

Batik T-Shirt Design for Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Batik is one of Indonesia's cultural heritages that holds significant historical, philosophical, and aesthetic value. As a symbol of national identity, its preservation requires innovative approaches to remain relevant in the face of changing times. In the current context, Generation Z—who are in their productive years and exert substantial influence on fashion trends and consumer behavior—show a declining interest in traditional Batik due to perceptions of impracticality and incompatibility with modern lifestyles. This study aims to design Batik-patterned T-shirts that align with the visual preferences of Generation Z, with the objective of increasing appreciation and pride in local culture through casual fashion media. A quantitative research method was employed, utilizing an online survey distributed to Generation Z respondents. The questionnaire gathered data on favored motifs, aesthetic preferences, and perceptions of Batik in contemporary fashion contexts. The collected data were analyzed statistically and presented in the form of diagrams. The findings indicate a strong interest in Batik motifs when integrated into modern and minimalist T-shirt designs. This study is expected to contribute to the development of culture-based fashion products and serve as a strategic approach to preserving Batik in a manner that is inclusive and adaptable to the tastes of today's younger generation.

KEYWORDS

Batik
Design
Generation Z
Indonesia
T-shirt

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INTRODUCTION

Clothing is one of humanity's most essential needs and has developed into a medium for expressing style and personality. T-shirts, known as *kaos* in Indonesia, are one of the most widely used unisex garments because of their comfort, practicality, and versatility (Sari & Indrawati, 2022). In addition to functionality, clothing increasingly serves as a tool to communicate cultural identity and individuality.

Batik, recognized by UNESCO as Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage, is experiencing declining popularity among younger generations. Generation Z often associates Batik with formal occasions or traditional settings, perceiving it as less compatible with casual, modern fashion (Sawitri, 2022). This declining interest risks weakening the role of Batik as a living cultural symbol.

Previous studies have explored Batik preservation through education, government campaigns, and formal dress initiatives (Khoiru Azizah & Bina Affanti, 2021). However, there is limited research on incorporating Batik motifs into casual wear that aligns with Generation Z's aesthetic preferences. Recent fashion studies highlight that younger consumers are more engaged with cultural elements when they are presented in a minimalist and contemporary form (Adiyanti, 2024).

This research offers a new approach by designing Batik-patterned T-shirts that adapt motif placement, scale, and style to suit Generation Z's visual preferences. Unlike traditional applications

of Batik, this approach seeks to blend heritage motifs with modern streetwear sensibilities, making Batik more relatable and wearable for daily use.

Generation Z represents approximately 27.94% of Indonesia's population and plays a significant role in shaping fashion and consumer trends (Andani & Astuti, 2025). Strengthening their connection to Batik is an urgent step to ensure its cultural continuity, while simultaneously supporting Indonesia's creative economy through innovative fashion products.

The purpose of this study is to design Batik-patterned T-shirts based on Generation Z's motif and style preferences, with the goal of increasing appreciation and everyday use of Batik. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of cultural-based fashion and provide practical strategies for preserving Batik in a modern, inclusive manner.

METHOD

A research design serves as a comprehensive, unified blueprint that outlines the specific procedures for data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation. A research design is important to keep the research going in the right path. This research adopts a descriptive quantitative method, where the data is being presented in numerical and descriptive form. This method emphasizes on objective measurements with statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of collected data through polls, questionnaires, or surveys.

There are few steps to do to undergo the research, those are:

1. Preparation

Prior to conducting the study, researchers identified Generation Z's preferred T-shirt styles, including color choices, design composition, motifs, and cutting styles. Based on these findings, more than five Batik T-shirt design samples were prepared as survey stimuli. Data collection involved two stages: (1) developing Batik T-shirt design prototypes, and (2) distributing questionnaires to over 50 Generation Z respondents from Tarumanagara University. This sample size was considered sufficient to generate descriptive insights into their interest in Batik-inspired T-shirt designs.

2. Implementation

Data for this study were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 50 students from Tarumanagara University. The questionnaire will be created using Google Forms and consist of six questions related to Generation Z's preference for Batik T-shirt designs. The questions that will be asked on this survey will first focus on the gender of the respondents, following several questions related to T-shirt design preferences, like the preferred part to put motifs on the T-shirt to find out whether the respondents prefer to put the motif on the front of the T-shirt or the back of the T-shirt. After that, respondents will be asked about T-shirt design composition of motifs, texts, and images that they prefer. The next question is about the preferred T-shirt color tone that the respondents prefer. Following questions about T-shirt cutting size and preferred design options from the visual samples that the researchers have made.

Table 1. Survey Indicators

No.	Survey Indicator	Answer Options
1	Respondent's gender	Male, Female
2	Preferred part of the T-shirt to have motifs	Front, Back
3	Preferred T-shirt design composition	50% motif & 50% text, More images than text, More text than images, Image only (no text)
4	Preferred T-shirt color tone	Monochrome, Earth tone, Pastel, RGB
5	Preferred T-shirt cutting	Oversized, Fit body, Normal size
6	Preferred design option from visual samples	Option 1, Option 2, Option 3, Option 4, Option 5, etc.

3. Reporting

A typical research paper is structured into three main sections. The introduction provides the overall context of the study, presenting the background, problem formulation, research objectives, expected contributions, and, when applicable, the research hypotheses. This section also includes a




theoretical review, synthesizing relevant literature, concepts, and previous research findings to establish a foundation for the study. The methodology section outlines the research design, procedures, data collection techniques, and analytical methods employed, ensuring that the process is transparent and replicable. This section also presents and discusses the findings in detail. The result of this research will be presented using the chart method that consists of pie charts and bar charts. The chart method is a visual way to write in a journal that goes beyond simple text. This approach is especially useful for presenting complex ideas or data in a clear, concise, and easy-to-read format. The charts will show the percentage of respondents' answers to the questions that have been asked. The paper concludes with the conclusions and recommendations section, which summarizes the key results, confirms or rejects the research hypotheses, and provides suggestions for practitioners and future researchers who wish to expand upon the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research followed three stages: preparation, implementation, and reporting. In the preparation stage, a preliminary study was conducted to explore Generation Z's clothing preferences, particularly Batik-themed T-shirts, by analyzing aspects such as color choices, design style, T-shirt cuts, and text-image balance. Based on these findings, nine T-shirt designs were created as samples. During the implementation stage, an online questionnaire with six questions was distributed to over 50 Tarumanagara University students via Google Forms to gather data on their preferences, including motif placement, style, color, cut, and favorite design. Finally, in the reporting stage, the data were analyzed descriptively and compared with theoretical frameworks to interpret Generation Z's preferences for Batik-inspired T-shirts.

The following presents the results of T-shirt design development that adapts several Batik motifs featured in selected examples. These designs aim to reinterpret traditional Indonesian patterns into modern casual fashion that aligns with the tastes and lifestyle of Generation Z, while also reflecting cultural heritage and current trends.

Table 2. T-Shirt Design Results with Batik Pattern Implementation

No.	T-Shirt Design	Description
1		The first design employs a black base color, associated with strength and versatility, making it suitable for everyday wear. Beige lines on the shoulders and sleeves form subtle geometric contours that enhance the silhouette, while minimalist typography on the front presents the phrases "The Beauty of Batik" and "Indonesia's Heritage" with abstract motifs adding modern flair. The back showcases a collage of Batik motifs from various regions, symbolizing cultural diversity and national identity. This combination reflects Batik as a living tradition that evolves with time. As noted by Ratuannisa et al. (2020) , integrating heritage symbols into casual wear strengthens cultural continuity while appealing to modern aesthetics. The black base also matches Gen Z's preference for neutral, versatile colors, confirming Batik's adaptability to street fashion.
2		The second design features a white base that emphasizes clarity and neutrality, allowing the Batik motif to stand out. The Megamendung motif from Cirebon is applied as a collage on the back with simple typography stating its name and origin, while a smaller collage on the front creates visual balance. This placement highlights the motif and reinforces its educational aspect, helping wearers recognize Batik's cultural roots. The choice of Megamendung aligns with its symbolic meaning of patience and serenity (Kusumowardhani, 2020), resonating with Gen Z's search for balance. The white background enhances the motif's blue tones, fitting Gen Z's preference for clean, minimalist visuals.
3		This design emphasizes the Megamendung motif in blue shades on both front and back, creating visual continuity. A curved wave-like graphic on the front adds a dynamic, youthful touch, while layered patterns on the back strengthen visual identity and preserve the motif's meaning. According to Gifari Zakawali (2024) , the blue Megamendung symbolizes calmness and brightness, evoking the vastness of the sky and sea. This interpretation

		aligns with Gen Z's values of lightness, openness, and creativity. The focus on fluid shapes reflects Gen Z's preference for organic designs over rigid structures (Sharon K.D Wardoyo & Ronny H. Walean, 2022), bridging traditional philosophy with modern visual playfulness.
4	 	The fourth design uses a black base with gold-accented Megamendung on the front left, adding elegance. The back features a central wayang figure framed by Megamendung, symbolizing Javanese cultural richness. This design merges Batik and wayang into a single wearable item, with gold lending a casual yet premium look. As Andriyanti et al. (2022) explain, recontextualizing traditional ornaments into contemporary designs not only preserves cultural meaning but also elevates aesthetic value (Andriyanti et al., 2022). For Gen Z, this combination allows them to wear culture as identity while maintaining comfort and relatability.
5	 	As shown in Figure 5, a golden floral Batik motif on the front right creates asymmetry and visual interest, while the back features six Batik motifs in a collage with the phrase "The Batik Culture of Indonesia." This design celebrates Indonesia's cultural diversity. According to Utoyo et al. (2020), visual arts can serve as media of pluralism, and this design embodies that principle by presenting Batik as a mosaic of cultural expressions (Utoyo et al., 2020). The gold accent modernizes the motif and appeals to Gen Z's preference for bold, symbolic fashion, communicating inclusivity and cultural awareness.
6	 	This design introduces the Kawung motif, one of the oldest Javanese patterns symbolizing balance, humility, and selflessness (Hermandra, 2022). The front features the word "Kawung" in gold at the lower-left for subtle emphasis, while the back extends the motif with geometric framing to maintain symmetry and meaning. The gold adds refinement, and the structured visuals enhance its value, making the motif both culturally rich and modern. As Sharon & Walean (2022) note, structured visuals in T-shirt design enhance perceived value (Sharon K.D Wardoyo & Ronny H. Walean, 2022).
7	 	The seventh design draws inspiration from Komodo Island, with a minimal front and a back featuring a Komodo dragon illustration, a Nusa Tenggara map, and a floral Batik motif. This fusion of natural heritage and Batik reflects cultural hybridity. According to Badruz Zama & Firmansyah (2024), cultural and regional icons can strengthen merchandise branding and foster local pride (Badruz Zama & Firmansyah, 2024). For Gen Z, this design offers both authenticity and novelty, showing Batik's adaptability beyond Java-centric motifs.
8	 	The eighth design features a black base with #WONDERFULINDONESIA in bold on the front and an illustration of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana statue with geometric motifs on the back. This design aligns with national branding and appeals to Gen Z's hashtag-driven culture. Haris Setyawan (2022) highlights that Garuda Wisnu Kencana symbolizes love, devotion, and courage, values relevant to youth identity (Haris Setyawan, 2022). Combining hashtag culture with traditional symbolism, this design communicates cultural pride and modern connectivity.

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The ninth design uses a white base with layered blue Megamendung accents for a fresh, bright look. Minimalist typography names the motif and its origin, adding cultural context. This design was the most preferred (44.8%), showing that simplicity, balanced colors, and symbolic meaning strongly influence Gen Z's choices. Zakawali (2024) notes that Megamendung's appeal lies in its universal symbolism of calm and openness, transcending cultural boundaries (Zakawali, 2024). Its popularity highlights Gen Z's preference for wearable, versatile, and contemporary styles.

Following the development of the nine Batik T-shirt designs, a structured online questionnaire was distributed to investigate Generation Z's preferences. Respondents provided demographic data such as gender, indicated their preferred motif placement (front or back), and selected a favored design composition (balanced motif-text, image-dominant, text-dominant, or image-only). They also identified their preferred color tones (monochrome, earth tone, pastel, RGB) and cutting style (oversized, fit body, or regular). Finally, participants reviewed the nine visual design alternatives and chose the one they found most appealing.

From the series of questionnaire questions distributed to 50 respondents, the following results were obtained in table 3.

Table 3. Respondent Result

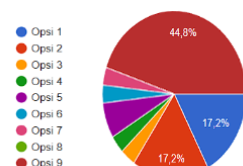
No.	Respondents	Charts	Description
1	Profile	<p>Gender</p> <p>Usia</p>	<p>As shown in pie charts, based on gender, 56.9% of respondents are male and 43.1% are female. This indicates that a greater number of male respondents participated in this study compared to female respondents.</p> <p>Based on the bar chart, the dominant age group is respondents aged 18, accounting for 35.3% of the total</p>
2	Front nad back pattern are of the T-shirt	<p>Kalian lebih suka dengan baju yang memiliki motif yang lebih banyak di area...</p>	<p>based on the responses of 51 participants, 70.6% prefer T-shirt designs with dominant motifs on the front area. Meanwhile, 29.4% of respondents prefer designs with motifs predominantly placed on the back of the T-shirt.</p>
3	Types of T-shirt designs	<p>Kalian lebih suka dengan baju yang....</p> <p> 50% motif dan 50% tulisan Lebih banyak gambar dibandingkan dengan tulisan Lebih banyak tulisan dibandingkan dengan gambar Hanya gambar tanpa tulisan </p>	<p>The most preferred type of T-shirt design is one that features more images than text, accounting for 51% of the responses. This is followed by T-shirt designs that use only images without any text, which received 27.5%. Designs that combine 50% images and 50% text gained 11.8%. The least preferred type is the design that contains more text than images, with only 9.8% of respondents selecting this option.</p>
4	Preferences for T-shirt color tones	<p>Kalian lebih suka kaos dengan warna</p> <p> Monokrom Earthtone Pastel RGB </p>	<p>Based on the pie chart, the most preferred T-shirt color tone is earth tone, chosen by 60.8% of respondents. This is followed by pastel tones in second place with 21.6%. The third place is occupied by monochrome tones, accounting for 17.6%. Meanwhile, RGB colors were the least favored, receiving no selections from the respondents.</p>

5 Types of T-shirt cuts



Based on the pie chart, the most preferred T-shirt cut is the oversized fit, chosen by 47.1% of respondents. This is followed by the normal size cut, which received 29.4%. The least preferred option is the fit-body cut, selected by only 23.5% of respondents.

6 T-shirt designs



Based on the pie chart, the distribution of each category or design option is analyzed as follows: Option 9 received 44.8% of the total votes, indicating that the majority of respondents preferred this design over the others. This option features a white and blue color combination with artistic text elements on both the front and back of the T-shirt. Option 1 and Option 2 each received 17.2% of the votes, placing them jointly in second as the most popular designs.

The survey findings reveal that Generation Z prefers T-shirts with visually dominant Batik motifs, earth-tone or neutral colors, and oversized cuts, reflecting their emphasis on comfort, minimalism, and visual identity expression (Ratuannisa et al., 2020). The Megamendung motif—particularly in the ninth design—was the most favored, underscoring its cultural resonance. Megamendung represents serenity and resilience (Kusumowardhani, 2020), while Kawung conveys humility and balance (Hermandra, 2022), suggesting that Batik's philosophical values remain relevant when adapted into casual, wearable forms.

These preferences also signal opportunities for Batik's evolution into a sustainable fashion product rather than remaining confined to formal attire. Earth tones align with Gen Z's awareness of sustainability, while oversized cuts meet their need for comfort and versatility (Sharon K.D. Wardoyo & Ronny H. Walean, 2022). As Rudianto (2020) argues, Batik's survival depends on innovative reinterpretations that preserve symbolic meaning while embracing modern aesthetics. This study demonstrates such an approach, rebranding Batik as a daily fashion item that strengthens cultural identity and appeals to global Gen Z markets.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that Generation Z prefers Batik-inspired T-shirts with visually dominant motifs, earth-tone color palettes, oversized cuts, and minimalist compositions. The ninth design, featuring the Megamendung motif in blue and white, was the most favored, confirming that Batik can stay relevant when reinterpreted in casual, contemporary forms. These findings align with the research objective of exploring how Batik can be adapted to everyday fashion to foster cultural appreciation among young people.

The results imply that sustaining Batik's cultural relevance requires continuous design innovation and contextual adaptation. This opens opportunities for the creative industry to develop Batik-based fashion that strengthens national identity while competing in global markets. However, the study was limited to a single demographic group from one university, suggesting that future research should involve broader participants and explore other fashion categories to create inclusive and widely accepted Batik innovations.

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