

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**THE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY  
OF MODULAR BATIK BLOCK  
CONCEPT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to elicit data on cultural sustainability through the innovation of the traditional batik block. This study mainly focuses on the cultural sustainability of the modular batik block concept while exploring the cultural viability of the block in Malaysia. Cultural sustainability of block makers is needed through the innovation of batik block towards the batik artisan, practitioners and batik community. Malaysia's traditional batik block is the legacy and treasure of the country. However, it has slowly faded, nearing extinction, particularly in the east coast region. Nowadays, in the context of globalization and rapid technological change, the production of batik blocks has become scarce when younger generations are no longer interested in block-making. Therefore, only a few master block makers are left in Malaysia. The interest in batik among Malaysians has begun to decrease, especially among the younger generations. This study used a qualitative approach by using the Third Generation Activity Theory and Design Thinking (DT) model as a research process in this research. The research has adopted ethnographic and descriptive research. In so doing the observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD) were utilized to gather the data. This research study involved nine selected respondents based on their experience and expertise in their field. A thematic analysis was used to classify the data collected. The finding reveals that the product of 'Blockternative', with the concept of modularity can create various tessellated patterns and this 'Blockternative' also provides various alternatives and options with a myriad of potential batik block designs. However, by making the traditional block more stimulating, the art of batik block in Malaysia will continue to flourish, thus enhancing the appreciation of the valuable traditional culture of batik making. This study will be helpful to scholars, educators, undergraduate students and graduate students in their efforts to gain a thorough understanding of batik blocks, both conceptually and practically.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter is a brief discussion on how the study is conducted. It outlines on how the problem statement is refined, the research objectives are developed, how the research goals are formed, the purpose of the proposed research questions, and what are the significance determined. The study's main purpose has developed a comprehensively discovered the important element. As a result, the work on eliminating and delimitation is included within the scope of this chapter. The exact information in each chapter is intended to assist the reader in understanding its content. Each part is also discussed from the perspective of comments or point of views.

### 1.2 Research Background

Handicraft refers to things that are made by hand. It has aesthetic and cultural values (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2007) based on the materials used, the quality, the design of the product. Particularly, the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation (MHDC) had combines traditional and contemporary components that can be divided into the following categories based on textiles, forestry-based industries, and earthen-based constructions of metals minerals (Hassan, Kian, Rahman, & Sade, 2017). Moreover, Arney (1987) notes that the meaning of batik in Malaysia goes beyond a description of the physical batik technique; rather, for most Malaysians, batik stands for a distinct design feature with specific themes, and the procedure comes second. “When the culture dies, the Malay community will lose their own identity, in their own country!” Such were the words spoken by the Malaysian Government’s Societal Advisor, Tan Sri Dr. Rais Yatim, while officiating the Keris and Malay Cultural Heritage Festival which took place at the Malay Heritage Museum, University Putra Malaysia (UPM) on the 29th of September 2016 (Bernama, 2016). Malay heritage and culture that are still practiced and preserved by the Malay community today should be ceaselessly sustained in order to safeguard the