

Analysing the factors affecting the purchasing decision of Malaysian batik products

U.H. Simin & N.H.A. Rahman

International Islamic University Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT: Malaysian batik is a highly purchased handicraft in comparison to other handicraft products. There has been a scarcity of previous studies in addressing the factors affecting the purchasing decision over the traditional textile, which is batik. Hence, this study aims to analyse the factors that affect the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products. This study has employed quantitative research by distributing questionnaires consisting of 35 questions, which were categorized into four sections. This study also employed the purposive sampling technique with a total of 62 respondents who completed the questionnaires. The study found that six factors affect the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products, which are: the quality factor, price factor, availability factor, packaging factor, reference factor, and brand factor. Besides, other factors have been identified from the open-ended question, namely the promotion and awareness, design and color, identity and authenticity, and usability. The study suggested exploring the promotion and awareness factor, design and color factor, identity and authenticity factor, and usability factor that affect the purchasing decisions over Malaysian batik products. The findings of the study would benefit the batik industry by enhancing the use of Malaysian batik and increasing the sales value of Malaysian batik.

Keywords: handicraft, batik products, Malaysian Batik, purchasing decision, quantitative research

INTRODUCTION

Traditional batik is one of the oldest arts of Malaysian culture, and symbolically, the motifs often represent many things (Sidek 2018). Like consumer goods, Malaysian batik may not have a strong identity and character in comparison to Indonesian batik, but it still possesses a big market in Malaysia (Mahdzar et al. 2013). Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation (MHDC) stated that batik was highlighted as the main contributor to the overall craft sales value in Malaysia (MHDC 2016). The batik sales of a subsidiary company of MHDC, Kraf Holding Sdn Bhd increased from RM 913,778 in 2009 to RM 239,784,324.65 in 2016.

Although the sales value of Malaysian batik products is increasing, Annuar (2019), in his article in *Malay Mail* reported that the revival of batik popularity among Malaysians is not for Malaysian batik, but Indonesian batik. There are a few reasons for this; the main one among them is affordability. Amy Blair, the founder of Batik Boutique, explained that price point is still a matter of concern for Malaysians, and Indonesia's mass-printed batik is far more affordable than the East Coast's hand-printed version (Annuar 2019). The report indicated that the price factor contributed to the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products. Nevertheless, price is not the only factor that consumers consider before purchasing any products (Pesol et al. 2016).

The study concerning the factors that affected the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products has been under research in prior literature (Fei 2013; Sabijono 2013). The studies specific for Malaysian batik appear to be essential and worth of investigation as the batik industries in Indonesia and Malaysia are different (Leigh 2002). According to Pesol et al. (2016), through

the practical aspect, batik producers or marketers can understand the demand of Malaysian batik consumers when the related factors that affect purchasing decisions over Malaysian batik products are discovered. It would contribute to an in-depth understanding of Malaysian batik consumers, then will provide innovative and creative planning as well as strategic promotional and marketing activities to enhance the use of Malaysian batik and increase its sales value. Approximately 90.5 per-cent of entrepreneurs think that the high consumption of batik can have a positive impact on firm sales (Akhir et al. 2015). Therefore, this study intends to identify the related factors that will affect the purchasing decisions over Malaysian batik products and determine the most influential factors that affect said purchasing decisions.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 *Factors affecting the purchasing decision of Malaysian batik products*

This present study adopted the theoretical framework from Ujianto and Abdulrachman (2006). The study incorporated six factors, namely the reference factor, quality factor, price factor, brand factor, packaging factor, and availability factor.

The reference group is an individual or group of people who significantly influence one's behaviour (Sumarwan 2014). Ujianto and Abdulrachman (2006) found that the reference factor was the most influential factor that affects the purchasing decision over batik sarong among consumers in East Java, Indonesia. The study is in line with Mandey and Kawung (2016), which argued that reference factors had a significant effect on the purchasing decision over batik products in Manado, North Sulawesi.

Next, quality is defined as an evaluation of the excellence and superiority of the product (Nguyen & Gizaw 2014). The study by Nurfikriyadi (2016) emphasized that product design and product quality are the significant factors that will affect the purchasing decision over batik products. Furthermore, Rahadi et al. (2016) indicated that quality factors had a significant effect on consumers' batik preferences with pattern and design coronated as the preferable factors in determining the quality of batik products in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, price is the amount of money charged for a product or a service; the sum of the values that customers exchange for the benefits of having or using a product or service (Kotler & Armstrong 2016). Tiningrum (2014) indicated that, aside from product, place, and promotion, the price had a significant influence on purchasing decision towards Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in Surakarta City. Moreover, Kusumodewi (2016) mentioned that aside from lifestyle and product quality, the price had a significant influence on the purchasing decisions over batik in Mirota, Surabaya. The study is in line with Mandey and Kawung's (2016) study, in which the price factors had a significant effect on the purchasing decision over batik products in Manado, North Sulawesi.

Furthermore, a brand is described as a logo, style, word, name, or any other attribute that distinguishes the services or goods of a seller from other sellers' (Yuliaty 2015). A study by Mubarak (2018) found that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Besides, research conducted by Mandey and Kawung (2016) showed that brand factors had a significant positive impact on the purchasing decision over batik products in Manado. Also, Siregar and Widiastuti (2019) mentioned that the brand factor had a significant positive relationship on the purchasing decision over batik products in Danar Hadi Surakarta, Indonesia.

Then, packaging design has become an important marketing factor for various consumer goods. It has a vital role in communicating product benefits to the customer. A study by Ujianto and Abdulrachman (2006) had stated that packaging design affects the purchasing decision over batik sarong in Manado, Indonesia. Besides, Hamdar, Khalil et al. (2018) had also discussed a similar result, in which the research has indicated that there was a significant relationship between the product packaging and the purchasing decision.

Finally, the availability factor refers to the extent of consumer attitudes towards the availability of existing products (Ujianto & Abdulrachman 2006). The study by Ujianto and Abdulrachman (2006) has indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between availability factor and purchasing decision. Besides, a study by Mandey and Kawung (2016) has shown that there is a significant effect on the availability of products towards the consumer purchasing decision. The result has indicated that consumers will choose to buy batik products from famous and well-known shops/markets.

1.2 *The importance of the Malaysian batik for the tourism industry in Malaysia*

As an “intangible cultural heritage of humanity,” Malaysian batik is believed to be an attractive heritage product that can be offered to tourists from all over the world, especially those who are interested in culture and the art of society in a country (Akhir et al. 2018). Malaysia has now been successfully promoted internationally by the increasing popularity of batik known as one of the most famous textile crafts. It is not only demanded by batik lovers, but also from international tourists, who buy batiks for gifts and souvenirs. (Pesol et al. 2016). This is because foreign tourists see batik as a fabric that is full of colors and very different from their textiles, which ultimately gives them an interest in buying. Batik is also listed as the Top 10 souvenirs purchased by tourists, where 23 out of 94 tourists prefer to buy batik items, apart from accessories and keychains (Hamden et al. 2015). Hence, the growth in the batik industry can offer attractive tourism products that will further boost the country’s tourism industry and contribute to the Malaysian economic growth.

2 METHOD

This study is a quantitative research design that used descriptive analysis. Data for this study have been collected using a purposive sampling technique for domestic tourists who had purchased Malaysian batik products as the target population for the study. Previously, from 1st October until 15th October 2019, a pretest of 30 surveys was conducted to detect possible errors on the questionnaire. This study managed to obtain results from 62 respondents with the implementation of sample size calculation.

Each item for the factors had applied the five-point Likert Scale as an indicator of measurement ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (6). Then, the responses received were classified into either negative, moderate, or positive. Besides, these data were used to rank the factors that affect the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik.

For the open-ended question, there was only one question provided, where the consumers could state their comments and suggestions on Malaysian batik products. The data from the open-ended section were computed using Microsoft Excel and had been grouped according to their likeness. Then, the result of the data was triangulated with the data stated in the consumers’ background, purchase information, and the factors influencing the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products.

3 RESULTS

Based on the data collected from 62 respondents, quality factor, price factor, availability factor, and packaging factor had a positive impact on the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products. In contrast, the reference factor and brand factor were moderate. The reference factor indicated a mean score of 3.25, with ‘choose Malaysian batik products that are recommended by family members’ contributed to the highest value of reference factor with a mean score of 3.98. Levy and Lee (2004) mentioned that since the family is a fundamental decision-making unit, the interaction between family members is likely to be more significant than those of smaller groups, such as friends or colleagues. Likewise, the consumers were moderately affected by the brand factor, with

Table 1. The result of the open-ended data.

Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
Promotion and awareness	17	28
Price	12	20
Design and color	8	13
Usability	8	13
Authenticity and identity	6	10
Quality	5	8
Availability	4	7
Total	60	100

a mean score value of 3.13. The highest mean value for the brand factor was '*consider the brand before purchasing Malaysian batik products*', with a mean score value of 3.27.

Otherwise, the quality factor had the highest mean score value, which is 4.53, making the factor as the most influential factor among others. The data indicated that consumers require a product to have high durability, neat, and strongly sewn to ensure that the product can be used for a longer time. Besides, the consumers were also concerned about the color of Malaysian batik and the durability of said color. They prefer Malaysian batik products with the right color combination and a color that does not fade and wear out quickly. Besides, the tendency to choose Malaysian batik products that are comfortable upon use gave the idea that the consumers do not want to experience discomfort from the material of the products, for example, feeling hot when wearing them. It also explains why smoothness and thickness were considered because the product's material will have an impact on comfort.

Next, the price factor had positively affected the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products with a total mean score of 4.23. The highest mean score was '*compare prices before purchasing Malaysian batik products*' with a mean score value of 4.65. The data indicated that the price factor is very crucial in determining the purchasing decision over batik. Customers would perceive a different price as a measure of value and quality (Mandey & Kawung 2016). For the availability factor, the results show a mean value of 3.80. The average number of respondents had agreed that they would '*choose to buy Malaysian batik products in a shop or market that has a complete selection*' with the mean score value of 4.15.

Then, the packaging factor indicated a mean score value of 3.63 with the highest mean score for '*choose a Malaysian batik product that has a nice and beautiful packaging design*' with a mean score value of 3.71. Gogoi (2013) mentioned that customers always think that purchasing products that have simple packaging and those that are not so popular will be a high risk because the quality of said products cannot be trusted.

The open-ended data emphasized that other factors can be studied concerning the factors that affect the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products. From 62 respondents, there are only 60 respondents who answered the open-ended section. Table 1 indicates that seven categories frequently appear in the open-ended data, including promotion and awareness, price, design and color, usability, authenticity and identity, quality, and availability.

Most of the respondents emphasized highly on the promotion and awareness of Malaysian batik products. A female respondent from Perak (R = 27, age = 23), stated that:

"Batik should be highly promoted and advertised as one of Malaysia's tradition and cultural pride."

Additionally, promotion and awareness were also emphasized by a female respondent from Selangor (R = 37, age = 23), who mentioned that:

"Batik nowadays become trending, especially during Hari Raya. But I didn't have much information regarding the differences between batik Malaysia and Indonesia. So somehow, I didn't know whether the batik that I buy coming from which country."

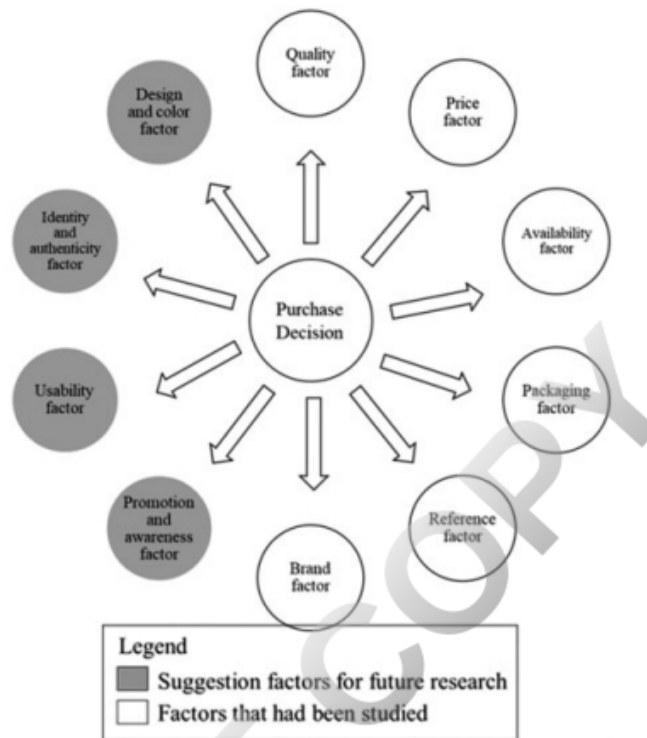


Figure 1. Purchasing decision's factors.

Furthermore, the information from the open-ended section found that the consumers were also concerned with the design and color of Malaysian batik products. A female respondent from Selangor (R = 12, Age 24) stated that:

"Selling more batik small flower pattern and pastel colors."

Meanwhile, another respondent highlighted the design of Malaysian batik products. A female respondent from Kedah (R = 16, Age = 27) suggested that:

"Batik industry or designers should always come up with attractive, eye-catching, up-to-date designs that can attract customers to buy batik from time to time as batik as we expect will not be outdated as time passes."

The data previously mentioned that the consumers were looking towards the pattern and motif of Malaysian batik products before they purchase. This data from the open-ended section proved that consumers are particularly concerned about the pattern and motif of Malaysian batik products and suggested the color and pattern that they want. Besides, a respondent (R = 16, Age = 27) had emphasized on 'up-to-date design'. As on average, the age range of respondents is between 21 to 24 (66.1%, N = 41), they demand something up-to-date and in line with the current fashion trend.

Moreover, the consumers were also concerned about the usability of Malaysian batik product, as a male respondent from Terengganu (R = 31, Age = 23) mentioned that:

"Today, the teacher and some government workers wear batik on Thursday. It is better if all the sectors in Malaysia can wear batik every Thursday, including university students and staff."

Furthermore, the authenticity and identity of Malaysian batik were also discussed in the open-ended data. A female respondent from Melaka (R = 8, Age = 24) mentioned that:

"It is good if we can keep the authenticity of the batik product. Even trend changing fast, but batik product always gets the demand."

For that, another conceptual framework can be constructed based on the data gained through the open-ended. Figure 1 shows the suggested conceptual framework.

4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research had adopted a study by Ujianto and Abdulrachman (2006) who included six factors in their research, and the factors are; quality factor, price factor, availability factor, packaging factor, reference factor, and brand factor. The average number of respondents had positively agreed that all factors had influenced their purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products. However, the finding from the open-ended questions showed that there are four other factors mentioned by consumers, namely, promotion and awareness, design and color, usability, and identity and authenticity. Therefore, other factors need to be considered and studied for the related factors may and will affect the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik in the Malaysian context.

Based on the data, the most influential factor that affected the purchasing decision over Malaysian batik products is the quality factor. On the price factor, the respondents have also been affected positively by the idea that the item should be worth the quality for certain prices. The study is in line with Djumarno and Djamaluddin (2017), which indicated that better product quality will maintain a high level of customer satisfaction. Hence, this will encourage customers to make future purchases. However, the result is different from the findings in Ujianto and Abdulrachman's (2006) study, in which the most influential factor was the reference factor as the consumers were specifically influenced by a famous officer, idols, and scholars in determining their purchasing decision over batik products in Manado. Therefore, the data emphasized that different populations have different factors and preferences in deciding the choice of batik products that they purchase.

Hence, the findings of the study will provide a better understanding of the critical factors involved in the purchasing decisions over Malaysian batik products, which would benefit batik producers or marketers by enhancing the use of Malaysian batik and increasing its sales value.

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