




Teenagers' Expression of Nationalism Through Batik on Social Media: A Tiktok Case Study

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Abstract. This study aims to explore how teenager's express nationalism through the use of batik on TikTok. Using a qualitative approach and a case study design, the research involved two key informants, 20-year-old students who actively create and share batik-related content on TikTok. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and content documentation, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings reveal that both informants interpret batik not merely as traditional attire but as a symbol of cultural pride and an integral part of modern lifestyle. TikTok serves as a creative space for articulating digital nationalism in casual, visual, and flexible forms. Factors influencing these expressions include pride in local culture, family support, environmental influences, and social media trends. This study highlights the transformation of youth nationalism into the digital sphere, while also drawing attention to the risks of cultural commodification and trend fatigue that may challenge the sustainability of batik as a national identity symbol.

Keywords: Batik, Social media, TikTok, Digital Nationalism.

1 Introduction

The TikTok social media phenomenon is increasingly dominating the behavior of Indonesian teenagers in expressing self-identity and culture (Syafa'ati & Khusyairi, 2023). The platform provides ample space for young people to showcase their creativity through short, easy-to-consume videos. In this context, expressions of nationalism are becoming increasingly fluid and transforming into more visual and digital forms (Risky Azizah et al., 2023). Teenagers now tend to display their cultural pride through viral content that attracts public attention (Rahman, 2023). This change creates an opportunity to preserve national cultures such as batik through the popular TikTok platform.

The use of batik as a cultural symbol on social media is a form of modernization in preserving tradition (I Gusti Ngurah M. Wirajangsa, 2025). Batik, once considered formal attire and synonymous with the older generation, is now being adopted by teenagers with a creative and trendy touch (Steelyana, 2012). TikTok, a social media platform, has become an effective platform for teenagers to introduce batik in more casual everyday fashion styles (Yasmin & Pamuji, 2024; Riya, 2024). This transformation has created a shift in the meaning and perception of batik among the younger generation

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(Rahman, 2023; Budiarti, 2025). Batik is no longer just traditional clothing, but a modern identity attractively packaged through social media (Adaniyah & Sarjono, 2023; Wirajangsa & Puspita, 2025).

The trend of popularizing batik on TikTok is often done through challenges, dances, and video stories that show pride in using batik (Putri, A., & Azeharie, 2021). This movement reflects digital nationalism, where teenagers assert their love for the nation's culture in a virtual space (Rahman, 2023; Yasmin & Pamuji, 2024). TikTok is a channel that allows these expressions of nationalism to spread massively and quickly (Wirajangsa & Puspita, 2025; Khusyairi & Syafa'ati, 2023). Previous research has not explored how adolescent nationalism is manifested through clothing choices such as batik in social media (Budiarti, 2025; Adaniyah & Sarjono, 2023). This provides an opportunity for this research to fill the void.

Study by **(Nuhayah et al., 2024)**. In the journal *Historia*, researchers explored how Banten batik is being reinterpreted by Generation Z through fashion trends shared on TikTok. Using qualitative methods, the study found that trends like #OOTD have become symbolic spaces where teenagers not only showcase their style but also embed historical and nationalistic values through the batik motifs they wear. This suggests that batik on TikTok is not merely aesthetic, but also a form of participation in cultural preservation and nationalist spirit.

Nugroho et al., (2021) using a qualitative descriptive approach, they examined the use of TikTok to strengthen national identity amid the pandemic. This research highlighted the phenomenon of TikTok accounts consciously using batik cloth in their content as a symbol of national pride. Their findings demonstrate that social media has become an interactive space that strengthens teenagers' symbolic affiliation with national culture, while simultaneously extending the meaning of nationalism into everyday digital practices.

Research by Wirajangsa and Puspita (2025) reveals that TikTok is effective in preserving batik among teenagers, but has not explored how batik becomes a symbol of nationalism that is internalized by teenagers. In Khusyairi and Syafa'ati's research (2023), TikTok is used as a public space for teenagers to express themselves, but has not focused on the cultural value of batik. Riya's research (2024) highlights the sharia business aspects of batik marketing, not the expression of national identity. Meanwhile, Budiarti (2025) emphasizes batik marketing strategies through influencers, without examining the aspects of nationalism inherent in the use of batik by teenagers. This lacuna is an important foundation for this research.

Research by Alamsyah et al.(2022) shows that cultural terms such as "Mas-Mas Jawa" are used by teenagers in TikTok to express regional identity. However, there is no study that specifically looks at how batik is used as a symbol of nationalism. Research by Khusyairi and Syafa'ati (2023) highlights more aspects of digital public space, not batik as a national cultural identity. Riya's research (2024) focuses on sharia economic aspects, while this research will examine social and cultural aspects. In addition, previous studies have not deeply connected the use of batik with the awareness of nationalism that arises through social media. This research offers a new perspective in seeing how social media plays a role in the formation of adolescents' national identity.

The use of batik by university students in Tangerang City has an interesting dimension in relation to the preservation of local culture and the expression of national identity. This study is especially important in the context of the younger generation living

in the digital era and globalization, where social media such as TikTok has become the main platform for self-expression. In this study, it is found that batik is not just clothing, but has shifted into a lifestyle symbol that contains historical and nationalistic values.

One relevant qualitative study was conducted by Yuniasih et al. (2020), who examined the role of students in promoting Kampong Batik Kembang Mayang (KBKM) in Tangerang as part of a community service program. Students were directly involved in batik tourism education and promotion, including creating social media content. They identified that students' active participation in wearing batik during these activities contributed to increasing the local community's interest in batik as a cultural identity (Yuniasih et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Mukmin (2022) in his article on the creation of the RBS (*Rumah Batik Setu*) batik brand identity emphasized that students act as a bridge between local culture and the modern market through digital media. Their role in the design, promotion, and branding of local batik reflects their active involvement in shaping a new narrative of batik as a modern product rooted in national values. This is crucial in positioning batik as a symbol of nationalism relevant to the lifestyles of young people.

Additionally, Alamsyah, Sari, and Sanjaya (2022) explored how social media was used to raise cultural awareness of *Batik Setu* in South Tangerang. This study demonstrated that student participation in batik community activities and community social media management encouraged the transformation of batik from mere formal attire into a flexible and contextual symbol of identity expression.

Based on the research background, this study aims to understand how teenagers' nationalism expression is realized through the use of batik in TikTok social media. The focus of this research is on the process of teenagers building and displaying their national identity consciously in the digital space. This research is expected to contribute to the development of social science, especially in the study of digital nationalism and cultural preservation through social media. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for educators, cultural actors, and the government in developing effective cultural preservation strategies among the younger generation. This research is also expected to encourage teenagers to be prouder to wear batik in their daily lives.

The phenomenon of batik use by teenagers on the social media platform TikTok shows a transformation in the meaning of batik from simply traditional clothing to a symbol of modern identity imbued with nationalism. However, previous studies have focused more on aspects of promotion, business, and the digital space in general without examining in depth how batik is understood and used by teenagers as an expression of nationalism in the context of social media. This gap in research forms the basis of this study.

Thus, the main issue of this study lies in how teenagers internalize and express nationalism through the use of batik on the TikTok platform.

2 Methodology

According to (Creswell, 2014), a qualitative approach is used when research aims to understand the experiences, views, or interpretations of subjects in a particular context. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring the meaning,

experience, and subjective expression of teenagers in using batik through TikTok social media.

The research method used is a case study. Robert K. Yin (2013) provides a limitation on case studies as research that investigates phenomena in the context of real life, Case studies are used because this research examines specifically the phenomenon of adolescent nationalism expression which focuses on the use of batik on TikTok social media This type of research provides flexibility in exploring the experiences and meanings constructed by adolescents in the context of social media.

The data collection techniques in this study used three main methods; observation, interviews, and documentation of TikTok content. This technique was chosen to obtain a thorough understanding of the expression of youth nationalism in using batik through TikTok social media. The observation method was used to directly observe how Poltekkes Kemenkes Banten students produce and share TikTok content related to the use of batik.

This study employed a **purposive sampling technique**, as it was considered the most suitable approach to select participants who met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The informants were chosen based on the following considerations:

They are active TikTok users who regularly produce or engage with content related to batik.

They are teenagers or young adults (aged 18–22) who are currently studying at the Banten Ministry of Health Polytechnic.

They have direct experience in wearing batik both in daily life and in TikTok content.

Using these criteria, the researchers selected **two key informants**, Mulia and Putri, both 20 years old, who actively create and share TikTok content featuring batik. These informants were considered sufficient for an in-depth case study design, allowing the researchers to explore in detail how nationalism is expressed through batik usage on social media. Additional contextual insights were also gathered through observations of other TikTok content related to batik to enrich the data.

3 Results and Discussion

The data collected from the content analysis and interviews were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This technique allows researchers to identify key themes that emerge from the data, as well as the relationships between these themes. In the context of this study, possible themes that may emerge include the influence of trends, the symbolism of batik clothing, and social interactions on social media.

The analysis process began with interview transcription and data coding to identify relevant categories. Once the categories were determined, the researcher analyzed the relationships between the categories to understand how teenagers construct their identities through batik clothing. This analysis is expected to provide insight into how social media functions as a space for identity exploration and how batik clothing becomes a symbol of a broader cultural identity.

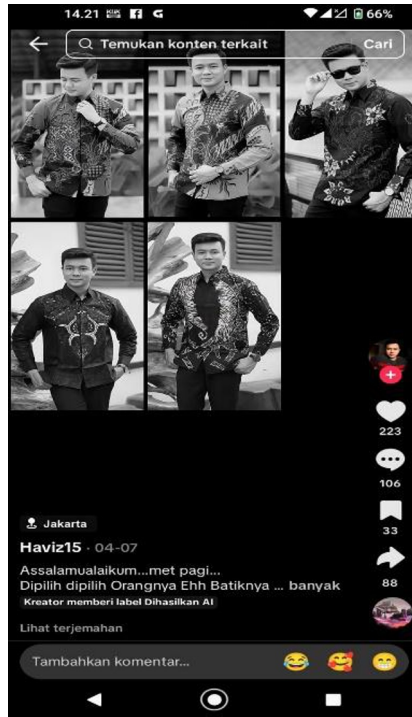


Fig 1. Batik Nawilis
Source: Tiktok

Figure 1, it tells the tiktok account #batik nawilis is a shop that sells solo batik. This account is the latest batik sales account on the tiktok account. In this video, there is a Gen Z generation host who sells the latest batik shirts that are in accordance with the latest trends. This live broadcast was watched by many people, even up to 300 thousand viewers and liked by more than 200 thousand viewers from many viewers who can invite generation Z to be proud to use or wear typical Indonesian batik.

On social media TikTok, we can see that Generation Z has wider access to information and technology, which makes it easier for them to explore and understand cultural heritage such as batik. They tend to use social media platforms to share and discuss various aspects of culture, including batik. According to a report from We Are Social and Hootsuite in 2022, around 88% of young Indonesians are active on social media, which gives them space to express themselves and share their interest in batik (Hootsuite, 2022).

Batik is not only considered as traditional clothing, but also as a symbol of pride and identity. Many Gen Z children adopt batik in their daily lives, both in formal and informal events. This phenomenon reflects their efforts to integrate tradition into a modern lifestyle. For example, in a study conducted by the University of Indonesia, it was found that 65% of students wore batik in campus events as a form of respect for local culture (Indonesia, 2021).

In addition, many young designers are inspired by batik and create innovative works that combine traditional elements with modern styles. This not only enriches the fashion

world but also helps popularize batik among the younger generation. A prominent example is the batik collection showcased at Jakarta Fashion Week, where many young designers showcased their works with a contemporary touch (Jakarta Fashion Week, 2023).

Thus, batik is not just clothing, but also part of the identity and lifestyle of Gen Z children. Awareness of the importance of preserving this cultural heritage is one of the driving forces for the younger generation to continue to develop and promote batik in various aspects of their lives.



Figure 2. Gen Z Women Wearing Batik
Source: TikTok

Social media plays a very important role in introducing and popularizing batik among Gen Z children. The Tiktok platform has become a channel for them to share batik-related content, from tutorials on how to wear batik to batik art exhibitions. According to research conducted by Nielsen in 2021, around 75% of young people rely on social media to find the latest fashion trends, including batik (Nielsen, 2021).

One interesting example is the use of the hashtag #Batikday on TikTok, which has attracted the attention of millions of users. Content uploaded by influencers and ordinary users often shows how batik can be combined with various modern styles. This creates greater awareness of the diversity of batik motifs and techniques in

Indonesia. Data from Instagram shows that this hashtag has been used more than 1 million times, showing how popular batik is among young people (TikTok, 2024)

The data analysis process in this study adopted the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of three interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Data Reduction involved transcribing interview results, reviewing observation notes, and identifying relevant segments of TikTok content. Codes such as "batik as pride," "TikTok trends," and "casual nationalism" were developed to capture the main ideas expressed by the informants.

Data Display was conducted by categorizing these codes into broader themes, such as cultural identity, creativity, social media influence, and digital nationalism. The themes were organized in tabular and diagrammatic form to map the relationship between adolescents' personal interpretations of batik and their social media practices.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification entailed interpreting the thematic patterns in relation to existing theories of youth nationalism and digital nationalism. The credibility of findings was enhanced through triangulation between interviews, observation, and TikTok content analysis. This stage confirmed that nationalism among adolescents is being redefined in flexible, lifestyle-oriented, and visually mediated forms.

Campaigns conducted by the government and non-governmental organizations also make extensive use of social media to promote batik. For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia launched the "Cinta Batik" campaign which aims to increase awareness and interest in batik among young people. This campaign managed to reach more than 500,000 users within one month of its launch (Kemdikbud, 2022).

In addition, social media also provides a space for Gen Z children to learn more about the history and meaning behind batik. Many accounts are dedicated to batik education, providing information about the various types of batik from all over Indonesia, as well as the techniques used to make them. This helps create a deeper understanding of this cultural heritage and increases a sense of pride among the younger generation.

This study involved two informants who actively use batik in their daily lives and in TikTok social media content, namely Mulia and Putri, both 20 years old and students of Poltekkes Kemenkes Banten. Based on the results of in-depth interviews, the following are the findings that have been systematically compiled.

For Mulia, batik is not just a campus uniform that must be worn on certain days. She views batik as a symbol of national pride and a unique and authentic work of art. Mulia appreciates the artistic value of batik, especially in animal motifs which she believes reflect majesty and beauty.

Meanwhile, Putri has known batik since she was in elementary school and since then has formed an emotional closeness to batik. She considers batik as a symbol of Indonesian national identity that is inherent in her daily life. Putri specifically likes the megamendung motif which she thinks symbolizes the beauty of the sky. She also expressed her preference for batik that has bright colors and is not monotonous, because it feels more dynamic than other uniforms which are generally more rigid and boring.

Both informants use social media, especially TikTok, to display batik as part of their lifestyle. Mulia routinely creates TikTok content showing herself wearing batik, especially during the moment of wearing the campus uniform every Friday. According

to her, TikTok is an effective medium to popularize batik among teenagers because almost all teenagers are currently actively using the platform.

Putri has also uploaded batik content, although the frequency is lower than Mulia. She believes that through TikTok, batik is becoming more well-known and accepted by teenagers. Putri emphasized that batik designs are currently more creative and modern, thus changing the perception that batik is something old-fashioned.

Both Mulia and Putri expressed that wearing batik is a form of nationalistic expression that is relevant to the lifestyle of today's youth. They believe that nationalism is no longer expressed in formal forms such as flag ceremonies, but rather in personal expression through clothing style and social media activities. TikTok, in their view, is a strategic medium in expanding the reach of batik to peers.

The views of these two informants are in line with the theory of digital nationalism which states that social media is an alternative space for teenagers to show their love for the nation visually and creatively. TikTok is a bridge connecting traditional culture with popular culture that is growing rapidly among Generation Z.

Through digital interactions on TikTok, teenagers are not only passive users, but also form communities that actively promote batik. These communities play an important role in encouraging teenagers to continue wearing and popularizing batik in various styles and contexts.

Mulia and Putri agree that trends and communities on TikTok greatly influence how teenagers assess and display batik in their daily lives. This shows that social media has significant power in shaping cultural awareness and building a more inclusive and dynamic national identity.

The results of the study show that the expression of adolescent nationalism is currently shifting from formal to more casual and personal forms, in accordance with the theory of adolescent nationalism put forward by (Aulia, 2025). Nationalism in this study is no longer tied to traditional symbols such as flag ceremonies or formal uniforms, but is expressed through the use of batik in daily activities and social media. Both Mulia and Putri emphasized that they feel proud to wear batik, and they express that pride in the TikTok content they create. This proves that adolescent nationalism is currently internalized in a lifestyle that is relevant to their world, as explained by (Fauzan, R., Wicaksono, A., & Pratama, 2022) that adolescent nationalism is formed from personal attachment to cultural symbols that are close to everyday life.

From the results of interviews and observations, there are several main focuses:

The Meaning of Batik for Teenagers:

- Batik is seen as an expression of national pride and cultural identity.
- Generation Z sees batik as part of a modern lifestyle, not just traditional clothing.

Creativity and Innovation:

- The need to develop batik designs to be attractive and relevant to teenage styles
- The initiative to apply batik motifs to contemporary items such as cellphone casings

Youth Nationalism:

- Nationalism is expressed casually and flexibly through fashion and social media.

- Batik has become a symbol of nationalism that is close to their daily lives.

Table 1. Data Presentation

No	Main Theme	Emerging Patterns	Data Support
1	The Meaning of Batik	Batik as a symbol of pride and identity	Mulia and Putri interpret batik as a source of pride
2	Social media	TikTok as a medium for promotion and expression	Both of them actively use TikTok for batik content.
3	Creativity and Innovation	Modern batik designs are in demand	Demand for bright batik, unique motifs, applications on accessories
4	Digital Nationalism	Casual nationalism through fashion and TikTok	Batik is no longer considered old-fashioned, in fact it has become a contemporary trend
5	Community on Social Media	Community support drives batik expression	TikTok community influence increases sense of pride

Based on the Miles and Huberman model, the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions forms a cycle that mutually reinforces each other and provides a complete understanding of the phenomena being studied.

This finding supports the theory of adolescent nationalism (Aulia, 2025). which states that the expression of nationalism has transformed into a more personal and casual form, in line with the lifestyle of the younger generation. No longer through formal symbols such as flag ceremonies, but through everyday clothing published on social media.

In addition, the results of your research also strengthen the theory of digital nationalism (Hadiputri, 2023) which explains that social media, such as TikTok, is an effective arena for teenagers to display and disseminate cultural symbols such as batik. This is reinforced by the findings of (Prasetyo, B., Lestari, S., & Gunawan, 2024) that social media actually shapes the cultural identity of the younger generation.

The findings of this study indicate a shift in the paradigm of youth nationalism that is increasingly fluid and flexible. Generation Z no longer interprets national symbols such as batik rigidly, but instead makes it part of a personal identity that is relevant to their daily lives. TikTok is a space for actualization that allows this expression to spread quickly and widely, creating communities that organically promote batik.

However, the challenge ahead lies in the ability to continue to innovate in the design and presentation of batik so that it remains attractive to the eyes of the dynamic young generation. If batik is not developed with a modern touch, the risk of declining interest can occur because teenagers are very sensitive to rapidly changing trends.

In addition, dependence on social media also raises critical questions regarding sustainability. Will the love of batik only last as long as it is trending on social media or will it take root as part of a deeper cultural awareness? This is an important reflection for cultural activists and batik designers to ensure that batik is not just a momentary commodity on TikTok, but still has long-term value in shaping national identity.

Thus, the results of this study not only strengthen the theory of youth nationalism and digital nationalism, but also confirm that social media has a central role in shaping the cultural awareness of the younger generation.

Although the findings demonstrate how TikTok has become a powerful space for expressing nationalism through batik, it is also necessary to reflect on its potential challenges. First, there is the issue of **commodification**. On TikTok, cultural expressions are often subject to the logic of virality and monetization. Batik may be promoted more as a fashionable commodity than as a cultural heritage. When the pursuit of likes and followers dominates, the symbolic and historical depth of batik risks being overshadowed by its market value.

Second, the phenomenon of **trend fatigue** must be considered. Social media thrives on constantly changing trends. Adolescents may enthusiastically embrace batik today, but lose interest once other styles become more popular. Without sustained efforts, batik could remain only a fleeting fashion statement rather than a lasting expression of nationalism.

Third, there is a tension between **authenticity and modernity**. While creative adaptation is essential to engage young people, excessive stylization may dilute the authenticity of batik motifs. The challenge lies in maintaining cultural integrity while ensuring batik remains appealing and relevant.

Thus, while TikTok opens opportunities for cultural preservation and digital nationalism, it also presents risks that require critical awareness. Ensuring that batik does not become trapped in cycles of commodification and fleeting popularity demands innovation from designers, educational initiatives, and supportive cultural policies. Only through such integrative efforts can batik continue to embody a meaningful expression of nationalism for future generations.

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study on the Expression of Teenage Nationalism by Using Batik Through TikTok, it can be concluded that the use of batik by teenagers has undergone a significant transformation in meaning. Batik is no longer just traditional clothing that is identical to formal events, but has become part of the modern lifestyle of teenagers. Generation Z uses social media, especially TikTok, to express their pride in batik in a creative and casual way. The use of batik by teenagers is a form of nationalism that is more visual, flexible, and relevant to their world. Social media provides a new space for teenagers to display cultural identity more closely and personally.

This study found that teenagers like Mulia and Putri interpret batik as a symbol of cultural pride and self-identity. They actively produce and share TikTok content that displays batik in attractive styles and in line with current trends. TikTok social media is an effective channel in expanding the influence of batik among the younger generation. Factors such as family support, social environment influence, and digital media trends play a major role in encouraging teenagers to wear batik. Teenagers combine batik with modern fashion elements to create a more dynamic and attractive look.

Teenage nationalism is currently shifting from formal forms of expression to digital nationalism that is more flexible and easily accepted. Teenagers show their love for their country through the choice of clothing they upload on social media, no longer through rigid state symbols. TikTok has become a strategic medium for forming and

disseminating nationalism in the context of visuals and trends that are popular with the younger generation. Through TikTok content, batik is not only clothing, but also a symbol of identity that teenagers are proud of. This pattern shows that social media is able to shape cultural awareness and build a more inclusive national identity.

Based on the findings of this study on teenagers' expression of nationalism through batik on TikTok, it can be concluded that the meaning of batik among Generation Z has undergone a significant transformation. Batik is no longer seen merely as traditional clothing for formal occasions, but rather as part of a modern lifestyle that teenagers proudly integrate into their social media practices. Through TikTok, teenagers like Mulia and Putri reinterpret batik as a symbol of cultural pride, creativity, and casual nationalism. Social media thus provides a powerful space for adolescents to express their national identity in flexible and visually engaging ways.

The results of this research carry important implications for various stakeholders. For **policy makers**, they suggest the need to design cultural preservation policies that embrace social media as a legitimate arena for promoting national heritage, for instance through youth-centered digital campaigns. For **educators**, the findings highlight opportunities to incorporate batik and other cultural symbols into civic and cultural education, encouraging students to connect national identity with everyday practices. For **designers and creative industries**, the study underscores the importance of continuous innovation in batik design that resonates with the tastes of the younger generation, while safeguarding authenticity. In doing so, batik can remain culturally meaningful while also commercially sustainable.

Academically, this study fills a gap in the literature. While previous research has addressed TikTok as a platform for self-expression or batik as an element of cultural promotion, few have explicitly examined the intersection of batik and nationalism in digital contexts. By analyzing how teenagers consciously express nationalism through batik on TikTok, this study extends discussions on *digital nationalism* and *youth cultural identity*, offering fresh insights into how national symbols are reinterpreted in the age of social media.

Future research may expand the sample size and involve teenagers from diverse regions to capture different interpretations of batik as a cultural symbol. Longitudinal studies could also examine whether the attachment to batik among young people endures beyond temporary social media trends. Moreover, comparative studies of other cultural elements—such as traditional music, dance, or regional attire—could provide a broader perspective on how Generation Z redefines nationalism in digital environments.

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