

Research Article

Handwritten Signatures on Batik as a Branding Strategy and Their Effect on Consumers' Purchase Intention: A Case Study of Oey Soe Tjoen Batik

Mega Saffira*, Tatang Khalid Mawardi, Michaela Benita Chandra, and Kalya Vanessa Natania

Creative Polytechnic Indonesia, Indonesia

ORCID

Mega Saffira: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3450-3791>

Abstract.

In the midst of increasing market competition in the batik industry in Indonesia, the role of branding strategy must be considered by every batik entrepreneur. The use of handwritten batik signatures on batik fabrics has been a classic, long-standing branding approach in batik, and as one of the batik houses that has been active for almost 100 years in Indonesia, Oey Soe Tjoen has also made efforts in their branding strategy with this method. This research aims to analyze the handwritten signature on batik fabric as a branding strategy for traditional batik fabrics in Indonesia, particularly Oey Soe Tjoen, and its influence on consumers' purchase intention. This study implements a mixed-methodological approach which consists of qualitative and quantitative methods. The results are in the form of qualitative data on the handwritten signature analysis through interview and observation, while the quantitative data are analyzed as to its effect on consumers' purchase intention, using the multiple regression analysis. Based on the research, the use of handwritten signature on batik fabrics has a significant effect on customer's purchase intention. The objective of this research is to be a reference for more batik entrepreneurs in Indonesia to draw upon and further consider the implementation of handwritten signature as a branding strategy. This research aspires to also have an impact on increasing the competitiveness of the Indonesian traditional batik industry, locally and internationally.

Keywords: batik, branding, cultural heritage, purchase intention, textile

1. Introduction

As one of Indonesia's well-known cultural heritages in traditional textiles, the batik industry in Indonesia plays a big role in the nation's economic growth and potential, as it absorbs high demand even in the international community [1]. Apart from creative and fashion products, batik is also classified as a cultural product, whereas its role to the consumers is more to fulfill their hedonic and aesthetic needs instead of functional or practical since the consumption of batik requires aesthetic, symbolic, and sensory

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consideration of the consumers [2]. Poon also added that batik has the potential to be counted as a type of fine art and can be branded as an 'elite art' [3]. Batik, as an art as well as a craft product, due to its complex technical and philosophical substance, has also been considered a significant social identity symbol for Indonesian culture [4].

Furthermore, batik has also been listed by UNESCO as one of the intangible world's cultural heritages [4], which makes batik also recognized as a cultural brand in the international scope, aside from being Indonesia's social, political, and economic identity [5]. To further enhance the batik industry's growth both nationally and internationally, branding will play a significant part in increasing the value of a batik product, because most consumers need more communication effort from the batik house or brands to be able to fully understand its authenticity, quality, and symbolic meaning. This research will investigate one of the oldest branding approaches in the batik industry, which is the application of handwritten signature, particularly on its practice as implemented by a long-standing artisan batik brand from Pekalongan, Oey Soe Tjoen, and how it could affect the purchase intention among consumers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Branding Strategy and Consumers' Purchase Intention

According to Kotler and Pfoetsch, a brand is a combination of many elements such as name, symbol, term, sign, and design, that functions as the identifying factor of a product or service, and as the differentiating factor apart from their competitors [6]. A brand gives a product augmented, non-physical benefits that can create an emotional connection with the consumers [7]. A brand is also a very significant variable in building a positive image in the mind of the customers, whereas it will further create customers' loyalty, where customers are willing to choose a certain brand against the other despite of the price, which will lead to repurchase and recommendations [8,9].

In today's business landscape, the significance of branding has grown substantially, whereas companies that incorporate brand-focused strategies into their corporate plans possess the potential to attain sustainable competitive advantages through brand equity, and because brands have the capacity to offer robust protection in the marketplace [10]. There is an interesting shift in branding among consumers' perceptions, whereas, in the

past, private labels were typically viewed as cheaper, lower-quality alternatives to well-known national brands. Nevertheless, recent research in the industry indicates that consumers currently tend to consider private labels instead of high-quality products [11].

One of the behaviors of the consumers that can be affected by a brand's branding strategy is their purchase intention. Purchase intention is defined as a part of decision-making process that examines the reason why a consumer decides to purchase a product in a particular condition [9,12]. Purchase intention does not only work as a construct to predict a consumer's final purchase decision but also as a tool to predict the usage behaviour of the consumer [13,2]. There are many variables or factors that can influence consumers' purchase intention, such as price, product and service quality, as well as how it relates to the consumers' attitudes, behavior, and perceptions towards them [14,9].

There are also several studies that concluded that customers' purchase intention is also significantly impacted by other factors such as brand awareness and brand image, which are particularly summarized in the name of the brand [9]. To put it differently, brand image is a crucial factor that motivates consumers to purchase. The stronger the image associated with a product; the more likely consumers will be drawn towards it. Consumers have more confidence in a product with a reputable brand image [15]. These statements are also supported by Ranjbarian et al. that a company's success and competitive advantage creation of a product are involving the perceived value, perceived quality, and customer's satisfaction [16].

2.2. Branding Strategy in The Batik Industry

In the batik industry, branding is an effort that could help batik producers engage with their consumers emotionally, which could then lead to retaining the consumers' loyalty and increasing competitiveness in the market [17,18]. It also aligns with the ASEAN Economic Community trade regulation which was published in 2016, where Southeast Asian countries created a policy that requires local products to improve their branding along with relevant product classification, with the aim to make the local products more competitive in ASEAN level [19]. Another objective of implementing a branding strategy in a batik business is also to provide consumers with both emotional and practical benefits while securing a lasting place in consumers' minds [20].

A study case of modern batik branding came from Batik Komar, a batik house in Bandung, West Java. Instead of focusing only on its brand visual elements, Batik

Komar highlighted their product identity and uniqueness as their branding strategy. They implement their product uniqueness through the selection of colours and designs. However, they still consider making a logo that stands out among other batik brands, as well as the designs of their website, brochure, packaging, letterhead, social media, and other promotional tools [21]. Moreover, Batik Komar also implement other social and emotional approaches such as conducting a studio visit program and putting their customer service quality as a priority, because by maintaining a good relationship with their visitors and consumers, they can expect future continuous purchase as well.

Batik Keris, on the other hand, relied on the developing brand image through their longstanding brand name, “Batik Keris”. It suggests that the strong association with the name “Batik Keris” heightens customer contentment. A robust brand image instils confidence in customers who wear Batik Keris, significantly contributing to increased customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to Batik Keris, contributing to customer retention. This underscores the importance of brand image, exemplified by the distinctive batik patterns, in cultivating customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to customer loyalty [10].

These few examples of branding strategy among batik brands could reflect how current batik business owners now understand that their business brand’s image can serve as an indicator of the quality of the batik products they manufacture, and it can also set their products apart from those of other local businesses in the region. Additionally, they recognize the importance of brand loyalty, given the subcontracting of production by larger national batik entrepreneurs [22].

2.3. History of Oey Soe Tjoen

In the history of batik in Indonesia, the Chinese ethnicity has a significant role in determining the development of the world of batik, especially pesisiran (coastal-styled) batik in Pekalongan, and Indonesia in general. The batik produced by Chinese families in Indonesia was then called peranakan batik. One of the most well-known peranakan batik houses in Pekalongan is Oey Soe Tjoen, which was founded by Oey Soe Tjoen and his wife, Kwee Tjoen Giok (also known as Kwee Netti), in 1925, in Kedungwuni, Pekalongan, Central Java [23]. In the beginning, Oey came from Oey Kiem Boen’s family who owns a batik business that uses stamp technique. However, Oey Soe Tjoen wants to set up his own business using the handwritten batik technique. Batik Oey Soe Tjoen has been running for three generations until now while still maintaining its

standards and characteristics in its design, as well as the quality of its batik products. Up until today, the name Oey Soe Tjoen does not only refer to its founder or the family's first generation but has become the brand of the batik business.

The batik motifs made by Oey Soe Tjoen batik have consisted of various ornaments with buketan (bouquet) motifs. Buketan is a motif in the form of a series or a bouquet of flowers. When it was first established, batik products with buketan motifs were the most sought-after by buyers. Other well-known Oey Soe Tjoen batik motifs are cuwiri, merak ati, and urang. These motifs have been consistently made by Oey Soe Tjoen batik until now, and apart from that, Oey Soe Tjoen still also make other motifs based on the buyer's special orders [24].

2.4. Handwritten Signature on Oey Soe Tjoen Batik Fabrics

As an iconic Batik brand in the history of batik in Indonesia, especially Peranakan Batik, Oey Soe Tjoen has its own approach to trying to differentiate its products from other batik products. One of the long-practised approaches they have been implementing is through writing the name 'Oey Soe Tjoen' on each batik cloth using the hand-written batik technique. According to Zangger, one of the common practices in communicating product standards or quality to consumers who potentially use different writing languages is to use the company name paired with a factory illustration or trademark symbol (stamp/trademark) [25]. Zangger explained in his research, that in the Chinese and Southeast Asian markets, consumers tend to buy products that have a certain stamp because they are considered a symbol of a guarantee of consistent quality [25]. The use of stamps on textile products has long been known in the Singapore and Java textile industries, at least since around the 1860s. It is also stated that products with a brand stamp or symbol can be given a higher price accompanied by higher market demand compared to products that do not use it [25].

The history of the use of handwritten batik signatures traced back to around the year 1870 when batik entrepreneurs in Pekalongan began to put their signatures on the batik products of their respective companies. Signatures were given onto the batik fabric after the drawing process using wax was completed. Eliza Van Zuylen, a Dutch batik crafter from Pekalongan, signed her batik in the 1890 - 1990 period using the finest canting. The signature was usually written on the top side of the sarong or on a long piece of cloth. There is no recorded statement regarding the original intention of putting a signature on batik fabric at the time, especially when batik was not viewed

as an art object that requires the maker's signature. However, for a batik fabric to have a signature could indicate that the batik fabric has been quality approved by the batik business owner, and make the batik crafter more well-known among batik enthusiasts [24].

As a handwritten signature is a visual brand element, it will also contribute to building consumers' trust towards the product in the case of purchasing batik fabric online, where visual representation plays a dominant role [26]. Based on a paper by Nurjanah et al., a significant portion of batik clothing fabrics also lack any brand identification; as most brand names are showcased on the store's signage [4]. Hence, the use of handwritten signatures on the fabric could help consumers distinguish a batik product from a certain brand apart from the others even when they are already out of their packaging.

Apriliani & Hudrasyah in their research about the buying habits of batik consumers provided the data where most batik consumers' Purchase Consideration involves the batik pattern, price, material, type, and origin [26]. They also expressed their concerns regarding the quality of the batik as a product as well as the seller, or the brand if they market their products on their own. One of the ways that can guarantee the quality of batik fabric is a brand with a credible history of good product quality. It can justify the use of handwritten signatures on batik fabrics that are applied by Oey Soe Tjoen, whereas handwritten signature is not only difficult to imitate thereby guarantees the product quality and originality, but it also resembles significant emotional values of the brand directly onto the product.

3. Methodology Research

This research uses a mixed-methodological approach where qualitative methods are done alongside the quantitative. The qualitative data collection was done through comparative analysis, interview, and observation. The field observation and interview were done directly in the studio of Oey Soe Tjoen in 2019 as well as the exhibition 'Masa Depan Batik' by Sabine Bolk in 2023. Furthermore, the interview was conducted with Widyanti Widjaja, the current owner of Oey Soe Tjoen batik house, during the aforementioned studio visit in 2019. The data intended to be collected from the qualitative study consists of the history of the brand Oey Soe Tjoen and the way they use 'Oey Soe Tjoen' handwritten signature on their batik fabrics.

On the quantitative side, the data collected will figure out the effect of handwritten signatures on batik consumers' purchase intention. The data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms. The research sample was limited to people aged 27 years old and above (Millennials, Gen X, Boomers), considering their buying abilities and awareness towards artisan batik products. The survey was classified into four sections: 1) demographic; 2) interests towards batik products; 3) awareness towards Oey Soe Tjoen batik; 4) effect of handwritten signature on consumers' purchase intention.

The quantitative data were then analyzed using linear regression and descriptive analysis methods. Linear regression is a method to present observed data using a fitted linear equation created by investigating the relationship between two variables, which consists of explanatory and dependent variables [27]. Meanwhile, a descriptive analysis summarizes collective data or information out of different variables as well as their potential relationships in a quantitative manner [28].

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Comparative Analysis: Oey Soe Tjoen & Batik Tiga Negeri Keluarga Tjoa

Before Oey Soe Tjoen, one of the batik houses that had also used handwritten signatures on their batik products was Batik 3 Negeri by the Tjoa family from Surakarta, or Solo, which became popular in 1910. Similar to Oey Soe Tjoen batik, the Tjoa family have passed their family business for three generations. The first generation was started by Tjoa Giok Tjiam, which was then continued by his children, Tjoa Tjoen Kiat and Tjoa Tjoen Tiang, as the second generation, and now by his grandchildren as the third generation [7]. The batik house then ended its production in 2014.

The difference between Oey Soe Tjoen's handwritten signature and Batik Tiga Negeri Keluarga Tjoa was, that in Batik Tiga Negeri Keluarga Tjoa, every batik fabric was marked with a handwritten signature of the owner of the batik house according to its period, not the founder of the batik house. The use of this method resembles the function of the signature in artworks like paintings. Aside from being a form of identification and authenticity symbol, the presence of the handwritten signature also gives information to the consumers about the year or period of the production, or in which generation it was produced [7]. On the other hand, this difference could also reflect how Oey Soe Tjoen treated the name of the founder as a brand in the first place, instead of a signature of

the batik maker. The breakdown of the comparison between their branding approach is listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Comparative Analysis between Oey Soe Tjoen & Batik Tiga Negeri Keluarga Tjoa.

	Batik Tiga Negeri Keluarga Tjoa	Oey Soe Tjoen
Founder	Tjoa Giok Tjiam	Oey Soe Tjoen
Origin	Solo	Pekalongan
Pattern Style	Batik Tiga Negeri	Peranakan
Year Founded	1910	1925
Name on The Signature	Name of the currently active owner in the period	The founder's name (Oey Soe Tjoen)
Year Ended	2014	Still on going

Source: Primary Data (2023), [7].



Figure 1: Oey Soe Tjoen handwritten signature (left) [29]; Oey Kiem Lian /Widianti Widjaja handwritten signature (Author, 2023).

4.2. Interview: Widianti Widjaja from Oey Soe Tjoen

There are a few takeaways that can be highlighted from the interview with Widianti Widjaja, the third generation of Oey Soe Tjoen who is currently running the business, from an interview in Oey Soe Tjoen's workshop conducted in 2019:

1. *The history of Oey Soe Tjoen batik business*

In 1976, Oey Soe Tjoen passed away, and his business was continued by his firstborn, Muljadi Widjaja, together with his wife, Istijanti Setiono. Even though the ownership was already handed over to Muljadi Widjaja, Kwee Netti still provided guidance and supervision related to the production process. Kwee Netti then passed away in 1996, and Muljadi Widjaja was fully responsible for the business, until his passing when he was 63, and it was continued by his wife, Istijanti Setiono. Aside from running the business,

Istijanti also taught Oey's batik techniques to his daughter, Widiанти Widjaja. Then, from 2006 on, Oey Soe Tjoen batik has been completely owned by Widiанти Widjaja, the third generation [30].

2. The role of putting handwritten signature on Oey Soe Tjoen's batik fabrics

Although the batik fabrics are produced by the hands of many batik artisans of Oey Soe Tjoen, the role to put the handwritten signature on the fabrics has always been done by the wives of the active owners of the business, which were Kwee Netti (wife of Oey Soe Tjoen), Istijanti Setiono (wife of Muljadi Widjaja), and finally Widiанти Widjaja (the current owner) [30].

3. The decision to use the name 'Oey Soe Tjoen' for the handwritten signature

In the past, there were two times where names other than Oey Soe Tjoen was used for the signature. It was Kwee Tjoen Giok (Kwee Netti)'s name, and also Oey Kim Lian (Widiанти Widjaja)'s name. However, in the period where Kwee Netti's name was used for the signature, the sales were not as good as the ones using Oey Soe Tjoen's name as signature. As well as the time where Widiанти Widjaja used her name for the signature, she later decided that the use of the name 'Oey Soe Tjoen' is more effective for the brand, because more consumers are familiar with it [30].

4.3. Observation: 'Masa Depan Batik' Exhibition by Sabine Bolk

'Masa Depan Batik' was an exhibition held by Sabine Bolk, a Dutch batik artist and researcher, in collaboration with Erasmus Huis. The exhibition was held in Jakarta, and was opened on October 21st 2023, where the author visited. The exhibition displayed batik fabrics crafted by several batik artisans across Java, including Widiанти Widjaja of Oey Soe Tjoen. The batik fabric exhibited by Widjaja was titled 'The Banquet', whereas she drew the inspiration from her children's picture book. In the caption card, Widjaja explained that since this is a personal project, the handwritten signature used on the fabric was of her name (Oey Kim Lian), instead of Oey Soe Tjoen. This further confirms how Widjaja consciously use the name Oey Soe Tjoen not only as the name of her late grandfather and the founder of the batik house, but as a brand of her family business (Author, 2023).

4.4. Quantitative Analysis: Effect of Handwritten Signature on Batik to Consumers' Purchase Intention

The quantitative research was conducted to determine and analyze the influence of Interest in Batik (X1), Oey Soe Tjoen Brand Awareness (X2), and Handwritten Signature (X3) on Purchase Intention (Y). The number of respondents used in the research was 174 participants. The data collection method was carried out by distributing questionnaires to research respondents. The data collected was then analyzed descriptively and using multiple linear regression analysis techniques. Testing was carried out used a statistical calculation application, namely SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) v26.

4.5. Respondent Characteristics

Data on respondent characteristics are grouped based on age, gender, occupation and brand awareness. Detailed data related to respondent characteristics can be seen in Table 2 below:

Aside from the demographic background, in the table, data regarding whether respondents were familiar with the brand 'Oey Soe Tjoen' was also asked in the research. The results of respondents' answers showed that as many as 104 respondents (60%) felt unfamiliar with the brand. Respondents who had heard of it but were not sure were 33 people (19%), and 37 people who were familiar with the brand (21%). Based on this explanation, it is known that the majority of respondents in the research were those who were less familiar with the brand 'Oey Soe Tjoen'.

4.6. Classical Assumption Test

4.6.1. Normality Test

Normality test was conducted to examine the research data distribution. This research normality test was done using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The result is shown in Table 3 below:

According to the normality test result in Table 3, the *Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)* significance score is $0,187 > 0,05$. Based on the score, it can be concluded that the data used in the research is normal in distribution.

TABLE 2: Respondents Characteristics.

Characteristics	Quantity	Percentage
Age		
27 - 42	118	68%
43 – 58	26	15%
59 – 68	19	11%
> 68	11	6%
Total	174	100%
Sex		
Female	102	59%
Male	72	41%
Total	174	100%
Occupation		
Students	8	5%
Employees	71	41%
Business Owners	29	17%
Academics	18	10%
Others	48	27%
Total	174	100%
Oey Soe Tjoen Brand Awareness		
Not Familiar	104	60%
Have Heard of	33	19%
Familiar	37	21%
Total	174	100%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

TABLE 3: Normality Test Result.

N	Significance	Description
174	0,187	Normal Data

Source: Primary Data (2023)

4.6.2. Multicollinearity Test

The requirement for multicollinearity is the tolerance value for each independent variable has to be more than 0,10, and the Variance Inflation Factor has to be less than 10. The test result is shown below:

TABLE 4: Multicollinearity Test Result.

Coefficients			
No	Model	Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Interest Towards Batik (X_1)	0,813	1,229
2	OST Brand Awareness (X_2)	0,898	1,113
3	Handwritten Signature (X_3)	0,756	1,323

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Based on the result in ‘Collinearity Statistics’ in Table 4, the tolerance and VIF value in general is < 10,00. As the tolerance value of both variables are > 0,10 and the VIF value is < 10,00, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity symptoms in the regression model.

a. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted by examining the scatter plot model. The test result is shown below:

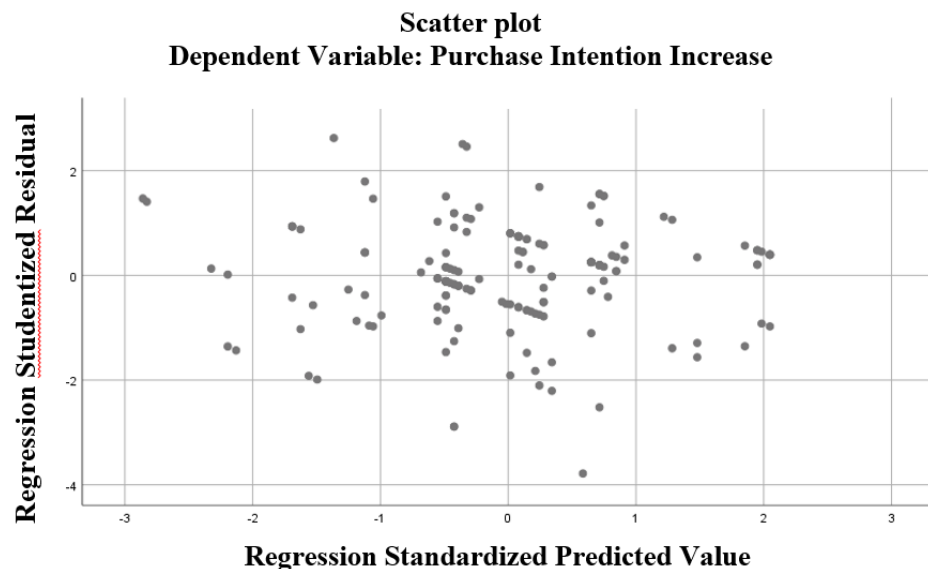


Figure 2: Heteroscedasticity Result Test.

Figure 1 shows that the dots are scattered and is under the number 0. Since the data is scattered at random without forming a particular pattern, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity in the research data.

4.7. Multiple Linear Regression

Furthermore, the result regarding the effect of Handwritten Signature on Batik (X₃), backed up by respondents' general interests in batik products (X₁), and Oey Soe Tjoen Brand Awareness (X₂) on consumers' Purchase Intention (Y) was analyzed using the multiple linear regression analysis. The following are the results of the regression analysis carried out (Table 5):

TABLE 5: Linear Regression Analysis Result (Author, 2023).

Model	Regression Coefficient	P-value	Description
Constant	3,323	0,023	-
Interests in Batik Products (X ₁)	0,208	0,541	Not Significant
OST Brand Awareness (X ₂)	0,315	0,391	Not Significant
Handwritten Signature (X ₃)	1,825	0,000	Significant
F Test		0,000	Significant
Adjusted R Square = 0,421 (42,1%)			

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Based on the test results in Table 2 above, it is known that the significance value of variable X₁ is 0.541, X₂ is 0.391, and X₃ is 0.000. The significance value of variables X₁ and meanwhile, variable X₃ has a smaller significance value of <0.05, which means that the Handwritten Signature (X) partially has a significant effect on the Purchase Intention variable (Y). This also proves that having a signature on batik products can increase purchase intention in Oey Soe Tjoen batik products.

The results of the F test or simultaneous test show a significance value of 0.000 or <0.05. Based on the results of the F test, it can be concluded that the variables of general Interest in Batik Products (X₁), Brand Awareness (X₂), and Handwritten Signature (X₃) simultaneously have a significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y). The influence of the variables Interest in Batik Products (X₁), Brand Awareness (X₂), and Handwritten Signature (X₃) in predicting changes in Purchase Intention (Y) is 42.1%, while 57.9% is influenced by other variables not studied.

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the use of handwritten signature on batik fabrics can significantly influence the purchase intention of customers positively. However, it is important to acknowledge that the samples used for this analysis are limited to participants with prior interest towards batik fabrics and have general knowledge of batik fabrics quality as purchase consideration. Moreover, regarding the purchase

intention, the disclaimer regarding the exclusion of Oey Soe Tjoen's batik fabrics price was provided in advance, since the participants financial background varied. Therefore, the purchase intention measured in this research did not involve the price point variable.

5. Conclusion

The research showed that handwritten signature on batik products has a significant influence on consumers' purchase intention, even though the effect of the consumers' general interest towards batik products and awareness towards the particular brand was not significant. Based on the observation result as well as the quantitative data, it can be determined that using handwritten signatures on their products could be a considerable branding strategy that can be implemented by batik business owners or artisans, as it conveys the product's authenticity, quality, and heritage. By having handwritten signatures on the fabrics, the consumers' trust towards the product may increase.

For long-standing batik brands such as Oey Soe Tjoen, it is important for the consumers to know the brand to be able to predict their quality and increase their purchase intention. However, consistency in the use of brand elements, in this case, the handwritten signature, is required in this matter for the consumers to recognize it as an iconic characteristic or element of the brand [31]. As Daradjat and Puspitasari stated, a brand image of a product can turn out positively only if the branding strategy is implemented at a constant frequency [21]. Therefore, it is important also for the batik house like Oey Soe Tjoen who incorporated the handwritten signature as their brand element to consistently implement this strategy, and ideally, accompanied by supporting branding efforts.

In addition, traditional artisan batik houses such as Oey Soe Tjoen can stand the test of time mainly because their consistent product quality and its attachment to their family history as the brand heritage. The combination of both product quality and brand heritage are the key aspects that lead them to keep a strong positioning in the consumers' minds. The heritage that a brand like Oey Soe Tjoen brings will comprehensively symbolize its historical aspects, artistic value, as well as the originality of its products [2]. All these aspects are then summed up in Oey Soe Tjoen's name that are put in the form of a signature on the batik fabrics. The result of this research will further confirm the research by Mirabi et al. [9] whereas five factors affecting purchase intention, including brand name, product quality, price, packaging, and advertising, were

investigated, and that brand name and product quality are two of the variables impacting the customers' purchase intention alongside advertising.

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