



## Historical Exploration: Soerakarta Walking Tour as a Platform to Foster Historical Awareness of BSLady Solo

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### Abstract

The Historical Exploration program, developed through a collaborative initiative between BSLady Solo and Soerakarta Walking Tour, represents an innovative approach to integrating cultural heritage education with active community involvement. Designed to increase historical consciousness among urban women engaged in fashion communities, the program facilitates immersive experiences within the historical environment of Solo while simultaneously enriching participants' comprehension of batik as both a cultural expression and a philosophical symbol. This research adopts a qualitative methodology, incorporating in-depth interviews with participants, organizers, and cultural stakeholders to explore the educational and social dimensions of the program. By engaging in guided historical walks and narrative-based learning activities, participants are encouraged to interpret the meanings behind batik motifs and interact directly with local artisans, thereby fostering an appreciation for traditional craftsmanship and its role in shaping regional identity. Furthermore, the program encourages intergenerational dialogue and the transmission of local wisdom, contributing to cultural preservation amid the pressures of modernization. Ultimately, this initiative exemplifies how creative collaborations in heritage education can cultivate a deeper, sustainable engagement with local identity and instill collective pride in cultural traditions.

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## INTRODUCTION

History is a fundamental element in shaping the identity and collective consciousness of a society, both at the individual and communal levels. An in-depth understanding of local history is vital in reinforcing cultural identity, particularly in the context of globalization, where traditional values are often overshadowed by global cultural flows (Smith, 2006; Ashworth, 2011). Surakarta, or Solo, stands as one of Java's most prominent cultural centers, possessing a rich historical legacy manifested in architectural landmarks such as the Surakarta Palace and Dutch colonial-era buildings (Praiswari & Arsandrie, 2021). The city is also known for its vibrant artistic heritage, including batik, classical Javanese dance, and gamelan music, all of which continue to play a role in defining its cultural character (Kusumahayati et al., 2024).

Preserving historical heritage, however, extends beyond maintaining physical sites; it requires sustained and inclusive dissemination of historical narratives. Recent studies emphasize the importance of integrating creative and experiential approaches to cultural education in order to enhance public engagement, especially among younger generations who often find conventional forms of historical education to be disengaging (Syahputra et al., 2020; Wijaya, 2021). Creative heritage programs that blend storytelling, site visits, and digital media have been shown to increase cultural awareness and emotional connection to historical narratives (García & Puig, 2018; Nugroho et al., 2022).

Despite this growing body of research, there remains a significant research gap in understanding how lifestyle-based community groups particularly those outside traditional cultural or academic institutions can act as agents of cultural transmission. In the context of Solo, although heritage movements are active, cultural participation among urban lifestyle communities, such as fashion-based social groups, is still underexplored.

BSLady Solo, a women's community formed by enthusiasts of the Muslim fashion brand Buttons-carves, represents a unique intersection of fashion, social engagement, and cultural interest. While rooted in modern consumer identity, this

community has extended its activities into social, educational, and cultural domains. One notable initiative is the Historical Exploration program, developed in collaboration with Soerakarta Walking Tour. This program invites community members to visit cultural heritage sites, such as the Danar Hadi and Batik Keris showrooms where they engage in learning activities that explore the historical production processes of batik, its symbolic meanings, and its role in shaping Javanese identity.

These experiential visits allow participants to develop a nuanced understanding of batik not merely as a commodity, but as a living cultural artifact and medium of historical expression (Asril, 2022). This aligns with studies that highlight the efficacy of hands-on, community-based learning in making cultural education more relevant and impactful (Safitra et al., 2022; Irawan & Oktaviani, 2020). The Historical Exploration program exemplifies how cultural heritage can be revitalized through interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, and community involvement. It also offers a promising model for bridging the divide between tradition and contemporary urban culture, illustrating that cultural preservation is not confined to institutional efforts, but can flourish within modern lifestyle movements.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, which is a method aimed at understanding phenomena in depth through the perspectives of participants and the social context surrounding them (Creswell, J. W., 2014). In this context, the research explores how the BSLady Solo fashion community contributes to communicating historical values through the Historical Exploration program, carried out in collaboration with Soerakarta Walking Tour. This approach involves data collection through in-depth interviews with BSLady Solo community members, tour guides, and walking tour participants. The interview technique aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of fashion in conveying historical messages, including how the clothing worn interacts symbolically with historical narratives, as well as the impact felt by visitors in relation to the experience (Sudarmoko, H., 2017).

Besides conducting interviews, the research also involved direct observation of the walking tour

activities to capture the interaction between the participants and the fashion elements presented during the tour. Out of a total of 18 participants, two were selected as interview respondents. The first respondent is a housewife from Solo, and the second is a medical doctor from Semarang. Both were chosen due to their active engagement during the tour and their affiliation with the BSLady Solo community. The gathered data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify patterns and significant themes related to the strategy of conveying history via fashion. The findings also revealed an interaction between the historical narrative of batik and the development of historical awareness, which is fostered through the fashion industry as a medium of cultural expression.

The analysis emphasized how fashion elements are employed to visually and emotionally bring historical narratives to life and examined how this approach contributes to increasing participants' historical understanding and awareness. Activities such as photos and videos taken during the tour were also reviewed to delve into the visual representation of history in the fashion context. Through this approach, the study aims to provide in-depth insights into the interaction between history, fashion, and tourism, as well as its role in raising historical awareness within urban societies.

In this study, the BSLady Solo community's visits to historical sites, such as the Danar Hadi Batik showroom and Batik Keris, are considered part of a strategy to explore how firsthand experiences with cultural heritage can influence historical awareness. This approach seeks to understand how the knowledge of batik as a symbol of local wisdom can be informally communicated through the community's interactions with cultural informants and historical spaces (Hamid, N. A., 2018).

Instead of focusing on participants' visual appearance through their attire, this research prioritizes the cognitive and emotional involvement that arises when participants gain direct insights into the history and cultural significance of the Solo batik industry. Thus, this methodology enables the researcher to examine how lifestyle-based communities like BSLady Solo can serve as a powerful medium for facilitating historical

understanding through experience and intersectoral dialogue.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The BSLady Solo Community

The BSLady Solo community is part of a network of loyal customers of the Muslim fashion brand Buttonscarves, which spans across various cities in Indonesia. This community was established as a platform for women who not only have an interest in modern Muslim fashion but also actively engage in building social networks and contributing to various value-based activities such as education, social causes, sports, and cultural preservation (Nurul Mustaqimmah et al., 2024). The existence of this community is closely tied to the strong brand image of Buttonscarves, which has established itself as a globally recognized Muslim fashion brand. This brand image creates a high level of trust among consumers, fostering loyalty even amid relatively high product prices. Buttonscarves products are not just a fashion choice, but also a symbol of status and lifestyle. In fact, consumers often compete to acquire the latest collections released by the brand.

The remarkable growth of Buttonscarves can be attributed to collaborations with various stakeholders and the strong support from its loyal customer community, referred to as BSLady. Members of BSLady actively contribute to promoting the brand within their own networks, voluntarily identifying as loyal consumers of Buttonscarves. Notably, the formation of this community was not initiated by Buttonscarves management, but rather emerged organically from the brand's loyal customers, who frequently exchange information about new collections, upcoming product releases, and even preloved items with other loyal consumers.

The BSLady Solo community consists of Muslim women from various professional backgrounds and age groups. Its members include doctors, entrepreneurs, housewives, lecturers, bankers, and students. There are no specific requirements to join this community, as long as individuals are users of Buttonscarves products. BSLady Solo was established in December 2021, with Dr. Pragezty, Wulan Rahmanie serving as the treasurer, and Hany Nurpratiwi as the secretary. The

purpose of this community is to facilitate communication and sharing among BSLady members in the Solo area.

Moving forward, the aim is to expand the scope of sharing beyond fashion and beauty to also include empowering women, offering mutual support among women, and spreading benefits to one another. The BSLady community is not confined to Solo; it has expanded to other regions in Indonesia, including BSLady Yogyakarta, BSLady Central Java, BSLady Bandung, BSLady East Kalimantan, BSLady Lampung, and several other BSLady communities. These regional communities are branches of the official BSLady account, which serves as the primary platform for the community.

Since its inception, the BSLady Solo community has actively initiated various activities to strengthen solidarity among its members. One of the regular activities is the monthly gathering and social events. The first BSLady Solo gathering took place on January 16, 2022, at Java Terrace Café in Solo. During this event, BSLady Solo collaborated with Wardah Beauty Solo to host a beauty class aimed at providing education on beauty and self-care. Additionally, The BSLady (the central organization) supported the event by providing goodie bags and door prizes as a form of appreciation for the members' participation. This event was also formally recognized as the official establishment of the BSLady Solo community. The enthusiasm for the first gathering was remarkable, with attendees not only from Solo but also from other regions such as Yogyakarta, Magelang, Semarang, Grobogan, Boyolali, Madiun, Wonogiri, Karanganyar, and Sragen. This demonstrates the strength of the social network and the appeal of the community, which is built upon a shared love for the Buttonsscarves brand.

Beyond being a fashion enthusiast community, BSLady Solo also plays an active role in supporting campaigns against the circulation of counterfeit Buttonsscarves products. Members recognize that Buttonsscarves has introduced high-quality products that align with their tastes, both in terms of design, material, and the symbolic values embodied in the brand. The experience of using Buttonsscarves products not only provides aesthetic satisfaction but also fosters self-confidence, self-

appreciation, and pride in one's personal identity through fashion choices (Putri, 2023). This strengthens Buttonsscarves' position as a premium brand valued by its consumers and serves as a symbol of meaningful modern lifestyle (Safitri & Kurniawan, 2022).

### **Soerakarta Walking Tour**

As a city with a rich historical and cultural heritage, Surakarta faces the challenge of conveying its historical values to modern society, particularly to the younger generation, who are generally more responsive to visual and hands-on approaches. In this context, Soerakarta Walking Tour has emerged as an educational innovation that blends urban tourism with experiential history learning. The program is structured as a walking tour, where participants are guided through various historical sites in Solo, including the palace area, colonial-era remnants, and traditional markets that have played a significant role in the social and cultural evolution of the Javanese community.

Led by knowledgeable local guides, participants not only receive factual information about the sites visited but are also encouraged to engage with the historical context through narratives that are both informative and accessible (Asril, 2022). The uniqueness of the Soerakarta Walking Tour lies in its participatory and community oriented approach. Rather than being a one way transmission of knowledge, as seen in conventional learning methods, this program positions participants as integral parts of the historical narrative itself. By walking through the city, participants are invited to form an emotional connection with the historical heritage that is often overlooked in everyday life (Wulandari, 2021). This learning model aligns with Kolb's (1984) concept of experiential learning, where meaningful understanding is built through direct experiences and reflection on those experiences.

In addition to its educational aspect, the Soerakarta Walking Tour also strengthens cultural preservation through cross-sector collaborations, including with creative communities, local historians, and urban lifestyle groups. This collaborative approach allows history to be presented in a fresh and relevant way, while still

maintaining its scholarly essence. Several tour programs even involve local entrepreneurs and artists, fostering a vibrant and inclusive cultural preservation ecosystem (Putri & Haryanto, 2023).

Overall, the Soerakarta Walking Tour offers more than just a historical sightseeing experience; it serves as an effective cultural communication strategy. The program demonstrates that history education does not necessarily have to take place in classrooms or through textbooks; it can occur on the streets, between old buildings, and in direct interactions between people and their urban surroundings. Through this engaging and reflective approach, the initiative has successfully revived historical awareness among the dynamic urban community.

#### **Soerakarta Walking Tour as a Platform for Raising Historical Awareness in BSLady Solo**

In efforts to strengthen historical awareness among urban communities, participatory and contextual approaches have proven more effective than conventional methods of delivering historical content. This is reflected in the initiative of BSLady Solo, a women's Muslim fashion community formed by loyal customers of the Buttons carves brand, which took part in the Soerakarta Walking Tour as part of its cultural enrichment agenda. Unlike typical fashion based community activities, this initiative reflects a shift in paradigm, wherein a modern lifestyle group actively engages in the preservation of local historical values through an immersive, relevant, and enjoyable experience.

The Soerakarta Walking Tour itself is a curated cultural journey designed to reintroduce local communities to the living history of Surakarta. The tour routes include Keraton Surakarta, a symbol of Javanese royal legacy; Kampung Batik Laweyan, one of the oldest batik producing neighborhoods; and Ngarsopuro, a site of colonial urban heritage and modern cultural revitalization. These locations are not only architecturally and historically significant but also act as narratives of Solo's transformation across time. By walking through these heritage spaces, participants are exposed to layered stories that connect the past with the present.

To deepen their understanding, participants also visited batik showrooms such as Danar Hadi

Museum and Gallery and Batik Keris, where they were introduced to the batik production process, traditional dyeing techniques, and the symbolic meanings behind specific batik motifs. These visits illustrated batik not just as a product of cultural identity, but as a living historical text that encapsulates philosophical, economic, and social values of the Javanese people (Syafira & Prasetyo, 2023).

This contextual and narrative-based learning experience aligns with the experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb (1984), which emphasizes the importance of concrete experiences in the process of knowledge construction. By directly engaging with historical spaces, stories, and local craftspeople, participants were able to move beyond passive reception of information to active reflection and internalization of cultural heritage.

Berliana Putri, one of the participants in this activity, expressed that the Soerakarta Walking Tour provided a distinctive experience compared to previous community events.

"This program offered a different concept from our usual BSLady gatherings. I already knew about Solo batik brands like Danar Hadi, but I just realized how strong their brand DNA is, with underlying philosophies that represent Solo's local richness. The event was impressive,"

she remarked during an interview on December 5, 2022.

Her statement underscores that the walking tour not only conveyed information but also generated emotional and cognitive engagement, connecting modern lifestyles with deep rooted traditions in a meaningful way.

While BSLady Solo participants wore contemporary Muslim fashion rather than traditional clothing during the tour, their active involvement illustrated that cultural appreciation need not rely on outward symbols alone. Their enthusiasm reflected a genuine curiosity and a conscious effort to bridge modern identity with traditional values (Dewi, 2024). This demonstrates that Muslim fashion communities, often seen as trend-oriented, can serve as agents of cultural transmission when placed within participatory educational frameworks.

The program further illustrates the expansion of historical preservation beyond academic or institutional boundaries. As highlighted by García and Puig (2018), community based and emotionally resonant activities are effective in fostering public historical consciousness and building collective memory. The Soerakarta Walking Tour thus operates not merely as a tourist attraction but as a civic platform for cultural education, especially tailored for younger, urban demographics.

In conclusion, BSLady Solo's involvement in the Soerakarta Walking Tour exemplifies how lifestyle based communities can become active participants in heritage discourse. Through this experiential model, history becomes a living narrative inclusive, accessible, and embedded in the routines of everyday life. The program demonstrates how creative, narrative driven heritage collaborations can foster a more sustainable, relevant, and emotionally connected form of historical awareness in the context of rapid modernization.

#### **Historical Awareness of BSLady Solo**

Historical awareness refers to a deep understanding of past events and their influence on present conditions and future developments. This awareness involves not only factual knowledge about history but also a comprehension of how past occurrences have shaped society, culture, and individual identity (Ma'rufin & Utari, 2018). It goes beyond remembering dates and names, emphasizing the importance of understanding the context and consequences of historical actions and decisions.

Historical awareness helps individuals and communities to comprehend their origins and the formation of their cultural identity (Setyawan et al., 2021). Each nation or community possesses a unique historical trajectory that informs its values, traditions, and social norms. For example, in Indonesia, the legacy of Dutch colonialism and the struggle for independence significantly contributes to the formation of national identity and collective pride. Understanding this history allows people to appreciate their cultural heritage and recognize their role within a broader societal context (Samosir et al., 2024).

BSLady Solo, as a community of loyal consumers of the Buttonsscarves brand, has begun to show increased awareness of historical values and local philosophies, particularly those associated with Solo batik. This awareness is fostered through creative and engaging activities. A concrete example of this is the implementation of the *Jelajah Sejarah* (Historical Exploration) program, conducted in collaboration with Soerakarta Walking Tour. This initiative involved inviting community members to visit historically significant sites in Solo, such as the Danar Hadi and Batik Keris showrooms, to gain firsthand insight into the history, meaning, and production process of batik as a form of local wisdom.

#### **Integrating Cultural Heritage, Lifestyle, and Experiential Learning: The BSLady Solo Historical Exploration Program**

However, this initiative extended beyond a mere historical tour. The event series also included a communal lunch, a sharing session, and a beauty demonstration sponsored by Instaperfect. The program was intentionally designed to be relaxed, interactive, and enjoyable, aiming to encourage active participation among attendees. By presenting history in a modern and fashionable format, the event successfully created a learning environment that was accessible and appealing to younger generations.

Participants gained deeper insights into the philosophy of Solo batik, including the symbolic meanings behind its motifs and the intricate techniques involved in its creation processes that demand both patience and precision (Syafira & Prasetyo, 2023). This direct, hands-on approach reinforced participants' understanding of cultural heritage in a manner that aligns with their contemporary lifestyles. It emphasizes the importance of caution in applying modern standards to historical events and using historical understanding to inform contemporary judgments (Ahmad, T. A, 2024)

Dr. Yuanita, a participant from Semarang, remarked in an interview on December 6, 2022,

"The concept of this BSLady Solo gathering is unique. I learned so much about batik history, its meanings, and how it's made, I didn't realize it was

this laborintensive. History teaches us about process and cultural continuity, and this was presented in such a modern way. It was tiring, but definitely worth it.”

As the initiator of the program, Dr. Yuanita also shared that the event was intended to broaden the community’s perspective on cultural preservation through engaging and informal activities.

By integrating elements of history, lifestyle, and beauty into a single event, the program offered a holistic and memorable experience for participants. This aligns with Kolb’s (1984) concept of experiential learning, which posits that meaningful understanding is best achieved through direct engagement and emotional involvement. BSLady Solo’s initiative illustrates that fashion communities are not limited to aesthetic interests; they can also serve as agents of cultural advocacy. Through the historical exploration program, participants not only enjoyed communal moments but also engaged with and internalized the local values embedded in the batik tradition of Solo.

## CONCLUSION

The historical exploration program initiated by the BSLady Solo community, in collaboration with Soerakarta Walking Tour, plays a strategic role in fostering historical awareness, particularly related to the philosophy of Solo batik and local wisdom. By integrating historical narratives with modern lifestyle elements, the program presents cultural heritage in an engaging format. Participants not only gained insight into the batik-making process but were also introduced to the symbolic meanings embedded in each motif. Complementary activities such as product sharing sessions and beauty demos further demonstrated how historical content can be contextualized within contemporary urban culture. This initiative exemplifies an effective model for integrating historical awareness, local wisdom, and modern cultural practices in strengthening cultural identity.

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