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Chapter

Surface Design Technique through Tradition Technique

Harozila Ramli and Tajul Shuhaizam Said

Abstract

This aim of this study is to examine the application of tritik technique in creating exquisite batik pattern design. Essentially, tritik is a technique in batik pattern making that is almost similar to the "tie-and-dip" (ikat-dan- celup) technique; however, the subtle difference between the two techniques lies in the aspect of fabric treading, with the former being able to produce elegant and appealing patterns. This study used a qualitative approach using an observation method in which the researchers observed the creation of such art through studio practice. Essentially, the examination of the practice of such a technique was carried out based on direct observation and unstructured interviews, and the collection of textile products. The research findings showed the experimentation of the tritik technique in the textile pattern designs was highly effective, as evidenced by the exquisite aesthetical effects on the surface of the fabrics, such as the formation of elegant lines consisting of dots and of dashed lines and 3-dimensional texture. In addition, the research findings revealed that the quality of fabrics, the type of colors, and sewing polarity heavily influenced such exquisite tritik pattern design. Collectively, all the above elements were intertwined that helped create appealing, beautiful tritik pattern design infused with high aesthetical values.

Keywords: tritik technique, Batik, Textile pattern designs

1. Introduction

Textile art in the Malay world, especially in Malaysia have been detected since the start of the historical development of the culture of the archipelago. Since the Sultanate has recorded about how different types of fabric and textiles is taken as an omen to the status of goods in individual position in society and benchmark the progress of Malay civilization.

According to Raffles in The history of Java [1] has described how different types of clothing and fabrics are unique with the technique of patterning the surface of the fabric such as tie and *tritik*, as well as illustrations of batik patterns produced. Skeat [2] also describe how the Malays use natural coloring during dyeing silk and cotton which are obtained from Singapore.

In a note, Winsteadt [3] Malay Industries Part I, Art and Craft, he also describes the surface design techniques on fabric produced by the Malay community at the time. Techniques that have been applied are such as coloring, weaving, embroidering, embroidering and knitting techniques for the production of textile patterns and ornaments. Obviously tradition surface design of decorative fabric or Malays textile surface have long practiced and it has been developed and passed down from

generation to generation until now in the development of traditional cultural arts in Malaysia.

Essentially, batik making is a method of creating beautiful textile materials or cloth involving the use of candles and coloring materials based on natural or synthetic colors. In creating batik, candles are the main medium used to create the required pattern and, at the same time, serve as the medium to separate the colors. To help create artistic batik, several techniques can be used, including tradition technique, the use of *canting*, metal block, wood block, screen, and, lately, dedicated computer software, to create digital batik products.

Tritik technique is one of the traditional decorative techniques that have long been practiced by textile craftsmen in Malaysia. The adaptation of this technique has become one of the uniqueness of batik design in Malaysia apart from the technique of dyeing, canting, and the use of batik blocks and also screen printing as well as the use of brush techniques on fabric.

Tritik is indeed not a new discovery in textile history. This technique has existed for a long time when society began to explore fabrics and colors in dyes for fabric coloring. Instead, there was previously in India called Bandhani and Japan called Shibori, in Malaysia and Indonesia called Tritik. In fact, there is a much older tie-dye motif found in Peru in 500. The designs found include circles and small lines with bright colors, such as red, yellow, blue, and green.

But in Japan and China have developed tie-dye techniques since the sixth century using silk cloth. Silk fabric is evaluated as a suitable material for a more perfect color absorption process. These skills are also likely to have evolved in the Malay Archipelago as a result of trading activities involving the exchange of goods in the past. Skills staining on fabrics, ornaments and decorations technique is adapted according to the nature of Malay culture and become a work of art in the textile design community in the archipelago.

Tritik or *sasirangan* batik is one of the high fashions that help project the uniqueness and beauty in terms of its creation, such as the type of polarity or motifs created with the method of sewing and pull. In the early history of textile, this technique was used by the Banjarmasin society in which the early design of tritik batik only used simple motifs deemed moderately sufficient to meet the fashion needs of the people dwelling in the district of Banjarmasin. However, in tandem with the advancement in fashion designs taking place in the world, tritik batik has undergone a series of innovative transformations through which the patterns and motifs created by such technique have been reshaped and redesigned with diverse geometrical and organic patterns that helps project their artistic beauty.

Moreover, the application and combination of colors also play an important role in establishing the required motif and pattern on the surface of the batik design. Surely, the knowledge and skills in pattern design of fabric surfaces are a critical element in designing exquisite motifs on such surfaces [4].

Consistent with the current trend in fashion designs, the new, contemporary tritik batik, with its exquisite aesthetical effects visibly appearing on the surface of the fabrics, helps make its wearers look elegant and attractive. Despite the uniqueness in such pattern design, tritik technique has gradually being neglected in today's batik pattern design, which is partly attributed to the complicated process involved in making such design.

To help sustain the use of batik in Malaysia as a national attire, the Malaysian government had made it compulsory for the public servant to wear batik shirts or *baju kurung* (women Dress). Apparently, the rapid development of fashions has been instrumental in influencing the design of fashions throughout the world.

Despite such development, however, some of the traditional designs, such as batik blocks, batik drawing, and batik printing, have managed to survive the test of

time, with many fashion fans keeping their loyalty with such designs. As such, the use of tritik technique can be re-energized to create batik that has a new appealing design with high aesthetical and artistic values and exquisite pattern design that projects unique beauty. Admittedly, due to the rapid development of the fashion world taking place at an unprecedented rate, the tritik technique has started to decline in its use in the making of batik textile. Unmitigated, such a decline will see such a unique technique becomes obsolete – a thing of the past – in batik-textile making. Obviously, more efforts have to be put in place to address this pressing predicament by encouraging practitioners to adopt the tritik technique in designing intricate batik patterns. Another problem that contributes to the declining use of such a technique lies in the lack of proper learning or training in pattern design of batik textile, especially with respect to the structure of patterns that needs to be discerning learned. For example, the knowledge regarding the closely aligned stitches to create intricate patterns with amazing characteristics, such as sharp teeth, base, *dovo, regulon,* and *gadan*, and the application of red, green, and yellow have to be mastered by practitioners.

Seen from the socio-cultural viewpoint, such a problem is the manifestation of the lack of knowledge among the members of the society, in particular, Art students, with respect to the societal impact of the tritik technique, effecting a decline in the awareness or appreciation of such a culturally enriched method of producing traditional batik. Clearly, to help overcome such a problem, the tritik technique needs to be used in the pattern design process to produce elegant and immaculate patterns, which are on par with those created by other techniques, such as tie-*and-dip* (ikat celup) technique.

Based on a practical studio experimenting with the tritik technique in the making pattern - design process of batik motifs on the surface of a fabric. In addition, the effect of this technique on the surface of the fabric, also has been examined which began from the creation of the Napthol color through the mixing of Diazo salt and Remazol coloring dye to the complete tritik process performed on the fabric. Through practiced studio process, focusing on the process prior to sewing was carried out, the inherent constraints encountered during the process of sewing a particular polar of a pattern and the effects of untying knots on the fabric, also able to identify the outcome of the pattern design of the tritik technique.

Definitely, the selection of suitable fabrics in creating tritik batik is of paramount importance. Obviously, the use of quality fabrics will improve the rate of absorption, enabling the coloring materials to penetrate deeply into the fabrics to produces stunningly attractive, intricate, and appealing effects of the tritik technique. In this regard, the use of suitable fabrics has a profound impact on the effectiveness of the tritik technique that helps the Naphthol color to seep deep into every fabric of the batik materials. To date, several types of fabrics have been widely used with this technique, such as cotton fabric, rayon fabric, and silk fabric, which are clothes made from natural sources. Essentially, such fabrics contain natural fibers with good "working characteristics", with which the tritik technique can produce amazing effects.

In Malaysia, the majority of people prefer to wear clothes made of cotton. Such a preference is not surprising as cotton can easily absorb sweats produced by the human body in countries in the tropical region of the world, such as Malaysia. In essence, this type of cloths is made from cotton fibers that are used to make short, soft, and fluffy fibers In general, these cotton fibers are used as the primary material in making shirts, robes, bedspreads, and others. Given their delicate characteristics, cotton fabrics are suitable for batik practitioners who manually use their hands with some degree of force in making batik materials (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1.
Cotton fabrics are suitable for batik practitioners.

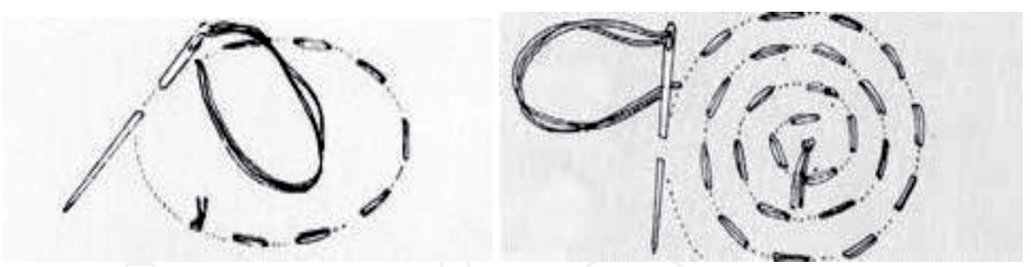


Figure 2.
Illustration of sewing or stitching process in a spiral.

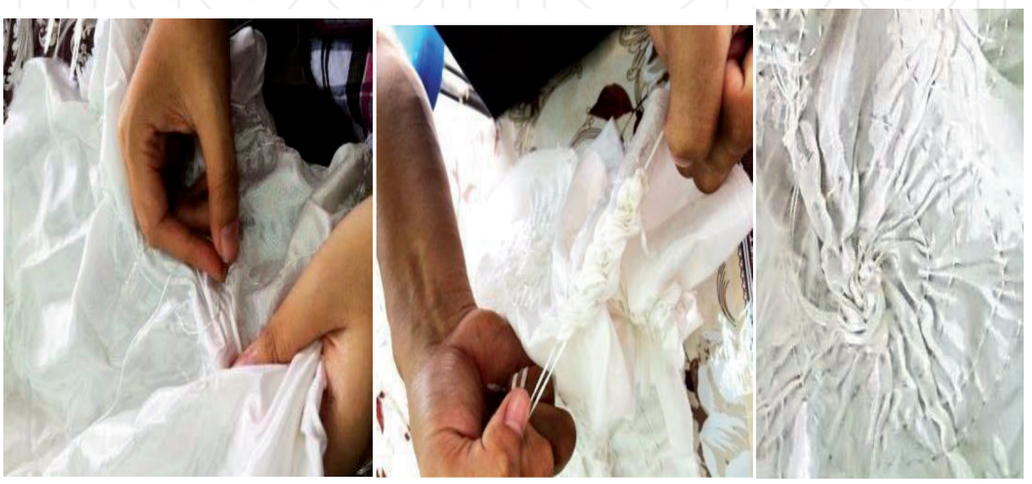


Figure 3.
Sewing process in a spiral moves according to a prescribed spiral pattern.

2. The method of stitching

In general, this type of stitching has a number of diverse sewing techniques, but to create a pattern on the fabric will entail the needle to move in a spiral. Effectively, such a spiral motion of the needle, in which it moves according to a prescribed pattern based generally on a distance of I cm, can help achieve the desired effects.

Furthermore, the threads need to be tightened when the sewing or stitching process has completed. Subsequently, colorings will be swiped over the entire surface of the fabrics that have been completely sewn (**Figures 2** and **3**).

3. The tritik cotton-fabric patterns

The followings are some of the patterns of the cotton cloth created by the effects of the stitching technique used. Clearly, such forms and shapes of the patterns were the results of a sewing or stitching processing a particular direction or polarity, effecting the desired effects that helped create such amazing pattern designs (**Figure 4**).

4. The rayon fabrics

Principally, Rayon is a fabric that can be weaved or merged, depending on its diverse use. In fact, the effectiveness of stitching Rayon is relatively higher than those of other fabric materials, such as *taf* cloth of cotton cloth. In the batik-making industry, the Rayon fabric is categorized as a semi-soft fabric that most batik



Figure 4.
Spiral patterns of the cotton cloth created by the effects of the stitching technique.



Figure 5.
The rayon fabrics.

practitioners find easy to manually work on. As such, the use of this fabric should be emphasized to achieve the desired effects on such fabric (**Figure 5**).

5. The method of stitching

The type of sewing or stitching as shown above is based on horizontal sewing that cuts the surface of the fabric neatly. Ideally, the distance of the stitched fabric

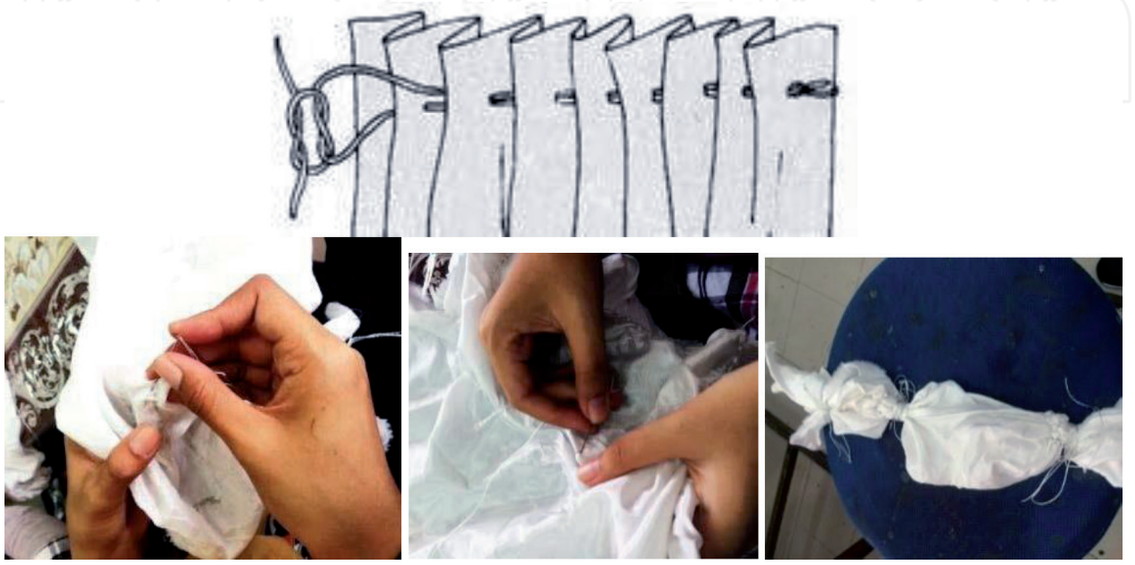


Figure 6.
The process of horizontal sewing performed on a fabric.

should be in the range between 1 cm and 2 cm. obviously, the direction of sewing that is straight and compact will create an amazingly appealing effect. In particular, the end of the cloth must be tied to achieve a better effect (**Figure 6**).

6. The tritik rayon-fabric patterns

As shown in **Figure 7**, the result of using the tritik technique on the Rayon fabrics showed stunning effects, visibly highlighting the effects of colors and stitching on such fabric. Evidently, the stitching the fabric horizontally did not in any way compromise the quality of the fabric. On the contrary, such a stitching method was able to project the undulation of the movement of colors together with the desired pattern on the fabric.

7. The type of satin fabrics

As contended by almost all practitioners, the satin fabric is regarded as the most elegant fabric compared to other types of fabrics, making it a high-class fashion material. This contention is not without reason, as this type of fabric has a surface is delicately soft and glossy, the characteristics that create stunning reflections under the light. In general, satin cloth consists of silk or Rayon, which makes its surface extremely soft. The drawback of this fabric, however, is that it needs constant care, given the delicate nature of its material, which is made up of the softest fibers. To date, satin fabrics have been widely used in many designer fashions throughout the world, notably in developed countries (**Figure 8**).

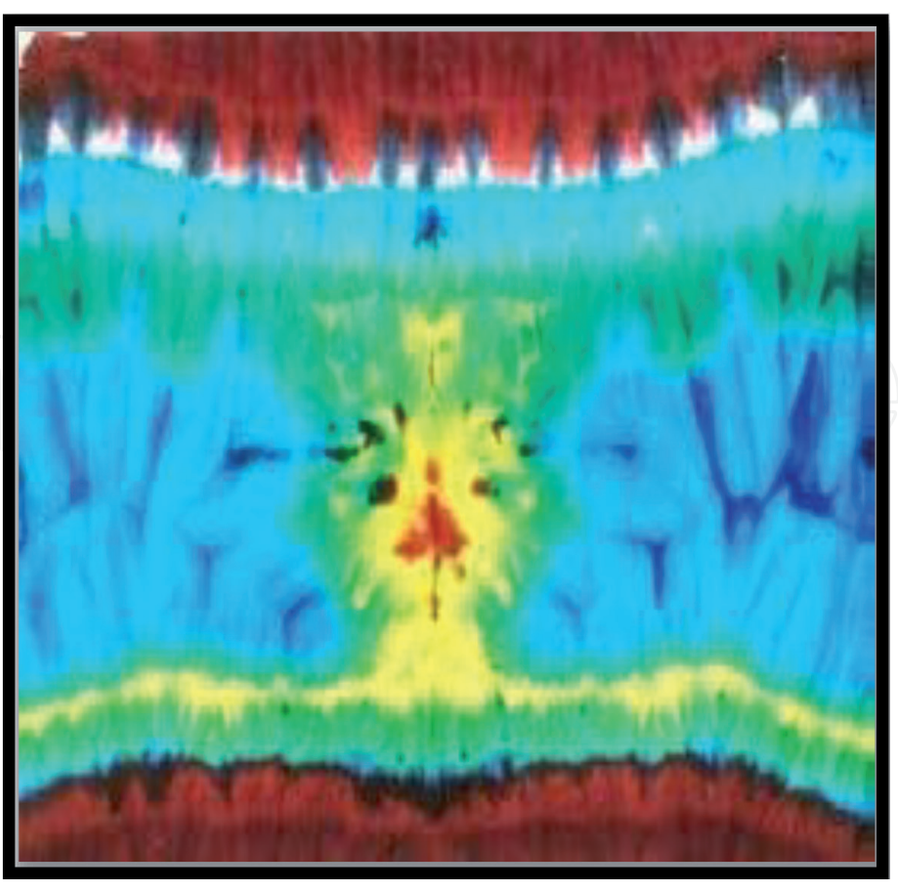


Figure 7.
Tritik technique on the rayon fabrics showed stunning effects, visibly highlighting the effects of colors and stitching on rayon fabric.

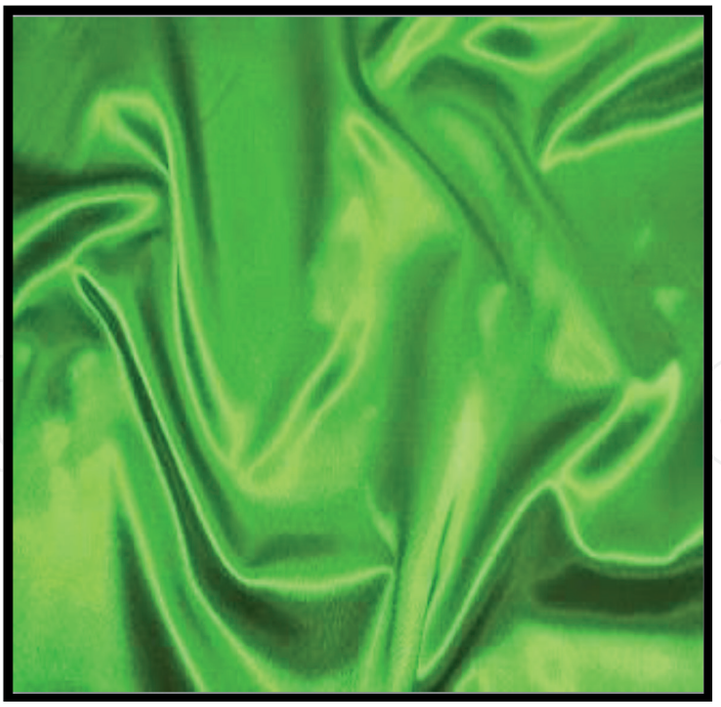


Figure 8.
Satin fabric.

8. The method of stitching

The appropriate configurations of such stitching for such fabrics are circular and horizontal. In this study, the configuration examined was based on circular sewing involving a single direction of movement, of which the closer the distance of the stitches the more attractive the effects on the surface of the fabric.

As shown in the **Figure 9**, spiral stitching based on the close distance among the stitches will create stunningly beautiful effects on the fabric. Furthermore, the edges of the cloth have to be permanently fastened by pulling the thread forcefully to create the desired effects.

9. The tritik satin-fabric patterns

Figure 10 shows the effects of the tritik technique on the surface of the satin fabric. Revealingly, it shows that a well-balanced use of colors can create spectacularly attractive and beautiful effects compared to those that use colors that are too bright or too dull. Through this practical studio-based study, the researchers examined the practice of the tritik technique in the batik-making process involving three types of fabrics, namely cotton fabric, rayon fabric, and satin fabric.

Based on the observations, it can be reasonably argued that each type of fabric has its own unique and beautiful tritik effects, despite using the same sewing or stitching configuration. Surely, such differences in the tritik effects lie in the properties of the fabrics, with each having different thickness and structure of fibers, which produce the unique texture of the fabrics. Clearly, the different types of fibers make some fabrics soft while others coarse, the impact of which will have a profound impact on the rate of absorption and the rate of evaporation of liquids that result in different effects on the patterns of the fabrics. Given such inherent differences, the selection of appropriate fabrics should be treated with caution – in fact, it should be treated as the basis – to help create specular and stunning patterns using the tritik technique.



Figure 9.
Spiral stitching based on the close distance among the stitches will create stunningly beautiful effects on the fabric. Furthermore, the edges of the cloth have to be permanently fastened by pulling the thread forcefully to create the desired effects. The process of spiral stitching performed on a fabric.

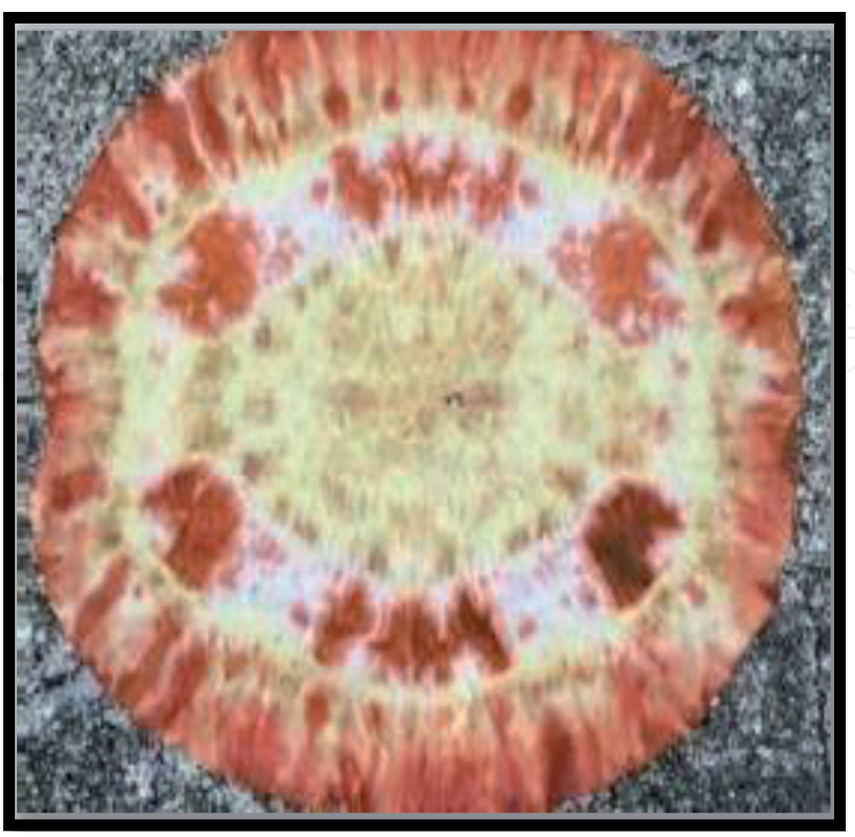


Figure 10.
Tritik technique on the surface of the satin fabric.

Moreover, the quality of stitching also depends on the sewing configuration that can help create beautiful effects by controlling the form or the structure of such a pattern. Also observed in this study was that pattern designs in various organic forms or shapes seemed to be the dominant pattern in the tritik technique to produce patterns with high aesthetical values. In addition, the distance between stitches can strongly influence the effects on the patterns made on the fabrics. Likewise, the strength of the knots is also important in creating such attractive patterns.

Evidently, the closer the stitching on the surface of the fabric, the more stunning the patterns will be. Similarly, the tighter the threads are tied, the more spectacular the tritik effects will be in producing beautiful, delicate lines of various sizes and quality. Undeniably, the tying technique and the stitching configuration play an important role in the tritik technique in creating beautiful, unique patterns. In terms of the use of coloring materials, the tritik technique heavily relies on relevant colors to create the desired tritik patterns on fabrics. In fact, such a technique emphasizes well-balanced and judicious use of colors, given that the tritik pattern entails the tone of colors that is neither too strong not too weak.

Clearly, a well-balanced use of colors in the tritik technique can produce patterns that harmoniously blend the chosen color to produce pleasing effects, highlighting a spectacular contrast of colors that enrich the beauty the batik fabric. In this regard, the mixing of Naphthol color and Diazo salt can help produce a color tone that represents the color of the earth's soil. Thus, it cannot be overstated that the coloring effect is an important element in designing beautiful, intricate patterns on the surface of fabrics, which can be carried out by experimenting with colors and sodium silicate. The effect of tritic techniques on fabrics has indirectly created new

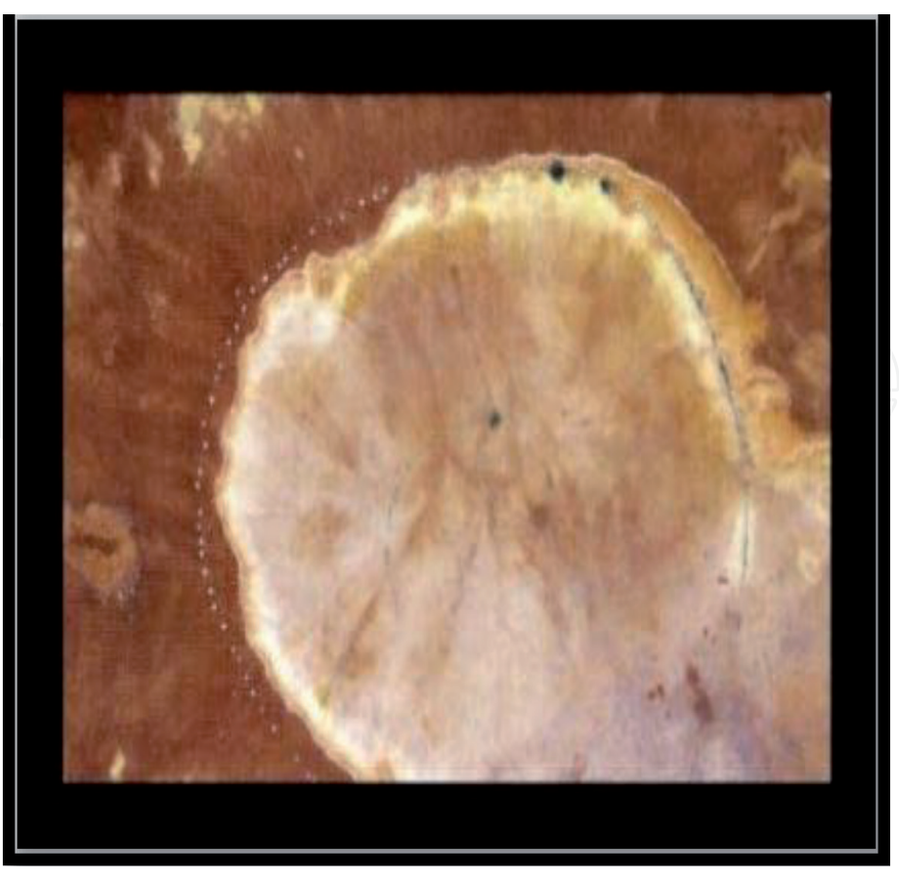


Figure 11.
Type of fabrics: Cotton. Technique: Dipping Tritik. Medium: Naphthol color. Soaking duration (in sodium): 6 hours.

patterns with very unique organic and abstract shapes. The effects of color patterning the shapes on the surface of the fabric is one of the characteristic privileges tritik technique that can provide confirmation of the identity of batik fabrics are processed. The followings figure showcase the pattern designs of various fabrics created by the tritik technique (**Figure 11**).

10. Tradition technique *vs* global trending

The experimentation of the tritik technique in designing patterns is a new learning process that effectively has helped create a new, diverse technique in batik textile industry. Specifically, practitioners can use this unique technique, which is slowly being forgotten, to manipulate the method of sewing or stitching threads on the surface of fabrics, which, in principle, the experimentation with ways to create beautiful pieces of fashions with colorful pattern designs (**Figure 12**).

As demonstrated, the effects of decorative arrangements created by the tritik technique is both refreshingly amazing and attractively mesmerizing, with the surface of fabrics infused with design elements and principles that give rise to high aesthetical values of the fabric materials. In addition, both the intended effects and the unintended effects resulting from the application of colors in the tritik technique can help create the desired forms, shapes, lines and spaces on the fabric materials. Furthermore, exploring the techniques and integrating the knowledge and skills pertaining to synthetic coloring materials can pave a way for the improvement in the learning of pattern designs.

According to a study conducted by Bintan Titisari, Kahfiati Kahdar and Intan Rizky Mutiaz in writing an article entitled Development of Dye Sewing Techniques (Tritik) with patterns geometris [5] suggests a very significant finding on how the application of Dye Sewing techniques (Tritik) can be implied in the fashion world. The effect of the use of geometric patterns on political techniques will produce motifs with the effects of direction, depth, and movement (optical illusion) by using the composition of balance, rhythm and harmony. In addition to the presence of effects optical illusions that give the impression of depth, direction and motion, they can be used to create dimensions and illusions in fashion products. The effect of Sewing Techniques (Tritik) from this traditional heritage can also be adapted using



Figure 12.
Type of fabrics: Satin. Technique: Brush-swiping Tritik. Medium: Remazol color. Soaking duration (in sodium): No soaking involved.



Figure 13.
Type of fabrics: Rayon. Technique: Swiping and dipping Tritik. Medium: Naphthol color. Soaking duration (in sodium): No soaking involved. Year 2016.

the latest technology with the help of computer applications and industrial-scale sewing machine technology that can make new contributions in textile technology, for example, geometric patterns using vector graphics editor can be used as preliminary data for development in the CAM (Computer Aided Manufacture) program (**Figure 13**).

The effect of the Sewing Pattern design (Tritik) can also be commercialized in the Fashion industry design where the illusion effect of this geometric design gives a soft finish to the fabric and further highlights the design to visualize the camouflage effect (see **Figures 14–17**). The result of the tritik technique adapted from this traditional technique is an alternative effect that can be designed on the surface of batik fabric. Traditional techniques from hand sewing skills can further highlight the value of the beauty of decorative patterns on batik fabrics.

On the international scene, batik has already taken its place in the contemporary fashion industry. Now the fabric is not only used for traditional clothing, but has also found its way to applications such as haute couture as well as being used in accessories such as handbags [7]. Many popular figures have walked the red carpet proudly wearing batik, from Bill Gates, Nelson Mandela to Barack Obama, and from Beyoncé Knowles to Jessica Alba. The international fashion scene has seen batik designers introduce batik to the world through the mixing of fabrics with modern designs and production methods. For example, Malaysian fashion designer Fern Chua presented handmade batik designs to the world stage through the British Council's global campaign. Highlighting the theme of Crafting Futures, the campaign also brought together fashion and craft designers from around the world to explore and build the future of batik's potential globally. The works of others from the world's batik designers, and many more have also supported batik on the international stage.



Figure 14.
Tritik techniques that can be used as an illusion pattern design for the fashion industry. Photo credit to Titisari et al. [6]

These advances have also influenced well -known designers from other countries to include batik in their design collections. Notably, Belgian-American designer Diane von Furstenberg's batik dress worn by Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton; while Angelina Jolie was seen wearing a batik dress by US designer Nicole Miller. Other international designers who also feature batik in their collections include Dries van Noten from Belgium, Ek Throngprassert Thailand, and Milo



Figure 15.
Fashion design that adapts sewing techniques (tritik) in Malaysia.



Figure 16.
Fashion design that adapts sewing techniques (tritik) by SEYMOUR. Photo credit to BLOG DESIGN BY LABINA @ PLEXICOD.



Figure 17.
Fashion design that adapts sewing techniques (tritik) by Humbang Shibori x Purana at JFW 2019. Photo credit to (Fimela.com/Nurwahyunan).

Milavica from Italy. In addition, one of the oldest fashion schools in Italy, Koefia, not only incorporates batik fashion in its curriculum, but also parades its stylish designs on the catwalk. Therefore, the practitioners of batik fashions can capitalize on the effects of the tritik technique to help them create spectacularly stunning and beautiful pattern designs on the surface of the fabrics of batik textile in global. To help realize this aim, it becomes the imperative of the stakeholders and practitioners to rejuvenate such a technique that is capable of creating immaculate and unique pattern designs with high aesthetical values.

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