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Exploration Analysis of The Impact of Local Cultural Empowerment on Commercialization and Promotion of Tourism Objects

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui proses komersialisasi yang terkait dengan penggunaan praktik budaya warisan masyarakat lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian menggunakan analisis dokumen, wawancara, dan observasi. Warisan budaya sering kali menjadi aspek yang dapat memperkuat ekonomi dan menjadi simbol pengelolaan pariwisata. Pentingnya memperlakukan warisan budaya dengan baik dan mengembangkannya akan berdampak terhadap peningkatan performa pariwisata. Pengelolaan wisata juga membuka akses bagi wisatawan baik lokal dan mancanegara untuk melakukan eksplorasi dengan cara yang lebih otentik. Dengan strategi komersialisasi yang tepat, pengelolaan wisata warisan budaya dapat tetap relevan dan berkontribusi terhadap keberlanjutan budaya dan ekonomi.

Kata Kunci: *Wisata Budaya, Komersialisasi, Pariwisata, Wisatawan, Ekonomi*

Abstract

This research aims to determine the commercialization process related to the use of local community heritage cultural practices. This research uses a qualitative approach. The research uses document analysis, interviews and observations. Cultural heritage is often an aspect that can strengthen the economy and become a symbol of tourism management. The importance of treating cultural heritage well and developing it will have an impact on improving tourism performance. Tourism management also opens up access for both local and foreign tourists to explore in a more authentic way. With the right commercialization strategy, cultural heritage tourism management can remain relevant and contribute to cultural and economic sustainability.

Keyword: *Cultural Tourism, Commercialization, Tourism, Tourists, Economy*

INTRODUCTION

For several decades, new market conditions and demands, such as competitiveness, poverty, and demand segmentation, have prompted the emergence of new tourism concepts and typologies (Sari et al., 2024). Some of them are ecotourism, adventure tourism, ethnic tourism, rural tourism, and cultural tourism. Ecotourism focuses on environmentalism and education about nature conservation, while adventure tourism offers challenging experiences such as mountain climbing or diving (Syefriani et al., 2021). Ethnic tourism introduces an ethnic or community group's culture and customs, whereas rural tourism invites tourists to experience rural life and local culture in villages. Cultural tourism highlights the experience and understanding of the culture of a place, including its art, traditions, and history (Erawati, 2021). These concepts reflect the tourism industry's efforts to adapt to changing market demands and preferences, with the aim of creating more diverse and meaningful tourism experiences for tourists (Iswahyudi et al., 2023).

Tourism activities are a means to highlight culture and generate income to support and strengthen cultural heritage, cultural production, and creativity. By promoting cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, regions can attract tourists and develop their tourism experience (Rachmat et al., 2023). Recognizing the importance of culture in tourism also has implications for local development and community welfare. Through the use of cultural heritage, local communities can gain economic benefits while maintaining their identity and environmental desirability (Santoso et al., 2022). As a result, cultural integration in tourism development is an important strategy for the government and stakeholders to advance the industry in a sustainable manner (Murdana et al., 2023).

In the context of the cultural tourism typology, various actors take the cultural elements and identity of a particular community, which are part of the cultural heritage, and transform them into cultural tourism products aimed at tourists visiting the area (Kamarudin

et al., 2023). This process entails transforming cultural elements into tourist experiences that visitors can enjoy and understand (Iswahyudi et al., 2023). We need to identify, inventory, and include places with rich cultural diversity in our tourism products. We then offer these tourism products to potential consumers through appropriate marketing efforts to pique their interest in visiting and enjoying the existing cultural riches (Nurdiani et al., 2024). This approach is important because it ensures that visiting tourists reflect the richness and uniqueness of local culture while also providing economic and social benefits for local communities. Thus, managing and marketing cultural tourism products is an important strategy for developing sustainable tourism, which has a positive impact on all parties involved (Harsono et al., 2024).

The temporary and voluntary movement of people outside their place of residence causes a complex activity known as tourism. Tourists use capital from their hometown to cover expenses at their destination, not from the places they visit. The reasons for this change vary, ranging from rest, education, health, business, and others (Solehati et al., 2022). Generally, this motivation stems from the unique natural and cultural attractions at the destination, which are not available in their current location. This attraction then gave rise to various types of tourism, such as sun and beach tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, health tourism, and others (Taufik et al., 2022). Natural and cultural resources in a destination become raw materials for future tourist attractions. Therefore, these resources must be located in places that are accessible and valid for tourist exploitation. In this context, tourist attractions refer to the inherent features of a place that is valued or enabled by tourism. The process of valuing tourism resources entails various actors, including economic agents and the state (Sadikin et al., 2023). This process involves the transformation of resources into products or attractions, and from products or attractions into offers aimed at the market. This process depends on the presence of certain resources in the destination, such as natural and cultural heritage, climate, local communities, and other factors. Organizing and presenting these resources transforms them into attractions that tourists can utilize and relish. Therefore, we can understand a product or attraction as a resource that facilitates one or more tourist activities (Iswahyudi et al., 2023).

In the process of transforming resources into tourist attractions, various agents operate with the aim of maximizing the economic benefits of cultural heritage. These agencies provide infrastructure facilities and public services that enable cultural heritage to have a private supply of services, as well as support the legal and planning framework for the development of tourism activities in the destination (Taufik et al., 2022). Once the product is ready, a marketing plan launches it into the market, aligning it with the targeted

demand segment (Sadikin et al., 2023). Although the process of converting resources into tourist attractions is generally the same for both natural and cultural heritage in a destination, both have their own characteristics (Solehati et al., 2022). Factors such as destination location, heritage type, actors involved, level of tourism development, and others influence this specificity. Cultural heritage, for example, frequently necessitates more intensive conservation and restoration efforts, as well as special attention to cultural aspects that require the participation of local communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research methodology uses a qualitative approach to understand the commercialization process in a social, economic, and political context. Researchers formulate a theoretical framework to guide the research, considering the specific objectives we aim to achieve. The next step involves a literature review to understand its history and relationship to tourism. This research will also identify social actors that play an important role in current tourism development. We will do this by consulting relevant literature that discusses their roles and contributions. Furthermore, participant observation will be the main method used in this research, which includes document analysis, interviews with subjects and informants, participation, direct observation, and introspection. We expect this method to provide a deep understanding of the dynamics of commercialization and its role in tourism.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of tourists seeking new experiences, which has resulted in the commercialization of certain cultural practices. These new tourists are no longer satisfied with conventional or purely commercial tour packages. They seek deeper, more authentic, and more meaningful experiences that allow them to truly engage with the local culture they visit. This phenomenon has led to the development of alternative cultural tourism that provides tourists with unique and satisfying experiences. Local community members comprise the majority of alternative cultural tourism providers. For them, it is not just a hobby or mere pleasure but also an important source of livelihood. This allows them to provide more authentic and meaningful experiences for tourists while also making a positive contribution to sustainability and respect for cultural heritage. Tourists who participate in alternative cultural tourism have the opportunity to explore and appreciate cultural heritage in a more intimate and personal way. They are not just spectators but also active participants in the cultural practices they

visit. This not only improves the tourist experience, but also helps to maintain and promote unique and valuable cultural heritage in local communities.

Depending on the purpose and context, we can see cultural heritage activation in two different contexts. The first activation, known as classic, takes place in a social context that prioritizes internal consumption, specifically by local residents. This activation places greater emphasis on respect for cultural heritage by local communities, which may have diverse ideological identities. The second activation, on the other hand, relates to the process of commercializing cultural heritage in order to introduce it to the tourism market. This approach focuses more on building an attractive image for external tourists, often based on dominant stereotypes about a place. The main goal is to increase tourist interest and generate external consumption. These differences underscore the importance of understanding the context and purpose of cultural heritage activation. While the second activation can bring economic benefits through the tourism industry, the first activation places more emphasis on maintaining and respecting cultural heritage in local communities. Governments and relevant stakeholders must balance both approaches to ensure the sustainable preservation and utilization of cultural heritage.

The intervention reflects the dynamics between first and second inheritance activation, as described previously. Heritage activation emphasized the importance of cultural heritage as an integral part of community identity. This includes efforts to maintain and preserve traditional aspects of cultural practices offered for internal consumption, namely by local communities. On the other hand, heritage activation focuses on commercialization to attract tourists. This often leads to a distortion of stereotypes. While this may bring economic benefits to the tourism industry, there are concerns that the version presented to tourists does not always reflect what actually happened. In this context, it's crucial to think about implementing cultural heritage interventions that prioritize sustainability and uphold authentic cultural values. We must carefully carry out efforts to commodify cultural heritage as a tourism attraction to avoid obscuring the essence and authenticity of the cultural practice itself.

Heritage activation represents a further evolution in approaches to commodification and tourism marketing. In this activation, tourists not only consume the show or product, but also actively participate in a more immersive and authentic experience. This approach leads to creating a more meaningful and immersive experience for tourists while also ensuring that it remains vibrant and relevant within the cultural context. It also reflects a response to criticism of commodification as merely stereotypical and distortionist by

offering an alternative that is more authentic and oriented towards true experiences in the original environment.

To create a more authentic and interesting experience for tourists, suppliers of cultural tourism products introduce various complementary elements. They promote schools and milongas abroad, provide bilingual teachers or translators during classes, and feature exhibitions of professional dancers and live orchestras to add a sense of authenticity. The on-site restaurant serves traditional dishes, and cultural tour classes cater to specific levels and themes. Organized trips into the interior provide an opportunity to get to know the local culture more closely. Collaboration with language schools and accommodation around the location provides comfortable facilities for tourists. Personalized study programs and an on-site clothing store also enrich the experience. The presence of live companies allows tourists to engage directly with cultural practices. All of this aims to create a more meaningful, immersive, and authentic experience for tourists while also providing benefits to local communities through interactions between both parties.

In the case of alternative tourism institutions, the process of commercializing cultural heritage occurs through the assembly of various special tour packages aimed at international tourists. These packages not only offer unique experiences but also allow travelers to engage more deeply with local culture. In addition, these two institutions provide customized tour packages that cater to the needs and preferences of tourists. The reason behind this commodification of cultural heritage lies in the need to use self-managed and more sustainable resources. The commodification of cultural heritage also addresses a design gap in tourism products that traditional tour operators cannot fill. By providing a more authentic and immersive experience, these institutions have succeeded in attracting tourists who are looking for a more distinctive and different experience from conventional tours. These institutions' importance in the modern tourism context also reflects a response to market demand for more unique, personalized, and impactful tourism experiences. By providing tourists access to engage directly with cultural heritage, these institutions not only create valuable experiences for tourists but also help in promoting and preserving unique and valuable cultural heritage for local communities.

In the context of tourism management, cultural heritage is often at the center of economic, political, and symbolic disputes. Conflicts and tensions regarding official tourism management reflect these disputes. We conducted interviews and found that all interviewees agreed that the government's closure of various spaces and the centralization of economic benefits was the most relevant problem. The interviewees emphasized the importance of this issue, pointing out that there are still empty areas for further tourism

research. In this context, there may be a need to examine more deeply how government policies and actions influence the sustainability and inclusiveness of cultural heritage management, as well as how they impact local communities and the sustainability of culture itself. The importance of viewing cultural heritage as a dynamic entity involved in economic, political, and symbolic disputes emphasizes the need for a careful and sustainable approach to tourism management. In this case, there needs to be dialogue and collaboration between the government, local communities, and other stakeholders to ensure that tourism management policies and practices take into account the interests of all parties involved. It also shows the importance of treating cultural heritage with full respect and understanding the values and consequences of commercialization efforts on cultural heritage in the context of tourism.

Thus, new forms of tourism commercialization have made an important contribution to maintaining cultural vitality and relevance today. The experiences offered to tourists enhance their awareness of social, cultural, and artistic values. We invite tourists to delve deeply into history and practices, and engage in artistic expression through gatherings and dance. Alternative tourism management has also opened the door for tourists to approach it in a more authentic and meaningful way. Instead of viewing it as superficial or merely a memory, they view it as a dynamic heritage that is constantly evolving and accessible to anyone seeking to explore cultural riches. Thus, through thoughtful and responsible commercialization, it has been able to remain relevant, contribute to cultural and economic sustainability, and provide meaningful and authentic experiences for its visitors.

CONCLUSION

This analysis concludes that economic, political, and symbolic disputes often center around cultural heritage in the context of tourism management. Conflicts related to official tourism management, such as the government's closure of spaces and the centralization of economic benefits, reflect these disputes. The importance of treating cultural heritage with respect and understanding its values highlights the need for a careful approach to tourism management. New forms of tourism commercialization, particularly in the case of cultural heritage, have made an important contribution to maintaining culture's vitality and relevance today. The experiences offered to tourists enhance their awareness of social, cultural, and artistic values. Alternative tourism management also opens the door for tourists to approach it in a more authentic way. With wise commercialization, cultural heritage tourism management can remain relevant and contribute to cultural and economic sustainability. This way, visitors can have a meaningful and authentic experience

while supporting the sustainability of the culture they visit.

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