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Community-Based Tourism and Local Wisdom Strategies for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Purwakarta

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ABSTRACT

Purwakarta Regency possesses a distinct cultural identity rooted in Sundanese philosophy, such as "Tatanen di Bale Atikan" and unique architectural heritages. However, the rapid pace of industrialization poses a threat to the sustainability of these cultural values. This study aims to analyse the integration of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and local wisdom as a strategic framework for cultural heritage preservation in Purwakarta. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, this research evaluates how local communities utilize their cultural capital to create sustainable tourism experiences. The findings, supported by primary data from the Department of Youth, Sports, Tourism, and Culture (DISPORAPARBUD) of Purwakarta, suggest that the synergy between local government policies and community-led initiatives—rooted in "Tri Tangtu" (the harmony of God, nature, and humans)—is crucial for cultural resilience. This paper proposes a model of "Resilient Cultural Entrepreneurship" where local wisdom is not only preserved but also serves as a primary driver for regional economic innovation.

Keywords: *Community-Based Tourism, Local Wisdom, Cultural Heritage, Purwakarta Istimewa, Participatory Communication*

1. INTRODUCTION

Purwakarta Regency currently stands at a crucial intersection between the demands of modernization and the urgent need to preserve its cultural identity. Strategically located in the primary corridor connecting the metropolitan areas of Jakarta and Bandung, Purwakarta has long been recognized as a central hub for manufacturing industry growth in West Java. The presence of large-scale industrial estates has undeniably contributed significantly to Local Own-Source Revenue (PAD) and job creation. However, the massive pace of industrialization and the penetration of global culture bring concerning socio-cultural impacts, including the threat of cultural homogenization and the fading of community ties to ancestral traditions.

In response to these challenges, the Local Government of Purwakarta has taken proactive measures. Through a development vision encapsulated in the slogan "Purwakarta Istimewa" (Special Purwakarta), the local government seeks to balance development by designating tourism as a leading sector. Tourism in Purwakarta is not designed as an exploitative mass industry but is directed toward an alternative tourism model grounded in natural wealth and the depth of Sundanese cultural heritage. This strategy serves as a concrete cultural defense mechanism, where tourism acts as an instrument to revive, preserve, and promote local wisdom.

Local wisdom within the Purwakarta community is not merely a relic of the past displayed in museums; it is a living collective intelligence and value system (living culture). One of its primary manifestations is the "Tri Tangtu" philosophy, which teaches balance and harmonious relations between the Creator, the universe, and humanity [1]. Additionally, cultural movements like "Tatanen di Bale Atikan"—a character education system integrating agricultural, ecological, and Sundanese spiritual values into daily life—play a significant role.

The central problem addressed in this research is how to transform these noble values and local wisdom into a tangible competitive advantage through the tourism sector without compromising their authenticity. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) emerges as the most relevant paradigm to answer this challenge. CBT positions local communities not as mere objects or informal workers but as the primary subjects, resource owners, planners, and managers of tourism activities [2].

This research thoroughly explores how the integration of the CBT approach and local wisdom is implemented in Purwakarta Regency. By examining

strategic policies from the Department of Youth, Sports, Tourism, and Culture (DISPORAPARBUD) and analyzing field practices, this study aims to formulate an adaptive and economically valuable cultural preservation model, conceptualized herein as "Resilient Cultural Entrepreneurship."

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

Community-Based Tourism is a tourism development approach that emphasizes local community empowerment. According to contemporary tourism literature, CBT emerged as a critique of mass tourism, which often ignores environmental carrying capacity and marginalizes indigenous populations [3]. The fundamental concept of CBT is that tourism development must be controlled by local communities, rooted in local culture and environments, and provide direct economic, social, and cultural benefits to the community [4]. The success of CBT relies heavily on the extent to which communities have access to and control over tourism resources (social, cultural, and natural capital) and their involvement in decision-making processes.

2.2. Local Wisdom and Sundanese Cultural Identity

Local wisdom encompasses the life views, knowledge, and survival strategies manifested in activities carried out by local communities to meet their needs and solve problems. In the Sundanese cultural landscape of Purwakarta, local wisdom plays a central role. The concept of "Tri Tangtu di Buana" serves as the ontological foundation for the Sundanese people to maintain cosmic balance. Implementing this concept in tourism requires respecting both the built and pristine natural environments, preserving traditional spatial planning, and upholding local social norms [5]. When local wisdom is commodified for tourism purposes, there is a risk of reducing its sacred or philosophical meaning. Therefore, careful strategies are required so that culture can be marketed as a tourism appeal while maintaining its dignity and sanctity.

2.3. Participatory Communication in Tourism Development

As a discourse within Communication Science, the development of tourism villages based on local wisdom is inseparable from participatory communication processes. Participatory communication is a dialogic approach where all stakeholders (government, academics, private sector, and community) hold equal standing in formulating development agendas. In the context of CBT, communication does not flow unilaterally from the government to the community (top-down) but is circular and interactive . The success of tourism governance is largely determined by the effectiveness of communication in bridging differing interests, transferring management knowledge from the government to village drivers, and building an authentic destination branding narrative [6].

3. METHOD

This study is designed using a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach [7]. This approach was selected because the researchers intend to explore a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, specifically regarding cultural preservation strategies through tourism in the specific and complex region of Purwakarta Regency.

3.1. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques:

1. **In-depth Interview:**

   The key informant in this study was Mr. Fadlie, S.E., M.M. (NIP. 197707092009011004), who serves as a Junior Expert / Adyatama for Tourism and Creative Economy at DISPORAPARBUD Purwakarta Regency.



Figure 1 Mr Fadlie, S.E., M.M. as the key informant

   The informant was chosen based on his capacity, authority, and comprehensive understanding of the regional tourism development roadmap. Interviews focused on strategic policies, tourism village classifications, and local wisdom integration strategies.

2. **Descriptive Observation:**

   The researchers observed several cultural tourism destinations in Purwakarta, such as the architectural landscape in Kampung Tajur and the traditional Simping culinary production centers, to witness the on-ground implementation of CBT concepts.

3. **Documentation Study:**

   Reviewing official government documents, the informant's presentation materials (the document "Tourism as an Employment Opportunity" compiled by DISPORAPARBUD), and regional regulations, specifically Purwakarta Regency Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2023 concerning Tourism Villages, [8].

3.2. Data Analysis Techniques

The obtained data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, comprising three stages: data reduction (selecting and sorting relevant interview transcripts and documents), data display (compiling narratives and mapping policy strategies), and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, researchers employed source and method triangulation, where the informant's statements were confirmed against secondary data (regulatory documents) and field realities (observations).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data gathered from DISPORAPARBUD Purwakarta, the tourism sector in this region exhibits an impressive growth trajectory. While Purwakarta only had 32 tourism destinations a few years ago, by 2024, this number had surged to 62 actively operating primary destinations, with an additional 70 potential new attractions identified across various sub-districts. This exponential growth is not coincidental but the product of structured policy design responsive to local wisdom potentials.



Figure 2 Purwakarta Tourism Map

4.1. Policy and the Tourism Village Classification Roadmap

A monumental step by the Purwakarta Local Government in securing a legal umbrella for CBT development was the enactment of Regional Regulation (Perda) Number 1 of 2023 concerning Tourism Villages. This regulation provides legal certainty, standard operating guidelines, and legitimacy for village communities to manage their regional potentials autonomously.

Mr. Fadlie explained that the development of tourism villages in Purwakarta is not executed haphazardly but orchestrated through a measurable classification stage. There is a four-tier hierarchy applied to tourism villages:

1. **Pioneering Tourism Village (Desa Wisata Rintisan):**
   The phase where tourism awareness begins to grow. New cultural and natural tourism potentials are identified, but supporting infrastructure and community institutions (such as Pokdarwis - Tourism Awareness Groups) are still in their formative stages.
2. **Developing Tourism Village (Desa Wisata Berkembang):**
   At this stage, the village has a clear institutional structure. Tourist visits become routine, attraction management is operational, and the community begins to feel the economic impact of the tourism multiplier effect.
3. **Advanced Tourism Village (Desa Wisata Maju):**
   The tourism village is managed professionally with adequate infrastructure support. The village can conduct independent promotions through digital marketing communication, and local wisdom products are packaged with high-quality standards (e.g., hygiene standardization and souvenir/culinary packaging).
4. **Independent Tourism Village (Desa Wisata Mandiri):**
   This is the apex of the CBT pyramid. The village has achieved complete financial and managerial independence. Tourism becomes a primary recognized economic driver nationally or even internationally, product innovation occurs continuously, and the preservation of cultural heritage is guaranteed as it has become the community's livelihood.

4.2. Implementation of the 3K Communication Strategy (Communication, Coordination, Collaboration)

As part of the managerial strategy and conflict resolution in community-based tourism development, DISPORAPARBUD initiated the “3K Strategy”. From a Communication Science perspective, this strategy is highly relevant for unblocking information bottlenecks among stakeholders.

1. **Communication:**
   Creating an egalitarian dialogue space among the local government, traditional leaders, and tourism actors. Communication focuses on aligning the vision that tourism exists not to exploit culture but to preserve it. This includes disseminating the understanding of the “Sapta Pesona” principles (Safety, Order, Cleanliness, Coolness, Beauty, Politeness, and Memories) to grassroots tourism actors [9].
2. **Coordination:**
   Cross-sectoral policy synchronization (Silo-busting). Tourism cannot stand alone. DISPORAPARBUD coordinates with the Public Works Department for road infrastructure leading to tourism villages, the Cooperatives and SMEs Department for coaching souvenir artisans, and the Education Department for integrating “Tatanen di Bale Atikan” values into youth programs.
3. **Collaboration:**
   Building strategic partnerships (pentahelix) involving academics, business actors (local investors/corporate CSR), communities, government, and mass media. Collaboration ensures the burden of tourism development is shared, minimizing the risk of failure.

4.3. Objectification of Local Wisdom: The Case of Kampung Tajur and Simping

The successful integration of CBT and local wisdom is most evident in the preservation practices of both physical cultural forms (architecture) and non-physical forms (culinary and lifestyle).

First, the conservation of traditional architecture in Kampung Tajur, Pasanggrahan Village. Unlike tourism developments that build modern resorts uprooting communities from their origins, Kampung Tajur maintains traditional houses with the “Julang Ngapak” roof model. This roof, which widens on its sides resembling a bird flapping its wings, is not merely aesthetically pleasing but a manifestation of Sundanese architectural adaptation to the tropical climate [10]. Through the CBT scheme, traditional houses made of natural materials (bamboo, wood, palm fiber) function as

homestays. Tourists do not stay in homogeneous hotel rooms but live with local residents (host families), eat traditional meals, and participate in daily activities such as farming, making palm sugar, and pounding rice. This is a form of cultural heritage preservation through experiential tourism.

Second, the preservation of the traditional culinary "Simping." This typical Purwakarta snack has deep historical roots. Through collaboration between the artisan community and the government, Simping successfully gained recognition as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTB). This acknowledgment is not just a title but cultural capital capitalized to form the "Simping Tourism Village." Visiting tourists are offered educational tours to observe the Simping-making process, from the tapioca dough preparation to the traditional baking process. Flavor innovations are continuously developed by the community without losing the traditional manufacturing methods. This proves that local wisdom can be dynamic and responsive to contemporary market tastes.

4.4. The "Resilient Cultural Entrepreneurship" Model

Based on a comprehensive analysis of DISPORAPARBUD policies and field practices, this research proposes a conceptualization termed the **Resilient Cultural Entrepreneurship** model. This model posits that cultural heritage preservation will not survive long-term (resilient) in the modernization era if it relies solely on government subsidies or sentiments of past romanticism. Culture must be able to sustain itself.

Resilient Cultural Entrepreneurship positions village communities as cultural entrepreneurs. They are encouraged to possess tourism business literacy, digital marketing skills, and hospitality standards, but the core soul or primary product remains the authenticity of Sundanese local wisdom (Tri Tangtu philosophy, local architecture, arts, culinary). In this model, local wisdom acts as a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) making Purwakarta's tourism inimitable by other regions. Simultaneously, the economic revenue from tourism provides financial incentives for the younger generation in the village to stay and care for their ancestral cultural heritage, rather than engaging in massive urbanization to become laborers in industrial estates.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the integration of the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approach and local wisdom in Purwakarta Regency has proven to be a highly effective and comprehensive strategy for preserving cultural heritage. This success is inseparable from the strong synergy between local government regulations, specifically the enactment of Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2023 concerning Tourism Villages, and the active participation of grassroots communities. Through the implementation of the "3K Strategy" (Communication, Coordination, Collaboration) initiated by DISPORAPARBUD, participatory communication has successfully bridged the various interests of policymakers. The utilization of traditional "Julang Ngapak" houses in Kampung Tajur and the designation of Simping as an Intangible Cultural Heritage demonstrate that Sundanese local wisdom has not only been saved from extinction due to industrialization but also transformed into high-value economic capital. This research posits that Purwakarta is building a foundation of "Resilient Cultural Entrepreneurship," where cultural authenticity and economic innovation go hand in hand. It is highly recommended for stakeholders to continuously intensify the mentoring of Pioneering and Developing tourism villages, and to strengthen digital marketing communication literacy for CBT managers, ensuring Purwakarta's cultural heritage maintains a competitive edge in the post-crisis global tourism market.

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