

OPTIMIZING TOURISM PROMOTION THROUGH THE USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the optimization of tourism promotion through the utilization of cultural heritage by using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The study was conducted by selecting literature from academic databases such as Scopus, DOAJ, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "cultural heritage," "tourism marketing strategy," "cultural commodification," and "smart technology" within the time span of 2014-2024. The results showed that although the integration of cultural heritage in tourism marketing strategies successfully increased destination attractiveness and visitor engagement, challenges such as cultural commodification, overtourism, and disagreements between stakeholders still need to be addressed. A balance between cultural conservation and tourism development is a key element in an effective strategy, where the preservation of local cultural identity must be considered. In addition, the use of smart technology in the promotion of local culture is proven to attract tourists, but there is a gap in understanding the impact of social media and other technologies on destination image. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore more deeply the factors that influence the success of heritage-based tourism marketing strategies and how technology can be effectively integrated in such contexts.

Keywords : Tourism Promotion, Cultural Heritage, Tourism Marketing Strategy, Smart Technology in Tourism, Balance of Conservation and Development..

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sector that contributes significantly to global and national economic growth, being a major source of income as well as driving employment and infrastructure development (Khan et al., 2020). In Indonesia, this sector is one of the main pillars of the economy, utilizing natural, cultural and historical wealth (Anoegrajekti et al., 2021). To compete globally, tourism promotion must be optimized with creative and sustainable approaches, such as the utilization of local cultural heritage, which plays a vital role in enhancing the attractiveness of tourism destinations in Indonesia. (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020).

Tourism has great potential, but destination promotion faces increasingly complex challenges in the era of globalization, with intense competition between countries to attract international tourists (Chung et al., 2020). Traveler preferences have shifted to more authentic and culture-based experiences (Hunt, 2021). In addition, innovation in

marketing, especially through digital technology, is of key importance. Destinations that fail to adapt to modern marketing trends and optimally utilize local potential risk losing appeal, especially in Indonesia, where a diverse range of cultural heritage could be promoted to attract global tourists (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2023).

Local cultural heritage is a strategic asset in promoting tourism, encompassing traditions, art, architecture, and cuisine that offer an authentic experience for tourists (Kastenholz & Gronau, 2022). In Indonesia, cultural tourism is not only crucial for attracting international tourists but also for preserving local identity and contributing to regional development (Syafri et al., 2020). In fierce global competition, local culture serves as a differentiating element that enhances the attractiveness of tourist destinations (Sadowski & Wojcieszak, 2019). In addition to attracting tourists, culture-based tourism is also important for preserving heritage and maintaining community identity (Ruan et al., 2024). This research focuses on how utilizing Indonesia's rich cultural heritage can not only attract international visitors but also strengthen local economies and preserve cultural identity.

Cultural heritage is an effective marketing instrument in enhancing destination branding and enriching the tourist experience. The integration of cultural elements in marketing strategies allows destinations to differentiate themselves and attract a variety of audiences. In Indonesia, promoting unique cultural heritage elements such as traditional festivals, cuisine, and local arts through branding could create a competitive edge in the global tourism market (Sulistiono et al., 2022). In South Korea, traditional festivals and local cuisine contribute to branding that creates an attractive image for tourists (Son, 2023). Digital marketing also increases the visibility of cultural heritage through interactive campaigns (Wang, 2023). In Cañar, Ecuador, the cultural marketing plan involves the community, essential for protecting the heritage (Cristina Chimbaina Pillaga et al., 2022). However, challenges such as over-tourism and commodification need to be addressed to maintain the sustainability of cultural heritage.

Culture-based tourism promotion strategies utilize local cultural assets to enhance tourism, encourage community engagement, and sustainable development. The success of these strategies requires the collaboration of stakeholders, including government, communities, and the private sector, to revitalize local culture (Guamán et al., 2023). In Indonesia, stakeholder involvement in promoting local culture, especially in rural areas, is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of cultural tourism (Yanan et al., 2024). Initiatives such as participatory rural assessments strengthen cultural branding, such as in Kamal Village (Liang et al., 2021). Community branding by the Ternate Heritage Society and utilization of cultural elements, such as Taoism in Laoshan, can attract tourists and preserve culture (Salwa Hardi, 2023; Jia & Sutunyarak, 2022). However, challenges such as cultural assimilation and environmental impacts must be addressed to ensure long-term sustainability (Putraji et al., 2023).

Innovation plays an important role in tourism marketing, especially amid challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism companies adapt services and products to new customer needs through digital marketing and domestic tourism (Sheresheva et al., 2021). Destination innovation, which combines assimilation, differentiation, and integration, provides a competitive advantage (Wardani & Widodo, 2020). In the creative tourism industry, entrepreneurial orientation and organizational culture

influence innovation and performance Prima Lita et al., (2020), although the direct impact of innovation on performance is often insignificant, reflecting the complexity in tourism marketing.

The results showed gaps in the optimization of tourism promotion through the utilization of cultural heritage. Although cultural heritage is effective as a marketing tool, challenges such as overtourism and commodification still need to be addressed to maintain the sustainability of community values. Collaboration between stakeholders shows positive results, but understanding how to actively engage communities remains limited. Additionally, the lack of integration of innovation with cultural elements in marketing strategies poses a significant challenge. This research aims to fill the gap by exploring more effective strategies for utilizing cultural heritage in tourism promotion in Indonesia, with a particular focus on integrating digital strategies, stakeholder engagement, and innovation in preserving cultural authenticity while attracting international tourists.

METHODS

In this study, the main objective was to explore the utilization of cultural heritage as a tourism marketing instrument through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The literature search process was conducted systematically using databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ, with keywords such as “cultural heritage,” “tourism marketing,” and “cultural branding.” Literature published between 2014 and 2024 was the main focus to capture the latest developments in the utilization of cultural heritage in tourism. The choice of these primary databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ) was made to ensure comprehensive access to both peer-reviewed articles and grey literature, which is crucial for an in-depth analysis. These databases are widely recognized for their academic credibility and extensive coverage of tourism-related topics.

Inclusion criteria included studies that addressed the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism marketing, as well as research that focused on culture-based branding strategies. Conversely, the exclusion criteria included studies that were irrelevant to the topic or lacked methodological rigor. The practical application of inclusion and exclusion criteria was ensured by reviewing the abstracts and methodologies of all selected studies. However, it is important to note that the focus on English-language publications and international studies may introduce bias, as local or non-English studies were not extensively considered. In the selection stage, articles that meet the inclusion criteria were further evaluated for their methodological soundness and relevant data was extracted manually, including key results, methodology, and conclusions that support qualitative analysis. The extracted data will be analyzed to identify patterns, challenges, and opportunities in the application of cultural heritage as a tourism marketing instrument, focusing on the effectiveness of the strategies used. The research procedure can be seen in Figure 1.

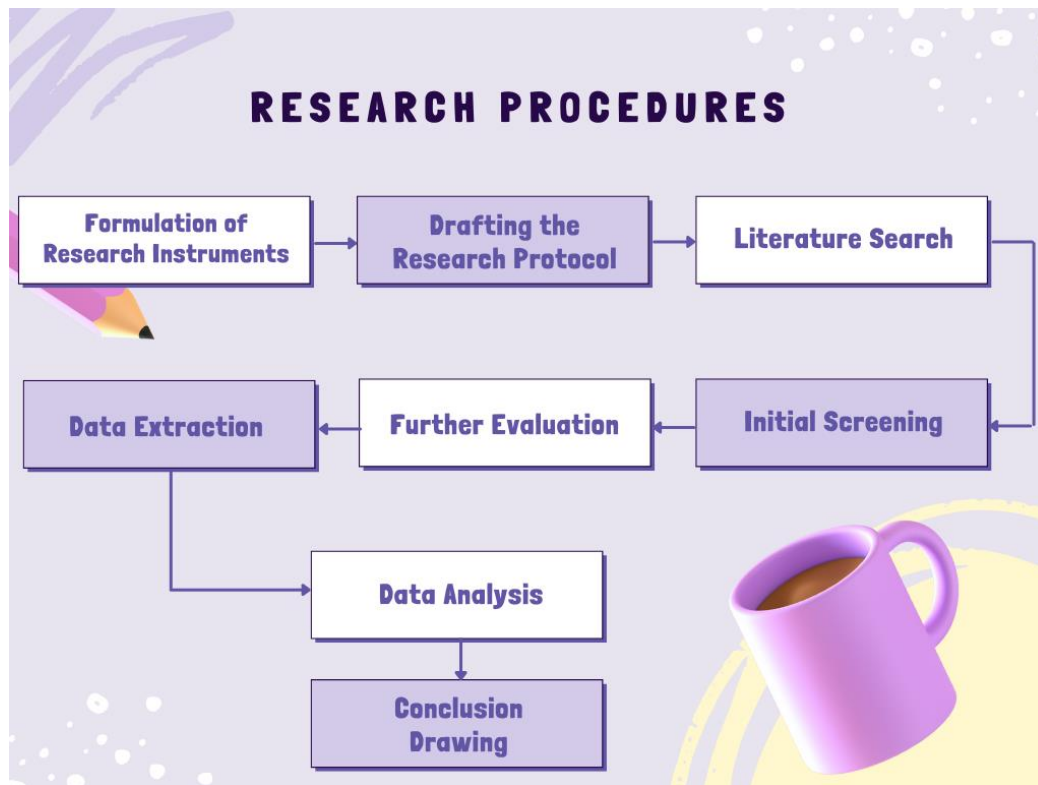


Figure 1. Research Procedure

Figure 1 explains the research procedure that begins with formulating a specific research instrument regarding the optimization of tourism promotion through the use of cultural heritage. The next step was to develop a research protocol that included setting inclusion and exclusion criteria and identifying data sources from platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ. Literature was systematically searched with related keywords, such as “cultural heritage,” “tourism marketing,” “culture-based branding,” and “community engagement.” Search results were then filtered by title and abstract to eliminate irrelevant articles. Articles that passed the initial screening were reviewed in more depth through a full read-through to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. Data from the articles are then extracted and analyzed to identify important findings related to tourism promotion optimization strategies, challenges faced, and opportunities that can be exploited. The results of this analysis will be used to provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of heritage-based tourism promotion strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the literature search, several relevant research findings have been identified to support the focus and objectives of this study. This research can be grouped based on several main focuses, namely: 1) the role of cultural heritage in increasing the attractiveness of tourist destinations, 2) effective marketing strategies for local cultural integration, 3) challenges in cultural preservation and tourism

development, 4) the importance of tourism policies that support sustainability, and 5) innovation in destination branding based on local wisdom.

Table 1. Focus and Insight into Research Outcomes according to Eligibility Criteria

No	Field or Focus	Names of Authors	Research Insights or Variables
1	Cultural Heritage and Tourism Attractions	(Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	The integration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) enriches the visitor experience and supports the local economy.
2	Tourism Policy	(Jangra <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	Good tourism policy can improve competitiveness and sustainable growth.
3	Technology in Tourism	(Pinke-Sziva <i>et al.</i> , 2024)	Smart technology can attract travelers to small destinations.
4	Cultural Branding	(Son, 2023; Andari <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Branding based on culture and local wisdom supports sustainability and tourist satisfaction.
5	Cultural Marketing	(Dr. S.K. Bhargava, 2022; Pranskūnienė & Zabulionienė, 2023)	Challenges to heritage integration include local identity and disagreements between stakeholders.
6	Balance between Conservation and Development	(Kausar & Gunawan, 2018; Adhika & Putra, 2021)	The challenge of maintaining a balance between cultural preservation and tourism development.
7	Innovation in Branding	(Jasni Dolah <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Innovative branding that emphasizes cultural stories improves destination perception.
8	Commodification of Culture	(Kuswardani <i>et al.</i> , 2023)	The risk of cultural commodification needs to be managed to maintain authenticity.
9	Message Consistency	(Castañeda-García <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	Consistency of messages across multiple communication channels is important for building brand equity.
10	A Case Study in Cultural Branding	(Kasdi <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Mastika & Nirmran, 2020)	A successful case example of building a heritage-based destination brand image.

Table 1 illustrates the focus and scope of the research results related to cultural heritage, tourism marketing, and branding strategies that can be used to enhance the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Each study provides important insights into how cultural heritage and local uniqueness can be leveraged in marketing and branding strategies, emphasizing the need for supportive policies, innovative technologies, and consistency in brand communication. In addition, challenges such as cultural commodification and the balance between preservation and tourism development are also key concerns in formulating effective strategies.

Cultural Heritage Can Increase the Attractiveness of Tourism Destinations

Cultural heritage enhances tourism appeal by offering unique experiences and supporting cultural exchange. The integration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in tourism strategies enriches visitor engagement, supports local economies, and cultural preservation (Zhang et al., 2020). However, the relationship between cultural heritage and tourist satisfaction requires further synthesis, as the impact of different cultural elements on visitor engagement is not fully explored (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022). Good tourism policies can improve competitiveness and ensure sustainable growth (Jangra et al., 2021). Smart technologies in heritage tourism can also attract tourists to small destinations (Pinke-Sziva et al., 2024). However, challenges such as overtourism and commodification of culture must be addressed to maintain the authenticity and integrity of heritage.

Cultural heritage plays an important role in enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations, such as the roof replacement ceremony in Hitu that preserves cultural identity and boosts the local economy (Uwen & Lasaiba, 2022). City branding such as “World Batik City” in Pekalongan effectively promotes cultural assets and attracts tourists (Faradies, 2020). These cultural assets become the main attraction for tourist destinations (Kendir, 2020), and well-managed cultural centers can enrich the tourist experience, increase satisfaction, and support sustainable destination management (Zeng, 2017).

The research findings indicate that cultural heritage plays a crucial role in enhancing the attractiveness of tourism destinations by offering unique experiences and supporting the local economy. The integration of intangible cultural heritage in tourism strategies enriches visitor engagement, while branding such as “World Batik City” in Pekalongan is effective in attracting tourists. However, a deeper exploration of the relationship between cultural heritage branding and visitor satisfaction is needed to fully understand the impact. Good tourism policies and the application of smart technologies are also needed to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of destinations. With the right approach, cultural heritage can be a major attraction in sustainable tourism development.

Challenges in Integrating Cultural Heritage into Tourism Marketing Strategy

The integration of cultural heritage in tourism marketing faces challenges from local identity, stakeholder interests, and sustainable practices. Disagreements between managers, stakeholders, and local communities can result in inconsistent marketing strategies (Dr. S.K. Bhargava, 2022). Critical exploration of these challenges, particularly regarding local community involvement and stakeholder coordination, is needed to clarify how these barriers affect the success of heritage tourism strategies (Hatipoglu et al., 2016). Approaches that accommodate local and regional perspectives are needed to create harmony (Pranskūnienė & Zabulionienė, 2023). Moreover, balancing tourism growth with heritage preservation is an important challenge, as tourism can damage cultural sites (Хетарцова & Khetagurova, 2017). Nonetheless, these challenges offer opportunities for innovative marketing strategies that strengthen cultural exchange and community engagement.

The integration of cultural heritage in tourism marketing faces challenges such as maintaining a balance between cultural conservation and tourism development Kausar & Gunawan, (2018), as well as maintaining local values while enhancing the tourist experience, and managing the commodification of cultural landscapes (Adhika & Putra, 2021). Effective strategies include cultural events to promote local traditions and interpretations that convey local wisdom (Ayunda & Megantari, 2021). While tourism supports cultural preservation, challenges in maintaining authenticity and economic benefits remain, so careful planning is needed to address these (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2021).

The results show that challenges in integrating cultural heritage into tourism marketing strategies include disagreements between managers, stakeholders and local communities, which can result in inconsistent strategies. A balance between cultural conservation and tourism development is essential, as enhancing the tourist experience often conflicts with preserving local values. Further analysis of how local communities perceive the impact of tourism and their role in tourism marketing would provide valuable insights. Despite the challenges, there are opportunities to develop innovative marketing strategies, such as cultural events that promote local traditions. Therefore, careful planning and involvement of all stakeholders is necessary to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage in the context of tourism.

A Culture-Based Branding Strategy Can Differentiate a Tourism Destination from Its Competitors

Culture-based branding strategies are essential to differentiate tourist destinations through unique cultural elements. For example, South Korea utilizes festivals and historical sites to create an attractive brand image, where the authenticity of the experience increases tourist satisfaction (Son, 2023). The impact of branding strategies on tourist loyalty and return intentions should be further explored (Liu et al., 2020). Local wisdom and community involvement also support the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism products (Andari et al., 2022). Innovative branding in

Penang emphasizes cultural stories to improve destination perception (Jasni Dolah et al., 2022), while social media can strengthen competitiveness by promoting local culture (Kuswardani et al., 2023). However, the risk of commodification of cultural elements needs to be watched so as not to damage their authenticity and value.

Cultural branding strategies can differentiate tourist destinations by utilizing authentic social realities, including culture, values, and unique advantages (Poti & Hendrayady, 2020). Consistency of messages across different communication channels is essential in building destination brand equity (Castañeda-García et al., 2020). For example, Demak Regency emphasizes the history of the Wali Songo to build its image as the City of Guardians, attracting tourists who seek an authentic halal tourism experience (Kasdi et al., 2018). In Bali, ecological tourism villages develop brands based on Hindu cosmology and the concept of “Tri Hita Karana,” which emphasizes authenticity (Mastika & Nimran, 2020). The integration of cultural elements in destination branding strategies is essential for creating attractive tourism offerings.

The research findings indicate that culture-based branding strategies are essential to differentiate tourist destinations by utilizing unique cultural elements. The authenticity of the cultural experience enhances brand image and tourist satisfaction. For example, South Korea and Penang successfully promote local culture, while Demak Regency relies on the history of Wali Songo to build the image of Kota Wali. In Bali, the tourist village brand focuses on Hindu cosmology. However, challenges such as cultural commodification need to be managed to maintain authenticity. Community involvement and consistent branding messages are key to successful culture-based branding strategies. With community engagement and consistency of message, cultural branding can provide a competitive advantage for tourist destinations.



Figure 2: Development of Research Variables

Figure 2 illustrates the development of research variables regarding the role of cultural heritage in enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Cultural heritage serves as a tourist attraction by offering unique experiences and supporting cultural exchange, as well as preserving cultural identity. The integration of intangible cultural heritage in tourism policy not only enriches visitor engagement, but also supports cultural preservation and the local economy. Culture-based branding is becoming an effective marketing strategy, helping to promote cultural assets and improve destination competitiveness. However, challenges such as overtourism and commodification of culture need to be addressed to preserve the authenticity of heritage. In addition, technological innovation and the use of social media can strengthen the promotion of local culture, improving the consistency of messages across different communication channels. Case examples such as the “World Batik City” in Pekalongan and the “Tri Hita Karana” concept in Bali show how the implementation of these strategies can enhance the tourist experience and drive destination sustainability.

Conclusion

The results of the research on the integration of cultural heritage in tourism marketing strategies show that while this approach has been successful in increasing destination attractiveness and visitor engagement, there are still challenges that need to be overcome, particularly with regard to cultural commodification, overtourism, and disagreements between stakeholders. A balance between cultural conservation and tourism development is a key element in an effective strategy, where the preservation of local cultural identity must be kept in mind. In addition, the theoretical implications of these findings suggest that more nuanced approaches to branding and marketing are needed, particularly those that incorporate sustainable tourism principles. In addition, the use of smart technology in the promotion of local culture is proven to attract tourists, but there is a gap in understanding the impact of social media and other technologies on destination image. This highlights the need for future studies to examine the long-term effects of digital marketing and its influence on the authenticity of cultural heritage sites. Therefore, it is recommended that future research focus on the influence of the use of digital technology and social media on culture-based marketing strategies in various regional contexts to deepen the understanding of how these elements affect tourism attractiveness and sustainability. Future studies could also employ quantitative methodologies or case studies to measure the actual impact of these technologies on local communities and tourism industries.

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