



Sustainable Cultural Tourism Innovation: Cow Cart in Palbapang Village

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the sustainable cultural tourism innovation using cow carts in Palbapang Village, Yogyakarta. The background highlights the importance of integrating sustainability into tourism development to preserve cultural and environmental heritage. A qualitative approach was employed, involving in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis to gather comprehensive data from stakeholders such as cow cart owners, tourism managers, tourists, and local residents. The findings indicate that the cow cart initiative is well-received by the community, enhancing local pride and providing economic benefits by boosting local small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The initiative also reduces environmental impact by minimizing reliance on motor vehicles and promoting waste management and nature conservation. The discussion emphasizes the importance of community participation and government support in improving infrastructure and training to ensure high-quality services. The study concludes that cow cart tourism effectively promotes sustainable cultural tourism, preserving cultural heritage while fostering economic growth and environmental conservation. This model demonstrates how traditional practices can be integrated with modern tourism demands to achieve long-term sustainability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the significant economic sectors in supporting a country's economic growth (Bangun, 2024). As a country known for its cultural diversity, amazing nature, and rich historical heritage, Indonesia has great potential to become a beautiful tourist destination (Firdiansyah, et al., 2024). Every corner of Indonesia has an unparalleled attraction, has its own uniqueness and characteristics so that it can attract tourists to visit. In addition, for tourists who seek authenticity and uniqueness is also helped by the diversity of cultures and traditions seen in art, dance, food, and traditional ceremonies. Tourist attractions in Indonesia can offer a mesmerizing and unforgettable

experience for those who want to explore and feel its natural and cultural wonders (Ramdhani & Andriana, 2023).

With good management, Indonesia's natural beauty and cultural richness can become a sustainable source of income that provides significant economic benefits to the country and its people (Kristiana & Nathalia, 2021). The contribution of tourism to foreign exchange is large enough to make each region now promote existing natural tourism or develop sustainable tourism to attract tourists to come to their area. The value of tourism foreign exchange until September 2023 is recorded at 10.46 billion US dollars with the contribution of tourism GDP estimated at 3.8 percent, the added value of the economy of IDR 1,050 trillion, the export value of the economy of 17.38 billion US dollars, and the number of domestic tourist movements of 688.78 million trips until October 2023 (Hendriyani, 2023).

Along with its rapid growth, tourism faces environmental, cultural, and social preservation problems. Therefore, the concept of sustainable tourism becomes more important when developing tourism destinations by incorporating sustainability principles (Irawan, 2023). In the midst of global competition and challenges, the importance of integrating the concept of sustainability into tourism development is important so that local communities can experience long-term benefits. Sustainable tourism development is a widely known concept in tourism development. Sustainable tourism itself is tourism that takes into account the current and future economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts (Wibowo & Belia, 2023).

Sustainable tourism is currently being promoted to minimize environmental impact and maximize socio-economic benefits in tourist destinations (Kumaji, Hakim, & Pangestuti, 2021). According to Frans Mardi H. (2003) sustainable tourism utilizes experience in a conservative rather than exploitative way that prevents the commercialization of nature and culture, in this context culture is defined as a set of norms, morals, values, and rules that humans use to understand their environment, consisting of natural, social, and built environments (culture), and used to encourage behavior as social beings. Cultural tourism is an important part of the concept of sustainable tourism that prioritizes the preservation and appreciation of the destination's cultural heritage. Cultural tourism is the journey of a person or group to see, research, know, and understand things that are different from everyday life (esotism) carried out within a certain period of time (Ardiwidjaja, 2020).

Speaking of cultural tourism, there is one village in the city of the Special Region of Yogyakarta which in 2018 officially became a cultural pioneer village, namely Palbapang Village located in Bantul regency. The origin of Palbapang Village itself cannot be separated from the story of the Mangir Kingdom which experienced a dispute with the Mataram Kingdom in the Ancient Mataram era. The name Palbapang itself has a meaning, namely Pal means boundary, batok, place and Bapang means watched, guarded. The name refers to the story of the ruler of Mangir at that time, Bagus Wanabaya or also known as Ki Ageng Mangir. On the way to the Kingdom of Mataram, Ki Ageng Mangir was handed over to the Mataram soldiers who would escort him. The area was then named Palbapang, which means place or delivery boundary. Palbapang village consists of 10 combinations. These villages include Kadirojo, Karasan, Ngringinan, Peni, Serut, Bolon, Dagaran, Taskombang, Sumuran, and Karang Asem (Admin, Sejarah Palbapang, 2022).

With its status as a cultural pioneer village, Palbapang Village tries to preserve its history and culture through various ways. Tourists can see documentation of Palbapang's past at the Palbapang terminal and Gie Art Space, and many people in the village still remember the stories and origins of the village. In addition, there is the Bantul Museum of the Dutch East Indies Colonial Period which houses various artifacts and historical objects from the Dutch East Indies colonial period. Palbapang Village is also famous for its regular cultural activities to commemorate history and preserve local

culture. One of the most famous is Gelar Seni Budaya, which is held every year as an event to celebrate the anniversary of Palbapang Village. The event usually features traditional dances as well as Reog and Jathilan arts. The purpose of this event is not only to attract tourists to Palbapang, but also to foster a sense of cultural bonding and togetherness among the villagers.

As a cultural pioneer village, Palbapang Village innovates by combining tourism activities with sustainable principles, offering an innovation in cultural tourism through the use of Ox Carts as a unique means of tourist transportation. So the representation of history and culture to tourists is packaged through cultural tours using ox carts, tourists who take this tour are invited to visit historical locations in the village and listen to explanations from local guides about the history and traditions of the village. The use of ox carts as a means of tourist transportation has great potential to increase local community participation, strengthen social bonds between tourists and locals, and enrich the tourist experience with genuine local wisdom. By using ox carts, tourists can empower the cultural values and traditions that exist in Palbapang while still maintaining the uniqueness and authenticity of tourist destinations.

Ox cart tourism itself is a unique type of adventure that can be found in several places in Indonesia such as Yogyakarta, Solo, and Bali. This tour involves traveling in carts pulled by cows across forests and countryside, thus giving tourists the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature while enjoying the different rural atmosphere of the city (Cininta, Sekarlangit, & Wicaksono, 2023). Ox carts are part of the intangible cultural heritage that not only represents the traditional way of life but is also considered to have great potential to improve the quality of sustainable cultural tourism in Palbapang Village. This initiative aims to revive almost forgotten local traditions and integrate them with the modern need for inclusive and environmentally friendly tourism, as well as one to maintain Yogyakarta's strong cultural values. The purpose of writing this article is to see in more detail about the innovation of Palbapang village ox carts can be an effective tool to promote cultural tourism that not only strengthens the local economy but also protects the environment and culture.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In analyzing the innovation of ox cart cultural tourism in Palbapang Village through the lens of Intercultural Communication Theory, this study uses a qualitative approach to dig deeper into the dynamics and influence of intercultural interactions. Qualitative methods are chosen because they provide flexibility in understanding individual perceptions, experiences, and responses to this complex and dynamic cultural phenomenon. To collect relevant data, the study implemented three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews will be conducted with various stakeholders, including ox cart owners, tour managers, tourists, and local residents, using a semi-structured approach to gain in-depth insights into their interactions and perceptions regarding this tourism activity. Data collection in this study is using participatory observation, in participatory observation, researchers are involved in the daily activities of people who are observed or used as a source of research data. Researchers participate in retrieving data sources while observing, as well as experiencing ups and downs (Sejati, 2019)

Participatory observation is carried out directly at tourist sites to observe the interactions that occur between tourists and local communities, as well as to understand the cultural context in which the activity takes place. The duration of participatory observation itself is carried out within 3 hours in one day. In addition, document analysis will involve reviewing promotional materials, social media content, and related publications to understand how ox cart tourism in Palbapang Village is promoted and perceived. Research samples are selected through purposive sampling,

purposive sampling is a sampling technique of data sources with certain considerations. In this particular con-sideration for example is that the person is considered to know best about what we expect, or perhaps he as a ruler so that it will make it easier for the researcher to explore the object or social situation under study (Sugiyono, 2013).

Thus ensuring that the participants involved have significant direct knowledge or experience of the research topic. It aims to collect extensive and in-depth data from multiple perspectives. Data analysis will be carried out with thematic analysis techniques, where the data obtained will be encoded and analyzed to find the main themes related to intercultural interaction. This process will help in identifying how such interactions affect the perceptions, values, and customs of both parties involved. This study also emphasizes ethical aspects by ensuring all participants provide informed consent, as well as main-taining their confidentiality and anonymity at all stages of the study. Using this approach, the study aims to provide a holistic and ethical understanding of the influence of inter-cultural interaction in the context of ox cart tourism in Palbapang Village, making an important contribution to the study of intercultural communication in the context of cultural tourism.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The people of Palbapang Village welcomed the tourism initiative using ox carts as an innovative way to preserve and promote local culture.



Figure 2. Community Comments on Bullock Cart Promotional Content



Figure 3. Community Comments on Bullock Cart Promotional Content



Figure 4. Community Comments on Bullock Cart Promotional Content

This initiative is also seen as an effort to reduce the environmental impact commonly generated by conventional tourism that relies on motor vehicles. Local

residents actively participate in providing services and maintaining the authenticity of cultural experiences for visitors, which increases their pride in the local culture.



Figure 5. Ox Cart Trip

Source : *Researcher Documentation (2024)*

In the interview, Mr. Agus, an ox cart owner, stated, "I feel proud to be able to show this part of our unique tradition to the outside world. It's not just about earning extra income, it's more about preserving our ancestral heritage." In addition, Ibu Sari, a trader at the local market, added, "This activity brings more visitors who are interested in the uniqueness of our culture, and it helps small businesses like mine thrive." These two interviews highlight how oxcart-based activities have strengthened the sense of community and cultural identity in Palbapang Village, as well as providing positive economic impacts for residents.

The Palbapang District Government recognizes the importance of sustainable tourism development and fully supports this ox cart-based tourism activity. The government plans to allocate funds to improve road infrastructure and public facilities that support these activities, as well as provide training for ox cart owners to improve service quality. This plan is expected to strengthen Palbapang's position as a unique and sustainable cultural tourism destination. According to Pak Joko, Head of the local Tourism Office, "We see great potential in this activity to bring in more tourists and at the same time promote environmental sustainability. We are committed to not only providing funding, but also ensuring that all aspects of this activity run smoothly and professionally." He also added that, "Infrastructure construction such as the addition of dedicated lanes for ox carts and the improvement of facilities around tourist sites will begin soon to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all visitors." This interview shows the government's active support in developing tourism that not only boosts the local economy but also preserves cultural values and environmental sustainability.



Figure 6. Ox Cart Trip Participants
Source : Researcher Documentation (2024)

The use of ox carts as a means of tourism has significantly increased income for ox cart owners and various micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Palbapang Village. This activity encourages increased sales of local products such as traditional foods, handicrafts, and souvenirs. The increase in visitors has also had a positive impact on other related sectors such as accommodation and local transport.

Mr. Alip, the owner of the ox cart, shared, "Since the program started, I have seen a noticeable increase in the number of tourists wanting to use the ox cart. This not only increases my income, but also helps me hire more locals to help in my day-to-day operations." Meanwhile, Ibu Rina, owner of a food stall near the tourist route, stated, "With more visitors coming, I have to increase our traditional food production. Our income has doubled since ox carts became popular." Furthermore, Pak Arif, manager of a local homestay, added, "We have received more guests who stay longer to enjoy the local cultural experience through ox cart tours. This helps us expand our services and improve the quality of accommodation."

The initiative has increased social interaction between local communities and visitors, enriching cultural exchanges. Local communities have greater opportunities to interact and share elements of their culture with visitors, which not only reinforces community identity but also builds better intercultural respect and understanding. These activities also strengthen social relationships within communities as they work together in managing and providing tourism services. Nyoman, a traditional artist in the village, revealed, "Since this ox cart tourism has grown, I have had more opportunities to showcase our dance and music arts. It's a good platform to introduce our culture to the world." In addition, Ibu Anita, a trader at the local market, added, "This activity brought many visitors who were interested in learning to make local handicrafts. This not only helps sales, but also allows us to share knowledge and skills that have been part of our lives." Pak Budi, the local community leader, stated, "We have seen an increase in cooperation between residents since ox carts became the main attraction. This helps us unite efforts to improve the quality of services and facilities we offer to visitors, while still maintaining our cultural values."

Ox carts as a mode of tourist transportation have a low impact on the environment, reducing dependence on motor vehicles that typically result in higher carbon emissions and noise pollution. In addition, the initiative encourages the public and visitors to be more concerned about environmental issues, such as waste management and nature conservation. Pak Wayan, an ox cart operator, shared his

experience, "We use ox carts which not only reduces pollution, but also as a way to show visitors how we in this village appreciate nature." He added, "This initiative makes us and our visitors more aware of the importance of maintaining a clean and healthy environment." Ibu Lestari, the manager of a local conservation program, explains, "With the increase in tourist visits, we are in-troducing better recycling and waste management programs throughout the village. Visitors are invited to participate in conservation activities, such as tree planting and river cleanup, which have a direct positive impact on our environment."

The tourists who visit a particular location and seek to improve the economy, society, and environment of the place are known as sustainable tourism (Mariati, 2023). One of Indonesia's tourist attractions is its culture, which attracts tourists, especially those with a special interest in local culture and art (Fatmah, et al., 2024). Sustainable cultural tourism is an important concept in the modern tourism industry, whose purpose is not only to promote the cultural richness of the region, but also to preserve, preserve and develop the existing cultural heritage. Palbapang Village located in Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta presents continuous innovation in cultural tourism by using ox carts as a distinctive and unique element. Ox cart tourism in Palbapang Village not only revives important traditional cultural elements but also opens up space for significant intercultural interaction. The reason for choosing a cow cart as a tourist attraction in Palbapang is that the cow cart does not require fuel, because this transportation is one of the most beneficial modes for the environment, and the cow dung can also be used as organic fertilizer for plants (Dyanningra, 2018). Ox carts are one of the important means of transportation for some Indonesian people, especially Javanese people in ancient times (Novitasari, 2021).

Yogyakarta Ox Cart is one of Indonesia's Intangible cultural heritage originating from the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. Yogyakarta Ox Cart has been established since 2019, and is included in the domain of Traditional Craft Skills and Proficiency, when referring to the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which has been ratified through Presidential Regulation Number 78 of 2007 concerning the ratification of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Admin, GEROBAK SAPI YOGYAKARTA SEBAGAI WARISAN BUDAYA TAKBENDA INDONESIA, 2020). Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 106 of 2013 Article 1 that Indo-nesian Intangible Cultural Heritage is the various results of practice, embodiment, ex-pression of knowledge and skills, related to the culture. A field that is continuously passed from one generation to the next through preservation, reproduction and cultural results in the form of Intangible Culture after going through the process of identifying Intangible Culture. The ox cart is considered as one of the historic traditional transportation because it became an important symbol in the struggle for independence of the Republic of Indonesia, the ox cart is also a symbol of hard work, togetherness and simplicity for the ox cart drivers so that the ox cart is an important cultural symbol to be maintained and preserved for the next generation. "Bajingan" is a term for bullock cart drivers (Ardani, Rahmawati, & Rachmedita, 2023).

The country of Indonesia is one of the countries that is rich in culture and diversity of customs. The diversity and uniqueness of culture in Indonesia is one of the things that attracts others to learn about it and this is included in the category of sustainable cultural tourism (Sukaris, Kurniawan, & Kurniawan, 2023). A visit to Palbapang Village offers an opportunity for tourists from diverse cultures to participate directly in Palbapang's own traditions. Through this authentic experience, visitors not only witness the uniqueness of ox carts as a means of transportation but also understand the deep meaning behind them. In addition to cultural understanding, tourists will also learn the history of this village, Dutch colonial relics are still well pre-

served and provide valuable insights into the past. From the historical Stoomwals, Cagak Aniem from the colonial Dutch East Indies, the Dutch Museum which stores colonial artifacts, to the Dutch well and Palbapang train station which is now converted into a terminal (Admin, SEJARAH, 2022). These interactions not only enrich their travel experience but also encourage deeper intercultural and historical understanding, helping to bridge differences and increase appreciation of cultural diversity.

The understanding of tourists about cultural diversity is discussed in communication science, namely the theory of intercultural communication, this theory is a strong foundation in studying cross-cultural interactions. Intercultural communication is defined as a communication situation between individuals or groups with different language and cultural backgrounds. It is derived from the following basic definition: communication is a positive relationship built between people through language, and intercultural means a communication relationship built between people of different cultures (Djafar, 2019). One of the key aspects of the theory of intercultural communication is the exchange of values and customs (Fitria, 2024).

Through interaction with the local community during ox cart tours, tourists can learn values such as togetherness, hospitality, and sustainability. Instead, local communities are exposed to a variety of perspectives that bring a new understanding of their own cultural practices and how these are valued by outsiders. It can also be an opportunity to revisit and reinforce cultural values that may be in danger of being forgotten. These interactions are further explained through memorable experiences shared between tourists and local communities. For example, the participation of tourists in the traditional process of pulling carts, or visiting people's homes to enjoy traditional food, creates learning moments that are not only entertaining but also educational. These moments facilitate a deeper exchange of knowledge and help reduce prejudices or misunderstandings.

Intercultural communication theory also recognizes the role of media in shaping and mediating cultural experiences. Mass media provide a lot of new information and knowledge. This will increase human understanding of the characteristics of other cultures. The more human understanding of other cultures, the more effective intercultural communication occurs (Halik, 2019). In this context, the promotion of ox cart tours through social media or other platforms can influence how the experience is viewed prior to physical arrival. Media content created by tour managers or visitors can be an effective tool to spread knowledge and increase interest and appreciation of local culture. Positive interactions can strengthen commitment to environmental conservation and social sustainability, as reflected in conservation and preservation efforts adopted by the people of Palbapang Village. In line with this, tourists learn to appreciate and participate in these efforts, taking home lessons about the importance of conservation and sustainability.



Figure 7. Ox Cart Content on YouTube Kalurahan Palbapang

4. CONCLUSION

This initiative is not only a relevant innovation but also has great potential for further development. Through a qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, the study revealed various positive aspects resulting from the application of ox carts as a cultural tourism tool. One of the main findings was the positive response from the people of Palbapang Village to this initiative. People see ox carts as an important symbol of their cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. Ox carts not only serve as a traditional means of transportation but also as an integral part of the village's cultural identity. Through this initiative, people feel proud to be able to maintain the traditions of their ancestors while introducing them to tourists. The active participation of citizens in providing ox cart services and authentic cultural experiences for visitors demonstrates a deep involvement and commitment to cultural preservation.

The initiative also has a significant economic impact on local communities. The use of ox carts as a tourist attraction has increased the income of villagers, especially for ox cart owners and related small and medium enterprises (SMEs), such as traditional food vendors and local artisans. This initiative creates new job opportunities and improves the lives of local people. Government support in the form of infrastructure improvements and training also plays an important role in ensuring the economic success of these innovations. The use of ox carts helps reduce the carbon footprint generated by conventional tourism which often relies on motor vehicles. Ox carts, as an environmentally friendly means of transportation, produce no greenhouse gas emissions and support nature conservation efforts. In addition, the initiative encourages better waste management and other conservation practices, such as afforestation and maintenance of natural areas. Some recommendations can be given for further development. First, there needs to be more intensive promotion to attract more domestic and foreign tourists. Second, continuous training for villagers in terms of tourism management and tourist services is very important to maintain service quality. Third, governments and stakeholders need to continue to support these initiatives by providing resources and policies that support sustainability.

Overall, this study shows that ox cart tourism in Palbapang Village is an effective model for integrating traditional practices with the needs of sustainable modern tourism. This initiative not only preserves local culture and has a positive economic impact on the community but also supports environmental conservation efforts. With the right support

and active participation from all parties, this tourism model has great potential to be applied in other regions in Indonesia as well as in other countries that have similar cultural wealth. Due to the limitations of the qualitative method and purposive sampling used in this study, the results may not be widely generalizable. In addition, the short period of participatory observation may not have fully demonstrated the deeper interactions and cultural dynamics among tourism actors and the local community. Future research should extend the observation period to gain a more in-depth and representative understanding of the impact of cultural tourism using ox carts in Palbapang Village. In addition, future research could consider quantitative methods to measure economic and social impacts more accurately and thoroughly, as well as to study the perceptions of tourists from different cultural backgrounds.

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