

Research Article

Cultural Preservation Strategy Through Tourism : A Case Study of the Surakarta Palace

Dewi Amelia Lestari^{1*}, Ersyafaat Huda², Johny Subarkah³, and Arie Restaman⁴

¹ Indonusa Polytechnic of Surakarta, Indonesia; email: dewaamelia@poltekindonusa.ac.id

² Indonusa Polytechnic of Surakarta, Indonesia; email: ersyafaathuda@poltekindonusa.ac.id

³ Indonusa Polytechnic of Surakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Indonusa Polytechnic of Surakarta, Indonesia

* Author's correspondence : Dewi Amelia Lestari

Abstract: This research explores cultural preservation strategies through the development of the tourism sector, using the Surakarta Palace as a case study. The Surakarta Palace, a cultural heritage site in Central Java with significant historical and cultural value, plays a vital role in preserving Javanese traditions while contributing to regional tourism growth. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative method with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that the Surakarta Palace actively preserves culture through various initiatives such as organizing traditional ceremonies, staging classical Javanese art performances (like gamelan and wayang), and managing museums that house historical artifacts and royal collections. These strategies serve not only to maintain cultural continuity but also to increase the attractiveness of the palace as a cultural tourism destination. Despite these efforts, several challenges remain. These include limited financial resources, minimal use of digital media for promotion, and the lack of public awareness—especially among younger generations—regarding the importance of cultural heritage. To address these challenges, the study emphasizes the need for integrated collaboration between the government, the Surakarta Palace institution, and the surrounding community. Strengthening digital-based promotional strategies and educational outreach is also considered essential to increase public engagement and sustainable tourism impact. In conclusion, the Surakarta Palace serves as a strategic model for cultural preservation within the tourism framework. By improving stakeholder cooperation and adapting to technological advances, cultural heritage can be preserved effectively while supporting local economic development through tourism. Therefore, cultural preservation and tourism development should be positioned as complementary efforts, where the sustainability of both depends on strategic planning, inclusive participation, and adaptive innovation in facing the dynamic demands of modern tourism.

Keywords: Collaboration; Culture; Heritage; Strategy; Tourism.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is a strategic sector in Indonesia's economic development. It serves as a key driver of national economic growth and provides employment. This sector contributes significantly to increasing regional income and promoting local culture globally. Cultural preservation plays a crucial role in sustainable tourism development. Cultural preservation is a crucial aspect of sustainable tourism development. [1] Culture not only serves as a marker of a society's identity, but also holds significant educational and economic value when optimally developed through the tourism sector.

Solo, or administratively Surakarta, is a city in Central Java province known as the center of Javanese culture. Solo boasts a rich cultural heritage that remains vibrant and alive in the lives of its people to this day. One of the cultural icons that represents the nobility of Javanese culture is the Surakarta Palace. The Surakarta Palace is not only a symbol of history and architectural heritage from the past, but also a center of Javanese culture and the preservation of traditional arts, transforming it into a major cultural tourist attraction in Surakarta. [2] Through various activities such as traditional dance performances, wayang

performances, traditional ceremonies, and other artistic performances, the Surakarta Palace actively maintains and transmits Javanese culture to modern society, including the younger generation and domestic and international tourists. This serves as a foundation for preserving cultural heritage and introducing the richness of traditions to the public.

However, the reality on the ground shows that cultural preservation faces various challenges. Internal challenges include a decline in interest in local culture among the younger generation. The influence of foreign cultures and globalization is seen as a contemporary trend by the younger generation compared to traditional arts. Furthermore, limited human resources, supporting facilities, and inadequate operational funds are major obstacles to managing cultural preservation.[3].

Meanwhile, from an external perspective, the emergence of excessive cultural commercialization practices can lead to a reduction in the meaning of culture from sacred to mere entertainment due to a lack of education for tourists.[4] If left unchecked, this risks the erosion of authentic cultural values and alienation of local communities from their own culture. Furthermore, tourism practices can lead to overtourism, where excessive numbers of tourists threaten cultural and environmental sustainability. Therefore, a strategic approach to managing cultural tourism is necessary to maintain harmony.

2. Literature Review

Cultural Preservation

Cultural preservation is an effort made to maintain and safeguard cultural values so that they do not become extinct as time goes by or are replaced by foreign cultures, especially amidst the rapid flow of globalization.[5] Cultural preservation is crucial because it is part of a nation's identity and heritage. Culture reflects the values, traditions, norms, and outlooks on life that have been passed down from generation to generation. Culture is not only a symbol of collective identity but also a fundamental foundation for shaping national character. Losing culture means losing historical roots and future direction. Furthermore, a preserved culture has economic value, particularly in the development of the tourism sector. A well-preserved local culture can become a unique and sustainable tourist attraction.

Cultural preservation is not merely a ceremonial endeavor, but rather an ongoing process that demands a focused strategy that adapts to the dynamics of the times. Cultural preservation strategies need to be implemented in depth, including digitalization, documentation, early cultural education, strengthening the role of cultural institutions, and the involvement of indigenous communities.[6] Without real intervention, many cultural elements face extinction. Limited resources, a lack of supportive policies, and a lack of government support hinder the process of cultural preservation.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is a form of tourism activity that focuses on visiting destinations that have cultural value such as customs, historical sites, religious ceremonies and other forms of cultural heritage.[7] Cultural tourism offers many benefits, both economically and socially, as well as through cultural preservation. Cultural preservation provides incentives for local communities to preserve traditions and cultural heritage, boosts the local economy through job creation and increased income. Cultural exchange can strengthen intercultural understanding between tourists and local communities.[8].

The Relationship between Tourism and Cultural Preservation

Tourism and cultural preservation are closely related and mutually influence each other. Cultural tourism is a form of tourism based on local cultural heritage, not only serving as a means of promoting culture to visiting tourists but also having the potential to encourage cultural preservation, both directly and indirectly.[9].

Traditions, cultural sites, and traditional rituals are often attractions in tourism. When local culture is made a tourist attraction, and there is encouragement from the community to preserve these cultural forms, it prevents extinction and remains attractive to visitors. Tourism can serve as a medium for revitalizing cultures that have been eroded by modernization. If tourism is not managed properly, it can negatively impact cultural

preservation.[10]Excessive commercialization of culture can alter the original values or meaning of a tradition. Therefore, a sustainable, community-based approach to cultural tourism development is needed, emphasizing the importance of active local community participation in controlling and managing tourism activities to ensure they remain aligned with existing cultural values.

The involvement of government, tourism operators, and the community is key to ensuring that tourism is not only economically profitable but also supports the preservation of authentic culture. Tourism can be a strategic tool for cultural preservation if it is managed according to sustainable principles.[11].

3. Method

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach. A descriptive qualitative approach is a type of research that aims to accurately describe a phenomenon, without any intervention from the researcher, using data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The researcher conducted direct observations within the Surakarta Palace to observe various cultural preservation activities taking place, such as traditional ceremonies and so on. This observation was participatory and non-structural, where the researcher was not directly involved in the activities but actively recorded relevant findings.[12]. In-depth interviews were conducted with parties who play a direct role in cultural preservation at the Surakarta Palace.[13]The interviewees included palace administrators, courtiers, tour guides, representatives from the tourism office, and tourists. The interview technique used was semi-structured, with open-ended questions that allowed for further development based on the interviewees' responses. Documents collected included activity archives, annual reports, photographs, documentation, and other references relevant to the research.[14].

4. Results and Discussion

The Influence of Tourism on Cultural Preservation at the Surakarta Palace

Based on observations and interviews with palace management, courtiers, and tourists, the presence of tourists has motivated the palace to maintain and present various elements of traditional culture in a sustainable manner. Activities such as classical dance performances, traditional processions, and exhibitions of heirlooms are held regularly as part of both cultural attractions and cultural preservation efforts.[15]The desire of tourists to witness and learn about Javanese culture has created a need for cultural preservation that is not only ceremonial but also deeply rooted in values and meaning.

Tourism also creates economic opportunities that help fund various cultural activities. Revenue from entrance fees, guide services, and educational tourism activities directly contributes to the maintenance of palace buildings and the organization of cultural events. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that cultural preservation is not merely a form of entertainment for tourists, but rather upholds the noble values of authentic Javanese culture.



Figure 1

Furthermore, the increase in tourist visits has had a positive impact on raising local awareness of the importance of cultural preservation. Tourists' interest in the traditions, arts, and ceremonies at the Surakarta Palace has made locals realize that their culture has high value

and attracts international attention. This has fostered a sense of pride and concern for their ancestral heritage, which had previously been overlooked.[16].

This situation particularly impacts the younger generation, who are beginning to appreciate and relearn their ancestral culture. Through cultural activities such as involvement in traditional ceremonies, young people not only learn about traditions directly but also understand their inherent values. This is crucial for the continued preservation of culture, as the younger generation plays a role as the successors, preserving and passing on the culture to the next generation.[17].

Cultural Preservation Strategies Implemented by the Surakarta Palace

The cultural preservation strategy at the Surakarta Palace is carried out in a planned manner and involves various elements, both internal and external. One strategy is the regular implementation of traditional dance performances, such as classical Javanese dance and heirloom parades. These activities not only serve as a form of cultural preservation but also serve as a means of education and entertainment for the community and tourists. For example, heirloom parades are held within the framework of certain traditional ceremonies and contain deep symbolic meaning, strengthening the community's understanding of the historical and spiritual values of the culture.[18].

The preservation strategy is also realized through the regeneration of courtiers. The younger generation is actively involved in the cultural inheritance process, starting with the procedures for traditional ceremonies and so on. This training is a crucial part of maintaining cultural continuity, because without regeneration, traditions risk extinction over time. Thus, cultural preservation at the Surakarta Palace focuses not only on physical preservation and cultural performances, but also on fostering values and knowledge that are instilled in the lives of future generations.

Collaboration between the Surakarta Palace and the regional and central governments is a crucial strategy for cultural preservation, particularly through collaborative, educational programs. These programs include cultural festivals and other initiatives. The goal is to broaden public understanding of Javanese cultural heritage in a systematic and structured manner.

Apart from conventional approaches, the Surakarta Palace must also utilize digital media as a means of cultural promotion and education.[19] Digital promotion is conducted through social media platforms, websites, and visual documentation of traditional activities. This initiative aims to reach a younger generation who are more familiar with technology and also serves as a medium to introduce palace culture to a wider audience.

Effectiveness of Cultural Preservation Strategies

The cultural preservation strategy implemented by the Surakarta Palace is considered quite effective in maintaining the existence and sustainability of the palace's cultural traditions. This is evident in the high enthusiasm of tourists for participating in cultural activities such as classical dance performances, heirloom processions, and annual traditional ceremonies.[20] Tourists attended not only as spectators but also showed interest in understanding the meaning behind each cultural procession they witnessed. This positive response indicates that the strategy implemented was not only engaging virtually but also capable of conveying cultural values in depth.

Furthermore, the involvement of the younger generation in various palace cultural activities demonstrates the success of the established regeneration program. They are involved in learning traditional ceremonial procedures and actively participate in organizing cultural events. This involvement demonstrates a new awareness among the younger generation to preserve and continue their ancestral heritage. This participatory strategy not only preserves tradition but also ensures that palace culture remains alive and relevant amidst changing times.

6. Conclusion

The cultural preservation strategy implemented through tourism at the Surakarta Palace includes utilizing cultural attractions such as traditional ceremonies and dance performances as attractions. The involvement of local communities and courtiers in cultural activities maintains the continuity of Javanese cultural traditions. Facility development and digital promotion are still limited, although some efforts are beginning to be directed towards

attracting the interest of the younger generation and international tourists. Challenges faced in management and preservation include budget constraints, infrastructure maintenance, and low visitor awareness of the importance of preserving cultural values and traditions.

Collaboration between the government, tourism stakeholders, and the Surakarta Palace is needed to strengthen synergy in cultural preservation and the development of culture-based tourism destinations. Digitalization and social media-based promotion must be maximized to reach the younger generation and international tourists, with engaging and educational cultural content.

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