



Walking Tour and Culture: Fostering Cultural Collaboration Through Tourism

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Abstract:

Indonesia's rich cultural diversity, encompassing over 300 ethnic groups and more than 700 local languages, presents immense potential for the development of culture-based tourism. However, this cultural wealth faces increasing threats from modernization, urbanization, and globalization, which contribute to the erosion of traditional values and local identity. One promising solution to counteract these challenges is the implementation of walking tours, which offer immersive and educational tourism experiences that foster deeper cultural appreciation while empowering local communities. This study aims to explore how walking tours can function as effective instruments for cultural preservation and community-based tourism development in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative approach through literature review, the research analyzes secondary data from academic publications, policy reports, and case studies focusing on walking tour practices in various Indonesian cities and cultural villages. The findings reveal that walking tours provide significant benefits, including the revitalization of local wisdom, economic opportunities for artisans and small businesses, and increased tourist awareness of cultural sustainability. Moreover, the role of trained local tour guides is pivotal in facilitating authentic and meaningful interactions between tourists and host communities. These tours contribute not only to visitor satisfaction but also to the strengthening of cultural identity and community resilience. In conclusion, walking tours serve as a strategic model for integrating cultural education, tourism, and community empowerment.

Keyword: Walking Tour, Culture, Collaboration, Tourism



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country comprising more than 17,000 islands, with an extremely rich and diverse cultural distribution (Aji et al., 2022; Ariyaningsih, 2018). Within its vast geographical boundaries, there are over 300 ethnic groups and around 700 languages and dialects, reflecting an extraordinary level of cultural complexity (Aji et al., 2022). This diversity not only forms the foundation of Indonesia's national identity but also serves as a highly valuable resource for the development of the tourism sector, particularly culture-based tourism (Parta & Maharani, 2023; Saputra, 2024). Indonesia's cultural heritage encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects, such as performing arts, traditional cuisine, customary ceremonies, handicrafts, and local belief systems

(Heriyanto et al., 2019). This gives Indonesia a unique position in the eyes of the world as one of the most attractive cultural tourism destinations (Anindhita et al., 2024).

A prominent example of the successful development of cultural tourism can be seen in Bali, a province that has long been a focal point for international tourists. Bali is known for its traditional arts such as the Barong and Kecak dances, as well as Hindu religious rituals that are deeply embedded in the daily lives of its people (Stepputat, 2012; Suardana & Sumantra, 2023). The Galungan and Kuningan festivals, which are major celebrations in Balinese Hinduism, attract millions of tourists each year (Mahagangga et al., 2021). In addition, silver crafts in Celuk and wood carvings in Ubud serve as distinct attractions for tourists seeking direct cultural experiences (Sadguna et al., 2020; Wisudawati & Maheswari, 2018). Data from the Central Statistics Agency recorded that in 2022, more than 6 million foreign tourists visited Bali, indicating the strong appeal of cultural tourism in the region.

However, behind this success lie significant challenges that need to be seriously identified and addressed. Modernization and urbanization have led to a shift in values within society, especially among younger generations who are increasingly moving away from local traditions and culture (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Mahendra, 2024). Shows that traditional values are becoming less commonly practiced by youth, who tend to adopt modern and global lifestyles. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the massive flow of digital information and social media, which often dominates the cultural space with popular content from abroad, thereby displacing the presence of local culture in daily life (Anom et al., 2020; Yani et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the process of globalization not only opens opportunities for intercultural interaction but also exerts pressure on the survival of local cultures (Urbaite, 2024). In many cases, local cultures experience marginalization as they struggle to compete with dominant foreign cultures (Sihombing et al., 2024; Tang, 2025). This not only affects the existence of the culture itself but also threatens the sustainability of community identity and local wisdom values. Therefore, cultural preservation becomes a highly important issue in the context of sustainable development, and cultural tourism holds great potential to serve as an effective means of cultural revitalization.

Table 1. Tourist Visits and Indonesia’s Achievement in the Global Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024

Indicator	Period / Year	Figures & Growth
International Tourists	Jan–Jul 2024	7,752,910 visits (average ~1.107 million per month). YoY growth: +20.75%
Domestic Tourists	Jan–Jul 2024	598.72 million trips, increased by +18.03% compared to the same period in 2023
Foreign Tourists in July 2024	July 2024	1.31 million trips, grew by +16.91% YoY, +9.42% MoM
TTDI Ranking (WEF)	2024	Global: ranked 22 out of 119 countries; ASEAN: ranked 2nd, surpassing Malaysia and Thailand (below Singapore)
TTDI Ranking Improvement	2021–2024	From rank 32 (2021) to rank 22 (2024), an increase of 10 positions

Source: Author, 2024

The urgency to study cultural tourism is further strengthened by the growing trend of tourism in Indonesia in recent years. This growth is also reflected in the results of the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 released by the World Economic Forum. Indonesia ranked 22nd out of 119 countries globally and 2nd in the ASEAN region, surpassing key competitors such as Malaysia and Thailand. This achievement marks a significant improvement from its previous position in 2021, when Indonesia ranked 32nd globally. The ten-place rise reflects improvements in various aspects such as tourism competitiveness, infrastructure, sustainability, and especially the increasing international recognition of Indonesia's cultural potential. Given this trend, it is evident that culture-based tourism holds great opportunities for further development as a key strategy in preserving cultural heritage and empowering local communities.

The available data shows that Indonesia's tourism sector experienced significant growth in 2024. The number of international tourist (foreign visitor) arrivals from January to July 2024 reached more than 7.75 million people, with an average of approximately 1.07 million visits per month. In fact, in July alone, the number of foreign visitors reached 1.31 million, marking a 16.91% increase compared to the same month of the previous year and a 9.42% rise from the previous month. Meanwhile, domestic tourist (wisnus) movements during the same period recorded 598.72 million trips, showing a surge of 18.03% compared to the January–July period in 2023. This increase indicates a growing public interest in tourism activities, both in terms of recreation and cultural exploration across various regions in Indonesia.

To maximize this potential, innovative approaches are needed that can integrate cultural preservation with active local community participation. One approach that has begun to gain attention in this context is the concept of walking tours. A walking tour is a form of tourism activity where tourists explore a region directly on foot, guided by a local guide who understands the history, culture, and key narratives of the area (Haq et al., 2024; Thomas, 2010). This concept not only allows for a more immersive and authentic tourism experience but also opens a space for dialogue between tourists and local residents, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of local culture.

The cultural experience gained through walking tours holds great potential for building collective awareness about the importance of cultural preservation. In the case of Yogyakarta, for example, tourists can participate in batik-making workshops guided by local artisans. These activities not only provide knowledge about batik techniques but also offer insight into the philosophy behind the culturally rich batik patterns. Similar activities can be found in other regions, such as North Sumatra, which introduces Batak culture-based tourism through music, dance, and local cuisine (Nurhadi & Nucifera, 2018). These activities have proven to provide direct economic benefits to communities and strengthen cultural identity amid modernization challenges.

Previous studies have generally focused on the economic impact of cultural tourism or the physical preservation of cultural sites. However, few studies have specifically examined the contribution of walking tours to holistic cultural preservation, including in the context of community empowerment and direct cross-cultural interaction. Therefore, this study occupies an important position in expanding the academic discussion on tourism practices that support cultural sustainability. The walking tour approach offers originality in integrating tourism experience, cultural education, and community participation simultaneously.

Through this article, the author intends to examine in depth how walking tours can be an effective strategy for cultural preservation and local community empowerment in Indonesia. The main focus will be directed toward understanding the extent of community involvement in such activities, the challenges faced in their development, and the tangible impacts on the continuity of local cultural traditions. Additionally, this article also aims to identify new opportunities for designing community-based tourism programs that are adaptive to current developments while remaining rooted in local cultural values.

By addressing this theme, the article is expected to provide meaningful scholarly contributions in the field of cultural tourism, as well as present practical recommendations for policymakers, tourism industry stakeholders, and local communities. Emphasizing the active role of local communities as subjects, not merely objects of tourism, becomes the key to the success of walking tours as a model for sustainable development. Thus, this article not only contributes to academic discourse but also serves as a strategic instrument to encourage concrete and participatory cultural preservation practices in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the literature review method (Snyder, 2019) to analyze the role of walking tours in cultural preservation and local community empowerment in Indonesia. The qualitative approach is chosen for its capacity to explore the deep meanings behind cultural practices, social interactions, and community participation in culture-based tourism activities. This method emphasizes the interpretation of social phenomena through a narrative analysis of relevant secondary sources, including scholarly journals, statistical reports, policy documents, and academic publications related to the development of walking tours in both Indonesia and international contexts. The researcher conducted a critical review of the literature (Mallett, 2004) to obtain a holistic understanding of the intersection between tourism, cultural sustainability, and community involvement.

Data collection was carried out by selecting relevant literature that discusses walking tour practices in various Indonesian cities such as Yogyakarta, Bandung, Bali, Jakarta, and Semarang, as well as in several cultural villages. These sources were evaluated based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the central theme of the research. Data analysis was performed thematically by identifying and categorizing recurring issues such as community engagement, the socio-economic impact of walking tours, the role of tour guides, and the integration of local wisdom into tourism activities. This process also involved comparing findings from different studies that highlight best practices in implementing walking tours as a sustainable cultural tourism strategy.

To ensure data validity, this study used source triangulation by cross-referencing information from multiple references to verify consistency and accuracy (Decrop, 1999). A hermeneutic approach was also applied to interpret the cultural meanings embedded in walking tour practices, particularly in relation to tradition preservation and local values. The researcher considered social and geographical contexts that influence the success of walking tour programs in different regions. Through this qualitative method, the study aims to make both conceptual and practical contributions to the design of inclusive, participatory, and sustainable cultural tourism models in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DICUSSION

1. Definition and Concept of Walking Tour

The walking tour, as a tourism concept, has deep historical roots. Initially, walking tours emerged as a means for travelers to explore European cities such as Paris and Rome, which are rich in cultural and historical heritage. During the early 19th century, as awareness of the educational and cultural value of travel increased, walking tours gained popularity among tourists seeking a deeper understanding of the destinations they visited (Haldrup & Larsen, 2009). Modern walking tours began to flourish in the 1990s, driven by the growing demand for more authentic and interactive travel experiences. Cities like Barcelona and Amsterdam started to offer organized walking tours, appealing to tourists who wished to avoid mass tourism and discover lesser-known parts of the city (Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2018).

Table 2. The Evolution and Impact of Walking Tours in Cultural Tourism

Topic	Description
Origins	Walking tours began in European cities like Paris and Rome, allowing travelers to explore cultural and historical sites on foot.
Growth	They became more popular in the 19th century as people valued cultural education, and grew rapidly in the 1990s with the rise of authentic tourism.
UK Example	London tours feature historical landmarks with rich commentary on architecture and famous figures.
Spain Example	In Barcelona, tours explore famous spots and local neighborhoods like Gràcia, highlighting food and street art.
Germany Example	Berlin offers tours focused on WWII history and the East-West divide, linking the past to the present.
Economic Impact	In Florence, walking tours increase business for local shops and restaurants, supporting the local economy.
Cultural Role	These tours foster public education, preserve cultural identity, and pass knowledge between generations.
Significance	Walking tours are valuable tools for learning, community connection, and sustainable tourism development.

Source: Author, 2024

Countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, and Germany have successfully integrated walking tours into their cultural tourism development strategies. In the UK, for instance, walking tours in London highlight the city's historical landmarks with guides providing in-depth commentary on monuments, architectural heritage, and notable historical (Atkinson, 2023). In Spain, Barcelona offers tours that include not only prominent landmarks but also daily life in local neighborhoods such as Gràcia, where visitors can experience local cuisine and street art (Roca & Gomes, 2015). Similarly, in Germany, Berlin offers various walking tours that focus on World War II history and the socio-political divide between East and West Berlin. These tours provide tourists with insights into how historical events continue to shape contemporary society (Eksteins, 1999). Beyond cultural enrichment, walking tours have also generated positive economic impacts on local communities.

In Florence, Italy, for example, walking tours have been shown to significantly contribute to the local economy by increasing foot traffic to small businesses, including artisan shops and local restaurants (Vango, 2023). By highlighting the distinctiveness of

local culture, walking tours serve as a platform for intergenerational knowledge transfer and the long-term sustainability of cultural tourism. Walking tours offer a valuable opportunity for immersive cultural engagement. With a longstanding tradition and proven success in various countries, they have become an effective instrument for education, community interaction, and economic development. Their continued success underscores the importance of preserving and appreciating local cultural identities in the evolving landscape of global tourism.

2. The Adoption of Walking Tours in Cultural Tourism

Walking tours, within the context of cultural tourism, represent an effective approach for introducing local traditions, arts, and historical narratives to visitors. By exploring destinations on foot, tourists not only engage in visual experiences but also interact directly with the surrounding cultural environment. This immersive method enables a deeper appreciation of cultural elements often overlooked, such as distinctive architectural styles that reflect local values and aesthetic principles (Nanlohy et al., 2024). Walking tours create meaningful opportunities for interaction between tourists and local communities, allowing visitors to observe daily life and gain insights into the sociocultural values upheld by residents (Ormond & Vietti, 2022). The integration of walking tours into cultural tourism supports the development of community-based tourism models that offer mutual benefits for both hosts and visitors (Utami et al., 2024).

This model generates economic advantages for local communities through the provision of goods and services, while simultaneously reinforcing social cohesion and cultural identity (Mustofa & Arif, 2020). Involving local residents in the design and implementation of walking tours enables them to share authentic knowledge, stories, and experiences, thereby enhancing the overall tourist experience (Idajati et al., 2024). Yogyakarta serves as a prominent example of successful walking tour adoption. Tourist villages such as Kreet and Sidoarum have implemented walking tour programs that allow visitors to observe traditional handicraft production and engage directly with artisans, fostering cultural appreciation and economic support. Similarly, in Bali's Ubud region, walking tours are designed to connect visitors with terraced rice fields, art galleries, and spiritual sites. These tours frequently include interactions with local farmers and artists, contributing to economic sustainability while enriching the tourist experience (Utami et al., 2024).

In Bandung, walking tours highlight Dutch colonial architecture in areas such as Braga and Cihampelas. These tours combine historical exploration with culinary experiences, offering visitors a layered understanding of the city's cultural heritage (Bramiana et al., 2020). Jakarta's Kota Tua (Old Town) walking tours guide tourists through museums and colonial-era buildings, promoting heritage awareness and historical education (Mustofa & Arif, 2020). Meanwhile, in Semarang, walking tours focus on Chinese heritage, bringing tourists to temples and culinary sites that reflect the historical contributions of the Chinese-Indonesian community (Bramiana et al., 2020).

Overall, walking tours serve not only as a means of exploration but also as a strategic tool for cultural preservation and promotion (Mustofa & Arif, 2020). Their implementation supports the growth of sustainable cultural tourism that benefits both travelers and local communities (Utami et al., 2024). By fostering direct engagement between tourists and local cultures, walking tours become essential instruments in advancing sustainable tourism and empowering communities (Bramiana et al., 2020).

The successful implementation of walking tours across multiple Indonesian cities underscores their significant potential in the broader development of cultural tourism.

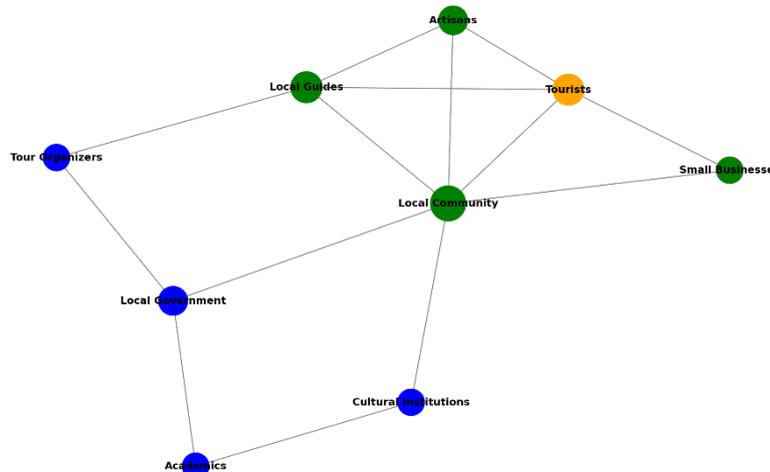


Figure 1. Social Network: Walking Tours In Cultural Tourism
Source: Author, 2024

The social network diagram above illustrates the dynamic and interconnected relationships among key stakeholders involved in walking tours within the context of cultural tourism. At the center of this network lies the Local Community, serving as a crucial hub that connects with both institutional actors (e.g., Local Government, Cultural Institutions, Academics) and local economic contributors (e.g., Small Businesses, Artisans, and Local Guides). This central role reflects the importance of community-based tourism, where local residents are not only hosts but also active participants shaping tourist experiences. Walking tours enable Tourists to directly engage with these local actors, facilitating immersive interactions that extend beyond mere observation. As they connect with artisans, explore cultural narratives shared by guides, and purchase local products, tourists become integral parts of a mutual value exchange rooted in cultural appreciation and economic support.

Institutional actors such as Tour Organizers, Local Government, and Academics provide the infrastructure, policy frameworks, and research insights necessary to sustain and scale walking tour programs. The presence of Cultural Institutions and Academics in the network highlights efforts to ensure that cultural representation remains authentic, respectful, and educational. Meanwhile, Tour Organizers collaborate with Local Guides and government agencies to design structured itineraries that align with both cultural preservation goals and tourist expectations. This interconnected web of relationships demonstrates that successful walking tours rely on a collaborative ecosystem, where economic, cultural, and social interests converge. By reinforcing ties across different sectors, the network supports a sustainable model of cultural tourism that empowers local communities while offering tourists a rich, participatory experience.

3. Knowledge Tour Guide dan Tourism

Tour guides play a pivotal role in the implementation of walking tours, offering not only navigational support but also comprehensive insights into local culture and history. A knowledgeable guide can enhance tourists' experiences by interpreting various cultural elements encountered along the route, from traditional practices to architectural

features. This contributes to a deeper understanding and more meaningful engagement with the visited destinations (Beedie & Hudson, 2003). In-depth knowledge of local culture and historical context is essential for tour guides. Trained guides are equipped to provide accurate, detailed, and contextual explanations, which significantly enhance tourist satisfaction (Weiler & Walker, 2014). Beyond conveying factual information, skilled guides help tourists immerse themselves in the distinctive identity of each destination.

Moreover, tour guides often employ storytelling techniques, incorporating local legends, myths, and oral histories into the narrative. This method transforms the learning process into a more engaging and memorable experience (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Through storytelling, guides foster an emotional connection between tourists and the culture being explored, enriching the overall experience on a personal level. Tour guides also serve as cultural ambassadors, contributing to the preservation and promotion of local heritage. By sharing traditional knowledge and customs with visitors, they reinforce the significance of cultural preservation and encourage local communities to participate in safeguarding their intangible heritage (Adel, 2023). This interaction increases tourist awareness of cultural sustainability and fosters a sense of responsibility toward preservation efforts.

Furthermore, guides function as intermediaries between tourists and local residents, facilitating mutual understanding and cultural exchange. This interaction provides tourists with authentic insights into local lifestyles and values, while also strengthening social cohesion within the host communities (Cohen, 1985). In this way, tour guides go beyond delivering content they foster meaningful cross-cultural relationships. In Indonesia, many tourism villages have implemented training programs for local guides. These programs emphasize knowledge acquisition, communication proficiency, and storytelling abilities. For example, in Desa Sidoharjo, Yogyakarta, guides receive training to effectively communicate the significance of local crafts such as batik and to engage meaningfully with visitors (Natasari et al., 2022).

Communication skills are essential to ensuring a smooth and enriching experience. Guides with strong interpersonal abilities can effectively respond to tourists' inquiries, provide appropriate recommendations, and maintain a welcoming environment throughout the tour. These skills are crucial for addressing challenges and enhancing visitor engagement. In line with technological advancements, many training programs now integrate digital tools such as mobile applications and multimedia platforms. These technologies assist guides in preparing and presenting information in more dynamic and engaging formats. Access to digital resources enables guides to stay updated and offer enriched, interactive experiences.

Despite these developments, several challenges persist. Limited funding, insufficient resources, and a lack of awareness about the importance of guide training can hinder the development of a skilled workforce (Islam et al., 2024). Government support and collaboration with tourism stakeholders are therefore crucial to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of such training initiatives. Ultimately, tour guides play a central role in promoting cultural awareness among tourists. By elucidating cultural values and contextual nuances, they help bridge the knowledge gap between visitors and host communities, fostering deeper appreciation and mutual respect (Weiler & Walker, 2014). This contribution supports broader sustainability goals within the tourism sector.

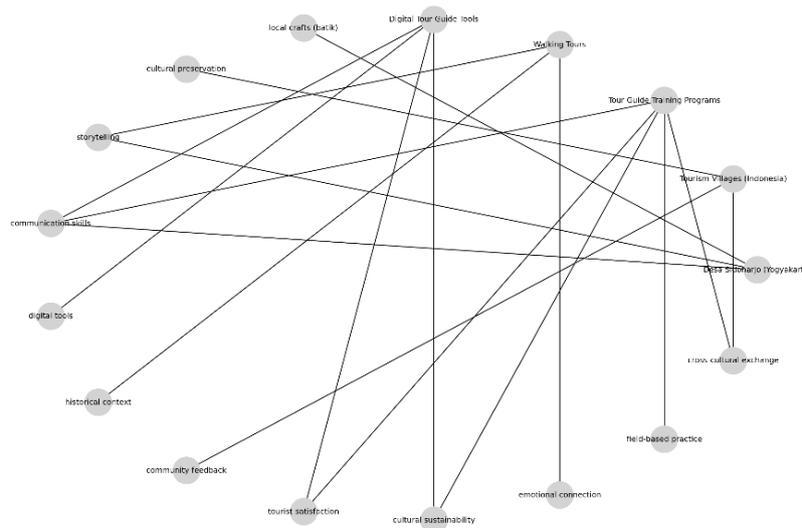


Figure 2. Group Query: Tour Guide Knowledge and Tourism Themes
Source: Author, 2024

The visualization above illustrates the intricate relationships between various elements of tour guide practices and the core themes that define effective tourism experiences. Each node on the left represents a key file or domain related to tour guiding, such as Desa Sidoharjo, Tourism Villages, or Digital Tour Guide Tools, while each node on the right reflects critical codes or concepts like cultural preservation, communication skills, and storytelling. The connections (edges) between them reveal how these themes are embedded across different contexts and practices in the tourism sector. For instance, Desa Sidoharjo is closely tied to local crafts such as batik, highlighting the role of traditional knowledge in guiding, while Tourism Villages emphasize broader values such as community feedback and cross-cultural exchange.

A particularly prominent node in the diagram is Tour Guide Training Programs, which connects to multiple key codes including field-based practice, cultural sustainability, and communication skills. This indicates that structured training serves as a foundational platform through which guides acquire essential competencies to deliver enriching and contextually appropriate experiences. The emphasis on tourist satisfaction and cross-cultural exchange further demonstrates how trained guides contribute not only to visitor enjoyment but also to meaningful intercultural engagement. These relationships underscore the significance of education and professional development in cultivating guides who are not just informers, but facilitators of cultural dialogue and preservation.

Moreover, the node Digital Tour Guide Tools links to concepts such as digital tools, tourist satisfaction, and cultural sustainability, suggesting the growing importance of technology in the delivery of modern tour experiences. As digital platforms become more integrated into guiding practices, they enable guides to present content in more dynamic and interactive ways. This evolution enhances the accessibility and appeal of cultural information, particularly for tech-savvy travelers. By mapping these thematic connections, the diagram provides a comprehensive overview of how diverse factors ranging from local heritage and education to storytelling and digital innovation intersect to shape a sustainable, informative, and emotionally resonant tourism landscape.

4. Promoting Local Wisdom or Educational Tourism

Walking tours have emerged as an effective medium for promoting local wisdom referring to the traditional knowledge and cultural values embedded within local communities. In this context, walking tours serve not only as a mode of exploration but also as educational platforms through which tourists gain deeper insight into local cultural practices. By offering immersive, firsthand experiences, tourists can engage with traditions, values, and customs that have been transmitted across generations. This process fosters intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer, thereby ensuring the continued relevance and vitality of local heritage.

One of the distinctive features of walking tours is the opportunity for direct interaction between tourists and local communities. These encounters allow tourists to observe how cultural traditions are preserved and practiced in daily life ranging from local festivals and artisanal crafts to traditional culinary practices. Such experiences are not only visual but also emotional, facilitating a sense of connection and appreciation for local culture. Studies have shown that direct engagement with cultural practices fosters empathy and enhances tourists' respect for host communities (Ayob et al., 2009; Sthapit et al., 2023)

The integration of educational tourism (edu-tourism) into walking tours further adds value by fostering awareness of social and cultural norms. With the guidance of trained and culturally knowledgeable tour guides, participants can gain a deeper understanding of the significance behind various customs and the challenges faced by local communities in preserving their cultural identity in the face of modernization. Tour guides play a pivotal role in revealing nuanced cultural dimensions such as rituals, beliefs, and symbolism thereby enriching the overall tourist experience (Jamaliah et al., 2024; Zhang & Xu, 2020). Local community involvement in the planning and delivery of walking tours significantly contributes to cultural preservation. By actively engaging in storytelling and interpretation, community members not only disseminate cultural knowledge but also develop a greater sense of ownership and pride in their heritage. This participatory approach strengthens social cohesion and encourages local stewardship of cultural resources, both of which are critical for long-term preservation efforts.

By promoting local wisdom through walking tours, community-based tourism (CBT) can develop in a sustainable and inclusive manner. This model not only generates economic opportunities for local communities but also reinforces cultural continuity. Tourists who experience such meaningful, education-rich engagements are more likely to support cultural conservation initiatives, thereby contributing both socially and economically to the host community. As such, walking tours represent an important mechanism for advancing responsible and sustainable tourism (Beedie & Hudson, 2003)

In addition to cultural preservation, walking tours play a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity. Each destination presents unique narratives and cultural expressions, and through walking tours, tourists are exposed to these differences in an intimate and respectful manner. Such encounters promote cross-cultural understanding and foster a greater appreciation for global cultural plurality. Moreover, walking tours can serve as a platform for raising awareness about pressing social issues affecting local communities. Discussions on the impacts of urbanization, globalization, or environmental degradation can inform tourists about the dynamic challenges to cultural preservation. This not only enhances their global consciousness but also encourages responsible behavior and advocacy in support of cultural sustainability.

5. Cultural Village

Cultural villages serve as tangible examples of how cultural preservation can be integrated with community-based tourism. In Indonesia, successful cultural villages that combine cultural tourism with local education include Kampung Batik Laweyan in Solo and Kampung Naga in West Java. These villages offer unique experiences where tourists can engage directly with the daily lives of local communities, gaining an understanding of the values and traditions passed down through generations (Agarwal et al., 2023; Dencer-Brown et al., 2022). Kampung Batik Laweyan is renowned as a hub for batik artisans who preserve the traditional craft of handmade batik. Visitors to this village have the opportunity not only to purchase batik products but also to actively participate in the creation process ranging from drawing motifs to dyeing the fabric. The walking tour in Kampung Batik allows tourists to interact directly with artisans, explore the philosophy behind the batik motifs, and learn about the history of batik in Solo, which is deeply intertwined with the region's Javanese culture.

Through participation in the walking tour, tourists become more than passive observers they actively engage in the cultural preservation process. This hands-on experience fosters a deeper understanding of the cultural significance embedded in each batik piece, while simultaneously supporting the local economy through the purchase of batik products. Moreover, the walking tour strengthens the relationship between tourists and locals, a connection often absent in more commercial tourist destinations (Aziz & Niazi, 2023; Gazley & Watling, 2015). In contrast, Kampung Naga in Tasikmalaya, West Java, offers a distinctive yet equally enriching cultural experience. This village maintains the traditional lifestyle of the Sundanese people, which has been passed down through generations. During the walking tour, tourists stroll through a well-preserved village featuring traditional Sundanese houses, interact with residents, and participate in daily activities such as farming, crafting, and cooking.

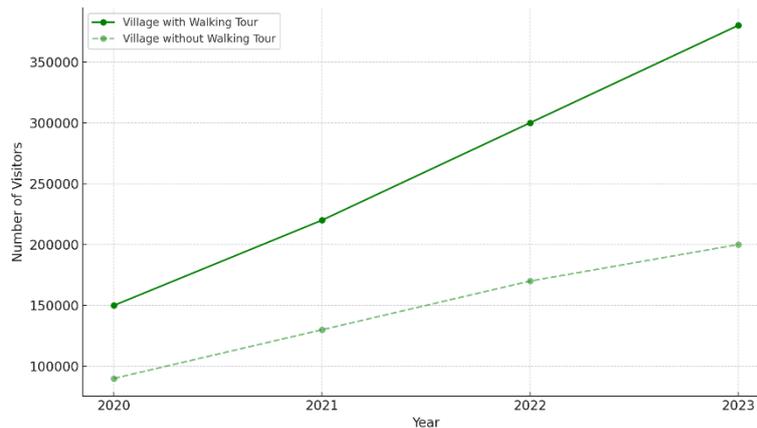


Figure 3. Visitor Comparison (2020-2023)

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2023

The experience offered by Kampung Naga allows tourists to appreciate traditional agrarian life and the values of simplicity cherished by the community. It provides a novel perspective on living in harmony with nature, presenting a more authentic alternative to modern or commercial tourist attractions (Zhong et al., 2025). Moreover, the walking tour in Kampung Naga allows tourists to witness the continuing practice of Sundanese

traditions in daily life. This enriches tourists' understanding of local culture and provides them with invaluable memories, seldom found in conventional tourist destinations.

In addition to the increase in tourist arrivals, local economic growth is also evidenced by a significant rise in the income of small businesses, such as those involved in handicrafts and local cuisine, which have experienced an upsurge of up to 30% in villages that have adopted the walking tour concept (BPS, 2023). Walking tours have proven to be an effective strategy for enhancing the tourist experience in village destinations while simultaneously generating positive economic impacts for local communities. The rise in tourist visits and the observed economic growth in villages implementing walking tours underscore the substantial potential for expanding this model to other villages across Indonesia (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

CONCLUSION

Walking tours in Indonesia offer significant opportunities to enhance tourist experiences while promoting the preservation of local culture. This concept allows tourists to explore and engage directly with local traditions and community life, deepening their cultural understanding and strengthening social bonds between tourists and local communities. Therefore, the development of walking tours should be supported by policies that enhance tourism infrastructure and foster community involvement. A key recommendation for the government is to develop policies that support the sustainable development of walking tours. This could include budget allocations for training local tour guides and providing the necessary infrastructure to support these activities. Additionally, it is crucial for the government to implement educational programs that emphasize cultural values and traditions for both local communities and tourists, fostering a greater understanding of the importance of cultural preservation.

For local tourism stakeholders, community involvement in designing and managing walking tours is essential. Collaboration with local residents in the development of tour content ensures that the experiences offered are authentic and aligned with existing cultural values. In this way, the economic benefits generated by tourism can be directly felt by the community. As a sustainable tourism model, walking tours contribute to cultural preservation by involving the community in the process. When local residents actively participate in tourism activities, they are more likely to preserve their traditions and cultural practices. This creates synergy between cultural preservation and economic development, ultimately yielding long-term benefits for the community. The involvement of younger generations in the development of walking tours is also crucial. Their participation ensures that local values and traditions continue to be preserved and passed on to future generations. Educational programs that engage youth in tourism activities can raise awareness of the importance of cultural preservation.

However, challenges in implementing walking tours must also be addressed. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of cultural preservation need to be tackled through collaboration between the government, industry stakeholders, and the community. Without addressing these challenges, the potential of walking tours to empower local communities may be undermined. The integration of walking tours with other forms of tourism, such as ecotourism and agritourism, should also be considered. By incorporating walking tours into a broader tourism network, tourists will have more diverse experience options, which can further

increase the economic impact on local communities. This integration adds value for all stakeholders involved in tourism.

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