



# Cultural Narratives in the Development of Traditional Markets as Authentic Tourism Attractions in Yogyakarta

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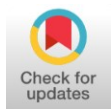
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## Abstract:

Traditional markets in Yogyakarta are more than economic hubs; they serve as dynamic cultural spaces that reflect Javanese heritage and identity. With the rise of global tourism and shifting traveler interests toward authentic, immersive experiences, these markets have undergone significant transformation. This study investigates how cultural narratives are reconstructed and utilized in the development of Yogyakarta's traditional markets specifically Beringharjo, Ngasem, and Kranggan as authentic tourism attractions. Employing a qualitative critical ethnography within an interpretive paradigm, data were collected through participant observation, document analysis, and visual studies. Thematic coding and narrative analysis were used to interpret the findings. The research reveals that cultural elements such as rituals, symbols, and spatial arrangements are selectively commodified to meet tourist expectations while local communities actively negotiate and preserve their cultural integrity. Market stakeholders engage in “stagecraft” by adapting traditional practices for tourist consumption without fully losing their original meaning. The results also show the emergence of hybrid cultural expressions shaped by the interplay of digital technologies, tourism trends, and community agency. These narratives are neither static nor purely commercial; instead, they are continuously reinterpreted within broader socio-economic and political contexts. This study contributes to theoretical discussions in heritage tourism by emphasizing cultural narrative as a social construct, while offering practical recommendations for sustainable, participatory tourism models. Ultimately, it concludes that authenticity in tourism is a dynamic process shaped through ongoing dialogue between tradition and modernity.

**Keyword:** Cultural Narratives, Traditional Markets, Tourism Authenticity



## INTRODUCTION

Traditional markets in Yogyakarta represent a rich cultural narrative that has developed over centuries, while also functioning as important centers of trade. Beyond the bustle of buying and selling, these markets preserve traces of history, tradition, and local wisdom that are deeply embedded in Yogyakarta's cultural identity. Their dual role as economic and cultural spaces makes them more than just places of transaction they are living reflections of the community's authentic and dynamic way of life. As the

paradigm of modern tourism shifts, more travelers are seeking authentic and meaningful holiday experiences that connect them with local life and cultural heritage. This trend presents a valuable opportunity for Yogyakarta's traditional markets to transform into tourist attractions. Rather than serving only as shopping destinations, these markets can offer added value as cultural and educational spaces, where visitors can enjoy interactive experiences, taste local culinary delights, and engage directly with local communities.

Traditional markets in Yogyakarta, such as Beringharjo Market, Ngasem Market, and Kotagede Market, are not only the city's economic center but also a cultural center that records the history, social relations, and local wisdom of the Javanese people. Since the 18th century, Beringharjo Market has been the city's trade center and a philosophical symbol of "*Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana*", held by the Yogyakarta Palace. This market combines tradition and modernity with the hustle and bustle of vendors selling hand-drawn batik, traditional snacks, and spices.

Beringharjo Market has more than 2,500 vendors, 60% of which are micro-enterprises that depend on this industry, according to data from the DIY Trade Office (Dinas Perdagangan DIY, 2022). Traditional markets in Yogyakarta still survive as inclusive places that maintain mutual cooperation economic practices such as trust-based negotiation systems and community-based distribution of agricultural products, despite being squeezed by the many modern markets. As a supporter of the creative economy and proof of cultural resilience, its existence contributes 12.5% to the DIY GRDP (Badan Pusat Statistik DIY, 2023).

In recent decades, the wave of modernization and global tourism has changed the paradigm of conventional markets from mere trading places to authentic tourist destinations that offer a pleasant experience for customers. This development is not affected by efforts to maintain cultural history, ranging from myths about the establishment of the market associated with the Yogyakarta Palace, market cleaning rituals, to economic practices based on beliefs. All of these help build the characteristics of traditional markets as tourist attractions.

As shown by data from the Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (2022) traditional markets are the center of Yogyakarta's cultural tourism and contribute 15.7% of the city's GRDP. However, as a consequence of this transformation, there are challenges to maintaining the credibility of cultural narratives amidst business pressures and changing consumer preferences. The role of cultural narratives in the growth of Yogyakarta's traditional markets as authentic tourist destinations and their impacts on socio-economic sustainability and the preservation of intangible heritage are the subjects of this study.

Previous studies have shown that markets function as living museums (Nopas, 2025) and community-based socio-economic spaces (Walter, 2020). However, there has been no research that comprehensively integrates cultural narratives such as founding myths, market cleaning rituals, and trust-based negotiation practices as the basis for proper tourism development. One of the main problems is the lack of multidisciplinary analysis that links the transformation of cultural narratives into tourism branding strategies, and the lack of research on the competition between preserving traditions (such as the market's relationship with the Keraton) and the pressure of post-pandemic commercialization, when tourists' interest in local experiences increases. To resolve this

discrepancy, this study uses a turn-narrative approach, which combines cultural anthropology and the creative economy (Ingold & Hallam, 2021).

This study investigates how stakeholders reconstruct narratives and internalize them as tourist attractions without sacrificing the truth of the story. It is crucial on two levels: theoretical, by expanding the discussion on heritage tourism through a narrative perspective; and practical, by suggesting a participatory tourism model that is aligned with the SDGs, especially goals 11 (sustainable cities) and 8 (inclusive economy), while protecting intangible heritage (Lerario, 2022).

Because narratives play a central role in shaping tourists' perceptions and experiences, understanding how stakeholders reconstruct and internalize these stories is essential to ensure authenticity and sustainability in heritage tourism. By involving local communities in the storytelling process, the tourism model becomes more inclusive and participatory, fostering a sense of ownership and pride while aligning with Sustainable Development Goals. This approach not only preserves the integrity of intangible cultural heritage but also supports economic inclusivity and sustainable urban development, making tourism a tool for both cultural preservation and community empowerment.

Therefore, this study not only fills an academic gap but also offers a precedent for building culture-based destinations amidst the challenges of globalization. The purpose of this study is to investigate how cultural narratives are created, negotiated, and commercialized in the process of transforming traditional markets in Yogyakarta into legitimate tourist destinations. The following are the primary study questions: How are cultural narratives in Yogyakarta's traditional markets adapted and used for authentic tourism, and how do local populations react to these changes both positively and negatively?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Using a critical ethnographic design, this qualitative study investigates the meaning and changes of cultural narratives in the development of traditional markets as tourist attractions in Yogyakarta. Positioning cultural narratives as social constructions formed through interactions between various actors and social structures, the interpretive paradigm is the philosophical framework for the study. Three traditional markets, namely Beringharjo, Ngasem, and Kranggan, were selected as research locations based on their historical representation, various economic-cultural activities, and the level of interaction with the tourism sector.

To collect data, a triangulation of methods was used, including participant observation, document analysis, and visual studies. To find the formation and changes of cultural narratives about traditional markets, document analysis involved examining historical documents, government policy documents, academic publications, and tourism promotional materials. Cultural symbols, spatial arrangements, and visual representations of the markets in various media artifacts from the markets studied in the visual research, which used photovoice and semiotic analysis.

Thematic coding, narrative analysis, and reflexive interpretation are the hermeneutic techniques used to analyze the collected data. Through prolonged engagement, debriefing with group mates, and careful writing in journals, the research can be trusted. To ensure the quality of interpretation, the researcher used the

hermeneutic circle by iteratively analyzing how elements of the cultural narrative relate to the socio-historical context and dynamics of modern tourism. Using the principle of communitarian ethics, ethical considerations are a top priority in this study because the research respects complex power relations.

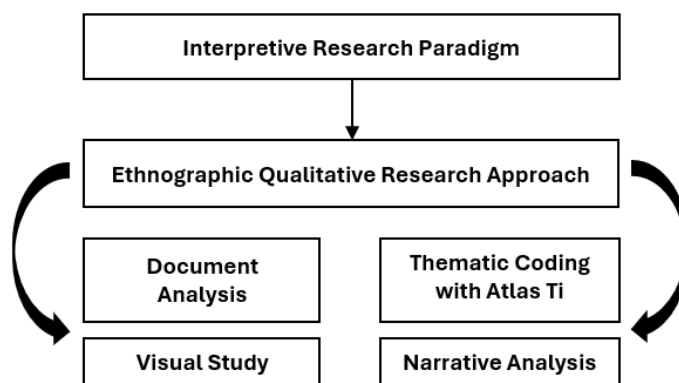


Figure 1. Research method framework  
Source: Author, 2025

Research is usually limited in terms of temporal and spatial scope. This can affect how deeply we understand the dynamic and multidimensional cultural narrative. However, this method allows for a thorough analysis of the expression, negotiation, and transformation of cultural stories in the development of traditional markets as authentic tourist attractions in Yogyakarta. Three traditional markets Beringharjo, Ngasem, and Kranggan were chosen using a purposive sample technique that took into account factors including historical representation, the variety of cultural and commercial pursuits, and the degree of engagement with the tourism industry. The official narrative and direct link to the Keraton institution are represented by Beringharjo Market. The rehabilitation of a historic neighborhood with a focus on cultural tourism is reflected in Ngasem Market. Kranggan Market, on the other hand, demonstrates the dynamics of an organic community that upholds traditional values in a contemporary metropolitan setting.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Transformation of Cultural Narratives in Developing Traditional Markets as Tourist Attraction**

In the development of Yogyakarta's traditional markets as tourist destinations, the transformation of cultural narratives shows a dynamic shift between commodification and truth. The results of thematic coding show that when cultural narratives are positioned as elements that attract tourists, they change their interpretation and context. The concept of "created tradition" proposed by (Martin, 2024) is in line with this phenomenon. This concept states that traditional traditions can be revitalized and replicated to meet current needs while maintaining their historical claims.

There is a selective process in displaying cultural elements in traditional markets. This is shown by the analysis of 129 quotes related to cultural commodification. Traders and market management authorities choose cultural elements that are considered interesting and "consumable" for tourists. The component that most often undergoes

transformation into a tourism product is the historical aspect of the market, especially those related to the founding myth and its relationship with the Palace (76 quotes). This shows a tendency to prioritize narratives that offer historical depth and uniqueness as a way to differentiate tourism businesses from others.

The phenomenon of "stagecraft" (58 quotes) shows the process of cultural narrative transformation. This shows an attempt to construct a "front stage" for tourist consumption, as defined by (Ingold & Hallam, 2021) in the theory of structured authenticity. To meet the expectations and time constraints of tourists, the ritual demonstrations that were originally sacred traditions undergo changes in time and procedure. However, this study found that market communities use resistance mechanisms (71 quotes) to maintain the cultural integrity of these practices. These strategies include restricting access to certain rituals and separating sacred areas from areas accessible to others.

In addition, the transformation of cultural narratives varies based on the type of market and its place in the symbolic hierarchy of Yogyakarta's traditional markets. Beringharjo Market, which has a strong historical connection to the Keraton, underwent a more organized and institutionalized transformation, thanks to the official tourism programs that were created. Ngasem and Kranggan Markets, on the other hand, tend to undergo more organic transformations and focus on community programs. These differences show how tourism development is influenced by elements of cultural authority.

The incorporation of Javanese philosophical principles into traditional markets as cultural spaces is another important aspect of the transformation of cultural narratives. Guyub Rukun and Tepa Selira are examples of tourism concepts that emphasize cross-cultural interaction and learning. This reflects what (Broka-Lāce, 2021) calls "glocalization," the process of transforming local values to meet global demands while maintaining their cultural nature. In the midst of the development of traditional markets as tourist attractions, the transformation of cultural narratives is not simply a shift in cultural practices into tourist commodities; it is a dialectical process that involves continuous negotiation between economic interests, cultural preservation, and social dynamics.

The resulting narratives combine traditional elements with contemporary interpretations to create customized tourism experiences. This phenomenon shows that authenticity in cultural tourism is a social construction that is always changing, not something that is fixed and isolated from socio-economic changes. The results of the analysis show that cultural narratives are transformed into tourist attractions during the development of traditional markets. This is a complex process involving various transformative agents. There is a systematic pattern in the process of reconstructing cultural components, which is seen in several main findings, according to empirical data.

First, it was found that certain cultural elements were selected because they were considered to have potential tourist value. This method is based on dominant aesthetic and economic standards, where elements considered "exotic" or "authentic" from the tourist's point of view are prioritized and elements considered less attractive are marginalized (Soulard et al., 2019). This phenomenon supports Urry's theory (Jyotsna & Maurya, 2019) that the "tourist eye" shapes and directs cultural representations. Second,



the results of the study show that significant architectural and zoning interventions have transformed the traditional market space.



Figure 2. pictures of Bringharjo, Ngasem and Kranggan markets  
Source: Author, 2024

Political economy analysis of the transformation of cultural narratives shows that the relationship between capital, cultural authority, and local communities creates a new regime of value (Smith, 2015). In the development of traditional markets as tourist destinations, resource allocation mechanisms tend to follow the principle of capital accumulation, which prioritizes components with high exchange value. This produces a representational hierarchy in which stories that conform to global market expectations receive greater attention (Picard & Robinson, 2006). Qualitative data show that financing the development of traditional market infrastructure as tourist destinations often results in patron-client relationships between investors and the trading community, with significant consequences for narrative autonomy. Traders who use the story of "managed authenticity" receive promotional support and preferential access to strategic locations, which provide structural incentives for narrative conformity. There are several important points, including:

- a. Hybridization of Cultural Practices; A phenomenon known as the hybridization of cultural practices is when traditional elements are combined with modern elements to create an "authentic yet comfortable" tourism experience.
- b. Tourism Experience Strategies; Tourist experiences are divided into groups based on the level of penetration into market zones; casual tourists tend to access areas that have undergone "aestheticization", while tourists seeking "immersive experiences" are advised to visit areas that are considered more "authentic".
- c. Symbolic Appropriation; The pattern of symbolic appropriation is seen when ritual and ceremonial elements that previously had certain cultural meanings are incorporated into scheduled tourist performances or attractions.
- d. Dynamics of Resistance and Adaptation; Various strategies of adaptation and resistance to the dominant narrative are demonstrated by the merchant community, ranging from strategic acceptance to active negotiation and covert resistance.

Digitalization of Traditional Narratives: The phenomenon of digitalization of traditional narratives has emerged through tourism applications and social media platforms, which significantly affect tourists' expectations and experiences before their visit. Cultural narratives, as used in this study, are collective representations that are passed down through the generations and express local cultural values through stories,

rituals, symbols, and social activities. The dynamic social process of preserving cultural values that are seen as "authentic" by both local actors and visitors is known as authenticity. In contrast, commercialization is the process by which cultural components are turned into goods that may be exchanged within the framework of the travel industry, frequently adjusting to the demands of international travelers without losing their symbolic value. The results are associated with the notions of "tourist gaze" (Urry), "structured authenticity" (Ingold & Hallam, 2021), and glocalization. The needs of tourism and the preservation of value are dialogical rather than linear. Instead of entirely erasing the original meaning, cultural commodification reframes symbolic meanings to fit the demands of the global marketplace.

## **2. The Role of Symbolism and Social Practices in Maintaining the Authenticity of Yogyakarta's Traditional Markets**

Yogyakarta's traditional markets demonstrate a complex cultural identity that remains authentic through an elaborate network of symbols and social practices that continue to be replicated in the modern era. Authenticity is a dynamic phenomenon negotiated through symbolic interactions between various social actors, as shown by an ethnographic analysis of this traditional market ecosystem (Su et al., 2018). In the space of Yogyakarta's traditional markets, symbolism transcends the material dimension and emerges in transactional rituals, communication patterns, and hierarchical structures that reflect Javanese cosmology.

Social practices such as "kulakan," which is a system of procuring goods, "arisan traders," which is a rotating credit association, and "pasaran," which is a traditional calendar system that regulates market activities, serve as means to disseminate tacit knowledge and values. Reconceptualizing authenticity as a dialogical process that involves selectively maintaining, creatively adapting, and resisting global homogenization. Here, traders do not only passively maintain traditions, but also act as active actors who strategically transform symbolic modalities to maintain socioeconomic relevance in a modern urban context. In maintaining the cultural identity of Yogyakarta's traditional markets, this phenomenon demonstrates a dialectic between structure and agency. However, fundamentally, it remains tied to a system of meaning rooted in local epistemology and cosmology.

A close examination of the symbolic aspects and social practices of Yogyakarta's traditional markets reveals mechanisms of authenticity preservation that function through a multilayered semiotic system. Economic transactions in these situations are not merely utilitarian transactions; they are symbolic exchanges that replicate conventional value structures, according to a phenomenological interpretation of the relationship between traders and buyers. With zoning that reflects sacred-profane and center-periphery gradations, the spatial configurations of Beringharjo, Kotagede, and Demangan markets reflect the symbolic stratification of space in Javanese cosmology. Using semiotic analysis of artifacts and trade practices, it is found that there is an indigenous categorization system that distributes goods into "hot-cold" and "coarse-fine" categories.

This system is rooted in local epistemology. In the context of the market, ritual formativities such as "pasar", "slametan dagang", and "unggah-unggahan" function as mnemonic mechanisms to transmit knowledge between generations and strengthen the

social cohesion of the market community. With their vernacular architecture and organic spatial structures, Yogyakarta's traditional markets activate distinctive sensory modalities (olfactory, auditory, and tactile) that cannot be implemented in modern retail formats. This creates an embodied experience that is essential for the perception of authenticity. Market traders use adaptive strategies that allow the integration of elements of modernity while maintaining traditional interpretive frameworks. This allows the establishment of a flexible cultural continuity yet remains tied to a fundamental symbolic matrix in the context of modern hybridity.

Table 1. Symbolism and Social Practice Authenticity

Dimension	Symbolic Manifestation	Social Practice	Function in Authenticity Preservation
Spatial	Zoning based on Javanese cosmological principles (center-periphery, sacred-profane)	Vendor placement according to traditional hierarchy and commodity types	Reproduces traditional meaning structures in the physical organization of markets
Temporal	"Pasaran" cycle (Pon, Wage, Kliwon, Legi, Pahing)	Trading activities following the Javanese calendar	Maintains economic activity rhythms distinct from modern markets
Transactional	Bargaining as communicative ritual	"Bakul" (small vendor) and "juragan" (large trader) as social categories	Facilitates symbolic exchange beyond economic transactions
Linguistic	Specialized terminology and expressions in transactions	Use of Javanese language with hierarchical levels (ngoko, madya, krama)	Transmits tacit knowledge and maintains social hierarchy

Source : Secondary Research Data, 2025

In a zoning configuration that follows Javanese cosmological principles, the spatial dimensions of Yogyakarta's traditional markets show a spatial stratification based on the sacred-profane and center-periphery dichotomies, which are substantially different from the homogeneous spatial organization of modern markets. The "pasaran" system regulates the temporality of traditional markets by integrating trading activities with the Javanese calendar cycle. This system creates a unique economic rhythm that is closely related to local belief systems. Bargaining is a communication ritual that replicates communal values and social stratification more than a pricing mechanism, as indicated by the transactional dimension (Syafii & Purnomo, 2024).

Spatial and temporal configurations of Yogyakarta's traditional markets are deeply embedded in Javanese cosmology, which emphasizes balance, harmony, and symbolic meanings tied to both geography and time. The sacred-profane dichotomy structures space according to spiritual significance, where central locations (often aligned with palaces or sacred landmarks) are considered more sacred, while peripheral zones serve more profane or utilitarian functions. This contrasts with modern markets, which typically prioritize efficiency, uniformity, and commercial accessibility over cultural or



cosmological symbolism. Furthermore, the “pasaran” system a five-day market cycle rooted in the Javanese lunar calendar infuses trading practices with ritualistic significance, aligning commerce with auspicious times and cosmological rhythms. This system not only regulates when and where markets occur, but also reflects an embedded temporal order that resists the linear, capitalist temporality of modern markets.



Figure 2. Inside The Beringharjo Market  
Source: The Global Girl, 2024

The communal components of conventional markets consist of social exchange systems and various merchant associations, which help spread the social capital of the indigenous population. Through various ceremonies and offerings that sacralize the market space, the ritual dimension shows the relationship between economic activities and Javanese beliefs. The linguistic dimension shows how the Javanese language maintains a hierarchical structure and supports the transmission of tacit knowledge. Sensory experiences that cannot be replicated by modern retail formats are provided by the materiality of traditional markets, characterized by traditional artifacts and techniques.



Figure 3. Foreign Tourist Visits  
Source: Detik.com

Authenticity in traditional markets is deeply embedded in lived experiences, social interactions, and cultural expressions, rather than merely in their physical appearance or architecture. The communal, ritual, linguistic, and sensory dimensions collectively demonstrate that authenticity is dynamic shaped and reshaped through ongoing practices and relationships within the community. This perspective challenges the conventional notion of authenticity as fixed and emphasizes its role as a social construct, continuously formed through the engagement of people, traditions, and spaces in everyday life. The authenticity of Yogyakarta's traditional markets is a dynamic and multidimensional construct rooted in symbolic systems, social practices, and lived experiences that go beyond mere physical preservation. It is maintained through a complex interplay of spatial organization, ritual ceremonies, linguistic hierarchies, and sensory engagement, all of which reflect and reinforce Javanese cosmology and cultural identity. Far from being static, authenticity in these markets is constantly negotiated and adapted by local actors in response to modern pressures, allowing for cultural continuity within a hybrid urban context. This reveals that authenticity is not only about preserving tradition but also about actively transforming it to remain meaningful and relevant in contemporary society.

### **3. Challenges of Commercialization and Strategies for Preserving Cultural Narratives in the Era of Globalization**

In the context of economic globalization, the cultural narrative has been radically transformed. This has led to a very important paradox in maintaining the original cultural values of conventional markets (Cutolo & Ferriani, 2024). The transformation of traditional markets into tourist destinations has generated commercial pressures to simplify, aestheticize and standardize cultural aspects in order to attract tourists from all over the world, as demonstrated by the proliferation of "tourist markets", which feature reduced forms of traditional trade (Panda, 2020). According to empirical analysis, the commercialization process has led to a progressive separation between the symbolic and instrumental values of cultural practices.

The meaning of rituals and social interactions previously integrated into economic activities has been broken down and recontextualized during the process. Digitalization and the entry of e-commerce platforms into the ecosystem of conventional markets have increased this challenge, changing the temporality and spatiality of economic exchanges that are essential to the cultural narrative of conventional markets. Nevertheless, conventional markets adopt flexible approaches that allow for negotiations between commercial demands and cultural preservation, such as: (1) strategic choices for traditional elements shown to tourists, maintaining a "back area" safe from tourist consumption; and (2) creative reinterpretations of traditional practices that allow for the integration of digital technologies and modern retail formats without sacrificing cultural values. These strategies demonstrate the ability of local community institutions to contest dominant narratives and create new ways to articulate cultural identities that are responsive to global contexts while maintaining local epistemologies and principles.

With the growth of tourism in conventional markets, a significant reconfiguration of cultural ecology has occurred. The interconnections between local consumption cycles, agrarian production systems and trade practices have been disrupted (Beling et al., 2018). Find research shows that the commercialization of traditional markets for

tourist consumption has resulted in a spatial redistribution of commodities, with subsistence commodities being spatially marginalized and commodities with tourist value being given a strategic position (Zhang et al., 2021). Agricultural systems in buffer zones have shifted from being focused on meeting local needs to producing products desired by tourists as a result of this phenomenon.

The reorganization of commodity flows, according to the analysis of distribution networks, has weakened the relationship between local producers and conventional markets. Longer and more complex supply chains, involving commercial intermediaries, have replaced these relationships. To address these ecological-cultural challenges, an all-encompassing conservation approach is needed (Barrett et al., 2022). This approach should focus on markets as physical locations as well as on the production-consumption networks that enable the transmission of indigenous cultural practices.

The shift of traditional markets into objects of tourist consumption presents an arena for epistemological contestation between the global paradigm and local knowledge systems in defining what is constitutive of "authenticity" and "tradition". Discursive studies of promotional materials, tourism development policies, and tour guide narratives reveal the dominance of western epistemology that tends to construct the imbalance of power in the process of knowledge production produces a hegemonic narrative. This reduces the complexity of traditional market culture to an important representation that suits the expectations of world tourists. In such a situation, it is imperative to develop decolonial research methodologies and participatory interpretation platforms to enable local epistemologies to be communicated in the representation of traditional market cultural narratives.

Digital Technology and the Reconfiguration of Cultural Narratives, The entry of digital technology into the ecosystem of traditional markets raises a complex paradox between conservation and transformation (Fitchett et al., 2021). On the one hand, digital platforms help maintain endangered traditional knowledge by facilitating the documentation and dissemination of extensive cultural practices, and help maintain traditional knowledge (Fettes & Blenkinsop, 2023). On the other hand, digital mediation changes the way knowledge is experienced and disseminated, producing hybrid forms that combine traditional components with digital logic.

A virtual ethnographic analysis of traditional market representations on social media shows the dominance of visual aesthetics that prioritize photogenic and "instagrammable" features. As a result, the essential multisensory dimension of the traditional market experience has been lost. However, creative efforts that combine traditional traders' stories with AR and community-based digital platforms demonstrate the ability of digital technologies to help preserve cultural narratives by transcending the distinction between traditional and modern. This method allows for a reconceptualization of conservation as an adaptive process that recognizes the agency of local communities in utilizing digital technologies to document, represent, and transmit their cultural stories (Fernández-Llamazares & Cabeza, 2018).

The preservation strategy for the cultural narrative of traditional markets requires an integrative policy framework to address the institutional divide between cultural preservation, economic development, and tourism authorities. A comparative policy analysis finds that the dominant sectoral approach has limitations, where tourism policies often conflict with cultural preservation demands, while cultural preservation

programs do not meet adaptive demands. Engaging traditional market communities, cultural authorities, tourism industry players, and academics in deliberative forums to build collaborative governance models can bring together different perspectives (Dangi & Petrick, 2021). Economic incentive instruments that support indigenous cultural practices, such as cultural certification, fiscal incentives for disseminating traditional knowledge, and the development of geographical indications for traditional market products, can help balance commercial demands with preserving cultural values. For example, the development of ethical protocols for traditional market tourism that prioritize cultural integrity, equitable distribution of benefits, and respect for traditional culture is an example of this action.

In the context of globalization, the issue of the commercialization of cultural narratives can be elaborated using various theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks offer critical perspectives that allow for a deeper understanding of the dynamic changes taking place. To begin with, (Mainardes et al., 2020) theory of cultural commodification builds the foundation for understanding how cultural components are transformed into tradable commodities in the global market, where exchange value is usually more important than symbolic value. This process results in what is referred to as the “commoditization of significance, which is the use of cultural significance for the sake of trade. Contemporary analysis shows that traditional markets experience a multi-layered commodification, where not only the traded products but also the social interactions, trading rituals, and even the identities of the traders are transformed into “spectacles” for tourist consumption. This reflects Debord’s idea of the “society of spectacle” (Jackson & Heath, 2024).

In studying how the commercialization of traditional markets contributes to the rise of global capitalism, resulting in cultural homogenization and “time-space compression,” critical political economy perspective is relevant. The spread of global capital into conventional markets has resulted in “McDonaldization,” defined by (Possamai, 2018) as the standardization and rationalization of cultural practices related to economic gain and the predictability of tourist experiences. However, recent ethnographic research suggests that local communities engage in a process of “glocalization” selective adaptation to global elements while maintaining local specificity. Local communities face these homogenizing pressures inactively.

According to Chi et al 92022) theory of “cultural similarity,” the transformation of cultural narratives is a productive process that results in the formation of new identities in the “third space,” transcending the traditional-modern divide. In such a situation, the reconstruction of traditional market narratives can be seen as an expression of hybrid cultural identities that combine elements from local and international cultures. Ortiz’s concept of “transculturation,” expanded by (Palmié, 2021), emphasizes the role of local community organizations in selecting, interpreting, and utilizing foreign cultural elements according to local needs and principles.

The Foucauldian approach, which emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and power in the construction of representations, can be used to analyze the discursive dimensions of the transformation of cultural narratives. In discussions of global tourism, the dominant narratives about traditional markets tend to reinforce global-local hierarchies, which (Chimakonam, 2020) calls “othering”. In such situations, the cultural preservation approach can be defined as an attempt at “counter-discourse”

that challenges hegemonic representations and organizes alternative narratives rooted in local epistemologies.

Pertiwi (2018) perspective on corruption provides us with an analytical perspective to understand how the cultural identity of traditional markets is formed and replicated through the repetition of everyday actions. Reconceptualizing cultural conservation as an active process of reproducing social practices, rather than simply conserving material artifacts, can be achieved through this performative awareness. How internalized dispositions and interpretive schemes enable the creative adaptation of traditional practices in changing structural contexts can be understood through the structure of Bourdieu (1984) "theory of practice" consisting of the concepts of habitus and field.

In studying the conservation of cultural narratives, the Actor-Network Theory developed by Bennett (2018) is useful because it involves human and non-human actors in complex networks. This method allows to analyze the function of technology, physical infrastructure, laws, and material artifacts in mediating and facilitating the reproduction of cultural practices. In the context of digitalization, this theory helps us understand how digital platforms not only function as neutral media but also play an active role in the transformation of modalities of experience and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study reveals that Yogyakarta's traditional markets have undergone a significant cultural transformation as they increasingly become integrated into the tourism industry. This evolution is marked by a delicate balancing act between embracing the economic potential of tourism and safeguarding traditional cultural values. Cultural narratives that once solely reflected local beliefs and customs have been selectively adapted to fit the expectations of both local communities and visiting tourists. However, these adaptations have not diluted the essence of the original stories; instead, they have been thoughtfully reinterpreted to remain relevant in a changing socio-economic landscape. Strategies such as the zoning of tourism experiences, the symbolic reimagining of cultural elements, and the blending of tradition with modern commercial needs exemplify this process. Digital technology further supports this shift by offering innovative platforms like social media and tourism applications that allow for broader and more dynamic dissemination of cultural narratives to a wider audience.

Given these developments, the study emphasizes the importance of a community-based participatory management model to ensure cultural sustainability. This model calls for active collaboration among various stakeholders, including market vendors, local government bodies, and the tourism sector. Such cooperation is vital to maintaining the authenticity of cultural practices while also accommodating the growth of the tourism economy. However, the study's findings are limited to three specific markets in Yogyakarta and focus on relatively recent changes. To fully understand how cultural narratives evolve over time and across different geographical and cultural contexts, future research should adopt a long-term perspective and expand its scope to include traditional markets in other regions. This broader approach will provide more comprehensive insights into how traditional markets continue to adapt in response to both internal community dynamics and external tourism pressures.



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