Rethinking Adaptive Governance in Living Cultural Heritage Tourism: Insights from Majapahit Tourist Village, East Java

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Article Info

Article History

Abstract:
In Indonesia, the safeguarding of living cultural heritage has been predominantly shaped by state-driven initiatives; however, the effectiveness of these top-down programs often falls short due to institutional fragmentation and limited grassroots participation. Majapahit Tourist Village in Mojokerto, East Java, established through the Majapahit Cultural House program which illustrates these persistent challenges, as numerous heritage houses have either deteriorated or been repurposed, exposing a disconnection between policy formulation and local implementation. This study investigates how adaptive governance can enhance the management of community-based cultural heritage tourism by analyzing the socio-political dynamics, local responses, and adaptive mechanisms at play within Majapahit Village. Utilizing a qualitative case study methodology, the research draws on in-depth interviews, direct observations, and policy document analysis. Through thematic analysis, the study identifies varying forms of community adaptation, spanning compliance, negotiation, and innovation that demonstrate local resilience in preserving cultural identity under socio-economic constraints. Results show that adaptive governance materializes through informal leadership, cultural entrepreneurship, and hybrid collaborations between community actors and external agencies. Nonetheless, the absence of coherent legal frameworks and insufficient financial support remain key obstacles to long-term sustainability. The study concludes that fostering adaptive governance necessitates co-management arrangements, participatory policy design, and the integration of cultural, economic, and legal considerations.

Keyword: Adaptive Governance; Cultural Heritage Tourism; Community-Based Tourism; Sustainable Tourism Management; Majapahit Village

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and heritage preservation are increasingly acknowledged as interdependent domains that play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development and reinforcing cultural identity in Indonesia. Over the past two decades, the growth of cultural heritage tourism has reflected the government's ambition to position culture as both an economic asset and a marker of national pride (Nuryanti, 2020). However, while

the sector has expanded significantly in quantitative terms, its qualitative aspects particularly local empowerment, sustainability, and adaptive capacity remain underdeveloped. In many instances, state-centered management practices dominate the governance of heritage villages, creating a structural imbalance between top-down policy frameworks and grassroots cultural initiatives (Gunawan & Priyanto, 2019).

This disconnect often results in fragmented policy implementation, heritage commodification, and the gradual erosion of community identity. The central concern of this study lies in addressing the limitations of state-centric cultural heritage governance and exploring how more adaptive, participatory, and resilient models can be developed within heritage-based tourism. Majapahit Tourist Village in Mojokerto, East Java, provides a critical empirical setting for this inquiry. Established under the Majapahit Cultural House Program, the initiative sought to revive local architecture inspired by the red-brick legacy of the Majapahit Kingdom.

Previous sociological research by Nanita (2021) revealed that the establishment of the Majapahit Tourist Village produced complex socio-cultural effects, including changes in livelihoods, social cohesion, and cultural expression. While these findings underscored the village's potential as a model for heritage-based tourism, they also revealed emerging tensions between economic aspirations and cultural preservation. Building upon these earlier insights, the present study advances the discussion by examining how governance structures and local actors adapt to sustain cultural identity amid institutional and economic pressures.

The urgency of this issue aligns with the global call for inclusive and adaptive governance frameworks in heritage tourism. Scholars argue that sustainable tourism development requires governance systems that promote shared learning, flexibility, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders (Chaffin et al., 2014; Dangi & Jamal, 2020). The concept of adaptive governance, originating from environmental and resource management studies, provides a valuable theoretical lens for understanding how institutions and communities can dynamically respond to uncertainty and change (Folke et al., 2005; Suprihatin et al., 2023). Applied to the context of heritage tourism, adaptive governance emphasizes the significance of community knowledge, informal networks, and social innovation in maintaining living cultural heritage.

However, empirical applications of this concept in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia remain limited. Most existing studies have focused either on the economic potential of heritage tourism or on the formal mechanisms of policy implementation (Hariyadi et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2020), leaving a substantial gap in understanding how local communities adapt and negotiate governance processes in practice. Positioned within this research gap, this article investigates how adaptive governance emerges and operates at the local level in the context of living cultural heritage, with Majapahit Tourist Village serving as a case study.

The research adopts a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2014), integrating theoretical reflection with empirical inquiry. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with community leaders, tourism practitioners, and local government officials, complemented by direct observation and document analysis. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the study identifies recurring patterns of compliance, negotiation, and innovation that illustrate the adaptive mechanisms characterizing community-based heritage governance. By reinterpreting cultural

governance dynamics through the lens of adaptive governance, this article contributes to the broader discourse on tourism governance and cultural sustainability. It posits that adaptive governance provides an alternative pathway for integrating cultural, economic, and legal perspectives in managing living heritage tourism. Beyond theoretical advancement, the study offers practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to develop participatory and context-sensitive frameworks for sustainable tourism governance in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed a qualitative single-case study design to explore how adaptive governance is practiced and negotiated in the context of living cultural heritage tourism. Majapahit Tourist Village (Mojokerto, East Java) was selected as an information-rich case because it represents a heritage-based tourism initiative shaped by both state-led programs and community cultural practices. This design enabled an in-depth examination of governance structures, actor relationships, and locally embedded adaptation processes within their real-life setting.

Table 1. Rethinking Adaptive Governance for Living Cultural Heritage Tourism

Core dimension	Adaptive governance (conventional)	Rethinking adaptive governance for living cultural heritage tourism	What to look for (operational prompts/indicators)
Governance purpose	System resilience and sustainability	Resilience + cultural continuity (values, meanings, practices, identity)	How is "success" defined: visitor numbers/income vs continuity of cultural meaning and practice?
Actors & authority	Multi-actor coordination	Multi-actor with power asymmetries (state–village–cultural custodians–tourism entrepreneurs)	Who actually decides? Who mainly implements? Who can veto cultural decisions?
Institutions (formal–informal rules)	Mix of formal rules and local norms	Negotiation between policy rules and cultural norms/ethics (propriety, sacredness, symbolism)	Which rules "matter" in practice? Are there unwritten cultural rules shaping what is allowed?
Knowledge & expertise	Evidence-based + local knowledge integration	Local cultural knowledge as authority (authenticity claims, cultural rights to interpret)	Who defines "authentic/appropriate"? How are competing interpretations debated and settled?
Networks & collaboration	Cross-scale networks	Collaboration plus cultural brokers (actors bridging community–state–market)	Who mediates conflicts and resources? How do brokers maintain trust across groups?
Social learning	Learning-by-doing and feedback loops	Learning that respects collective memory and cultural sensitivity	Are there reflective forums? Do rules change after

Core dimension	Adaptive governance (conventional)	Rethinking adaptive governance for living cultural heritage tourism	What to look for (operational prompts/indicators)
			experience? How is "learning" culturally framed?
Adaptation & flexibility	Rule adjustment under uncertainty	Adaptation without eroding meaning (rituals, sacred spaces, symbols, identity)	What changes are acceptable vs unacceptable? What boundaries are "non-negotiable"?
Conflict & negotiation	Conflict as inherent to governance	Conflict as contestation over meaning (commodification vs preservation)	Typical tensions (design, narratives, pricing, events). How are disputes resolved?
Equity & inclusion	Participation and benefit distribution	Cultural justice: recognition, voice, benefits, and burdens	Who is included/excluded (women, youth, tradition bearers)? How is representation ensured?
Legitimacy	Procedural legitimacy + outcomes	Legitimacy also from cultural-ethical fit ("social license," propriety)	What signals acceptance/resistance? Whose approval confers legitimacy?
Social innovation	Innovation for adaptive capacity	Innovation that safeguards *living heritage* (education-oriented, curated, non-extractive tourism)	New practices: visitor codes, curated storytelling, safeguarding protocols, co-created products
Outputs → outcomes	Adaptive policies and resilient systems	Dual outcomes: economic viability + cultural sustainability	New forums/rules/roles and their effects on identity, cohesion, and livelihoods

Source: Author, 2025

Data collection relied on semi-structured interviews with key local stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, tourism practitioners, and relevant local government officials), supported by direct field observation and document analysis (such as program-related documents and local governance artifacts). These multiple sources were used to capture not only formal policy arrangements but also informal norms, day-to-day practices, and community narratives that shape heritage management and tourism development.

All qualitative materials were analyzed using thematic analysis, following iterative steps of familiarization, coding, theme development, and refinement to identify recurring patterns of compliance, negotiation, collaboration, and innovation in governance practices. To strengthen the trustworthiness of findings, the study emphasized triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents, maintained a clear analytic trail (coding memos and theme logs), and used careful contextual description so interpretations remained grounded in field evidence and governance dynamics specific to the case.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's main findings in line with three objectives: (1) identifying the forms of adaptive governance manifested in Majapahit Tourist Village, (2) analyzing the socio-political and institutional dynamics that shape heritage management, and (3) examining how adaptive governance affects the sustainability of community-based tourism. The findings are organized to reflect these aims systematically, ensuring clear linkage between research objectives, field evidence, and analytical emphasis.

The discussion integrates empirical results with relevant theoretical frameworks and prior studies to explain how adaptive governance strengthens the resilience of living cultural heritage in Indonesia. By connecting on-the-ground practices in Majapahit Tourist Village with broader debates on participatory, flexible, and collaborative governance, this section demonstrates the governance conditions under which heritage preservation and sustainable tourism can reinforce each other over time.

1.   Forms of Adaptive Governance in Majapahit Tourist Village

The findings indicate that informal leadership is a central pillar of governance in Majapahit Tourist Village. Local leaders such as village elders, artisans, and members of the Majapahit Cultural House Community operate as key intermediaries between residents and government agencies. Through their social legitimacy and everyday proximity to community needs, these actors help translate formal programs into locally workable actions, while also voicing community aspirations upward through informal negotiation channels. Their roles are especially visible in moments when formal mechanisms are slow, fragmented, or absent, making informal leadership a practical governance infrastructure rather than merely a cultural attribute.

In operational terms, informal leaders coordinate collective efforts to preserve architectural heritage, organize cultural performances, and manage tourism-related events. They mobilize voluntary participation, mediate disputes, and maintain shared norms regarding the appearance and symbolic meaning of Majapahit-style houses, ensuring that cultural expressions remain consistent and recognizable to visitors. This governance pattern reflects the development of informal rules, networks, and collaborative initiatives that sustain heritage practices despite limited state support, effectively compensating for weak formal structures and uneven policy implementation. Such dynamics illustrate how community-based coordination becomes an adaptive response to institutional gaps, enabling continuity in heritage management and tourism activities in a way that is flexible and locally grounded.

This finding supports the argument that adaptive governance relies on trust-based, multi-level coordination capable of navigating institutional uncertainty, as emphasized in the literature. (Folke et al., 2005; Chaffin et al., 2014). As one participant stated, "We cannot always wait for the government's budget; we do what we can to repair or repaint our Majapahit-style houses so that visitors still recognize our identity." This statement demonstrates bottom-up resilience in practice, where communities proactively maintain cultural identity and continuity through self-initiated actions and shared commitments. In this sense, informal leadership does not merely supplement governance; it actively embodies a core principle of adaptive governance by enabling

collective action, maintaining legitimacy, and safeguarding living heritage through locally driven adaptation.

2.   Hybrid Collaborations and Policy Adaptation

Adaptive governance in Majapahit Tourist Village is not only maintained through informal leadership, but also strengthened through hybrid collaboration and continuous policy adjustment. The shift from a purely top-down restoration agenda toward participatory economic utilization (homestays, crafts, and cultural learning) indicates that governance operates as a living process, shaped by negotiation, experimentation, and learning across actors. At the same time, community-driven innovations such as mini-museums and art galleries signal a deeper transformation in how residents reinterpret heritage as both identity and livelihood.

These findings provide an important transition to the next discussion, which will further examine how multi-actor networks, institutional constraints, and local creativity interact to determine the long-term sustainability and resilience of heritage-based tourism governance.

a. Negotiating Between Policy and Practice; The study identified the emergence of hybrid collaborations among community groups, local government, universities, NGOs, and selected private stakeholders as an adaptive response to sustain heritage tourism in Majapahit Tourist Village. Although the Majapahit Cultural House Program was initially designed as a top-down initiative emphasizing physical restoration, its implementation gradually shifted toward a more participatory and economically oriented model that encourages homestays, craft-based entrepreneurship, and cultural workshops as locally beneficial forms of heritage utilization. This shift illustrates policy adaptation as a governance dynamic that develops through iterative experimentation, negotiation, and learning-by-doing, in which actors adjust practices based on feedback from everyday implementation and changing local needs (Duit & Galaz, 2008). Over time, the findings suggest that community involvement tended to evolve from passive compliance into more active co-management when residents perceived tangible economic and social benefits from heritage-based tourism development, which reinforced a sense of ownership and encouraged stronger participation in decision-making processes (Hariyadi et al., 2021).

b. Community-Based Innovation; Beyond negotiation and partial co-management, the findings reveal that some residents demonstrated community-based innovation as a more transformative form of adaptation that repositions heritage from a static object of preservation into a flexible resource for livelihood and education. Several households repurposed Majapahit-style homes into mini-museums, small art galleries, and learning spaces that combine storytelling, material culture display, and interactive experiences for visitors, allowing tourism activities to serve educational purposes while reinforcing local pride and cultural continuity. This innovation diversifies local income streams by expanding tourism products beyond accommodation and performances, and it simultaneously strengthens identity work by making cultural knowledge visible, teachable, and locally controlled rather than externally curated. Importantly, such initiatives indicate that adaptation is not limited to adjusting to existing programs but can involve reshaping the meaning and function of heritage to meet new challenges and opportunities, particularly when external

pressures such as inconsistent funding, policy uncertainty, and market volatility require residents to develop alternative pathways for sustainability. In this sense, local creativity functions as both an economic strategy and a governance strategy, because it generates new institutional practices (e.g., informal curation norms, visitor interaction routines, community storytelling standards) that support continuity even when formal structures are weak or delayed. These patterns align with the concept of transformative capacity, referring to the ability of social systems to reorganize, renew, and create new development trajectories while maintaining core identity and legitimacy amid changing conditions (Olsson et al., 2006).

3. Institutional Barriers and Governance Fragmentation in Majapahit Village

Despite strong community initiative, the findings indicate that institutional fragmentation continues to constrain the emergence of adaptive governance in Majapahit Village. Authority is divided between the Department of Culture and the Department of Tourism, creating a governance structure where responsibilities are dispersed rather than integrated. This situation reduces the capacity of institutions to respond quickly to local needs and weakens the continuity of heritage-based tourism management.

In practice, the division of authority produces overlapping mandates and blurred boundaries of responsibility. Program design, budgeting, and implementation often move through separate bureaucratic pathways, encouraging procedural delays and limiting cross-sector collaboration. As a result, stakeholders face uncertainty regarding which agency is responsible for particular actions, especially in cases where conservation goals intersect with tourism development agendas.

These governance conditions generate bureaucratic inertia and inconsistent funding priorities, which further slow down policy execution. Similar to the argument advanced by Gunawan and Priyanto (2019), heritage governance in Indonesia is frequently undermined by unclear mandates and weak inter-agency coordination. In Majapahit Village, this fragmentation is visible in delayed restoration activities, disputes over jurisdiction, and limited accountability mechanisms that make coordinated planning difficult to sustain.

Consequently, local residents and cultural actors increasingly rely on self-help initiatives to maintain heritage functions and tourism activities. Community-based financing, volunteer mobilization, and informal coordination become essential substitutes for formal support, especially when state programs are slow or uncertain. While such practices demonstrate resilience and local capacity, they also indicate that adaptive governance is being sustained through informal mechanisms rather than strengthened institutional arrangements.

A further constraint involves the absence of legal coherence in village-level cultural heritage management. Although Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage provides general conservation principles, it does not offer operational mechanisms tailored to living heritage contexts at the village scale. This gap aligns with Suprihatin et al. (2023), who emphasize that limited derivative regulations weaken policy consistency and leave heritage communities exposed to commercialization pressures, land-use conflicts, and unclear incentives for sustainable heritage utilization.

4.   Socio-Economic Dynamics and Local Empowerment in Majapahit Village

Socio-economic dynamics in Majapahit Village indicate that adaptive governance supports local empowerment, although the results remain uneven and strongly shaped by community capacity and external support (Dangi & Jamal, 2020). Tourism creates additional livelihood options, yet the continuity of these benefits depends on how well local actors can organize collective initiatives, access resources, and navigate institutional constraints that still limit long-term planning and coordination (Dangi & Jamal, 2020).

Adaptive governance has facilitated modest but meaningful economic empowerment through cultural tourism, as residents develop small-scale enterprises such as batik production, craft-making, culinary ventures, guiding services, souvenir trading, and homestays to diversify income sources (Dangi & Jamal, 2020). These activities reduce reliance on single livelihoods and help households build resilience by spreading economic opportunities across multiple tourism-related services and seasons (Dangi & Jamal, 2020).

Despite these gains, empowerment remains constrained by limited market access, low digital literacy, and uneven tourism infrastructure that restrict business growth and reduce competitiveness beyond local networks (Dangi & Jamal, 2020). When participatory mechanisms are not matched with sustained institutional capacity-building such as training, marketing support, and integrated visitor services empowerment risks becoming symbolic, where participation is visible but the economic benefits remain small and difficult to scale (Dangi & Jamal, 2020).

Beyond material outcomes, cultural continuity operates as a form of social capital that strengthens trust, cooperation, and local pride, which in turn supports collective action for maintaining Majapahit identity in everyday life (Putnam, 2000). Community events such as the Majapahit Cultural Festival function not only as tourism attractions but also as social rituals that reaffirm shared values, deepen community cohesion, and motivate residents to sustain heritage practices across generations despite changing economic pressures (Putnam, 2000).

Table 2. Socio-Economic Empowerment Dimensions and Governance Support Needs in Majapahit Village

Local Practice in Majapahit Village	Main Benefits	Key Constraints	Governance Support Needed
Batik/crafts, culinary ventures, homestays, guiding	Income diversification; household resilience	Limited market reach; seasonal demand	Integrated marketing and partnerships
Social media promotion; online selling (limited)	Wider visibility; potential market expansion	Low digital skills; weak branding	Training, mentoring, digital campaigns
Festival venues; heritage routes; visitor facilities (uneven)	Better visitor experience; longer stays	Weak amenities, signage, access	Coordinated infrastructure planning
Festivals, rituals, heritage aesthetics, volunteering	Cohesion; pride; collective action	Volunteer fatigue; resource scarcity	Incentives and community funding

Local Practice in Majapahit Village	Main Benefits	Key Constraints	Governance Support Needed
Informal coordination with agencies/stakeholders	Legitimacy; access to programs	Fragmented mandates; slow support	Clear roles and joint budgeting

Source: Author, 2025

Overall, the findings suggest that adaptive governance strengthens empowerment through both economic participation and cultural social capital, but its transformative potential depends on connecting local initiatives to stronger institutional support and coordinated policy implementation (Dangi & Jamal, 2020; Putnam, 2000). Strengthening digital skills, improving infrastructure, and formalizing collaboration among agencies and community groups would help convert local innovation into more durable, equitable, and scalable empowerment outcomes in Majapahit Village (Dangi & Jamal, 2020).

5. Towards a Conceptual Model of Adaptive Governance

Synthesizing the empirical findings, the study proposes a conceptual model that integrates three interrelated dimensions of adaptive governance in living heritage tourism:
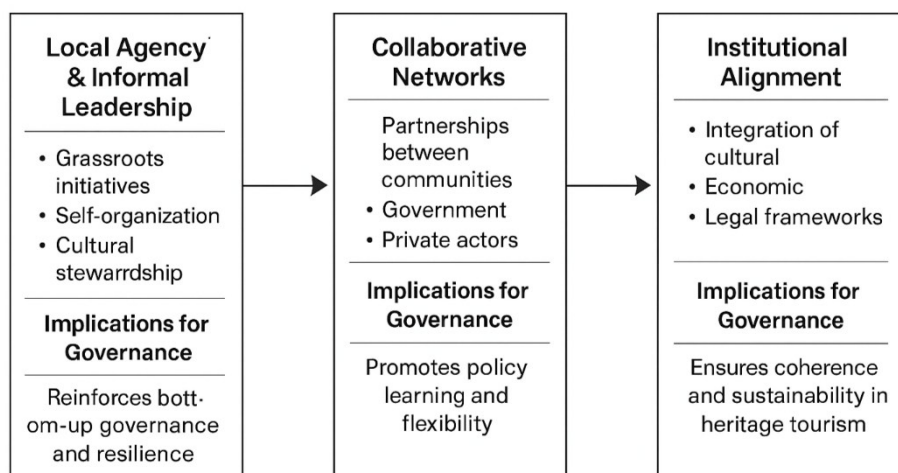

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Adaptive Governance in Living Cultural Heritage Tourism
Source: Author's analysis (2025), based on field data and adaptive governance framework
(Folke et al., 2005; Chaffin et al., 2014).

The conceptual model in Figure 1 synthesizes the study's empirical findings into three interrelated dimensions that together explain how adaptive governance can emerge and be sustained in living cultural heritage tourism. The first dimension, Local Agency and Informal Leadership, highlights that adaptive capacity often originates from the ground up, especially in contexts where formal systems are slow or fragmented. In Majapahit Village, everyday actors such as community elders, artisans, and cultural organizers act as practical "governance nodes" who initiate collective action, mobilize volunteers, and maintain shared norms of cultural stewardship.

Their grassroots initiatives and self-organization create a foundation of responsiveness and legitimacy that formal institutions frequently lack at the village level. In adaptive governance theory, these bottom-up dynamics are essential because they

allow communities to respond to uncertainty, negotiate trade-offs, and sustain resilience through flexible, learning-oriented action in the face of changing tourism pressures and conservation needs (Folke et al., 2005).

Building on this base, the second dimension, Collaborative Networks, emphasizes that community initiative becomes more effective when connected to multi-actor partnerships involving government, civil society, and private stakeholders. The model positions collaboration as a bridging mechanism that converts localized action into broader governance capacity by enabling resource sharing, joint problem-solving, and policy learning. In practice, collaborative networks can reduce the burden carried by communities alone by expanding access to training, funding opportunities, marketing channels, and technical guidance for heritage protection and tourism management.

More importantly, collaboration creates feedback loops where knowledge from local practice informs institutional decision-making, while institutional resources enhance the scalability and durability of community-led programs. This aligns with adaptive governance perspectives that stress learning, cross-scale linkages, and flexible coordination as key to navigating complex socio-ecological and socio-cultural systems, especially where tourism, conservation, and community welfare intersect (Chaffin et al., 2014; Folke et al., 2005).

The third dimension, Institutional Alignment, captures the need to consolidate these adaptive practices into coherent frameworks that integrate cultural priorities, economic development goals, and supportive legal arrangements. Without alignment, community innovation and collaboration may remain episodic and vulnerable to bureaucratic turnover, conflicting mandates, or inconsistent funding. Institutional alignment therefore serves as the stabilizing layer of the model: it ensures that policies across sectors are coordinated, responsibilities are clear, and incentives for sustainable heritage utilization are well-defined.

In living heritage contexts, alignment is particularly important because heritage is not only an object of conservation but also an evolving social practice embedded in daily livelihoods and identity-making. When institutional rules and programs are coherent, they can protect communities from excessive commercialization pressures while enabling tourism benefits to be distributed more fairly and managed more sustainably. Overall, the model suggests that adaptive governance in living cultural heritage tourism is strongest when local agency generates momentum, collaborative networks expand capacity, and institutional alignment secures long-term coherence and sustainability (Chaffin et al., 2014; Folke et al., 2005).

6.   Comparative Reflections and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on tourism governance and sustainability by positioning the Indonesian experience within the evolving theory of adaptive governance. Rather than treating governance as a fixed institutional arrangement, the Majapahit Tourist Village case illustrates governance as a dynamic process shaped by local agency, informal coordination, and the capacity of actors to adjust strategies in response to change. This perspective reinforces the adaptive governance assumption that sustainable tourism outcomes depend not only on formal policy instruments, but also on the social relationships, learning practices, and problem-solving routines that develop across state and community boundaries.

In comparative terms, the Majapahit case shows meaningful parallels with research on eco-halal tourism governance, particularly in how community participation, informal leadership, and trust-based collaboration function as enabling mechanisms for resilience (Nanita, Nugroho, & Yasin, 2025). Across both contexts, community actors do not simply implement externally designed programs; they actively interpret, negotiate, and adapt governance practices to fit local socio-cultural realities. This comparison suggests that adaptive governance is strengthened when communities are treated as co-managers with recognized authority and knowledge, and when collaborative arrangements are grounded in trust and shared norms rather than solely in administrative compliance (Nanita et al., 2025).

Theoretically, this study advances the argument that governance flexibility, cultural identity, and multi-stakeholder participation are foundational conditions for sustaining living cultural heritage in Southeast Asia. In Majapahit Village, cultural identity is not a symbolic add-on to tourism development; it acts as a governance resource that shapes collective action, reinforces legitimacy, and stabilizes cooperation in situations where formal institutions are fragmented. This implies that adaptive governance in heritage tourism should be conceptualized not only as institutional adaptability, but also as the capacity to safeguard cultural meaning while negotiating economic pressures, visitor demands, and development agendas within a shared social framework (Nanita et al., 2025).

Finally, the study underscores that effective governance is not merely a matter of regulatory design, but a continuous process of negotiation, experimentation, and learning between state and community actors. By linking adaptive governance theory with cultural heritage management, the research expands the applicability of the framework beyond its common environmental and socio-ecological roots, showing its relevance for examining heritage tourism resilience, community agency, and socio-cultural sustainability. In this sense, adaptive governance becomes a valuable analytical lens for understanding how heritage destinations across the ASEAN region can remain both economically viable and culturally grounded through collaborative, learning-oriented, and locally responsive governance arrangements (Nanita et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study examined how adaptive governance can enhance the management and sustainability of living cultural heritage tourism, focusing on the case of Majapahit Tourist Village in Mojokerto, East Java. Through a qualitative case study approach, the research analyzed local governance mechanisms, socio-political interactions, and the adaptive strategies employed by communities in navigating institutional and economic challenges. The findings reveal that adaptive governance in Majapahit Village operates through three interrelated dimensions: 1) Local agency and informal leadership, which preserve cultural identity and mobilize community-led initiatives; 2) Collaborative networks, fostering hybrid partnerships among community groups, government bodies, and private actors; and 3) Institutional alignment, the most critical yet underdeveloped aspect, hindered by fragmented regulations and weak coordination.

Together, these dimensions demonstrate that sustainable heritage governance depends not only on formal legal frameworks but also on cultural resilience, social trust, and participatory learning processes. This study contributes to the wider discourse on

tourism governance and sustainability by extending adaptive governance theory beyond its environmental roots into the cultural and tourism sectors. It illustrates how flexibility, inclusivity, and community empowerment can coexist with state-led heritage frameworks, offering a model of governance that balances policy structure with local autonomy. Practically, the findings call for co-management arrangements, stronger legal coherence, and capacity-building initiatives that empower communities to participate meaningfully in heritage management (Priambodo et al., 2025)

While insightful, the study's scope is limited to a single case, restricting generalizability. Future research could adopt comparative or mixed-methods approaches across multiple heritage villages to assess variations in adaptive capacity, or longitudinal designs to track how adaptive mechanisms evolve over time in response to policy and market shifts. In conclusion, the experience of Majapahit Tourist Village underscores that adaptive governance is not a static policy model but an evolving process of negotiation, learning, and collaboration. By aligning cultural preservation with community empowerment and institutional adaptability, living cultural heritage can emerge as a resilient and sustainable model of tourism development not only for Indonesia, but also for the broader Southeast Asian region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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