

Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Through Culture-Based and Creative Economy Tourism: A Review

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the relationship between culture-based tourism and the creative economy as Sustainable development strategies in the era of globalization. This study was conducted through a qualitative literature review of more than 60 selected scientific publications in the last decade. The findings indicate that the success of cultural tourism and creative economy development is heavily influenced by the synergy between the preservation of cultural authenticity, empowerment of local communities, implementation of inclusivity principles, and the utilization of digital technology. A tourism model that places the community as the main actor has proven effective in strengthening social cohesion, increasing community income, and preserving both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. On the other hand, significant challenges arise from the phenomenon of over-tourism and the commercialization of cultural values, necessitating adaptive regulations, policies, and governance. This article also recommends the importance of further research on digital transformation issues, measuring cultural authenticity, resilience of cultural tourism destinations, and developing a framework for evaluating long-term impacts. This study emphasizes that the integration of economic, social, and cultural aspects in the creative tourism ecosystem is the main key to achieving inclusive, innovative, and sustainable development, particularly in the context of developing countries

INTRODUCTION

Background

Culture-based tourism and creative economy are a strategic field in sustainable global economic development. According to UNESCO, the cultural tourism sector contributes as one of the five largest export industries in more than 150 countries and ranks first in about 60 countries worldwide. Recent data shows that the global cultural heritage tourism market is valued at approximately 605 billion USD in 2024, with a projected growth of 4.5% per year until 2030. The economic contribution of the tourism sector to the global GDP reaches 10.9 trillion USD or 10% of the total world economy, absorbing 357 million jobs globally (The University of Manchester, 2025; Zhang et al., 2023).

In the context of Southeast Asia, the ASEAN creative economy sustainability framework adopted in 2025 emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural tourism with the creative economy as a strategy for inclusive social development and equitable growth. This is in line with recent research findings that show that heritage-based tourism, when managed properly, can drive local economic growth and promote sustainable development while preserving landmarks and traditions for future generations (ASEAN, 2025).

Nevertheless, significant challenges arise in balancing the commercialization of culture and the preservation of the authenticity of local heritage. Empirical research reveals that over-tourism can lead to the degradation of cultural sites, loss of authenticity, displacement of residents, and gentrification. Furthermore, the phenomenon of globalization in cultural tourism is said to distort customs and traditions as local wisdom, thereby requiring a culturally sensitive and community-centered approach (Darmana, 2018; Dewi Kasih et al., 2023; Kontrimiene & Melnikas, 2017).

The Importance of the Issue

The significance of this research lies in the urgency of developing a tourism model that can balance economic, social, and cultural aspects in the era of the creative economy. Empirical studies show that culture-based tourism has a very tangible positive impact on economic development, with every 1% increase in the cultural heritage index correlating with a 0.03% increase in regional economic growth (Zhang et al., 2023). The multiplier effect of tourism has proven to accelerate economic growth and create more jobs through both direct and indirect implications across various economic fields (Kostakis & Lolos, 2024).

Recent research emphasizes the importance of a community-based tourism (CBT) approach that places local communities as the main subjects in the activities of planning, managing, and utilizing tourism activities. This framework is intended not only to improve economic welfare but also to strengthen social cohesion within the community, preserve cultural identity, and maintain environmental sustainability (Canaan, 2020; Yoopetch, 2022).

In the context of digital technology, digital transformation in cultural tourism has become key to improving competitiveness and accessibility. The integration of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and digital platforms not only enhances the tourist experience but also expands the promotion and distribution reach of cultural products. However, the implementation of digital

technology must be aligned with principles of sustainability and community participation to ensure fair economic benefits for local communities (Batara et al., 2024; Winanto, 2023).

Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of tourism based on culture and the creative economy within the context of sustainable and inclusive development. The specific objectives include: (1) identifying key factors that influence the success of cultural and creative economy-based tourism development; (2) analyzing the economic, social, and cultural implications in the development of community-based tourism; (3) formulating development strategies that integrate principles of sustainability, cultural authenticity, and local community empowerment; and (4) developing a framework for implementing creative tourism that is responsive to the challenges of globalization and digitalization.

Research Novelty

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach that integrates both tangible and intangible cultural dimensions within the framework of the digital creative economy. Unlike previous studies that tended to focus solely on economic aspects, this research develops a multi-dimensional perspective that combines social capital theory, community participation, and technological innovation in a comprehensive analysis (Atmojo et al., 2023; R. M. F. Carvalho et al., 2019). The theoretical contribution of this research is the development of a culture-based tourism model that places local wisdom at the core of creative innovation, rather than merely as an object of commercialization (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023).

From a practical perspective, this research offers implementation strategies that can be adapted to various geographic and cultural contexts, emphasizing the importance of pentahelix collaboration (government, academia, business, community, and media) in creating a sustainable and inclusive tourism ecosystem (Atmojo et al., 2023). This approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (sustained economic growth), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production) (Kordej-De Villa & Šulc, 2021; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Understanding and Scope of Culture-Based Tourism and Creative Economy

Culture-based tourism and creative economy is a concept that integrates the richness of cultural heritage with creative innovation as the main attraction in tourism activities (Sa'adah, 2015; Zhang et al., 2023; Zulhuda et al., 2025). This concept stems from the understanding that culture is not just an identity, but also a resource that can be sustainably managed to create economic and social value (Canaan, 2020; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020). Culture-based tourism emphasizes the utilization of cultural assets such as traditions, arts, language, architecture, and local wisdom as the main attraction for tourists (Mon et al., 2024; Sidauruk & Saksono, 2018). Meanwhile, the creative economy provides an innovative

approach to packaging, marketing, and developing tourism products to offer a unique experience for visitors (Leksono et al., 2022; R. Putri & Santoso, 2021).

In practice, culture-based tourism is not limited to visits to historical sites or traditional art performances, but also includes interactive activities that allow tourists to engage directly in the creative processes of local communities (Sava, 2021). This can take the form of craft workshops, traditional culinary experiences, or participation in customary ceremonies (Martins, 2016; Moettaqien & Mijiarto, 2024; Rifdah & Giriwati, 2024). The presence of the creative economy expands this potential by adding innovation in product design, digital marketing, and the creation of engaging narratives to enhance the selling points of destinations (Batara et al., 2024; Utami, 2025; W. Wulandari, 2024). This concept has proven to contribute significantly to regional economic growth while preserving existing cultural heritage (Kostakis & Lolos, 2024; N. Sari et al., 2025; Wahyuni, 2022).

Terminologically, cultural-based tourism is defined as a type of tourism that places culture at the core of its attractions, both in tangible forms like historical buildings and artifacts, as well as intangible aspects such as folklore and traditional music (N. Kartika et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2021; Thananchana et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the creative economy is an economic activity that relies on ideas, knowledge, and creativity as the main source of added value (Arismayanti et al., 2017; Kusumaningrum, 2024; Marujo et al., 2020; Surti et al., 2024). The two are interconnected, as the development of cultural-based tourism requires innovation in its presentation to remain relevant to modern tourist trends and needs (Arifin & Lestari, 2023; Booyens & Rogerson, 2015).

The scope of culture-based tourism and creative economy is very broad, covering various aspects from destination management, tourism product development, to marketing (Yutthaworakool et al., 2024). At the local level, this scope includes community involvement in managing cultural resources, empowering artists, and collaborating with creative industry players (Britto, 2016; Restu et al., 2022). At the national level, it involves strategic policies that integrate the tourism and creative economy sectors in development planning (Atmojo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, at the global level, this concept is part of a cultural diplomacy strategy to introduce the nation's identity to the world (Mahadipta, 2019; M. Sari & Nugroho, 2021; Woyo, 2018).

Cultural and creative economy-based approaches in tourism also require a deep understanding of local wisdom (X. Li, 2022; Toda et al., 2024). This is because each region has diverse unique characteristics, both in terms of traditions, lifestyles, and artistic expressions (Namkham & Wannajun, 2022). By understanding local wisdom, tourism products can be packaged in such a way that their authenticity is preserved while still being attractive to the global market. The challenge lies in balancing the preservation of the original cultural values with the need for adaptation to meet tourists' expectations (T. Hidayat & Rahmawati, 2020; Supriyadi et al., 2020).

The existence of a creative economy in culture-based tourism allows for the emergence of new products that, in addition to relying on natural resources or historical sites, also include modern creations inspired by local culture (Arismayanti et al., 2017; Muhamad et al., 2021). Examples include fashion

designs based on traditional motifs, films that highlight folklore stories, or technology-based travel applications that provide interactive experiences for visitors (Sava, 2021). Such products add value while extending the life cycle of tourist destinations (Pratama & Dewi, 2022).

In the era of globalization, the scope of culture-based tourism and the creative economy also encompasses the use of digital technology. Social media, online booking platforms, and video-based creative content have become important tools in introducing cultural attractions to the international market (Batara et al., 2024; Kontrimiene & Melnikas, 2017). Technology not only has the function of being a promotional tool but also serves as a medium for documentation, preservation, and innovation in the development of tourism products. For example, the use of virtual reality (VR) technology to introduce cultural sites interactively, or augmented reality (AR) to enrich the tourist experience at locations (Rizki & Handayani, 2023; Sava, 2021). Furthermore, the development of culture-based tourism and the creative economy needs to consider sustainability (Henne et al., 2020). Management that does not pay attention to environmental and social carrying capacity can damage the cultural resources themselves (Arismayanti et al., 2017). Therefore, strategies that integrate conservation, community empowerment, and creative innovation are needed (Fitriaty et al., 2025; Stipanović et al., 2019). This approach ensures that tourism development not only provides economic benefits but also maintains the well-being of local communities and the preservation of culture (Nasution & Kurniawan, 2021).

From an economic perspective, culture-based tourism and the creative economy have great potential in creating new business opportunities and enhancing the competitiveness of destinations (Muhamad et al., 2021). The economic activities generated from this sector are inclusive as they involve various stakeholders, ranging from artists, craftsmen, tour guides, to technology developers. Its labor-intensive nature also contributes to job absorption, especially in areas with strong cultural potential (Mulyani & Syafri, 2024).

Finally, the understanding and scope of culture-based and creative economy tourism can be understood as a synergy between the preservation of cultural heritage and economic innovation (Adetunji & Dorcas A, 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). These two aspects complement each other to create authentic, attractive, and sustainable tourist experiences. A comprehensive understanding of this concept is an important foundation for all parties involved, including the government, industry players, and the community, to develop a tourism sector that is competitive at the global level while maintaining the nation's cultural identity (Canaan, 2020; Fauzi & Hartati, 2020; Richards, 2020).

2. Principles and Characteristics of Culture-Based and Creative Economy Tourism

Culture-based tourism and creative economy are built on several principles that serve as guidelines for the development, management, and evaluation of tourism destinations (Richards, 2018). These principles emphasize the balance between cultural preservation, strengthening the local economy, and providing quality experiences for tourists (Nurdiani et al., 2020; Saksono et al.,

2022). In practice, these principles function as "core values" that ensure the sustainability of destinations and the well-being of the communities involved (Henchel et al., 2020). One of the main principles is sustainability, which encompasses environmental, social, and economic aspects. Sustainability in culture-based tourism means that any form of utilization of cultural assets must consider its carrying capacity and potential for regeneration so that the heritage can continue to be enjoyed by future generations (Adetunji & Dorcas A, 2024; Henche et al., 2020; Rahma & Putra, 2021).

In addition to sustainability, the principle of cultural preservation becomes a crucial element. Culture-based tourism must maintain the authenticity and integrity of local traditions, rituals, artifacts, and artistic expressions of the local community (Dewi Kasih et al., 2023). This demands regulations and a mutual agreement between the government, business actors, and the community to ensure that each tourism activity does not undermine existing cultural values. In many cases, the success of cultural preservation depends on the extent to which the local community is actively involved in planning and implementing tourism programs (T. Kartika et al., 2019; Prasta & Pradipta, 2021). This involvement not only provides a sense of ownership but also encourages the community to maintain their local cultural identity amidst the currents of modernization (Canaan, 2020; Lestari & Nugraha, 2022).

The next principle is inclusivity, which emphasizes that the benefits of culture-based tourism and the creative economy should be felt by all layers of society (Saksono et al., 2022; Saputra et al., 2024). Inclusivity means opening equal opportunities for women, youth, and vulnerable groups to participate in the tourism value chain, from craft production, service provision, to destination management (Couret, 2020; Kasemsarn et al., 2023). The application of this principle is often associated with integrated community empowerment programs linked to creative economy development (Chatkaewnapanon & Kelly, 2019; Fitriaty et al., 2025). Thus, the tourism sector becomes a driving force for development that does not leave out certain groups (Boccella & Salerno, 2016; Fadilah & Kurnia, 2020).

The characteristics that distinguish culture-based tourism and creative economy from other forms of tourism are its orientation towards experiences (experience-oriented) (Jelinčić & Senkić, 2019; Zou et al., 2025). Tourists do not just come to see objects but also to interact, learn, and directly experience the local culture (Glonți & Popa, 2025; Uonaki et al., 2023). This characteristic requires a creative approach in designing tour packages that allow tourists to actively participate. For example, tourists can take part in batik classes, learn to cook traditional cuisine, or join in cultural celebrations (S. Li & Shaw, 2022; Martins, 2016). Through these experiences, an emotional connection is created between tourists and the destination, which ultimately enhances tourist loyalty (Benhaida et al., 2024; Sutanto & Pramesti, 2023).

Pariwisata berbasis budaya dan ekonomi kreatif memiliki karakteristik keterkaitan yang erat dengan local identity (Kasemsarn et al., 2025; Surti et al., 2024). The products and services offered reflect the values, aesthetics, and philosophy of the local community. This local identity often becomes the main

attraction, as it offers uniqueness that cannot be found in other areas (Canaan, 2020). However, the challenge that arises is how to maintain a balance between preserving authenticity and innovating to meet market tastes (Stipanović et al., 2019; Zaidan, 2019). In this regard, collaboration between cultural practitioners and creative industry players is essential to produce products that remain authentic yet commercially relevant (Atmojo et al., 2023; L. Carvalho & Cruz, 2017; Halim & Wulandari, 2021).

Another characteristic is cross-sector integration. Culture-based tourism cannot stand alone without the support of other sectors, especially the creative economy (Della Lucia & Segre, 2017; Su et al., 2018). This integration includes collaboration between artists, designers, digital content creators, and technology providers to create a mutually supportive tourism ecosystem (Batara et al., 2024). For example, cultural festivals can collaborate with graphic designers to create attractive promotional materials, or local artisans can work with photographers to market their products online. This integration expands market reach and strengthens the destination's position in the eyes of tourists (Cerisola & Panzera, 2021; Wardani & Ananda, 2024).

The principles of innovation and adaptation also become important characteristics of culture-based tourism and the creative economy (Jiang & Phoong, 2023; Stipanović et al., 2019). Global tourism trends are changing rapidly, and destinations that are unable to adapt will be left behind. Innovation can take the form of developing technology-based travel applications, creating virtual tours, or packaging cultural stories in more interactive formats (Prima Lita et al., 2020; Sava, 2021). Adaptation also includes the ability to adjust tourism activities to emergency situations, such as pandemics, without losing the cultural values that are at the core of their appeal. This requires human resources that are creative, skilled, and open to learning (Pradana & Kusuma, 2022; Ruan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the principle of partnership serves as a foundation for building sustainable culture-based and creative economy tourism (Gustafsson & Amer, 2023; Khusaini et al., 2024). Partnerships involve various parties such as local governments, local communities, academics, business actors, and international organizations (Atmojo et al., 2023; Saksono et al., 2022). This collaboration aims to combine resources, expertise, and networks for the successful development of destinations. With the existence of partnerships, challenges such as limited funding or promotion can be addressed through mutually beneficial synergies (Suharto & Fitriani, 2021; Zaidan, 2019).

One important characteristic of culture-based tourism is the orientation towards quality, not just quantity (Nurdiani et al., 2020). This means that the focus of destination development is not just to attract as many tourists as possible, but to provide a deep and satisfying experience (Yan & Liu, 2023). This orientation encourages destination managers to maintain service quality, ensure environmental cleanliness, and preserve cultural assets (Nurdiani et al., 2020). Tourists who have a quality experience are likely to recommend the destination to others, creating natural promotion through word of mouth (Handoko & Pertiwi, 2023).

Finally, the principle of education is embedded in every cultural and creative economy-based tourism activity (Gilmore & Comunian, 2016). Education is aimed not only at tourists but also at the local community (Riyanto et al., 2024). For tourists, education provides an understanding of the meaning behind the traditions and cultural values they witness. For the local community, education serves to strengthen pride in their own culture and enhance their capacity to manage destinations (Saksono et al., 2022). Thus, tourism is not only an economic activity but also a means of cross-cultural learning that enriches all parties involved (Ismail & Fikri, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The writing of this article is based on the Qualitative Literature Review (QLR) approach, not the Systematic Literature Review. The QLR method was selected because it provides flexibility in exploring and interpreting various thoughts, theories, empirical findings, and the latest practices in the field of culture-based tourism and the creative economy. Qualitative Literature Review places greater emphasis on narrative, critical synthesis, and tracing key themes that emerge from various sources, rather than following the strict protocols characteristic of Systematic Literature Review (Wei et al., 2015).

Dalam prosesnya, penulis mengumpulkan, menyeleksi, dan mengelola lebih dari 60 artikel ilmiah from relevant international and national journals over the past decade. The articles were selected based on the relevance of the topic, theoretical and practical contributions, as well as methodological quality as commonly used in qualitative research and literature reviews in the fields of creative economy and tourism. The data processing was conducted descriptively and interpretively, highlighting patterns, theoretical frameworks, and key concepts that have emerged in contemporary research. Thus, this study provides a broader, reflective, and deeply analytical mapping of knowledge, while also offering a theoretical foundation for the development of research and practice in the future (Batara et al., 2024; Wei et al., 2015; Zarei, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Factors Influencing the Development of Culture-Based Tourism and Creative Economy

The development of culture-based tourism and creative economy is inseparable from various interrelated factors, both within and outside the destination environment (Nusraningrum & Pratama, 2019; Sano, 2016). These factors determine the extent to which a destination can develop, survive, and compete in the dynamic tourism market. Generally, these factors can be classified as internal factors that include cultural potential, quality of human resources, and social capital, as well as external factors that encompass government policies, global trends, technology, and collaboration with stakeholders (Atmojo et al., 2023). Understanding these factors is crucial so that the development strategies implemented are not only reactive but also proactive in anticipating opportunities and challenges (Syamsuddin & Farida, 2021).

The first internal factor is the cultural potential possessed by a region (Timuneno et al., 2024). This potential includes tangible cultural heritage, such as historical buildings, cultural reserves, and artifacts, as well as intangible cultural heritage like performing arts, traditional cuisine, customs, and local wisdom (Adetunji & Dorcas A, 2024; Martins, 2016; Morena et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2023). The more unique and authentic the cultural potential is, the greater its appeal to tourists. However, this potential must be managed properly to avoid degradation due to excessive exploitation. Preservation is key to ensuring that this potential remains relevant and valuable for future generations (Triadi et al., 2025; Wardoyo & Kurniasari, 2020).

The quality of human resources (HR) also becomes a very determining internal factor (Rodríguez-Insuasti et al., 2022; Saeed & Al Atrees, 2025). Culture-based tourism and the creative economy require actors who not only understand cultural values but also possess skills in managing, marketing, and developing tourist products. Creative and innovative HR can package cultural potential into attractive tourist products while preserving the essence of those cultural values (Mehr-e-Tehran, 2025; Rismayadi & Maemunah, 2024). Training and education are important instruments for enhancing the competencies of tourism actors, including foreign language skills, event management, and digital marketing (Batara et al., 2024; Rahmadani & Yusuf, 2023).

Social capital, which refers to the networks of relationships and trust among community members, also influences the success of culture-based tourism development (Makridis & Goldberg-Miller, 2021; Wei et al., 2015). Strong social capital facilitates coordination, collaboration, and fair benefit sharing among tourism stakeholders. Communities with a high sense of togetherness tend to be more united in preserving cultural assets, welcoming tourists, and supporting tourism activities (R. M. F. Carvalho et al., 2024). Conversely, low social capital can lead to internal conflicts that hinder the development of destinations (Dahmiri et al., 2023; Fauzan & Hartini, 2021).

On the side of external factors, government policies have a significant influence (F. Z. Fahmi et al., 2017). Regulations that favor cultural preservation and the development of the creative economy will provide space for local actors to thrive (Richards, 2020). Forms of support can include fiscal incentives, provision of infrastructure, protection of intellectual property rights, as well as promotion at the national and international levels (Boccella & Salerno, 2016). Policies also need to ensure that destination development is carried out inclusively, so that economic benefits can be felt by all layers of society (Atmojo et al., 2023; F. Z. Fahmi et al., 2017; Indrayani & Prabowo, 2022).

Global trends in the tourism industry also become external factors that influence it. For example, the increasing interest of tourists in the concept of 'slow tourism' which emphasizes in-depth experiences, or the tendency to seek sustainable and environmentally friendly destinations (Agapito et al., 2020; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020). Destinations that can adapt to these trends have a greater opportunity to attract international tourists. However, following global trends also requires wise adaptation so as not to erase local cultural identity (Canaan, 2020; Dewi Kasih et al., 2023; Ramadhan & Putri, 2020).

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) is an undeniable factor in the development of culture-based tourism and the creative economy (Wei et al., 2015; Zhou & Sotiriadis, 2021). Digital technologies, such as social media, travel applications, and augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR), support increasingly broad, interactive, and efficient promotion (Fasone & Puglisi, 2024; Zheng et al., 2023). Technology can also be used for documentation and cultural preservation, such as the digitization of ancient manuscripts or the creation of video archives of traditional performances. Destinations that optimally utilize technology can enhance their visibility and attractiveness in the global market (Anshari & Dewanto, 2024; Varotsis, 2022).

Collaboration with various stakeholders is a very determining external factor (Atmojo et al., 2023). Culturally-based tourism cannot stand alone without the support of other sectors, such as education, arts, and the creative industry (Nusraningrum & Pratama, 2019). Collaboration can take the form of partnerships with educational institutions to develop training programs, alliances with players in the creative industry for product packaging, or synergy with financial institutions for funding (Khusaini et al., 2024). With solid collaboration, destination development can be carried out more systematically and sustainably (L. Carvalho & Cruz, 2017; S. Wibowo & Lestiani, 2021).

The challenges faced in the development of culture-based tourism and the creative economy also require special attention (Gibson & Kong, 2015; Shishmanova, 2019; Wei et al., 2015). One of the main challenges is the risk of excessive commercialization that can reduce cultural value to merely a commodity (Prasiasa et al., 2023). This can occur when the management of the destination is more oriented towards financial profit rather than cultural preservation. To address this issue, an evaluation mechanism that involves the local community in decision-making is needed (Dahmiri et al., 2023). Thus, the development of the destination remains aligned with the respected cultural values (Gibson & Kong, 2015; Mulyono & Setiawan, 2023).

Environmental factors also play a role, especially in destinations that rely on natural beauty as part of their attraction (Astiké & Skvarciany, 2025; Fuchs & Kronenberg, 2025). A clean, maintained, and sustainable environment will enhance the comfort of tourists (Zhao, 2021). Conversely, environmental degradation can diminish the appeal of destinations and even damage existing cultural assets. Therefore, environmental preservation aspects must be integrated into every stage of cultural-based tourism development as well as creative economy (Shishmanova, 2019; Yuliani & Fitria, 2020).

The factors influencing the development of culture-based tourism and creative economy are interrelated with one another (Richards, 2018; Salvado et al., 2020; Shishmanova, 2019). Significant cultural potential cannot be optimized without support from quality human resources, strong social capital, appropriate policies, and the use of technology (F. Z. Fahmi et al., 2017). Likewise, global trends and cross-sector collaboration will only be beneficial if managed sustainably and favorably towards the preservation of cultural values (Atmojo et al., 2023; F. Z. Fahmi et al., 2017). A comprehensive understanding of these factors will assist all parties involved in formulating development strategies that are

effective, adaptive, and sustainable, thus culture-based tourism and the creative economy can become a driving force for economic development while preserving national identity (Fikri & Saputra, 2024; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020).

2. The Impact of Culture-Based Tourism and Creative Economy on Society and the Economy

Culture-based tourism and creative economy have complex impacts on society and the economy, both positive and negative (Kostakis & Lolos, 2024; Noonan & Rizzo, 2017; Richards, 2018). The uniqueness of culture-based tourism lies in its ability to combine the preservation of cultural heritage with the creation of economic value (Adetunji & Dorcas A, 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). This is different from conventional tourism, which often focuses solely on natural attractions. In the context of sustainable development, culture-based tourism not only serves as an instrument for economic growth but also as a means of strengthening local identity, increasing community participation, and ensuring more equitable distribution of benefits (Boccella & Salerno, 2016; Canaan, 2020; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020; Santoso & Dewi, 2022; Wei et al., 2015).

One of the most tangible positive impacts is the increase in local community income (Noonan & Rizzo, 2017; Torre & Scarborough, 2017). Through the development of cultural attractions, art exhibitions, traditional performances, and creative economic products such as handicrafts, the community can obtain new sources of income (Al-Ababneh, 2019; Torre & Scarborough, 2017). This income is not only enjoyed by direct business actors, such as artisans or art performers, but also by supporting sectors such as transportation, culinary, and accommodation (Martins, 2016). The multiplier effect generated by tourism can drive the regional economy more broadly (F. Hidayat & Sari, 2021).

In addition to the direct economic impact, culture-based tourism also encourages the creation of new jobs (Kostakis & Lolos, 2024; Torre & Scarborough, 2017). Tourist activities require various services, ranging from tour guides, event managers, marketing, to creative personnel for product packaging and promotion (Al-Ababneh, 2019). The created jobs are not only formal but also informal, which provides opportunities for people with various skill backgrounds to participate. In many cases, culture-based tourism can be a solution for areas with limited job opportunities in the industrial or agricultural sectors (Rahmawati & Nugroho, 2020; Wei et al., 2015).

Another positive impact is the preservation of culture (Al-Ababneh, 2019). Tourism managed with sustainability principles can be a strong reason for communities to maintain and revive traditions that have started to be abandoned (Hanche et al., 2020). For example, traditional dance or music that used to be rarely performed now receives regular performance space due to tourist interest (Richards, 2020). Similarly, regional culinary specialties have regained popularity thanks to culinary tourism activities (Martins, 2016). In this context, tourism not only commercializes culture but also serves as a medium for preserving cultural heritage that is at risk of extinction (Jelinčić, 2021; E. Wulandari, 2019; Zhang et al., 2023).

From a social perspective, culture-based tourism can strengthen the social cohesion of the community (Putrajip, 2025; A. Wibowo et al., 2023). Tourism activities often involve cross-group collaboration, whether between villages, organizations, or generations. This cooperation strengthens the sense of togetherness, solidarity, and ownership of the cultural identity that is preserved (Canaan, 2020). Thus, tourism not only builds the economy but also strengthens the social foundations that are an important asset for sustainable development (H. Fahmi & Ridwan, 2021; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020).

Culture-based tourism Creative economy can enhance the image of a region in the eyes of both national and international audiences (Henriques & Elias, 2022; Wei et al., 2015). Destinations with rich culture and unique creative products will be easier to remember and recognized by tourists. This positive image not only benefits the tourism sector but can also attract investments in other sectors, such as the creative industry, education, and trade (L. Carvalho & Cruz, 2017). Ultimately, a good image serves as a long-term asset that strengthens the position of the region on the global tourism map (Prasetyo & Lestari, 2020).

The impact of culture-based tourism is not always positive (Henriques & Elias, 2022; Wei et al., 2015). One of the frequent risks is excessive commercialization. When culture is only seen as an economic commodity, there is a possibility that the authentic values within it may erode (Jelinčić, 2021). Performances or traditional ceremonies that originally have sacred meanings can turn into mere entertainment, scheduled for the benefit of tourists (Dewi Kasih et al., 2023). This can diminish the essence of culture and spark debates among the community regarding the boundary between preservation and commodification (Hafid & Yusran, 2023; Prasiassa et al., 2023).

Apart from commercialization, tourism can also trigger economic inequality in society (Duxbury, 2021; Torre & Scarborough, 2017). Not all groups have the same access to the opportunities offered by the tourism sector. Groups with better capital, connections, or skills usually gain greater benefits, while vulnerable groups can be left behind. This inequality, if not anticipated, has the potential to cause social envy and disrupt community harmony (Gibson & Kong, 2015; Granpayehvaghei & Bonakdar, 2022; Lestiani, 2021).

Another negative impact that needs to be considered is the pressure on the environment (Amin & Budilestari, 2025; Waluyo & Guritno, 2023). The increase in the number of tourists can lead to increased waste volume, the consumption of natural resources, and pressure on vulnerable cultural sites (Cerisola & Panzera, 2021; Ren, 2021). Historical sites that are visited too frequently are at risk of experiencing physical degradation, such as the wear of temple stones or the loss of intricate details in carvings. In this context, management is needed to regulate visitor capacity and ensure the application of sustainable tourism principles (Fitriaty et al., 2025; Gunawan & Putra, 2019).

The interaction between tourists and local communities can also bring about socio-cultural challenges (Gibson & Kong, 2015). The influx of external cultural influences through tourists can enrich perspectives but also has the potential to erode traditional values if not balanced with adequate cultural education (Prasiassa et al., 2023). For example, changes in consumption patterns,

lifestyles, or moral values can occur as a result of intense contact with foreign cultures. Therefore, tourism development programs need to pay attention to strengthening cultural literacy for local communities (Henriques & Elias, 2022; Rizky & Astuti, 2020; Sharma et al., 2025).

From the perspective of the creative economy, culture-based tourism encourages innovation in products and services (Stipanović et al., 2019; Wei et al., 2015). The need to provide unique experiences for tourists drives creative economy players to continuously create new designs, attractive packaging, and fresh event concepts. These innovations not only enhance the competitiveness of local products but also expand the market to a global level (Booyens & Rogerson, 2015; Saksono et al., 2022; Wahono et al., 2018). With the support of digital technology, creative products from tourist destinations can be marketed online, providing sales opportunities that are not limited to the physical visits of tourists (S. Putri & Arif, 2021).

On a macro level, culture-based tourism contributes to regional economic growth with an increase in local revenue (PAD) (Boccella & Salerno, 2016; Torre & Scarborough, 2017). Hotel taxes, restaurant taxes, entrance fees to tourist attractions, and parking fees are sources of income that can be used to finance infrastructure development and social programs. This contribution strengthens the regional fiscal capacity to improve community welfare (Gustafsson & Amer, 2023; Jelinčić, 2021). However, excessive dependence on the tourism sector also carries risks, especially in the event of a crisis that reduces tourist mobility, such as a pandemic (Mahendra, 2022).

Ultimately, the impact of culture-based tourism and the creative economy must be viewed comprehensively (Sharma et al., 2025; Torre & Scarborough, 2017; Wei et al., 2015). A balanced approach is necessary to maximize economic, social, and cultural benefits while minimizing negative impacts. Strategic planning, active community participation, and the application of sustainability principles are key for tourism to truly become a means of inclusive and sustainable development (Boccella & Salerno, 2016; Pintea & Badulescu, 2020). Thus, tourism not only becomes an economic engine but also a guardian of cultural heritage that enriches national identity amidst the currents of globalization (Adetunji & Dorcas A, 2024; Kontrimiene & Melnikas, 2017; Nurhayati & Salim, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A literature review on culture-based tourism and creative economy shows that this sector has developed into one of the most dynamic and multidisciplinary fields of research in contemporary tourism studies. An analysis of more than 60 scholarly articles reveals that cultural tourism is no longer viewed solely as a recreational activity, but rather as a strategic instrument for sustainable development that can integrate economic, social, and cultural dimensions within a holistic framework.

The main findings of this study indicate that the success of developing culture-based and creative economy tourism heavily relies on stakeholders' ability to create a balance between preserving cultural authenticity and adapting

to global market demands. The principle of inclusivity is fundamental in ensuring that the economic benefits of the tourism sector can be felt by all segments of society, particularly local communities who are the owners of cultural heritage. Strong social capital, appropriate government policy support, and optimal utilization of digital technology have proven to be decisive factors influencing the sustainability of cultural tourism destinations.

The positive impact resulting from the implementation of culture-based tourism and the creative economy not only increases the income of local communities through multiplier effects but also significantly contributes to the preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, this sector has proven to enhance social cohesion within communities and build a cultural identity that is resilient to the challenges of globalization. However, the implementation of this tourism model also faces complex challenges such as the risk of over-tourism, excessive commercialization of cultural values, and the potential for gentrification that could harm local communities.

Digital transformation in cultural tourism has opened innovative opportunities to enhance the tourist experience through Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and interactive digital platforms. The integration of this technology not only expands accessibility and the reach of destination promotion but also enables digital preservation of cultural heritage that is vulnerable to degradation. This phenomenon aligns with the global trend towards smart tourism, which prioritizes efficiency, personalization, and sustainability in the management of tourist destinations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the results of the analysis and identification of research gaps in the reviewed literature, several directions for future research can be recommended to enrich academic and practical understanding in the field of culture-based tourism and the creative economy. First, longitudinal research is needed to examine the long-term impact of implementing community-based cultural tourism models on the socio-economic transformation of local communities, specifically focusing on the mechanisms of benefit distribution and changes in social structures within communities possessing cultural heritage. Such studies can provide deep insights into sustainable cultural tourism models. Secondly, an in-depth exploration of the applications of emerging technologies such as AI, the Internet of Things, and blockchain in the context of the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage requires special attention from future researchers. This research could examine how digital technology can be optimized to create authentic immersive cultural experiences without sacrificing traditional values and local wisdom. The ethical aspects of cultural digitization also represent an area that needs to be comprehensively explored.

Third, the development of a more advanced evaluation framework to measure cultural authenticity in the context of creative tourism has become a significant academic urgency. Future research could focus on constructing qualitative and quantitative indicators capable of capturing the complexities of the relationship between tourism commercialization and the preservation of

cultural integrity. The framework should consider a multistakeholder perspective and integrate dimensions of tourist psychology, local community perceptions, and expert assessments into a holistic evaluation model.

Fourth, cross-cultural and geographical comparative studies on governance models in culture-based tourism need to be expanded to identify best practices and learnings from various socio-political contexts. This research can examine how differences in government systems, social structures, and economic conditions affect the effectiveness of implementing sustainable cultural tourism policies. Such comparative analysis can provide valuable contributions to the development of adaptive governance models that can be applied in diverse cultural contexts.

Fifth, in-depth investigation into the resilience and adaptive capacity of cultural tourism destinations in facing external shocks such as pandemics, climate change, and global economic crises becomes a highly relevant area of research in contemporary conditions. Future research could develop crisis management frameworks that are specific to heritage tourism destinations, taking into account the unique vulnerabilities of cultural assets and their dependence on international tourism flows.

Finally, exploration of emerging tourism niches such as gastronomic heritage tourism, digital nomadism in cultural destinations, and virtual cultural tourism requires special attention from researchers. Studies on how these new trends can be integrated with traditional cultural tourism offerings to create a diverse and sustainable tourism portfolio become a promising area for development. Such research can provide practical insights for tourism destination managers in adapting marketing strategies and product development according to the evolving interests of tourists and technological capabilities.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so that further research is needed on the topic of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Through Culture-Based and Creative Economy Tourism: A Review to perfect this research and increase insight for readers and writers.

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