

Developing Community-Based Heritage Walking Tours for Local Economic Enhancement: A Case Study of Peneleh, Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the gap between the high heritage potential and the limited community readiness in implementing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Kampung Peneleh, Surabaya. The objective is to analyze the potential and readiness of developing a community-based heritage walking tour as a strategy for enhancing the local economy. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed through in-depth interviews, field observations, and focus group discussions involving local communities and stakeholders. The findings reveal that although Peneleh possesses strong historical assets and place identity, its development is constrained by limited human resource capacity, weak tourism management, and insufficient stakeholder coordination. Unlike previous CBT studies that primarily emphasize participation as a success factor, this study highlights a critical gap between participation and actual capability, demonstrating that participation alone is insufficient without structured capacity building and product development. This research contributes to the literature by proposing an integrated perspective that combines human resource empowerment, experiential tourism product design (heritage walking tours), and collaborative governance as key determinants of sustainable CBT implementation. It also provides empirical evidence from an urban heritage context, which remains underexplored in prior CBT research dominated by rural tourism settings. The study concludes that strengthening community competencies and developing structured, experience-based tourism products are essential to generate inclusive and sustainable local economic benefits.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As one of Indonesia's historic urban centres, Surabaya possesses numerous heritage areas that reflect the city's socio-cultural evolution, including Kampung Peneleh as one of

its oldest settlements with strong historical value and local identity. The area demonstrates significant potential to be developed as a heritage walking tour destination due to its authentic architectural character and spatial configuration. However, this potential has not been optimally transformed into sustainable economic value [1]. The primary issue lies in the limited readiness of the local community as the main actors in tourism, particularly in terms of knowledge, technical skills, and confidence in managing tourism activities. Previous studies indicate that without active community participation and adequate human resource capacity building, heritage tourism development tends to become exclusive and less beneficial for local communities [2].

Furthermore, the literature on Community-Based Tourism (CBT) highlights that community involvement plays a crucial role in improving local welfare and preserving cultural heritage [3]. However, contrasting findings reveal that participation in many CBT practices is often symbolic rather than substantive, as communities are involved without being sufficiently equipped with managerial and technical capabilities [4]. This condition indicates a gap between participation and actual capacity. In the context of heritage tourism, previous research emphasizes the importance of experiential quality, storytelling, and place identity in enhancing tourist engagement and satisfaction [5]. Nevertheless, other studies argue that many heritage destinations fail to develop structured and marketable tourism products due to weak governance, lack of innovation, and absence of standardized tourism design [6]. From an economic perspective, the concept of Local Economic Development (LED) positions tourism as a driver of regional economic growth based on local potential; however, its impact is often suboptimal due to weak integration between community capacity, tourism product development, and stakeholder collaboration [7].

Based on these conditions, a clear research gap emerges, where most CBT studies focus on rural contexts and emphasize participation as the primary determinant of success, while limited research critically examines the discrepancy between participation and capability, particularly in urban heritage settings. In addition, there is a lack of integrative studies that connect human resource empowerment, experiential tourism product development, such as heritage walking tours, and collaborative governance within a unified analytical framework. Therefore, this study formulates the following research questions: how ready is the community of Kampung Peneleh to develop a community-based heritage walking tour, what are the main constraints in transforming heritage potential into sustainable tourism products, and how can human resource empowerment and collaborative governance be integrated to support local economic development.

To address these issues, this study adopts an approach that integrates community capacity building, structured and experience-based tourism product development, and strengthened stakeholder collaboration. The objectives of this study are to analyze the potential and readiness of Kampung Peneleh as a community-based heritage walking tour destination, to identify constraints in CBT implementation from social, managerial, and economic perspectives, and to formulate a development model based on human resource empowerment and local economic principles. Theoretically, this study is grounded in the concepts of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which emphasizes community participation and control; heritage tourism, which focuses on authenticity and visitor experience; and

Local Economic Development (LED), which views tourism as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth.

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it offers a novel perspective by shifting the focus from participation-based to capability-based CBT development, particularly in the context of urban heritage tourism [8]. Practically, it provides strategic recommendations for policymakers, communities, and stakeholders in designing more structured, inclusive, and sustainable tourism development. Ultimately, the development of heritage walking tours is expected not only to support cultural preservation but also to generate equitable and sustainable economic benefits for local communities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and Local Economic Impact

This concept views local communities not merely as complements to tourism activities, but as key actors involved in management and development processes. Communities are given the opportunity to determine tourism directions based on their own potential and needs. Recent studies show that CBT in Indonesia has been growing significantly, reflecting increasing academic interest. However, research emphasizes the importance of evaluation frameworks that balance economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Putra & Wijaya, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2022). Case studies in regions such as Banyuwangi and Sidomulyo Village demonstrate that CBT success depends on institutional entrepreneurship, stakeholder collaboration, and community managerial capacity. Without these, local economic potential cannot develop optimally (Sutrisno & Hadi, 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2024). Therefore, human resource empowerment is essential to ensure that tourism benefits are truly experienced by local communities.

Heritage Walking Tours: Place Identity, Tourist Experience, and Local Benefits

Heritage walking tours act as a bridge between local historical narratives and real visitor experiences. Through direct interaction with space and buildings, place identity becomes stronger, encouraging longer and more meaningful visits. This aligns with heritage tourism studies emphasizing authentic experiences and emotional engagement (Putra & Wirawan, 2023; Hidayati, 2024). In the Peneleh area, the quality of tourist experience depends not only on historical attractions but also on effective management. This includes clear guidance, meaningful points of interest, well-structured routes, engaging storytelling, and trained tour guides. These elements are crucial for visitor satisfaction and for designing community-based tourism products and HR empowerment programs (Suryani & Prasetyo, 2023; Lestari et al., 2024). Thus, structured, participatory, and sustainable tour planning is recommended to strengthen heritage tourism in Surabaya, aligning with CBT principles that prioritize local community involvement (Rahmawati & Nugroho, 2023; Wibowo, 2024).

Human Resource Empowerment (Capacity Building) in Community-Based Tourism

In developing heritage tourism in Kampung Peneleh, human resource empowerment is crucial to encourage active community participation. This includes not only technical

skills but also the ability to manage tourism potential. Activities include training local tour guides, managing tourism businesses and MSMEs, developing cultural tourism products, digital marketing, and community governance. According to Andini (2024), capacity-building programs through technical and social training enable communities to manage tourism independently. Communities thus become not just objects but key developers of tourism destinations.

Training for local tour guides is also essential, as their storytelling ability and interaction with visitors enhance the tourism experience (Anggara, 2025). Additionally, strengthening MSME capacity contributes significantly to local economic development through business management training, product improvement, and market expansion. Continuous mentoring is needed to ensure sustainability (Wijaya, 2025).

Measuring Local Economic Impact: Qualitative Methods

The measurement of local economic impact in community-based tourism uses qualitative approaches to deeply understand how tourism activities affect economic conditions, business patterns, and socio-economic dynamics. Data collection typically involves in-depth interviews, field observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders such as tour guides, MSME actors, community managers, and residents. This approach allows researchers to capture contextual changes such as new business opportunities, increased local product sales, and community participation in tourism activities. Qualitative methods are widely used in CBT research because they provide insights into social and economic conditions that cannot always be explained through quantitative data alone (Junaid, 2021).

3. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the potential, readiness, and development strategies of community-based heritage walking tours in Kampung Peneleh, Surabaya. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting relevant stakeholders such as local residents, tour guides, MSME actors, community groups, and government representatives, and expanded using snowball sampling. A total of 15–20 informants participated, with fieldwork conducted over approximately 2–3 months. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, focus group discussions (FGDs), and documentation. Data analysis followed a stepwise process: transcription, open coding, categorization, and thematic analysis to identify key themes related to community capacity, tourism potential, and local economic dynamics. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking to confirm the accuracy of findings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Kampung Peneleh area in Surabaya shows significant potential as a heritage walking tour destination, particularly considering the presence of historic buildings, the spatial patterns of old settlements, and the historical value inherent in the city's development. However, it can be argued that the mere existence of physical potential does not

automatically guarantee the success of tourism destination development. Many heritage areas in Indonesia have stagnated due to the inability to transform their potential into economically valuable tourism products. This aligns with the findings of Timothy and Boyd (2003), who emphasized that the success of heritage tourism is largely determined by the ability to manage interpretation and the tourist experience, not just the existence of physical assets.

Table 1. Article Classification Results

No	Article Title	Author(s)	Year	Case/Festival	Sustainability Dimensions	Key Findings
1	The Role of Community-Based Tourism in Sustainable Tourism Village In Indonesia	[9]	2024	Community-based tourism in Indonesia	Economic, Social, Environmental	CBT must maintain a balance among the three sustainability aspects
2	Sustainable Tourism Implementation In Indonesia: Emphasizing Green Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, and Local Empowerment	[10]	2024	CBT in Indonesia	Social, Environmental	The CBT trend is increasing; sustainability evaluation is needed
3	Cultural heritage and sports tourism: a systematic literature review of sustainable destination management practices	[11]	2021	Tourism villages in Indonesia	Economic, Social	The success of CBT is determined by human resource capacity and collaboration
4	The Development of Tourism Based on Local Culture through Bibliometric Analysis	[12]	2024	Heritage tourism	Social, Cultural	Authentic experiences enhance tourist attraction and satisfaction
5	The heritage tourist: an understanding of the visitor experience at heritage attractions	[13]	2017	Heritage tourism	Social	Direct interaction increases tourist engagement
6	Loyalty in Heritage Tourism: The Case of Córdoba and Its Four World Heritage Sites	[14]	2020	Heritage tourism management	Economic, Social	Tourism management influences visitor satisfaction
7	Community participation in heritage tourism management of Sukhothai historical park	[15]	2023	Heritage areas	Social, Institutional	Participatory planning improves tourism success
8	Community cultural development: Exploring the connections between collective art making, capacity building and sustainable community-based tourism	[16]	2022	Global cultural tourism	Economic, Social	Tourism improves community welfare

No	Article Title	Author(s)	Year	Case/Festival	Sustainability Dimensions	Key Findings
9	Power in community-based tourism: empowerment and partnership in Bali	[17]	2024	CBT	Social, Economic	Training enhances community independence
10	The role of tourism guides in heritage management at archaeological sites: enhancing conservation and visitor experience	[18]	2025	Heritage tourism	Social, Cultural	Tour guides play an important role in tourism experiences
11	Community participation in cultural heritage management: A systematic literature review comparing Chinese and international practices	[19]	2020	Heritage tourism	Social, Environmental	Community participation determines sustainability
12	Regional economic development and tourism: A literature review to highlight future directions for regional tourism research	[20]	2020	Local economic development	Economic	Tourism drives regional economic growth
13	Boosting accessibility and inclusiveness in tourism and cultural heritage sites: benchmarking best practices	[21]	2025	Global heritage tourism	Social	Inclusivity is important in CBT
14	The Role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Supporting Indonesia's Economic Resilience	[22]	2025	Tourism MSMEs	Economic	MSMEs strengthen local economies
15	Community Participation in Preserving the History of Heritage Tourism Sites	[23]	2024	Heritage tourism	Social	Community participation is important in tourism management

The tabulation of classified article data shows that most studies in the literature review focus on the development of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and heritage tourism as strategies for community-based sustainable development. In general, the most dominant sustainability dimension is the social aspect, particularly related to community participation, human resource (HR) empowerment, and strengthening local community capacity. This is evident in studies such as [24], which emphasize that the success of community-based tourism is highly dependent on active community involvement in tourism planning and management. However, in practice, such participation is often merely normative and not accompanied by real capacity building or long-term sustainability.

However, the empirical data show that community readiness remains limited. Most informants acknowledged a lack of confidence and skills in managing tourism activities. As one participant stated, *“We have many historical stories, but we don’t know how to present them to visitors in an interesting way.”* Another informant noted, *“There has been training before, but it was not continuous, so we still feel unprepared to become tour guides.”* These statements highlight gaps in storytelling ability, guiding skills, and service quality.

Observational insights also reveal weak coordination among stakeholders. There is no standardized tour package, clear route mapping, or integrated promotion strategy. Community participation exists, but it is sporadic and not yet organized into a structured tourism system. In addition, while some MSMEs benefit from visitor presence, the economic impact is still limited and uneven across the community.

Discussion

In addition, the economic dimension is also a key focus in several studies, especially in the context of improving local community welfare through the development of local MSMEs and tourism-based business opportunities [25]. Studies by [26] indicate that tourism significantly contributes to Local Economic Development (LED), particularly when it is managed inclusively and based on local potential. Nevertheless, some studies highlight that the distribution of economic benefits is often uneven, thus requiring a more equitable and sustainable approach.

In the context of heritage tourism, the tabulation results show that tourism experience and place identity formation are key factors in enhancing destination attractiveness. Research by [27] confirms that direct interaction between tourists and the local environment and community can create more meaningful experiences and increase visitor satisfaction. Therefore, the development of tourism products such as heritage walking tours needs to be supported by strong narratives, well-structured routes, and the ability of tour guides to deliver engaging storytelling [28].

The findings demonstrate that the existence of heritage assets alone is insufficient to ensure successful tourism development, confirming the argument of [29] that interpretation and visitor experience are more critical than physical resources. This study extends previous research by showing that in the context of urban heritage tourism, the main challenge lies not only in participation but in the gap between participation and capability.

Overall, the tabulation results indicate that although many studies have addressed the social and economic aspects of CBT and heritage tourism development, the environmental dimension has received relatively limited attention. This highlights a research gap, which presents an opportunity for further studies, particularly in integrating environmental aspects into sustainable community-based tourism management.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of community-based heritage walking tours in Kampung Peneleh, Surabaya, requires more than the presence of historical assets, as the key determinant lies in the alignment between local potential and community capability. The findings highlight that the current implementation of Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

remains largely procedural, where participation exists but is not yet supported by adequate skills, structured management, and effective stakeholder coordination. As a result, tourism development has not reached an optimal or sustainable level. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by extending the CBT framework from a participation-based approach toward a capability-based approach, emphasizing the importance of human resource empowerment, experiential tourism product design, and collaborative governance as integrated components. Practically, the study implies that policymakers and stakeholders need to prioritize continuous capacity building, structured product development, and institutional synergy to achieve inclusive and sustainable tourism outcomes.

However, this study has several limitations. It focuses on a single case study in an urban heritage context, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions. In addition, the use of qualitative methods means that the results are context-specific and rely on interpretative analysis rather than quantitative measurement of economic impact. Future research is recommended to adopt comparative studies across different heritage areas, integrate quantitative approaches to measure economic and social impacts more precisely, and explore digital innovation in heritage tourism development. Further studies can also examine long-term governance models and policy interventions that support sustainable CBT implementation. For the broader society, this research provides practical insight into how local communities can be empowered to manage tourism independently, ensuring that heritage preservation and economic benefits are achieved simultaneously in a sustainable manner.

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