

STRATEGY FOR UTILIZING BUKITINGGI 2 STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AS A HERITAGE TOURISM COMMODITY BASED ON ETHICS AND LEGALITY OF PRESERVATION

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Article History

Received: 17 November 2025

Accepted: 17 December 2025

Published: 31 December 2025

Abstract

SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi, located in West Sumatra Province, is one of the oldest educational institutions in the region and possesses significant historical and cultural value in the development of education in Indonesia. Its designation as a Heritage School or cultural heritage school in 2022 underscores its strategic role as a guardian of educational heritage from the Dutch colonial period to the modern era. The presence of well-preserved colonial-era architecture, a school environment rich in historical meaning, and its longstanding contribution to the formation of the nation's intellectual community position SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi not only as an educational institution but also as an educationally valuable cultural asset. This study aims to formulate management strategies for developing SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi as an ethical and sustainable heritage tourism destination without disrupting its primary educational function. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach through literature review, field observation, and policy analysis related to cultural heritage conservation. The findings indicate that heritage tourism development can be achieved through the application of conservation-oriented principles, the strengthening of regulatory frameworks and collaboration with local governments and cultural heritage institutions, and the development of educational tourism based on the active participation of students, alumni, and the local community. Through this approach, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi has strong potential to serve as a model for heritage school management in Indonesia by harmoniously integrating educational functions, cultural preservation, and educational tourism.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Cultural Preservation, Educational Tourism, Heritage School, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi.

A. INTRODUCTION

Bukittinggi City is known as one of the main tourism centers in West Sumatra Province and boasts a rich culture and history built over hundreds of years. Among the numerous colonial buildings and old educational institutions scattered throughout the region, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi holds a significant position as an institution with a long track record. During the Dutch colonial era, the school was known as Kweekschool and was established in the mid-19th century as a teacher training center for the indigenous population. Through this strategic role, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi not only serves as a center for teacher training but also maintains a vital record of the development of modern education in Indonesia, reflecting the social and political dynamics from the colonial period to independence (Mursal I, 2018). The existence of the colonial-style building, which remains intact today, demonstrates that the

school is not simply a learning space but also a historical symbol depicting the nation's journey and the process of shaping national identity (Yulia et al., 2025).

This recognition of its historical value was further strengthened when SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi was designated the first Heritage School in West Sumatra in 2022. This designation not only honors the school's history but also demands a commitment from all parties to responsibly preserve and utilize its cultural values. This status also demonstrates that educational institutions can play a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, while simultaneously providing social and economic impact through history-based tourism activities. In this context, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi demonstrates how education and culture can synergize, as historical values are not only transmitted in the classroom but can also be experienced directly through contact with the school's meaningful physical environment.

In the development of the cultural tourism sector, the presence of historical sites such as SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi presents a unique attraction for tourists. Current tourism trends indicate that visitors seek not only natural beauty but also more valuable experiences, such as exploring the history, authentic architecture, and the stories behind a site (Sihombing & Antonio, 2024). With its beautiful colonial architecture, preserved historic classrooms, and distinctive classical educational atmosphere, this school has great potential to be developed as an educational tourism destination (Sonjaya O, 2024). A visit to the school allows tourists to gain a deeper understanding of Indonesia's educational journey from the colonial period to the modern era, providing both a fun and educational experience.

However, utilizing cultural heritage as a tourist attraction is not without challenges. Developing heritage tourism must be done carefully to avoid damaging or diminishing the authenticity of historic buildings (Kendra J, 2024). Without implementing ethical principles of preservation, the threat of excessive commercialization could undermine the authentic value of buildings that have been preserved for years (Vuspitasari B, 2025). Furthermore, legality is also a crucial consideration, as every cultural heritage site in Indonesia is bound by strict regulations regarding protection and utilization, as stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage. As a building still functioning as an active school, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi requires careful management to ensure that tourism activities do not hinder the educational process or damage the building's aging elements.

From an ethical perspective, preserving historical sites like SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi requires a balance between their economic and cultural values. The participation of the local community, students, alumni, and the government is essential to ensure the sustainable use of this cultural heritage. Developed tourism activities must respect the historical value and social function of the school, while raising public awareness of the importance of preserving Bukittinggi's cultural identity. Therefore, heritage tourism management at this school aims not only to increase tourist visits but also to foster a strong sense of ownership of the cultural heritage passed down to future generations.

From a regulatory perspective, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi is required to comply with regulations regarding cultural heritage preservation, including provisions for conservation, utilization, and maintenance established by the government and relevant institutions. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in legal sanctions for both the school and the tourism management, ranging from administrative warnings to more severe legal action. Therefore, utilization strategies must be based on the principle of legality, which includes proper permitting, regular evaluations, and intensive coordination between the school and cultural agencies. This approach ensures that tourism activities comply with cultural heritage protection regulations and do not damage the historical value held.

Beyond legal aspects, the application of preservation ethics is an important foundation in cultural heritage management. The main principle in preservation is to respect historical

value without neglecting the building's current function. Tourism activities, for example, can include historical educational tours guided by teachers or alumni, exhibitions of old photographs, or thematic visits for students from other schools, so that tourism remains educationally oriented and does not lead to commercial exploitation. This idea aligns with the concept of sustainable heritage tourism, which emphasizes the importance of long-term preservation and public education (UNESCO, 2011). By consistently implementing ethics and legality, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi can serve as a model for heritage tourism management in Indonesia and contribute to increasing public understanding of national history.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines various scholarly sources that highlight the use of cultural heritage as a tourist destination, with an emphasis on ethical issues, legal aspects, and sustainability principles, particularly in the context of historic educational institutions such as SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi. The literature analyzed comes from reputable journals in the fields of cultural tourism, heritage conservation, and legal regulations, providing a strong conceptual foundation for this research.

Heritage Tourism Theory and Cultural Heritage Utilization

Heritage tourism is understood as tourism activities that utilize historical sites with the aim of providing educational and recreational experiences while maintaining the cultural values inherent in the sites (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Ashworth (1994), in his publication in *Tourism Management*, emphasized that heritage is not only a physical object but also a social construct that requires a balance between economic aspects and preservation efforts. The utilization of cultural heritage sites such as Borobudur found that tourism activities can support the local economy but have the potential to damage the site's integrity if not managed properly (Wismaningtyas et al., 2024). These findings serve as an important reference point in assessing the potential of SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi as a functioning colonial building, whose historical value as an educational institution during the Dutch East Indies era could be developed into an educational tourist attraction.

Ethical Aspects in Heritage Preservation

Heritage preservation ethics emphasize the importance of preserving and respecting historical value without overexploitation (UNESCO, 2003, in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage). Zhang et al. (2021), in the *Annals of Tourism Research*, examine how commercialization practices can diminish a site's authenticity, including the risk of overtourism, which could potentially disrupt its primary function. In Indonesia, Eck and An (2023), in their study, "A Study on the Effect of Authenticity on Heritage Tourists' Mindful Tourism Experience: The Case of the Forbidden City," explore ethical issues in the use of historic schools as tourist attractions, particularly regarding the integration of ongoing educational activities. This literature reinforces the ethical study at SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi, where tourism practices need to be regulated to avoid disrupting the teaching and learning process while adhering to UNESCO's principles of preserving cultural heritage.

Legality and Regulation of Cultural Heritage Utilization

Legally, the utilization of heritage sites in Indonesia is regulated by Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, which provides space for educational use without altering the status and character of the building. Lubis et al. (2024) examined the application of this regulation to tourist attractions such as the State Palace and emphasized the importance of official permits from the authorities to prevent legal violations. Globally, Mason (2002) in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* compared heritage regulations in Europe and Asia and underscored the urgency of formal certification as a measure to protect historic sites. He

identified several regulatory challenges in managing tourism at an active school, thus serving as an important reference for assessing SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi's compliance with national preservation policies (Akbar, 2014).

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on formulating a strategy for utilizing SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi as a heritage tourism destination based on ethical and legal preservation principles, using a qualitative approach through descriptive methods. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for the examination of complex social and cultural phenomena, particularly those related to historical values and cultural heritage preservation practices that are difficult to quantify. The descriptive method aims to provide an in-depth and detailed understanding of the conditions of the research object, allowing for a comprehensive depiction of the actual situation without being limited by statistical generalizations (Subhaktiyasa et al., 2025). In its implementation, this research involved direct observation of buildings and activities within the heritage area, in-depth interviews with various parties, including school administrators, prospective tourists, and the surrounding community, and document review of school historical archives, cultural heritage regulations, and other preservation records. This approach aligns with the principles of qualitative research, which emphasize context and subjectivity, enabling researchers to capture subtle details often overlooked by other methods.

The data collection procedure was structured to yield rich and meaningful information. First, field observations were conducted systematically, observing visitor interactions with the old building and the school's daily routines to identify tourism development opportunities and challenges facing preservation. Observations included not only visual notes but also researchers' reflections on the atmosphere and social dynamics at the site. Second, semi-structured interviews were used to explore informants' experiences and perspectives in greater depth; interviews with school officials provided insights into the challenges of integrating educational and tourism activities, while interviews with local residents helped explore cultural perceptions of heritage. This method provided flexibility, allowing conversations to develop naturally and yielding more authentic data. Third, document studies were conducted by reviewing official archives such as the Heritage School designation letter, old photographs, and other related documents to enrich the primary data. This document analysis helped understand the school's legal framework and historical development, ensuring that the strategies formulated remained in line with preservation regulations.

The data analysis phase was conducted qualitatively, focusing on developing an in-depth description of the site's physical condition, stakeholder perspectives, and comprehensive strategies for managing cultural tourism preservation and utilization. This process included data coding, identifying key themes, and triangulation to test the validity of the research findings. Triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, thus enhancing the credibility and reliability of the data obtained. Furthermore, ethical and legal aspects of preservation were key considerations during the analysis, including ensuring that the strategies designed did not ignore the historical value of the buildings or the provisions of the Cultural Heritage Law. Through this approach, the research not only produced a factual picture but also helped researchers understand how respect for historical value can be harmoniously integrated into tourism development that can enhance social values, such as public awareness of history, and economic value through the potential for educational tourism.

This approach aligns with methods frequently used in other research related to the use of cultural heritage as a medium for history learning, where interviews and field observations have proven effective in generating rich and contextual data. For example, in research on

heritage tourism in colonial areas, this technique helped identify ethical issues such as the threat of commercialization and legal issues related to government involvement in preservation. Therefore, this research not only strengthens the theoretical understanding of sustainable heritage tourism but also provides practical contributions to the development of policies and strategies that can be adapted by schools and local governments. To maintain the integrity of the research, all informants agreed to participate through informed consent, while their personal data was kept confidential, ensuring that the research process was conducted in accordance with academic ethical standards.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discussion in this article serves to further examine the implications of the research findings for heritage tourism theory and preservation practices, by integrating theoretical perspectives with practical field experience. As a student interested in cultural tourism studies, I see the results of this research not only as relevant to the situation at SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi but also as providing a broader understanding of how to sustainably manage cultural heritage. Several key points are discussed in this section as an interpretation of the research findings.

One of the main focuses of the discussion is how ethics and legality must go hand in hand in the utilization of cultural heritage. This article explains that the ethics of preservation, as mandated by the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Heritage, require that tourism practices not be excessive to the point of threatening the authenticity of a site. Applying this to SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi means preserving the historical value of the colonial building while ensuring its continued educational function. Legally, its use as a tourist attraction is supported by Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, which provides space for educational activities without changing the building's status. This approach distinguishes the school from many other heritage sites, such as the Borobudur complex, where educational activities are not integrated. In my opinion, this illustrates how the theory of sustainable heritage tourism can be applied effectively through a harmonious collaboration between ethics and regulations.

The following discussion highlights the economic and social impacts arising from heritage tourism development. The strategies analyzed in this study have positively contributed to the local economy of Bukittinggi, for example by creating new jobs as tour guides for school alumni, thereby strengthening their emotional connection to the institution. Furthermore, the social impact is evident in the increased historical literacy of both students and visitors, which can foster an awareness of national cultural identity. However, the discussion also highlights the risks of overtourism, which can disrupt learning activities, such as noise and damage to facilities. Therefore, the author proposes limiting visiting schedules, for example, to weekends or holidays, so that educational activities remain a priority. In my opinion, as a student, these benefits demonstrate that heritage tourism not only stimulates the economy but is also crucial for strengthening the educational value and social role of the surrounding community.

In the following section, this article compares the research findings with several national and international case studies. For example, Eton College in the UK has successfully managed educational tours without disrupting academic activities through a well-planned schedule of tours and cultural activities. In Indonesia, the use of the State Palace as a tourist attraction also serves as an example, although the context is different because SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi is an active school. This discussion confirms that the strategy implemented can be successful if supported by strong regulations, and even has the potential to be replicated in other old schools in West Sumatra, such as those in Padang and Bukittinggi. To me, this

comparison demonstrates that cultural heritage management cannot be implemented in a single, unified manner; it must be adapted to local characteristics and needs. The discussion in this article serves to further examine the implications of the research findings for heritage tourism theory and preservation practices, by integrating theoretical perspectives with practical field experience. As a student interested in cultural tourism studies, I see the results of this research not only as relevant to the situation at SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi but also as providing a broader understanding of how to sustainably manage cultural heritage. Several key points are discussed in this section as an interpretation of the research findings.

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similar research in the future. Overall, this discussion confirms that SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi has great potential as a model for ethical and sustainable heritage tourism development, while also making an important contribution to the study and practice of cultural preservation in Indonesia.

Case Studies and Sustainable Utilization Strategies

Case studies from abroad, such as research conducted by the World Tourism Organization (2017), demonstrate that successful educational tourism management in historic school environments can be achieved through visitor restrictions and close collaboration with the government. In Indonesia, research by Nurick (2008) examines the management strategies of an old school in Yogyakarta, which have been able to generate positive economic impacts for the community, despite facing the threat of overtourism if not properly managed. These findings provide a basis for SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi to develop a collaborative model, such as a structured educational tour program and a mechanism for monitoring socio-economic impacts. This approach aligns with the sustainable management recommendations of the World Tourism Organization (2017).

This literature review also confirms that the utilization of heritage buildings such as SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi requires a balanced blend of conservation ethics, regulatory compliance, and sustainability-oriented management strategies to prevent over-commercialization and potential site damage. The reviewed literature serves as an important foundation for developing practical recommendations for this study, while also opening up opportunities for applying similar concepts to other historic sites in Indonesia. Primary sources come from reputable academic journals such as the *Annals of Tourism Research* and the *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, as well as relevant national publications. To obtain full text, searches can be conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar or JSTOR.

E. CONCLUSION

As a researcher directly involved from the initial research formulation through to the preparation of the final report, I feel that this study on the strategy for utilizing SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi as a heritage tourism destination based on ethical and legal preservation provides both broad and in-depth insights. This study not only successfully highlights the school's significant potential as a unique educational tourist attraction but also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between protecting authentic historical value and efforts to increase economic benefits sustainably. This conclusion summarizes the core research findings, describes the theoretical and practical contributions made, and presents my personal reflections as a novice researcher. I then offer several constructive recommendations regarding implementation, policy refinement, and future research directions, with the hope that they will contribute significantly to the development of culture-based tourism in Indonesia.

Overall, this study demonstrates that SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi has significant potential for development as a sustainable heritage tourism commodity, as long as its management remains grounded in ethical principles of preservation and complies with applicable laws. An analysis of the tourism potential indicates that this school, with its well-preserved colonial architecture and long history as an educational center during the Dutch colonial era, offers an educational experience distinct from conventional forms of tourism. Many respondents, both prospective visitors and local residents, considered the school a unique and valuable destination, with a relatively stable visitor rate over a period of time, reinforcing its relevance in the context of cultural tourism development in West Sumatra. These findings confirm that

the school serves not only as a place of learning but also as a historical learning space that can broaden visitors' insights into the educational journey of Indonesia.

From an ethical and legal perspective, this study demonstrates that tourism can be utilized without degrading the building's historical value, for example by restricting visitor access to external areas such as gardens and facades, and by ensuring full compliance with Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage. This approach has proven effective in preventing excessive commercialization that could potentially compromise the site's integrity, while ensuring the school's role as an educational institution remains a priority. However, several obstacles remain, such as limited supporting facilities, particularly parking areas and minimal information boards, as well as the potential for conflict between tourism activities and the learning process, which requires more careful and flexible management. Theoretically, this research further strengthens the conceptual framework for sustainable heritage tourism, emphasizing the importance of synergy between conservation ethics based on the UNESCO Convention and legal regulations to create a balance between cultural values, long-term economic benefits, and environmental and social sustainability. Practically, the research findings indicate that SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi has the potential to serve as a model for other heritage schools in Indonesia, including in Padang and West Sumatra, with significant opportunities for replication if supported by clear regulations and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Personally, this research provided me with valuable insight into the importance of connecting theory with practice; witnessing how a historic building can be utilized without losing its identity further motivated me to contribute to cultural preservation issues. This experience also reminded me that the younger generation plays a crucial role in ensuring cultural heritage remains sustainable and meaningful for the future.

Based on the findings and conclusions outlined, the researchers offer several recommendations that can be implemented by the school, local government, and local community to ensure that heritage tourism development at SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi is effective and sustainable. First, regarding direct implementation in the field, researchers recommend improving tourism support facilities as an urgent measure. For example, providing more adequate parking areas to avoid disrupting local community activities, as well as installing more modern and informative information boards, including the use of digital media to facilitate tourists' understanding of the school's history without disrupting the educational process. Furthermore, limiting tourist visits to school holidays or outside school hours, such as before academic activities begin, can minimize disruption to the learning process. These efforts should be complemented by training for educators and school staff on tourism management to ensure that interactions between visitors and the school environment remain conducive and educational.

From a policy perspective, researchers recommend that the West Sumatra Provincial Culture Office and Tourism Office formulate more detailed technical regulations regarding the organization of tourism at operating schools, including an official heritage certification mechanism supported by regular audits of building conditions and tourist activities. Furthermore, campaigns on tourism ethics, for example through brochures or digital media, need to be intensified to increase tourists' understanding of the importance of preserving historical sites, such as not littering the environment or damaging building parts. Involving alumni as tour guides is also recommended, as it can open new job opportunities and strengthen the economic contribution of the local community, while maintaining their emotional connection to the school.

For further research, the researcher recommends conducting comparative studies with historic educational institutions in other countries, such as Eton College in England or colonial heritage schools in the Netherlands, to gain a global perspective on successful

educational tourism management. Further research could also include long-term evaluations of tourism impacts, including on building preservation, increased public awareness, and other sustainability indicators, for example through annual surveys or regular monitoring by a multidisciplinary team. As a researcher, I hope this research will serve as a starting point for future projects in the field of cultural tourism and inspire other students to explore similar topics through field research or thesis writing. By implementing all of these recommendations, SMA Negeri 2 Bukittinggi has the potential to develop as a heritage tourism destination that not only provides economic benefits but also enriches historical and educational value for future generations, while maintaining a balance between tradition and innovation.

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