

## STRATEGY TO INCREASE TOURIST VISIT INTEREST IN SEE HIN KIONG TEMPLE TO EMPOWER THE ECONOMY OF PADANG CITY

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### Abstract

This study analyzes strategies that can be implemented to increase interest in visiting See Hin Kiong Temple to empower the regional economy of Padang City. Padang is the capital of West Sumatra Province which has a rich culture, one of which is See Hin Kiong Temple as a religious and Chinese cultural tourism destination that is a form of acculturation in Padang City. The purpose of this study is to determine the characteristics of See Hin Kiong Temple such as tourist attractions, facilities and infrastructure, transportation, tourism promotion, tourism management and develop strategies to increase interest in tourist visits to support the economic empowerment of Padang City. The method used is a qualitative descriptive analytical approach with direct observation, interviews with managers, and relevant literature studies to identify attractions, facilities and infrastructure, and economic potential in the Temple. The results show that See Hin Kiong Temple has the potential as a cultural heritage that encourages economic growth in Padang with characteristics such as advantages and disadvantages. See Hin Kiong Temple has historical and cultural value, architectural uniqueness equipped with a museum, a strategic location and cultural status. However, the Temple requires special maintenance making it difficult to preserve the building. Currently, the Temple is also less attractive to visit by the younger generation. The proposed strategies include creating structured tour packages with historical guidebooks, empowering local community human resources through management education, collaborating with the government and businesses for additional facilities, and digital promotion via social media and annual events.

**Keywords:** Padang, Tourism, Temple.

### A. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a vacation activity that can be done by all groups, and tends to be done by teenagers. Over time, tourism activities have different goals and benefits from each other. According to Ruhma (2023), the history of tourism in Indonesia has existed since the Dutch colonial period in 1910-1920 with the establishment of Vereeniging Toesristen Verker (VTV). Tourism in Indonesia is one of the activity sectors related to travel and tourism and plays an important role in supporting the economy. The tourism sector in Indonesia has been carried out since the kingdom era, at that time the Kingdom officials liked to travel on business despite limited transportation. However, the tourism sector in Indonesia has now developed greatly along with the role of technology that breaks down regional boundaries. The history of tourism in Indonesia has existed since the Dutch colonial period in 1910-1920 with the issuance of a decree by the Dutch Governor General called Vereeniging Touristen Verkeer (VTV) which contains the start of tourism activities to the Dutch East Indies

(present-day Indonesia). Over time, Europeans who visited Indonesia were not only for business trips, but were also interested in tourist attractions in Indonesia. As a multicultural nation, Indonesia boasts a rich cultural heritage reflected in various artistic and architectural expressions. One manifestation of this cultural diversity can be seen in the buildings of worship, which not only serve a religious purpose but also hold historical and social values. One region in Indonesia with a rich cultural heritage is West Sumatra, with its provincial capital in Padang City.

Padang is the capital of West Sumatra province, where the majority of the population is Muslim. As many as 97% of the population in West Sumatra Province is Muslim (Danida, 2023). Many Islamic places of worship, such as mosques, serve as tourist destinations. Over time, several mosques have become tourist destinations due to their distinctive characteristics, such as unique architecture and historical value as cultural heritage. Mosques serve as religious tourism destinations for both local and international tourists. Besides Islam, other religions represent the cultural and social diversity of Padang City. Padang's social and cultural culture is rich and diverse, with its primary roots stemming from the Minangkabau ethnic group, which has a matrilineal kinship system and distinctive customs. Padang City boasts ethnic diversity, including Minangkabau, Nias, Chinese, Batak, Javanese, and others, fostering social harmony with local culture as a foundation (Hafsyari, 2022). Customary traditions such as the Batagak Gala, the matrilineal descent system, and lively cultural and religious celebrations, such as Eid al-Fitr and the Prophet's Birthday, strengthen community ties. Furthermore, Padang's social culture has evolved through the acculturation of Islamic influences, trade, and inclusive values that continue to adapt to changing times. A cultural form other than Islam is the existence of Confucianism, with places of worship called temples.

In Padang City, there is a historic temple called See Hin Kiong, which holds cultural significance for the Chinese community in Padang and is a famous landmark, frequently attracting tourists both domestically and internationally. The See Hin Kiong Temple is an important building in the West Sumatra region of Indonesia, located in the province of West Sumatra. It is part of traditional Chinese culture and is considered a museum for the Chinese people. Reconstruction of the temple began in 1871 (Tommy, 2025). See Hin Kiong Temple is a tourist attraction in Padang City today.

Tourism is one of the factors of economic progress in the city of Padang. The Padang City Government stated that economic growth in Padang City is currently increasing compared to the past few years. This can be seen from a number of achievement data that have been implemented and have a real impact on all people in Padang City. (Widi, 2025). The purpose of this study is to determine strategies to increase interest in visiting the See Hin Kiong Temple destination to empower the economy in Padang City. See Hin Kiong Temple is one of the destinations that supports the economic sector of Padang City. To increase interest in visiting tourists, strategies are needed so that tourism activities can run optimally. Based on this, the author formulates the problems in this study. The formulation of the problem to be discussed is what are the characteristics of the See Hin Kiong Temple and strategies to increase temple visits to empower the economy of Padang City.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Strategy to increase interest in visits**

According to Anisa & Lindawati (2024), to attract more visitors, strategies to increase tourist visits focus on digital marketing, infrastructure development, and improving service quality. Utilizing social media, collaborating with influencers, and organizing engaging events are effective strategies for building tourist awareness and interest. In terms of

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consumer behavior, interest is an attitudinal component that indicates how consumers intend to act before making a purchasing decision. Kotler and Keller (2009) argue that interest is the first response that indicates a customer's readiness to make a purchase.

### **Temple**

A temple is defined as a place of worship for adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs in Indonesia, which includes elements of Buddhism, Taoism, and popular religion, often mistakenly referred to as a Confucian place of worship. The word "kelenteng" comes from the phonetic "Kwan Im Teng" (觀音亭), the first place of worship built in 1650 for the Goddess Kwan Im, or from the sound of bells (teng-teng-teng) in Chinese worship rituals. This term is commonly used in Java, while in Sumatra it is called "bio" or other local variations (Herman, 2012).

### **Economic empowerment**

Community economic empowerment is a process aimed at increasing the capacity and independence of individuals and groups to manage their economic resources independently. This process encompasses various strategic steps focused on increasing access to education, training, capital, and markets. Furthermore, community economic empowerment involves their active participation in decision-making related to economic and social development, enabling them to optimally contribute to improving their quality of life (Leuhery et al., 2023).

Latifah's research, entitled "Analysis of the Potential of Places of Worship for Community Economic Empowerment," examines places of worship (such as mosques, churches, monasteries, Chinese temples, and temples) as potential economic empowerment tools for combating poverty, a significant problem in Indonesia. Sharia economics is the foundation of an economic approach that balances the rights and interests of all individuals. Places of worship have significant potential to be developed as centers for community economic empowerment, which can positively impact the economic empowerment of surrounding communities and help alleviate poverty. To optimally utilize this economic potential, improved management, professionalism of administrators, and active involvement of the surrounding community are required.

## **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analytical methods to explore the architectural form, the structure of the statue layout, and the offerings that are the main attractions of the See Hin Kiong Temple. Data were collected through direct observation of the architectural objects and interviews with Tommy, the temple manager. Literature review assisted in the interpretation of field data on the history and visual aesthetics of the architecture. The analysis process consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and interpretive conclusions.

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Characteristics**

#### **Tourist Attractions**

The temple boasts magnificent architecture, with dragon carvings and striking red hues, reflecting the uniqueness of Chinese culture. The temple serves not only as a place of worship for Confucianists but also as a religious tourist attraction, preserving the history of West Sumatra's cultural acculturation. In addition to viewing altars and statues of important deities, visitors can enjoy cultural rituals and celebrations, such as Cap Go Meh, with its captivating lion dance performances and cultural parades.

The temple, now a cultural heritage site, has undergone renovations to function as a Chinese community museum, significantly enhancing its educational value and historical

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tourism potential. In the area around the temple, visitors can enjoy the atmosphere of the old town, steeped in Chinese ethnic nuances, accompanied by culinary delights such as dumplings and noodles, further enriching the tourist experience. The See Hin Kiong Temple is also widely known as a popular photography spot, with its traditional ornaments and a popular gathering place for young people, especially during Chinese New Year and New Year celebrations.

### **Facilities and infrastructure**

The facilities and infrastructure at the See Hin Kiong Temple consist of a temple building comprising three main rooms: the main room in the center, which serves as a place of worship; a meditation room on the right side; and an office space on the left side. In the front courtyard of the temple is a rectangular pond adorned with two facing dragon statues, a large urn, and a small bridge connecting the two dragon statues. The courtyard is equipped with two joss sticks (incense) used in religious rituals. The temple's roof has a distinctive Chinese feel, with dragon ornaments and a striking red color accented with golden yellow. The roof resembles a horn or gonjong, a shape that blends with local architecture (the traditional house). The temple is open to the public from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Western Indonesian Time (WIB), except during religious ceremonies, allowing for flexible accommodation for both tourism and religious activities.

The temple grounds provide easy access to Padang's Old Town and provide historical and cultural information to help visitors understand the inherited values of Chinese culture. There's a museum behind the temple that preserves cultural heritage, both written and photographic, as evidence of its construction. However, supporting facilities like parking, restrooms, and a tourist office aren't specifically mentioned. Consequently, visitors are advised to adapt to the surrounding area.

### **Transportation and transportation infrastructure**

See Hin Kiong Temple enjoys good accessibility through various land transportation modes in Padang City. Located in the Old Town area, the temple is easily accessible by public transportation (angkot), taxis, and online motorcycle taxis, which offer extensive service in the area. The road to the temple is paved and located on a main route, ensuring good access for both public and private vehicles.

Transportation infrastructure around the temple includes adequate roads and safe pedestrian paths, making it easy for visitors to walk from the nearest parking lot or bus stop. Private vehicle parking facilities within the temple area are limited, so visitors tend to park their vehicles in the area around the Old Town and walk to the temple, such as cafes or other places to stop. This transportation infrastructure supports easy access for tourists and local residents to See Hin Kiong Temple.

### **Tourism promotion**

Tourism promotion is carried out through its potential as a religious and cultural tourism destination, preserving the history of the Chinese community in Padang. Temples are often promoted as unique tourist attractions with distinctive Chinese architecture and centers of traditional celebrations such as Cap Go Meh, featuring lion dance performances and cultural parades, attracting both domestic and international tourists. The cultural activities and religious rituals held at the temples indirectly serve as attractions, promoted through social media and local media coverage.

### **Tourism manager**

The See Hin Kiong Temple is managed by the local Chinese community and administrators, along with support from the Padang City government, particularly through the Padang Old Town Area Management Agency, which was established to accelerate the development of historical tourism destinations in the area. One of the temple's administrators

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is Tommy, a member of the community. The temple management team is responsible for building maintenance, organizing religious activities, and holding cultural events and traditional rituals to attract tourists.

The Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) plays an active role in promoting and preserving cultural values in the See Hin Kiong Temple area. The local government, through the tourism office, provides support in developing facilities and tourism promotion strategies to increase visits and maintain the temple's presence as a cultural heritage of the Chinese ethnic group in Padang. This management is carried out collaboratively by the local community, cultural organizations, and the local government. Several parties work together to conserve and develop cultural and history-based tourism, strengthening the temple's position as a tourist attraction in preserving the culture and identity of the Chinese community in West Sumatra.

### **Temple tourists**

The See Hin Kiong Temple in Padang City receives an average of 100 tourists per day. Visitors come not only from within the country but also from abroad, especially during major celebrations like Cap Go Meh, which features lion dance performances and traditional Chinese cultural parades. This temple, a tourist destination combining religious, historical, and cultural elements, along with unique traditional Chinese architecture, attracts a wide range of tourists. The temple is visited by people of all ages and is frequently visited by schoolchildren and university students. Visitors can enjoy a spiritual experience while also learning about the cultural diversity and history of the Chinese community in Padang.

Places of worship such as temples serve not only as places of worship but also serve an economic purpose (Lutfi, 2023). As a place of worship and a tourist destination, the See Hin Kiong Temple can benefit the Padang city economy. Achieving this goal requires an appropriate strategy to increase tourist interest.

The See Hin Kiong Temple in Padang, founded in 1893, serves as a center for the Tri Dharma (Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist) worship for the Chinese community, with significant historical and cultural value. The temple boasts unique architectural features, including dragon ornaments, a museum, and cultural heritage status. Strategically located in the Old Town area, the temple offers easy access for visitors and is supported by supporting facilities such as a Chinese-style cafe. Regular social, artistic, and educational activities, along with promotions from the government and tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), make this a cultural and educational tourist attraction that attracts a wide range of tourists, including students.

Renovating the temple requires specialized labor and expertise, and revitalization materials must be sourced from abroad, making it difficult to preserve the temple as a heritage destination. The current location of the temple differs from its original location, affecting its authenticity for some visitors. Parking facilities are also lacking, a crucial drawback as a tourist destination. The temple faces problems such as damage caused by the 2009 earthquake that required large costs to repair with imported materials, changes in location from its original location that affected its credibility, limited facilities such as parking, disaster vulnerability in West Sumatra, and declining interest of the younger generation in Chinese traditions, plus competition from other, more sophisticated tourist destinations.

### **Strategy**

#### **Creating tour packages**

The temple management has prepared tour packages for visitors. Visiting restrictions are in place to protect the worship items inside the temple from damage. The management has

created tour packages that include visits to the temple and museum. They also provide guidebooks on the temple's history as souvenirs to encourage repeat visits.

### **Empowerment of human resources in local communities**

The temple is managed exclusively by core community members, those of a particular ethnicity. This ensures the preservation of its architectural design as a place of worship and tourist destination. However, without a successor to manage the temple, its preservation as a cultural heritage site will be threatened. Therefore, education regarding temple management is needed for the local community, encouraging them to participate in preserving the temple's tourism. The management's strategy is to collaborate with historians to create a guidebook as a souvenir included in the tour packages provided by the management.

### **Support from the central government, business actors, and local communities**

The tourism office is involved in the management of the temple. However, the central government and local communities have not yet sufficiently participated in this management. Confucian groups can collaborate with the government and local communities. This strategy indirectly encourages various parties to participate in economic empowerment in Padang City. Some possible actions include applying for funding or additional facilities from the government, providing a space for businesses interested in investing, such as cafes and food stalls, near the temple, and involving local communities other than Confucian groups in managing the temple as a tourist attraction.

### **Effective promotion through social media and collaboration with influencers and annual events**

The next strategy is to create informative posts with video footage of typical Chinese architecture and dragon statues, using editing apps to make them more engaging. Create videos about Chinese New Year or Cap Go Meh events with the hashtag #PariwisataReligiSumbar for broader community engagement. Maintain and preserve existing annual events such as Cap Go Meh and Chinese New Year, which are celebrated by the Chinese.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The See Hin Kiong Temple in Padang City serves more than just a place of worship. It is a historical artifact, a center of Chinese culture, and a cultural heritage site with strategic value for driving the city's economic growth. This study not only explains the unique characteristics of the temple as a religious tourism destination but also provides strategies to increase tourist visits and boost Padang's economy. The See Hin Kiong Temple offers a tourist attraction rich in historical and educational value. However, the temple faces crucial challenges, ranging from damage from the 2009 earthquake, which requires specialized repair costs and expertise, to issues with the authenticity of the location, and limited basic facilities such as parking.

To overcome these obstacles and maximize economic potential, this study proposes four strategies. First, creating structured tourism packages that offer educational experiences (through museum visits and guidebooks) is considered essential for enhancing tourism value. Second, human resource empowerment needs to be expanded beyond the core community by involving local communities other than Chinese in the management of existing temple tourism. Third, collaboration between the management community, the Padang City Government (Tourism Office), and business actors is essential. This involvement includes government support in procuring facilities and providing investment space for businesses around the temple area. Finally, to attract more tourists, effective promotion through online media and annual event management is needed. The temple will remain a relevant tourist attraction amidst modern tourism competition by posting interesting architectural videos on

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social media and maintaining the value of cultural events such as Cap Go Meh. The success of Padang City's economic empowerment through the temple depends heavily on the implementation of a collaborative strategy that balances cultural heritage conservation with the development of modern tourism facilities and promotion.

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