

THE IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE CASE STUDY : SAUNG ANGKLUNG UDJO

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Abstract

This study analyzes the impact of digital-era tourism on cultural preservation, using Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU) in Bandung, West Java, as a case study. While the digital era offers wide access to information, it also poses challenges to the authenticity and sustainability of local culture. The *angklung*, as a traditional art form, faces the threat of extinction and declining interest from the younger generation. As a cultural tourist destination, SAU has successfully preserved the *angklung* through digital transformation, which was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through literature and documentation studies. The findings indicate that SAU functions as a center for cultural preservation, education, and local community empowerment. SAU's digitalization strategy includes leveraging social media (especially Instagram) for promotion, education, and information dissemination, with a focus on creating unique and informative Sundanese cultural content. The positive impacts of this digitalization include global cultural promotion, increased youth participation, easier access to information, innovation in cultural attractions, a solution during times of crisis, and the creation of new jobs in the digital cultural sector. However, there are also negative effects, such as the potential for excessive commodification that may reduce the sacred value of the culture, the inability of online experiences to fully replace direct interaction, and the risk of plagiarism and content misuse. The study concludes that digitalization is an effective tool for SAU in promoting and educating about culture, despite the ongoing challenges of commodification and the erosion of authentic values. Through a strategy of cultural content, local community engagement, and interactive performances, SAU has successfully balanced preservation and innovation, making it a model for cultural tourism adaptation in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital Era, Tourism, Cultural Preservation, Saung Angklung Udjo.

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology is unavoidable and has a significant impact on tourism and cultural preservation (Adriyani et al., 2023). The digital era provides broad access to information and more dynamic interaction (Azzahran et al., 2024). However, it also

introduces new challenges related to the authenticity and sustainability of local culture (Heliawati & Munaroh, 2025). In this sense, digitalization is not just an extra promotional tool; it's a fundamental force reshaping how culture is accessed, understood, and preserved (Rayhan, 2025). This creates a dilemma between the global opportunities for cultural dissemination and the risk of cultural homogenization, which can erode local identity (Fazli et al., 2025).

Traditional arts and culture, including the angklung, cannot avoid the currents of modernization. The angklung faces a serious threat of extinction and a decline in interest, especially among the younger generation, who are more drawn to modern music (Rayhaniah & Tahir, 2024). External factors like globalization also contribute to this decline, which is an internal threat. This situation demands that preservation be carried out through proactive and innovative methods (Crysti et al., 2024).

For a long time, Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU) has been a prime example of a cultural tourism destination that actively preserves the art of the angklung and Sundanese culture. It has successfully made the angklung a well-known and beloved traditional art form for all generations (Hapsari, 2022). The most significant digital transformation at SAU occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic had a major impact on visitor numbers and even threatened the center with closure (Ramara & Safitri, 2024). This external event indirectly forced SAU to accelerate its adoption of digital systems. This transformation highlights the link between digital adoption and an organization's ability to survive, especially in the preservation of cultural heritage (Cahyono et al., 2023). Digitalization is also seen as a way to make culture more relevant and increase appreciation for traditional arts in the modern era (Musthofa, 2018).

Given these current conditions, it's important to analyze the role and strategies SAU has used to preserve Sundanese culture in the digital age. This research also aims to identify the positive and negative impacts of the digitalization process on cultural tourism activities at Saung Angklung Udjo.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Tourism and Local Cultural Preservation

According to Damarjati (in Susanti & Sjuchro, 2019), cultural tourism is travel or activity motivated by cultural objects, such as local customs, religious ceremonies, lifestyles, historical artifacts, folk arts, and crafts. The preservation of cultural heritage involves protecting the tangible heritage of a living community, including their buildings, structures, sites, and communities (Gea, 2023). This also includes protecting landscapes altered through agriculture and industry, as well as material culture like artifacts and archives. In addition to tangible aspects, "Heritage Preservation" also involves transmitting intangible elements like oral traditions, music, and community rituals (Coppin State University, 2002 in Hani, et al, 2012 (in Susanti & Sjuchro, 2019)).

Digital Strategies in Cultural Preservation

In their study, Arsyad et al. (2025), citing Krisnanik et al. (2023), state that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) allows for broad access to cultural information, with

interactive content like videos being easy to understand. A study by Amelia et al. (2024) also emphasizes that Generation Z tends to better understand culture when it's presented through creative digital content, such as short videos on TikTok. Furthermore, research by Amran et al. (2022) shows that the digitalization of culture in Pekanbaru through a cultural website has increased public participation in learning about and preserving local culture. The digitalization of culture through social media not only boosts youth involvement in preservation but also helps prevent the extinction of local cultures (Krisnanik et al., 2023).

Cultural Commodification

Commodification is the process of transforming use value into exchange value within a market system (Irianto, 2016). In a cultural context, commodification can have complex effects. While it has the potential to support cultural preservation, it can also drive a standardization of "culture," which may lead to a loss of its meaning and the excessive exploitation of its value (Bai & Weng, 2023).

According to a journal by S.Y. Akbar, Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU) can be categorized as a cultural tourism destination that has successfully applied cultural commodification as a strategy for sustainable development (Susanti & Sjuchro, 2019). The process of cultural commodification at SAU consists of five phases: (1) Establishing the basic foundation, (2) Product diversification, (3) Community development, (4) Professional involvement, and (5) Digitalization. In each phase, SAU undertakes a series of cultural commodification activities adapted to its internal organizational conditions and environment. The research findings indicate that this process of cultural commodification is directly proportional to the increase in tourist visits.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a **descriptive qualitative approach**. This method is often called "naturalistic research" because it's conducted in a natural setting (Fadli, 2021). It's also referred to as an "ethnographic method" since it was initially used in cultural anthropology. Furthermore, it's a qualitative method because the data gathered and the analysis process have more qualitative characteristics. The main goal of this research is to understand and describe digital marketing strategies and practices at Saung Angklung Udjo as part of its cultural preservation and tourism development efforts. It also aims to examine the impact of tourism digitalization on cultural preservation at the location.

Data was collected through, Literature study: Examining various scientific journals, news articles, and publications on cultural tourism, digital marketing, and cultural heritage preservation. Documentation study: Gathering visual materials like photos, videos, official social media content from Saung Angklung Udjo, and promotional materials such as brochures and pamphlets. The constant observation led to a high variation in the data (Sugiyono, 2013). The data analysis was conducted using three main stages, according to Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The research was conducted at Saung Angklung Udjo in Bandung, West Java. This location was chosen because it is a leading cultural tourism destination that actively uses digital media for its promotional activities.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of Saung Angklung Udjo

Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU) is a leading cultural destination in Bandung, West Java. It was founded in 1966 by Udjo Ngalagena and his wife, Uum Sumiati, along with their children, with a core focus on the education and preservation of traditional Sundanese art, particularly the *angklung*. SAU's vision is to be a premier art and culture tourism destination dedicated to fostering and preserving the art of the *angklung*. It also serves as a central hub for training, research, performances, and the *angklung* music industry in Indonesia (Ramara & Safitri, 2024). Situated on 1.3 hectares, SAU plays a crucial role in preserving unique Sundanese culture through its performances and by introducing the *angklung* to a wider audience, especially children. Its operations also involve the local community, demonstrating a commitment to local empowerment (Ramara & Safitri, 2024). The management of SAU is a family business, run by the Udjo family.

SAU has four key products that attract visitors:

1. The Angklung: Udjo transformed the *angklung* from a sacred traditional instrument used only for rituals into a musical instrument that can be played at any time.
2. Live Performances: These shows combine traditional children's games (*kaulinan barudak*), dances, music, angklung playing, and traditional Sundanese attire in a concise, engaging format.
3. Food and Beverages: SAU offers local F&B products, representing the traditional cuisine of the surrounding community.
4. Handicrafts: Previously incidental decorations, these crafts have been given commercial value and are now sold as souvenirs.

The Role and Strategy of Saung Angklung Udjo in Cultural Preservation in the Digital Era

SAU is widely known not just as a tourist destination but as a hub for preserving Sundanese culture, especially the *angklung*. Research by Rayhaniah & Tahir (2024) confirms SAU's role as a cultural preservation center with various educational and artistic activities. Through its programs, SAU ensures that the younger generation learns about, loves, and appreciates their cultural heritage. SAU has also actively sought UNESCO recognition for the *angklung* as a tangible cultural heritage of Indonesia, partly in response to cultural claims by other countries. In doing so, SAU not only maintains the existence of the *angklung* but also strengthens national identity and introduces cultural values to a broad audience.

Musthofa (2018) also highlights SAU's role as a center for education and training in *angklung* and Sundanese culture, engaging locals, students, and tourists. This not only preserves the *angklung* but also instills cultural values in the youth. SAU is also a creative tourism destination, transforming traditional art into interactive attractions where visitors are not just spectators but active participants in playing the *angklung*. The center also empowers the local community by employing them as artisans, trainers, and performers, ensuring that tourism and cultural preservation directly benefit the economic and social well-being of the community.

SAU's strategy for adapting to the digital era includes leveraging social media and digital marketing to attract more tourists. This is particularly aimed at the domestic market. Visual and audio elements, such as visually appealing ads, are crucial for capturing the attention of the digital audience (Swasana, 2024). The quality of the content also plays a key role in motivating tourists to visit (Pujiastuti, 2024). This shows that SAU is not merely "online" but employs a sophisticated digital marketing strategy to provide relevant and engaging cultural content (Rayhaniah & Tahir, 2024).

A study by Fadhilah & Permatasari (2025) states that SAU's digital preservation strategy involves using Instagram (@angklungudjo) as its primary social media platform. Instagram was chosen for its large user base, especially among Gen Z and millennials. SAU also maintains a distinct cultural content style, highlighting Sundanese culture by featuring cultural figures and emphasizing the authenticity and uniqueness of the *angklung*. Social media is also used to provide educational content about SAU, including information on the *angklung*, performances, and show schedules.

In conclusion, SAU has effectively embraced its role and strategy in cultural preservation in the digital era. It serves as a central hub for preserving Sundanese culture, particularly the *angklung*. More than just a tourist destination, it is a center for education and training for locals, students, and tourists, and a medium for instilling cultural values in the youth. SAU continues to innovate by turning traditional art into an interactive tourism attraction that actively empowers the local community. It is also actively working to gain international recognition for the *angklung*, strengthening national identity. SAU's digital strategy includes a comprehensive use of social media, with Instagram as the main platform, chosen for its large user base and accessibility. Social media is used for cultural preservation by focusing on unique, informative, and educational content. Through these roles and strategies, SAU not only ensures its cultural relevance in the digital space but also actively motivates tourist visits through modern marketing.

The Impact of Tourism Digitalization on Cultural Activities at Saung Angklung Udjo

Digitalization has had a significant impact on cultural activities at Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU), bringing both positive and negative consequences.

Positive Impacts

The digitalization process at SAU has had a beneficial effect on its cultural activities. According to Musthofa (2018), digitalization offers SAU the opportunity for global cultural promotion, increases youth participation and motivation toward cultural preservation, provides easier access to information and education about SAU, and encourages innovation in cultural attractions.

Rayhaniah & Tahir (2024) also note that using digital media can be a solution for adapting during times of crisis, like the 2020 pandemic, by keeping the culture alive and continuing preservation efforts online. Furthermore, Siliutina et al. (2024) suggest that digital media can create new jobs in the cultural digital sector, particularly for young people. These new roles include digital content creation, virtual exhibition design, digital archiving, and online marketing. This is seen as a positive development as it increases youth involvement in preserving cultural heritage.

In short, digitalization provides positive impacts for cultural preservation at SAU, including promotion and marketing, increased youth engagement, and improved access to information. It also drives innovation in cultural attractions and can be a solution for overcoming challenges during national or global crises to ensure cultural preservation continues. On top of that, digitalization creates new job opportunities and encourages youth involvement in cultural preservation.

Negative Impacts

S.Y. Akbar notes that while media can be a powerful tool for promoting and marketing cultural products, it also shapes preferences for commodification. Through social media, SAU has successfully adapted its commodified products to modern trends, creating new value in its communication system.

However, this digital commodification has a potential negative side: it can reduce a culture's authentic value, simplify its meaning, and shift the focus from education to mere commercialism. This requires a balanced strategy to ensure that promotion and preservation are not distorted by market demands.

Rayhaniah & Tahir (2024) also highlight the negative impacts of digitalization on cultural preservation. It encourages excessive cultural commodification, which can gradually reduce a culture's sacred or philosophical value, turning it into a mere spectacle or commercial product.

Furthermore, online cultural experiences cannot fully replace direct, in-person interaction, meaning the educational value, atmosphere, and emotions of a live performance are not fully conveyed. Digitalization also creates opportunities for plagiarism and the misuse of cultural content by unauthorized parties. Siliutina et al. (2024) also point out that the wider digital access becomes, the greater the risk of cultural distortion or commodification that erodes cultural authenticity.

In conclusion, digitalization also presents significant negative impacts and challenges for cultural preservation, particularly concerning commodification and authenticity. It risks simplifying cultural meanings and shifting the focus to commercialism, and the online experience cannot fully replace the live cultural experience. The ease of digital access also raises concerns about plagiarism and the misuse of cultural content.

E. CONCLUSION

Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU) is a key player in cultural preservation. Facing the challenges of the digital age, it has successfully used social media to digitalize its art performances. This has allowed SAU to reach a wider audience and increase interest in traditional art among the younger generation. This proves that digitalization is an effective tool for cultural promotion and education. However, it also comes with challenges, namely the commodification of culture and the potential loss of the authentic value of cultural presentations. SAU's preservation strategy using cultural content, engaging the local community, and packaging interactive performances maintains a balance between preservation and innovation. This makes SAU a real-world example of how digitalization can be integrated adaptively to support the sustainability of cultural tourism in Indonesia.

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