

RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF HERITAGE TOURISM IN LOCAL CULTURAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Bali's tourism development has historically relied on cultural heritage as a fundamental pillar of destination development and a key driver of regional economic growth. However, the expansion of mass tourism has intensified cultural commodification, which poses significant risks to the sacred values, symbolic meanings, and social legitimacy of indigenous communities as the rightful custodians of cultural heritage. This article aims to analyze the development of heritage tourism in Bali from a Public Administration perspective, particularly within the framework of cultural governance and sustainable tourism policy. This study employs a qualitative approach through a systematic literature review of reputable national and international journals, as well as relevant public policy documents. The analysis is linked to public administration theories, particularly collaborative governance and sustainable public management, to examine the roles of state and non-state actors in cultural tourism governance. The findings indicate that heritage tourism can serve as a strategic public policy instrument for cultural sustainability when it is managed collaboratively, places indigenous communities at the center of decision-making processes, and is supported by regulations that are sensitive to local values such as Tri Hita Karana. Policy implications highlight the need to strengthen local government capacity as facilitator, regulator, and mediator in balancing economic, social, and cultural interests in an equitable manner.

Keywords: Bali, Cultural Governance, Heritage Tourism, Public Administration, Sustainable Tourism.

A. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, Balinese tourism has been constructed as culture-based tourism, emphasizing traditions, religious rituals, and local value systems as the primary destination identity (Wilantara, 2024). Balinese culture serves not only as a tourist attraction but also as a system of community life integrated with social, religious, and ecological dimensions (Paramita, 2025). In this context, tourism development policies should be oriented toward the public interest and the protection of cultural values as strategic regional resources.

However, the dynamics of globalization and the expansion of mass tourism have shifted the orientation of Balinese tourism development toward a market-oriented logic that positions culture as an economic commodity (Darmayasa et al., 2025). This phenomenon demonstrates issues in public policy governance, particularly weak regulations, minimal participation of indigenous communities, and the dominance of market actors in the decision-making process (Suwarno, 2025). From a Public Administration perspective, this situation reflects the suboptimal implementation of good governance and collaborative governance principles in the cultural tourism sector (Ameilia, 2023). The process of cultural commodification in modern tourism demonstrates a tendency to reduce sacred and symbolic cultural values to

mere economic value, particularly in the context of culture-based destinations (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Salazar, 2021).

The phenomenon of staged authenticity in cultural tourism demonstrates that cultural practices are often reconstructed to suit tourist expectations, resulting in a shift in the meaning and function of local culture (Mkono, 2020; Rickly, 2022). In the Balinese context, several religious rituals and traditional art performances have undergone adjustments in time, space, and meaning to accommodate their consumption as tourist attractions. This situation creates a dilemma between the economic needs of the community and the moral obligation to maintain the authenticity and sacredness of culture.

On the other hand, the sustainability of cultural tourism cannot be separated from the role of indigenous communities as the rightful owners of cultural heritage (Wirawan, 2025). Balinese culture is a system of values and symbols integrated with social structures, religious beliefs, and customary practices. Therefore, its management in tourism must consider the legitimacy of indigenous communities as the rightful owners of cultural heritage (Picard & Wood, 2021; Suarmini et al., 2023). Neglecting the role of indigenous communities in tourism management has the potential to create conflicts of interest and delegitimize tourism practices themselves (Teguh, 2024).

Therefore, a heritage tourism approach is relevant as an alternative policy for sustainable and equitable tourism development. Heritage tourism positions cultural heritage as a public interest that must be managed in a participatory and long-term manner. This study aims to analyze the role of heritage tourism as a public policy instrument in strengthening cultural governance in Bali amidst pressures of commodification and globalization of tourism. This study aims to analyze the role of heritage tourism as a public policy instrument in strengthening cultural governance in Bali amidst pressures of commodification and globalization of tourism. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of Public Administration perspectives, specifically the concepts of collaborative governance and sustainable public management, in analyzing heritage tourism as public policy, not merely as an economic tourism activity. Unlike previous research that generally places heritage tourism within the context of tourism and cultural studies, this article emphasizes heritage tourism's position as a public governance instrument that positions indigenous communities as primary actors and local governments as facilitators, regulators, and mediators of local value-based policies such as *Tri Hita Karana*. This emphasis strengthens the article's theoretical and practical contributions to the development of sustainable cultural tourism policies in Bali.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism is a form of tourism that emphasizes the use of cultural heritage as the main attraction of a destination (Nofiyanti & Adawiyah, 2025). Cultural heritage in this context includes tangible elements such as historic buildings and cultural sites, as well as intangible elements such as traditions, rituals, performing arts, and the value systems inherent in a community (Timothy, 2020). Heritage tourism is not only oriented towards the tourist experience but also towards preserving cultural values and local identity.

Poria, Butler, and Airey (2021) emphasize that heritage tourism has strong social and political dimensions because it relates to the public interest, cultural legitimacy, and the collective identity of local communities. Therefore, heritage tourism management requires the involvement of public actors, particularly local governments, to ensure a balance between economic benefits and cultural preservation.

In the context of modern tourism, heritage tourism often faces the challenge of cultural commodification. Salazar (2021) explains that the globalization of tourism encourages the

packaging of local culture as a tourism product, potentially shifting its symbolic meaning. This situation demands a public policy approach that is more sensitive to the cultural values and interests of local communities.

Cultural Governance and Public Administration

Cultural governance refers to the decision-making and management processes of cultural resources that involve various actors, including government, communities, and the private sector (Maluka et al., 2025). From a public administration perspective, cultural governance emphasizes the importance of collaboration, transparency, and participation in managing public interests (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2020).

The concept of collaborative governance explains that sustainable public policies can only be achieved through the involvement of non-state actors in the planning and implementation processes (Ansell & Gash, 2022). In the context of cultural tourism, indigenous communities hold a strategic position as holders of social and cultural legitimacy for the heritage they manage. Ignoring the role of indigenous communities has the potential to create conflicts of interest and undermine the legitimacy of public policies.

Cultural Commodification and Staged Authenticity in Tourism

Cultural commodification is a phenomenon where cultural values are reduced to economic commodities to meet the needs of the tourism market (Adiwinata & Muhid, 2025). Mkono (2020) explains that the practice of staged authenticity in cultural tourism often presents culture artificially, blurring the line between authenticity and cultural manipulation. This phenomenon is common in culture-based tourism destinations experiencing pressure from large-scale tourist visits.

Rickly (2022) emphasizes that without adequate regulation and oversight, cultural tourism has the potential to neglect ethical and sustainable aspects. In the Balinese context, the adaptation of religious rituals and performing arts for tourism purposes demonstrates a serious challenge in maintaining a balance between economic needs and the preservation of cultural values.

Heritage Tourism in the Balinese Context

The management of cultural tourism in Bali cannot be separated from the local value of Tri Hita Karana and the role of traditional villages as socio-cultural institutions. Tri Hita Karana emphasizes the balance of human relationships with God, fellow human beings, and the environment as the foundation of Balinese life. This value is relevant as a normative foundation for the management of sustainable heritage tourism.

Research by Suarmini, Putra, and Ardika (2023) shows that traditional villages play a strategic role in managing cultural tourism in Bali, particularly in maintaining cultural authenticity and regulating the use of local traditions. The involvement of traditional villages in cultural tourism governance can increase policy legitimacy and promote more equitable and sustainable tourism.

However, the implementation of local values in tourism policy still faces challenges. Suhartanto et al. (2020) revealed that the narrative of sustainability in tourism is often not fully realized in management practices at the local level. Therefore, strengthening the role of local governments in integrating Tri Hita Karana values into tourism policy is a crucial need.

Research Position and Novelty

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that most previous studies place heritage tourism within the study of tourism and culture. This study places heritage tourism from a public administration perspective as a regional public policy instrument related to cultural governance, indigenous community participation, and tourism sustainability. This approach is both novel and offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of cultural tourism policy in Bali.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review. Data were obtained from accredited national journals, reputable international journals, academic books, and tourism and cultural policy documents. The analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically, linking the concept of heritage tourism with public administration theory.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Heritage Tourism as a Public Policy Instrument

Heritage tourism serves as a public policy instrument for maintaining cultural sustainability and the public interest. Heritage tourism is not only oriented toward the utilization of cultural assets, but also toward managing the meaning, identity, and public interest inherent in that cultural heritage (Timothy, 2020; Poria et al., 2021). Local governments have a strategic role in formulating regulations, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring the protection of cultural heritage.

From a public administration perspective, the development of heritage tourism requires an active role for local governments in formulating regulations, supervising, and facilitating the involvement of relevant actors. Poria et al. (2021) state that government failure to regulate the utilization of cultural heritage has the potential to shift the goal of preservation to mere economic exploitation. Therefore, heritage tourism needs to be positioned as a policy instrument oriented toward sustainability and long-term interests.

Cultural Commodification and the Challenges of Balinese Tourism Governance

Cultural commodification is a major challenge in managing cultural tourism. Salazar (2021) explains that commodification occurs when cultural practices are reconstructed to suit the tastes of the tourism market, thereby risking the loss of their symbolic meaning and sacred value. This phenomenon is also reinforced by the practice of staged authenticity, where culture is artificially presented for tourist consumption (Mkono, 2020).

In the Balinese context, the practice of adapting rituals and performing arts for tourism purposes demonstrates weak public policy governance in the cultural tourism sector. Rickly (2022) emphasizes that without adequate regulation and oversight, cultural tourism tends to neglect ethical and sustainable aspects. This underscores the importance of local governments in controlling the rate of cultural commodification through policies that support the preservation of local cultural values.

The Role of Indigenous Communities in Heritage Tourism Management

Indigenous communities are key actors in heritage tourism management because they possess social and cultural legitimacy over the heritage they manage. Picard and Wood (2021) emphasize that local community involvement in cultural tourism is a crucial prerequisite for maintaining cultural authenticity and avoiding conflicts of interest. Without the participation of indigenous communities, tourism policies have the potential to lose social legitimacy.

Research by Suarmini et al. (2023) shows that the role of traditional villages in Bali is strategic in maintaining the balance between cultural preservation and tourism development. The involvement of traditional villages in decision-making not only enhances the sustainability of cultural tourism but also strengthens the position of local communities as subjects of development, not merely objects of tourism.

Tri Hita Karana as a Normative Basis for Cultural Tourism Management

The Tri Hita Karana values are a relevant normative basis for heritage tourism management in Bali. This concept emphasizes the balance of human relationships with God, fellow human beings, and the environment as the basis for sustainable development. In the

context of cultural tourism, the Tri Hita Karana values can serve as ethical guidelines in formulating public policies that are sensitive to local values.

However, the implementation of Tri Hita Karana values in tourism policy still faces challenges. Suhartanto et al. (2020) revealed that the narrative of sustainability in tourism is often not followed by consistent policy practices at the local level. This indicates the need to strengthen the capacity of local governments so that local values are not merely normative but are truly internalized in cultural tourism management policies and practices.

Implications of Heritage Tourism for the Sustainability of Balinese Tourism

Heritage tourism that is managed in a participatory and sustainable manner has positive implications for the sustainability of Balinese tourism. Timothy (2020) emphasized that heritage-based tourism can strengthen local identity and improve community welfare when managed inclusively. This approach allows for a balance between economic, social, and cultural interests.

Conversely, if heritage tourism continues to be managed within a commoditized framework without adequate governance, Balinese tourism risks long-term cultural degradation (Salazar, 2021; Rickly, 2022). Therefore, strengthening heritage tourism governance through collaborative public policies oriented toward local values is a crucial need for regional tourism development.

E. CONCLUSION

Heritage tourism is a strategic approach to Balinese tourism development that focuses not only on economic growth but also on protecting cultural heritage as a public interest. Based on the discussion, heritage tourism management needs to be placed within a regional public policy framework that emphasizes cultural sustainability, the participation of indigenous communities, and a balance between economic and social interests.

The discussion reveals that the main challenge in managing cultural tourism in Bali is the high level of cultural commodification due to the dominance of market interests and weak policy governance. This commodification has the potential to diminish the sacred value and symbolic meaning of local culture if not balanced with adequate regulation and oversight. This situation emphasizes the importance of the local government's role in controlling the use of cultural heritage so that it is not solely oriented towards tourist needs.

The discussion also emphasizes the central role of indigenous communities in heritage tourism management. The involvement of indigenous communities, particularly through traditional villages, is a key factor in maintaining cultural authenticity and enhancing the legitimacy of cultural tourism policies. Meaningful participation by local communities can encourage the creation of more equitable and sustainable tourism.

Furthermore, the values of Tri Hita Karana have proven relevant as a normative basis for managing cultural tourism in Bali. However, the implementation of these values in public policy still requires strengthening, particularly in translating local values into concrete regulations and management practices. Therefore, increasing the capacity of local governments as facilitators, regulators, and mediators is crucial in heritage tourism governance.

Overall, this study concludes that the success of heritage tourism in Bali depends heavily on the quality of public policy governance that is collaborative, participatory, and sensitive to local cultural values. Strengthening the role of local governments and indigenous communities is key to maintaining the sustainability of Balinese cultural tourism amidst the pressures of globalization and cultural commodification.

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