



Integrating Cultural Heritage and Creative Economy for Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case Study of Lombok, Indonesia

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism in Indonesia faces challenges in balancing economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Lombok Island, with its rich Sasak cultural heritage and the development of strategic tourism areas such as Mandalika, serves as a significant case study for understanding the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy. This article aims to analyze the potential, challenges, and strategies for sustainable tourism development based on cultural heritage and the creative economy in Lombok. The method employed is a literature study with a descriptive qualitative approach, drawing from academic sources, international organization reports, and government policies. Findings indicate that Sasak cultural heritage demonstrates high resilience and can be integrated with the creative economy sector to produce authentic and competitive tourism products. Local creative industries significantly contribute to community welfare while strengthening cultural identity. However, challenges persist, including the risk of local community marginalization, environmental pressures, and infrastructure limitations. Required strategies include strengthening community empowerment, developing integrated management models, and implementing community-based tourism principles in line with international guidelines. The integration of culture and the creative economy in Lombok can serve as a best-practice model for sustainable tourism development in Indonesia.

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Introduction

Sustainable tourism has increasingly become a major global concern in the 21st century, particularly as the expansion of mass tourism has triggered significant pressures on natural ecosystems, socio-cultural traditions, and community livelihoods. International organizations have consistently emphasized that tourism, while serving as a vital engine of economic growth, also bears responsibility for safeguarding cultural diversity and ecological balance (UNESCO, 2021; UNWTO, 2018). The growing body of scholarship in this field underscores that sustainable tourism is not only about minimizing environmental footprints, but also about ensuring social inclusivity and cultural continuity across generations. This paradigm shift marks a departure from conventional tourism development, which often prioritized short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term sustainability.

In Indonesia, these concerns resonate strongly given the country's vast and diverse cultural and natural resources. The archipelago is home to more than 17,000 islands and hundreds of ethnic groups, each with distinctive traditions, arts, and belief systems. This richness, while offering immense opportunities for tourism, also creates challenges in terms of governance, preservation, and equitable distribution of benefits. Recognizing these dynamics, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (n.d.) has officially positioned sustainable tourism as a central policy priority. The ministry's strategy highlights the need to move beyond extractive tourism models and to foster inclusive economic growth that uplifts local communities. Integral to this agenda is the acknowledgment that cultural heritage and the creative economy represent key pillars of a sustainable and competitive tourism sector.

The integration of cultural heritage and creative economy is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context. Cultural heritage—ranging from traditional crafts, rituals, and performing arts to historical architecture and intangible values—serves as a foundation for identity and community resilience. Meanwhile, the creative economy, defined by innovation, design, and cultural production, has become a crucial driver of value



creation in the tourism sector. When aligned effectively, these two dimensions not only attract international tourists seeking authentic experiences but also empower local communities through entrepreneurship and cultural revitalization. Thus, the Indonesian government envisions this integration as a means of achieving the “triple bottom line” of sustainability: economic viability, social inclusiveness, and environmental responsibility.

Lombok Island stands out as a particularly compelling case study for analyzing this synergy. Situated in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Lombok is often overshadowed by its neighboring island of Bali in terms of global tourism visibility. Nevertheless, Lombok possesses distinct cultural and natural assets that position it as an emerging destination within Indonesia’s tourism landscape. Central to this identity is the Sasak community, the indigenous ethnic group that constitutes the majority of Lombok’s population. The Sasak people maintain rich traditions of music, dance, crafts, architecture, and customary law, which collectively embody a living cultural heritage. Their rituals, social practices, and artistic expressions have persisted despite rapid modernization and external influences, reflecting a form of cultural resilience that aligns with the goals of sustainable tourism.

In addition to its cultural richness, Lombok has been strategically developed as part of Indonesia’s national tourism priorities. The Mandalika area, designated as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), has been envisioned as a world-class destination capable of hosting international events such as MotoGP. This development has attracted significant investment in infrastructure, accommodations, and entertainment facilities. While the Mandalika project promises economic benefits and greater global visibility for Lombok, it has also sparked debates concerning issues of inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation (Sayuti, 2023; Chaniago et al., 2023). The tension between large-scale tourism development and community-based approaches illustrates the broader dilemmas facing sustainable tourism in Indonesia and beyond.

Against this backdrop, the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy emerges as a critical pathway for Lombok. Cultural heritage provides the foundation for authenticity—a quality increasingly valued in global tourism markets, where visitors seek experiences that go beyond mere consumption and foster meaningful encounters with local ways of life. Meanwhile, the creative economy translates these cultural resources into innovative products and services, ranging from traditional textiles and culinary arts to contemporary performances and digital storytelling. Together, they generate tourism offerings that are not only marketable but also culturally grounded and socially beneficial.

The relevance of this integration is supported by theoretical and policy perspectives. Loulanski and Loulanski (2011) emphasize that heritage should not be treated solely as a static object of consumption, but rather as a dynamic process that evolves through interaction with communities, visitors, and creative industries. Similarly, Richards (2011) underscores the role of creativity in enhancing tourism experiences, shifting the focus from passive sightseeing to participatory and co-created cultural encounters. At the policy level, the OECD (2022) highlights the importance of synergies between tourism, culture, and the creative economy as drivers of inclusive and sustainable development. These perspectives collectively point to the need for a holistic framework in which cultural heritage is preserved and revitalized through creative practices, thereby ensuring that tourism remains sustainable and locally embedded.

In practice, such integration also demands attention to governance, community participation, and institutional support. Sustainable tourism cannot be realized through top-down planning alone; it requires active involvement of local communities who are the custodians of cultural heritage and the primary stakeholders of tourism development. In Lombok, this means engaging Sasak artisans, performers, and cultural leaders in shaping tourism products and narratives. Furthermore, policies must address issues of equity, ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism reach marginalized groups rather than being concentrated among external investors. By embedding these principles, Lombok’s tourism development has the potential to serve as a model for balancing economic competitiveness with cultural resilience and social justice.

This article, therefore, seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy in promoting sustainable tourism development in Lombok. The discussion draws upon a wide range of sources, including empirical studies, government policies, and international frameworks, as well as theoretical perspectives on culture-based and creativity-driven tourism (Loulanski & Loulanski, 2011; Richards, 2011; OECD, 2022). The central argument is that Lombok’s unique cultural assets and creative potential, when strategically aligned with sustainability principles, can generate a tourism model that is both globally competitive and locally empowering. At the same time, the analysis recognizes the challenges and tensions inherent in this process, including the risks of cultural commodification, environmental degradation, and social exclusion. By examining these dynamics, the article contributes to broader debates on how emerging destinations can harness the synergy between cultural heritage and the creative economy to foster sustainable and inclusive tourism futures.

The integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy has been increasingly recognized as a strategic pathway for advancing sustainable tourism. Scholars and policymakers emphasize that this integration allows destinations to remain competitive while safeguarding cultural identity and ensuring community participation. Loulanski and Loulanski (2011) underline that cultural heritage should not be perceived merely as static objects of display but as dynamic processes that evolve through social practices, community engagement, and creative reinterpretation within tourism development. Complementing this view, Richards (2011) and Richards and Raymond (2018) argue that the creative economy enriches the attractiveness of destinations by transforming cultural assets into experiential products that resonate with contemporary tourists seeking authenticity and participation.

On a global scale, normative frameworks have been established to guide the integration of culture and creativity into tourism. UNESCO (2021) provides international principles for safeguarding cultural diversity while promoting sustainable visitor experiences, while ICOMOS/ICTC (n.d.) highlights the importance of heritage management standards that prioritize both conservation and community benefit. In addition, the OECD (2022) stresses the need for synergistic collaboration between tourism, culture, and creative sectors as engines of inclusive and innovative development. These frameworks collectively offer benchmarks that can be adapted by national and local stakeholders to ensure that tourism development aligns with sustainability objectives.

Within Indonesia, such global discourses have been contextualized in national strategies. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (n.d.) explicitly integrates local cultural heritage into creative industry development, framing it as a cornerstone for sustainable tourism policy. This approach reflects a recognition that Indonesia's diverse cultural traditions and creative practices are not only assets for international branding but also vital resources for empowering communities and fostering inclusive economic growth.

At the local level, Lombok provides a particularly illustrative case of this integrative approach. Several empirical studies have demonstrated both the potential and the challenges of tourism development on the island. Research by Singandaru et al. (2024), Cantika Yuli et al. (2023), and Widjaja et al. (2023) examines Mandalika as a flagship tourism area, showing how investment and infrastructure development can generate opportunities while also raising concerns about inclusivity and sustainability. Complementary studies highlight the significance of community-based tourism initiatives, such as those documented by Permadi et al. (2023), which showcase how local participation can strengthen resilience and distribute benefits more equitably. Furthermore, research on post-disaster recovery emphasizes the role of Sasak cultural resilience in sustaining identity and continuity in the aftermath of natural calamities, such as the 2018 earthquake (Heritage, 2025).

Taken together, these studies confirm that the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy in Lombok is not only feasible but also essential for building a sustainable tourism model. They also highlight that while global and national frameworks provide overarching guidelines, local contexts such as Lombok demand tailored strategies that address unique cultural assets, socio-economic conditions, and community aspirations

Materials and Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on literature study as the main research design. The choice of this method is based on its suitability for exploring concepts, frameworks, and practices of sustainable tourism by integrating cultural heritage and the creative economy. Rather than testing hypotheses statistically, the approach seeks to provide in-depth descriptions and interpretations of existing scholarly discussions, policies, and empirical evidence related to the Lombok context. Data were primarily obtained from four categories of sources: (1) peer-reviewed academic journals that analyze tourism development, cultural heritage management, and creative economy practices; (2) reports and guidelines issued by international organizations such as UNESCO, UNWTO, ICOMOS, and the OECD, which offer global frameworks for sustainable tourism; (3) Indonesian government policies, particularly documents from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), which articulate national strategies for integrating culture and creativity into tourism; and (4) local and regional studies focused on Lombok, including research on the Sasak community, Mandalika tourism development, and community-based tourism initiatives. These diverse sources were selected to ensure a balanced perspective between global frameworks, national priorities, and local realities. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that allows for identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring patterns within textual sources. Following Braun and Clarke's conceptualization of thematic analysis, the process began with systematic reading of selected materials, followed by coding relevant segments into categories such as "cultural resilience,"

“creative economy innovation,” “community empowerment,” “environmental challenges,” and “policy frameworks.” These categories were then synthesized into broader themes, namely: (1) the potential of cultural heritage, (2) the role of the creative economy, (3) the synergy between heritage and creativity, and (4) challenges and strategies for sustainable tourism in Lombok. The use of thematic analysis also ensured that both opportunities and constraints could be systematically compared across different scales of analysis—from global discourses to local practices (Fatina et al., 2023; Harinurdin et al., 2025). To enhance the reliability of findings, triangulation was applied by cross-checking data from multiple sources. For example, policy documents were compared with empirical studies to assess consistency, while international guidelines were examined against local practices to evaluate applicability. This cross-validation helped minimize bias and ensure that conclusions drawn are grounded in multiple perspectives. The main categories of literature reviewed in this study are summarized in the table below.

Table 1
Literature review summarize

Source Category	Examples of Sources	Relevance to Study
Academic Journals	Singandaru et al. (2024); Cantika Yuli et al. (2023); Widjaja et al. (2023)	Provide empirical evidence on Lombok’s tourism, Mandalika development, and cultural heritage integration
International Organization Reports	UNESCO (2021); UNWTO (2018); OECD (2022); ICOMOS/ICTC (n.d.)	Offer global frameworks and normative guidelines for sustainable tourism and heritage management
Government Policies	Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (n.d.)	Outline Indonesia’s national strategies for integrating cultural heritage and the creative economy
Local/Regional Studies	Permadi et al. (2023); Heritage (2025); Community-Based Tourism Journal (2023)	Highlight community-based tourism, cultural resilience of the Sasak, and post-disaster recovery

By employing this methodological framework, the study seeks to generate a comprehensive analysis that bridges theoretical discussions with empirical realities, offering nuanced insights into the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy in the sustainable tourism development of Lombok

Results and Discussions

a. The Potential of Lombok’s Cultural Heritage
Lombok Island possesses a unique cultural identity that is inseparable from the Sasak community, whose traditions, beliefs, and values have been preserved for generations. This cultural heritage has not only shaped local identity but also contributed to the attractiveness of Lombok as a tourism destination. The potential of cultural heritage in Lombok lies in its ability to enrich visitor experiences while simultaneously maintaining cultural continuity for the host community. The Sasak people’s customs, rituals, traditional arts, and architecture represent living heritage that continues to evolve in response to changing times (Sasongko et al., 2025).
One of the strongest aspects of Lombok’s cultural heritage is the resilience demonstrated in the aftermath of the 2018 earthquake. While the disaster significantly damaged infrastructure and tourism facilities, cultural expressions such as rituals, communal traditions, and artistic performances remained intact and even gained renewed importance as a source of collective healing and social cohesion. The preservation of these traditions not only supported community resilience but also offered visitors an authentic understanding of local ways of coping with adversity (Heritage, 2025). This highlights the strategic role of cultural heritage as both a social anchor and a sustainable tourism resource.
Tourism development in Lombok has increasingly emphasized the integration of cultural heritage into visitor experiences. Traditional houses in villages such as Sade and Ende, for example, are not only preserved as architectural heritage but also serve as sites for cultural performances, storytelling, and demonstrations of traditional crafts. Novita et al. (2024) show how these forms of integration contribute to enhancing the authenticity of tourist experiences, creating deeper emotional connections between visitors and the host

culture. Similarly, Singandaru et al. (2024) underline that Sasak traditions embedded in daily life—ranging from ceremonial rituals to local culinary practices—are effective attractions when presented in participatory formats that allow tourists to engage directly with communities.

Beyond their entertainment value, these cultural practices function as a medium of cultural education. Visitors who participate in rituals or observe traditional ceremonies gain insights into local cosmologies, ethical systems, and ecological wisdom. For instance, water-related rituals practiced by the Sasak are not only religious in nature but also reflect environmental ethics regarding the sustainable use of natural resources. Such practices resonate with the growing global interest in tourism experiences that are meaningful, ethical, and sustainability-oriented. Thus, cultural heritage in Lombok contributes to sustainable tourism by promoting cultural continuity, environmental awareness, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Nevertheless, the potential of cultural heritage in Lombok is not without challenges. One major issue concerns the commodification of culture, where traditions risk being reduced to staged performances detached from their original meanings. If not carefully managed, this process can undermine the authenticity that tourists seek and weaken the cultural integrity of the community. In this regard, community participation in decision-making becomes crucial to ensure that tourism integration respects cultural values while generating economic benefits. Novita et al. (2024) argue that initiatives led by local communities, such as cooperative management of cultural villages, are more likely to balance preservation with tourism development.

Another challenge is related to infrastructure and accessibility. While cultural villages and traditional sites offer strong potential, many remain marginalized from mainstream tourism circuits due to limited transportation, promotional support, and investment in cultural facilities. Without adequate infrastructure, the capacity of these sites to attract and sustain visitor interest is constrained. Addressing these gaps requires not only government intervention but also partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations.

Overall, Lombok's cultural heritage embodies both opportunities and risks in the context of sustainable tourism. Its resilience, authenticity, and educational values position it as a vital resource for enriching tourism offerings. At the same time, careful management and participatory approaches are essential to avoid over-commercialization and ensure that cultural heritage remains a living, meaningful process for the Sasak community.

b. The Creative Economy as a Tourism Driver

Alongside cultural heritage, the creative economy has emerged as a dynamic force in shaping Lombok's tourism landscape. Creative industries—including handicrafts, culinary arts, fashion, and performing arts—have long been integral to local livelihoods, but recent policy and market shifts have positioned them more explicitly as tourism drivers (Cantika Yuli et al., 2023; Widjaja et al., 2023). These sectors generate added value by transforming cultural knowledge and skills into products and experiences that appeal to tourists, while simultaneously contributing to community welfare.

Handicrafts represent one of the most prominent creative sectors in Lombok. The island is widely known for its traditional weaving (songket), pottery, and bamboo crafts, which are produced using techniques passed down through generations. Cantika Yuli et al. (2023) observe that these products serve a dual function: they provide economic benefits for artisans and act as cultural ambassadors for Lombok. Tourists purchasing handicrafts not only bring home souvenirs but also engage in cross-cultural exchange that reinforces the distinctiveness of Sasak identity. However, ensuring that artisans receive fair compensation remains a pressing concern, particularly in contexts where intermediaries dominate the market.

Culinary arts constitute another fast-growing segment of Lombok's creative economy. Local dishes such as ayam taliwang and plecting kangkung have become iconic attractions in their own right, drawing food tourists who seek authentic flavors. Culinary festivals and food-based tourism packages are increasingly promoted by both government and private stakeholders as strategies for diversifying the island's tourism portfolio. Widjaja et al. (2023) argue that integrating culinary traditions into tourism circuits not only enhances visitor satisfaction but also strengthens the local economy by linking small-scale producers, farmers, and restaurateurs into broader value chains.

Performing arts—including traditional dances, music ensembles such as *gendang beleq*, and contemporary creative adaptations—also play a significant role in attracting tourists. Live performances staged in cultural villages, hotels, or during festivals serve as both entertainment and cultural education. Moreover, new hybrid forms of performance that blend traditional elements with modern aesthetics demonstrate the adaptability of Lombok's creative economy to changing market demands. This flexibility underscores the role of creativity as a resource for innovation in tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (n.d.) has placed strong emphasis on creative economy models rooted in local culture as a strategy for sustainable development. Policies focus on empowering communities through training, capacity-building, and market access, enabling creative workers to expand their businesses while retaining cultural authenticity. These initiatives resonate with the OECD's (2022) argument that creative sectors can diversify tourism economies and foster inclusive growth. For Lombok, this means that creative industries not only provide income but also reduce dependence on mass tourism models dominated by large-scale resorts and international operators.

Despite these promising developments, the creative economy in Lombok also faces several structural challenges. First, there is the issue of market access and competitiveness. While local products are rich in cultural value, they often struggle to compete with mass-produced goods in terms of pricing, branding, and quality assurance. Addressing these barriers requires strengthening entrepreneurial skills among artisans, improving product design, and enhancing digital marketing capacities.

Second, policy coordination and sustainability present ongoing concerns. Creative economy programs are sometimes fragmented across different government agencies, resulting in overlapping initiatives that lack long-term continuity. Without coherent strategies, there is a risk that creative industries may fail to reach their full potential as tourism drivers. Harinurdin et al. (2025) note the importance of aligning creative economy policies with cultural preservation and tourism development to achieve synergetic outcomes.

Third, environmental sustainability remains an area requiring more attention. For instance, the production of handicrafts and culinary goods can exert pressure on natural resources if not managed responsibly. Developing eco-friendly practices and supply chains is therefore critical to ensuring that the growth of creative industries aligns with sustainable tourism principles.

Despite these challenges, the creative economy offers transformative opportunities for Lombok's tourism. By harnessing creativity as both an economic and cultural resource, Lombok can move beyond extractive tourism models and position itself as a destination that offers meaningful, innovative, and sustainable experiences. The synergy between cultural heritage and creative industries thus becomes a cornerstone for developing a tourism sector that is inclusive, resilient, and competitive in global markets.

c. Synergy of Cultural Heritage and Creative Economy in Sustainable Tourism

Integrating cultural heritage with the creative economy produces authentic and highly competitive tourism products (Richards & Raymond, 2018). In the context of Lombok, this synergy is increasingly recognized as a pathway for achieving sustainable tourism development. Cultural heritage provides the raw materials of identity—rituals, traditional knowledge, and tangible heritage—while the creative economy translates these resources into innovative experiences and marketable products. The combination enhances both cultural continuity and economic viability, allowing communities to generate income while safeguarding their traditions.

This integrative model has been applied in several community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives across Lombok. For instance, in Kembang Kuning Tourism Village, cultural practices such as traditional ceremonies and local gastronomy are embedded into tourism packages that also showcase creative products like weaving and handicrafts (Permadi et al., 2023). The model creates a holistic visitor experience that combines cultural immersion with opportunities for creative engagement. Similarly, at Kerta Gangga Waterfall, tourism activities go beyond natural sightseeing by incorporating storytelling, performances, and locally crafted souvenirs (Abdurrahman et al., 2025). In these cases, heritage and creativity complement one another, providing visitors with layered experiences that are simultaneously educational, entertaining, and socially meaningful.

The synergy also extends to post-pandemic recovery strategies. Saputro et al. (2023) emphasize that community-based creative initiatives—such as digital marketing of local crafts and the rebranding of traditional rituals as hybrid cultural events—have been instrumental in reviving local tourism economies. These approaches not only generated alternative income streams during the crisis but also strengthened community solidarity. Similarly, Susilorini et al. (2022) argue that integrating creative industries with cultural tourism offers a model for socio-economic resilience by diversifying livelihood opportunities and reducing dependency on volatile mass tourism markets.

Another dimension of synergy lies in the creation of experience-based tourism products. Unlike conventional tourism, which often commodifies culture into passive spectacles, the integration of heritage and creativity encourages active participation. Tourists are invited to join weaving workshops, learn local dances, or taste regional dishes while listening to narratives of their cultural significance. This form of co-creation enhances visitor satisfaction and promotes cross-cultural understanding. Richards and Raymond (2018) highlight that such participatory cultural experiences are increasingly in demand among global tourists seeking authenticity and meaningful engagement.

From a development perspective, this synergy generates multiple benefits. First, it contributes to economic inclusivity by ensuring that income circulates at the community level, benefiting artisans, performers, farmers, and small entrepreneurs. Second, it promotes cultural sustainability by maintaining traditional knowledge as a living, evolving practice. Third, it supports destination competitiveness by differentiating Lombok from mass tourism destinations that rely primarily on natural attractions or luxury facilities. In this sense, the synergy between cultural heritage and the creative economy is not merely an added value but a strategic foundation for building a sustainable tourism brand.

d. Challenges and Development Strategies

Despite its great potential, tourism development in Lombok faces significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure long-term sustainability.

The first challenge relates to large-scale development projects, such as the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ). While designed to attract international investment and high-end tourism, these projects risk marginalizing local communities by displacing traditional livelihoods, limiting access to cultural sites, and concentrating economic benefits in the hands of external investors (Chaniago et al., 2023). Without adequate mechanisms for community involvement and benefit-sharing, such initiatives may exacerbate social inequalities and undermine the very cultural assets that constitute Lombok's unique appeal.

The second challenge concerns environmental sustainability. As tourist arrivals increase, so too do the pressures on natural resources, waste management systems, and carbon emissions from transport and hospitality activities. Susilorini et al. (2022) warn that without integrated planning, the expansion of tourism may lead to ecological degradation, threatening not only biodiversity but also the cultural landscapes tied to local rituals and livelihoods. For example, overexploitation of water resources for hotel development can disrupt community practices that rely on rivers and springs for ceremonial purposes. Thus, environmental risks are inseparable from cultural sustainability.

The third major challenge involves infrastructure and accessibility. Although Lombok has benefited from improvements in airports, roads, and port facilities, many cultural and creative tourism sites remain difficult to access due to limited transportation networks and insufficient public amenities. This not only restricts visitor flows but also reduces opportunities for peripheral communities to participate in tourism value chains. (Khariyatur et al., 2023) points out that without equitable infrastructure development, the benefits of tourism will remain concentrated in select areas, undermining regional inclusivity.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that align tourism development with community empowerment and cultural preservation. One key strategy is strengthening community empowerment through open innovation, which encourages collaboration among local communities, governments, and private stakeholders to co-create solutions tailored to local contexts (Harinurdin et al., 2025). Such approaches ensure that communities are not passive beneficiaries but active agents in shaping tourism development.

Another strategy is adopting integrated management models that coordinate cultural, environmental, and economic goals. Fatina et al. (2023) emphasize that fragmented governance often leads to inefficiencies and conflicting policies. Integrated models, by contrast, promote cross-sectoral cooperation, harmonizing heritage conservation with creative industry development and tourism infrastructure planning.

Equally important is the promotion of community participation in tourism planning and implementation. Sayuti (2023) argues that participatory mechanisms—such as village forums, cooperative tourism management, and local representation in decision-making bodies—are crucial for ensuring that tourism reflects community aspirations and preserves cultural values. Participation also fosters a sense of ownership, motivating communities to actively protect both heritage and natural resources.

Finally, adherence to international guidelines such as those developed by UNESCO (2021) and ICOMOS (n.d.) is essential for safeguarding cultural sustainability. These frameworks provide principles for managing cultural heritage in ways that balance conservation with contemporary use. Applying these principles in Lombok can help ensure that cultural assets are preserved not as static relics but as living traditions embedded in community life and creatively adapted for tourism purposes.

In conclusion, Lombok's tourism development stands at a crossroads. The synergy between cultural heritage and the creative economy offers transformative opportunities for building a sustainable, inclusive, and competitive tourism sector. However, realizing this vision requires addressing the structural challenges of large-scale development, environmental sustainability, and infrastructure gaps. By adopting community-centered, integrated, and globally informed strategies, Lombok can ensure that its tourism future is not only economically successful but also culturally vibrant and environmentally responsible.

Conclusion

This research confirms that the integration of cultural heritage and creative economy is a strategic foundation for sustainable tourism development in Lombok. The cultural heritage of the Sasak people, whether in the form of traditional art, architecture, rituals, or local wisdom, has proven to remain resilient and able to survive despite facing major challenges such as natural disasters. Preservation efforts carried out by integrating these cultural values into tourism activities not only enrich the tourist experience, but also strengthen the identity and pride of the local community.

At the same time, the creative economy sector plays an important role as a key driver of tourism growth. Creative products, ranging from handicrafts, performing arts, to culinary specialties, are attractions that increase the diversity of tourism offerings while opening up economic opportunities for communities. The active involvement of communities in developing creativity-based products creates added value that boosts welfare and strengthens destination competitiveness.

The synergy between cultural heritage and the creative economy has been proven to produce authentic, unique and highly competitive tourism products. This model can be seen in the development of tourism villages and community-based tourism, which emphasize direct experience, cultural interaction, and community involvement. Through this approach, tourism is not only an economic tool, but also an important instrument to strengthen social and cultural resilience. However, major challenges remain. Large-scale development projects have the potential to marginalize local communities if not managed inclusively. Threats to environmental sustainability due to increasing carbon footprints, waste management issues, and limited transportation infrastructure are also obstacles that require serious attention. Without proper handling, Lombok's tourism potential could be hampered by long-term negative impacts.

Strategies to address these challenges need to be directed towards community empowerment, community involvement in tourism planning, and integrated management. By strengthening local capacity, encouraging open innovation, and prioritizing sustainability principles, Lombok can develop a more inclusive and sustainable tourism model. Finally, the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy not only provides added value to Lombok's tourism development, but also opens up opportunities for creating a balance between economic growth, environmental preservation, and strengthening cultural identity. With the right strategy, Lombok has the potential to become an example of cultural-based sustainable tourism best practices at the national and international levels.

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