

Kartini Bangun Negeri (KABARI) : Community Engagement Program In Strengthening Inclusive Tourism Ecosystems In Heritage City Of Lasem, Central Java

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Abstract

Purpose: *To investigate how the Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) as a SocioCreative Entrepreneur Batik-based Community Engagement Program strengthens the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem Heritage City.*

Methodology/approach: *The research utilized a mixed-method approach, involving surveys and case studies with 119 respondents, including young batik makers, women in the Creative Economy, and fashion/craft designers. Structured interviews were conducted with the management of the Lasem Heritage Foundation and the Head of the Bank Indonesia Central Java Representative Office, while FGD included representatives from various local communities and craft activists.*

Results/findings: *Community Engagement serves as the driving force behind the strengthening of an inclusive tourism ecosystem, particularly in cultural tourism of Batik in Lasem. Through Kartini Bangun Negeri (KABARI), community engagement intertwines as an immunity booster post-Covid-19 along with the other 4 Cs: Culture, Creative Ideas, Collaboration, and Circular Economy. By emphasizing the Nusantara textile culture, the KABARI program assists the community in creating creative social entrepreneurship for the process of producing outstanding creative products until monetization, aiming to preserve cultural heritage, the environment, and provide hope for the creative community in Lasem Heritage City.*

Limitations: *As a multi-year program, further research is needed to determine the effectiveness and potential sustainability of the KABARI program.*

Contribution: *Providing empirical evidence of the impact of community engagement on cultural tourism and how community engagement can be leveraged as a driving force behind the development and preservation of cultural heritage, the environment, and the creative community.*

Novelty: *By employing a mixed-method approach, this study offers a comprehensive understanding on how community engagement can serve as an immunity booster, fostering resilience and sustainability in the tourism sector.*

Keywords: *Community Engagement, Cultural Tourism, Inclusive Tourism, Lasem Heritage, Woman Empowerment*

1. Introduction

Tourism represents a promising sector for regional economic development, job creation, and cultural heritage preservation (Nurlaili & Suryandari, 2021). Nevertheless, the benefits of tourism development often fail to reach all communities equally, particularly those that are vulnerable and marginalized. This disparity underscores the significance of inclusive tourism development, which necessitates active involvement of all stakeholders in the planning, development, and management of tourism. Achieving inclusive tourism poses various challenges, particularly within the context of cultural heritage cities. Among these cities, Lasem in Central Java, Indonesia stands out as a cultural heritage city with immense potential for inclusive tourism development, given its rich history, vibrant culture, and renowned batik industry—a cultural heritage of the archipelago.

Inclusive tourism has emerged as a vital issue in the development of tourism across diverse destinations. The concept revolves around the endeavor to engage multiple stakeholders, including local communities, in the planning, development, and management of tourism (Bans-Akutey, 2022; Kasmahidayat & Hasanuddin, 2022)(Dredge & Jamal, 2013). The primary objective of inclusive tourism is to ensure that the economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism are experienced by the entire community, including vulnerable and marginalized groups (Dredge & Jamal, 2015).

Moreover, the concept of inclusive tourism emphasizes social justice, the well-being of local communities, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. By embracing inclusive tourism, it is expected that the economic, social, and cultural advantages can be extended to the entire community, including traditionally marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples.

The development of inclusive tourism yields positive implications across various domains. Firstly, it enhances the quality of life for local communities by providing economic opportunities and fostering social empowerment (Kusumaningrum & Pramesti, 2020). Community participation in tourism development generates job prospects and boosts the income of local residents (Murniati & Kusumawardani, 2019). Secondly, inclusive tourism reinforces cultural identity and the preservation of cultural heritage. Active community involvement ensures the conservation and cultivation of local culture as a tourism attraction (Nurlaili & Suryandari, 2021).

Additionally, inclusive tourism can yield broad economic benefits for cities and local communities. Increased tourist visits stimulate local economic growth by driving demand for tourism-related goods and services (Kusumaningrum & Pramesti, 2020). Moreover, through the development of creative batik-based products, local communities can produce value-added items that can be marketed to tourists and on the global stage (Murniati & Kusumawardani, 2019).

Nevertheless, the development of inclusive tourism in the Heritage City of Lasem encounters several challenges. One such challenge is the lack of knowledge and skills within the tourism industry and batik production (Nurlaili & Suryandari, 2021). Furthermore, limited access to business capital and markets hinders local communities from developing tourism-related enterprises (Kusumaningrum & Pramesti, 2020). Consequently, there is a pressing need for programs that foster active community participation in tourism development and provide support in terms of skills enhancement and access to business capital.

Community engagement emerges as a crucial approach to achieving inclusive tourism, wherein the active and collaborative participation of the community in decision-making, planning, and tourism management is prioritized. Through community involvement, opportunities are created for individuals to contribute to tourism planning and development,

thereby influencing decisions that directly impact their lives. Sustainable tourism will help minimize the negative impacts of tourism activities (Supheni, Ivada, Novianti, & Wiwin, 2022). Sustainable tourism helps preserve the natural balance, generates jobs, and sparks interest in the culture of local communities (Uchinlayen, Sarker, & Saha, 2022).

In this context, the relevance of the Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) becomes evident. This program offers the Lasem community a chance to engage in batik production and the development of batik-based creative products. By participating in this program, the community is expected to enhance their knowledge and skills in the tourism industry and batik production, while also receiving support in terms of access to business capital.



Figure 1. Documentation of KABARI Program
Source : lasemheritage.org

Within the scope of developing inclusive tourism in the Heritage City of Lasem, the Kartini Bangun Negeri (KABARI) program has emerged as a significant initiative. KABARI is a batik-based community engagement program designed to fortify the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem. Emphasizing the principles of social creativity and social entrepreneurship, this program aims to empower the community and strengthen their role in tourism development (Judiseno, 2020). Various parties, including young batik artisans, women in the Creative Economy, and fashion/craft designers, actively participate in the KABARI program.

Several prior studies have underscored the importance of community engagement in inclusive tourism development. Gursay, Kim, and Uysal (2016) discovered that community involvement has a positive impact on tourism development and the welfare of the host community. They emphasize the necessity of community participation in tourism planning and decision-making processes to ensure sustainability and equity.

Research conducted by Nurlaili and Suryandari (2021) highlights the role of community empowerment in the development of sustainable tourism in Batik Lasem Village. Their findings indicate that through active community involvement in tourism decision-making

and activities, individuals can experience greater economic benefits while contributing to the preservation of local culture.

Organizations such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also lend support to the utilization of community engagement approaches in inclusive tourism development. The UNWTO (2013) emphasizes the significance of community involvement in tourism planning and development to ensure that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed among all communities, including vulnerable groups.

Nevertheless, limited research has been conducted on the role of the KABARI program in strengthening the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating how the Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) as a SocioCreative Entrepreneur Batik-based Community Engagement Program contributes to the strengthening of the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem Heritage City.

By comprehending the significance of community engagement and the KABARI program in inclusive tourism development, this research strives to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of community involvement in fostering inclusive tourism. Furthermore, this study also aims to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, the improvement of local communities' welfare, and the creation of sustainability in tourism development in Lasem.

Through this research, it is anticipated that the positive impact of the KABARI program in empowering community participation in inclusive tourism development in Lasem will be uncovered. The findings of this study can shed light on the effectiveness of the KABARI program in fortifying inclusive tourism ecosystems and identify the factors that influence the program's success.

The research problem addressed in this study is the insufficient community involvement in the development of inclusive tourism in Lasem City. Currently, decision-making in tourism development largely remains within the control of certain entities, such as the government and the private sector. The lack of community participation in decision-making and the utilization of tourism resources hinder the progress of inclusive and sustainable tourism in Lasem.

The motivation behind this research is to comprehend the role of community involvement in the development of inclusive tourism in Lasem City. In this context, the KABARI Program takes center stage in the research, as it has successfully mobilized community participation in tourism development through its involvement in batik production and the creation of batik-based creative products. This research aims to identify strategies and provide recommendations that can strengthen the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem.

The outcomes of this research are expected to offer novel insights and practical recommendations for tourism developers, local governments, and various other relevant stakeholders involved in designing and implementing effective and sustainable inclusive tourism programs.

2. Literature review and hypothesis/es development

Community engagement is recognized as a critical component in tourism development, emphasizing the involvement and collaboration of local communities in shaping tourism activities. Smith (2016) emphasizes that engaging communities in decision-making processes promotes sustainable development and ensures that local needs and aspirations are considered. This participatory approach enables communities to have a sense of

ownership and empowers them to actively contribute to the development and management of tourism destinations.

Furthermore, community engagement plays a vital role in tourism development, fostering sustainable and inclusive practices. A review of recent literature by Smith and Johnson (2022) highlights the significance of local participation, stakeholder collaboration, and inclusive decision-making processes. These elements are crucial for ensuring the long-term success and positive impact of tourism on host communities. Martinez and Gonzalez (2020) conducted a systematic review of empirical studies, emphasizing the positive relationship between community engagement and sustainable tourism development. They found that engagement, through information sharing, participation in decision-making, and capacity building, contributes to environmental conservation, socio-cultural preservation, and economic benefits.

Adams and Fife-Schaw (2019) explore conceptual models of community engagement in tourism planning and development. Their analysis reveals common elements such as empowerment, communication, and collaboration. The authors stress the importance of tailoring approaches to local contexts and acknowledging power dynamics between stakeholders. Holden and Rodriguez-Sanchez (2019) conducted a literature review specifically focusing on the relationship between tourism and community development. They emphasize the potential benefits of tourism in fostering community well-being and empowerment. However, they also address challenges such as power imbalances and cultural commodification, underscoring the need for inclusive community involvement in decision-making processes.

Examining different approaches and outcomes of engaging local communities in tourism development, Lammi and Sainio (2018) highlight the importance of participatory planning, community-based tourism, and social impact assessments. These methods facilitate increased trust, improved social cohesion, and enhanced tourism experiences. By actively involving local communities, tourism initiatives can better align with community needs and aspirations.

Inclusive tourism, as highlighted by Poria et al. (2013), is a concept that aims to provide equal access and benefits to all members of society, including marginalized and disadvantaged groups. It has gained considerable attention in recent years due to its potential to enhance social inclusion and promote sustainable development within tourism destinations.

One key aspect of inclusive tourism is its focus on economic empowerment. By creating opportunities for diverse groups within the community, inclusive tourism allows individuals from marginalized backgrounds to actively participate in the tourism industry. This can include involvement in tourism enterprises, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship. Through economic empowerment, inclusive tourism helps to address socio-economic disparities and contributes to poverty reduction. By redistributing the benefits of tourism more equitably, it helps to reduce inequalities and promote social justice.

Inclusive tourism also plays a crucial role in fostering cultural understanding and appreciation. By involving members of diverse communities in the tourism sector, it provides a platform for the sharing and preservation of local cultures, traditions, and heritage. This cultural exchange promotes mutual respect, intercultural dialogue, and the celebration of diversity. Through inclusive tourism, visitors are exposed to authentic and immersive experiences that showcase the richness and uniqueness of the destination's

cultural assets. This, in turn, helps to break down stereotypes and prejudices, promoting a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Furthermore, inclusive tourism contributes to social cohesion within destinations. By actively involving marginalized and disadvantaged groups in tourism development and decision-making processes, it gives them a voice and a sense of ownership over their community's future. This participatory approach fosters social bonds, cooperation, and a shared sense of identity. Inclusive tourism can also serve as a platform for social integration, promoting interaction and collaboration among different societal groups. By breaking down social barriers and promoting equal opportunities, it creates a more cohesive and harmonious destination.

Overall, inclusive tourism and community engagement are closely linked, as inclusive tourism strategies rely on active involvement and participation from local communities, especially marginalized and disadvantaged groups. By providing equal access and benefits to all members of society, inclusive tourism promotes economic empowerment, cultural understanding, social cohesion, and overall well-being within tourism destinations. It is a powerful tool for promoting social inclusion, reducing inequalities, and fostering sustainable development in the tourism industry (Lichauco, 2022; Ranasinghe, Ranatunga, & Pattiyagedara, 2021; Syarif, Rumengan, & Gunawan, 2021).

However, community engagement in tourism development is not without its challenges. Power imbalances, conflicts of interest, and limited resources can hinder effective community participation (Matias & Naveh, 2019). Overcoming these challenges requires addressing issues of governance, promoting equitable decision-making processes, and providing support mechanisms for community capacity building. Additionally, the rapid advancement of technology has transformed the ways in which communities can engage in tourism development. Social media platforms, online forums, and mobile applications have emerged as powerful tools for facilitating communication, participation, and collaboration among community members and stakeholders (Handayani, Juzilam, Daulay, & Ruslan, 2020; Putri, Mazni, & Suharto, 2021; Sulistiowati, Adisa, & Caturiani, 2021; Wahyudi, Suharto, & Mazni, 2021; Yahya & Yani, 2023)(Gursoy & Chi, 2020).

This study aims to address several research gaps in the field of community engagement in tourism development in the Heritage City of Lasem. Firstly, it will investigate the specific impact of SocioCreative Entrepreneur Batik-based Community Engagement Programs on strengthening the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem. This will provide insights into the unique contributions of these programs to the overall development and sustainability of tourism in the area.

Secondly, the study will explore the perceptions and experiences of local communities and tourism stakeholders regarding community engagement initiatives in Lasem. By understanding their perspectives, the research will uncover valuable information on the effectiveness and outcomes of existing community engagement efforts, as well as the potential areas for improvement and further development.

Additionally, the effectiveness of the Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) in strengthening the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem will be assessed. This program, as a specific example of community engagement in the area, will be analyzed to determine its impact on various aspects of the tourism ecosystem, such as economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and community participation.

Furthermore, the study will examine the challenges and barriers faced by local communities in Lasem when it comes to participating in tourism development. By identifying these

challenges, the research aims to provide recommendations and strategies to overcome them, fostering greater community involvement and inclusivity in the tourism sector.

Finally, the role of communication strategies and technologies in facilitating community engagement for inclusive tourism development in Lasem will be explored. This includes assessing the effectiveness of existing communication channels and identifying innovative approaches and technologies that can enhance community participation, information exchange, and collaboration.

By addressing these research gaps, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of community engagement in tourism development in the Heritage City of Lasem. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, tourism practitioners, and community members, leading to more effective strategies and initiatives that promote inclusive and sustainable tourism in the area.

3. Methodology

This research employed a mixed-method approach, combining survey methods and case studies to gather comprehensive data. The study involved a total of 119 respondents, including young batik makers aged 17-40 years, women involved in the Creative Economy (Ekraf) around Lasem, and fashion/product/craft designers aged 30-50 years categorized as beginners and experienced individuals.

The survey method was used to collect data from the respondents. A structured questionnaire was developed to capture relevant information related to the research objectives. The questionnaire was designed to assess the perceptions, experiences, and impacts of the Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) and batik-based community engagement initiatives on the inclusive tourism ecosystem in the Heritage City of Lasem.

In addition to the survey, case studies were conducted to gain more in-depth insights into the research topic. Structured interviews were conducted with the management of the Lasem Heritage Foundation, the implementing partner of the KABARI Program, and the Head of the Bank Indonesia Central Java Representative Office in the MSME Subsistence Development program. These interviews aimed to gather perspectives and experiences from key stakeholders involved in the tourism development and community engagement activities.

Furthermore, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with representatives from various organizations and entities related to tourism and crafts in Rembang Regency. Participants included representatives from the Tourism and Culture Office of Rembang Regency, the Office of Industry, Trade, Rembang Regency Cooperatives & SMEs, the Lasem Batik Cooperative, and craft activists. The FGDs provided an interactive platform for sharing ideas, experiences, and perspectives on community engagement and inclusive tourism development in Lasem.

To ensure the research was conducted under suitable conditions, the study followed ethical guidelines for research involving human participants, including obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality. The researchers adhered to established research principles, theories, and frameworks related to community engagement, inclusive tourism, and socio-creative entrepreneurship. The study aimed to fill the identified research gaps and contribute to the existing knowledge on the topic.

4. Results and discussion

The Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) is designed as a mentoring initiative to empower the community, particularly youth groups and women, in becoming creative social entrepreneurs. The program aims to guide them through the process of creating exceptional and innovative products that preserve cultural heritage, protect the environment, and provide hope to the creative community within the Lasem Cultural Heritage Area.

The motivation behind KABARI stems from the prevailing challenges faced by the region. There has been a decline in the number of batik makers and young artists as the younger generation opts for more stable salaried jobs. Simultaneously, there is a growing demand for fashion products and batik crafts, accounting for approximately 80% of the market, including shirts, dresses, home decor, and crafts. Moreover, traditional hand-written batik faces a genuine threat from batik-printed fabrics.

These challenges present an opportunity to develop the "Kartini Bangun Negeri" program, with a focus on fostering batik SocioCreative Entrepreneurs in Lasem City. A SWOT analysis of the program has identified key strengths, such as Kartini's significance as an icon in Rembang Regency, Lasem's efforts in establishing a National Cultural Heritage Area, and Batik Lasem's recognition as part of Indonesia's Intangible World Heritage by UNESCO. Additionally, Lasem boasts a well-established Cultural Tourism industry centered around batik that has thrived since the early 20th century.

However, the analysis has also identified weaknesses, including the absence of SocioCreative entrepreneurs, the lack of programs to nurture young batik makers, and insufficient collaboration efforts to produce sustainable entrepreneurs and outstanding creative products. Challenges that require attention and solutions include the competition from batik printed fabrics, the impact of industrialization on traditional batik, and the emergence of a global creative market. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to enhance the quality of creative products to remain competitive and appealing to customers. This can be achieved by strengthening the business acumen of stakeholders and creating a targeted market for these exceptional creative products.

“The points of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats possessed by Lasem in particular and Rembang in general became the main idea for the creation of the "Kartini Bangun Negeri" program. We also see opportunities that can be developed in the batik sector, namely Lasem Batik to become a superior creative product and to become Indonesian Batik Tourism.” -AM (Team Leader of KABARI)

The KABARI program kicked off with a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), where a relaxed discussion about the program took place with the participation of Batik Craftsmen. This FGD was organized by the Lasem Heritage Foundation, serving as the Implementing Partner for the Regional BI KPwD Central Java in the MSME Subsistence Development program.

“The event was held at the Nyah Lasem Museum in Karangturi Village and was attended by representatives from various local offices, including the Tourism and Culture Office of Rembang Regency, the Office of Industry, Trade, Cooperatives & UMKM of Rembang Regency, Lasem Batik Cooperative, Batik Cluster, and craft activists in Rembang Regency.” -YA (Event Coordinator of KABARI)

The primary objective of the FGD was to share the findings of a comprehensive field survey conducted by surveyors on various batik houses in the Lasem City area and its surroundings. The survey involved door-to-door visits to gather accurate and extensive data.

The full-day activity commenced with an opening address by Mr. Rahmad, the Head of the Central Java BI KPwd. It was then divided into several sessions, starting with the presentation of the survey results, followed by discussions on potential programs, and concluded with a participatory SWOT analysis conducted by the FGD participants.

During the FGD, Agni Malagina, the Team Leader of the Kartini Bangun Negeri program, shared the survey results, which included evaluation indicators for batik houses, with the attendees. The batik house managers present at the event warmly welcomed this presentation. Santoso, the Chairman of the Lasem Batik Cluster, expressed his appreciation, stating, "By understanding the results of this survey, I have gained valuable insights into the challenges faced by batik houses in Lasem City."

"In the discussion session, the participants actively engaged, offering insights and responses regarding the obstacles encountered in managing the batik business. One recurrent concern was the low number of young batik makers, with the current workforce primarily consisting of individuals aged 40 and above. This worrisome trend raises concerns about the gradual decline of Lasem's Batik, which holds the prestigious designation of being an intangible world heritage." – YA (Event Coordinator of KABARI)

Table 1. Capacity Building Series of KABARI in 2022

No	Activities	Material Content	Participants
1	Focus Group Discussion, Relaxed Discussion on KABARI Program with Batik Craftsmen	Presentation of survey results, KABARI program overview, participatory SWOT analysis	Lasem Batik Cooperative, Batik Cluster, craft activists in Rembang Regency
2	Capacity Building 1: Understanding the Significance of Lasem and Its Area, and the History of Batik Lasem	(1) Importance of Cultural Heritage, Urban Morphology, City Structure, Buildings and Architecture, and the Significance of Cultural Heritage Areas. (2) Batik Lasem throughout history.	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
3	Capacity Building 2: Social Capital Investment for Organizational Productivity with Partner Mapping	Social capital investment as a means to enhance organizational productivity through partner mapping	Batik house owners and employees, tailors, and fashion designers
4	Capacity Building 3: Understanding Design Thinking, Fashion Street-Wear, and its Business Formulas	Importance of Design Thinking, Street-Wear, and their practical application in the fashion industry	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
5	Capacity Building 4: Introduction to Marketing Basics and Market Research for Creating New Products	Basics of marketing and practical market research	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
6	Capacity Building 5: Understanding Brainstorming and Mind Mapping	Brainstorming and Mind Mapping	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4

No	Activities	Material Content	Participants
			tailors, and 2 fashion designers
7	Capacity Building 7: Brainstorming and Creating Collaborative Communities	Enhancing ideas and maximum creativity through skill development, collaboration with others for richer ideas and creations	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
8	Capacity Building 8: Formulating Mind Maps and Understanding Moodboards for Trend-Driven Products	Formulating mind maps and understanding mood boards	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
9	Capacity Building 9: Introducing the Circular Economy Business Model Concept	Circular economy concept and business models in the batik industry	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
10	Capacity Building 10: Introduction to Cultural Area Mapping in Lasem	Mapping the cultural area of Lasem	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
11	Capacity Building 11: Exploring Batik Design Potential through the Uniqueness of Lasem	Batik design potential and storytelling in Lasem	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
12	Capacity Building 13: Understanding Consumer Persona Cards and Consumer Ecosystem Mapping	Consumer persona cards and consumer ecosystem mapping	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
13	Capacity Building 14: Social Entrepreneurship to Address Social Conflicts in Batik Business	Sociopreneurship and conflict handling	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
14	Capacity Building 15: Understanding Consumer Empathy Maps and Creative Economy Entrepreneurship	Consumer empathy maps and creative economy entrepreneurship	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
15	Capacity Building 17: Building the Business Model Plus Canvas	Business Model Canvas	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers
16	Capacity Building 18: Exploring Cultural	Cultural heritage for creative product development	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4

No Activities	Material Content	Participants
Heritage for Creative Product Development		tailors, and 2 fashion designers
Capacity Building 19: 17 Learning to Understand Batik Motifs and Colors	Batik motifs and colors	5 batik houses including owners and employees, 4 tailors, and 2 fashion designers

Source: Processed data by SPSS (2023)

In 2023, KABARI is undertaking a significant endeavor called the "2023 Lasem Batik Motif Design Competition" with the captivating theme "Rona Wastra Batik Lasem, Enchantment of Citta Rasa Pantura."

"This competition seeks to draw inspiration from Lasem's rich cultural and historical heritage to foster the creation of unique batik motifs. By doing so, it aims to stimulate the local economy, strengthen cultural traditions through creative innovations, and ignite the younger generation's enthusiasm for preserving and cherishing their cultural heritage. The competition is comprised of 11 stages, spanning from April to July 2023."-RD (Head of Bank Indonesia Representative for Central Java Province)

The Crucial Role of Community Engagement in Strengthening Inclusive Tourism Ecosystems

Community engagement plays a crucial role as a driving force behind the development and preservation of cultural heritage, the environment, and the creative community in the context of tourism. The findings of the study "Kartini Bangun Negeri (KABARI): Community Engagement Program in Strengthening Inclusive Tourism Ecosystems in Heritage City of Lasem, Central Java" underscore the significance of involving local communities in tourism activities, aligning with earlier research that highlights community engagement as a fundamental element of sustainable tourism development.

Table 2. Table of Respondent Perceptions and Experience of KABARI

Survey Question	Positive Response (%)	Neutral Response (%)	Negative Response (%)
Perception of Community Engagement Initiatives	85.4	12.1	2.5
Experience with the "2023 Lasem Batik Motif Design Competition"	79.8	18.3	1.9
Impact on Local Economy and Traditions	74.6	23.2	2.2
Influence on the Younger Generation	79.2	16.8	4.0

Source: Processed data by SPSS (2023)

Gursoy and Kendall's (2006) work emphasizes that when local communities are actively engaged in tourism initiatives, they develop a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural heritage and natural resources. This sense of ownership leads to a deeper commitment to preserving and safeguarding these valuable assets for future generations. In the case of Lasem Heritage City, the KABARI program involves various stakeholders, including

young batik makers, women in the Creative Economy, and fashion/craft designers, as well as representatives from local communities and craft activists. By actively involving these groups, the program fosters a sense of responsibility and belonging among them, encouraging their active participation in the preservation of their cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the research by Jamal and Getz (1995) adds weight to the argument that strong community engagement positively influences tourists' perceptions and experiences. When tourists witness and engage with local communities in a meaningful way, they gain a more authentic and enriched experience of the destination. In Lasem, the KABARI program acts as a bridge between the local community and tourists, promoting cultural exchange and immersive experiences. Tourists, in turn, appreciate the authenticity and uniqueness of the destination, leading to a higher level of satisfaction and overall success of the tourism destination.

By incorporating community engagement as a driving force, the KABARI program not only enhances the tourism experience but also addresses broader sustainability concerns. The program aligns with the principles of the 5 Cs: Community Engagement, Culture, Creative Ideas, Collaboration, and Circular Economy. These Cs converge to create a holistic and sustainable tourism ecosystem, ensuring that economic, social, and environmental factors are harmoniously integrated into the development process. By fostering creative social entrepreneurship and emphasizing the Nusantara textile culture, the KABARI program generates economic opportunities for the local community while preserving and promoting the intangible cultural heritage of Batik in Lasem.

The 5 Cs of Inclusive Tourism Ecosystem

The study highlights the significance of the 5 Cs - Community Engagement, Culture, Creative Ideas, Collaboration, and Circular Economy - as pivotal components of the KABARI program in fostering an inclusive tourism ecosystem. This concept is rooted in the theory of sustainable tourism development, where the integration of multiple factors is key to creating a destination that is not only economically viable but also socially and environmentally responsible. Bramwell and Sharman (1999) extensively explored the importance of collaboration and creativity in tourism development, advocating for the involvement of diverse stakeholders, including local communities and creative entrepreneurs, to cultivate a more resilient and diverse tourism sector.

"Culture as an Inspiration for Creative Product Works" was held on Friday, 18th November 2022, as one of the sharing classes and joint learning sessions within the Kartini Bangun Negeri Program (KABARI) in Rembang. This program was initiated by Rahmat Dwisaputra, the Head Representative of Bank Indonesia Central Java, with the aim of preserving and fostering the regeneration of batik artisans and rejuvenating the MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in Batik Tulis Lasem. The program provides multi-year assistance through the Inclusive Economic and Financial Development Program, specifically targeting subsistence groups.

"KABARI is focused on cultivating a strong and sustainable ecosystem for Lasem's hand-written batik, promoting contemporary and affordable quality products. The program is driven by the spirit of the 5 Vitamin C elements: Culture, Creative Ideas, Collaboration, Community, and Circular Economy. These elements are seen as an 'immunity booster' for the local batik industry in the aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak."- RD (Head of Bank Indonesia Representative for Central Java Province)

Table 3. Survey Result on Perceptions of 5C in KABARI Program

Vitamin C Element	Positive Response (%)	Neutral Response (%)	Negative Response (%)
Culture (C1)	90.5	8.3	1.2
Creative Ideas (C2)	84.6	12.0	3.4
Collaboration (C3)	74.8	18.6	6.6
Community (C4)	81.2	15.1	3.7
Circular Economy (C5)	75.4	17.8	6.8

Source: Processed data by SPSS (2023)

Community engagement plays a central role in the KABARI program, as evidenced by the active participation of young batik makers, women in the Creative Economy, fashion/craft designers, and representatives from various local communities and craft activists. By involving these stakeholders, the program fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among the community members, which, in turn, leads to stronger commitment and dedication to preserving their cultural heritage and natural resources. Furthermore, community engagement serves as a platform for cultural exchange and mutual understanding between tourists and locals, enhancing the overall tourism experience. Over 80% of participants perceived that the involvement of the local community in the KABARI program has resulted in a deeper understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage. Nearly 70% of respondents believed that engaging with the community has strengthened their commitment to preserving and promoting traditional batik practices

Culture is another fundamental element of the KABARI program, with an emphasis on the Nusantara textile culture and traditional Batik in Lasem. Over 90% of participants believed that the emphasis on culture in the KABARI program has significantly contributed to preserving the traditional art of hand-written batik in Lasem. Approximately 80% of respondents expressed that integrating culture has enhanced the authenticity and uniqueness of the batik products, making them more appealing to both local and international markets. Cultural heritage has long been recognized as a significant draw for tourists seeking authentic and unique experiences. By promoting and preserving the rich cultural heritage of Batik, the KABARI program not only contributes to the distinct identity of Lasem Heritage City but also generates economic opportunities through cultural tourism. Previous research by Richards (2011) and UNESCO (2009) supports this notion, highlighting the role of cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship in driving cultural tourism and fostering local development.

The KABARI program's emphasis on creative ideas and social entrepreneurship further reinforces its potential in strengthening the inclusive tourism ecosystem. Around 85% of participants perceived that the focus on creative ideas has led to innovative designs and product developments, enabling them to stay competitive in the ever-changing market. Over 70% of respondents reported that exploring creative ideas has opened new opportunities for business growth and expansion, generating fresh interest from customers. By nurturing and supporting creative entrepreneurs in the local community, the program facilitates the creation of innovative and sustainable tourism products and experiences. This aligns with the principles of the creative economy, which recognizes the economic potential of creative industries and their contribution to cultural preservation and development. The work of various scholars, including Florida (2002) and Howkins (2001), has extensively discussed the importance of creativity and innovation in the context of the creative economy, underscoring its relevance to the KABARI program's objectives.

Collaboration is a vital aspect of the KABARI program, as it involves stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, including the management of the Lasem Heritage Foundation and the Head of the Bank Indonesia Central Java Representative Office. Such collaborations foster a holistic and well-coordinated approach to tourism development, ensuring that the interests and aspirations of various stakeholders are addressed. The research by Gursoy and Kendall (2006) further supports this idea, emphasizing the positive impact of collaboration on sustainable tourism development. Through collective efforts and partnerships, the KABARI program aims to create a resilient and inclusive tourism ecosystem that benefits all involved parties. Approximately 75% of participants acknowledged that collaboration with various stakeholders in the KABARI program has fostered a strong sense of unity and cooperation among the participants. Around 60% of respondents cited that collaborating with different individuals and organizations has led to a broader network and access to resources, enriching their business prospects.

Lastly, the Circular Economy component of the KABARI program emphasizes responsible and sustainable resource management. Around 75% of participants reported that the implementation of circular economy principles in the KABARI program has resulted in more sustainable and eco-friendly practices. Over 60% of respondents expressed that adopting circular economy concepts has helped reduce waste and create opportunities for upcycling, contributing to a greener batik industry. By promoting practices that minimize waste, reduce environmental impact, and foster a regenerative approach to tourism, the program aligns with the principles of a circular economy. The work of Gössling et al. (2020) discusses the relevance of circular economy principles in tourism, stressing the importance of minimizing negative environmental effects and promoting more sustainable consumption and production patterns. By incorporating these principles, the KABARI program contributes to the broader vision of sustainable and responsible tourism, ensuring that the benefits of tourism extend to the community and the environment.

Nusantara Textile Culture and Creative Social Entrepreneurship

The emphasis on Nusantara textile culture within the KABARI program showcases the program's commitment to preserving and promoting the unique heritage of Batik in Lasem. Nusantara refers to the Indonesian archipelago, encompassing a rich diversity of cultural traditions and artistic expressions. Batik, as an integral part of Nusantara textile culture, holds deep historical and cultural significance, making it an attractive and authentic element for cultural tourism. The study's findings resonate with previous research by Richards (2011) and UNESCO (2009), which highlight the pivotal role of cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship as significant drivers of cultural tourism.

“By placing Nusantara textile culture at the forefront of the KABARI program, it not only elevates the value of the local cultural heritage but also establishes Lasem Heritage City as a unique and compelling destination for cultural tourism. Tourists are drawn to destinations that offer immersive experiences and opportunities to engage with local culture authentically. The KABARI program's efforts to preserve and promote Batik not only serve as an attraction for tourists but also contribute to the broader recognition and appreciation of Indonesia's cultural diversity.” -AM (Team Leader of KABARI)

Moreover, the KABARI program's focus on creative social entrepreneurship demonstrates its alignment with the principles of the creative economy. Creative social entrepreneurship refers to the use of creative ideas, innovation, and cultural expressions to drive economic and social change. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of Lasem Heritage City, where traditional artistic practices like Batik making can be transformed into sustainable businesses, benefiting the local community.

The work of Richards (2011) emphasizes that creative industries, such as those involved in cultural craftsmanship, contribute significantly to local development and empowerment. By supporting creative social entrepreneurship, the KABARI program not only facilitates economic opportunities for local artisans but also contributes to the overall economic growth and well-being of the community. This empowerment of local artisans and creative entrepreneurs enhances the sustainability of the tourism sector by diversifying income sources and promoting a more equitable distribution of benefits.

Community Engagement : Immunity Booster and Post-Covid-19 Resilience

The finding that community engagement acts as an immunity booster post-Covid-19 highlights the vital role of local communities in enhancing the resilience and sustainability of the tourism sector in the face of unprecedented challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the global tourism industry, disrupting travel patterns, and causing widespread economic hardships. In response, the KABARI program's emphasis on community engagement has proven to be a crucial strategy for fostering post-pandemic resilience.

Table 4. Survey Result on Community Engagement: Immunity Booster and Post-Covid-19 Resilience

Survey Question	Positive Response (%)	Neutral Response (%)	Negative Response (%)
Perceptions on Community Engagement as an Immunity Booster	85.4	12.1	2.5
Experiences of Post-Covid-19 Resilience through Community Engagement	80.2	15.6	4.2
Empowerment of Local Communities	75.3	20.1	4.6
Strengthening Bonds and Support Networks	85.1	14.3	0.6

Source: Processed data by SPSS (2023)

Ritchie and Jiang's (2019) research on post-disaster tourism recovery supports this finding, as it underscores the significance of involving local communities in rebuilding efforts after crises. Community engagement not only facilitates effective communication and coordination but also harnesses the collective knowledge, resources, and determination of the community to overcome adversities. In the case of the KABARI program, community engagement has been instrumental in mobilizing local support and participation in revitalizing the tourism sector in Lasem Heritage City after the Covid-19 pandemic.

One way community engagement acts as an immunity booster is by instilling a sense of ownership and responsibility among local stakeholders for the sustainable development of tourism. When communities are actively engaged in decision-making processes and actively involved in tourism activities, they are more likely to prioritize the preservation of their cultural heritage, environment, and overall well-being. This sense of responsibility ensures that the tourism sector's recovery is not solely dependent on external factors but rather a collective effort from within the community.

Moreover, community engagement fosters adaptive capacity, allowing destinations like Lasem Heritage City to be more agile in responding to changing circumstances. The KABARI program's active engagement with local communities and stakeholders enables

them to identify emerging trends and challenges promptly. This responsiveness facilitates the development of innovative strategies to adapt to evolving visitor preferences, health and safety concerns, and market demands. As a result, the tourism sector in Lasem becomes better equipped to navigate uncertainties and position itself for long-term sustainability.

Over 85% of participants agreed that community engagement initiatives within the KABARI program played a crucial role in strengthening the local batik industry's immunity against the challenges posed by the Covid-19 outbreak. Approximately 70% of respondents believed that the integration of community engagement acted as a protective shield, preserving the cultural heritage of hand-written batik and ensuring its continuity in difficult times.

Furthermore, Around 80% of participants shared positive experiences of post-Covid-19 resilience, attributing it to the collective efforts and support from the local community as fostered by the KABARI program. Over 65% of respondents expressed that community engagement initiatives provided a safety net, facilitating economic recovery, and revitalizing the local economy after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Approximately 75% of participants reported an increased sense of empowerment resulting from community engagement initiatives. They felt more equipped to face future challenges and uncertainties. Over 60% of respondents stated that community engagement encouraged them to explore innovative solutions and creative approaches in adapting to the changing business landscape post-Covid-19.

The survey indicated around 85% of participants highlighted the strengthened bonds and support networks formed through community engagement, enabling them to share resources, knowledge, and experiences during and after the pandemic. Over 70% of respondents appreciated the collaborative spirit fostered by community engagement, which created a supportive environment for collective growth and resilience.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study successfully addressed its research objectives by providing a comprehensive analysis of the role of community engagement in strengthening inclusive tourism ecosystems in the Heritage City of Lasem. Through a mixed-method approach involving surveys, case studies, structured interviews, and focus group discussions, the study explored various dimensions of community engagement in the tourism context.

The findings underscored the crucial role of community engagement as a driving force behind the development and preservation of cultural heritage, the environment, and the creative community. Earlier research by Gursoy and Kendall (2006) and Jamal and Getz (1995) supported the significance of involving local communities in sustainable tourism development. By fostering a sense of ownership, promoting authentic experiences, and contributing to a holistic and sustainable tourism ecosystem, community engagement through the KABARI program emerged as a promising model for inclusive tourism development in heritage cities like Lasem.

The study also identified the 5 Cs - Community Engagement, Culture, Creative Ideas, Collaboration, and Circular Economy - as essential components of the KABARI program in fostering an inclusive tourism ecosystem. Drawing on insights from earlier research by Bramwell and Sharman (1999), Richards (2011), UNESCO (2009), and others, the program demonstrated potential for building a resilient, diverse, and responsible tourism sector in Lasem.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the significance of Nusantara textile culture and creative social entrepreneurship within the KABARI program. By aligning with the principles of cultural tourism and the creative economy, the program exemplified its dedication to preserving cultural heritage while fostering economic and social development. The emphasis on creative social entrepreneurship empowered local artisans and contributed to the long-term prosperity of the community.

Finally, the study accomplished its objectives by examining the impact of community engagement initiatives, particularly the KABARI program, in strengthening the inclusive tourism ecosystem in Lasem. The research provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of community engagement efforts and their contributions to economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and community participation in the tourism sector.

In summary, this study significantly contributes to the understanding of the vital role of community engagement in the development and sustainability of inclusive tourism ecosystems. The findings and insights from this research can serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and communities in Lasem and other heritage cities, guiding them towards more effective and responsible tourism development strategies. As the world continues to face challenges, such as the post-Covid-19 recovery, the emphasis on community engagement remains crucial in ensuring the resilience and well-being of tourism destinations.

5.2. Limitation

As a multi-year program, further research is needed to determine the effectiveness and potential sustainability of the KABARI program.

5.3. Suggestion

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the following suggestions are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of the KABARI program and similar community engagement initiatives:

1. **Long-term Evaluation:** Conduct follow-up studies to assess the long-term impact and sustainability of the KABARI program.
2. **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Involve a broader range of stakeholders for more comprehensive and inclusive approaches.
3. **Capacity Building:** Provide training and support to empower local artisans and entrepreneurs.
4. **Cultural Promotion:** Emphasize authenticity and immersive cultural experiences to attract tourists.
5. **Pandemic Resilience:** Incorporate measures for post-pandemic resilience and preparedness.
6. **Multi-dimensional Evaluation:** Adopt a comprehensive evaluation approach to assess economic, environmental, and social impacts.
7. **Knowledge Sharing:** Facilitate knowledge sharing and best practices among heritage cities and programs.

By implementing these suggestions, the KABARI program can further strengthen inclusive tourism ecosystems, preserve cultural heritage, and benefit the local community.

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