

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TUO KAYU JAO MOSQUE AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM ATTRACTION IN SOLOK REGENCY

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Abstract

Indonesia has many historical and cultural values that can be preserved and provide both education and entertainment. Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is the oldest mosque in Indonesia, located in Solok Regency, West Sumatra. Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is one of the important cultural heritages due to its historical value, its very unique architecture that combines Islamic values and Minangkabau customs and played a major role in the spread of Islam throughout Indonesia. The purpose of this study was to find the potential and the best way to develop Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a historical tourist attraction. This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, which involved data collection through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature research. The results showed that although this mosque has significant historical and cultural values and beneficial natural potential, it still faces challenges. For example, there is a lack of government support and sufficient supporting facilities. Therefore, to make Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque a widely known heritage tourism destination and have a positive impact on the surrounding community, a development plan is needed that strengthens local institutional capacity, involves the community in preservation, and encourages creativity through digital media and cultural events. Using a holistic and participatory approach, this research is expected to serve as a reference for heritage tourism managers and local governments in developing culture- and history-based tourism.

Keywords: Heritage Tourism, Development, Attractions, Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, Solok Regency.

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has enormous potential for heritage tourism, thanks to its diverse cultural and historical richness. This potential encompasses both physical historical monuments and intangible heritage. Cultural heritage, comprised of historical sites, traditions, ancient architecture, and cultural artifacts, stands as silent witness to Indonesia's long history. Heritage tourism not only serves as a tourist attraction offering educational and entertaining experiences through visits to museums, temples, historic buildings, and traditional arts, but also plays a crucial role in preserving Indonesia's history and cultural identity. With all its historical value and uniqueness, the development of heritage tourism in Indonesia can be achieved by preserving the cultural heritage for future generations and preserving the historical values inherent in Indonesian culture.

Heritage tourism in West Sumatra holds enormous potential, as it encompasses cultural values, historic sites, traditions, and customs passed down through generations, which are

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crucial cultural assets for the identity and development of heritage tourism in West Sumatra. Preservation is crucial to ensure the sustainability of cultural heritage for future generations to enjoy, while maintaining Minangkabau cultural identity and appeal amidst modernization. The protection and utilization of cultural heritage in West Sumatra are top priorities. For example, in Solok Regency which holds the historical site of the oldest mosque in Indonesia, namely the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is located in Jorong Kayu Jao, Nagari Batang Barus, Gunung Talang District, Solok Regency, West Sumatra. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is a significant historical cultural heritage site, as it is the oldest mosque in Indonesia. It was founded by Angku Masaur (Angku Masyhur) and Angku Labai, local clerics and religious figures. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque was the first place where Islam was spread in Indonesia. Furthermore, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque boasts distinctive architecture, combining elements of Islamic values and Minangkabau customs. The mosque retains its palm fiber roof, and features an odd number of pillars, stairs, and windows. Not only does it serve as a place of worship, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is also a cultural heritage site, preserving this centuries-old cultural heritage.

Developing the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque's tourist attractions is crucial for developing its heritage tourism potential, serving as a learning and educational platform for the history of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque and raising awareness among the local community. Although the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is hundreds of years old and boasts historical value and distinctive Minangkabau architecture, many local tourists are unfamiliar with it, while many international tourists visit it. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque still faces several challenges, such as a lack of interest and support from the government, a lack of human resources involved in tourism, and limited road access.

To make the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque a better-known and sought-after heritage tourist attraction, an appropriate attraction development strategy is needed. Based on interviews and field data, the researcher aims to examine how the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque can be developed as a tourist attraction, and what strategies can be used to develop the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque's tourism potential as a heritage tourist attraction. This study aims to identify the potential development of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a tourist attraction and formulate strategies that can be used to develop the potential of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a heritage tourist attraction. It is hoped that this research will be useful for local governments and cultural heritage as a reference for managing heritage tourism, for the community and mosque managers to be more active in preserving and developing these tourist attractions, for academics as a source of research, and for tourists to get a better cultural experience through the development of the heritage tourism attraction of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage Tourism

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque boasts distinctive architecture, including a roof still made of palm fiber, pillars, stairs, and an odd number of windows. It also boasts a unique historical story. This makes it a heritage attraction that must be preserved. This aligns with the definition of heritage tourism, as defined by the National Historic Preservation Agency (Cahyadi and Gunawijaya, 2009), which states that heritage tourism is a journey to experience places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories/history of past and present people. Heritage tourism can be defined as a visit to a place considered to have historical value that is important to the development of a region or city and can be used

as a tourist attraction (Kartika et al., 2017). Researchers used this theory to develop a heritage tourism theory that aligns with the historical appeal of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

As a six-century-old mosque and the oldest in Indonesia, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque not only bears witness to the spread of Islam in Indonesia but is also a cultural heritage site. This refers to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, Article 5, which states that an object, building, or structure can be proposed as a cultural heritage object or cultural heritage structure if it meets the following criteria: It is 50 (fifty) years old or more, represents a stylistic period of at least 50 (fifty) years, has special significance for history, science, education, religion, and culture, and has cultural value for strengthening the nation's character.

Heritage tourism theory is a preservation theory that integrates a tourism approach to utilize historical monuments and buildings and their historical value, so that visitors can experience and learn about these historical values as an integral part of the conservation of the city's cultural heritage (Diliawan et al., 2025). This theory emphasizes the principles of sustainable urban development through three main aspects: improving the maintenance of intact and sustainable architecture and the environment, in order to enhance the area's potential as an attractive city image. In its application to historical sites such as the Old Town of Semarang, built in the 16th century with European architectural style from the Dutch colonial era, heritage tourism utilizes the rarity and historical value of buildings to make them iconic destinations, which ultimately become a source of income for local communities and local governments through sustainable conservation practices. This method is in accordance with the development of the appeal of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, its unique architectural and cultural value and its use as a tourism attraction, by protecting its historical authenticity and encouraging sustainable economic growth without sacrificing the integrity of cultural heritage.

Tourism Development

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque also has the potential to be developed into an interesting tourist attraction to be visited by both local and foreign tourists. This is also stated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 11 of 2010 concerning cultural heritage, article 1, which states that "Development is an increase in the potential value, information, and promotion of Cultural Heritage and its utilization through Research, Revitalization, and Adaptation in a sustainable manner and does not conflict with the objectives of Conservation". According to Yoeti (2002) stated that Tourist Attraction or tourism attraction is anything that attracts people to visit certain tourist areas. Quoted from dispar.badungkab.go.id, regarding tourism, tourist attraction is anything that has uniqueness, convenience and diversity. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is a tangible cultural heritage because it is a physical cultural heritage that has very distinctive and unique historical and architectural value. This was stated by Brata et al. (2020) who stated that tangible cultural heritage is cultural heritage that can be touched or materialized (tangible cultural heritage), such as historical sites or buildings, archaeological sites, museum collections, fine art, vernacular architecture, technological relics, ancient literary collections, temples, forts, and others. Researchers used this theory to find an ideal tourism development concept for the historical tourist attraction of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

The development of heritage tourism attractions at historic mosque sites makes a significant contribution by emphasizing the importance of historical, architectural, and cultural values as the main foundation for building sustainable tourism. (Wibiyanto and Prastowo 2023), "Identification of Historical Values at the Great Mosque of Demak for Heritage Tourism." This study examines the historical, architectural, and cultural values of

the Great Mosque of Demak, one of the oldest mosques in Indonesia, as a key asset in heritage tourism development. This can be enhanced through preservation, visitor education, and community integration to increase religious and cultural tourism visits.

The results of the study indicate that the integration of these values in tourism development strategies is able to increase the number of religious tourist visits within one year after implementation, with the support of community-based preservation programs, the development of digital-based educational tours (audio guide applications), and the provision of tourist-friendly facilities such as information centers and integrated access routes. This method is relevant to the development of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a cultural heritage tourism, especially by identifying the historical value of Minangkabau, designing sustainable heritage tourism packages, and ensuring that the local indigenous community is actively involved to ensure that tourist attractions are not only commercial, but also support the preservation of cultural heritage where similar historical values can be utilized to avoid monotonous tourism activities, and strengthen the same cultural identity.

Tourism Promotion Concept

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque needs more intensive promotion and its own social media accounts to ensure a regular and organized campaign. Stanton (cited by Rangkuti, 1993) defines promotion as the activity of providing information to consumers, influencing, and encouraging them to purchase or use a product, effectively introducing tourism potential to the wider public. Researchers used this theory to find the ideal promotional concept for the historical tourist attraction of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

The concept of tourism promotion plays a strategic role as a trigger for visiting decisions and shapes visitor satisfaction. (Setyaningsih and Murwatiningsih, 2018) in their study, "The Influence of Motivation, Promotion, and Destination Image on Visitor Satisfaction through Visitor Decisions," demonstrated that tourism promotion significantly influences visitor decisions and indirectly increases satisfaction through mediating these decisions. The research used a quantitative approach with path analysis of 100 respondents in cultural tourism destinations in Central Java, and concluded that promotional elements such as visual advertising, social media publications, and local community-based word-of-mouth were able to strengthen the destination's image as an authentic and historically meaningful place that is relevant for the development of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, because this mosque is more than 400 years old and has traditional Minangkabau architectural value, and its historical role as an early Islamic education center in West Sumatra. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque can be strengthened as a heritage religious tourism destination by using digital promotional methods (such as cultural heritage videos on Instagram and TikTok) and collaborating with cultural influencers and local communities to attract domestic and international visitors.

Strengthening Institutional Capacity in Villages

The centuries-old Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque holds significant historical and cultural value, so efforts are needed to strengthen institutional capacity at the village level to maintain, preserve, and sustainably manage the mosque's existence and function. This aligns with Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, which states that efforts to holistically enhance village institutional capacity encompassing individual managers, organizations, and systems, enable village institutions to develop, strengthen, and manage village potential for community well-being. According to Faozan in Parjaman (2018), strengthening government institutional capacity at the local level is defined as an effort to build institutional capacity holistically, encompassing individual, organizational, and system aspects, so that institutions can develop and become a real force for the welfare of village communities. Researchers used this theory

to develop a concept for strengthening institutional capacity in villages relevant to the historical tourism appeal of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

Strengthening institutional capacity at the village level is a crucial prerequisite for developing heritage tourism destinations, as it involves coordination across local actors, utilization of historical assets, and community empowerment to achieve sustainability. Research by A. K. Wardani, S. Riyadi, and K. Kunci (2024) entitled *Analysis of Strengthening Village Government Capacity in Developing Cultural Tourism Objects in Ciamis Regency*. Shows that strengthening village institutional capacity through managerial training, the formation of tourism awareness groups (pokdarwis), and optimizing local regulations can increase the competitiveness of cultural tourism objects in terms of visits and community income. This research is relevant in relation to the development of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a heritage tourism destination, because the mosque is more than 400 years old, a symbol of Minangkabau cultural identity that requires strong institutional management at the village level in addition to functioning as a place of worship. A similar method can be applied by the Solok village government, in the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque tourism by forming a special management body, incorporating tourism curriculum into village deliberations, and collaborating with traditional institutions to maintain historical value and wooden architecture. Therefore, increasing institutional capacity is not just an administrative tool, but also a long-term plan to transform religious and cultural assets into financially profitable tourist destinations while maintaining cultural heritage.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Bongdan and Taylor (in Moleong) state that qualitative research methodology produces descriptive data, either in the form of spoken or written words from people or observed behavior. Several data collection techniques, including interviews, were used. Interviews were conducted to obtain information from informants regarding the history, potential, and condition of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque. This is similar to the statement, "An interview, according to Hadi (1986, 138), is a method of obtaining data through verbal questions and answers, with two or more people face to face. In this study, the researcher and informant met face-to-face with the goal of obtaining reliable and accurate information and data.

Then, the researcher conducted observations by visiting the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque to observe in detail the building's shape and architecture, and interacted with the mosque's administrators to gather in-depth information about the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque. This is similar to Suharsimi's statement that observation is the direct observation of an object in an environment that is still in process or under research, using the five senses. The act of observing is carried out deliberately by paying attention to the applicable observation rules. Then the researcher also takes documentation to collect visual data and photos. This is stated by (Sugioyono: 2014). Documentation is one of the data collection techniques by taking pictures or documents to obtain data. Then the researcher also conducts a literature review which is useful for obtaining supporting data from written sources such as journals, articles, books and previous research results. This is stated by Creswell John. W. in (Habsy, 2017) says that a literature review is a collection of written articles from journals, books, and other documents that explain theories and information from the past and present, and organizes the literature into topics and necessary documents.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General Description of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is the oldest mosque in Indonesia and the site where Islam was first spread in Indonesia before spreading to Java. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque was built in 1567. Calculated, the mosque is now approximately 458 years old. This statement is presented in the journal "Preservation of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque Building in West Sumatra" (Harun et al. 2016). Based on interviews with an informant the researchers met at the research site, known as Wal, the caretaker and manager of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, he stated that the mosque was built in 1419 and is now 606 years old. Furthermore, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is a building that survived earthquakes and served as a shelter during colonial wars in ancient times.

The Tuo Kayu Mosque was founded by local clerics and religious figures, such as Angku Masaur (Angku Masyhur) and Angku Labai. These two figures are buried in the grounds of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque. Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque was originally known as Nur Ikhlas Mosque, which has a combination of 3 colors, namely white, green and yellow. After being inaugurated as a cultural heritage, the name of this mosque changed to the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as it is known today. The color was also aged, in accordance with the symbol as the oldest mosque in Indonesia. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque has a distinctive architecture, combining elements of Islamic values and Minangkabau customs, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque also still maintains a roof made of palm leaf fiber, the building still uses kayu jao, and has an odd number of pillars, windows, and stairs, which symbolize the pillars of Islam and the pillars of prayer. Previously, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque was built without nails as time went by, now the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque was restored with nails without changing its original form.

The Potential of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a Heritage Tourism Attraction

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is not only a place of worship, but also a living monument that records the development of Islam in the Minangkabau region. As the oldest mosque in Indonesia, hundreds of years old, the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is a silent witness to the spread of Islam in Indonesia. The mosque's aesthetic and cultural philosophy are also seen in the beauty of the wood carvings on each part of the building, which have symbolic meanings related to customs and religion. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is located in a hilly area at an altitude of approximately 1,152 meters above sea level. The pristine natural beauty of the surrounding area provides a calm and refreshing atmosphere for visitors. Its unique historical, cultural, and architectural values, combined with its pristine natural beauty, make the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque a great potential to become a heritage tourist attraction in Solok Regency.

Old Mosque Development Strategy

The development of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, independently managed and maintained by Wal, a community leader deeply dedicated to preserving the mosque. All the facilities and accessibility features within the mosque were personally designed by Mr. Wal, including the "Kayu Jao Mosque" sign, which is crafted from recycled zinc and then reworked into a striking work of art. Furthermore, Wal decorated the mosque floor with creative and artistic abstract patterns from discarded ceramics. Furthermore, the garden surrounding the mosque is independently maintained by collecting flower buds from various plants, creating a beautiful and attractive environment for visitors. Wal also built gazebos and bridges from recycled wood to satisfy visitors. He also personally constructed a new access road and a gate from recycled materials to create a gateway at the mosque's entrance. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque has great potential to become a valuable religious and cultural tourist attraction, yet the local government and community have not been involved in this effort.

The restoration of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, which has only been carried out once since 1415, demonstrates the meticulous preservation efforts to preserve and maintain the building's historical authenticity. During this renovation, the palm fiber roof was replaced with a new one, and the floors and ceilings were also refurbished. The restoration did not alter the mosque's original form or basic structure, thus preserving its original character and historical significance, despite the physical changes. This approach maintains the mosque's role as a place of worship and an important symbol of the community while demonstrating a strong commitment to the cultural heritage passed down through generations. This restoration preserves the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque's identity and historical significance for the surrounding community while extending the building's lifespan.

As the manager and administrator of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, Wal is deeply committed to ensuring the successful promotion of this religious tourism attraction. After completing the meticulous and well-planned restoration and rejuvenation process, Wal went beyond the physical restoration efforts to proactively promote the mosque through various media and approaches that directly engage with the community and visitors. He actively disseminated information about the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque's spiritual value, history, and unique architectural beauty. After adding new facilities to satisfy visitors, the management immediately seized the opportunity to showcase the mosque's rich cultural and religious heritage to the local community and tourists. This approach can raise awareness of the importance of preserving cultural and religious heritage and strengthen the mosque's image as a center of religious activity and an attractive tourist destination. This way, the mosque can attract more sustainable visitors and demonstrate its commitment to the active and civilized preservation and development of cultural heritage.

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque does not charge any admission fees, demonstrating Wal's sincere intention to maintain the mosque's existence as a cultural heritage site for all to enjoy. Therefore, Wal's development approach is a clear example of a creative and independent way to manage local heritage tourism despite facing challenges from external sources such as a lack of intrinsic support. However, there are concerns that free admission to the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque could hinder the development of tourism at the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

Promotion Efforts

To promote the mosque as a cultural heritage site, the Solok regional government could collaborate with the West Sumatra Cultural Heritage Preservation Center. This collaboration would involve physical restoration of the mosque, employing structural improvements that maintain its authenticity, such as replacing decaying wood with locally sourced, sustainably sourced teak made by indigenous Minang craftsmen. A storytelling element could be added by placing QR codes in each corner of the mosque. The QR codes would open audio, text, or short video guides in Minang, Indonesian, and English. The narrative would be less formal and more like a fairy tale, as if someone nearby were telling the story. Creating and selling souvenirs such as carved wooden key chains or children's books about "Adventures at the Old Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque" would keep visitors engaged for a long time and could become a source of income.

Create a series of short stories about "The Secret of Tuo Kayu Jao" on Instagram or TikTok. For example, create 30-second videos that not only capture the mosque but also tell stories about the local villagers surrounding it, such as the earthquake-resistant strength of the jao wood or the spread of Islam. To make the content go viral within the cultural community, collaboration with indigenous Minang influencers is essential. Heritage tourism requires feelings, not facts.

Hold an annual festival around the mosque that combines traditional Minang arts such as randai (folk theater) with an interactive historical tour. This will give visitors the opportunity to learn woodcarving or make 19th-century-style rendang, while also hearing stories from elders in the village. Engage the local community as hosts to avoid being too commercial. This event could be held before or after Eid al-Fitr to attract thousands of tourists from West Sumatra and beyond.

Create a "Heritage Trail" tour package connecting the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque with locations such as Istano Basa Pagaruyung or the Payakumbuh traditional market. By collaborating with local homestays and offering local guides to tell the mosque's history, you could propose to the West Sumatra Tourism Office to include the mosque in official itineraries and have it covered in national media. Create a bilingual brochure with an artistic design and featuring images of the mosque. The renovations encompass not only physical construction but also enhancing the visitor experience, leaving visitors with lasting memories upon their return. The focus is on authenticity while maintaining sustainability, bringing the mosque back to life.

Efforts to Cultivate a Sense of Belonging

The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque is a historic cultural heritage tourist attraction in West Sumatra. It possesses high cultural value and distinctive Minangkabau architecture. This mosque is not only a place of worship but also a venue for preaching, discussions, and social activities for the surrounding community. The Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque needs to be preserved as a cultural heritage site. The community must feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for preserving and promoting its cultural and historical values. This aligns with the statement by Hagerty & Patusky (1995), who defines a sense of belonging in tourism as an experience of engagement experienced by an individual in an environment, thereby making them an integral part of that environment. Researchers used this theory to identify a concept of sense of belonging that aligns with the historical tourist appeal of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

Preserving traditional arts is an important aspect in fostering a sense of ownership and love for local culture among the community. Aniq Irhandayaningsih (2018) in a journal entitled "Preservation of Traditional Arts as an Effort to Grow Love of Local Culture in the Jurang Blimbing Tembalang Community" revealed that active community involvement in the preservation of traditional arts such as local dance and music can strengthen cultural identity and foster a sense of belonging or a deep sense of ownership of the cultural heritage. The qualitative approach in Aniq Irhandayaningsih's research (2018) emphasized that cultural preservation is not only about maintaining the sustainability of traditions, but also as a community empowerment strategy that is directly able to create sustainable and inclusive tourist attractions. This research is relevant to the development of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque as a cultural heritage tourism destination. The success of heritage tourism development depends on the preservation of traditional arts and increasing the sense of ownership and participation of the local community in maintaining and preserving the historical values of the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque. The social and cultural values generated from this involvement bring visitors to a meaningful tourism experience. By empowering the local community to participate in the management and promotion of the mosque, in addition to maintaining historical values, it also helps the sustainable growth of the local economy. Therefore, community empowerment and preservation of traditional arts as described in this study can be used as a learning model to create a heritage tourism development strategy at the Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque.

E. CONCLUSION

Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque, the oldest mosque in Indonesia, holds exceptional cultural, cultural, and architectural value typical of the Minangkabau people, making it an important destination for heritage tourism in Solok Regency. By increasing tourist visits, developing the mosque's cultural tourism potential can contribute to cultural heritage preservation. Tuo Kayu Jao Mosque can be transformed into a sustainable and beneficial heritage tourism attraction by using a development approach that strengthens village institutional capacity, encourages community participation in creative initiatives involving digital technology and collaboration with various parties, and maintains authenticity, cultural education, and religious tourism. Management efforts still rely on individuals like Wal, who independently builds facilities using recycled materials such as gates, gazebos, and rejected ceramics, and uses direct promotion to attract tourists without an entrance fee, creating inclusive accessibility rarely found in places like this. A beneficial heritage destination uses a development approach that strengthens village institutional capacity, encourages community participation in creative initiatives involving digital technology and collaboration with various parties, and maintains authenticity, cultural education, and religious tourism. Support from the local government, community, and stakeholders is needed to maximize this potential.

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