

Cultural Tourism: Potential, Uniqueness and Attraction

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ABSTRACT

Tourists have a variety of attractions to choose from, including natural, cultural, and artificial tourism. Indonesia, with its diverse cultures, customs, beliefs, seasons, and tribes, offers a wide range of tourist attractions, attracting many visitors. Cultural factors play a significant role in attracting tourists, stemming from the inheritance of ancestors and developed by their descendants. To attract tourists through culture, there must be a strategy to preserve the existing cultural heritage and maintain a competitive perspective. Malang is a city with numerous tourist attractions, including cultural tourism. One of the notable sites is the Patirtaan Ngawonggo Site located in Nanasan village, Tajinan District, Malang regency. This holy bath, known to residents since 1970 as Reca (Arca), also features a patirtaan. The rich history and cultural significance of this site make it a compelling destination for tourists. This writing employs a qualitative approach, where qualitative writing seeks to elucidate phenomena in depth through comprehensive data collection. This writing adopts a descriptive style, with the research aiming to generate a systematic, factual, and precise depiction of the characteristics and facts about a specific population or object. Ngawonggo is a sacred bathing or patrician site left over from ancient Mataram during the golden age of Mpu Sindok or the Medang Kamulan kingdom. At this site, there are four clusters which include reliefs of the embodiment of gods and goddesses, ponds and meandering reliefs, cliffs with meandering reliefs, and reliefs of natural supporting creatures universe or gana.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism: Potential, Uniqueness And Attraction

1. INTRODUCTION

With the busyness and activities of society in the world, travel is a necessity for everyone. Tourists have a variety of attractions to choose from, including natural, cultural, and artificial tourism. Indonesia, with its diverse cultures, customs, beliefs, seasons, and tribes, offers a wide range of tourist attractions, attracting many visitors. Tourist attractions are forms and facilities that can draw tourists to a specific area. An undeveloped attraction is only a potential resource and cannot be considered a tourist attraction until it is developed. Without attractions, the development of tourism itself becomes challenging.

Cultural factors play a significant role in attracting tourists, stemming from the inheritance of ancestors and developed by their descendants. To attract tourists through culture, there must be a strategy to preserve the existing cultural heritage and maintain a competitive perspective. This aligns with the view of Richards and Wilson in Li (2014) that cultural tourism attractions operate in a highly competitive market, with an increasing number of new attractions, cultural routes, heritage centers, and evolving customer demands.

Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning tourism, it is highlighted that the natural environment, flora, fauna, ancient heritage, historical legacy, art, and culture of the Indonesian people are considered valuable assets for tourism development to improve the prosperity and well-being of the population. The right to travel and participate in tourism activities is acknowledged as a fundamental human right. Tourism plays a vital role in national development, carried out in a systematic, planned, integrated, sustainable, and responsible manner while preserving religious and cultural values, community livelihoods, environmental sustainability, quality, and national interests. The progress of tourism is crucial to promote equitable distribution of economic opportunities, achieve benefits, and effectively address the challenges posed by local, national, and global changes.

To introduce new tourism initiatives and attract visitors, managers must devise strategies to engage and retain potential tourists. Besides cultural aspects, the key factor that draws tourists is the level of uniqueness. The more distinctive a tourist destination is, the more appealing it becomes to visitors. This aligns with the principles outlined in Law No. 10 of 2009. Tourist attractions encompass anything that offers uniqueness, convenience, and value through a variety of natural, cultural, and man-made offerings that are sought after and visited by tourists.

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Law No. 9 of 1990 defines a tourist attraction as a destination that attracts tourists. Firstly, tourist attractions include natural features like flora, fauna, and environmental conditions. Secondly, man-made tourist attractions consist of museums, historical sites, arts and culture, agro-tourism, hunting tourism, natural adventure tourism, parks, and entertainment complexes. Thirdly, there are special interest tourist attractions such as hunting, mountain climbing, caves, industry and crafts, shopping areas, fast-flowing rivers, places of worship, pilgrimage sites, and more.

Meanwhile, as per the Directorate General of Government, tourist attractions are categorized into three types. Firstly, natural tourist attractions are natural resources that are appealing to visitors in their natural state or after development. These include flora and fauna, unique ecosystems like beaches and mangrove forests, natural phenomena like craters, hot springs, waterfalls, and lakes, and cultivated natural resources like rice fields, plantations, animal husbandry, and fishing. Secondly, socio-cultural tourist attractions encompass museums, historical sites, traditional ceremonies, and arts and crafts. Lastly, special interest tourism attractions cater to tourists with specific motivations such as hunting, mountain climbing, white water rafting, medicinal purposes, and ecotourism.

Planning and management of natural, socio-cultural, and special interest tourist attractions should be based on national and regional development plan policies. If these policy plans are not available, the tourist attraction development planning team should be able to adopt a suitable policy plan for the area in question. According to Maryann (1991:11), a tourist attraction must fulfill the requirements for regional development. These requirements consist of (1) what to see, meaning that the location should offer tourist sites and attractions that are unique compared to other areas, including special and cultural attractions for tourist entertainment. This includes natural landscapes, activities, arts, and tourist spots, (2) what to do, indicating that recreational facilities should be provided in addition to sightseeing opportunities to ensure tourists feel comfortable for an extended period, (3) what to buy, requiring the tourist destination to have shopping facilities, particularly for souvenirs and local crafts as mementos, (4) what to arrive, encompassing accessibility, transportation options to visit the tourist attraction, and estimated travel time to reach the destination, and (5) what to stay, detailing the temporary accommodation options for tourists during their visit, such as star or non-star hotels.

Malang is a city with numerous tourist attractions, including cultural tourism. One of the notable sites is the Patirtaan Ngawonggo Site located in Nanasan village, Tajinan District, Malang regency. This holy bath, known to residents since 1970 as Reca (Arca), also features a patirtaan. The rich history and cultural significance of this site make it a compelling destination for tourists.

2. METHOD

This writing employs a qualitative approach, where qualitative writing seeks to elucidate phenomena in depth through comprehensive data collection. Qualitative writing unveils specific social situations by accurately portraying reality, constructed through words derived from pertinent collection and analysis techniques obtained from natural settings. Therefore, qualitative writing is not merely an attempt to depict data, but rather the depiction is a product of valid data collection, a necessity in qualitative research. This writing adopts a descriptive style, with the research aiming to generate a systematic, factual, and precise depiction of the characteristics and facts about a specific population or object.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Malang Raya boasts a collection of temples that serve as a testament to the grandeur of the Hindu-Buddhist civilization in the past. Singosari Temple, Jago Temple, and Kidal Temple stand as significant examples of Hindu-Buddhist architectural marvels and exquisite artworks that are meticulously preserved to this day. These sites can be categorized into four groups. Firstly, the Kanjuruhan kingdom site features a Joglo-shaped open building known as Watu Gong in Kanjuruhan Hamlet. Among the artifacts found are 12 stone pillars serving as foundations to support the house's structure, along with three Hindu-Buddhist statues, three stone mortars, a pipisan stone, various large stones, a square-shaped stone jar for water storage, and several temple stones.

These artifacts offer tangible proof of the kingdom's existence and embody a rich cultural and historical legacy. Secondly, the Ancient Mataram Kingdom site comprises inscriptions and temple remnants that further validate the Ancient Mataram government's achievements. Notable temples left behind during King Sindok's reign include the Lor Temple near the Berbek River, Gunung Gangsir Temple in Bangil, Sumberwaras Temple near Blitar, and Songgoriti Temple in Batu near Malang.

The remnants of this temple offer solid proof of the presence and influence of Ancient Mataram in the area. Next, the Singhasari Kingdom Site. These artifacts consist of the Yoni and Nandi in Punden Pendem Junrejo, temple ruins in Punden Mojorejo, statue fragments in Pesanggrahan Village, several Yoni and stone mortars in Sumber Torong Park,

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along with Ganesha statues in Torongrejo, Junrejo. Additionally, in Tlogomas Village, Yoni, temple fragments, phallus, and lion statues were also discovered as other relics. Furthermore, there is a Majapahit Kingdom site with archaeological remnants in the form of the Katiden I Inscription dating back to 1392 AD and the Katiden II Inscription from 1395, issued by King Wikramawar-ddhana. Visitors can explore these temples to examine the intricate details of the carvings, the impressive architecture, and the spiritual ambiance that is present (Firdawati, 2022; Poesponegoro and Notosusanto, 2009). Hindu-Buddhist religious rituals and customs in the Greater Malang area are still diligently preserved and honored. Examples include offering ceremonies to the deities through prayer, meditation, and various forms of worship and reverence for Brahma and Shiva. Travelers have the opportunity to witness religious ceremonies conducted at Pura Luhur Poten on Mount Bromo or observe processions and offerings at other sacred sites.

This enables tourists to comprehend the spiritual life and culture of Hindu-Buddhist society. Malang Raya is also a venue for artistic and cultural performances linked to the Hindu-Buddhist era.

In Ngawonggo Village, Tajinan District, Malang Regency, situated in Nanasan village, there exists a patrician site or sacred ancient bathing site discovered by Rahmad Yasin, a resident, on April 24, 2017. The residents were aware of this ancient bathing place for a long time, but it had not been exposed until Yasin and his peers shared a photo of the patirtan site on social media, causing it to go viral. The following day, Dwi Cahyono, an Archaeologist from Malang State University, visited the site for on-site observations. A month later, the East Java Cultural Heritage Conservation Center (BPCB) conducted zoning mapping of the Patirtan site to delve deeper into the history of the Ngawonggo Patirtan.

This site is believed to have originated during the Medang Kingdom era under the leadership of Mpu Sindok. According to Dwi Cahyono, as reported by the daily newspaper Kompas.com, the name Ngawonggo Village is derived from the term Kaswangga mentioned in the Pancakahyanga Wurundangan inscription dated Wednesday Wage 7 November 944 AD, corresponding to the 10th century when Mpu Sindok ruled the Medang Kingdom. The inscription indicates that Kaswangga was a village that served as a Kadewaguruan facility in the past. Kadewaguruan was a concealed ancient Javanese educational institution.

In ancient times, Patirtaan or baths served not only as a source of clean water but also as a place of spiritual purification. Patirtaan is a sacred bath frequently used by the royal court. At the Ngawonggo Patirtan site, nine statues and Javanese script inscriptions were discovered carved from Padas soil, which is gradually eroding. However, some of the statues among the nine are weathered and challenging to identify. Only a few statues remain visible, such as those depicting Ganesha, Lord Vishnu, and Shiva. The bathing area is divided into six separate pools, all situated on the cliffs of the Manten River. These pools are believed to have been designated bathing spots for nobles based on their caste, ranging from Pakistan 6 at the top to Patirtan 1.

The Ngawonggo Patirtan site is the sole location in East Java positioned on a river cliff. The river itself holds a strong connection to the lifestyle of ancient inhabitants who established settlements following its course. Therefore, it is not surprising that along the riverbanks, artifacts like ancient coins, pottery, ancient iron, and fragments of gold have been unearthed. These findings suggest that the banks of the Manten River once housed local communities. Presently, this site, under the management of Rahmad Yasin, is frequently frequented by history enthusiasts and students pursuing history degrees. Occasionally, individuals visit to cleanse themselves by partaking in a bath at Patirtan Ngawonggo.

According to Philip Kotler and Gery Armstrong (2009:68) promotion is an activity that communicates the superiority of a product and persuades target customers to buy it. From this definition, it can be concluded that promotion is an activity to convey information or communication between sellers and potential buyers who have the nature of disseminating information, influencing, persuading, and reminding the target market to create demand for the products or services offered by the company. The informants in this research are tourist attraction administrators, residents, and tourists. From the presentation of the five people who were informants, there were several findings, namely: the results of interviews with tourist attraction administrators showed that there were several promotions carried out to create an attraction for tourists to visit and visit the tourist attraction repeatedly, including promotions via social media, here are the objects Tourism already has Instagram which can be accessed by all prospective tourists. The website contains photos, addresses, contact persons, and activities that have been and will be carried out.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Ngawonggo is a sacred bathing or patrician site left over from ancient Mataram during the golden age of Mpu Sindok or the Medang Kamulan kingdom. At this site, there are four clusters which include reliefs of the embodiment of gods and goddesses, ponds and meandering reliefs, cliffs with meandering reliefs, and reliefs of natural supporting creatures universe or gana. Apart from that, there is also a core zone starting from the bridge built by the Dutch to the end of the pool on the east side where this area can only be used for carrying out local belief rituals and documentation. The

potential, uniqueness, and attractiveness of the history of Ngawonggo culture are some of the things that attract tourists to visit.

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