
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN DEVELOPING LOCAL WISDOM-BASED SOUVENIRS OF PALEMBANG: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Kiradel Sastra*, Alditia Detmuliati

¹Sriwijaya State Polytechnic, Palembang

*Corresponding author: sastrakiradel@gmail.com

Abstract

This study focuses on the potential of entrepreneurship in building a sustainable souvenir-based creative economy in Palembang. By utilizing the cultural richness of Palembang, entrepreneurs can create unique and high-value souvenir products. This study will identify market segments, analyze marketing strategies, and examine the challenges and opportunities in developing a souvenir business. The results of the study are expected to support the growth of Palembang's creative industry, cultural preservation, and the environment. In addition, this study will explore the development of souvenirs that are not only unique, but also have utility value, designs that follow trends, and competitive prices, so as to attract tourists and support the sustainability of Palembang's creative economy.

Keywords: Creative economy, Cultural heritage Entrepreneurship, Souvenir development, Sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a global phenomenon that plays a significant role in driving the economies of many countries. In 2019, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020) reported a 4% increase in international tourist arrivals compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 1.5 billion. This growth has also driven higher demand for souvenirs, which are an integral part of the tourism experience (Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Souvenirs not only serve as tangible reminders of travelers' journeys but also play a vital role in promoting local culture and supporting the local economy. These items are considered essential elements of the tourism experience (Kim & Han, 2019), and the global consumption of souvenirs has grown into a widespread phenomenon, with an estimated market value of \$24 billion in 2019 (GlobalData, 2020). As Manola and Balermipas (2020) argue, souvenirs offer a multifaceted experience that blends travel memories with the art and cultural heritage of a destination. The authenticity of souvenirs, along with their connections to traditions, art, and cultural contexts, significantly influences tourists' purchasing decisions. Beyond representing the place and its people, souvenirs are often utilized to promote domestic and international tourism while showcasing a nation's cultural identity. Moreover, they play a role in shaping national identity and preserving the narrative of a country's history.

According to UNWTO (2016), the cultural heritage sector plays a significant role in the tourism industry, contributing substantially to global economic development. This is in line with the growing number of tourists seeking unique and diverse cultural experiences. Many cultural travelers explore various parts of the world to appreciate history through cultural monuments and artistic creations, enjoy local cultures, and learn about the traditions of their destinations. Examples of

traditional souvenirs from Palembang rooted in local culture include Kain Songket, Kain Tajung, Kain Jomputan, and Kaos Nyenyes.

Despite the significant role souvenirs play in the tourism industry, systematic research on this topic remains limited. While some studies have explored the cultural and economic value of souvenirs in tourism (Kim & Lee, 2019; Prentice, Witt & Hamer, 1998), there is a lack of literature specifically focusing on the contribution of souvenirs to enhancing the tourist experience and fostering destination loyalty. Most existing studies tend to concentrate on specific types of souvenirs, such as food-related souvenirs (Pine & Kivela, 2002) or destination-branded souvenirs (Choi & Lee, 2017), rather than examining souvenirs as a broader category. This gap in the literature highlights the need for further research to better understand the role of souvenirs in tourism and how they can be utilized to enhance the tourist experience and promote destination loyalty.

Therefore, this review aims to explore the relationship between souvenirs and tourism, particularly by identifying the role of souvenirs in the tourism industry. Souvenirs are tangible items purchased by visitors as mementos of their travels or as gifts for friends and family. The role of souvenirs in tourism is highly complex, and understanding it requires an analysis of the relationship between visitors and the places they visit, as well as the broader social and economic context in which tourism operates. Further research is needed to investigate the relationship between souvenirs and the overall tourist experience, particularly the impact of souvenirs on the formation of memories and emotions among tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Souvenir

The term "souvenir" refers to items that are purchased, gifted, or locally produced, and are associated with a specific destination (Dougoud, 2000). Further elaborating, Gordon (1986) states that the word "souvenir" translates to "remember." According to Tolia-Kelly (2004), a souvenir is a physical object, often seen on shelves or refrigerators, that serves as a tangible link between individuals and their memories of a particular place. Ramsay (2009) further explains that souvenirs are objects that allow individuals to establish a connection between themselves and their experiences at a specific location. Miller (2008) expands on this by describing souvenirs as part of material culture, playing a significant role in shaping our lives. Moosberg (2007) adds that souvenirs are viewed as concrete symbols within the consumption practices of tourists.

Swanson and Timothy (2012) propose a classification of souvenirs into four categories: totality souvenirs, linking souvenirs, life souvenirs, and pilgrimage souvenirs. Totality souvenirs represent the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination, often taking the form of branded or logoed items. Linking souvenirs, on the other hand, are functional household items such as kitchenware, rugs, or ready-made clothing, which act as reminders of the visited destination. Life souvenirs are typically food products that evoke nostalgic feelings, reminding tourists of the tastes and experiences they had during their travels. Lastly, pilgrimage souvenirs are items that represent a pilgrimage site, such as miniature models of landmarks like pyramids or temples, serving as symbols of the spiritual or historical significance of the location. These various categories highlight the diverse ways in which souvenirs can function as both tangible and symbolic representations of the places and experiences they commemorate.

The Importance of Souvenirs in Tourism

Souvenirs play a pivotal role in the tourism industry, serving as a significant driver of economic growth in many countries. According to Kim and Ko (2012), souvenirs are tangible representations of tourists' experiences, embodying memories of the destinations visited and reflecting the cultural, historical, and social elements of those places. These items often serve as reminders of the unique aspects of a particular location, creating a lasting connection between the visitor and the place. In addition to their personal value, souvenirs are frequently purchased as gifts for family and friends, further expanding the reach of a destination's cultural influence. By being shared with others, these gifts promote the destination and generate interest, potentially encouraging future travel to the area. Furthermore, souvenirs provide an important avenue for supporting local businesses and artisans. By purchasing locally made products, tourists contribute directly to the economic sustainability of the destination. This helps foster a stronger connection between the visitors and the local community, supporting local economies while also promoting the preservation of traditional craftsmanship and cultural heritage. As Ruhanen et al. (2013) note, souvenirs can play a role in advancing sustainable tourism practices, as they often involve products made with locally sourced materials and through environmentally responsible processes.

The importance of souvenirs in the tourism industry is further emphasized by their contribution to both economic and cultural development in various destinations. Souvenirs not only generate revenue for local businesses, but they also play a vital role in the cultural exchange between tourists and host communities. Through the production, sale, and consumption of souvenirs, a shared understanding of cultural heritage is fostered, allowing both tourists and locals to appreciate and celebrate each other's traditions. This dual impact highlights how souvenirs serve as more than just physical items—they are cultural ambassadors that contribute to the economic vitality and cultural richness of tourist destinations.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, aimed at exploring the relationship between souvenirs and tourism, with a particular focus on the role of souvenirs in enhancing the tourist experience and fostering destination loyalty. This method involves a detailed examination of primary and secondary data, including interviews with local artisans, tourism industry stakeholders, and tourists, as well as a review of relevant literature. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the cultural, economic, and social contexts surrounding souvenirs in the tourism industry.

To further understand the significance of souvenirs in Palembang, this study also incorporates a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of the city's souvenir industry. The SWOT analysis will help identify the internal and external factors that affect the production, marketing, and consumption of souvenirs in Palembang. Strengths may include the city's rich cultural heritage, unique traditional crafts such as Songket, Wayang, and Keris, and a growing tourism sector that supports local businesses. Weaknesses might include challenges such as limited global recognition of Palembang's unique souvenirs, a lack of proper branding, or inconsistent quality control. Opportunities could include the potential to enhance destination loyalty through strategic souvenir marketing, the rise of eco-tourism, or the integration of souvenirs into sustainable tourism initiatives. Finally, threats may involve increased competition from other tourist destinations, the impact of economic downturns on discretionary spending, or the risk of cultural commodification.

By combining the descriptive qualitative approach with a SWOT analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of souvenirs in Palembang's tourism sector. The research seeks to identify the factors influencing souvenir consumption, the potential of souvenirs to enhance the tourist experience, and the broader economic and cultural implications of souvenir trade in the city. Ultimately, this will contribute to a better understanding of how souvenirs can be leveraged to strengthen Palembang's tourism industry, support local artisans, and promote sustainable and culturally rich tourism practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Palembang, the capital city of South Sumatra Province, is one of the oldest cities in Indonesia with a rich history and cultural heritage. Located along the Musi River, Palembang offers beautiful and strategic views, making it an important trading city since ancient times (Ardiansyah, 2020). The city is known as "Bumi Sriwijaya," referring to the great kingdom that once ruled this region, the Sriwijaya Kingdom (Yunus, 2019). Sriwijaya, which existed from around the 7th century to the 13th century, was a maritime empire that played a significant role in Southeast Asia. The kingdom was renowned as a center of culture, trade, and religion, particularly for the spread of Buddhism (Wolters, 1999). At its peak, Sriwijaya controlled a vast territory, covering Sumatra, Java, the Malay Peninsula, and parts of the Philippines and Thailand (Reid, 1993). The kingdom also played an essential role in international relations, facilitating trade between China, India, and Southeast Asian countries (Manguin, 1996).

One of the aspects that makes Palembang famous is the Musi River, which flows through the heart of the city, dividing Palembang into two main parts. The river has played an important role in the city's history as a primary trade route since the time of the Sriwijaya Kingdom (Fikri, 2017). Many historical buildings and traditional areas in Palembang still maintain the cultural heritage of the past, such as Kampung Kapitan, where traders and immigrants from various regions once interacted (Suryani, 2015). In addition, Palembang is also famous for several cultural heritages rooted in the Sriwijaya period, such as the Keris, Songket Fabric, and various Buddhist artifacts. The Songket fabric, for example, is one of the highly valued handicrafts still used in traditional ceremonies and as a typical souvenir of Palembang (Nasution, 2018). The existence of ancient artifacts and inscriptions, many of which originate from the Sriwijaya era, demonstrates how significant Palembang was in the history of Southeast Asia (Soekmono, 2004).

Today, Palembang has developed into a rapidly growing city with modern infrastructure and various facilities supporting tourism, trade, and education (Wahid, 2020). However, the city continues to preserve its traditional values, which are reflected in its arts, culture, and distinctive cuisine, such as Pempek, which is popular throughout Indonesia (Rohman, 2016). Overall, Palembang is a city that combines rich history, culture, and modern advancement. The legacy of the Sriwijaya Kingdom has made a major contribution to the city's identity, and today, the kingdom's heritage remains alive in the life of Palembang's people, reflected in its traditions, crafts, and historical sites that attract both domestic and international tourists (Suryanto, 2019).

Palembang, a city rich in cultural heritage and history, has great potential to develop a creative economy based on souvenirs. This potential is evident from the diverse cultures reflected in the arts, crafts, and distinctive cuisine of Palembang. However, the utilization of this potential in the form of innovative and high-value souvenir products is still not optimal. The development of souvenir-based entrepreneurship in Palembang has several strong reasons. First, souvenirs play an important role in

promoting the cultural identity of a region. By creating unique and attractive souvenir products, Palembang can showcase its cultural richness to both domestic and international tourists.

Second, souvenirs can be a source of income for the community, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Third, the souvenir industry can contribute to the preservation of culture and environmental sustainability. By utilizing local materials and adhering to sustainable principles, souvenir products can serve as a medium to safeguard cultural heritage and protect the environment. Currently, the souvenir market in Palembang primarily offers traditional handicrafts such as songket fabric, miniature limas houses, and accessories with Palembang batik patterns. Additionally, local cuisine like pempek and kemplang are also popular souvenir options. However, the variety of available souvenirs is still limited and lacks innovation.

One challenge in finding unique souvenirs in Palembang is the limited number of stores selling such products. Existing stores tend to offer similar products, resulting in limited choices for consumers, and it can be difficult for them to find high-quality items at affordable prices.

some examples of souvenir shops in Palembang:

1. Kaos Nyenyas

Kaos Nyenyas Palembang was established on July 16, 2009, in Palembang, specifically at Palembang Indah Mall. It was founded by Yoki Firmansyah, also known by his nickname Abang Yoki. With a multi-merchandise concept, Kaos Nyenyas Palembang entered the Palembang community with unique and distinctive product variations. The brand highlights themes from local culture, language, and everyday life of the Palembang people in particular, and South Sumatra in general. These themes are creatively presented on media such as t-shirts. Kaos Nyenyas offers a wide range of t-shirt designs featuring Palembang's unique characters, wordplay, and rhyming verses. In addition to t-shirts, Kaos Nyenyas Palembang also offers other creative accessories.



Figure 1. Kaos Nyenyas Shop

2. Rumah Oncak

Rumah Oncak Center for Palembang Special Souvenirs and Gifts. Address: Jl. Enim Raya, Suka Maju, Sako District, Palembang City, South Sumatra 30961, Indonesia. It is a souvenir shop specializing in Palembang City. This shop provides various types of souvenirs specializing in Palembang City and South Sumatra Province. There are souvenirs in the form of food, snacks, clothes, souvenirs and even special fabrics. Rumah Oncak, the center for souvenirs and souvenirs typical of Palembang, offers its products at affordable prices and the best quality.



Figure 2. Rumah Oncak Shop

To boost the souvenir industry in Palembang, it is essential to conduct comparative studies with other successful tourist destinations. Bali, famous for its unique and artistic handicrafts, and Yogyakarta, known for its batik, serve as prime examples. By analyzing the marketing strategies and product development in these destinations, Palembang can create more innovative and competitive souvenir products. The entrepreneurial potential based on souvenirs in Palembang to drive the creative economy, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance tourism is immense. Through comprehensive research, we aim to identify solutions to the existing challenges and develop sustainable strategies for the souvenir industry.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the substantial entrepreneurial potential for developing a sustainable souvenir-based creative economy in Palembang, South Sumatra. Through a comprehensive analysis of Palembang's rich cultural heritage, this research identifies opportunities for local entrepreneurs to craft unique, high-value souvenir products that capture the essence of the city and appeal to both domestic and international tourists. The findings emphasize several key factors that are crucial for the development of Palembang's souvenir industry. First, product innovation plays a vital role in enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of souvenirs. Entrepreneurs must focus on designing products that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional, following trends while maintaining the authenticity of Palembang's cultural identity. By integrating local cultural elements such as Songket, Batik, and traditional crafts, souvenirs can be positioned as both meaningful and commercially viable.

Additionally, marketing strategies and sustainable production practices are critical to the long-term success of this industry. Effective marketing can increase the visibility of Palembang as a tourist destination, while sustainability practices can contribute to the preservation of local culture and the environment. By using locally sourced materials and eco-friendly production methods, entrepreneurs can create souvenirs that are both culturally significant and environmentally responsible. The study also underscores the importance of expanding distribution channels, including physical stores, online platforms, and international markets, to reach a broader audience. This will ensure that the souvenirs produced in Palembang gain recognition beyond the local market, attracting tourists from various regions. Furthermore, a SWOT analysis of the souvenir industry in Palembang reveals the city's

strengths, such as its rich cultural heritage and growing tourism sector, but also identifies weaknesses such as limited innovation and global recognition. Addressing these weaknesses through strategic product development and branding will be essential for establishing Palembang as a competitive player in the global souvenir market.

To overcome the challenges faced by the souvenir industry, it is recommended that stakeholders, including policymakers, local entrepreneurs, and the tourism sector, collaborate to create a supportive ecosystem. This could involve providing training and resources for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), facilitating access to capital, and promoting sustainable and ethical business practices. Collaboration will foster the growth of a dynamic creative economy that benefits local communities, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes tourism in Palembang. In conclusion, the souvenir industry in Palembang holds significant potential for contributing to the city's creative economy, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism development. By focusing on product innovation, marketing, sustainability, and expanding market reach, Palembang can enhance its position as a premier destination for cultural tourism and souvenirs. This study provides valuable insights into the strategies and opportunities that will allow Palembang to build a thriving and sustainable souvenir-based creative economy, ultimately benefiting both local artisans and global visitors.

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