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Developing Malay cultural heritage areas as historical religious cultural tourism: A case study of Rantau Panjang village, Deli Serdang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the development strategy of the cultural heritage area in Rantau Panjang Village and identify its development model as a sustainable religious, historical tourist attraction in Deli Serdang Regency, Indonesia. The methodology used is descriptive qualitative, where data is obtained through field information collection by conducting interviews with twelve key informants and documentation studies. The collected data were then analyzed and interpreted, presented in tabular format and visual representation, with the help of NVivo software to process qualitative data. The results show that advancing the cultural heritage area in Rantau Panjang Village is a multifaceted endeavour that requires substantial dedication from various stakeholders. With the implementation of appropriate strategies and proactive community involvement, this cultural heritage area has the potential to develop into an attractive and sustainable cultural tourism destination. A successful model for developing this area requires careful planning, strong collaboration between various parties, and active community participation. With a comprehensive and sustainable methodology, this area can be used as an example of Indonesia's cultural heritage conservation and historical tourism development. The contribution of this research provides a foundation for further development to preserve and promote cultural wealth and historical tourism in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: cultural heritage, development, Indonesia, religious tourism, village

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Introduction

Sustainable development in the context of religious and historical tourism has become an essential imperative for countries. Its main objectives include improving community welfare and optimizing tourism potential within a region (Cros, 2001; Janssen & Knippenberg, 2008; Taylor, 2016). Rantau Panjang Village in Indonesia recognized as a Malay cultural heritage area, has emerged as a prominent religious tourism destination that is anticipated to drive development for the local community.

Tourism includes many classifications, including religious tourism (Lin et al., 2022; Luo, 2024). Religious tourism is described as a category of tourism intricately linked to important activities or locations related to religious dimensions (Prieto et al., 2019; Rezaei & Khouadja, 2022; Zhang & Peng, 2019). It is conceptualized as tourist engagement in locations that have profound significance for adherents of a particular religion. These local sites may include worship sites and historical landmarks associated with a particular religion, each imbued with unique specificity and meaning (Ebrahimi et al., 2020; Eugster, 2003; Williams et al., 2015). The plurality of religions and belief systems in Indonesia serves as a foundational asset for promoting religious tourism. Many historical buildings have special significance for the faithful, so Indonesia's sizable population of religious believers represents an excellent opportunity to advance religious tourism (Licata et al., 2021; Throsby, 2010; Yang & Wall, 2021).

Globally renowned cultural heritage and historical sites are considered integral components of human civilization's heritage (Coroş et al., 2021; Xu & Sofield, 2017; Yu et al., 2023). Stewardship and conservation of heritage, in all its manifestations, go beyond connecting the contemporary with the heritage of the past. It also entails building a sustainable and harmonious future for future generations (Fraser, 2020; Job et al., 2017; Rosardi et al., 2021). The sustainable development goals, as articulated in UN General Assembly Resolution 70/193, affirm that the achievement of Sustainable Cities and Communities requires concerted efforts to "increase efforts to safeguard and maintain the world's cultural and natural heritage" (Al-Jaberi & Hasan, 2022; Giordano, 2020; Milićević et al., 2015; Veghes, 2023).

In the theory of heritage tourism, as presented by Timothy and Boyd (2006), visits to historic or industrial areas that have developed into places of interest for tourists are the scope of tourism. They earnestly underline the importance of involving residents in formulating tourism-related products. Adverse social consequences associated with tourism can be addressed by respecting these communities and attentively addressing their concerns and suggestions. Timothy and Boyd explain how travellers pursue cultural enrichment and immersive experiences. This phenomenon emphasizes that the importance of cultural heritage goes beyond mere tourist attractions and also serves as an important educational asset that enhances a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of humanity's collective cultural heritage (Thamrin et al., 2024.

The keyword 'development' in development theory, as stated by Bryant and White (1980, p. 45) has mentioned that development is an effort to improve human ability to influence their future with five main implications, namely: (1) Development means optimizing human capabilities, both individuals and groups (*capacity*). (2) Development means encouraging the growth of togetherness, values equality, and welfare (equity). (3) Development means trusting the community to develop itself according to its capabilities. This trust is expressed through equal opportunities, freedom of choice and the power to decide (empowerment). (4) Development means generating the ability to build independently (sustainability). (5) Development means reducing the dependence of one country on another, creating a relationship of mutual benefit and mutual respect (*interdependence*).

Preserving historical narratives has demonstrated efficacy as one of the most effective methodologies to restore peace and facilitate sustainable development, especially in post-conflict scenarios (Fauzan et al., 2024). During periods of armed conflict, significant historical heritage and sites, which embody a nation's identity and are interwoven with collective consciousness, are often subjected to destruction or damage (Lin et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023; Tang & Xu, 2023). At this point, it is essential to refer to the preamble of conventions aimed at the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, along with the regulations governing the implementation of such conventions (Janssen & Knippenberg, 2012; Stepanova et al., 2023).

Historical tourism represents a distinctive travel modality that seeks to investigate and understand the historical heritage of a particular locale or region. It takes tourists to sites of historical significance, including museums, archaeological locations, and other culturally significant buildings, allowing them to immerse

themselves in an ancient setting and enhance their understanding of the events, cultures, and transformations that have affected a region or nation (Al-Jaberi & Hasan, 2022).

An essential component of historical tourism is respecting historical and cultural heritage. Individuals embark on this journey to observe firsthand the elements of history that have contributed to the shaping of the contemporary world. This includes visits to historical buildings, archaeological sites, and locations with significant historical value (Fanea-Ivanovici, 2018). In addition, historical tourism plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage. Most historical sites are carefully guarded and maintained to retain their historical values. This preservation includes restoration initiatives, artefact conservation, and archaeological research to reveal further insights into the past (Stark, 2020). Tourists unwittingly engage in efforts to protect and sustain cultural heritage by protecting and supporting these sites. Realizing that historical tourism goes beyond merely observing ancient ruins or strictly historical monuments is crucial. Beyond these aspects, historical tourism requires a deep understanding of the historical context, culture, and values that shape a particular region or locale (Taylor, 2016).

According to Rybina (2021), these are some of the characteristics that symbolize historical tourism: (1) Exploration of Historical Sites: (2) Historical tours often entail direct visits to historical places such as the remains of ancient cities, palaces, temples, cathedrals, fortresses, or monuments. Participants can observe existing physical structures, artefacts, and archaeological remains from the past. (3) Interaction with Cultural Heritage: (4) Travelers engage with inanimate objects or physical buildings and can interact with living cultural heritage. This may include meetings with residents of a locale who explain traditions, folklore, and cultural practices transmitted through successive generations. (5) Historical Education and Understanding: (6) History tours provide opportunities for direct engagement with historical sources. Visitors can immerse themselves in important events, famous historical figures, and their consequences on the development of society. (7) Preservation and Conservation: (8) Historical tourism can facilitate preserving and conserving historical sites. By supporting sustainability and conservation efforts, tourists contribute to the protection of cultural and historical heritage. (9) Valuing Cultural Diversity: (10) Through visits to historic sites, tourists can foster an appreciation of global cultural diversity. This fosters a more nuanced understanding of the evolution of civilizations and their interactions over the centuries.

Mohanty and Mohanta (2023), in their scholarly research entitled, "*Assessment of stakeholders' perspectives on infill buildings in the historical settings of an eastern Indian state-Odisha*," adopted the 'infill design' methodology, which presents formidable challenges when applied to heritage environments. This endeavour has garnered the interest of design practitioners and residents alike. The extant literature has championed the contextual design paradigm for new constructions in heritage locales. Nevertheless, the degree of contextualism applicable to new buildings on heritage sites is inherently subjective, fluctuating between levels of replication and stark contrast.

Mohanty and Mohanta's research aimed to assess the most appropriate design strategy for the historically significant Odisha region in eastern India. The research design utilized a methodology in which two prominent eastern cultural heritage sites (Puri and Ekamra Kshetra) were selected as case studies for this investigation. The research approach involved identifying key architectural components at both sites, accompanied by a questionnaire carefully crafted by design experts, based on interviews with 400 residents and 36 design professionals regarding their aesthetic inclinations for architectural styles and elements. The design experts developed the questionnaire, focusing on the architectural styles and components identified in both sites. Descriptive statistical methods and correlation analysis were used to ascertain the relevance of various design approaches and elements. The findings of this investigation corroborated that most respondents (including design professionals and residents) showed a preference for a replicated design approach that incorporated traditional Odisha architectural elements.

Oikonomopoulou and colleagues (2023), in their scientific work entitled: "*Preservation of Cultural Landscape as a Tool for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas: The Case of Mani Peninsula in Greece*", explain that the notion of cultural landscape is a multifaceted concept that is intricately interwoven with material-physical and immaterial components. To date, strategies aimed at preserving and enhancing cultural landscapes have primarily focused on the tangible aspects of their material culture, often isolating them from the intangible dimensions or even from the natural ecosystems in which they exist. The investigation conducted

by Oikonomopoulou et al. examines the interrelationship between historical heritage and landscape nature and its metaphorical implications, proposing this relationship as a spatial planning instrument for sustainable development. The proposed methodology was applied in the region of the Mani Peninsula, located in the southern region of Peloponnese, Greece.

Throughout this documentation phase of Oikonomopoulou and her colleagues' research, both literature review and fieldwork generated descriptive data, which was then organized through a standardization framework. Procedures for management and analysis were used across different layers of data relating to the current state of preservation and the extant developmental framework relevant to the research area. New thematic cultural routes are suggested to link the tangible cultural heritage and environmental values of the region under examination, integrating the geomorphological characteristics of the landscape with their intangible dimensions. In addition, designated protected areas were recommended to safeguard monuments and sites of historical or natural significance. The findings of their investigation revealed that through the implementation of integrated strategic planning for the advancement of cultural activities and networks, which harmonizes the principles of spatial and urban planning, not only is the preservation of the natural and cultural wealth of the region achieved, but also balanced economic development and social cohesion are fostered, ultimately leading efforts towards sustainable development.

Studies surrounding development studies, especially concerning planning scenarios aimed at transforming villages into historically sustainable religious tourism sites in North Sumatra Province in Indonesia, still need to be completed and are challenging to find. Consequently, this research seeks to add to the existing data on this subject matter. The analysis in this development study was used to explore the dynamics of social transformation in the community of Rantau Panjang village, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, about the interplay of power between cultural heritage custodians and the local government, as well as policies enacted by the local government that were not effectively implemented. Given this contextual framework, the researchers were motivated to investigate "The Development of the Rantau Panjang Village Cultural Heritage Area as Historically Sustainable Religious Cultural Tourism in Deli Serdang Regency".

This research further raises three research questions (RQs). (RQ1) What is the scenario planning strategy for the development of Rantau Panjang Village cultural heritage as a sustainable religious, historical tourism object in Rantau Panjang Village? (RQ2) How to identify the scenario planning model of Rantau Panjang Village cultural heritage as a sustainable religious, historical tourism object located in Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra in Indonesia. The objectives of this study are (1) to analyze the development strategy of the cultural heritage area of Rantau Panjang Village as a sustainable religious, historical tourism object in Indonesia, (2) to identify the development model of the cultural heritage area of Rantau Panjang Village as a sustainable religious, historical tourism object located in Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra in Indonesia.

Method

This research uses a qualitative methodology characterized by a descriptive framework. Qualitative descriptive research articulates phenomena, occurrences, or events in the immediate context (J. Cresswell, 2006, p. 23). The researcher in this investigation utilized qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo so that the resulting figures from the coding process had substantial significance in facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the interview data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2014; Endah et al., 2020; Evers, 2018).

According to Bazeley & Jackson (2014), some common interpretations of quantification metrics often encountered in NVivo data processing include the frequency of code occurrence, specifically (1) coding frequency, which indicates the number of times a particular code is manifested across the data. An increased frequency indicates a higher relevance of the code to the overarching research theme. (2) code distribution describes the spread of codes across different documents or 'nodes'. This aspect helps identify the main focal points of discourse on a particular topic. The presence of "hypothesis confirmation" determines whether the quantitative metrics generated can support or refute hypotheses regarding the proposed research "development". The numbers generated through NVivo go beyond mere numerical representations, as they are 'quantitative manifestations of qualitative data'. By understanding the underlying implications of these numbers, researchers can engage in more in-depth analysis, uncover latent patterns, and derive more robust conclusions.

According to Moleong (2011, p. 34), the methodology adopted is qualitative. This requires that the data

collected is not represented numerically but comes from interview transcripts, field notes, personal documents, memos, and official documents. As explained by Creswell (2017), this qualitative inquiry aims to thoroughly describe the underlying empirical reality of the phenomenon with depth, detail, and completeness. Thus, adopting a qualitative approach in this research is intended to align empirical reality with established theory through descriptive methodology.

Qualitative analysis strategies are usually not used to collect data frequently but to analyze ongoing social processes and derive meaning from observable facts (Hadi, 2020; Peris et al., 2020; Yazan & De Vasconcelos, 2016). Therefore, qualitative analysis is used to understand processes and facts, not just to explain them. This research methodology concentrates on a development study emphasizing scenario planning for advancing the Rantau Panjang Village cultural heritage area as a sustainable historic religious cultural tourism site in Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The methodological approach adopted by this researcher is descriptive qualitative analysis using a case study format based on data collection and analysis within a single research framework. The fundamental premise lies in utilizing a qualitative approach to explain the research challenges.

Result And Discussion

From the distribution of cultural heritage that we found as Table 1 below, related to the development of cultural heritage areas in Deli Serdang Regency, we found several historic Malay cultural heritage sites in several areas in the district that the local district government has designated as tourist destinations have been included in the Deli Serdang tourism calendar.

Table 1. Cultural Heritage of Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia in 2024

No	Name of Cultural Heritage	Type of Cultural Heritage	Location of Cultural Heritage
1.	Sultan Basyaruddin Grand Mosque	Bangunan	Jalan Besar Desa Klambir, Desa Rantau Panjang Kecamatan Pantai Labu
2.	Sultan Sulaiman Reservation	Structure	Gunung Paribuan Village, Gunung Meriah District, Deli Serdang Regency
3.	Makam Diraja Serdang	Structure	Paya Gambar Village, Batang Kuis Sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency
4.	Urung Sinembah Deli	Region	Patumbak Kampung Village, Patumbak District, Deli Serdang Regency
5.	Gua Kemang Sibolangit	Website	Sembahe Village, Sibolangit District, Deli Serdang Regency
6.	Gudang Pemeraman Tembakau	Building	Bulu Cina Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency
7.	Gereja Buluh Awar	Building	Buluh Awar Village, Sibolangit District, Deli Serdang Regency
8.	Rumah Haji Datuk Abdullah Tanjung Morawa	Building	Tanjung Morawa Pekan Village, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency
9.	Rumah Perkebunan Paya Bakung	Website	Paya Bakung Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency
10.	Rumah Manager Kebun Bandar Klippa	Building	Tanjung Sari Village, Batang Kuis District, Deli Serdang Regency
11.	Benteng Putri Hijau	Website	Deli Tua Village, Namorambe Sub-district
12.	Makam Kota Rantang	Website	Kota Rantang Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency
13.	Komplek Pertokoan Kolonial Bangun Purba	Website	Bangun Purba Village, Bangun Purba Sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Based on our investigation, the Sultanate of Serdang, recognized as one of the most ancient Malay sultanates in the North Sumatra Province of Indonesia, has an extensive and complex historical narrative, especially about the village of Rantau Panjang. The village serves as a silent observer of this prominent sultanate's beginnings and early development. The Sultanate of Serdang began due to division within the Sultanate of Deli during the early 18th century. Disputes over succession to the throne among the descendants of the Sultan of Deli culminated in a bifurcation, which resulted in the formation of new kingdoms, including the Sultanate of Serdang.

After the death of Tuanku Panglima Paderap, the progenitor of the Sultanate of Deli, a fierce battle for the throne ensued among his descendants; Tuanku Umar Johan, one of Tuanku Panglima Paderap's heirs, chose to secede and establish a distinct territory within the Serdang region. Establishment in Rantau Panjang: The village of Rantau Panjang was established as the focal point of the administration of the nascent Serdang Sultanate. Its favorable geographical position and its remoteness from the center of turmoil in Deli made it an optimal place for developing the burgeoning kingdom.

Under Tuanku Umar Johan and his successors, the Serdang Sultanate entered a period of unprecedented prosperity. Some factors that contributed to the sultanate's progress included: (1) agriculture, where agricultural endeavors became the cornerstone of the Serdang Sultanate's economy. Cultivated products, including rice, coconuts, and spices, were the primary commodities involved in trade. Trade: The Sultanate of Serdang established commercial relations with other sovereign entities in the archipelago and even engaged with foreign markets. Culture: The Sultanate of Serdang exhibited a deep cultural richness, as evidenced by its artistic expressions, architectural achievements, and traditional practices. (2) Relocation of the Government Center: In line with temporal developments, the administrative core of the Serdang Sultanate was moved from Rantau Panjang to Perbaungan. This relocation was done with various considerations, including security, accessibility, and regional development. (3) Decline and End of the Sultanate: In the 20th century, the Serdang Sultanate declined along with the encroachment of colonial influence and the transformation of global political dynamics.

According to Ichwan (2013, pp. 32-40), the imposition of Dutch colonial rule triggered significant changes in the sultanate's administrative and economic framework. After Indonesia gained independence, the Sultanate of Serdang was officially integrated into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Despite this transition, the historical and cultural heritage of the Serdang Sultanate continues to resonate, remaining an integral part of the identity of the people of Serdang Bedagai.

Although the administrative center of the Serdang Sultanate was relocated, Rantau Panjang Village holds many remnants of the Malay sultanate's historical narrative. Some of these remnants include (1) Historic sites: In the village, several historical landmarks associated with the Serdang Sultanate survive, such as the former grand palace buildings, the Sultan Basyarudin Mosque, the Naga Hijau temple, and the tombs of the sultans. (2) Customs: Rantau Panjang villagers continue to uphold traditions significantly influenced by the cultural heritage of the Serdang Sultanate. (3) Family tree: Many residents of Rantau Panjang Village have family trees that can be traced back to the founding figures of the Serdang Sultanate as a note for future research, for a more comprehensive and more precise understanding of the historical trajectory of the Serdang Sultanate in Rantau Panjang Village, the researcher advises future researchers to engage in further scholarly research by consulting related historical resources, including texts (manuscripts), articles, and other historical archival documents.

A. Rantau Panjang Village cultural heritage area development strategy

Rantau Panjang Village also has traces of the nation's history. Malay heritage buildings from the Serdang Sultanate, such as the Sultan Basyaruddin Grand Mosque and the Green Dragon Temple, can be used for religious tourism. Every religious activity carried out at these two objects of historic houses of worship can provide more spiritual experiences to various groups of people. In its development, religious tourism includes physical travel to holy places and involves various activities such as religious festivals and participation in religious ceremonies. This reflects the transformation of religious tourism from a mere visit to holy places to a holistic experience that includes spiritual, cultural, and social aspects (Lubis et al., 2024).

Regarding cultural and religious activities, the people of Rantau Panjang village have often carried them out at the Sultan Basyaruddin Grand Mosque and the Green Dragon Temple. Currently, many communities outside the village are interested in holding activities in the cultural heritage area of Rantau Panjang village. From the perspective of Rantau Panjang Village as a religious tourism destination, several things need to be considered so that the religious tourism experience can provide added value, both for visitors and for the

community. Development in various aspects must be designed in advance so that the cultural heritage buildings of the Sultan Basyaruddin Grand Mosque and the Green Dragon Temple can be used as religious tourism objects with the hope that the village of Rantau Panjang will become a religious tourism destination.

Rantau Panjang Village, distinguished by its profound historical significance as the center of the Serdang Sultanate, has great potential for transformation into an attractive cultural heritage area. Therefore, the following **strategies for developing the cultural heritage area of Rantau Panjang Village** can be carried out, among others:

(1) *Site Inventory and Mapping Documentation*: Carefully map all historic sites within the village, including former palaces, mosques, tombs, and additional architectural heritage. Comprehensive Documentation: Develop comprehensive documentation in photographs, illustrations, and detailed narratives about each site. The documentation can be compiled into books and scholarly articles or easily accessible through digital databases.

(2) *Preservation and Rehabilitation Legal Protection*: Institutions officially designate cultural heritage status to protect historic sites from degradation or destruction. Then, phased rehabilitation is required. By gradually rehabilitating historic buildings in Rantau Panjang Village that are damaged or disturbed, their authenticity can be maintained using materials that meet preservation standards. Furthermore, periodic maintenance is required, such as implementing systematic maintenance protocols for rehabilitated sites to maintain longevity.

(3) *Utilization for Education and Tourism Local Museum*: Establish a local museum featuring a collection of artifacts, photographs, and historical documentation representing the Serdang Sultanate. Historic Tourism Trail: Develop a historical tourist trail connecting various historically significant village sites. Education Program: Facilitate historical education initiatives targeting residents and visitors, including workshops, seminars, and exhibitions. Cooperation with Schools: Build partnerships with educational institutions to integrate the historical narrative of the Serdang Sultanate into the academic curriculum.

(4) *Accessibility Infrastructure Development*: Improve road connectivity to historical sites and additional public facilities. Supporting Facilities: Provide necessary infrastructure such as parking areas, sanitation facilities, and visitor information centers. Landscape Setting: Strategically design the landscape around the historic site to add to its aesthetic appeal and convenience.

(5) *Community Economic Development (MSME)*: Assist the local community in cultivating handicrafts inspired by Serdang Sultanate motifs. *Homestay:* Enable community members to build homestay accommodations for domestic and international travelers. *Local Products*: Facilitate marketing local products from the surrounding community.

(6) *Community Involvement Socialization*: Educate the community on preserving cultural heritage. Formation of Community Groups: Initiate the formation of community collectives dedicated to preserving cultural heritage. Community Participation: Provide avenues for community members to actively participate in preservation and development initiatives regarding cultural heritage areas.

(7) *Cooperation with Government and Private Sector Government Support*: Seeking government support in financial resources, policies, and regulations supporting cultural heritage preservation. Cooperation with the private sector: Collaborate with private entities to obtain financial and technical assistance (Nasution et al., 2024).

By implementing the strategies mentioned above, Rantau Panjang Village is poised to develop into an attractive and sustainable historical tourism destination while preserving the cultural heritage of the Serdang Sultanate for the next generation. However, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the local population's social, economic, and cultural context prior to the initiation of cultural heritage area development. In addition, the local community's active involvement is crucial to this preservation effort's success. The conclusion of this development strategy is that the advancement of the cultural heritage area in Rantau Panjang Village is a multifaceted endeavor that requires substantial dedication from diverse stakeholders. By implementing appropriate strategies and proactive community involvement, the cultural heritage zone in Rantau Panjang Village has the potential to develop into an attractive and sustainable cultural tourism locus.

B. Development Model of Cultural Heritage Area of Rantau Panjang Village, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra

Rantau Panjang Village is envisioned as an important center for the conservation and advancement of Malay cultural heritage associated with the Sultanate of Serdang, in addition to serving as a premium historical tourist destination of significant value. As for our model for developing a Malay cultural heritage area in Rantau Panjang Village, we began with (1) Mission: to engage in the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage sites. To increase the potential of historical and cultural tourism initiatives. To raise public awareness of the importance of cultural heritage preservation. To empower local communities to take an active role in the regional development. (2) Objectives: Establish a carefully managed and sustainable cultural heritage area. To increase the influx of tourists to Rantau Panjang Village. To improve the socio-economic welfare of the surrounding community. To maintain the authenticity and integrity of the cultural heritage site.
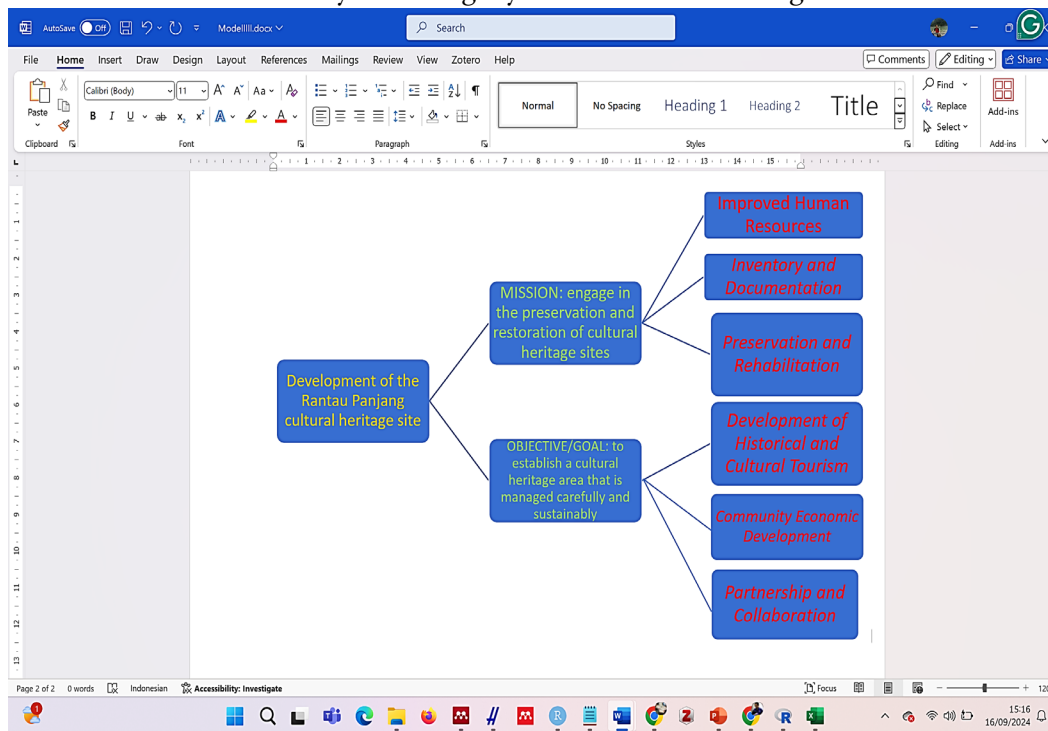
Figure 1. Rantau Panjang Village Cultural Heritage Area Development Model. Source: processed by researchers, 2024

As an application to realize the mission and objectives, the representation of the **development model,** as **shown in Figure 1, is** by conducting, among others, (1) *Inventory and Documentation* by conducting comprehensive mapping of cultural heritage sites as a whole. To produce detailed documentation that includes photographs, illustrations, and descriptive notes. To compile a digital database that is easily accessible to the broader community. (2) *Preservation and Rehabilitation*: by officially establishing the status of cultural heritage, i.e., gradual rehabilitation efforts focusing on preserving cultural authenticity while formulating a long-term maintenance strategy. (3) *Historical and Cultural Tourism Development*: To create attractive historical tourism trails, we recommend the government establish local museums and tourism products based on cultural heritage. So that tourists can be facilitated with the experience of their visit to the Rantau Panjang cultural heritage area. (4) *Community Economic Development*: We recommend empowering local communities to participate in tourism-related activities. For example, they cultivate local handicrafts and facilitate the marketing of local products. (5) *Human Resource Capacity Building*: Conduct training programs for community members and tour guides. This will raise public awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage. (6) *Partnerships and Collaboration*: to establish partnerships with government entities, academic institutions, the private sector, and the general public local communities in regional management in the Rantau Panjang cultural heritage site area. For the **implementation stage:** Planning must be carried out, namely, preparing a comprehensive development plan that includes budgeting and implementation schedules. Implementation: To carry out activities according to the established plan. Monitoring and Evaluation: Conduct periodic assessments to evaluate the program's efficacy. Socialization: To disseminate information to the public about the importance of cultural heritage preservation. The success indicator of this strategy is an increase in tourist visits to the Rantau Panjang cultural heritage site

area. In addition, there is an increase in the level of local income, efforts to preserve the physical integrity of the cultural heritage site, an increase in local community awareness of the importance of preserving the Rantau Panjang cultural heritage, and the formation of an active community group dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage in the village.

In implementing the strategy, challenges, and solutions will certainly always arise. The challenges include inadequate public awareness. The solution is to conduct intensive outreach efforts involving public figures. Another challenge is financial constraints. The solution is to seek alternative funding sources through partnerships with private entities and donor organizations. The next challenge is the physical degradation of the site. The solution can be done by implementing a gradual rehabilitation effort involving conservation specialists. The challenge that is predicted to occur is spatial change. An alternative solution is to delineate the cultural heritage area and develop local regulations to protect the area. In conclusion, successfully developing the Rantau Panjang Village cultural heritage area requires careful planning, strong collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and proactive community involvement.

In qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo, the numerical results derived from the coding procedure have profound significance in facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the data. Standard interpretations of quantified numbers often encountered in the NVivo data processing paradigm include (1) the frequency of occurrence of codes, which relates to the manifestation of a particular code; specifically, the total number of codings, indicating the instances in which a particular code is represented throughout the data corpus. An increased frequency indicates increased code relevance to the overarching research theme. (2) Code distribution, which describes the spatial allocation of codes across different documents or 'nodes,' thus allowing the identification of focal points in the discourse around a particular topic. Hypothesis assertion is facilitated by using these numerical figures to corroborate or refute proposed hypotheses.

The utilization of NVivo in our investigative efforts, as in **Table 1,** has revealed that individual perceptions regarding several codes and themes-namely, "cultural preservation," "preservation efforts," "Malay cultural heritage," and "enthusiastic residents of Rantau Panjang Village"-have emerged with notable frequency in the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews. This increased frequency underscores the centrality of these themes in shaping individuals' perceptions of religious tourism in the context of Rantau Panjang Village's cultural heritage. Furthermore, the examination of co-occurrence (the simultaneous appearance of two or more themes) made it possible to distinguish factors influencing satisfaction levels among the population.

Table 2. Coding matrix of themes based on the results of interviews with informants about the development of cultural heritage in Rantau Panjang Village, Deli Serdang, Indonesia.

Main Theme of The Interview	Cultural Preservation	Conservation efforts	Malay Cultural Heritage	Rantau Panjang Village	Residents are enthusiastic
Needs in-depth study	10	27	10	10	38
Less than optimal	18	35	18	18	46
Regulation	10	27	10	10	38
Basyaruddin Mosque	5	22	5	5	33
Green Dragon Temple	4	21	4	4	32
Historical identity	33	50	33	33	61
Inviting tourists	19	36	19	19	47
Local wisdom	14	31	14	14	42
Religious tourism	4	21	4	4	32
Serdang Sultanate	1	18	1	1	29
Kualanamu Airport	3	20	3	3	31
Minimal facilities	13	30	13	13	41
Potential conflict	7	24	7	7	35
Potential value	15	32	15	15	42
Support from village officials	11	28	11	11	38

Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo, 2024

Identifying key themes revealed that the increasing numbers in specific codes indicated that the theme of "development" was a central focal point across all fields and interview data. From this primary focus, new insights emerged: codes that show unexpected frequencies can yield interesting new findings. The code mentioned above relates to "development" in terms of strategic scenario planning for advancing the cultural heritage area. Ultimately, the numerical outputs generated by the NVivo software go beyond mere numerical value; they represent a quantitative encapsulation of qualitative data. By understanding the underlying implications of these numbers, we can conduct more in-depth analysis, uncover latent patterns, and formulate more robust and validated conclusions.

All data from in-depth interviews with eight informants was processed and analyzed using the NVivo tool and then interpreted. It was found that the words "development" and "developed" became the most dominant diction compared to other words during the in-depth interviews, namely 124 and 18 times. Discussions about Malay cultural heritage, cultural preservation, and cultural preservation efforts associated with historical identity placed the highest percentage at 14.63 percent. The theme of Kuala Namu Airport had the lowest percentage of discussion at 0.82%. Thus, researchers can conclude that the first and foremost effort to preserve Malay cultural heritage for sustainable religious tourism is development and development.

The keyword 'development' in the development theory of Bryant and White (1980) has mentioned that development is an effort to improve human ability to influence their future by having five main implications, as we have stated in the introductory chapter above. The five basic principles of development are certainly oriented towards people-centered development. Thus, a development process will emerge to improve people's ability to determine their future and the welfare of their children and grandchildren. The interviews with all informants revealed many essential themes in stabilizing the development of cultural heritage areas in Deli Serdang. The researcher managed to visualize it in one visual form, as Figure 2 below takes five significant themes in the development of cultural heritage. The five main themes are Malay cultural heritage, Rantang Panjang Village, Enthusiastic Residents (cultural heritage to be developed), cultural preservation, and preservation efforts (cultural heritage).

Other important themes emerged from in-depth interviews with all informants (triangulation). At least 22 essential themes regarding support from residents, government, and other stakeholders for developing the cultural heritage. We found 22 critical themes, among others; cultural identity (33 references), local wisdom (14 references), Serdang Sultanate (1 reference), Green Dragon Temple (4 references), Basyaruddin Mosque (5 references), inviting tourists (19 references), religious tourism (4 references), Kuala Namu airport (3 references), support from village officials (11 references), lack of facilities (13 references), potential value (15 references), potential conflict (7 references), not yet submitted (2 references), less than optimal (7 references), inhibiting factors (5 references), stakeholder coordination (24 references), less than optimal (18 references), development planning 37 references), regulation (10 references), human resources (9 references), socialization and promotion (10 references), and need in-depth study (10 references).
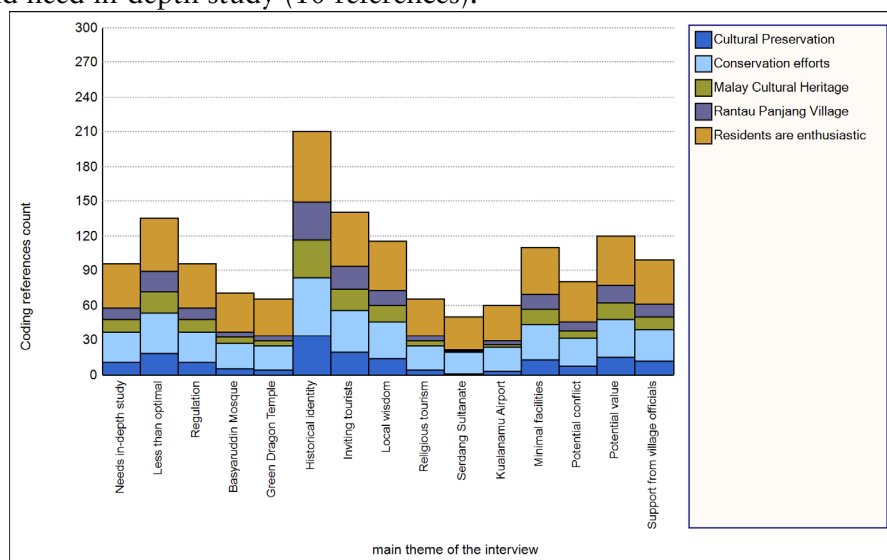

Figure 2. Coding matrix from interviews with many informants about religious tourism in Rantau Panjang Village, Deli Serdang. (Source: researcher analysis using Nvivo, 2024)

In addition to the perceptions of academics, government, and community leaders, Mr. Solahudin considers the role of the media or press is also a stakeholder that has an important role. Where the media is also expected to be able to disseminate the existence of a tourist village.

> "In the development of tourist villages, the press is expected to be able to carry out a control function that will voice the various problems that occur in the development of tourist villages, as well as the success stories of tourist village development. The on-line and off-line press is also expected to be able to disseminate the existence of a tourist village to provide a viral effect for the existence of the tourist village. With the dissemination of the existence of the tourist village, it is expected that the desire of visitors to visit the tourist village will grow". (Solahudin, tourism academic)

The potential of the Rantau Panjang Village area to meet the requirements to become one of the cultural heritage in North Sumatra was also expressed by a historian from the Master of History, University of North Sumatra (USU) named Dr. Suprayitno. According to him, Rantau Panjang Village has heritage sites that still exist today. In addition, there are historical values as a reinforcement of cultural heritage. According to Suprayitno, the definition of cultural heritage is cultural heritage in the form of objects or intangible attributes that are the identity of a community or people inherited from previous generations, which are preserved for future generations. Cultural heritage can be tangible, such as monuments, artifacts, and areas, or intangible, such as traditions, languages, and rituals.

> "There are requirements to be considered as cultural heritage, namely, tangible or physical remains. Unique, related to the collective memory of the local community, for example, as a symbol of inter-religious harmony, tolerance, origin or genealogy of figures and community history. Recorded in stories or legends of the surrounding community. The heritage or site is well maintained. It is better if there is a historiography of the site (there is an academic study)." (Dr. Suprayitno, USU history expert)

In its evolution, religious tourism not only includes physical travel to sacred sites, but also integrates many activities such as religious festivals and involvement in religious ceremonies. This evolution signifies a paradigm shift in the understanding of religious tourism from a simple visit to a sacred location to a comprehensive experience that encapsulates spiritual, cultural and social dimensions. With regard to cultural and religious practices, Rantau Panjang villagers often conduct such activities at the Sultan Basyaruddin Grand Mosque and the Naga Hijau Temple.

Currently, many communities outside the village are showing increasing interest in conducting activities within the Rantau Panjang village cultural heritage area. From the point of view of Rantau Panjang Village as a religious tourism destination, several considerations must be addressed to ensure that the religious tourism experience provides added value for visitors and the local community. Progress across multiple dimensions should be carefully planned in advance to facilitate the establishment of the cultural reserve that includes the Sultan Basyaruddin Grand Mosque and the Naga Hijau Monastery as a viable religious tourism venue, with the aspiration that Rantau Panjang village will develop into a leading religious tourism destination.

Historical tourism is a travel modality that seeks to investigate and understand the historical heritage intrinsic to a particular locale or region. It transports tourists to historical sites, museums, archaeological locations and other important historical structures, allowing them to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the past and enhance their understanding of the events, cultures and transformations that have affected a region or nation. An important aspect of historical tourism is respect for historical and cultural heritage. Individuals embark on this journey to directly witness the elements of history that have contributed to the formation of contemporary society. This includes visits to historical buildings, archaeological sites, and locations that have historical significance.

Conclusion

The historical site of relics of the Serdang Malay Sultanate located within the historic boundaries of Rantau Panjang Village, located in Deli Serdang District, North Sumatra, Indonesia, serves as an exemplary illustration

of the evolution of a Malay historical site, characterized by its profound attributes, identity, and historical significance. Nonetheless, the site remains ambiguous and is increasingly threatened by substantial changes resulting from rapid industrialization, economic progress, and urbanization, thus underscoring the need to preserve its existence. The confluence of traditional architectural heritage, contextual setting, and Serdang Malay cultural practices constitutes the basis of its character and identity, which has substantially influenced the historical narrative and morphology of the Serdang Sultanate, representing essential characteristics of its historical heritage, including construction form, structural design, contextual placement, environmental setting, and spectrum of human activities.

In answering these two research questions, we conclude that (1) The advancement of the cultural heritage area in Rantau Panjang Village is a multifaceted endeavour that requires the substantive dedication of diverse stakeholders. By implementing appropriate strategies and proactive community involvement, the cultural heritage zone in Rantau Panjang Village has the potential to develop into an attractive and sustainable cultural tourism locus. (2) Successful models for developing the Rantau Panjang Village cultural heritage area require careful planning, strong collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and proactive community involvement. The area can exemplify a successful model in conserving cultural heritage and advancing Malay historical tourism in Indonesia through a comprehensive and sustainable methodology.

The heterogeneity of character exhibited by the Malay Sultanate sites, in conjunction with architectural characteristics, urban layout, and cultural pluralism, makes this area distinctive and worthy of preservation efforts. The analysis finally concludes that the preservation and conservation of physical and cultural components is an essential aspect of the conservation strategy of the Malay Sultanate in Indonesia. Therefore, a structured development approach is essential to facilitate documenting and maintaining cultural heritage sites in Rantau Panjang Village. Insights gained from this research are anticipated to inform comprehensive planning initiatives to protect the Malay royal city from the dangers of obsolescence. The preservation and conservation of these historic areas will contribute to diversifying urban image and identity while mitigating the decline of Malay Kingdom towns in Indonesia.

We contribute to this research by providing information on research opportunities from other angles that may be possible for future researchers, for example, research directed towards the architectural characteristics of the former palace buildings in the Rantau Panjang Village site area, the remains of the sultanate government framework, or other vital charms in the history of the former Serdang Malay sultanate in Rantau Panjang Village.

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