

CULTURAL COMMODIFICATION AND ITS IMPLICATION IN TOURISM: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Commodification refers to the process of transforming goods, services, ideas, or cultural practices into commodities that can be bought, sold, or traded in the market. This process often alters cultural traditions to meet market demands. This literature review examines how tourism commodifies cultural practices, frequently stripping them of their original meanings and significance. The review aims to explore the impacts and implications of this transformation on the broader tourism market by analyzing various theoretical frameworks. Our objectives include understanding how commodification occurs in different contexts, evaluating its effects on cultural identity and traditional practices, and identifying strategies to preserve cultural heritage while promoting sustainability in tourism development. Based on previous research on cultural commodification and its effects, future strategies should focus on creating authentic cultural experiences that educate visitors, enrich local communities, and protect traditions from the pressures of commercial interests.

Keywords: Commodification; Cultural Commodification; Tourism Commodification; Tourism Industry

ABSTRAK

Komodifikasi mengacu pada proses mengubah barang, jasa, ide, atau praktik budaya menjadi komoditas yang dapat dibeli, dijual, atau diperdagangkan di pasar. Proses ini sering mengubah tradisi budaya untuk memenuhi permintaan pasar. Tinjauan literatur ini meneliti bagaimana pariwisata mengkomodifikasi praktik budaya, sering kali menghilangkan makna dan signifikansi aslinya. Tinjauan ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak dan implikasi dari transformasi ini pada pasar pariwisata yang lebih luas dengan menganalisis berbagai kerangka teoritis. Tujuan kami termasuk memahami bagaimana komodifikasi terjadi dalam konteks yang berbeda, mengevaluasi dampaknya terhadap identitas budaya dan praktik tradisional, dan mengidentifikasi strategi untuk melestarikan warisan budaya sambil mempromosikan keberlanjutan dalam pengembangan pariwisata. Berdasarkan penelitian sebelumnya tentang komodifikasi budaya dan efeknya, strategi masa depan harus berfokus pada menciptakan pengalaman budaya otentik yang mendidik pengunjung, memperkaya komunitas lokal, dan melindungi tradisi dari tekanan kepentingan komersial.

Kata Kunci: *Industri Pariwisata; Komodifikasi; Komodifikasi Budaya; Komodifikasi Pariwisata*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a significant driver of economic growth in many regions around the world, however, the increasing commercialization of tourism has raised concerns about the authenticity of the cultural experiences offered to tourists, as well as the potential for the commodification of local traditions. The temptation for communities to commercialize their heritage and culture to tap into the growing demand for new attractions by the tourism industry is strong (Laksana, 2016) (Lestari, 2020). However, this short-term gain must be assessed against the potential long-term consequences, such as the loss of authenticity and the erosion of local traditions. Commodification is the process by which goods, services, ideas, or cultural practices are transformed into commodities that can be bought, sold, or traded in the market. Commodification can significantly alter cultural traditions, often reducing or modifying performances, like dances, to align with market needs. This shift can compromise the authenticity of cultural expressions, as they are tailored to meet market expectations rather than preserving their original form. Economically, while commodification might boost income for local communities, it can also create job distortions and diminish local economic potential, as dependence on tourism increases.

Moreover, the focus on commercializing culture risks eroding

traditional practices' genuine meanings and values. On the other hand, tourism can lead to cultural involution, where traditions are adapted and reformed rather than completely lost. Additionally, the influx of tourists can disrupt social structures and relationships within the community, and strain local resources, potentially impacting the environment and the cultural practices tied to it. Tourism destinations, maintaining authenticity is essential for safeguarding the unique identity of its culture amid tourism pressures.

By ensuring cultural integrity, tourism destinations can preserve the significance of cultural expressions, preventing them from being reduced to mere entertainment. Authentic cultural tourism can foster meaningful interactions between tourists and local communities, promoting a deeper understanding of the culture. This involves navigating attracting visitors and preserving genuine cultural practices. Authenticity necessitates a true depiction of local culture, which commercial interests may overlook. By providing authentic experiences, tourism can educate visitors about the cultural context, fostering greater appreciation and respect for local traditions, and can contribute to more sustainable tourism practices that benefit both the community and the environment. Cultural commodification in tourism is a critical issue that raises important questions

about the integrity and authenticity of local traditions.

This literature review explores how tourism transforms cultural practices into consumable commodities, often stripping them of their original meanings and significance and aims to identify its impacts and implications upon the greater tourism market by examining various theoretical frameworks. Our objectives include assessing how commodification occurs across different contexts, evaluating the impacts of tourism on cultural identity and traditional practices, and identifying strategies for preserving cultural heritage to promote sustainability in tourism development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Industry

The tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world. Tourism is often dubbed as the prima donna industry in improving the economy of a region. In some famous tourist destinations, tourism even becomes the locomotive of the economy that fills the joints of life and becomes the breath of the city. Because all elements of society can manage the existing potential so that it has economic value that has positive implications for their lives such as reducing the number of unemployed and reducing the number of poverty (Irianto, 2016).

The development of tourism trends as a lifestyle has encouraged the practice of commodification of local cultural elements and in this context is culinary culture. The developments that occurred during the capitalist industrial era have an impact on the manners and attitudes of modern society. The concept of a

capitalist economy brings people's behavior to the principle of consumerism which gives rise to a consumer culture in modern society (Suteja & Wahyuningsih, 2019). The tourism industry encourages the emergence of cultural products that are produced specifically for tourists. The industry has natural and cultural wealth from various ethnic groups that exist and are tourist attractions, therefore cultural tourism is considered a viable product for many (Citrawati, 2020).

Culture is one thing that will continue to change according to the times. Everything that is now considered a tradition is rooted in the contemporary cultures of society in the past. Likewise, what is now considered a contemporary culture is likely to be considered a traditional culture in the future. This is what is often brought up in the tourism industry to attract the market. In fact, in the tourism industry, culture or culture that is used as a tourist attraction is not something raw and original (Pratama, 2019). Cultural commodification is an act that makes cultural elements into something that has economic value and can be traded, thus causing a modification to cultural elements.

Commodification can affect income and create new livelihoods for local communities and the presence of tourists who visit will interact with the surrounding community so that it can affect the social and cultural conditions of the community (Simamora & Sinulingga, 2023). Cultural tourism involves traveling to experience and learn about the culture of a destination, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects such as local customs, traditions, arts, and

everyday life. This form of tourism includes engaging with historical sites, art performances, and local culinary practices. Cultural tourism is characterized by its experiential meaning, motivational aspects, resource-based supply, and operational management, reflecting its complexity that extends beyond mere cultural activities and consumption (UNWTO, 2019). As societies have come to value their cultural assets more and recognize tourism's potential for economic and social benefits, cultural tourism has gained prominence. People are drawn to cultural tourism for various reasons, including educational experiences, authenticity, culinary exploration, local arts and performances, historical interest, social interaction, personal growth, and sustainable tourism practices. This form of tourism not only satisfies travelers' curiosity and desire for personal enrichment but also supports the economic sustainability of local communities, making it a mutually beneficial pursuit for both visitors and hosts.

The Commodification Process

Commodification is the process of changing goods or services that previously followed non-market social rules into a subject that follows market rules. Commodification, as a form of global capitalism accumulates capital and transform use value into commercial exchange (Arifullah et al., 2023). It changes traditional art to suit market demand so that traditional art is explored excessively, so that there are meanings and sacred values that change. The

change of traditional art into a commodity makes the traditional art that is displayed become fake cultural art because the art that is displayed can be said to be "puppet" art or "engineered" art, because the art that is performed is far from authentic, even the values of traditional norms and sacredness are eroded or even lost because the art that is performed is forced to suit market interests/needs (Gusnadi, 2019).

Commodification shows that the development of cultural tourism has resulted in changes in various cultural areas. This transformation of tradition occurs as an effort to adapt the community to the entry of the need for the development of the tourism sector. Cultural transformation in tourism refers to changes in local culture that occur due to interaction with the tourism industry. This transformation can include various aspects, such as adaptation to the presence of tourism, the influence of tourism on local cultural values, and efforts to preserve local wisdom in tourism (Pratiwi & Pinasti, 2017).

The impact of tourism on local cultural values can be observed through the transformation of the cultural values of the Grebeg Suro tradition, which changes its exchange value due to the commodification carried out. Therefore, commodification and manipulation of culture in the tourism sector cannot be avoided. The commodification process involves the manipulation of culture in tourism to make culture into an object that has exchange value or selling value through the cultural and service industries as commodities (Jayendra & Suarmana, 2023).

To analyze this process of change, Mosco (2009), in his book “The Political Economy of Communication” explains commodification as the process of changing something that has value, in this case, a product that can be marketed and has added value to be exchanged. This concept refers to the process of transforming goods and services that are valued based on their usefulness. To become a commodity, something must be valued according to what the market determines. Mosco divides the form of commodification into 3 forms, namely (1) Commodification of content, (2) Commodification of audience, and (3) Commodification of labour. The commodification that occurs includes presentations that were initially only performed in certain places, now shifting to performing arts in open spaces, to be consumed by the community, and enjoyed by tourists.

Cultural commodification, in the development of cultural tourism, shows it as a means of entertainment, as a means of education, and as a means of performance (Diwyarthi et al., 2022). This follows the opinion of Dewi (2016), that cultural tourism has resulted in commodification which means welfare for the community that supports the culture. Culture is not only a tool to worship the greatness of God, but also generates income that means increasing community welfare.

This phenomenon results in a dilution of cultural significance and authenticity as local traditions are modified to become more marketable. For instance, in the paper written by (Cahyadi, 2016), there are various

impacts of commodification. One of which is the alteration of cultural traditions, such as traditional music or dance performances, which may be shortened, modified, or simplified for audience consumption or to fit the schedules of tourists. Another factor would be the loss of originality or authenticity. Authentic cultural expressions can be compromised as they are specifically tailored for the consumption of tourists who may not be familiar with or may not even favor the palate of the locals.

Implication of Commodification

Based on the Research Conducted by (Cahyadi, 2016), The case of Puri Anyar Kerambitan in Bali, Indonesia, provides a prime example of the philosophical debate surrounding authentic tourism and the commodification of cultural tourism. On one hand, the unique cultural traditions and ceremonies of the region have become a significant draw for tourists, with many visitors eager to witness and participate in these events.

Preserving the cultural heritage of Puri Anyar Kerambitan in Bali requires a multifaceted approach that integrates community engagement, cultural education, and sustainable tourism practices. Economically, the preservation of cultural heritage directly benefits the local community by driving cultural tourism, which is a significant contributor to Local's economy. Studies have shown that cultural tourism provides substantial income opportunities, including jobs in hospitality, guiding, and artisanal crafts, thus supporting the livelihoods of

community members (Richards, 2018). The integration of cultural preservation into tourism also supports sustainable development by encouraging practices that benefit both the environment and the local populace. Sustainable tourism initiatives, which prioritize cultural sensitivity and environmental stewardship, help ensure that economic gains do not come at the expense of Bali's cultural and natural resources (UNWTO, 2019).

The Examples of Commodification

In Indonesia, cultural commodification is certainly not an unfamiliar concept to implement. Given the rich diversity of cultures and traditions, Indonesia has presented numerous cases of cultural commodification. Known for being the cleanest village in the world by the UNWTO, Penglipuran Village in Bangli Province, Bali is well renowned for its traditional Balinese architecture, which is still well preserved. Tourists can enjoy immersive cultural experiences and support the Balinese people who still hold fast to customs and traditions, such as the unique house arrangements and religious ceremonies. The implications of such an example are dual, with the positive side emphasizing the immediate profit and autonomy that the Balinese locals would be granted, through supports such as homestays and handicrafts. However, there are some negative impacts, such as several ceremonies and traditions may be performed openly and adjusted to meet expectations of tourists, reducing the spiritual meanings of such ceremonies or rituals (Sudiarta & Nurjaya, 2015).

Other such examples from Indonesia is Toraja from South Sulawesi, where it's well known for its elaborate and unique funeral ceremonies. Positive implications include the increase of income for the Toraja people and preserve local culture through tourism, however some drawbacks are that ceremonies such as the Torajan funeral ceremonies that are usually sacred and private become a spectacle for tourists, which reduces the original value and meaning of the tradition. All in all, cultural commodification in tourism in Indonesia greatly involves the existing cultural diversity, but also brings challenges in maintaining authenticity and traditional values. On one hand, tourism provides economic opportunities for local communities and increases awareness of Indonesian culture. However, if not managed correctly, cultural commodification can cause the loss of the original meaning of tradition or create excessive dependence of tourism. Therefore it's imperative that ensuring ethical cultural tourism is carried out by considering the principles of sustainability and preservation of local cultural values.

METHOD

The study of cultural commodification and its implications in tourism research has utilized a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. A systematic literature review (SLR) identifies, selects and critically appraises research to answer a formulated question (Dewey & Drahota, 2016). This method aims to outline the processes involved in identifying, selecting, and analyzing

relevant literature on cultural commodification within the tourism context, while also highlighting future perspectives and knowledge gaps in the field. The researcher has reviewed various sources about cultural commodification and its impact on tourism. A literature review constitutes a form of research that relies exclusively on written materials, encompassing published and unpublished findings. Data necessary for this research can be sourced from various documents, and the variables in literature studies are typically non-standard. The data collection technique employed is qualitative, involving a thorough exploration of various literatures, such as books and journals. The data analyzed consists of secondary information derived from literature related to cultural commodification.

The research utilized Harzing's Publish or Perish, a free software application that streamlines searching for academic articles. This tool organizes results effectively and connects users to various publication databases, including Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic, Scopus, and Web of Science. By leveraging this resource, researchers can easily locate articles that are relevant to their literature review. The subsequent data collected is analyzed through traditional literature review methods. Based on these criteria, the researcher performed searches using the following keywords: 1) Commodification Concepts, 2) Cultural Commodification, and 3) Tourism Commodifications. The researcher found over 25 articles over the past 10 years about these search terms

and then refined the selection by categorizing those centered on "Cultural Commodification" and "Tourism Commodification" through keyword and title searches.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results found from previous research regarding cultural commodification and its implications, several things can be found. One is the loss of authenticity due to commodification. Studies have highlighted that the commodification of local cultures leads to the dilution or misrepresentation of traditional practices, rituals, and artifacts to cater to tourist expectations. This practice is utilized to increase tourism revenue and global recognition of a culture.

However, studies have shown results in the loss or distortion of culture's authenticity. An illustrative example of communication degrading a nation's local culture is seen in Bali, Indonesia. Once a vibrant tapestry of spiritual and artistic practices, the island's culture has been transformed into a commercialized spectacle for tourists (Bagus & Paramita, 2020).

Traditional ceremonies, once deeply meaningful communal events, are now often staged for entertainment, stripped of their authentic significance to cater to visitor expectations. Over time, locals, as well as the future generation of locals, may begin to associate these traditional practices with tourism entertainment rather than with their spiritual or cultural significance. This would lead to a gradual decline in the understanding of their true meaning,

which would exacerbate as time goes on (Fauzi, 2024).

Another factor of cultural commodification that may pose as detrimental is the market-driven nature of the production of goods or traditional handicrafts. In Patoame Village in the Boalemo Regency, it was once celebrated for its rich heritage, and the region has seen a surge in mass produced souvenirs that mimic traditional designs but lack authentic craftsmanship. To meet high demands, mass production using inauthentic/synthetic materials and factory processes has emerged in its place, undermining the authenticity and cultural value of traditional craftsmanship, even when the sales of these products provide a primary source of livelihood for families (Dai et al., 2022).

This implication would reduce the uniqueness and cultural significance of the products, and thus making them less meaningful for both creators and consumers. Along with the presence of commercializing culture that would undermine its value as a product, sacred cultural sites that hold religious and spiritual value may degrade from the overt commodification practices that may distance its original, historical purpose to a simple experience that can be easily bought and exploited. As performances are increasingly tailored for tourist consumption, the authentic spiritual and cultural significance is often overshadowed by commercial interests. Local communities, once active participants in preserving and practicing their cultures, find themselves relegated

to mere spectators in their own heritage (Tradisional Di Era et al., 2020).

When cultural practices are tailored to meet tourist expectations, the inherent cultural identity of communities across the globe may erode over time. In its development, the Tabot ritual has not only become the identity of the Bengkulu community, but has now become part of a tourism promotion event. In the midst of the struggle of customs, the Tabot ritual has experienced a cultural commodification, the festival that accompanies the Tabot celebration marks a popular cultural transfer in the community (Budiman, 2022).

Younger generations might prioritize catering to tourists' demands over preserving their own authentic traditions which would lead to a gradual loss of heritage, art, language, traditions and more. The intense influx of tourists often leads to the commercialization of the surrounding area, which may become disruptive if the tourist destination is under-equipped to accommodate this demand (Lin, 2023).

The tourism industry plays a significant role in the degradation of cultural traditions through the process of commodification. As destinations seek to attract visitors, local cultures are often transformed into marketable products, leading to the production of inauthentic goods (Alaudin, 2020).

As far as the economic risk is concerned, communities that heavily rely on cultural tourism for income become vulnerable to economic instability when tourist numbers decline due to global crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic, instances of political instability, or

environmental disasters). The concern for tarnished destination reputations is also important, as tourists who are seeking authentic experiences may feel disappointed when they encounter over-commercialized or inauthentic practices, for example, if travelers view a destination as a 'cultural theme park', they may share negative reviews, deterring others from visiting and thus harming the destination's reputation (Segara, 2020).

While cultural degradation and over-commercialization is a concern, some commodification efforts have inadvertently led to cultural revival. For example, tourism has encouraged the preservation and documentation of languages, dances, and rituals in regions such as New Zealand (Maori culture) or Hawaii (UNWTO). So, the tourism industry can benefit from promoting sustainable models that encourage preservation while delivering economic benefits through the restoration of ancient festivals or traditional clothing that had fallen out of regular use.

Without careful management, the quest for profit can overshadow genuine cultural significance, ultimately undermining the very traditions that attract visitors in the first place. This duality highlights the need for a balanced approach to tourism that respects and sustains cultural authenticity while reaping its economic rewards (Riddhagni, 2017). It has been found that the impacts of commodification can pose a detriment to local communities however, it may also give way to encouraging the preservation of diverse cultures, festivals, traditions, and more.

With the passage of time and the rise of social media, the importance of increasing awareness about the value of preserving cultural heritage through educational initiatives and community engagement should be emphasized (Messianik, 2023). By leveraging social media as a platform for cultural expression, Shamad suggests that future tourism actors can be encouraged to appreciate and promote their traditional values in innovative ways. He also highlights potential positive outcomes of commodification, such as economic opportunities for local artisans and the revitalization of interest in cultural practices when presented creatively. Ultimately, he calls for a balanced approach that fosters appreciation for authentic culture while navigating the challenges posed by commercialization in tourism destinations.

CONCLUSION

The evolving dynamics of tourism as an economic driver highlight the complex relationship between cultural commodification and the preservation of authenticity in local traditions. While tourism can significantly bolster local economies and create employment opportunities, the shift toward commodifying cultural practices often results in the dilution and misrepresentation of authentic cultural expression.

This transformation challenges the genuine meaning and values of tradition, leading to reliance on market-driven adaptation that caters to tourist expectations. By addressing these challenges, the tourism industry can

intricate balance by promoting cultural integrity and sustainable tourism that prioritize the preservation of cultural heritage, ensuring the local communities benefit economically without compromising their unique identities.

Future strategies must focus on fostering authentic cultural experiences that educate visitors while enriching local communities and safeguarding their traditions against the pressure of commercial interests.

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