



Technological and Innovative Approaches in Developing Religious and Cultural Tourism

Kartono, Muhammad Dandi Ramadhan

Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia
Corresponding Author. Email kartono@ugj.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose – This research aims to formulate a strategy for the development of religious and cultural tourism in Cirebon City based on technology and innovation, as an effort to answer today's challenges and maximize the existing potential in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Methods: The research was conducted using a descriptive, quantitative method. The research sample comprised 165 respondents, including visitors, individuals, and tourism-related parties. A purposive sampling approach was used. Data analysis is performed in Microsoft Excel.

Result: The management of religious and cultural tourism in Cirebon City has significant potential in its history and palace heritage, but its development remains hampered by limited infrastructure, low-quality human resources (HR), and suboptimal technology adoption and integration across stakeholders.

Conclusion - To optimize the potential of tourism in the digital era, it is necessary to have a sustainable tourism development strategy that must rely on technological innovation and cross-sector collaboration between the government, tourism managers, and tourism actors.

Keywords – Tourism; Religious; Cultural; Technological; Innovative



© 2025 Author. This article is licensed under [the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution, and reproduction in any media or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author and the source.

INTRODUCTION

Cirebon City, nicknamed "City of Guardians", has a strategic position and a wealth of cultural and religious heritage. The city of Cirebon is known as the center of the spread of Islam in Java, as reflected in the presence of various historical sites and mosques throughout the city. This heritage makes Cirebon a unique and memorable spiritual destination for tourists because it holds a wealth of sites and extraordinary cultural heritage, including four palaces: Kasepuhan Palace, Kanoman Palace, Kacirebonan Palace, and Kaprabonan Palace. Overall, Cirebon City has 5 Cultural Heritage Areas and 52 Cultural Heritage Buildings that are cultural and religious tourism attractions, such as Sunyaragi Cave, Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, Talang Temple, Winaon Temple, Dewi Welas Temple, Saint Joseph Church, and others. The existence of these

various sites shows that Cirebon has a rich multicultural heritage. The narrative of Cirebon as the "City of Guardians" may inadvertently limit perceptions of its religious and cultural tourism. There are opportunities that have not been fully utilized to promote Cirebon as a destination that represents cultural pluralism and interreligious harmony. (Damayanti et al., 2023) (Squirrelly et al., 2024) (Adriyani et al., 2023)

The Cirebon City Culture and Tourism Office (Disbudpar) in 2024 reported that the target of 2.3 million tourists had been exceeded, with an achievement of 4.05 million tourists. However, when compared to the last three years, the number of tourists in Cirebon City has decreased, with the following data: (F. Rohman, 2025)

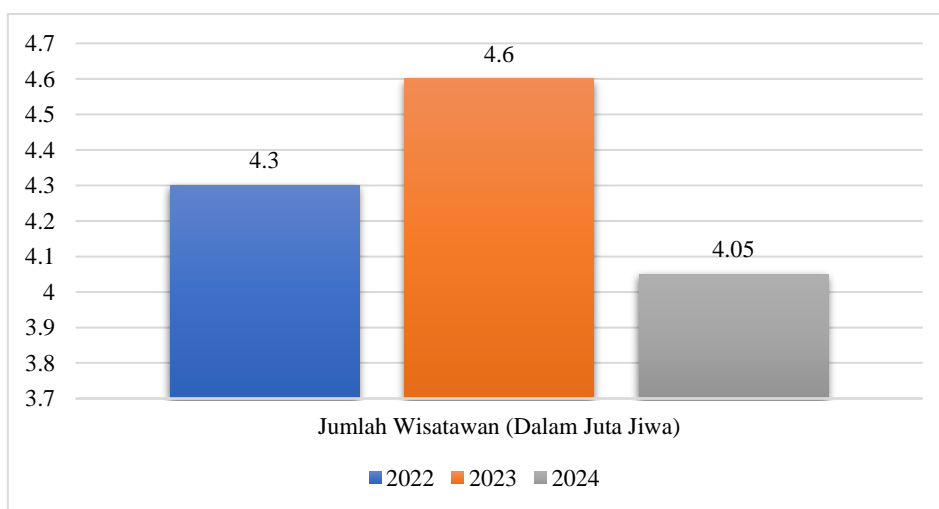


Figure 1. Number of Tourists in Cirebon City in 2022-2024

The picture above shows that the number of tourists in Cirebon City in 2024 has decreased when compared to 2023 and 2022. In 2024, the number of tourists will decrease by around 550,000 compared to 2023. The conditions are very different from 2023, when the number of tourists increased by around 300,000 compared to 2022. The decline in the number of tourists in Cirebon City in 2024 is directly proportional to the decline in the tourism sector's contribution to the Regional Gross Domestic Product (PAD) of Cirebon City. In 2024, the tourism sector's contribution to the Regional Original Revenue (PAD) of Cirebon City will decrease by 120.5 billion Rupiah. The decline in tourist numbers in 2024 is an important signal for local governments and tourism industry players to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the promotion and destination management strategies implemented. In today's digital era, one solution is to develop technology- and innovation-based strategies. (Cirebon City Open Data, 2025) (Afina et al., 2022)

The decline in the number of tourists indicates that the current management and promotion of tourism in Cirebon City have not been able to address the challenges posed by the changing preferences of modern tourists, who tend to be digital-native and seek comfort, uniqueness, and memorable experiences. The Cirebon City Government has not been able to fully develop a breakthrough work program that positions tourism as a regional flagship program. Although efforts are underway to optimize the performance of digital-based services and the use of social media and the Cirebon Wistakon application for promotion, management, and use, the current system is still considered suboptimal, and there is a need for renewal or improvement of the application system. There is a need to improve the integration of more advanced technologies, and the report also notes the lack of ready-to-use information media for tourists.

The Cirebon City Government, through the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP), also launched the Tourism Satpol PP program, which is tasked with maintaining security in tourism areas and recreational activities in Cirebon City. This program aims to provide comfort to tourists and support the growth of the tourism sector in Cirebon City. Satpol PP Tourism will be responsible for handling various disturbances that may occur in tourist destinations or during tourism activities in Cirebon City. Currently, the Cirebon City Government also has a potential icon: the Cirebon City Mask Museum, which houses a collection of 621 masks. Then, the Cirebon City Government is also building a Tourist Marker in the Palace Area, which is expected to increase tourist numbers.

Digital transformation and innovation are a must for Cirebon tourism to remain competitive. Literature on Cultural Inheritance-Based Innovation shows that it can create new appeal without sacrificing existing original values. Technologies such as augmented reality, mobile applications, and interactive digital platforms have also been proven to improve the visitor experience and expand the reach of destination promotions. Several previous studies on the development of cultural and religious tourism in several regions have found that the importance of collaboration between stakeholders, local community involvement, cultural preservation, and the use of technology 4.0 in tourism development strategies. The strategy has proven effective not only in increasing the number of tourists but also in supporting the sustainable development of the local economy. (Wang et al., 2023) (Indrawati et al., 2023; Park et al., 2023) (Ferdian et al., 2025; Sukono et al., 2023) (Giotis & Papadionysiou, 2022; Essay et al., 2025)

The development of religious and cultural tourism in Cirebon City must be comprehensively designed, combining the preservation of traditional values with the application of digital innovation as the main strategy. Strengthening digital promotion, providing technology-based facilities, improving local human resources through digital literacy, and creating a technology-based tourism ecosystem are crucial steps. Thus, this research is important for formulating a strategy for the development of religious and cultural tourism in Cirebon City based on technology and innovation, as an effort to address today's challenges and maximize existing potential in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism

Etymologically, the word "tourism" comes from Sanskrit; actually, it does not mean "tourisme" or "tourism". The word "tourism" is synonymous with "tour". The word tourism consists of two tribes, namely "pari" and "tourism". The word "pari" means "many, many times," while "tourism" means "travel," which, in this case, is synonymous with the word "travel". Tourism comes from the Sanskrit word VIS, which means "a place to stay and sit." The word then developed into Vicata in the ancient Javanese language Kawi, which means "traveling." The word tourism then acquires meaning as a trip or part of a trip carried out voluntarily and temporarily to enjoy tourist objects and attractions. Tourism, according to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, is traveling together to expand knowledge. The tourism component consists of 6A, namely (Priyanti et al., 2022) (Khodiyat , 1992) (Ministry of Education and Culture , 2021) *Attraction, Amenities, Ancillary service, Activity, Accessibilities, and Available Package* (Buhalis , 2000) .

Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is a type of tourism product closely related to religion or the community's religion. Religion is the belief that there is a relationship between man and God Almighty, which is considered supernatural. This relationship is manifested in many ways, including doctrinal and lifestyle streams. Religious tourism refers to visiting places that have an important meaning for religious people. These places are usually places of worship, tombs of scholars, or historical sites with a specific purpose. These advantages can be seen in terms

of history, for example, the place is the subject of myths and fairy tales, or its extraordinary and artistic architecture. (Imandintar & Idajati , 2019)

Religious tourism is a form of tourism related to the religion, history, customs, or beliefs of a people or community, and it is a routine activity to visit every year. The purpose of religious tourism is to worship and improve spirituality. In a narrow sense, religious tourism is defined as visiting all the world's tombs. Religious tourism, in a broad sense, is any tourism that incorporates Islamic values. There is a difference between sharia tourism and conventional tourism, namely, several aspects, including the type of object, worship facilities, culinary offerings, destinations and targets, tour guides, relationships with the community in the tourist attraction environment, and the tourist travel agenda presented. (Adiyati et al., 2019) (A. Rohman & Fauzi, 2017)

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is a form of tourism activity stimulated by the presence of tourist objects, such as local cultural art products, including customs, ceremonies, religion, the way of life of the local community, historical relics, art, folk crafts, and so on. Cultural tourism, in general, is a trip that aims to explore customs, arts, and historical sites, such as temples, palaces, forts, and ancestral tombs. Cultural tourism in the tourism industry is one of the main elements and plays an important role. Many tourists visit a place just to observe the customs of a community and its way of life, art, and history, including buildings, temples, forts, and other historical relics. Culture-based tourism is a type of tourism activity that uses culture as its object. In some literature, several definitions of cultural tourism are mentioned. Each tourist attraction has its own attraction. Cultural tourism is a form of tourism activity stimulated by the presence of tourist objects, such as local cultural art products, including customs, ceremonies, religion, the way of life of the local community, historical relics, art, folk crafts, and so on. (Watson et al., 2023) (Solemnity et al., 2020) (Fahmi et al., 2023)

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a method of developing conditions and evaluating a problem, project or business concept based on internal (internal) and external factors (external, namely strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), this method is most often used in business evaluation methods to find strategies that will be carried out SWOT analysis only describes the situation that occurs not just solving problems. SWOT analysis is the systematic identification

of various factors to formulate strategies that are expected to solve a problem. This analysis is based on logic that can maximize strengths ((Rangkuti, 2017) *strengths*), and opportunities (*opportunities*), but together can minimize weaknesses and threats (*threats*). Then, the SWOT analysis in tourism can be classified into the Internal Environment and the External Environment. (Lestari & Tripalupi , 2021)

METHODS

The type of research to be used is quantitative descriptive, which aims to describe a phenomenon or characteristic associated with a population. (Schindler & Cooper, 2019) This study uses tourism component research indicator instruments adapted from Buhalis (2000) and SWOT analysis from Lestari & Tripalupi (2021). The sampling method is purposive. The sample comprises visitors, individuals, and organizations who are aware of the development of religious and cultural tourism. In determining the number of samples, the researcher uses the theory of Hair et al. (2014), which recommends a minimum of 10 samples, or 5 times the total number of dimensions/indicators, whichever is greater. Based on the researcher's conditions and capabilities, the sample count, with 33 indicators, will be multiplied by 5. So a sample size of 165 respondents was obtained. In conducting quantitative analysis, the researcher uses descriptive methods (Sugiyono, 2018). The data analysis method in this study uses descriptive analysis with the Microsoft Excel data processing application. The stages of data analysis begin with data collection, then processing (editing, coding, tabulation), presentation (tables/graphs), and interpretation using descriptive statistics. (Njeri Mugwe & Runo, 2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

Based on an analysis of 165 respondents at cultural and religious tourism locations in Cirebon City, the profile of tourists turned out to be dominated by women (60%) and the younger generation with an age range under 25 years old (61.2%). In line with this age profile, the majority of visitors are students (57.6%). In terms of geographical reach, this tourist attraction is not only in demand among local residents of Cirebon City (24.2%), but also attracts more regional tourists, especially from Bandung (33.3%), and foreign tourists, such as those from Malaysia (3.6%). In addition, this tourist destination has proven capable of creating high loyalty, as shown by most respondents (37.6%) who have visited more than five times,

indicating that cultural and religious tourism in Cirebon has a strong and sustainable attraction for young, educated people.

Quantitative Analysis

Based on Table 1, the evaluation of the visual attractiveness indicator showed very superior results. Of the 165 respondents, the absolute majority, namely 121 respondents (73%) gave a very good assessment. Meanwhile, 40 respondents (24%) rated it well, and only 4 respondents (3%) rated it quite well. The dominance of this response reflects that tourist attractions in Cirebon, such as the Palace, Sunyaragi Cave, the Great Mosque of Sang Cipta Rasa, and historical temples, have high architecture, aesthetics, and historical value. The small number who consider it quite good is likely motivated by maintenance issues or limited interpretation of cultural sites. Thus, visual appeal is a major strength that can be enhanced through technologies such as virtual tours, augmented reality (AR), and digital storytelling to attract foreign tourists and younger visitors.

The results of data collection show the following:

Table 1. Evaluation of the Religious and Cultural Tourism Component of Cirebon City

Yes	Tourism Component	Pretty				
		Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Good (%)	Not Good (%)	Very Bad (%)
1	Something to see	73	24	3	-	-
2	Something to do	39	47	3	1	-
3	Something to buy	16	50	33	1	-
4	Tourist travel map	12	36	42	9	1
5	Transportation access	14	64	20	2	-
6	Transportation costs	32	44	23	1	-
7	Travel time	12	56	32	-	-
8	Access information tourist	24	59	16	1	-
9	Accommodation	31	41	27	1	-
10	Culinary / Restaurant	11	65	23	1	-
11	Entertainment	22	54	20	4	-
12	Places of Worship	46	44	10	-	-
13	Souvenir Sales	20	42	36	1	1
14	Hygiene	33	44	18	5	-

15	Hospitality	32	52	15	1	-
16	Activities support	18	52	29	1	-
17	Activity costs	32	41	25	2	-
18	Ready-made package	15	54	30	1	-
19	Tailored-made package	13	53	33	1	-
20	Financial Services	9	48	33	5	5
21	Healthcare	11	32	36	20	1
22	Communication Services	15	51	29	4	1

Regarding the indicators of activities that can be carried out, as many as 78 respondents (47%) answered well. The rest, 64 respondents (39%), answered very well; 21 respondents (3%) were quite good; and 2 respondents (1%) were not good. This shows that, although there are activities such as cultural tours, religious ceremonies, and art performances, the variety remains limited. The main challenge is to enrich the experience by offering interactive activities, such as palace batik workshops, culinary specialties, digital history exhibitions, and application-based education packages. This innovation will make tourism more *experience-based* according to the needs of modern tourists.

Regarding the availability of souvenirs or souvenir products, 82 respondents (50%) rated it well. On the other hand, 54 respondents (33%) rated it quite well, 27 respondents (16%) rated it very good, and 2 respondents (1%) rated it not good. This means that although typical products such as batik, empal barrels, and handicrafts are available, not all destinations can offer a variety of high-quality, easily accessible products. The low rating is very good, showing the need for innovation in *merchandising* and local marketing strategies. The development of digital platforms for online sales and the facilitation of *cashless payments* in tourist locations is crucial to strengthening the creative economy ecosystem.

The tourist map indicator shows that 69 respondents (42%) answered quite well. The rest, 59 respondents (36%), answered well; 20 respondents (12%) were very good; 15 respondents (9%) were not good; and 2 respondents (1%) were very poor. The percentage of satisfaction centered in the middle indicates that the direction guides and information about tourist locations are not optimal. The limitations of digital maps and integrated information boards make it difficult for tourists. The development of *app-based smart tourism maps*, *QR*

codes, and integration with Google Maps is urgent to help visitors plan routes and find nearby facilities easily.

For transportation access to religious and cultural tourist destinations, the majority, namely 105 respondents (64%) gave a good assessment. Meanwhile, 33 respondents (20%) rated it quite well, 23 respondents (14%) rated it very good, and 4 respondents (2%) rated it not good. Transportation financing indicators, as many as 73 respondents (44%) answered well. Furthermore, 37 respondents (23%) answered quite well, 53 respondents (32%) were very good, and 2 respondents (1%) were not good. These findings show that cost accessibility is very affordable for most travelers. This indicates that religious and cultural tourism in Cirebon is highly competitive in terms of travel affordability. Based on the travel time efficiency indicator, 93 respondents (56%) rated it well. The rest, 52 respondents (32%) answered quite well, and 20 respondents (12%) were very good. This shows that location access is not too difficult, but there are still opportunities to improve time efficiency by improving the quality of public transportation or traffic engineering management on congested tourist routes.

Indicators of ease of access to information, 97 respondents (59%) stated that it was good. A total of 26 respondents (16%) rated it as quite good, 40 respondents (24%) rated it as very good, and 2 respondents (1%) rated it as not good. This figure shows that information about destinations is relatively easy to obtain through digital and conventional media. However, the presence of respondents who rated it as quite good and not good indicates the importance of increasing digital promotion, providing on-site physical information centers, and optimizing social media algorithms.

Lodging indicators show that 68 respondents (41%) answered well. While 45 respondents (27%) answered quite well, 45 respondents (31%) answered very well, and 1 respondent (1%) answered not well. Accommodation in Cirebon has proven to support the needs of tourists who stay for more than one day. Even so, the 27% share in the category is quite good, suggesting a need to increase the variety of lodging classes, comfort levels, and support services.

Culinary and Restaurant Culinary is one of the strongest supporters, with 107 respondents (65%) rating it well. A total of 38 respondents (23%) rated it as quite good, 18 respondents (11%) rated it as very good, and 2 respondents (1%) rated it as not good. This figure proves that local gastronomy is the main supporting attraction. The existence of a small minority that considers it bad must be a constructive input for business actors in maintaining standards of taste, service levels, and cleanliness. Entertainment indicators show that 89

respondents (54%) give a good rating. The rest, 34 respondents (20%) were quite good, 36 respondents (22%) were very good, and 6 respondents (4%) were not good. Although art and cultural performances are well appreciated, the distribution of these entertainment facilities is considered uneven across destinations and still needs further innovation in formats to be more stunning.

Facilities for places of worship, 73 respondents (44%) rated it good. A total of 17 respondents (10%) answered quite well, and 75 respondents (46%) answered very well. This indicator shows that the worship infrastructure in Cirebon is very adequate in terms of comfort and accessibility. The remaining 10% of respondents who rated it as good enough served as an alarm for managers to pay close attention to the capacity and cleanliness of the worship hall during the peak holiday season.

Regarding the ease and quality of selling souvenirs, 70 respondents (42%) answered "well." In addition, 59 respondents (36%) rated it quite well, 34 respondents (20%) rated it very good, and 1 respondent (1%) rated it not good and very bad, respectively. This evaluation shows that the packaging's creativity and the uniqueness of products that reflect Cirebon's authentic identity still have a lot of room to grow. Stricter product curation is needed to maintain quality in the market.

The cleanliness of the tourist environment was rated good by 73 respondents (44%). A total of 29 respondents (18%) answered quite well, 54 respondents (33%) were very good, and 5% (or about 8 respondents) rated it not good. Although most sites are maintained, the negative response to the hygiene aspect demands serious attention to an integrated waste management system and to improving public sanitation facilities. The friendliness of the community and tourism actors showed that 86 respondents (52%) rated it well. A total of 25 respondents (15%) rated it quite well, 53 respondents (32%) were very good, and 1% (or about 2 respondents) were not good. The culture of hospitality has proven to be a crucial factor that supports the cultural tourism experience. Therefore, the standardization of excellent service rooted in local hospitality must be preserved and incorporated into tourism human resource training.

Activity Support Facilities: A total of 86 respondents (52%) rated the supporting facilities as good. While 48 respondents (29%) rated it quite well, 29 respondents (18%) rated it very good, and 1% were not good. Essential facilities such as public toilets, waiting rooms, and information centers in tourist destinations require increased maintenance to ensure a harmonious, evenly distributed quality across each area of the tourist attraction. Activity Costs Regarding the affordability of tourism activity costs, 68 respondents (41%) stated that it was

good. Meanwhile, 41 respondents (25%) answered quite well, 52 respondents (32%) were very good, and 2% answered not well. Broadly speaking, the levy and activity costs are considered quite affordable. However, pricing governance must still be evaluated to ensure it is proportionate and transparent, in line with the quality of the facilities enjoyed by visitors.

The indicator of readiness for instant tour packages showed that 89 respondents (54%) rated it well. A total of 50 respondents (30%) answered quite well, 25 respondents (15%) were very good, and 1% were not good. This proves that the available packages have helped tourists plan their trips. However, the large number in the category is quite good, indicating the need to diversify the tour package themes to accommodate more specific tourist segments. Regarding the option to adjust the tour package, 87 respondents (53%) gave a good rating. A total of 55 respondents (33%) answered quite well, 21 respondents (13%) were very good, and 1% were not good. These findings require travel agents to increase their operational flexibility so that travelers can freely modify itineraries to suit their personal preferences.

Financial services showed 79 respondents (48%) rated it well. However, 54 respondents (33%) answered quite well, 16 respondents (9%) answered very well, 8 respondents (5%) answered not well, and 8 respondents (5%) answered very poorly. The high level of dissatisfaction with this indicator is clear evidence that the availability of automated teller machines (ATMs), QRIS integration, and digital banking transaction literacy in tourist areas has not been optimal, and that management should accelerate digitalization. Health services are the indicator with the most worrying report cards. Only 53 respondents (32%) rated it well. A total of 60 respondents (36%) answered quite well; 18 respondents (11%) answered very good; 32 respondents (20%) answered not well; and 1% answered very poorly. A very significant deficit in this aspect indicates the lack of availability of health posts, P3K, or emergency response protocols on site. Improvements in this sector are essential to ensure tourists' safety, security, and peace of mind. On the communication service indicator, 85 respondents (51%) answered well. A total of 48 respondents (29%) rated it quite well, 25 respondents (15%) rated it very good, 6 respondents (4%) rated it not good, and 1 respondent (0.5%) rated it very poor. In general, mobile internet network infrastructure is adequate, but complaints in some areas indicate the presence of signal blind spots that can hinder tourists from accessing tourist guide applications or sharing their documentation on social media.

The main findings of this study provide empirical evidence that visual attraction (something to see) in Cirebon City's cultural and religious heritage is the main anchor supporting the resilience of regional tourism. An evaluation showing that 73% of respondents

rated this aspect very well proves that the architectural charm and historical value of the Palace, Sunyaragi Cave, and local temples are highly competitive. In the post-pandemic global tourism landscape, relying solely on physical conservation is not enough to sustain interest in travel, especially among younger travelers and international tourists. (Sharma et al., 2021)

Transformation towards a *Smart Tourism Destination* (STD) through the use of immersive technology is a strategic imperative. The integration of (Wei et al., 2024) *Augmented Reality* (AR), *Virtual Reality* (VR), and *digital storytelling* at historical sites in Cirebon can change how tourists consume cultural information. According to, immersive technology provides an ideal environment for tourism promotion while increasing visitor satisfaction as the boundaries between the real and virtual worlds blur. In line with that, it found that the application of AR in educational and cultural tourism significantly increases tourists' visual engagement. By digitizing Cirebon's historical artifacts, managers are not only preserving the collective memory but also creating a sustainable smart tourism ecosystem. Pratisto et al. (2022) Bahari et al. (2025) (Fatma & Bhatt, 2026)

Although visual attractions were rated as very good, *the "something to do" and "something to buy (souvenirs)" indicators still showed results concentrated in the "good" and "quite good" categories.* This indicates stagnation in tourism product innovation. The concept of modern tourism demands a transition from mere sightseeing to experience-based tourism (Kilichan & Yilmaz, 2020). Click or tap here to enter text. The limited number of tailored *tour packages* and local entertainment options requires diversification through interactive workshops, such as palace batik training or Cirebon culinary cooking classes. The lowest levels of satisfaction in the souvenir sales (only 20% very good) and financial services indicators (10% very poor) indicate that the supply chain of the creative economy has not been digitized well. emphasized that smart destinations must integrate advanced technology to create transaction efficiency, provide competitive advantages, and balance the well-being of local communities. The implementation of contactless digital payment systems (such as QRIS) and the development of Gelbman's (2020) *local e-commerce* platforms have proven essential in boosting the turnover of MSMEs around tourist areas. The digitization of financial services not only provides convenience but also serves as an instrument of financial inclusion for actors in sustainable tourism. (Susanto et al., 2022) (Samancioglu et al., 2024)

One of the most crucial findings is the low assessment of health service indicators. As many as 20% of respondents assessed health facilities in the Cirebon religious tourism area as "not good". In the contemporary tourism paradigm, soft *infrastructure*, including medical

emergency services and safety, is a key determinant of a destination's competitiveness. Public awareness of health risks has increased dramatically; travelers are now prioritizing destinations with clear safety protocols and medical response plans. It also highlighted that elderly-friendly destinations, relevant to the demographics of religious tourists, must prioritize accessibility and health support facilities. Ignoring this aspect can be fatal to the tourism ecosystem's resilience in the face of future shocks. Moreover, previous research has affirmed the increasingly strong two-way relationship between the quality of tourism and the guaranteed (Luštický & Štumpf, 2021) (Zheng et al., 2021) Lee (2025) (OECD, 2022) Konstantopoulou et al. (2024) *well-being* or welfare of visitors.

Another managerial weakness is seen in the tourist travel map indicator, where 42% of respondents rate it as "quite good". This indicates that the tourist mobility guide has not been intelligently integrated. explained that in religious tourism destinations, navigation services based on Seal et al. (2025) *Geographic Information Systems* (GIS) and spatial maps are crucial for analyzing crowd density (crowd management) and streamlining pilgrimage routes. The integration of smart QR codes and centralized navigation apps will ensure tourists can map transportation facilities, culinary areas, and public toilets in *real-time* (Vodák et al., 2021). Quality of Amenities, Hospitality, and Role of Human Resource Capacity as a whole, indicators related to resident friendliness (52% good), accommodation (41% good), culinary (65% good), and places of worship (46% very good) show very adequate social capital and basic facilities. Cultural tourism is rooted in human interaction and cultural hospitality. This positive evaluation must be maintained as an authentic differentiation of Cirebon destinations. However, the assessment of the cleanliness of supporting facilities (18% good and 5% not good) revealed inconsistent service standards across destinations.

The solution to this problem depends on the development of tourism human resources. emphasizing that ongoing education and training for tour guides, cultural heritage managers, and accommodation staff will have a direct impact on improving the quality of services provided to tourists. The management of amenity by a trained workforce not only increases visitor satisfaction but also the probability of repeat visits. Collaborative efforts among city governments, universities, and local communities are urgently needed to evaluate the feasibility of destination-development priority policies. Ultimately, technological innovation cannot run alone; it must go hand in hand with green tourism initiatives and sustainable management so that the Marathon Cover & São Paulo (2020) (Zechariah, 2024) *Smart Tourism*

Technology Experience (STTE) can truly create holistic happiness and satisfaction for tourists. (Amin et al., 2025; Yuksel et al., 2024)

CONCLUSIONS

The management of religious and cultural tourism in Cirebon City has significant potential in its history and palace heritage, but its development remains hampered by limited infrastructure, low-quality human resources (HR), and suboptimal technology adoption and integration across stakeholders. To optimize opportunities in the digital era, a sustainable tourism development strategy must rely on technological innovations, such as integrated tourism applications, virtual tours (AR/VR), e-ticketing, digital payment systems, and the digitization of cultural archives, to increase visibility, accessibility, and interactive experiences for tourists. Therefore, it is highly recommended that there be a strong synergy between local governments, destination managers, and tourism actors to build a digital tourism ecosystem through strengthening regulations, infrastructure support, and increasing the digital literacy capacity of human resources, so that Cirebon's cultural heritage remains sustainable and globally competitive, especially in attracting the interest of the younger generation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adiyati, A., Sardjono, A. B., & Murtini, T. W. (2019). Religious tourism activities in the change of settlements in the historic area of Menara Kudus. *Journal of Architecture ARCADE*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.31848/arcade.v3i2.258>
- Adriyani, R., Erna, E., & Indrianto, R. (2023). Development of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Based on Digital Heritage. *Exchall: Economic Challenge*, 5(1).
- Afina, R., Qatrunnada, H., Amabel Kirani, H., Kencana, W. H., Budilaksono, S., Febrianty, F., & Gantina, D. (2022). Marketing Strategy for Tourism Villages Based on Information and Technology. *IKRAITH-Technology*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.37817/ikraith-teknologi.v6i3.2302>
- Amin, S. Bin, Khandaker, M. K., Samia, B. I., Khan, F., & Taghizadeh-Hesary, F. (2025). Fostering sustainable tourism through digital innovation and green tourism initiatives in Bangladesh. *Sustainable Futures*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sfr.2025.100841>
- Bahari, A. O., Amol, F., Pradana, D. W., & Iswanto, D. (2025). Analysis of the Experience of Using Augmented Reality Applications for Educational Tourism. *Research Horizon*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.54518/rh.5.2.2025.542>
- Buhalis, D. (2000). Tourism Management Special Issue: The Competitive Destination Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management*, 21(1).
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publication.

- Damayanti, B., Nurajijah, S., & Ali, M. N. (2023). Sunyaragi Cave as a Historical Tourism in Cirebon. *JETOUR: Journal of Sharia Tourism and Hospitality*, 1(2).
- Fahmi, A., Suyasa, I. M., & Agusman, A. (2023). ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF SASAK ENDE VILLAGE AS A CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTION IN SENGKOL VILLAGE, PUJUT DISTRICT, CENTRAL LOMBOK REGENCY. *Journal Of Responsible Tourism*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.47492/jrt.v3i2.2860>
- Fatma, A., & Bhatt, V. (2026). Conceptualizing smart tourism ecosystem: multi-level framework integrating smart technologies and stakeholders for value Co-creation. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-06-2025-0693>
- Ferdian, F., Bina Bangsa Munawaroh, U., Bina Bangsa Jl Raya Serang, U., & Cipocok Jaya, K. (2025). Digital Transformation in Developing Cultural and Religious Tourism in Old Banten. *Scientific Journal of Student Research*, 2(1), 343–355. <https://doi.org/10.61722/jirs.v2i1.3666>
- Gelbman, A. (2020). Smart tourism cities and sustainability. In *Geography Research Forum* (Vol. 40, Number 1).
- Giotis, G., & Papadionysiou, E. (2022). The Role of Managerial and Technological Innovations in the Tourism Industry: A Review of the Empirical Literature. In *Sustainability (Switzerland)* (Vol. 14, Number 9). MDPI. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14095182>
- Imandintar, D. D., & Idajati, H. (2019). Characteristics of Religious Tourism Villages in the Development of Bejagung Village as a Religious Tourism Village. *ITS Engineering Journal*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.12962/j23373539.v8i2.48404>
- Indrawati, L. R., Laut, L. T., & Taufik, I. (2023). Touch of Technology 4.0 as Innovation and Business Strategy for the Development of Ngargogondo Tourism Village. *Journal of E-Bis*, 7(2), 637–646. <https://doi.org/10.37339/e-bis.v7i2.1315>
- Istiyanto, R., Usman, F., & Hasyim, A. W. (2025). TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN KUNCEN VILLAGE FOR ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT OF THE KUNCEN COMMUNITY. *Journal of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness (JEPA)*, (1). <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jepa.2025.009.01.19>
- Ministry of Education and Culture. (2021). The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language," in The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language. *Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language*.
- Khodiyat, R. (1992). *Dictionary of Tourism and Hospitality*. Grammar.
- Kilichan, R., & Yilmaz, M. (2020). Artificial intelligence and robotic technologies in tourism and hospitality industry. *Erciyes üniversitesi social bilimler enstitüsü dergisi*, (50). <https://doi.org/10.48070/erusosbilder.838193>
- Konstantopoulou, C., Varelas, S., & Liargovas, P. (2024). Well-Being and Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review. In *Economies* (Vol. 12, Number 10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies12100281>
- Lee, T. J. (2025). The role of tourism in healthy aging: interdisciplinary perspectives on well-being, accessibility and their policy implications. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-08-2024-1209>
- Lestari, L., & Tripalupi, L. E. (2021). SWOT Analysis of the Potential and Attraction of Osing Kemiren Tourism in the Context of the Development of Osing Kemiren Traditional Village, Glagah District, Banyuwangi Regency in 2021. *Journal of Economic Education Undiksha*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.23887/jjpe.v13i2.35511>
- Luštický, M., & Štumpf, P. (2021). Leverage points of tourism destination competitiveness dynamics. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100792>

- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- OECD. (2022). *Building resilience in the tourism ecosystem*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/efa87744-en>
- Cirebon City Open Data. (2025, May 27). *Regional Original Revenue (PAD) of the Cirebon City Tourism Sector in 2022-2024*. <https://opendata.cirebonkota.go.id/dataset/pendapatan-asli-daerah-pad-sektor-pariwisata>.
- Park, H., Lee, M., & Back, K. J. (2023). A critical review of technology-driven service innovation in hospitality and tourism: current discussions and future research agendas. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(12), 4502–4534. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-07-2022-0875>
- Pratisto, E. H., Thompson, N., & Potdar, V. (2022). Immersive technologies for tourism: a systematic review. In *Information Technology and Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-022-00228-7>
- Priyanti, S. E., Sugiarto, E., & Wiweka, K. (2022). *Introduction to Tourism Science*. DOTPLUS Publisher. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363436717>
- Ramadhanty, G., Setianti, Y., & Warta, W. (2024). ANALYSIS OF CIREBON CITY BRANDING AS A CULTURE-BASED TOURISM CITY. *Citizen : Indonesian Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal*, 4(3), 205–217. <https://doi.org/10.53866/jimi.v4i3.610>
- Rangkuti. (2017). SWOT Analysis-Techniques for Dissecting Business Cases. How to Calculate Weight, Rating, and OCAI. In *Publisher PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama*.
- Rohman, A., & Fauzi, Moh. Q. (2017). Economic Impact on the Income of Stall Traders in the Religious Tourism of the Tomb of Sunan Drajat Lamongan. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sharia Economics*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.20473/vol3iss20162pp114-126>
- Rohman, F. (2025, January 24). *Cirebon City targets 2.6 million tourist visits by 2025*. <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/4606346/kota-cirebon-targetkan-kunjungan-26-juta-wisatawan-pada-2025>.
- Samancioglu, E., Kumlu, S., & Ozkul, E. (2024). Smart tourism destinations and sustainability: evidence from the tourism industry. In *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes* (Vol. 16, Number 6). <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-07-2024-0167>
- Seal, M., Singh, P., & Sharma, D. (2025). Transforming visitors' experiences and site management: Role of technology in enhancing services at religious tourism destinations. In *Technology and Religious Tourism: Emerging Trends, Cases and Futuristic Perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83662-260-420251004>
- Sharma, G. D., Thomas, A., & Paul, J. (2021). Reviving tourism industry post-COVID-19: A resilience-based framework. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100786>
- Solemede, I., Tamaneha, T., Selfanay, R., Solemede, M., & Walunaman, K. (2020). STRATEGY FOR RESTORING THE POTENTIAL OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN MALUKU PROVINCE (An Analytical Study in the Transition Period of the New Normal). *NOUMENA: Journal of Social Humanities and Religion*, 1(1).
- Sukono, Widiyanto, H., & Supriyanto, A. E. (2023). Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy Based on Cultural Heritage in the City of Surakarta. *Journal of Bengawan Solo, Center for Regional Research and Development Studies, Surakarta*, 2(2), 130–143. <https://doi.org/10.58684/jbs.v2i2.60>

- Susanto, E., Hendrayati, H., Rahtomo, W. R., & Prawira, M. F. A. (2022). Adoption of Digital Payments for Travelers and Tourism Destinations. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.254>
- Vodák, J., Šulyová, D., & Kubina, M. (2021). Advanced technologies and their use in smart city management. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13105746>
- Wang, M. Y., Li, Y. Q., Ruan, W. Q., Zhang, S. N., & Li, R. (2023). Cultural inheritance-based innovation at heritage tourism destinations: Conceptualization, structural dimensions and scale development. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 55, 118–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.03.009>
- Waqanimaravu, M., & Arasanmi, C. N. (2020). Employee training and service quality in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 23(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2020.1724850>
- Watoni, A., Mahsun, M., & Suteja, I. W. (2023). DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM POTENTIAL IN SEMBAGEK HAMLET, SUKADANA VILLAGE, BAYAN DISTRICT. *Journal Of Responsible Tourism*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.47492/jrt.v3i1.2725>
- Wei, W., Önder, I., & Uysal, M. (2024). Smart tourism destination (STD): developing and validating an impact scale using residents' overall life satisfaction. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 27(17). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2296587>
- Yuksel, F., Kement, U., Dogan, S., Erkol Bayram, G., Bayar, S. B., & Cobanoglu, C. (2024). Effect of smart tourism technology experience (STTE) on tourist satisfaction and tourist happiness in Bordeaux: the mediation role of self-gratification. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-06-2024-0119>
- Zakaria, J. (2024). Sustainable Tourism as an Economic Development Model in Evaluation and Prospects of Priority Tourism Destination Development Policy in Indonesia. *Journal of Public Service Management*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.24198/jmpp.v8i2.54183>
- Zheng, D., Luo, Q., & Ritchie, B. W. (2021). Afraid to travel after COVID-19? Self-protection, coping and resilience against pandemic 'travel fear.' *Tourism Management*, 83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104261>