



The November 10 Museum as a Space for Representing Surabaya's Local Cultural Identity

Diva Pancah Rini, Yudiana Indriastuti

Tourism Study Program, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: yudiana_indriastuti.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id

Abstract:

Background. Museums serve not only as institutions for preserving historical heritage but also as spaces for representing local cultural identity. This study aims to analyze how Museum 10 November represents the local cultural identity of Surabaya as a historical tourism destination. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving museum managers and visitors.

Aim. This study aims to analyze how Museum 10 November represents the local cultural identity of Surabaya through its historical narratives, collections, and exhibition displays.

Methods. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model.

Results. The findings show that Museum 10 November represents Surabaya's local cultural identity through narratives of heroism, the values of *Arek Suroboyo*, cultural diversity, historical collections, and exhibition displays that strengthen visitors' understanding of the city's history and local identity.

Conclusions. The study concludes that Museum 10 November functions as a medium for representing Surabaya's local cultural identity and contributes to strengthening cultural awareness through historical tourism experiences.

Keywords: Cultural representation, Local cultural identity, Museum 10 November, Surabaya, Identity



© 2026 The Author(s). This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source.

INTRODUCTION

The current development of tourism is not only focused on recreational visits but also geared toward educational experiences that introduce tourists to a region's history, culture, and identity. One form of tourism undergoing this development is cultural tourism, which provides tourists with the opportunity to understand cultural values, traditions, history, and the characteristics of local communities through various interpretive media. Museums, as institutions dedicated to preserving cultural heritage, serve a broader purpose than simply

serving as repositories for historical collections. Through the processes of curation, collection presentation, historical narration, exhibition design, and the interpretations provided to visitors, museums shape the public's perspective on specific events or cultural identities. Stuart Hall (2013) explains that representation is the process of producing meaning through language, symbols, and various systems of signs.

As one of Indonesia's largest cities, Surabaya has a strong local cultural identity that has been shaped by its long history. The city is known as the "City of Heroes" because it was the site of the Battle of November 10, 1945, one of the most significant events in the history of Indonesia's struggle for independence. In addition to being synonymous with heroism, the people of Surabaya are also known for their distinctive character, known as "Arek Suroboyo," which is a character that. One institution that plays a key role in representing this cultural identity is the 10 November Museum in Surabaya. The museum was built to honor the struggle of the people of Surabaya to defend Indonesia's independence and has become a popular historical tourist destination visited by schoolchildren, college students, the general public, and tourists alike. Through its collection of weapons, dioramas depicting the struggle, historical archives, documentary photographs, recordings of Bung Tomo's speeches. This presentation aims not only to provide historical information but also to foster visitors' understanding of the local cultural values inherent in Surabaya society.

Nevertheless, the representation of local culture in museums cannot be understood as something objective or neutral. Every collection, narrative, and exhibition layout is the result of a process of selection, interpretation, and construction of meaning carried out by museum administrators. Therefore, it is important to examine how the 10 November Museum represents the local cultural identity of the city of Surabaya through the various forms of presentation displayed to visitors. This study is relevant because cultural representations in museums influence how the public understands a region's identity while also reinforcing the museum's role as a medium for cultural education and the preservation of local heritage.

Previous studies on the 10 November Museum have generally focused on the museum's role as a medium for historical education, the promotion of nationalism, museum management, and its appeal as a historical tourist attraction. While these studies have contributed to our understanding of the museum's role from the perspectives of education and tourism, they remain limited in their examination of the museum as a space for the representation of local cultural identity. Meanwhile, research on the representation of local

culture has primarily focused on cultural heritage sites, community traditions, and other cultural tourism destinations. Consequently, studies on how the 10 November Museum represents the local cultural identity of the city of Surabaya remain relatively limited and require more in-depth analysis.

This study aims to analyze the representation of Surabaya's local culture at the 10 November Museum as a historical tourist destination. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of research on cultural tourism and museology, particularly regarding the role of museums in representing local cultural identity. In addition, this study is expected to provide input to the management of the 10 November Museum in developing a more comprehensive strategy for presenting its collections and interpreting culture, so that the museum is recognized not only as a symbol of national heroism but also as a means of preserving the local cultural identity of the city of Surabaya.

The novelty of this study lies in applying Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation to analyze Museum 10 November as a cultural representational space that constructs Surabaya's local identity through historical narratives, exhibition design, symbolic collections, and visitor interpretation. Unlike previous studies focusing primarily on historical education and tourism, this research integrates cultural representation, local identity construction, and visitor meaning-making within a single analytical framework

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the representation of Surabaya's local cultural identity at Museum 10 November as a historical tourism destination. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, meanings, and cultural representations constructed through museum exhibitions and visitors' interpretations. The research was conducted at Museum 10 November Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. The research subjects consisted of museum managers and visitors who were selected using purposive sampling. Museum managers were chosen because they possess knowledge regarding the museum's exhibition concepts, historical narratives, and cultural interpretation, while visitors were selected based on their experiences in observing and interpreting the museum exhibitions.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine the museum's exhibition layout, collections, visual displays, and cultural elements representing Surabaya's local identity. In-depth interviews

were carried out with museum managers and visitors to obtain comprehensive information regarding the representation of local culture and visitors' interpretations. Documentation, including photographs, museum archives, exhibition materials, and institutional documents, was used to support and validate the research findings. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting and organizing relevant information related to cultural representation. The organized data were then presented systematically to facilitate interpretation, followed by drawing conclusions based on recurring patterns and themes identified throughout the research process.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and technique triangulation were employed by comparing information obtained from different informants and data collection methods. Furthermore, the interpretation of the findings was guided by Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation, which explains how meanings and cultural identities are constructed through symbols, narratives, and systems of representation.

DISCUSSION

Museums have evolved from institutions dedicated solely to preserving historical collections into cultural spaces that actively construct meanings, identities, and collective memories. Contemporary cultural tourism literature recognizes museums as important destinations where visitors engage not only with historical artifacts but also with cultural narratives that shape their understanding of local identity. Previous studies have explored museum interpretation, visitor experience, heritage tourism, and cultural education, highlighting the role of museums in fostering cultural awareness and destination attractiveness (Kim, 2021; Richards, 2021; Smith & Richards, 2022).

Several scholars have also investigated the representation of local identity within heritage tourism. Rahmawati and Haryono (2024) demonstrated that heritage museums contribute to identity construction through symbolic exhibitions, while Hidayat and Nugroho (2023) emphasized that heritage tourism strengthens local identity by communicating cultural values embedded in historical narratives. Other studies have focused on museum interpretation, visitor experiences, and cultural learning (Pratiwi & Santoso, 2022; Fitriyani & Wibowo, 2023). However, these studies generally emphasize educational functions, tourism experiences, or museum management rather than examining museums as representational spaces where cultural identities are actively produced.

The findings of this study reveal that Museum 10 November represents Surabaya's local culture through historical narratives, museum collections, exhibition displays, and visitors' interpretations. The representation extends beyond documenting the events of the Battle of Surabaya on 10 November 1945, highlighting cultural values that have become integral to Surabaya's identity. Based on the analysis of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

Representation of Local Cultural Identity through Historical Narratives

The study found that historical narratives are the primary medium through which Museum 10 November represents Surabaya's local cultural identity. The museum presents historical events through dioramas, photographs, historical archives, military artifacts, and Bung Tomo's recorded speeches, enabling visitors to understand the historical significance of the Battle of Surabaya. Rather than merely presenting chronological historical information, the museum emphasizes cultural values such as courage, solidarity, patriotism, and collective struggle, which are widely associated with the identity of Surabaya's people.

Interviews with museum managers indicate that the exhibition layout and interpretative narratives were intentionally designed to demonstrate that the struggle for independence involved various segments of society regardless of ethnicity, religion, or social status. Consequently, the museum constructs an understanding that Surabaya's local identity was shaped by collective historical experiences and shared cultural values. From Stuart Hall's perspective, representation is a process through which meaning is produced and communicated through language, symbols, and cultural signs. The museum's collections and historical narratives therefore function not only as historical evidence but also as symbolic representations that construct visitors' understanding of Surabaya's cultural identity.

Representation of *Arek Suroboyo* Values

Another significant finding concerns the representation of *Arek Suroboyo* values. The museum portrays the characteristics commonly associated with Surabaya's people, including bravery, egalitarianism, solidarity, determination, and resilience. These values are illustrated through various dioramas depicting civilians, youth organizations, women, and local communities actively participating in the struggle for independence. Visitors interviewed during the study generally described Surabaya's people as courageous, outspoken, and united after visiting the museum. These perceptions were largely influenced by the museum's historical narratives, exhibition displays, and explanations provided by

museum guides. According to Hall's theory of representation, cultural identity is socially constructed rather than naturally given. The museum therefore functions as a representational space where the meaning of *Arek Suroboyo* identity is produced and communicated through historical interpretation and symbolic exhibition.

Representation of Cultural Diversity

The findings also demonstrate that Museum 10 November represents Surabaya as a multicultural city. Historical exhibitions acknowledge the participation of various ethnic communities including Javanese, Madurese, Arab, and Chinese Indonesians in defending Surabaya during the independence movement. Their involvement is represented through visual displays, historical documentation, and interpretative narratives that emphasize unity despite cultural differences. This representation suggests that Surabaya's local culture is not homogeneous but is formed through the interaction and cooperation of diverse cultural communities. The museum therefore promotes an inclusive understanding of local identity by recognizing the contribution of multiple ethnic groups to the city's historical development. This finding supports Stuart Hall's argument that cultural identity is continuously constructed through representation and social interaction. By presenting multicultural historical narratives, the museum encourages visitors to interpret Surabaya's identity as a shared cultural heritage rather than the legacy of a single community.

Museum as a Medium for Cultural Education

The study further indicates that Museum 10 November functions as an important medium for cultural education. Besides preserving historical collections, the museum utilizes various interpretative media, including dioramas, audiovisual presentations, documentary films, historical artifacts, and immersive exhibition technologies, to enhance visitors' learning and co-experiences. Interviews with visitors reveal that they gained not only historical knowledge but also a deeper understanding of Surabaya's cultural values, particularly courage, cooperation, solidarity, and patriotism. These educational experiences contribute to strengthening visitors' appreciation of local culture while reinforcing the museum's role as a cultural learning institution. The museum's educational function demonstrates that cultural representation extends beyond displaying historical objects. Instead, it involves communicating meanings and values that enable visitors to develop emotional and cultural connections with Surabaya's historical heritage.

The findings indicate that Museum 10 November serves not only as a repository of historical artifacts but also as a cultural institution that actively constructs and communicates the local cultural identity of Surabaya. Through the selection of collections, exhibition design, historical interpretation, and symbolic narratives, the museum produces meanings that influence visitors' perceptions of Surabaya as the "City of Heroes" while simultaneously introducing the cultural characteristics associated with its local community. These findings support Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation, which argues that meaning is socially constructed through systems of representation rather than simply reflecting reality. In the context of Museum 10 November, historical objects acquire cultural significance because they are interpreted within narratives that emphasize heroism, solidarity, multiculturalism, and the values of *Arek Suroboyo*. Consequently, visitors do not merely observe historical collections but actively construct meanings regarding Surabaya's local identity through their interaction with museum exhibitions.

However, the study also reveals that the museum's representation remains predominantly centered on national heroism. While local cultural identity is evident through narratives of collective struggle and community values, other dimensions of Surabaya's local culture such as traditional arts, local customs, culinary heritage, and everyday cultural practices receive comparatively limited attention. This suggests that the representation of local culture could be expanded to provide a more comprehensive portrayal of Surabaya's cultural identity. Overall, Museum 10 November has successfully fulfilled its role as a historical tourism destination and as a medium for representing local cultural identity. Strengthening the representation of broader cultural elements alongside historical narratives would further enhance visitors' understanding of Surabaya's cultural heritage and reinforce the museum's contribution to cultural preservation and sustainable cultural tourism.

Although numerous studies have discussed museums as educational institutions and historical tourism attractions, relatively little attention has been paid to the representational processes through which museums construct local cultural identities. Specifically, research concerning Museum 10 November has largely concentrated on its historical significance, nationalism, and educational roles, leaving the cultural representation of Surabaya's local identity insufficiently explored.

Furthermore, existing literature rarely applies Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation to examine how museum exhibitions, historical narratives, symbolic artifacts, and interpretative media collectively produce meanings regarding local identity. There is also a

lack of integrated analysis addressing how Museum 10 November simultaneously represents heroism, multiculturalism, and the cultural values of *Arek Suroboyo*. This conceptual gap limits current understanding of museums as cultural institutions that actively shape identity rather than merely preserve history.

The novelty of this study lies in its conceptual and analytical approach. Unlike previous research that predominantly views Museum 10 November as a historical tourism destination or educational institution, this study conceptualizes the museum as a space of cultural representation where local identity is socially constructed through historical narratives, symbolic collections, exhibition design, and visitor interpretation.

By employing Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation, this research provides a comprehensive explanation of how meanings associated with Surabaya's identity—including heroism, multiculturalism, solidarity, and the *Arek Suroboyo* ethos—are produced and communicated within museum spaces. Additionally, the study integrates museum representation, cultural tourism, and visitor interpretation into a single analytical framework, offering a more comprehensive understanding of museums as dynamic cultural institutions that contribute to identity formation and sustainable cultural tourism.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Museum 10 November plays a significant role in representing Surabaya's local cultural identity through historical narratives, museum collections, exhibition displays, and interpretative media. The representation of local culture is reflected in the values of heroism, solidarity, courage, multiculturalism, and the characteristics of *Arek Suroboyo*, which collectively shape visitors' understanding of Surabaya's identity as the City of Heroes. Guided by Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation, the findings indicate that the museum functions not merely as a repository of historical artifacts but also as a cultural space where meanings and identities are constructed and communicated through symbols, narratives, and historical interpretation.

The study also reveals that Museum 10 November serves as an important medium for cultural education by strengthening visitors' awareness of Surabaya's historical heritage and local cultural values. However, the representation of local culture remains predominantly focused on narratives of national heroism, while other aspects of Surabaya's cultural identity, such as traditional arts, local customs, culinary heritage, and everyday cultural practices, are less prominently represented. Therefore, expanding the museum's

interpretative content to incorporate broader elements of local culture would provide a more comprehensive representation of Surabaya's cultural identity. Such efforts could enhance the museum's educational function, enrich visitors' cultural experiences, and support the sustainable development of historical and cultural tourism in Surabaya.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Astuti, N. W. W., Putra, I. N. D., & Suardana, I. W. (2024). The future of green tourism in Bali: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, 15(2), 421–436.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Surabaya. (2024). *Kota Surabaya dalam angka 2024*. BPS Kota Surabaya.
- Chen, G., & Rahman, I. (2022). Cultural tourism: An analysis of engagement, cultural contact, memorable tourism experience and destination loyalty. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 41, 100953.
- Fitriyani, N., & Wibowo, A. (2023). Museum as a cultural education medium: Visitor perspectives in Indonesian museums. *Journal of Tourism Sustainability*, 3(2), 95–108.
- Hermawan, H., & Brahmanto, E. (2021). Cultural tourism development based on local wisdom in Indonesia. *Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Development Studies*, 9(1), 34–45.
- Hidayat, T., & Nugroho, S. (2023). Representation of local identity in heritage tourism destinations. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 18(5), 628–643.
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia. (2023). *Statistik museum Indonesia 2023*. Direktorat Pelindungan Kebudayaan.
- Kim, J. H. (2021). Heritage interpretation and tourist experience in cultural tourism destinations. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 16(6), 679–694.
- Pratiwi, D., & Santoso, H. (2022). Museum interpretation and visitor experience in historical tourism attractions. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 20(7), 950–967.
- Rahmawati, D., & Haryono, S. (2024). Local cultural identity representation in heritage museums: A qualitative study. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2345678.
- Richards, G. (2021). *Rethinking cultural tourism*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Smith, M. K., & Richards, G. (2022). *The Routledge handbook of cultural tourism*. Routledge.
- Suryani, T., & Setiawan, R. (2022). Museum experience and cultural identity construction among domestic tourists. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 17(4), 480–495.
- UNWTO. (2022). *Tourism and culture synergies*. World Tourism Organization.
- Wijaya, A., & Kurniawan, D. (2023). Historical tourism and cultural representation in Indonesian museums. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 9(3), 315–329.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Widayani, R. R. (1999). *Persyaratan asam amino pembatas-utama pada pakan ayam pedaging di Indonesia* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Gadjah Mada).