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The *Bejeleng* Tradition: Integrating Indigenous Spirituality into Lombok's Cultural Tourism Strategy

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Abstract

The growth of cultural tourism has intensified debates on authenticity, sustainability, and the ethical integration of indigenous practices into tourism development. In East Lombok, the *Bejeleng* tradition—a sacred Sasak ritual associated with the production of traditional coconut oil (*Minyak Jeleng*)—embodies these tensions because it is governed by strict spiritual regulations, collective participation, and ritual purity. This study examines how *Bejeleng* can be strategically integrated into Lombok's cultural tourism development without compromising its spiritual integrity. Grounded in Greg Richards' cultural tourism framework, the study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand indigenous spirituality as a collective social

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experience. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with religious leaders and ritual participants, and documentary analysis, and were analyzed through a two-stage thematic procedure combining inductive, participant-driven open coding with theoretically informed deductive interpretation based on Richards' cultural tourism framework. The findings show that integrating *Bejeleng* into cultural tourism must be selective, value-based, and community-led. Indigenous spirituality functions as a non-negotiable boundary against ritual commodification, while community leadership regulates external engagement. Tourist involvement is limited to non-ritual domains, including observation and the use of ritual-derived products, whereas economic benefits remain controlled secondary outcomes that do not alter ritual practices. This study contributes to cultural tourism scholarship by extending Richards' framework to sacred ritual production processes and demonstrating that meaningful cultural experiences can be constructed through symbolic proximity rather than direct participation.

[Perkembangan pariwisata budaya telah memperkuat perdebatan tentang autentisitas, keberlanjutan, dan integrasi etis praktik masyarakat adat dalam pengembangan destinasi. Di Lombok Timur, tradisi *Bejeleng*—ritual sakral masyarakat Sasak yang berkaitan dengan pembuatan minyak kelapa tradisional (*Minyak Jeleng*)—mencerminkan persoalan tersebut karena dijalankan dengan aturan spiritual yang ketat, partisipasi kolektif, dan prinsip kesucian ritual. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana *Bejeleng* dapat diintegrasikan secara strategis ke dalam pengembangan pariwisata budaya Lombok tanpa mengurangi integritas spiritualnya. Dengan menggunakan kerangka pariwisata budaya Greg Richards, penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis untuk memahami spiritualitas masyarakat adat sebagai pengalaman sosial kolektif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh agama dan peserta ritual, serta analisis dokumen. Data tersebut kemudian dianalisis melalui prosedur tematik dua tahap yang memadukan pengodean terbuka secara induktif berbasis perspektif partisipan dengan interpretasi deduktif yang diinformasikan secara teoretis berdasarkan kerangka pariwisata budaya Richards. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi *Bejeleng* ke dalam pariwisata budaya harus dilakukan secara selektif, berbasis nilai, dan berada di bawah kendali komunitas. Spiritualitas adat menjadi batas yang tidak dapat ditawar untuk mencegah komodifikasi ritual, sedangkan kepemimpinan komunitas mengatur keterlibatan pihak luar. Keterlibatan wisatawan dibatasi pada ranah non-ritual, seperti observasi dan penggunaan produk yang bersumber dari ritual, sementara manfaat ekonomi diposisikan sebagai dampak sekunder yang terkendali dan tidak mengubah praktik ritual. Studi ini memperluas kerangka Richards pada proses produksi ritual sakral dan menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman

budaya bermakna dapat dibangun melalui kedekatan simbolik, bukan partisipasi langsung.]

Keywords: cultural tourism; indigenous spirituality; sacred ritual; Bejeng tradition; Lombok

Introduction

Cultural tourism constitutes one of the fastest-growing segments within the global tourism market.¹ This expansion is characterized by an increasingly close interrelationship between the cultural and tourism sectors. According to OECD and UNWTO estimates, approximately 40% of tourism can be attributed to cultural tourism, indicating the substantial position of culture within the global tourism economy.² This shift is reflected in tourists' growing preference for tourism experiences that facilitate learning, cross-cultural understanding, and deeper engagement with local ways of life, rather than passive modes of travel.³ As a consequence, cultural tourism is increasingly understood not merely as an economic activity, but also as a medium for cultural preservation and the expression of identity. This changing orientation has also influenced tourism development strategies, placing issues of authenticity and the sustainability of indigenous cultural expressions at the center of contemporary academic and policy debates.

Against this global backdrop, the Indonesian context offers a particularly relevant case for examining the intersection between

¹ OECD, 'The Impact of Culture on Tourism', OECD, 2009, 10, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2008/12/the-impact-of-culture-on-tourism_g1gh9ee6/9789264040731-en.pdf. Accessed 27 June 2026.

² OECD, 'Maximising Synergies between Cultural and Creative Sectors: Discussion Paper for the G20 Tourism Working Group', 2022, 5, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/09/maximising-synergies-between-tourism-and-cultural-and-creative-sectors_dd784e39/f597b0f0-en.pdf. Accessed 27 June 2026.

³ Vivina Carreira, M Rosario González-Rodríguez, and M Carmen Díaz-Fernández, 'Cultural and Knowledge Seeking by Visitors at World Heritage Sites: The Case of Coimbra', *RPER*, no. 62 (2022): 7–19, <https://doi.org/10.59072/rper.vi62.24>; Li Xu, Jie Zhang, and Zhenghu Nie, 'Role of Cultural Tendency and Involvement in Heritage Tourism Experience: Developing A Cultural Tourism Tendency–Involvement–Experience (TIE) Model', *Land* 11, no. 3 (2022): 370, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11030370>.

cultural heritage and tourism development.⁴ This heritage includes historical sites, traditional architecture, customary rituals, and a wide range of cultural practices that involve the active participation of local communities.⁵ The continued practice of traditions across various regions has provided an important foundation for designing culturally distinctive tourism models that do not rely entirely on mass tourism.⁶ However, the growing involvement of tourists in local cultural activities has also demanded greater attention to preserving cultural authenticity, ensuring the sustainability of customary practices, and strengthening community roles and autonomy, particularly amid increasingly intense destination competition.

Beyond local practices and community-based cultural expressions, tourism has increasingly been positioned at the policy level as a strategic instrument for reinforcing cultural identity, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting sustainable development.⁷ Within this framework, cultural and spiritual tourism has gained increasing relevance due to its capacity to mediate between global market demands and efforts to preserve local values.

⁴ Risda Asfina and Ririn Ovilia, 'Be Proud of Indonesian Cultural Heritage Richness and Be Alert of Its Preservation Efforts in the Global World', *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Humaniora* 15, no. 2 (2016): 195–206, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jh.v15i2.6428>.

⁵ Ida Bagus Made Wisnu Parta and Ida Ayu Kartika Maharani, "Cultural Tourism in Indonesia: Systematic Literature Review," *Vidyottama Sanatana: International Journal of Hindu Science and Religious Studies* 7, no. 2 (31 October 2023): 189–204, <https://doi.org/10.25078/vidyottama.v7i2.2498>.

⁶ Retno Handini et al., "Sumba Megalithic Tradition: A Sustainability Perspective," *L'Anthropologie* 127, no. 3 (July 2023): 103154, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anthro.2023.103154>; Diana Hernawati, Rinaldi Rizal Putra, and Vita Meylani, "Indigenous Vegetables Consumed as Lalapan by a Sundanese Ethnic Group in West Java, Indonesia: Potential, Traditions, Local Knowledge, and It's Future," *South African Journal of Botany* 151 (December 2022): 133–45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sajb.2022.09.007>.

⁷ Upi Sopiah Ahmad, "Implementasi Pariwisata Terhadap Perekonomian Indonesia [Implementation of Tourism on the Indonesian Economy]," *Al-DYAS: Jurnal Inovasi Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 1, no. 1 (2022): 81–96, <https://doi.org/10.58578/alldyas.v1i1.1319>; Neli Aida, Ghania Atiqasani, and Widia Anggi Palupi, "The Effect of the Tourism Sector on Economic Growth in Indonesia," *Wseas Trans. Bus. Econ* 21 (2024): 1158–66, <https://doi.org/10.37394/23207.2024.21.95>; Hasan Basri et al., "Shifting Society in Response to the Tourism Industry: A Case Study of New Challenges in Lombok Utara" 4, no. 2 (2020): 183–94, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpt.63315>.

Within this broader national and policy context, East Lombok emerges as a region endowed with both rich natural resources and strong, well-preserved cultural traditions. In addition to its natural assets, such as mountains, waterfalls, agricultural landscapes, and marine resources, the region is recognized for authentic cultural practices transmitted across generations.⁸ One such practice is the *Bejeleng* tradition, a sacred ritual associated with the production of traditional coconut oil known as *Minyak Jeleng*.⁹ Strict ritual regulations, spiritual recitations, and a community-based management system characterize this tradition. Its implementation has been carried out exclusively by men at specific times. It has been intended for non-culinary purposes, such as healing and spiritual practices, including bodily protection rituals (Informant C, *Interview*, 2024). These characteristics indicate that *Bejeleng* represents a manifestation of indigenous spirituality with clearly defined sacred boundaries, and therefore cannot be treated as a conventional cultural attraction within tourism development.

The popularity of the *Bejeleng* tradition amongst the Sasak people can be understood through three main dimensions: spiritual, social, and cultural. Spiritually, this tradition is not only linked to the production of traditional coconut oil but is also regarded as a religious practice embodying the values of prayer, blessing, sanctity, and the hope for salvation. This tradition is evident in the series of recitations, prayers, and rituals that accompany the process of making *Minyak Jeleng*.¹⁰ Socially, *Bejeleng* involves collective participation by the

⁸ Baharudin Baharudin, Muhammad Adi Junaidi, and Lalu Muhammad Ariadi, "Authenticity of Traditional Houses, Islam and Cultural Tourism Products and Services," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 1 (2023): 467–99, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v23i1.776>; Siti Hamdiah Rojabi, Mahmudah Budiatiningsih, and Aryan Agus Pratama, "SWOT Analysis of Sustainable Tourism Development in Tetebatu, East Lombok," *International Journal of Tourism Business Research* 2, no. 1 (26 June 2023): 22–26, <https://doi.org/10.29303/intour.v2i1.716>.

⁹ S. Ali Jadid Al Idrus, Lenny Herlina, and Mohan Taufiq Mashuri, "The Values of Islamic Education and Science Learning in the Tradition of Jeleng Minyak 1000 Hajat," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA* 9, no. 1 (2023): 126–32, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v9i1.2913>.

¹⁰ Idrus, Herlina, and Mashuri, 'The Values of Islamic Education, 126–32. See also Lenny Herlina, 'Spiritual Education Dimensions in Bejeleng Tradition: A Sociocultural Approach to the Sasak Muslim Community in Lombok, Indonesia',

community, religious leaders, Islamic boarding schools, religious organizations, and government bodies, thereby serving as a space for social interaction that strengthens solidarity and unity across groups. This dimension is evident in the *Bejeleng* event at Pondok Pesantren Salaf Modern Thohir Yasin East Lombok, which has drawn the attention of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Government, as it aligns with strengthening unity, identity, local wisdom, and tourism.¹¹ Culturally, the popularity of *Bejeleng* is reinforced by public recognition, as evidenced by the achievement of a MURI record for the production of “*Seribu Hajat*” oil (the name of the oil), which involved thousands of worshippers from various regions of Lombok.¹² Therefore, *Bejeleng* must be preserved as this tradition represents the spiritual heritage of the Sasak people, upholds the moral authority of the pesantren and religious figures, strengthens social cohesion, and preserves cultural knowledge passed down across generations. Its preservation is vital to ensure that the development of cultural tourism in Lombok does not lead to the commodification of rituals, but remains grounded in respect for sacredness, local values, and the community’s religious identity.¹³

On this basis, this study positioned the *Bejeleng* tradition as a strategic indigenous resource in the development of cultural tourism in Lombok. By applying Richards’s cultural tourism framework to a form of production grounded in sacred ritual practice, this research addressed a dimension of cultural tourism that has remained relatively underexplored in academic discourse. Accordingly, the study was guided by the following central question: how can the sacred *Bejeleng* tradition be strategically integrated into the development of cultural tourism in Lombok?

KASTA : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Agama, Budaya Dan Terapan 6, no. 1 SE-Articles (14 April 2026): 405–420, <https://doi.org/10.58218/kasta.v6i1.2650>.

¹¹ Bidang-IKP, ‘Zikrol Hauliyah Ponpes Thohir Yasin, Gubernur NTB: Bangun Daerah Butuh Persatuan’, Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2025, <https://ntbprov.go.id/post/zikrol-hauliyah-ponpes-thohir-yasin-gubernur-ntb-bangun-daerah-butuh-persatuan#>. Accessed 27 June 2026.

¹² Awaludin, ‘Pembuatan Minyak “Seribu Hajat” Raih Rekor Muri’, Antara-NTB, 2016, <https://mataram.antaranews.com/berita/30369/pembuatan-minyak-seribu-hajat-raih-rekor-muri>. Accessed 27 June 2026.

¹³ UNESCO, ‘Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’, 2003, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention?> Accessed 27 June 2026.

In addressing this question, it is also necessary to consider Lombok's broader ambition to position itself as a cultural and spiritual tourism destination. In this context, the *Bejeleng* tradition represents an element of intangible cultural heritage that aligns with the shifting tourism trend toward immersive, transformative cultural experiences. Its ritual structure, active community involvement, and inherent spiritual meanings have demonstrated strategic relevance for the planning and management of cultural tourism at the regional level.

Despite the growing relevance of indigenous spirituality in destinations such as Lombok, previous studies on cultural tourism have primarily focused on heritage sites, tourism conflicts, and conservation challenges.¹⁴ In the Indonesian context, research has predominantly examined large-scale heritage attractions or secular cultural performances. Although some studies have addressed the commodification and transformation of local practices,¹⁵ scholarly attention to sacred ritual production processes as a strategic component of cultural tourism development has remained limited. Consequently, a knowledge gap persists regarding how to ethically and strategically integrate indigenous spirituality, community participation, and ritual practices into regional tourism planning, particularly in Lombok, where cultural and spiritual identity have been central to destination development and branding.

¹⁴ Mengyuan Jia et al., "Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Flood Risk at Cultural Heritage Sites Using a GIS-Based SCS-CN Method: A Case Study of Shanxi Province, China," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 96, no. May (2023): 103968, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2023.103968>; Fengyi Ji, Fang Wang, and Bihu Wu, "How Does Virtual Tourism Involvement Impact the Social Education Effect of Cultural Heritage?," *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 28, no. March (2023): 100779, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100779>; Rami al Shawabkeh et al., "Toward Sustainable Urban Growth: Spatial Modeling for the Impact of Cultural and Natural Heritage on City Growth and Their Role in Developing Sustainable Tourism," *Alexandria Engineering Journal* 69 (2023): 639–76, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aej.2023.02.001>.

¹⁵ Xavier Matteucci et al., "Envisioning the Futures of Cultural Tourism," *Futures* 142, no. July (2022): 103013, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2022.103013>; Chengcai Tang et al., "Comprehensive Evaluation of the Cultural Inheritance Level of Tourism-Oriented Traditional Villages: The Example of Beijing," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 48, no. July (2023): 101166, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101166>.

Theoretically, this study bridged experience-based cultural tourism scholarship with an analysis of sacred indigenous ritual practices. In practice, it offered a strategic framework for policymakers, community leaders, and tourism stakeholders to integrate spiritual dimensions into sustainable destination development.

Building on these theoretical and practical implications, this study makes three principal contributions to cultural tourism scholarship. First, it extends existing cultural tourism theory by demonstrating that sacred ritual production processes can contribute to tourism development without being transformed into tourist attractions, thereby challenging dominant assumptions of participation- and performance-based cultural tourism. Second, by introducing the concept of symbolic proximity, this study refines Richards' notion of deep cultural experience, showing that meaningful and transformative cultural engagement can be achieved through ethically mediated exposure rather than direct tourist participation in ritual practices. Third, the study advances a governance-based perspective on community participation by conceptualizing indigenous spirituality and community leadership as regulatory mechanisms that define non-negotiable boundaries of tourism integration. Through these contributions, the article provides a theoretically grounded framework for integrating indigenous spirituality into cultural tourism strategies while safeguarding sacred values, community authority, and cultural sustainability.

To ground these contributions conceptually, this research draws upon cultural tourism theory developed by Richards, which conceptualizes cultural tourism as the consumption of meaningful, interactive, and potentially transformative experiences. Richards' framework was employed as both an analytical tool and a strategic approach, operationalized through five key dimensions: the pursuit of deep cultural experience and learning; the role of community participation in cultural preservation and sustainability; tourism product diversification; stakeholder collaboration; and the balance between globalization and localization.¹⁶ These dimensions provided the

¹⁶ Greg Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe* (Wallingford: Atlas, 2005); Greg Richards, "Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends," *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 36 (2018): 12–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2018.03.005>.

analytical basis for examining how indigenous spirituality embodied in the *Bejeleng* tradition could be strategically integrated into the development of cultural tourism in Lombok.

To address the research question and theoretical objectives outlined above, this study adopts a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. The methodological procedures employed to explore the *Bejeleng* tradition and its integration into cultural tourism development are described in the following section.

Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to examine how the Sasak community experiences, interprets, and preserves the sacred *Bejeleng* tradition. This design was selected because the study focuses on meanings, values, ritual experiences, and community-based interpretations rather than on statistical measurement. Creswell and Poth explain that qualitative inquiry is appropriate for exploring social meanings and lived experiences within their natural contexts,¹⁷ while Moustakas emphasizes that phenomenology is concerned with understanding the essence of experiences as perceived by participants.¹⁸ In this study, phenomenology was not used merely to explore individual consciousness. Still, it was adapted to understand indigenous spirituality as a collective social experience embedded in ritual practice, communal participation, and local religious authority.

The research was conducted in the context of the *Bejeleng* ritual in East Lombok, specifically during its implementation in Rajab 1444 H (2023) and 1445 H (2024). The *Bejeleng* tradition was selected because it represents a sacred ritual production process that combines religious recitation, ritual purity, community participation, and the making of traditional coconut oil known as *Minyak Jeleng*. The participants were selected purposively, following the principle that qualitative informants should be chosen based on their direct experience, knowledge, and relevance to the phenomenon under investigation. Twelve key informants were involved in this study,

¹⁷ John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 5th ed. (London: Sage, 2025), 53.

¹⁸ Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (California: Sage, 1994), 165.

consisting of three Tuan Guru, one organizing committee chair, and eight male ritual participants. These informants were considered able to provide rich information about the spiritual meanings, cultural values, ritual procedures, community decision-making mechanisms, and possible ethical integration of *Bejeleng* into cultural tourism development.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The combination of these techniques was intended to capture the phenomenon from several complementary angles: observation provided direct understanding of ritual practices, interviews revealed participants' interpretations, and documentation helped contextualize the tradition within its broader cultural setting. Patton argues that qualitative fieldwork enables researchers to understand social practices within their natural environment through direct engagement with people, events, and settings.¹⁹ During participant observation, the researchers acted as participant-observers. Their active involvement was limited to non-religious preparations, while a passive stance was maintained during the core ritual to respect ethical and spiritual boundaries. Field notes and reflective journals were used to record ritual processes, social interactions, spatial arrangements, and the researchers' reflections during fieldwork.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected informants to obtain deeper explanations of the meanings and values attached to the *Bejeleng* tradition. The interview questions focused on four main areas: the spiritual meaning of the ritual, the cultural and social values embedded in the practice, the role of community and religious leadership, and the possibilities and limits of integrating the tradition into cultural tourism. The interviews were conducted in the local language and were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. Photographic and video documentation were also used as supporting data to describe the ritual context and spatial setting. However, this documentation was used solely for academic purposes, not for commercial display, to preserve the sacred character of the tradition.

¹⁹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2015), 109.

A reflexive stance was maintained throughout the research process. The research team was affiliated with Lombok-based Indonesian academic institutions and approached the *Bejeleng* tradition through scholarly engagement with Islamic culture, local knowledge, and cultural tourism rather than as ritual authorities. This positionality provided contextual familiarity, but it also required careful attention to the possibility that academic and tourism-oriented assumptions might shape the interpretation of sacred practices. To manage this risk, the researchers distinguished descriptive field notes from analytical reflections, discussed emerging interpretations through peer debriefing, and consistently checked the meanings of ritual practices against participants' explanations and documentary materials. This reflexive procedure helped ensure that the interpretation of *Bejeleng* remained grounded in community meanings rather than in external tourism development expectations.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on the six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke. The analysis began with familiarisation with the data through repeated readings of interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary materials. Initial codes were then generated manually to identify important patterns related to spiritual meaning, ritual rules, community participation, sacred boundaries, cultural products, and tourism-related possibilities. These codes were grouped into candidate themes, reviewed across the entire dataset, and refined into final themes that represented the central findings of the study.

The analytical process was conducted in two stages to maintain coherence between empirical findings and theoretical interpretation. The first stage was inductive, allowing themes to emerge from participants' narratives and field observations. The second stage was theoretically informed, in which the emerging themes were interpreted through Richards' cultural tourism framework.²⁰ This framework was used to examine how the *Bejeleng* tradition could be understood in relation to deep cultural experience, community participation, tourism product diversification, stakeholder collaboration, and the balance between globalization and localization. Through this two-stage process, the study was able to connect the lived spiritual experience of *Bejeleng* with broader questions of cultural tourism strategy.

²⁰ Richards, 'Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends', 12-21.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied source triangulation by comparing data from interviews, participant observation, and documentary materials. Peer debriefing was also conducted to examine coding decisions, refine theme development, and reduce interpretive bias. These procedures are consistent with Lincoln and Guba's criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research, particularly credibility, dependability, and confirmability.²¹ Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process by obtaining participants' consent, protecting informants' identities, respecting ritual boundaries, and ensuring that all documentation was used responsibly. These measures were necessary because the *Bejeleng* tradition is not merely a cultural object of study, but a sacred practice that requires sensitivity to local religious authority, community norms, and spiritual values.

Results

Efforts to integrate indigenous traditions into cultural tourism development often encounter fundamental tensions between preservation and commodification, particularly when the traditions involved are embedded in sacred spiritual systems. In Lombok, the *Bejeleng* tradition represents a form of indigenous religious practice in which ritual, community governance, and cultural production are inseparable from spiritual devotion. Addressing the research question of how the sacred *Bejeleng* tradition can be strategically integrated into Lombok's cultural tourism development therefore requires an understanding of sacredness not merely as a cultural attribute, but as a boundary that determines permissible and impermissible forms of tourism engagement. Based on the thematic analysis of interviews, participant observation, and documentary materials, four interrelated themes were identified: spirituality as the primary boundary of integration, community leadership as the controller of integration, limited and directed tourist involvement, and economic benefits as a controlled secondary outcome. These themes show that the integration of *Bejeleng* into cultural tourism cannot be understood as the transfer of ritual practices into the tourism market, but rather as the ethical

²¹ Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1985), 213.

management of spiritual meanings, community authority, and non-ritual cultural access.

Spirituality as the Primary Boundary of Integration

The first finding demonstrated that *Bejeleng* ritual practices were inseparable from the indigenous spirituality that underpinned them. The production of coconut oil was not understood as an ordinary productive activity, but rather as a sequence of sacred devotional acts. Each stage of the process was accompanied by religious practices, including the recitation of *ṣalawāt* (invocations of blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his companions) during the grating of coconuts, and the recitation of Surahs Yasin, Ad-Dukhan, As-Sajadah, and Al-Mulk during the heating of the coconut milk.²² Furthermore, the obligation to maintain ritual purity through ablution reinforced that the entire process occurred within a non-negotiable ritual space.

The sacred status of *Bejeleng* was also reflected in its timing and ritual setting. Informants explained that Minyak Hifziah, also known as “*Minyak Seribu Hajat*”, is produced once a year on the first Friday night of Rajab, after *ṣalāt Hifziah* and the Zikrol Hauliyah programme at Pondok Pesantren Thohir Yasin.²³ This timing distinguishes *Bejeleng* from ordinary production, because the oil is not produced continuously to meet market demand but only within a specific ritual moment recognized by the community.

The ritual process shows that spirituality governs not only the prayers recited, but also the technical procedures used in production. Informants emphasized that participants must maintain ablution, renew it when broken, and use manual tools rather than machines during peeling, grating, squeezing, and heating. Even the preparation of coconut milk follows inherited procedures, including the use of special utensils that are prayed over by the Tuan Guru. These requirements demonstrate that *Bejeleng* is structured by ritual discipline rather than by efficiency or productivity.

²² *Observation*, Rajab 1444 H (2023) and Rajab 1445 H (2024).

²³ Tuan Guru Haji IT, religious leader, leader of Pondok Pesantren Thohir Yasin, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024. Informant C, community participant, male, *Interview*, 2023-2024; Informant B, community participant, male, *Interview*, 2024. *Observation*, Rajab 1444 H (2023) and Rajab 1445 H (2024).

The spiritual orientation of *Bejeleng* is also evident in the community's understanding of *Minyak Hifziah* as a medium of healing and fulfillment of needs. Informants described the oil as useful for bodily and inner illnesses and as a means through which people seek assistance for various desires (*hājat*). The fact that it is not commercially sold, but produced by participants for communal and devotional purposes, reinforces that *Bejeleng* operates within a sacred moral economy rather than a market-oriented system.

This perspective was reaffirmed by Tuan Guru Haji IT, who stated, “This is not merely making oil; it is an act of worship. These prayers are what give the oil its barakah and power.”²⁴ This statement indicates that the spiritual value of *Bejeleng* does not serve as an additional meaning attached to the ritual, but rather as the foundation that defines the practice's legitimacy. Consequently, strategic integration into tourism could only be achieved by positioning the spiritual values of *Bejeleng* as a source of inspiration for cultural tourism experiences, without involving the ritual practices themselves.

Community Leadership as the Controller of Integration

While spirituality defined the non-negotiable boundaries of the *Bejeleng* tradition, the second finding indicated that its continuity and regulation depended on the active involvement of the local community. The study recorded participation by 83 ritual groups each year, with each group comprising approximately 20–30 male participants. Participation in the tradition was understood as a shared responsibility and a means of fulfilling spiritual obligations. Informant C described the tradition as “deeply enjoyable and eagerly anticipated every year,” while Informant B emphasized that “it is exhausting, but the spiritual satisfaction is immense.”²⁵

The scale of community participation indicates that *Bejeleng* has evolved from a relatively limited religious activity into a collective ritual sustained by broader networks of religious adherents and local communities. According to the informants, the production of *Minyak Hifziah*—another designation for the oil produced through the *Bejeleng* tradition, in addition to *Minyak Seribu Hajat*—originated several

²⁴ Tuan Guru Haji IT, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024.

²⁵ Informant C, community participant, male, *Interview*, 2023-2024; Informant B, community participant, male, *Interview*, 2024

decades ago in a smaller religious setting associated with a dhikr group. Over time, however, the practice expanded to involve participants from the surrounding community and even from outside the local area.²⁶ This development suggests that community leadership has not merely preserved an inherited ritual practice but has also actively organized, regulated, and sustained the tradition while ensuring that its spiritual orientation remains intact.

Community regulation was also evident in the division of roles and the determination of who could participate in the process. Although the broader people included both men and women, informants explained that the production stages—peeling coconuts, grating, squeezing coconut milk, and heating—were carried out by male participants only.²⁷ This arrangement was not presented as a technical preference, but as part of a ritual order supervised by the pesantren community. Thus, leadership translated spiritual rules into practical procedures that guided collective action.

The temporal organization of the ritual further reflects the regulatory role of community leadership. As stated previously, *Minyak Hifziah* is produced only once a year, on the first Friday night of Rajab, beginning on Thursday afternoon and continuing until the oil is completed, either late at night or in the early morning.²⁸ This annual, time-bound arrangement indicates that the production of *Minyak Hifziah* is not driven by commercial demand but by a ritual calendar recognized and maintained by the community. The fact that the oil is not sold commercially and is produced directly by the participants themselves further demonstrates that community control operates through temporal limitation, ritual discipline, and shared responsibility, rather than through market-oriented distribution.

These accounts show that community participation in *Bejeleng* is not merely logistical support, but a form of collective religious commitment. The tradition is sustained through community discipline, religious leadership, and shared responsibility rather than through

²⁶ Tuan Guru Haji IT, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024.

²⁷ Informant A, organizing committee chair, male, aged 29, *Interview*, 2024. Tuan Guru Haji IT, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024. *Observation*, 2023 and 2024.

²⁸ Tuan Guru Haji IT, religious leader, leader of Pondok Pesantren Thohir Yasin, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024. Informant C, community participant, male, *Interview*, 2023-2024; Informant B, community participant, male, *Interview*, 2024. *Observation*, Rajab 1444 H (2023) and Rajab 1445 H (2024).

formal tourism institutions. In the context of tourism development, this finding underscores that any form of external engagement must remain under community control. Community members and religious leaders must determine the boundaries, timing, and forms of tourist access so that integration does not weaken ritual authority or alter the sacred structure of the tradition.

Limited and Directed Tourist Involvement

As a direct consequence of community control over the ritual, the third finding showed that the *Bejeleng* tradition applied a clear distinction between closed ritual practices and forms of public engagement that were only selectively open. Direct participation in the ritual production process was restricted to Muslim men who met the requirements of ritual purity, as observed during the fieldwork.²⁹ This restriction is not a form of exclusion in a commercial sense, but a ritual regulation intended to protect the sacred order of the tradition. The restriction, therefore, indicates that access to the ritual core is determined by spiritual eligibility, ritual discipline, and community authority rather than by the openness normally expected in tourism activities. In this context, limited access functions as a mechanism for maintaining the integrity of the ritual, ensuring that the production process remains governed by sacred norms rather than by external curiosity or market demand.

This finding also shows that *Bejeleng* operates through a layered structure of access. The innermost layer consists of the sacred production process, which remains closed and regulated because it involves ritual purity, religious recitation, and obedience to procedures recognized by the community. The second layer consists of controlled observation, through which outsiders may witness certain aspects of the tradition without intervening in the ritual. The third layer consists of the use of the final product, which enables wider communities and visitors to encounter the tradition through its material and symbolic outcomes. This layered arrangement allows *Bejeleng* to remain socially accessible while preserving the sacredness of its ritual center.

Outside the core ritual, external involvement remained possible. Non-Muslim community members and tourists were permitted to

²⁹ Observation, Rajab 1444 H (2023) and 1445 H (2024), Tuan Guru Haji IT, Interview, 2023 and 2024.

observe the process from designated areas and to use or consume the final product. Informant A and Tuan Guru Haji IT confirmed that *Bejeleng* coconut oil was intended for general use.³⁰ In addition, Informant F noted that international tourists frequently purchased the oil as a form of traditional medicinal souvenir.³¹ These forms of engagement demonstrate that the community does not reject external interest altogether, but directs it toward forms of participation that do not disturb the ritual order. Observation from designated spaces allows visitors to recognize the cultural significance of *Bejeleng*, while the use of the final product provides a tangible point of connection with the tradition. However, neither form of engagement grants outsiders authority over the ritual process itself.

This pattern indicates that strategic integration is achieved through restricted and controlled access rather than direct participation in ritual activities. The distinction between the protected ritual process and the accessible cultural product enables *Bejeleng* to generate cultural understanding and limited tourism value without being transformed into a staged attraction. The final product thus functions as a mediated cultural interface between the community and external audiences, while the ritual core remains under the authority of community members and religious leaders. In this sense, *Bejeleng* offers a model of symbolic proximity, through which tourists may encounter its cultural and spiritual meanings without entering the ritual core. This model provides an alternative to participation-based tourism by showing that meaningful engagement with sacred traditions can be constructed through distance, interpretation, respect, and regulated access. Limited and directed tourist involvement, therefore, becomes an ethical strategy for balancing cultural openness, community authority, spiritual protection, and the prevention of ritual commodification.

Economic Benefits as a Controlled Secondary Outcome

Beyond issues of access and participation, the fourth finding indicated that economic benefits within the *Bejeleng* tradition were carefully controlled and remained subordinate to ritual integrity rather than market demand. The distribution of ritual coconut oil, known as

³⁰ Informant A, organizing committee chair, male, aged 29, *Interview*, 2024. Tuan Guru Haji IT, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024.

³¹ Informant F, tour guide, male, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024.

Minyak Hifziah or “the oil of a thousand wishes,” took place through informal channels without altering the established ritual process. Tourist interest in the product, as conveyed by Informant F, did not encourage the community to increase production scale.³² This indicates that *Bejeleng* operates within a spiritual economy in which the value of the oil is defined primarily by barakah, healing, communal trust, and ritual legitimacy rather than by market demand. The oil may circulate beyond the ritual community, but its circulation remains attached to the sacred process through which it is produced.

The spiritual boundaries of *Bejeleng* were also evident in the regulation of who could enter the ritual core. According to Tuan Guru Haji IT, the ritual process could not be performed by women or non-Muslims because it required specific religious qualifications, ritual purity, and obedience to the sacred procedures established by the community and religious leaders.³³ This restriction should not be interpreted merely as social exclusion, but as a spiritual regulation that defines the boundary between ritual participation and public engagement. Women, non-Muslim community members, and tourists were not positioned as ritual actors. Yet, they were still allowed to observe the process directly from appropriate spaces and to benefit from the oil produced through the ritual.

This arrangement shows that *Bejeleng* distinguishes between participation in the sacred process and access to the cultural and material outcomes of the tradition. The ritual itself remains protected from unrestricted involvement, while its meanings and final product can still be encountered by wider publics. In this sense, the community does not close *Bejeleng* entirely from external attention, but directs such attention into forms that do not disturb the ritual order. Observation and the use of *Minyak Hifziah* become acceptable forms of engagement because they allow outsiders to recognize the cultural and spiritual significance of the tradition without entering the sacred domain of production.

The informants consistently rejected mechanization or increased production volume, as such changes were perceived as conflicting with the tradition’s spiritual values. This finding shows that the economic

³² Informant F, tour guide, male, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024.

³³ Tuan Guru Haji IT, *Interview*, 2023 and 2024; Informant A, organizing committee chair, male, aged 29, *Interview*, 2024.

potential of *Bejeleng* is tolerated only insofar as it remains subordinate to ritual integrity. Accordingly, relevant tourism strategies did not involve expanding production, but rather managing product distribution and cultural values in a limited and ethical manner. The refusal of mechanization is especially important because it demonstrates that the community prioritizes ritual continuity over productive efficiency. If production were increased merely to meet tourist demand, the oil would risk being detached from the spiritual discipline, manual procedures, and religious authority that give it meaning.

Taken together, the results demonstrated that the integration of the sacred *Bejeleng* tradition into cultural tourism development in Lombok could only be carried out selectively, value-based, and under community control. Such integration was not interpreted as transferring ritual practices into the tourism domain, but as utilizing the associated spiritual meanings, social governance structures, and cultural products within an ethical and sustainable framework. *Bejeleng* spirituality functioned as an inviolable boundary, preventing the ritual from being displayed or replicated for tourists. At the same time, community leadership and participation served as regulatory mechanisms that determined the form, timing, and extent of external involvement. Tourist engagement was enabled through limited access outside the ritual core, such as observation and the use of cultural products. At the same time, economic benefits emerged as controlled secondary outcomes that did not alter the spiritual orientation of the tradition. Consequently, strategies for integrating *Bejeleng* into Lombok's cultural tourism should prioritize value preservation, protection of sacredness, and the strengthening of local community roles, rather than ritual expansion or commodification.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the *Bejeleng* tradition cannot be understood merely as a cultural practice, but rather as an indigenous system governed by spiritual values, rules, and clearly defined mechanisms of participation. Within Richards' cultural tourism framework, such a practice cannot be treated as a tourism attraction that is ready for consumption. Instead, *Bejeleng* represents a process of meaning-making deeply embedded in the community's social and spiritual structures. This discussion therefore uses Richards' cultural tourism framework as the main analytical lens, particularly its emphasis

on deep cultural experience, community participation, tourism product diversification, stakeholder collaboration, and the balance between globalization and localization. At the same time, the phenomenological approach and thematic analysis used in this study provide the methodological basis for interpreting *Bejeleng* from the lived and collective experiences of the participants. Therefore, the integration of the *Bejeleng* tradition into cultural tourism in Lombok should be understood as the integration of cultural values and governance, rather than as the performance or commodification of ritual practices.

Analytically, this means that *Bejeleng* must be approached not as an object to be displayed, but as a living sacred system whose meanings are produced through ritual discipline, communal obedience, and religious authority. This interpretation is important because cultural tourism studies increasingly emphasize the need to move beyond attraction-based models towards value-based, experience-oriented, and community-sensitive approaches.³⁴ Richards' discussion of cultural tourism as a field concerned with meaningful experience and cultural consumption provides a useful starting point. Still, the *Bejeleng* case shows that cultural meaning in sacred contexts cannot be separated from restrictions, boundaries, and ritual authority.³⁵ Thus, the analytical focus of this discussion is not simply whether *Bejeleng* can become part of tourism, but under what ethical and cultural conditions such integration can occur.

Building on this interpretation, the *Bejeleng* tradition can be understood as aligning with Richards' concept of deep cultural experience,³⁶ although it expresses this experience through ethical bonds rather than direct participation. Participants experience deep involvement through religious symbols, spiritual beliefs, ritual purity, prayer, collective labor, and obedience to religious authority within a

³⁴ Zixuan Sun and Jianming Yao, "Optimizing Sustainable Resource Integration in Cultural and Tourism Communities Considering Community Influence on Spatial Quality," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 18, no. 4 (2026): 1714, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su18041714>; Kamila Borseková and Katarína Vitálišová, "Participatory Models and Approaches in Sustainable Cultural Tourism," in *Innovative Cultural Tourism in European Peripheries*, 2024, 92–113, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003422952-6>.

³⁵ Richards, "Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends," 12–21.

³⁶ Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe*; Richards, "Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends."

sacred space. The phenomenological interpretation of these experiences shows that the depth of *Bejeleng* does not lie in unrestricted access to the ritual, but in the meanings attached by participants to prayer, barakah, purity, and communal devotion. In this sense, deep cultural experiences emerge through ethically mediated exposure.³⁷ This finding refines Richards' concept by showing that, in sacred indigenous contexts, meaningful cultural experience can be constructed through symbolic proximity rather than direct participation in ritual practice.

This refinement is theoretically significant because much of the cultural tourism literature associates meaningful experience with participation, immersion, and interaction. In the *Bejeleng* case, however, direct participation may weaken rather than deepen cultural understanding if it violates the ritual order that gives the tradition its meaning. The concept of symbolic proximity, therefore, becomes central: tourists may approach the meanings of *Bejeleng* through observation, interpretation, narrative explanation, and the use of ritual-derived products, but they do not enter the ritual core. This model resonates with studies of religious and sacred tourism, which argue that sacred places and practices transmit identity, memory, and spiritual values through controlled forms of visitor engagement rather than unrestricted access. For example, the Loang Baloq Tomb in Lombok, Indonesia, fosters shared understanding and intercultural communication through rituals and community involvement, preserving spiritual values while mediating tensions between tradition and tourism.³⁸

Evidence from comparative cultural contexts further supports this interpretation. Studies in Turkish Islamic environments demonstrate that rules governing visitor access to sacred sites protect religious values while still allowing individuals to form deep spiritual

³⁷ Viktoriia Khudaverdiieva, "The Potential of Cultural Tourism as A Component of SSocial and Cultural Development of Society," *Scientific Journal of Khortytsia National Academy* 8 (2023): 179–91, <https://doi.org/10.51706/2707-3076-2023-8-14>; Stuart Hayes, Hazel Tucker, and Clinton Golding, "Exploring 'Deep Learning' during an International Tourism Field School," *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education* 26 (2020): 100229, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2019.100229>.

³⁸ Betty Tresnawaty and Enok Risdayah, 'Integrating Intercultural Communication and Religious Tourism: A Phenomenology Study of Cultural Worship at Loang Baloq Tomb, Indonesia', *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 25, no. 2 (2025): 116–131, <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v25i2.1100>.

connections with these places. Research conducted at the Muradiye Complex and Kazdağı National Park shows that systematic observation techniques safeguard religious beliefs and cultural artifacts while facilitating meaningful engagement.³⁹ Similarly, Uslu demonstrates that Turkish heritage tourism provides genuine experiences through structured programs rather than unrestricted participation.⁴⁰ Comparable approaches are also evident in Balinese and Indian ritual contexts, where structured observation methods are employed to honor sacred boundaries while fostering deeper cultural understanding.⁴¹ These comparative studies strengthen the argument that restriction, distance, and regulation should not be viewed as obstacles to cultural tourism, but as ethical instruments for protecting authenticity and sacredness.

Beyond the dimension of cultural experience, the study also shows that community participation in the *Bejeleng* tradition functions as a system of community-based cultural governance. The annual involvement of 83 ritual groups reflects a collective management structure that safeguards spiritual discipline, ritual standards, and the continuity of the tradition. Within Richards' framework, this finding extends the understanding of community involvement from simple social inclusion to an active mechanism of cultural protection and regulation. The thematic analysis indicates that community participation in *Bejeleng* operates in three interrelated forms: participation in ritual preparation, participation in maintaining sacred rules, and participation in determining the limits of external involvement. Unlike community-based tourism models primarily

³⁹ Selen Durak, Saliha Tupal Yeke, and Tulin Vural Arslan, 'Significance of Cultural Heritage Preservation in Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Muradiye Complex in Bursa, Turkey', *European Journal of Sustainable Development* 5, no. 4 (2016): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2016.v5n4p1>; Yılmaz Arı, 'Protecting Biocultural Diversity at Kazdağı National Park, Balıkesir, Turkey: The Role of Sacred Natural Sites', *Human Geographies – Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography* 14, no. 2 (2020): 215–238, <https://doi.org/10.5719/hgeo.2020.142.3>.

⁴⁰ Abdullah Uslu et al., "The Role of Authenticity, Involvement and Experience Quality in Heritage Destinations," *Tourism and Management Studies* 20, no. 3 (2024): 79–91, <https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.20240306>.

⁴¹ I Gede Mudana et al., "Kuta and the Implementation of Cultural Tourism: The Popularity of Beach Resort Strengthened by Balinese Art and Cultural Attraction," *Russian Law Journal* 11, no. 5 (2023): 1831–48, <https://www.russianlawjournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/2927>.

oriented toward economic objectives, participation in the *Bejeleng* tradition is rooted in customary obligations and spiritual commitments that predate tourism interests. Consequently, the sustainability of the *Bejeleng* tradition represents an established cultural condition that must be respected in any tourism integration strategy.

The *Bejeleng* case, therefore, shifts the meaning of community participation from “involvement in tourism” to “authority over cultural boundaries.” This distinction is crucial. In many tourism development models, community participation is often framed as a means of increasing local income, employment, or managerial inclusion. In *Bejeleng*, however, the community is not merely a stakeholder within tourism development; it is the holder of ritual legitimacy. This is consistent with scholarship on intangible cultural heritage, which emphasizes that authenticity is not only in the visible form of a tradition but also in transmitted customs, inherited meanings, and practitioners’ identities.⁴² Thus, any tourism strategy that ignores community authority risks separating *Bejeleng* from the very social and spiritual structures that sustain its authenticity.

This interpretation is consistent with existing scholarship indicating that strong community participation can function as a cultural defense mechanism against excessive commercialization.⁴³ Richards similarly argues that effective cultural tourism does not reject globalization, but instead manages it through collectively recognized cultural boundaries to preserve local identity.⁴⁴ Supporting evidence from Southeast Asia further reinforces this argument. Research conducted in Indonesia and Malaysia shows that tourism governance guided by spiritual values and Sharia principles protects sacred sites while encouraging positive social behavior among local residents.⁴⁵

⁴² Soojung Kim, Michelle Whitford, and Charles Arcodia, “Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Sustainable Tourism Resource: The Intangible Cultural Heritage Practitioners’ Perspectives,” in *Authenticity and Authentication of Heritage* (Routledge, 2021), 34–47.

⁴³ Haiyan Wang, Haifeng Yu, and Qinghua Zhao, “Community Participation Model in the Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism,” in *International Conference on Education, Management, Economics and Social Science (ICEMESS 2024)*, 2024, 146–51, <https://doi.org/10.23977/ICEMESS2024.026>.

⁴⁴ Richards, “Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends.”

⁴⁵ Novea Elysa Wardhani, ‘Existence of Fatwa of the National Sharia Council of the Indonesian Ulema Council (DSN-MUI) No. 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 Concerning Guidelines for Organizing Tourism Based on Sharia Principles: Between Spiritual and

Moreover, ritual practices and community ethics enhance the sustainability of cultural tourism when guided by collective moral awareness.⁴⁶ A comparable pattern is evident in the study of the Sapuro religious tourism site in Pekalongan, where strong religious commitment among local communities supports ethical tourism practices without undermining sacred values.⁴⁷ In the *Bejeleng* case, this governance logic is especially significant because the authority to define ritual meaning, access, and representation lies primarily with the community, pesantren, and religious leaders, not with tourism markets or external stakeholders.

Beyond governance and participation, the circulation of *Minyak Hifziah* provides further insight into the concept of diversification in cultural tourism as discussed by Richards.⁴⁸ In the *Bejeleng* case, diversification does not occur through the transformation of the ritual into a tourism product, but through the controlled circulation of ritual-derived meanings and material outcomes. This model allows economic benefits to emerge without compromising the sacredness of indigenous practices. Studies from Bali demonstrate that cultural products can coexist with ritual life when sacred boundaries are consistently maintained.⁴⁹ As a result, the role of external actors remains supportive, while primary authority continues to rest with the community and religious leaders.⁵⁰

Regulatory’, *Journal of Social Research* 2, no. 9 (2023): 3162–3168, <https://doi.org/10.55324/josr.v2i9.1373>; Noorsalwati Sabtu, Mashita Abu Hasan, and Noorul Huda Sahari, ‘Formulating Shariah Compliant Ethical Code for Tourists in Malaysia’, in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Halal Conference (INHAC 2016)* (Springer, 2018), 139–51.

⁴⁶ Jun Wu et al., ‘The Relationship between Form and Ritual in Cultural Sustainability’, *Sustainability* 14, no. 15 (2022): 9157, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14159157>.

⁴⁷ Hendri Hermawan Adinugraha et al., ‘Implementing Islamic Values in Sharia Tourism Practices: A Case Study of the Sapuro Religious Tourism Destination in Pekalongan’, *Abdurrauf Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, no. 2 (2025): 101–24, <https://doi.org/10.58824/arjis.v4i2.334>.

⁴⁸ Richards, *Cultural Tourism in Europe*.

⁴⁹ Ni Made Arshiniwati and Ida Bagus Gede Surya Peradantha, ‘Reviving the Sanghyang Grodog Ritual Dance: Promoting Social Harmony and Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Nusa Lembongan Island, Bali’, *Jurnal Kajian Bali* 15, no. 1 (2025): 61–91, <https://doi.org/10.24843/JKB.2025.v15.i01.p03>.

⁵⁰ Carson Lewis Jenkins, ‘The Role of Government in the Tourism Sector in Developing Countries: A Perspective Article’, *Tourism Review* 75, no. 1 (2020): 203–

This form of restrained diversification contributes to cultural tourism debates by showing that sustainability does not always require expanding access to cultural practices. Existing studies on tourism-oriented traditional communities emphasize the need to balance cultural preservation with tourism use.⁵¹ The *Bejeleng* case sharpens this argument by demonstrating that such a balance can be achieved through differentiation between the protected ritual core and the publicly accessible cultural interface. *Minyak Hifziah* functions as this interface: it enables wider cultural encounter while keeping the authority, meaning, and legitimacy of the ritual anchored in the community that produces it.

While diversification creates limited economic opportunities, this study also situates the *Bejeleng* tradition within the broader tension between globalization and localization in cultural tourism. Although growing global interest in spiritual tourism increases visibility, the findings show that localization can be maintained through collectively recognized boundaries that regulate how sacred traditions are represented, interpreted, and encountered by outsiders. Similar dynamics are evident in large-scale religious events such as the Kumbh Mela, where access regulations are used to preserve sacredness while managing global visitor engagement.⁵² Taken together, these findings confirm that effective tourism management does not require rejecting globalization, but instead managing it through clearly defined and collectively recognized cultural boundaries.⁵³

6, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-04-2019-0142>; Marketa Kubickova, "The Role of Government in Tourism: Linking Competitiveness, Freedom, and Developing Economies," *Czech Journal of Tourism* 5, no. 2 (2016): 73–92, <https://doi.org/10.1515/cjot-2016-00005>.

⁵¹ Tang et al., "Comprehensive Evaluation of the Cultural Inheritance Level of Tourism-Oriented Traditional Villages: The Example of Beijing."

⁵² Kakoli Saha and Rachna Khare, "A Geospatial Approach to Conserving Cultural Heritage Tourism at Kumbh Mela Events in India," in *Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration: Changing Spaces in Historical Places* (Springer, 2020), 125–40, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41905-9_9; Rashmi Mishra, "Behavioral Intentions Towards Spiritual Tourism: Promoting Cultural Heritage and Sustainability Through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG11. 4) in Maha Kumbh, Prayagraj, India," *Journal of Lifestyle & SDG's Review* 5 (2025): 01–25, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n03.pe05792>.

⁵³ Afsaneh Pourjam, "Globalization and Management of Cultural Diversity in Tourism Businesses," *Tourism of Culture* 1, no. 1 (2020): 45–54, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/396440032>.

This finding also responds to broader debates on the future of cultural tourism. Matteucci, Koens, Calvi, and Moretti show that cultural tourism futures require more nuanced models that avoid both excessive commodification and romanticized preservation.⁵⁴ *Bejeleng* offers a nuanced model because it neither rejects tourism entirely nor allows it to redefine the ritual. Instead, it establishes a selective relationship with tourism, grounded in sacred boundaries, controlled access, and community-led interpretation. In this sense, limitation is not a weakness of tourism planning, but a form of ethical governance. It allows the tradition to remain meaningful for its practitioners while still contributing to cultural education and sustainable destination identity.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that integrating the *Bejeleng* tradition into cultural tourism in Lombok requires a careful balance between openness and the protection of sacred values. Indigenous spirituality, community-based governance, and selective access function as the main principles for developing meaningful and ethical cultural tourism. Within this framework, the *Bejeleng* tradition is not positioned as an object of tourist consumption, but as a source of values and ethical guidance that shapes the direction of tourism development. Theoretically, this study extends Richards' framework by showing that sacred ritual production can contribute to cultural tourism through symbolic proximity, community-led governance, and controlled access rather than direct participation or ritual performance. Methodologically, the phenomenological-thematic approach ensures that this conclusion emerges from participants' lived meanings and collective experiences rather than from an external tourism development perspective.

The integration model proposed by this study can therefore be summarised as a sacred-boundary model of cultural tourism. This model consists of four interrelated principles: first, sacredness functions as the primary boundary of integration; second, community and religious leaders retain authority over access and representation; third, tourist engagement is directed toward interpretation, respectful observation, and ritual-derived cultural products; and fourth, economic benefits remain secondary to ritual continuity. Together, these principles shift cultural tourism strategy from the commercial staging

⁵⁴ Matteucci et al., 'Envisioning The Futures of Cultural Tourism', 103013.

of sacred practices toward the ethical governance of access, meaning, and representation.

These findings also generate several practical and policy implications for cultural tourism development in Lombok and in other regions with similar sacred traditions. First, destination managers and regional planners should implement value-based selective integration by ensuring that the core *Bejeleng* ritual is not packaged as a commercial attraction, staged performance, or replicated for tourist entertainment. Second, tourist access should follow a layered spatial model of symbolic proximity, in which visitors engage with *Bejeleng* through respectful observation in non-ritual areas, educational interpretation, and ritual-derived products such as *Minyak Hifziah* rather than through direct participation in the sacred production process. Third, community-led governance must remain central, with the local community, pesantren, and Tuan Guru retaining authority over timing, representation, access, and the extent of external stakeholder involvement. Fourth, economic benefits should be treated as controlled secondary outcomes to prevent tourism interests from exerting pressure for mechanization, commercial scaling, or artificial increases in production volume. Fifth, regional government agencies should adopt a non-interventionist role by supporting heritage protection, policy frameworks, and peripheral infrastructure without interfering in customary rules, ritual timeframes, or sacred technical procedures. Finally, tourism operators and local guides should develop respectful educational narratives that emphasize cross-cultural understanding, historical transmission, and deep learning rather than exoticizing sacred indigenous practices. Taken together, these recommendations reaffirm that the sacred-boundary model supports preservation, community control, and carefully managed visitor engagement.

In conclusion, the sacred *Bejeleng* tradition can be strategically integrated into cultural tourism development in Lombok not through the performance or replication of rituals, but through the strengthening of spiritual values, community governance, and selective access management. This approach ensures that local communities and religious leaders retain control over cultural practices and representations, while enabling the *Bejeleng* tradition to contribute meaningfully, ethically, and sustainably to Lombok's cultural tourism strategy without compromising the sacredness of indigenous practices.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the sacred *Bejeleng* tradition can be strategically integrated into the development of cultural tourism in Lombok, not through the performance or replication of rituals, but through the management of spiritual values, community-based governance, and selective regulation of access. Such integration has positioned indigenous spirituality as a non-negotiable boundary, ensuring that local communities and religious leaders retain control over cultural practices and representations, while permitting tourist involvement only within non-ritual domains. Through this approach, the *Bejeleng* tradition has contributed meaningfully, ethically, and sustainably to cultural tourism strategies without compromising the sacredness of indigenous practices.

Theoretically, this study has extended Richards' cultural tourism framework by demonstrating that deep cultural experience does not necessarily depend on direct participation, but can be constructed through symbolic proximity and ethically mediated meaning-making. In practice, the findings underscore the importance of a governance-based approach to cultural tourism development, with communities and religious leaders playing central roles. At the same time, external actors serve as facilitators who respect established cultural boundaries.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research focused on a single ritual tradition within a specific local context in East Lombok; therefore, the findings are not intended to be directly generalized to all indigenous spiritual practices in Indonesia or elsewhere. Second, the empirical data were derived primarily from male informants directly involved in the *Bejeleng* ritual, leaving the perspectives of women and non-participating groups unexplored in depth. Third, the study focused on cultural and spiritual dimensions without quantifying economic impacts or tourist perceptions; consequently, the economic implications of cultural tourism have been discussed at a conceptual level.

Future research should move beyond general comparative approaches by adopting more specific intersectional and mixed-method designs. An intersectional framework could examine how gender, age, ritual status, religious authority, and community position shape different forms of access to sacred knowledge, participation, and decision-making within *Bejeleng* and comparable ritual traditions. In particular, future studies should systematically include female

community members, non-participating local residents, local guides, government tourism planners, and external destination marketers whose perspectives were not fully captured in this study. A mixed-method design combining ethnographic interviews, focus group discussions, visitor perception surveys, and small-scale economic-impact assessment would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how sacred traditions can be integrated into cultural tourism while preserving community authority, spiritual legitimacy, and ethical boundaries.

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