



History-Based Tourism Development: A Case Study of the Tourism Office's Strategy in Increasing the Attractiveness of Fort Kuto Besak Palembang

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ABSTRACT

Historical tourism plays a crucial role in supporting economic development, cultural preservation, and enhancing regional image. As one of Indonesia's oldest cities, Palembang boasts a rich historical heritage with potential for development, one example being Kuto Besak Fortress. This fort not only reflects the glory of the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate but also holds a strategic position as a city tourism icon. This study aims to determine the strategy of the tourism office in increasing the historical tourist attraction of Kuto Besak Fortress in Palembang City. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation at the Palembang City Tourism Office and Kuto Besak Fortress in Palembang City. Data analysis was carried out through data collection, data presentation and verification and confirmation of conclusions. At the research location was conducted at Jl. Dr. Wahidin No. 3, Talang Semut, Bukit Kecil District, Palembang City, South Sumatra 30121. And Jalan Sultan Mahmud Badarudin, 19 Ilir, Bukit Kecil District, Palembang City. By conducting observation, interview and documentation stages and conducting research objectively. Interview sources numbered 11 informants including 1 head of the office, 3 tourism office employees, and 7 members of the public. The results of this study found a strategy implemented by the Palembang City Tourism Office that includes quite comprehensive planning aspects, such as increasing tourism promotion through digital media through websites and social media, organizing annual events, and involving the community and local stakeholders in the development of historical tourism, making it a potential tourist attraction. However, in implementing this strategy, several major obstacles were identified, including the Tourism Office facing challenges such as limited budget and human resources, coupled with low public awareness of cleanliness and security, the presence of illegal buskers, thuggery, unorganized street vendors, and illegal parking still disrupting the comfort and image of tourists visiting Kuto Besak Fortress. Collaboration between the government and the community is the main key to making Kuto Besak Fortress a historical tourist destination that is not only attractive, but also comfortable, safe, and sustainable for all groups. In conclusion, this study concludes that the Palembang City Tourism Office has made significant efforts to develop Kuto Besak Fort as a historical tourism destination. Through a combination of planned and adaptive strategies, despite facing several obstacles, it is hoped that Kuto Besak Fort will continue to grow into a leading tourist attraction that contributes to the preservation of history and the local economy of Palembang City.

INTRODUCTION

Government policies in a country can be a benchmark for success in achieving broader development goals nationally, sustainable tourism development is one of the concepts that directs tourism development to

move in a more advanced and integrated direction while still paying attention to economic, environmental, and socio-cultural values so that sustainability in the future is expected to provide good benefits in the future. Sustainable tourism development is expected to fulfill three pillars, namely maintaining environmental sustainability in tourist destinations, encouraging economic growth, and maintaining cultural and environmental quality as an integral part of tourism (Suryantari, 2024).

The local government as the highest authority has strategic authority in providing public services. In this role, the government functions as an entrepreneur, coordinator, simulator, and facilitator. As a facilitator, the government is committed to providing optimal facilities and infrastructure for infrastructure development, especially for the development of the tourism sector, in addition to paying attention to infrastructure, the government also needs to encourage the implementation of existing creative economy ideas and provide supporting facilities for their development. This support is not only in physical form but also through the expansion of various existing facilities and increased coordination between stakeholders, in addition to extensive advertising efforts both domestically and abroad are also very important (Tifany & Meirinawati, 2023).

Kuto Besak Fort as a representation of the heyday of the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam is an invaluable cultural heritage, this historical site not only has high historical and cultural value but also has great potential to be developed as an attractive tourist destination for both domestic and foreign tourists and one of the oldest historical buildings in the city of Palembang which has strategic value as a leading tourist destination. This building is a heritage from the royal and colonial period, located right on the banks of the Musi River with easy access to the city center through the Palace Building which was once the center of the Sultanate of Palembang in the XVIII century. The idea to build Kuto Besak Fort was initiated by Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin, the strategic location near the Ampera Bridge and the beauty of the Musi River make it an interesting place to visit (Oktavia & Melasari, 2018).

Topographically, Palembang is a waterfront city, overlooking the water with large and small tributaries that cut its banks to form a lagoon. Kuto Besak Fort is located in the center of Palembang City, South Sumatra Province, precisely located north of the Musi River. This area is bounded by the Sekanak River located to the west, Tengkuruk River to the east, and Kapuran River to the north. Here is the location of Kuto Besak Fort (Hanafiah, 2016).

Kuto Besak Fort has great potential as a historical tourist destination that can provide valuable experiences for visitors. Although various efforts have been made by the government in developing Kuto Besak Fort as a historical and cultural tourist destination, it still faces a number of challenges such as budget limitations, not optimal physical condition of the site, inadequate supporting infrastructure and social problems such as the existence of buskers and traffic jams. Lintas is the main obstacle in realizing the full potential of this historic site. This condition indirectly impacts the comfort of visitors and reduces the attractiveness of Kuto Besak Fort as a tourist destination (Sabila & Damayanti, 2017).

The city of Palembang as the capital of South Sumatra Province has a variety of tourism potentials that need to be optimized. This effort is in line with the vision and mission of the Palembang City Long-Term Development Plan 2024-2026 which aims to realize a regional economy based on independent local economic potential. One of the important steps in the field of tourism is to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations by focusing on improving the quality of existing tourist attractions, objects and attractions, in addition to that the development of tourism activities in the field of arts and culture must be strengthened through more effective promotions, no less important the provision of supporting facilities and infrastructure will be optimized to support tourism activities. In this case, the Palembang City Government is committed to making Kuto Besak Fort one of the main tourist icons and not lost by the times that are getting better and provide a podium so that it can become a tourism that is always in demand from time to time (Karyono, 2020).

The tourism sector, which is characterized by rapid growth globally, has a significant contribution to sustainable development in various countries. Effective and sustainable management is therefore essential to ensure that the sector provides optimal benefits to local communities, the natural environment and associated cultural heritage. Conceptually tourism is defined as the travel activity and visits of individuals or groups to destinations outside their neighborhood of residence for diverse purposes including recreation, entertainment, education, and business. The tourism industry encompasses various forms of travel, from leisure vacations to religious trips, and involves various sectors of the economy, including transportation, accommodation, and culinary services. Tourism not only has a significant economic impact globally, but it also plays a role in promoting cultural exchange, preservation of cultural heritage, and increasing cross-cultural understanding. However, tourism development also poses challenges related to environmental impact management, cultural heritage preservation, and sustainable development achievement (Putu Guntur Pramana Putra, S.Par., 2019).

The Tourism Office as a local government institution has the main responsibility for the development of the tourism sector. In carrying out its duties, the Tourism Office cannot work in isolation but must interact with various stakeholders. Active involvement from various parties is needed to support the success of the development of tourist destinations, especially in terms of planning, implementation and evaluation of programs. One of the main functions of the Tourism Office is to implement, serve, foster and control tourism

activities in its area (Paradana Award, 2021).

The Tourism Office as an institution responsible for the development of the tourism sector is faced with the challenge of continuing to innovate and increase the attractiveness of tourist destinations. In an effort to attract tourists, creativity is needed in creating unique and sustainable tourism products. In addition, the active participation of local communities is the key to success in the preservation and development of tourist destinations, especially for historical tourist attractions. The lack of public awareness and concern for historical and cultural values can hinder efforts to preserve and develop tourist destinations (Fahreza et al., 2023).

In this case has great potential to empower communities by providing better access to tourism resources including infrastructure upgrades and the implementation of more innovative policies, a series of strategies often used by governments to promote tourism with the aim of increasing local people's incomes. However, behind these efforts to strengthen the community, problems often arise related to the economic burden borne by the community due to the taxes imposed. In this context, the Palembang City government is responsible for fulfilling its obligations which include the payment of taxes in an effort to encourage their participation in the tourism industry. Thus, participation in the tourism industry is further increased (Oct. 2024).

The Palembang City Tourism Office has intangible assets in the form of systems, applications, and websites such as www.charmingpalembang.com which is used to promote the tourism of the Kuto Besak Fortress of Palembang City through the internet. In addition, there is digital media that can be accessed through a professionally managed website containing the Palembang City 3600 virtual tour program. This website functions as a storefront of Palembang City with various content such as text, video, audio, virtual tours, directories of facilities that support tourism, and others to promote tourism in Palembang City and attract tourists and investors (Palembang City Tourism Office Strategic Plan for the Year, 2024).

Currently, the development of the tourism sector and creative economy (ekraf) of Palembang City has currently experienced a significant recovery since the Covid-19 pandemic ended in 2022," said Acting Mayor (Wako) of Palembang A Damenta, after symbolically launching the Palembang 2025 Calendar of Charming Events. According to him, data shows that the number of tourist visits has increased in 2023 by 2,011,058 tourist visits to Palembang City, an increase of more than 35 percent from 2022 of 1,542,485 tourist visits. In 2024, the number of tourist visits until September was recorded at 1,533,584 and this figure is expected to continue to increase followed by Of course, the increase in the number of tourist visits also has an impact on the economy of Palembang City, especially the contribution to Regional Original Revenue (PAD) from the tourism sector, namely hotel tax, restaurant and entertainment tax, as well as billboard tax in 2023 of more than 30 percent or worth Rp.344,018,249,523. He Continuing the city of Palembang as the oldest city in Indonesia, it offers a variety of tourist activities such as cultural tourism, historical tourism and culinary tourism that has gone global as well as various cultural, sports, culinary and festival events that can be the choice of tourists to come to the city of Palembang. Meanwhile, the Head of the Palembang City Tourism Office, Sulaiman Amin, said that the Palembang City tourism program has been intensively carried out since 2019. His party launched *Charming Events of Palembang* containing a collection of events held in the city of Palembang. Launching *Charming Events of Palembang* in February 2024 took the theme #collaborationofdiversity. Meanwhile, *Charming Events of Palembang* in 2025 with the tagline #eventkitogalo, takes the theme of the Kito Galo Event. "We hope that this can be a strengthening of synergy and multihelix collaboration in tourism in the implementation of quality events in the city of Palembang. *The Grand Launching of Charming Events of Palembang 2025* launched 143 curated events consisting of cultural arts, culinary, sports, festivals and others. Of the 143 events, said Amin, there are 10 best events, two of which have been included in the ranks of the Karisma Event Nusantara (KEN) in 2024 by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) of the Republic of Indonesia, namely the Traditional Bidar Boat Festival, the Sriwijaya Festival and there are 8 other events that have been included in the ranks of the TOP 10 *Charming Events of Palembang* is the Kubro Pilgrimage, Cap Go Meh Kemaro Island, Sriwijaya Lantern Festival, Palembang Expo, Palembang Girl Bachelor Awarding Night XXXVIII, Ampera Tourism Run, Suara Musi International Jazz Festival and *Band Competition Festival* (Sriwijayamedia.com,2024).

The performance of the Palembang City Tourism Office can be seen directly through the implementation of programs held every year. The Palembang City Government is committed to developing the tourism sector by organizing various annual initiatives. In this effort, they collaborate with various related parties, including tourism stakeholders, academics, communities, and government agencies at the central and regional levels, to support the development of tourism destinations. The initiative includes marketing, creative industries, and partnership development with the aim of creating synergy and integration to make Palembang a leading tourist destination. The city of Palembang attracts many visitors, both local and foreign tourists, a variety of tourist attractions are offered, ranging from historical sites, artificial recreational places to cultural charms. Some of the most popular destinations include Ampera Bridge, Musi River, Jakabaring Sports City, Kuto Besak Fort, Kemaro Island, and Al Qur'an Al Akbar. With a rich historical background, culinary and religious tourism in Palembang has also become very popular with domestic and international tourists and continues to grow rapidly every year (Strategic Plan of the Palembang City Tourism Office for 2024-2026).

Therefore, every year the Tourism Office needs to formulate a strategy to increase the historical tourist attraction of Kuto Besak Fort in Palembang City and encourage tourist interest to visit the location, the development of the tourism sector, especially related to various tourist destinations, is driven by a series of events that are part of the Palembang City event calendar every year the goal is to extend the time of tourist visits in Palembang City and increase the power of attract the city for tourists. Therefore, based on the above background, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the research title " **Tourism Office's Strategy in Increasing Historical Tourism Attraction in Kuto Besak Fort, Palembang City**"

RESEARCH METHODS

The author will adopt a qualitative approach in reviewing the strategies implemented by the Tourism Office to increase the historical tourist attraction of Kuto Besak Fort in Palembang City. This qualitative method aims to collect accurate and relevant data through interview and observation techniques. In this context, qualitative research is descriptive and analytic in nature, where the process and meaning of research are designed to be in harmony with the facts in the field. This method focuses more on the observation of existing phenomena. The quality of analysis and accuracy in qualitative research are greatly influenced by the strength of word choice and sentence structure used. (Karimuddin, 2017) The researcher will take an in-depth approach to dig up the necessary information through interviews with the sources. The results of these interviews will play an important role in establishing the real research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Palembang City Tourism Office is one of the Regional Apparatus Work Units, namely technical affairs that are the authority of the Palembang City Government. In an effort to develop tourist attractions to increase the number of tourists is a strategic step that needs to be done in a sustainable manner. Although Palembang City has great tourism potential, it has not been adequately developed. The Palembang City Tourism Office is implementing a strategy to promote historical tourism of the Kuto Besak Fortress in Palembang City by utilizing digital technology and information technology (Fitria et al., 2025) to improve and promote historical tourism in Kuto Besak Fort, Palembang City to local and foreign tourists, the Tourism Office organizes international events in collaboration with tourist objects and attractions in Palembang City in order to develop culture and tourism promotion in Palembang City (Fara Amelia, 2025).

The Palembang City Tourism Office is determined to develop six development priority elements to accelerate the development and development of Palembang City's tourism. The priority development strategy involves and collaborates with *Pentahelix* tourism, namely elements of academia, business, community/community, government and media, in addition to encouraging the role of the private sector to assist tourism development, especially in the improvement of 15 priority tourist destinations which will be of special concern to the Palembang City Tourism Office and will continue to be developed gradually through funding sourced from the Regional Expenditure Budget funds (Strategic Plan of the Palembang City Tourism Office for 2024-2026).

The development of this tourist area is a process that provides direction for the development of a feasible environment, in harmony and in accordance with the aspirations of the community, the ability of local resources and the carrying capacity of the land, the development of tourist areas will not be separated from the collective memory of the past which is the core of the *Urban Heritage Tourism*. In the process of developing tourist attraction areas, the central and regional governments have the duties contained in Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage article 95 it is stated that local governments have the duty to protect, develop and utilize cultural heritage in the form of objects, buildings, structures, areas, and cultural heritage sites (Budi et al., 2024). This research aims to find out the Strategy of the Tourism Office in Increasing the Historical Tourist Attraction of Kuto Besak Fort, Palembang City. The Tourism Office plays an important role in efforts to increase historical tourism attractions, especially in Kuto Besak Fort. The Tourism Office carries out several important roles in increasing attractive and sustainable tourist attractions. Through a collaborative approach, digitalization, event organizing, and human resource improvement, the Tourism Office is able to improve a memorable tourist experience for visitors while maintaining a valuable cultural heritage for the city of Palembang.

In this study, it was obtained through interviews with the Head of the Tourism Office, Tourism Office Employees and the Community who visited Kuto Besak Fort. The researcher uses Geoff Mulgan's theory with indicators, namely. Purpose, Environment, Direction, Action and Learning and Cooper's theory are. tourist attractions, ease of access, comfort, and supporting services provided by the government and the private sector.

In this study, using the theory of Strategy according to Geoff Mulgan with indicators namely Purpose, Environment, Direction, Action, Learning and the theory of Historical Tourism Attraction according to Cooper, namely Tourist attractions, Ease of access, Comfort, and supporting services provided by the government and the private sector.

Conclusion

In this study, an analysis can be seen from the Tourism Office's Strategy in Increasing the Attraction of Historical Tourism in Kuto Besak Fort, Palembang City. By using the theory of Strategy according to (Geoff Mulgan, 2009). Namely with indicators, namely Goals, Environment, Direction, Action, Learning. From these indicators, you can see the expression of opinions. Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the strategy of the Palembang City Tourism Office in increasing historical tourism attractions in Kuto Besak Fort is a comprehensive and sustainable effort, which is carried out through a strategic approach.

Table 1 Conclusion of the Discussion

Yes	Indicator	Remarks
1.	Purpose	The strategic goal of the Palembang City Tourism Office in developing historical tourism in Kuto Besak Fort is to make it a tourist icon that is able to strengthen the city's cultural identity, increase tourist visits, and support local economic growth. This effort is realized through various activities such as organizing cultural events, improving regional infrastructure, and the active involvement of the historical community and cultural arts actors. This overall approach shows that the tourism office does not only focus on the physical aspect, but also emphasizes on the preservation of historical values and the empowerment of the community in a sustainable manner.
2.	Environment	Changes in the environment around Kuto Besak Fort, both physically, socially, and culturally. Through various innovations such as the organization of contemporary events, the arrangement of facilities, and the handling of waste and order problems, the agency has succeeded in maintaining the relevance of this destination in the midst of the challenges of the times. A responsive strategy is also reflected in community involvement through education programs and the formation of tourism awareness groups. This approach shows an awareness that the success of a destination is not only determined by infrastructure, but also public involvement and the government's adaptive nature to environmental dynamics.
3.	Briefing	The Tourism Office has carried out systematic briefings through socialization, training, and the preparation of regulations. Area management is carried out centrally through the Regional Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD), accompanied by the implementation of Regional Regulations to regulate the behavior of visitors and business actors in tourist areas. Directions are also provided through promotional media, information boards, and cross-sector coordination. In addition, strengthening human resource capacity and building collective awareness is an important part of the briefing strategy so that tourism management runs in an orderly, efficient, and sustainability-oriented manner.
4.	Actions	The implementation carried out can be seen from the physical revitalization of the fort, the improvement of public facilities, the organization of cultural festivals, and promotion through digital media and collaboration with influencers. The Service also collaborates with the Cultural Heritage Preservation Center for the conservation of historical sites. Initiatives such as the provision of security posts, regional planning, and periodic waste management show that strategies do not only stop at planning, but are executed in the form of targeted and consistent actions. This reflects a commitment to creating a dynamic, safe, and attractive tourism environment.
5.	Learning	Obstacles faced in the implementation of the strategy include budget limitations, lack of quality and quantity of human resources, and low public awareness of the cleanliness and safety of the area. The existence of unorganized street vendors, thuggery, and illegal parking are also challenges. The agency realizes that the success of the strategy cannot be achieved without the active participation of all parties. Therefore, routine evaluations, improving public education, and cross-agency collaboration continue to be pursued as a form of learning to improve strategies in the future.

Furthermore, it is seen from a theoretical perspective (Cooper, 2005). Namely tourist attractions, ease of access, comfort, and supporting services provided by the government and the private sector Kuto Besak Fortress as one of the historical tourism icons of Palembang City has a strong attraction in terms of historical value and the beauty of its geographical location on the banks of the Musi River. Through an interview approach with the visiting community, this study found that Kuto Besak Fort holds great potential as a historical tourist destination that is not only able to provide an educational experience.

Table 2 Conclusion of the discussion

Yes	Indicator	Remarks
1.	Tourist Attractions	Kuto Besak Fort has a strong attraction as a historical site full of cultural value and a symbol of the glory of the Sultanate of Palembang. The uniqueness of its location on the banks of the Musi River with the background of the Ampera Bridge and the existence of special culinary makes this area crowded. However, the threat of the existence of illegal buskers, thuggery, and unorganized street vendors reduces the quality of the tourist experience. Therefore, the management of attractions needs to be improved in order to provide a sustainable positive impression for tourists
2.	Ease of access	The location of Kuto Besak Fort in the center of the city makes it very accessible by public and private transportation for tourists visiting Kuto Besak Fort. However, challenges arise from parking management that is not optimal. Although the parking lot is quite large, illegal parking and levies are still found that are not in accordance with the rules. Parking safety is also in doubt. Visitors hope for a more professional and transparent management to create comfort from arrival to return from the tourist area.
3.	Convenience	The comfort of visitors is still disturbed by the lack of supporting facilities such as public seating, the condition of the fort that is poorly maintained, and security disturbances from thugs and buskers. The existence of a sitting area that is generally only available in the merchant area forces visitors to transact if they want to rest. In addition, reports of loss of goods and slum traces in several corners of the fort also reduced the sense of security. Therefore, it is necessary to improve comfort infrastructure and the presence of effective and tourist-friendly security.
4.	Support Services Provided by the Government and Private	In terms of supporting services, the area around Benteng Kuto Besak already has potential through the existence of floating restaurants, culinary traders, and easy access to souvenir shops in the 16 Ilir area. However, services such as vehicle rentals, official tour guides, and transportation facilities in the area are still not optimal. To make Kuto Besak Fort a complete destination, collaboration between the government and the private sector is needed to provide more organized services

The Tourism Office in Increasing Tourist Attraction in Kuto Besak Fort Palembang City The Palembang City Tourism Office has a clear vision to make Kuto Besak Fort a tourist icon of the city's pride, which not only attracts tourists but also preserves culture and encourages the local economy. They have developed a comprehensive strategy and made various real efforts, ranging from physical revitalization, holding cultural *events*, to digital promotion, and adapting to changes in the surrounding environment. The management system through UPTD and regulations also shows seriousness. However, behind all these efforts, the Tourism Office faces a big challenge. Limited budgets and human resources, coupled with low public awareness of cleanliness and safety, are the main obstacles. Then problems such as the existence of illegal buskers, thuggery, unorganized street vendors, and illegal parking still interfere with the comfort and image of tourists who visit Kuto Besak Fort. Collaboration between the government and the community is the main key to making Kuto Besak Fort a historical tourist destination that is not only interesting, but also comfortable, safe, and sustainable for all groups.

Suggestions

For the Palembang City Tourism Office to develop a strategy for developing historical tourism that is more structured and participatory. This strategy must be aligned with the long-term development plan and widely disseminated to the community and tourism actors in order to create synergy and mutual awareness. To maintain sustainability, the tourism office needs to strengthen cross-sector coordination in terms of improving

infrastructure, waste management, controlling street vendors, and securing tourist areas. Improving the quality of services also needs to be a priority, including the provision of public facilities such as seating, clean toilets, and night lighting. Digital promotion must be expanded by involving social media, influencers, and online-based travel platforms. In addition, strengthening the capacity of tourism human resources through regular training and evaluation will support the implementation of more effective and sustainable strategies

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