IJHESS
International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences
PUBLISHER:
Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu
ISSN: 2685-6689
SINTA 2

Synergy Between Education and Economy in Developing the Potential of "*Pasar Kamu*" Cultural Culinary Tourism in Denai Lama Pantai Labu Village, Deli Serdang Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the synergy between education and economy in empowering communities through the development of culture-based culinary tourism. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that Pasar Kamu functions not only as an economic marketplace but also as a non-formal educational space that promotes community-based learning. Through digital literacy training, branding assistance, and participatory management, local youth develop entrepreneurship skills and cultural awareness. Collaboration with universities strengthens knowledge transfer in digital marketing and business management, resulting in increased MSME income and expanded market reach. In conclusion, the synergy between education and creative economy in Pasar Kamu produces a sustainable community empowerment model that integrates educational values, local wisdom, and digital innovation. This model can serve as a best practice for developing culturally rooted tourism villages in Indonesia.

Keywords: Community Education, Creative Economy, UMKM, Digital Literacy, Local Culture, *Pasar Kamu*

ARTICLE IDENTIFIERS

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
Volume 8 - Issue 4 - 2026
Pages 1461-1470
DOI: 10.56338/ijhess.v8i4.12723

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 17 August 2026
Revised: 26 October 2026
Accepted: 19 November 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Deli Serdang Regency is one of the regions with diverse tourism potential in North Sumatra Province. Its geographical conditions, which include highlands, lowlands, and coastlines, provide significant ecological and cultural advantages for the development of the tourism sector (Gamage et al., 2020). Based on data from the Deli Serdang Regency Central Statistics Agency (2024), there are around 30,122 tourism activities with a total of 40,225 visitors spread across various sub-districts. However, most of these tourism activities are still concentrated in the natural and artificial tourism sectors, while culinary tourism based on local culture has not been optimally developed (Nson, 2024). In fact, according to Statista (2023), around 81% of domestic tourists in Indonesia seek culinary tourism references through social media, and 67% of them consider local cultural aspects when choosing a destination. This means that culinary tourism has strategic appeal that has the potential to drive the creative economy of the community if managed professionally and sustainably (Pramezwary et al., 2026).

In response to this opportunity, the Deli Serdang Regency Government, through the 'Tourism-Aware Village' programme, is encouraging community participation in the management of cultural-based tourism potential and local independence (Raihan & Tuspekova, 2022). Three villages have been designated as pilot projects Denai Lama Village, Pematang Johar Village, and Sialang Village, but Denai Lama Village stands out uniquely for its success in developing culinary tourism that combines cultural values, creativity, and mutual cooperation. It was in this village that Pasar Kamu (Youth Breakfast Market) was born, a youth community initiative inaugurated on 20 January 2019 as a traditional culinary-themed public market. According to data from the Tourism Department (2023), Pasar Kamu has become one of the favourite destinations, attracting around 700–800 local and out-of-town tourists each week, making it a concrete example of collaboration between the community, civil society, and local government in developing a culture-based economy.

However, there are a number of fundamental challenges that hinder the sustainability of Pasar Kamu. First, from a managerial perspective, most MSME players do not yet have adequate product branding and digital literacy skills (Amory et al., 2025). Promotion still relies on conventional media and limited community networks, so the potential of the digital market has not been maximised (Pramezwary et al., 2026). Second, from an educational perspective, collaboration between universities and local communities is still incidental, i.e. it is not structured in a sustainable mentoring model. Meanwhile, in other areas such as Pentingsari Tourism Village (Yogyakarta) and Nglanggeran (Gunungkidul), collaboration with universities has proven to strengthen the digital capacity of the community and increase culinary tourism visits by up to 40%. This highlights a significant gap between the cultural potential and human resource readiness in Denai Lama Village to manage culinary tourism in a modern way without losing traditional values.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2022), the development of community-based tourism villages can provide added value not only economically, but also socially, ecologically, and educationally. This approach is in line with the ideas of Priasukmana and Mulyadin (2001) as well as Fandeli, Baiquni, and Dewi (2013), that sustainable tourism development must involve the community as the main subject that preserves local wisdom. In this context, Pasar Kamu has the potential to be a concrete example of how education and the economy can work together to strengthen the competitiveness of local culinary tourism in the digital age. The Head of Denai Lama Village even emphasised, 'A tourism village is not just a place to holiday, but a learning space where we instil cultural, economic, and community values (Nashruddin, 2025).

Therefore, this study aims to understand how the synergy between education and economy is implemented in the context of Pasar Kamu, as well as its impact on community empowerment and the sustainability of the creative economy at the village level. Specifically, this study will focus on five main areas: 1) The condition of Pasar Kamu as a local culture-based economic space that grew from community initiatives; 2) Education as the basis for community social transformation, through training, digital literacy, and community-based learning; 3) The synergy between the creative economy and the preservation of local culture, which places culture as an identity and social capital; 4) The synergy between education and the economy in field practice, through collaboration between universities, the government, and the community in increasing the capacity of MSMEs; and 5) The impact of synergy on social and economic sustainability, which measures how educational and creative economic activities create real change for community welfare and cultural preservation. Through a participatory approach, this research is expected to contribute conceptually and practically to the development of a community empowerment model based on the synergy between education and the creative economy, rooted in local culture. The Pasar Kamu model is expected to become a

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best practice in developing sustainable tourist villages that harmoniously combine educational, economic, social and cultural values.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the synergy between education and economics in developing cultural potential through culinary tourism at Pasar Kamu in Denai Lama Village (Cheong et al., 2023). This approach was chosen because it is relevant for revealing the social dynamics behind the establishment of Pasar Kamu and the role of non-formal education in driving socio-economic change in the local community (Muhammad Adriansyah Siregar et al., 2023). Data in this study were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies (Rustamana et al., 2024). Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously using the Miles and Huberman (2014) model, namely through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Fernandes et al., 2025). The research results were categorised into main themes such as: (1) the condition of Pasar Kamu, (2) education as the basis for community social transformation, (3) the synergy between the creative economy and the preservation of local culture, (4) the synergy between education and the economy in field practice, and (5) the impact of synergy on social and economic sustainability.

THEORETICAL STUDIES

Education and Community Empowerment

Education plays a fundamental role in community empowerment because it provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to improve their social and economic conditions. In the context of community-based development, education is not limited to formal institutions but also encompasses non-formal and informal learning processes that emerge through social interaction, practical experiences, and participation in community activities. Community-based learning enables individuals to acquire relevant knowledge while responding directly to the needs and challenges of their surrounding environment. Through this approach, education becomes an instrument for developing human potential, strengthening social participation, and encouraging economic independence. Community empowerment through education emphasizes the importance of active participation, capacity building, and the development of local knowledge. Rather than positioning communities merely as recipients of development programs, empowerment approaches encourage them to become active actors in identifying problems, managing resources, and creating solutions. In this regard, digital literacy and entrepreneurship education are particularly important for communities involved in tourism and small-business activities.

Digital literacy enables local entrepreneurs to utilize information technology for product promotion, market communication, and business development. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship education strengthens their ability to identify market opportunities, manage business activities, develop innovative products, and improve competitiveness. Furthermore, educational empowerment becomes more effective when it is integrated with the cultural and economic characteristics of local communities. Learning activities based on local potential allow community members to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications. In culture-based culinary tourism, for example, traditional food preparation, local culinary knowledge, and cultural practices can serve as educational resources for developing entrepreneurial competencies. Consequently, education functions not only as a means of individual development but also as a mechanism for preserving cultural identity, strengthening community capacity, and promoting sustainable socioeconomic transformation.

Creative Economy and Culture-Based Culinary Tourism

The creative economy represents an economic development approach that emphasizes creativity, innovation, knowledge, and cultural resources as sources of added value. Unlike conventional economic activities that primarily depend on physical resources and production capacity, the creative economy relies heavily on human intellectual potential, cultural identity, and the ability to transform ideas into economically valuable products and services. Within this framework, local traditions and cultural practices can become important economic assets when developed through innovative business models, effective marketing strategies, and sustainable resource management. The creative economy therefore provides opportunities for local communities to generate income while maintaining their cultural characteristics.

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Culture-based culinary tourism represents one manifestation of the relationship between cultural heritage and creative economic development. Culinary tourism extends beyond the consumption of traditional food because it also involves cultural experiences, local identities, social interactions, and the historical meanings associated with food. Traditional culinary products can function as cultural representations that communicate the uniqueness of a particular community or geographical area. By integrating local cuisine with tourism activities, communities can develop distinctive attractions that differentiate their destinations from other tourism locations. This approach also creates opportunities for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to participate in tourism value chains through food production, product innovation, culinary services, and supporting economic activities.

The development of culture-based culinary tourism requires several supporting factors, including product quality, branding, accessibility, market orientation, and the utilization of digital technology. Branding plays an important role in establishing product identity and communicating cultural uniqueness to potential consumers. Meanwhile, digital marketing provides opportunities for local businesses to reach broader markets through social media, digital platforms, and online promotional networks. These strategies are particularly relevant for community-based tourism destinations because they allow local entrepreneurs to promote their products without depending entirely on conventional marketing channels. Nevertheless, economic development should remain connected to cultural preservation and community interests. The integration of creativity, cultural values, and entrepreneurship is therefore essential to ensuring that culinary tourism generates economic benefits while maintaining the authenticity of local traditions.

Collaborative Governance and Sustainable Community-Based Tourism

Collaborative governance provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how different stakeholders can work together to achieve shared development objectives. This approach emphasizes cooperation among government institutions, universities, local communities, private-sector actors, and civil society organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating development initiatives. In community-based tourism, collaborative governance is particularly important because tourism development involves multiple dimensions, including economic activities, cultural preservation, institutional capacity, environmental sustainability, and community participation. No single institution or stakeholder can independently address all these dimensions. Therefore, effective collaboration is necessary to mobilize resources, exchange knowledge, strengthen institutional relationships, and establish sustainable development strategies.

Universities play an important role in this collaborative process, particularly through knowledge transfer, community engagement, research activities, and capacity-building programs. Academic institutions can contribute by providing technical assistance in business management, digital marketing, entrepreneurship, product development, and organizational management. Such collaboration allows local communities to access knowledge and expertise that may otherwise be difficult to obtain independently. At the same time, universities can benefit from community engagement by developing practical learning opportunities for students and generating research that responds to actual social and economic conditions. This relationship creates a mutually beneficial partnership in which academic knowledge and local experiences are integrated into community development practices.

The sustainability of community-based tourism also depends on participatory management, local ownership, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits. Community participation should extend beyond involvement in tourism activities to include decision-making processes, resource management, program evaluation, and the determination of development priorities. Participatory management encourages transparency, strengthens collective responsibility, and increases the community's capacity to maintain tourism initiatives over the long term. Furthermore, the integration of digital innovation into tourism management can improve promotional effectiveness, administrative efficiency, information accessibility, and market connectivity. However, technological adoption must be accompanied by adequate digital competencies and institutional support to ensure that innovation produces meaningful benefits for local communities.

In this context, sustainable community-based tourism can be understood as a development model that integrates economic improvement, cultural preservation, social participation, and institutional collaboration. The relationship between educational institutions, local communities, and economic stakeholders creates opportunities for developing tourism destinations that are not only commercially competitive but also socially inclusive and culturally sustainable. Pasar Kamu illustrates the potential of this approach through the integration of traditional culinary activities, community-based learning, entrepreneurship development,

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digital literacy, and university partnerships. Accordingly, collaborative governance provides an important conceptual perspective for examining how stakeholder synergy can transform local cultural resources into sustainable economic opportunities while strengthening community capacity and preserving local identity.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Pasar Kamu: Synergy between Young People, Culture, and the Creative Economy

Pasar Kamu, short for Pekan Sarapan Karya Anak Muda, first opened on 9 August 2020. This market was initiated by the Kawan Lama Area community, a group of young people from Denai Lama Village led by Dedy, Solihin, Brahmana Kumbara, and Ilham Kurniadi young leaders who have long been active in social movements and community empowerment in North Sumatra. A few months later, this initiative was further strengthened through collaboration with Masyarakat Sadar Wisata (Masata) Deli Serdang, a partner community focused on community-based tourism development (Nasution et al., 2023). This collaboration became a turning point in Pasar Kamu's journey, as it brought together the synergy of local cultural potential, young entrepreneurial spirit, and digital promotion strategies that they began to learn through digital literacy-based training. Pasar Kamu is designed to resemble a traditional folk market, where visitors can enjoy old-fashioned snacks such as lupis, lemang, kue talam, and serabi (Azmi et al., 2025). The cuisine served reflects a blend of Malay and Javanese cultures, the two dominant ethnic groups that shape the social identity of the Denai Lama community. However, Pasar Kamu is more than just a place to sell food; it is a socio-economic and educational space. It was born out of concern for the condition of young people in Kampong Lama, many of whom were unemployed and working odd jobs, despite their great potential (A. Lubis et al., 2024). Most junior high school or high school graduates in this village previously worked as farm labourers, chicken coop labourers, or casual workers without digital skills.

Seeing this situation, Dedy and his friends began to initiate community-based education in entrepreneurship, managing social media, and creating digital promotional content (Sulaiman et al., 2022). They reorganised the economic system so that Pasar Kamu was owned by the community, not by outside investors. The division of labour, capital, and profits was regulated transparently and agreed upon in a community forum (Zebua et al., 2024). This model represented the principle of mutual assistance economics, as proposed by the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023), which emphasised solidarity-based and participatory economic empowerment. This step is in line with research by Hapsari & Dewi (2022) which shows that digital literacy has a significant impact on increasing the competitiveness of traditional culinary MSMEs. With simple digital promotion training, traders at Pasar Kamu began to understand the importance of branding, product storytelling, and attractive visual communication.

In a short period of time, Pasar Kamu has grown into a creative economic space that drives hundreds of local residents. Currently, there are around 152 vendors selling more than 220 food and beverage items, assisted by 46 young volunteers, most of whom are junior high and high school students. Every weekend, the market attracts 700–800 visitors, the majority of whom come from outside Pantai Labu, such as Medan, Lubuk Pakam, and Tebing Tinggi. Visitor data shows a significant increase since the introduction of digital marketing training facilitated by several partner universities in Deli Serdang, including training in product branding based on cultural narratives (Fijrina et al., 2025). In addition to economic impacts, Pasar Kamu also creates socio-educational impacts: young people learn leadership, women empower themselves through culinary entrepreneurship, and communities begin to reinterpret cultural potential as a source of sustainable economy. This model is in line with UNESCO's (2021) idea of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, which emphasises the importance of integrating education, culture, and the local economy in creating resilient communities in the digital age.

Education as the Basis for Community Social Transformation

The results of the study show that the presence of Pasar Kamu in Denai Lama Village is not merely a form of economic activity for the people, but has developed into a community-based non-formal educational space that plays an important role in increasing human resource capacity, especially among the younger generation (Hawanda et al., 2023). This initiative began with the concern of a group of local leaders, Dedy, Solihin, Brahmana Kumbara, and Ilham Kurniadi, about the socio-economic conditions of the village community, which had previously been stagnant (I. H. Lubis et al., 2023). They realised that overcoming underdevelopment could not only be achieved through the provision of economic capital, but must begin with liberating education, namely education that grows from the community's own awareness.

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By applying the principles of community-based learning, Pasar Kamu becomes a social laboratory where the community learns through direct experience (experiential learning). Activities such as managing stalls, organising finances, arranging market spaces, and promoting products digitally are concrete forms of learning that are not bound by the classroom (Trisnawaty et al., 2022). Young people who previously worked odd jobs, were farm labourers, or were unemployed are absorbed in activities that foster a sense of responsibility, creativity, and collaboration. In practice, this learning process forms a learning ecosystem that connects economic, social, and cultural aspects into a single meaningful activity (Silalahi et al., 2024).

The educational model implemented in Pasar Kamu also fosters critical reflection. Through active involvement in market activities, the community learns to reflect on their life experiences: from dependence on external assistance to collective independence based on local potential (Siregar et al., 2024). The changes that occur are not only at the economic level, but also in the mindset and social structure of the community. A new awareness has emerged that the progress of the village cannot be expected from outside parties, but must be built through the strength of the residents themselves. In addition, the educational process at Pasar Kamu emphasises the values of social responsibility and participatory leadership (Salsabila et al., 2025). The founders do not act as sole instructors, but as facilitators who provide space for each community member to become a teacher for others. This peer learning pattern effectively increases a sense of ownership and social solidarity among market participants. Thus, Pasar Kamu functions not only as a place of buying and selling, but as a 'school of life' where people learn about management, work ethics, leadership, and the preservation of local culture.

In the context of community empowerment, Pasar Kamu is a concrete example of education as liberation. Education here is not aimed at producing workers who are compliant with the capitalist economic system, but at fostering critical awareness of one's own potential and that of the environment. As a result, the community of Denai Lama Village now has the confidence and collective spirit to manage their natural and cultural resources as capital for sustainable development (Safitri & Lubis, 2023). Thus, Pasar Kamu has presented an alternative form of education oriented towards transformative social action. Through a community-based learning approach and creative economic practices, the community not only acquires technical skills, but also builds awareness of identity, independence, and social solidarity (Hutomo et al., 2023). This transformation is proof that the synergy between education and the economy can be a driving force for sustainable social change at the grassroots level.

Synergy between Creative Economy and Local Cultural Preservation

In conversations with visitors and managers, one thing that is most often mentioned is the strong impression of traditional nuances inherent in Pasar Kamu. One visitor, for example, said that the atmosphere of this market 'takes us back to our childhood, when we used to buy snacks at bamboo stalls in the village.' This impression is not accidental. The market's architectural design was deliberately modelled after bamboo huts with dried coconut leaf roofs. These simple elements create a familiar, cool atmosphere that is rich in cultural meaning, a true representation of the local wisdom that is the main attraction of this culinary tourism area (Khairullah & Kusma, 2025). More than just physical appearance, Pasar Kamu presents an authentic cultural experience through its concept of social interaction and unique transaction system. The use of the 'tempu' payment method, which consists of finely ground coconut shells, is a symbol of local pride and an innovation that revives the collective memory of the coastal Malay agrarian community. Each 'tempu' is worth Rp2,000 and can be exchanged at a special money exchange booth located at the entrance area. Through this system, visitors not only purchase products but also 'enter' the cultural narrative crafted by the Denai Lama community.

From a governance perspective, Pasar Kamu also demonstrates a high level of ecological awareness. Environmental cleanliness is maintained through a waste management system that separates organic, non-organic and residual waste, which is placed at several strategic points. This practice is in line with the concept of sustainable community-based tourism, which emphasises a balance between environmental sustainability, community participation, and local economic sustainability (Zahra & Dora, 2024). In addition, the presence of security officers at several points, the willingness of the community to provide information, and the support of the village government and traditional institutions demonstrate how Pasar Kamu has grown from a spirit of mutual cooperation and collective awareness (Khadry & Silalahi, 2024). From a community education perspective, the social environment of Pasar Kamu serves as a cross-generational learning space. Young people learn service ethics, financial management, and marketing strategies directly from field practice, while the older generation transfers cultural values such as simplicity, hard work, and local wisdom

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through daily activities in the market (Fadli et al., 2024). This synergy forms a holistic learning ecosystem where economics, culture, and education converge in the daily lives of residents. Thus, Pasar Kamu has not only succeeded in preserving cultural authenticity as a tourist attraction, but also showcases a model of cultural entrepreneurship based on educational and social values (Rahman & Hakim, 2024). The sustainability of Pasar Kamu depends on how the community and universities continue to strengthen digital literacy, cultural promotion, and product branding without losing the traditional spirit that defines its identity. Creative tourism rooted in local culture is not merely aesthetic consumption, but a collaborative process of negotiating identity and meaning in an ever-changing global context.

Synergy between Education and Economy in Field Practice

In Pasar Kamu's field practice, the synergy between education and economy is realised through concrete activities that touch on two sides at once: human capacity building and creative economic development. One concrete activity is digital literacy and social media training for traders, organised by universities and local communities. Through workshops, traders learn how to take attractive product photos, write captions with cultural storytelling, choose hashtags, and consistently upload content on Instagram and TikTok. This type of training not only improves technical skills but also raises awareness that digital marketing can expand markets. The next step is direct mentoring, in which students and lecturers take on the role of facilitators (Ginting et al., 2025). They help traders create posting schedules, evaluate upload performance, and modify content strategies based on consumer feedback and insight data. For example, if video content highlighting the process of making traditional foods receives high engagement, then more similar content will be created. This mentoring also covers product branding aspects the use of collective logos, packaging design, and visual identities that reflect the local Malay-Javanese culture.

The results of this practice, as shown in several recent community service studies, indicate that non-formal education based on digital competencies can truly empower MSMEs economically. For example, in Palembang City, digital literacy education for MSMEs selling local specialities improved the ability of food vendors (in Palembang) to use social media and online promotion, thereby increasing product visibility. Similarly, in Tugurejo, Semarang, branding and digitalisation coaching activities for MSMEs in support of smart ecotourism showed that business actors became more knowledgeable about product identity, packaging, and digital promotion, thereby increasing their competitiveness. In addition, the integration of education and economics in field practice also encourages collaboration between actors: young traders learn from each other, communities provide discussion spaces to evaluate marketing strategies, and universities provide knowledge resources and access to simple technology.

In the study 'Development of Marketing Strategies for MSMEs in Traditional Markets and Culinary Centres in Kalideres, West Jakarta', it was found that educational interventions related to STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) and digital marketing practices increased market reach and promotional effectiveness for culinary MSMEs (Erianto et al., 2024). The Pasar Kamu field practice reflects that education-economy synergy is not just a slogan, but a measurable operational action. The combination of workshops, mentoring, field practice, and repeated evaluations has resulted in improved digital competence, strengthened cultural branding, and tangible local economic growth.

The Impact of Synergy on Social and Economic Sustainability

The synergy between education and the creative economy at Pasar Kamu has had a significant impact on the social and economic sustainability of the Denai Lama Village community. Educational interventions in the form of digital literacy training, product branding assistance, and community-based learning practices have created a multiplier effect on the social lives of residents. The community has not only experienced an increase in technical skills in marketing products, but has also strengthened social networks, community solidarity, and a sense of belonging to the local cultural identity. One of the most tangible social impacts is the formation of a collaborative learning ecosystem. The younger generation, who were previously passive, are now driving economic and creative activities, as well as promoting culture through digital media. They act as local content creators, documenting market activities and narrating the stories behind traditional snacks such as lemang, kue bolu kampung, or fresh palm juice. These activities not only increase the digital presence of markets in online spaces but also strengthen values of community and social responsibility. Transformative education in the form of community-based entrepreneurship has proven effective in shaping residents' critical awareness that preserving local culture also means preserving the economic sustainability of the village.

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From an economic perspective, the results of educational interventions show an increase in the production capacity and competitiveness of MSMEs (Syahrizal et al., 2023). Once business actors understand the importance of cultural narratives in digital promotion, product sales increase because buyers are not only purchasing food, but also experiences and cultural values. Similar findings are also shown by Dayar et al.'s (2023) research, which states that the digitisation of local food product marketing can increase sales value by up to 30% with minimal promotional costs through social media platforms. Meanwhile, Fakhria et al. (2024) show that strengthening local branding of MSME products contributes to a sustainable increase in the income of small business owners in eco-tourism-based culinary tourism areas.

This synergy also strengthens the sustainability of the local value-based economy. Pasar Kamu is not just a transaction space, but also a forum for the regeneration of values where young people learn about mutual cooperation economics and entrepreneurial ethics that favour culture. Thus, the economy that grows in Denai Lama Village is not exploitative, but inclusive, participatory, and sustainable. Collaboration between universities, local communities, and village governments is a catalyst in building an empowerment model that is not only profit-based but also preserves social and cultural identity. Ultimately, the social and economic sustainability that emerges from this synergy establishes Pasar Kamu as a model living laboratory for culture-based community education. Educational values, digital creativity, and the collaborative economy combine to form a village development strategy that is rooted in local potential yet adaptive to global challenges. Such a model is relevant for implementation in various other regions as a best practice of synergy between universities and communities in strengthening culture-based creative economies.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the development of the culinary tourism potential of Pasar Kamu in Denai Lama Village is clear evidence of the synergy between education and the creative economy that has grown from the roots of the community. Through a community-based learning approach, activities at Pasar Kamu not only encourage the improvement of digital skills and entrepreneurship among the community, but also strengthen awareness of the importance of preserving local culture as a valuable economic identity. The role of higher education institutions in providing digital literacy training, product branding assistance, and research and publication support has strengthened the capacity of MSME actors to adapt to the digital economy era without losing traditional values. From a social perspective, Pasar Kamu has formed a collaborative ecosystem that fosters solidarity, a sense of belonging, and pride in local cultural heritage. Economically, this activity contributes to increased turnover, job creation, and growth in the culture-based culinary tourism sector.

The synergy between education and economics in this field practice demonstrates that community empowerment can be effective when education is positioned not only as a transfer of knowledge but also as a reflective and transformative social process. Therefore, the Pasar Kamu model can serve as inspiration and a best practice in developing sustainable tourism villages that balance economic, social, cultural, and ecological aspects. As a recommendation, collaboration between local governments, universities, and local communities needs to be continuously strengthened through sustainable policies and programmes that support the development of culture-based creative economies. Higher education institutions are expected to make areas such as Pasar Kamu a living laboratory for research and community service that is relevant to local needs. Thus, the synergy between education and the creative economy is not only an empowerment strategy, but also a foundation for national cultural independence and resilience in the digital age.

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