# STRATEGY TO INCREASE TOURISTS' INTEREST IN VISITING THE BAJRA SANDHI MUSEUM AS A TOURISM ATTRACTION FOR THE HISTORY OF BALINESE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE

<sup>1</sup>I Wayan Tantra <sup>2</sup>Gusti Ayu Mahanavami <sup>3</sup>Nyoman Parta <sup>4</sup>Anak Agung Ngurah Gde Suindrawan <sup>5</sup>Rosula Afrin <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Manajemen Indonesia Handayani Email: wayantantrastimi20@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore appropriate strategies in attracting tourists to visit the *Bajra Sandhi* museum which has historical value as well as factors that influence tourists' interest in visiting museums which have value of the people's struggle. This study is qualitative research that uses primary and secondary data sources. The sample selection technique was carried out using the purposive sampling method. Data collection was undertaken through observation, semi structured interviews and literature study. Data analysis for this study uses a model developed by Miles & Huberman through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the right strategy to increase tourist interest in visiting the museum is carried out by utilizing a strategic location, adequate service facilities, cultural values of local wisdom and support from the government, increasing promotions both online and offline as well as better accessibility and increasing collaboration with tourism actors and travel agencies.

**Keywords:** Strategic location, adequate facilities, cultural values, government support, promotion and cooperation with tourism actors

# **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism has long been a mainstay sector in supporting economic growth in Bali. According to data published by the Bali Province Central Statistics Agency in 2024 (BPS, 2024), the contribution of tourism sector in five years during the year of 2019-2023 period shows a tendency to increase significantly after the end of COVID 19 pandemic. The contribution of this sector in year of 2023 reached 19.93% of Bali's GRDP or undergo growth of 1.98%, compared to the previous year's period in year of 2022 which was 17.98%. Even though its contribution is lower than compared to the period before the COVID 19 pandemic, which reached 23.25% in year of 2019, the role of tourism sector in Bali's economy is still considered to be the largest compared to other economic sectors.

Tourism according to Law Number 10 of 2009 aims to increase economic growth, improve people's welfare, preserve nature, the environment and resources and advance culture (Dinata et al., 2024). The role of tourism development to increase economic growth is supported by the study of Surahman et al. (2020) which shows that the impact of tourism

development provides an economic contribution reaching 94.61%. Meanwhile, its sociocultural impact reached 93.61%. This research is also strengthened by the study of Simorangkir et al. (2024) which states that tourism development significantly improves economic performance and can directly influence economic growth reaching 87.3%. As one of the world's destinations, Bali is known for its cultural tourism which has many cultural tourist attractions including: Temples, Tourist Villages, Museums, Historical Monuments and Balinese Dance. One of the unique tourist attractions located in the center of Denpasar city is the *Bajra Sandhi* Museum.

It represents a symbol of the Balinese people's struggle to free themselves from colonialism known as the "*Puputan War*". The monument holds memories of the tenacity of Balinese warriors from the time of Balinese kingdom to seizing and maintaining Indonesian independence, especially in the Bali area. This monument was built to pay tribute to heroes and honor the struggle of Balinese people (Suweda & Darmawan, 2017). This museum is located in the city center in the Renon area, Denpasar, Bali. Built in 1988 and inaugurated in 2003 on 13.8 hectares of land filled with the philosophical meaning of local Balinese wisdom. The problem currently being faced in managing the museum is that, after the Covid 19 pandemic, the number of visits by foreign and domestic tourists as well as pupils and students has decreased drastically, and strategies are needed to increase tourist interest in visiting this museum again after COVID 19. Based on tourist visits data for the period of 2018-2022, both domestic and foreign shown in Table 1.1 show drastically decline in visitor interest.

No	Year	Domestic	Student	Foreigner	Total
1	2018	32,434	116,952	78,265	227,651
2	2019	26,099	76,745	46,042	148,886
3	2020	1,806	689	456	2,951
4	2021	2,517	3,808	198	6,523
5	2022	3,606	3,947	251	7,804

 Table 1.1 Data on Bajra Sandhi Monument Tourist Visits from 2018-2022

Source: Bajra Sandhi Monument (2023)

Table I.1, the average number of tourist visits before Covid 19 per year reached 188,268 tourists, most of which were supported by visits from school and college students. In year of 2019 the number of tourist visits decreased by 34.60% compared to the previous year in 2018. This was caused by the spread of news about Covid 19 and the official announcement

of the Covid 19 pandemic outbreak by the government which had an impact on decreasing tourist interest in visiting the museum. During the pandemic in year of 2020, the number of tourist visits was far below the average visit before the pandemic with a growth rate reaching -77.51%. This decline was caused by large-scale restrictions imposed by the government in order to prevent a more massive spread of this outbreak to society. In the period 2021 to 2022, the number of tourist visits will begin to increase, but this number is still far from the average number of visits before Covid 19. Managers need a strategy to attract tourists' interest in returning to the Bajra Sandhi museum as a tourist attraction. Several studies have been conducted to explore museums as tourist attractions (Kristanto et al., 2024; Firmansyah et al., 2024; Effendy & Sarudin, 2024; Angelica & Adiansyah, 2023; Krisdayanthi et al., 2023). However, to date there are still few studies that pay in-depth attention to analyzing and evaluating strategies to increase tourist interest in visiting museums, which specifically immortalize the heroic history of the Balinese people's struggle to repel colonialism on the land of Bali. This study develops existing studies by focusing on exploring strategies to increase tourists' interest in visiting museums that have historical value of the people's struggle to expel colonialists through a qualitative approach. Museums can provide information about aspects of past life that can still be preserved as cultural heritage to become part of a nation's identity.

Kristanto et al. (2024), exploring the potential of museums as tourist attractions and efforts to make them into integrated tourist destinations, do not explicitly mention strategies for attracting tourists to visit museums. Firmansyah et al. (2024), evaluating internal and external factors that influence the development of museum tourist attractions as well as strategies for developing cultural heritage museums as tourist destinations. Effendy & Sarudin (2024), examining the influence of tourist attractions on tourists' interest in visiting museums, did not explicitly reveal the right strategy to increase tourists' interest in visiting museums. Angelica & Ardiansyah (2023), tested how and to what extent the tourist attraction of museums influences tourists' interest in visiting again. Krisdayanthi et al. (2023), analyzed in depth the management of museums as tourist attractions based on local wisdom.

The research aims to explore strategies for attracting tourists to visit museums that have historical value, as well as factors that influence tourists' interest in visiting museums that have values of the people's struggle. The research is also expected to make a positive contribution in developing scientific knowledge, especially in the field of cultural tourism strategies. This research is also expected to provide policy recommendations for decision makers, as well as stakeholders, regarding relevant strategies in increasing tourists' interest in visiting museums that contain historical values of the nation's struggle.

Chen and Rahman (2018) stated that since the early 1980s cultural tourism has been recognized separately from recreational tourism. However, until now there is no general agreement on a generally accepted definition of cultural tourism. According to Chen and Rahman, cultural tourism is defined as a form of special interest and experiential tourism based on the search for or participation in new and immersive cultural experiences of an aesthetic, intellectual, emotional or psychological nature. In contrast, Richards (2011) put forward two different definitions of cultural tourism according to conceptual and technical ones. The conceptual definition refers to "the movement of people to cultural tourism destinations far from their normal place of residence, with the aim of gathering new information and experiences to meet their cultural needs". Meanwhile, the technical definition states "all movements of people to certain cultural tourist attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, art and drama outside their normal place of residence".

Silberberg (1995) states cultural tourism as visits by people from outside the host community who are wholly or partly motivated by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region or institution. According to this definition, cultural tourism can take the form of visits to museums, galleries, festivals, architecture, cultural heritage sites, art performances, as well as attractions related to food, clothing, language and religion (Stylianou-Lambert, 2011). There is a diversity of definitions that emerge when experts argue that a distinction must be made regarding the motivations and interests of tourists visiting a cultural destination, whether these motivations are primary, secondary, or incidental. Stebbins (1996) argues that cultural tourism should be treated as a serious form of recreation. On the other hand, Richards (2011) states that cultural tourism is more about activities and tourist visits to cultural destinations.

Kastenholz and Gronau (2020) revealed the importance of tourists' visiting experience in increasing interest in visiting a tourist attraction. Experience seeking is defined as a combination of cognition, sensation, and novelty seeking, people desire experiences that enchant their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds. The visiting experience is an important factor in increasing tourists' interest in visiting, because tourists who visit cultural tourism do not buy physical products, but rather expect idealized experiences in places and people. According to Kastenholz et al. (2018) these experiences, although there is no consensus regarding their nature, composition, assessment, and consequences, are largely understood as highly subjective, complex, emotionally engaging, meaningful, and long-lasting experiences that can influence tourists' interest in revisiting a tourist attraction.

According to Wang (2020) a museum visit is a complex experience that involves various characteristics of tourists which include: psycho-motor skills to the cognitive field, from the sensory-perceptual field to feedback on emotions, social attitudes and technological culture. Wang (2020) stated that visiting a museum is a complex experience that involves various characteristics of tourists which include: psycho-motor skills to the cognitive field, from the sensory-perceptual field to feedback on emotions, social attitudes and technological culture. Wang (2020) stated that visiting a museum is a complex experience that involves various characteristics of tourists which include: psycho-motor skills to the cognitive field, from the sensory-perceptual field to feedback on emotions, social attitudes and technological culture. Furthermore, Ceccarelli et al (2024) reveal the complex experience of tourists as a human "universe of experience": every time users encounter a cultural experience, they will behave accordingly to their "universe", involving sensory, mental and motor functions in space and time. Cultural places are influenced by historical, archaeological and artistic knowledge, or by the content conveyed and presented in the space. It is this relationship between content and cultural space that shapes the user experience, in terms of motor skills, emotions, and cognition. Studying and designing these relationships is the goal of universal design (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012).

Yu et al. (2021) argue that apart from complex experiences that be able to influence interest in visiting a cultural tourism attraction, other factors that very substantially influence tourists' interest in visiting are the perceived value of cultural tourism and tourist satisfaction. Tourism marketing experts identify conceptualizations of perceived value from two main approaches. First, perceived value is considered as a trade-off between the total perceived benefits and the total sacrifices perceived by tourists. Second, perceived value is defined as a multidimensional construct involving many factors. Sweeney et al. (1999) defines perceived value from five dimensions: emotional value, social value (acceptance), and three functional values, namely versatility, performance/quality, and price/value for money. Specifically relating to regions, Eid & El-Gohary (2015) developed the Tourist Perceived Value Scale to measure the perceived value of tourists from six dimensions: price, quality, emotional, social, physical attributes, and non-physical attributes. Based on the perceived value of tourists, it can influence the level of satisfaction and loyalty towards certain tourist attractions.

Garcia-Madariaga et al. (2020) revealed that satisfaction influences tourists' interest in visiting a tourist attraction. In the tourism paradigm, satisfaction is usually defined as an

assessment tool that assesses the cognitive and affective elements of the travel experience compared to the expectations of the visit. In this case, visitors create a frame of reference in which they make comparative judgments and feel satisfied because they believe the visiting experience has evoked positive feelings and favorable evaluations. This has been considered an indispensable condition for an organization's long-term success as satisfied visitors will be less prone to switching to something different. The cognitive aspect that is very important in arousing tourists' interest in visiting a tourist attraction is the image of the tourist attraction.

Whang, Yong, & Ko (2016) and Stylidis, & Cherifi (2018) suggest that image is defined as a combination of impressions, perceptions and feelings that influence the decisionmaking process and behavioral intentions in the future. The concept integrates cognitive and affective aspects which, when referring to tourism, offers a global assessment of these two elements in relation to a particular place. Current study has analyzed the image of all affective elements which revealed that the affective component has a significant impact on the global image which can increase tourists' interest in visiting certain tourist attractions (Martínez et al., 2009).

Masnadi (2023) stated that the success of a tourist attraction is determined by product factors (location, accessibility, diversity of attractions, environmental quality, facilities and costs) and tourist attraction management factors (real elements in products, services and human resource management). This is very necessary to create a tourist attraction for tourists to visit. Based on recent research, in developing countries like Indonesia, the number of people visiting museums is relatively low (Suwaryono et al. 2022). In addition, museums are required to adapt to new circumstances due to shifting customer behavior patterns, globalization, and increased accessibility of information from around the world. The results of this study contradict research by Kluge-Pinser & Stauffer (2021) on museums in America and Germany.

Kluge-Pinser & Stauffer (2021) revealed the results of study on the attractiveness of museum tourism in America and Germany. The results of this study show that museums in America receive very broad support. An American Alliance of Museums (AAM) study on museums and public opinion found that: 97% of Americans believe that museums are educational assets for their communities. 89% believe that museums provide important economic benefits to their communities. 96% want to maintain or increase federal funding for museums in the United States. The study also reveals the high level of community

participation in America in supporting cultural activities, including appreciating museums as educational centers for their communities.

Krisdayanthi et al. (2023) argued that the success of managing a museum as a tourist attraction is predominantly determined by the idealistic goals of its founder, it must be built from very strong cultural philosophical thoughts of local wisdom, namely the harmonization of the relationship between God, Man and Nature, which is a fundamental characteristic of a museum tourist attraction. Local wisdom is behavior that is general in nature and applies to society at large, from generation to generation, which will develop into firmly held values, which are called culture. Krisdayanthi et al., further explained that factors that also influence the success of managing a museum are good museum management and collaboration with various parties involved in tourism activities.

Sarantakou et al. (2024) stated that historical museums are now recognized as valuable anthropogenic tourism resources, whose sustainable management requires a balance between protection and active participation in tourism development. Many tourism destinations and tourism businesses are leveraging their unique heritage to increase their competitive advantage. Maintaining authenticity and promoting historical and cultural heritage through this museum helps preserve and revive local traditions and enhance the cultural identity of the destination. In addition, the introduction of museum tourism uses simultaneously supports several sustainable development goals, such as preserving local heritage, diversifying dominant tourism development patterns, and spreading tourism development spatially and temporally.

# METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative research. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning ascribed to a social or humanitarian problem by individuals or groups. Tracy (2020) further expressed qualitative methods as a general phrase that refers to the collection, analysis and interpretation of interviews, participant observation and textual data to understand and describe meaning, relationships and patterns. The data sources used in this research come from primary and secondary data. Sugiyono (2016) stated that primary data is data obtained directly from the data provider to the data collector. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained by reading, studying and understanding other media sourced from literature, books and documents. The

primary data for this research was obtained through interviews with informants. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through documents, literature and articles.

The sample selection technique was carried out using the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2016). The informants selected were based on their considerations and knowledge about the *Bajra Sandhi* Museum. Data collection was carried out through observation, semistructured interviews and literature study. The data analysis for this research uses a model developed by Miles & Huberman (1992) through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The *Bajra Sandhi* Museum or better known as the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument is a monument symbolizing the struggle of the Balinese people, located in the Renon area, Denpasar, Bali. This monument occupies 13.8 hectares of land with a building area of 4900 meters designed by Ir. Ida Gede in year of 1981. Construction of the monument began in 1987 on the initiative of the former Governor of Bali, Prof. Dr. Ida Bagus Mantra. On June 14 2003, this monument was inaugurated by President Megawati Soekarno Putri.

The *Bajra Sandhi* Museum has typical traditional Balinese architecture. The construction is full of the meaning of Hindu religious philosophy which contains local wisdom values. The word *Bajra* itself means *Genta*. Hindu priests often use *Genta* when chanting mantras in religious ceremonies. Apart from that, elements of Hindu philosophy in the monument include: The *Amertha* Jar, symbolized by a *Kumbha* (a kind of pot) which can be seen at the top of the monument. The Basuki Dragon's tail is formed near *Swamba* and his head is on the Great Kori *Badan Bedawang Akupa* which is formed at the base of the monument, his head is on the Great Kori. Mount of *Mendara Giri* is manifested by a towering monument. The pond that surrounds the monument is likened to *Ksirarnawa* (sea of milk). Not only does it have Hindu philosophical values, the *Bajra Sandhi* monument is also full of symbols of independence. There are 17 steps at the main door of the monument. There are 8 large pillars inside the monument which have a height of 45 meters. These numbers are the date of Indonesian independence, August 17, 1945.

The message that the founders of *Bajra Shandi* Monument want to convey to the younger generation is that success can only be achieved through hard work, perseverance, tenacity and mutual cooperation. Likewise, the octagonal building symbolizes the power of God Almighty (*Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*). The figure refers to the struggle of Indonesian people against the colonialists so that they achieved independence on August 17 1945. Horizontally, the monument is square in shape, which refers to the *Tri Mandala* Concept. First, *Nista Mandala (jaba sisi)* is realized in the form of an outer courtyard surrounding the monument which is equipped with paths, gardens, seating and a track and field for sports activities. Second, *Madia Mandala (jaba tengah)* which is on the second layer is realized in the form of a courtyard surrounded by a building fence equipped with gates (*Candi Bentar*) on all four sides. Third, Utama Mandala (innards) is the core of the building which is surrounded by a lake, paths and *Bale Bengong* at every corner.

The strategy to increase tourist interest in visiting the museum can be done by maximizing the strengths they have to take advantage of existing opportunities, namely by utilizing strategic locations, adequate service facilities, cultural values of local wisdom and support from the government which is expected to be able to attract more tourists by developing more incentive promotional activities through more intensive use of digital technology. The results of interviews conducted with the Head of the *Bajra Sandhi* Museum, I Made Artana Yasa, confirmed the importance of location as a strategic strength factor.

"The location of the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument is very strategic and can facilitate access so that it is better known so that it can attract more tourists to visit the Monument" (interview on 30 July 2024).

The cultural values that are full of local wisdom contained in the museum are a strategic strength, as stated by Mrs. Ni Nyoman Cermen, and are a source of tourist attraction for tourists to visit the museum, as expressed in the following interview.

"The historical and cultural value that is a symbol of the struggle of Balinese people, the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument has high historical and cultural value, making it a center for historical education for local and foreign residents" (interview on July 30 2024).

The statement regarding the importance of cultural values as a tourist attraction was also expressed by Mr. I Nyoman Subawa, with the presence of elements of local wisdom cultural values which are full of philosophical and religious values, it can be a strong cultural tourist attraction, and be able to increase tourist interest in visiting as stated in the following interview.

"High interest in cultural tourism can provide significant benefits for tourist destinations, including increasing visits, income and cultural preservation. However, it is also important to ensure that the development of cultural tourism is carried out by respecting and preserving traditions and avoiding exploitation that could damage the authenticity of the culture" (interview 30 July 2024).

The existence of available facilities as a strategic strength in providing comfort support for tourists to increase interest in visiting the museum was expressed in the following interview with Mrs. Ni Nyoman Nenny Trisnawati.

"The adequate facilities at the *Bajra Sandi* Monument are strongly recommended to improve the quality and supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as roads and transportation to meet tourist needs" (interview dated July 30 2024).

The amount of support from the regional government of Bali Province as a strategic force in efforts to increase tourist visits to the museum was expressed in an interview with the Head of the Museum, I Made Artana Yasa, as stated as follows.

"Local government support is often provided through tourism promotion to attract more visitors to this monument, through advertising, participation in tourism exhibitions and cooperation with travel agents. "There is support from the government for the *Banjra Sandhi* Monument so that it remains as an important icon that not only functions as a historical marker but also as a valuable cultural and tourism asset for the Balinese people" (interview on 30 July 2024).

The strategies to increase tourist interest in visiting museums can also be done by means of eliminating weaknesses and minimizing threats. Through increasing continuous promotional activities in various media, both online and offline, and better accessibility, we can provide wider information to tourists to increase interest in tourist attractions. The interview conducted with the Head of the Museum, Mr. I Made Artana Yasa, are revealed below.

"The *Bajra Sandhi* Monument is still lacking in promotion and marketing, the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument is not well known or does not attract enough attention from both local and international tourists, due to inadequate promotion and marketing efforts,

this has resulted in a low number of visitors and a lack of awareness of its value history and culture as a result of this lack of promotion and marketing, the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument may not receive enough visitors to maximize its potential as a historical and cultural destination" (interview dated July 30, 2024).

Furthermore, the importance of better accessibility to provide comfort for tourists who want to visit museums was stated in the interview with Mr. I Ketut Netra as follows.

"Accessibility that is not yet optimal can reduce visitors' interest in coming to the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument, because they may experience difficulty in reaching or enjoying the tourist attraction. To improve accessibility, managers can consider improving infrastructure, increasing supporting facilities, as well as providing better information for visitors" (interview dated July 30, 2024).

Regarding the limitations of the museum's supporting facilities, it was also expressed further in an interview with Mr. I Nyoman Muliana, stated as follows.

"The meaning of limited supporting facilities at the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument is that this monument may not have adequate additional facilities or services to meet the needs and comfort of visitors. This can cover various aspects that tourists usually expect when visiting a tourist attraction" (interview dated 30 July 2024).

Strategies to increase tourist interest in visiting the museum can be done by taking advantage of opportunities and minimizing weaknesses. Through more intensive and sustainable promotional efforts, taking advantage of the growth of tourism sector and developments in digital technology, as well as increasing cooperation with various existing travel agencies, it is hoped that it will be able to attract more tourists to visit the museum. An interview with the Head of the Museum, Mr. I Made Artana Yasa, is expressed as follows.

"With the rapid growth of tourism sector in Bali, the tourism industry in Bali has experienced significant development, both in terms of the number of tourists, income, and tourist attractions that support the sector... therefore the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument tourist attraction has great opportunities big in increasing the number of visitors" (interview 30 July 2024).

The importance of collaboration with various tourism actors such as Travel Bureaus is an important element in increasing tourist interest in visiting the museum. This was stated in an interview with Mrs. Ni Luh Putu Dewi Ardhiyanti as follows.

"By collaborating with other tourism agents, the *Bajra Sandhi* Monument has a very big opportunity to be known by many people so that the level of visits can be very large" (interview on 30 July 2024).

### CONCLUSION

The strategy undertaken to increase tourist interest in visiting the museum as a tourist attraction for the history of the struggle of the Balinese people, which is full of local wisdom and cultural values, can be carried out by maximizing the potential strength they have to take advantage of all existing opportunities, namely by utilizing strategic locations and facilities, adequate services, cultural values of local wisdom and support from the government. Apart from that, it needs to be supported by strategies that are able to eliminate weaknesses and minimize threats, through increasing sustainable promotions in various media, both online and offline and better accessibility, to provide comfort for tourists and improve supporting facilities to maintain sustainable tourism. Another supporting strategy that also needs to be considered is taking advantage of all existing opportunities and minimizing weaknesses, through more intensive promotional efforts by taking advantage of the growth of the tourism sector and developments in digital technology, as well as increasing cooperation with various existing tourism actors and travel agencies.

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