

Handicrafts and Traditional Arts: Driving Sustainable Growth in Village Tourism

Original Article

Tona Aurora Lubis^{1*}, Firmansyah², Ida Masriani³, Novita Sari⁴, Maryati Ningsih⁵

¹⁻⁵Department of Management, Faculty of Economic and Business, Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia

Email: ¹⁾ tonalubis@unja.ac.id, ²⁾ firmansyah@unja.ac.id, ³⁾ ida_masriani@unja.ac.id,

⁴⁾ novita_sari@unja.ac.id, ⁵⁾ merynigsih@gmail.com

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Abstract

Traditional arts and crafts play a vital role in enhancing village tourism by attracting visitors, creating immersive cultural experiences, and contributing to economic sustainability. This study examines the impact of traditional performances and high-quality handcrafted products on tourist satisfaction and overall tourism success. Using a structured research approach, data were collected and analyzed to evaluate how arts and crafts influence tourism appeal, visitor engagement, and local economic benefits. The findings indicate that traditional arts significantly enhance visitor experiences through cultural performances, while traditional crafts reinforce destination identity by offering unique, high-quality souvenirs. Moreover, tourist satisfaction emerges as a key determinant of village tourism success, emphasizing the importance of well-managed arts and crafts initiatives. However, challenges such as financial limitations, lack of innovation, and inadequate marketing strategies hinder the full potential of these tourism assets. The study highlights the need for collaborative efforts among tourism managers, policymakers, artisans, and local communities to sustain and further develop traditional arts and crafts as integral components of village tourism. Strengthening policies, enhancing promotional strategies, and improving market accessibility are essential to ensuring long-term sustainability and economic growth in rural tourism destinations.

Keywords: Handicrafts, Traditional Arts, Village Tourism, Cultural Heritage, Tourist Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Tourism serves as a vital source of economic stability by contributing to foreign exchange earnings and job creation (Dašić et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the tourism sector has demonstrated significant growth, with its contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reaching 3.83% by September 2023, an increase from 3.6% in the previous year (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif RI, 2022). As tourism evolves, various segments have emerged, including gastronomic tourism (Lubis et al., 2023), military tourism (Khalid et al., 2020), rural tourism (Chai et al., 2021; Chen & Kong, 2021; Yang et al., 2021), health tourism (Febrida et al., 2022), sports tourism (Fatimah & Ramadhan, 2019; Kersulić et al., 2020), educational tourism (Hussein et al., 2022), religious tourism (Huang & Pearce, 2019; Kim et al., 2020), archaeological tourism (Beretić et al., 2021), urban tourism (Singh, 2022), recreational tourism (Amilia, 2020), and ecological and ethnic tourism (Chai et al., 2021).

Among these segments, cultural heritage tourism has gained prominence as a means of promoting education and cultural interpretation. Tourists actively seek experiences that allow them to immerse themselves in local culture through traditional arts and crafts (Dragicevic



Curkovic, 2021). This interaction not only enriches the tourist experience but also strengthens the economic potential of local communities. Studies have established that arts and crafts are crucial elements of a destination's attractiveness (Firmansyah et al., 2022). The emergence of village tourism, which integrates tourism with local lifestyles, further reinforces the economic benefits of cultural heritage.

Indonesia's commitment to rural tourism development is evident, with 1,902 out of 74,954 villages being transformed into tourist destinations (Purnomo et al., 2020). This initiative is supported by Law No. 6 of 2014, which empowers villages to manage assets and foster economic self-sufficiency through tourism development (Firmansyah et al., 2022; Lubis et al., 2023). However, as competition among tourist villages intensifies, the need for unique attractions and sustainable economic models becomes imperative.

One of the most promising strategies to differentiate village tourism is through the integration of traditional arts and crafts. Traditional performances, such as dance, music, and theater, offer immersive cultural experiences that attract visitors and enhance local identity. Handcrafted products, including textiles, carvings, and ceramics, provide tangible connections to local culture and serve as valuable souvenirs. The combination of arts and crafts creates a distinctive and authentic tourism experience that appeals to modern travelers seeking meaningful engagement with local traditions.

Despite its potential, there remains a research gap concerning the economic impact of traditional arts and crafts in village tourism, particularly in Muaro Jambi Regency. Understanding this economic impact is crucial because arts and crafts serve not only as cultural expressions but also as key drivers of local income and employment. Successful integration of arts and crafts into tourism can increase visitor spending, create new job opportunities, and promote sustainable economic growth in rural areas. Furthermore, arts and crafts-based tourism helps to preserve cultural heritage while enhancing community resilience, making it an essential component of long-term village tourism strategies. Previous studies have highlighted the role of handicrafts in enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs (Dahmiri et al., 2023) and in preserving cultural identity in Jambi Province (Firmansyah et al., 2022; Lubis et al., 2023). Muaro Jambi Regency is rich in traditional arts and crafts, including Seni Gambangan, Tari Topeng, Busana Tengkuluk, Tradisi Baladas Basamo, Rabana Seruling, Batik Muaro Jambi Regency, Lacak, Anyaman Tikar, Ambung, Lukah, and indigenous crafts of the Suku Anak Dalam (Dinas Kebudayaan Muaro Jambi Regency, 2024). However, a systematic analysis of their contribution to the local economy is lacking.

This study aims to bridge this research gap by developing a model that evaluates the role of traditional arts and crafts in enhancing the economic impact of village tourism. While prior research has explored the role of handicrafts in MSME competitiveness and cultural preservation, the specific economic contribution of arts and crafts to village tourism performance remains underexplored. Factors such as inconsistent data collection, lack of clear performance indicators, and the informal nature of many artisanal activities have contributed to this gap. By integrating regional cultural assets with tourism strategies, this research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism and community-based economic development. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, tourism practitioners, and local artisans, facilitating the optimization of cultural resources to strengthen village tourism economies. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of leveraging traditional arts and crafts as a strategic asset for sustainable rural tourism development.

2. Literature Review

Tourism, particularly cultural and heritage tourism, plays a crucial role in economic development by creating employment opportunities and supporting local economies (Dašić et al., 2020). In Indonesia, village tourism has been increasingly recognized as a means to drive regional economic growth, integrating cultural heritage and local craftsmanship into sustainable tourism models (Firmansyah et al., 2022; Kemenparekraf, 2023). Despite the potential of village tourism, challenges remain in optimizing its economic impact, particularly in terms of integrating traditional arts and crafts into broader tourism strategies.

Traditional arts and crafts contribute significantly to tourism development by enhancing destination attractiveness and preserving cultural identity (Dragicevic Curkovic, 2021). Studies suggest that engaging tourists in local artistic practices fosters deeper cultural appreciation while simultaneously boosting local economies (Farmonovna et al., 2020). However, the commercialization of arts and crafts remains a challenge, as many artisans lack marketing skills, financial resources, and access to larger markets (Singh, 2022).

2.1. Empirical Review and Hypothesis Development

This study builds on existing research that explores the role of arts and crafts in enhancing the economic impact of village tourism. The integration of traditional craftsmanship into tourism experiences has been shown to increase visitor engagement, extend tourist spending, and create sustainable livelihoods for local communities (Lestari et al., 2021). Prior research underscores the economic significance of arts and crafts within tourism frameworks. Craft-based tourism has been identified as a key driver of local economic growth in multiple destinations, including Indonesia (Firmansyah et al., 2022), Croatia (Dragicevic Curkovic, 2021), and Pakistan (Shafi et al., 2020). The ability of traditional crafts to serve as a unique selling point for destinations contributes to a region's competitive advantage in the tourism industry (Wang et al., 2021). However, achieving sustainable economic benefits requires integrated strategies that combine cultural preservation, effective marketing, and government support (Farmonovna et al., 2020). However, studies also highlight various challenges faced by artisans, including financial constraints, limited competitiveness, and difficulties in adapting to modern consumer demands (Shafi et al., 2020; Singh, 2022).

2.2. Hypothesis Development

2.2.1. Traditional Crafts and the Performance of Village Tourism

Traditional crafts play an essential role in attracting tourists and enhancing local economic activities. Previous research highlights that handicraft, such as textiles, woodwork, and ceramics, contribute to village tourism by offering unique cultural products that differentiate destinations (Farmonovna et al., 2020). In Indonesia, traditional crafts have been shown to increase economic opportunities for artisans and small businesses, particularly when integrated into tourism strategies (Firmansyah et al., 2022). However, challenges such as limited market access, lack of promotional efforts, and inadequate government support often hinder the full potential of crafts in tourism development (Singh, 2022). Therefore, understanding how traditional crafts influence the performance of village tourism is crucial for designing effective economic strategies.

H1: Traditional crafts significantly influence the performance of village tourism.

2.2.2. Traditional Arts and the Performance of Village Tourism

Traditional arts, including music, dance, theater, and visual arts, enhance the cultural appeal of tourist destinations by offering immersive experiences that attract visitors (Dragicevic Curkovic, 2021). Studies have demonstrated that cultural performances and art exhibitions can lead to increased visitor engagement and spending, thus supporting local economies (Lestari et al., 2021). Moreover, the integration of traditional arts in tourism helps preserve cultural heritage while promoting community involvement in the tourism sector. However, the commercialization of arts remains a challenge due to funding limitations, inconsistent quality, and difficulties in marketing to broader audiences (Shafi et al., 2020). Understanding the role of traditional arts in boosting the performance of village tourism can help in formulating policies that support sustainable cultural tourism.

H2: Traditional arts significantly influence the performance of village tourism.

By incorporating arts and crafts into tourism models, destinations can leverage cultural heritage as a strategic asset, fostering sustainable economic growth while maintaining the authenticity of local traditions. This study aims to bridge the research gap by evaluating the effectiveness of integrating traditional arts and crafts into tourism strategies, particularly in the context of Muaro Jambi Regency.

3. Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to analyze the relationship between traditional arts, crafts, and the performance of village tourism in Muaro Jambi Regency. The study aims to evaluate the economic contribution of these cultural elements by employing statistical analysis and hypothesis testing, ensuring a data-driven approach to understanding their impact on tourism development.

The population of this research comprises village tourism destinations in Muaro Jambi Regency. From this population, a sample is selected using purposive sampling with a judgment sampling technique, ensuring that the selected respondents meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as tourism potential, involvement in arts and crafts, and economic impact.

The data collection process involved both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires distributed to key stakeholders, including village tourism managers, artisans, and local government representatives. These questionnaires included a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative measures and qualitative insights. Secondary data were sourced from tourism reports, government publications, statistical databases, and previous research on cultural heritage and tourism development.

The analysis was conducted in two stages: descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize key data trends, such as mean values and frequency distributions. Inferential statistics were performed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, implemented in Smart PLS 3. This approach enabled the testing of hypothesized relationships between traditional arts, crafts, and village tourism performance, ensuring a robust and systematic evaluation of the research model.

This methodological framework ensures a systematic and robust investigation into how traditional arts and crafts influence the performance of village tourism, providing actionable insights for stakeholders in the region.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

In this study, the researcher proposes two independent variables: Traditional Arts and Traditional Handicrafts, which are essential elements in enhancing village tourism performance. The Traditional Arts variable is measured using six key indicators: the preservation of traditional arts (X1.1), the involvement of younger generations in maintaining traditional arts (X1.2), the development of traditional arts into tourism attractions (X1.3), the enhancement of traditional arts' appeal to tourists (X1.4), the visualization and innovation of traditional arts (X1.5), and the provision of artistic performances to introduce local culture (X1.6).

Meanwhile, the Traditional Handicrafts variable is measured using five key indicators: the production of handicrafts based on local culture (X2.1), creativity in developing new products (X2.2), the quality of handicraft products (X2.3), the utilization of local raw materials (X2.4), and the popularity of handicraft products as signature souvenirs of village tourism (X2.5).

The dependent variable in this study is Village Tourism Performance, which is measured using six key indicators: the number of tourist visits (Y1.1), tourist satisfaction with tourism attractions (Y1.2), village tourism revenue from tourism activities (Y1.3), village tourism revenue from local products (Y1.4), local community participation in managing village tourism (Y1.5), and the success of village tourism promotion through media and events (Y1.6).

All indicators used in this study are reflective, representing the measured concepts to explain the relationship between traditional arts, traditional handicrafts, and village tourism performance. This research model has been constructed using Smart PLS software to illustrate the relationships between variables, including the direct impact of traditional arts and handicrafts on village tourism performance.

Below is the initial model construction visualized using Smart PLS software, which depicts the relationships among independent, mediating, and dependent variables in this study.

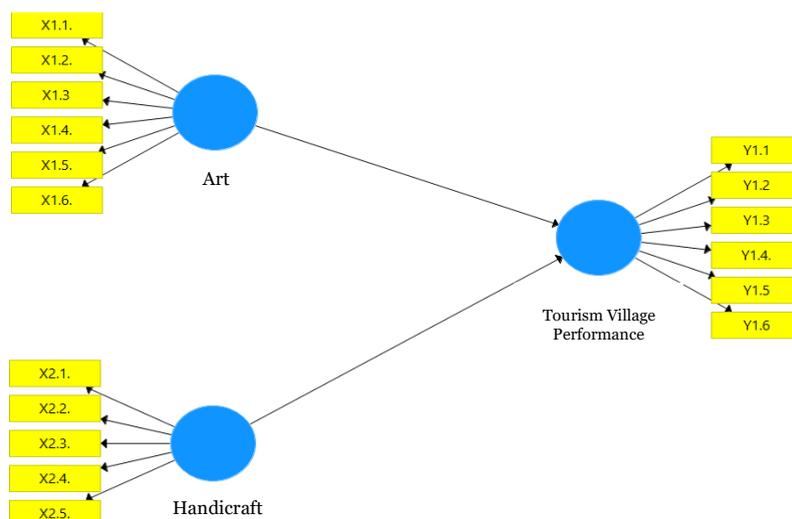


Figure 1. Initial Research Model

The calculation results of the initial research model using Smart PLS software can be seen in the following figure.

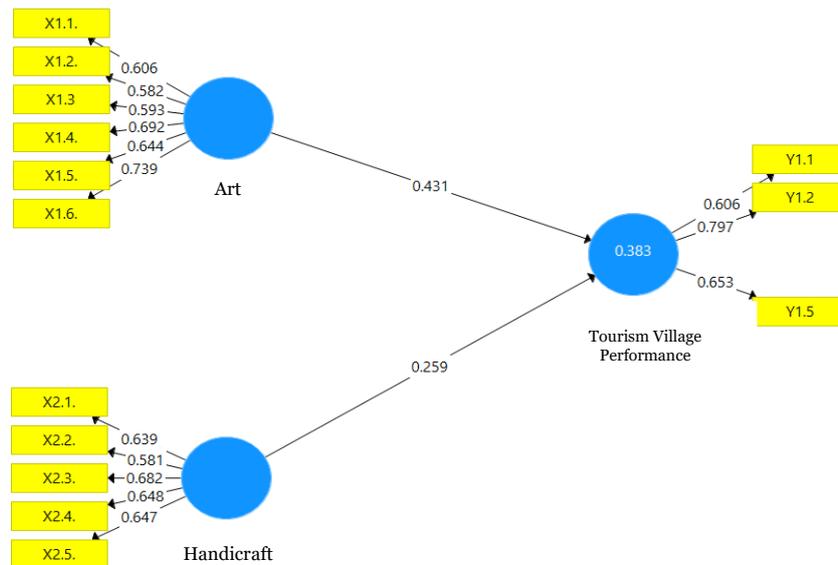


Figure 2. Calculation of Initial Research Model

According to Ghozali (2016), the convergent validity of a measurement model with reflective indicators can be assessed by examining the correlation between item/indicator scores and their respective construct scores. This correlation is defined as the loading factor (outer loading). An indicator is considered reliable if it has a correlation value above 0.70. However, in scale development research, loading values between 0.5 and 0.6 are still acceptable. In this study, the loading factor threshold is set at a value above 0.5.

Based on the figure, several indicators have loading factor values below 0.5, namely village tourism revenue from tourism activities (Y1.3), village tourism revenue from local products (Y1.4), and the success of village tourism promotion through media and events (Y1.6). Therefore, these indicators were removed from the model, and the second model was then constructed as follows:

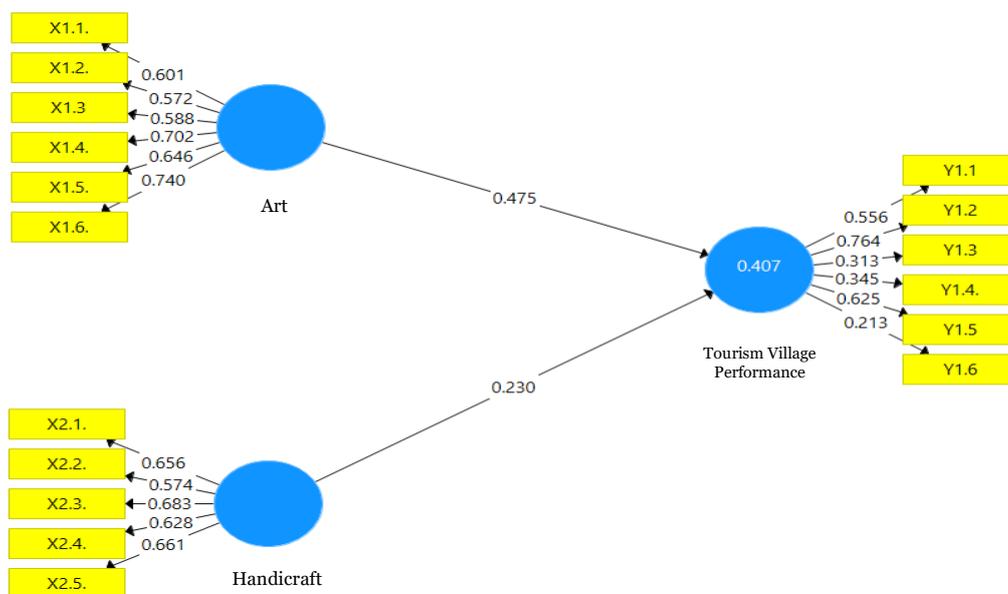


Figure 3. Calculation of Second Research Model

Based on Figure 3, it can be seen that all indicators have values above 0.5. This indicates that all indicators are valid and serve as reflections of their respective research variables.

The second research model can be explained through the results of hypothesis testing, obtained from the bootstrapping process. The following are the path coefficient results from this research model:

Table 1. Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Handicraft-> Tourism Village Performance	0,259	4,135	0,00
Art-> Tourism Village Performance	0,431	6,704	0,00

Source: PLS Output

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The Influence of Traditional Arts on Village Tourism Performance

The results indicate that traditional arts have a path coefficient of 0.431, with a t-statistic of 6.704 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). These findings confirm that traditional arts have a positive and significant impact on village tourism performance. The most influential indicator within the arts variable is the provision of artistic performances to introduce local culture (X1.6), highlighting the critical role of cultural events in enhancing the attractiveness of village tourism. This aligns with previous research suggesting that traditional arts contribute significantly to cultural heritage tourism by preserving local customs and engaging visitors through authentic and immersive experiences (Dragicevic Curkovic, 2021; Firmansyah et al., 2022).

Traditional arts, such as dance performances, traditional music, theatrical shows, and cultural festivals, not only provide entertainment but also foster a deeper connection between tourists and local heritage. Studies by (Firmansyah et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2021) emphasize that well-integrated artistic performances can enhance a destination’s cultural identity and differentiate it from competitors in the tourism market. In Muaro Jambi Regency, performances such as Gambangan, Rabana Seruling, Tari Baladas Basamo and Tari Topeng offer unique cultural experiences that are rarely found elsewhere. These performances not only celebrate traditional artistry but also serve as an economic driver by attracting more visitors, increasing tourism-related spending, and supporting local artisans and performers.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that traditional arts contribute not only to the attractiveness of village tourism but also to overall tourist satisfaction (Y1.2), which is the most influential indicator of village tourism performance. Previous studies have highlighted that tourists are more likely to develop positive perceptions, higher engagement, and stronger emotional connections with a destination when they experience well-curated cultural performances (Farmonovna et al., 2020; Shafi et al., 2020). The high level of satisfaction among visitors engaging with traditional arts indicates that authentic, well-organized cultural performances can enhance the tourist experience, boost visitor loyalty, and encourage repeat visits, ultimately increasing the economic benefits for local communities.

Moreover, integrating traditional arts into village tourism aligns with the broader concept of sustainable tourism, where cultural heritage is preserved while simultaneously contributing to economic and social development. However, several challenges remain in maximizing the potential of traditional arts in tourism, as noted by (Singh, 2022). These include inconsistent funding, lack of promotional efforts, and difficulties in marketing

traditional performances to a broader audience. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from local governments, tourism stakeholders, and the creative industry to ensure that traditional arts receive adequate support and recognition.

In conclusion, traditional arts play a crucial role in strengthening the competitiveness of village tourism and driving economic growth by improving tourist satisfaction. To further maximize this potential, it is essential to implement innovative promotional strategies, enhance the quality of artistic performances, integrate traditional arts into broader tourism development plans, and improve financial and marketing support for local artists. By doing so, village tourism destinations can leverage their cultural heritage as a strategic asset, ensuring long-term sustainability and increased economic benefits for local communities.

4.2.2. The Influence of Traditional Crafts on Village Tourism Performance

The test results indicate that traditional crafts have a path coefficient of 0.259, with a t-statistic of 4.135 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). These findings confirm that traditional crafts have a positive and significant impact on village tourism performance. The most influential indicator within the crafts variable is product quality (X2.3), underscoring the importance of maintaining high standards for local handicrafts to enhance their appeal and economic viability in the tourism sector. This is consistent with previous research that highlights the role of high-quality traditional crafts in shaping a destination's competitiveness, increasing visitor engagement, and supporting economic sustainability (Lestari et al., 2021; Singh, 2022).

Traditional crafts in Muaro Jambi Regency, such as Batik Jambi, Busana Tengkuluk, Lacak Hat, woven mats, and indigenous handcrafted artworks from the Suku Anak Dalam, serve as tangible expressions of local culture and identity. These crafts not only enhance the uniqueness of village tourism destinations but also contribute to cultural preservation. Prior studies by (Farmonovna et al., 2020; Shafi et al., 2020) emphasize that tourists are more likely to develop a strong attachment to a destination when they engage with authentic, locally crafted products. By integrating traditional crafts into the tourism experience, destinations can strengthen their branding, differentiate themselves from competitors, and attract a wider range of visitors seeking cultural authenticity.

Moreover, these findings suggest that traditional crafts contribute significantly to tourist satisfaction with attractions (Y1.2), which is one of the most influential indicators of village tourism performance. Tourists who engage with high-quality traditional products tend to have a more meaningful and memorable experience, leading to greater destination loyalty and higher likelihood of recommendations. Research by Firmansyah et al. (2022) supports this by demonstrating that well-curated traditional craft experiences enhance the overall perception of a destination and increase visitor spending.

Traditional crafts also play a crucial role in local economic development, generating income through direct sales, employment opportunities, and the commercialization of unique cultural products. The ability to successfully market handcrafted souvenirs and artisanal goods has been identified as a key driver of economic resilience in rural tourism communities (Dragicevic Curkovic, 2021). However, several challenges persist, including limited access to broader markets, insufficient financial support, and difficulties in maintaining consistent quality standards (Singh, 2022). Addressing these barriers requires investment in skills development, innovation in design, and the implementation of strategic marketing initiatives to ensure that local artisans can effectively compete in the tourism market.

In conclusion, traditional crafts play a pivotal role in enhancing village tourism performance by contributing to cultural preservation, tourist satisfaction, and economic sustainability. To fully maximize their potential, tourism stakeholders and policymakers

should focus on enhancing product quality, strengthening supply chains, providing artisan training programs, and improving promotional efforts. By doing so, village tourism destinations can position themselves as thriving cultural centers, ensuring long-term sustainability and economic prosperity for local communities.

5. Conclusions

This study concludes that competitiveness factors significantly influence the performance of MSMEs in Jambi Province. Among these factors, entrepreneurial capabilities play a dominant role in enhancing MSME performance. The findings highlight that entrepreneurial skills, including innovation, risk-taking, and opportunity recognition, are crucial for fostering sustainable growth and maintaining market competitiveness. The integration of these skills with technological advancements and supportive government policies further strengthens MSME performance, ensuring their resilience in dynamic economic environments.

The findings of this study confirm that traditional arts and crafts play a crucial role in enhancing village tourism performance. Traditional arts have a path coefficient of 0.431, with a t-statistic of 6.704 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a positive and significant impact on village tourism performance. The most influential indicator within the arts variable is the provision of artistic performances to introduce local culture (X1.6). This highlights the critical role of cultural events such as Gambangan, Rabana Seruling, Tari and Tari Topeng in attracting tourists, enhancing visitor engagement, and increasing local tourism revenues.

Similarly, traditional crafts have a path coefficient of 0.259, with a t-statistic of 4.135 and a p-value of 0.000, confirming their significant positive impact on village tourism performance. The most influential indicator within the crafts variable is product quality (X2.3), demonstrating that high-quality handicrafts such as Batik Jambi, woven mats, and Suku Anak Dalam handicrafts increase tourist satisfaction and strengthen destination appeal.

Furthermore, tourist satisfaction emerges as the most influential determinant of village tourism success (Y1.2). Tourists who engage with high-quality artistic performances and authentic local products are more likely to recommend the destination, return for future visits, and contribute to increased tourism spending and economic growth for local communities. The strong relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourism performance underscores the importance of delivering consistent and authentic cultural experiences.

However, challenges such as limited financial support for traditional art events, lack of innovation in craft designs, and inadequate marketing strategies hinder the full potential of these tourism assets. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from village tourism managers, artisans, policymakers, and local communities to ensure the sustainable integration of traditional arts and crafts into tourism development. Improved financial assistance, enhanced promotional strategies, and increased training for artisans are essential to maximizing the long-term economic benefits of village tourism.

This study provides a replicable model for other village tourism destinations in Indonesia that seek to leverage traditional arts and crafts for tourism growth. Strengthening policies, enhancing promotional efforts, and improving market access can help safeguard cultural heritage while boosting the long-term sustainability of village tourism.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the performance of village tourism. Village tourism managers should preserve and innovate traditional arts by enhancing cultural performances to maintain authenticity while attracting modern tourists. Strengthening partnerships with travel agencies and cultural organizations

can increase visitor engagement and expand promotional reach. Local artisans and craft producers should improve traditional craft quality through training programs focused on innovation and sustainable materials while expanding market access by leveraging digital platforms and tourism collaborations to increase visibility and sales potential. Policymakers and tourism authorities are advised to provide financial assistance and grants to support traditional artisans and cultural performers, and to strengthen promotional campaigns that integrate arts and crafts into regional and national tourism strategies, ensuring broader recognition. Local communities should be encouraged to actively participate in preserving cultural heritage through workshops, festivals, and tourism-related initiatives. Educating local youth on the economic and cultural value of traditional arts and crafts can foster long-term sustainability and strengthen the economic impact of village tourism.

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