



Typology of Tourist Experiences in Cultural Tourism: A Case Study of Kampung Wayang, Wukirsari Tourism Village

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ABSTRACT

Cultural tourism offers travelers the opportunity to engage meaningfully with local identity, heritage, and traditional values, moving beyond passive sightseeing toward experiential immersion. Kampung Wayang, located in Wukirsari Tourism Village, Yogyakarta, stands as a living cultural space where the ancestral art of *wayang kulit* is actively preserved and transmitted through interactive participation. This study aims to explore the typology of tourist experiences in Kampung Wayang by employing a qualitative methodology that includes in-depth interviews with domestic tourists, direct observation, and documentation. Drawing from typological frameworks by Cohen (1979), Quan and Wang (2004), and Wickens (2002), the findings reveal four overlapping experiential dimensions—emotional, aesthetic, reflective, and existential. Tourists not only observe cultural expressions but co-create meaning through hands-on workshops, philosophical dialogues with local *dalang*s, and self-reflective engagement with traditional narratives. These dimensions demonstrate that Kampung Wayang functions as more than a tourism destination; it serves as a transformative arena for cultural continuity, informal education, identity negotiation, and sustainable community-based tourism. The study highlights the importance of participatory frameworks in designing cultural tourism experiences that are both humanistic and impactful, offering implications for tourism development policy, heritage preservation, and experiential learning practices.

Keywords: Cultural tourism, typology, tourist experience, wayang kulit, Tourism Village.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism has emerged as a strategic approach in sustaining local heritage while promoting meaningful engagement between communities and travelers (Richards, 2018). This form of tourism emphasizes the preservation of intangible cultural assets, such as traditional arts, rituals, and philosophies, by transforming them into interactive experiences that allow visitors to participate and connect deeply with local practices (UNESCO, 2021). One of the leading examples of this approach in Indonesia is Kampung Wayang, located within the Wukirsari Tourism Village in Yogyakarta, which has been recognized for its commitment to cultural revitalization and community-based tourism development (Pinontoan & Lestari, 2024). As a living cultural space, Kampung Wayang functions beyond the conventional tourism model by integrating cultural expression into the daily life of the community, enabling tourists to engage directly with tradition in its authentic context (Sartika, Zulfikar, & Alfitri, 2023). This destination not only showcases wayang kulit performances but also immerses visitors in the entire cultural ecosystem—offering workshops on puppet-making, discussions with *dalang* (puppet masters), and reflections on the philosophical messages embedded in the stories (Widiyanti et al., 2023). By facilitating this level of participatory experience, Kampung Wayang exemplifies a sustainable and humanistic model of cultural tourism that fosters cross-cultural dialogue, strengthens local identity, and generates inclusive economic benefits for the host community (Oktadiana, Pearce, & Budarma, 2023).

Tourist experience in such destinations transcends mere sightseeing; it evolves into a multidimensional engagement that includes sensory immersion, active participation, emotional resonance, and cognitive reflection (Campos et al., 2018). This aligns with the broader framework of experiential tourism, where the focus shifts from passive consumption of attractions to meaningful involvement in the cultural and social fabric of the host community (Richards, 2011). Emotional engagement—such as awe, empathy, and nostalgia—emerges when tourists are involved in hands-on cultural activities, particularly those embedded with historical and symbolic meaning like wayang kulit (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Moreover, such experiences often trigger introspective processes, allowing travelers to reflect on their own identities, values, and worldview in relation to the traditions

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they encounter (Cohen, 1979; Kim & Ritchie, 2014).

According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the experience economy situates tourism as a realm of staged authenticity, where the primary value lies in the creation of personalized and memorable experiences. In this context, destinations are expected to offer not just products or services, but curated encounters that appeal to the emotional and intellectual needs of visitors. Kampung Wayang aligns strongly with this concept by transforming tourists into active co-creators of cultural meaning through immersive activities such as puppet crafting, philosophical storytelling, and dialogues with local artists (Sartika et al., 2023). Rather than positioning tourists as spectators, the village facilitates a space where they participate in the reproduction and reinterpretation of cultural symbols, thus fostering deeper cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (Oktadiana et al., 2023; Pinontoan & Lestari, 2024).

Despite a growing body of literature on tourism experience that emphasizes the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of tourist engagement (Campos et al., 2018; Kim & Chen, 2020), most studies have primarily focused on urban or commercialized destinations, leaving a gap in understanding how rural cultural settings shape experiential depth (Larsen, 2007; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). The unique spatial, symbolic, and participatory characteristics of cultural villages—such as Kampung Wayang—offer a distinct context in which visitors are not merely observers but also participants in the re-creation of cultural meaning (Richards, 2011; Raymond & Hall, 2008).

However, relatively few studies have provided in-depth typological mapping of tourist experiences in these settings, particularly from a phenomenological lens that captures the subjective nature of engagement (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). This research fills that gap by systematically identifying types of tourist experiences—ranging from aesthetic and emotional to reflective and existential—and analyzing how each type is shaped by the nature, intensity, and quality of interaction between the visitor and the cultural practices of the host community (Cohen, 1979; Kim & Ritchie, 2014). The study positions cultural villages not only as spaces for passive heritage consumption but as living laboratories for intercultural dialogue, identity negotiation, and value transmission (MacCannell, 1976; Salazar, 2012).

The objective of this study is to explore the typology of tourist experiences in Kampung Wayang, a cultural tourism destination that exemplifies participatory heritage engagement. Typological analysis allows for a nuanced understanding of how tourists engage with cultural environments through various dimensions—sensory, emotional, intellectual, and existential—which shape the overall quality and meaning of the experience (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012; Cohen, 1979).

This research also aims to analyze the depth of participation among tourists, from passive observation to active involvement in wayang-making workshops, philosophical dialogues with *dalang* (puppet masters), and direct immersion in local daily life. Scholars argue that the level of tourist participation significantly influences the memorability and transformational potential of tourism experiences (Campos et al., 2018; Pine & Gilmore, 1999), where deeper engagement fosters stronger emotional attachment and cultural appreciation (Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Furthermore, the study seeks to evaluate how these experiential interactions impact the tourists' understanding of local cultural values and philosophies. Cultural learning and intercultural understanding are critical outcomes of heritage tourism, especially when facilitated through co-creation and mutual exchange (Richards, 2011; Salazar, 2012). Kampung Wayang, as a community-based cultural destination, provides a valuable case for analyzing how meaningful engagement fosters empathy, respect, and cross-cultural reflection (Su & Wall, 2014; Moscardo, 2008).

By connecting tourist experience typologies with the depth of involvement and cognitive-emotional outcomes, this study contributes significantly to the discourse on sustainable tourism—particularly its humanistic, educational, and reflective dimensions. Tourist engagement in Kampung Wayang illustrates how cultural interaction can promote identity negotiation, emotional immersion, and deeper cognitive processing (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009; Kim & Chen, 2020). This aligns with the findings of Liu et al. (2024), who emphasized how attentional cues and visual stimuli affect virtual

tourist typologies, suggesting that meaningful engagement—whether physical or virtual—is key to visitor satisfaction and memory formation.

Leung and Handler (2024) also identified motivation-based typologies in religious tourism, reinforcing the idea that tourist profiles can be nuanced based on value-driven participation. Similarly, Lam et al. (2024) highlight the role of perceived self-responsibility in shaping sustainable behavior among tourists—an element that is deeply observed in the co-creative interactions at Kampung Wayang. Recent literature further supports the need for typology frameworks in managing new forms of tourism. For instance, Cahyadi et al. (2024) used pilgrimage typologies to understand visitor motives in heritage based destinations, while Rosalina et al. (2025) proposed a conflict-based resource typology in rural Bali, revealing how typologies aid in resolving socio-cultural frictions and aligning management strategies.

Furthermore, Yayla et al. (2024) constructed a gastro-tourist typology to understand digital nomads' cultural behaviors, echoing the idea that immersive tourism transcends consumption and requires a deeper alignment with local values and practices. The typological discussions from Atasoy (2024) and Slevitch (2025) also argue for more systematic categorization models, positioning typologies as essential tools not only in theory but also in applied tourism management.

Consequently, by deconstructing tourist experience types and mapping them against levels of involvement, value orientation, and cultural impact, this study advocates for cultural tourism as a participatory, co-constructed, and ethically responsible practice (Uriely, 2009; Różycki & Korbziel, 2022; Vong, 2016). The outcomes reinforce the potential of community-based tourism not merely in safeguarding heritage, but in nurturing social sustainability, mutual understanding, and the continuous evolution of cultural meaning-making.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the *lived experiences* of tourists visiting Kampung Wayang, emphasizing the subjective and context-bound nature of cultural encounters (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). A qualitative design was considered suitable as it allows researchers to uncover deep, personal meanings behind tourist behavior and interaction with cultural heritage (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, capturing emotional, cognitive, and reflective dimensions of the visitor experience (Seidman, 2013). Four domestic tourists who had participated in *wayang kulit* workshops and performances were selected through purposive sampling. This approach focuses on participants with rich and relevant experiences that inform the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). Complementary observation and documentation enriched the contextual understanding and helped validate verbal accounts (Angrosino, 2007).

Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the data, based on Cohen's (1979) classic typology of tourist experience, which differentiates tourists into five categories ranging from recreational to existential. This framework was expanded through insights from Quan and Wang (2004), who distinguish between peak and supporting experiences in tourism, and further cross-validated with Wickens' (2002) exploration of sacred-profane experiences, particularly in culturally rich environments. To provide a nuanced understanding of cultural tourism experience, this study also drew from McKercher and du Cros' (2003) typology, which identifies five types of cultural tourists based on depth of cultural engagement. Their model is especially relevant to community-based tourism like Kampung Wayang, where visitor involvement varies significantly. Additionally, Hvenegaard (2002) contributed perspectives on cognitive-normative and interactional typologies that align with how visitors internalize values from traditional arts such as wayang. The social dimensions of tourist-host interaction were also acknowledged through the lens of Fan et al. (2017), who proposed dynamic typologies based on levels of social contact.

Analytical rigor was maintained through triangulation across interview data, observational

notes, and photographs (Patton, 1999). Member checking further ensured validity, allowing participants to confirm that the interpretations accurately represented their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study of tourist typologies has evolved significantly since the foundational framework proposed by Cohen (1979), who categorized tourists into five types—recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential—based on their motivations and levels of cultural immersion. These classifications serve as a useful foundation for understanding how tourists engage with cultural experiences, especially in destinations like Kampung Wayang.

However, subsequent scholars have questioned the static nature of traditional typologies, advocating for more fluid, dynamic interpretations. For instance, Uriely (2005) highlights that tourist experiences are increasingly hybrid and context-dependent, suggesting a "post-modern" perspective where individuals may shift between typologies depending on time, place, and social roles. In line with this, Uriely (2009) introduced an *analytical deconstruction* approach, allowing researchers to go beyond rigid categorization and explore nuanced meanings embedded in tourism behaviors.

Cultural destinations like Kampung Wayang provide fertile ground for applying this broader analytical lens. For example, Vong (2016) emphasizes that cultural tourist typologies can aid in profiling tourists within non-traditional settings such as gaming cities, suggesting that typology frameworks are adaptable across cultural and experiential contexts. Similarly, Różycki & Korbiel (2022) argue that tourist typologies must integrate interdisciplinary insights to reflect the complexity of modern tourist identities and motivations.

To support experience-based segmentation, McKercher and du Cros (2003) proposed a five-type cultural tourist model—ranging from purposeful to incidental cultural tourists—based on their depth of engagement and motivation. This model complements Quan and Wang's (2004) distinction between *peak experiences* (core tourism activities) and *supporting experiences* (ancillary activities), offering a structural framework to evaluate visitor participation levels.

Additionally, Fairhurst et al. (2007) found that typologies could predict tourist behavior such as spending patterns, information sourcing, and activity preference, further reinforcing the practical relevance of typology models in destination management. This is supported by Ceylan et al. (2021) who analyzed destination image perception patterns based on typological segmentation, suggesting that perception and satisfaction are closely tied to the type of tourist.

Recent research also emphasizes the need for conceptual clarity and methodological innovation. Rocamora et al. (2023) propose integrating tourism typologies with modality-based classifications to accommodate the diversity of tourism practices. Meanwhile, Garrod (2007) demonstrates how typological segmentation applies even within niche markets like marine tourism, showing the versatility of typologies beyond mainstream cultural contexts.

In sum, understanding the typology of tourist experiences—especially within culturally immersive destinations like Kampung Wayang—requires a multi-dimensional approach that considers motivations, behaviors, contextual variables, and evolving identities. This study contributes to this growing body of knowledge by analyzing how visitors to Kampung Wayang navigate between educational, emotional, aesthetic, and existential experiences through participatory cultural encounters. Findings revealed that tourist experiences in Kampung Wayang can be categorized into four overlapping types:

1. Aesthetic and Emotional Experience

One of the most dominant forms of tourist experience in Kampung Wayang is aesthetic and emotional involvement with the traditional art of wayang kulit. Tourists show deep admiration for the artistic details in the wayang-making process, from the selection of buffalo skin, carving techniques, to intricate coloring. Their involvement in these activities not only strengthens their appreciation for local culture, but also builds intense emotional connections.

One informant stated that when he first held buffalo hide and tried to carve it, he felt a deep meaning in every detail of the carving. When watching a wayang performance at night, the experience was described as very touching, because the combination of gamelan music, the voice of the dalang, and the shadows of the wayang characters created an atmosphere that stirred the emotions.

This kind of experience is in line with the concept of aesthetic experience described by Csikszentmihalyi and Robison (1990), which is a deep sensory experience of a work of art that triggers reflection and inner enjoyment. In addition, Quan and Wang (2004) mention that peak experiences in tourism often occur when tourists are emotionally immersed in core cultural practices.

Direct interaction with local artists further strengthens these emotional bonds. Tourists are not merely passive spectators but also participate in the creative process, which reinforces their sense of connection with the community. This aligns with Pine and Gilmore's (1999) concept of the experience economy, which places high value on co-creative experiences between cultural actors and tourists.

One informant even stated that he initially only intended to watch, but eventually felt part of the community because he was invited to discuss directly with the puppeteer and was involved in the workshop. He felt that this experience removed the boundaries between tourists and hosts, making it more than just an ordinary visit.

The aesthetic and emotional experience in Kampung Wayang is thus not only about admiring art, but also creating empathetic relationships and an appreciation of local identity. This reinforces Uriely's (2005) view that postmodern tourism experiences are emotionally reflective and contribute to the personal meaning and identity of tourists.

2. Reflective and Educational Experience

Educational and reflective experiences are an important dimension of a visit to Kampung Wayang. Interaction with local puppeteers and involvement in wayang kulit stories not only provide historical and philosophical information, but also encourage tourists to reflect on life values. Themes such as justice, loyalty, sacrifice, and truth contained in wayang plays evoke a deep internal reflection process.

One tourist recounted that after watching the Mahabharata story performed by a local puppeteer, he began to reflect on his position in his family and work. He said that the character of Bima, who is honest but often misunderstood, made him think

about the importance of loyalty to principles, even if it is not always appreciated by those around him. In his words: "I feel like I am looking in a mirror through the wayang characters. It feels like a slap in the face, but also enlightening."

This kind of experience is in line with the ideas of Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012) regarding memorable tourism experiences (MTEs), in which the reflective and cognitive learning dimensions play a major role in creating long-lasting memorable tourism experiences. Cohen (1979) also emphasizes that existential and reflective travelers seek more than just entertainment—they seek meaning and life orientation through their journeys.

Conversations with puppeteers not only convey stories narratively, but also open up space for philosophical dialogue. One puppeteer told tourists that the character Semar is not just a funny figure, but a symbol of wisdom and humility in Javanese culture. Tourists also stated that this understanding made them view humor in a new way: as a means of conveying truth without causing harm.

This supports McIntosh's (1999) finding that cultural tourism has great educational potential if tourists are directly involved in interpreting cultural values. Kampung Wayang offers this kind of space through workshops, open discussions, and narratives that are not only educational but also emotionally and spiritually touching.

Furthermore, tourists also stated that activities such as trying to become a puppeteer or

writing a simple script allowed them to understand the thought processes of the local community. They did not just “learn” as passive students but became part of a living cultural practice. This aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning approach, where direct experience is integrated with critical reflection to form new knowledge and understanding.

3. Existential and Transformative Experience

Existential and transformative experiences arise when tourists become more than mere observers of culture, but deeply immerse themselves in the creative and spiritual processes at Kampung Wayang. Long-term involvement—such as participating in puppet-making workshops for several days, learning to play the gamelan, and reflecting on the philosophy of puppet stories—sparks a change in perspective on life and identity.

An informant who participated in a three-day workshop stated that the process of creating wayang from raw leather to a playable state is not merely technical, but also spiritual. He described the process as “a long and silent meditation,” during which he felt connected to something greater than himself. He said: “I came as a tourist, but returned as someone who sees the world more deeply. I realized that technology and the speed of modern life made me lose awareness of meaning.”

This experience reflects the concept of existential tourism described by Cohen (1979), in which tourists seek not only pleasure or knowledge, but personal meaning and existential wholeness. According to Reisinger (2013), journeys involving spiritual or philosophical dimensions tend to drive identity transformation, especially when individuals encounter cultural values that are different yet universally relevant.

In this context, wayang kulit becomes an effective reflective medium. Its stories, full of moral dilemmas and human complexity—such as the conflict between family responsibilities and national duties, or between truth and loyalty—become a mirror of the inner struggles that tourists also feel in their modern lives. One traveler noted that the character of Arjuna, who is calm yet burdened by inner turmoil, reminded him of his personal dilemma of pursuing a career versus nurturing family relationships.

Research by Uriely (2005) mentions that travelers in the existential seekers category often find reflections of their personal crises in the cultures they encounter. When they not only observe but also become part of the local narrative, the experience has the potential to become a liminal space—a transitional space that allows for identity transformation (Turner, 1969).

Furthermore, this experience also reflects what Mezirow (1991) calls transformative learning, which is the process by which a person changes their framework of thinking through critical experiences. In the context of Kampung Wayang, encounters with meaningful local values can create a turning point in understanding and a new direction in life for some tourists.

4. Skill-Based Learning Experience

Tourists who are directly involved in the process of making wayang kulit—from selecting buffalo hide, cutting out motifs, to the coloring and stick attachment processes—experience skill-based learning. This activity not only introduces technical knowledge, but also fosters a deep appreciation for the complexity and value of traditional art.

One informant stated: “At first, I thought making wayang was like any other craft, but when I tried cutting and carving the leather, I realized how precise this work is. I felt like I was learning art and philosophy at the same time.” This statement shows how the learning process is not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor.

This experience is in line with the concept of experiential learning proposed by Kolb (1984), in which learning occurs through a concrete cycle—involving direct experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. In this context, learning to make wayang puppets becomes a holistic process that touches on the realms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Furthermore, active involvement in making wayang creates embodied knowledge—knowledge that is learned and understood through the body and actions, not just through reading or lectures (Pink, 2009). One tourist even stated that after trying to carve wayang motifs, he felt more appreciation for the time and patience of the craftsmen. “I was only able to make one small part in two hours, while local artists can complete a full character in a day. That’s amazing.”

This type of experience reinforces the importance of educational tourism that combines skills and cultural insight. A study by Ritchie, Carr & Cooper (2003) confirms that experiential learning promotes cross-cultural understanding and strengthens emotional bonds between tourists and local communities. Kampung Wayang is an ideal space for this because it not only showcases the art, but also provides access to the creative process.

Tourist experiences in Kampung Wayang reveal that cultural tourism thrives best when framed as a participatory and dialogic process. Rather than functioning as a passive display, Kampung Wayang serves as an active cultural arena where values are transmitted, identities negotiated, and meanings co-created.

This aligns with the concept of dialogic space described by MacCannell (1976) and further expanded by Chronis (2008), where tourism becomes a site for meaning-making rather than mere consumption. Kampung Wayang enables a dynamic interaction between visitors and locals that fosters mutual understanding and shared cultural interpretation. One participant noted, “I felt spiritually and intellectually engaged. I wasn’t just learning about Javanese culture—I was learning about myself when confronted with values like loyalty, honesty, and sacrifice.” This form of engagement demonstrates what Uriely (2005) refers to as meaningful engagement, where tourists move beyond passive observation and become collaborators in cultural preservation and interpretation. As Sartika, Zulfikar, and Alfitri (2023) suggest, immersive cultural encounters allow for genuine interaction that transcends.

commodification. Tourists do not merely witness cultural artifacts—they participate in living traditions and contribute to their relevance in contemporary life. Thus, cultural villages like Kampung Wayang are not just spaces of cultural display; they are vibrant ecosystems that support social exchange, critical reflection, and identity exploration. The success of such destinations depends not on visual spectacle alone, but on their ability to foster shared meaning and cultivate cross-cultural dialogue rooted in respect and co-creation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that tourist experiences in Kampung Wayang are inherently complex, layered, and multidimensional—ranging from aesthetic appreciation and emotional resonance to reflective and existential transformation. These experiences are largely shaped by the degree of immersion and direct interaction with the living culture of the host community. The findings demonstrate that active participation, such as engaging in wayang-making workshops or dialoguing with local dalangs, leads to deeper personal engagement and facilitates the co construction of cultural meaning.

Such experiential richness reinforces the function of Kampung Wayang not only as a tourist destination but as a site of sustainable cultural transmission, where intangible heritage is revitalized through dialogue and embodiment rather than commodification. This supports previous literature emphasizing the role of participatory and dialogic tourism in preserving cultural identity while fostering mutual understanding (Chronis, 2008; Uriely, 2005).

From a practical standpoint, tourism policymakers and destination managers are urged to shift paradigms—moving from transactional models of tourism toward frameworks grounded in co creation, cultural literacy, and community empowerment. Strategic efforts should include: Integrating cultural education components into tour packages, allowing tourists

to not only observe but actively engage in meaning-making, Providing capacity-building for local facilitators, especially in storytelling, philosophical interpretation, and visitor engagement, to enhance the depth of cultural delivery Developing evaluative instruments to measure levels of experiential engagement (cognitive, emotional, spiritual) for future benchmarking and tourism planning.

This study acknowledges several limitations. The small sample size and the single case context of Kampung Wayang limit the generalizability of findings. The highly qualitative and subjective nature of the data also necessitates caution when drawing broader conclusions about cultural tourism typologies. For future research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies across multiple cultural tourism villages in Indonesia or Southeast Asia to explore whether similar typologies and patterns of engagement emerge. Moreover, mixed-methods approaches that combine qualitative insights with quantitative tools may offer a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural tourism experiences shape visitor behavior, memory retention, and intercultural empathy.

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