



A Digital-Based Tourism Promotion Strategy to Increase Tourist Visiting to Archaeological Sites at Leleka Village, Wolasi District, South Konawe Regency

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Abstract

A digital-based tourism promotion strategy is a way to increase tourist visiting to Archaeological Sites at Leleka Village, Wolasi District, South Konawe Regency. This service community has objective to develop knowledge about enhancing digital-based tourism promotion of Archaeological remains. This community service activity uses an educational method. The primary target group is the community in Leleka Village, Wolasi District, South Konawe Regency, who are directly or indirectly involved in the management and development of the archaeological site for tourism destination, namely Kumapo Cave. The result indicates that this digital-based promotion strategy affects many tourists visiting by reason of there are many Archaeological cave sites with historical values and significant potential cultural tourism. The implication of this community service gives to the local society to care and protect their tangible cultural heritage and promote to the social media or in digital platform.

Keywords: Digital promotion, Archaeological remains, Leleka Village

Abstrak

Strategi promosi pariwisata berbasis digital merupakan suatu upaya untuk meningkatkan Kunjungan Wisatawan ke situs Arkeologi di Desa Leleka, Kecamatan Wolasi. Pengabdian masyarakat ini memiliki tujuan untuk memberikan ilmu pengetahuan tentang peningkatan promoasi promosi pariwisata tinggalan Arkeologi berbasis digital. Metode edukasi digunakan dalam kegiatan pengabdian ini. Mitra dari kegiatan ini adalah masyarakat dari Desa Leleka, Kecamatan Wolasi, Kabupaten Konawe Selatan yang terlibat langsung maupun tidak langsung dalam usaha pengelolaan dan pengembangan situs Arkeologi sebagai destinasi pariwisata, yaitu Gua Kumapo. Hasil pengabdian mengidikasikan bertambahnya jumlah kunjungan wisatawan di situ Arkeologi Desa Leleka, Kecamatan Wolasi, Kabupaten Konawe Selatan yang memiliki nilai sejarah dan juga sebagai pariwisata budaya. Adapun impilkasi dari

pengabdian ini adalah menumbuhkan rasa peduli bagi mitra pengabdian untuk memelihara warisan budaya tangible dan ikut serta dalam mempromosikan pariwisata budaya di media sosial dan di berbagai platform digital.

Kata kunci: Promosi digital, tinggalan Arkeologi, Desa Leleka

Introduction

Archaeology is the study of past material cultural remains. Archaeology focuses on human remains dating back at least 50 years. These material remains are essentially products of human culture. These remains are not merely worthless objects, but essentially reflect the achievements the civilization of human in each period. The remains of Archaeology are cultural materials that must be preserved and have many important values in a line with the Law Number 10 of 2011 about Cultural Heritage (Undang-Undang Nomor 10 Tahun 2011 Tentang Cagar Budaya, 2011). Prehistoric archaeological findings in Leleka Village illustrate how ancient humans used caves as burial containers, using Soronga as burial places. The caves still contain remains as evidence of their culture.

Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province has a rich of heritage in culture, especially the sites of Arcaheology and caves spread at Leleka Village, Wolasi District. These sites hold significant historical value and cultural tourism potential. Specifically, sites like Kumapo Cave in Leleka Village offer the unique characteristic of being an "open natural laboratory." This cave is home to evidence of ancient human burial culture, evidenced by the discovery of artifacts such as pottery, Soronga (traditional burial containers or coffins), and scattered human bones. These findings make the cave not only a natural adventure destination but also a valuable destination for hands-on historical education.

Each community has its own way of treating the deceased, including burial, cremation, mummification, worship, hiding, or even forgetting. This depends on the values or belief systems they adhere to. There are also burial traditions that involve placing the body in a cave or niche. Burial is a social activity involving the removal of the body from the environment of the living, and its implementation is carried out in a patterned manner according to certain recognized and culturally supported rituals (Bernadeta, 2010).

These Archaeological findings confirm the high significance of the Kumapo Cave Site as a cultural heritage site. The previous research by Pradana (Pradana & Kasmiasi, 2017) detailed the discovery of 172 human bones, indicating at least three individuals were buried there. The composition of the identified bones, including three skulls, 16 left tibiae, 12 right tibiae, and others, demonstrates the site's complexity as a prehistoric burial site. While 110 bones still require further identification for accurate individual data and skeletal characteristics, the existing data is sufficient to serve as a powerful educational and promotional narrative. This aligns with the cave's description of its function as a burial site (Pradana & Kasmiasi, 2017). Regarding Kumapo Cave itself, many members of community of Leleka Village are currently unaware of its origins, even the meaning of Kumapo itself. This situation needs a proper solution in the form of supporting resources to support the communities to participate in

maintaining the heritage of cultural as an iconic tourist destination (Karta et al., 2025); (Handoko, 2007).

In this context, the urgency of disseminating this scientific information to the public is even greater. Digital technology plays a bold advantage in serving information about tourist destinations and also assistance for the tourists (Novia Jamilati et al., 2023); (Minanda et al., 2024). Therefore, the youth community in Konawe Regency with an interest in history and archaeology is a potential target for active involvement in digital promotion of historical sites in the region. The community service activities designed aim to bridge digital skills with cultural awareness through training, mentoring, and the creation of creative digital content. This is the novelty of this program: developing a digital promotion strategy for historical tourism based on a youth community interested in history, using an educational and participatory approach. This approach not only provides a solution to the low level of promotion of historical sites but also instills cultural preservation values in future generations. In addition, to the role of the younger generation in tourism development through digital-based promotional strategies and the role of stakeholders are also crucial. These roles are highly strategic, particularly in the regulatory, monitoring, and evaluation aspects of each effort to preserve and protect tangible cultural heritage (Astiti, 2018); (Laksana et al., 2022). This role can prevent vandalism because one of the impacts of tourism which is not well controlled is the potential for clusters of vandalism at tourist attractions (Yusriana et al., 2022).

The discussion above touches on several elements, namely the management community, local youth, and the community in Leleka Village. Therefore, several phenomena were identified as major obstacles hindering the development of Archaeological sites, particularly Kumapo Cave, into leading educational tourism destinations. These problems are classified as follows. First, the site's low level of recognition. Archaeological sites, particularly Kumapo Cave in Leleka Village, are not yet widely known to outsiders. This limitation results in low tourist traffic and low economic potential. Second, the lack of an effective promotional strategy. Partners lack the understanding and skills to develop a planned, measurable, and engaging digital-based tourism promotion strategy. Third, limited use of digital platforms. Partners have not optimized the use of social media and other digital platforms as primary promotional tools. Existing promotional content (if any) is sporadic, unengaging, and inconsistent. Therefore, the purpose of this community service activity is to bridge the gap between the high potential of archaeological sites (including Kumapo Cave) in Konawe and the low level of promotion and tourist visits, by focusing the intervention on Leleka Village, Wolasi District. Specifically, the goal of this activity is to increase understanding and awareness of cultural conservation. This activity also provides a deeper understanding to the local community, especially the younger generation in Leleka Village, regarding the importance and methods of preserving archaeological cultural remains (both tangible and intangible). This able to grow up awareness as well as liability for historical heritage in the village. The next goal is to develop a digital promotion strategy. This activity provides knowledge and practical guidance to partners on developing an effective and targeted digital-based tourism promotion strategy, with a focus on digital storytelling of Kumapo Cave. In addition, this community service can improve the digital skills of the youth community. This activity is realized in the form of training and mentoring the youth community in Leleka Village

in producing and managing creative, educational, and interesting digital content (photos, videos, SEO-based narratives) for the publication of the village's archaeological site. Increasing the Visibility of the Archaeological Site: Realizing the initiation or optimization of official digital platforms (such as social media accounts and/or Google Business profiles) of the Leleka Village Archaeological site so that it is easily accessible, searchable, and recognized by potential tourists from outside the area. Furthermore, this community service program can also encourage increased tourist visits. The goal is to increase tourist visits to the archaeological site in Leleka Village, Wolasi District, which is expected to stimulate the local economy through digital-based cultural tourism promotion.

Method

This community service activity uses an educational method. The primary target group is the community in Leleka Village, Wolasi District, Konawe Regency, who are directly or indirectly involved in the management and development of the archaeological site's tourism potential (Kumapo Cave). This target group is divided into the younger generation, the village youth community, and the Leleka Village community, with the total of 20 people. Their role is as key actors trained in digital skills, digital storytelling, and content production. They are agents of change who are expected to become the site's sustainable digital promotion management team. Next, Site Managers and Community Leaders. Key village figures (Village Head or Village Officials) and representatives of archaeological site managers (if established). They act as decision-makers and providers of authentic information data regarding the site. They are involved in the socialization of conservation values and approval of the historical narrative to be promoted. Finally, there are supporting parties (Stakeholders), namely representatives from the Konawe Regency Tourism Office and/or the Cultural Heritage/Archaeology Preservation Center. Their role is as consultants and strengthens the legitimacy of the program, especially to ensure that the promoted historical narrative is accurate and in accordance with preservation principles. Furthermore, the activity targets were determined. The selection of these targets was based on the program's novelty, namely empowering young communities with an interest in history, to bridge the gap between the site's potential and its lack of digital promotion. The sequence of activities is as follows. The sequence of implementation of this community service activity is designed in three main stages: the preparation activity, the step of actualization, examination of activity and the last is reporting of community service output. The step of preparation focuses on thorough planning, coordination, and the preparation of relevant materials. Then, an initial survey and coordination took place. This activity was carried out by conducting an initial visit and direct observation to the Kumapo Cave and Leleka Village locations to update data and confirm permits for the activity with village officials and community leaders.

Result and Discussion

The results of this community service were divided into several activities. The first was the outreach of the Kumapo Cave archaeological remains as cultural heritage. This activity was

followed by a presentation on developing Archaeological sites as tourist attractions and digital-based archaeological tourism promotion strategies. The stages of these activities are explained as in the following.

1. Socialization of the Archaeological Remains of Kumapo Cave as a Cultural Heritage

This stage serves as an educational foundation and instills conservation awareness, essential before widespread digital promotion. The outreach session aims to provide the local community, particularly the younger generation at Leleka Village, with a deep and comprehensive understanding of the significance of Kumapo Cave as a cultural heritage site classified as a Cultural Heritage Site. By presenting credible archaeological data, such as the discovery of traditional burial containers (Soronga) and the complexity of human bone discoveries, this activity is expected to foster collective awareness and a sense of love and responsibility for the village's historical heritage, in line with the activity's objectives. Through an interactive approach, the community is encouraged to view archaeological remains not merely as inanimate objects, but as a tangible reflection of the achievements of their ancestral civilization, thus fostering a sense of ownership and enabling sustainable preservation efforts.



Figure 1. Explanation of material on the socialization of the archaeological remains of Kumapo Cave as a cultural heritage

The description of the material hosted by one of the community service member based on the figure 1 above is as follows:

1. Conveying the important value of the site: there was a comprehensive socialization to the community and youth of Leleka Village regarding Kumapo Cave as a Cultural Heritage and its important value as stated in Law Number 11 of 2010. Emphasis was given to prehistoric archaeological findings, such as burial methods using caves and Soronga (traditional burial containers/coffins), which illustrate the achievements of past human civilization.

2. Discussion and Knowledge Sharing: there was an interactive session to bridge scientific knowledge (the discovery of 172 human bones, 3 individuals identified) with local knowledge (cave burial traditions) to foster collective awareness of heritage.
3. Cultivating a Sense of Ownership: It means that this activity subjected to encouraging the community to see archaeological remains not just as objects, but as a reflection of local civilization and cultural identity that must be preserved.

2. Development of Archaeological Sites as Tourist Attractions

The material on Developing Archaeological Sites as Tourist Attractions was presented in session 2. This material is no less important because this explanation bridges the gap between the archaeological findings of Kumapo Cave, which have high historical value, with the demands of the digital era in the tourism sector. Digital skills, with a focus on creating professional, consistent, and attractive digital assets of Kumapo Cave in the online realm. This activity aims to build the site's brand identity and ensure the message delivered to the public is persuasive and credible. Methodologically, this session is supported by the principles of creating accurate and engaging narratives to educate visitors, as well as utilizing digital technology for immersive experiences.



Figure 2. Presentation of material on archaeological sites as tourist attractions

From the material presented by Dr. Sitti Hernminma, SST. Par., M.Hum., as shown in the images above, which was about the Development of Archaeological Sites as Tourist Attractions, it was clear that the public and participants in attendance were listening attentively. Several important points from the explanation were highlighted, namely:

1. Digital Asset Creation and Brand Identity: The session emphasizes the importance of creating professional, consistent, and engaging digital assets. Methodologically, this session teaches the principles of creating accurate and engaging narratives to educate visitors, as well as the potential of leveraging digital technology for immersive experiences (such as interactive QR codes) as an adaptation effort in the aspect of tourism.

2. **The Heritage of Culture Management Socialization:** This session successfully raised awareness among partners that intensive digital promotion must always be aligned with site preservation efforts. This principle aims to prevent the risk of physical damage to sites and the loss of cultural values due to uncontrolled tourist visiting.
3. **Strengthening Community Participation:** This session explicitly encourages young people to take an active role as "promotion ambassadors" and "site guardians." It is hoped that the site's preservation and promotion activities will continue independently by the Leleka Village community after this community service program is completed.

Participatory Conservation Education is a crucial step in instilling the understanding that the successful promotion of Kumapo Cave must be based on a strong commitment to conservation, as well as strengthening the role of local communities as primary subjects, not merely objects, in cultural heritage management. This is crucial for ensuring program sustainability and mitigating the risk of physical damage and vandalism, the primary threats to archaeological sites as tourism increases.

3. Digital-Based Archaeological Tourism Promotion

This material specifically bridges the gap between the historical archaeological findings of Kumapo Cave and the demands of the digital era of tourism zone. Digital expertise is prioritized on creating professional, consistent, and engaging digital assets for Kumapo Cave online. This activity aims to build the site's brand identity and ensure the message conveyed to the public is persuasive and credible, supported by the principles of creating accurate and engaging narratives to educate visitors, as well as utilizing digital technology for immersive experiences.



Figure 3. Presentation of digital-based tourism promotional materials

The figure 3 above shows that the community and participants in attendance were attentive, demonstrating the high level of enthusiasm shown by partners for the tourism development potential at Leleka Village. Based on the material presented, the main focus of this session covered three pillars of success in developing digital-based Archaeological tourism as in the following description:

1. **Creation of Digital Assets and Site Brand Identity:** This session emphasizes that archaeological sites are important national cultural assets, which, if managed wisely, can be a source of sustainable economic growth. Therefore, the digital assets (photos, videos, narratives) produced must be professional and consistent to maintain the credibility of the site. This concept directly supports the preservation of the site's cultural value and motivates conservation so that the site remains attractive to tourists in the future, in addition to providing economic value, education, innovation, and a positive impact on the local community (Ardiwidjaja & Antariksa, 2022); (Astiti, 2016); (F. K. K. Putra et al., 2018).
2. **Integration of Accurate Narrative and Immersive Technology:** The materials socialize the importance of focusing on in-depth education to transform passive visits into meaningful learning experiences. The Kumapo Caves site should be positioned as an open laboratory for learning History and Archaeology. The team explained that the integration of technology, for example through the use of interactive QR codes or digital storytelling, can help visitors learn about the values of the site, ultimately fostering respect and care for the existing heritage. In addition, the work of digital-based immersive mechanization can improve huge impact to the expansion of national and global tourism industry (Kalia et al., 2022); (Khurramov Ortikjon Kayumovich, 2020); (Kononova et al., 2020).
3. **Socialization of Preservation Values (Cultural Heritage Management) and Community Participation:** This session successfully raised awareness among partners that digital promotion must align with site preservation efforts (Cultural Heritage Management). This responds to concerns about the risk of physical damage to sites and the loss of cultural values due to uncontrolled tourist visits, as well as the threat of vandalism. Solutions offered include visitor management, early education, and strengthening participation, where the younger generation is encouraged to become "promotion ambassadors" and "site guardians" responsible for ensuring that preservation and promotion activities continue independently. This is in line with the offer of tourism education through experimental archaeology (Surya, 2025) and geological tourism with the utilization of archaeological sites (I. K. A. Putra & Wijayanti, 2020). Next, this activity is divided into several stages as follows.
 1. **Training and capacity building of digital-based human resources.** As stated by Santana et al (Almeida-Santana et al., 2020) that the digital tourism ecosystem is very necessary in the development and promotion of tourism and can build advanced socio-economic activities (Benyon et al., 2014), which can ultimately be developed into a digital tourism business (Saura et al., 2019). This activity includes an Archaeological Digital Storytelling Workshop: Providing intensive training to participants on how to transform scientific data into engaging and credible digital narratives.
 2. **Technical social media training** which includes practical training in photography/videography using smartphones, use of social media features (Reels/TikTok), and strategies for using relevant hashtags.

3. Core Promotional Content Development (Digital Asset Creation). This activity includes pilot content production, which includes direct assistance in producing at least five types of pilot content (videos, infographics, high-quality photos) ready for upload. Next is Digital Platform Optimization. This activity includes assistance in creating and managing official social media accounts, as well as optimizing Google My Business/Google Maps for Kumapo Cave.

Conclusion

The Community Service activity carried out at Leleka Village, Wolasi District, South Konawe Regency, has succeeded in bridging the gap between the high potential of the Kumapo Cave Archaeological Site as a prehistoric cultural heritage and the low level of promotion and tourist visiting. The main conclusions from the implementation of this program are as follows:

1. Raising awareness of conservation and cultural values: This program has successfully fostered a deeper understanding among the local community, especially the younger generation, of the significance of Kumapo Cave as a prehistoric burial site classified as a Cultural Heritage. Archaeological findings such as Soronga (traditional burial containers), pottery, and the discovery of 172 human bones are used as educational narratives to instill awareness of holding as well as management for the preservation of sites.
2. Empowerment of digital promotion skills: The solutions offered, namely education and capacity building of digital human resources, have been implemented through Digital Storytelling workshops and technical social media counseling (smartphone photography, hashtag strategies, use of features such as Instagram Reels or TikTok). This provides practical skills to the younger generation to become agents of change and sustainable digital promotion management teams for the site.
3. Overall, this community service activity succeeded in realizing a novelty program, namely developing a digital promotion strategy for historical tourism based on a young community who have an interest in history, with an educational and participatory approach, while also supporting the implementation of the *Tri Dharma* of higher education by Halu Oleo University.

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