

Preserving Cultural Authenticity Through Green Tourism Management: An Ethnographic Business Study in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya, Indonesia

Paramita Kartika Sari ^{1*} Mariatus Sholikhah ²

^{1*} Akademi Pariwisata 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Nahdlatul Ulama (UNISNU) Jepara, Jepara, Indonesia

Email: pramita_ks@yahoo.com

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted : July 03, 2026
Reviewed : July 04, 2026
July 09, 2026
Revised : August 15, 2026
Accepted : August 17, 2026
Published : August 23, 2026

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The author(s) declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to analyze how cultural authenticity is maintained through sustainable tourism management in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya, and to examine how community participation supports the preservation of cultural identity alongside local economic development.

Research Method: This study employed a qualitative business ethnography approach in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Benowo Sub-district, Surabaya. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with six purposively selected key informants — a tourism village manager, a Pecel Semanggi business owner, a Bakul Semanggi Gendong vendor, a resident, a youth representative, and a community member responsible for environmental upkeep — documentation, and field notes, conducted over an eight-week fieldwork period between February and March 2026. Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, with credibility established through triangulation, member checking, and researcher reflexivity, and contextualized with secondary data from the Surabaya City Government, the Surabaya City Statistics Agency (BPS), and the East Java Provincial Government, Indonesia.

Results and Discussion: The findings show that cultural authenticity is preserved through daily cultural practices, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and active community participation. Traditional culinary businesses — involving more than 120 active Pecel Semanggi vendors and over 13 diversified semanggi-based products (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025) — support both economic development and cultural preservation, while sustainable tourism management strengthens the link between environmental conservation, cultural sustainability, and local economic growth. The study also finds that cultural commodification does not necessarily reduce authenticity when local communities retain control over tourism activities and cultural representation. However, this process is not free of tensions, including risks of staged authenticity and an uneven distribution of economic benefits.

Implications: The findings guide policymakers and tourism managers in developing inclusive, culturally sensitive, and environmentally sustainable tourism strategies.

Originality: This study contributes by integrating cultural authenticity, community-based tourism, sustainable tourism, and business ethnography within a single analytical framework in the context of Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Keywords: cultural authenticity; business ethnography; community-based tourism; sustainable tourism; Kampung Wisata Semanggi; local culture.



1. Introduction

Developments in the global tourism industry indicate a paradigm shift from an economic growth orientation toward more sustainable tourism. Tourist destinations are no longer evaluated solely by the number of visitor arrivals but also by their ability to preserve environmental integrity, maintain local cultural identity, and improve community well-being. This shift reinforces the role of culture as a main pillar of tourism development, as it is often the defining characteristic that distinguishes one destination from another. Consequently, environmentally friendly and community-based tourism management is increasingly viewed as a key strategy for achieving sustainable development goals in the tourism sector (Le *et al.*, 2024). In recent years, community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as an approach that integrates economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects into destination management. This approach positions local communities as key actors in the planning, management, and evaluation of tourism activities, ensuring that benefits are felt not only by tourists but also by the local community. CBT is also believed to strengthen the preservation of local culture by actively involving communities in safeguarding traditions, local knowledge, and regional identity (Prayoga & Wahyono, 2024).

Indonesia's cultural diversity is a key asset in the development of community-based tourism. The tourism villages that have emerged across different regions demonstrate that local culture can serve as both a tourist attraction and a means of preserving cultural heritage. However, the growth of tourism has also created new challenges, namely the shift in the function of culture from a social practice into a tourism commodity. This situation calls for a management model that balances economic interests, cultural preservation, and environmental protection to ensure destination sustainability (Timothy & He, 2024).

The city of Surabaya illustrates this shift concretely. Government data show that Surabaya recorded 25,487,271 tourist visits in 2025, of which approximately 87.8% were domestic (nusantara) tourists — indicating a tourism market with a strong local base rather than one dependent on international arrivals (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya/LPPD, 2025). As part of its sustainable urban development strategy, the city government has developed 44 thematic villages (kampung tematik) across 31 sub-districts targeted for creative-economy development, positioning local communities as central actors in tourism rather than passive beneficiaries (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). Tourism villages such as Kampung Lawas Maspati, Kampung Peneleh, Kampung Ketandan, and Kampung Wisata Semanggi in Benowo have been developed by highlighting history, culture, cuisine, and community participation as their main attractions. This development model aims not only to increase tourist visits but also to strengthen area identity, create economic opportunities, and improve residential quality of life through community involvement in destination management (Prayoga & Wahyono, 2024).

Kampung Wisata Semanggi, located in RW 3, Kelurahan Sememi, Kecamatan Benowo, Surabaya, is distinct from other tourism villages because it highlights Pecel Semanggi as both a cultural identity and a culinary tourism icon of the city (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). More than 120 vendors were recorded as actively selling Pecel Semanggi in 2025, and the community has diversified the semanggi plant into more than 13 derivative products — including cookies, putri salju, nastar, crackers, juice, and instant semanggi — reflecting an expanding culture-based micro-enterprise sector (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). The cultural significance of this practice has also received formal recognition: Pecel Semanggi Suroboyo was designated an Intangible Cultural Heritage (Warisan Budaya Tak Benda) in 2022 (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya/Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2022), and Kampung

Semanggi received the 2025 East Java Inotek Award in the regional-innovation category for its community-empowerment model (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur/Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). This traditional dish has been passed down through generations. It is an integral part of the social life of the Benowo community — a community that itself is growing, with a population of 74,933 in 2024 and an annual growth rate of 1.96% (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Surabaya, 2025), meaning that tourism activity unfolds within an actively developing residential environment rather than a static one. Beyond its economic value, Pecel Semanggi also embodies historical, ecological, and cultural significance, reflected in the use of local ingredients, traditional preparation techniques, and the presence of the Bakul Semanggi Gendong as a cultural symbol of Surabaya's community (Shrestha, Shrestha, *et al.*, 2025). The tradition of selling Pecel Semanggi by carrying it on one's shoulders is a form of intangible cultural heritage that represents hard work, family solidarity, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge; its preservation therefore requires tourism management that goes beyond increasing tourist visits to sustaining the cultural practices that form the community's identity (Shrestha, L'Esprit Decosta, *et al.*, 2025).

In contemporary tourism studies, the concept of cultural authenticity has become increasingly important because it relates to the quality of the tourism experience and the sustainability of destinations. Authenticity is no longer understood merely as the genuineness of cultural objects, but also as a social experience constructed through the relationships between communities, tourists, and the cultural environment; it is the result of an ever-evolving interaction shaped by how communities preserve their cultural values amid social and economic change (Timothy & He, 2024). The ethnographic approach offers a deeper perspective on this relationship by placing communities' daily lives at the center of analysis. Through ethnography, researchers not only describe tourist attractions but also reveal how communities interpret culture, construct identity, and negotiate the changes brought about by tourism development — a perspective that is increasingly relevant for explaining the interconnections among cultural preservation, the environment, and community well-being in context (Adams, 2024).

Although various studies have addressed community-based tourism, destination sustainability, and cultural authenticity, most still focus on governance, tourist satisfaction, or destination marketing strategies. Studies that integrate ethnographic methods with business practice remain comparatively limited: a recent review of business ethnography research finds that empirical applications in specific community-based enterprise settings — as opposed to conceptual or organizational behavior contexts — are still relatively scarce (Mantilla & Solis, 2026). This gap highlights the need for research to explain how local cultural practices can be preserved while delivering economic benefits, without compromising sustainability principles. Based on this discussion, this study aims to analyze how cultural authenticity can be preserved through environmentally friendly tourism management in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya, using a business ethnography approach. The study contributes by integrating three perspectives — cultural authenticity, community-based tourism, and sustainable tourism management — to examine the relationships among cultural preservation, community economic activity, and environmental sustainability. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to tourism ethnography while offering practical input for local governments and tourism village managers seeking to balance cultural preservation, local economic strengthening, and environmental conservation (Adams, 2024).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review and hypothesis development. Section 3 presents the research method and design. Section 4 provides the results and discussion. Section 5 presents Concluding Remarks and Recommendations.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Cultural Authenticity in Tourism

Cultural authenticity is one of the most important concepts in tourism studies because it influences tourists' perceptions, destination attractiveness, and the sustainability of local culture. Early studies viewed authenticity as the originality of cultural objects, traditions, and heritage preserved without significant alteration (Liu *et al.*, 2025). Contemporary scholars, however, argue that authenticity is socially constructed and continuously negotiated through interactions among local communities, tourists, and tourism stakeholders. According to Timothy & He (2024), authenticity should be understood not merely as the preservation of historical artifacts but also as the maintenance of cultural meanings, values, and social practices embedded in community life. The concept of authenticity has evolved into several dimensions, including objective, constructive, and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity refers to the genuineness of cultural objects and traditions; constructive authenticity emphasizes the social interpretation of authenticity; and existential authenticity focuses on the personal and emotional connections tourists develop during cultural interactions. In community-based tourism destinations, authenticity is often reflected through daily cultural practices, local knowledge, traditional livelihoods, and social relationships maintained by residents (Sentanu *et al.*, 2025). Maintaining cultural authenticity is particularly important in tourism villages because commercialization can create pressures that alter local traditions. Nevertheless, prior studies indicate that cultural commodification does not necessarily diminish authenticity when local communities retain control over cultural representation and tourism management (Salim & Rahman, 2022). Authenticity should therefore be viewed as a dynamic process that balances cultural preservation with adaptation to changing social and economic conditions.

2.2 Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a tourism development approach that places local communities at the center of tourism planning, management, and the distribution of benefits (Jackson, 2025). CBT emerged as an alternative to conventional tourism models that often prioritize external investors while providing limited benefits to residents; its fundamental principle is that tourism should contribute to community welfare while preserving local culture and natural resources. CBT promotes community empowerment by encouraging local participation in decision-making, tourism operations, and destination governance (Gunawan *et al.*, 2026), allowing residents to become active stakeholders rather than passive recipients of development. It also contributes to cultural preservation by directly involving local communities in protecting traditional knowledge, customs, culinary heritage, and social practices, while strengthening social cohesion through cooperation, mutual trust, and collective responsibility. In tourism villages, CBT serves as an effective mechanism for integrating cultural conservation with economic development (Singh & Dhakad, 2025). By empowering local entrepreneurs and encouraging community participation, tourism villages can generate sustainable income while maintaining cultural authenticity.

2.3 Sustainable Tourism Management

Sustainable tourism management refers to the planning and implementation of tourism activities that balance economic development, environmental conservation, and socio-cultural sustainability (Dewi *et al.*, 2025), derived from the broader framework of sustainable development. The framework is commonly built on three interconnected dimensions: economic sustainability, which focuses on long-term economic benefit for local communities and businesses; environmental sustainability, which emphasizes conservation of natural resources, biodiversity, and ecological systems (Kori, 2025); and socio-cultural sustainability, which seeks to preserve cultural heritage, traditions, local identity, and community well-being. Recent studies suggest that sustainable tourism management requires active collaboration among local governments, tourism operators, community organizations, and residents, and that it should promote responsible resource use, waste reduction, environmental awareness, and community participation (Suparjo *et al.*, 2024). Sustainable destinations are characterized not only by economic growth but also by their ability to protect cultural and environmental assets — a consideration that is especially important for tourism villages, where local culture and environmental resources constitute the primary attraction, and where increased visitor numbers must not threaten cultural authenticity or environmental quality.

2.4 Business Ethnography in Tourism Studies

Business ethnography is a qualitative research approach that examines social behavior, cultural practices, and organizational activities within economic contexts (Mantilla & Solis, 2026). Derived from traditional ethnographic methods in anthropology, it seeks to understand how people create meaning, interact, and make decisions within business environments. In tourism research, business ethnography provides a comprehensive understanding of how tourism activities are embedded within local cultural systems (Adams, 2024). Unlike quantitative approaches that focus on measurable outcomes, ethnography emphasizes the lived experiences, perceptions, and everyday practices of individuals and communities through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and prolonged field engagement. Its application in tourism studies is particularly valuable for community-based tourism because it reveals how residents interpret tourism development, preserve cultural traditions, and negotiate the changes tourism brings (Tucker, 2026), and because it enables a deeper understanding of how authenticity is experienced and reproduced in everyday life.

2.5 Traditional Culinary Heritage and Cultural Preservation

Traditional culinary heritage is increasingly recognized as an important component of cultural tourism and destination identity (Nadra *et al.*, 2025). Food is not merely a source of economic value but also a cultural expression that reflects local history, ecological knowledge, social relationships, and community identity. Its preservation contributes to cultural sustainability by transmitting recipes, preparation techniques, ingredients, and consumption practices across generations, while also supporting local economies by creating opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs and community-based enterprises. In many destinations, traditional food serves as both a tourist attraction and a mechanism for cultural preservation: tourists seek authentic culinary experiences, while local communities leverage culinary tourism to maintain cultural continuity, creating opportunities to achieve economic, cultural, and social objectives simultaneously (Spilioti & Marinakos, 2025). In Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Pecel Semanggi embodies culinary heritage, local identity, ecological knowledge, and cultural continuity. At the same

time, the tradition of the Bakul Semanggi Gendong demonstrates how culinary practices can serve as living cultural heritage sustained through daily social interaction and community participation.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the assumption that cultural authenticity can be preserved through sustainable tourism management supported by active community participation. Community-based tourism functions as a mechanism that empowers residents to maintain control over cultural representation and tourism activities, while sustainable tourism management provides the framework for balancing economic development, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. Within this framework, traditional culinary businesses such as Pecel Semanggi act as cultural and economic assets that strengthen local identity while generating income. Business ethnography serves as the analytical approach for understanding how these processes occur in everyday community life. The relationship among cultural authenticity, community participation, sustainable tourism management, and local economic activity therefore forms the central foundation of this research in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a business ethnography design to gain an in-depth understanding of how the Kampung Wisata Semanggi community preserves cultural authenticity through environmentally friendly, tourism-based business practices. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it allows the examination of community behaviors, values, symbols, and social practices within the context of daily life, enabling cultural meanings to be understood from the perspective of the cultural actors themselves. In this study, business ethnography is used to analyze the relationship between the community's economic activities, cultural preservation, and community-based tourism management — an approach suited to explaining social dynamics within the community and how culture becomes integral to local business practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Pink *et al.*, 2022).

The research was conducted in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, located in RW 3, Kelurahan Sememi, Kecamatan Benowo, Surabaya (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025) — an area known for preserving Pecel Semanggi cuisine and the Bakul Semanggi Gendong tradition, and situated within a sub-district of 74,933 residents growing at 1.96% per year (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Surabaya, 2025). The location was selected through purposive sampling because it possesses characteristics aligned with the study's focus: a culture-based tourism destination integrating the preservation of local tradition, community empowerment, and creative-economy development, and an example of community-based tourism (CBT) developed through collaboration among the community, local government, and other stakeholders (Junaid, 2024).

3.1 Informants

Research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, involving informants deemed to possess knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the social and economic life of Kampung Wisata Semanggi. Three selection criteria were applied: (1) direct involvement in the management, cultural practice, or economic activity of the tourism village; (2) a minimum of one year of active involvement in the cultural or economic life of the tourism village; and (3) willingness to take part in in-depth interviews.

Six informants were interviewed, representing distinct positions within the tourism village: the village's tourism manager, a Pecel Semanggi micro-business owner, a Bakul Semanggi Gendong vendor, a long-term resident, a youth representative, and a community member involved in environmental upkeep. This spread of roles was intended to capture cultural preservation, business practice, community governance, intergenerational perspective, and environmental management as distinct but connected vantage points (Patton, 2023). Their profile is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of Key Informants

Code	Role / Position	Basis of Selection	Length of Involvement
I-01	Tourism village manager	Oversees day-to-day management and cultural representation of the destination	4 years
I-02	Pecel Semanggi micro-business owner	Runs a culinary business learned within the family; represents the culture–economy link	Over 15 years
I-03	Bakul Semanggi Gendong vendor	Practices the shoulder-carried selling tradition; represents intangible cultural heritage bearers	Over 20 years
I-04	Resident	Long-term resident not directly employed in tourism; represents community perspective on daily-life impact	Lifelong resident (30+ years)
I-05	Youth representative	Represents the rising generation's relationship to, and participation in, local culture	2 years
I-06	Community member, environmental upkeep	Involved in cleanliness and environmental preparation for tourism activity	3 years

3.2 Data Collection

Fieldwork was conducted over eight weeks, between February and March 2026, with a visiting frequency of three to four site visits per week, including both weekday and weekend market days. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and field notes. Participatory observation was used to understand the community's daily activities, the production and sales processes of Pecel Semanggi, interactions between business operators and tourists, and the forms of cultural preservation occurring within the tourism village. In-depth interviews followed a semi-structured guide organized around five thematic areas: (1) everyday cultural practices and the meaning of authenticity, (2) the operation and organization of the Pecel Semanggi business, (3) environmental and eco-friendly management practices, (4) community participation in tourism governance, and (5) perceptions of commodification and change. Documentation in the form of photographs, archives, institutional documents, and publications was used as supporting data to reinforce findings from observation and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Tracy, 2020).

3.3 Data Analysis and Coding

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), comprising data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification, applied in three stages. First, open coding was applied line-by-line to interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation to generate descriptive codes grounded in informants' own words and observed practices. Second, axial coding grouped related codes into categories (for example, codes describing ingredient sourcing, food preparation, and intergenerational teaching were grouped under a 'culinary

knowledge transmission' category). Third, selective coding integrated these categories into the seven overarching themes. Analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the research process so that interpretations remained consistent with the social context of the community under study. An illustrative excerpt of this coding process is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Coding Matrix (Illustrative Excerpts, Translated from Bahasa Indonesia)

Raw Data Excerpt (Informant Code)	Open Code	Category	Theme
"We are not creating a new culture; we are introducing what already exists in the community" (I-01)	Continuity of pre-existing tradition	Community ownership of representation	1. Cultural authenticity as the foundation of sustainable tourism
"I learned to make Semanggi from my family... not like learning at school, but by watching and helping" (I-02)	Intergenerational, observation-based learning	Culinary knowledge transmission	2. Business ethnography and local economic activity
"If everything is changed, the distinctive character of Semanggi will disappear" (I-02)	Preservation of traditional preparation method	Authenticity in production practice	2. Business ethnography and local economic activity
"We still try to keep [the environment] clean... warga (residents) know that if the environment is not cared for, tourism will not last long" (I-06)	Emergent, community-driven environmental awareness	Grassroots eco-management	3. Eco-friendly practices in tourism management
"Not everyone has to become a manager directly... what matters is that residents feel this kampung belongs to all of us" (I-01)	Distributed, non-uniform community roles	Community-based governance	4. Community-based tourism and destination governance
"If we chase tourists too much, sometimes culture gets made up just to look attractive. We try to avoid that" (I-01)	Resistance to staged authenticity	Community control over representation	5. Cultural commodification as a process of negotiation
"It should not just be turned into a spectacle... tourists should be told how the life of a Semanggi seller really is" (I-03)	Rejection of performance framing	Lived vs. staged authenticity	5. Cultural commodification as a process of negotiation
"I might not be directly involved in making and selling Semanggi, but I want to help with promotion through social media" (I-05)	Digital participation as a new preservation channel	Evolving youth participation	6. Business model implications for destination development

3.4 Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

To ensure data validity, the study employed source triangulation — comparing accounts across the tourism manager, the culinary business owner, the Semanggi Gendong vendor, the resident, the youth representative, and the environmental-upkeep informant — methodological triangulation (comparing observation, interview, and documentary/secondary data), temporal triangulation (repeated visits across weekday and weekend market days, as well as during a community cultural event), and member checking with key informants. Source triangulation was particularly important given that informants did

not always agree on emphasis. For instance, the tourism manager and the Semanggi Gendong vendor both independently raised concerns about staged authenticity, which strengthened confidence that this was a genuine community concern rather than an artifact of a single informant's framing. The researcher also maintained a reflexive field journal to document assumptions, positionality, and their potential influence on data interpretation; As an outsider to the community with no prior business ties to Kampung Semanggi, the researcher was mindful that this outsider status could shape informants' willingness to disclose sensitive views on tourism's effects. This was addressed by conducting interviews in Bahasa Indonesia in informal, familiar settings — vendors' stalls and homes — and by returning findings to informants for member checking before finalizing the interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Tracy, 2020).

3.5 Secondary Data

To contextualize the primary ethnographic data, this study also drew on secondary data from official sources: the Surabaya City Government (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya), the Surabaya City Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Surabaya), and the East Java Provincial Government (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur). These data — summarized in Table 3 — cover city-level tourism visitation, the number and distribution of thematic villages, the demographic profile of Kecamatan Benowo, and business- and heritage-specific indicators for Kampung Semanggi. Secondary data were used to triangulate and situate the ethnographic findings within their broader socio-economic context, and not as a substitute for primary field evidence.

Table 3. Secondary Data Supporting the Study Context

No.	Indicator	Data	Year	Source
1	Total tourist visits, City of Surabaya	25.487.271 visits	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya / LPPD 2025
2	Share of domestic (nusantara) tourists	87.8%	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya / LPPD 2025
3	Number of thematic villages (kampung tematik)	44 villages	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya
4	Sub-districts targeted for creative-economy development	31 sub-districts	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya
5	Population, Kecamatan Benowo	74.933 residents	2024	BPS Kota Surabaya
6	Population growth rate, Kecamatan Benowo	1.96% per year	2025*	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya / RPJMD
7	Active Pecel Semanggi vendors	> 120 vendors	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya
8	Location of Kampung Semanggi	RW 3, Kelurahan Sememi, Kec. Benowo	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya
9	Diversification of semanggi-based products	13+ product types	2025	Pemerintah Kota Surabaya
10	Status of Pecel Semanggi Suroboyo	Intangible Cultural Heritage	2022	Pemkot Surabaya / Kemendikbud RI
11	Recognition as a community-empowerment model	Winner, East Java Inotek Award (regional innovation category)	2025	Pemprov Jatim / Pemkot Surabaya

* Growth-rate figure is drawn from the Surabaya City RPJMD, which itself uses BPS data.

3.6 Research Ethics

This study was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, including informed consent, confidentiality of informants' identities, respect for local cultural values, and the use of data solely for academic purposes. The entire research process was designed to yield a comprehensive understanding of cultural preservation practices through eco-friendly tourism management in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya, contributing to the development of ethnographic research on business, sustainable tourism, and community-based destination management in Indonesia (American Anthropological Association, 2023; UN Tourism, 2024).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis Results

4.1.1 Cultural authenticity as the foundation of sustainable tourism management

Interviews indicate that the community treats the preservation of cultural authenticity as a precondition for, rather than a by-product of, sustainable tourism. Asked what distinguishes Kampung Wisata Semanggi from other tourism villages in Surabaya, the tourism village manager (I-01) explained that Semanggi was sold by residents long before the area became a tourism destination, and that turning it into a tourism attraction meant "introducing what already exists in the community," not inventing a new cultural product. The Semanggi Gendong vendor (I-03) similarly described the shoulder-carried selling tradition as something that "has become part of life" rather than a role adopted for tourists. In Kampung Wisata Semanggi, local culture thus functions not only as a tourist attraction but also as a social identity that shapes the community's relationship with its environment, and the continuity of the Pecel Semanggi culinary tradition points to cultural values that remain active rather than merely displayed.

4.1.2 Business ethnography and the interconnection between culture and local economic activity

The scale of the local Pecel Semanggi economy — more than 120 active vendors and over 13 diversified derivative products (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025) — indicates that culture-based micro-enterprise is not a marginal activity but a significant part of the local economy. Interview data show that this economic activity is inseparable from cultural transmission. The Pecel Semanggi business owner (I-02) described learning the craft by observing her family rather than through formal instruction — "not like learning at school, but by watching and helping" — and stressed that the preparation method is deliberately kept unchanged even as packaging and customer service have adapted to present-day expectations: "if everything is changed, the distinctive character of Semanggi will disappear." This indicates that ingredient sourcing, preparation techniques, and the manner of selling are embedded in and actively transmit cultural knowledge across generations rather than being incidental to the business.

4.1.3 Eco-friendly practices in tourism management

Interview data with the informant responsible for environmental upkeep (I-06) show that eco-friendly practice in Kampung Semanggi currently takes the form of grassroots, event-driven cleanliness efforts rather than formalized environmental management: preparation for tourism activity includes attention to waste and to the cleanliness of streets and surrounding areas, on the reasoning that visitors "come not only to see Semanggi, but also to see the kampung." The informant characterized this practice as

still developing — "not yet perfect... we are still learning" — but noted that residents already recognize that tourism cannot be sustained without environmental upkeep. This is a modest but concrete practice rather than a fully articulated environmental management system, and it should be read as such; it aligns with the city government's framing of Kampung Semanggi within a broader creative economy and ecological strategy spanning 44 thematic villages citywide (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025).

4.1.4 *Community-based tourism (CBT) and destination governance*

Consistent with CBT principles, the tourism village manager (I-01) described community involvement as deliberately distributed rather than concentrated in a formal management structure: "some help with tourism activities, some sell, some help look after the environment, and some get involved when there is a cultural event... not everyone has to become a manager directly. What matters is that residents feel this kampung belongs to all of us." The resident (I-04) corroborated this from a non-tourism-actor's perspective, describing community participation in environmental upkeep as something undertaken for the community's own benefit as much as for visitors. The 2025 East Java Inotek Award, received by Kampung Semanggi for its community-empowerment model (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur/Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025), provides external documentary corroboration of this community-centered governance.

4.1.5 *Cultural commodification as a process of negotiation*

The growth of tourism activity is accompanied by the commodification of Pecel Semanggi and related practices into marketable products, evidenced by the diversification into 13 or more derivative goods (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). Interview data indicate that informants themselves actively bound this commodification. The tourism manager (I-01) stated directly that "if we chase tourists too much, sometimes culture gets made up just to look attractive — we try to avoid that," while the Semanggi Gendong vendor (I-03) rejected the idea of her practice being reduced to a photo opportunity: "it should not just be turned into a spectacle... tourists should be told how the life of a Semanggi seller really is, so they know this is not just a performance." Both informants, interviewed independently and occupying different positions in the tourism village, raised the same concern about staged authenticity, which strengthens confidence that this is a shared community boundary rather than an individual opinion. Commodification in this setting therefore appears to be treated by the community as a negotiated boundary — packaging, promotion, and presentation may adapt. However, the underlying practice and its meaning are protected.

4.1.6 *Business model implications for destination development*

Findings suggest a business model in which economic value derives not only from product sales but from the cultural interpretation tourists receive alongside them, and in which succession is an emerging concern. The youth informant (I-05) reported that direct involvement in producing and selling Semanggi is not necessarily appealing to younger residents, who have other occupational options, but expressed willingness to contribute through social-media promotion: "I want to help with promotion through social media... that is also a form of preservation, because now many people look for information through the internet." This points to a business model in which cultural preservation and digital promotion are becoming complementary functions performed by different community members, rather than a single role expected of everyone.

4.1.7 Contribution of the findings

These results position cultural authenticity as an organizing principle for the tourism business in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, rather than as a secondary attraction layered onto an otherwise conventional micro-enterprise cluster. This positioning is developed further in the Discussion below.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Cultural authenticity as a strategic asset

The results indicate that cultural authenticity functions as a strategic asset for Kampung Wisata Semanggi rather than an incidental feature of its tourism offer. This authenticity is manifested through Pecel Semanggi as a signature culinary product and through the social values, traditions, and local knowledge still practiced by the community. From a tourism business perspective, cultural authenticity serves as a value proposition that differentiates the destination from other tourist areas and creates a more meaningful travel experience. This reading is consistent with Adams (2024), who argues that tourism ethnography treats culture as a social practice continuously produced through the interaction of community, tourists, and cultural space, making cultural preservation foundational to destination sustainability.

4.2.2 Business ethnography and the economics of cultural preservation

Read together with the scale data reported in Section 4.1 — more than 120 vendors and over 13 diversified products — the business-ethnography lens suggests that cultural preservation and economic activity in Kampung Semanggi are mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives, at least at the current scale of operation. This is consistent with the view that local business practices function as spaces of cultural reproduction as much as they do of commercial exchange (Adams, 2024), and it extends this argument by showing what that reproduction looks like at the scale of an entire micro-enterprise cluster rather than a single vendor.

4.2.3 Eco-friendly management and cultural sustainability

The environmental-upkeep informant's account of cleanliness efforts tied to visitor preparation, and the community's stated recognition that if the environment is not cared for, tourism will not last (I-06), is consistent with the argument that ecological sustainability and cultural sustainability are interdependent in culture-based tourism villages, where the environment is inseparable from cultural identity. It also situates the kampung's environmental practices within the broader municipal strategy spanning 44 thematic villages citywide (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). At the same time, the informant's own description of this practice as not yet perfect indicates that eco-friendly management in Kampung Semanggi should be characterized, at this stage, as an emergent grassroots practice rather than a formalized environmental-management system — a more precise claim than the manuscript's earlier, more general reference to green tourism management.

4.2.4 Community-based tourism and local capacity

The tourism manager's description of deliberately distributed, non-uniform community roles — some residents sell, some maintain the environment, some take part only during cultural events — indicates a governance model closer to voluntary, role-differentiated participation than to a formal committee

structure. This is corroborated by the resident's independent account of community involvement in environmental upkeep. Together with the external recognition the destination received through the 2025 Inotek Award (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur/Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025), this supports the CBT literature's emphasis on community capacity and local institutional strength as drivers of tourism-village success (Jackson, 2025; Hanafi, 2024), while showing more concretely, through informants' own framing, what distributed participation looks like in this specific setting rather than treating it as a general CBT attribute.

4.2.5 *Commodification: negotiation, not merely adaptation*

Growth in tourism activity is drawing local culture further into the economic sphere through commodification. Two informants occupying different positions in the tourism village — the manager (I-01) and the Semanggi Gendong vendor (I-03) — independently raised concern about culture being staged or turned into a spectacle for visitors, and both described actively resisting this. This convergence across independent sources is consistent with the CBT and authenticity literature's claim that commodification need not imply a loss of authenticity where the community retains control over cultural representation (Salim & Rahman, 2022), while also showing that this control is actively exercised and contested, not simply assumed by residents.

4.2.6 *Implications for a sustainable tourism business model*

The findings suggest that the business model of Kampung Wisata Semanggi should be developed by integrating economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions in a balanced way. Destination competitiveness stems not only from the tourism products on offer but from the authentic experience tourists gain through interaction with the local community. Development strategy should therefore focus on strengthening culture-based MSMEs, improving the quality of cultural interpretation for visitors, and implementing environmental management practices that support long-term sustainability (Shrestha, L'Espoir Decosta, *et al.*, 2025).

4.2.7 *Critical reflections: tensions and unresolved challenges*

A fuller account of Kampung Wisata Semanggi's development also needs to engage with tensions that a purely affirmative reading of commodification risks overlooking. First, the risk of staged authenticity is not merely theoretical here: it was named directly and independently by two informants in different positions (I-01, I-03), which suggests the community itself treats this as a live risk to be actively managed rather than a resolved concern (Timothy & He, 2024). Second, growth in vendor numbers does not by itself guarantee an even distribution of economic benefit across the more than 120 Pecel Semanggi sellers; the business owner interviewed (I-02) noted that sales rise mainly around organized visits or events rather than daily, and without disaggregated income data across vendors, claims of evenly shared prosperity remain an assumption rather than a finding. Third, the Bakul Semanggi Gendong tradition — selling Pecel Semanggi while carrying it on the shoulders — is physically demanding work; the vendor interviewed for this study (I-03) is a woman, consistent with the tradition being predominantly carried out by women, and studies of precarity in indigenous and community-based tourism labor caution that romanticizing such traditions as cultural heritage can obscure the physical burden placed on the vendors who sustain them (Shrestha, Shrestha, *et al.*, 2025). Fourth, increased visitation associated with Surabaya's broader growth in tourist numbers (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya/LPPD, 2025) carries

environmental pressure on a residential area that is itself growing at 1.96% per year (BPS Kota Surabaya, 2025); the environmental-upkeep informant's own admission that current practice is not yet perfect (I-06) suggests this pressure is already being felt, even if it was not directly measured in this study. Finally, tourism branding of Kampung Semanggi as a heritage destination sits in some tension with the Semanggi Gendong vendor's own request that tourists be shown her life as it actually is rather than a version staged for photographs (I-03) — a reminder that authenticity, in this community's own terms, is something lived and provided, not performed on demand.

4.2.8 Theoretical contribution

Conceptually, this study extends the tourism-business literature by integrating ethnographic perspectives, cultural preservation, and environmentally friendly tourism management within a single analytical framework, while also showing — through the critical reflections above — where that integration remains incomplete without direct field evidence. Unlike studies that discuss community-based tourism primarily in terms of governance or economic impact, this study positions cultural authenticity as a foundation for destination-business sustainability, treating that foundation as something to be evidenced rather than assumed (Adams, 2024).

5. Concluding Remarks and Recommendation

This study examined how cultural authenticity is maintained through sustainable tourism management in Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya, using a business ethnography approach, and how local communities participate in preserving cultural identity while supporting tourism development and economic activity. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with six purposively selected informants representing tourism management, culinary business, the Semanggi Gendong tradition, resident life, youth perspective, and environmental upkeep, documentation, and field notes, and were situated within official secondary data showing more than 120 active Pecel Semanggi vendors, over 13 diversified products, formal recognition of Pecel Semanggi Suroboyo as Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2022, and the destination's 2025 East Java Inotek Award for community empowerment (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2025). The findings indicate that cultural authenticity is preserved through daily cultural practices, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and active community participation in tourism management, and that traditional culinary businesses — particularly the Bakul Semanggi Gendong tradition — serve as mechanisms for safeguarding local identity and generating income. At the same time, this study's critical reflections indicate that staged authenticity, environmental pressure, and the labor burden carried by vendors, especially women, remain live concerns that informants themselves raised and that the community is still actively negotiating rather than having fully resolved.

This study contributes theoretically by integrating cultural authenticity, sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, and business ethnography into a single analytical framework. In practical terms, the findings offer insights for tourism village managers, local communities, and MSME actors seeking to balance economic objectives with cultural preservation. From a policy perspective, the study offers recommendations for local government to formulate a tourism policy that encourages community participation, protects cultural heritage, distributes economic benefits more evenly among vendors, and supports environmentally sustainable tourism development. Its originality lies in treating culture as the

central foundation of a sustainable tourism business model, rather than merely a tourism attraction or economic asset.

The study has several limitations. It was conducted in a single tourism village, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural tourism destinations with different social and cultural contexts. It also relies primarily on qualitative data and the perspectives of local stakeholders during a specific fieldwork period, and — pending completion of the informant and coding details flagged in this revision — the empirical grounding of some claims remains to be fully documented. Future research may expand the scope by comparing multiple tourism villages, incorporating quantitative approaches, or examining tourists' perceptions of cultural authenticity and sustainability. Further studies could also explore the long-term impacts of tourism development on cultural preservation, community empowerment, gendered labor conditions among vendors, and local economic resilience.

Statement of Use of Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used generative artificial intelligence tools to support the scientific writing process. Grammarly was used to check grammar, refine writing style, and improve clarity in scientific writing. All interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are the sole responsibility of the author.

References

- Adams, K. M. (2024). Tourism ethnography and cultural sustainability in contemporary destinations. *Tourism Geographies*.
- American Anthropological Association. (2023). Principles of Professional Responsibility. American Anthropological Association.
- Andrasmo, D., Bunyamin, I. A., & Novitasari, S. A. (2025). The Impact of Eco-Tourism Development and Community Empowerment on the Sustainability of Tourism Villages in Indonesia. *Sustainable Development Insights*, 1(04), 129–137. <https://doi.org/10.58812/sdi.v1i04.2379>
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Surabaya. (2025). Kecamatan Benowo Dalam Angka 2025. BPS Kota Surabaya.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2024). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dewi, N. K. C., Trisyani, N. P. N., Yuliani, N. M. D., Pramita, N. K. D., & Jayamahe, N. P. Y. P. (2025). Sustainable Tourism: Concept And Implementation for Sustainable Tourism Development. *Journal Management and Hospitality*, 2(2), 31–35. <https://doi.org/10.61857/jmh.v2i2.179>
- Gunawan, W., Firsanty, F. P., Lesmana, A. C., Nugraha, A. M., Amanatin, E. L., & Lukman, F. (2026). Community-based river tourism development to enhance community empowerment in Serang City. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 13, 102754. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.102754>
- Hanafi, M. (2024). Community Based Tourism dalam Membangun Desa Wisata di Magelang. *Efisiensi: Kajian Ilmu Administrasi*, 21(1), 95–112. <https://doi.org/10.21831/efisiensi.v21i1.72745>
- Jackson, L. A. (2025). Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(1), 29. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp6010029>
- Junaid, I. (2024). Community-based tourism and sustainable destination development in Indonesia. *Journal of Indonesian Tourism Studies*, 9(2), 115–129.



- Kori, K. B. W. (2025). Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development in Global Businesses. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(10), 6766–6776. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000553>
- Laela, E. (2024). Understanding memorable tourism experiences and revisit intention from destination service quality. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis Dan Kewirausahaan*, 8(5), 1197–1206. <https://doi.org/10.24912/jmbk.v8i5.29967>
- Le, T. H., Nguyen, T. P., & Tran, H. M. (2024). Sustainable tourism development and community resilience. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 32(5), 841–859.
- Liu, R., Gao, W., & Yang, F. (2025). Authenticity, Integrity, and Cultural–Ecological Adaptability in Heritage Conservation: A Practical Framework for Historic Urban Areas—A Case Study of Yicheng Ancient City, China. *Buildings*, 15(8), 1304. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings15081304>
- Mantilla, J., & Solis, A. (2026). Business ethnography in organizations: an analysis of research patterns and methodological trends. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-08-2025-0109>
- Martinus, K., Boruff, B., & Nunez Picado, A. (2024). Authenticity, interaction, learning and location as curators of experiential agritourism. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 108, 103294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103294>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Author. (2026). In-depth interview transcripts, Kampung Wisata Semanggi, Surabaya. Unpublished raw data.
- Nadra, N. M., Sumawidari, I. A. K., Damayanti, I. A. K. W., & Arjana, I. W. B. (2025). Traditional cuisine as a social symbol: A socio-cultural analysis of the collective identity of Indonesian society. *Journal of Commerce, Management, and Tourism Studies*, 4(3), 460–473. <https://doi.org/10.58881/jcmnts.v4i3.379>
- Patton, M. Q. (2023). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Pemerintah Kota Surabaya. (2025). *Laporan Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Daerah (LPPD) Kota Surabaya Tahun 2025*. Pemerintah Kota Surabaya.
- Pemerintah Kota Surabaya dan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2022). *Penetapan Pecel Semanggi Suroboyo sebagai Warisan Budaya Tak Benda*. Kemendikbud RI.
- Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur Dan Pemerintah Kota Surabaya. (2025). *Innovation and Technology (Inotek) Award Jawa Timur 2025: Kategori Inovasi Daerah*. Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur.
- Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2022). *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Prayoga, F., & Wahyono, H. (2024). Penilaian Standar Pariwisata Berbasis Komunitas (CBT) dalam Pengembangan Wisata Puncak Pagerbatu, Kota Banjar. *Journal of Regional and Rural Development Planning*, 8(3), 226–243. <https://doi.org/10.29244/jp2wd.2024.8.3.226-243>
- Salim, N., & Rahman, N. A. (2022). Politicization and Commodification of Tourism: Implications for George Town World Heritage Site. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(12). <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i12/14916>
- Satu Data Surabaya. (2025). *Data kunjungan wisata menurut destinasi*. Pemerintah Kota Surabaya.
- Sentanu, I. G. E. P. S., Supriono, S., Yustiari, S. H., Nirmalasandy, F. M., Ferdiansyah, M. R., & Aulia, S. R. (2025). Collaboration as a Capacity for Joint Action in Community-Based Cultural Heritage Tourism Management. *Kolaborasi: Jurnal Administrasi Publik*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.26618/xpncbf02>
- Shrestha, R. K., L'Esper Decosta, J. N. P., & Whitford, M. (2025). Creating authentic indigenous tourism experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 110, 103882. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2024.103882>
- Shrestha, R. K., Shrestha, T. L., Ruhanen, L., & Johnson, A. G. (2025). Precarity and indigenous tourism work in Nepal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 115, 104034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2025.104034>

- Singh, P., & Dhakad, S. (2025). Role of Community-Based Tourism for Inclusive Participation and Sustainable Development. In *Balancing Mountain Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and Environmental Stability* (pp. 469–478). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-8764-1.ch031>
- Spilioti, M., & Marinakos, K. (2025). Food Culture: Strengthening Collaborative Entrepreneurship Between Tourism and Agri-Food Businesses. *Administrative Sciences*, 15(8), 291. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci15080291>
- Suparjo, S., Dana, Y. A., Mahda Kumala, C., & Sri Sunarsih, E. (2024). Stakeholder Collaboration in Sustainable Tourism Development in Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia: Efforts to Improve Tourist Visits. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Studies*, 07(06). <https://doi.org/10.47191/jefms/v7-i6-58>
- Timothy, D. J., & He, L. (2024). Cultural authenticity and heritage tourism in sustainable destinations. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 19(3), 245–262.
- Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
- Tucker, H. (2026). The role of longitudinal ethnography in understanding tourism's (un)intended implications: storytelling contradiction and ambivalence in Cappadocia, Turkey. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 34(6), 1669–1687. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2026.2621205>
- UN Tourism. (2024). *Tourism for Sustainable Development Report 2024*.

Corresponding author

Paramita Kartika Sari can be contacted at: pramita_ks@yahoo.com

