(Research/Review) Article

Cultural Tradition Management and Sustainable Tourism: A Qualitative Descriptive Analysis of Caos Dahar

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Abstract: Cultural traditions play a vital role in sustainable tourism by shaping social values, collective identity, and long-term cultural continuity. Caos Dahar, a Javanese practice involving communal food preparation and sharing, serves as an expression of gratitude, spirituality, and social cohesion. Despite its cultural significance, it has been rarely examined from a management perspective, particularly in relation to its integration into sustainable tourism systems. This study analyzes Caos Dahar as a form of cultural tradition management and explores its contribution to sustainable tourism. The research highlights the lack of management-oriented studies combining cultural traditions with sustainability frameworks. A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted, using secondary qualitative data from documented practices and relevant academic literature. Data were analyzed using thematic categorization and interpreted through a multi-theoretical framework, including motivation theory (ERG), social network theory, and cultural philosophy. The findings reveal that Caos Dahar functions as a managed cultural practice, involving implicit management processes such as planning, coordination, and role distribution. The tradition fulfills existential, relational, and growth-oriented needs, sustains social networks, and exhibits adaptability across various cultural dimensions. These characteristics enable Caos Dahar to contribute to the social, economic, and cultural aspects of sustainability within tourism. The study concludes that cultural traditions can be viewed as intangible strategic resources when properly managed. This research expands management and tourism studies by offering a management-oriented interpretation of cultural traditions and moving beyond outcome-based sustainability perspectives toward process-oriented cultural tradition management.

Keywords: Cultural management; Cultural tradition; Qualitative study; Sustainable tourism; Tourism management.

1. Introduction

Cultural traditions represent complex social systems that embody collective values, meanings, and practices transmitted across generations. In the context of sustainable development and tourism studies, cultural traditions are increasingly recognized not only as heritage assets but also as adaptive social mechanisms that contribute to economic resilience, social cohesion, and environmental awareness. One such tradition is *Caos Dahar*, a Javanese cultural practice centered on the preparation and communal sharing of food as an expression of gratitude, spirituality, and social solidarity (Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Geertz, 1973). Despite its cultural richness, *Caos Dahar* has received limited scholarly attention within integrative sustainability-oriented tourism research.

Previous studies on cultural traditions and tourism have employed various methodological approaches. Ethnographic methods have been widely used to explore ritual meanings and symbolic practices within local communities, offering deep contextual insights into cultural expressions (Geertz, 1973; Smith, 2009). Case study approaches have examined how cultural traditions are maintained and transformed within tourism destinations and creative industries, particularly in relation to cultural commodification and destination branding (Richards, 2018). Additionally, conceptual and literature-based studies have

contributed theoretical frameworks linking culture, social capital, and sustainable tourism development (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000; UNWTO, 2018).

While these approaches provide valuable contributions, each presents inherent strengths and limitations. Ethnographic and case-based studies offer rich empirical depth but are often limited in scope and generalizability. Conceptual studies, on the other hand, allow broader theoretical synthesis but may overlook contextual meanings embedded in specific cultural practices. Moreover, many existing studies tend to examine cultural traditions from singular perspectives—such as symbolic meaning or economic value—without sufficiently integrating motivational, relational, and cultural-philosophical dimensions. This limitation indicates the need for a qualitative approach that is both descriptive and analytically grounded in theory.

The research problem addressed in this study lies in the limited integrative understanding of *Caos Dahar* as a multidimensional cultural practice within sustainable tourism discourse. Existing literature has not adequately explored how *Caos Dahar* simultaneously fulfills human motivational needs, sustains social networks, and operates across cultural dimensions that evolve from mythic to functional contexts. As a result, the potential contribution of *Caos Dahar* to sustainable tourism remains fragmented and under-theorized.

In the context of management studies, cultural traditions require deliberate managerial processes to ensure their continuity and relevance within sustainable tourism systems. Managing cultural traditions involves organizing practices, coordinating stakeholders, sustaining social networks, and aligning cultural values with economic and environmental objectives. However, existing tourism management literature has paid limited attention to how local cultural traditions are managed as intangible resources within organizational and destination-level sustainability strategies. This gap highlights the need for a qualitative descriptive analysis that explicitly examines cultural tradition management as a managerial practice rather than solely as a cultural phenomenon.

To address this gap, this study adopts a qualitative descriptive research approach. This approach is particularly suitable for capturing contextual meanings, social relations, and functional roles embedded in cultural traditions, which cannot be sufficiently explained through quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014). The study descriptively analyzes *Caos Dahar* using secondary qualitative data and documented sources, while employing established theoretical frameworks as analytical lenses. Motivation theory (ERG) is applied to explain how the tradition fulfills existential, relational, and growth-related needs (Alderfer, 1969). Social network theory is used to understand the relational structures that support the continuity of the tradition (Bott, 1957; Mitchell, 1969), while Van Peursen's cultural theory provides a philosophical framework to situate *Caos Dahar* across mythic, ontological, and functional dimensions (Van Peursen, 1976).

The contributions of this study are threefold. First, it provides a qualitative descriptive analysis of *Caos Dahar* that integrates motivational, social, and cultural-philosophical perspectives within a sustainability framework. Second, it advances cultural tourism discourse by conceptualizing traditional practices as adaptive and relational systems rather than static cultural artifacts. Third, it offers a theoretically informed qualitative model that can serve as a reference for future interdisciplinary research on cultural traditions and sustainable tourism.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews relevant literature and theoretical frameworks related to cultural traditions and sustainability. Section 3 outlines the qualitative descriptive research methodology employed in this study. Section 4 presents the analysis and discussion of *Caos Dahar* based on the proposed theoretical lenses. Section 5 discusses the implications of the findings for sustainable tourism studies and practice. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper and suggests directions for future research.

2. Literature Review and State of the Art

A. Studies on Cultural Traditions and Sustainable Tourism

Previous studies have extensively examined cultural traditions as key components of sustainable tourism development. Cultural traditions are often positioned as heritage assets that enhance destination attractiveness, strengthen cultural identity, and generate socio-economic benefits for local communities. Research in cultural tourism highlights that traditional practices contribute to experiential value creation and destination differentiation when appropriately integrated into tourism systems (Richards, 2018; UNWTO, 2018).

Several studies adopt qualitative approaches to explore ritual meanings, symbolic representations, and cultural values embedded in traditional practices. Ethnographic and interpretive studies emphasize the role of rituals in preserving collective memory and reinforcing social cohesion within host communities (Geertz, 1973; Smith, 2009). While these studies provide rich cultural insights, they often focus primarily on symbolic and anthropological dimensions, with limited attention to managerial processes that sustain and organize cultural traditions in tourism contexts.

B. Management-Oriented Approaches to Cultural-Based Tourism

In management and tourism studies, cultural traditions have increasingly been discussed in relation to destination management, cultural commodification, and value creation. Scholars argue that cultural elements can function as strategic resources when managed systematically through stakeholder coordination, governance structures, and sustainable planning (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000). Research on community-based tourism and cultural-based management emphasizes the importance of social capital, trust, and collective action in sustaining cultural practices within tourism destinations.

Case study research has demonstrated how cultural traditions are incorporated into tourism management strategies to enhance competitiveness and community participation (Richards, 2018). However, these studies tend to emphasize outcomes—such as economic impact, branding, or visitor experience—rather than examining cultural tradition management as an ongoing organizational and social process. As a result, the managerial mechanisms underlying the continuity and adaptation of cultural traditions remain insufficiently theorized.

C. Methodological Trends and Limitations in Existing Studies

From a methodological perspective, prior research on cultural traditions and tourism sustainability predominantly employs ethnographic methods, case studies, or conceptual frameworks. Ethnographic approaches offer deep contextual understanding but are often limited to specific locations and cultural settings, restricting broader analytical generalization. Conceptual studies provide theoretical integration but may lack descriptive grounding in actual cultural practices.

Moreover, many studies analyze cultural traditions through single theoretical lenses—such as cultural symbolism or economic value—without integrating motivational, relational, and cultural-philosophical perspectives. This methodological fragmentation limits the ability to understand cultural traditions as multidimensional systems that simultaneously fulfill human needs, sustain social networks, and evolve across cultural dimensions.

D. Research Gap and Positioning of the Present Study

Despite growing interest in cultural traditions and sustainable tourism, there remains a notable gap in management-oriented qualitative research that explicitly examines how cultural traditions are managed as part of sustainable tourism systems. Existing studies rarely position cultural traditions as dynamic managerial objects that require coordination, organization, and strategic alignment with sustainability goals.

Furthermore, limited research integrates motivation theory, social network theory, and cultural philosophy to analyze cultural tradition management in a holistic manner. This gap suggests the need for a qualitative descriptive approach that not only documents cultural practices but also interprets their managerial, social, and functional dimensions.

Accordingly, this study positions itself as a qualitative descriptive analysis that examines *Caos Dahar* as a form of cultural tradition management within sustainable tourism. By integrating motivation theory, social network theory, and cultural philosophy, this study offers a multidimensional analytical framework that extends existing tourism management literature and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of cultural-based sustainability practices.

In summary, existing studies have contributed valuable insights into cultural traditions and sustainable tourism. However, limited attention has been given to cultural tradition management as a systematic managerial process supported by qualitative descriptive analysis and multi-theoretical integration. This limitation underpins the need for the present study, which seeks to extend prior research by offering a management-oriented interpretation of *Caos Dahar* within sustainable tourism systems.

3. Materials and Method

A. Research Design

This study adopts a **qualitative descriptive research design** to examine cultural tradition management in the context of sustainable tourism. Qualitative descriptive research is suitable for management studies that aim to understand social practices and organizational processes in their natural context without statistical transformation (Sandelowski, 2000; Creswell, 2014). In this study, *Caos Dahar* is analyzed as a managed cultural practice embedded in tourism sustainability systems.

B. Data Sources

The study uses secondary qualitative data obtained through document analysis. Document analysis enables systematic examination of written and electronic materials to gain contextual and conceptual understanding (Bowen, 2009). The data sources include academic publications, documented descriptions of *Caos Dahar*, and institutional reports related to cultural heritage and sustainable tourism management (Saunders et al., 2019).

C. Analytical Framework

Data analysis is guided by a multi-theoretical framework. Motivation theory (ERG) is used to explain how cultural traditions fulfill existential, relational, and growth needs (Alderfer, 1969). Social network theory is applied to understand how relationships among stakeholders sustain cultural practices (Bott, 1957; Mitchell, 1969). Cultural philosophy theory is used to interpret Caos Dahar across mythic, ontological, and functional dimensions (Van Peursen, 1976). These theories function as analytical lenses rather than statistical variables.

D. Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative analysis follows four main steps adapted from established qualitative research procedures (Miles et al., 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006), Literature selection, based on relevance to cultural tradition management and sustainable tourism. Data organization, by grouping documents into thematic categories. Qualitative descriptive analysis, focusing on managerial aspects of Caos Dahar. Thematic interpretation, aligning descriptive findings with the selected theoretical frameworks.

E. Research Trustworthiness and Ethics

To ensure analytical rigor, this study applies source and theoretical triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research uses publicly available secondary data, and all sources are properly cited to maintain ethical standards.

4. Results and Discussion

A. Results

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using documented sources and relevant academic literature as the primary dataset. No physical hardware or computational software is utilized. Instead, theoretical frameworks—motivation theory (ERG), social network theory, and cultural philosophy—function as analytical tools to interpret qualitative data systematically.

The initial analysis involved organizing documented descriptions of *Caos Dahar* and related cultural practices into thematic categories. The results indicate that *Caos Dahar* operates as a managed cultural tradition, characterized by implicit managerial processes such as planning, role allocation, coordination, and continuity management. Documented sources describe structured preparation of food offerings, shared responsibilities among participants, and consistent symbolic arrangements, indicating the presence of informal management mechanisms embedded in cultural practice.

From a motivational perspective, the findings show that *Caos Dahar* fulfills multiple layers of human needs. The provision and sharing of food address existential needs, communal participation strengthens relational needs, and the reinforcement of cultural and spiritual identity supports growth needs. Similar findings are reported in cultural tourism studies, which emphasize that food-based cultural traditions often function as instruments of social bonding and collective motivation within community-based tourism systems (Richards, 2018; UNWTO, 2018).

In terms of social structure, the analysis reveals that *Caos Dahar* is sustained through dense social networks involving community members, cultural custodians, and organizational actors. These relational ties facilitate coordination, trust, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Prior studies on social capital in tourism management highlight that strong relational networks play a critical role in sustaining intangible cultural resources and ensuring their continuity within tourism destinations (Putnam, 2000; Bourdieu, 1986).

Furthermore, analysis based on cultural philosophy indicates that *Caos Dahar* functions across mythic, ontological, and functional dimensions. While the mythic dimension preserves symbolic and spiritual meanings, the functional dimension enables adaptation to contemporary organizational and tourism contexts. This multidimensionality allows *Caos Dahar* to remain relevant as a cultural-based management practice aligned with sustainability principles, a pattern also observed in other adaptive cultural traditions integrated into modern tourism systems (Van Peursen, 1976; Richards, 2018).

B. Discussion

The results confirm the analytical proposition of this study that cultural traditions can be understood as managerial systems rather than static cultural artifacts. The qualitative descriptive findings demonstrate that *Caos Dahar* embodies managerial logic through coordination of actors, structured processes, and value alignment, supporting its role within sustainable tourism management. This finding extends existing management-oriented tourism literature, which often focuses on economic outcomes or destination branding, by emphasizing the underlying cultural management processes that sustain tradition-based tourism practices.

The integration of motivation theory, social network theory, and cultural philosophy provides a comprehensive explanatory framework for understanding cultural tradition management. Motivation theory explains why individuals and groups continue to participate in *Caos Dahar*, while social network theory elucidates how relational structures enable coordination and continuity. Cultural philosophy, in turn, explains how traditions adapt across symbolic and functional dimensions without losing their core values. This integrated perspective addresses gaps in previous studies that tend to analyze cultural traditions through isolated theoretical lenses.

From a sustainability management perspective, the findings suggest that cultural traditions such as *Caos Dahar* function as intangible strategic resources. When managed appropriately, these traditions contribute to social sustainability through strengthened community relations, to economic sustainability through enhanced cultural value creation, and to environmental sustainability through the preservation of local wisdom and resource-conscious practices. These insights are consistent with global sustainable tourism frameworks that emphasize the integration of culture into long-term destination management strategies (UNWTO, 2018).

Overall, this study demonstrates that qualitative descriptive analysis, when supported by robust theoretical frameworks and relevant literature, is effective in revealing the managerial dimensions of cultural traditions. By positioning *Caos Dahar* as a form of cultural tradition management, this research contributes to management scholarship by offering a culturally grounded yet analytically rigorous understanding of sustainability-oriented tourism practices

5. Comparison

This section compares the findings of the present study with existing state-of-the-art research on cultural traditions and sustainable tourism, with particular emphasis on managerial orientation, methodological approach, and analytical integration.

Previous state-of-the-art studies on cultural traditions in tourism predominantly frame traditions as cultural heritage assets or symbolic practices. Ethnographic and interpretive studies provide deep insights into ritual meanings and identity formation but often focus on cultural preservation rather than managerial processes (Geertz, 1973; Smith, 2009). While these studies successfully document cultural richness, they offer limited explanations of how cultural traditions are organized, coordinated, and sustained as part of tourism management systems.

In contrast, management-oriented tourism studies tend to emphasize outcomes such as economic impact, destination branding, and visitor experience (Richards, 2018; UNWTO, 2018). Although these studies acknowledge the importance of culture, cultural traditions are frequently treated as supporting elements rather than as strategic resources that require deliberate management. As a result, the internal mechanisms through which cultural traditions are maintained and adapted remain underexplored.

Compared to these approaches, the present study offers a distinct contribution by positioning *Caos Dahar* explicitly as a managed cultural tradition within sustainable tourism. Rather than focusing solely on symbolic meaning or economic outcomes, this study highlights implicit managerial functions, including planning, coordination, role distribution, and value alignment. This management-focused interpretation provides a more operational understanding of how cultural traditions contribute to sustainability.

Methodologically, prior studies often rely on ethnography, case studies, or conceptual models without integrating multiple theoretical perspectives. This study advances the state-of-the-art by employing a qualitative descriptive approach supported by a multi-theoretical framework, integrating motivation theory, social network theory, and cultural philosophy. This integration allows for a more comprehensive analysis of cultural tradition management, capturing motivational drivers, relational structures, and adaptive cultural dimensions simultaneously.

From a sustainability perspective, existing literature frequently addresses social, economic, or environmental dimensions in isolation. In comparison, this study demonstrates how cultural tradition management contributes to sustainability in a holistic manner, linking social cohesion, cultural value creation, and adaptive continuity within tourism systems. By doing so, the study provides a clearer conceptual bridge between cultural practices and sustainability-oriented management.

Overall, the comparison with state-of-the-art research indicates that this study extends existing literature by shifting the analytical focus from cultural description and outcome-based evaluation toward process-oriented cultural tradition management. This contribution enhances the measurability of cultural practices in management studies by identifying managerial functions and relational mechanisms that can be examined, compared, and adapted across different tourism contexts.

6. Conclusion

This study examined *Caos Dahar* through a qualitative descriptive approach to understand its role as a managed cultural tradition within sustainable tourism. The main findings demonstrate that *Caos Dahar* functions not merely as a cultural ritual but as an implicit management system that involves planning, coordination, role distribution, and continuity management. Evidence from documented sources and relevant literature shows that the tradition fulfills motivational needs, sustains social networks, and adapts across cultural dimensions, thereby supporting sustainability-oriented tourism practices. The synthesis of findings indicates a strong alignment between the research objectives and the results obtained. By applying motivation theory, social network theory, and cultural philosophy, the study confirms that cultural traditions can be analyzed as managerial processes rather than static cultural artifacts. The findings support the central argument that effective cultural tradition management contributes to sustainable tourism by reinforcing social cohesion, enabling cultural value creation, and facilitating adaptive continuity in changing organizational and tourism contexts. In terms of contribution, this study advances management and tourism scholarship by offering a management-oriented interpretation of cultural traditions. It extends the existing state-of-the-art by shifting the analytical focus from symbolic or outcome-based perspectives toward process-oriented cultural tradition management. The study also demonstrates that qualitative descriptive research, when supported by robust theoretical frameworks, can generate analytically rigorous insights relevant to sustainability management. Practically, the findings provide guidance for tourism managers and cultural stakeholders in treating cultural traditions as intangible strategic resources within sustainable tourism systems. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis relies on secondary qualitative data and documented sources, which may limit contextual specificity. Second, the qualitative descriptive approach emphasizes interpretation rather than empirical measurement, which restricts direct generalization across different cultural settings. Future research is therefore encouraged to incorporate primary data collection, such as interviews or participatory observation, to enrich empirical depth. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural traditions or the integration of digital and technological perspectives in cultural tradition management could further enhance understanding in this field.

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