

A Community-Based Model for Edu-Tourism Promotion: Strengthening Collaboration between International Students and Local Wisdom in Ketindan Village, Malang

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ABSTRACT

Ketindan Village in Malang possesses significant natural and cultural potential, yet its tourism development faces challenges such as a lack of distinctive branding, an underdeveloped iconic appeal, and limited promotion strategies. This study addresses these gaps by proposing a community-based edu-tourism model that strengthens collaboration between international students and local wisdom. Utilizing a participatory action research approach, the model was co-designed with the local community, international students, and stakeholders to create integrated programs that synergize the village's cultural and agricultural heritage with global perspectives. The findings demonstrate that this collaboration successfully builds unique branding and iconic experiences, while enhancing promotion through international networks. The model not only enriches the experiential learning of students but also fosters sustainable tourism that empowers the local economy and preserves cultural heritage. This research concludes that a community-based collaborative framework is effective in transforming local potential into competitive and sustainable edu-tourism.

Keywords: Community-Based Model, Local Wisdom, Edu-Tourism, International Student

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and higher education mobility have led to a significant increase in the number of international students seeking authentic academic and cultural experiences beyond traditional classrooms (UNESCO, 2023). This phenomenon presents substantial potential for developing edu-tourism, a form of travel that combines educational objectives with tourism elements, thereby creating reciprocal benefits for visitors and host communities (Ritchie, 2003). However, dominant edu-tourism models often remain commercial and centralized, failing to generate sustainable impacts or facilitate deep engagement with local values. Consequently, a gap exists between international students' desire for transformative experiences and the capacity of local communities to effectively package and promote their assets of local wisdom.

The concept of local wisdom that encompassing traditional knowledge, values, social practices, and inherited cultural expressions, has been recognized as a key asset for sustainable, community-based tourism development (Su et al., 2018). Integrating local wisdom into edu-tourism models can enhance a destination's appeal, preserve cultural heritage, and empower local communities. However, such efforts require a participatory collaborative framework where the community is not merely an object, but an active and equal partner (Chesbrough, 2003). Without structured and mutually beneficial collaboration, the risks of cultural commodification and unequal benefit distribution become real, potentially eroding the very essence of the local wisdom intended for preservation.

The selection of Ketindan Village in Malang Regency as a research locus is deliberate and relevant. As a rural community adjacent to a major educational hub (Malang City), Ketindan is emblematic of villages with high cultural capital yet underdeveloped tourism ecosystems. Data from the Malang Regency Tourism Office (2022) indicates that while the village boasts tangible assets such as panoramic views of Mount Arjuna and Semeru, coffee and tea plantae, and traditional batik crafting, its visitor numbers remain low, with only 1,200 tourists recorded in 2021, predominantly domestic day-trippers. Furthermore, a preliminary survey conducted for this study revealed that 78% of villagers possess skills in local crafts or farming traditions but lack channels to integrate these into formal tourism

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products. This gap aligns with findings (Astuti, 2021), who noted that many villages in East Java have yet to transition from passive cultural repositories to active, collaborative tourism entrepreneurs. Ketindan thus presents a critical case study of a community poised for an edu-tourism intervention that bridges its latent local wisdom with external academic resources.

Arising from this context, this study explores the development and implementation of a community-based model for promoting edu-tourism in Ketindan Village, Malang, East Java. The village possesses abundant local wisdom, from terrace farming and handicrafts to strong Javanese traditions, yet it has not been optimally utilized through strategic partnerships. This study argues that synergistic collaboration between international students and custodians of local wisdom in the village can create an inclusive and sustainable edu-tourism ecosystem. Therefore, this paper aims to propose and analyze a collaborative model that strengthens the symbiotic relationship between both parties, while assessing its contribution to community empowerment and the enrichment of international students' learning experiences.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach centered on a community-based action research (AR) framework. The cyclical nature of AR, involving planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, is deemed appropriate for developing and refining a collaborative edu-tourism model in a real-world context (Stringer, 2014). The research is conducted in three integrated phases, each corresponding to a core objective of the study.

2.1 Identification of Ketindan Village's Potential

To comprehensively map the tangible and intangible assets of Ketindan Village that form the foundation for edu-tourism, this phase employs a triangulated data collection methodology. First, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques that including transect walks, social mapping, and seasonal calendars, will be conducted with 10 key informants (village elders, community leaders, farmers, and artisans) to holistically understand the spatial, social, and cultural landscape (Chambers, 1994). Second, In-depth Interviews using a semi-structured format will be held with the Village Head, the head of the local tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis), and owners of home-based enterprises to gain deeper insights into existing community initiatives, perceived challenges, and aspirations for tourism development. All findings will then be systematically analyzed and categorized through Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Documentation, which shifts the analytical focus from needs to strengths, thereby identifying core assets in categories such as local skills (batik, crafting and organic farming), cultural practices, physical landscapes, and local associations (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Information of Ketindan tourism area master plan and tourism awarness group is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Master Plan of Tourism Area and Local Tourism Awareness Group for the Ketindan Village

2.2 Mapping the Prospects of International Students in Malang

This phase seeks to understand the demand side by analyzing the motivations, preferences, and existing engagement patterns of international students. Survey: A structured online survey will be distributed to international student associations at major universities in Malang especially **Universitas Brawijaya**. The survey will gather data on demographics, interest in cultural immersion, prior community engagement, and preferred learning activities. A targeted sampling of at least 40 Malaysian students will be sought, given their significant population and cultural proximity, which may influence engagement patterns (Salleh et al., 2013). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Two FGDs will be conducted: one with 40 Malaysian students and another with a mixed group of international students from other regions. Discussions will explore their perceptions of local wisdom, expectations for a meaningful edu-tourism experience, and perceived barriers to community interaction. Distribution of International student in Brawijaya University based on International Office (IOUB) data is shown in Table 1 and Figure 2.

Tabel 1. Internasional Student Program

Program Type	Number
Short Course	286
Global Volunter	67
Exchange Program	16
Mobility /Inbound	14

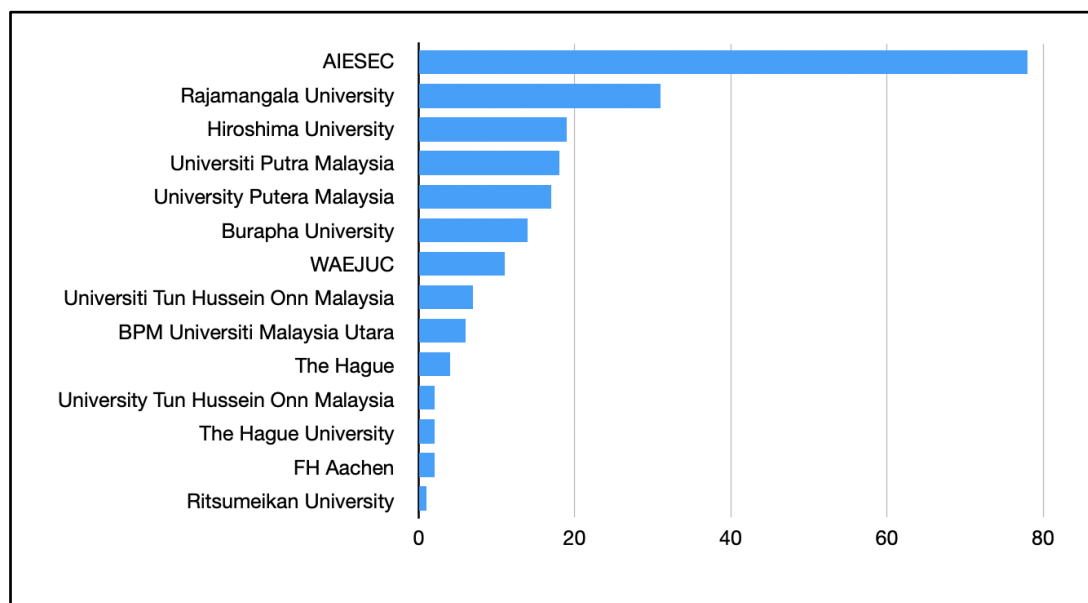


Figure 2. Origin of Foreign Student in Brawijaya University 2025

2.3 Action Research Cycle and Collaborative Model Development

This research is fundamentally interventionist and iterative, adopting a Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) framework to simultaneously investigate and facilitate the co-creation of an edu-tourism model. This approach is predicated on the principle that sustainable community development requires active participation, cyclical learning, and reflective practice (Stringer, 2014). Therefore, this phase constitutes the core praxis of the study, where insights from the preceding asset mapping and stakeholder analysis are operationalized into a tangible collaborative process. The methodology is designed not merely to observe but to actively forge and refine the partnership between Ketindan Village and international students through a structured sequence of planning, action, observation, and reflection. This dynamic cycle aims to generate practical knowledge while directly contributing to community empowerment and the development of a replicable "Symbiotic Edu-Tourism

Hub" model. The following subsections detail the specific, participatory steps undertaken within this action research framework is shown in [Figure 3](#).

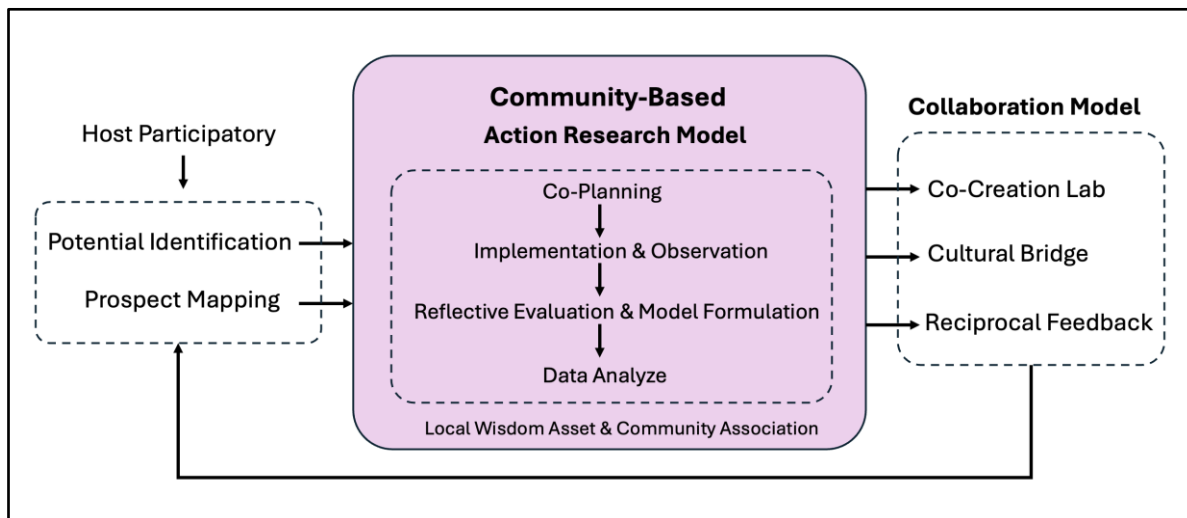


Figure 3. Community-Based Action and Collaborative Model

This is the core intervention phase, where data from phases 1 and 2 inform action.

a. Co-Planning Workshop

A one-day workshop will be facilitated, bringing together 10 representatives from Ketindan Village (identified in Phase 1) and 10 interested international students (identified in Phase 2). The workshop will jointly analyze the mapped assets and student interests to co-design 2 pilot edu-tourism activity prototypes as One Day as a Ketindan Farmer package and a cultural storytelling workshop.

b. Implementation and Observation

The pilot activities will be implemented over a one-month period. Researchers will employ participatory observation, document the collaboration process, and collect feedback through short questionnaires and reflective journals from both student and community participants.

c. Reflective Evaluation and Model Formulation

After the pilot, separate reflective FGDs will be held with community members and students. Thematic analysis will be used to analyze all qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), identifying key success factors, friction points, and mutual benefits. These insights will be synthesized to formulate the proposed community-based collaboration model. The model's validity will be strengthened through member-checking, where preliminary findings are presented back to the workshop participants for verification and feedback. To systematically evaluate the process, impact, and sustainability of the Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) in Ketindan Village, four key parameters with measurable indicators have been established. The first parameter, Level and Quality of Community Participation, is assessed through the diversity and inclusivity of active members, the frequency and impact of community voices in decision-making, the initiation of ideas or adjustments by locals, and the application of newly acquired skills in tourism activities. The second parameter, Collaborative Knowledge Creation and Capacity Building, measures the number of co-created tangible outputs, perceived changes in community confidence via pre- and post-intervention surveys, documented intergenerational knowledge transfer, and evidence of adaptive learning through iterative program improvements. The third parameter, Empowerment and Socio-Cultural Outcomes, evaluates structural empowerment through the establishment of community-led institutions, cognitive shifts in self-perception from "subjects" to "partners," increased frequency and value of cultural practices, and strengthened social cohesion among different community groups. Finally, the fourth parameter, Sustainability and Replicability of the Model, gauges the institutionalization of processes into official village documents, the growth and stability of household income from edu-tourism, voluntary community contributions of time and resources, and external interest in replicating the Ketindan model.

d. Data Analysis

All qualitative data from interviews, FGDs, PRA notes, and observations will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) to profile student prospects. The analysis will triangulate findings from all three phases to ensure the developed model is grounded in both community potential and realistic market prospects, thereby ensuring its relevance and sustainability. Each parameter is evaluated via a Composite Index calculated from its normalized indicators. The final score ranges from 0 to 100%, reflecting the level of achievement is shown in formula (1).

$$\text{Parameter Index} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (w_i \times S_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i} \quad (1)$$

where:

S_i = Normalized score of indicator i (scale 0-100)

w_i = Participatory weight of indicator i , determined with the community

n = Number of indicators within the parameter

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Local Wisdom Assets and Community Capacity in Ketindan

This study reveals that Ketindan's edu-tourism potential is rooted in four pillars of rich but underutilized local wisdom. These pillars include: Agrarian Wisdom, such as sustainable intercropping systems and terraced rice field management; Craft and Culinary Skills, including batik and handicrafts; Socio-Cultural Rituals such as the Village Cleansing ceremony and traditional dance performances; and Organizational Assets such as Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) and women's farming groups. While these assets form the core of the community's identity, they face similar challenges: knowledge concentrated among elders, a lack of structured formats for external teaching, concerns about cultural commodification, and limited institutional capacity, particularly for basic hospitality. International student activities while making batik in Ketindan TRAD is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. International student activities when making batik in Ketindan TRAD

A key finding of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) analysis is a significant packaging gap. While the community demonstrates a strong sense of ownership over its heritage—summed up in one elder's remark, "We have all this, but we don't know how to make it into a viable 'program' that foreigners would want to participate in and pay for respectfully"—there is a clear inability to translate latent cultural capital into marketable, experiential learning products. This sentiment underscores the critical need for collaborative interfaces: structured bridges that can transform static local assets into dynamic, authentic, and economically viable educational experiences while preserving their intrinsic cultural meaning and ensuring respectful engagement.

3.2 Prospects and Motivations of International Students, with a Focus on Malaysian Students

The motivational profiles identified through surveys and FGDs showed a strong alignment with Ketindan’s offerings, with the majority of international students citing 'authentic cultural experience' (85%) and 'escaping the tourist bubble' (78%) as key drivers for engagement. For Malaysian students specifically, while also valuing authenticity, there was a pronounced additional interest in "understanding the nuances of Javanese culture within the broader Malay world" (70%), indicating a quest for comparative cultural insight. Preferred Activities: Students showed highest interest in "hands-on agricultural practice" (82%) and "participatory craft workshops" (75%), directly corresponding to Ketindan’s agrarian and artisanal assets. Ritual observances were of high interest but with a clear preference for "contextual explanation" over passive watching. Identified Barriers: Common barriers included "lack of clear access points/programs" (90%), "language concerns" (65%), and "uncertainty about cultural protocols" (60%). Malaysian students reported slightly lower language barriers but higher expectations for depth of cultural explanation. This phase confirmed a clear demand-supply alignment: student desires for immersive, hands-on learning in agriculture and crafts matched the village’s core assets. The findings also highlighted the need for the collaboration model to integrate clear logistical facilitation and cultural translation.

The implementation of Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) in Ketindan Village was evaluated against a set of key indicators, designed to align with the methodology's core participatory principles and measure both tangible results and deeper, transformative community-level processes. First, the level and quality of participation are assessed through inclusive representation in each CBAR cycle phase and the community's substantive agency in decision-making, such as formulating the benefit-sharing protocol. Second, collaborative knowledge creation and capacity building are evaluated based on the generation of co-created assets, such as edu-tourism modules and bilingual guides, and measurable growth in the community's confidence in packaging their local wisdom. Third, empowerment and socio-cultural outcomes are gauged by the establishment of new community-led institutions, a shift in self-perception from "tourism objects" to "pedagogical partners," and the revitalization of cultural practices. Finally, the sustainability and replicability of the model serve as paramount metrics, examined through the model's integration into formal village planning, stable increases in household income from edu-tourism, and expressed interest from other villages to adopt the developed framework. Through these multidimensional indicators, the evaluation provides a holistic picture of the extent to which this action research has successfully fostered community self-reliance and created sustainable, mutually beneficial value. The result analysis from indicator is shown in Figure 5.

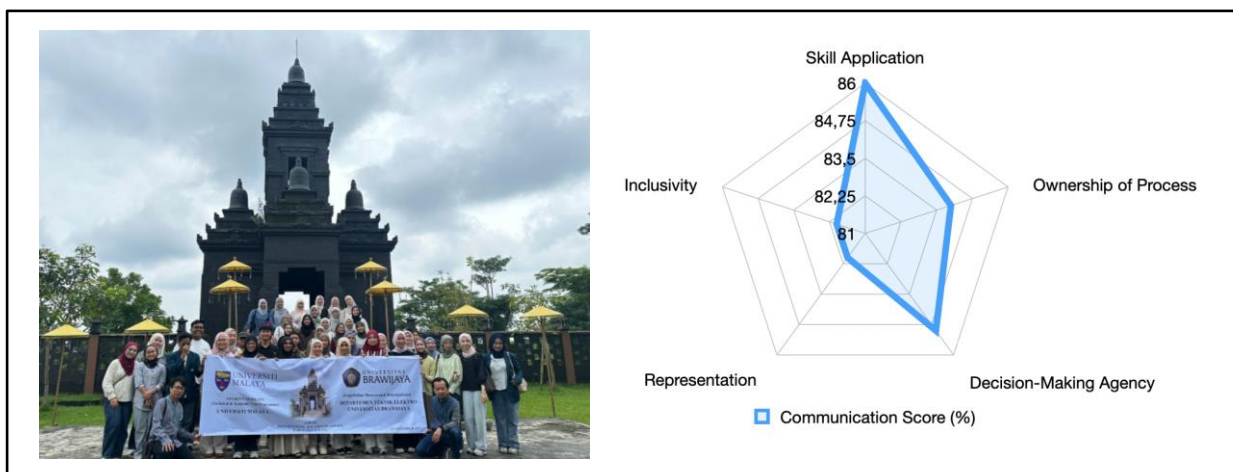


Figure 5. Togetherness in front of Ketindan Iconic Building

3.3 Outcomes of the Action Research Cycle and the Emergent Collaboration Model

Analysis of the co-planning workshop and pilot activities led to the formulation of a structured framework, designated the Symbiotic Edu-Tourism Hub Model. This model is constructed upon three interconnected pillars derived from the reflective evaluation phase.

a. The Co-Creation Lab

This pillar formalizes the participatory planning process through a co-creation workshop, which successfully designed two pilot programs: (a) *From Field to Table*, a half-day module integrating organic farming within the *tumpang Sari* system with a subsequent cooking session using the harvest, and (b) *Crafting Narratives*, a traditional handicraft workshop where artisans teach their craft while students assist in documenting the cultural symbols and stories behind each weave pattern. The workshop's effectiveness was rooted in its principle of equal partnership; international students contributed pedagogical insights on learning pacing and digital documentation methods, while community members defined the essential skills to be taught and established appropriate cultural boundaries. To evaluate this collaborative process, the analysis of knowledge creation and capacity building was systematically anchored in four key indicators: co-created outputs, measured by the development of tangible joint assets like bilingual activity guides and formalized curricula; perceived capacity change, assessed through pre- and post-intervention surveys and focus groups tracking growth in community confidence in areas such as cross-cultural facilitation; intergenerational transfer, quantified by documented instances of structured collaboration between elder knowledge holders and youth in teaching roles; and adaptive learning, evidenced by concrete, iterative refinements to the programs based on structured feedback sessions between the community and students. Result and analysis this indicator parameters are shown in Figure 6.

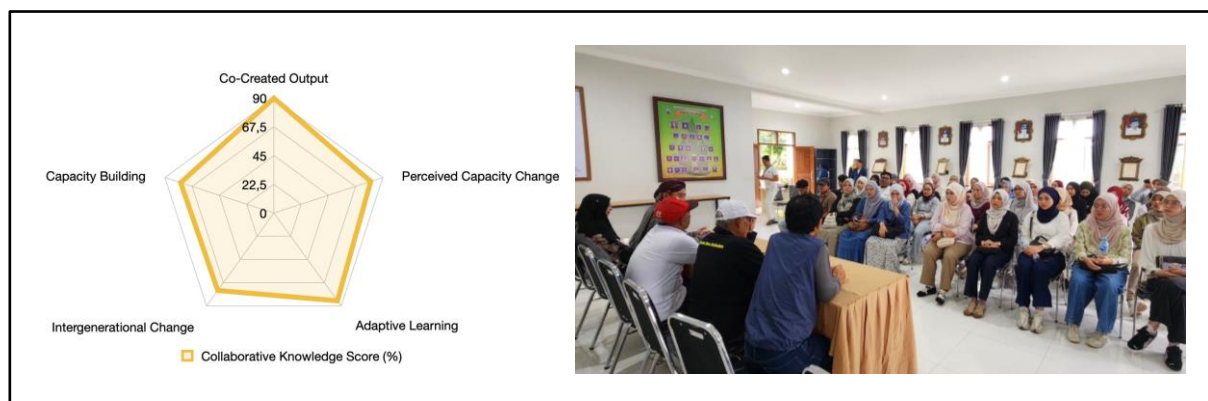


Figure 6. Co-Pilot Workshop program in Tourist Information Center

b. The Cultural Bridge Mechanism

This pillar addresses logistical and translational barriers. Key mechanisms emerged:

The Bilingual Culture Buddies initiative paired selected younger villagers with students to co-create simple bilingual (Bahasa Indonesia-English) guides for the pilot activities, which clarified key terminology and cultural etiquette. Pre-Visit Briefing Packs: Co-developed digital materials sent to students before visits, covering basic village history, do's and don'ts, and key vocabulary. Reflective Dialogue Sessions: Structured post-activity discussions facilitated by a researcher, where students and community members shared perceptions. One Malaysian student noted, "*Seeing the Bersih Desa preparation, I could compare it to our kenduri rituals back home*". The dialogue afterward made the similarities and differences so clear. A village facilitator added, "*We realized our daily work has academic value. Their questions made us see our own culture anew*". The socio-cultural explanation process is shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Cultural Explanation Activities

The evaluation of empowerment and socio-cultural outcomes revealed transformative shifts across structural, cognitive, cultural, and social dimensions. Structural empowerment was concretely achieved through the formal establishment and proactive management of the Tourism Governing Board and the Standing Co-Creation Lab Committee, which institutionalized community authority over the tourism agenda. Cognitive empowerment manifested in a significant narrative shift within the community, where members increasingly self-identified as "knowledge experts," "pedagogical partners," and "cultural teachers" rather than passive beneficiaries, a change consistently observed in meeting dialogues and interviews. Cultural affirmation was evidenced by a reported resurgence in the practice and perceived prestige of rituals like Bersih Desa and crafts such as janur weaving, alongside community-initiated projects to digitally document intangible heritage. Finally, social cohesion was strengthened, as observed through increased collaborative projects and shared decision-making between previously siloed groups (the Pokdarwis, the women's farming collective, and local artisans) fostering a unified approach to community development. Collectively, these indicators confirm that the initiative successfully catalyzed a profound reconfiguration of agency, identity, and collective action within Ketindan. The result of socio-cultural indicator parameter is shown in [Figure 8](#).

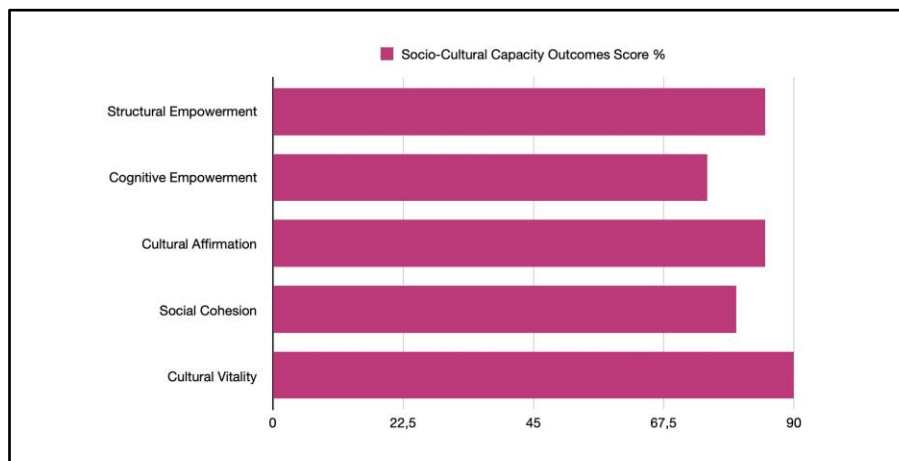


Figure 8. Indicator measurement of Socio-cultural parameter

c. The Reciprocal Feedback and Value Loop

The model institutionalizes continuous improvement. Financial contributions from students were managed transparently by the Pokdarwis, with 80% going directly to participating households and 20% to a community fund for maintaining activity locations. Feedback from reflective FGD was used to immediately adjust the pilots; for instance, extending hands-on farming time based on students feedback then providing more breaks for artisans based on community input. Student activity in Agro Edu-tourism in Ketindan is shown in [Figure 9](#).



Figure 9. International student activities in Edu-Tourism in Ketindan

The long-term viability and broader applicability of the Symbiotic Edu-Tourism Hub model are critically assessed through four definitive indicators. Institutionalization is measured by the formal integration of the model's core processes such as the Co-Creation Lab and benefit-sharing protocol into the official Village Mid-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes), ensuring its permanence beyond pilot phases. Economic viability is quantified by tracking a consistent year-on-year increase and stabilization of household income directly attributed to edu-tourism, alongside the diversification of revenue streams within participant families, moving beyond agriculture to include guiding, homestays, and craft sales. Community commitment is evidenced by the voluntary allocation of time, labor, and even private resources by residents to maintain and improve tourism assets without external prompting, demonstrating deep endogenous ownership. Finally, model transfer interest serves as a key external validation metric, gauged by the number of formal inquiries, study visits, or adaptation requests received from neighboring villages, regional governments, or NGOs, which signals the model's perceived value and potential for replication in similar community-based tourism contexts. The result of sustainability is shown in Figure 10.

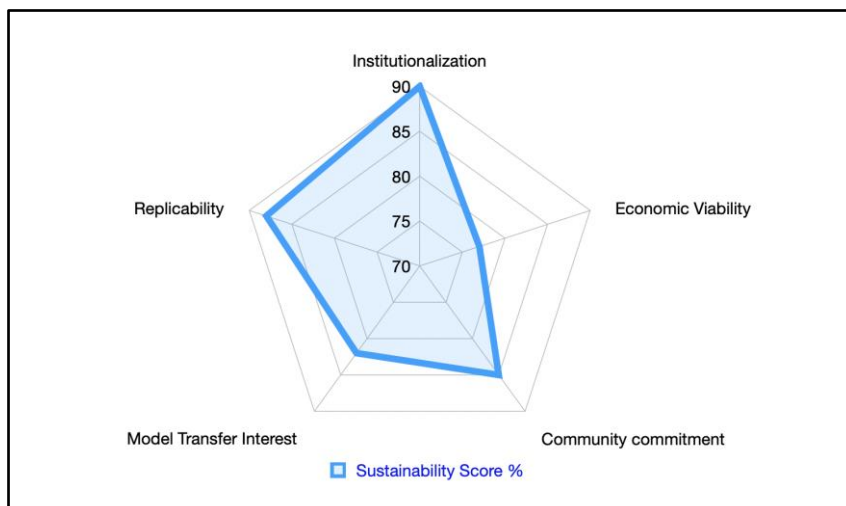


Figure 10. Analysis of Sustainability and Replicability

Discussion and Synthesis

The results demonstrate that the gap between Ketindan's assets and international student demand is not one of content, but of connection and structuring. The action research process successfully facilitated this connection. The emergent model moves beyond a transactional host-guest relationship towards a co-learning partnership. The value generated is not merely economic but also cognitive (new knowledge for students, new perspectives for the community) and social (strengthened community organization and cross-cultural bonds). The model's sustainability hinges on the continued

functioning of the Co-Creation Lab, ensuring that activities evolve with changing participant cohorts while remaining firmly rooted in local wisdom. This addresses the core challenge identified in the introduction, offering a replicable framework for transforming latent community capital into a dynamic, collaborative edu-tourism ecosystem.

4. CONCLUSION

This study conclusively demonstrates that a sustainable edu-tourism model in rural settings hinges on a structured, collaborative framework to bridge latent local wisdom with the global demand for immersive learning. Ketindan Village possesses a robust foundation in agrarian systems, artisanal skills, cultural rituals, and social organizations. However, the research confirms that a strong sense of community ownership is insufficient without effective mechanisms to package and co-deliver these assets into compelling experiential products, a gap aptly termed the packaging dilemma.

The action research validates the efficacy of the proposed **Symbiotic Edu-Tourism Hub Model**, founded on three integral pillars: a Co-Creation Lab for equitable program design, a Cultural Bridge Mechanism for logistical and translational facilitation, and a Reciprocal Feedback Loop for continuous adaptation and fair benefit-sharing. This framework successfully repositions the community from a passive cultural repository into an active pedagogical partner, simultaneously transforming the student experience from passive observation into engaged, transformative co-learning. The outcomes affirm that such collaboration generates multidimensional value, fostering not only economic benefit but also reinforcing cultural pride, enabling intergenerational knowledge transmission, and deepening meaningful cross-cultural understanding, thereby fully aligning with the principles of sustainable, community-based tourism.

To solidify this progress, the path forward requires institutionalizing the partnership. Critical steps include formalizing the Co-Creation Lab into a standing committee, enhancing local facilitator capacity through targeted training, and establishing transparent value-sharing protocols. Concurrently, higher education institutions in Malang should formally integrate Ketindan into curricula through thematic community service-learning programs to ensure a respectful and steady participant flow. Future research must pursue longitudinal impact studies and test the model's replicability in diverse contexts to refine its core principles. Ultimately, Ketindan's evolution from a case study to a benchmark for sustainable edu-tourism depends not on promotion, but on deepening this initiated partnership, proving that authentic community wisdom and global educational mobility can coalesce into mutual, enduring value.

5. ACKNOWLEDGE

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