

Chinatown in Madura as urban heritage branding: Potential and challenges

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ABSTRACT

Background: Chinatowns have become popular tourist destinations in various prominent locations worldwide. Similarly, several Chinatowns around the cities in Indonesia, including Bangkalan in Madura, can potentially be developed as an attractive tourist destination. **Purpose:** This study explored the potential of Chinatown to grow as a city branding tourism in Bangkalan. **Methods:** It employed a qualitative descriptive method to understand the potential and obstacles to developing Chinatown in Bangkalan, Madura. Data was collected using open-ended interviews, semi-participatory observation, and related documentation. Informants comprised local Chinatown residents, cultural observers, tourism agents, and local government authorities or regulators. Spradley's taxonomic analysis was used to map findings into thematic categories. Triangulation and observation persistence were used as techniques to ensure the data validity. **Results:** Based on the destination branding theory and SWOT analysis, Chinatown in Bangkalan has strength in accessibility, supporting facilities, heritage buildings, and Madurese Chinese culture. Meanwhile, weaknesses were found in regulation and coordination among the parties involved. **Conclusion:** Chinatown in Bangkalan can potentially be developed as an urban heritage branding by harnessing accessibility, supporting facilities, and heritage buildings while simultaneously mitigating the barriers. **Implications:** The research results can be a guide for policy brief formulation and insights for related stakeholders. Subsequent research can further explore the perceptions of Chinatown tourism enthusiasts from a diverse demographic perspective.

Keywords: Urban tourism; urban heritage tourism; branding; city branding; destination branding

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INTRODUCTION

Tourist attractions constitute products of the tourism sector, destinations, or places of visitation for tourists who engage in recreational activities. They offer diverse experiences and entertainment during their leisure time. Besides, they also allow the restoration of oneself from daily obligations.

The diversity of tourist attractions possessed by a region also contributes to and is considered highly potential to become the largest sector that can drive economic growth for a country through employment opportunities, thus generating revenue and finally bringing prosperity to the local community.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism fully accounts for the current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, fulfilling the needs of visitors, the industry, and the host communities. Therefore, tourism is not merely a journey, pleasure, or experience, but it can also influence the economy, society, culture, and the environment through the impact of visitors.

This perspective is highly relevant for the country of Indonesia, which possesses great potential in tourism for its abundant natural and cultural wealth. The government has designated tourism as one of the most important core sectors that generates foreign exchange

revenue for the nation. As such, the continuous management and development of the region's potential and attractions are necessary, as well as strengthening the appeal for tourists to maintain the increased success of these tourist attractions and the economy. With proper management and development, a tourist destination can also give visitors a positive impression, by which their interest potentially increases.

To understand how a destination can attract consumers and what their demands are for tourism, it is necessary to recognize and comprehend consumer behavior. Through this understanding, it is possible to appreciate the decision-making process of consumers, encompassing psychological, sociological, and economic aspects. Some key areas to study regarding the behavior of tourist consumers include understanding the "why, where, and what" of the decisions made by tourists, their needs, purchasing motivations, the varying effects of different promotional tactics, diverse perceived purchasing risks, different market segments based on purchasing behavior, and ways to enhance the chances of success.

The efforts to manage and develop the potential of regions as tourist attractions are not limited solely to areas with a natural or rural-based focus despite Indonesia's abundant natural wealth. Briefly acquainting oneself with rural tourism is one type of tourism activity or product

that is nature, rural, and agriculture-based. With rural tourism being categorized as possessing a serene and rejuvenating environment, tourism is often perceived as an individual's journey from the city to the countryside because urban areas are widely perceived as tiring places of work and, thus, nature-based tourism allows one to release that sense of weariness.

In contrast to rural tourism, urban tourism refers to tourism activities within urban areas, depicting the atmosphere or landscape of the city, which contains tourism products that can be offered (attractions), such as entertainment, the utilization of objects or elements in the city like architecture, culture, social, business, technology, diverse experiences, as well as involving accessibility and numerous facilities within. Urban tourism is a type of tourism activity taking place in urban areas characterized by non-agricultural economic attributes, such as administration, manufacturing, trade, and services, which serve as transportation hubs (Morrison & Maxim, 2020).

However, over time, the government in many cities has been competing to develop urban tourism, as urban environments are also considered to have the potential to boost the economic sector of tourism. This can attract investors to conduct business due to the current popularity of urban tourism among millennials and the present generation.

The development of a city to be designated as a tourist area requires several aspects, such as finding the potential of tourist attractions, rediscovering the untapped potential, supporting the opportunity for tourism development by providing appropriate facilities, and managing the area professionally and sustainably. Urban tourism is a form of tourism development within the city that utilizes the city spots or elements to become tourism commodities. The three elements of urban tourism include the primary element, which represents attractions that can draw tourists, the secondary element, and the additional element in the form of facilities and infrastructure as a means of service to provide comfort for tourists.

Developing region's potential and attractiveness in the tourism sector is not limited to the nature-based or rural areas only. Rural areas are also potential spots for tourism. Rural tourism represents tourism products with a small-town atmosphere, historic architecture, agrarian lifestyle, and close proximity to natural resources. It offers a beautiful, refreshing environment and a sensation of traveling from city to village. In addition, there is a trend in the evolving destination branding in urban tourism. Urban tourism is in demand by millennials, the current generation, thus attracting investors to do business.

Utilization of objects or elements for urban

tourism can be found in cities in Indonesia, such as Chinatowns in Petak Sembilan Jakarta, Chinatown in Singkawang, West Kalimantan, Chinatown in Semarang, Central Java, Kampung Sudiroprajan in Solo, and Kya-Kya Area in Surabaya (Julianto & Ridaryanthi, 2023). The tourism concept is called urban heritage tourism, which is currently developed in big cities around the world. With the objects that left historical values and histories, urban tourism allows visitors to not only get vacation but also to appreciate, interpret, and increase knowledge, even as a means of preserving the historic wealth of a region or city (Su et al., 2018); (Colomb & Novy, 2021).

Bangkalan district in Madura is known for its rural landscape, offering diverse natural attractions like hills, beaches, and religious tourism. The potential of urban tourism can be developed by leveraging the city's cultural and historical heritage as tourism products. Creating an urban landscape in a rural area can alter the perception that not all districts on Madura Island consist solely of rural areas, particularly in Bangkalan Regency. This can also be initiated by developing urban tourism.

The Chinatown area located in the city of Bangkalan, which offers colonial historical stories about the arrival of Chinese can be an option to become an icon of historic tourism in the city. The exploration of the potential and

development of the Chinatown area as an icon of urban heritage tourism will bring about an image of the concept of urban tourism (Colomb & Novy, 2021) and urban heritage tourism (Su et al., 2018), also city branding (Green et al., 2016) as one of the branding processes in the marketing strategy to build the identity and image of a city so that it has a uniqueness to highlight in for marketing. City branding is also often associated with destination branding in marketing tourism to change the public view that not all regencies on the island of Madura contain nature-based tourism.

Contrary to urban tourism, urban heritage tourism refers to the concept of preserving historical buildings or areas located in urban or city areas through a tourism approach. According to Karlström (2017), urban heritage refers to physical remnants built with historical architectural value and located in urban areas, such as churches and other religious buildings, castles, city walls, palaces, and institutional buildings (Mandaka & Ikaputra, 2021).

Urban heritage tourism is crucial for community economic development and cultural heritage preservation. Several aspects require significant consideration in the development process, such as the management system implemented, the surrounding environment of a cultural heritage site, economic activities, and community support from the surrounding

area (Dieck & Jung, 2018). Heritage tourism development is intended to ensure the preservation of historical assets, where preservation and maintenance are taken to safeguard the quality of buildings and the historical narratives within a particular area. This action must also be grounded by a great plan to prevent a decline in the quality of these legacy assets, as stated by the Directorate General of Tourism in 1989 (Mandaka & Ikaputra, 2021).

Thus, the planning approach towards historical heritage in the context of tourism development involves strategies and methods, such as conservation, gentrification, rehabilitation, renovation, restoration, and reconstruction. These approaches aim to preserve the value and significance of historical or cultural heritage, which ensures that the quality and integrity of the objects are well maintained. It involves rehabilitating buildings or areas that have experienced a decline in quality, as well as providing new facilities and elements while preserving and adapting to the original conditions.

In transforming an area into urban heritage tourism, the object must generate high-quality experiences such as nostalgia, a sense of pride, enjoyment, and daydreaming, thereby providing tourists with social-psychological benefits and enabling them to distinguish it from other heritage tourism destinations (Chen &

Chen, 2010) economic dependence on tourism, perceived positive tourism impacts, perceived negative impacts and support for tourism development. A total of 239 respondents completed a survey conducted at Tainan city, a heritage city in southern Taiwan. The data were analysed using a structural equation modelling (SEM).

Therefore, this study explored the potential of the Chinatown area in Bangkalan Regency as an icon of urban heritage tourism. This research is expected to contribute to the study of tourism branding. The findings may also act as input to stakeholders in the Bangkalan Chinatown area development process. The historic area is a priority for revitalization as a city tourism icon to leave a long-term impact on the economy and welfare of local communities. Moreover, the research results can also be used to initiate an integrated marketing communication that highlights the unique culture and heritage of Chinatown in Bangkalan.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted the constructivism paradigm as a natural basis for interpreting phenomena by involving descriptive qualitative methods. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) in (Stake, 2005), qualitative research allows the exploration of the actor's experience.

Table 1 Informants' profile

Position	Informant	Profession
Key informants	YLK	Department of culture and tourism Bangkalan Regency
	MRT	curator of the East Java cultural center
Secondary informants	RDT	Bangkalan chinatown's local residents
	INA	Bangkalan chinatown's local residents
	AL	Bangkalan chinatown's local residents
	STD	Bangkalan chinatown's local residents
	ADB	Bangkalan chinatown's local residents

Source: Researcher data, 2023

With a qualitative approach, researchers can identify issues as well as understand meaning, behavior, events, and objects. The subjects in this study were the Bangkalan District Youth, Sports, Culture and Tourism Office officers, local Chinatown residents, and local historians, as listed in Table 1.

Meanwhile, the examined phenomenon was the urban heritage branding of the Chinatown area in Bangkalan. Data was collected by interviews, passive participatory observation, and documentation. Data analysis used the Spradley model by assigning key informants and then coding the findings in thematic categories.

Furthermore, the analysis used SWOT analysis to evaluate issues, projects, or businesses in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a tourism product (Mondal, 2017). The SWOT analysis was conducted to determine the potential and readiness level of the Bangkalan Chinatown area as a tourist attraction and to

provide alternative strategies for managing the Bangkalan Chinatown area.

To ensure the credibility of the data, the researchers conducted data triangulation by crosschecking and comparing the findings of data from informants with several business owners and the local community. Furthermore, the researchers conducted technical triangulation by checking the data obtained through the same informants with different data collection techniques, such as the results of in-depth interviews with one of the informants. In case differences were found in data acquisition, the researchers re-interviewed the informant to ensure the data validity.

The research was conducted at the Bangkalan Regency Youth, Sports, Culture, and Tourism Office located at Jalan Soekarno Hatta No. 39A, Mlajah, Bangkalan and the Bangkalan Chinatown area located on Jalan Panglima Sudirman, Bangkalan Regency, Madura, East Java.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term “Kampung Pecinan” or Chinatown is closely tied to the history of colonial policies. The word “Pecinan” originates from “Pe-cinan” in Javanese, which refers to a residential area, region, or district where the majority or minority of its inhabitants are of Chinese descent. These areas can be characterized by their social composition, with either a smaller minority or a larger majority of the Chinese or Tionghoa population. Beyond being residential areas, these neighborhoods typically also serve other functions, such as centers for trade and economic activities.

According to Ang (2020), Chinatown areas have distinct characteristics: located in the city center, living unique Chinese cultural traits that vary from one city to another, populated by a minority Chinese, and featuring straight and orderly streets with rows of shop-houses used for trading. Further, Hu-Dehart (2012) explains that Chinatown is a settlement in a specific part of a city, characterized by its population, housing structures, social organization, and overall ambiance, shaped by the historical and cultural heritage of Chinese communities.

The Bangkalan Chinatown area located on Jalan Panglima Sudirman, Bangkalan Regency, describes an area or location that has Indische Empire architectural style buildings used for

trading activities and Chinese architectural style buildings, namely the Eng An Bio Temple or Vihara. Indische Empire architecture or building style is an architectural style from the colonial era, which developed before Westernization (18th to 19th centuries) in cities in Indonesia in the early 20th century (Antonius et al., 2014). This architectural style arose because of the Indische Culture culture that developed in the Dutch East Indies until the end of the 19th century, and first appeared on the outskirts of Batavia, or currently the city of Jakarta in the mid-17th century, and developed in urban areas that had many European residents.

Although at first glance, it may appear as just an area with rows of shophouses catering to the daily needs of the community, this area has a historical background similar to Chinatowns in other regions, and its long history is inseparable from the story of colonial policies. The Bangkalan Chinatown area, where the majority of the population is of Chinese ethnicity, is a result of the migration and settlement of the Chinese community and their descendants in the city of Bangkalan. This was also explained by MRT (informant) in an interview regarding the history of the Chinese community’s migration and the development of the Chinatown area in Madura Island after the events of 1740, known as the Geger Pecinan incident.

Developing the Bangkalan Chinatown area



Source: Research observation, 2023

Figure 1 Bangkalan Chinatown landscape

as a tourist attraction, by creating a vibrant urban landscape like in other major cities, can attract residents and tourists from outside the region. It can generate the perception and opinion that Bangkalan City can compete with other cities in the urban tourism sector. Figure 1 shows the recent Chinatown Bangkalan landscape. The figure presents the architecture of the front side of the cluster. It is the main part of the block, which offers an ancient atmosphere from the stores as in the common Chinatown worldwide.

As explained by MRT (informant) in the interview, the construction of city walls or fortresses in Batavia (now Jakarta) occurred because the Chinese community played a significant role in the economy and served as an economic pillar in Batavia. Therefore, they were

given a designated area. Apart from economic reasons, this designated area also served as a means of control in case of resistance from specific groups, making it easier to manage. If all groups, such as the Chinese, Javanese, Madurese, and others, were mixed in a single area, sentiments and resistance may arise as what happened in 1740. This discussion covers the entire Java region, including Madura and Gresik.

To support the success of tourism development and promotion, three main components are essential in the tourism sector, which are attractions, amenities, and accessibility (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). They are considered crucial in creating tourist destinations that can attract visitors, fulfill their needs, provide comfort, and facilitate their visitation to the tourist site.

A brand can be used for various purposes, one of which is differentiation or a distinctive identity compared to the competitors (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015). Branding is an effort to create a positive image for a tourist destination to attract tourists to visit the area and provide them with a memorable experience (Subarkah et al., 2020). This memorable experience is delivered through the presentation of the tourist destination. Destination branding activities can provide unforgettable travel experiences for tourists, uniquely associated with the tourist



Source: Research observation, 2023

Figure 2 Bangkalan Chinatown as a business center

attraction, and serve to strengthen pleasant memories or recollections of visiting the destination (Hemmonsbey & Tichaawa, 2020). Through the destination branding process, tourism stakeholders or managers can convince tourists that the destination offers a variety of benefits and positive impressions.

The Chinatown area refers to a part of the city which in terms of population, form of residence, social order and environmental atmosphere has distinctive characteristics because the growth of that part of the city is historically rooted in Chinese cultured society. In general, in the Chinatown area, there are rows of shophouses for both living and working, as well as pagodas and monasteries as places of worship and social activities (Santos et al., 2008).

The identity of Chinatown appears in the variety of buildings with Chinese characteristics in decorations and architectural

elements (Widiastuti et al., 2015; Sujin, 2017). The Chinese, known as a nation of traders and immigrants, have explored all over the world. Therefore, Chinatown is found in almost every city. Chinatown has even become a city landmark and is used as a tourist destination. This area usually functions as a place for business activities such as restaurants, shops, theaters, and other recreational buildings. Figure 2 shows the activities at Chinatown Bangkalan.

One of the factors for the formation of Chinatown is that the Chinese typically live in groups. By living close to each other, they have a sense of security and can help one another (Ang, 2020). Usually fellow Chinese have high solidarity (Lee et al., 2016). In Indonesia, during the Dutch colonial period, the Chinese community built their houses following the Dutch housing pattern in continuously linked houses with or without terraced floors.

Chinatown in Bangkalan City also has a landscape similar to other Chinatowns. This gives Bangkalan City the potential to have urban tourism by making Chinatown an icon of urban heritage tourism. Bangkalan Chinatown has fulfilled the required elements to be urban tourism. These elements are focused on facilities and attractions in the city center as a support (Khan, 2015; Meethan, 2014). Local accommodation and logistics can be found easily around Chinatown. Apart from being a heritage



Source: Research observation, 2023

Figure 3 Eng An Bio Temple

area, Bangkalan Chinatown can also become an urban tourism icon. Attractions, amenities, accessibility, and community involvement are relatively found in this destination. Chinatown also represents religiosity through its place of worship called the temple, as shown in Figure 3.

Before the colonial period in Indonesia, the urban layout throughout the Nusantara region, particularly in Java and Madura Island, exhibited a similar pattern influenced by colonial policies. There is a term known as “Mancapat” and “Mancalima.” This system of urban organization carries symbolic meanings and follows a pattern centered around the Keraton (palace), Alun-alun (public square), Masjid (mosque), Pasar (marketplace), Pecinan (Chinatown), Rumah-rumah Bangsawan (noble houses), and ethnic settlements forming a cohesive unit (ethnic neighborhoods). This pattern reflects the social,



Source: Research observation, 2023

Figure 4 Bangkalan Chinatowns' heritage objects

economic, and cultural structures of the local communities within the respective regions.

Utilization of historic buildings as urban heritage tourism is an activity to preserve historic buildings and culture from extinction or manage urban heritage itself. Historic heritage is expected to be maintained, passed on, and continued to future generations through tourism activities thus becoming an identity and character of a city (Mandaka & Ikaputra, 2021). Urban tourism development typically leverages the elements or features possessed by a city as tourist attractions (Ben-dalia & Collins-kreiner, 2013).

The historical heritage objects within urban environments can be referred to as urban heritage. It is a physical remnant built with historical architectural value and located in urban areas, such as churches and other religious buildings, castles, city walls, palaces,

and institutional buildings (Karlström, 2017). Urban heritage is an important asset with potential for development and preservation, as shown in Figure 4.

One of the ways to build a tourist destination is by leveraging the existing historical heritage or cultural heritage within the city. The utilization of historical heritage, including buildings, areas, and other objects in Indonesia, is regulated by the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, that the government in each region and individuals can utilize cultural heritage for religious, social, cultural, technological, tourism, educational, and scientific purposes (Timothy, 2014). The preservation of historical heritage, including cultural heritage, is an approach in urban planning and spatial arrangement to maintain, preserve, protect, and utilize cultural heritage for development purposes (Agisilaos, 2012).

The existence and utilization of historical heritage within urban environments can provide an understanding and a sense of pride in the history that occurred in the relevant city (Susanti, 2020). Meanwhile, urban heritage tourism plays a crucial role in community economic development and the preservation of cultural heritage through several aspects, including the implementation of management systems, the surrounding environment of a cultural heritage site, economic activities, and the social support

of the local community (Aydin & Alvarez, 2020).

However, based on the observations conducted and the analysis of the urban heritage concept, the Bangkalan Chinatown District is not solely a commercial area but also a cultural heritage site. Therefore, this district can develop with these unique characteristics and provide attractions through tourism-related attributes, such as facilities and accessibility.

To thrive in branding, the tourism object must be influenced by the conveyance of a message and visualization that can transmit the object's meaning to elicit opinions or perceptions from visitors and generate appeal for them.

The development of this destination requires commitment from relevant stakeholders to optimize the potential. The findings show that stakeholders do not show maximum effort to develop Chinatown. According to the informant, this was due to constraints on infrastructure revitalization resources, human resources, development concepts, and strategies. Efforts for developing destinations into heritage branding icons and city tourism need to be made professionally and sustainably (Tondobala, 2011). Urban heritage is a physical historical heritage, which is a contemporary urban area, a heritage building with architectural and historical values or city "monuments", such as

churches and other religious buildings, castles, city walls, palaces, as well as institutional buildings (Karlström, 2017).

Urban development can simultaneously revitalize the local economy. So urban heritage and tourism are very closely related, where tourism is useful as a tool to maintain or preserve historical relics by fulfilling the principles, requirements, and planning for heritage. With activities to preserve historical buildings and culture from extinction, or managing urban heritage itself, it is hoped that historic heritage can be maintained, passed on, and continued to future generations through tourism activities and can become the identity and character of a city (Mandaka & Ikaputra, 2021). In cities, creating an identity can be done with city branding. Through city branding, tourists can see the characteristics or uniqueness of the city as a differentiator so they can compete with other cities (George & Almeyda-Ibanez, 2017). All branding tries to provide products with a specific and more distinctive identity, also a place or region requires a differentiator through a brand identity so that tourists can feel that the quality is superior to competitors, and can be consumed in a way that is commensurate with the destination of the place (Kavaratzis et al., 2015).

The potential of the Bangkalan Chinatown area as a tourist attraction is further supported by

its strategic location in the heart of Bangkalan City, making it easily accessible to visitors from outside of Madura Island due to the presence of the Suramadu National Bridge and the harbor. Consequently, the Bangkalan Regency can initiate the development of urban tourism or urban heritage tourism, enhancing the vibrancy and allure of the urban landscape by focusing on the development of the Bangkalan Chinatown as a distinctive urban heritage tourism destination, akin to Chinatowns found in other major cities. This approach enables it to compete with similar Chinatown tourist attractions, showcasing its unique characteristics and distinguishing features.

However, for other societal groups in urban areas, there were no restrictions on development during that period, and the privileged or special status in the pre-colonial era was primarily reserved for the aristocracy, such as kings and princes, who owned land around the Keraton. Additionally, there was a group of religious scholars, predominantly of Arab descent, who had their own designated areas near the Keraton and mosques, commonly known as Kampung Kauman. Despite that, other ethnic groups remained integrated as a single entity, as there was no separation based on specific ethnic groups such as Chinese, Arab, Madurese, and so on. This practice began in Batavia when the Dutch implemented ethnic segregation policies.

The Bangkalan Chinatown area is situated in the heart of Bangkalan City and follows the “Mancapat-Mancalima” city structure, rooted in Javanese cosmology and influenced by Hindu-Buddhist beliefs. This structure encompasses elements in traditional Javanese cities during the Mataram Islamic Kingdom. Therefore, by undertaking efforts to develop and enhance the Bangkalan Chinatown as a tourist destination, various facilities and elements within the city can be maximized to support tourism activities, including cultural facilities, historical buildings, accommodation, healthcare, places of worship, shopping centers, and more.

According to YLK (informant) and MRT (informant), the Bangkalan Chinatown area is not considered a tourist attraction but rather a district with a range of shops and a market for basic needs, as well as the sale of electronics and gold. They argue that the area lacks other compelling attractions for further development. However, MRT (informant) suggests that despite many Madurese preferring to travel outside the island, such as Surabaya, the Bangkalan Chinatown area still holds potential as a tourist destination. This potential can be realized by exploring inherent strengths and attractions with initiatives within 5 to 10 years. This requires the implementation of policies and local community awareness campaigns that target the Bangkalan Chinatown area with a

great branding strategy.

Utilizing the tourist attractions during the evening hours can also enliven the Bangkalan Chinatown District and provide an exceptional experience, similar to the Kya-Kya Chinatown District in Surabaya. According to STD (informant), the shophouses in the Bangkalan Chinatown District are open from morning until evening, and none of the shops remain open over 7 pm, except for the food vendors on the streets. The Bangkalan Chinatown District is bustling and crowded until the late afternoon, so the potential for developing it as a tourist attraction can only be realized during the nighttime hours.

The high interest in urban tourism is supported by tourism-related aspects such as excellent facilities and accessibility (Leh et al., 2021). Therefore, the development of the Bangkalan Chinatown area as a tourist destination undoubtedly requires a long period of time. Moreover, the process of branding for the establishment and development of a new tourist destination is not simple; it demands time, commitment, energy, focus, strategy, competence, and a resilient attitude (Judisseno, 2019).

The concept of developing the Bangkalan Chinatown area as urban heritage tourism has received a response from one of the gold business owners in the area, RDT (informant). According to him, the historical buildings in the



Source: Research observation, 2023

Figure 5 Bangkalan Chinatowns' heritage objects

Bangkalan Chinatown area should be preserved. In the 1970s, the number of shophouses around the Bangkalan Chinatown area was not as many as it is today, and at first glance, the area was primarily seen as a trading or market district. In the evenings, the place is quiet even though some vendors are operating outside of the shophouses. In the past, the government prohibited the vendors from selling their goods, but now they can operate freely.

According to AL (informant), several tourist attractions in the Bangkalan Regency initially opened, yet they had to be eventually closed. The closure was primarily attributed to a lack of consistency in maintenance, resulting in a decline in visitor interest. As shown in Figure 5, the Chinatown landscape and architecture could be considered heritage objects.

In the interview, YLK (informant) explained that the main cause is the lack of material

support or funding from the government for tourism development. The allocation of funds is primarily focused on addressing the needs of the local community, such as providing clean water and electricity to remote villages and districts. The development of “new” tourist attractions is considered less important, not a priority, and not politically popular. Consequently, the government prioritizes the interests of the community over the development of new tourist attractions. Additionally, the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Bangkalan Regency does not possess data on proposed tourism concepts or projects, other than data on facility improvements such as roads and streetlights. Furthermore, according to YLK (informant), the Bangkalan Chinatown area, which is predominantly occupied by gold traders, cannot be developed as a tourism service enterprise because it does not meet the standards set by the ministry. The only types of businesses that meet the requirements are billiard halls, swimming pools, and culinary tourism establishments such as restaurants or food stalls.

Meanwhile, another perspective on the development and enhancement of the Bangkalan Chinatown District as an iconic urban heritage tourism destination was provided by ADB (informant), who represents the original business owners and works as an administrator at an electronics store in the area. According to

INA (informant), the level of interest among visitors to the Bangkalan Chinatown District is significantly lower compared to the Kya-Kya Chinatown District in Surabaya. This is because, on the island of Madura, both the local residents and tourists are more inclined towards culinary experiences and enjoying the natural scenery or nature-based tourism concepts.

The Bangkalan Chinatown District can establish its own identity or brand identity that can depict its characteristics, as this district is a cultural heritage site or a historic preservation area, and not merely an ordinary commercial district. Certainly, it has a historical narrative, such as the migration and development of the specific Chinese ethnic enclave in the city of Bangkalan, the presence of the Chinese community, as well as the legacy of traditional Chinatown architectural buildings, and the diversity of its culture.

In addition, the natural historical buildings located in the Bangkalan Chinatown District have undergone extensive modifications due to renovations carried out by their owners, with a more modern appearance to accommodate commercial activities. If this trend continues unchecked, over time the quality and authenticity of these structures will inevitably deteriorate, making it increasingly challenging to preserve them or develop them as tourist attractions. The situation is further exacerbated by the

fact that these cultural heritage sites have not been officially registered as Suspected Cultural Heritage Objects (Objek Diduga Cagar Budaya), and hence do not receive the appropriate protection and maintenance as stipulated by the relevant legislation. Furthermore, the Bangkalan Chinatown District has become the property of the local community, which poses difficulties in implementing a tourism-focused concept for the area.

CONCLUSION

The Chinatown in Bangkalan has the potential to be developed into a heritage tourism icon as well as urban tourism branding for the supporting facilities and attractions around the destination. The primary and secondary elements of urban tourism have been available around the area. The location of Chinatown is in the city center with easy accessibility for tourists as well as business and cultural activities. By making the most, preserving, and maintaining historical building assets, the area can be maintained as an icon of a region, and developed into a historical tourist attraction, with a variety of attractions in it. In addition, Developing Chinatown into a tourist attraction can invite visitors and tourists to appreciate, interpret, and increase knowledge. Besides, this action can be a means of preserving the historic

wealth of the Bangkalan region. The natural architecture will fade and lose the historical elements once not preserved.

However, the management of the area to a more professional and sustainable stage seems to be complex due to insufficient funds from the Bangkalan Local Government. This is not only the development of the concept of urban tourism or urban heritage tourism, but all activities will be very difficult to implement. Not all inputs to the government regarding Bangkalan tourism development activities have been implemented even though it has great potential.

Therefore, the local government and tourism stakeholders, especially the Bangkalan Regency Culture and Tourism Office, must immediately provide support for the utilization of the potential of the Bangkalan Chinatown area as a tourist attraction and develop the tourism components. This action can prevent a decline in potential, which would make it increasingly difficult to compete with other cities. Also, the local government should immediately register the ODCB (Suspected Cultural Heritage Objects) so that the area and the buildings receive the proper protection and maintenance according to the law. The government must also continue to invite and encourage stakeholders and local communities to take preservation actions towards cultural heritage objects in Bangkalan Regency,

including the Chinatown area. Furthermore, they must have strong support and awareness for the tourism sector, by enhancing the potential and improving the quality of tourism components. Finally, considering the weaknesses, it is recommended to establish a specialized agency or committee consisting of local government, the Chinatown community, and tourism stakeholders to coordinate the development of Chinatown and formulate regulations that support the development of heritage tourism. Further research can explore the perceptions of Chinatown tourism enthusiasts from different demographic perspectives.

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