



## THE DYNAMICS OF DEWI KAJII TOWARDS A CULTURE-BASED INDEPENDENT VILLAGE BASED ON COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

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### ABSTRACT

#### Article History

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The Dewi Kajii Tourism Village emerged as a social reconciliation effort to address community friction in Gilangharjo by utilizing local potential as a collective unifier. This research examines the management dynamics and strategies for strengthening local identity toward becoming a Culturally Independent Village (Desa Mandiri Budaya). Using a qualitative exploratory case study approach, data were gathered via observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using an interactive model. The study finds that Dewi Kajii is currently transitioning from the development to the consolidation stage of the Tourism Area Life Cycle. Success is driven by "packaging authentic potential," integrating ornamental fish cultivation with traditional arts like pande gamelan into a cohesive ecosystem. Institutional formalization through the separation of roles between Pokdarwis and economic units ensures transparent governance while maintaining local character. However, sustainability is challenged by high dependency on key figures and uneven participation in homestay development. The research concludes that the transition to a fully realized Independent Cultural Village depends on balancing traditional preservation with commercial innovation through enhanced cultural storytelling, documentation, and leadership regeneration to ensure long-term community resilience.

**Keywords:** Community-Based Tourism; Cultural Identity; Tourism Management; Desa Mandiri Budaya; Dewi Kajii

### INTRODUCTION

The Dewi Kajii Tourism Village emerged from the social conditions of the Gilangharjo community, which frequently experienced friction among residents, even during village entertainment and ceremonial activities. This situation indicated a lack of collective space capable of sustainably uniting the community. Based on these conditions, the management of Dewi Kajii began developing local potential already present within the community, particularly ornamental fish farming, which



has flourished for a long time and achieved national-level recognition. This potential served as the foundation for building a community-based tourism village identity.

The development of Dewi Kajii did not stem from the creation of new attractions, but rather from the daily activities of a community that already possessed social and economic ecosystems. Following the designation of Gilangharjo as a Culturally Independent Village (*Desa Mandiri Budaya*), the management of Dewi Kajii expanded through the integration of culture, *UMKM*, festivals, arts, and homestay development into a community-based tourism system. In this process, culture is understood not only as heritage to be preserved but also as a component of economic empowerment strategies and the strengthening of local identity.

However, the development process of Dewi Kajii has not been without obstacles. Management faces various issues such as budget constraints, local political dynamics, low community participation, and challenges regarding youth regeneration. These hurdles demonstrate that managing a tourism village involves more than just building a destination; it also involves social processes, institutional strengthening, and the ability to foster sustainable community participation.

These conditions illustrate that developing community-based tourism villages is a complex process involving social negotiation, the strengthening of cultural identity, and local-level management strategies. Nevertheless, studies on tourism villages have thus far focused more on economic aspects and destination development, while the internal dynamics of management, the experiences of key driving actors, and the process of cultural identity formation remain relatively limited in discussion.

Based on these circumstances, this research focuses on the dynamics of community-based cultural tourism management in Dewi Kajii and the strategies for strengthening local cultural identity towards becoming a Culturally Independent Village (*Desa Mandiri Budaya*). The explicit novelty of this study lies in its formulation of an integration model between community-based tourism governance and the institutional framework of a Culturally Independent Village. While mainstream CBT literature predominantly views culture either as a static heritage asset or merely as a commercial attraction commodity, this study offers a novel perspective by positioning cultural identity as an adaptive, resilient instrument and an institutional anchor during the consolidation phase of a tourism destination. This theoretical contribution expands Richard Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) framework by embedding local socio-cultural resilience as a decisive internal factor that prolongs a destination's life cycle, rather than treating evolution merely as a response to external market trends.

Consequently, this research aims to comprehensively analyze the management dynamics, cultural identity construction, and adaptive community strategies of Dewi Kajii during its structural transition toward becoming a Culturally Independent Village. Through a thorough exploration of this bottom-up management ecosystem, this study provides significant academic contributions by bridging the gap between descriptive field observations and macro-level governance theories. Practically, the formulated insights offer a strategic roadmap for policy makers and local tourism practitioners in designing sustainable, self-

sufficient, and inclusive culture-based tourism models that preserve authentic local values amidst increasing commercial pressures.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Indigenous Community Tourism and Socio-Cultural Sustainability

Recent literature highlights that tourism development in indigenous and local communities should transcend mere economic orientation to focus on safeguarding cultural identity, enhancing community autonomy, and maintaining social ecosystems. Celis (2025), utilizing a qualitative Community-Based Tourism (CBT) framework, underscores that long-term sustainability heavily relies on the local capacity to control cultural resources as a defensive mechanism against exploitative tourism models.

While this study on Dewi Kajii shares a foundational alignment by positioning the community as the central protagonist, it shifts the analytical paradigm. Rather than focusing strictly on broader power relations and socio-political macro-negotiations as seen in Celis's work, this research narrows its scope down to the empirical micro-managerial processes, structural institutionalization, and adaptive localized strategies of actors steering a village toward becoming a *Desa Mandiri Budaya*. To capture this specific phenomenon contextually, this study expands its theoretical toolkit beyond standard CBT by integrating the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), Three Levels of Tourism Product, and SWOT analysis.

### Sustainable Tourism Governance and Community-Based Management

From a governance perspective, contemporary destination management success is largely dictated by institutional capacity, multi-stakeholder synergy, and equitable benefit distribution. Grounded in institutional policy analysis, Yamin et al. (2026) argue that sustainable tourism necessitates macro-level collaboration across sectors to survive market fluctuations.

In contrast to the policy-centric focus of Yamin et al., this paper addresses a critical bottom-up operational gap by exploring the organic, micro-level configurations inside the community itself. Employing an exploratory qualitative approach, we unpack how everyday social interactions and the literal conversion of local livelihoods—specifically ornamental fish cultivation—are structured into a formalized cultural identity that acts as the bedrock for *Desa Mandiri Budaya*. By weaving conflict management, local leadership dynamics, and inter-generational regeneration into the core discussion, this study bridges policy theory with authentic community practices.

### Community Participation and Managerial Capacity in Community-Based Tourism

The operationalization of CBT heavily thrives on active community participation and the organizational dexterity of local bodies like *Pokdarwis*. Empirical studies by Jamalina and Wardani (2017) in Nglanggeran demonstrate that deep local involvement generates substantial socio-economic dividends, though it

frequently battles hurdles regarding human resource professionalism. Similarly, Lasally et al. (2021) identify managerial capacity as the primary anchor for maintaining long-term tourism system viability.

However, existing frameworks by Jamalina and Wardani (2017) as well as Lasally et al. (2021) remain largely limited to assessing descriptive participation metrics and general destination components. This study enriches this discourse by dissecting the internal social negotiations and showing how economic assets, such as ornamental fish farming, are conceptually elevated into a collective cultural identity. Thus, the focus extends beyond generic "participation" or "capacity" toward understanding the strategic socio-cultural adaptation under structural constraints and local political shifts.

### **Collaboration and Multidimensional Sustainability**

To conceptualize the external network of community destinations, Sumarni et al. (2020) advocate for the Pentahelix model, asserting that sustainable management cannot survive in isolation and demands institutional networks among government, academics, industry, community, and media. Concurrently, Musyafa et al. (2024) evaluate CBT through five distinct dimensions (economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political), proving that balancing these dimensions reinforces local pride and cultural continuity.

While these multi-actor and multi-dimensional frameworks provide robust external and structural maps, they rarely capture how everyday community practices organically shape these systems from within. This research bridges this exact gap by analyzing how personal actor experiences, leadership resilience, and micro-level spatial negotiations transform raw local attributes into institutional pillars. Consequently, this study moves past the structural impacts of tourism to unpack the very genesis of a culture-driven management system in the specific context of *Desa Mandiri Budaya*.

## **METHOD**

This research employed a qualitative approach using an exploratory case study design. The qualitative method was chosen because the study aims to understand deeply the complex social phenomenon of Dewi Kajii management in its transformation toward a Cultural Independent Village (*Desa Mandiri Budaya*) through the experiences, perspectives, and practices of key local actors. According to John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, qualitative research is effective for exploring meanings constructed by individuals or groups regarding social phenomena through direct interaction in the field. The exploratory case study design was applied because this study focuses intensively on a single unit of analysis, namely the management system of Dewi Kajii. As explained by Robert K. Yin, case studies are appropriate for answering "how" and "why" questions related to contemporary events in which researchers have limited control over the phenomena being studied.

The research was conducted at Dewi Kajii (Desa Wisata Kajii), located in Gilangharjo Village, Pandak District, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The site was selected purposively because Dewi Kajii demonstrates an organic tourism development process rooted in local cultural potential and

community experiences. In this study, the object of research was not limited to a geographical setting but was understood as a bounded management system consisting of local actors, institutional structures, cultural activities, and economic practices interconnected within the tourism village development process. The study specifically focused on how local identity, particularly ornamental fish cultivation and cultural art practices, has been managed and transformed into the foundation of a community-based cultural tourism village. In addition, the study explored leadership dynamics, community empowerment, social participation, and local negotiation strategies used to sustain tourism development.

Data were collected through triangulated qualitative techniques consisting of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly in the research location to examine tourism activities, management practices, social interactions, and community participation in the operation of Dewi Kajii. This technique enabled the researcher to understand the contextual realities of the tourism management process beyond verbal explanations provided by informants. In-depth interviews were conducted with the founder and leader of Dewi Kajii, village tourism managers, and the Head of Gilangharjo Village as key stakeholders. The interviews aimed to obtain narrative and reflective data related to leadership strategies, management experiences, social negotiation processes, and challenges encountered in developing Dewi Kajii as a Cultural Independent Village. Documentation techniques were also employed to support and verify primary data obtained from observations and interviews. The documents included annual reports, institutional records, photographs, local regulations, and other archives related to tourism management and community activities.

The collected data were analyzed interactively using the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. The analysis process consisted of four stages: data condensation and coding, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. In the first stage, the researcher coded important findings from interviews, observations, and documentation to identify themes such as leadership dynamics, community participation, funding strategies, and local identity construction. The second stage involved selecting and focusing relevant data related to the transformation of Dewi Kajii into a Cultural Independent Village. The third stage organized the findings into descriptive narratives, tables, and strategic flow descriptions to facilitate interpretation of social interactions and management patterns. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying relationships, patterns, and tendencies emerging from the data, while verification was continuously conducted through triangulation and field rechecking to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Understanding Tourism Village, Cultural Pioneer, and Cultural Independent Village**

The findings at Dewi Kajii indicate that a tourism village is not merely a geographical entity with attractive destinations, but an integrated management system that combines cultural, social, and economic elements. The transformation of local potential into structured tourism attractions reflects a shift toward

experiential tourism, where visitors actively engage in local production processes and social interaction within the community. In this context, John Swarbrooke explains that effective community-based tourism is tourism capable of transforming social and cultural capital into educational experiences without removing community sovereignty over their living space. This concept is reflected in Dewi Kajii through the integration of ornamental fish cultivation and local cultural practices into participatory tourism experiences.

The “Cultural Pioneer” (*Rintis*an Budaya) phase in Dewi Kajii represents an important stage in organizing local cultural potential that previously existed informally within the community. Cultural activities such as *pande gamelan* and *pande keris* were revitalized as efforts to strengthen local identity and preserve traditional knowledge. Although these cultural elements have not been fully commercialized as tourism products, they function as educational and identity-based assets for the community. According to Robert E. Wood, before culture is packaged for public consumption, communities must undergo a process of cultural internalization in which traditional values are reinterpreted and understood by younger generations as the foundation of collective identity. Therefore, the cultural pioneer stage in Dewi Kajii can be understood as a social investment aimed at maintaining cultural authenticity in the future development of tourism activities.

The achievement of Cultural Independent Village (*Desa Mandiri Budaya*) status represents the peak of Dewi Kajii’s transformation process. This status requires the integration of four major pillars: Prima, Preneur, Culture, and Tourism. The findings show that cultural independence is not solely related to the preservation of traditional arts, but also to managerial capacity in integrating cultural potential with local institutions and creative economic activities. Clare A. Gunn argues that tourism destination independence is achieved when local institutions are capable of integrating entrepreneurship with cultural preservation, creating a sustainable economic cycle for the community. In Dewi Kajii, the “Preneur” pillar is represented through ornamental fish cultivation and community-based micro enterprises, while the “Culture” pillar is strengthened through festivals and traditional art performances that reinforce local identity.

### **History and Development of Dewi Kajii: A TALC and Crisis-Driven Reconciliation Analysis**

The empirical genesis of Dewi Kajii offers a critical departure from conventional, market-driven destination models. As evidenced by its history, the establishment of the tourism village in Kadisoro, Gilangharjo, was primarily triggered by a structural necessity to resolve severe social fragmentation and frequent communal conflicts during sports and ceremonies. Analytically, this positions the Exploration Stage of Dewi Kajii within Richard Butler’s Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) framework not as a commercial discovery by external actors, but as an organic, crisis-driven social reconciliation mechanism. The community strategically converted day-to-day agricultural spaces and its historical ornamental fish cultivation, which dates back to 1987 and holds national-level achievements into a shared socio-cultural anchor. By doing so, the community elevated a purely economic primary livelihood into a collective symbol of local pride and communal unity.

The destination experienced an accelerated shift toward the Development Stage around 2022, institutionalized by the official designation of Gilangharjo as a

Culturally Independent Village (*Desa Mandiri Budaya*). This structural milestone forced the integration of four development pillars: *Prima*, *Preneur*, *Culture*, and *Tourism*. This transition was marked by spatial and product expansions, such as utilizing the *Angkringan Dewi Kajii* as a hybrid communal-commercial space, incorporating heritage blacksmithing (*pande gamelan* and *pande keris*), and expanding geographic networks to include the batik production centers in Gunting Hamlet.

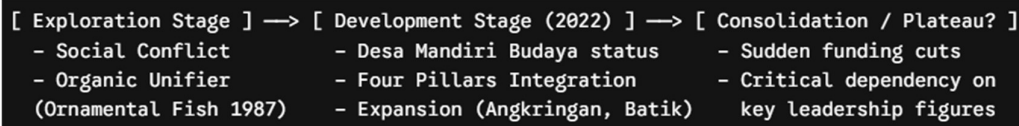


Figure 1. Three-Stage Organizational Development Framework  
Resource: Personal Source, 7 May 2026

However, a critical evaluation of this evolution reveals deep systemic vulnerabilities regarding institutional sustainability. The early financial resilience of the village—which began with pure community self-funding before receiving a one-time government injection of 300 million Rupiah for infrastructure—was severely tested when subsequent state funding allocations were discontinued. While the management successfully demonstrated resilience by securing alternative corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and private sponsorships, this adaptive capacity remains heavily centralized.

The structural progression of Dewi Kajii is profoundly dependent on key local figures (*tokoh kunci*) who possess the specific social capital and external networks necessary to navigate these funding crises. This presents a critical institutional risk: if these core actors exit the ecosystem, the destination faces a premature stagnation or decline phase under the TALC framework due to a lack of decentralized leadership regeneration.

Furthermore, as the destination attempts to sustain its growth through macro-branding mechanisms like the annual *Dewi Kajii Culture Fest* every September, the pressure to maintain commercial numbers introduces the early risks of *cultural commodification*. The expansion toward broader regional attractions must therefore be managed carefully; otherwise, the original, grass-roots social reconciliation that successfully healed the community's fragmentation risks being overshadowed by top-down, elite-driven commercial targets.

## Vision and Mission Analysis

### Vision

Through its formulated vision—which aims “to realize innovative ornamental fish and cultural educational tourism based on sustainable natural resource, tourism, and environmental development for community welfare”—Dewi Kajii establishes a forward-looking strategic foundation. By embedding ornamental fish education and local cultural heritage at the core of its development, the statement holistically anchors these sectors within the values of innovation, environmental stewardship, and resource sustainability. Ultimately, this approach frames tourism not merely as a commercial venture, but as a community-centric engine designed to uplift local livelihoods and foster socio-economic welfare.

From a strategic management lens, however, this comprehensive ambition introduces a clear trade-off in clarity. Because the vision attempts to encompass

multiple ecological and economic dimensions simultaneously, the statement becomes somewhat broad and lengthy, which slightly dilutes its primary focus. Concurrently, it misses an opportunity to explicitly articulate Dewi Kajii's truest competitive advantage: the unique, living synthesis where ornamental fish cultivation directly intertwines with the village's daily cultural identity. Nevertheless, despite these structural ambiguities, the vision remains a commendable framework that successfully binds educational, ecological, and economic aspirations into a cohesive, long-term development trajectory.

### **Mission**

The operational approach of Dewi Kajii is structured around three core missions: improving excellent and friendly human resources, developing ornamental fish tourism based on *Sapta Pesona* principles, and driving local cultural potential toward environmentally friendly tourism. This mission framework effectively bridges human resource capacity with cultural and environmental sustainability. The emphasis on cultivating "excellent and friendly" local teams shows a proactive focus on hospitality as a competitive tool, while the adoption of *Sapta Pesona* principles provides a clear standard for creating a clean, safe, and welcoming tourism environment.

Socio-culturally, the mission successfully operationalizes eco-cultural conservation by weaving the village's living heritage—specifically *pande gamelan*, *pande keris*, and traditional performing arts—into the broader tourism ecosystem. Nevertheless, these statements lean toward broad generalizations, missing the opportunity to articulate specific innovation pathways or identify defined target markets. Although this comprehensive outlook serves sustainable tourism development well, the strategic framework would be greatly strengthened by injecting a sharper market orientation and explicit differentiation, ultimately positioning Dewi Kajii more robustly within the cultural tourism sector.

### **Management System Model of Dewi Kajii: CBT Governance and Internal Power Relations**

The management system of Dewi Kajii demonstrates a robust model of CBT governance, operationally embedding community-driven values into a culturally rooted tourism ecosystem. Rather than relying on artificial, top-down commercial attractions, the destination's primary strength is its organic evolution from existing local livelihoods, specifically the historic ornamental fish cultivation established in 1987. This preservation of everyday cultural practices directly reinforces destination authenticity, actively engaging the community through local UMKM, the *Angkringan*, cultural festivals, and evolutionary homestay developments. In this governance framework, residents theoretically act as the primary protagonists who retain socio-economic control and ownership over the tourism outcomes.

From an institutional standpoint, this model is sustained by an adaptive, dual-track management structure that maintains a formalized division of roles. In order to analyze how this structural arrangement functions alongside internal power relations and village dynamics, the institutional model is mapped out as follows:

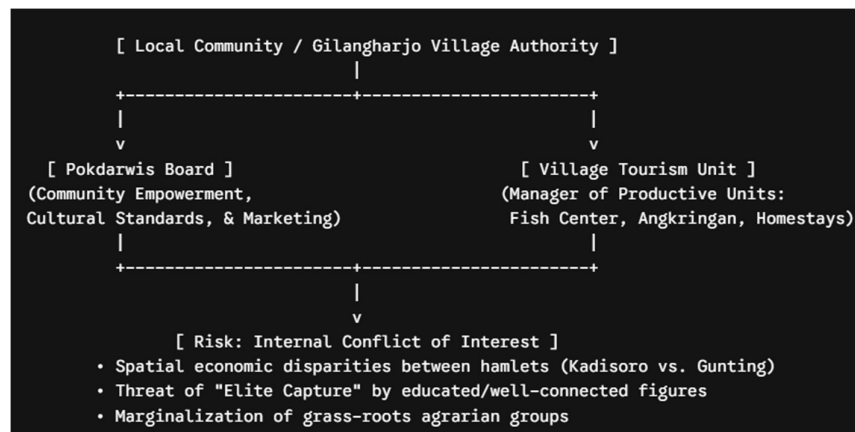


Figure 2. Governance Structure and Potential Internal Conflicts within the Village Tourism Organization

While this dual-track system strengthens administrative legitimacy and promotes cross-hamlet integration, a closer critical inspection uncovers latent conflicts of interest and structural power imbalances within the community. The separation of roles between *Pokdarwis* (acting as an empowerment facilitator) and the productive Village Tourism units (managing assets like fish ponds, sponsorships, and the *Angkringan*) is highly dependent on how transparently and equitably resources are distributed.

Sub-villages (*dusun*) that physically host highly marketable attractions—such as the main ornamental fish hubs in Kadisoro—organically accumulate greater financial capital, infrastructure investment (like the 300 million Rupiah government facility), and political leverage than hamlets managing less tangible or expanding cultural assets, such as the batik production centers in Gunting. This spatial economic disparity triggers latent internal jealousy, which risks fragmenting the collective, egalitarian spirit crucial to sustainable CBT.

Furthermore, the governance model operates under the constant threat of "elite capture." The operationalization of alternative funding networks, corporate social responsibility (CSR) sponsorships, and institutional partnerships requires specific administrative literacy and external social capital. Consequently, well-educated or economically stable members of the community naturally dominate the executive seats of the *Pokdarwis* board.

Without continuous democratic oversight, this elite dominance risks silencing the voices of marginalized grass-roots agrarian groups, turning active participation into mere symbolic compliance.

Therefore, while the integration of cultural heritage (*pande gamelan* and *keris-making*) with economic activities provides financial resilience and funds cultural preservation, the underlying management model is not a friction-free success story. It operates as a highly fragile equilibrium that demands constant transparency and resource negotiation to prevent elite dominance and resource-driven internal conflict.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis

Internal and External Factors	Description
Strengths	<p>Dewi Kajii exhibits several core strategic strengths that solidify its position as a resilient community-based tourism destination. At its foundation, the village possesses deep historical legitimacy and local authenticity, anchored by its long-standing tenure as an ornamental fish cultivation center since 1987. This historical root has not only shaped the village's identity but has also culminated in national recognition and prestigious awards, creating a highly distinctive brand equity that is exceptionally difficult for competing destinations to replicate. Crucially, this tourism development is not an artificial construct; it thrives on organic community activities that inherently preserve the area's cultural integrity. This grass-roots alignment ensures that the entire management system receives robust social support and internal legitimacy from the local residents. Furthermore, this strong community backing is complemented by the high managerial capacity of the leadership team, who demonstrate a sophisticated proficiency in strategic planning and proactive networking with both government institutions and private sector stakeholders.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Despite its substantial strengths, Dewi Kajii faces several critical internal weaknesses that present strategic hurdles. A primary challenge lies in the fact that community participation in tourism management remains unevenly distributed, a gap most visible in the sluggish development and inconsistent provision of active homestays. This issue points to a broader structural disconnect, namely a noticeable gap between formalized administrative planning and the actual, operational readiness of the local community. Furthermore, while the village is rich in cultural heritage, high-potential assets like the traditional <i>keris</i> craftsmanship remain underutilized; they still require stronger conceptual narratives and compelling storytelling to transform them into mature, market-ready educational tourism packages. Finally, these operational and product-level vulnerabilities are further compounded by internal political dynamics within the village, which pose a continuous risk to organizational coordination and the long-term stability of strategic decision-making.</p>
Opportunities	<p>On the external front, Dewi Kajii is well-positioned to capitalize on several promising opportunities that can drive its future growth. Chief among these is the village's official designation as a <i>Desa Mandiri Budaya</i>, a prestigious status that grants invaluable access to institutional policy legitimacy and substantial government funding support. This regulatory advantage aligns perfectly with current market dynamics, particularly the growing global trend toward authentic, culture-based tourism, which naturally expands the destination's potential tourist base. To capture this expanding market, digital technology presents a vital frontier, offering innovative tools for the global marketing of ornamental fish products and wider</p>

tourism promotion. On a local scale, this ecosystem can be further stimulated by annual cultural festivals, which serve as strategic catalysts to strengthen the economic activities of village micro-businesses (UMKM). Ultimately, by leveraging these festivals and its unique cultural identity, Dewi Kajii can attract corporate sponsorships, opening alternative funding pathways that ensure long-term financial sustainability.

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Threats

While the opportunities are vast, Dewi Kajii must carefully navigate several severe external and structural threats to ensure its long-term viability. At the organizational level, a heavy dependence on a few key figures poses a significant risk to operational sustainability, particularly if leadership regeneration is not systematically managed. This leadership vulnerability is further exacerbated by a broader socio-cultural shift: the declining interest of the younger generation in preserving local traditions, which directly threatens the continuity of the village's cultural heritage. Externally, the destination is also exposed to political macro-dynamics, where sudden government policy fluctuations and regional political shifts can abruptly disrupt institutional and financial stability. Finally, as Dewi Kajii intensifies its efforts to survive amid fierce tourism competition, it faces the subtle yet dangerous risk of cultural commodification—a phenomenon that could inadvertently dilute the very local authenticity that defines its core identity.

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The SWOT analysis in this study functions as a strategic evaluation tool to examine the competitive position of Dewi Kajii in its transformation toward a *Desa Mandiri Budaya*. According to Thomas L. Wheelen and J. David Hunger (2012), SWOT analysis systematically identifies internal and external factors to formulate strategies that maximize strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats. In the context of community-based tourism, Harold Goodwin and Rosa Santilli (2009) argue that sustainable community tourism depends on the ability to balance local socio-cultural assets with external market dynamics.

The findings reveal that Dewi Kajii's primary strength lies in its strong historical legitimacy and authentic local identity as an ornamental fish cultivation center established since 1987 with national recognition. Its organic development model—transforming existing community activities into tourism attractions without artificial modification—has strengthened social legitimacy and preserved cultural integrity. This condition is further supported by the managerial capacity of the local management team in strategic planning and external networking with government institutions and private stakeholders.

However, several internal weaknesses remain. Community participation is still uneven, particularly in the provision of homestay facilities, indicating a gap between administrative planning and community readiness. In addition, cultural potentials such as keris craftsmanship still require stronger narratives and storytelling strategies to become mature educational tourism products. Local political dynamics also pose challenges to organizational coordination and strategic decision-making. From the external perspective, Dewi Kajii has significant opportunities for development. Its status as a *Desa Mandiri Budaya* provides broader policy legitimacy and access to government funding support. The growing trend of experience-based

tourism also creates opportunities for authentic interaction between tourists and local culture. Digital marketing, annual cultural festivals, and UMKM development, further strengthen the destination's economic and promotional potential.

On the other hand, several threats may affect long-term sustainability. Dependence on key community leaders creates risks if leadership regeneration is not effectively maintained. The declining interest of younger generations in preserving local traditions also threatens cultural continuity. In addition, political instability and changing government policies may influence financial and institutional support. Without careful management, the commodification of local culture may weaken Dewi Kajii's unique identity amid increasing tourism competition.

### Critical Evaluation of Dewi Kajii Programs: A Three Levels of Tourism Product Perspective

To avoid a purely descriptive inventory of village activities, the empirical programs of Dewi Kajii, encompassing its core social values, tangible attractions, and value-added operations are critically analyzed through Kotler's Three Levels of Tourism Product framework. This approach contextualizes how raw community initiatives are structurally transformed into a tourism system, while exposing the latent socio-cultural risks, power imbalances, and commodification pressures embedded within each tier.

**Komponen Wisata**

**Atraksi Wisata**

- Mentoring ikan hias
- Edukasi ikan hias
- Membuat wayang ikan
- Kontes ikan hias

**Fasilitas wisata**

1. Padang rumput
2. Pendopo
3. Gazebo
4. Farm ikan hias
5. Pusat informasi (sekretariat)
5. Toilet umum
6. Mushola
7. Tempat parkir
8. Pusat kuliner

**Akomodasi**

1. Homestay mulai 150k
2. Pendopo mulai 600k

**Paket Wisata**

**Paket A**  
2 Hari 1 Malam  
IDR 500k/Org  
\*Minimal 10 orang  
Fasilitas :

1. Trainer
2. Visit Farm
3. Welcome Drink
4. Snack dan Makan
5. Gala Dinner
6. Free Dokumentasi
7. Homestay
8. Sepeda + Sunset
9. Wayang Ikan
10. Belajar Gamelan

**Paket B**  
2 Hari 1 Malam  
IDR 450k/Org  
\*Minimal 10 orang  
Fasilitas :

1. Trainer
2. Visit Farm
3. Welcome Drink
4. Snack dan Makan
5. Gala Dinner
6. Free Dokumentasi
7. Homestay
8. Sepeda + Sunset
9. Wayang Ikan

**Tambahan :**

1. Gerobak Sapi
2. Melukis Topeng
3. Membatik

**Atraksi Wisata**

- Outbound
- Topeng
- Gamelan
- Membatik
- Gerobak Sapi
- Farm ikan

Figure 3. Dewi Kajii educational tourism catalog  
Resource: Dewi Kajii, 7 May 2026

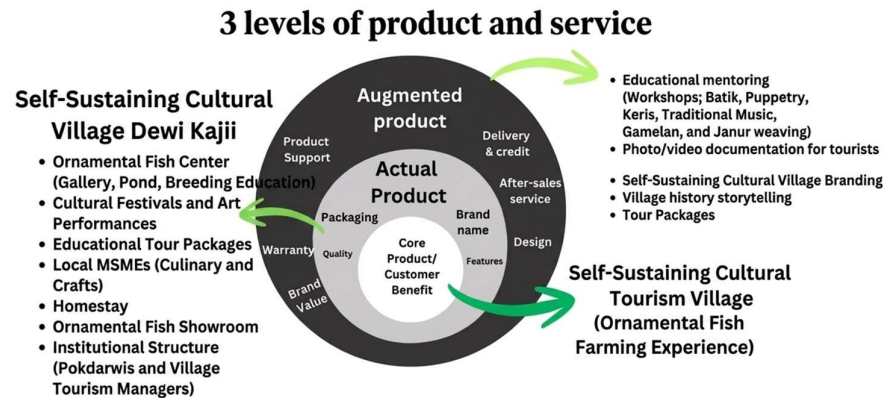


Figure 4. Three Level of Product and Service Dewi Kajii  
Resource: Personal Source, 7 May 2026

### **Core Product: Social Cohesion and Institutional Resilience**

At the core level, Dewi Kajii offers an intangible value proposition that transcends ornamental fish tourism as a mere physical commodity. The primary product sought by visitors is the participatory experience of learning how a fragmented community successfully transformed deep-seated social conflict into structural social cohesion through the collaborative development of aquaculture and cultural activities. This level emphasizes cultural independence, local identity, and community resilience, allowing consumers to immerse themselves in authentic village life and sustainable, bottom-up economic practices.

However, a critical academic analysis reveals that maintaining this core product introduces a fragile socio-political equilibrium. The narrative of "communal harmony" is highly sensitive to internal power relations and benefit distribution. If the financial dividends from tourism activities disproportionately favor specific sub-villages (*dusun*) over others, the original social friction that the tourism village sought to resolve could easily be re-ignited. Therefore, the core product is not a static achievement but a continuous democratic negotiation.

### **Actual Product: Tangible Assets and the Threat of Cultural Commodification**

The actual product represents the tangible tourism attractions and operational components that form the physical manifestation of Dewi Kajii's tourism system. Based on empirical data, this tier effectively consolidates several core programs into a unified visitor experience. It is anchored primarily by the Ornamental Fish Center, which leverages its strong historical legitimacy dating back to 1987 by combining physical showrooms, breeding ponds, educational spaces, and national contests with digital marketing to expand its consumer network. Linked directly to this economic anchor is the curation of cultural assets into a professional tourism package catalog, which offers hands-on workshops in traditional manufacturing processes. This daily operational landscape is further punctuated by the annual Dewi Kajii Culture Fest, a flagship program that integrates education, entertainment, traditional art performances, and local economic activities to consolidate community identity and drive public promotion. Finally, these attractions are supported by concrete community infrastructure and services, including

community-managed *Angkringan* communal stalls that serve as local revenue sources, fishing ponds, space rentals, and community-based homestays.

While these combined elements form a robust physical ecosystem that drives significant economic circulation for local micro-businesses (UMKM), they simultaneously face the critical threat of cultural commodification. When sacred heritage crafts like *pande gamelan* (gamelan smithing) and the conceptually refined *pande keris* (keris smithing) are tightly packed into rigid, time-constrained commercial tour packages, their intrinsic cultural meaning risks being diluted into staged, superficial entertainment tailored strictly for tourist consumption. Furthermore, the community-based homestay development—which aims to provide authentic host-guest interactions—is intentionally being implemented gradually to match community readiness. This calculated slowness reflects a deep-seated socio-cultural anxiety: if domestic spaces are exposed to external market forces without strict cultural boundaries, the private spheres that once nurtured genuine local solidarity risk being fully commercialized into hyper-real performances.

### **Augmented Product: Value-Added Operations and Leadership Dependency**

The augmented product provides additional non-physical value and supporting services that enhance the overall visitor experience, encourage knowledge transfer, and build long-term destination branding. In Dewi Kajii, this tier includes expanded educational workshops (such as batik production centers in Gunting Hamlet, wayang, karawitan, and janur crafts), historical storytelling regarding village transformation, photo/video documentation services for visitors, and macro-destination branding as an officially designated *Desa Mandiri Budaya* (Culturally Independent Village).

An analytical evaluation of this augmented level uncovers a profound structural dependency on key local figures (*tokoh kunci*). The operationalization of complex cultural narratives, digital archive management across social media platforms, and the execution of the *Desa Mandiri Budaya* framework, which demands the integration of the four major development pillars (*Prima, Preneur, Culture, and Tourism*) rely heavily on a small group of educated, well-networked community elites.

This introduces a severe institutional vulnerability: if these key figures exit the ecosystem, the village's capacity to maintain its external networks and sustain its augmented services will drop significantly due to a lack of decentralized leadership regeneration.

Additionally, the *Desa Mandiri Budaya* status risks creating institutional imbalances or "elite capture." Sub-villages hosting prominent physical workshops (such as the main ornamental fish hubs or batik centers) naturally capture greater government funding allocation and political leverage than hamlets managing less tangible cultural assets. Consequently, while the augmented product succeeds in professionally positioning the destination, it creates internal conflicts of interest that threaten to marginalize lower-income agrarian groups, challenging the egalitarian principles of Community-Based Tourism (CBT).

## TALC Analysis

To understand the strategic position of Dewi Kajii, this study applies Richard Butler's *Tourism Area Life Cycle* (TALC) theory, which views destination development as a cyclical process ranging from exploration to possible stagnation or rejuvenation.

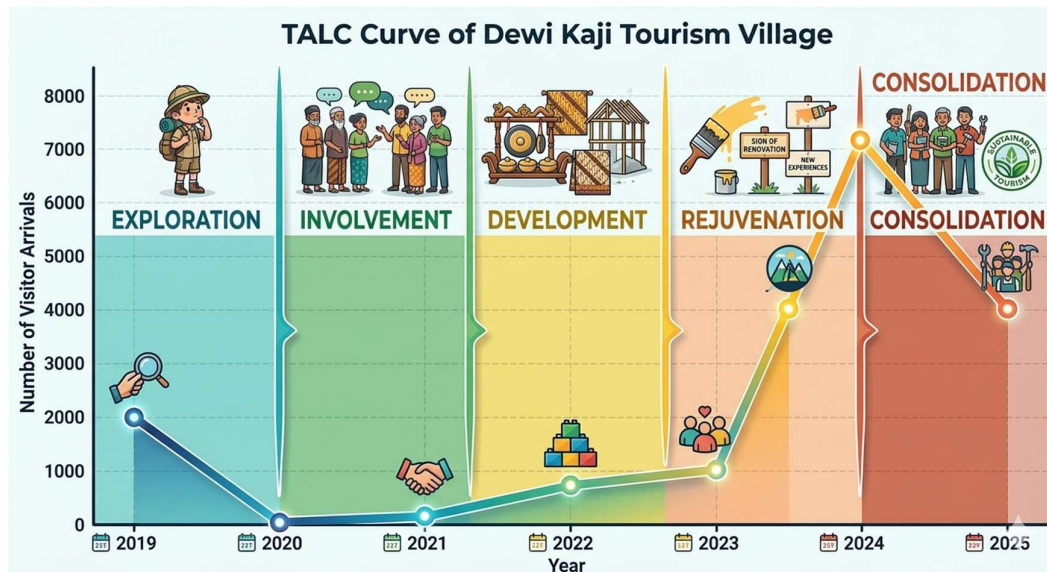


Figure 5. Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) Curve of Dewi Kaji Tourism Village  
Resource: Personal Source, 7 May 2026

### Exploration Stage

The exploration stage of Dewi Kajii began around 2015 through community and youth organization (*Karang Taruna*) initiatives to identify local potentials in agriculture, culture, and ornamental fish farming. Ornamental fish cultivation was selected as the village's main identity because it had developed since 1987 and had become an important part of the local economy. At this stage, tourism activities were still informal, community-based, and operated without adequate tourism infrastructure. Tourism also functioned as a medium of social consolidation to reduce community conflict through the strengthening of local identity.

### Development Stage

The development stage started to emerge in 2018 through collaborations with academics and the establishment of the "Mina Muda" group. Development became more significant in 2022 when Dewi Kajii received government support for the construction of *Angkringan Dewi Kajii*, which functions as both a social and economic space for the community. Tourism development then expanded into cultural sectors such as gamelan craftsmanship, keris craftsmanship, batik, and cultural festivals. During this phase, the management system became more professional through a collaborative *pentahelix* approach involving government, academics, communities, businesses, and media. Youth participation also increased significantly.

### Consolidation Stage

The consolidation stage became evident in 2024 after Gilangharjo was officially designated as a *Desa Mandiri Budaya* (Independent Cultural Village). At this stage, tourism had become an important component of the local economy, supported by

stable tourist visits and stronger institutional structures. Ornamental fish cultivation was integrated with cultural tourism, local *UMKM*, and educational tourism programs. Destination management became more organized through strengthened external networks, spatial planning, and clearer economic targets. However, community participation still needs to be maintained so that it is not overshadowed by bureaucratic formalities.

### **Stagnation Stage**

Although Dewi Kajii continues to grow, the potential for stagnation must still be anticipated. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 became an example of an external disruption that temporarily halted tourism activities. In response, the management focused on internal strengthening and the development of new cultural potentials. Future stagnation risks may arise from low participation in homestay programs, weak cultural regeneration among younger generations, and excessive reliance on storytelling without sufficient improvement in physical facilities. Therefore, community-based innovation remains crucial for maintaining destination sustainability.

### **Rejuvenation Stage**

Dewi Kajii demonstrates a proactive tendency toward rejuvenation before experiencing destination decline. This strategy is carried out through innovation in ornamental fish products, diversification of cultural attractions, development of creative industries, and strengthening professional governance. The village's status improvement from "Developing" to "Advanced," along with the increasing number of tourist visits, indicates that Dewi Kajii is transitioning from the development stage toward consolidation with a positive growth trajectory. This rejuvenation effort reflects the destination's ability to maintain relevance and sustainability organically through community-based development.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the Dewi Kajii Tourism Village has successfully transitioned from an organic, crisis-driven social reconciliation initiative into a highly structured community-based destination, currently consolidating its position within the upper tier of the Development Stage toward the Consolidation Stage of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC). The empirical success of Dewi Kajii is anchored in its ability to package authentic local potential, achieved through the structural integration of historical ornamental fish cultivation since 1987 with heritage traditional crafts like *pande gamelan* and annual cultural festivals into a unified, non-artificial eco-cultural ecosystem. Institutional formalization through a dual-track governance structure—marked by a clear division of roles between the Pokdarwis and productive Village Tourism units—has successfully established solid administrative boundaries and alternative funding resilience through corporate sponsorships.

However, a critical evaluation reveals that this community-based system operates under a highly fragile socio-political equilibrium. The structural transition toward a fully realized *Desa Mandiri Budaya* (Culturally Independent Village) is intensely challenged by internal vulnerabilities that intersect at multiple levels. At the grassroots, the village faces spatial economic disparities and potential conflicts of interest among different sub-villages (*dusun*) due to unequal tourism resource allocation. This economic friction is further compounded by the chronic risk of "elite capture" within the Pokdarwis executive board, which threatens to marginalize grass-roots agrarian groups. Organizationally, there is a severe institutional dependency on a small group of educated, well-networked key local figures (*tokoh kunci*) without a formalized mechanism for leadership regeneration. Simultaneously, a latent threat of cultural commodification looms over the village as sacred heritage crafts are increasingly commercialized into rigid tour packages. Despite these challenges, the theoretical novelty of this research lies in its positioning of local socio-cultural resilience and community identity not merely as a commercial commodity or static asset, but as an adaptive, defensive instrument and an institutional anchor capable of prolonging a destination's life cycle and preventing premature stagnation during its critical consolidation phase.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Dewi Kajii, several strategic policy recommendations are proposed for local government authorities, policymakers, and tourism practitioners. First, the Gilangharjo Village Authority and Pokdarwis must establish an equitable inter-hamlet profit-sharing mechanism by formulating a transparent financial regulation that redistributes a specific percentage of tourism revenues from high-yielding zones, like the primary ornamental fish hub in Kadisoro, to support infrastructure and capacity building in culturally rich but lower-income hamlets such as Gunting, thereby eliminating internal jealousy and preserving collective solidarity. Second, to mitigate the extreme dependency on key community leaders, the management must institutionalize democratic leadership regeneration by designing a formalized "CBT Leadership Academy" in collaboration with local academic institutions, which actively trains local youth and grass-roots agrarian members in digital marketing, administrative literacy, and network management to decentralize social capital. Third, to prevent commodification, local cultural practitioners should develop a "Living Heritage" standard by establishing strict community guidelines regarding the presentation of *pande gamelan* and *pande keris*, ensuring packages are designed around extensive cultural storytelling and authentic educational interactions rather than shortened, superficial performances. Finally, rather than enforcing top-down operational metrics that overwhelm residents, the village should implement a localized community-based homestay incubation using a peer-to-peer model where neighbors who have successfully run homestays provide gradual, informal training to unready households, ensuring that the private domestic sphere is commercialized at a pace that matches local socio-cultural readiness.

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