

Dynamics of Governance in Urban Indigenous Cultural Villages: A Case Study of Pampang, East Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of governance in urban indigenous cultural villages, focusing on the Pampang Cultural Tourism Village in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Urban indigenous communities face unique challenges in maintaining local wisdom while adapting to modernization and development policies. Previous studies have primarily explored indigenous governance in rural areas, while research on urban-based indigenous communities remains limited. This research gap highlights the importance of gaining new insights into how governance systems function in cultural villages located near urban centers, where tourism activities and globalization pressures are highly influential. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Findings reveal that governance in the Pampang Cultural Tourism Village represents a hybrid system, where customary practices coexist with government regulations and tourism demands. Such governance arrangements have contributed to cultural preservation and created economic opportunities for the community, but they have also triggered tensions regarding interest representation, resource distribution, and the risk of cultural commodification. The study concludes that strengthening inclusive governance mechanisms is crucial for the sustainability of urban indigenous villages. This research contributes to the broader literature on indigenous governance by introducing perspectives from urban contexts, which are often overlooked. Policy recommendations include the need for state recognition of local wisdom, greater community participation, and balancing cultural preservation with economic development

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Introduction

The governance of natural resources and community-based administration has become increasingly significant in addressing ecological crises, climate change, and the marginalization of vulnerable groups. Conventional governance models dominated by state-centric and market-based mechanisms often fail to fully capture local socio-cultural contexts [1]. As an alternative, Indigenous governance emerges as a vital framework rooted in self-determination, cultural traditions, and ecological sustainability [2][3].

In Indonesia, recognition of Indigenous governance is enshrined in the 1945 Constitution and the Village Law (UU No. 6/2014)[4][5]. However, despite the legal foundation, implementation remains uneven, and the complexity of customary structures has yet to be fully integrated into national governance frameworks [6]. This tension between recognition and practice creates an important research gap in understanding how Indigenous communities navigate governance within modern policy contexts. Indigenous governance encompasses diverse practices rooted in cultural identity, kinship, and ecological stewardship. These models often diverge significantly from Western paradigms, focusing instead on collective decision-making and the preservation of locality [7]. Research in Tanah Toa, for example, illustrates how governance is interwoven with cultural narratives, reinforcing participation and local knowledge in decision-making processes [7].

At a broader scale, comparative studies highlight how Indigenous governance incorporates Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as fundamental to sustainability [3][2]. In Canada, integrating Indigenous decision-making into environmental management frameworks has enhanced cultural preservation and ecological outcomes [8]. Similar patterns are found in Indonesia, where the governance of the role of customary leaders (bendesa and sabha desa) in Bali's Desa Adat plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony and managing communal resources [9].

While Indigenous communities in Indonesia possess strong genealogical-territorial ties, challenges persist in aligning customary governance with national administrative systems. Studies indicate that Indigenous governance structures, though resilient, face pressures from state policies, economic modernization, and tourism development [6]. Strengthening governance based on local wisdom is thus essential, particularly in protecting territorial rights and ensuring community autonomy. Legal recognition alone is insufficient without adequate institutional support, participatory mechanisms, and integration with modern governance [6]. For instance, disparities often arise between central government regulations and regional autonomy, limiting Indigenous authority in managing land, water, and cultural heritage.

Although research has examined Indigenous governance in various regions, limited attention has been given to its dynamics within urban cultural tourism villages. Kampung Adat Pampang in East Kalimantan represents a distinctive case where Indigenous identity intersects with state governance, tourism development, and urbanization. This study seeks to analyze governance dynamics in Pampang Cultural Tourism Village, focusing on how customary structures adapt to modern pressures

while preserving cultural continuity. By situating this case within broader scholarly debates on Indigenous governance, the research contributes to understanding how customary practices can coexist with national policy frameworks and global sustainability agendas..

Literature Review

Nas, Nurlinah, and Haryanto (2019) argue that indigenous village governance is not merely a formal structure but a social mechanism that preserves cultural identity and community cohesion. These governance models often differ from state-centric systems yet play a crucial role in strengthening community participation and ensuring local sustainability [7].

Bullock, Zurba, Reed, and McCarthy (2020) highlight that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) are central elements in environmental governance and resource management [2]. Nicholson, Spiller, and Pio (2017) emphasize the importance of harmonizing Indigenous knowledge with modern governance [3], while Rist et al. (2019) illustrate how Indigenous communities develop collaborative management of coastal areas. These studies show that the integration of local and scientific knowledge can lead to more sustainable governance practices [10].

Parmadi and Benardin (2021) point out that the commodification of traditional arts through the tourism industry presents a dilemma between cultural preservation and economic needs. Therefore, revitalization strategies rooted in local identity are essential to prevent culture from being reduced to mere commodities [11]. Similarly, Suryadi (2020) stresses that modernization and market demands in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution push cultural actors to balance traditional values with the needs of tourism development [12].

Hafidhoh (2025) adds a contemporary perspective by examining digital tourism branding as a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it increases cultural accessibility, but on the other, it risks weakening traditional values when culture is represented primarily as digital commodities [13]. Furthermore, Ruhanen and Whitford (2019) warn that Indigenous tourism can only sustain cultural heritage if it is managed through autonomous community governance, ensuring that Indigenous peoples remain the primary decision-makers [14].

The formal recognition of Indigenous communities in Indonesia is enshrined in Article 18B (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which acknowledges the existence of customary law communities and their traditional rights. Furthermore, Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages formally legitimizes Indigenous villages as local government entities with authority based on their original rights. This is further reinforced by Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 52 of 2014, which provides guidelines for the recognition and protection of customary law communities [15].

Nevertheless, most existing studies still focus primarily on Indigenous governance in rural and environmental contexts [7][2]. Research specifically addressing Indigenous governance in urban settings with a cultural tourism orientation remains relatively limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the dynamics of Indigenous governance in Pampang Cultural Tourism Village, East Kalimantan, within the context of modernization and cultural tourism development.

Research Methods

The first This study employed a qualitative interpretive paradigm to explore how indigenous mechanisms of social control function as preventive strategies against drug misuse among youth in the digital era. The research sought to understand the lived experiences and the cultural logic embedded within the social system of the Dayak Kenyah community in Pampang Village, East Kalimantan.

Following Sugiyono (2019), a descriptive qualitative approach was adopted to capture social phenomena in a holistic and naturalistic manner [16]. The research design was a case study, focusing on a single bounded case namely, the indigenous community of Pampang as the primary unit of analysis.

Data were collected through three main techniques:

1. In-depth interviews with key informants, including the Head of Economic, Development, and Environmental Affairs of Pampang Urban Village (Ahmad Hani Wibawa) and customary elders who play significant roles in local governance.
2. Field observations during community gatherings at the *lamin* (traditional longhouse) and during interactions between youth, elders, and government representatives.
3. Document analysis of secondary sources, including records of customary law practices and government profiles of Pampang Village.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves three concurrent and iterative stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This approach allows the researcher to continuously refine emerging patterns, establish linkages between categories, and validate interpretations throughout the research process [17]. The process began with reducing the data by coding and categorizing transcripts, observations, and documents into relevant themes. The information was then displayed in narrative and thematic form to identify patterns and relationships. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified through triangulation and member checks with community leaders, ensuring the validity of the findings.

Result and Discussion

A. Community Governance and Customary Authority

The governance system in Pampang Cultural Village reflects a distinctive pattern where customary authority remains central in regulating the life of the community. Unlike conventional state-driven governance structures, decision-making in Pampang is rooted in cultural traditions and led by customary elders who hold both symbolic and practical authority. These leaders, often referred to as *kepala adat* or community elders, are seen not merely as administrators but as custodians of collective wisdom and guardians of social norms.

Field observations during rituals and meetings at the *lamin* (traditional longhouse) revealed how decision-making is conducted through deliberation (*musyawarah*), emphasizing consensus rather than majority rule. Customary elders act as mediators, ensuring that every decision aligns with the values of respect, solidarity, and harmony. This process not only maintains social order but also reinforces the community's cultural identity. Importantly, the authority of these elders extends to conflict resolution. When disputes arise among members, solutions are sought through

customary laws (*hukum adat*), which prioritize reconciliation and restoration of balance within the community rather than punitive measures.

This reliance on customary authority creates what can be described as a dual governance structure. On the one hand, the community is subject to the formal administrative system of the urban village under Indonesian state law. On the other hand, the everyday practices and moral compass of the people are guided by indigenous governance mechanisms. Rather than competing, these two systems often intersect and interact, requiring negotiation and mutual recognition. For instance, while government officials may handle bureaucratic tasks such as development planning or public services, customary elders continue to influence decisions on cultural preservation, rituals, and communal land use.

Table 1. Differences between Indigenous Governance and Formal Governance in Pampang Cultural Village

Aspect	Indigenous Governance	Formal Governance
Leadership	Customary Chief, Elders	Urban Village Head, Section Heads
Decision-Making	Deliberation, Consensus	Regulations, Administration
Main Focus	Rituals, culture, communal land	Infrastructure, public services
Conflict Resolution	Customary law (reconciliation)	State legal procedures

Source: This Study, 2025[18]

The endurance of this dual system demonstrates the adaptability of indigenous governance. It highlights the ability of the Pampang community to maintain cultural integrity while also navigating the demands of modern governance frameworks. By retaining the central role of customary authority, the community ensures that cultural values remain embedded in governance practices, allowing them to sustain both social cohesion and cultural resilience in the midst of modernization and external pressures.

B. Indigenous Social Control and Youth Engagemenent

One of the most distinctive features of governance in Pampang Cultural Village is the way indigenous mechanisms of social control are integrated into community life, particularly in relation to the younger generation. Unlike formal governance frameworks that rely on rules and sanctions, the Dayak Kenyah community places significant emphasis on cultural practices, rituals, and community gatherings as preventive measures against deviant behavior, including drug misuse among youth.

Field data reveal that cultural activities such as traditional dances, music, and rituals are not performed solely for tourism purposes but are deeply embedded in the community's social fabric. Youth are actively encouraged, and sometimes obliged, to participate in these events, which fosters discipline, respect for elders, and a sense of belonging. The *lamin* functions as both a symbolic and practical arena where intergenerational transmission of values occurs. Within this space, elders guide younger members, providing moral lessons and reinforcing social expectations in ways that strengthen identity and cultural pride.

Interviews with community leaders highlighted the belief that strong cultural grounding acts as a protective shield against external pressures and risky behaviors. By embedding youth in a web of social relationships, the community ensures informal

monitoring, where misbehavior is quickly noticed and addressed through collective dialogue rather than punitive measures.

Table 2. Impacts of Tourism on the Community

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
New economic opportunities	Cultural commodification
Improved infrastructure	Potential management conflicts
Promotion of Dayak culture	Rituals losing their sacred value

Source : This Study, 2025 [18]

This system of social control reflects a proactive and preventive orientation. Rather than responding after problems emerge, indigenous governance seeks to build resilience in young people through active cultural participation. In doing so, the community not only preserves its heritage but also adapts traditional mechanisms to address contemporary challenges, particularly those associated with urbanization and the digital era.

C. Interaction with Modern Governance and Tourism Development

The transformation of Pampang into a designated cultural tourism village has significantly reshaped the dynamics of its governance. While the recognition has brought increased visibility and economic opportunities, it has also generated tensions as indigenous governance structures interact with modern state administration and the demands of cultural tourism.

On the positive side, tourism provides new sources of income for the community. Performances of traditional dances, the sale of handicrafts, and the organization of cultural festivals have allowed the villagers to benefit from broader economic networks. Government support for infrastructure development, such as road access and promotional campaigns, has also raised the profile of Pampang as a cultural destination. For many residents, tourism has created pathways for economic participation without leaving their village, strengthening attachment to local traditions.

However, community leaders expressed concerns about the commodification of culture. Rituals and performances that once held sacred meaning risk being reshaped to meet tourist expectations, sometimes at the expense of authenticity. Elders worry that cultural practices may become more superficial, performed for economic benefit rather than spiritual or communal significance. This tension reflects a broader dilemma: how to balance cultural preservation with the practical needs of economic development. Another challenge lies in the coordination between indigenous governance and modern administrative structures. While state agencies manage tourism policy, licensing, and revenues, customary leaders continue to hold authority over cultural practices and community norms. This dual authority often requires negotiation, and at times, friction emerges regarding who has the final say in matters related to tourism management. Nevertheless, instances of collaboration—such as joint committees involving government officials and customary elders—demonstrate the potential for hybrid governance solutions.

Ultimately, the experience of Pampang illustrates the resilience of indigenous governance in navigating modernization. By negotiating the intersection of tradition, administration, and tourism, the community continues to protect its cultural integrity while adapting to new opportunities and challenges. This balance underscores the

importance of recognizing indigenous governance not as static, but as a dynamic system capable of evolving in response to external pressures.

Conclusion

This study has examined the dynamics of Indigenous governance in the Dayak Kenyah community of Pampang Cultural Tourism Village, East Kalimantan, highlighting how customary systems continue to shape community life in the midst of urbanization and tourism development. The findings confirm that Indigenous governance anchored in consensus, cultural rituals, and communal land management remains central to sustaining social cohesion and cultural identity. At the same time, the interaction between customary and formal governance generates both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, collaborative arrangements create possibilities for more inclusive management of cultural tourism; on the other hand, tensions may arise when administrative regulations and state-centric approaches conflict with community-based practices.

Tourism has brought positive impacts such as increased economic opportunities, cultural promotion, and infrastructure development. However, it also raises risks including cultural commodification, weakening of sacred traditions, and potential disputes over resource management. To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen the recognition and participation of Indigenous communities in governance processes. Policy frameworks should be designed to balance economic development with the preservation of local knowledge, cultural values, and community empowerment.

This study contributes to existing literature by addressing the underexplored context of Indigenous governance in urban-based cultural tourism villages. Unlike many previous studies that focus primarily on rural or ecological settings, this research emphasizes how Indigenous governance adapts in a modern, urbanized environment that is deeply influenced by tourism dynamics. Future research recommendations include:

1. Conducting comparative studies between Indigenous villages in rural versus urban contexts to identify similarities and differences in governance adaptation;
2. Exploring the role of youth and intergenerational knowledge transfer in sustaining Indigenous governance practices;
3. Analyzing the impacts of digitalization and social media branding on cultural representation and governance;
4. Investigating long-term policy impacts of national and regional regulations on the autonomy of Indigenous governance systems.

By pursuing these research directions, scholars and practitioners can further strengthen the understanding of how Indigenous governance systems can remain resilient and sustainable in the face of globalization, urbanization, and tourism pressures.

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