

# Assessing Visitor Preferences as to Sustainable Heritage Tourism

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# Assessing Visitor Preferences as to Sustainable Heritage Tourism

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The tourism industry can be an economic multiplier for regional economic growth. Kota Lama is cultural heritage that must be preserved. Good planning is needed to develop it as a tourist destination. This study assesses tourist preferences, to evaluate the market for heritage tourism. This research is exploratory. It uses both primary data obtained from interviews and questionnaires from tourists. Data was taken by purposive random sampling method and analysed by quantitative descriptive method. A region becomes a tourist destination in five aspects; attractions, accessibility, facilities, promotions and information. The result show that Kota Lama fulfils all aspects as a heritage destination. Tourists' perceptions will support its development policy. Coordination with the community and tourism stakeholders is needed, because tourist satisfaction is a determinant of Kota Lama becoming a sustainable, heritage tourism destination.

**Key words:** *Assess, Preference, Tourist, sustainable, Cultural Heritage.*

## Introduction

Tourism is considered an asset or strategic tool that encourages regional development. Tourism development increases the community's income, around the tourist attraction. Tourism in Indonesia is the fourth largest sector. It contributed foreign exchange in 2013 - 2015 and consistently showed its progress, after gas and earth oil, coal and palm oil. In Central Java, Semarang City has the highest number of tourist objects (36 destinations) but the number of tourist visits is not high (2,843,997 people). Magelang District which has fewer objects (14 destinations), but was able to attract 4,273,552 people (Java (2017)).

In Semarang, many places can be developed as tourist destinations, one of which is Kota Lama. Kota Lama is historical. It was the original capital of Central Java. Semarang City and Kota Lama are just like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated, and certainly present its



uniqueness; a gradation that is rare when two generations are put together to create an interesting ladder. Kota Lama is a silent witness to both Dutch Colonial history over more than two centuries, and its economic concomitant. There are about 101 ancient buildings that still stand firm and have a colonial history in Semarang. Kota Lama is a historic site which in many ancient buildings developed into cultural heritage.

In addition to cultural and conservation needs, the existence of heritage tourism is also expected to greatly add value for regional economic growth. Heritage Tourism is more specifically referred to as cultural and heritage tourism or cultural heritage tourism. Rusli Cahyadi (2009) states that cultural heritage, through historical objects, can be a valuable asset for raising a local economy. Fateh Habibi (2018) said that tourism is a huge support to the growth of an economy. In the social sphere, such as the opening of additional jobs and levelling seasonal fluctuations, cultural and historical heritage plays an important role.

Efforts to preserve heritage tourism destinations require high costs and separate management. The industrialisation of tourism in Kota Lama can bring not only historical learning but also multiplier effects, to the local economy of Semarang. Stakeholders perceptions greatly influence the successful development of tourism in Kota Lama. That view is in line with studies by Luigi dell 'Olio (2011), Tsung-HsienTsai (2019), Marius-Răzvan Surugiu (2015), Carmelo J. Leon (2015), and Jeanne Dachary-Bernard (2013). Therefore, the present study is urgently needed, to find out tourist preferences, as one important evaluation for the development of tourist attractions, as well as to find out the market demand for heritage tourism in Kota Lama. Tourists are very important, because they themselves can be an effective media campaign, after they visit Kota Lama. Atsbha Gebreegziabher Asmelash (2018) and Carmelo J. Leon (2015) state that tourists' perceptions of economic dimensions appear to affect their satisfaction with industry.

### **Literature Review**

Presently, many heritage tours become tourist destinations. Countries and regions are actively exploring its potential. Heritage tourism combines artistic, cultural and heritage values. As an important asset of the cities, the potential of historical and cultural legacy objects can significantly profits their economic development. Farid (2015) has already conducted this study in Mali and Ethiopia. In addition, cultural and historical destinations not only bring in regional income, but will give pride to the local population, for the uniqueness of heritage tourism, and so they will be pleased to share it with foreign tourists (Gulnara Ismagilova, 2015).

Heritage tourism has a positive value in local development. In addition to income and community welfare, tourism improves national and international networks, through foreign



relations with assisting organisations. An example is the provision of departures abroad, for organisations focused on cultural heritage objects. Regular visits to a city / region with cultural heritage objects can occur; further, heritage tourism can increase the appeal of cultural heritage formation for foreign tourists, which can then be used in the innovation of charity organisation heritage objects (Dmitry Vorontsov, 2015).

However, the development of heritage tourism has negative factors. Among others, as stated by Dmitry Vorontsov (2015), lags in giving information regarding potentially cultural heritage objects to foreign tourists is aggravated by incomplete information on the internet, at official governmental sites or cultural institutions. Information is sometimes available in a limited number of languages, or even only in a local language. In addition, affordable cultural heritage objects that are affordable for the elderly or disabled may be lacking. This condition should be considered, because heritage tourism is also enjoyed by many people who are elderly or are at retirement age. Therefore infrastructure must be elderly-friendly.

Tourist preferences in the development of heritage tourism are very important. As stated by Luigi dell 'Olio (2011) that consumer is very critical to the service quality alteration, until they are persuaded to consider other variables that initially, they were not aware of, in turn, becoming very influential on their evaluation of overall service quality. Furthermore, several studies have found that opinions and evaluations from visitors can be a promotion that has enormous impact. Andrea Ghermandi (2020) and Marius-Răzvan Surugiu (2015) stated that visitors will give feedback on their visits to cultural and heritage objects, and they will share their experiences through the internet - social media – vlogs - about their tourist journeys. A partial pattern of Kota Lama will be seen and indirectly promoted. Then, prospective visitors will read those experiential accounts, and discuss them through technologically advanced media. This will be captured by heritage tourism providers, to further develop the marketing tools for these objects, so that they are more attractive. Tourist heterogeneity is also important because it can be used to categorise the needs and interests in heritage tourism services. Carmelo J. Leon (2015) stated that heterogeneous preferences across the population of tourists can be useful for targeting specific groups, according to their specific characteristics. Jeanne Dachary-Bernard (2013) stated that management problems, which come from the outcome of different spatial configurations in economic, social and environmental fields, can be solved by using analyses of preference. Eunkyung Park (2019) also finds that travel experiences and evaluations from tourists must be considered, to actual assess their satisfaction during a heritage journey. The services provided can also be in the form of procurement of souvenir items typical of the place. According to Tsung-HsienTsai (2019), tourism promotion is carried out through tour packages made interestingly and comprehensively, in the media available in a given market, which include travel plans, itinerary, food tourism plans and shopping plans.



## Methodology Approach

This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach, which is to describe or overview the events that relate to the studied object. Primary data is used. It is obtained from questionnaires given to visitors, about the characteristics, interest and preferences of tourists who travel to heritage attractions. The population were visitors to attractions in Kota Lama.

The sampling technique uses purposive random sampling method. In accordance with the theory of C. Cooper (1994), this research used indicators that must be owned by a tourist destination, namely:

1. Tourist attraction, that is everything in the tourist area that can attract tourists to visit a tourist attraction, the quality of management services for tourists, local community attitudes towards tourists, and the physical environment of the tourist attraction.
2. Accessibility to tourist attractions involved road conditions, and accessibility by public and private vehicles.
3. Facilities, namely tourist infrastructure such as the availability of places to eat, resting places, places of worship, security facilities, cleaning facilities, parking area and toilets.
4. Promotion and information, including promotions via brochures, advertisements, internet, radio and television, as well as information about attractions through the availability of information boards.

The measurement indicators as to tourist preferences, used in developing heritage tourism are as follows:

**Table 1:** Assessment indicators

Preference	Score	$\Sigma$ (Range)
Very good	5	4,6 – 5,0
Good	4	3,6 - 4,5
Good enough	3	2,6 - 3,5
Poor	2	1,6 - 2,5
Not good	1	1,0 - 1,5

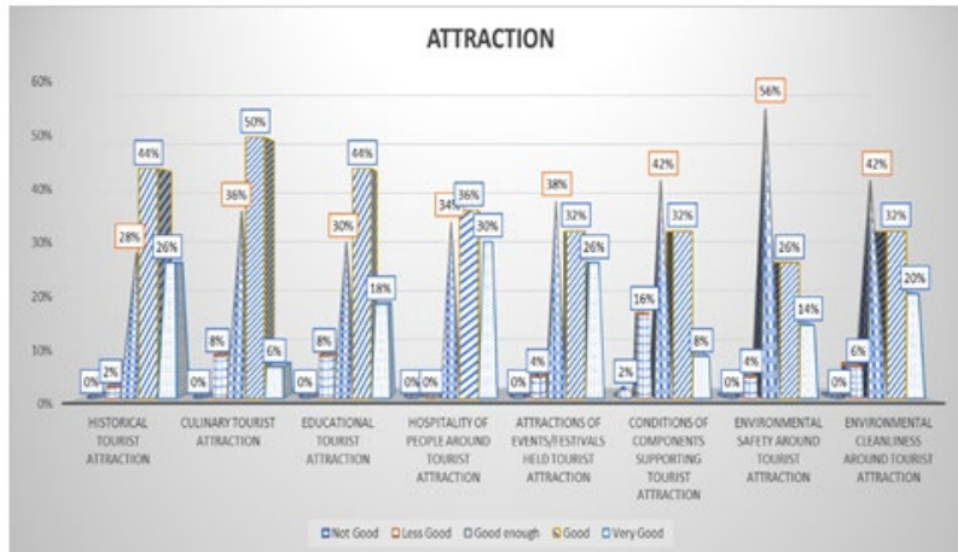
## Result and Analysis

Kota Lama is a silent witness to the Dutch Colonial story for more than two centuries and its location next to an economic area. About 101 ancient buildings still stand firm in that history in Semarang. As a historic area which developed into heritage tourism, Kota Lama can also provide great economic value for regional economic growth. Rusli Cahyadi (2009) and Clare J.A. Mitchell (2018) state that historical and cultural heritage objects are important assets of



the city, generate profits, and significantly influence economic development. Fateh Habibi (2018), and Seidl (2014) say that tourism as a whole supports economic growth.

**Figure 1.** Attraction Aspect



**Source:** Primary Data, processed

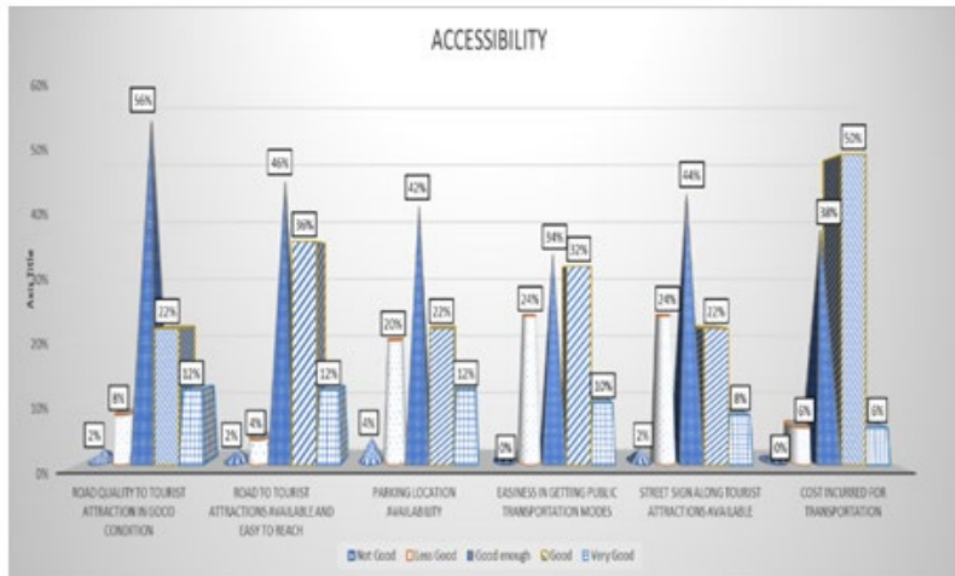
The results show that of the tourists visiting Kota Lama, 68% come from outside the region, and 50% visited more than three times. Such visitors are loyal, carrying out repetitive behaviours. Satisfaction with the previous visit is the value obtained from Kota Lama. Experience actually has a direct effect on satisfaction and an indirect effect on loyalty, as Ali Shakoori (2019) and Atsbha Gebreegziabher Asmelash (2018) find. According to Attraction Assessment theory, the stronger predictors of Kota Lama respectively are the traditional food, the ancient building design, and then the educational content in the history of Kota Lama, as in Figure 1. Based on assessment, it was also obtained that the safety predictor around the tourist attractions must be a major concern. The developing of Kota Lama should prioritise this component, especially for managers, because tourist preferences are not very good in this component.

This finding show how significant the local community is, in providing support for the preservation of heritage tourism in Kota Lama. The same study was also carried out by Dian Rahmawati (2014) and Kurniasih (2018).

The Kota Lama is a historical and educational attraction. From the middle of 2017 until today, the Government of Semarang City is revitalising it, using funding Ministry of Public

Works and Public Housing aid, amounting to IDR 156 billion. The funding is allocated for infrastructure, building roads, retention pools, the pump house of the Bubakan roundabout and Berok Bridge, and the installation of street furniture. Based on the blueprint published by the Regional Development Planning Board, Kota Lama in the future will be divided into five activity segments. Each corner is mapped in accordance with the type of activity, such as culture, recreation, commercial or private office space, traditional and modern trade, and the education sector.

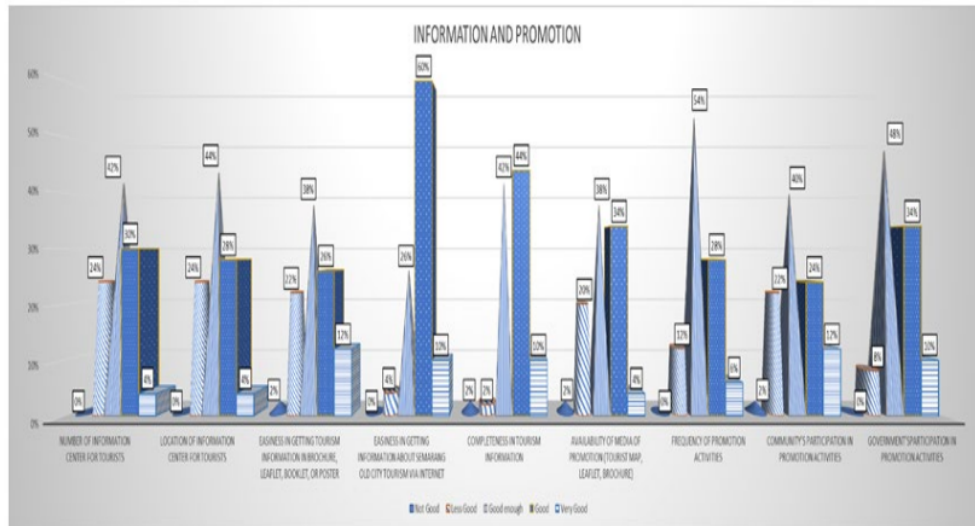
**Figure 2.** Accessibility Aspect



**Source:** Primary Data, processed

The Government of Semarang City has a target, that in 2020 the Kota Lama Area is included in the world heritage list of UNESCO. Therefore, the Government keeps chasing the good repair of existing attractions. Good tourism attractions can gather many tourists, keep them inside the attractions for a long time, and satisfy the visitors (Eunhyung Park, 2019; Soekadijo, 2013). Interesting tourist attractions must have ease of accessibility, and not merely exist. Accessibility sets geographic land use, applying an inter-related transportation network system. Therefore, accessibility involves comfort. Whether it is easy or difficult for the tourists to reach their destination depends on the transportation system applied.

**Figure 3.** Information and Technology Aspect



**Source:** Primary Data, processed

Accessibility is a significant support for tourism development because it relates to intersectoral development (Suwanto, 2004). Therefore, accessibility to tourist attractions in Kota Lama needs special handling. Without being related by a good transportation network, it is impossible that an attraction will be visited by tourists.

Referring to Figure 2, tourist preferences as to accessibility show that they do not mind transportation costs that must be incurred to visit the destination. It was shown that 50% of tourists give a good rate, and 6% give “very good”, meaning no problem with the amount of costs incurred. But the overall tourist preferences are not high. They indicate that access to physical facilities is the biggest obstacle in developing Kota Lama into Heritage Tourism. Figure 2 shows that tourists’ willingness to pay was not matched by the provision of quality roads, available and easy roads to reach attractions, and that the existence of car parking is not easy. That is so even if the location is very far away, and public transportation that can deliver them to a tourist attraction is rarely found. Kota Lama has a huge potential because of its strategic location, near the harbour and airport. In addition, the Tawang train station is very close. Many people use the railroad to get to other areas. Therefore, transport must be a major concern, requiring the determination of an appropriate strategy, to address the root of the problem.

Topographically, Semarang City is in the lowland near the beach. It is no wonder that the streets of the Kota Lama area are often inundated by the tide, causing the road around the area to not be in a good condition. However, today the Government of Semarang City has





been repairing the road, so that the tourists will feel easy and comfortable about getting to Kota Lama. Fifty percent of people respond with a good mark to the category of the cost incurred for transportation. It is because the transportation in Semarang City is very affordable. Moreover, Semarang City provides the Rapid Transit Bus (BRT) from and to Kota Lama, for the price of IDR 3,500 per person, one way.

Tourist attractions are at the end of the tour, and they must meet the requirement of accessibility. This means that tourist attractions should be easy to reach and find. Easy navigation requires street signs near the tourist attraction. For this sub-category, 44% of tourists give the assessment of “not good enough”. Indeed there have been some street signs, but the situation is too minimal. More street signs would facilitate tourists reaching the location. The tourist map of Kota Lama needs to be put in every corner of that area, and contain important information of the building that should be visited, and the public facilities available for tourists.

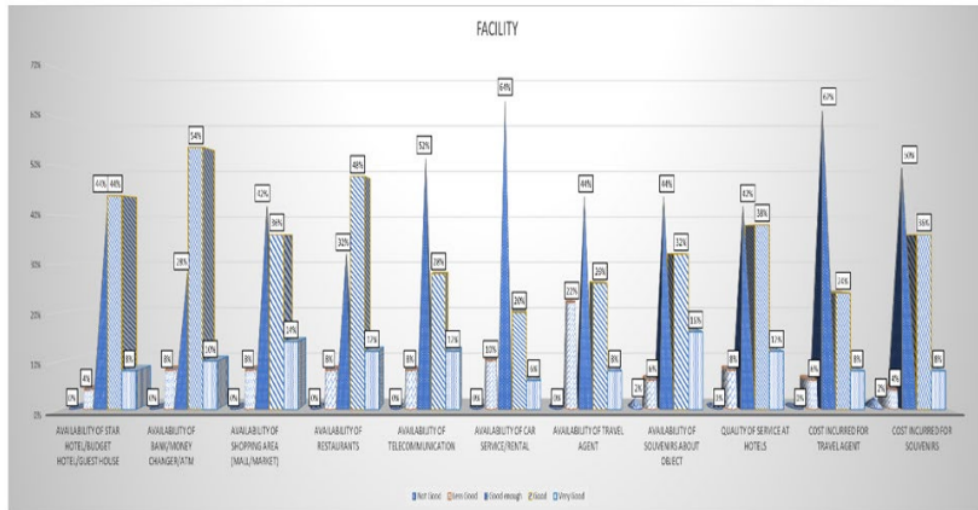
Other factors that have significant roles in tourism are information and promotion. Promotion is needed, to persuade people to visit Kota Lama. Research shows that 60% of people rate the ease of internet information about the Kota Lama as “good”. They browse information about Kota Lama before visiting. It turns out that the good information on the internet is not balanced at tourist sites. Tourists’ preferences give an average rate for the number of information centres (42%), the location of information centres for the tourists (45%), and the frequency of promotion activities (54%). So, Local Government needs to add the information centres for tourists in Kota Lama site, by establishing TC (Tourism Information Centres) and providing professional tour guides. This way, tourists will better understand the history of the buildings in the Kota Lama.

The facilities provided by the organiser are those that make it easy for visitors to meet their needs during their visit. Hopefully therefore, visitors will not find it difficult to meet their needs (accommodation and transportation). The facilities that become easy for the visitors to local tourist destinations are determined by the completeness of information and the availability of transportation. Complete information should be very easy to find in every media promotion provided by the tour organisers. They can use social media to improve visits. The availability of transportation should be the commitment intertwined between the organiser and the supporting parties of tourist attractions whether the community or the private. It will all provide valuable information to decision-makers, for improved tourism management and conservation strategies (Andrea Ghermandi, 2020).

A physical facility is provided by the organiser of a tourist attraction, to give a service or an opportunity to tourists to enjoy it (Suwanto, 2004). The availability of facilities will

encourage prospective tourists to visit and enjoy tourist attractions over a relatively long time. Facilities and services will ease people's visits and movements at desired tourist attractions.

**Figure 4.** Facility Aspect



**Source:** Primary Data, processed

As to availability, the results showed 54% of tourists said that banks / money changers / ATMs are easy to find. Figure 4. That is because there are large banks in the area on Jalan Kepodang. Tourists can easily find them. A slightly disappointing result is the sub-category of the availability of car rental travel services, because 64% of respondents who gave quite good grades. This indicates that the supporting facilities at tourist sites are not enough to provide a sense of satisfaction, even though in a good tourist spot, we will easily find a car rental service. In addition, travel agents for the Old City and souvenirs are too expensive. It is an important note for managers, to create local souvenirs which are price efficient, because the existence of local products is very important. They are a unique characteristic of a region (Nihayah, Pujiati, & Khoiruddin, 2017). More than 50% of tourists give an average rating for this sub-category. This finding is an important note for heritage tourism managers who want tourists to visit again. Many studies such as Tsung-Hsien Tsai (2019), Marius-Răzvan Surugiu (2015), Carmelo J. Leon (2015) and Jeanne Dachary-Bernard (2013) said that tourist satisfaction is crucial, for the sustainability of visits to heritage attractions.

The availability of starred hotels, budget hotels, and guest houses received a 44% "good" response from tourists. Based on the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Semarang City, the number of starred and non-starred hotels is 167, with 9,967 rooms. A 48% "good" mark was also awarded for the category of restaurant availability. The Kota Lama area also



becomes the culinary centre of Semarang City. The Government of Semarang City frequently holds culinary festivals in the Kota Lama area. Tourists demand in Kota Lama a historical area, to meet the factors of aesthetics, plurality, scarcity, historical roles, and strengthening the area with the environment supporting the tourism activities (safety, comfort, cleanliness, regularity, and easiness).

### **Conclusion**

This study aims to assess tourist preferences as one important evaluation for the development of a tourist attraction, as well as to find out the market demand for heritage tourism. Kota Lama fulfilled all aspects of heritage destinations. Tourists' good perception as to aspects of attraction, accessibility, facilities and promotion and information has been strengthened by it. This finding is the same as Lusetyowati (2015). The attraction of heritage objects displays architecture that follows buildings in continental Europe around the 1700s. It can be seen from the typical buildings and ornaments that are identical to European style, such as the size of the doors and windows that are extraordinarily large, the using of coloured glass, the unique shape of roofs, and the existence of basements. The availability and ease of information about Kota Lama can be accessed via the internet, so that tourism is widely promoted to and known by consumers. Roads and facilities toward these attractions are substantially available. There are some negative notes from the perception of tourists who come to Kota Lama. The condition of buildings that are poorly maintained is a weakness, as is sanitation, which will affect the sustainability of their visits. In addition, tourists also face difficulties in getting public transportation, instructions and signs that are expected for easier the mobility around Kota Lama. The tourist information centre is also not easily found in this tourist area. In line with concerns by Dmitry Vorontsov (2015), information available about heritage tourism usually uses local languages that are not easily understood by foreign tourists.

The next finding is the success of regional development. A cultural heritage tour was not only determined by the aspects of attractions, accessibility, facilities and promotion and information, but also by the readiness of the local community to support the development of its region as a tourist site. In terms of tourism demand, tourists evidently are willing to pay for visiting heritage tourist attractions like Kota Lama, because they have an expectation. However, they want to have a return commensurate with what has been spent, mainly in relation to satisfaction after they visit a cultural heritage attraction.

Overall, the perception of tourists towards Kota Lama will be able to support its development policy as heritage tourism (Eunhyung Park, 2019; Luigi dell 'Olio, 2011; Marius-Răzvan Surugiu, 2015). Government policy should be directed towards coordinating with tourism stakeholders, both the community and tourism service providers, in Kota Lama. The



perception related to the availability of infrastructure that facilitates tourist mobility around Kota Lama. Also, the community's concern for sanitation and hygiene must be the top priority. Emphasis is needed because tourist satisfaction is a determinant of the success and sustainability of heritage tourism. Kota Lama, as cultural heritage, must be preserved, to show to future generations the noble history and formation of Semarang City. A similar study by Bashi (2015) stated that at this time, heritage and cultural tourism are under great pressure due to rapid economic development. The process requires environmental and natural resources, such that cultural heritage is being neglected, and even facing destruction.

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