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THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON SHIFTING MOUNTAIN CLIMBING RITUAL TRADITION IN GEOPARK RINJANI, INDONESIA

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Hasan Basri[1], Tuti Mutia[2], Abdul Rasyad[1], Ahmad Tohri[1], Hanapi Hanapi[1], Muhamad Ali[1]

The impacts of tourism on shifting mountain climbing ritual tradition in geopark Rinjani, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: This article aims to explore the tourism influence on the transformation of mountain climbing rituals. This study is a phenomenography centered on a mountain climbing ritual procession conducted by a guide named *Mangku*. Twenty participants, including *Mangku*, community leaders, mountain climbing guides, and local community, were interviewed, and their results were corroborated through the research of documentary materials and pertinent literature. Thematic data from Braun & Clark Framework were utilized to ascertain the tourism influence on spiritual value shifts, mountain climbing, and community engagement. It indicates that tourism diminishes the spiritual significance of indigenous mountain climbing rituals and reduces the societal role of the *Mangku*. The study advocates rules for preserving traditions, cultural education to uphold spiritual values, and sustainable environmental conservation.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, mountain climbing, ritual, tradition, Mount Rinjani, Indonesia

Vpliv turizma na spreminjanje ritualne tradicije plezanja v geoparku Rinjani na Indoneziji

POVZETEK: Namen članka je raziskati vpliv turizma na preoblikovanje ritualov plezanja v gorah. Študija je fenomenografija, osredotočena na ritualno procesijo plezanja po gorah, ki jo vodi vodnik *Mangku*. Intervjuirali smo dvajset udeležencev, med njimi *Mangkuja*, voditelje skupnosti, gorske vodnike in lokalno skupnost, rezultate pa potrdili z raziskavo dokumentarnega gradiva in literature. Tematski podatki iz okvira Braun & Clark so bili uporabljeni za ugotavljanje vpliva turizma na spremembe duhovnih vrednot, gorsko plezanje in vključevanje skupnosti. Kažejo, da turizem zmanjšuje duhovni pomen avtohtonih ritualov gorskega plezanja in zmanjšuje družbeno vlogo *Mangkuja*. Študija zagovarja pravila za ohranjanje tradicij, kulturno izobraževanje za ohranjanje duhovnih vrednot ter trajnostno varstvo okolja

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Turizem, plezanje, ritual, tradicija, gora Rinjani, Indonezija

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1 Introduction

Mount Rinjani (hereafter Mt. Rinjani) had been a center of spirituality for the local community before the global tourism campaign. Mountains are regarded as sacred macrocosms symbolizing the balance between the physical, spiritual, and metaphysical dimensions that establish connections with individuals (Nuraini et al. 2023) as a microcosm. Traditional beliefs and rituals are significant in sustaining a harmonious relationship among humans, nature, and supernatural forces (Ween and Abram 2012; Høyem 2020). Processions and rituals on Mt. Rinjani are conducted by spiritual leaders commonly referred to as *Mangku* within the local community. *Mangku* holds significant responsibility in preserving traditions and customs transmitted across generations. In recent decades, the tourism industry has significantly impacted the region (Alamineh et al. 2023; Wu et al. 2023), particularly concerning the sustainability of local rituals and traditions, including mountain climbing activities. There is an initial ritual in mountain climbing ritual tradition in the form of reading the prayer for salvation and obeying customary rules known as *awik-awik*, which reflects local norms to preserve nature and social-spiritual harmony. This ritual is an essential part of mountain climbing activities to protect the mountain climbers from any form of danger while climbing. This practice is also witnessed before climbing the Himalaya peaks in Nepal (Nepal Traveller 2024) as well as other mountainous regions worldwide.

Mt. Rinjani is located on the island of Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Mt. Rinjani is situated between 80 18'18" and 80 32'19"S and 1160 21'30" and 1660 34'15" E (Siolemba Patiro et al. 2024). It is the second-highest active volcano with an altitude of 3,726 meters above sea level (Muntasib et al. 2019), making it the second-highest mountain in Indonesia after Mt. Kerinci in Sumatra. This mountain is part of the Rinjani-Lombok Geopark, which UNESCO recognizes as a geologically, ecologically, and culturally important area for sustainable development (Lee and Jayakumar 2021). This Geopark protects biodiversity and geology while supporting the local community's economy through sustainable tourism.

The accessibility of hiking due to high rainfall is influenced by the rainy season for safety reasons. In the dry season, the main popular hiking trails are through Sembalun and Senaru, which offer panoramic views and challenges for mountain climbers. The vegetation around Mt. Rinjani is very diverse and includes tropical rainforests, grasslands, and evergreen forests that dominate at certain altitudes. On the lower slopes, various tropical flora, such as orchids, palms, and typical mountain plants, grow. At higher altitudes, vegetation changes to plant species that are more resistant to cold temperatures and extreme conditions.

Mt. Rinjani is one of Indonesia's most in-demand mountain climbing destinations, attracting thousands of domestic and foreign tourists annually. This mountain climbing activity not only aims to enjoy Lake Segara Anak's natural beauty and panorama but also involves religious rituals for the local community, such as the traditional ceremony of Mulang Pakelem. This natural and cultural potential makes Mt. Rinjani a tourist destination and an essential place in environmental conservation and local culture.

As an increasingly popular tourist destination, Mt. Rinjani has undergone radical changes due to tourist visits, both domestic and international. Modernization that follows the flow of tourism contributes to economic progress (Paramati et al. 2017; Garau-Vadell et al. 2018; Li et al. 2018; Comerio and Strozzi 2019), creating jobs (Nair et al. 2015; Kantar and Svržnjak 2017) as well as increasing the income of local communities (Zhang and Gao 2016; Groizard and Santana-Gallego 2018; Pan et al. 2018). However, this modernization challenges the spiritual tradition that has long been an integral part of the Mt. Rinjani region. The increase in tourism that prioritizes physical, recreational, and commercial aspects, such as mountain climbing (Westskog et al. 2021) raises concerns about the loss of spiritual meaning in existing rituals. Rituals, such as *Ngasuh Gunung* (prayer offerings and embedding of local symbols commonly known as *Sembeq* for safety) and protecting mountain climbers from danger, as well as the *Jambeq Gunung* ritual practiced by traditional leaders to ask for blessings and maintain natural harmony, which were previously seen as sacred acts, are now beginning to be marginalized by the needs of the tourism industry, which prioritizes tourists' comfort and satisfaction.

Mangku's role as a ritual leader in mountain climbing encounters increasing pressure in this context. *Mangku* is responsible for leading ritual processions, such as special offerings and prayers; they maintain a spiritual relationship between the community and Mt. Rinjani, which many believe to be a sacred place (Crimmel 2003). These rituals, which usually involve offerings to ancestral spirits, are performed to pray for the safety and well-being of the mountain climbers and maintain the balance of nature. This tradition has been an important part of the spiritual life of the Sasak people (an ethnic group that lives on the island

of Lombok, where Mt. Rinjani is located) for centuries. The role of *Mangku* is very central to guiding activity, for example, providing an understanding of geographical and weather conditions that are indispensable in mountain climbing safety (Różycki and Dryglas 2014). However, with the development of the tourism industry, these rituals are increasingly losing their relevance for most mountain climbers, especially tourists from outside the region.

Today's main problem is the shift in spiritual values and mountain climbing rituals on Mt. Rinjani. The tourism industry places more emphasis on the physical and aesthetic aspects of mountain climbing (Westskog et al. 2021) without understanding the spiritual dimension contained in each traditional procession. Tourists, who are mostly interested in natural beauty and physical adventure, tend to ignore the rituals led by *Mangku*, even seeing them as part of a purely tourist attraction. This has led to the degradation of traditional values that should be maintained as an integral part of the cultural identity of the local community.

The change in views among the younger generation of the Sasak people further weakens the challenges *Mangku* faces in maintaining its spiritual role. The younger generation, who are more open to the influence of modernization and globalization (McKenzie 2019; Lin and Long 2020), is beginning to experience a shift in orientation from traditional spiritual values to more pragmatic economic values, which trigger social and cultural change as well (Stevens 1991). Traditional spiritual values emphasize the sacredness of nature through rituals and customary rules. Mountain climbing activity is a spiritual practice loaded with ecological awareness and cultural ethics. In the past, before climbing, mountain climbers always performed a prayer ritual at the entrance of the climb as a form of asking permission from the spirit of the mountain guard. They only brought enough refreshment, did not take anything from the forest, and maintained their attitude and speech during the journey, believing that the mountain was sacred. This practice reflects a high spiritual awareness of nature and is part of cultural ethics to maintain ecological balance. The correlation is robust because these values foster responsible behavior, preserve the environment, and make the mountain a sacred space.

On the other hand, the pragmatic economic value in modern climbing focuses more on exploiting mountains as a tourist commodity, where the main goal is financial gain through an increase in the number of tourists, guide services, entrance tickets, and other commercial activities. This orientation change often ignores sacred values; for example, mountain climbers violate customary prohibitions, litter, or climb without following the salvation prayer procession. Ritual processions that used to be carried out with great respect are now starting to be seen as something ancient in the context of the development of the times. As a result, *Mangku*'s role as the guardian of the community's spirituality began to be marginalized, and rituals that were once considered sacred were increasingly rarely carried out solemnly. In fact, rituals are an inseparable part of the culture (Richards 2018).

Research on the impact of tourism on the spiritual tradition of mountain climbing is still very limited (Shi et al. 2022), although attention to the influence of the tourism industry on the environment and economic impacts is increasing (Boyns and Luery 2015; Du et al. 2016; Azam et al. 2018; Comerio and Strozzi 2019; Nagaj and Žuromskaitė 2021). Studies of how tourism activities affect ritual practices and the sustainability of local traditions, especially those led by *Mangku*, are still understudied. This creates a knowledge gap that needs to be addressed immediately, given the importance of preserving spiritual traditions as part of an invaluable cultural heritage (Berkes et al. 2000). To address this gap, Interaction Ritual Theory (IRT) was in use introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman (1967). This theory focuses on the dynamics of social interaction (Wu et al. 2023) and how small rituals can shape individual identity and group cohesion. In this theory, social interaction is seen as a series of units that have certain components, such as shared presence, shared attention, and emotional resonance, that lead to group solidarity (Bargeman and Richards 2020; Johannessen and Collins 2024). This theory emphasizes that through interaction rituals, individuals can feel strong social bonds, reinforce social norms, and create deeper meaning in collective life.

This study, furthermore, seeks to examine the impact of tourism on the sustainability of local rituals and traditions on Mt. Rinjani. This research aims to significantly address the knowledge gap concerning the interplay between spiritual traditions and tourism while also offering practical recommendations for local communities and tourism stakeholders to preserve the sustainability of culturally significant traditions and rituals. In conclusion, the research question proposed was: How does tourism impact the mountain climbing ritual tradition (Sasak people) of Mt. Rinjani Geopark?

2 Literature review

Johannessen and Collins (2024) explain that IRT is a micro-sociological mechanism that explains how intense face-to-face interactions, which involve physical presence, shared attention, and synchronized emotion, can result in group solidarity, sacred symbols, moral standards, and emotional energy. IRT is the key to understanding social harmony as well as the dynamics of conflict, domination, and social transformation through »conflict rituals« that are also driven by collective emotional energy. In the context of mountain climbing involving local rituals and traditions, IRT offers a relevant framework of understanding to explain how interactions between tourists and local communities can shape unique and immersive experiences of mountain climbing.

The relevance of IRT in responding to the tourism phenomenon and its impact on local rituals and traditions can be seen in how tourism affects cultural sustainability. Through ritual interactions, traditional values can be conveyed and revived, but this also poses challenges, such as cultural commodification that may change the original meaning of the ritual (Cochrane 2009). If these rituals are repackaged or modified to meet tourists' expectations, they risk losing their spiritual essence and original meaning. The following is the research framework, as presented in Figure 1.

This theory contributes to filling a gap in tourism studies that have so far highlighted more the risk and physical aspects of climbing activities (Slentz and Chase 2003; Windsor et al. 2009; Lockwood and Sparks 2013; Gatterer et al. 2019). In this context, IRT is highly urgent because it is able to explain how ritual interaction in social infiltration not only strengthens local cultural values but also becomes a means of forming sustainable solidarity (Hausmann et al. 2011) between tourists and communities, thus making this theory a robust conceptual foundation in this paper.

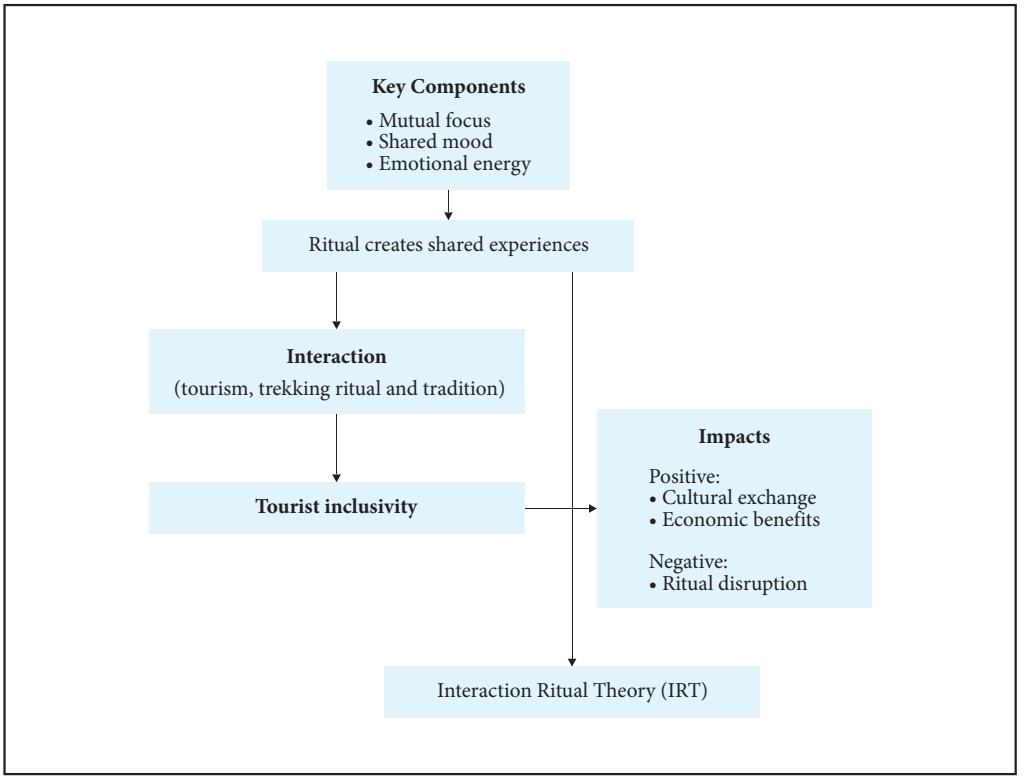


Figure 1: Research framework elaborated by authors.

3 Research methodology

3.1 Research design

This study uses a phenomenography approach to describe the phenomenon and current reality of mountain climbing rituals in Mt. Rinjani. Phenomenography is a research approach that has not been widely used in the field of tourism (Novais et al. 2018) although this approach has developed into various fields such as education (Marton 1981) and marketing (Lin and Niu 2011). According to Marton (1981), phenomenography is understood as a qualitative approach that tries to explore individual experiences in a content-oriented and relational way. Furthermore, Novais et al. (2018) explain that phenomenography focuses on the conception of certain aspects of reality that are generally recognized from empirical research, collective meaning rather than single meaning, and looking at phenomena from a second-order perspective of how phenomena are understood. The phenomenography is different from phenomenology, which focuses on decomposing meaning from the side of individual meaning (Barnard et al. 1999).

This approach was carefully selected as the focus of the study was to explore a deep understanding of the impact of tourism activities on the sustainability of local rituals and traditions. The phenomenography approach is particularly suitable in this context as it provides the flexibility to explore social, cultural, and spiritual aspects holistically through the perspectives of key actors, such as *Mangku*, local communities, indigenous leaders, and tour guides, to see how they understand and experience reality (Sandberg 2000). The approach was chosen because Mt. Rinjani is a unique site rich in spiritual traditions. To underpin this approach, IRT was applied to comprehensively explain the phenomena explored concerning the mountain ritual tradition in Geopark Rinjani, Indonesia. IRT also works to reveal how interaction rituals address the research aim explaining social norms, and the ritual sustainability from the perspective of traditions in the region of Mt. Rinjani, Lombok, Indonesia.

3.2 Sampling and data analysis

The data was collected from two main sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and analysis of documentary materials related to the mountain climbing ritual procession. In-depth interviews were conducted with *Mangku*, other community leaders, the mountain climbing guide community, and representatives of the local community who were directly involved in the mountain climbing ritual on Mt. Rinjani. A number of questions were formulated to answer the two research questions listed in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Blueprint of interview.

	Questions
A.	Tourism impact on the mountain climbing ritual tradition in Mt. Rinjani
1.	What kinds of rituals are usually performed before or during the climb of Mt. Rinjani?
2.	How do tourists, both domestic and international, engage with this ritual tradition?
3.	Have you observed any changes in the way these rituals are performed since the growth of tourism in this area?
4.	In your opinion, are the spiritual values behind the rituals still understood and respected by mountain climbers today?
5.	How do local communities perceive the changes in ritual practices due to the presence of tourists?
6.	Are there any parts of the ritual that have been abandoned or replaced due to the influence of the tourism industry?
B.	Strategy proposed to preserve the mountain climbing ritual tradition of Mt. Rinjani
7.	What efforts have been made by traditional communities or spiritual figures such as *Mangku* to maintain the rituals?
8.	Are there any customary regulations (*awik-awik*) in place to govern how tourists interact with local traditions?
9.	What role does the government or tourism authorities play in supporting the preservation of mountain climbing rituals tradition?
10.	Are there any educational programs or awareness campaigns for tourists regarding the cultural and spiritual values of the area?
11.	In your opinion, what are the most effective strategies to ensure that ritual traditions are not lost as tourism continues to grow?
12.	Is there any collaboration between local communities, customary leaders, and tourism stakeholders to preserve the cultural values around Mt. Rinjani?

The judgment sampling technique was used to select participants who had deep knowledge and involvement in the spiritual traditions of the region. This technique was chosen because only individuals with specific insights into rituals and traditions can provide rich and relevant information for the purposes of this research.

The research participants comprised 20 participants, including three *Mangku*, four community leaders, and 13 others from the local community and mountain climbing guides (Table 2). Participants were selected based on their involvement in the ritual procession and their knowledge of the influence of tourism modernization on local traditions. Each participant was interviewed face-to-face in the area around Mt. Rinjani for 45 to 90 minutes. In addition to interviews, related documents were analysed and interpreted to strengthen the findings of how the mountain climbing ritual procession on Mt. Rinjani was carried out.

Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature, including previous studies related issued raised in the example of European mountains (Vidal-González and Sánchez 2019; Nowacki 2023) in other mountainous regions of Indonesia and other European regions, as well as tourism policy documents related to preserving culture and tradition in Mt. Rinjani. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis proposed by (Braun and Clarke 2006). The first step was transcribing the interview results and interpreting the documentary materials, such as photos. Furthermore, the codes are grouped into several initial themes that are relevant to the two main research question, that is how does tourism impact the sustainability of the mountain climbing ritual tradition on Mt. Rinjani?

To answer the research question, themes such as the erosion of the sacred value of rituals (shifting spiritual values), the commercialization of mountain climbing, and the change in the role of *Mangku* were successfully identified. These themes were then reviewed to ensure they are coherent, clearly defined, and critically linked to relevant literature. These themes were categorized and compared with findings from the relevant literature. The validity of the data is ensured through a triangulation procedure, comparing them to each other to verify the consistency and relevance of the research results. Once the main themes have been identified and analysed, the researcher makes conclusions based on the patterns that appear in the data and relates them to the main research questions and the existing literature.

Table 2: Profile of participants (n=20).

Status	Sex	Number	Code
Mangku	Male	1	Mk1
Mangku	Male	1	Mk2
Mangku	Male	1	Mk3
Mountain climbing guide	Male	1	MCG1
Mountain climbing guide	Male	1	MCG2
Mountain climbing guide	Male	1	MCG3
Mountain climbing guide	Male	1	MCG4
Mountain climbing guide	Male	1	MCG5
Community leader	Male	1	CL1
Community leader	Male	1	CL2
Community leader	Male	1	CL3
Community leader	Male	1	CL4
Host-society	Female	1	HS1
Host-society	Male	1	HS2
Host-society	Female	1	HS3
Host-society	Male	1	HS4
Host-society	Female	1	HS5
Host-society	Male	1	HS6
Host-society	Female	1	HS7
Host-society	Male	1	HS8

4 Results

The rapid development of modern tourism has significantly impacted various aspects of local people's lives, including the continuity of their rituals and traditions. As one of Indonesia's most popular tourist destinations, Mt. Rinjani attracts thousands of tourists every year who are interested in its natural beauty and the physical challenges of its mountain climbing. Statistical data provided by Rinjani National Park (Figure 2) shows that the total number of tourist visits in 2024 was 80,109 people, while in 2025 the number decreased to 57,131 people due to nine-month visit record only. The highest visit in 2024 occurred in May with a total of 11,776 people, while in 2025 the peak visit was recorded in June with 11,759 people. In contrast, the lowest number of visits in 2024 occurred in December with 4,268 people, while in 2025 the lowest figure was in September with 6,693 people. When viewed from the monthly average, visits in 2024 will reach around 6,676 people, while in 2025 the monthly average increased to 9,522 people, although the data for 2025 only covered the period until September. These findings show that there were fluctuations in visit patterns influenced by seasonal factors and external dynamics relevant to tourism activities in the Mt. Rinjani region. However, behind the economic increase resulting from the tourism sector, local traditions that have long been part of the cultural identity of the Sasak people around the mountain face various challenges.

The most obvious impact of tourism on local traditions is the shift in ritual meaning and value. On Mt. Rinjani, the ritual led by *Mangku*, a spiritual leader who plays an important role in society, has sacred value. These rituals, such as offerings and prayers to seek protection and safety during the ascent, have been going on for centuries. However, with the increasing flow of tourists who mostly do not have a deep understanding of local traditions, the spiritual meaning of these rituals is further eroded. Tourists see these rituals more often as cultural attractions that can be displayed than as an integral part of the spiritual life

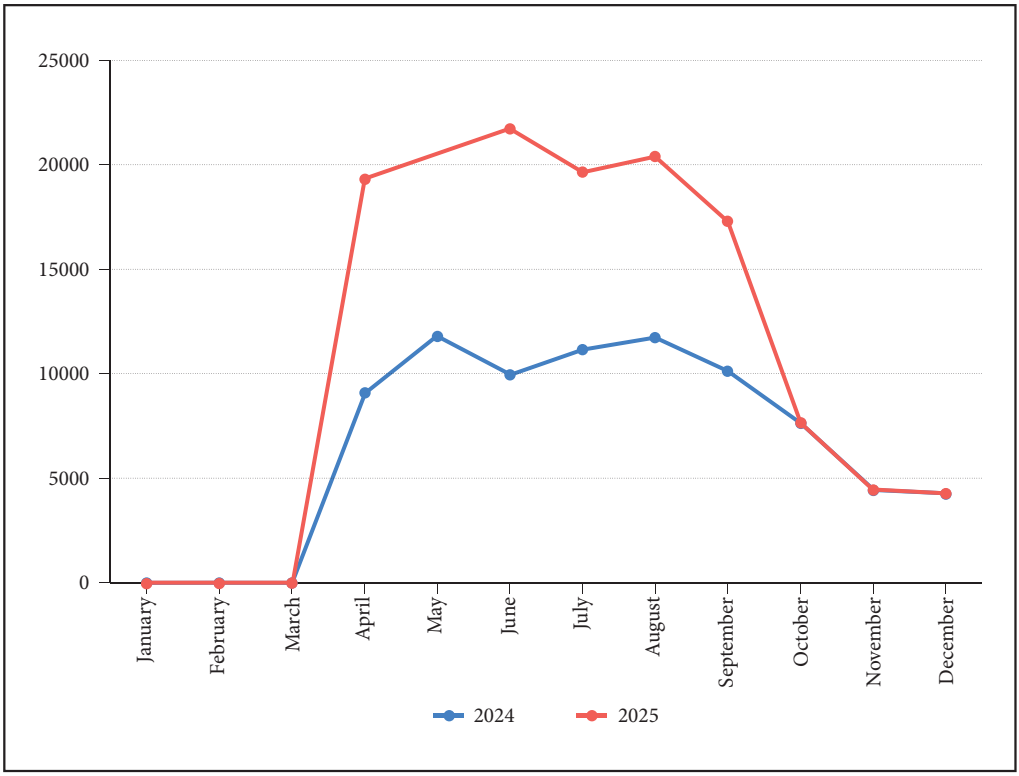


Figure 2: Mountain climbing visit in Rinjani National Park in 2024 and 2025.

of the Sasak people (HS3). As a result, the sacred value inherent in the ritual was degraded, and local communities began to feel that their rituals were no longer valued appropriately.

In addition, the modernization of tourism has also caused a change in the way people view and carry out rituals. The younger generation, who are more exposed to the current of modernization, are starting to abandon old traditions that are considered irrelevant in their lives. Pressure from the tourism sector that emphasizes economic benefits makes local communities prioritize commercial aspects rather than maintaining spiritual traditions. Many are more focused on developing mountain climbing services, accommodation, and other tourist facilities, while traditional rituals are beginning to be marginalized. This resulted in the loss of most of the values of the tradition that were once highly valued (MCG1).

The pressure from modern tourism also impacts *Mangku*'s role as a ritual leader. *Mangku*, who was once highly respected and served as a spiritual guardian, is now beginning to lose its influence in society. As more tourists come to enjoy the physical hike without regard for the spiritual aspect, *Mangku*'s role in leading the ritual becomes increasingly isolated. *Mangku* still leads some traditional processions, but community participation in these processions is diminishing, and the meaning of rituals that were once very important is now beginning to be seen as a mere formality. Tourists not involved in this ritual tend to ignore it, while younger locals are starting to see the role of *Mangku* as less relevant.

On the other hand, modern tourism also challenges environmental sustainability, an important part of traditional rituals on Mt. Rinjani. The rituals have always involved elements of nature conservation, where people believe that maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature is an essential part of their spiritual beliefs. However, increasing the number of tourists who do not always comply with customary rules and mountain climbing ethics causes environmental damage (Mk3). The increase in waste, destruction of vegetation, and the decline in water quality in the Mt. Rinjani area are problems that increasingly threaten the preservation of nature that has been preserved through local traditions. *Mangku* and the local community are experiencing difficulties maintaining this tradition of nature preservation during tourism modernization, which prioritizes economic growth over environmental preservation (Mk1).

Even so, the impact of modern tourism on the continuity of local rituals and traditions on Mt. Rinjani is not entirely devastating. Tourism also provides opportunities to promote and preserve traditions through interaction with tourists who are interested in local culture (CL3). Several tourism programs that aim to promote ecotourism and community-based tourism can play a role in maintaining a balance between tradition and modernization. With the right approach, modern tourism can be a means to introduce the spiritual and cultural values of the Sasak people to the outside world, as well as encourage tourists to appreciate local traditions more.

Overall, the impact of modern tourism on the continuity of local rituals and traditions on Mt. Rinjani is two-way. On the one hand, tourism has led to the degradation of spiritual meaning and shifted the important role of *Mangku* and local communities in preserving traditions. On the other hand, tourism also provides opportunities to protect and promote these traditions through a tourism approach that is more sensitive to local culture. The challenge ahead is how local communities, together with the government and tourism actors, can find a balance between tourism modernization and preserving traditions that have become the spiritual identity of the Sasak people around Mt. Rinjani.

5 Discussion

This study found that tourism activities on Mt. Rinjani significantly impact the sustainability of local trekking rituals and traditions in the Sasak community. On the one hand, the modernization of tourism has shifted the spiritual meaning contained in traditional rituals, especially due to the lack of appreciation from tourists who focus more on physical experience and recreation (Xuemei et al. 2024) than the spiritual meaning of trekking. In addition, the local younger generation is starting to abandon traditions that they consider archaic and less relevant to modern life. However, the study also identifies that preservation strategies such as community-based tourism development, regulations that support the preservation of traditions, and indigenous education for the younger generation can help maintain local traditions amid the modernization of the tourism industry.

Several studies on trekking and some related to local rituals have highlighted this issue closely. Although some studies only limit the study to the evaluation and challenges of trekking (Hillman 2019; Muntasib

et al. 2019), other studies agree with what was found in this study. An interesting thing, for example from the research of (Cochrane 2009) revealed that the impact of tourism on rituals and local traditions, particularly concerning sacred sites like Mt. Bromo, is perceived as mystical recognition. The author notes that tourism can lead to the commercialization of these sites, potentially altering their sacred atmosphere and affecting the authenticity of traditional rituals. Furthermore, the author discusses the potential degradation of rituals or local traditions due to tourism. It is mentioned that tourism at sacred sites, such as Mt. Bromo, brings management challenges and conflicts between different user groups, including worshippers and tourists. The influx of visitors can lead to commercialization and alterations to the environment that disturb the sacred atmosphere of these places. This often raises questions about authenticity and sustainability as the rituals might be modified or commodified to meet the expectations of tourists, which can undermine their original spiritual significance. Sacred site (mountains) is significantly affected by social and environmental change (Nyaupane et al. 2014).

In a non-Asian context, for example, trekking in the Himalayas represents a close connection between rituals, culture, and economy. The climbing path initially functioned as a pilgrimage route to a sacred location, where religious practices and traditional processions were combined with the spiritual experience of the mountain climbers (Nowacki 2023). On the other hand, this activity is a driver of the local economy through the services of guides, porters, accommodation, and the commercialization of expeditions that continue to grow (Pond et al. 2014). The complexity of accessibility including social, economic, and environmental factors also confirms that climbing is not just a physical activity, but part of a layered socio-economic system (Apollo 2017) that the majority of mountain destination managers globally shift from the sacredness of ritual to economic dominance.

Other findings show that tourism is closely related to spiritual values, for example, in rituals (Kim et al. 2013). Rituals play an important role in raising tourism's image through symbols and traditions. Visits to sacred sites and participation in local rituals help connect tourists with a destination's cultural heritage and create an authentic experience. Cooper et al. (2003) explained that performance rituals are the cause of improving the quality of education. There are value and experience from the ritual process that tourists can learn. Ritual performance also encourages customer intention to decide on a purchase. In addition, rituals encourage the preservation of local traditions, maintain the community's cultural identity, and provide economic benefits through sustainable tourism. However, it is important to maintain a balance so that the ritual is not degraded or over-commodified due to tourism pressures and that its spiritual meaning and authenticity are maintained.

Although this study contributes to filling the research gap on the impact of tourism activities on rituals, it has some limitations. The main limitation is that the focus is more on the supply perspective: local communities, especially traditional leaders, *Mangku*, local communities, and local trekking guides. This study has not explored in depth how tourists or outsiders, both in terms of their perception and experience of the rituals and customs on Mt. Rinjani, affect the sustainability of the tradition. It is very important to understand the tourist's perspective further because they are one of the main actors in the tourism industry that can contribute to preserving or eradicating local traditions. Further studies involving tourists can provide more holistic insights into how tourists view and appreciate local traditions and the impact of their interactions on the sustainability of rituals.

Another limitation of this study is that the approach used is qualitative, with interviews limited to several key informants, even though it is complete by digging for information from other sources such as documents and academic literature. Although this method provides a deep understanding of the role of *Mangku* and the dynamics of local traditions, this research may not fully represent the diversity of views and experiences of the Sasak people throughout the Mt. Rinjani region. Research with a larger sample size, using quantitative surveys or a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, can provide a more comprehensive picture of how local communities, including the younger generation, view the role of *Mangku* and their traditions during tourism modernization.

This research is also limited to the socio-cultural context without focusing on the environmental dimension. Although there is recognition that the traditions on Mt. Rinjani are closely related to nature conservation, the specific impact of tourism activities on the physical environment and how they affect the implementation of rituals have not been explained in detail in this study. Therefore, future research needs to combine socio-cultural analysis with studies on environmental impacts to provide a more thorough understanding of the sustainability of indigenous rituals on Mt. Rinjani. The study of how environmental damage

can affect local communities' spiritual practices and customs is very relevant, considering that Mt. Rinjani is a conservation area with a vulnerable ecosystem. Thus, while this study provides important insights into how tourism modernization affects local rituals and traditions in Mt. Rinjani, more in-depth studies are needed to explore other untapped dimensions, such as the perspective of tourists, the dynamics of the younger generation, and the interaction between environmental sustainability and ritual implementation. Future research is expected to make a deeper contribution to understanding how tradition and modernization coexist harmoniously in natural and cultural tourist destinations such as Mt. Rinjani.

6 Conclusion

This study seeks to examine the influence of tourism on the sustainability of local rituals and traditions in Mt. Rinjani, and to suggest strategies for preserving these traditions amid modernization. The research findings indicate that tourism activities in the Mt. Rinjani region significantly influence the rituals and beliefs of the local people. A primary influence is the transformation of spiritual values shown in the rituals conducted by *Mangku*, which are progressively marginalized by industrialization. Tourists frequently prioritize the physical and visual dimensions of trekking, neglecting the cultural and spiritual significance inherent to the Sasak people's way of life. Moreover, the economic demands of tourism compel many younger generations to forsake traditional practices in favour of a more pragmatic and profit-driven approach.

Nevertheless, the study indicates that opportunities remain to safeguard local traditions, particularly by incorporating cultural values into sustainable tourist management. Proposed initiatives encompass establishing community-based tourism, indigenous education for youth, and regulations safeguarding the spiritual values of local communities. This heritage may be preserved despite modernization by facilitating the active engagement of local communities, especially indigenous leaders like *Mangku*. Implementing ecotourism and cultural tourism strategies can facilitate the introduction of the spiritual values of the Sasak people to tourists, enabling a deeper appreciation of local traditions and contributing to their preservation.

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