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EXPLORING THE VISITING TRENDS AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT MUSEUM KESULTANAN BULUNGAN, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Museums play a pivotal role in educational settings by serving as platforms for exploring history and local culture. Nevertheless, a disparity exists between national museums and their regional counterparts. Regional museums often lack comprehensive educational programming and are primarily viewed through the lens of tourism. Addressing this imbalance necessitates enhancements in educational initiatives within regional museums. However, a thorough analysis of visitor trends is imperative before implementing reforms. In this study, we focus on a museum situated on the island of Borneo, specifically in Bulungan, North Kalimantan, Indonesia, to contextualize our investigation. This study analyzed the visiting trend and educational activities at the Museum Kesultanan Bulungan in Indonesia from June to December 2022. We used a quantitative approach as a primary approach by focusing on the number of visitors and gathering qualitative information as part of validity through observations and interviews with museum managers. The study found that regular tourism visits dominated educational visits, with seasonal educational activities confined to specific months. Most visitors come from the North Kalimantan region, indicating that the museum primarily caters to the local population. However, the study also suggests the potential to expand its outreach to visitors from other regions of Indonesia and internationally. Students from senior high school, junior high school, and elementary school dominated the number of visitors engaging in educational activities, with field studies being the most common. The study provides insights into the patterns of museum visits and educational activities at Museum Kesultanan Bulungan and suggests ways to improve its outreach and educational offerings. Drawing upon the findings of our study, we propose several recommendations

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Museums play a pivotal role in educational settings by serving as platforms for exploring history and local culture. Nevertheless, a disparity exists between national museums and their regional counterparts. Regional museums often lack comprehensive educational programming and are primarily viewed through the lens of tourism. Addressing this imbalance necessitates enhancements in educational initiatives within regional museums. However, a thorough analysis of visitor trends is imperative before implementing reforms. In this study, we focus on a museum situated on the island of Borneo, specifically in Bulungan, North Kalimantan, Indonesia, to contextualize our investigation. This study analyzed the visiting trend and educational activities at the *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan* in Indonesia from June to December 2022. We used a quantitative approach as a primary approach by focusing on the number of visitors and gathering qualitative information as part of validity through observations and interviews with museum managers. The study found that regular tourism visits dominated educational visits, with seasonal educational activities confined to specific months. Most visitors come from the North Kalimantan region, indicating that the museum primarily caters to the local population. However, the study also suggests the potential to expand its outreach to visitors from other regions of Indonesia and internationally. Students from senior high school, junior high school, and elementary school dominated the number of visitors engaging in educational activities, with field studies being the most common. The study provides insights into the patterns of museum visits and educational activities at *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan* and suggests ways to improve its outreach and educational offerings. Drawing upon the findings of our study, we propose several recommendations

for enhancing museum efficacy. These include the implementation of innovative learning initiatives, such as interactive exhibitions, alongside promotional efforts facilitated through local governmental policies. Additionally, augmenting staffing levels and refining existing educational programs, such as guided field trips, are advised to enrich the educational experience offered by the museum. These recommendations aim to foster a more dynamic and engaging environment conducive to learning and exploration within the museum setting.

Keywords: *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan*, educational activities, visiting trend

INTRODUCTION

For many years, museums have functioned as pivotal educational arenas, facilitating the exploration of history and local cultural facets (Chan, 2013; Reeve & Woollard, 2013). However, in recent decades, museums have undergone a transformative shift, aiming to showcase artefacts and offer a comprehensive narrative surrounding the exhibited items to their visitors (Choi & Kim, 2021; Navarrete, 2019). The integration of cutting-edge technologies like augmented reality (Chen *et al.*, 2021; Venigalla & Chimalakonda, 2019) and touch-screen displays (Han & Cui, 2021; Li, 2022) has significantly augmented the educational encounters within these spaces.

Nonetheless, the prevalent utilisation of museums for educational purposes predominantly revolves around national institutions, with regional museums receiving notably less attention from the public (Pakawyan, 2020). Statistical data reveals a substantial disparity in visitor numbers between regional and national museums, indicating a trend where regional museum visits are predominantly driven by tourists rather than individuals seeking educational enrichment (Directorate for the Protection of Indonesian Culture, 2015). Conversely, national or provincial museums tend to draw a comparable audience for tourism and educational motives (Directorate for the Protection of Indonesian Culture, 2015).

This study presents insights into the pattern of educational visits specifically directed toward regional museums. We are forming a segment of an extensive research initiative focusing on the *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan* (Bulungan Sultanate Museum) in Tanjung Palas District, Kab. Bulungan, North Kalimantan, the outcomes of this investigation will lay the groundwork for forthcoming endeavours to promote regional museums as educational hubs for educational researchers in education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History and Background of the *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan* (Bulungan Sultanate Museum)

In delving into the historical underpinnings of *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan*, it is crucial to trace the evolution of regional museums across Indonesia. Traditional communities in Indonesia have long engaged in the collection and preservation of cultural artefacts, reflecting deeply ingrained heritage practices passed down through generations (Kreps, 2006; Njoto, 2015 & Sellato, 2015). The inception of the museum concept can be attributed to Georg Eberhard Rumpf, a Dutch naturalist, in the 17th century, paving the way for the establishment of the Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Batavia Arts and Sciences Association) in Batavia, now Jakarta (Sellato, 2015).

Subsequently, numerous princes and regents across Java initiated private museums, such as those in Surakarta in 1890, Surabaya in 1900, and Mangkunegaran in 1918 (Sellato, 2015). This trend extended beyond Java's borders. Moreover, enacting the Law on Cultural Property, Monumenten Ordonnantie No. 238, in 1931 marked a significant milestone (ICOM, 2010). By the onset of World War II, there were approximately 16 Dutch museums, which likely surged to 24 to 26 post-war. Concurrently, the 1930s saw the emergence of several local museums, including the *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan*, situated in East Kalimantan, now within the North Kalimantan Province (ICOM, 2010 & Sellato, 2015).

Situated in Bulungan Regency within the North Kalimantan Province, *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan* is an enchanting history repository (Director of Indonesian Cultural Heritage and Museum Conservation, 2018). Nestled within the opulent precincts of the former *Museum Kesultanan Bulungan*, this museum embodies the region's opulent legacy (Director of Indonesian Cultural Heritage and Museum Conservation, 2018). It serves as a portal through which visitors are transported across time, encountering a splendid array of artifacts and remnants once cherished within the grandeur of the Bulungan Sultanate. These relics bear significant historical weight and represent tangible remnants of the remarkable Bulungan civilization.

Some items in the museum's collection are meticulous replicas, painstakingly recreated owing to the aftermath of the *Bultiken* tragedy (Raditya, 2017), yet they vividly encapsulate the essence of that era. Noteworthy among these reproductions are the coronation site, the sultan's throne, the ceremonial wedding setting, the sultan's resting place, and the regal attire of the Sultan of Bulungan (Abelda, 2016; Director