

Accelerating Bureaucratic Strengthening In Cultural Tourism Village Development: A Case Study Of The Trowulan Area, Mojokerto Regency

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Abstract

Bureaucratic strengthening is an important foundation for achieving effective, inclusive, and sustainable rural development. In the context of cultural tourism villages, bureaucratic capacity extends beyond the administrative capabilities of village governments to include the ability to establish cross-sectoral coordination, manage resources, utilize digital technologies, and engage communities and other stakeholders in the development process. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of accelerating bureaucratic strengthening in the development of cultural tourism villages in the Trowulan area, Mojokerto Regency. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 informants comprising village government officials, administrative personnel, community leaders, tourism-related MSME actors, and representatives of the local government, as well as through focus group discussions (FGDs), observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that bureaucratic strengthening faces major challenges: limited bureaucratic capacity, fragmented coordination among actors, suboptimal institutional arrangements and division of authority, limited digitalization of administrative processes, and overlapping policy implementation. At the same time, the Trowulan area, as a cultural heritage area containing various historical destinations, requires a governance approach that involves government, communities, businesses, cultural organizations, and other supporting actors. The study demonstrates that accelerating bureaucratic strengthening should focus on continuous capacity building for government personnel, collaborative institutional arrangements, digital transformation,

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regulatory harmonization, and data-driven, participatory cultural tourism planning. The findings further demonstrate that bureaucratic strengthening is not merely a matter of improving administrative capacity but rather a process of institutional transformation aimed at creating adaptive, collaborative, and sustainable governance of cultural tourism villages.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Strengthening; Village Government; Cultural Tourism Village; Collaborative Governance; Digital Transformation; Trowulan; Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Rural development is an important component of Indonesia's national development agenda. Decentralization through Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages has provided village governments with greater authority to manage governance, development, community empowerment, and public services in accordance with local characteristics. This legal framework was subsequently amended through Law Number 3 of 2024, which constitutes the second amendment to Law Number 6 of 2014. These changes demonstrate that village governance continues to evolve in response to development needs and changing societal dynamics.

The expansion of village authority has, at the same time, increased demands on local bureaucratic capacity. Village governments no longer function merely as administrative implementing bodies but also as development actors that are expected to plan programs, manage resources, deliver public services, establish partnerships, and respond to social and economic changes within their communities. From a public administration perspective, these conditions position institutional capacity, personnel competence, accountability, transparency, and coordination capabilities as important factors in determining the success of development at the local level (Dwiyanto, 2018; Peters, 2018).

These demands become increasingly complex when villages develop culture-based tourism. A tourism village is not merely an economic activity but also a space for interaction among government, communities, businesses, cultural organizations, tourists, and various government institutions at different levels. Cultural tourism development also has distinctive characteristics because it requires the reconciliation of economic interests with the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental sustainability (Damanik & Weber, 2006; Inskeep, 1991; Murphy, 1985). In Pakis Village, Trowulan District, Mojokerto Regency, there is considerable potential for developing a culture-based tourism village that can contribute to broader area



development while generating benefits for the local community. This development initiative is intended to increase community income through tourism activities while encouraging local participation in the inclusive management and preservation of the village's cultural potential. Previous studies on tourism village governance in Indonesia have shown that community-based destination development requires effective coordination among stakeholders, while limitations in communication, institutional capacity, and technology utilization remain key challenges.

The Trowulan area provides a relevant context for examining these issues. Trowulan District consists of 16 villages and had a population of 77,581 in 2024 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Mojokerto, 2024). The area possesses significant historical and cultural value due to its numerous archaeological remains associated with the Majapahit Kingdom. Government cultural heritage databases identify several important heritage sites in Trowulan, including Tikus Temple, Brahu Temple, Wringin Lawang Temple, Segaran Pool, Bajangratu Gate, and various other sites that form part of the national cultural heritage (Direktorat Pelindungan Kebudayaan, 2023; Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2023).

The strength of cultural tourism in Trowulan is also reflected in the development of Kampung Majapahit Bejijong Tourism Village. The official Jadesta portal of the Ministry of Tourism identifies Kampung Majapahit Bejijong as a tourism village based on arts, culture, history, nature, and creative industries. The village adopts a one village, multi product concept and was listed among the top 50 tourism villages in the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Awards (ADWI) (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia, 2021). Government information further indicates that the development of Kampung Majapahit extends beyond historical sites and involves homestays, culinary activities, handicrafts, cultural attractions, and community-based activities.

At a broader scale, Mojokerto Regency has also experienced growth in tourism activity. The Mojokerto Regency development planning document records 921,151 tourist visits in 2024, an increase from 845,377 visits in 2023 and 663,265 visits in 2022 (Pemerintah Kabupaten Mojokerto, 2024). Within the historical and religious tourism category, the number of visits reached 396,711 in 2024. These figures indicate that tourism is becoming increasingly important to regional economic development while reinforcing the need for destination governance capable of connecting economic, social, institutional, and cultural preservation interests.

Governance issues become even more significant because Trowulan is not merely an ordinary tourism destination. The 2026 Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) of Mojokerto



Regency identifies several cultural tourism areas in Trowulan District, including Bajangratu Temple, Tikus Temple, Brahu Temple, Centong Site, Wringin Lawang Temple, Segaran Pool, Putri Cempo Tomb, Minakjinggo Temple, Majapahit Site, Sumur Upas Temple, Troloyo Tomb, and Lantai Enam Site (Pemerintah Kabupaten Mojokerto, 2025). The large number of heritage sites and actors involved demonstrates that the development of cultural tourism in the area requires coordination that cannot be undertaken by a single actor.

Previous research on Kampung Majapahit Bejijong has examined collaborative governance in tourism village development (Basyar et al., 2025; Vandayani & Widiyarta, 2022). These studies identified the involvement of the village government, Mojokerto Regency Government, local communities, and the private sector. More recent research has also indicated that the Majapahit heritage area in Trowulan faces the need to balance cultural heritage preservation with tourism development objectives through interactions among local communities, government, and cultural organizations (Nanita & Sharma, 2026).

Nevertheless, research on Trowulan can still be developed from a different perspective. Previous studies have primarily examined collaboration as a mechanism for tourism village development, whereas bureaucratic strengthening as an institutional capacity that enables such collaboration to function effectively has not been a primary focus. There is therefore an opportunity to examine how personnel capacity, interorganizational coordination, administrative digitalization, the distribution of authority, and community participation are interconnected in accelerating bureaucratic strengthening within the context of cultural tourism.

The urgency of bureaucratic strengthening is also evident in local institutional initiatives in Pakis Village, Trowulan District. Pakis Village has strategic potential as a cultural tourism village based on heritage from the Majapahit era and is currently being developed to diversify the local economy. However, efforts to approach and engage stakeholders have encountered complex bureaucratic barriers. One of the major challenges arises from overlapping policy implementation within the area, whereby cultural heritage preservation mandates, regional tourism regulations, and village governance authorities often operate according to sectoral logics that intersect without clear synchronization of administrative procedures (Matland, 1995; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984).

This study addresses this gap by positioning bureaucratic strengthening as a process of institutional transformation rather than merely an improvement in the administrative capabilities of government personnel. The novelty of this research lies in integrating four dimensions—



human resource capacity, institutional and coordination strengthening, digital transformation, and community participation—to explain the process of accelerating bureaucratic strengthening in cultural tourism villages. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the dynamics of accelerating bureaucratic strengthening in the development of cultural tourism villages in the Trowulan area, Mojokerto Regency.

THEORETICAL STUDY

Bureaucratic Strengthening and Institutional Capacity

Bureaucratic strengthening in public administration is understood as a process of enhancing the capacity of government organizations to perform governmental functions effectively, accountably, and responsively. Such strengthening extends beyond organizational structures to encompass human resource capacity, work procedures, organizational culture, decision-making capabilities, and adaptive capacity (Dwiyanto, 2018; Peters, 2018). In village governance, bureaucratic capacity possesses distinct characteristics. Village governments operate with relatively limited resources while maintaining direct relationships with local communities. Bureaucratic strengthening at the village level in this study is operationalized through four main dimensions: (1) bureaucratic capacity; (2) institutional capacity and coordination; (3) digital transformation; and (4) community participation.

Collaborative Governance Framework

Tourism village development involves actors with differing interests, resources, and authority. Collaborative governance positions government not as the sole development actor but as one of several stakeholders responsible for establishing joint decision-making processes (Agranoff, 2007; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). This approach emphasizes dialogue, trust, role sharing, facilitative leadership, and collective agreements. In tourism villages, collaboration requires strong internal bureaucratic capacity to manage interorganizational relationships effectively over time (Basyar et al., 2025; Vandayani & Widiyarta, 2022).

Digital Transformation in Public Administration

Digitalization in village governance does not merely refer to adopting technological devices but involves fundamental changes in organizational working practices (Meijer & Bekkers, 2015; Mergel et al., 2019). Digital transformation improves efficiency in documentation, data



management, reporting, public communication, and community participation. Digitalization is understood as an instrument for strengthening bureaucratic capacity rather than an end in itself.

Sustainable Cultural Tourism Governance

Cultural tourism has the potential to enhance local economies while creating risks if economic exploitation is not balanced with cultural heritage preservation (Damanik & Weber, 2006; Inskeep, 1991; Murphy, 1985). Governance must integrate economic, social, cultural, and environmental interests to maintain the integrity of cultural assets (Nanita & Sharma, 2026). The conceptual framework posits that Bureaucratic Capacity drives Institutional Strengthening, Coordination, Digital Transformation, and Community Participation, leading to Sustainable Cultural Tourism Village Development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach to examine the dynamics of bureaucratic strengthening in the Trowulan cultural tourism area, Mojokerto Regency (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moleong, 2021; Sugiyono, 2022). Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 20 key informants selected via purposive sampling, comprising village government officials, administrative personnel, community leaders, tourism-related MSME actors, and representatives from the Mojokerto Regency Government (Tourism Office, Cultural Office, and Bappeda).

Data collection was complemented by focus group discussions (FGDs), direct field observations across historical sites in Trowulan, and document analysis of regional planning records (RKPD 2026), statistical publications (Kecamatan Trowulan Dalam Angka), and relevant legal regulations (Law No. 11/2010, Law No. 6/2014, Law No. 3/2024, and Permendikbud No. 260/M/2013). Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis technique, involving data familiarization, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the analytical report. Triangulation of sources and methods was applied to maintain data trustworthiness and analytical rigor.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conditions of Cultural Tourism Development in the Trowulan Area

The Trowulan area consists of a complex network of historical sites, residential spaces, community economic activities, and cultural attractions. The Mojokerto Regency Government identifies various primary cultural tourism attractions, including Bajangratu Temple, Tikus Temple, Brahu Temple, Wringin Lawang Temple, Segaran Pool, Minakjinggo Temple, Majapahit Site, Sumur Upas Temple, and Troloyo Tomb (Pemerintah Kabupaten Mojokerto, 2025). This rich concentration presents economic opportunities while creating governance complexity, as destination management must reconcile commercial tourism expansion with cultural heritage protection (Nanita & Sharma, 2026).

Kampung Majapahit Bejijong Tourism Village represents a prominent community-based model adopting a "one village, multi product" concept, winning recognition in the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Awards (ADWI) (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia, 2021). However, scaling such models across the 16 villages of Trowulan District requires an integrated bureaucratic framework capable of handling cross-jurisdictional heritage assets.

Barriers to Bureaucratic Strengthening

The empirical findings reveal five primary structural and operational barriers hindering bureaucratic strengthening in the area:

1. *Limited Bureaucratic Capacity*

Village personnel face expanding expectations that extend beyond routine administrative tasks to include data-driven planning, tourism program management, public communication, and digital technology adoption. Current capacity-building efforts remain sporadic rather than continuous.

2. *Fragmented Interorganizational Coordination*

Coordination among village governments, regency technical agencies (OPDs), provincial bodies, site managers, and local communities remains situational and program-dependent (Pollitt, 2003). Unstructured coordination creates overlapping initiatives and unaligned development priorities.



3. *Institutional and Authority-Related Issues*

Because several archaeological sites in Trowulan hold national cultural heritage status under Ministerial Decree No. 260/M/2013 (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2013; Republik Indonesia, 2010), village governments lack legal authority to independently manage or modify heritage spaces. This split authority creates friction between local economic development goals and strict heritage conservation mandates.

4. *Limited Administrative Digitalization*

Digitalization remains largely confined to basic promotional social media rather than integrated administrative data systems, public service portals, or destination management information systems (Meijer & Bekkers, 2015).

5. *Overlapping Policy Implementation Across Bureaucratic Domains*

In Pakis Village, policy execution is constrained by intersecting legal frameworks: Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage on the one hand, and Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism alongside Law No. 6 of 2014 / Law No. 3 of 2024 on Villages on the other. The absence of synchronized administrative guidelines generates legal ambiguity and operational delays (Matland, 1995; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

Strategies for Accelerating Bureaucratic Strengthening

To address these institutional bottlenecks, five strategic pillars are formulated:

1. *Strengthening Collaborative Institutions*

Establish the Trowulan Cultural Tourism Management Forum (*Forum Pengelolaan Wisata Budaya Trowulan—FPWBT*) as a multi-stakeholder coordination platform involving village governments, regency agencies, cultural preservation offices (BPK), MSMEs, academics, and heritage communities (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

2. *Continuous Capacity Development for Village Personnel*

Shift from one-off workshops to continuous blended-learning modules focusing on data-driven planning, financial administration, public communication, and heritage preservation regulations.

3. *Digital Transformation of Village Administration*

Deploy an integrated village information system incorporating MSME databases, tourism asset registries, event calendars, and public complaint mechanisms (Mergel et al., 2019).

4. *Inclusive and Data-Driven Cultural Tourism Planning*



Formulate medium-term village development plans (RPJMDes) based on comprehensive spatial carrying capacity, cultural asset mapping, and equitable local economic distribution indicators (Inskeep, 1991).

5. *Regulatory Harmonization and Cross-Jurisdictional Synchronization*

Formulate joint decrees between the Mojokerto Regency Government and national heritage authorities, establish integrated standard operating procedures (one-stop clearance), and create a policy mediation desk under Bappeda to resolve implementation friction (Matland, 1995; Nugroho, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Accelerating bureaucratic strengthening in the development of cultural tourism villages in the Trowulan area is an institutional transformation process that extends beyond routine administrative training. The research concludes that: (1) expanding village authorities under Law No. 3 of 2024 requires multidimensional bureaucratic competencies; (2) fragmented interorganizational coordination and overlapping legal mandates between cultural heritage conservation and village tourism require formal collaborative governance structures; and (3) administrative digitalization must serve as a core driver of transparent, data-driven governance. Establishing synchronized operating procedures and multi-stakeholder forums enables adaptive governance that balances economic welfare with long-term cultural preservation.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS / SUGGESTIONS

To implement these findings effectively, the following practical steps are recommended:

- **Institutionalize FPWBT:** The Mojokerto Regency Government should enact a formal decree establishing the Trowulan Cultural Tourism Management Forum to serve as a legal coordination body.
- **Implement One-Stop Clearance SOPs:** Develop integrated licensing and assistance workflows between the Tourism Office, Cultural Heritage Preservation Office (BPK), and Village Empowerment Office.
- **Expand Digital Infrastructure:** Allocate village budget (APBDes) funds for standardized village management software and staff digital literacy training.



- **Conduct Long-Term Impact Studies:** Future research should evaluate the quantitative impact of FPWBT implementation on local MSME income and heritage site preservation scores.

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