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Open Trips to the Baduy Tribe as an Alternative Tourism Trend Among Young People

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Abstract

The growing popularity of open trip packages—group travels that bring together individuals who may not know each other beforehand—has become a noticeable trend among young travellers in Indonesia. One of the destinations that frequently appears in these travel programmes is the Baduy region in Banten, an area known for its strong cultural traditions and limited interaction with modern influences. This study explores the reasons young people choose to join open trips to Baduy, how they view the local culture, and what kinds of social and cultural effects their visits may have. Using a qualitative approach that combines in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and online questionnaires, the research seeks to capture the experience of both visitors and the local community. The results show that many young travellers are driven by a need for genuine and meaningful experiences, a curiosity about indigenous culture, and a wish to step away from digital routines for a while. Although most participants express admiration for the values upheld by the Baduy people, several behaviours witnessed during the trips do not fully align with local expectations, raising concerns about cultural sensitivity. These findings point to the importance of providing proper guidance and information to open trip participants, so that visits to Baduy can take place in a way that respects local customs and supports the preservation of community life..

Keywords: Basic Firefighting Training, Instructor Experience, Work Skills

1. Introduction

Tourism has undergone significant changes in the last decade, in line with the development of digital technology and changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation. One innovative form of modern tourism is open trips, which are tourist trips with a cost-sharing system with other participants who do not know each other beforehand. This concept has grown rapidly because it is considered more economical, flexible, and allows tourists to form new social relationships.

The favorite tourist destinations for open trips are generally locations that offer unique and authentic experiences, including traditional areas such as the Baduy tribe in Banten. The Baduy tribe is widely known as a community that maintains a simple lifestyle, rejects modernity, and strictly upholds traditional values. The combination of cultural exoticism and natural beauty makes Baduy a popular choice for young people seeking a “back to basics” experience and digital detox.

However, the increase in tourist visits to the Baduy region through open trips poses a dilemma. On the one hand, it opens up economic opportunities for the local community. On the other hand, the influx of visitors from outside, especially the younger generation with their popular culture and digital lifestyle, has the potential to cause friction with the indigenous community. This phenomenon raises important questions about the extent to which open trips impact Baduy cultural values and how young tourists understand and appreciate local wisdom.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding the behavior of young tourists in the context of community-based cultural tourism. This research also serves as a foundation for developing an ethical and sustainable approach to tourism promotion.

Based on this background, the study aims to:

1. Identify the motivations of young people to participate in open trips to Baduy.
2. Analyze their perceptions of local culture, and
3. Examine the socio-cultural impact of open trips on the Baduy community.

A number of previous studies have discussed the dynamics of tourism in the Baduy region, but their focus and approach vary. Although there have been quite a number of studies on Baduy tourism and the tourism behavior of the younger generation, there are still several gaps that have not been explored in depth. To date, no research has been found that truly highlights open trips as a new form of tourism that is in high demand among the digital native generation. Most previous studies have emphasized the impact of tourism in general without distinguishing the characteristics of young tourists who come through this group travel pattern. In addition, there is still a lack of research that combines the perspectives of tourists and local communities in seeing how open trips shape the tourism experience while also affecting the lives of the Baduy people. This study attempts to fill this gap by further examining the motivations, perspectives, and impacts that arise from open trips to Baduy, and ultimately offers recommendations that can support more sustainable tourism management in the region.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations, perceptions, and behaviors of young tourists who participate in open trips to the Baduy tribe. This approach was chosen because it allows for closer exploration of the phenomenon in the field context, enabling researchers to observe how interactions between tourists and indigenous communities actually take place. The research was designed as a qualitative descriptive study that highlighted the direct experiences of the participants, the socio-cultural dynamics during the activities, and the impact of open trips on the Baduy community. The participants in this study were tourists aged 18–35 who had participated in at least one open trip to Baduy in the last two years. They were selected through purposive sampling so that only those who had direct experience were involved in the research. There were 45 participants, consisting of 30 online questionnaire respondents and 15 in-depth interviewees. In addition, the researchers also interviewed five traditional leaders and local guides to obtain the views of the Baduy community itself.

Data collection was carried out in three ways, namely in-depth interviews to explore the motivation and personal experiences of tourists, participatory observation by participating in open trip activities to see interactions directly, and online questionnaires to collect additional information from respondents who were difficult to reach. All data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis, starting from the transcription process, coding, category grouping, to drawing main themes related to the motivation, perceptions, and socio-cultural impacts of open trip activities. To maintain the validity of the findings, the researchers used source and method triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and questionnaires, as well as reconfirming with participants through member checking. The entire research process was carried out with due regard for research ethics, including obtaining consent from each participant, maintaining confidentiality, and respecting the rules and values of the Baduy during fieldwork.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Participant Profile

Based on the data collected, the majority of research participants were aged 22-28 years (68%), had a bachelor's degree (73%), and worked as private employees or entrepreneurs (62%). Most participants came from major cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Tangerang, and Bekasi. This shows that open trips to Baduy are dominated by urban educated youth who have access to information and high mobility.

Table 3.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=45)

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Age	18-21 years old	5	11%
	22-25 years old	17	38%
	26-28 years old	13	29%
	29-35 years old	10	22%
Education	High School/Equivalent	3	7%
	Diploma	4	9%
	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	33	73%
	Postgraduate Degree (S2/S3)	5	11%
Work	Students	6	13%
	Private Sector Employees	21	47%
	Entrepreneurship	7	16%
	PNS/BUMN	5	11%
	Freelancer/Content Creator	6	13%
City of Origin	Jakarta & Surrounding Areas	27	60%
	Bandung	9	20%
	Other Cities in Java	6	13%
	Outside Java	3	7%
Frequency of Visits	The first time	31	69%
	2-3 times	11	24%
	More than 3 times	3	7%

The data shows a pattern consistent with Murphy et al.'s (2007) research on the segmentation of young travelers, where the majority are young professionals with middle incomes seeking experiences different from their urban routines. These findings are also in line with the UNWTO (2019) study, which shows that millennials and Generation Z dominate the alternative tourism sector.

Interestingly, 24% of participants have made repeat visits, indicating a high level of satisfaction and a desire for a more in-depth experience. Some repeat visitors stated that their first visit was “too short” and that they wanted to “gain a deeper understanding of Baduy life.”

3.2 Motivation for Joining an Open Trip to Baduy

Thematic analysis of interview and questionnaire data yielded four main themes related to the motivation of young tourists to join open trips to Baduy:

a. Search for Authentic Experiences

The majority of participants (82%) stated that they were interested in visiting Baduy because they wanted to experience a lifestyle different from their daily lives in the city. They described Baduy as a place that is “still

authentic,” “untouched by modernity,” and “offers experiences that cannot be found in ordinary tourist attractions.”

Participants expressed a desire to escape the fast pace of urban life and seek a connection with nature and a simpler way of life. They saw the Baduy as the antithesis of urban life, which they considered “artificial” and stressful.

This finding resonates with MacCannell's (1973) theory of the “quest for authenticity,” in which modern tourists seek experiences they perceive as more ‘authentic’ and “uncontaminated” by modernity. However, as Cohen (1988) warns, the authenticity sought by tourists is often a romantic construct rather than an objective reality.

Table 3. 2. Main Motivation for Joining an Open Trip to Baduy (N=45, Multiple Responses)

Motivation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Authentic experiences/back to nature	37	82%
Exploring local culture	34	76%
Digital detox	31	69%
Building social networks	24	54%
Affordable costs	22	49%
Influence of social media/friends	19	42%
Search for meaning in life/spirituality	16	36%
Documenting social media content	13	29%
Adventure/physical challenges	11	24%

An interesting paradox emerges from the data: 69% cited digital detox as their motivation, but 29% also acknowledged documenting social media content as one of their goals. This reflects what some researchers refer to as “performative authenticity,” where “authentic” experiences also function as social capital on social media (Steiner, 2010).

b. Cultural Exploration and Social Learning

A total of 76% of participants mentioned that their motivation was to learn about the culture and local wisdom of the Baduy tribe. They were interested in understanding how the Baduy community was able to maintain its traditions amid massive modernization.

Participants expressed interest in understanding how the Baduy community can live without modern technology and what makes them continue to maintain their traditional way of life in the contemporary era. Many see this as a valuable lesson about consistency in values and principles of life.

These findings are in line with Richards' (2018) research on cultural tourism, which shows a shift from passive “cultural tourism” (viewing historical sites) to active “creative tourism” (participating in cultural life). Young tourists don't just want to see, they want to feel and understand.

However, a deeper analysis reveals that their understanding of Baduy culture is often superficial and influenced by media stereotypes. Some participants admitted that their knowledge of Baduy prior to their visit came only from blog articles and YouTube videos, which tend to emphasize the exotic aspects rather than the complexity of the culture.

Table 3.3. Sources of Information about the Baduy Before the Visit (N=45, Multiple Responses)

Source of Information	Total	Percentage
Instagram/Social Media	38	84%

Source of Information	Total	Percentage
Blog/Online Articles	29	64%
YouTube/Vlog	26	58%
Friend Recommendations	21	47%
Official Tourism Website	8	18%
Books/Scientific Journals	4	9%
Documentaries	3	7%

This data confirms the dominance of social media in shaping perceptions of tourist destinations, in line with previous research findings on the travel behavior of Generation Z (UNWTO, 2019). However, it also highlights a risk: information circulating on social media is often inaccurate or oversimplifies complex cultural realities.

c. Digital Detox and Self-Reflection

The phenomenon of “digital detox” emerged as a significant theme, with 68% of participants stating that they wanted to break free from their dependence on digital technology. They saw Baduy as an ideal place to “disconnect to reconnect” with themselves and nature.

Participants reported transformative experiences when they initially experienced stress from not being able to access digital devices, but after a few hours felt a deep sense of calm. They became more aware of their surroundings and experienced a deeper quality of social interaction compared to everyday conversations in urban environments.

The researchers' observations found that the absence of phone signals and electricity in Inner Baduy forced tourists to experience a different form of social interaction. They talked more face-to-face, played traditional games with residents, and enjoyed the silence of the night without gadget screens.

However, an interesting paradox was found: although many cited digital detox as their motivation, the majority of participants brought power banks and immediately returned to being active on social media once they left the Baduy area. Some even admitted that they couldn't wait to upload photos and stories after returning to areas with signal coverage.

This phenomenon reflects what researchers call “temporary authenticity seeking”—the desire for authentic experiences that are temporary and limited, rather than permanent lifestyle changes. As analyzed by Pine and Gilmore (2011), for many modern tourists, the “digital detox” experience is a commodity to be consumed, not a transformation to be applied.

Some participants acknowledged the irony of this situation: they came to Baduy to escape technology, but the first thing they did once they had signal was to post photos and stories on social media. Others stated that digital detox in Baduy served as a necessary “reboot” to refresh themselves, rather than a permanent lifestyle change.

d. Social Motivation and Networking

Open trips offer the opportunity to meet new people who share similar interests. As many as 54% of participants mentioned that they were interested in joining open trips because they wanted to expand their friendships and social networks.

Unlike conventional tour packages where participants already know each other, open trips create a unique social dynamic. Participants arrive as strangers and must build relationships in a short period of time. Many respondents stated that they made close friends or even business partners from their open trip experiences.

Data shows that intense shared experiences—such as walking for hours and sharing simple accommodations in local homes—tend to create strong bonds. Some participants reported that the bonds formed during open trips felt stronger than friendships built through conventional networking, such as seminars or business events.

These findings support Kastenholz et al.'s (2018) research on socialization patterns in rural tourism, which found that challenging shared experiences that take people out of their comfort zones tend to create stronger social bonds than conventional social interactions.

Table 3.4. Quality of Social Interaction in Open Trips (N=45)

Interaction Aspects	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Making new friends	71%	24%	5%	0%
Stronger bonding compared to conventional trips	58%	31%	9%	2%
Staying friends after the trip	44%	38%	13%	5%
Going on other trips together	36%	29%	27%	8%

However, not all social experiences are positive. Some participants reported social friction due to differences in expectations, traveling styles, or differences in understanding of ethical behavior in traditional areas. Minor conflicts such as noisy roommates, participants who complain too often, or disagreements about the pace of the trip became challenges in the dynamics of the open trip group.

3.3 Tourists' Perceptions of Baduy Culture

An analysis of tourists' perceptions of Baduy culture shows diverse and complex results, revealing a spectrum from deep appreciation to problematic romanticization:

a. Appreciation for Simplicity and Adherence to Customs

Most tourists (85%) expressed admiration for the Baduy community's consistency in following customary rules (pikukuh). They believe that the simplicity of the Baduy way of life provides important lessons about sustainability and harmony with nature.

Participants particularly appreciate the consistency of the Baduy community in maintaining their principles of life despite being faced with various temptations of modernity. Many see this as a lesson in integrity and commitment to their beliefs.

Table 5. Most Admired Aspects of Baduy Culture (N=45, Multiple Responses)

Cultural Aspects	Total	Percentage
Simplicity of life	39	87%
Compliance with customary rules	38	84%
Harmony with nature	36	80%

Cultural Aspects	Total	Percentage
Honesty and sincerity of residents	33	73%
Traditional agricultural system	28	62%
Handicrafts	24	53%
Traditional education system	15	33%
Customary leadership structure	12	27%

Tourists are particularly impressed by the Baduy's ecological practices, such as the prohibition of chemical fertilizers, crop rotation, and the maintenance of protected forests. Many say that the Baduy provide a “real-life example” of sustainable living, which they have only read about in books or online articles.

This finding resonates with Iskandar's (2007) research on the ecological wisdom of the Baduy, which shows that their system has proven to be sustainable for centuries. However, as warned by Permana et al. (2011), this wisdom is contextual and cannot simply be transplanted into a modern urban context without a deep understanding.

3.4 Economic Impact of Open Trips on the Baduy Community

Open trips have a positive economic impact on the Baduy community, particularly through homestays, local tour guides, and the sale of handicrafts. Based on data collected from families involved in the tourism sector, the study found a significant increase in income.

Table 3.7. Estimated Monthly Revenue from the Tourism Sector

Revenue Category	Before Getting Involved in Tourism	After Getting Involved in Tourism	Improvement
Homestay (per month)	Rp 500.000 - 1.000.000	Rp 2.500.000 - 5.000.000	250-400%
Local guide (per month)	Rp 800.000 - 1.200.000	Rp 3.000.000 - 6.000.000	275-500%
Craft seller (per month)	Rp 400.000 - 800.000	Rp 1.500.000 - 3.000.000	275-375%

Families involved in the tourism sector reported a significant improvement in their quality of life, including the ability to send their children to higher education, improve their housing conditions, and better meet their families' needs.

3.5 The Role of Open Trip Organizers

The study found significant variations in the quality of open trip organization:

a. Education-Based Open Trips

Some open trip organizers take an educational approach by providing cultural briefings before departure, providing behavioral guidelines in accordance with Baduy norms, and involving competent local guides. This type of open trip tends to result in a more meaningful and positively impactful travel experience.

b. Commercial Open Trips Without Adequate Guidance

Unfortunately, some open trip organizers focus more on the commercial aspect by offering low prices without providing adequate cultural education. This results in tourists arriving without sufficient knowledge and understanding of Baduy norms and values.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that open trips to the Baduy tribe have become a significant alternative tourism trend among Indonesia's younger generation. The main motivations for tourists include the search for authentic experiences, cultural exploration, digital detox, and social networking. The impact of open trips on the Baduy community is ambivalent. On the one hand, there are tangible economic benefits for some residents. On the other hand, there are concerns about shifting cultural values, commercialization of traditions, and pressure on the environment. The quality of the open trip organization determines whether this tourism activity will have a positive impact or actually damage local wisdom. To ensure the sustainability of cultural tourism in Baduy, a balanced approach between economic development and cultural preservation is needed. Tourist education, clear regulations, and local community empowerment are key to creating an ethical and sustainable tourism model. This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of community-based cultural tourism in the digital age and offers practical recommendations for stakeholders in managing tourism in traditional areas. Further research is recommended to examine the long-term impact of tourism activities on the socio-cultural transformation of the Baduy community and to develop a more participatory and sustainable tourism management model.

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