

## Culture and Regional Language Based Tourism Economy: An Interdisciplinary Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the limited systematic research on the integration of culture and regional language as core economic resources in tourism, despite their significant influence on destination competitiveness, sustainability, and cultural preservation. It aims to analyze the role of culture and regional language as symbolic and economic capital, identify dominant integration patterns in tourism development, and examine challenges and future directions of culture- and language-based tourism economies. The research employs a qualitative interdisciplinary literature review design, drawing on peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books published between 2015 and 2025, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through systematic document analysis and examined using thematic and comparative analysis to synthesize perspectives from tourism studies, cultural studies, linguistics, and the creative economy. Findings indicate that culture and regional language function as strategic symbolic assets that shape destination identity, strengthen perceptions of authenticity, and generate economic value when effectively mobilized within tourism systems, supporting cultural capital theory. Community-based tourism, participatory cultural governance, and linguistic landscape strategies emerge as the most effective integration patterns for achieving economic sustainability while safeguarding cultural integrity. However, persistent challenges—including over-commodification, cultural homogenization, unequal benefit distribution, and limited institutional capacity—remain significant barriers. The study concludes that integrating culture and regional language into tourism economies requires inclusive governance, ethical commodification, and innovation through digital storytelling and creative industries. The implications advance interdisciplinary tourism and cultural economy scholarship while informing policymakers and practitioners on sustainable, culture-based tourism strategies. Future research should employ empirical, comparative, and mixed-methods approaches across diverse regional contexts.

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### **Article history:**

*Received: January 7, 2026*

*Revised: January 26, 2026*

*Approved: January 27, 2026*

*Published: January 28, 2026*

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#### **Keywords:**

*Culture; Regional Language; Tourism Economy; Symbolic Capital; Sustainability*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the tourism sector has increasingly positioned culture and regional language as strategic resources within the global tourism economy. Internationally, tourism development has shown a strong tendency toward the commodification of culture, whereby cultural expressions, traditions, and local languages are often transformed into economic products to satisfy market demand (Richards, 2018). While this process contributes to destination competitiveness, it simultaneously raises concerns regarding the reduction of cultural symbolic value into purely economic terms. A systematic review of cultural tourism literature indicates that tourists' motivations are significantly shaped by the uniqueness of local culture and identity, reinforcing the economic importance of cultural differentiation in tourism destinations (Richards, 2018). In parallel, studies on linguistic landscapes emphasize that local and multilingual language displays in tourism areas function as symbolic capital that shapes destination identity and influences tourists' economic perceptions and behavior (Gorter, 2018). From the perspective of sustainable tourism, international organizations argue that integrating culture and local language into destination management can strengthen economic, social, and cultural sustainability when participatory approaches are applied (UNWTO, 2017).

Within the Indonesian context, similar issues emerge but with distinctive socio-cultural dynamics. National studies demonstrate that the use of regional languages in tourism products and activities contributes not only to local language preservation but also to the enhancement of regional tourism competitiveness (Nuria & Subuh, 2025). Cultural-based tourism has been shown to significantly support local economic development when community cultural values are positioned as core assets of destination development (Sumarsono et al., 2024). Moreover, research highlights that linguistic practices in public tourism spaces reflect cultural identity and enrich tourists' experiences, thereby increasing the economic attractiveness of destinations (Rastitiati et al., 2024). Regional languages used as tourism brand identities play a dual role as tools for language preservation and local economic marketing strategies (Nuria & Subuh, 2025). Community-based cultural tourism has also been empirically proven to increase local income through active community participation in destination management (Sari et al., 2024), while integrated cultural tourism embedded in social life generates simultaneous economic, social, and cultural impacts (Zunaidi et al., 2024).

Several national studies further emphasize that cultural commodification within tourism villages can be implemented without eroding symbolic cultural values, provided it is managed sustainably (Ristiawan, 2024). Local culture-based tourism promotion has been found to directly increase tourist visits and stimulate regional economic growth (Sartika et al., 2024). Linguistic literacy in tourism communication is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in enhancing the competitiveness of tourism villages and ensuring local economic sustainability (Wahyuni, 2025). Additionally, linguistic landscapes in tourism areas represent complex relationships between language, power, and economic interests within the tourism industry (Gorter, 2018). The synergy between government institutions, local communities, and cultural capital has been identified as a key determinant of successful cultural tourism development in supporting local economies (Sumarsono et al., 2024). Preservation of regional languages in tourism contexts strengthens cultural identity and contributes to the long-term economic sustainability of destinations (Susianti et al., 2025), while the integration of local languages into tourism activities creates destination differentiation that enhances tourism's economic value (Nuria & Subuh, 2025). Recent literature

further confirms that the integration of culture and regional languages into tourism development enhances destination competitiveness at both regional and global levels (Richards, 2018).

Previous studies provide important foundations for understanding the relationship between culture, language, and tourism economy, yet they also reveal conceptual and analytical gaps. Tang and Xu (2023), through a scoping literature review, demonstrate that cultural integration in rural tourism—including language, customs, and cultural landscapes—enhances tourist experiences and contributes to local economic growth, while also generating conflicts when cultural commodification is perceived as inequitable. Perdana Putra (2025) examines the integration of cultural heritage and the creative economy in Lombok, Indonesia, showing that local cultural identity can improve community welfare through competitive and community-based cultural tourism. Jatinurcahyo et al. (2024) focus on the preservation of regional language traditions in tourism villages, highlighting the economic potential of linguistic uniqueness as a cultural attraction. Sartika et al. (2024) analyze cultural promotion by local communities and its impact on tourist visits and local economic growth, while Darnita (2023) evaluates how cultural festivals generate tourism revenue and stimulate local economic circulation. Although these studies address culture and tourism economy, most remain fragmented—either emphasizing cultural heritage, community participation, or economic impact—without comprehensively synthesizing the role of regional language as an integral economic and cultural asset within tourism.

The theoretical foundations of this study further support the identified research gap. Cultural Capital Theory explains that cultural elements, including language and symbolic practices, can be converted into economic capital when recognized and utilized within specific social arenas such as tourism (Bourdieu, 1986). In cultural tourism contexts, regional language functions as a marker of authenticity that enhances symbolic value and economic competitiveness (Richards, 2018). Linguistic Landscape Theory highlights that language displayed in public tourism spaces reflects identity, ideology, and power relations that shape tourists' economic perceptions (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Gorter, 2018). Sustainable Cultural Tourism Theory emphasizes the need to balance economic benefits with cultural and linguistic preservation to ensure long-term destination sustainability (UNWTO, 2017; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Meanwhile, Cultural-Based Creative Economy Theory views local culture and language as creative resources that can be transformed into high-value tourism products through innovation, storytelling, and cultural differentiation (UNESCO, 2013; Howkins, 2013).

Based on these issues, empirical findings, and theoretical perspectives, this study positions itself as an interdisciplinary literature review that systematically examines how culture and regional language function as symbolic, cultural, and economic capital within tourism development. The focus of this research is to analyze the roles, integration patterns, challenges, and future directions of culture- and regional language-based tourism economy as reflected in national and international literature over the past decade, thereby contributing a more holistic and theoretically grounded understanding of tourism economy rooted in cultural and linguistic identity.

## **METHODS**

### **1. Research Type**

This study employed a qualitative research approach using an interdisciplinary literature review method. Qualitative research is appropriate when the objective is to explore meanings, concepts, patterns, and theoretical relationships derived from textual data rather than numerical

measurement (Creswell, 2014). This approach allows researchers to interpret complex social phenomena, including cultural, linguistic, and economic dimensions, within their natural and discursive contexts. Furthermore, qualitative inquiry emphasizes depth of understanding, reflexivity, and contextual interpretation, which are essential for examining how culture and regional language function as economic assets in tourism development (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Given that this study focuses on synthesizing theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from diverse disciplines, a qualitative literature-based approach provides a robust framework for integrative and interpretive analysis.

## **2. Research Design**

The research design adopted in this study was a systematic and integrative literature review. A literature review design enables researchers to critically examine, compare, and synthesize existing knowledge to identify conceptual patterns, theoretical developments, and research gaps within a specific field (Snyder, 2019). Compared to narrative reviews, integrative literature reviews offer a more structured and transparent process while allowing theoretical expansion across disciplines (Torraco, 2016). This design is particularly suitable for addressing the research questions, as it facilitates the integration of perspectives from tourism studies, cultural studies, linguistics, and creative economy research. Previous studies employing similar review designs have successfully revealed interdisciplinary linkages and advanced conceptual frameworks in tourism and cultural economy research (Booth et al., 2016; Torraco, 2016), positioning this study as an extension that explicitly foregrounds regional language as a core analytical dimension.

## **3. Population and Sample**

In this literature-based study, the **population** consisted of scholarly publications addressing tourism economy, cultural tourism, regional language, linguistic landscape, and creative economy published within the last ten years (2015–2025). The **sample** comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and authoritative reports selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is appropriate when researchers intentionally select data sources based on predefined criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2019). The inclusion criteria focused on publications that explicitly discuss culture and/or regional language in relation to tourism economy. Methodological literature supports purposive sampling in qualitative and review-based research, as it ensures analytical depth and conceptual relevance rather than representativeness in a statistical sense (Patton, 2015).

## **4. Data Collection Instruments and Techniques**

Data were collected through document analysis, using scholarly databases and academic repositories to identify relevant literature. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating printed and electronic materials to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). The primary instruments in this study were literature selection matrices and thematic extraction tables, which were used to record bibliographic information, research focus, theoretical frameworks, methods, and key findings. The use of structured extraction tools enhances transparency and analytical rigor in literature-based research (Booth et al., 2016). Previous qualitative reviews have effectively employed similar document analysis techniques to synthesize interdisciplinary findings and ensure consistency across data sources (Snyder, 2019).

## **5. Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on identifying recurring concepts, theoretical patterns, and analytical categories related to culture, regional language, and

tourism economy. Thematic analysis involves iterative processes of data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to generate meaningful themes (Miles et al., 2014). In this study, analysis followed stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, allowing for systematic comparison across studies and disciplines. This approach is widely recommended for qualitative synthesis and literature reviews, as it supports theory development and integrative interpretation (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). Through thematic analysis, this study was able to map interdisciplinary trends, highlight conceptual gaps, and propose directions for future research on culture- and regional language-based tourism economy.

## **RESULTS**

### **1. Culture and Regional Language as Symbolic and Economic Capital in Tourism Economy**

#### **a. Conceptual Foundations of Cultural and Linguistic Capital in Tourism**

##### **Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Regional Language as Symbolic Capital in Tourism Development**

Scholarly literature conceptualizes culture and regional language as forms of symbolic capital that carry meanings beyond mere communication or tradition. In tourism research, culture is understood not only as a set of practices or artifacts but also as a semiotic system that tourists consume as part of their experience (Richards, 2018). Cultural resources—whether tangible heritage or intangible language practices—become assets that differentiate destinations and contribute to economic positioning in competitive tourism markets (Richards, 2018).

In relation to language, linguistic landscapes (the visible display of languages in public spaces) operate as symbolic markers that communicate identity, hierarchy, and cultural value to visitors. For instance, signage featuring local languages on tourist routes reflects cultural identity while serving an informational role that shapes visitor perceptions of authenticity (Rastitiati et al., 2024). This dual communicative and symbolic function positions regional language use as a resource that can be leveraged for economic benefit when tourism stakeholders recognize its contribution to cultural differentiation and destination appeal.

##### **Transformation of Cultural and Linguistic Assets into Economic Value within Tourism Systems**

Research from the field of linguistic landscape studies suggests that the visual presence of local languages in tourism spaces does more than signal identity; it affects tourists' economic behavior. Linguistic visibility can enhance perceived authenticity and induce greater tourist engagement, which in turn increases tourism expenditures—especially in heritage contexts where visitors seek cultural learning and distinctiveness (Dai et al., 2024). Linguistic landscapes thus serve as tangible interfaces where symbolic capital (culture and language) intersects with tourism consumption patterns, implying economic value through enhanced visitor satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Similarly, localized language use embedded within tourism products—such as village storytelling, place names, and interpretive materials—strengthens the cultural economy by attracting niche markets interested in authentic cultural experiences. In this framing, regional language transforms from a functional means of communication into a marketable asset that can boost destination revenue and community incomes.

## **The Role of Authenticity, Identity, and Cultural Representation in Shaping Tourism Demand**

Authenticity remains a central theme in cultural tourism scholarship, where cultural representation and identity are critical to shaping tourist demand. Empirical studies on intangible heritage tourism confirm that authentic expressions of culture—including language—positively influence tourists' satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn drives repeat visitation and word-of-mouth promotion (Lu et al., 2025). Specifically, when language is presented authentically within cultural contexts (e.g., traditional ceremonies, linguistic landmarks), tourists are more likely to perceive the destination as genuine, thereby increasing the destination's competitive advantage and economic yield.

### **b. Economic Functions of Culture and Regional Language in Tourism Destinations**

#### **Culture- and Language-Based Differentiation as a Strategy for Tourism Competitiveness**

Tourism literature emphasizes that destinations increasingly rely on cultural differentiation to stand out in saturated markets. Cultural uniqueness, supported by language diversity and heritage, forms a core component of destination branding that leads to competitive advantages (Richards, 2018). For example, destinations showcasing multilingual linguistic landscapes or regional language narratives appeal not only to international but also to culturally curious segments of the tourism market.

Multilingual signage and culturally rooted narratives create interpretive layers that enhance visitor experiences by signaling respect for local heritage and facilitating cross-cultural accessibility. Consequently, destinations with strong cultural and linguistic profiles often achieve more favorable economic performance through higher visitation rates and extended stays.

#### **Regional Language as an Economic Branding Instrument in Destination Marketing**

The use of regional language in promotional materials serves as a branding instrument that constructs compelling destination images. Language choices within tourism marketing—whether on digital platforms, printed guides, or signage—signal values of authenticity, accessibility, and cultural depth that resonate with both domestic and international tourists (Khabib & Muliana, 2025). Language becomes part of the narrative architecture of destination brands, enabling differentiation in an increasingly competitive global market.

Effective language branding also facilitates emotional connections with prospective visitors by invoking cultural heritage narratives that align with tourists' desire for meaningful, culturally rich experiences. This emotional appeal translates into economic benefits via increased brand loyalty and enhanced perceived value.

### **The Contribution of Cultural and Linguistic Capital to Local and Regional Tourism Economies**

At the community level, cultural and linguistic capital contributes to local economic diversification by supporting small-scale enterprises, cultural festivals, and heritage tours that attract visitors and generate revenue. Tourist interest in regional languages encourages the development of cultural products (e.g., language-infused souvenirs, local culinary tours with language interpretation) and services that channel economic resources into communities. This pattern aligns with research showing that cultural festivals and regional language events function as economic drivers by combining cultural preservation with tourism-oriented commerce.

### **c. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cultural and Linguistic Capital**

#### **Contributions from Tourism Studies, Linguistics, Cultural Studies, and Creative Economy**

The integration of insights from tourism studies, linguistics, cultural studies, and creative economy research underscores the complexity of cultural and linguistic capital in tourism. Linguistic research on language visibility in tourism spaces reveals how public language use reflects sociocultural dynamics and economic motivations (Rastitiati et al., 2024). At the same time, cultural studies emphasize the role of narrative and identity in enabling tourism experiences that are both economically viable and socially meaningful.

Creative economy frameworks further contribute by illustrating how culture and language can be transformed into innovative tourism products that stimulate entrepreneurship and regional development. This interdisciplinary lens helps explain how cultural assets—including language—become part of a broader economic ecosystem that values symbolic capital for its potential to drive sustainable tourism.

### **Synergies between Symbolic Value and Market Value in Tourism Practices**

The synergistic relationship between symbolic value (cultural and linguistic meaning) and market value (economic benefit) is evident in cases where heritage practices and language visibility attract specific tourist segments. Cultural authenticity and linguistic uniqueness create perceived value that transcends utilitarian tourism experiences, encouraging deeper cultural engagement and enhancing economic impacts such as increased visitor spending and longer stays. Integrating symbolic and market values thus reinforces the idea that cultural and linguistic capital can be intentionally leveraged for economic outcomes.

### **Implications of Interdisciplinary Approaches for Tourism Economic Analysis**

An interdisciplinary approach to tourism economy emphasizes that economic analysis cannot be isolated from cultural and linguistic contexts. Researchers argue that economic models of tourism should account for symbolic capital, which influences consumer behavior, destination identity, and market segmentation. By synthesizing insights from different fields, scholars propose frameworks that better capture the multifaceted nature of tourism economies rooted in culture and language.

## **2. Patterns of Integrating Culture and Regional Language in Tourism Development and Economic Sustainability**

### **a. Models of Cultural and Linguistic Integration in Tourism Practices**

#### **Community-Based Tourism and Participatory Cultural Management Models**

The literature consistently identifies **Community-Based Tourism (CBT)** as a dominant model for integrating culture and regional language into tourism development. CBT emphasizes local participation, collective decision-making, and community ownership of cultural resources, ensuring that economic benefits are distributed equitably while safeguarding cultural identity (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017). Empirical studies demonstrate that participatory cultural management strengthens local capacity and enhances residents' sense of ownership over tourism activities, which is crucial for sustaining both cultural authenticity and economic viability (Dodds et al., 2018).

Within CBT frameworks, culture and language are not treated merely as attractions but as living social practices embedded in community life. This approach allows tourism development to align with local values, social norms, and linguistic traditions, reducing the risk of cultural alienation while enhancing destination distinctiveness in competitive tourism markets.

#### **Integration of Regional Language in Tourism Services, Public Spaces, and Narratives**

Recent tourism and linguistic studies highlight that regional languages are increasingly integrated into tourism services, public signage, interpretive materials, and destination narratives. Linguistic landscape research confirms that the visible presence of local languages in tourism spaces contributes to tourists' perception of authenticity and place identity, influencing their engagement and consumption behavior (Dai et al., 2024). Language use in guided tours, storytelling, and cultural performances further deepens tourists' experiential immersion and reinforces the symbolic value of destinations (Gorter, 2018).

The integration of regional language into tourism narratives transforms language into a communicative and economic asset, supporting both cultural representation and market differentiation. Such practices strengthen the cultural economy by linking linguistic heritage to experiential tourism products.

### **Cultural Commodification and Value Creation in Tourism Destinations**

While cultural commodification is often viewed critically, recent literature suggests that commodification can generate positive outcomes when managed ethically and sustainably. Studies indicate that cultural elements—including language—can be packaged as tourism products without eroding their symbolic meaning if community consent and participatory governance are prioritized (Richards, 2018). In this context, commodification becomes a process of value creation, where symbolic cultural assets are translated into economic opportunities that support local livelihoods and destination development.

#### **b. Economic, Social, and Cultural Implications of Integration**

##### **Impacts on Local Income Generation and Employment Opportunities**

Integrated cultural and linguistic tourism models have been shown to generate tangible economic benefits for local communities. Empirical evidence from developing and emerging tourism destinations demonstrates that community-managed cultural tourism increases household income, creates employment opportunities, and stimulates micro-enterprises linked to cultural products and services (UNWTO, 2018). Language-based tourism activities—such as cultural interpretation, local guiding, and storytelling—expand employment niches that rely on local knowledge rather than external expertise.

These findings underscore that culture- and language-based tourism contributes to inclusive economic growth, particularly in rural and peripheral regions where alternative income sources are limited.

##### **Cultural Preservation and Linguistic Sustainability within Tourism Economies**

Tourism integration has also been associated with enhanced cultural and linguistic sustainability. Studies published in sustainability-oriented journals emphasize that tourism can function as a mechanism for revitalizing endangered languages and traditions by increasing their social and economic relevance. When regional languages are embedded in tourism activities, communities gain incentives to transmit linguistic knowledge across generations, reinforcing cultural continuity within evolving tourism economies (Timothy, 2018). Thus, tourism serves not only as an economic engine but also as a platform for cultural reproduction and linguistic resilience.

##### **Social Cohesion and Community Empowerment through Cultural Tourism**

The literature further highlights that participatory cultural tourism fosters social cohesion and empowerment. Community involvement in cultural decision-making strengthens social capital, collective identity, and intergenerational collaboration (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Language-based

cultural practices reinforce shared identity and pride, which are critical for sustaining long-term community engagement in tourism development.

### **c. Sustainability-Oriented Tourism Development**

#### **Balancing Economic Growth with Cultural and Linguistic Preservation**

A central finding across sustainability-oriented tourism studies is the necessity of balancing economic objectives with cultural and linguistic preservation. Over-commercialization risks cultural dilution; however, carefully regulated integration ensures that economic growth does not undermine cultural integrity (Timothy & Boyd, 2015). Sustainable cultural tourism frameworks emphasize adaptive management strategies that align tourism intensity with local cultural capacity.

#### **Governance, Stakeholder Collaboration, and Policy Frameworks**

Effective governance emerges as a key determinant of successful culture- and language-based tourism. Research shows that multi-stakeholder collaboration involving governments, local communities, and private actors enhances policy coherence and ensures that cultural and linguistic assets are protected while contributing to economic development (UNWTO, 2017). Clear regulatory frameworks, cultural protection policies, and language inclusion strategies are essential for managing tourism growth sustainably.

#### **Long-Term Economic Sustainability of Culture- and Language-Based Tourism**

Long-term sustainability depends on the ability of destinations to continuously regenerate cultural value while adapting to changing market demands. Studies in *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* argue that destinations integrating culture and language into tourism planning demonstrate stronger resilience to market fluctuations and external shocks (Dodds et al., 2018). Cultural and linguistic capital thus functions as a renewable economic resource when embedded within sustainable governance structures.

### **3. Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Directions of Culture- and Regional Language-Based Tourism Economy**

#### **a. Key Challenges in Culture- and Language-Based Tourism Development**

##### **Risks of Over-Commodification and Cultural Homogenization**

One of the most frequently cited challenges in culture- and language-based tourism development is the risk of over-commodification, which may lead to cultural homogenization. The literature cautions that excessive market-oriented packaging of cultural and linguistic elements can dilute their symbolic meaning, resulting in standardized tourism products that prioritize commercial appeal over cultural authenticity (Richards, 2018). When cultural expressions and regional languages are repeatedly simplified to meet tourist expectations, destinations risk losing the very distinctiveness that initially attracted visitors (Su et al., 2021).

Empirical studies further suggest that homogenization often emerges when tourism development is externally driven and lacks strong cultural governance mechanisms. In such contexts, local language use may be reduced to decorative symbols rather than meaningful communicative practices, weakening its role as cultural capital within tourism economies (Zhang & Gao, 2019).

##### **Marginalization of Local Communities and Unequal Economic Benefits**

Another critical challenge concerns the unequal distribution of economic benefits and the marginalization of local communities. Research on tourism political economy demonstrates that cultural and linguistic resources are often controlled by external investors or elites, limiting local communities' access to economic gains derived from their own cultural heritage (Scheyvens &

Biddulph, 2018). This dynamic can undermine community trust and reduce local support for tourism initiatives.

Studies in community-based tourism contexts reveal that when participatory mechanisms are weak, local residents—particularly language custodians and cultural practitioners—may remain symbolic contributors rather than economic beneficiaries (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Such inequality not only raises ethical concerns but also threatens the long-term sustainability of culture-based tourism systems.

### **Limited Institutional Capacity and Policy Support**

Institutional constraints also pose significant challenges. Several studies indicate that insufficient policy frameworks, limited institutional coordination, and inadequate funding hinder the effective integration of culture and regional language into tourism development strategies (OECD, 2020). Without clear regulatory guidance, tourism stakeholders may lack incentives to prioritize cultural and linguistic preservation alongside economic objectives.

Moreover, policy fragmentation between tourism, culture, and language governance often results in overlapping responsibilities and weak implementation, reducing the effectiveness of culture- and language-based tourism initiatives (UNESCO, 2019).

## **b. Emerging Opportunities and Strategic Potentials**

### **Creative Economy and Innovation in Cultural and Linguistic Tourism Products**

Despite these challenges, the literature identifies significant opportunities within the creative economy. Cultural and linguistic assets increasingly serve as foundations for innovative tourism products such as immersive storytelling tours, language-based cultural performances, and heritage interpretation experiences. Research highlights that creative tourism initiatives grounded in local culture and language generate higher value-added experiences and support small-scale entrepreneurship (Richards & Duif, 2019). By embedding language into creative narratives and experiential design, destinations can diversify tourism offerings while reinforcing cultural identity and economic resilience.

### **Digitalization, Storytelling, and Linguistic Branding in Tourism Promotion**

Digital transformation has opened new strategic pathways for promoting culture- and language-based tourism. Studies show that digital storytelling, social media narratives, and multilingual branding strategies enhance destination visibility and emotional engagement with potential tourists (Mariani et al., 2022). Regional languages integrated into digital content function as markers of authenticity and cultural depth, differentiating destinations in global tourism markets.

Digital platforms also enable communities to control cultural narratives, reducing dependence on external intermediaries and strengthening cultural sovereignty in tourism promotion.

### **Strengthening Destination Competitiveness in Regional and Global Markets**

Cultural and linguistic differentiation is increasingly recognized as a core driver of destination competitiveness. Research in destination management literature demonstrates that destinations leveraging unique cultural identities and language heritage achieve stronger brand recognition and market positioning (Pike & Page, 2014; updated evidence in Pike et al., 2020). Such differentiation supports long-term competitiveness by attracting culturally motivated tourists and fostering repeat visitation.

## **c. Future Research and Development Directions**

### **Interdisciplinary and Comparative Research Approaches**

The literature strongly recommends interdisciplinary and comparative research to advance understanding of culture- and regional language-based tourism economies. Comparative studies across regions and cultural contexts can reveal how different governance models, linguistic policies, and market conditions shape tourism outcomes (Saarinen et al., 2020). Integrating perspectives from economics, linguistics, anthropology, and tourism studies allows for more nuanced theoretical frameworks that capture the complexity of cultural tourism systems.

### **Policy Implications for Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Preservation**

Future research should also inform policy development by identifying regulatory mechanisms that balance economic growth with cultural and linguistic preservation. Evidence-based policies that recognize language as intangible cultural heritage can strengthen tourism planning while safeguarding cultural rights (UNESCO, 2019). Policy alignment across tourism, education, and cultural sectors is essential to institutionalize sustainable practices.

### **Strategic Frameworks for Integrating Culture and Regional Language into Tourism Economy**

Finally, scholars emphasize the need for strategic frameworks that position culture and regional language as **renewable economic resources** rather than extractive commodities. Such frameworks should integrate community participation, creative economy principles, and sustainability indicators to guide tourism development. By doing so, destinations can harness cultural and linguistic capital to achieve inclusive, resilient, and sustainable tourism economies.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Results Analysis**

#### **a. Culture and Regional Language as Symbolic and Economic Capital in Tourism Economy**

The findings of this interdisciplinary literature review clearly demonstrate that culture and regional language function not merely as complementary or decorative elements in tourism development, but as fundamental forms of symbolic and economic capital that shape tourism economies. Cultural practices, traditions, and regional languages act as semiotic resources through which destinations construct identity, authenticity, and differentiation in increasingly competitive tourism markets. This confirms the first research question by showing that culture and language influence tourism demand not only at the symbolic level but also through measurable economic outcomes such as visitor attraction, length of stay, and spending behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings strongly align with Cultural Capital Theory, which posits that symbolic resources—when socially recognized and institutionally supported—can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In tourism contexts, regional language operates as a marker of authenticity and cultural depth, enhancing perceived value and competitiveness (Richards, 2018). Linguistic landscape studies further reinforce this interpretation by demonstrating that the visibility of local languages in tourism spaces communicates identity, power relations, and cultural legitimacy, all of which shape tourists' economic perceptions and consumption patterns (Gorter, 2018). Thus, cultural and linguistic capital emerges as an active economic force rather than a passive cultural attribute.

Importantly, the results suggest that the economic value of culture and language is relational rather than intrinsic. Cultural and linguistic assets generate economic benefits only when they are meaningfully integrated into tourism narratives, services, and experiences. This finding advances

existing tourism economy literature by emphasizing that symbolic capital must be strategically mobilized within tourism systems to function as economic capital.

#### **b. Patterns of Integrating Culture and Regional Language in Tourism Development and Economic Sustainability**

The results further reveal that the integration of culture and regional language into tourism development follows identifiable and recurring patterns, particularly through community-based tourism (CBT), participatory cultural management, and linguistic landscape strategies. These patterns directly address the second research question by illustrating how integration mechanisms influence both economic sustainability and cultural preservation.

Community-based tourism models emerge as the most prominent framework for embedding cultural and linguistic assets into tourism practices. By positioning local communities as custodians and decision-makers, CBT ensures that cultural expressions and regional languages remain living social practices rather than commodified artifacts (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017). The literature consistently shows that participatory approaches enhance local ownership, strengthen social cohesion, and increase the likelihood that economic benefits remain within communities (Dodds et al., 2018). In this sense, integration is not only operational but also ethical and political.

At the operational level, the integration of regional language into tourism services, public signage, storytelling, and destination narratives strengthens authenticity and visitor engagement. Linguistic landscape research confirms that language visibility in tourism spaces enhances tourists' emotional connection and experiential immersion, which positively affects satisfaction and economic behavior (Dai et al., 2024; Gorter, 2018). These findings indicate that language functions simultaneously as a communicative tool, a cultural symbol, and an economic resource.

Crucially, the results demonstrate that such integration contributes to long-term economic sustainability when cultural commodification is managed responsibly. Rather than undermining cultural value, ethically governed commodification can transform symbolic assets into renewable economic resources that support livelihoods while preserving cultural integrity (Richards, 2018; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). This challenges simplistic critiques of commodification and highlights the importance of governance and community participation in sustainable tourism development.

#### **c. Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Directions of Culture- and Regional Language-Based Tourism Economy**

The analysis of the third research question reveals a dynamic tension between structural challenges and emerging opportunities in culture- and regional language-based tourism economies. One of the most significant challenges identified in the literature is the risk of over-commodification, which may lead to cultural homogenization and the erosion of symbolic meaning. When cultural and linguistic elements are excessively simplified to meet market expectations, destinations risk losing their distinctiveness and long-term competitiveness (Richards, 2018; Su et al., 2021).

Another persistent challenge concerns unequal power relations and benefit distribution. The findings indicate that when tourism development is externally driven or weakly governed, local communities—particularly language custodians and cultural practitioners—may be marginalized from economic gains derived from their own cultural resources (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Nunkoo et al., 2020). Institutional limitations, fragmented policies, and insufficient coordination between tourism, cultural, and language authorities further constrain effective implementation (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2019).

Despite these challenges, the results also highlight substantial opportunities and strategic potentials. The creative economy emerges as a key avenue for transforming cultural and linguistic capital into innovative, high-value tourism products such as immersive storytelling experiences, language-based cultural performances, and heritage interpretation initiatives (Richards & Duif, 2019). Digitalization and linguistic branding further expand these opportunities by enabling destinations to communicate authenticity, cultural depth, and identity to global audiences through digital storytelling and multilingual promotion (Mariani et al., 2022).

Looking forward, the findings suggest that future development of culture- and regional language-based tourism economies requires interdisciplinary approaches, inclusive governance, and strategic frameworks that treat culture and language as renewable rather than extractive resources. By aligning creative economy principles, sustainability objectives, and community participation, destinations can strengthen resilience, competitiveness, and cultural integrity in the long term.

## **2. Comparison with Previous Studies**

The findings of this study are largely consistent with prior international and national research. Previous studies have emphasized the economic value of cultural differentiation in tourism (Richards, 2018; Pike et al., 2020), and this review extends that argument by explicitly positioning regional language as an integral component of such differentiation rather than a peripheral cultural marker. Linguistic landscape studies similarly affirm that language visibility in tourism spaces shapes tourists' perceptions, identity construction, and consumption behavior (Gorter, 2018; Rastitiati et al., 2024), aligning closely with the patterns identified in this review.

However, this study advances existing literature by synthesizing insights across disciplines and highlighting how symbolic value and market value operate synergistically. While earlier studies often focused separately on cultural heritage, community participation, or economic impacts (Sartika et al., 2024; Darnita, 2023), this review integrates these dimensions to demonstrate that culture and language simultaneously generate symbolic meaning, social cohesion, and economic benefits. Moreover, unlike fragmented empirical studies, this research offers a holistic analytical framework that situates regional language as both an intangible cultural heritage and a strategic economic resource.

## **3. Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Theoretically, this study contributes to tourism economy scholarship by strengthening the integration of Cultural Capital Theory, Linguistic Landscape Theory, and Sustainable Cultural Tourism Theory. The findings reinforce the argument that tourism economic analysis must incorporate symbolic and cultural dimensions to adequately explain tourist behavior and destination competitiveness (Richards, 2018; Gorter, 2018). By foregrounding regional language as symbolic capital, this study expands conceptual understandings of how non-material cultural assets are converted into economic value within tourism systems.

Practically, the findings provide important implications for policymakers, destination managers, and local communities. The evidence suggests that tourism development strategies should move beyond commodification-driven models toward participatory and sustainability-oriented approaches that empower local communities as custodians of cultural and linguistic capital (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; UNWTO, 2017). Integrating regional languages into destination branding, tourism services, and digital promotion can enhance authenticity, strengthen local identity, and improve economic resilience. Additionally, governance frameworks that align

tourism, cultural, and language policies are crucial to ensuring that economic benefits are equitably distributed and culturally sustainable (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2019).

#### **4. Research Limitations**

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, as a qualitative literature review, the findings rely on the scope, quality, and availability of existing publications, which may introduce publication bias and limit empirical generalization. Second, although this review covers national and international literature from the past decade, contextual differences across regions may constrain the transferability of certain findings. Third, the interdisciplinary nature of the review, while analytically enriching, may also limit the depth of discussion within specific disciplinary frameworks.

Future research is therefore encouraged to complement this review with empirical studies, comparative cross-regional analyses, and mixed-methods approaches to validate and extend the conceptual insights presented here. Such efforts would further strengthen understanding of how culture and regional language can be sustainably leveraged as economic capital in diverse tourism contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

This interdisciplinary literature review demonstrates that culture and regional language constitute core forms of symbolic and economic capital within tourism economies rather than peripheral cultural attributes. The findings confirm that cultural practices and regional languages play a decisive role in shaping destination identity, perceptions of authenticity, and tourist demand, thereby directly influencing economic outcomes such as destination competitiveness, visitor engagement, and local income generation. By synthesizing literature from tourism studies, linguistics, cultural studies, and the creative economy, this study shows that when cultural and linguistic assets are meaningfully integrated into tourism systems, they can be converted into sustainable economic value while simultaneously supporting cultural and linguistic preservation. These results provide clear answers to the research questions by evidencing the dual symbolic–economic function of culture and language, the dominant integration patterns through community-based and participatory models, and the structural challenges and strategic opportunities shaping culture- and language-based tourism development.

Despite these contributions, this study is subject to several limitations. As a literature-based qualitative review, the analysis relies on the availability, scope, and quality of existing studies published over the last decade, which may result in the underrepresentation of certain regions or emerging practices not yet well documented in academic literature. In addition, variations in methodological approaches, disciplinary perspectives, and conceptual definitions across the reviewed studies may limit the generalizability of some synthesized findings. The absence of primary empirical data also restricts the ability to assess causal relationships between cultural–linguistic integration and specific economic outcomes at the destination level.

Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt comparative and mixed-methods designs that combine qualitative insights with quantitative measurements of economic impact. Empirical studies across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts would help refine theoretical models and assess how different governance structures, policy frameworks, and market conditions mediate the economic value of cultural and linguistic capital. Further interdisciplinary research is also needed to explore digitalization, creative economy innovation, and language policy as emerging drivers of sustainable tourism development. Such efforts will strengthen the evidence base for integrating

culture and regional language as renewable, inclusive, and resilient foundations of tourism economies.

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