

Local Genius in the Nyuguh Tradition: Strengthening Sustainable Community Empowerment in Kuta Indigenous Village

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Abstract

Amidst the challenges of maintaining cultural integrity within modern tourism, indigenous traditions offer unique frameworks for sustainable development. This study explores the local genius inherent in the Nyuguh tradition as a foundation for sustainable community empowerment in the Kuta Indigenous Village, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, data were gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, and focus group discussions. The data were analyzed using interactive analysis techniques. The findings reveal that the Nyuguh tradition manifests local genius across religio spiritual, socio cultural, ecological, economic, socio educational, and adaptive innovative dimensions. These values function as social mechanisms that strengthen community cohesion and environmental balance while stimulating autonomous economic empowerment. This research underscores that local wisdom is not merely a cultural relic but a strategic form of social capital essential for the resilient management of cultural tourism destinations.

Keywords: *Nyuguh tradition, local genius, Kuta Indigenous Village, Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism*

1. Introduction

Ciamis Regency has demonstrated a consistent strategic commitment to accelerating its tourism sector by optimizing local comparative advantages (Nursetiawan & Lines, 2019; Rahmayani et al., 2021; Yulistianeu et al., 2023). Recent evidence suggests that the synergy between natural resource utilization and socio-cultural conservation has significantly catalyzed regional tourism growth (Endang, 2024; Hermansyah, 2024;). This momentum offers a critical opportunity to formalize and strengthen community-based tourism (CBT) models, particularly within the Kuta Indigenous Village, which has obtained juridical legitimacy through Ciamis Regency Regulation No. 15 of 2016.

The implementation of these regional policies is vividly reflected in the village's capacity to serve as a resilient bastion for the continuity of ancestral traditions and local wisdom (Sugara, 2023; Sugara & Perdana, 2021; Suwarlan et al., 2020). As an actualization of an integrated social system, these traditions regulate the harmonious triad between human society, ancestral entities, and the natural environment (Akbar & Indratno, 2023; Ningrum et al., 2022). The convergence of these values fosters a distinctive socio-cultural uniqueness (Riswani et al., 2023; Yusuf et al., 2024), effectively positioning the village as a prime model for community-based tourism that prioritizes cultural authenticity (Fitriani, 2024; Suwarlan et al., 2020).

A primary pillar of cultural authenticity in the Kuta Indigenous Village is the steadfast preservation of ancestral practices amidst the pressures of modernity (Kusmayadi et al., 2018; Nurrohman et al., 2024; Pradina et al., 2022; Saepulmilah et al., 2024; Suwarlan et al., 2020). Central to this heritage is the Nyuguh tradition, which transcends its manifestation as a routine ceremony held annually on the 25th of Safar (Saepulmilah et al., 2024; Suwarlan et al., 2020). Rather, it functions as a sophisticated socio-religious instrument that integrates spiritual veneration with ecological stewardship (Yusuf et al., 2024). The cultural uniqueness of Nyuguh is visualized through

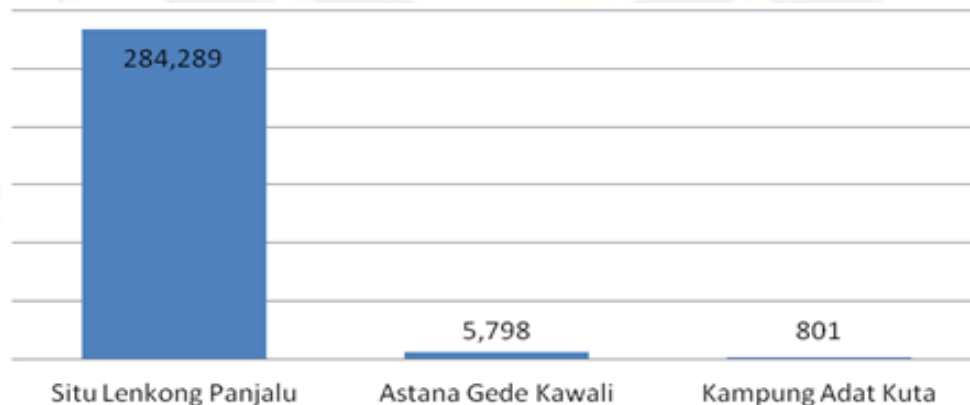
a complex tapestry of symbols, rites, and social practices, each embedding profound philosophical values regarding the tripartite relationship between humanity, nature, and the Creator (Fajarini & Dhanurseto, 2019; Putri et al., 2021; Saepulmilah et al., 2024; Sugara, 2023; Sukmayadi, 2018; Winoto & Nuarini, 2021; Yusuf et al., 2024).

The cultural uniqueness manifested within the Nyuguh tradition facilitates the establishment of a robust tourism ecosystem rooted in the visibility of both tangible and intangible cultural assets (Winoto & Nuarini, 2021). The integration of physical ritual artifacts with abstract philosophical values creates a comprehensive and immersive cultural tourism landscape (Putri et al., 2021). In this context, the appeal of Kuta Indigenous Village extends beyond mere ceremonial aesthetics; it resides in the profound narratives of local wisdom that offer transformative meaning to the tourist experience (Kheiri, 2023; Lin et al., 2022).

The distinctive character of Kuta Indigenous Village offers a profound and immersive experience, where authentic cultural attributes serve as a unique attraction for global travelers. This cultural uniqueness creates a dialogical space for interaction, enabling tourists to comprehend the intrinsic values, meanings, and practices embedded within the indigenous community (Martínez, 2024; Nurbaeti et al., 2024). Simultaneously, this interaction allows the indigenous people to reaffirm their cultural identity while securing sustainable economic benefits (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Richards, 2018). Consequently, such dynamics necessitate the active involvement of the Kuta community in negotiating a balanced space where economic interests, social cohesion, and the preservation of local cultural identity can coexist harmoniously (Singh et al., 2003)."

In practice, while the culture-based tourism developed by the Kuta Indigenous community reflects a concerted effort toward sustainability, it faces significant systemic challenges. These obstacles encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from inadequate infrastructure to limited destination accessibility, both of which adversely affect tourist comfort and visitation frequency. This disparity is further evidenced by the relatively low influx of visitors to the indigenous village compared to more established natural and cultural attractions within Ciamis Regency. Such a gap underscores a critical disconnect between the village's profound cultural potential and its operational realization as a competitive sustainable tourism destination.

The Graph. The number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency Culture Tourism in 2020



Source: (Winoto & Nuarini, 2021)

Empirical data from 2020 underscores a significant gap in tourist visits among culture-based destinations in Ciamis Regency. While Situ Lenkong Panjalu dominated this sector with 284,289 visits, Astana Gede Kawali recorded 5,798. Meanwhile, Kuta Traditional Village received only 801 visitors. This very low volume highlights a critical tension between the community's strict cultural preservation and the need for an effective destination visibility strategy. This suggests that the local wisdom inherent in the Nyuguh tradition deeply rooted in the local social system has not been optimally integrated into the village's management and promotion framework. As a result, the philosophical and cultural values that should underpin the tourism experience have failed to significantly enhance community well-being or strengthen the region's cultural identity.

Building upon prior scholarship, the diverse manifestations of local genius within the Nyuguh tradition encompassing local philosophy, indigenous knowledge, technology, skills, materials, aesthetics, and idioms represent significant potential as sustainable tourism resources (Yusuf et al., 2024). This is further corroborated by the work of Sukmayadi (2018), which identifies a comprehensive worldview among the Kuta community characterized by virtues such as sincerity, obedience, and visionary responsibility. These ethical foundations, ranging from social empathy and religious piety to wisdom and constructive thinking, form a robust psychosocial infrastructure (Sukmayadi, 2018). Integrating these philosophical and practical dimensions of local genius provides a holistic framework for transforming ancestral traditions into a viable base for community-led sustainable development.

While Adhitama et al. (2024) argue that local wisdom-based tourism provides a robust framework for regional governments to enhance destination attractiveness, other scholars highlight potential socio-cultural barriers. Specifically, Rachmawati (2018) contends that certain traditional values such as rigid collectivism, significant power distance, and inflexible customs may inadvertently stifle new initiatives. These indirect communication patterns and an overemphasis on harmony can discourage risk-taking, thereby limiting the scope of community empowerment (Rachmawati, 2018). Conversely, successful community-based tourism development can catalyze collective action to address group needs (Knight & Cottrell, 2016). In this regard, the concept of Sustainable Community Empowerment Tourism, rooted in cultural and social capital, serves as an essential foundation for equitable and sustainable tourism management (Fitrianto, 2019; Li & Hunter, 2015; Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019).

Building upon these premises, this study aims to operationalize the local genius values inherent in the Nyuguh tradition as strategic capital for developing a Sustainable Community Empowerment Tourism model within the Kuta Indigenous Village. This research explores the transformative potential of indigenous wisdom, examining how it can be converted into a resilient economic driver without compromising socio-cultural integrity of the community. By doing so, this study provides significant theoretical and practical contributions to the discourse on community empowerment and the management of special interest cultural destinations, offering a replicable framework for balancing heritage preservation with sustainable development.

2. Method

This study adopts a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to explore the inherent local genius values embedded within the Nyuguh tradition. The ethnographic design is essential, as it facilitates immersion a deep, prolonged engagement enabling researchers to capture the complex and often tacit socio-cultural realities of the Kuta Indigenous community. This approach strategically integrates an Emic perspective, providing an authentic understanding from the local community's viewpoint, with an Etic perspective, which utilizes academic theoretical frameworks to analyze the development of Sustainable Community Empowerment Tourism. By synthesizing these dual perspectives, this research uncovers how traditional value systems function as a foundation for empowerment without distorting the cultural integrity of the tradition."

In this study, the researcher acted as a participant observer, engaging in prolonged immersion within the community's daily dynamics. This intensive observation period commenced in early August 2025 and culminated during the peak of the Nyuguh tradition on August 19, 2025. Such involvement was instrumental in establishing a deep rapport with key stakeholders, including traditional leaders (Kuncen), village authorities, and local residents. This trust-building process facilitated the elicitation of tacit meanings and nuanced cultural practices often inaccessible to outsiders. To ensure data triangulation, in-depth interviews were complemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These sessions involved a diverse array of participants, including cultural experts, representatives from the Ciamis Regency Office of Culture, Youth, and Sports (Disbudpora), the Tourism Office, and local tourism entrepreneurs, ensuring a multi-perspective analysis of the tradition's empowerment potential.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model as proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which encompasses three concurrent flows: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the data reduction phase, raw information from field notes and transcripts was systematically filtered and focused specifically on the manifestations of local genius

within the Nyuguh tradition. Subsequently, in the data display stage, these reduced data were organized into descriptive analytical narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate the mapping of cultural patterns. The final stage, conclusion drawing, was performed iteratively through a process of deep reflection and source triangulation. This rigorous approach ensured the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings, aligning with established standards for qualitative validity.

3. Result and Discussion

A. Local Genius within the Nyuguh Tradition of Kuta Indigenous Village

The research findings reveal that the Kuta Indigenous community possesses a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, meticulously preserved and continuously actualized through a series of ancestral traditions and rituals. This cultural system transcends mere religious ceremonies; it is deeply embedded in behavioral norms, traditional architectural codes, sophisticated environmental management systems, and sacred spatial regulations (Nisa & Surtikanti, 2024; Pradina et al., 2022). This holistic integration of values suggests that local genius in Kuta is not a static relic of the past but a dynamic social contract that governs the community's relationship with both the spiritual and physical realms. This perspective was further elucidated by the Head of Karangpaningal Village, who stated:

Every tradition practiced by the Kuta Indigenous community serves not only as a life guide and a regulator of the social order but also reflects local genius values that embody profound ecological and spiritual significance. (Head of Karangpaningal Village, Personal Communication, August 2025).

This resilience is manifested in various customary prohibitions (*pamali*) and practical wisdoms that govern the community's daily life. For instance, the prohibition against building houses with permanent materials (bricks and tiles) and the strict preservation of the Sacred Forest (*Leuweung Larangan*) are not merely archaic rules, but sophisticated forms of local technology and environmental management. These practices ensure a low ecological footprint and maintain the hydrological balance of the region, which are essential components of the Nyuguh philosophy of 'harmony with nature.' By integrating these local skills and knowledge systems into the tourism experience. The Kuta community does not just sell a spectacle, but invites visitors to engage with a living model of sustainability.

Referring to these findings, it is evident that the Kuta Indigenous community maintains a profound perspective on balancing human existence with the natural world. The actualization of the Nyuguh tradition serves as a vital medium for expressing gratitude and reverence toward both the environment and their ancestors. Consequently, every facet of local wisdom acts as a guiding principle for sustaining social harmony and ecological equilibrium (Hasbiah, 2015; Salazar, 2015). These values are deeply internalized within daily communal activities (Fajarini & Dhanurseto, 2019; Nisa & Surtikanti, 2024; Sugara & Perdana, 2021) and manifested through various customary rules and prohibitions (*pamali*) that function as conservation practices rooted in local belief systems (Sukmayadi, 2018; Suwarlan et al., 2020). Such praxis exemplifies a sophisticated way of thinking, behaving, and interacting with the socio natural environment, which is fundamentally interpreted as local genius (Parameswara et al., 2021; Sirna et al., 2021).

The daily activities of the Kuta Indigenous community exemplify a sophisticated power of adaptation, maintaining cultural authenticity despite the pervasive pressures of modernity. Rather than rejecting progress, the community employs a robust 'cultural filter' mediated through customary regulations. This adaptive mechanism ensures that external influences are meticulously screened before being integrated into their social fabric. This dynamic was explicitly confirmed by the Kuta customary leader (*Kuncen*), who stated:

*The Kuta Indigenous community consistently upholds the customs and traditions passed down by our ancestors; however, we remain open to and follow the changes of the times, provided they do not contradict the teachings and beliefs of our people especially the ancestral mandates and sacred prohibitions (*pantrangan*).* (Customary Leader of Kuta Village, Personal Communication, August 2025).

This statement highlights a philosophy of selective modernization, where the 'ancestral mandate' (*amanat leluhur*) and 'sacred prohibitions' (*pantrangan*) function as the ultimate ethical benchmarks. Such cultural filtering ensures that community empowerment particularly through tourism does not lead to cultural commodification or the erosion of local identity. Instead, it positions the Kuta community as active agents who control the pace and nature of development, rather than passive subjects of external change.

Consequently, the Kuta Indigenous community demonstrates a principle of selective openness, reflecting a robust adaptation to both social dynamics and ecological shifts. This stance reinforces the community's autonomy as a vital component in the formation of their collective identity. Through consistent cultural practices inherited across generations, they maintain the core values that bind them as a unified communal entity (Parameswara et al., 2021; Stephansen, 2017). Ultimately, this resilience transforms the Kuta Indigenous Village from a mere geographical location into a socio-cultural space imbued with symbolic power and profound cultural durability (Aulia & Indratno, 2023; Nisa & Surtikanti, 2024).

Both of these elements selective openness and cultural resilience are visualized through the local genius of the Kuta Indigenous community, which is vividly manifested in every implementation of the Nyuguh tradition. The actualization of this local genius is embedded within a series of ritual processions that encompass spiritual values, social ethics, and structured ecological practices. Each stage of the ritual represents more than just ancestral reverence. It functions as a collective mechanism to strengthen social bonds, regulate natural resource management, and ensure the sustainability of harmonious relations between humans and their environment. Consequently, the tradition serves as a stabilizing force, maintaining social order and creating a tripartite harmony between humanity, nature, and the spiritual realm.

For the Kuta Indigenous community, the Nyuguh tradition does not merely function as a cultural heritage conservation effort but serves as the bedrock of local genius in sustainable resource management. This strength is evidenced throughout the preparation and execution of ritual symbols, emphasizing several critical dimensions: religio spiritual, socio cultural, ecological, economic, socio educational, and adaptive innovative. The integration of these dimensions ensures that the Nyuguh tradition remains not only a relevant cultural practice but also a living, sustainable source of indigenous knowledge. Based on extensive field observations, the specific dimensions of local genius within the Nyuguh tradition are described as follows:

1. Religio Spiritual Dimension

The religio spiritual dimension represents the foundational manifestation of the Kuta community's belief in ancestral presence and transcendental forces, which are regarded as the ultimate guardians of life's balance. This dimension is evidenced by the community's commitment to expressing gratitude, seeking protection, and honoring their ancestors as an integral part of the belief system inherited across generations. A pivotal element of this dimension is the prayer-reading procession (*pembacaan doa*) during the Nyuguh tradition, which functions as both a spiritual conduit and a moral compass. This ritual act fosters a collective consciousness that reconnects the community with their origins while ensuring the continuity of their traditions. Consequently, every stage of the Nyuguh tradition is imbued with profound sacred legitimacy. This not only sustains the longevity of customary practices but also serves as the moral bedrock for strengthening cultural identity and maintaining enduring social harmony.

2. Socio Cultural Dimension

Socio cultural dimension serves as a manifestation of the collective strength of the Kuta Indigenous community in maintaining social cohesion, preserving cultural values, and regulating interaction patterns based on ancestral norms. This capability is reflected in the intergenerational participation involving all community elements from traditional leaders to the village government at every stage of the Nyuguh tradition. This involvement spans from the initial preparation of ritual requirements and the organization of the event series to active participation in the communal procession. In this context, the Nyuguh tradition functions as a vital vessel for social integration, fostering a deep sense of togetherness and solidarity among residents. The active engagement of the Kuta community in these traditional proceedings is a clear manifestation of collective action, which is instrumental in nurturing long-term social cohesion and cultural continuity.

3. Ecological Dimension

Ecological practices in Kuta are reflected in the community's profound understanding, reverence, and management of the natural environment as an integral component of their socio-spiritual life. These values are deeply rooted as a 'living principle,' fostering a harmonious and sustainable social mechanism. Every aspect of daily life in the Kuta Indigenous community represents a collective awareness of utilizing natural resources without compromising their preservation. This ecological capability is vividly manifested during the Nyuguh tradition through the use of organic materials, the selection of ritual sites within the Sacred Forest (*Leuweung Larangan*), and the adherence to customary provisions that govern human-nature interactions with the utmost respect.

The ritual symbols and media employed such as local agricultural produce, specific leaves, and water sourced from within the Kuta customary area carry more than just symbolic weight; they reflect a sophisticated local wisdom dedicated to ecosystem sustainability. By integrating traditional agricultural practices with spiritual and cultural values, the community acknowledges nature as the primary supporter of life. Consequently, the Nyuguh tradition functions not only as a customary ritual but also as a powerful ecological educational medium, reinforcing the symbiotic and harmonious relationship between the community and its environment.

4. Economy Dimension

Beyond its profound spiritual and cultural significance, the Nyuguh tradition serves as a catalyst for community-based economic activities. The ritual's requirements spanning production, distribution, and consumption stimulate a local economic turnover that integrates small-scale entrepreneurs, local artisans, and food producers. This tradition creates a strategic window for cultural-based tourism development, where the 'local economic turnaround' is fueled by the active participation of residents in providing traditional cuisine, processed agricultural goods, and indigenous handicrafts. Consequently, the Nyuguh tradition provides a platform for local actors to promote flagship products, expand market reach, and foster economic creativity.

During the festivities, the community facilitates dedicated stalls and exhibition spaces, allowing both local inhabitants and external vendors to market their products as part of the broader Nyuguh event circuit. The provision of these marketing spaces does not merely enhance the celebratory atmosphere; it creates inclusive and mutually beneficial economic opportunities. This capacity contributes directly to the village's financial circulation while reinforcing the image of the Kuta Indigenous Village as a productive and adaptive cultural space. By bridging ancestral tradition with modern economic needs, the community demonstrates that cultural preservation can coexist with and even drive sustainable economic empowerment."

5. Socio-Educative Dimension

The implementation of the Nyuguh tradition is an integral component of the Kuta community's collective identity, serving not only as an annual ritual but as a living repository of historical and ancestral values. The community's consistency in sustaining this tradition amidst contemporary social and ecological shifts demonstrates a resilient indigenous knowledge system. This capacity for cultural preservation facilitates a transformative learning space, where the profound values embedded in the Nyuguh tradition are transmitted across generations. This process occurs through the deep internalisation of meanings and symbols, primarily conveyed through oral traditions by customary leaders during ritual momentum.

Through routine, repetitive, and structured inheritance mechanisms, local wisdom is deeply internalized by the Kuta people as a fundamental 'principle of life.' The internalization of traditional symbols including sacred prohibitions (*pamali*), customary rules, and life philosophies fosters a strong sense of psychological ownership over their ancestral heritage. In this context, the Nyuguh tradition acts as a primary source of knowledge that shapes the mindset and behavior of the community. Every stage of the procession reinforces the community's identity, ensuring that while the external world changes, the core cultural values of the Kuta Indigenous Village remain steadfast and sustainable.

6. Adaptive Innovative Dimension

The continuity of the Nyuguh tradition within the Kuta Indigenous community demonstrates a remarkable ability to adapt to changing times while maintaining the relevance of ancestral values amidst evolving social dynamics. Although the Kuta people are renowned for their strict adherence to sacred prohibitions (*pamali*), they possess a unique ability to synergize deeply rooted traditions

with contemporary social, economic, and technological developments without sacrificing their core essence. This adaptability is largely driven by the capacity of traditional leaders, who act as guardians of sacred values, interpreters of meaning, and crucial bridges between past and present generations.

Through verbal communication, internal deliberation, and the recitation of historical narratives during rituals, these leaders ensure that each transformation strengthens, rather than obscures, their collective identity. Consequently, traditional leadership is a key factor in ensuring that the Nyuguh tradition remains a 'living' practice, relevant, and resilient to change. A significant manifestation of this innovation is seen during the annual ceremony in the month of Safar (Hijri calendar). While the ritual remains spiritually traditional, it has now opened the way for younger generations to document and publicize local cultural values through social media. By utilizing digital platforms, the unique traditions of Nyuguh and Kuta Village have gained wider visibility, reaching a global audience. This combination of adaptation and innovation not only strengthens a sense of psychological ownership among the Kuta community but also expands the reach of cultural preservation into a global and modern context.

The six dimensions of local genius embedded within the Nyuguh tradition provide a concrete illustration of how the Kuta Indigenous community integrates spiritual, cultural, ecological, economic, and socio-educational values into a cohesive multidimensional framework. The sacred values presented in this tradition are more than mere symbols of ancestral heritage; they serve as strategic instruments for strengthening communal identity, driving community empowerment, and ensuring environmental sustainability. Furthermore, these values establish a foundation for the development of indigenous knowledge and the formulation of policies rooted in local wisdom.

Each stage of the Nyuguh tradition, as a form of authentic cultural expression, plays a pivotal role in integrating cultural capital and social capital with local economic activities. This community-led integration forms the bedrock of successful community-based tourism (Pardosi et al., 2024; Quang et al., 2023). Given that such cultural expressions possess significant potential to increase tourist interest and visitation (Esteban & Ballesteros, 2023; Prandodo & Mustikarani, 2024), they can be developed into the fundamental elements of a robust Community Empowerment Tourism framework (Quang et al., 2023). In alignment with this potential, the reinforcement of local genius through the Nyuguh tradition should be directed toward a tourism model that avoids mere cultural commodification. Instead, it must ensure that the developmental benefits are equitably distributed across all levels of the Kuta Indigenous community, maintaining the sanctity of the tradition while fostering sustainable prosperity

B. Development of Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism in Kuta Indigenous Village

Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism serves as a strategic framework to revitalize the capacity of local communities in autonomously controlling and managing tourism resources, thereby ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits (Zainal et al., 2024). The implementation of SCET relies on institutional strengthening, the escalation of managerial skills, and the development of tourism products rooted in cultural and ecological integrity (Ginangjar, 2023). Theoretically, the success of this approach is dictated by the degree of active community participation across all phases of destination governance (Turčinović et al., 2025; Wani et al., 2024). As a catalyst for communal capacity building, SCET plays a crucial role in stimulating the creative economy (Emanuel de Rozari et al., 2024; Isaac, 2024), constructing social cohesion (Astuty et al., 2023; Esteban & Ballesteros, 2023), and mitigating environmental degradation by preserving cultural identity as an intergenerational heritage (Sugara & Perdana, 2021; Pardosi et al., 2024).

In the Kampung Kuta indigenous community, the manifestations of Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism are actualized through the local genius encrypted within the Nyuguh Tradition. This ritual transcends mere ceremonial dimensions, embodying a cosmic balance philosophy that harmonizes the relationships between humans, nature, and ancestors. The internalization of values throughout the stages of Nyuguh has proven effective in accelerating ecological awareness while fostering social solidarity through inclusive collective practices (Yusuf et al., 2024; Zainal et al., 2024). The dimension of social capital strengthening was explicitly affirmed by the Head of Karangpaningal Village:

The Nyuguh Tradition serves as a pivotal momentum for all citizens, regardless of status, to converge and collaborate. The fraternal bonds emerging from this tradition are regarded as an ancestral mandate and are formally integrated into the customary regulations of the Kuta Village community. Any failure to observe the Nyuguh tradition is profoundly believed to invoke communal disasters or catastrophes. Consequently, Nyuguh functions as a fundamental tie that constructs the collective togetherness of the Kuta indigenous people (Head of Karangpaningal Village, Personal Communication, August 2025).

This statement confirms that the Nyuguh Tradition functions as the foundation of social capital, acting as the primary engine for sustainable tourism. The integration of ancestral mandates and customary regulations creates a social control mechanism ensuring that tourism development remains grounded in the principles of justice and communalism. However, this sustainability depends not only on sociological aspects but also on a profound theological ecological dimension. As explained by the Kuta traditional leader (Kuncen), who stated:

The Nyuguh Tradition is a symbolic form of gratitude and reverence to the ancestors who have consistently guarded and provided protection for the customary territory of Kampung Kuta. Thus, the Nyuguh Tradition possesses a high level of sacredness. If this tradition is not performed, it could certainly trigger disasters or catastrophes for the Kuta indigenous community. (Customary Leader of Kuta Village, Personal Communication, August 2025).

Belief in metaphysical sanctions, described as "disasters or catastrophes," functionally operates as a community-based early warning system that compels communities to maintain ecological consistency. In the context of empowerment, this fear of losing sacredness is transformed into a highly effective mechanism for protecting natural resources. Compliance with these spiritual consequences inherently creates an autonomous social security system. The indigenous people of Kampung Kuta do not require coercive external supervision, as they have a collective moral responsibility for communal safety. This belief system develops into a positive energy manifested as organic solidarity, which serves as the primary capital in the formation of Sustainable Community Empowerment Tourism (Judijanto, 2025; Young, 2025; Pangga et al., 2025). The synergy between these ancestral values and the modern empowerment framework creates a robust model of Sustainable Community Empowerment Tourism. By positioning the Nyuguh tradition as the core of social management, the people of Kampung Kuta demonstrate that sustainability is not an external concept but a deeply rooted practice. This integration ensures that tourism development does not result in cultural erosion, but rather serves as a means to strengthen the village's identity and ecological integrity.

Further data analysis explains that empowerment in the Kuta Indigenous community is not a temporary construct, but rather a continuous cultural process embedded in the community's daily lives. The active involvement of every community member in the preparation and implementation of the Nyuguh tradition reflects practices that grow out of traditional customs, not instant modern interventions. These activities are systematically categorized into four functional dimensions that constitute the fundamental pillars of Sustainable Community Empowerment Tourism in Kuta Village, as detailed in the table.

Table. 1 Local Activities Genius Forming Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples Kuta Village

Local Genius	The role of	Empowerment activities
Indigenous structure	Serves as the primary value controller, guardian of social norms, and steering mechanism for communal management.	Establishes social regularity and facilitates autonomous, deliberation based decision making processes. (<i>musyawarah</i>)
Sacred and Ecological Space Preservation	Functions as a socio-spiritual instrument to maintain the equilibrium between human activities, nature, and ancestral values.	Implements a custom-based conservation system that ensures the long-term integrity of the local ecosystem.

Intergenerational knowledge transfer	Ensures the continuity of indigenous values, customary norms, traditional skills, and cultural identities.	Strengthens the community's independent management capacity and safeguards cultural authenticity against modern erosion.
Cultural-based economic development	Optimizes customary potential, traditional rituals, and local craftsmanship as sustainable welfare sources.	Enhances local entrepreneurial agency and generates inclusive employment opportunities through the creative economy.

Source: Research Results, 2025

The findings presented in Table confirm that these empowerment practices are not ephemeral constructions but sustainable cultural processes grown from daily customary practice. This internalization transforms empowerment into social capital, enabling the community to act as both managers and guardians of ecological harmony. The conception of Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism in Kuta has evolved naturally from residential structures and demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt to dynamic changes. It functions as a form of social security maintained through customary mechanisms, harmonious inter-residential relationships, and a collective commitment to ancestral inheritance.

Ultimately, the development of Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism in Kuta Indigenous Village transcends formal implementation; it has become an integral part of the people's daily existence. This model does not merely prioritize economic benefits but reaffirms the necessity of social balance, ecological sustainability, and spiritual strength as long-term pillars. The primary framework provides extensive space for indigenous peoples to assume active roles in destination management not just as executors, but as decision-makers who determine their own developmental direction. This approach not only generates authentic cultural attractions but also strengthens ecological education, reinforces local identity, and creates inclusive economic opportunities, manifesting as the hallmark of tourism excellence in Kuta Indigenous Village.

4. Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings, it can be concluded that the Nyuguh tradition in Kuta Indigenous Village represents a multidimensional manifestation of local genius, encompassing spiritual-religious, socio-cultural, ecological, economic, educational, and adaptive-innovative dimensions. This tradition functions not merely as a sacred ritual to reinforce cultural identity and ancestral continuity but acts as a sophisticated social mechanism that consolidates organic solidarity and communal cohesion while building ecological awareness through internalized conservation practices. Furthermore, the collective involvement of the community in each stage of the procession positions the Nyuguh tradition as an instrument of social empowerment and a stimulant for local economic activities, thereby creating a pathway for authentic cultural-based tourism development. From a theoretical perspective, this study succeeds in formulating that the integration of sacred values serves as the foundational architecture for the Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism model, which prioritizes cultural integrity alongside economic empowerment. These findings reinforce the theory of social capital rooted in local wisdom as a primary determinant for the independent management of special interest and cultural tourism destinations.

Regarding future research opportunities, the study of the Nyuguh tradition can be expanded through several strategic avenues. First, investigation into the transformation and adaptation of these beliefs amidst modernization and digitalization is essential, particularly concerning how the younger generation articulates local values within the digital and social media landscape. Second, further exploration of community-based creative tourism models is needed to emphasize sustainable and inclusive empowerment frameworks. Third, comparative research involving similar traditions in other indigenous communities would enrich intercultural perspectives and expand the understanding of the diverse local genius practices across the archipelago. Finally, an interdisciplinary approach integrating anthropology, ecology, creative economics, and public policy is vital to formulate comprehensive development strategies for Sustainability Community Empowerment Tourism within indigenous societies globally.

5. Acknowledgments (Optional)

The authors express their deepest gratitude to the Directorate of Research and Community Service (DPPM) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemendikdasaintek) for funding the 2025 Basic Research under the Beginner Research Grant (PDP) scheme, with Main Contract Number: 125/C3/DT.05.00/PL/2025 and Sub Contract Numbers: 7951/LL4/PG/2025; 156/4123/KS/R/VI/2025. This has enabled the successful completion of this research. Appreciation is also extended to the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of Galuh University for the ongoing support and facilities provided during the research. Furthermore, the authors would like to thank the Ciamis Regency Government, the Head of Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, and the entire community of Kuta Traditional Village for their extraordinary cooperation and invaluable participation throughout the research process.

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