Designing a library tourism model based on local cultural storytelling

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ABSTRACT

Background: Few reading communities have developed systematic literacy tourism models centering local narratives. **Purpose:** This study designs and validates a culturally embedded literacy tourism model at Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community, Sumedang. **Methods:** Using design thinking methodology (empathize, definition, ideation, prototyping, testing), data were collected through ethnographic observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. The prototype featured a 90-minute narrative route incorporating Sundanese storytelling (Nini Anteh), traditional games (paciwit-ciwit lutung, oray-orayan), and reflective discussions. **Results:** Results demonstrate measurable multi-dimensional impacts. Educationally, children exhibited significantly enhanced narrative comprehension when stories were delivered orally versus textually, with sustained active participation throughout sessions. The integration of folklore with traditional games created embodied learning experiences that improved reading retention and contextual understanding. Socially, the model fostered intergenerational dialogue among local storytellers, volunteers, children, and parents, strengthening community cohesion. Post-implementation, multiple schools independently contacted the reading community requesting program replication, indicating strong social demand and perceived value. Culturally, participants demonstrated deepened emotional connections to Sundanese heritage, with Nini Anteh eliciting particularly strong responses regarding loyalty and familial bonds. Children expressed heightened pride in regional identity and increased engagement with local cultural narratives. Digital documentation through Instagram and integration with the Sumedang Reading Community Forum website extended program reach beyond physical sessions, creating accessible archives for broader literacy networks. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that participatory, culturally oriented literacy programs transform local knowledge into transferable educational frameworks. Limitations include single-location implementation and analog process constraints. **Implications:** Theoretically, this demonstrates that modularity frameworks can resolve authenticity-scalability tensions in cultural tourism. Practically, the model provides a replicable blueprint for reading communities, with policy implications for Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia

literacy strategies and UNESCO Memory of the World heritage preservation. Future research should explore multi-site validation and hybrid analog-digital models.

Keywords: Library tourism; Design thinking; Local culture; Storytelling; Reading community

INTRODUCTION

Library tourism is emerging as an innovative approach that integrates literacy education, cultural preservation, and experiential learning. This trend reflects a broader shift in transforming libraries and reading communities into interactive spaces that promote local narratives and community engagement (Rejeki, Agustine, et al., 2024).

Globally, libraries have become part of educational tourism, as seen in China, where architectural design, atmosphere, and cultural programming attract visitors despite ongoing service and human resource challenges (Jiang et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2021). Indonesia is rich in oral traditions and unique places such as *Smong* in *Simeulue*, *Sariga* in *Muna* and *Umpasa* in *Batak* culture. These traditions can be used as a means of storytelling to educate and promote resilience (Ramli et al., 2024; Saidiman et al., 2020; Silalahi, 2023).

Although cultural tourism has gained popularity as a cultural and educational innovation, the existing framework still has significant gaps in terms of scalability and cultural integration. Most current approaches focus heavily on architectural aesthetics and physical appeal, while neglecting the integration of intangible cultural heritage and community-centered narratives (Qiu et al., 2022). Conventional tourism models often prioritize large-scale commercial appeal at the expense of cultural

authenticity (Zhang et al., 2021). In contrast, the cultural heritage preservation framework, while maintaining authenticity, aims to foster broader public engagement.

The convergence of community libraries as cultural centers, experiential tourism, and place-based learning offers a distinct conceptual framework for literacy tourism. Place-based learning situates educational experiences within local cultural contexts, cultivating belonging and cultural continuity (Summers & Buchanan, 2018). Experiential tourism engages visitors as active participants in cultural narratives rather than passive observers (Doyle & Kelliher, 2023). Together, these frameworks position libraries as active spaces for cultural participation and communal education, functioning as hubs that merge literacy practices with heritage engagement and participatory storytelling (Markova, 2019; Yuan, 2020).

In practice, this framework translates into concrete literacy tourism activities: storytelling sessions, dramatized folk performances, interactive reading trails, creative writing inspired by local tales, and collaborative art workshops. For instance, folktales like *Nini Anteh* or *Smong* are re-enacted as thematic literacy journeys where participants move through reading, performing, and reflecting stages. Such experiential formats not only reinforce comprehension and empathy but also transform reading into an embodied,

community-driven practice that balances cultural preservation with adaptive learning (Yuan, 2020).

Despite the theoretical promise of these frameworks, their implementation in Indonesia faces distinct challenges. Many reading communities remain focused on foundational literacy, with culture and tourism relegated to the periphery. Critical comparison of existing models reveals systematic limitations. *Rumah Literasi Indonesia* demonstrates cultural integration but lacks systematic documentation protocols and standardized implementation frameworks, limiting inter-regional transferability (Sativany et al., 2024). READ centers in Nepal, while successful in community mobilization, rely heavily on external NGO funding structures that constrain long-term sustainability and autonomous replication (Shrestha & Krolak, 2015). Australian Indigenous libraries excel in cultural preservation through digital archives but operate within resource-intensive infrastructures unsuitable for grassroots Indonesian contexts (Blackburn, 2017). These models share a common weakness: their site-specific designs prioritize local authenticity over modular adaptability, creating replication barriers across diverse sociocultural settings.

This research proposes, for the first time, a culturally rooted literacy tourism model based on the *Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community* that addresses these systematic gaps. The model's scalability is theoretically grounded in modularity frameworks for educational systems (Moro et al., 2023) and innovation diffusion theory applied to education contexts (Green & Ziegler, 2023). Modularity enables the separation of core

design principles (narrative-based pedagogy, participatory co-creation, cultural embeddedness) from context-specific content (regional folklore, traditional games, local languages), allowing systematic adaptation across Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape, from Java's Wayang Beber to Aceh's Smong traditions. Boundary conditions for successful replication include: (1) presence of documented oral traditions, (2) community facilitator capacity for participatory design, and (3) basic digital infrastructure for documentation and network integration (Flam et al., 2023).

Unlike previous compartmentalized frameworks, this model bridges micro-level community practice with macro-level policy frameworks through measurable benchmarks (authenticity, awareness, empowerment, practice) derived from experiential learning frameworks (Kolb, 2013; Phan, 2024) and cultural tourism experience models (Manojlović et al., 2025). The design thinking methodology operationalizes these principles into a five-phase implementation protocol, enabling both fidelities to core pedagogical principles and flexibility for contextual adaptation, thereby resolving the authenticity-scalability tension inherent in prior models.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applied the design thinking method to develop a culture-based model for literary tourism for the *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community. This method was chosen because design thinking offers the opportunity to assess the needs of individual users through a participatory approach that is context-based and solution-oriented (Indrianto et

al., 2024). This method enables researchers to deeply understand user needs while fostering co-creation and iterative refinement (Bender-Salazar, 2023). The term 'users' here refers to the managers of the reading community, community members, service users, traditional elders, and tourists who engage with literary and cultural resources.

Design thinking can be viewed as a research approach that combines a design method with practical qualitative research methodology (Balakrishnan, 2022; Fitriyah et al., 2025). Originally conceptualized by Brown (2009) as a human-centered innovation approach and further refined by Liedtka (2015) for organizational problem-solving, design thinking emphasizes empathy, experimentation, and iterative refinement. This research was conducted using the design thinking framework, which consists of five fundamental components: empathy, definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing (Bjornen & Ippoliti, 2021).

During the empathy phase, observations and interviews were conducted with selected community leaders, volunteers, cultural actors, and guests to understand their experiences, perspectives, expectations, and challenges related to literacy and cultural promotion activities. Defining the next stage involved analyzing the gathered data from interviews and observations to extract key themes and opportunities.

This concern is the basis of the ideate process, where creative ideas are developed in cooperation with stakeholders through group discussions and brainstorming. Here, the ideas concentrate on the programs, services, and information materials that would aid the culture-based tourism experiences.

In the prototype phase, the collected ideas are translated into a preliminary draft for a literary tourism model. This draft includes the structure of the activities, the narrative material, the media used to convey information, and visitor scenarios. The model was then tested during the testing phase through simulations and limited trials with visitors and partners from the community. The feedback received was analyzed to improve and refine the model.

The data analysis employed thematic analysis (Naeem et al., 2023) through a systematic five-step process: (1) familiarization with interview transcripts and field notes; (2) inductive coding to allow themes to emerge from participants' experiences; (3) theme development combining data-driven and theory-informed approaches; (4) theme review and refinement against original data; and (5) interpretation within design thinking principles and literacy tourism literature. This inductive-deductive approach ensured the analysis remained grounded in participants' perspectives while aligned with the theoretical framework.

The study employed purposive sampling to select seven key informants representing critical stakeholder perspectives (Table 1). The sample size aligns with qualitative research principles emphasizing depth over breadth (Palinkas et al., 2015). Each informant category serves specific replicability functions: the reading community manager provides institutional knowledge essential for sustainability; the forum representative ensures regional network alignment

facilitating cross-site adaptation; volunteers offer implementation insights; and visitors validate end-user experiences. This sampling strategy enables transferability by documenting explicit selection criteria that other researchers can apply when replicating the model in different reading community contexts (Morse, 2015). Data validity was enhanced through triangulation of sources (multiple stakeholder groups), methods (interviews, observations, and document analysis), and researchers (collaborative analysis among team members). Credibility was further ensured through member checking by sharing preliminary findings with key participants.

Table 1

Informant

No	Informant category	Number	Selection Criteria
1	*Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community Manager	1 person	Directly responsible for managing and developing reading community programs
2	Representative of the Sumedang Reading Community Forum	1 person	Understands policies, networks, and dynamics among reading communities at the regency level
3	Reading community volunteers	2 people	Actively involved in literacy activities, storytelling, and visitor engagement
4	Reading community Visitors (students, parents, tourists)	3 people	Participate in literacy tourism activities and have direct experience with the reading community

Source: Research result, 2025

Ethical standards were strictly observed. All participants provided written informed consent after receiving clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary participation, and right to withdraw. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonymization and secure data storage. Particular care was taken to respect the intellectual property rights of local storytellers and cultural custodians, with documentation conducted under community consent and proper attribution, in line with ethical guidelines for community-based participatory research (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015).

Design thinking was well suited to the Indonesian cultural context for several reasons. Its participatory ethos resonates with local values of *gotong royong* (cooperation) and *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus), enabling genuine community engagement rather than top-down intervention (Indrianto et al., 2024). The iterative prototyping process also aligned with Sundanese oral and experiential learning traditions, allowing storytelling activities to evolve organically through community feedback. Moreover, the emphasis on co-creation positioned local facilitators as active knowledge holders rather than passive beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, several contextual limitations warrant consideration. As a method rooted in Western design traditions, design thinking required cultural adaptation; its emphasis on rapid prototyping initially conflicted with local norms prioritizing trust-building before

implementation (Ramli et al., 2024). In addition, the solution-oriented focus sometimes obscured deeper structural issues, such as resource inequalities between urban and rural reading communities. The single-site implementation also limits statistical generalizability, although the modular design supports replication. Finally, the predominantly analog process constrained scalability; future research should explore hybrid analog–digital models that remain inclusive of communities with limited technological infrastructure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community located in Sumedang Regency, West Java. The initiative to establish it began in December 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic prevented children from attending school and caused them to spend more time playing around their homes. Seeing this situation, Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community Manager, was motivated to provide an alternative learning space in her neighborhood. She moved bookshelves and children's reading materials, including Bobo magazines, to her garage as a spontaneous response to the literacy needs of children during the crisis. Over time, the initiative grew into a more structured community literacy movement. In 2022, this reading community officially joined the reading community forum of West Java Province and Sumedang Regency. Since then, the library, previously known as the *Galura Puspa Kencana* Library, has been renamed *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community, emphasizing its focus on a storytelling-based literacy approach and local Sundanese culture.

Table 2

Structure of the local culture-based literacy tourism model

Services component	Purposes	Activity	Achievement indicator	Users segmentation
1. Literacy Tourism Services	Providing an educational travel experience	1. Reading folk tales based on local culture 2. Thematic storytelling 3. Reading together	1. Visitors actively participate in literacy sessions 2. An increase in reading interest	Children, students, parents
2. Cultural Tourism Services	Preserving local culture through creative activities	1. Calligraphy workshop 2. Sundanese traditional games	1. Community participation is increasing 2. Documentation of cultural works	Students, art community, general visitors
3. Media and Technology	Disseminating information and strengthening documentation	1. Instagram *Pabukon Ngadongeng* reading community 2. Reading community Kabupaten Sumedang Forum Website	1. Media is available and used 2. Visitors access digital content	General visitors, students, teachers, researchers

Source: Research's result, 2025

The main vision of *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community to foster an interest in reading and a love for Sundanese cultural literacy, especially among children. To achieve this vision, the reading community has designed various creative and contextual literacy programs. Some of the missions carried out include enriching the collection of reading materials, establishing partnerships with various parties, and reviving children's imagination through folktales that highlight local values.

The literacy tourism model developed at *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community consists of three main components, namely literacy tourism services, cultural services, and media and technology services (Table 2). Each component is designed to complement each other and form an educational tourism experience that not only fosters an interest in reading but also strengthens visitors' connection with local wisdom and cultural narratives.

Support for *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community comes from various parties, both governmental and non-governmental. The National Library of Indonesia, through its Quality Reading program, has donated books to support literacy activities. Additionally, support also comes from individuals and communities dedicated to promoting literacy at the grassroots level. Through this collaboration, *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community continues to grow as an alternative learning space that not only educates but also deeply roots itself in local culture and wisdom.

When National Children's Day, Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community once again organized a storytelling activity at Class I of SDN Karangmulya on July 23, 2024, as part of efforts to foster an early interest in reading and local cultural literacy (Figure 1). During this session, two folk tales were shared: "*The Origin of Mount Tampomas*" and "*The Story of Maung and Kuya*." These tales were selected for their rich local wisdom and moral messages that are relevant to children.

In addition to storytelling, this session also introduced the book Warna-Warna Kaulinan, particularly the chapter "*Paciwit-Ciwit Lutung*," which revives traditional Sundanese games. The participants' response was very positive, especially from the girls, who were enthusiastic when asked to practice the *paciwit-ciwit lutung* game. This activity demonstrates that the combination of storytelling and traditional games can be an effective strategy in fostering a love for literacy and one's own culture among the younger generation.

On July 17, 2024, Pabukon Ngadongeng reading community held a literacy activity at SDN II Manglayang through a storytelling session in Grade I (as documented in Figure 2). This activity was part of a program to promote community reading parks and preserve culture through literacy based on storytelling and children's reading.

The two stories presented in this activity were *Jalu jeung Dara*, a fable that had previously been performed in the storytelling competition finals at the Indonesia University of Education (UPI), and *Sakadang Peucang jeung Kunya*. In addition, volunteers also read Indonesian storybooks that were tailored to the participants' level of understanding. This activity coincided with the *Rebo Nyunda*

program regularly held by the school, so all stories were told in Sundanese. This is in line with the vision of *Pabukon Ngadongeng* reading community, which focuses on preserving Sundanese culture through local cultural literacy movements.

Logistical support in the form of reading books was carried in reading community backpacks and received positive responses from students, as evidenced by the large number of loans. The loan recording process was carried out by reading community volunteers, while the documentation of activities was handled by an internal team. This activity proved that a local culture-based approach was able to attract students' interest in reading while strengthening their cultural identity from an early age.

Figure 1. Sundanese storytelling activity for Grade 1 students of SDN Karangmulya, Sumedang
Source: Pabukon Ngadongeng reading community's Instagram, 2024

Figure 2. Sundanese storytelling activity for Grade 1 students of SDN II Manglayang
Source: *Pabukon Ngadongeng* reading community's Instagram, 2024

These two activities (Figures 1 and 2) illustrate the initial implementation of the literacy tourism services developed by Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community, using a local culture-based and participatory approach. Literacy tourism services aim to increase interest in reading by providing enjoyable and

contextual educational tourism experiences. Activities such as regular folk tale readings, thematic storytelling, and group reading sessions are designed to ensure that visitors are not merely passive readers but active participants in the learning process rooted in local narratives (Campbell-Hicks, 2024).

More than just reading stories, this approach has a broader dimension in the context of cultural literacy. It not only introduces functional literacy, but also strengthens children's emotional attachment and local identity, in line with the importance of narratives and symbols in shaping cultural meaning in social institutions (Haryono & Qur'ani, 2019). Studies show that local narrative-based learning can improve reading retention and emotional engagement among students, making shared reading and storytelling activities effective for enriching socio-cultural understanding while improving literacy skills (Lee, 2025).

Researchers believe that this approach has mutually reinforcing pedagogical and cultural strengths. From a pedagogical perspective, integrating folk tales into reading activities creates a bridge between text and context, making it easier for students to understand meaning through experiences that are close to their lives. From a cultural perspective, local narratives strengthen identity awareness and build a sense of belonging to the cultural heritage of the community.

Furthermore, the literacy experience presented through the tourism approach allows the learning process to take place informally and participatively. This is in line with the concept of experiential learning, where emotional, social, and cognitive involvement occur simultaneously in a non-formal learning space. Therefore, reading community is not just a place for reading, but also a place for character building, cultural memory, and enjoyable active learning.

At the second meeting of the calligraphy writing course organized by Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community, the material presented focused on the Tsulusi letters, namely the letters ر (*ra*), ھ (*ha*), and ج (*jim*) (see Figure 3). The activity took place on October 16, 2022, and was attended by children from the Manglayang Village, who were enthusiastic about learning the art of calligraphy as part of their Islamic cultural arts education. The participation of the children from Manglayang Village in this training demonstrates that interest in calligraphy can be cultivated through an inclusive and enjoyable community-based approach.

On July 20, 2023, Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community held an event to introduce traditional Sundanese games to students at SDN II Manglayang (Figure 4). During this event, the children were introduced to *Oray-Orayan*, a folk game that promotes togetherness, cooperation, and joy. This activity is part of efforts to preserve local culture while providing educational games that emphasize direct social interaction amid the rise of digital devices.

The children were very enthusiastic about the game, laughing together and working together to form a line like a snake moving to the rhythm of traditional songs sung together. Through this activity, *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community hopes to instill a love for Sundanese culture from an early age and

strengthen social bonds within the school environment through traditional games.

The cultural tourism services at *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community are a form of culture-based literacy innovation that integrates creative and participatory approaches into educational activities. The two main services highlighted, namely children's calligraphy workshops (Figure 3) and traditional games (Figure 4), show that a cultural approach can provide an alternative learning model that is informal but has a significant impact on strengthening local identity and children's character.

Figure 3. Calligraphy writing workshop for kids
Source: Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community's Instagram, 2022

Figure 4. Traditional Sundanese game activity "*oray-orayan*"
Source: Pabukon Ngadongeng reading community's Instagram, 2023

In the context of calligraphy, the introduction of Arabic script and writing arts not only serves as training in fine motor and artistic skills, but also as a medium for shaping spiritual aesthetics and values of perseverance. Meanwhile, traditional games such as *oray-orayan* serve as a vehicle for social and cultural learning that emphasizes cooperation, unity, and the development of children's collective awareness of local values. This model aligns with the direction of cultural tourism development that emphasizes direct experiences and active visitor

engagement as a form of meaningful and impactful education (Jovicic, 2016; Richa & Naithani, 2024; Seyfi et al., 2020).

Cultural tourism is no longer positioned as passive consumption of cultural performances, but rather as a participatory process that builds dialogue between generations and between values (McKercher, 2020). From a non-formal education perspective, both services can be categorized as part of experiential cultural literacy, where children not only absorb cultural information, but also practice it, interpret it, and internalize it through their bodies and emotions (Rejeki, Renggani, et al., 2024). In this way, they learn not only through texts, but through collective experience.

Furthermore, a documentary approach to cultural activities such as recording the process of writing calligraphy and traditional games, or documenting the oral narratives behind the games, has strategic value in creating collective community memory and expanding access to intangible cultural heritage. This documentation serves as a source of learning, inspiration, and reference for replication in other reading communitys with similar cultural characteristics.

Thus, the success of cultural services at reading community is not only measured by the number of activities carried out, but also by the depth of community involvement, the continuity of inherited values, and the extent to which these activities can be replicated contextually in other regions. *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community, in this case, demonstrates potential as a center for literacy-based cultural innovation, where cultural heritage is preserved through

vibrant, collaborative, and grounded learning experiences.

The literacy tourism model implemented by *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community can be understood through the lens of experiential learning theory (Idris, 2018), where learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the storytelling sessions documented at SDN Karangmulya and SDN II Manglayang, children did not merely listen passively but actively engaged through traditional games (*paciwit-ciwit lutung*), discussion, and embodied participation, reflecting the complete experiential learning cycle. This approach aligns with educational tourism frameworks that emphasize active engagement and contextual learning as critical elements in meaningful visitor experiences (Wibowo, 2025).

Comparative analysis reveals that similar community-based literacy initiatives in other Global South contexts face parallel challenges and opportunities. For instance, the Rural Reading Camps in India's Bihar state utilize local folklore and oral traditions to enhance literacy among marginalized children, demonstrating that culturally responsive pedagogy significantly improves reading engagement and comprehension (Nedungadi et al., 2024). Similarly, the Story Project in Uganda integrates indigenous storytelling with literacy development, showing that narrative-based approaches can bridge the gap between home language practices and school literacy requirements (Kendrick et al., 2022). However, unlike these programs which often rely heavily on external NGO

support, *Pabukon Ngadongeng* demonstrates greater community ownership and institutional sustainability through its integration with local government structures and the Sumedang reading community Forum.

Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community, located in Sumedang, West Java, demonstrates adaptive cultural literacy practices in line with contemporary developments by leveraging digital media as an integral part of its dissemination and documentation strategies. One form of this digital transformation is realized using the Instagram platform as the primary channel for recording and publishing regular cultural literacy activities rooted in local traditions (Figure 5). The official account @pabukon_ngadongeng serves as the digital representation of the dynamic activities of the reading community while also functioning as a space for interaction between the institution, local communities, and a broader public audience.

By mid-2025, this account had posted more than 150 posts reflecting the diversity of services provided, ranging from storytelling sessions, calligraphy training, recording local culture, reading services, to volunteer involvement. The account's layout is curated using a thematic visual approach through the highlight stories feature, making it easier for visitors to explore the types of activities in a chronological and conceptual manner. The use of social media is not only documentary in nature but also serves as an effective communication and institutional exposure strategy.

In practice, Instagram is used not just as a one-way communication tool, but also as a medium for program dissemination, community-based documentation, and strengthening the identity of reading community as a provider of inclusive and contextual cultural literacy services. This approach reflects a progressive understanding of digital literacy, where visual and participatory narratives become important instruments in building awareness of literacy based on local culture.
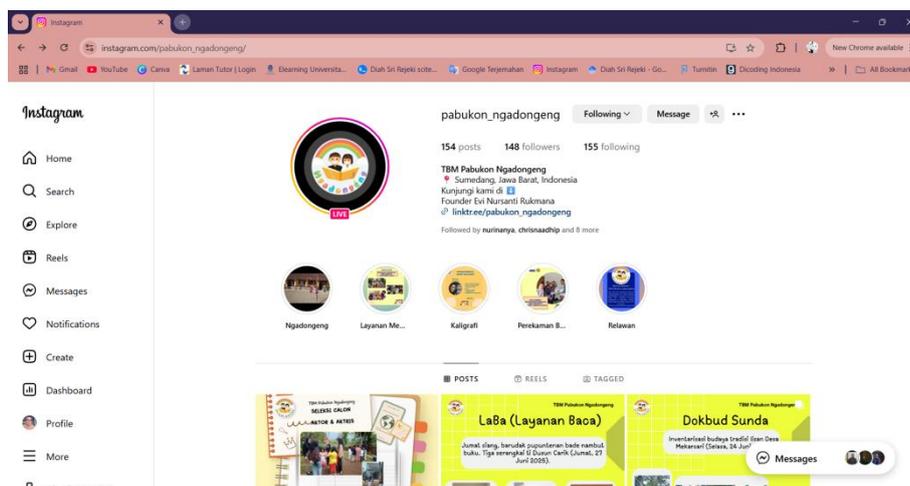

Figure 5. Instagram *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community
Source: *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community's Instagram, 2025

The digital transformation of *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community does not stop at social media. Another strategic step is the integration of this reading community into the digital platform of the Sumedang Regency reading community Forum, specifically in the "Educational Tourism" feature on the forum reading community sumedang.org site (as shown in Figure 6). On that page, this reading community is listed as one of the institutions providing community-based participatory education services. The presence in this directory is not only a symbolic recognition but also concrete evidence of reading community's capacity to provide sustainable, innovative, and replicable literacy tourism services.

The online platform facilitates the community, schools, and stakeholders to access program information quickly and efficiently. In addition, this site also serves as a database for the literacy community, recording activities, best practices, and collaborative potential among reading communitys. Through this digital system, *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community no longer operates solely in a local space but also contributes to an open and interconnected digital literacy ecosystem.
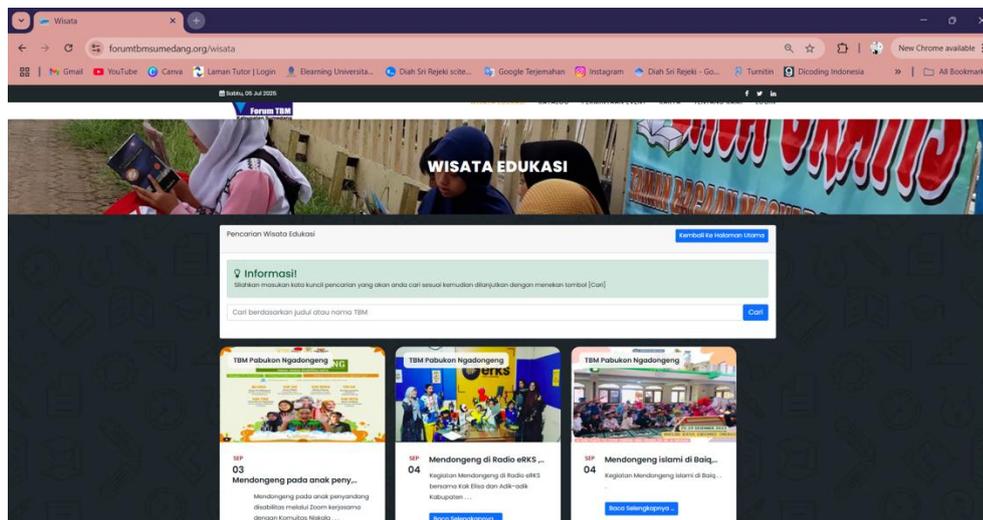

Figure 6. Pabukon Ngadongeng Reading Community integrated with the website of the reading community forum of Sumedang regency
Source: website https://forumtbmsumedang.org/, 2025

Activities such as *Tsulusi* letter calligraphy workshops and the traditional *Oray-Orayan* game, which are part of reading community's cultural tourism services, are now not only conducted in-person but also documented online (Figures 5 and 6). This documentation allows temporary and oral activities to become digital archives that can be accessed across space and time. This aligns with Campbell-Hicks, (2024) view that social media in community literacy movements can extend local public spaces into the digital realm, making visual and narrative content a medium for the formation of collective memory and cultural awareness.

In the perspective of cultural literacy, visualizing reading community activities is very important to revive forms of local cultural expression that have long been under-documented in the formal education

system. Instagram, for example, provides a visual and narrative space that captures the process of storytelling, group reading sessions, and cultural training such as writing in the Sundanese script. These activities, which were previously ephemeral, are now documented and available as learning resources for students, teachers, researchers, and fellow literacy activists in various regions (Rejeki, Renggani, et al., 2024).

The use of digital media also opens up opportunities to create a more systematic record of local knowledge (Ember, 2022). In this context, documentation is not only understood as a form of preservation but also as part of a strategy for dissemination and replication of best practices. Through open digital access, *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community not only communicates with local visitors but also builds a broader network with other education, culture, and literacy communities.

Researchers believe that media and technology are not merely aids in literacy programs but have become key components in the current reading community service model. The presence of consistent digital content, increased interaction on social media, and the utilization of online materials by diverse communities are indicators of the success of this approach. The segmentation of reading community users is also expanding, encompassing students, teachers, researchers, and educational tourists who use reading community as a reference for culture-based literacy activities.

Thus, the digital strategy implemented by *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community through social media and online platforms (Figures 5 and 6) not only strengthens institutional capacity but also establishes it as a center for open, collaborative, and sustainable local knowledge documentation. In an era where information is fluid and fast, this initiative proves that reading community can be an adaptive, relevant, and empowered literacy actor in shaping a literate society both culturally and digitally.

Implementation of the Local Culture-Based Literacy Tourism Model at *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community, based on the design thinking framework outlined in Table 3. At the *Empathize* stage, the researchers observed the weekly storytelling sessions regularly held at *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community. This activity involves local cultural figures as storytellers and volunteers who facilitate interactions with children and parents.

Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the perceptions, experiences, and expectations of visitors regarding the culture-based literacy activities. The results show that Sundanese folktales like Nini Anteh are very popular among children because they are rich in meaning, emotionally familiar, and easy to understand. Children are more enthusiastic when the story is told orally compared to just being read in text.

The local narrative-based literacy approach has proven effective in building children's social and cultural understanding. Recent studies show that the use of narrative texts highlighting local culture significantly improves students' reading comprehension and strengthens their emotional engagement with the stories, thereby increasing reading retention (Afifah et al., 2025; Fauzi et al., 2024).

This emotional involvement encourages context-based learning and deepens the learning experience. Moreover, the narratives and symbols presented in social institutions such as reading parks play a crucial role in shaping the collective meaning and cultural identity of the participants (Dajani & Meier, 2019).

The use of local narrative media, whether in the form of text, e-comics, or creative activities such as storytelling, has also proven capable of fostering appreciation for local wisdom and strengthening community values (Rejeki & Aminudin, 2025). Thus, the integration of local narratives in literacy not only enhances reading and writing skills but also enriches children's understanding of cultural diversity and their social identity.

Table 3

Components of the local culture-based literacy tourism model

Stages	Implementation activities	Results
Empathize	1. Observation of the weekly storytelling session 2. Interview with local storytellers (cultural figures) and volunteers 3. Discussion with children and parents	1. A high interest was found in Sundanese folklore such as *Nini Anteh* 2. Children feel more connected through oral stories
Define	Formulating the problem statement: "The lack of literacy experiences based on local culture and oral narratives in regional reading communities"	1. The program focus is determined: fairy tale-based literacy tourism 2. User segmentation is established: children, elementary school students, and parents
Ideate	1. FGD with reading community managers, teachers, and the Sundanese storytelling community 2. Activity ideas: monthly themed storytelling sessions, reading together, storytelling workshops for volunteers	1. It was agreed to create a "Storytelling Literacy Tour Package" /session 2. The narrative is focused on local themes and character values
Prototype	Arranging the visit itinerary: welcome → storytelling → story discussion → quiz game → documentation	Instagram content production for event promotion
Test	1. Simulation with child visitors 2. Evaluation using questionnaires and participatory observation	1. The children were enthusiastic, the duration was considered just right (±90 minutes) 2. Requests from other schools are starting to come in 3. Need additional visuals & storytelling aids

Source: Research's result, 2025

At the Define stage, the results of the observation and interview analysis conducted at *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community indicate a gap in the literacy tourism program that systematically utilizes the richness of local narratives as the core activity. Although storytelling activities have become a routine practice at

reading community, there has not yet been a comprehensive approach that packages it as an educational tourism literacy experience based on Sundanese culture.

These findings were then used to formulate the main problem statement, namely: "The unavailability of a literacy tourism model that integrates oral narratives and local wisdom as the main strategy in community literacy activities." Based on these findings, the program user segment was formulated more specifically, namely elementary school children. This approach is implemented in the form of organizing thematic storytelling tour packages based on Sundanese folklore, with monthly themes such as "*The Loyalty of Nini Anteh*" Each session not only includes storytelling but also discussions on cultural values and creative activities such as drawing and playing traditional games.

This activity strengthens the function of reading community as a cultural-based learning and social interaction space. This approach is in line with research that shows that the integration of local values in educational tourism can strengthen cultural understanding, enhance learning motivation, and build the collective identity of participants (Amalia et al., 2022). Storytelling activities that highlight local oral narratives not only enrich literacy experiences but also serve as a medium for cultural preservation and contextual learning relevant to the younger generation (Nelisa et al., 2021).

Researchers argue that storytelling activities are not merely a form of educational entertainment, but rather a local pedagogical medium that can bridge literacy, cultural identity, and children's learning habits. The integration of folklore

as the centrepiece of literacy activities not only strengthens reading interest but also builds cultural awareness among the younger generation regarding local values and symbols.

Next, at the *Ideate* stage, the researchers held a forum group discussion involving reading community managers and the community from the reading community forum of Sumedang Regency. From this brainstorming session, various creative ideas emerged, including monthly themed storytelling sessions, group story readings, and storytelling training for volunteers. The FGD results agreed on the creation of an activity package titled "Storytelling Literacy Tour," designed as an educational experience lasting about 90 minutes with an engaging storyline and narration based on local values.

Researchers emphasize that the Ideate stage in the context of reading community is not merely about gathering ideas, but rather a process of transforming concepts into contextual and enjoyable learning experiences. Research shows that structured storytelling, both oral and digital, can enhance literacy skills, digital literacy, as well as children's emotional and social engagement (Maureen et al., 2018).

Storytelling activities have been elevated from informal spaces to a systematic educational structure. The direct involvement of the community and service users in designing and implementing storytelling activities reflects the principles of educational tourism based on participation and local culture, which has proven effective in building character, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering creativity and collaboration (Farantika et al., 2022).

At the *Prototype* stage, the *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community team organized a 90-minute visit itinerary consisting of five main parts: welcome, Sundanese folklore storytelling session, reflective discussion, interactive quiz games, and documentation. This series of activities is designed to create an enjoyable literacy experience while also fostering emotional and cognitive engagement among participants, in accordance with the principles of narrative-based tourism design that is effective both educationally and culturally (Moscardo, 2020).

In addition to organizing the activity structure, the team also produces visual and narrative content, such as digital posters, activity documentation, and story quotes, to be published through the official Instagram account @pabukon_ngadongeng. This strategy not only expands the reach of promotions and attracts the interest of school partners but also supports digital literacy and broader community participation (Adeyinka-Ojo et al., 2020; Wibowo, 2025).

The Test Stage was conducted through a simulation of the literacy tourism program with children from SDN II Manglayang and SDN Karangmulya. The evaluation was conducted using two approaches: distributing questionnaires to accompanying teachers and participatory observation of the participants' responses. The evaluation results show that participants responded with great enthusiasm and were actively engaged throughout the activity. The 90-minute duration was deemed ideal by both teachers and participants as it provided enough time to enjoy each session without boredom. These findings support previous research that emphasizes that literacy tours designed to be interactive and enjoyable can significantly enhance children's reading interest, engagement, and literacy experience (Zahra et al., 2025).
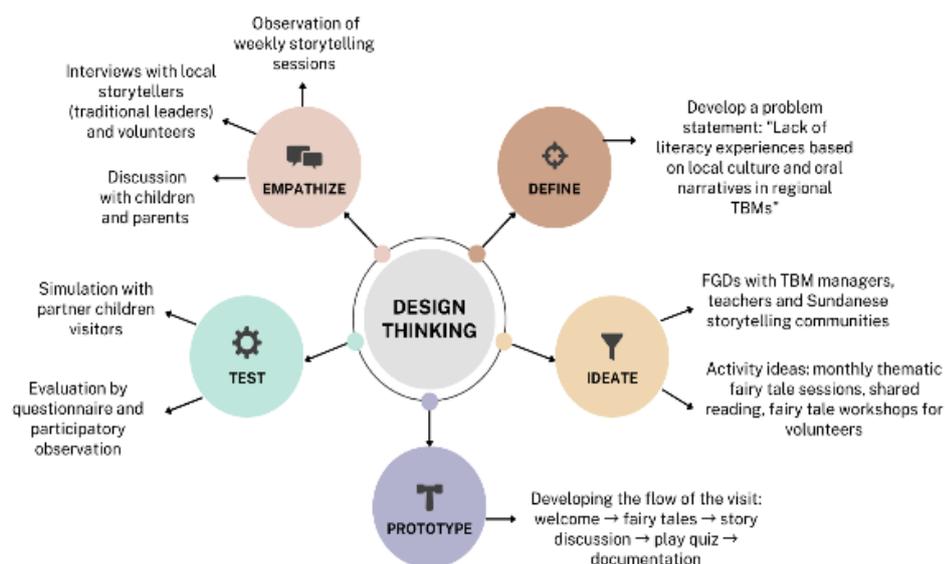

Figure 7. A literacy tourism model based on local culture with a design thinking approach
Source: Research's result, 2025

Interestingly, after the simulation was conducted, several other schools began contacting reading community to explore the possibility of organizing similar activities. This shows the potential for program replication and the high interest in the developed literacy tourism model. However, the observation results also revealed a need to add visual media and storytelling aids, so that the stories are easier to understand and visually appealing, especially for participants in the lower grade levels.

Interestingly, after the trial period, several other schools began contacting reading community to hold similar activities. This indicates a strong potential for program replication and shows that this literacy tourism model is relevant to the needs of other schools (Rejeki & Desriyeni, 2022). However, observations also identified the need for additional visual media and storytelling aids to enhance story comprehension, especially for young children. This is in line with the recommendation of Prasetyo & Rini, (2021) which states that narratives will be more effectively absorbed if supported by strong visual elements. Figure 7 presents a visual representation of the local culture-based literacy tourism model developed using the Design Thinking approach by *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community and has the potential to be replicated in other reading communities.

The model's sustainability extends beyond local replication to potential alignment with national and international heritage frameworks. Institutionally, it supports Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia (Perpusnas) literacy development strategies while fulfilling UNESCO Memory of the World

Programme objectives through systematic digital documentation of Sundanese oral traditions. However, realizing this potential requires policy mechanisms for knowledge transfer, standardized archival protocols, and formal recognition by cultural authorities—ensuring the model contributes to broader heritage preservation networks rather than remaining an isolated innovation.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully designed a replicable literacy tourism model grounded in local culture by using the *Pabukon Ngadongeng* Reading Community as a pilot case. Through a design thinking approach that emphasizes empathy, collaboration, and contextual innovation, the resulting model not only aligns with the cultural and educational needs of the community but also offers a practical framework that can be adapted and implemented in other regions. The model contributes to both the theoretical discourse on literacy tourism and its practical application in community-based literacy initiatives. Further research is recommended to expand trials to various reading communities with different cultural backgrounds and to explore the use of digital platforms and interactive media to enhance the accessibility, scalability, and sustainability of literacy tourism programs in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Technology (Diktisaintek), for providing financial support for the Fiscal Year 2025.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

DSR: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing, supervision. MA: data curation, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing. DS: methodology, formal analysis, visualization, writing – review & editing. IAS: investigation, validation, writing – review & editing. ENR: data curation, investigation, writing – review & editing. NST: conceptualization, methodology, validation, writing–review & editing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

FUNDING

DATA AVAILABILITY

The qualitative data generated during this study have been included in the manuscript in anonymized and aggregated form. Additional materials are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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