



The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Developing Reog Ponorogo Cultural Tourism: An Analysis of Women's Involvement as Cultural Practitioners and the Promotion of Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT

Abstract – The recognition of Reog Ponorogo as an intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding by UNESCO in 2024 underscores the importance of Reog as a cultural identity and tourist attraction; however, conservation efforts at the local level have not yet been fully gender-inclusive. There is a gap between the demand for women's participation in cultural preservation and the practice of Reog tourism, which remains male-dominated; consequently, women's roles have not been optimally integrated into the management and economic utilization of cultural tourism.

This study aims to analyze the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in developing Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism through the involvement of women as cultural practitioners and the promotion of gender equality. Using a qualitative approach through literature review and conceptual analysis, the results indicate that CSR has the potential to serve as a strategic instrument to bridge cultural preservation and gender equality; however, its implementation remains limited and lacks gender sensitivity. The implications of this study emphasize the need for structured and inclusive CSR programs to strengthen the sustainability of Reog Ponorogo while improving the well-being of local communities.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Reog cultural tourism, the role of women.*

Background

Introduction – The art of Reog Ponorogo is an intangible cultural heritage of Indonesia rich in historical and spiritual value, as well as in the identity of the people of Ponorogo, East Java. According to UNESCO (2024), Reog Ponorogo was recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2024 during the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee. This

recognition affirms the uniqueness of Reog as a traditional performing art that combines dance, music, and non-verbal drama, while also highlighting the challenges to its preservation due to modernization and shifting public entertainment preferences (UNESCO, 2024). In the development of cultural tourism, Reog serves as a major attraction that supports the local economy through sustainable tourism, with community participation—including that of women—being key to the art form's survival (Supriyanto, 2023).

A company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) serves as a strategic tool in supporting the preservation and development of Reog cultural tourism, while promoting gender equality through the empowerment of women as cultural practitioners. The CSR approach encompasses economic, social, and cultural aspects that align with the goals of sustainable development and gender inclusivity. (Supriyanto, 2023) explains that women's involvement through community groups such as Ki Onggoputi Putri in Plunturan has become an empowerment movement that preserves Reog while developing the village's cultural tourism, with women playing an active role as barong dancers—even though this initially stemmed from PKK activities (Supriyanto, 2023). This transformation from a masculine tradition to gender inclusion can be strengthened through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, such as training, event promotion, and funding for women's community groups to address stereotypes and challenges related to generational renewal (Marliyani et al., 2018).

This study analyzes the role of CSR in developing Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism, with a focus on the involvement of women as cultural practitioners and the promotion of gender equality, in order to provide insight



into the contribution of corporate initiatives to strengthening the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and the empowerment of marginalized groups. (UNESCO, 2024) emphasizes the urgent need for protection due to declining interest among the younger generation and a lack of knowledge transmission, making CSR a potential catalyst for multi-stakeholder collaboration toward sustainability and inclusivity (UNESCO, 2024). This is particularly relevant following UNESCO's recognition, as the preservation of Reog requires external support to integrate gender equality and local economic development through sustainable cultural tourism (Supriyanto, 2023).

The development of Reog Ponorogo-based cultural tourism has become a priority for the revitalization of traditional arts following its recognition by UNESCO (2024), which emphasizes gender inclusivity as a prerequisite for the sustainability of cultural heritage. The involvement of women through the Sardulo Nareswari and Ki Onggoputi Putri associations marks a transformation from a masculine tradition toward gender equality, in which women play roles ranging from supporting dancers (jathil) to the lead performer (pemborong) who wears the heavy peacock mask (dadak merak) (Supriyanto, 2023; Sari et al., 2025). This phenomenon reflects the empowerment of women as active cultural agents, initially through PKK activities to fill their free time, but which has evolved into a movement for the preservation and development of rural cultural tourism. Women's participation not only prevents Reog from becoming extinct but also unlocks economic potential through regular performances and tourism events that attract both domestic and international tourists (Marliyani et al., 2018); (Supriyanto, 2023).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a business strategy that not only fulfills ethical obligations but also supports sustainable development, including the preservation of local culture and the promotion of gender equality in line with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). In Indonesia, companies often support the preservation of intangible cultural heritage such as Reog Ponorogo through their CSR programs—for example, by providing assistance to arts associations, fostering the next generation of practitioners, and developing cultural tourism infrastructure (Maya, 2024) as outlined in the Periodic Report (UNESCO, 2024). This CSR initiative aligns with UNESCO's principles, which require women's participation for the recognition of cultural heritage,

thereby not only preserving Reog from declining interest among younger generations but also promoting social transformation toward equality (Maya, 2024). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a business strategy that not only fulfills ethical obligations but also supports sustainable development, including the preservation of local culture and the promotion of gender equality in line with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). In Indonesia, companies often support the preservation of intangible cultural heritage such as Reog Ponorogo through their CSR programs—for example, by providing assistance to arts associations, fostering the next generation of practitioners, and developing cultural tourism infrastructure (Maya, 2024). This CSR initiative aligns with UNESCO's principle requiring women's participation for the recognition of cultural heritage, thereby not only preserving Reog from waning interest among the younger generation but also promoting social transformation toward equality (Maya, 2024).

Nevertheless, challenges posed by gender stereotypes and Javanese cultural traditions continue to hinder full acceptance, making external support necessary to accelerate inclusion. In the context of Reog, CSR can integrate women's empowerment by providing arts training, promoting inclusive events, and offering economic support to women's groups such as Sardulo Nareswari, which has endured for more than a decade as a symbol of gender identity negotiation within a masculine cultural space. This illustrates how CSR helps address traditional gender stereotypes while strengthening the preservation of the arts through women's active participation. Such programs also support the regeneration of artists and the development of inclusive cultural tourism in Ponorogo (Marliyani et al., 2018).

This study is relevant because it fills a gap in the literature regarding how CSR can serve as an effective tool for developing cultural tourism based on gender equality, particularly in regions such as Ponorogo that rely on traditional arts as a source of identity and economic sustenance. CSR plays a role not only in cultural preservation but also in the empowerment of marginalized communities through a sustainable approach aligned with national and international policies (Maya, 2024); (Supriyanto, 2023). This integration strengthens the synergy between business, heritage preservation, and gender equality in the post-UNESCO recognition era (UNESCO, 2024); (Sari et al., 2025). Furthermore, CSR



programs focused on women Reog performers can enhance the competitiveness of Ponorogo's cultural tourism at the national and global levels by highlighting the value of inclusivity as a unique selling point.

Thus, this approach not only preserves traditional arts but also contributes to improving the economic well-being of local communities through a gender-equitable tourism model. Within this broader framework, this study is expected to provide theoretical and practical insights into the synergy between CSR, Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism, and gender equality. By analyzing women's involvement as cultural practitioners, this study will explore how CSR programs can strengthen the preservation of traditional arts while empowering women to actively participate in local economic development (Marliyani et al., 2018). This approach is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic era and following UNESCO's recognition, as cultural preservation requires multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure sustainability and inclusivity (Maya, 2024).

Literatur Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as a company's responsibility for the social and environmental impacts of its operations, which goes beyond legal obligations to promote the greater good of society as a whole, with a link to a relevant journal article (Chen et al., 2021). CSR categories generally encompass four main dimensions: economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and philanthropic responsibility, which form the basic framework for sustainable practices, with relevant journal links (Carroll, 2021). CSR elements include a commitment to human rights, employee well-being, business ethics, and environmental protection, while its indicators can be measured through metrics such as employee retention rates, carbon emissions reduction, and community contributions, with relevant journal links (Lopez et al., 2022).

Reog Cultural Tourism

Reog cultural tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on the traditional Reog Ponorogo performing arts of Indonesia, which incorporate elements of dance, music, and mystical symbolism as cultural heritage to attract tourists (Dharojah et al., 2024). The role of women in CSR is becoming increasingly prominent because women tend to be more sensitive to ethical and community issues; thus, the

presence of female directors on corporate boards significantly improves CSR performance, as supported by relevant journal articles (Ding et al., 2022). In Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism, women's roles are evolving through their participation as Jathil dancers, which not only preserves culture but also empowers women through arts groups such as Ki Onggoputi Putri (Supriyanto, 2023). The integration of CSR into cultural tourism in Indonesia, including Reog, involves corporate support for the preservation of local heritage and community empowerment, which contributes to sustainable tourism through multi-stakeholder collaboration (Hendrayani et al., 2025).

The Role of Women

The role of women in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the development of Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism is defined as the active involvement of women as practitioners of traditional arts who preserve cultural heritage while promoting gender equality through empowerment in sustainable tourism (Supriyanto, 2023). The categories of women's roles are divided into cultural participation as Reog dancers and preservers, economic empowerment through tourism enterprises, and social advocacy for gender equality within the community (Altinay et al., 2026). The elements of women's roles include cultural identity, social integration, and resilience in the face of gender stereotypes, where women serve as custodians of traditional Reog knowledge while collaborating in tourism development (Dong & Khan, 2023). Indicators of women's roles are measured by their level of participation in Reog performances, increased income from cultural tourism, and progress toward gender equality—such as access to education and the representation of women in leadership positions within the Ponorogo community (Tristanti et al., 2022).

Results and Discussion

The Gap Between Global Recognition of Reog Ponorogo and the Implementation of Gender-Inclusive Preservation Research Method

The study's findings reveal a gap between UNESCO's international recognition of Reog Ponorogo as intangible cultural heritage in 2024 and the implementation of inclusive cultural preservation at the local level. Normatively, UNESCO recognition requires broad



community involvement, including women, in the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge. However, observations of Reog cultural tourism practices show that the structure of performances and tourism management remains dominated by male actors, while women's roles have not yet been fully integrated into decision-making and economic benefits. This situation aligns with findings in the literature review, which state that the recognition of cultural heritage is often not followed by substantial social transformation, particularly in terms of gender equality (Supriyanto, 2023; UNESCO, 2024).

Women's Involvement as Cultural Actors: Between Innovation and Social Resistance

The results of the literature review indicate that women's involvement in the Reog Ponorogo art form has seen significant development, particularly through the emergence of all-female Reog groups such as Sardulo Nareswari and Ki Onggoputi Putri. This phenomenon marks a shift from women's traditional role as supporting performers (jathil) toward an innovative role as lead performers (pembarong). However, these findings also reveal social resistance stemming from gender stereotypes and Javanese cultural values that still position Reog as a masculine domain. This gap reinforces findings in the literature review that, although women have been physically present in performances, their social and cultural legitimacy is still a work in progress (Marliyani et al., 2018; Sari et al., 2025). Thus, women's involvement has not yet fully transformed into structural equality within Reog cultural tourism.

The Role of CSR in Bridging the Gap Between Cultural Preservation and Gender Equality

The results of the analysis indicate that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has the potential to serve as a strategic tool for bridging the gap between cultural preservation and the promotion of gender equality in Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism. Based on a literature review, CSR is no longer understood merely as philanthropy but as a strategic approach that aligns business interests with social and cultural development. However, the study's findings also indicate that CSR implementation in the cultural sector still tends to focus on event sponsorship or financial assistance without gender-sensitive program design. This creates a gap between the inclusive goals of CSR and actual practices on the ground. In fact, the

literature emphasizes that CSR integrated with women's empowerment—through arts training, strengthening the capacity of women's organizations, and promoting inclusive events—can accelerate social transformation and the regeneration of Reog artists (Marliyani et al., 2018; Maya, 2024).

CSR, Women's Empowerment, and Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Further discussion reveals that women's involvement as practitioners of the Reog cultural tradition impacts not only social aspects but also the economic sustainability of cultural tourism. Observations of women's Reog associations show that women's active participation has led to regular performances, increased the frequency of tourism events, and attracted the interest of domestic and international tourists. However, without sustained external support, these initiatives are vulnerable to constraints in funding, promotional access, and member recruitment. In this context, CSR plays a crucial role as a catalyst for multi-stakeholder collaboration among companies, cultural communities, and local governments. These findings reinforce the argument in the literature review that CSR focused on gender equality can improve women's well-being while strengthening the competitiveness of cultural tourism destinations (Sari et al., 2025; Supriyanto, 2023).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the results of this study enrich the literature on cultural tourism by demonstrating that CSR can serve as a bridging mechanism between the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and the promotion of gender equality. These findings underscore that cultural preservation cannot be separated from the dynamics of gender relations within local communities. In practical terms, the research results indicate the need for more structured CSR program design that is based on the needs of the women's Reog community and aligned with the principles of inclusivity following UNESCO's recognition. Without such integration, the development of Reog cultural tourism risks becoming merely a symbolic gesture of preservation without sustainable social impact (Maya, 2024; UNESCO, 2024).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Reog Ponorogo art form holds a strategic position as an intangible cultural



heritage that not only represents the cultural identity of the people of Ponorogo but also has great potential as a driver of sustainable cultural tourism. UNESCO's recognition of Reog Ponorogo as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2024 underscores the urgency of preservation, while also prompting reflection on internal challenges, particularly regarding gender inclusivity and the sustainable regeneration of cultural practitioners. Research findings reveal a gap between this global recognition and preservation practices at the local level, where the management and performance structures of Reog remain relatively male-dominated and have not yet fully integrated women into strategic decision-making positions or the distribution of economic benefits.

The findings of this study confirm that women's involvement as practitioners of the Reog cultural tradition—whether as jathil dancers or pембарong—represents a form of cultural innovation and negotiation of gender identity within the realm of traditional arts, which has long been dominated by men. Although women's participation has expanded through women's Reog groups, this study found that the social legitimacy and sustainability of women's roles still face cultural resistance, resource constraints, and a lack of structural support. In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) emerges as a strategic instrument capable of bridging the interests of cultural preservation, tourism development, and the promotion of gender equality.

Overall, this study concludes that CSR initiatives that are strategically designed, gender-sensitive, and community-needs-based can make a significant contribution to strengthening Reog Ponorogo cultural tourism. CSR serves not only as a means of funding or event support but also as a catalyst for social transformation through women's empowerment, capacity building for arts communities, and the creation of an inclusive cultural tourism ecosystem. Thus, the synergy between CSR, the preservation of Reog Ponorogo, and gender equality is key to ensuring the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage while improving the economic well-being of local communities. These findings have important implications for the development of cultural tourism policies and CSR practices in Indonesia, particularly in the context of post-UNESCO recognition, which demands multi-stakeholder collaboration and a gender-equitable approach to development.

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