

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Cultural tourism refers to tourism activities that utilize culture as the main attraction for visitors. This phenomenon involves various studies and models to utilize local culture as the main attraction, allowing tourists to learn and experience local culture firsthand. Richard G defines "Cultural tourism can be defined as the movement of people to cultural attractions outside their normal place of residence in order to gain new knowledge and experiences to fulfill their cultural needs".

As stated by Tamas Hardi, Cultural values, monuments, historical buildings and heritage sites are the strongest attractions for nationality-based cultural tourism. These cultural attractions include historical sites, museums, art galleries, local festivals, and local traditions and rituals. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2018), 89% of national tourism operators make cultural tourism part of their tourism policy, confirming that countries with diverse cultural wealth can benefit more from this sector.

According to the World Economic Forum's Tourism and Travel Development Index (TTDI 2023), Europe is the continent with the highest tourism levels, with 17 European countries in the top 30 countries with the best tourism and travel sectors. These countries benefit from a good business environment, utilization of modern technology, adequate infrastructure, and rich cultural and natural resources that support tourism development. Ireland, one of the European countries, makes effective use of cultural tourism, ranking 24th on the list of countries with the best tourism and travel sectors according to TTDI 2023. Ireland's landscape, which combines elements of history, culture, tradition, and natural heritage, is a major attraction for tourists (Aranzabal, Schmitz, & Pineda, 2009).

Among the various cultural attractions in Ireland, castle tourism is one of the prominent forms of cultural tourism. Ireland, often dubbed as the "Island with Hundreds of Castles", has many castles scattered across the country. However, over time, many historic castles have lost their functionality and are not well maintained. The local government has attempted to preserve some castles by carrying out restoration and functional adaptation to meet the needs of the present (Wonders of Ireland, 2023). One castle that has been successfully preserved and recognized as one of the best castles in Ireland is Bunratty Castle.

Bunratty Castle, which is one of the top five best castles in Ireland according to TripAdvisor (2024), dates back to the 14th century and has a complete and authentic interior (Anna Marie, 2023). The castle has been awarded "Family Venue of the Year" and "Tourist Attraction of the Year" in 2022 (The Irish Hospitality Award). After numerous restorations, Bunratty Castle retains its 16th-century interiors and art, and has function rooms that are still in use today. In addition, Bunratty Castle is the only castle in Ireland to have a Folk Village Park, a village that depicts the life of the people of Bunratty in the 18th century, complete with various facilities and attractions that provide a nostalgic feel from 1900. One of the main attractions is the Bunratty Medieval Banquet, a signature dinner event that has been taking place for 60 years and is one of Ireland's most prestigious dining experiences, with over three million guests having enjoyed a 15th century-style dinner (BunrattyCastle.ie, 2024). Bunratty Castle was visited over 344,000 times in 2023, with a 14% increase from the previous year, making it one of the most popular castles in Ireland. Bunratty Castle's success in utilizing local history and culture as a cultural tourism product also adds to its appeal.

Looking at how successful Bunratty Castle is, namely as a cultural tourism place and as a site to preserve and learn Ireland's heritage, is the main reason this research paper was initiated. This research will explore how Bunratty Castle manages ancient cultural activity and still attracts many visitors, and how they overcome the challenges that may occur during operation, as well as the Castle's impact on the local community, namely economically, socially, and culturally. This research paper and

video output will hopefully be an answer to those who are curious about the strategy of a cultural tourism site and how they remain original while keeping up with the latest trends.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on this background, the problem formulation in this study is as follows:

1. What is its role in the preservation of Ireland's cultural heritage?
2. What is the impact of tourism on the local community around Bunratty Castle, economically, socially and culturally?
3. How does Bunratty Castle overcome their challenges in managing cultural activities to attract visitors?

1.3 Project Purpose

1. To find out Bunratty Castle's role in preserving Ireland's cultural heritage.
2. To find out how Bunratty Castle affects the lives of the local community, including economic, social and cultural impacts.
3. To find out strategies used by Bunratty Castle to overcome challenges in managing cultural activities to attract visitors

1.4 Project Benefit

1.4.1 Contribution to Theory Development

An in-depth analysis of how Bunratty Castle utilizes its cultural heritage elements can make a significant contribution to the study of Indonesian cultural tourism, given Indonesia's cultural diversity. By examining Bunratty Castle's promotional strategies, challenges, opportunities and management, it is possible to identify best practice tutors that can be adapted to promote cultural tourism destinations in Indonesia. This theory does not

only examine the understanding of preserving and managing international cultural heritage, but also to increase the variety of local cultural tourism that is more innovative and provides a memorable experience for visitors.

1.4.2 Practical Contribution

Studying Bunratty Castle's proven methods of cultural tourism development effectively enhances its potential, with the hope of providing practical guidance aimed at adapting these practices to the local context, and in accordance with Indonesian cultural values. The application of these practices can maximize the visitor experience, reinforce the uniqueness of cultural activities, and increase tourist attraction, ultimately supporting local economic improvement through more effective and sustainable heritage management.

1.4.3 Policy Contribution

By exploring Bunratty Castle, we hope that it could preserve the heritage of Ireland's cultural tourism. By the development of cultural tourism, it could increase revenue for the tourism sector, and be impactful for the community around Bunratty Castle and its region.