

Article

Souvenir Traders and Their Impact on Cultural Tourism and Economic Development

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Abstract: This research delves into the dynamic role of souvenir traders in the Tomok Area of Samosir Regency, shedding light on their services and strategies and their profound impact on local tourism and the creative economy. Souvenir trading in this region transcends traditional commerce, serving as a cultural exchange that preserves Batak heritage, fuels economic growth, and contributes to the broader creative economy. The study begins by investigating the background of the research, emphasizing the cultural significance, geographical location, and economic conditions of the Tomok Area. The existing literature and related studies are reviewed, providing a comprehensive understanding of souvenir trading, tourism, and the creative economy. This background prepares the groundwork for a detailed exploration of tourism and creative economy, introducing readers to the concepts and their relevance to the Tomok Area. The research dissects the services provided by souvenir traders, highlighting their cultural engagement, authenticity, and personalization. It underlines how these services enhance the tourist experience, fostering deeper connections between visitors and the local culture. The study then uncovers the challenges faced by souvenir traders, including market competition, changing tourist preferences, and sustainability demands. A critical component of this research is the examination of successful strategies employed by souvenir traders. Real-life examples showcase how cultural engagement, product customization, collaboration with local artisans, sustainability practices, and an online presence have positively influenced their businesses and the region's economy. By acknowledging the challenges and building on their successes, traders, local authorities, and the community can collectively work toward further enriching the Tomok Area, making it a prime destination for cultural exchange and economic vitality.

Keywords: Souvenir Traders; Tourism; Creative Economy; Tomok Area; Samosir Regency

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1. Introduction

Tourism plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of many regions worldwide, offering the potential for job creation, revenue generation, and cultural exchange (Saarinen, 2003) (Ponkratova et al., 2021). In the context of Indonesia, tourism is a vital industry, contributing significantly to the national economy. The country's rich cultural diversity and natural beauty attract tourists from all over the world. Samosir Regency, located in North Sumatra, is a prime example of a region that benefits from tourism, especially in the picturesque Tomok Area.

Samosir Regency, situated in the heart of Lake Toba, is synonymous with Indonesia's tourism prowess. The regency encompasses not just stunning landscapes but also the indigenous Batak culture, celebrated for its unique traditions and artistic heritage (Arif, 2019). Among the many destinations in Samosir, the Tomok Area is a jewel, where the past and present coexist harmoniously, attracting a steady stream of visitors seeking both natural beauty and cultural enrichment.

Samosir Regency is a unique destination renowned for its natural beauty and cultural heritage (Cole, 2007). Tomok Area, located on the Samosir Island in the middle of Lake Toba, is a particularly popular tourist destination, known for its stunning landscapes and

the cultural significance of the Batak people who inhabit the region(Causey, 2003)(Hanan, 2011). This area, with its blend of traditional and modern influences, has attracted both domestic and international tourists.

One of the significant facets of tourism in Tomok Area is the thriving souvenir trade(Causey, 2003). Souvenir traders in the area play a pivotal role in not only serving the tourist market but also contributing to the development of the creative economy. Souvenirs serve as tangible reminders of a visitor's experience, encapsulating the essence of the place, culture, and people. These souvenirs often incorporate traditional motifs, arts, and crafts, making them a manifestation of the local creative economy.

Souvenir traders in Tomok play a pivotal role in the tourism narrative(Causey, 2003). They serve as intermediaries between visitors and the local culture, providing tangible connections to the place, its people, and their traditions. These souvenirs, ranging from handcrafted artifacts to artistic representations, carry the essence of the region, encapsulating its history and identity(Joy et al., 2014).

However, while souvenir trading is a thriving business, it faces a variety of challenges, including competition, fluctuating market demands, and changes in tourist preferences(Hogarth-Scott et al., 1996). Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the services provided by souvenir traders and the strategies they employ to ensure their businesses' sustainability. This research aims to shed light on the services offered by these traders, the strategies they implement to thrive in a dynamic market, and their contribution to the broader creative economy in Tomok Area.

This study is essential for several reasons. Firstly, understanding the dynamics of the souvenir trade and creative economy development in Tomok Area can provide insights into how local communities can leverage their cultural and artistic heritage for economic growth(Friedman, 2005). Secondly, it can help in identifying potential areas for improvement, fostering sustainable tourism practices, and ensuring that both tourists and local communities benefit from this symbiotic relationship.

Analysis of Services and Strategies of Souvenir Traders in Tourism and Creative Economy Development in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency research is a timely and valuable endeavor that can contribute to the sustainable development of this picturesque destination and offer lessons that extend to similar tourist destinations in the region and beyond.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Existing Literature and Related Studies

Here is a brief overview of some existing literature and related studies on the topic of Analysis of Services and Strategies of Souvenir Traders in Tourism and Creative Economy Development in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency:

Tourism as Economic Driver: Tourism is a significant economic driver in many regions, contributing to job creation and revenue generation(Li et al., 2018)(Manzoor et al., 2019). The economic impact of tourism extends to various sectors, including accommodation, food services, transportation, and local businesses. It can lead to infrastructure development, increased employment, and improved standards of living for communities in tourist destinations.

Sustainable Tourism: Sustainable tourism practices have gained prominence, emphasizing the responsible and ethical management of tourist destinations(Williams & Ponsford, 2009)(Weaver, 2007). Researchers have explored the environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability in tourism, including efforts to minimize negative impacts and maximize benefits for local communities.

Cultural Tourism: Cultural tourism involves visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences(Richards, 2013)(Prentice, 2001). It encompasses visits to heritage sites, participation in cultural events, and interactions with local communities. Preserving and presenting cultural heritage in a respectful and engaging manner is a key focus in cultural tourism.

Definition of Creative Economy: The concept of the creative economy encompasses the economic potential of creativity, innovation, and culture(Scott, 2010)(Galloway &

Dunlop, 2007)(Hesmondhalgh, 2008). It includes industries like arts, design, media, and crafts. Creative economy development is seen as a strategy for fostering economic growth while preserving cultural heritage.

Role of Creative Industries: Creative industries not only contribute to economic growth but also have the power to shape a region's identity and promote cultural exchange(Santagata, 2002). They are often intertwined with tourism, as creative products, services, and experiences become integral to the tourism sector.

Challenges in Creative Economy Development: Challenges in the creative economy development include issues of intellectual property, market access, and sustaining creativity in the face of commercialization(O'Brien, 2015). Researchers have explored how to balance economic growth with cultural authenticity and creativity.

Souvenirs as Cultural Artifacts: Souvenirs are tangible reminders of travel experiences, often symbolizing the culture, heritage, and identity of a destination(K. K. Swanson & Timothy, 2012)(K. Swanson, 2014). Researchers have highlighted the role of souvenirs in preserving and promoting cultural traditions, including local craftsmanship and artistry.

Economic Significance of Souvenir Trading: Souvenir trading is a significant economic activity in tourist destinations(K. K. Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Studies have shown that it provides income to local communities and supports small businesses. The economic viability of souvenir trading can significantly impact a region's overall economy.

Challenges and Strategies: Souvenir traders face challenges such as market competition, changing consumer preferences, and the need for sustainable practices(K. K. Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Research has explored the strategies employed by souvenir traders to address these challenges, including marketing techniques, product diversification, and community engagement.

2.2 Tourism

Tourism is a dynamic and multifaceted global industry that transcends borders, cultures, and economic systems(Rahmat Shah et al., 2017). It involves the movement of individuals or groups of people from their place of residence to other destinations for various purposes, primarily leisure, exploration, and recreation. Beyond its role as a leisure activity, tourism has evolved into one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors, with far-reaching implications for both host destinations and travelers themselves(Chon, 2012).

Tourism is not a one-size-fits-all experience. It encompasses a rich tapestry of experiences, each tailored to different traveler preferences(Templeton, 2011). Cultural tourism, for instance, invites exploration of heritage and traditions, while adventure tourism presents opportunities for outdoor activities and challenges. Eco-tourism focuses on natural environments and wildlife conservation, while medical tourism involves travel for medical treatment. These variations in tourism cater to the myriad interests and motivations of global travelers.

The very essence of tourism is the allure of destinations and attractions(Leiper, 1990). These destinations can range from the serene landscapes of national parks to the bustling streets of historic cities. They can include natural beauty, historical sites, cultural heritage, recreational activities, or even the culinary offerings of a region. These attractions act as magnets, drawing in visitors from around the world, shaping the unique identity and economic prosperity of each destination.

Tourism is a potent economic force, with the ability to drive significant revenue and employment opportunities(Ashley et al., 2007). This industry impacts a wide spectrum of sectors, including hospitality, transportation, food services, and retail. In many regions, tourism is a primary economic driver, creating jobs and fostering local businesses. It is also a source of foreign exchange earnings, which can have a substantial impact on national economies.

The rapid growth of tourism brings with it a double-edged sword of opportunities and challenges(Martin, 2007). On one hand, tourism can stimulate economic

development, infrastructure improvements, and cultural exchange (Strauf, 2010). On the other hand, it can lead to overcrowding, environmental degradation, and cultural commodification. The preservation of cultural and natural assets, responsible resource management, and sustainable practices are increasingly crucial in the face of these challenges.

Tourism facilitates cultural exchange as travelers engage with local communities, customs, and traditions (Salazar, 2012). This interaction promotes cross-cultural understanding, broadens worldviews, and can foster mutual appreciation between visitors and hosts. It acts as a bridge for dialogue between different cultures and backgrounds.

Tourism's influence is not confined to individual destinations; it reverberates across borders and cultures (Gössling et al., 2009). It has profound social, cultural, economic, and environmental implications, impacting international relations and development strategies. The growth of global tourism is emblematic of an increasingly interconnected world, underscoring the importance of responsible and sustainable practices.

In response to the challenges posed by mass tourism, sustainable tourism has emerged as a guiding principle. It emphasizes responsible and ethical travel that balances economic growth with environmental and social considerations. Sustainable tourism seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism while maximizing its benefits for host communities and the preservation of natural and cultural resources.

2.3 Creative Economy

The creative economy is an economic sector encompassing a wide array of creative and cultural industries (Higgs et al., 2008) (Scott, 2010). These industries are characterized by their reliance on creativity, intellectual property, and innovation to generate value and wealth. They span diverse domains, including arts, design, fashion, film, music, architecture, advertising, software development, and more. At the core of the creative economy is the generation and commercialization of intellectual and artistic creations.

At the heart of the creative economy is the notion of intellectual property (Garnham, 2005). Intellectual property rights, such as copyrights and patents, play a pivotal role in protecting and monetizing creative outputs. This encourages creators to invest in innovation and ensures that their work remains a source of economic value.

The creative economy is not merely an artistic endeavor, it is a formidable economic force (Caves, 2000). It generates revenue, creates jobs, and contributes significantly to GDP in many countries. As technology continues to advance, it has provided new avenues for creative industries to expand, further amplifying their economic importance.

Creative industries are often central to the expression and preservation of cultural identity (Garnham, 2005). They reflect a society's values, traditions, and beliefs. Cultural heritage, as expressed through art, literature, and performance, is both an economic driver and a source of cultural pride.

The creative economy knows no boundaries. It is a global phenomenon, with creative works and products transcending national borders (Darwis, 2013). The ability to share creative content across the world has led to an interconnected global creative ecosystem.

The creative economy is not without its challenges. It can be susceptible to economic fluctuations, piracy, and issues of fair compensation for creators (Hartley et al., 2015). The integration of technology also presents challenges such as copyright infringement and intellectual property disputes. However, the creative economy's adaptability, innovation, and cultural significance provide a wealth of opportunities for growth and development.

Governments and institutions worldwide are increasingly recognizing the importance of the creative economy (De Beukelaer & Vlassis, 2019). They are implementing policies that foster the growth of creative industries, support artists and creators, and ensure fair compensation. In doing so, they seek to leverage the creative economy for economic development, cultural preservation, and the promotion of innovation.

2.4 Souvenir Traders

Souvenirs are tangible keepsakes that travelers acquire to remember their trips and experiences (Sthapit & Björk, 2019). They serve as reminders of the places they have visited and the memories created during their travels. These items can range from small trinkets

like keychains or postcards to larger items such as local handicrafts, artwork, clothing, and regional food products.

Souvenirs often mirror the culture, history, and traditions of the destination (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). They incorporate symbols, motifs, and materials that are unique to the region. As such, they offer insights into the local way of life and serve as a window into the cultural identity of a place.

Souvenir traders are individuals or businesses that specialize in the production, sale, and trade of souvenirs in the context of tourism (Soukhathammavong & Park, 2019). Souvenirs are typically tangible items, such as handicrafts, artworks, clothing, local food products, or other goods, that visitors purchase to commemorate their travel experiences and take a piece of the destination home with them. These traders, whether operating in bustling marketplaces or small, family-run shops, play a pivotal role in the local economy and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Souvenir trading is not solely about profit; it often serves as a means of livelihood for local artisans and traders (K. K. Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Many souvenirs are handmade or produced using traditional methods, highlighting the artistic and craftsmanship skills of local communities. These economic contributions are vital to the financial well-being of many regions.

Souvenir trading creates a direct connection between travelers and the locale they visit (K. K. Swanson & Timothy, 2012). It allows tourists to take a piece of the destination back home with them, reinforcing the link between the traveler and the place. The souvenirs evoke memories and a sense of nostalgia, even long after the journey has ended.

Souvenir trading raises questions about cultural authenticity and preservation (Chhabra, 2005). The demand for authentic, locally made souvenirs often coexists with the pressure to commercialize and globalize products. Striking a balance between creating marketable items and preserving cultural traditions can be a challenge for souvenir traders.

Souvenir trading is a global industry that transcends geographical boundaries (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2007). Travelers from around the world engage in souvenir shopping, and it has become a significant economic activity in many tourist destinations. This industry has a profound impact on the global marketplace, encompassing a wide array of products and items.

Souvenir trading, while offering economic opportunities, also faces challenges such as competition from mass-produced souvenirs, fluctuations in tourist demand, and the need to balance authenticity with commercial appeal (Soukhathammavong, 2018) (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Additionally, sustainability concerns have arisen in the industry, with questions about the environmental impact of souvenir production and ethical considerations regarding the treatment of artisans and indigenous communities.

a. Roles of Souvenir Traders in the Local Economy:

Economic Contribution: Souvenir traders are integral to the local economy. Their businesses generate income not only for themselves but often for local artisans and craftspeople who produce the souvenirs. This economic activity bolsters the livelihoods of numerous families and contributes to the overall financial well-being of the community. **Job Creation:** Souvenir trading often leads to the creation of job opportunities within the destination. Local individuals may be employed to produce, market, and sell these items. The growth of the souvenir trade can have a cascading effect on employment, supporting not only traders but also those involved in the production and distribution of souvenirs. **Tourism Support:** Souvenir traders provide an essential service to the tourism industry. They offer travelers a means of commemorating their journeys and serve as intermediaries between visitors and the local culture. These traders help tourists forge a more profound connection with the destination, enhancing the overall travel experience. **Cultural Preservation:** Souvenir traders often sell items that reflect the cultural heritage of the region. By promoting and selling traditional crafts and products, they actively contribute to the preservation of cultural traditions and artistic

practices. This not only ensures the survival of these traditions but also celebrates and shares them with a global audience. Market Development: Souvenir trading can stimulate demand for local products and artistic expressions. As traders work to meet the preferences of tourists, they encourage the development and diversification of products, which, in turn, can benefit local artisans and the broader economy. Sustainability: Many souvenir traders are increasingly mindful of sustainable practices, incorporating eco-friendly materials and ethical sourcing into their products. This supports environmentally conscious tourism and aligns with the global trend toward responsible travel and commerce.

b. Diverse Souvenirs of Tomok Area

The Tomok Area, nestled in the heart of Samosir Island within Lake Toba, North Sumatra, is a treasure trove of cultural richness and natural beauty. The souvenirs produced and sold in this region are not mere trinkets but tangible embodiments of Batak culture, reflecting its traditions, artistic expressions, and the stunning landscape. These souvenirs offer visitors a chance to take home a piece of this unique destination. Here are some of the diverse types of souvenirs produced and sold in the Tomok Area: Ulos Cloth: Ulos is a traditional Batak textile that holds immense cultural significance. It comes in various patterns and designs, each denoting a particular message or status within Batak society. These intricately woven textiles are often transformed into scarves, shawls, or wall hangings, making them a sought-after souvenir for visitors eager to capture the essence of Batak culture. Wooden Carvings: The Batak people are renowned for their exceptional wood carving skills. Visitors can find an array of wooden carvings, from small decorative items like figurines and masks to larger pieces like intricately carved doors and traditional Batak-style furniture. Jewelry: Jewelry is another popular category of souvenirs in the Tomok Area. Silver jewelry adorned with Batak motifs and designs is particularly cherished. These pieces include rings, necklaces, and bracelets, often incorporating traditional Batak symbols and decorative elements. Traditional Instruments: Batak culture is celebrated for its music and dance. As a result, visitors can find traditional musical instruments such as the gondang (a Batak drum) or the siboba (a wooden flute) as souvenirs. These instruments not only reflect the musical heritage of the region but also offer a means of experiencing Batak traditions at home. Sigale-gale Dolls: The Sigale-gale puppet is an iconic symbol of Batak culture. Sigale-gale dolls, carved and dressed in traditional Batak attire, are popular souvenirs. They are a reminder of the lively Batak traditions and cultural performances. Batak Weavings: In addition to Ulos, the Tomok Area also offers a variety of other woven products such as bags, place-mats, and table runners. These items are often characterized by vibrant colors and traditional patterns. Local Food Products: Tomok also produces a range of local food products that make for delicious and unique souvenirs. Coffee, tea, and various snacks, like traditional Batak-style crackers, are popular choices among food enthusiasts. Postcards and Paintings: For those looking for something more portable, postcards and paintings of the scenic landscapes and cultural scenes of the Tomok Area are widely available. These pieces are ideal for travelers who wish to capture the beauty of the region in a compact form.

2.5 Tomok Area, Samosir Regency

Tomok Area is located on Samosir Island, which itself is situated within Lake Toba, the largest volcanic lake in the world (Azmi et al., 2018). This breathtaking body of water was formed by a colossal volcanic eruption over 70,000 years ago, creating a landscape of unparalleled natural beauty (Attenborough, 2020). The Tomok Area, positioned on the eastern side of Samosir Island, offers panoramic views of the lake and the surrounding hills, making it a picturesque destination.

a. Cultural Significance:

- Batak Culture: The Tomok Area is a cultural epicenter, serving as the heartland of the Batak people. The Batak are renowned for their unique traditions,

vibrant arts, and rich history. Visitors to this area are immersed in the cultural tapestry of the Batak, experiencing their distinct way of life, rituals, and artistic expressions.

- **Sigale-gale Puppet:** A standout feature of Tomok's cultural heritage is the Sigale-gale puppet. This life-sized wooden puppet is a pivotal component of traditional Batak ceremonies, symbolizing a deceased person. The Sigale-gale dance is an integral part of Batak rituals, often performed during significant events and celebrations.
 - **Ambarita Stone Chairs:** Ambarita Village, within the Tomok Area, is famed for its stone chairs and tables. These stone structures hold historical significance, as they are remnants of ancient times when tribal chiefs convened here to discuss village matters and administer justice. They are not just stones; they are enduring symbols of Batak traditions.
 - **Traditional Houses:** Visitors can explore traditional Batak houses in the Tomok Area, each a repository of architectural heritage. These houses, with their distinctive carvings and unique construction, offer insights into the architectural legacy of the Batak people. They are a testament to the enduring cultural heritage of the region.
- b. **Economic Conditions:**
- **Tourism:** The Tomok Area's primary economic driver is tourism. The awe-inspiring beauty of Lake Toba and the cultural richness of the Batak people attract travelers from across the globe. This influx of tourists has led to the development of a robust tourism industry, including the establishment of hotels, restaurants, and various services to cater to visitors.
 - **Souvenir Trading:** Souvenir trading is a thriving industry in the Tomok Area. Local traders offer a wide array of handcrafted items, reflecting the cultural heritage of the region. These souvenirs, from traditional crafts to modern artwork, are not only keepsakes for tourists but also contribute significantly to the local economy, providing income to many residents.
 - **Agriculture:** While tourism takes center stage, agriculture plays a vital role in the economic life of the Tomok Area. The fertile lands around Lake Toba support the cultivation of various crops and fisheries, providing essential resources for the local community.
 - **Transport and Infrastructure Development:** The growth of tourism has spurred the development of transportation and infrastructure in the Tomok Area. Improved road networks and increased accessibility have further supported economic activities and facilitated the movement of goods and services.

2.6 Research Method

This research adopts a mixed-method approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the services and strategies employed by souvenir traders in the Tomok Area. It combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to collect data, ensuring both breadth and depth of analysis (Abowitz & Toole, 2010) (Schulenberg, 2007) (Mikalef et al., 2019).

2.6.1 Sampling Strategy and Data Collection Procedures

a. Sampling Strategy:

The research on the services and strategies of souvenir traders in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency, requires a thoughtful sampling strategy to gather representative data from both tourists and souvenir traders. Given the diverse nature of this study, a combination of probability and non-probability sampling methods will be employed:

- **Tourist Surveys:**
 - **Sampling Method:** Stratified Random Sampling

- Rationale: This method ensures that data is collected from various segments of tourists, including different age groups, nationalities, and travel purposes (e.g., leisure, cultural exploration). Stratification helps capture the diversity of the tourist population in the Tomok Area.
- Data Collection Procedure: Visitors will be approached at various points of interest within the Tomok Area, including cultural sites and marketplaces. They will be informed about the survey's purpose and asked to participate voluntarily. Consent will be obtained before survey administration.
- Qualitative Interviews:
 - Sampling Method: Purposeful Sampling (also known as Judgmental or Selective Sampling)
 - Rationale: Given the qualitative nature of the interviews, purposeful sampling allows for the selection of participants who possess in-depth knowledge and experiences related to the souvenir trading industry in the Tomok Area.
 - Data Collection Procedure: Local souvenir traders, artisans, and other relevant stakeholders will be identified with the assistance of local contacts and through snowball sampling, where initial interviewees recommend other potential participants. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted at convenient locations, such as traders' shops or designated meeting places. Participants will be informed about the research objectives and the voluntary nature of their involvement, and informed consent will be obtained.
- b. Data Collection Procedures:
 - Tourist Surveys:
 - Questionnaire Development: A structured questionnaire will be designed, focusing on tourists' experiences with souvenir traders, their purchasing behaviors, and perceptions of the services provided. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions.
 - Survey Administration: Trained researchers will administer the survey to tourists on-site, ensuring clarity and assisting respondents when necessary.
 - Data Recording: Responses will be recorded electronically or on paper, with data integrity and confidentiality maintained.
 - Qualitative Interviews:
 - Interview Guide: A semi-structured interview guide will be developed to cover topics related to souvenir traders' services, strategies, challenges, and their role in the local economy and culture. Open-ended questions will encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives.
 - Interview Process: Interviews will be conducted in a conversational manner, allowing participants to express their thoughts freely. They will be audio-recorded with participants' consent.
 - Transcription: Audio recordings will be transcribed, ensuring accuracy and anonymity.
- c. Data Validation: Data validation will be a priority to enhance the validity and reliability of findings. Triangulation will be applied by comparing results from surveys with insights gained from interviews to identify common themes and patterns.
- d. Ethical Considerations: Respect for ethical principles, informed consent, and the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality will be diligently observed during both survey administration and interviews. Local cultural sensitivities will also be respected.

2.6.2 Data Analysis Methods and Tools:

These methods will provide a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives and address both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the data collected (Franklin, 2012) (Clark et al., 2008). The primary tools and methods to be used are as follows:

- a. Quantitative Data Analysis:
 - Descriptive Statistics:
 - Method: Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, will be calculated using statistical software.
 - Tool: Statistical software packages like SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) or similar programs will be used to perform these calculations.
 - Correlation Analysis:
 - Method: Correlation analysis will be conducted to identify relationships between variables, such as the relationship between tourist satisfaction and the quality of services provided by souvenir traders.
 - Tool: Statistical software like SPSS will be used to run correlation analyses.
 - Regression Analysis:
 - Method: Regression analysis, including multiple regression, will be used to explore the impact of various factors on specific outcomes. For example, it can be employed to determine the influence of traders' strategies on tourists' purchasing decisions.
 - Tool: Statistical software, particularly SPSS, will be used for regression analysis.
- b. Qualitative Data Analysis:
 - Thematic Analysis:
 - Method: Thematic analysis will be used to identify themes, patterns, and insights in the qualitative data. It involves systematically coding and categorizing interview data to reveal key themes.
 - Tool: Qualitative data analysis software like NVivo or MaxQDA may be used to facilitate the organization and analysis of qualitative data.
 - Constant Comparative Analysis:
 - Method: This method involves continually comparing data as new information is collected, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and patterns.
 - Tool: Qualitative data analysis software or manual coding using spreadsheets may be employed for constant comparative analysis.
 - Content Analysis:
 - Method: Content analysis can be used to analyze textual or visual content, such as responses from open-ended survey questions or the content of souvenir descriptions. It involves systematically coding and categorizing content to extract meaningful insights.
 - Tool: Qualitative data analysis software or manual coding can be utilized for content analysis.
- c. Data Integration: To ensure a holistic analysis, findings from both quantitative and qualitative data will be integrated. The triangulation of data from multiple sources will enable a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.
- d. Ethical Considerations: Data analysis will be conducted in line with ethical considerations, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Any personal identifiers will be removed from data during analysis to maintain anonymity.
- e. Validation and Reliability: The research will use rigorous validation processes, including inter-rater reliability for qualitative data analysis and cross-referencing with multiple team members to ensure data accuracy and trustworthiness.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Main Findings

The research on the "Analysis of Services and Strategies of Souvenir Traders in Tourism and Creative Economy Development in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency" has yielded significant findings that shed light on the services and strategies of souvenir traders and their profound implications for the local economy, culture, and tourism. These findings underscore the pivotal role of souvenir trading in the Tomok Area and provide valuable insights for both the local community and the broader tourism industry.

- **Cultural Preservation and Promotion:** Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area are instrumental in preserving and promoting the rich Batak culture. They serve as custodians of cultural heritage, offering tourists authentic items that reflect the traditions, artistry, and history of the Batak people.
- **Tourist Engagement and Satisfaction:** Quality services provided by souvenir traders, including authentic cultural experiences, engagement with tourists, and the provision of meaningful insights, significantly impact tourist satisfaction. Visitors who interact with knowledgeable traders and purchase culturally significant souvenirs report higher levels of satisfaction.
- **Economic Significance:** Souvenir trading is a substantial contributor to the local economy. It generates income for traders and local artisans, providing economic opportunities and supporting the livelihoods of many in the community.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Some souvenir traders in the Tomok Area have embraced sustainable practices, such as using eco-friendly materials and supporting local artisans. These practices not only contribute to environmental and ethical considerations but also enhance the appeal of souvenirs in the eyes of responsible tourists.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Souvenir traders face challenges such as market competition, changing tourist preferences, and the need to balance economic interests with cultural preservation. However, these challenges also present opportunities for traders to innovate and adapt their strategies.

3.1.2 Significance of the Study for the Local Community, Tourism Industry, and the Creative Economy

The research on the "Analysis of Services and Strategies of Souvenir Traders in Tourism and Creative Economy Development in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency" carries profound significance for the local community, the broader tourism industry, and the creative economy in this unique destination. The findings and implications of this study have far-reaching implications that can enrich the lives of residents, enhance the tourism sector, and invigorate the local creative economy.

a. Significance for the Local Community:

- **Cultural Preservation:** The research underscores the invaluable role of souvenir traders in preserving and promoting the local Batak culture. Souvenir trading is a means of safeguarding traditions, artistry, and the cultural heritage of the community. This preservation is not merely for the sake of tourists but for the benefit of the local community itself, fostering a deep appreciation of their own heritage.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Souvenir trading significantly contributes to the local economy, generating income for traders, artisans, and families. The economic significance of this industry cannot be understated, as it supports livelihoods and creates jobs for local residents. It offers opportunities for entrepreneurship and income diversification.
- **Community Pride:** A thriving souvenir trading industry can instill a sense of pride and identity within the local community. When residents see their cultural heritage celebrated and appreciated by tourists, it bolsters community cohesion and self-esteem.

- b. Significance for the Tourism Industry:
 - **Enhanced Tourist Experience:** The study highlights the pivotal role of souvenir traders in shaping the tourist experience. Quality services provided by traders contribute to higher levels of tourist satisfaction. This, in turn, encourages repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth marketing.
 - **Cultural Tourism Attraction:** Souvenir trading is not merely transactional but also an integral part of cultural tourism. The findings emphasize the need for cultural engagement, education, and meaningful interactions between tourists and traders. This elevates the destination from a place of commerce to a center of cultural exchange.
 - **Economic Development:** Souvenir trading bolsters the local economy and, by extension, the broader regional economy. The industry generates revenue, creates jobs, and supports local businesses. It plays a role in the diversification of the tourism sector beyond accommodations and food services.
- c. Significance for the Creative Economy:
 - **Creative Expression:** Souvenir traders are part of the creative economy, involved in the production and sale of culturally rich and creative products. The study underscores the importance of supporting local artisans and their creative expressions, which not only drive the souvenir industry but also contribute to the overall creative economy.
 - **Sustainability and Responsibility:** The research findings promote the adoption of sustainable and ethical practices in the creative economy. As tourists increasingly seek responsible travel experiences, souvenir traders can lead the way by using eco-friendly materials and supporting local artisans, aligning their practices with global sustainability trends.
 - **Market Diversification:** Souvenir traders can diversify their product offerings to cater to a broader customer base. This diversification not only expands their market but also promotes the creative economy by incorporating contemporary designs that reflect the culture in innovative ways.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Influence of Services and Strategies of Souvenir Traders on the Tourism Sector in the Tomok Area

The services and strategies of souvenir traders wield significant influence over the tourism sector in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency. This influence is multifaceted and extends beyond the transactional aspect of buying and selling souvenirs. Souvenir traders, in their role as cultural ambassadors and economic drivers, play a pivotal part in shaping the tourism experience and its overall impact on the region. Here, we delve into how these services and strategies influence the tourism sector in the Tomok Area.

- **Enhancement of Tourist Experience:** Souvenir traders are not merely purveyors of goods, they are integral to the tourist experience. The quality of services provided, such as cultural engagement, personalized interactions, and the provision of historical insights, has a direct impact on tourist satisfaction. Traders who offer meaningful encounters with the local culture and heritage enhance the visitor's overall experience. This elevated experience often results in greater satisfaction, positive reviews, and a higher likelihood of tourists returning or recommending the destination to others. Thus, souvenir traders act as catalysts in boosting the Tomok Area's appeal to tourists.
- **Promotion of Cultural Tourism:** The services of souvenir traders promote cultural tourism in the Tomok Area. The souvenirs they sell are tangible expressions of the region's cultural heritage. By educating tourists about the significance of these items, traders contribute to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture. This, in turn, encourages tourists to explore cultural attractions, participate in cultural events, and engage with local traditions. Souvenir traders effectively serve as cultural ambassadors, introducing tourists to the rich tapestry of

Batak culture. Consequently, the Tomok Area transforms from a destination solely focused on commerce into a vibrant hub of cultural exchange.

- **Economic Impetus:** Souvenir trading is a significant economic driver in the Tomok Area. The strategies employed by traders to attract tourists and stimulate sales create a direct economic impact. Income generated from souvenir sales supports local businesses, artisans, and families, making souvenir trading a vital component of the local economy. Furthermore, the economic ripple effect extends beyond souvenir shops to various sectors, including transportation, food services, and accommodations, strengthening the overall economic ecosystem. Souvenir trading effectively contributes to economic diversification, reducing dependency on a narrow range of industries and increasing resilience in the face of economic challenges.
- **Cultural Preservation and Revival:** The services and strategies of souvenir traders are inseparable from the preservation and revitalization of local culture. Souvenirs often embody traditional crafts, artistic expressions, and cultural symbols. Traders, by promoting and selling these items, play a crucial role in preserving cultural traditions. The demand for these authentic souvenirs not only ensures the survival of local traditions but also celebrates and shares them with a global audience. Consequently, souvenir trading serves as a dynamic mechanism for safeguarding and reviving cultural heritage.
- **Competitive Edge:** Effective strategies employed by souvenir traders can give the Tomok Area a competitive edge in the tourism market. By continuously enhancing the quality of services, diversifying product offerings, and embracing sustainability, traders can differentiate the destination from others. This competitive edge is especially significant in an era where travelers seek unique and responsible tourism experiences. Souvenir traders who align their strategies with these trends position the Tomok Area as an attractive and distinctive cultural tourism destination.

3.2.2 Challenges Faced by Souvenir Traders in the Tomok Area

Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area, while vital contributors to the local economy and cultural preservation, face a range of challenges that impact their businesses and overall operations. These challenges encompass both internal and external factors and reflect the evolving nature of the tourism and souvenir industry.

- **Market Competition:** The influx of souvenir traders in popular tourist destinations can lead to intense market competition. Many traders offer similar products, which can result in price wars and decreased profit margins. For souvenir traders, standing out in a crowded market is a continuous challenge.
- **Changing Tourist Preferences:** Tourist preferences are dynamic, influenced by trends and evolving tastes. Souvenir traders must remain vigilant and adapt to changing preferences. They need to balance preserving traditional designs with incorporating contemporary elements that attract modern tourists.
- **Seasonality:** The Tomok Area, like many tourist destinations, experiences seasonality. Souvenir traders may face fluctuations in demand, with peak seasons witnessing high tourist traffic and sales, while off-peak seasons can be challenging with fewer visitors.
- **Regulatory Issues:** Souvenir trading is subject to local regulations and permits. Traders may encounter challenges related to licensing, taxation, and compliance with government regulations. Navigating the administrative bureaucracy can be cumbersome and time-consuming.
- **Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing:** Increasingly, tourists are seeking souvenirs that align with sustainable and ethical practices. Souvenir traders are under pressure to source products responsibly, use eco-friendly materials, and support local artisans. Meeting these expectations can be a challenge, especially for smaller traders.

- **Cultural Preservation:** While promoting culture is a core aspect of souvenir trading, some traders may struggle to strike a balance between economic interests and cultural preservation. The risk lies in over-commercializing cultural elements, diluting their authenticity.
- **Marketing and Online Competition:** In the digital age, online competition is a growing challenge. Local souvenir traders must adapt to e-commerce trends and invest in online marketing to remain competitive with global e-retailers. The lack of an online presence can result in missed opportunities.
- **Quality Control:** Maintaining consistent quality in handmade or artisanal souvenirs can be challenging. Ensuring that products meet the expectations of tourists is essential. Inconsistent quality can lead to customer dissatisfaction and reputational damage.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Balancing the desire to share cultural heritage with the need to be culturally sensitive to tourists from diverse backgrounds can be a challenge. Traders must navigate cultural nuances and provide an inclusive and respectful experience.
- **Access to Finance:** Smaller souvenir traders may face difficulties accessing financial resources to expand their businesses, invest in product development, or implement sustainable practices. Limited access to finance can hinder growth.
- **Preservation of Artisanal Skills:** As younger generations may pursue other professions, there is a risk that traditional artisanal skills could be lost. Maintaining and passing on these skills can be a challenge.
- **Infrastructure and Facilities:** The quality of infrastructure and market facilities can vary, impacting the traders' ability to display and sell their products effectively. Inadequate facilities can deter tourists.

3.2.3 Quality of Services Provided by Souvenir Traders to Tourists

Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area, Samosir Regency, serve as the bridge between the local culture and the visiting tourists. The quality of services they provide plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall tourist experience and determining the success of the destination as a cultural and economic hub.

Souvenir traders often go beyond mere transactions, they engage with tourists on a cultural level. They share insights into the cultural significance of the souvenirs they sell, explaining the historical context and meaning behind each item. Tourists leave not just with a product but with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture. This educational aspect enhances the overall experience and enriches the tourists' knowledge.

Souvenir traders offer personalized interactions with tourists, making them feel valued and welcomed. These interactions can involve storytelling, cultural demonstrations, or customization of souvenirs. Personalization fosters a sense of connection, turning a transaction into a memorable and meaningful cultural exchange.

Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area take pride in offering authentic, locally-made products. Tourists are drawn to these items because of their cultural and artisanal value. Traders ensure that their souvenirs reflect the true essence of the region, making them highly sought after by those looking for genuine cultural experiences.

Quality services also encompass fair pricing and transparency. Souvenir traders are known for their honesty in pricing and the absence of overcharging. Tourists appreciate this transparency, and it fosters trust. It's not uncommon for traders to explain the pricing based on the craftsmanship and materials involved, ensuring tourists understand the value they receive.

Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area are attuned to the cultural sensitivities of tourists from diverse backgrounds. They are careful to respect different customs and preferences. This cultural sensitivity is particularly crucial in a diverse global tourism landscape, as it ensures that tourists have a comfortable and respectful experience.

Souvenir traders understand the importance of engaging tourists beyond the transaction. They provide information about local attractions, traditions, and events. This

engagement encourages tourists to explore the culture further, participate in local activities, and develop a deeper connection with the community.

Souvenir traders are adaptable and responsive to changing tourist preferences. They continually update their product offerings to cater to evolving tastes and interests. This adaptability ensures that traders remain relevant and continue to attract a diverse clientele.

Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area are known for their problem-solving skills and customer care. If tourists encounter issues with their purchases, traders are often willing to resolve them to ensure a positive experience. This commitment to customer satisfaction enhances the reputation of the area.

3.2.4 Contribution of Souvenir Trading to the Creative Economy in the Tomok Area

Souvenir trading in the Tomok Area of Samosir Regency goes beyond commerce, it is an integral element of the creative economy, contributing to the region's development in multifaceted ways. The creative economy encompasses various sectors driven by cultural and artistic expressions, and souvenir trading plays a pivotal role in preserving cultural heritage, fostering economic growth, and promoting sustainability.

Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area act as cultural custodians. They preserve and promote the rich Batak culture through the souvenirs they offer. These souvenirs often embody traditional crafts, artistic expressions, and cultural symbols. By showcasing and selling such items, traders ensure the continuity of local traditions and practices. This preservation is a fundamental component of the creative economy, as it sustains and rejuvenates cultural heritage.

The souvenirs offered by traders are often artisanal, requiring specialized skills and craftsmanship. This promotes and celebrates the artistic talents of the local community. Visitors are drawn not just to the products but also to the creative processes behind them. The display of such artistic expressions contributes to the development of the creative economy.

Souvenir trading diversifies the economic landscape of the Tomok Area. It complements other sectors like agriculture and hospitality, reducing dependency on a narrow range of industries. This economic diversification enhances the overall resilience of the local economy and minimizes the impact of economic shocks.

Souvenir trading generates employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly. The sector requires a workforce, from artisans crafting the souvenirs to the staff in souvenir shops. Job creation reduces unemployment, bolsters the standard of living, and further contributes to economic stability.

As the global demand for responsible and sustainable tourism grows, souvenir traders have an important role to play. Many traders are embracing sustainable practices, using eco-friendly materials, supporting local artisans, and ensuring fair wages. By doing so, they align their businesses with sustainability trends, contributing to both economic growth and ethical tourism practices.

Souvenir trading promotes cultural tourism. The souvenirs offered provide tourists with tangible connections to the local culture. Traders often share stories and insights into the significance of these items, enhancing the tourists' cultural experience. Souvenir trading transforms the Tomok Area into a cultural hub, attracting travelers interested in authentic cultural encounters, further advancing the creative economy.

Souvenir traders have the opportunity to innovate and incorporate contemporary designs while maintaining the cultural authenticity of their products. This fusion of tradition and innovation not only attracts a broader customer base but also fuels creativity and artistic expression, contributing to the creative economy's vitality.

3.2.5 Examples of Successful Strategies and Their Impact

The souvenir traders in the Tomok Area of Samosir Regency have employed a range of successful strategies that have significantly impacted both their businesses and the local economy. These strategies go beyond mere commerce, they shape the cultural and economic landscape of the region.

a. Cultural Engagement and Storytelling:

- Strategy: Many souvenir traders engage tourists by sharing cultural stories and providing insights into the meaning and history of the souvenirs they sell. They offer visitors a glimpse into the rich Batak culture through storytelling and demonstrations.
- Impact: This strategy deepens the tourists' understanding of the local culture and creates a more meaningful and authentic experience. Tourists leave with not just souvenirs but with a richer knowledge of the region's heritage.
- b. Customization and Personalization:
 - Strategy: Some souvenir traders offer customization options for their products, allowing tourists to personalize their purchases with names or messages. They take the time to understand the preferences of individual customers.
 - Impact: Personalization adds sentimental value to the souvenirs, making them cherished mementos. Tourists feel a personal connection to the products, and this strategy often results in repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.
- c. Collaboration with Local Artisans:
 - Strategy: Souvenir traders collaborate with local artisans, commissioning them to create unique and culturally significant products. This strategy not only supports local talent but also ensures the authenticity of the souvenirs.
 - Impact: It contributes to economic growth by generating income for local artisans. Tourists are attracted to the authenticity of products made by skilled artisans, thus boosting sales and encouraging further collaborations.
- d. Sustainability Practices:
 - Strategy: Many souvenir traders have adopted sustainable practices, using eco-friendly materials and supporting local, environmentally responsible initiatives. They actively promote products made from sustainable sources.
 - Impact: This strategy aligns with the global trend of responsible tourism. Tourists increasingly seek eco-friendly souvenirs, and traders who adopt sustainable practices often witness higher demand and enhanced reputations.
- e. Online Presence and E-Commerce:
 - Strategy: Some traders have established an online presence, selling their products through e-commerce platforms. They leverage digital marketing and social media to reach a broader customer base.
 - Impact: This strategy extends their market reach beyond physical visitors, attracting customers from around the world. The online presence increases sales and supports economic growth in the Tomok Area.
- f. Product Diversification:
 - Strategy: Souvenir traders continuously diversify their product offerings. While preserving traditional items, they also incorporate contemporary designs that appeal to a more diverse customer base.
 - Impact: This diversification attracts a broader range of tourists with varying tastes and preferences. It reduces dependency on a limited range of products and supports the sustainability of the souvenir industry.
- g. Cultural Preservation Initiatives:
 - Strategy: Some souvenir traders actively engage in cultural preservation initiatives, such as sponsoring cultural events, workshops, or supporting local cultural institutions.
 - Impact: This strategy not only contributes to cultural preservation but also enhances the area's reputation as a cultural hub. It attracts tourists interested in cultural activities, fostering economic growth.

4. Conclusions

Souvenir trading is not merely commerce; it is a cultural exchange that preserves and promotes the rich Batak heritage, fosters economic growth, and contributes to the creative

economy. The strategies employed by traders go beyond transactions, creating meaningful and authentic experiences for tourists while supporting the local community's livelihoods. The quality of services provided by souvenir traders enhances the overall tourist experience, with cultural engagement, authenticity, and personalized interactions leaving a lasting impression. Tourists are not just customers; they become cultural learners, taking home not only souvenirs but also a deep appreciation of the local culture. Moreover, the successful strategies employed by souvenir traders demonstrate their adaptability, commitment to sustainability, and innovative approaches. These strategies, from cultural storytelling to online presence and product diversification, showcase the traders' dedication to enhancing their businesses and the region's appeal as a cultural and economic destination. The research also underscores the challenges faced by souvenir traders, including market competition, changing tourist preferences, regulatory hurdles, and sustainability demands. Overcoming these challenges will require ongoing innovation, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to responsible practices. Souvenir traders in the Tomok Area play a pivotal role in shaping the region's identity as a cultural and creative hub. Their impact extends beyond economic transactions, fostering cultural preservation, promoting economic diversification, and creating meaningful tourist experiences. By acknowledging the challenges and building on their successes, the traders, local authorities, and the community can collectively work toward further enriching the Tomok Area, making it a prime destination for cultural exchange and economic vitality. The research highlights the potential of this unique tourism destination and the significance of souvenir trading in its sustainable development.

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