

## Institutional and Community Synergies for Integrating Creative Industry with Sustained Tourism Growth: Qualitative Insights from West Java Indonesia

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**Abstract** - *The creative industry and tourism sectors are recognized as key drivers of regional economic growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. The creative industry fosters innovation and knowledge-based value creation, while tourism generates market access, global exposure, and demand for creative products and experiences. When effectively integrated, these sectors create a synergistic ecosystem that enhances regional competitiveness and promotes sustained growth. West Java, with its large population, strong creative industry presence, and diverse tourism potential, offers significant opportunities for such integration. However, synergy between these sectors remains suboptimal due to structural and institutional challenges. This study explores how institutional, and community actors shape creative industry-tourism integration and identifies key enablers and barriers. Using a qualitative case study and the Gioia methodology, data were collected from government officials and creative industry community representatives. The findings reveal that institutional facilitation, community-driven initiatives, and ecosystem readiness are critical for successful integration. However, gaps in market literacy, ecosystem alignment, and access to financing persist. This study refines the meso-level ecosystem perspective by highlighting the interplay between institutional structures, community agency, and ecosystem capabilities. The revised conceptual framework offers theoretical contributions and practical insights to enhance policy coherence, empower creative communities, and foster sustained tourism growth.*

**Keywords** - *Creative Industry, Sustained Tourism Growth, Ecosystem Integration, Institutional Synergy, Community-Driven Innovation, West Java*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The creative industry (CI) is increasingly recognized as key drivers of innovation, cultural expression, and regional development [21, 17]. In parallel, the tourism sector has evolved beyond traditional models, embracing creative and cultural experiences as strategic levers for destination

differentiation and sustained growth [29, 9]. The integration of creative industry with tourism development is considered essential to fostering local identity, generating employment, and enhancing regional competitiveness [19].

Indonesia has followed this global trend by positioning the creative industry as a priority sector for national development [5]. Among its provinces, West Java stands out for its large population of over 50 million, its leading number of creative industry businesses, and its diverse tourism attractions ranging from natural landscapes to rich cultural heritage [47]. Consequently, the integration of creative industry and tourism is viewed as a strategic opportunity to accelerate regional competitiveness and sustained growth.

However, despite this potential, the synergy between the two sectors remains suboptimal. Existing programs often operate in silos, lacking strategic alignment, while barriers related to market access, institutional coordination, and ecosystem fragmentation persist [47, 5]. This condition reflects a broader issue highlighted in the literature, where studies on CI and tourism integration remain limited, particularly at the meso level (regional or provincial), with most research focusing on city-level or national-level dynamics [14, 6].

To address this theoretical and empirical gap, this study explores how institutional, and community actors shape the integration between creative industry and tourism and identifies key enablers and barriers in aligning CI development with sustained tourism growth in West Java, Indonesia. Through this research, it is expected to provide new insights on how meso-level integration can be fostered to support sustained regional development.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do institutional and community actors shape the integration between creative industry and tourism?

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Published by Unit Research and Knowledge-School of Business and Management-Institut Teknologi Bandung

- RQ2: What are the key enablers and barriers in aligning creative industry development with sustained tourism growth?

By addressing these questions, this paper offers qualitative insights that complement existing studies on creative tourism, ecosystem development, and regional policy, with a specific focus on a developing economy context. In doing so, it contributes to the ongoing theoretical and practical discourse on leveraging creative industry for sustainable regional development.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Creative Industry and Tourism Synergies

The creative industry has become a significant driver of regional competitiveness and innovation [37, 32]. Creative industry, as a core component of this economy, generate economic and cultural value through activities based on human creativity, intellectual property, and collaboration [23, 2]. The integration of creative industries with tourism has gained increasing academic attention as a means to foster economic diversification, cultural preservation, and place branding [14, 30]. Theoretically, this intersection aligns with the concept of the creative economy as a driver of value-added production based on intellectual property [42] and with sustained tourism growth that emphasizes continuous economic contribution without compromising cultural and environmental assets [31].

Previous studies highlight several factors shaping creative industry and tourism integration, including policy frameworks, ecosystem maturity, institutional collaboration, and community [6, 45]. However, gaps remain, particularly in understanding integration dynamics at the regional (meso) level, where institutional fragmentation, uneven ecosystem development, and limited collaboration mechanisms often hinder effective synergy [43, 15].

In Indonesia, the government has prioritized creative industries through Law No. 24/2019, emphasizing ecosystem development, intellectual property protection, and market expansion. West Java stands out for its high concentration of creative businesses and diverse tourism attractions [47], positioning it as a strategic region for exploring creative industry and tourism integration.

Studies show that such integration can promote place branding, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism growth [44, 29]. However, challenges persist, including fragmented ecosystems, weak collaboration, and policy gaps, especially in developing regions like West Java [21, 9].

### B. Meso-Level Ecosystem Perspective

Strengthening synergies between creative industry and tourism requires attention to meso-level dynamics, such as the institutional, community, and ecosystem factors that shape development [1]. At this level, collaboration among businesses, government, and communities fosters innovation, resource-sharing, and ecosystem resilience [26].

In line with this, [24] emphasize that regional innovation ecosystems are not merely the sum of individual actors but complex configurations of institutions, networks, and shared resources, shaped by both formal structures and informal community initiatives. Their ecosystem approach highlights the need for coordinated efforts across actors and levels to enhance regional competitiveness. Besides, the Indonesia Creative Cities Network [20] highlights key ecosystem elements, including human resources, creative products, markets, and research and development, aligning with global ecosystem models. However, in West Java, gaps remain in ecosystem connectivity, market access, and institutional coordination [46].

### C. Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)

To understand these ecosystem dynamics, this study adopts the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) framework [22]. CAS emphasizes how multiple, interdependent actors, including government, communities, and businesses that interact, adapt, and co-evolve within complex, uncertain environments [34, 12]. Applying CAS enables this research to capture how creative industry and tourism systems in West Java respond to challenges like digital disruption, policy changes, and market shifts. It also highlights the role of decentralized decision-making, emergent collaboration, and local adaptation. Key themes identified in the qualitative findings.

### D. Institutional and Community Roles in Regional Development

Institutions and communities play a vital role in shaping regional development outcomes [36]. Institutional facilitation, such as policy support, ecosystem coordination, and resource mobilization, creates enabling conditions for industry development [27]. Simultaneously, community-driven initiatives, including creative entrepreneurship and grassroots innovation, enhance cultural vibrancy, economic participation, and social inclusion [48, 11]. However, misalignment between institutional strategies and community needs often hampers synergy, as evidenced in many Indonesian regions [10].

#### *E. Value Co-Creation in Creative Industry and Tourism*

The integration of creative industries and tourism is increasingly viewed through the lens of value co-creation, which emphasizes the active role of multiple stakeholders, such as producers, consumers, communities, and institutions, in jointly shaping experiences and outcomes [39]. Within this perspective, creative industry actors and tourism stakeholders collaborate to design products, services, and experiences that generate economic, social, and cultural value. Such an approach aligns with the ecosystem view discussed earlier, as it highlights the importance of interaction, knowledge exchange, and innovation across different actors within a shared environment. In the context of West Java, fostering value co-creation can help overcome fragmentation and strengthen synergies between creative industry development and sustained tourism growth.

#### *F. Theoretical Gaps*

Despite growing literature on creative industry and tourism development, several gaps remain:

- Limited empirical research on how institutional and community dynamics jointly influence creative industry–tourism integration at the meso level, especially in developing contexts like Indonesia.
- Insufficient understanding of how complex ecosystem interactions, as framed by CAS, affect long-term regional competitiveness and sustained tourism growth.
- A need for place-based, adaptive strategies that account for local culture, governance capacity, and stakeholder collaboration [38, 12].

#### *G. Conceptual Model*

This study builds upon an understanding of the complex relationship between creative industry development and sustained tourism growth, which has been emphasized in previous research [14, 42, 35, 31]. Based on the reviewed literature, a conceptual model was initially developed to illustrate the hypothesized relationships between key factors shaping the creative industry ecosystem, its competitiveness, and the potential synergies with tourism development.

The initial conceptual model proposes that external and internal influential factors drive the development of the creative industry ecosystem. A well-developed ecosystem enhances creative industry competitiveness, which in turn fosters sustained tourism growth. Furthermore, the model incorporates the role of creative industry ecosystem capabilities and the synergies between creative industry and tourism as essential mechanisms that strengthen this relationship.

However, it is important to emphasize that this conceptual model served as a preliminary guide for the

research. Given the qualitative, interpretivist approach of this study, the model was refined through empirical insights gathered from key stakeholders in West Java's creative industry and tourism sectors. The refinement reflects a more grounded understanding of how integration occurs in practice, incorporating factors such as community-driven development, institutional facilitation, and the barriers and enablers identified through thematic analysis.

The revised conceptual framework, which reflects the integration of theoretical foundations and empirical findings, is presented in the Findings and Discussion section (Section IV).

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative approach, which is suitable for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding actors' perspectives in depth [25, 13]. In particular, a case study design was chosen to investigate how institutional and community actors shape the integration of creative industry and tourism in West Java, as well as to identify key enablers and barriers in aligning creative industry development with sustained tourism growth. A case study design was chosen to examine the phenomenon within its real-life context, focusing on the meso-level ecosystem of West Java. The research emphasizes understanding the dynamics and interactions among key stakeholders from government, community, and the creative industry sector.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two key informants representing the institutional and community dimensions at the meso level:

1. Mr. Rispaga - Head of Tourism Industry Division, West Java Tourism and Culture Office, representing the government's role in CI and tourism policy coordination.
2. Mr. Harry Anugerah Mawardi - Creative industry practitioner, academic, and former Chair of West Java Creative Economy Committee, representing community perspectives and grassroots ecosystem development.

These informants were selected purposively due to their strategic positions and direct involvement in creative industry and tourism development in West Java. The interviews covered topics such as creative industry ecosystem development, institutional roles, tourism integration, barriers, and innovation. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Thematic analysis was applied using the Gioia Methodology, which is well-suited for generating grounded conceptual insights while ensuring analytical rigor, particularly in complex social phenomena such as ecosystem integration [7]. The analysis followed three steps: identifying First-Order

Concepts based on participants' own terms, developing Second-Order Themes through interpretative coding, and synthesizing Aggregate Dimensions that reflect theoretical constructs. The process generated data structures for each research question, providing a grounded thematic understanding of integration dynamics. The Gioia Method enabled a structured and transparent process to link empirical findings with the study's theoretical framework, including ecosystem development, collaboration mechanisms, and creative industry competitiveness.

This study focuses on the provincial (meso) level in West Java and involves two key informants. While providing rich insights, the findings are exploratory and may not fully represent all creative industry and tourism stakeholders in the region. Future research could expand the number of respondents and include additional stakeholder perspectives.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores how the integration between creative industry and tourism unfolds, as well as the key enablers and barriers that affect this alignment in West Java. Thematic analysis was conducted using the Gioia Methodology [7], generated two main data structures aligned with the research questions. This section presents the key findings, illustrated through concise Gioia diagrams, supported by representative quotes from the interview data.

##### A. Integration Dynamics between Creative Industry and Tourism (RQ1)

The first research question investigates: *How do institutional and community actors shape the integration between creative industry and tourism?* The analysis identifies three aggregate dimensions: (1) Institutional Dynamics and Policy Coherence, (2) Community-Driven Integration, and (3) Enabling Conditions for Integration (Figure 1).

##### A.1. Institutional Dynamics and Policy Coherence

The findings reveal that institutional actors play a central role in shaping integration through formal policies, collaborative structures, and targeted interventions. For instance, a government official emphasized:

*"We already have a creative economy regional regulation..."* (Government Actor)

This reflects the formal regulatory framework supporting creative industry development. However, beyond regulations, collaborative governance structures, such as the evolving hexaplex model, have been instrumental in facilitating alignment:

*"Pentahelix evolves into hexahelix..."* (Community

& Creative Industry Actor)

Despite these positive steps, policy fragmentation and inconsistent coordination remain barriers to achieving coherent integration across sectors.

##### A.2. Community-Driven Integration

Alongside institutional efforts, community actors emerge as key drivers of integration. Grassroots mobilization and proactive ecosystem development by creative communities contribute to linking creative industry and tourism. A community representative described:

*"During the pandemic... the creative economy has grown... on-demand streaming, online performing arts, crafts, architecture, personal spaces."* (Community & Creative Industry Actor)

These bottom-up initiatives demonstrate the potential of community-led models in fostering organic integration between sectors.

##### A.3. Enabling Conditions for Integration

However, integration remains hindered by ecosystem limitations and human capital challenges. Respondents highlighted persistent gaps in skills, knowledge, and support systems:

*"Ecosystem literacy and capacity gaps... Regional ecosystem limitations."* (Government Actor)

*"We are looking for alternative funding... creating vocational programs... internships at animation studios."* (Community & Creative Industry Actor)

These findings echo prior research emphasizing the need for strengthening local capacities and supportive infrastructure [14, 42].

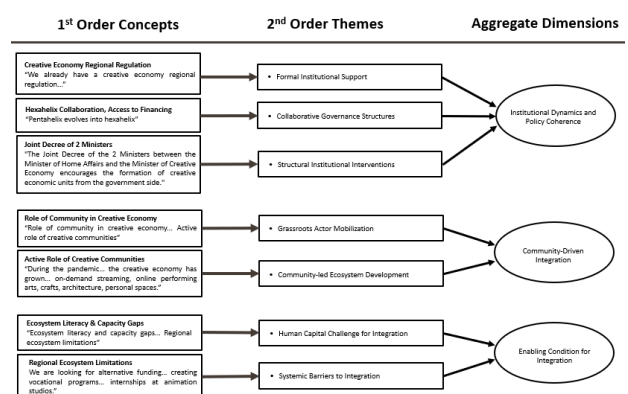


Figure 1 Gioia Data Structure RQ1: Integration Dynamics

##### B. Enablers and Barriers to Aligning Creative Industry Development with Sustained Tourism Growth (RQ2)

The second research question addresses: *What are the key enablers and barriers in aligning creative industry development with sustained tourism growth?* The analysis highlights two major dimensions: (1)

## Synergy & Integration Mechanisms and (2) Enabling Conditions for Integration (Figure 2).

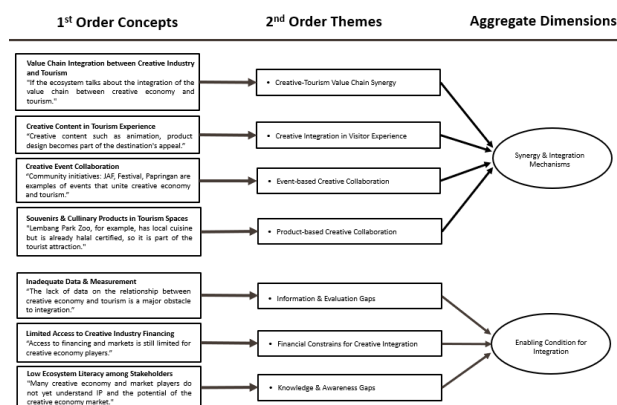


Figure 2 Gioia Data Structure RQ2: Enablers and Barriers for Alignment

### B.1. Synergy & Integration Mechanisms

Several mechanisms facilitate alignment, including value chain integration, creative tourism experiences, event-based collaborations, and product-driven synergies. As one respondent explained:

*"If the ecosystem talks about the integration of the value chain between creative economy and tourism..."*  
(Government Actor)

Creative content, culinary products, and collaborative events were seen as tangible avenues to strengthen integration:

*"JAF, Festival, Papringan are examples of events that unite creative economy and tourism."* (Community & Creative Industry Actor)

*"Lembang Park Zoo, for example, has local cuisine but is already halal certified, so it is part of the tourist attraction."* (Government Actor)

Despite these examples, integration mechanisms remain fragmented and require more systematic support.

### B.2. Enabling Conditions for Integration

Persistent barriers hinder alignment efforts. Inadequate data, limited access to financing, and low ecosystem literacy were consistently raised by respondents:

*"The lack of data... is a major obstacle to integration."* (Government Actor)

*"Access to financing and markets is still limited for creative economy players."* (Community & Creative Industry Actor)

*"Many creative economy and market players do not yet understand IP and the potential of the creative economy market."* (Government Actor)

These structural limitations align with previous studies

highlighting ecosystem gaps and institutional weaknesses as key barriers [35, 14].

### C. Discussion and Theoretical Implications

The findings underscore the complex interplay between institutional structures, community agency, market conditions, and ecosystem readiness in shaping the integration of creative industries and tourism in West Java. Integration does not occur in isolation but emerges from the dynamic interaction of multiple actors, policies, and contextual factors.

This study contributes to the literature by:

- Extending the understanding of creative industry ecosystems as multi-actor, policy-influenced structures, resonating with concepts from Creative Economy Ecosystem theory [14] and the Dynamic Capabilities perspective in tourism integration [8, 33]. The results align with theoretical perspectives on ecosystem approaches [24] and Complex Adaptive Systems [22], highlighting the need for coordinated, multi-actor efforts to realize the potential of creative industries as drivers of sustained tourism growth.
- Emphasizing the role of community-driven innovation as a bottom-up catalyst for sectoral alignment. The observed practices, such as localized creative collaborations and innovative tourism models, demonstrate how grassroots initiatives can complement formal institutional interventions, consistent with value co-creation literature [39]
- Highlighting persistent structural and capacity gaps, particularly regarding literacy on creative economy concepts, market access, and spatial infrastructure. These challenges reflect global critiques on ecosystem readiness and structural fragmentation [42, 31] and are consistent with prior studies identifying barriers to effective integration [16, 41].

In sum, achieving alignment between creative industry and sustained tourism growth requires addressing structural fragmentation, fostering collaboration, leveraging digital opportunities responsibly, and enabling grassroots innovation within a supportive ecosystem.

The findings also reinforce the theoretical gap identified in Section II.6, which highlighted limited understanding of how institutional and community dynamics interact at the meso level to drive integration. By applying an ecosystem perspective and acknowledging the adaptive, multi-actor nature of integration processes, this study contributes to filling that gap.

The revised conceptual framework (see Figure 3) reflects the interplay between institutional facilitation, community-driven initiatives, and ecosystem

capabilities as critical factors enabling the integration of creative industries and sustained tourism growth. Compared to the initial conceptual model, this revised version incorporates key empirical insights from the field, particularly regarding ecosystem fragmentation, knowledge and market readiness gaps, and the catalytic role of community innovation.

The inclusion of 'Literacy & Knowledge Gaps', 'Market Access & Financial Barriers', and 'Fragmented Ecosystem' within the ecosystem development construct highlights persistent structural challenges, echoing concerns raised in prior ecosystem studies [16, 41]. Similarly, the positioning of 'Community Innovation as Catalyst' and the expanded 'Creative Industry and Tourism Synergies' dimension reflects the bottom-up dynamics and co-creation processes emphasized in service-dominant logic literature [39].

Thus, the revised framework provides both a conceptual and practical roadmap for understanding and fostering the integration of creative industries and tourism. It emphasizes that sustained tourism growth is not a linear output of isolated interventions, but rather the emergent result of adaptive, collaborative, and systemic efforts across stakeholders."

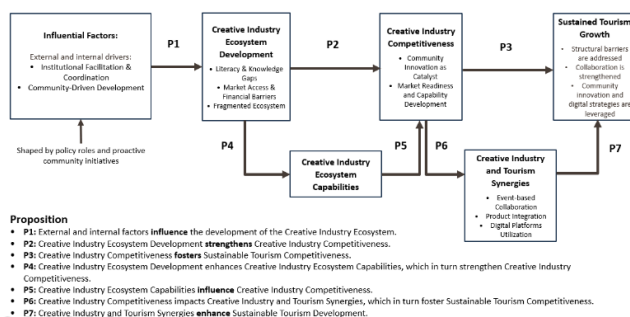


Figure 3 Revised Conceptual Framework

#### D. Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the study offers several important considerations for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to enhance the integration of creative industries and tourism in West Java and similar regional contexts. Strengthening policy coherence and collaborative governance is essential to ensuring that institutional interventions effectively support ecosystem development and cross-sectoral alignment. This requires not only regulatory improvements but also more inclusive and participatory mechanisms that bring together government agencies, creative communities, and tourism actors.

Equally important is the need to empower grassroots community initiatives through targeted capacity building and resource facilitation. The findings demonstrate that community-led innovation

can serve as a powerful catalyst for integration, but these efforts often face limitations due to insufficient institutional support, skills gaps, and financial constraints. Strategic interventions to address these weaknesses are vital to unlocking the full potential of creative communities.

Finally, addressing structural barriers such as data gaps, limited financing access, and low awareness of intellectual property and market opportunities is a prerequisite for sustainable integration. Investments in ecosystem literacy, market research, and financial inclusion programs can help create an enabling environment where creative industries and tourism can grow synergistically and contribute to regional competitiveness and socio-economic development.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the integration of creative industry with sustained tourism growth in West Java, Indonesia, focusing on how institutional and community actors shape this process and what key enablers and barriers influence its alignment. The findings underscore that successful integration is not merely the product of top-down policy formulation or isolated community initiatives but rather emerges from the dynamic interaction between institutional frameworks, community-driven development, and the broader enabling conditions within the creative industry ecosystem.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that while formal regulations, collaborative governance, and institutional interventions lay the foundation for integration, they remain insufficient without active grassroots mobilization and ecosystem development driven by creative communities. Institutional facilitation and coordination, alongside community-led innovation, emerged as key mechanisms for strengthening sectoral alignment.

However, persistent challenges such as ecosystem fragmentation, policy incoherence, knowledge gaps, limited access to financing, and unequal market opportunities continue to hinder the full realization of synergies between creative industries and tourism. These challenges reflect broader structural barriers identified in global creative economy discourse, including ecosystem readiness and stakeholder capacity limitations.

Theoretically, this study advances the understanding of creative industry–tourism integration by applying an ecosystem perspective [24] and Complex Adaptive Systems theory [22], positioning integration as a non-linear, adaptive, and multi-stakeholder process. Furthermore, the findings align with value co-creation perspectives [39], highlighting the role of community agency as a catalyst for integration. The revised conceptual framework



developed in this study reflects these insights, offering a basis for further academic inquiry into how multi-actor collaboration and systemic capacity building can foster sustained tourism growth supported by a vibrant creative economy.

Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for policymakers, creative industry actors, and tourism stakeholders. Enhancing policy coherence, empowering community innovation, strengthening infrastructure, and creating collaborative platforms that connect creative products with tourism experiences are essential steps toward achieving effective and inclusive integration. As demonstrated in the case of West Java, unlocking the potential of the creative industries to contribute to tourism competitiveness requires adaptive, collaborative, and context-sensitive strategies involving multiple stakeholders at various governance levels.

Future research could expand on these insights by applying comparative analyses across different regions or countries and exploring the long-term impacts of integration strategies on socio-economic development, cultural vitality, and ecosystem resilience.

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