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HISTORICAL TREKKING AS AN EDUCATIONAL MEDIUM: REVIVING HISTORICAL TRACES THROUGH HIKING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine Historical Trekking as an educational medium by analyzing the role of trekking (X1) and educational media (X2) in shaping the quality of outdoor activities (Y). A descriptive exploratory qualitative approach was employed involving 20 participants who joined a Historical Trekking activity at Rumah Sandi, Yogyakarta. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires to explore participants' experiences related to trekking activities, historical information delivery, and engagement in outdoor activities. The results indicate that trekking (X1) conducted in natural environments enhances participants' enjoyment and involvement in outdoor activities (Y). Furthermore, the integration of educational media (X2) in the form of historical narratives along the trekking route improves historical understanding, environmental awareness, and emotional engagement. This study concludes that Historical Trekking has strong potential as an innovative strategy for developing educational tourism based on outdoor activities and cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Trekking, Educational Media, Outdoor Activities, Historical trekking, Outdoor Learning*

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INTRODUCTION

Experience-based tourism has increased interest in nature-based activities such as trekking and hiking, especially after the pandemic. Post-pandemic changes in tourist preferences have encouraged a preference for open-air destinations that offer simultaneous physical, mental, and educational experiences (Ayu, W.A. et al., 2025). In this context, trekking (X1) serves not only as a recreational activity but also has the potential to be developed as a contextual learning medium through direct interaction with nature and the surrounding environment.

Trekking is categorized as a form of special-interest tourism, which utilizes the potential of natural landscapes, topographical characteristics, and the environment as its primary attractions (Bharata, I.B.A.Y. et al., 2023). This activity provides an exploratory experience involving physical engagement, visual observation, and personal reflection. Several studies have suggested that trekking

has educational value because it integrates elements of adventure, environmental learning, and understanding of local culture (Buckley, 2018; Nepal & Chipeniuk, 2005).

In line with these developments, the use of educational media (X2) in tourism activities has become a crucial aspect in conveying the value and meaning of a destination. Educational media serves as an interpretive tool that helps participants understand the historical, cultural, and environmental context more effectively (Heinich et al., 2002). The application of educational media such as guide narratives, interpretation boards, and historical information materials has been shown to enhance tourists' understanding, engagement, and learning experience (Huda & Firdaus, 2020; Packer, 2022).

Hiking (Y) is an activity that combines elements of sport, recreation, and learning in an open environment. This activity not only provides physical health benefits but also plays a role in increasing ecological awareness, character building, and social engagement of participants (Wearing & Neil, 2009; Rahmawati & Santoso, 2019). Therefore, hiking has great potential to be developed as an alternative learning medium that is more applicable and oriented towards direct experience.

One relevant development is Historical Trekking, which combines trekking activities with the delivery of historical narratives and cultural heritage values along the route. This approach aligns with the concept of edutourism and cultural heritage-based learning, which emphasizes direct learning experiences at historical sites (Nguyen & Cheung, 2023). However, studies specifically addressing the role of trekking and educational media as a whole in shaping the quality of hiking activities are still relatively limited, particularly in the context of local tourism in Indonesia.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore the role of trekking (X1) and educational media (X2) in shaping the experience of hiking activities (Y) through Historical Trekking activities. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of educational tourism based on history and nature, as well as serve as a reference for destination managers and the development of academic studies in the field of tourism.

Trekking is a form of nature-based adventure tourism that is not only oriented towards entertainment but also has educational and social value. According to Buckley (2018), trekking falls into the category of nature-based adventure tourism, which can foster awareness of environmental conservation and local culture. This activity provides participants with direct experience interacting with nature, exploring routes of geographical and historical significance, and learning to understand the interconnectedness of humans and their environment. Consistent with Nepal and Chipeniuk (2005), trekking can be a contextual learning tool because it combines elements of adventure, environmental observation, and cultural knowledge. Through this activity, participants gain not only physical pleasure but also meaningful educational experiences about nature and history.

In the context of tourism education, educational media plays a crucial role as a tool for conveying messages and learning values. Heinich et al. (2002) explain that educational media serves as a communication channel that helps participants understand the material effectively. This media can be visual, audio, or a combination of both, such as tour guide narratives, information boards, historical booklets, and even digital media. Huda and Firdaus (2020) add that implementing educational media at tourist destinations can foster interest in learning, strengthen memory, and foster a sense of engagement with the local environment and culture. During trekking activities, educational media can enrich participants' experiences by providing historical context or social values embedded in the hiking trails they traverse. Thus, trekking is not merely a physical activity but also a means of learning history and preserving culture.

Meanwhile, hiking is understood as a form of activity that combines elements of sport, recreation, and learning in an open environment. Wearing and Neil (2009) state that hiking has great potential to foster ecological and social awareness through direct experiences in nature. This activity is not only beneficial for physical health but also for character development and environmental stewardship. According to Rahmawati and Santoso (2019), hiking can be a medium for character education because it teaches independence, responsibility, and the ability to work together in groups. In the context of historical trekking, hiking becomes a platform for learning about living history because participants not only hear or read but also directly experience the locations and their values.

METHODS

According to Kim and Ritchie (2021), exploratory descriptive research is used to gain an initial understanding of tourist experiences in tourism activities that have not been extensively researched.

Based on this approach, this study employed an exploratory descriptive method to describe participants' experiences in Historical Trekking activities as an educational tool for hiking. This approach was chosen because the research did not aim to test cause-and-effect relationships, but rather to understand how participants interpreted the trekking experience and the contextual delivery of historical information in the field.

The research was conducted during a Historical Trekking activity held at Rumah Sandi, Yogyakarta, on November 22, 2025. This location was chosen because it has strong historical value and is relevant as a cultural heritage-based educational tourism destination, thus aligning with the research focus, which emphasizes the experience of learning history through hiking activities.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Etikan and Bala (2021) state that a research population is the entire subject group with specific characteristics consistent with the research objectives, while a sample is a subset of the population selected to represent those characteristics. In this study, the population was all participants in the Historical Trekking activity at Rumah Sandi during the activity. The research sample consisted of 10 participants selected from this population.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is a sample selection technique based on specific considerations to ensure that the selected respondents are truly relevant to the research objectives. This technique was used because only participants who participated in the entire activity and had direct experience with trekking and the presentation of historical material were deemed capable of providing information relevant to the research focus.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Jennings (2021) stated that data collection in experience-based tourism research can be conducted through open-ended questions to gain a more reflective and in-depth understanding of tourist experiences. In line with this opinion, data in this study was collected using a questionnaire containing both short-answer questions and open-ended questions.

This instrument was used to explore participants' experiences regarding trekking activities, the use of historical educational media, and the overall experience of participating in hiking activities. The use of a digital questionnaire was chosen because it facilitated the data collection process and allowed respondents to share their experiences directly after the activity.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

According to Braun and Clarke (2021), qualitative descriptive analysis is conducted through the stages of data reduction, grouping themes, and interpreting meanings to understand patterns and trends in respondents' experiences. Based on this approach, the data in this study were analyzed by grouping respondents' answers into main themes relevant to the research objectives, then interpreting the participants' experiences regarding Historical Trekking as an educational medium. This analysis technique was chosen because it aligns with the narrative nature of the data and the research objectives, which emphasize exploring participants' experiences rather than inferential statistical testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

This study involved 20 respondents who participated in the Historical Trekking activity at Rumah Sandi. Based on an analysis of the respondents' short answer questions, a general overview was obtained of the participants' perceptions of the trekking activity, the use of historical educational media, and the overall hiking experience.

In general, respondents considered the Historical Trekking activity to be a positive experience. They perceived the trekking activity as enjoyable and not monotonous, especially because it took place in an open natural environment. Furthermore, the presentation of historical information during the activity was considered to broaden participants' understanding of the historical value of the locations they visited.

To clarify the research findings, a summary of the respondents' responses is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Perceptions of Historical Trekking Activities

Rated aspect	Respondent's Answer	Number of Respondents
Trekking experience	Fun and interesting	7
	Physically challenging	3
Historical educational media	Increasing historical insight	8
	Needs a more in-depth explanation	2
Hiking activities	Attractive because it blends with nature	6
	Routes need to be clarified	2
	The duration of the activity is quite long	2

The table shows that the majority of respondents gave positive assessments of the three aspects studied. However, several respondents also provided constructive feedback, particularly regarding the clarity of the route and the depth of the presentation of the historical material.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Trekking on Hiking Activities

Trekking, in the context of tourism, is a nature-based activity that involves physical involvement and direct experience with the surrounding environment. This activity serves not only as a recreational activity but also as a means of creating meaningful tourism experiences through direct interaction with nature and the locations visited. This aligns with research conducted by Kim and Ritchie (2021), which states that tourists' direct involvement in experiential activities plays a crucial role in creating memorable tourism experiences.

The results of this study indicate that most respondents considered trekking to be enjoyable and capable of enhancing the quality of the hiking experience. This finding aligns with research by Nguyen and Cheung (2023), which states that nature-based tourism activities and direct experiences tend to increase tourists' engagement and satisfaction with the destinations they visit. Based on this description, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: Trekking contributes to shaping the hiking experience.

The Influence of Educational Media on Hiking Activities

Educational media in tourism serves as a means of interpretation that helps tourists understand the value, meaning, and context of a destination. The delivery of historical information directly linked to the tourist location allows tourists to connect physical experiences with cognitive understanding. According to Packer (2022), effective interpretation in cultural heritage-based tourism can enrich the tourist experience and enhance the meaning of the lessons learned during the visit.

Based on the research results, the majority of respondents stated that the historical information presented during the Historical Trekking activity increased their insight and understanding of the historical value of the Sandi House. This finding aligns with research by Xu, Buhalis, and Weber (2022), which states that the delivery of educational information integrated with tourism activities can enhance the overall tourism experience. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows:

H2: Educational media contributes to enriching the hiking experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussions conducted, it can be concluded that the Historical

Trekking activity at Rumah Sandi has the potential to serve as an educational tool for hiking. The integration of trekking activities and the delivery of historical information creates a tourism experience that is not only recreational but also educational for participants.

The results showed that participants responded positively to the trekking experience in an open natural environment. The physical activity combined with historical narratives at historical sites helped participants understand the historical context in a more concrete and contextual way. Furthermore, most respondents considered this activity to enhance historical insight and provide a meaningful tourism experience.

However, this research is exploratory in nature with a limited number of respondents, so the findings cannot be broadly generalized. Therefore, this research is positioned as a preliminary overview of the application of Historical Trekking as an educational tool in the context of experience-based tourism and cultural heritage.

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