

Typology of Strategic Approaches to the Resilience of Indonesian Cities in the UNESCO Creative City Network to Strengthen Cultural Identity: A Case Study of Pekalongan, Bandung, and Ambon

Edy Abdurrahman Syahrir^{1*}, Alwan², Sekar Alim Padar³, Rahma Hiromi⁴, Agussalam Syahrir⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Lecturer, Urban and Regional Planning Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, University of Sulawesi Tenggara

⁵Lecturer, Management Science Study Program, Faculty of Management and Business, Karya Persada Muna University

email: edyabdurrahmansyahrir@un-sultra.ac.id

Article Info :

Received:

06-06-2025

Revised:

12-06-2025

Accepted:

24-06-2025

ABSTRACT

As elements inherent to a city's image, cultural values and creative arts activities have unique characteristics that distinguish one city from another. Therefore, the cultural sustainability that has grown within the city's system of life needs to be preserved, given its status as a vulnerable site. To that end, a specific strategy is needed to create resilience in order to maintain its existence. This study aims to identify the key factors that need to be considered in formulating strategies to enhance the resilience of cultural and creative arts potential, particularly in addressing global challenges. The focus of this research is on three cities in Indonesia that are members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, namely Pekalongan, Bandung, and Ambon. The method used in this research is a qualitative and descriptive approach with comparative typological analysis. The results of the research show that cities in Indonesia utilise cultural elements as the basis for forming their identities, as culture is a key factor in the formation of a city's identity. Additionally, the categorisation based on sectors in the designation as a UNESCO Creative City requires the development of resilience strategies tailored to the potential of each sector possessed by the city. The main finding of this study is the importance for cities that have become part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to understand the characteristics or sectors that are the city's main strengths, so that they can develop effective strategies to achieve resilience.

Keywords : *Resilience; Potential; Strategy; Identity; Creative City Network.*



©2022 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

Culture is one of the most important resources in supporting the formation of a city's image. In principle, culture, according to (Arianis Chan, 2021) (Hilman, 2018) (Saputri, 2018) (Sutrisno, 2009) can serve as a source of meaning and identity for society, as well as an identity for a community group and a character for the city's image (Jigyasu, 2013) (Syahrir, 2021). Moreover, the heritage and uniqueness of culture, regardless of its form, will significantly contribute to enhancing competitiveness and development at the multi-dimensional level of a city (Edy Abdurrahman Syahrir, 2025) (Garcia, 2019).

One city in the world that has successfully maintained the uniqueness of its culture, which has developed within its diverse community, despite global challenges is the city of Duran in Ecuador, which is also part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network in the field of Craft and Folk Art. According to (Sawe, 2017), the city's strength in fostering cultural resilience lies in its ability to embrace diverse forms of creativity and leverage its culture as a driver of residents' well-being through the integration of modern creative development with local folk arts, thereby ensuring the continued preservation of its cultural identity in the face of global challenges.

As an integral part of a city's image, cultural values and creative arts activities possess unique characteristics that distinguish them from other cities. Cities around the world today have their own unique identities, particularly those that possess cultural heritage sites or creative arts activities, which serve as potential assets in shaping the city's identity. In this context, the cases of Pekalongan, Bandung, and Ambon can be categorised accordingly, as these three cities are now part of the Creative Cities Network recognised by UNESCO. In this regard, Pekalongan City became the first creative city in

Indonesia to be designated by UNESCO in the field of Craft and Folk Arts in 2014, followed by Bandung City in the field of Design Arts in 2015, and finally Ambon City in the field of Music in 2019.

Global changes can have an impact or exert pressure on the existence of culture and creative arts activities that are now ingrained as characteristics of the cities that have been designated by UNESCO as part of the global network of creative cities. Therefore, it is important to make cities unique or to have strategies to maintain their uniqueness as a potential asset. This is important because the uniqueness derived from the existence of culture and creative arts activities is closely linked to the resilience needed to sustain their existence within the city's living system (Bui, 2020) (Sawe, 2017) (Ziyadeh, 2018). Therefore, the uniqueness or cultural heritage that has existed within the city's living system must be continuously preserved because the nature of uniqueness or cultural heritage and creative artistic activities in their development will always face global challenges, thereby being classified as vulnerable sites or sites that are considered at risk and require special strategies to maintain their sustainability in the face of various global challenges.

To support the optimal preservation of cultural values and uniqueness, as well as creative artistic activities as potential city identities, further research is needed to understand the strategies required to maintain the resilience of cultural identity and uniqueness as city potentials in the case of Indonesian cities that have joined the UNESCO Creative City Network based on the typology of their potential fields. In line with this objective, through the cases of Pekalongan, Bandung, and Ambon, this study attempts to identify important aspects that need to be considered in determining strategies to achieve resilience in supporting the existence of cultural potential and creative arts activities as elements that shape the city's identity.

RESEARCH METHOD

The analysis conducted in this study utilised a qualitative and descriptive approach, with data collection techniques involving literature/document studies. To identify key considerations in determining strategies to achieve resilience in supporting the existence of cultural potential and creative arts activities as elements shaping the city's identity, a review of literature in the form of journals or best practices from cities in Indonesia relevant to the research topic was conducted.

Based on the results of the review and best practices identified in the literature, regarding the forms of resilience strategies applied in the cases of Pekalongan, Bandung, and Ambon, the typology of these strategies was identified based on the potential of each city's field, as recognised by UNESCO. The results of this typology were then compared to understand the forms of strategies from each city's field that are the cases in this study. Therefore, by understanding the typological forms of strategies in achieving resilience in the three cities that are the cases in this study, in accordance with the unique characteristics of each city, it is possible to gain an understanding of the important aspects that need to be considered in determining strategies for creative cities in achieving resilience against future global challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pekalongan City (Creativity Category in the Field of Craft and Folk Art)

In its existence as a creative city, Pekalongan became the first city in Indonesia to be recognised by UNESCO and included in the Creative City Network. In this case, UNESCO recognised Pekalongan City as part of the global creative city network in the field of Craft and Folk Art in December 2014. This recognition was inseparable from the local potential of the local community engaged in the creative economy of batik. The existence of this local potential then became the foundation for establishing Pekalongan City's identity as a creative batik city, and this was also utilised to support creative batik tourism promotion activities through city branding, namely as 'The World's City of Batik.'

Pekalongan City, which fundamentally derives its identity from the intangible cultural art of batik, faces significant challenges in adapting to global developments. In the long term, if Pekalongan City fails to adapt or establish resilience to maintain the existence of batik culture amid global changes, it will weaken the city's identity. This is because the identity of Pekalongan City as The World's City of Batik is formed from the cultural value of batik from the local community.

Therefore, in efforts to maintain the existence and identity of Pekalongan City as a batik city amid global challenges, several initiatives have been taken by policymakers and stakeholders. As

revealed in the research by (Damayanti, 2018) (Susanti, 2018), the strategies implemented to preserve batik culture and the image of Pekalongan City as the World's Batik City involve supporting creative batik tourism promotion activities through visual branding as the "World's City of Batik." Additionally, other efforts to maintain the resilience of the unique, intangible aspects of batik culture include the initiation of flagship programmes such as reviving cultural heritage sites, developing batik tourism potential, revitalising the arts, and maximising cultural and artistic activities through batik festivals.



Figure 1. Activities at the Kauman Batik Art Festival 2019

Source: <https://praptoprasojo.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/batik-carnival.jpg>

The local government has even established several batik villages, such as Kampung Batik Pesindon, Kauman, and Jlanprang, to serve as bases for the development of batik culture. In these districts, facilities such as batik craft training centres are also provided, allowing the public to experience firsthand the process of creating the distinctive batik of Pekalongan City. Therefore, through the integration of various stakeholders and government support through policies, this can serve as a strategy to preserve the creativity of batik as a cultural and identity element of Pekalongan City, enabling it to continue to thrive and remain relevant in the face of global challenges.



Figure 2. View of the Batik Pesindon, Kauman, and Jlanprang districts.

Source: Personal documentation

Bandung City (Creativity Category in Design)

The second city in Indonesia to be named by UNESCO as part of the Creative Cities Network is Bandung. UNESCO named Bandung to the Creative Cities Network in the field of Design in December 2015, following Pekalongan in January 2014. This designation is inseparable from Bandung's main potential, namely in the field of creative design, which is pursued by its community. This potential has shaped Bandung's identity as a creative city, and to support its existence as such, Bandung leverages city branding as a medium to strengthen its urban identity through promotional efforts. As evidenced by this designation, the Bandung City Government, through the Department of Culture and Tourism, is committed to supporting the creative activities of its residents as a strategic approach to maintaining the city's resilience and sustaining its status as a creative city by providing infrastructure to support community creative activities.

It cannot be denied that the creative sector, in line with the progression of time, will always face challenges and global pressures. Therefore, as stated by (Audina, 2019) in her research, the strategy implemented by the Bandung City Government to mitigate global challenges and maintain the sustainability of the community's creative ecosystem as a potential shaper of the city's identity is carried out by providing supporting facilities in the form of the Bandung Creative Hub Building, which aims

to accommodate creative activities, both individual and group, from all 16 sub-sectors of the creative field in Bandung City. In fact, this facility is the first integrated, most complete and most advanced creativity centre in Indonesia and the second integrated creative centre in Southeast Asia after Thailand with the Thailand Creative and Design Centre.



Figure 3. Appearance of the Bandung Creative Hub Building

Source: https://sorpresacinehome.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/26353232_.jpg

Furthermore, (Audina, 2019) also revealed that the existence of Bandung Creative Hub is able to strengthen the identity of Bandung City as a Creative City. This is due to the support of local government policies that provide opportunities for creative practitioners to continue collaborating with creative practitioners from other cities, thereby creating opportunities to support the community in consistently producing innovative and creative works that can not only compete at the regional level but also at the national or international level. Therefore, with this strategy, through government policy support, it can become a strategy in facing global challenges, thereby remaining relevant and adaptive to all challenges that arise.

Ambon City (Creativity Category in Music)

Ambon City is currently the third city in Indonesia to be designated by UNESCO as part of its Creative Cities Network. UNESCO designated Ambon City as a Creative City in the field of music in October 2019. Although Ambon City is still classified as a new member of the global Creative Cities Network, its musical potential has existed for a long time and is one of the most dominant cultural elements among the local community. As a result of this designation, Ambon City now has an identity shaped by its potential as a World Music City. Additionally, there are currently national and international events organised by the local government in collaboration with various stakeholders and the community to support Ambon City's status as a World Music City.



Figure 4. Musical Arts Activities in Ambon City

Source: <https://bizlaw.id/read/13786/Kota-Ambon-Ditetapkan-Sebagai-Kota-Musik-Dunia-oleh-UNESCO>

Meanwhile, as a form of anticipatory measures taken by the government to maintain the resilience of Ambon City's potential in the field of music, various strategies have been implemented, such as the provision of the Learning Together with Maestro (BBM) Traditional Tahuri Music Programme, which is carried out to introduce and instil a love of traditional music in the younger generation, namely students (Marchiantalahatu, 2019).. Additionally, to support other activities, the local government, through its policies, provides an arts performance venue and a Dancing Fountain at

Pattimura Park, which dances to the rhythm of music, also serving as an icon of Ambon City as the World Music City.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that cities in Indonesia currently utilise cultural values as the basis for shaping their urban identities. Culture serves as a crucial element in reinforcing a city's character. Additionally, creativity emerging from cultural activities and creative arts constitutes a key asset for enhancing a city's competitiveness, particularly through membership in the UNESCO Creative City Network.

Each city in Indonesia registered as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network has distinct characteristics, necessitating the implementation of tailored strategies to maintain resilience and support the city's creative potential. For example, cities recognised in the category of crafts and folk art will develop different strategies compared to those recognised in design or music, to preserve and strengthen their cultural creativity.

For example, Pekalongan City, famous for its batik crafts, in the category of crafts and folk art, can develop the tourism sector as part of a strategy to support the sustainability of batik creativity. Meanwhile, Bandung City, selected in the design category within the creative cities network, implements strategies by providing facilities such as the Bandung Creative Hub to support the community in innovating within the design field. This is an effort to maintain the productivity of its residents' creativity. On the other hand, Ambon City, recognised in the field of music, maintains its presence through the organisation of various music events and theatre performances. Supporting facilities such as art buildings are also provided to accommodate various artistic activities that constitute the cultural potential of Ambon City.

Thus, it can be concluded that for cities that wish to become part of the creative city network or are already part of it, it is important to first understand the character and potential of the creative fields they possess. This will enable them to design resilience strategies that align with the uniqueness and characteristics of the city, ensuring that the city's cultural and creative identity continues to thrive.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that an important first step in formulating a resilience strategy to support the existence of cultural and creative arts potential as elements that shape the identity of a creative city in facing global challenges is a deep understanding of the potential or uniqueness that characterises the city. With this understanding, cities can identify the main fields or sectors that constitute their strengths. This is crucial because in formulating resilience strategies, it is necessary to consider the potential or sectors that underpin the city's identity. Thus, the strategies developed will be more effective in preserving and adapting the city's potential in the face of global challenges.

The implications of this research finding are: (1) To address the impacts of cultural globalisation, cities in Indonesia that are part of the UNESCO Creative City Network must continue to maintain their existence and support innovation and creativity in the fields that constitute their potential, through strategies involving regulation and institutional integration, to achieve resilience in facing increasingly complex global challenges; (2) Cities that are part of UNESCO's Creative City Network can serve as examples for other cities or regions, both in Indonesia and around the world, of the importance of cultural values and creative arts activities in supporting the sustainability of urban life systems in the face of various global issues.

REFERENSI

- Arianis Chan, D. S. (2021). *City Image: City Branding and City Identity Strategies. Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*.
- Audina, R. A. (2019). Peran Bandung Creative Hub Dalam. *E-Proceeding of Management*, 1722–1733.

- Audina, R. A. (2019). Peran Bandung Creative Hub Dalam Membangun City Branding Kota Bandung Sebagai Kota Kreatif The Role of Bandung Creative Hub in. *Forming Bandung ' S City*, 1722–1733.
- Bui, H. T. (2020). he adaptive. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1–19.
- Bui, H. T. (2020). The adaptive resilience of living cultural heritage in a tourism destination. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1–19.
- Damayanti, L. (2018). Pariwisata Kreatif Berbasis Industri Batik Sebagai Upaya Pengembangan Ekonomi. *Universitas Diponegoro*.
- Edy Abdurrahman Syahrir, A. M. (2025). Pemetaan Spasial Dalam Mengungkap Area Prioritas Rawan Banjir Guna Mengoptimalkan Tata Ruang di Desa Guali Kabupaten Muna Barat. *Sultra Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 20–33.
- Garcia, B. M. (2019). ient cultural heritage: from global to national levels – the case of Bhutan. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*.
- Hilman, Y. A. (2018). Model City Branding Sebagai Strategi Penguatan Pariwisata Lokal Provinsi. *urnal Komunikasi Dan Kajian Media*.
- Jigyasu, R. (2013). Heritage and Resilient: Issue and Opportunities for Reducing Disaster Risk. *UNESCO Chair Professor at the Research Center of Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage*.
- Marchiantalahatu. (2019). *Kota Ambon Resmi Menjadi Ambon Unesco City of Music*. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan.
- Saputri, A. F. (2018). Pengaruh City Branding Terhadap City Image Dan Keputusan Berkunjung. *Journal Administrasi Bisnis (JAB)*, 82–91.
- Sawe, B. E. (2017). *UNESCO Creative Cities in South America*. Newyork: WorldAtlas.
- Susanti, R. A. (2018). World ' S City Of Batik. *Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 96–110.
- Sutrisno, M. (2009). *Ranah- Ranah Kebudayaan*. Jakarta.
- Syahrir, E. A. (2021). Role of physical elements in the image formation of a creative. *ARTEKS : Jurnal Teknik Arsitektur*, 363–372.
- Ziyaee, M. (2018). Assessment of Urban Identity Through A Matrix of Cultural Landscapes. *International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*.