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VISUALIZING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MALAY SOCIETY BASED ON MAPS IN TEBO REGENCY, JAMBI PROVINCE

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Abstract: *This study explores the cultural heritage of the Malay society in Tebo Regency, Jambi Province, through the lens of geospatial visualization. The primary purpose of the research is to document and analyze the distribution of traditional practices and cultural values geographically to promote cultural preservation and understanding. Using a qualitative and quantitative approach, the study integrates primary data collected from field observations and interviews with secondary sources such as cultural records and geographic data. GIS technology is employed to create a cultural map that visually represents traditional ceremonies, dances, and rituals unique to the region. Key findings reveal significant patterns in the spatial distribution of cultural practices, highlighting areas with rich cultural activity and their ecological and historical contexts. The research underscores the potential of maps as powerful tools for cultural education and promotion, as well as their role in safeguarding local traditions against modernization pressures. This work contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation by demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary approaches in heritage studies.*

Keywords: *cultural heritage, Malay society, geospatial visualization, GIS, Tebo Regency*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji warisan budaya masyarakat Melayu di Kabupaten Tebo, Provinsi Jambi, melalui visualisasi geospasial. Tujuan utama penelitian adalah untuk mendokumentasikan dan menganalisis persebaran praktik-praktik tradisional dan nilai-nilai budaya secara geografis guna mendorong pelestarian dan pemahaman budaya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan kuantitatif, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan data primer yang dikumpulkan dari observasi lapangan dan wawancara dengan sumber sekunder seperti catatan budaya dan data geografis. Teknologi SIG (Sistem Informasi Geografis) digunakan untuk menciptakan peta budaya yang secara visual menggambarkan upacara adat, tarian, dan ritual yang khas di wilayah tersebut. Temuan utama menunjukkan pola-pola penting dalam distribusi spasial praktik budaya, menyoroti area-area dengan aktivitas budaya yang kaya beserta konteks ekologis dan historisnya. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi potensi peta sebagai alat yang kuat untuk pendidikan dan promosi budaya, serta perannya dalam melindungi tradisi lokal dari tekanan modernisasi. Karya ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas tentang pelestarian budaya dengan menunjukkan nilai pendekatan interdisipliner dalam studi warisan budaya.

Kata kunci: warisan budaya, masyarakat Melayu, visualisasi geospasial, SIG, Kabupaten Tebo

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage serves as a vital identity marker for communities, reflecting their traditions, values, and historical experiences (Syukri, 2024). The Malay society in Tebo Regency, located in Jambi Province, Indonesia, possesses a rich cultural heritage characterized by unique traditional ceremonies, dances, and rituals. However, globalization and modernization have posed significant challenges to the preservation and documentation of these traditions (Hidir, 2009). Consequently, there is an urgent need for innovative methods to visualize and safeguard cultural heritage, ensuring its accessibility and relevance for future generations.

Geospatial visualization, particularly through mapping, offers a promising approach to addressing these challenges (Gunawan, 2021). By integrating cultural data with geographic information systems (GIS), it becomes possible to create visual representations of cultural practices and their spatial distribution. Such representations not only enhance understanding of cultural landscapes but also support efforts to promote and preserve cultural identity in the face of rapid societal changes (Gunawan, 2020).

This study aims to explore the cultural heritage of the Malay society in Tebo Regency by developing a cultural map that highlights the geographic spread of traditional practices. The research focuses on documenting key traditions, analyzing their spatial patterns, and demonstrating the potential of geospatial tools in cultural preservation. By combining qualitative insights with technological applications, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on heritage conservation and the innovative use of visualization techniques in cultural studies.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2014), integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the cultural heritage of the Malay society in Tebo Regency. The methodology is structured into the following stages:

1. Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** Field observations and interviews were conducted with key informants, including cultural practitioners, community leaders, and local historians. These interactions aimed to gather detailed accounts of traditional practices, ceremonies, and dances specific to the region (Endraswara, 2006).
- **Secondary Data:** Archival research and literature reviews were carried out to supplement primary data. Geographic data, including shapefiles (SHP) from BIG and existing maps, were obtained to support the geospatial visualization (Endraswara, 2006).

2. Data Analysis

- **Qualitative Analysis:** Content analysis was used to interpret the cultural significance of the traditions documented. Thematic coding helped categorize the practices based on their geographic and social contexts.
- **Spatial Analysis:** GIS software was utilized to map the distribution of cultural practices (Awaludin, 2010). Layers representing different traditions, such as dances and rituals, were overlaid onto a base map of Tebo Regency to identify spatial patterns and relationships.

3. Visualization and Interpretation

- The processed data was visualized in the form of a cultural map, highlighting key locations and their associated traditions (Faizal, 2024). Interactive mapping techniques were explored to enhance user engagement and accessibility (Chasanah, 2022).

4. Validation

- The resulting map and findings were reviewed by local stakeholders, including cultural experts and community members, to ensure accuracy and cultural sensitivity (Naspendra, 2020).

This methodological framework enables a holistic exploration of the interplay between culture and geography, providing valuable insights into the preservation and promotion of Malay cultural heritage in Tebo Regency.

Findings

1. **Distribution of Cultural Practices** The study identified several key traditions unique to the Malay society in Tebo Regency, including:

- **Upacara Beralin Mayang Mandi Baro:** Concentrated in the central and northern regions of the regency.
- **Upacara Adat Turun Mandi Ke Aek:** Predominantly practiced near riverbanks and water sources in the southern areas.
- **Tari Lukoh Gilo, Tari Selendang Putri, and Tari Kelik Elang:** These traditional dances are more frequently performed in urban centers and cultural hubs.

The geospatial analysis revealed a strong correlation between the location of these practices and the ecological and social characteristics of the region, such as proximity to water sources, agricultural areas, and community settlements. Specifically, rituals such as Upacara Adat Turun Mandi Ke Aek are deeply intertwined with the riverine systems that dominate the southern part of Tebo Regency. Rivers are not only vital for daily life but also hold spiritual significance, serving as focal points for ceremonies symbolizing purification and renewal.

Similarly, agricultural areas in the central regions provide a backdrop for Upacara Beralin Mayang Mandi Baro, a tradition closely associated with the agrarian lifestyle of the community. These rituals often integrate elements of nature, such as the use of mayang (young palm leaves), symbolizing harmony between humans and the environment. This connection underscores how cultural practices adapt to and reflect the ecological settings in which they are performed.

In urban centers, such as district capitals, traditional dances like Tari Lukoh Gilo and Tari Selendang Putri are commonly showcased during festivals and official events. These performances act as a bridge between the past and present, ensuring the continuity of cultural expressions while adapting to modern settings. Urban areas serve as cultural hubs where traditional practices are preserved, celebrated, and shared with a broader audience.

Community settlements also play a critical role in the spatial dynamics of cultural practices. Villages with strong social cohesion often serve as the custodians of specific traditions, with elders and cultural leaders taking an active role in maintaining and transmitting knowledge. This interplay between social structures and ecological settings highlights the resilience of cultural practices in the face of environmental and societal changes.

2. Cultural Patterns and Spatial Dynamics

Cultural activities in Tebo Regency are closely tied to ecological landscapes, with river systems playing a pivotal role in shaping traditional rituals and ceremonies. Rivers are deeply ingrained in the cultural consciousness of the Malay society, serving not only as sources of livelihood but also as sacred spaces for rituals such as purification, blessing ceremonies, and communal gatherings. This alignment between ecological elements and cultural expressions reflects a profound symbiosis, wherein the natural environment becomes an integral part of the cultural identity.

Urban areas, such as district capitals, serve as focal points for performing arts and collective cultural celebrations. These areas often host larger-scale events, including regional festivals and cultural exhibitions, which provide platforms for showcasing traditional dances like Tari Lukoh Gilo and Tari Kelik Elang. The urban setting fosters interactions between diverse communities, enabling cultural exchange and adaptation while maintaining the essence of traditional practices.

In contrast, rural zones retain more localized and community-specific traditions. These areas are marked by practices deeply rooted in familial and village-based social structures. For instance, smaller villages often preserve unique rituals and ceremonies that may not be as widely known outside their immediate locality. This localized focus allows rural communities to sustain their cultural heritage in its most authentic form, unaltered by external influences.

Furthermore, the spatial dynamics of cultural activities underscore the interplay between mobility and tradition. While urban centers facilitate the spread and modernization of cultural expressions, rural areas act as repositories of historical and ancestral knowledge. Together, these spatial patterns contribute to a dynamic cultural landscape that is both resilient and adaptable in the face of contemporary challenges.

3. Cultural Preservation Challenges

Modernization and urbanization have begun to shift cultural practices, leading to reduced frequency and altered forms of certain traditions. This phenomenon is evident in the decreasing prevalence of community-driven rituals, as younger generations prioritize modern lifestyles and activities over traditional customs. The rapid urbanization of certain regions has further marginalized rural traditions, as populations migrate to urban centers, leaving cultural custodianship in decline.

Younger generations exhibit limited knowledge of traditional customs, emphasizing the need for targeted educational and promotional efforts. This gap in cultural understanding can be attributed to the lack of integration of cultural education into formal curriculums and the waning role of elders as primary transmitters of cultural knowledge. Without deliberate intervention, there is a risk of cultural erosion as traditions lose their relevance and appeal to the younger demographic.

The challenges of preserving cultural heritage are compounded by the influence of globalization, which introduces external cultural elements that compete with local traditions. Social media and digital platforms, while offering opportunities for cultural promotion, often shift attention away from grassroots cultural practices toward globalized trends. This dual-edged sword requires strategic use to balance promotion and preservation effectively.

To address these challenges, it is imperative to implement community-based initiatives that foster cultural education and participation. Establishing cultural workshops, festivals, and digital platforms dedicated to local traditions can reinvigorate interest and engagement among younger generations. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations can also provide the resources needed to document, preserve, and promote Tebo Regency's rich cultural heritage.

4. Utility of Geospatial Visualization

The cultural map developed through this study successfully integrates traditional practices with geographic locations, providing an accessible and engaging tool for understanding and preserving Malay cultural heritage. By linking cultural elements to their spatial contexts, the map offers a unique perspective that highlights the interconnectedness between geography and tradition.

This tool not only serves as a repository of cultural knowledge but also acts as a medium for education and cultural advocacy. For educational purposes, the map can be incorporated into school

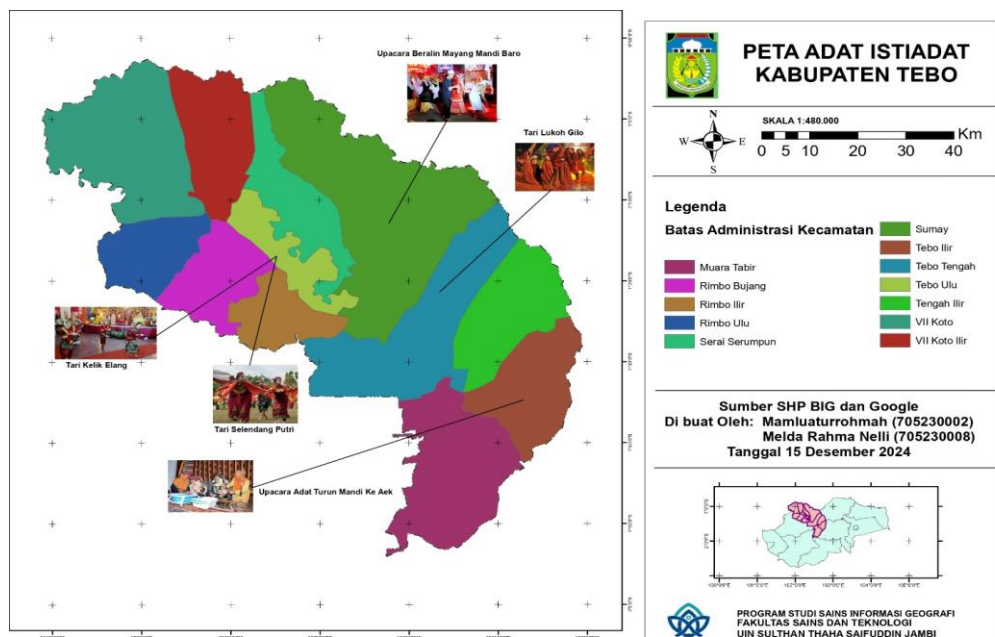
curriculums to teach students about their local heritage in an interactive and visually appealing manner. Additionally, it provides researchers and cultural practitioners with a reliable reference to analyze spatial-cultural patterns and plan preservation strategies.

Local stakeholders expressed significant interest in utilizing the map for cultural promotion. By integrating it into tourism initiatives, the map can attract visitors to explore the region's cultural landmarks, thereby supporting local economies and raising awareness of Malay traditions. The practical value of this geospatial visualization lies in its ability to bridge the gap between tradition and contemporary audiences, fostering a deeper appreciation for the richness of Tebo Regency's cultural heritage.

Moreover, the map's potential for digital transformation could further enhance its impact. An interactive digital platform can enable real-time updates, user-generated contributions, and broader accessibility. This evolution aligns with the goals of sustainable cultural preservation, ensuring that the traditions of Tebo Regency remain vibrant and relevant in an ever-changing world.

These findings underscore the importance of integrating technology into cultural heritage initiatives, demonstrating that innovative tools like geospatial visualization can play a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting local traditions for generations to come. By bridging traditional knowledge with modern technological applications, these tools empower communities to take an active role in preserving their heritage. They provide a platform for storytelling, education, and engagement, allowing cultures to thrive in a digital era without losing their authenticity. Furthermore, such initiatives contribute to the global appreciation of cultural diversity, offering a model for other regions seeking to balance modernization with the preservation of their unique identities.

5. Malay Cultural Map



CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the intricate relationship between cultural practices and their geographical contexts in Tebo Regency, showcasing how ecological landscapes and social dynamics influence the preservation and adaptation of traditions. Through geospatial visualization, this research has provided a novel approach to documenting and understanding the spatial distribution of Malay cultural heritage. The findings emphasize the potential of integrating modern technology, such as GIS, into cultural heritage preservation efforts, offering a sustainable and engaging means of safeguarding traditions.

While modernization and urbanization pose significant challenges, this study underscores the resilience of local cultures and the importance of strategic initiatives to bridge generational gaps in cultural knowledge. By combining traditional practices with innovative tools, communities can not only preserve their heritage but also promote it on broader platforms, ensuring its relevance and appreciation for years to come.

The cultural map developed through this research serves as a model for other regions facing similar challenges, illustrating how interdisciplinary approaches can address complex issues in heritage conservation. Future efforts should focus on expanding this framework to include more interactive and participatory elements, fostering a deeper connection between individuals and their cultural roots.

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