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**Can the Chinese Cultural Attraction Become an Icon of Tourism Cultural Heritage?  
(A Case in China Village, Manado)**

**Benny Irwan Towoliu<sup>1</sup>; Dimas Ero Permana<sup>2</sup>; Fonny Sangari<sup>3</sup>**

*<sup>1,2,3</sup>Politeknik Negeri Manado, Indonesia*

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**CAN THE CHINESE CULTURAL ATTRACTION BECOME  
AN ICON OF TOURISM CULTURAL HERITAGE?  
(A Case in China Village, Manado)**

**Benny Irwan Towoliu<sup>1</sup>; Dimas Ero Permana<sup>2</sup>; Fonny Sangari<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Politeknik Negeri Manado, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>Contributor Email: [benny.tourism@gmail.com](mailto:benny.tourism@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to analyze the residents' perception towards the Chinese cultural attraction as an icon of cultural heritage tourism in Manado city. Manado is a predominantly Christian community and dominated by indigenous Minahasa tribes. But, now the city is populated by various inhabitants such as Sangir, Gorontalo, Maluku, and even foreign immigrants such as China and Arab migrating since the Dutch colonial era. Of the various communities that exist, practically only the Chinese community that still maintains its rituals amid strong advances in the tourism industry, this cultural practice can become an icon for cultural tourism. However, can the cultural ritual be accepted as an icon of Manado cultural tourism? This research was in the form of a descriptive qualitative approach. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires and field observations. Questionnaires were distributed to 325 respondents spread in Manado. Empirical results showed that every ritual attraction of Chinese Culture had always been awaited and an interesting spectacle for the people of Manado since the people of Chinese descent domiciled in Manado City. These findings could also provide recommendations for policymakers in setting annual tourist agendas as well as providing legal certainty for this region of Chinatown with various attractions as a cultural heritage area.*

**Keywords:** *Chinese Ritual Attraction; Icon of Tourism; Cultural Heritage; Community.*



## A. Introduction

It is undeniable that the Chinese people are included in the category of a nomadic nation, (Su.et.al, 2016). In many places in every area, they can be found and tend to be able to survive in one place, living with indigenous people, while maintaining the original cultural values that are brought from their home countries, even though in the end some indigenous cultures experienced assimilation with local cultures where they settled. The long journey of the Chinese community in one particular region finally formed a community with the name of a distinctive identity like china town.

China town in several countries in the world is so strategically positioned, as a city center and commercial it has even become a tourist destination that must be visited by travelers who travel. The thing that attracts tourists visiting is the uniqueness of old city buildings, and cheap culinary. Several china towns are so legendary among world tourists like in china towns in Havana Cuba, Calcutta India, Bangkok Thailand, Manila Philippines, Johannesburg South Africa, Melbourne Australia, Vancouver Canada, San Francisco US, and London England. It is China, which is very well known in the world as a tourist destination, and there are still many other china towns that have not been exposed to tourists.

In Indonesia, several cities have china towns such as in Jakarta (Glodok), Semarang, Singkawang, Bandung, Solo (Sudiroprajan), Batam (Nagoya Hill), Medan (Asia Mega Mas), and Surabaya (Kya Kya). Generally, all of China's towns which are located in many places in various countries including Indonesia, display the same characteristics, such as old building architecture with Chinese motifs, traditional medicine systems(herbal), ornaments, and cheap culinary.

In the city of Manado, the capital of North Sulawesi Province, there is also an old Chinese residential area named Chinese village (*Kampoeng China*). It is not as famous as in some places in Indonesia, but their communities are so close and their religious life is well maintained, as evidenced by the implementation of various festive religious celebrations and to this, there has never been friction among fellow believers in Manado.

In the historical record of the Manado, China's merriment has existed since 1600, and then in the Dutch era, they were placed in separate places to become part of the function of the colonial government's control at that time, called "Chinese Village" (*Kampoeng China*). It was the name of a small area that has special characteristics. At present, the Chinese descendants do not like the location of their residence called the Chinese village, they prefer to be called the "city center". This is because of the mention of the Chinese village refers to separation influenced by the colonial government and not united with the indigenous people. Furthermore, they do not want to be called China, because they are considered discriminated or newcomers. They prefer to be called "Tionghoa Manado" which is more neutral. (Jacobsen, M, 2006).

The development of the city civilization of Manado is inseparable from the role of Chinese descent who contributed to the presence of Manado city. They tend to control the economy of the Manado because their livelihoods are as traders. Their residence is in the city center of Manado. In their religious traditions, some of them have converted to Protestantism and Catholicism, and the others are still Buddhists. Meanwhile, in celebration of the Chinese cultural tradition such as china new year, they celebrate together even though they already have different religions.

As the minorities that still embraces Buddhism, their religious traditions are still well maintained. This is also evidenced by the presence of Buddhist temples built since 1819. In the Buddhist temple, stupas are representing three philosophical Buddhists such as; *Theravada, Mahayana, and Tantrayana*, or 'three brothers' (*Tri Dharma*), namely Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism which are interpretations of Buddhism.

Although in particular the old temple is dedicated to Taoism. Cap Goh Meh is Taoist celebrations that have been celebrated for years since they domiciled in Manado. Cap Go Meh, interpreted as the night of the 15th 'in *Hokkien* (held on the fifteenth day of the first month, Lunar Calendar). Interestingly, the Christian and Muslims are involved in the celebration of Cap Go Meh, especially in the parade of the gods, such as T'ien Hou, which is carried around the streets in the middle of Manado. Even though these young men are different, they are happy to be involved in the parade. Aside



from the Cap Go Meh celebration, there are still many cultural activities characterized by have been carried out in Manado for hundreds of years.

Meanwhile, the indigenous culture of the local community has been so difficult to find, even though there were so many indigenous cultural attractions of the Minahasa tribe (the dominant tribe in North Sulawesi), but it is not well maintained and organized. *Kabasaran Dance*, for instance, can only be watched in regional events such as the inauguration of officials, or pick up of state guests at the airport. Meanwhile, is also invited to contribute to the Cap Go Meh parade, even though it is only a supporter of the event. Amid the city government being active in prioritizing tourist destinations, the attractions of Chinese culture can be another alternative tourism destination besides marine tourism.

It must be acknowledged that so far the development of tourism in Indonesia has generally been focused more heavily on natural tourism, even though Indonesia has a variety of ethnicities and cultures, which can be relied upon as a tourist attraction. In the context of socio-culture, the tourist attraction category is included in the cultural heritage attractions associated with tourism and heritage (Nuryanti, 1996).

In the Indonesian cultural heritage (2003) conservation certificate, inheritance was agreed as a heritage (*Pusaka*). It includes natural heritage, cultural heritage, and landscape heritage, which is a combination of natural and cultural heritage in the unity of space and time. Landscape heritage is known as a new understanding of the cultural landscape that focuses on cultural and natural linkages. This is a complex phenomenon with tangible and intangible identities. Stick to the above understanding, forms of folk tales, dances, culinary, traditional music, etc are included in cultural heritage called inheritance.

In tourism development discussing, the perception of tourists is needed in measuring whether the attraction of tourism is interesting or not. Moreover (Towoliu & Takaendengan,2015), analyzed tourists' perceptions of heritage tourism by showing that tourists were very satisfied with the culture and authenticity of the Han dynasty, but there were concerns from tourists about the loss of authenticity of local culture.



Besides, other forms of disappointment are business arrangements, inadequate tourism facilities, poor service, and limited tourism programs (Yang, 2012). The role of tourist is needed in cultural tourism conservation (Irandu, 2004). Meanwhile, Kristiningrum (2014) describes that a mixture of cultures (multi-ethnic) in Malaysia has created a multi-ethnic market, a form of the art market that is seen as heritage tourism and creative tourism. This has attracted local and foreign tourists to visit in the location.

The development of cultural heritage tourism, especially religious tourism, the management model that promotes carrying capacity, the reasons for cultural heritage tourism, especially for pilgrims with emotional problems, usually influence people to visit religious sites, and to maintain the sustainability of religious sites, as well as consider the carrying capacity of tourism management (Khreis, 2015). Besides the management of cultural heritage sites between a combination of private and public management.

The basis of consideration is that the site is located close to community settlements even though the site has entered a private area (Poulios, 2014) and Cannas, 2016). Heritage tourism management is essentially fixed on conservation and sustainable tourism arrangements, but the synergy between higher education, the community and the tourism sector is needed Cadar (2014); Li, & Hunter (2015); Svensson (2015).

Another argument states that if the management of a heritage site functions as a soulless tourist attraction, heritage tourism will not attract tourists to visit the site. The importance of souls in cultural and archeological sites is a tourist object so that it seems alive even though it is inanimate objects. The cases of archeological and cultural sites in Bali provide valuable lessons in which human interactions from ancient sites come to life when local people interact with ancient objects so that they are considered alive and give meaning (Rudana, 2009).

From some previous writings, it can be concluded that the management of cultural heritage tourism works when under some conditions. These conditions are: (1) it concerns conservation and sustainability, (2) the importance of synergy between cultural heritage owners, local communities, education, and government (regulations) in



managing historical heritage and (3) ancient cultural sites will be preserved when religious attractions or rituals are carried out at this location to give meaning to every historical heritage.

The involvement of the local community is very much needed in the management of cultural tourism of the inventory of various historic sites in the city of Manado until 2010, it is estimated that only 46 historic sites have been found, with two historic sites that still provide a surprising value to the community, namely the Old Centrum Manado Church and the Old Ban Hing Kiong Temple. By seeing that the importance of the spirit of a cultural heritage attraction, by organizing various celebrations of Taoism that are hundreds of years old practiced by minorities in China's rural areas, it is possible that various attractions of Chinese culture are made as cultural tourism icons in the city of Manado.

But can things be accepted by the people of Manado, considering that Buddhism is only 0.42%, Khonghucu 0.15% very small compared to Protestants 54.31% and Muslims 37.38%? Can Chinese cultural attractions become an icon of cultural heritage tours? The purpose of this study is to analyze the local community perceptions towards the Chinese culture attraction as the icon of heritage cultural tourism in Manado.

## **B. Method**

This research is in the form of a descriptive qualitative approach. The study was conducted in the city of Manado from December 2017 to June 2018. The respondents were the local people of Manado. The sampling method is quota sampling with consideration of large population distribution that it is very difficult to determine the limit of representation but with this method, it is assumed that the number of samples will be represented (Acharya, et.al, 2013). Data collection techniques were surveys and data collection instruments used are questionnaires. Questionnaires were designed by asking their perceptions of the attractions of Chinese culture rituals as the icon of cultural heritage tourism of Manado.

Questionnaires have been developed and tested on as many as 30 tourism students at the end of December 2017. The results of the trial showed



no major problems. There were only certain sentences with a need to make word changes. In January 2018, a survey of 350 respondents was conducted, using sampling method and accidental sampling. Questionnaires were designed using an attitude scale that is a Likert Scale with choices: 1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 "quite agree", 4 = "agree", 5="strongly agree" (Boone, et.al, 2012). In early June questionnaires were collected and as many as 325 questionnaires were returned, 25 questionnaires were not answered completely, and were considered to be damaged. Data Analysis In the measurement was used in the form of scoring criteria and figures of the percentage.

### **C. Result and Discussion**

#### **1. Result**

Table I summarizes the demographic profiles of respondents who meet the requirements. In the table, there are 325 respondents with gender distribution: 54.5 percent male and 45.5 percent female. Most of the respondents are in the age group of 31 to 40 (45, 8 percent): aged 20 to 30 (25.5 percent): aged 41 to 50 (16.9 percent) and aged over 51 years (11.7 percent). The level of education is dominated by respondents with a high school education level. The most dominant occupation is private industry (34.8 percent), while other types of work tend to be evenly distributed. With the characteristics of the respondents, it can be concluded that the respondents' data are fairly evenly distributed.

**Tabel 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Respondent	Variable (n= 325)	Number	Percent
Gender	Male	177	54,5
	Female	148	45,5
Age	20-30	83	25,5
	31-40	155	45,8
	41-50	55	16,9
	> 51	38	11,7



Respondent	Variable (n= 325)	Number	Percent
Education	Middle School	4	1,2
	High School	221	68,0
	Bachelor	100	30,8
Occupation	Government Employee/Military/Police	71	21,8
	Private Employee	113	34,8
	Employees of State-Owned Enterprises	20	6,2
	Entrepreneur/Trader	37	11,4
	Professional Worker	13	4,0
	Student	51	15,7
	Handyman	3	0,9
	Laborer	4	1,2
	Housewife	13	4,0

Source: a data resource

In Table II, the respondent's responses to the ten indicators about the ritual attractions of Chinese descendants when used as icons of heritage culture. The following indicators were asked: (1) The descendants maintain the ancestral cultural rituals, (2) Ritual Cap Go Meh has been a long-maintained attraction in the city of Manado, (3) Ritual attractions become characteristic of Chinese culture in Manado city, (4) This cultural ritual attraction can represent an old culture that is still preserved, (5) The ritual attractions of the descendants are interesting to watch, (6) Acts of old Chinese culture deserve to be an icon of cultural tourism, (7) Local people generally like Chinese cultural attractions, (8) Cultural ritual attractions should be maintained and protected by local regulations, (9) Chinese cultural attractions have surprising and exciting values to watch, and (10) Area of china town with various cultural attributes (cultural ornaments) deserve to be a cultural heritage. Indeed, the Cap Go Meh festival is one of the most popular Chinese still preserved and has become an interesting spectacle since the arrival of the Chinese people to the city of Manado. This festival has become an attraction for local people and tourists.



**Tabel 2. Local community perception of Chinese cultural attraction as the icon of tourism cultural heritage**

No	Indicator	Mean	Sd
1	The descendants maintain the ancestral cultural rituals	4,6185	0,48651
2	Cap Go Meh Ritual is a long-maintained attraction in the city of Manado	4,2677	0,62289
3	Attractions of thangsins-ritual become characteristic of Chinese culture in Manado city	4,1138	0,63535
4	This cultural ritual attraction can represent an old culture that is still preserved	3,7877	0,80191
5	The ritual attractions of the descendants are interesting to watch	4,5908	0,49245
6	Acts of old Chinese culture deserve to be an icon of cultural tourism	3,5231	0,79945
7	Local people generally like Chinese cultural attractions	3,4338	0,47890
8	Cultural ritual attractions should be maintained and protected by local regulations	4,3538	0,47890
9	Chinese cultural attractions have surprising and exciting values to watch	4,3938	0,48935
10	Area of china town with various cultural attributes/ cultural ornaments deserve to be a cultural heritage	3,6185	1,07251

Source: a data resource

At the parade, there is a ritual attraction showing some people displaying attractions that tend to be extreme, such as slicing the tongue, cutting arms, or piercing parts of their bodies with slashes of swords, machetes, etc. They are called "Thangsins", someone who is an intermediary who has been possessed by the spirit of God to bless his people. This attraction ritual can only be seen in two places in Indonesia, namely in Singkawang (West Kalimantan) and in Manado (North Sulawesi). From the information obtained, this attraction is no longer found in mainland China.

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In table II, the respondents generally average answered "quite agree" and "agree". Respondents gave different ratings for each indicator proposed. In the first indicator, the researchers explored the respondents' knowledge and understanding of the Chinese people of Manado. According to respondents, they still preserve their ancestral cultural traditions. On the respondent's answers "agreed" to 4.6185 percent, meaning that it is true, that they still maintain the tradition.

This shows that the offspring are still loyal to their ancestral culture. Their ancestral culture is very close to their beliefs or religions, namely Buddhism. Their ancestral culture is very close to their belief or religion, Budha-Taos. When cultural traditions are associated with the religious life of a particular community, there is a tendency that the tradition will be well maintained. The Balinese people are a real example where their cultural traditions are still preserved and even their culture has become a tourism product (Picard, 2006). This also applies to the Chinese-Manado people who live in Manado, where they still maintain traditions because they relate to belief, even though they live side by side with local communities.

In the second and third questions, researchers explored the understanding of local people about the attractions of "Thangsin". This attraction is interesting because it shows someone who performs attractions such as slicing the tongue, cutting the arm, piercing the body with the sword. The average respondent, "agree" with a percentage of 4.2. This attraction is very well known among the local people and, it has been preserved since the Chinese people entered the city of Manado. It makes sense to be known by the locals because it is celebrated every year.

In the fourth question, the researcher asks whether this attraction has represented an old culture that has been preserved in Chinese life. Answers from respondents on average quite agree, which is 3.7 percent. It is interesting to study more deeply because the respondents are residents



who have long interacted with them so that the local people know very well that amid hereditary traditions, not only is the Cap Go Meh tradition still preserved but there are also others.

In the fifth question, this attraction is interesting to watch and the respondents answered “agree”, (4.5 percent). In the study, respondents have had long experiences handed down by the ancestors of the local community, where the Chinese Cultural Tradition has become an interesting spectacle since they entered Manado. Besides, this festival is also free entertainment for local people. So this festival has been a spectacle of local people from generation to generation.

On the sixth question, the researchers asked whether the old Chinese cultural attractions deserve to be an icon of cultural tourism, and the answer from the average respondents is “somewhat agree”, which is 3.5 percent. Because it is understood that the local community in Manado still has a lot of cultural attractions that are still well preserved, but they have not been exposed. Chinese cultural attractions are preserved because the cultural attractions are part of their ritual of belief.

The seventh question is whether local people generally like the attractions of Chinese culture. The average respondents answered “somewhat agree”, which was 3.4 percent. From the observations of the researchers, the average respondents who often watch Chinese cultural attractions such as *Cap Go Meh Festival*: (1) local people from around the village of China town in Manado, (2) People from other villages around Manado city and ( 3) Local people who have middle to lower economic income. So people who come from luxury housing areas and have middle to upper economic income are rarely found. Even if they can still be found, they are generally descendants who are no longer in Buddhism but are still part of a family that celebrates Chinese New Year celebrations.

The eighth question is about the ritual attractions of Chinese culture that must be protected and protected by regional regulations. This question is asked because there is a connection between cultural ritual attractions and various cultural-historical buildings that are still preserved. It is stated that historical heritage sites will come alive when human activities are



interacting in them. Evidence from the inventory of historic heritage sites found in Manado, totaling 46 sites, and only 2 historical sites that are interesting for tourists to visit, namely Ban Temple Hin Kiong located in the China village which is a Buddhist place of worship and the Church Centrum where Protestants worship. Both of these places are very popular with visitors because they still give surprises.

Many historical heritage sites in various places in Indonesia have been damaged by nature or even by humans or even switched to other forms. This also happened in the city of Manado and its surroundings. Many old buildings from the Dutch colonial era seemed lost and even changed their faces to other new buildings. Manado's old city area began to lose its colonial-faced buildings, along with the loss of the existence of a colonial-faced historical building that was able to form the values of locality in an architectural form for the city of Manado (Wulur,2015). From this case, the researcher explored the answer to the eighth question if the attraction of the ritual of Chinese culture must be maintained and protected by regional regulations. Answers show that the average respondents answered "agree", (4.5 percent). It also illustrates that respondents want the area of the village of China in Manado to be used as an area protected by regional regulations, where all heritage sites both tangible and intangible are protected and preserved.

In the ninth question, do Chinese cultural attractions have surprising and interesting values to watch? The average respondents answered "agree", namely 4.39 percent. The results of the respondents' research indicate that what is displayed by the "Thangsin" possessed by the spirits of the gods by taking actions such as cutting the tongue, piercing the body with a sword or machete is an original and not fake ritual attraction category.

There are other interesting things from the observations of researchers about why this ritual attraction is always awaited by the local community. It turns out this attraction is not always present at the annual Cap Go Meh celebration festival, because ritual attraction must first be prayed for, and seek approval from the gods, whether the gods agree to be displayed, and also the "Thangsin" must fast in preparing themselves.

That is what makes the surprise value of this attraction. By looking at cases in tourist areas in Bali, where at the request of tourists, certain rituals or rituals of sacred dance attractions are easily displayed for the sake of commodities. Then the Chinese cultural festival in Manado needs to be protected from commodity interests. So, that the value of uniqueness and surprise is maintained and in demand by the public and local tourists.

For the tenth question, whether the China village of Manado with various cultural attributes deserves to be cultural heritage, the respondent's answers, on the averaged were "somewhat agree", namely 3.6 percent. Respondents hope not only for the Chinese Village area but for all historical sites that have authentic value in the city of Manado. They need to be designated as cultural heritage buildings and managed properly so that there is no change in function or damage. Especially for China Village, respondents hoped that the area would be regulated as in China by returning the original identity following the name of the area. It must be admitted that in some places in other countries, China Town always displays its face as its name suggests.

## **2. Discussion**

Perception assessment in total shows the average respondents answered agree, that is 4.06985 percent. This will give implication in the form of Manado local support for the efforts of a sustainable cultural area as a tourist area that can be alternative tourism, in addition to marine tourism. Also, the local community supports the China Village area with various cultural sites as an icon of cultural heritage tourism. The main thing that gets the support of the local community is the need for local regulations to protect the area as a cultural area. The next support is the realignment of the area according to its name. This support can strengthen local governments in building the region as a tourism area. An identity that refers to the identity of the region needs to be revived.

Identity refers to the identity of the Chinese Village communities, and Manado as a colonial heritage city. The China Village is a part of the city of Manado and perhaps in the next generation remains the only name, when



the government does not seriously pay attention to the expectations of local people who live in association with the community of Chinese descendants. The Manado city government needs to organize this Chinatown as a special characteristic location.

Descent who live in the area can work together to build up around the site. This form of arrangement is done by creating a Chinatown location to become the main or alternative tourist location, depending on how the Manado tourism development strategic plan is designed. The government through the tourism office must be able to create an icon of cultural tourism, where tourists who visit the city of Manado or Bunaken incomplete if they do not enjoy the China town of Manado.

The need for structuring the completeness of tourist accessories such as character names and street names in the Chinatown area uses Chinese calligraphy with translations in Indonesian. In every shophouse and residence, Chinese accessories are provided to give a different impression from other settlements. Other conveniences need to be facilitated, such as not allowing public transport cars to cross this tourist area, parking outside the area, good security systems, cleanliness, and the availability of various needs as the main means of transportation. In this area, only horse-drawn carriages called "*Bendi*" are permitted by the local community.

Transportation "*Bendi*" is very close to people's lives in the past Chinatown Manado. On special days, lion dance attractions - Kung Fu are turned on. The ceremonial is part of the Chinese New Year, namely Cap Go Meh, which is maintained and not modified for the benefit of tourists, meaning the value of sacredness is maintained and the provision of Chinese cuisine. The point is that the city government is rearranging the Chinatown area similar to the atmosphere in China, Hong Kong, or Macau and besides, Minahasa-Chinese local wisdom needs to be maintained. Manado Chinatown, like a diorama or a small living museum, illustrates the history of China's first trip to Manado, including the location of past photographs, and various "signs" of creative economic crafts that can be used as souvenirs.





#### **D. Conclusion**

This research is an initial investigation, the perception of the local community in assessing Chinese cultural ritual attractions to be an icon of cultural heritage tourism. Empirical findings show that in general, local people agree when the appeal of Chinese cultural rituals is used as cultural tourism. Apart from the limited scope of the period of data collection and the number of respondents and small indicators, the findings of this study can provide useful insights for local governments in determining the territory of China village with cultural ritual attributes as a protected and well-managed culture for tourism purposes.

Other business actors such as the travel business can design tour packages that include cultural tourism from the old China village in the city of Manado. The approach used in this study limits its ability to make broad conclusions. Admittedly, the research respondents did represent several local communities in the city of Manado. But for other studies in the future, this research can be repeated by adding broader indicators.

Also, research is conducted on China descendants to see how they respond when their cultural and environmental rituals are used as icons of cultural tourism. Finally, it is hoped that this research can be useful in providing solutions and recommendations for the city government and tourism businesses in the city of Manado.

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