

Service Creativity In The Cultural Tourism Performing Arts' Ecosystem

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Abstract

Abstract also written in English containing key issues, objectives, methods and results. Abstract This study examines the role of service creativity in the performing arts ecosystem within the context of cultural tourism, highlighting how service processes contribute to value creation beyond the artistic aspect. Cultural tourism has shifted from an object-based orientation to an experiential one, understanding performing arts not merely as a creative product but as an experience constructed through interactions between service providers and consumers. In this context, service becomes an integral part of the value creation process and audience satisfaction. This research uses a qualitative approach with a single case study method at PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng, a performing arts company in Bali. Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews and non-participatory observation. This research focuses on how service creativity is built through organizational processes, interactions, and practices. The results show that service creativity is formed through a structured yet flexible process, which integrates empathy for consumers, team collaboration, idea exploration, and continuous evaluation. The design thinking approach enables companies to deeply understand consumer needs and translate them into personalized and meaningful experiences. Service in this context is understood as a co-creative process, where consumers play an active role in shaping the final outcome. Furthermore, consumer satisfaction is influenced by various factors, such as trust, production and financial efficiency, innovation capacity, and evaluation and feedback mechanisms. This research confirms that service creativity is a strategic element in enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of performing arts businesses within the cultural tourism ecosystem.

Keywords: Service; Creativity; Tourism; Performing Arts

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism, which encompasses a variety of activities based on local heritage, arts, and traditions, has developed into a strategic sector within the global tourism industry. This sector not only plays a role in driving economic growth but also serves as a crucial medium for cultural exchange and the preservation of local values (Mazlan et al., 2025). Its development can be traced back to the post-World War II period, when increased leisure travel contributed to economic recovery while expanding cross-cultural understanding, particularly in Europe (Richards, 2018). Since the 1980s, cultural tourism has increasingly

developed as a significant market segment with a widening scope, encompassing heritage tourism, arts, gastronomy, and creative tourism (Matteucci et al., 2022). This expansion represents an important shift, where cultural tourism is no longer merely object-oriented, but rather experiences that involve the active participation of tourists.

Performing arts such as dance, *wayang*, theater, and *ketoprak* serve not only as entertainment but also as a medium for representing cultural values entrenched in society. This sector is growing rapidly and is part of the strategic creative economy industry. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy even lists performing arts as one of 16 leading subsectors of the creative economy (Kemenparekraf, 2023). This shows that performing arts not only have aesthetic value, but also significant economic value. As stated by Jardins (2023), art is a human work that is functional, aesthetic, and can be enjoyed through various senses, making it inseparable from the cultural life of society. Therefore, the development of performing arts needs to be carried out sustainably to ensure its sustainability and relevance in the modern context (Darmayanti & Oka, 2020).

The success of performing arts in attracting and retaining tourists is determined not only by artistic quality, but also by how the experience is presented. In this regard, service creativity is a key element. In the experience-based industry, service is no longer merely a support activity but an integral part of value creation. Companies need to ensure the quality of employee performance to deliver services that meet consumer expectations, while also encouraging creativity as a source of innovation in the service process (Apriadi & Dewi, 2023). Employee creativity allows for more interactive, personal, and memorable experiences, which ultimately shape positive perceptions of service quality.

Positive experiences felt by consumers have been shown to have a significant impact on their satisfaction and loyalty (Novian et al., 2023). Therefore, performing arts companies need to prioritize customer experience as a key part of their service strategy. Furthermore, in the face of increasingly intense industry competition, companies are required to develop distinctive characteristics and competitive advantages that differentiate them from competitors. Competitive advantage is strongly associated with a firm's ability to create unique value and differentiated offerings that are difficult to imitate by (Day & Wensley, 1988). In addition, uniqueness and differentiation in products and services enable companies to better match consumer preferences and strengthen their market position (Heimonen & Kohtamäki, 2019). In the context of the performing arts, differentiation lies not only in artistic content, but also in how services are designed and delivered to consumers. The involvement of various artists from various fields creates its own complexities in managing the performing arts business, both in the process of creating works and in providing services to consumers. This complexity demonstrates that the performing arts are an ecosystem that requires a holistic approach, including understanding the role of service creativity.

Strengthening the creative economy sector is also a key agenda item in national development. This reinforces the view that art and business are two complementary aspects.

Businesspeople need creative sensitivity to drive innovation, while artists also need an entrepreneurial orientation to give their work economic value and competitiveness. In practice, Bali serves as a concrete example of how performing arts play a role in the cultural tourism ecosystem. With thousands of arts groups spread across various regions, Bali exhibits both high industry dynamics and intense competition. This situation demands that performing arts companies rely not only on the quality of their performances but also on their ability to provide creative and innovative services. Creativity in customer service is a crucial factor in maintaining competitiveness and creating memorable tourism experiences for both domestic and international tourists.

In this context, companies like PT. Mata Hati Kitapoleng faces the challenge of continuously developing strategies that meet dynamic market needs. Understanding creativity in productivity and mapping customer satisfaction are crucial steps in designing effective services. Therefore, studying service creativity in the performing arts is relevant for identifying the processes and factors that influence customer experience and satisfaction. This research is expected to contribute to formulating creative and sustainable service models and strengthening the performing arts ecosystem in cultural tourism.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the aim of achieving an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of service creativity within the tourism performing arts ecosystem. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study does not focus on quantitatively measuring variables, but rather on interpreting the processes, experiences, and social dynamics that occur in service practices. Methodologically, this research adopts a case study approach, as the focus of the study is directed toward an in-depth understanding of a specific case within the context of real-world situations. Case studies allow researchers to explore phenomena holistically, including interactions between actors, creative processes, and contextual factors influencing service practices. This research specifically uses a single instrumental case study approach, making service creativity the primary issue examined through a single case study, namely PT. Mata Hati Kitapoleng.

In data collection, this study utilized interviews and observations. The interviews were conducted in-depth using a semi-structured approach, allowing flexibility in gathering information without losing the direction of the research. These interviews aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the creative process, service strategies, and experiences perceived by both actors and consumers. Informants in this study included internal company parties, such as the director, choreographer, and production manager of PT. Mata Hati Kitapoleng, as well as external informants from comparison companies and consumers who had direct experience with the services provided.

In addition to interviews, observations were conducted to directly understand service practices and creative processes taking place in the field. Observations were conducted in a non-participatory manner, with researchers observing activities without directly participating in the operational process. Through observation, researchers were able to identify how service creativity is manifested in real-life interactions, including performance packaging, audience interactions, and teamwork dynamics. This technique also served as a form of verification of data obtained from interviews.

The data collected in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process began with data transcription from interviews and field notes from observations, followed by data coding to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories related to service creativity. Coding was conducted iteratively, allowing themes to emerge organically from the data while remaining aligned with the research objectives. The analysis process continued until data saturation was reached, namely when no new significant themes or information emerged from additional data collection.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study applied several verification techniques. First, triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from different sources, including interviews, observations, and supporting documentation. Second, member checking was carried out by reconfirming several interview results and interpretations with informants to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's understanding. In addition, prolonged engagement in the field and continuous observation were employed to strengthen the depth and consistency of the data obtained. Through these steps, the research sought to maintain the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Profile of PT. Mata Hati Kitapoleng

PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng is a performing arts company founded in 2015 with the primary goal of supporting artists in the planning and production of performances. The name "Kita Poleng" contains a philosophical meaning that reflects the company's identity and core values. The word "*kita*" refers to the spirit of collectivity and collaboration among artists in creating works, while "*poleng*" in Balinese culture refers to a black and white cloth motif that symbolizes balance and harmony. This meaning then becomes the conceptual foundation for PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng in developing a performing arts practice that is collaborative, balanced, and oriented towards harmony between artistic aspects and audience needs.

In practice, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng acts as a creative facilitator, helping artists organize ideas, design performance concepts, and communicate their artistic vision to various stakeholders. The company focuses not only on the final performance, but also on the creative process, which involves comprehensive planning, from concept development and production to presentation to consumers. This approach aims to ensure that each work

produced is not only of high artistic quality but also relevant to market needs and the audience experience. Over time, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng continues to grow and makes significant contributions to the dynamics of the performing arts in Bali, particularly in integrating artistic and technical aspects in a balanced manner.

The company was founded by Jasmin Okubo and Dibal Ranuh, who also play an active role as key drivers in the company's creative development. Jasmin Okubo serves as CEO, artist, and quality controller, while Dibal Ranuh serves as co-founder, focusing on developing artistic visuals and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the show. Within the operational structure, Wendra Wijaya, as project manager, plays a key role in managing production and analyzing the show's scenarios. Furthermore, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng is supported by a core team that handles financial, logistical, and other operational needs, enabling the production process to run in a coordinated manner.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng demonstrated significant adaptability by developing various alternative forms of art, such as art videos, digital dance, visual arts, and dance films. These initiatives not only maintained the continuity of creative activities but also opened new opportunities to reach consumers through digital media. This transformation demonstrates that creativity is present not only in artistic works but also in service strategies and art product packaging that adapt to changing market conditions.

In human resource management, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng prioritizes the principles of collaboration and inclusivity. The production team involves individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise, including dancers, costume designers, and other creative personnel. Interestingly, the company also involves individuals with special needs, such as deaf friends, who contribute to costume management and participate in the performances. In addition to the core team, the company also collaborates with freelance dancers who have been involved for a certain period of time and actively promotes regeneration through a selection process to maintain the quality and sustainability of the production.

In its portfolio development efforts, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng continues to seek diverse work opportunities, including responding to the increasing demand for videography during the pandemic. The involvement of team members with backgrounds in management and scenario analysis demonstrates the integration of artistic and managerial approaches in company management. The collaborative process, involving various parties, both internal and external to the core team, allows for the exchange of ideas and the collective strengthening of concepts. This emphasizes that creativity at PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng is not individual, but rather the result of interaction and collaboration within a dynamic ecosystem.

With these characteristics, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng functions not only as a performing arts service provider but also as a creative space connecting artists, management, and consumers in a mutually supportive ecosystem. This collaborative, adaptive, and creativity-

driven approach serves as a crucial foundation for understanding how the company develops innovative service practices in the context of performing arts tourism.

3.2. Service Creativity in the Performing Arts Business

In the development of the creative industry, service creativity has become a crucial element in building competitive advantage, particularly in the experience-based performing arts sector. One relevant approach to understanding and developing service creativity is design thinking. This approach places humans at the center of the innovation process, emphasizing observation, collaboration, rapid learning, idea visualization, prototyping, and business analysis (Lockwood, 2009; Saputra, 2016). Thus, design thinking functions not only as a method for product creation but also as a strategic thinking framework for designing innovative, consumer-oriented services.

In a business context, this approach has proven effective in driving innovation that is more responsive to user needs, while simultaneously improving service effectiveness and efficiency. This demonstrates that service creativity is inextricably linked to an organization's ability to deeply understand user experiences and translate them into applicable and valuable solutions.

Conceptually, design thinking has key characteristics including a multidisciplinary approach, a systematic process, and a collaborative space for idea exploration. This process generally consists of the iterative and repetitive stages of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. In the empathize stage, organizations strive to understand consumer needs and experiences through direct observation and interaction. The define stage then formulates the problem in a more structured way, which serves as the basis for developing ideas. Next, the ideate stage encourages the exploration of creative solutions through team collaboration. The resulting ideas are then realized in the form of prototypes as initial representations, before finally being tested for feedback and refinement. This process emphasizes that service innovation is not linear but rather develops through a continuous cycle of evaluation and improvement.

In the context of the performing arts, the application of design thinking becomes increasingly relevant due to the industry's highly dependent nature on the consumer experience. Service creativity in the performing arts extends beyond the quality of the performance as an artistic product to encompass the entire audience experience, from interactions before, during, and after the performance. Thus, service becomes an integral part of the value creation process, not merely a supporting function.

As part of the creative economy industry, the performing arts have a strategic position that is on par with other sub-sectors such as culinary, fashion, film, and design (Kemenparekraf, 2023). Performing arts encompasses a wide range of activities, from the production of performances such as theater, dance, and music, to supporting activities such as stage design, lighting, documentation, and costume design (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).

This complexity demonstrates that the performing arts business is an ecosystem involving various creative actors, such as producers, directors, choreographers, dancers, and technical teams.

In this complex ecosystem, service creativity is a significant differentiator. This applies not only to artistic innovation but also to how services are designed to create unique, personalized, and memorable experiences for consumers. The multidisciplinary and collaborative approach of performing arts opens up significant opportunities for developing innovative and adaptive service models to changing market needs.

3.3. Analysis of Service Creativity in the Performing Arts Business Ecosystem of PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng

The findings of this study indicate that the creative process in customer service at PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng reflects the implementation of the design thinking approach within the performing arts business ecosystem. The company does not merely position creativity as artistic production, but as a service-based process oriented toward understanding consumer experiences and creating participatory interactions. This finding aligns with the argument of Brown (2018) that design thinking emphasizes human-centered innovation through empathy, experimentation, and collaboration.

The consultation stage conducted by PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng demonstrates the empathize phase of design thinking. The company begins its service by exploring client expectations, aesthetic preferences, and event objectives through intensive discussion and brainstorming sessions. This finding shows that consumer understanding becomes the foundation of service creation rather than merely a complementary activity. Theoretically, this supports the perspective of Lockwood (2009) that empathy allows organizations to recognize latent consumer needs and transform them into meaningful experiences. In the context of service creativity, this process confirms that performing arts services are experiential in nature because value is created through emotional and interactive engagement with consumers.

The define stage appears in the way PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng translates consumer input into a structured service concept. The company formulates artistic and managerial solutions by aligning consumer expectations with technical feasibility and market considerations. The findings reveal that service creativity involves negotiation between artistic vision and operational realities. This finding is relevant to the argument of service innovation theory that creative services require both symbolic value and functional value simultaneously. In other words, the company's creativity is not only reflected in artistic uniqueness but also in its ability to formulate workable solutions for consumers.

Furthermore, the ideate phase is reflected through collaborative discussions involving choreographers, creative directors, production teams, and consumers. The findings indicate

that creativity emerges collectively through multidisciplinary collaboration rather than individual artistic expression alone. This supports the concept proposed by creative industry scholars that innovation in the creative economy is strongly influenced by collaborative knowledge exchange and co-creation practices. The involvement of consumers in idea development also demonstrates participatory service innovation, where consumers become part of the creative process itself.

The prototype stage can be observed through the company's practice of presenting initial concepts, visual samples, and trial performances before the final event execution. These prototypes function as spaces for experimentation and adjustment. The findings suggest that PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng treats service as an iterative process that continuously evolves through testing and refinement. This aligns with the design thinking principle proposed by Kelley & Brown (2018), who emphasizes prototyping as a strategy to reduce uncertainty and improve innovation quality through rapid feedback. In the performing arts context, prototypes not only test technical aspects but also evaluate audience experience and emotional resonance.

The test stage is reflected in the company's evaluation process after performances through consumer feedback, internal discussions, and external assessments. The findings demonstrate that service quality is maintained through continuous reflection and adaptation. This confirms that service creativity is cyclical rather than linear. Theoretically, this finding strengthens the argument that innovation in creative services develops through ongoing interaction between producers and consumers. Feedback becomes an important mechanism for improving future performances and sustaining long-term consumer relationships.

Overall, the findings show that PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng applies design thinking not merely as a technical framework, but as a cultural approach in managing performing arts services. The company integrates empathy, collaboration, experimentation, and evaluation into the entire service process. This finding expands previous studies on service creativity by demonstrating that in the performing arts industry, creativity is embedded not only in artistic products but also in relational and experiential service practices. Therefore, service creativity becomes a strategic element for building competitive advantage and strengthening sustainability within the cultural tourism industry.

3.4. Factors Influencing Consumer Satisfaction at PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng

a. Consumer Trust

PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng, founded by Jasmin Okubo and Dibal Ranuh, has implemented creative initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng's creativity has opened up opportunities to create new ideas, transform, modify, and formulate products that meet the needs and are acceptable to consumers during the pandemic. PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng continues to find ways to remain active in the arts by creating various artistic content, including videos, visual artworks, dances, and dance films.

These initiatives not only aim to maintain the creative spirit but also serve as a bridge for the company to attract the attention of new consumers interested in their work.

b. Efficiency of company's production management

The organizational structure of PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng refers to the increasing awareness of the importance of maintaining tradition while enriching it with technology, such as visual mapping and LED. The development of performing arts certainly requires funding and careful thought in producing works and publishing them. The process of formulating a management concept that suits the Balinese market involves considering important elements in the performance, such as artistic lighting. Inspiration from Mas Jokhan, a key player in the lighting field, has helped generate creative ideas to strengthen performances in Bali. In terms of expenses and distribution of artist salaries, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng has ensured transparency by establishing a clear division from the start. By deducting operational and management costs before distributing profits, the company maintains a balance between appreciation for artists and company profits.

c. Financial Efficiency

Dance performances also involve establishing a clear price-sharing structure. Pricing details cover various aspects, such as the number of dancers, costumes, choreography, pre-event operational costs, and the company's profit sharing after deducting management fees. Attendance and involvement in the rehearsal and dress rehearsal processes are key to understanding and improving product quality, as well as minimizing errors and deficiencies from the outset. PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng strives to build its brand through increased community engagement and cultural preservation.

d. Innovation and Continuous Evaluation

Creativity and innovation are also crucial factors in the development of contemporary art by PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng. They promote the Earth Surf Island brand with a focus on arts and culture. PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng was selected as a relevant company based on its authenticity, Balinese roots, and traditional-contemporary creativity. This parent company has demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening Balinese culture through innovative performing arts that meet the needs and interests of today's consumers.

By continuously developing creativity and paying attention to factors that influence customer service, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng has become a key player in the performing arts industry in Bali. Their success in navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and remaining relevant to meet consumer needs is a testament to their dedication and commitment to maintaining creativity and providing a satisfying customer experience.

e. Consumer Experience in Product Quality

By utilizing the concept of dance art, companies can provide unique and engaging experiences for consumers at every event. Structured service engagement and the potential

for future collaboration are also factors that influence the quality of customer service, as this engagement allows companies to better understand consumer needs and preferences.

Furthermore, PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng implements a casual and collaborative approach in its prototype testing process. This approach allows the company to combine creative ideas from various team members and partners, resulting in innovative solutions for customer service. This casual approach also creates a relaxed and informal work environment, allowing employees to freely express themselves and collaborate creatively.

f. Evaluation and Feedback

The final step is the founder's direct involvement in the quality control process and performance testing, which is also a factor influencing the creativity of customer service at PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng. With the founder's direct involvement, the company can ensure that every service provided to customers is of high quality and meets company standards. Performance testing also allows the company to refine and develop its services based on the feedback and evaluations received.

4. CONCLUSION

This research highlights a crucial issue within the cultural tourism-based performing arts business ecosystem: performing arts are often trapped as merely aesthetic products, neglecting the dynamic and personal holistic experience of consumers, thus hampering competitive differentiation and socio-economic sustainability. The key findings from the PT Mata Hati Kitapoleng case study demonstrate that service creativity is a strategic solution, built through a structured process based on design thinking. Factors supporting consumer satisfaction include trust, production-financial efficiency, innovation, quality of experience, and continuous feedback, all of which strengthen the interaction between artists, management, and audiences. Overall, service creativity creates competitive advantage by enhancing consumer loyalty, cultural values, and a sustainable ecosystem. The contributions of this research are both conceptual (dynamic service model) and practical (implementation guide), opening up opportunities for further research in a broader context for an integrative service-creativity-sustainability model.

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