



## Enhancing Experience-Based Cultural Walking Tours through the 4E Framework: A Case Study of Glodok (Chinatown), Jakarta

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates how the Glodok Walking Tour can be optimized using the 4E Experience Framework—Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, Escapism—to enhance tourist involvement in cultural preservation. Although Jakarta is rich in heritage, tourism strategies often emphasize its modern image, resulting in the underutilization of areas like Glodok. As one of Southeast Asia's oldest Chinatowns, Glodok offers cultural, and culinary attractions that align with contemporary tourists' preferences for immersive experiences. While walking tours provide a sustainable platform for cultural engagement, existing designs often lack comprehensive experiential quality. This study seeks to address how the Glodok Walking Tour can be enhanced through the 4E framework to strengthen tourist involvement in heritage preservation. A qualitative case study was conducted, combining interviews with a tour guide and four tourists and participatory observation during the Glodok Walking Tour by Jakarta Good Guide. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model, involving data reduction, thematic coding based on the 4E framework, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation ensured validity. Results Findings revealed gaps across all dimensions: weak interpretive techniques and lack of hands-on activities (Entertainment); information overload and limited contemporary relevance (Education); poor environmental conditions and insufficient engagement with landmarks (Esthetics); and restricted immersion due to noise and lack of local engagement (Escapism). Optimizing the Glodok Walking Tour through improved storytelling, multisensory learning, enhanced environmental quality, and direct engagement with local stakeholders can transform it into a more meaningful experience. These enhancements foster deeper emotional connections and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Experiential Tourism, Walking Tour, 4E Experience Framework, Glodok



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## INTRODUCTION

Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, is widely recognized for its rich and diverse cultural heritage. Shaped by centuries of interaction among communities such as Betawi, Chinese Peranakan, and Dutch colonial influences, the city possesses an abundance of tangible and intangible cultural assets ([Erwantoro, 2014](#)). Its strategic location, supported by the Soekarno-Hatta International Airport—

Indonesia's busiest international gateway handling approximately 99.02% of foreign arrivals ([Badan Pusat Statistik DKI Jakarta, 2024](#))—further enhances its potential as a hub for cultural tourism.

Yet despite this strong foundation, Jakarta is predominantly promoted as a modern metropolis, characterized by high-rise buildings, shopping malls, and commercial entertainment ([Utami & Anza, 2017](#)). Tourism strategies often prioritize this cosmopolitan image, sidelining the city's traditional heritage. This reflects broader global trends in urban development, where cities increasingly align with Western models of consumption and leisure, often at the expense of preserving and activating their own cultural identities such as Betawi and Chinese Peranakan heritage.

To counter this imbalance, there is a growing need to promote Jakarta's cultural heritage through two primary approaches: cultural experience and cultural knowledge ([Nahak, 2019](#)). One of the most promising strategies is the use of culturally immersive walking tours, which offer an accessible, low-impact, and narrative-driven method of connecting visitors with historical neighborhoods. The United Nations World Tourism Organization, notes that walking tourism fosters deeper cultural engagement by encouraging close interaction with local environments, communities, and stories. When designed effectively, walking tours can enhance both visitor understanding and destination sustainability ([UNWTO, 2019](#)).

Globally, walking tours have gained popularity as tools for experiential learning and cultural interpretation. However, in Indonesia, their implementation remains limited in scope and reach ([Musthofa & Arif, 2020](#)). This underdevelopment can be attributed to several persistent challenges: weak promotional strategies, low public awareness (especially among domestic tourists), and a lack of strategic integration with broader destination branding and city tourism planning. There is also a tendency to view heritage experiences as static or formal, rather than dynamic, interactive, and appealing to younger audiences. Walking tours—despite their potential to deliver immersive, low-cost, and community-driven cultural experiences—have not been systematically supported by urban tourism policies, nor have they been adapted to meet the changing preferences of modern tourists, who increasingly seek engaging, aesthetic, and shareable experiences. Without targeted efforts to reposition cultural walking tours as meaningful and attractive experiences, their potential as tools for both education and preservation remains largely untapped in Jakarta.

One of the most well-known examples of walking tours in Indonesia is Jakarta Good Guide, a community-based organization that offers a range of thematic routes across Jakarta, each highlighting culturally and historically significant areas. Among its most notable routes is the Glodok walking tour, which takes visitors through Jakarta's historic Chinatown.

As one of the oldest Chinatowns in Southeast Asia, Glodok is rich in architectural heritage, religious landmarks, and culinary traditions. The district presents a vibrant mix of street life, traditional markets, ornate Chinese temples, colonial-era buildings, and a renowned food scene—making it an ideal setting for immersive, multidimensional experiences that strongly align with the experiential preferences of modern tourists. With its blend of cultural depth and visual appeal, Glodok offers experiences that are not only educational but also highly aesthetic and “Instagram-worthy.”

However, despite its suitability for experiential tourism, Glodok has not yet fulfilled its potential as a flagship destination for cultural walking tours. This shortfall lies not in the absence of cultural assets, but in the way these assets are currently presented and managed through walking tours. Existing tours in Glodok, while informative, largely follow traditional models that emphasize historical narration over sensory engagement. As a result, they often fall short in delivering the aesthetic appeal, emotional resonance, immersive escapism, and entertainment value that today's tourists increasingly expect

This gap has led to the perception of Glodok's walking tours as passive, outdated, and misaligned with the behaviors of experience-driven travelers. Without deliberate innovation to match evolving tourist expectations, walking tours risk becoming obsolete—even though they hold strong potential as tools for cultural education and preservation.

To bridge this gap, it is essential to redesign Glodok's walking tour experiences by integrating elements that are not only informative, but also visually compelling, emotionally engaging, and socially interactive ([Chan et al., 2025](#); [Douglas et al., 2024](#); [Jiang et al., 2024](#)). The application of Pine and Gilmore's (1998) 4E framework—comprising Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism—provides a strategic and practical foundation for this transformation ([Pine & Gilmore, 2011](#)). When applied to Glodok, the framework reveals untapped opportunities across all four dimensions, positioning the district as a destination capable of delivering culturally rich and experientially fulfilling walking tours.

Therefore, this research aims to enhance the design of walking tours in Glodok, Jakarta's historic Chinatown, as a strategic effort to increase tourist interest and participation. By applying the 4E framework, the study seeks to create experiences aligned with contemporary tourist expectations. The goal is to transform the walking tour from a passive informational activity into a dynamic and socially engaging cultural platform—one that not only informs but also strengthens visitors' appreciation and long-term commitment to preserving Jakarta's multicultural heritage.

Despite the growing popularity of cultural walking tours, most existing research has focused narrowly on infrastructure, accessibility, or tour guide motivation—often overlooking the critical role of visitor experience design. For instance, [Liow \(2022\)](#) proposed a research framework linking tourist walkability with sustainable tourism impacts on residents, emphasizing factors such as accessibility and community participation. However, this study focused primarily on infrastructure and mobility, without examining how the quality of visitor experience shapes engagement or cultural appreciation. In the Indonesian context, scholarly attention has also been fragmented. [Nanlohy et al. \(2024\)](#), explored walking tour development from the perspective of tour guide motivation, while [Ningrum \(2024\)](#) investigated walking tours as an alternative travel mode for younger generations. Some research has examined Jakarta Good Guide specifically—for instance, [Nasution et al. \(2019\)](#), assessed its service quality, and [Musthofa and Arif \(2020\)](#) analyzed its strategic positioning. However, none of these studies explore how structured experiential design, particularly through a comprehensive framework like Pine and Gilmore's 4E Experience Model, can enhance the quality of walking tours and foster deeper cultural engagement.

The **novelty** of this study lies in its systematic application of the 4E Framework to redesign the walking tour experience in Glodok, Jakarta's historic Chinatown. Whereas previous approaches have often resulted in passive, one-directional formats, the 4E Framework provides a holistic, visitor-centered model that integrates Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism. This framework prioritizes emotional connection, sensory immersion, active participation, and personal meaning-making—elements that strongly resonate with the expectations of today's experience-driven tourists.

By emphasizing these experiential dimensions, the 4E Framework enables walking tours to become not only educational but also engaging, memorable, and socially shareable. It encourages the co-creation of experience, positioning tourists not as passive observers but as active participants who emotionally and cognitively engage with cultural heritage. This marks a significant departure from conventional models by aligning tour design with the principles of the experience economy, where value is created through feelings, aesthetics, and interaction—not merely through the transmission of information. Viewed through this lens, the Glodok walking tour is reimagined as a dynamic cultural platform, tailored to the needs and expectations of contemporary travelers.

In doing so, this study contributes not only to the theoretical discourse on experiential tourism but also provides practical insights directly applicable to the improvement of the Glodok walking tour. By identifying experiential gaps and offering concrete design recommendations based on the 4E Framework, the research presents a structured model that can inform the revitalization of other underutilized heritage areas with similar characteristics. The findings offer actionable strategies for stakeholders involved in Glodok's tourism development—such as Jakarta Good Guide, local government, and community-based tourism actors—enabling them to craft walking tour experiences that are more engaging, emotionally resonant, and effective in promoting cultural preservation.

To build on this contribution, the study focuses on applying the 4E Experience Framework within the concrete context of the Glodok walking tour. The purpose of this research is to optimize the tourist experience by making the Glodok walking tour more immersive, engaging, and impactful through the principles of Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism. To achieve this purpose, the study addresses the following research question: *"How can the Chinatown (Glodok) walking tour be optimized using the 4E Experience Framework to enhance tourist involvement in cultural preservation?"*

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is suitable for exploring in-depth meanings, perceptions, and experiences of individuals within a specific cultural tourism context (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, a qualitative design enables a deeper investigation into how tourists perceive, interpret, and emotionally respond to their experiences during the Glodok walking tour, particularly in relation to the four dimensions of the 4E Experience Economy framework—Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism.

The study employs a case study strategy, allowing for an intensive, holistic examination of a single, bounded case—in this instance, the Glodok walking tour operated by Jakarta Good Guide. A case study design is particularly valuable in tourism research because it facilitates the analysis of phenomena in real-life settings, offering detailed insights into both the content and context of tourist experiences. By focusing on one tour route, this study is able to examine the existing structure, delivery, and participant engagement carefully, while also identifying opportunities for improvement and innovation.

Glodok serves as a suitable case study site due to its rich cultural and historical heritage, strong culinary appeal, and relevance to modern tourism trends. As one of the oldest Chinatowns in Southeast Asia, it offers a distinctive combination of architectural, cultural, and gastronomic elements that align well with the 4E experiential framework. Moreover, although it attracts visitors, Glodok remains underexplored in terms of experience-based tourism development, making it an ideal context for examining how walking tours can be optimized to enhance visitor engagement and support cultural preservation.

Participants for the interviews included one tour leader from Jakarta Good Guide and four tourists who had recently completed the Glodok walking tour. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly recommended in qualitative research to prioritize information-rich cases ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)). The tour leader was selected for their direct knowledge of the tour's design and implementation, while the tourist participants were chosen based on their engagement with the tour and their ability to articulate reflective evaluations of their experiences. The tourist participants consisted of two men and two women, representing the Millennial and Gen Z age groups, with diverse backgrounds including university students, corporate employees, and a content creator. This purposive selection ensured that the data collected were both relevant and reflective of diverse perspectives, aligning with the study's objective of optimizing walking tour experiences through experiential design principles.

In addition to the in-depth interviews, informal interviews were conducted with two additional participants during the walking tour. These informal interactions enabled the collection of spontaneous reflections and real-time impressions in a naturalistic context, thereby providing additional depth and richness to the qualitative data.

The fieldwork was conducted in Glodok, West Jakarta, a historic district recognized as one of the oldest Chinatowns in Southeast Asia. Located within the administrative area of the Taman Sari subdistrict, Glodok is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, characterized by a blend of traditional Chinese architecture, temples, markets, and culinary traditions interwoven with colonial-era influences. As a significant cultural and historical enclave within Jakarta, it offers an authentic representation of Chinese-Indonesian history and the city's broader multicultural development. The area is distinguished by its vibrant street life, narrow alleys, and historical buildings—features that contribute to its reputation as an "Instagram-worthy" destination, aligning well with the preferences of contemporary tourists ([Annisa Husnul Latifah & Hapsari Setyowardhani, 2021](#)). Furthermore, Glodok's diverse gastronomic offerings enhance its appeal, resonating with the increasing demand for culinary-focused cultural tourism ([Gurning et al., 2024](#); [Latifah et al.,](#)



[2024](#)). Given these attributes, Glodok presents considerable potential to attract modern tourists seeking both cultural enrichment and engaging, visually appealing experiences. The fieldwork involved direct participation in a walking tour session organized by Jakarta Good Guide (JGG), a community-based tour operator known for offering guided walking tours in culturally significant areas of Jakarta.

This research employed in-depth interviews using a semi-structured format, providing the necessary flexibility to explore participants' experiences while maintaining a clear focus on the four experiential dimensions outlined in the 4E framework—Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism. The semi-structured approach allowed for consistency across interviews while offering the opportunity to probe deeper into individual perceptions. Interview questions were designed to elicit rich, detailed narratives concerning the elements of the walking tour that participants found engaging, visually appealing, emotionally resonant, and personally meaningful.

In addition to the interviews, participatory observation was conducted to capture real-time interactions and non-verbal cues. The observation process was guided by a structured checklist specifically developed to assess indicators corresponding to the four dimensions of the 4E framework. This checklist ensured systematic and consistent documentation of phenomena related to entertainment, education, esthetics, and escapism throughout the walking tour experience.

To enhance the validity of the study, the interview guide and observation checklist were developed based on a comprehensive review of existing literature on experiential tourism, ensuring content alignment with the research objectives. Triangulation was achieved by combining observational data with interview responses, providing a more comprehensive and robust understanding of participants' experiences. Reliability was addressed through the consistent application of interview and observation protocols across all sessions. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in data capture. Furthermore, an intercoder reliability check was conducted, with members of the research team independently reviewing and coding a subset of the transcripts to ensure consistency in thematic analysis.

Data were collected using two primary qualitative methods: in-depth interviews and participatory observation, both widely recognized for their ability to capture rich, contextual insights in natural settings ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)). The in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face with all informants, comprising the tour guide and four tour participants, in a quiet, controlled environment free from auditory distractions. Each interview lasted approximately 40 to 60 minutes and was scheduled no later than three days after the walking tour to ensure that participants' recollections remained vivid and emotionally accurate.

Simultaneously, participatory observation was conducted, with the researchers joining the walking tour as participant-observers. Throughout the tour, detailed field notes were taken, focusing on the tour guide's narrative techniques, participant behaviors and engagement levels, the physical environment, and spontaneous participant reactions to various cultural and culinary elements encountered during the tour. This approach enabled the collection of non-verbal cues and contextual nuances that interviews alone could not fully capture.

By triangulating data from both interviews and direct observation, the study was able to gather comprehensive, real-time insights, thereby enhancing the depth and validity of the findings related to the delivery and reception of the walking tour experience. In addition, to ensure the reliability of the data and reduce potential interpretive bias, the researcher conducted re-verification of interview results with the respective informants. This process allowed participants to confirm or clarify their earlier responses, helping to strengthen the credibility and consistency of the findings and ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the participants' intended meanings.

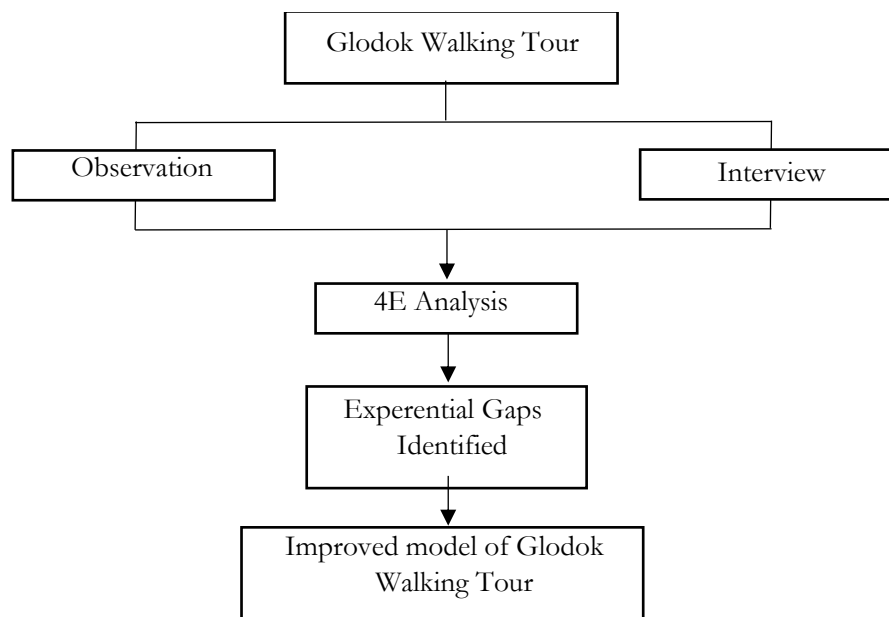
The data were analyzed using [Miles and Huberman's \(1994\)](#) interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)). In this study, data reduction was carried out by carefully selecting, simplifying, and organizing information obtained from in-depth interviews and field observations. Raw data from transcripts and field notes were coded and condensed into manageable categories aligned with the 4E framework—Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism. This process ensured that only relevant information was retained for deeper analysis.

Following data reduction, data display involved organizing the categorized information into thematic matrices. This step enabled a clearer comparison of patterns, allowing the researcher to systematically map how each experiential dimension was manifested during the walking tour. Thematic matrices facilitated the identification of both strengths and experiential gaps across the 4E elements, highlighting areas where participant engagement was strong and areas requiring improvement.

The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, involved interpreting the thematic patterns to generate findings and validating them through iterative cross-checking against the original data. By synthesizing these insights, the researcher was able to draw evidence-based conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the current tour design and propose targeted recommendations for its optimization.

Specifically, this approach enabled the researcher to pinpoint opportunities for enhancing the Glodok walking tour experience—such as integrating more interactive storytelling techniques, improving the visual appeal of the route, and refining the flow of historical and culinary sites. Ultimately, this structured, iterative method provided a robust analytical framework that not only aligned with qualitative research best practices but also supported the study's objective of developing a walking tour model better suited to contemporary tourist preferences and more capable of promoting cultural preservation. A conceptual model summarizing the flow of this process is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of The Study, Source: Authors



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are based on interviews and participatory observations conducted during a 3.5-hour walking tour on Friday, 16 May 2025. The tour was organized by Jakarta Good Guide (JGG), a community-based operator known for offering guided walking tours in culturally significant areas of Jakarta, including Glodok. On that day, the tour was attended by 12 participant and led by an experienced guide.

Figure 2. Participants of Glodok Walking Tour



Prior to the commencement of the tour, the researchers conducted informal interviews with several participants to gather information about their backgrounds and motivations for joining. Interestingly, the majority of participants were residents of Greater Jakarta. One participant



expressed a desire to discover aspects of the city previously unknown to them, despite frequently passing through the area. This observation reflects a growing trend among local residents to engage in tourism activities within their own urban environment, seeking new perspectives and experiences in familiar surroundings. [Richards \(2017\)](#) notes that the traditional boundaries between tourists and locals are increasingly blurred as urban residents pursue novel and enriching experiences within their everyday settings. Similarly, [Douglas et al. \(2024\)](#) suggest that engaging in cultural activities within one's own city satisfies both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors among tourists.

Moreover, this trend aligns with the concept of self-congruity, as discussed by [Latifah and Setyowardhani \(2021\)](#). According to their research, tourists tend to form psychological attachments to destinations that align with their self-concept. Destinations located within or near their place of residence evoke emotional resonance by reinforcing aspects of identity and belonging. This emotional attachment strengthens the perceived personal relevance of the destination, making the experience not only more meaningful but also more likely to inspire long-term interest and advocacy. Therefore, promoting local cultural experiences, such as the Glodok walking tour, can play a crucial role in fostering deeper emotional connections and enhancing residents' appreciation for their own cultural heritage.

These findings are significant as they provide valuable insights into the evolving motivations of contemporary tourists, particularly their growing interest in engaging with local culture and heritage. Consequently, they underscore the importance of developing tourism offerings that not only cater to international visitors but also respond to the interests and expectations of local residents. By recognizing and supporting the desire of locals to explore and rediscover their own cities, tourism planners and operators can contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable urban tourism landscape.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to identify experiential gaps and examine how the overall walking tour experience in Glodok can be enhanced through the application of the 4E Experience Framework. The 4E Framework, introduced by Pine and Gilmore (2011) provides a foundational model for understanding how businesses can create memorable and engaging experiences for their customers. It consists of four dimensions: *Entertainment*, *Education*, *Escapism*, and *Esthetics*. The findings of this study are discussed according to each of these experiential dimensions as follows:

Drawing from the results of in-depth interviews and participant observations, two key deficiencies were identified in the entertainment dimension of the tour experience: (1) interpretive communication techniques and (2) creative tourism practices. The following sections elaborate on these aspects in greater detail.

### 1. Interpretive Communication Techniques

Based on our observations, most participants were generally entertained by the tour guide's delivery style. The guide employed humor and used a distinctive signature phrase that captured participants' interest in the narratives. During interviews, this signature phrase was frequently

mentioned by participants when asked about memorable aspects of the guide's storytelling. Research suggests that humor is effective in enhancing tourist experiences; tour guide humor positively influences tourists' behavioral intentions by eliciting positive emotions ([Aerila et al., 2023; Tu et al., 2020](#)). This effect is particularly significant among tourists with lower openness traits, suggesting that humor can be a powerful tool for engaging diverse audiences. Furthermore, incorporating humor into educational tourism experiences has been shown to enrich learning, especially among younger audiences ([Aerila et al., 2023](#)).

During the initial phase of the tour, however, several participants appeared disengaged and less enthusiastic. Feedback from interviews indicated that the introductory segment, which focused on the historical origins of Glodok, was perceived as lengthy and lacking in engaging or entertaining elements. Participants noted that this portion involved passive listening without accompanying visual stimuli or physical movement, leading to a sense of monotony. One participant remarked, *"We were just standing and listening without seeing anything; it felt monotonous."*

This observation underscores the importance of incorporating visually engaging and interactive elements to enhance the entertainment value of the tour. Research in digital media demonstrates that visual storytelling significantly increases audience engagement. For instance, [Huang et al. \(2023\)](#), found that the use of infographics and data visualizations in online content boosted engagement by approximately 50%, while emotional visual stimuli, such as images and videos, increased engagement by 70%. In the context of tourism and heritage settings, [Kasemsarn and Nickpour \(2023\)](#) emphasize that digital storytelling—integrating multimedia visuals and interactive formats—enhances youth engagement and renders cultural narratives more compelling and shareable.

Building on these insights, it is recommended that future tours integrate visually stimulating materials during the introductory segments to create a more captivating and dynamic visual experience. Moreover, the introduction could be restructured to include dramatized storytelling or performative elements that animate historical narratives in an engaging manner. Incorporating live demonstrations, reenactments, or interactive audience participation early in the tour could further elevate the entertainment value, establishing a livelier and more immersive tone. Additionally, commencing the tour with a brief, interactive icebreaker or trivia quiz on Glodok's history would energize participants and foster a more playful and engaging atmosphere from the outset. Collectively, these strategies could transform the introductory segment from a passive lecture into an entertaining and immersive opening that captures and sustains audience interest throughout the tour.

## 2. Creative Tourism Practice

Another notable feature of the tour was the inclusion of an interactive session focused on ceremonial tea preparation. In the final segment, participants visited a local tea shop where they were introduced to traditional methods of brewing and serving tea. This hands-on component was intended to provide an engaging and educational experience, allowing participants to immerse themselves directly in a cultural practice deeply rooted in local heritage. Such activities align with the principles of creative tourism, where travelers move beyond passive sightseeing to actively

engage in the lifestyle, customs, and traditions of a destination. According to [Sava \(2022\)](#), creative tourism fosters experiential and participatory learning, enabling travelers to interact with local or national culture in ways that enhance engagement and create more meaningful and memorable experiences.

However, insights gathered from participant interviews and field observations revealed that the tea workshop fell short of its interactive potential. Rather than engaging participants directly, the session was limited to a demonstration, with no opportunity for attendees to brew their own tea. This lack of active involvement was perceived as less engaging and led to a more passive learning experience. One participant commented, *"It would've been more fun if we got to try making the tea ourselves—I just watched, but I didn't feel involved."*

This lack of active involvement was perceived as less engaging and contributed to a more passive learning experience. To enhance the effectiveness of this activity, it is recommended that future sessions adopt a more participatory approach by allowing participants to engage in the tea-making process themselves. Enabling hands-on involvement not only aligns more closely with the core principles of creative tourism but also increases cognitive engagement, satisfaction, and the likelihood of a memorable experience (Richards, 2014).

In relation to the educational dimension, several gaps were identified in the Glodok Walking Tour experience. These gaps can be categorized into four thematic areas: (1) cognitive load management, (2) information recall, (3) limited integration of gastronomic narratives, and (4) insufficient interpretation of significant cultural landmarks. Each of these themes will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

### 1. Cognitive Load Management

Based on our observations, the educational component of the Glodok walking tour could be enhanced for greater effectiveness. Specifically, the tour guide's presentation of Jakarta's and the Chinese community's historical background was highly information-dense, requiring participants to absorb a substantial amount of material in a short period. This was evident in multiple segments of the tour, where participants were seen nodding politely yet disengaging midway through lengthy explanations. One participant noted, *"I really wanted to learn more, but there was just too much information at once—I couldn't keep up."* Another commented during an informal break, *"It felt like a history lecture; I wish they had broken it up with something more interactive or visual."*

This feedback aligns with Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), which posits that overloading learners with excessive information can hinder comprehension and retention. CLT distinguishes between three types of cognitive load: *intrinsic* (related to the complexity of the material), *extraneous* (related to how the material is presented), and *germane* (related to the processing and construction of schemas) ([Sweller, 2010](#)). When extraneous load is high, such as through dense lectures without supportive visuals or interactive elements, it can impede learning by overwhelming the learner's working memory ([Vasilaki & Mavrogianni, 2025](#)).

To mitigate this, we offer recommendations based on the three types of cognitive load. To manage *intrinsic* load, the content could be segmented into smaller, more manageable units. Although the current tour already attempts this, the information at each location remains complex. Therefore, it is recommended to further simplify the narrative by prioritizing key facts and reducing unnecessary details that might overwhelm participants. Guides could focus on delivering two to three main points per location, using simple language and concrete examples to facilitate understanding.

To reduce *extraneous* load, it is advisable to moderate the pace of verbal explanations during the tour. Almost all the participants we interviewed indicated that the tour guide was speaking too quickly, which hindered their ability to fully comprehend and retain the information presented. A rapid delivery rate imposes additional demands on working memory, exacerbating extraneous cognitive load and making it difficult for participants to follow complex historical narratives (Sweller, 2010). By adopting a slower, more deliberate speaking pace, the guide can facilitate more effective processing of information and enhance participants' cognitive engagement. Research in cognitive psychology supports the notion that reducing the pace of information delivery allows learners to allocate more cognitive resources to meaningful learning processes rather than to decoding the speech itself (Sweller, 2010).

Finally, to enhance *germane* cognitive load, it is recommended to integrate interactive elements that promote active learning. Although the guide currently attempts to encourage two-way communication, the existing approach primarily involves posing factual questions—such as "Do you know this?"—before providing any contextual information. While this method may be intended to engage participants, it can inadvertently increase anxiety, particularly when participants lack prior knowledge of the subject matter. The use of display questions, in which the correct answer is already known to the questioner, often results in limited engagement and may cause participants to feel inadequate or discouraged. Research has demonstrated that anxiety can impair working memory and cognitive performance, particularly under conditions of high cognitive load (Robinson et al., 2013).

To foster a more conducive learning environment, it is recommended to employ referential questions—open-ended inquiries that seek participants' perspectives or interpretations. For instance, asking, "What are your thoughts on this historical event?" encourages deeper cognitive processing and more meaningful engagement. Such questions not only reduce extraneous load but also promote germane cognitive load, supporting schema construction and long-term learning.

## 2. Information Recall

Ineffective management of cognitive load can also significantly impair information retention. This phenomenon was evident during the Glodok Walking Tour's end-of-tour quizzes. Participants consistently demonstrated difficulty recalling cultural and historical information presented earlier in the tour, particularly when the material had been delivered rapidly and in a heavily information-dense format without the aid of visuals or interactive elements. Conversely, participants were able to recall information related to observable features, such as architectural details and visible

landmarks, suggesting that simpler, sensory-based information was more easily processed and retained.

Given this observation, it is recommended that the tour design emphasize multi-sensory learning strategies by integrating tangible, sensory-rich elements into the educational delivery. Specifically, using visual materials such as historical photographs, illustrated maps, and object replicas during explanations can anchor abstract historical information in concrete, perceptible formats. Additionally, incorporating environmental cues—such as pointing out textures, smells, or architectural details at specific locations—can stimulate multiple sensory channels, enhancing cognitive processing and retention through embodied learning principles ([Sweller, 2012](#)).

Simplifying the verbal narrative to highlight key takeaways, rather than delivering dense historical lectures, and pairing these summaries with direct sensory engagement will better align with cognitive load management theories. This approach not only reduces extraneous load but also facilitates deeper encoding by making the information more accessible and memorable ([Mayer, 2020](#); [Ouweland et al., 2025](#)).

Another important insight emerging from participant interviews is the observation that cultural discussions linked to contemporary issues were more memorable. Specifically, all four interviewed participants identified the segment discussing feminism within Chinese culture as the most memorable part of the tour. This observation is consistent with educational research, which shows that learners are more engaged and better retain information when content is relevant to contemporary social contexts and personal experiences ([McNaughton, 2012](#)). Therefore, it is recommended that future iterations of the tour deliberately integrate contemporary cultural themes into the narrative structure. By linking historical facts to ongoing societal issues, the tour can foster greater cognitive engagement, promote personal connection, and enhance the overall educational impact of the experience.

### 3. Limited coverage of gastronomic narrative

Regarding the content of the tour material, several critical gaps in the guide's explanations were observed. One notable deficiency pertained to the limited coverage of Glodok's rich gastronomic heritage. While participants expressed strong appreciation for the culinary aspects of the area, the guide's commentary remained largely superficial—limited to naming dishes or pointing out popular eateries, without exploring their historical background, preparation methods, or cultural significance.

During post-tour interviews, participants articulated a clear desire for deeper engagement with the local food culture. One remarked, *"We passed by so many interesting food stalls, but there was no story behind them. I would've loved to hear how these recipes evolved or why they're important to the community."* Moreover, field notes from this section of the tour indicate that participants frequently paused near food vendors, showing visible interest and occasionally approaching stalls independently. These observations point to a missed opportunity to use gastronomy as a gateway to cultural storytelling and emphasize the need for a more immersive and historically grounded culinary narrative in future iterations of the tour.



To address this gap, it is recommended that future tours incorporate more detailed explanations from a gastronomical perspective, highlighting the historical evolution, ingredients, and preparation techniques of iconic dishes. More effectively, the experience could be enhanced by facilitating direct interaction with local culinary practitioners, such as organizing live demonstrations or participatory workshops led by restaurant owners. Research indicates that culinary workshops and food-related storytelling enhance tourist engagement by transforming passive consumption into active, meaningful participation, thus contributing to deeper cultural understanding and more memorable experiences ([Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016](#); [Everett & Aitchison, 2008](#)).

#### 4. Limited coverage of significant cultural landmarks

The lack of depth in explanation was not limited to the culinary aspects but extended to significant cultural and historical landmarks as well. For instance, during the segment of the tour that passed by the traditional Chinese medicine shop, the guide provided only a cursory mention, merely identifying the building without elaborating on its historical background, cultural significance, or the traditional practices associated with it.

Such a superficial approach fails to convey the rich historical narratives embedded in these heritage sites. Insights gathered from post-tour interviews consistently revealed that participants expected more comprehensive information regarding the origins, historical development, and sociocultural relevance of such establishments. The omission of these critical narratives diminishes the educational value of the tour and limits participants' ability to fully appreciate the depth of local heritage.

Extant research emphasizes that effective heritage interpretation requires more than simple identification; it involves constructing meaningful narratives that foster emotional and intellectual connections between visitors and heritage sites ([Timothy & Boyd, 2006](#)). Without this depth, the tour risks being perceived as lacking authenticity and failing to meet the experiential expectations of culturally motivated tourists. Therefore, it is recommended that future tours incorporate more thorough, narrative-based interpretations of key landmarks to enhance visitor engagement and satisfaction.

For the esthetic dimension, three critical areas requiring enhancement were identified in the walking tour: (1) environmental hygiene and visitor safety, (2) opportunities for photography, and (3) integration of popular and iconic destinations. The following sections discuss these aspects in detail.

##### 1. Environmental Hygiene and Visitor Safety

During the tour, participants had the opportunity to visit local markets offering a variety of goods, particularly Chinese food and everyday essentials. However, the market's physical conditions were suboptimal: the environment was dirty and malodorous, and the walkways were narrow, limiting the comfort and safety of visitors. Several participants expressed discomfort, with one stating, *"I was excited to see the market, but the smell and the trash made it hard to enjoy."* Another commented, *"It was*

*difficult to walk without bumping into something or someone—it didn't feel very safe.” The situation was exacerbated by the presence of motorcycles weaving through pedestrian areas. As one participant noted with frustration, “It's supposed to be a walking tour, but we had to dodge motorbikes—it felt chaotic.” These findings highlight the need for improved market infrastructure and traffic control to ensure a safer and more enjoyable experience for future visitors.*

Given these findings, it is recommended that the walking tour organizers collaborate with the local community and municipal authorities to advocate for improved infrastructure and the establishment of stricter pedestrian-only zones in the market area. Implementing sanitation improvements and enforcing no-vehicle regulations would enhance both the safety and esthetic appeal of the route, aligning with best practices in sustainable tourism development ([Timothy & Frost, 2014](#)). Improvements in market cleanliness and pedestrian management not only contribute to visitor satisfaction but are also critical in preserving the authenticity and accessibility of the cultural experience.

Moreover, during interviews, tour guides reported that pedestrian walkways are often converted into informal parking areas, further obstructing the tour route and diminishing the quality of the experience. This practice undermines the intended use of public spaces and conflicts with urban policies that prioritize walkability and sustainable tourism mobility ([Cousin et al., 2015](#)). It is therefore essential that local authorities enforce stricter regulations on public space usage, ensuring that pedestrian areas remain unobstructed and accessible. Strategic collaboration between tour organizers, local stakeholders, and municipal agencies would be instrumental in creating a safer, more welcoming environment that supports both community livelihoods and a positive tourist experience.

## 2. Opportunities for Photography

According to [Latifah \(2024\)](#), local travelers, particularly from younger demographics, increasingly seek travel experiences that are shareable through photos and videos. However, the current structure of the Glodok Walking Tour does not accommodate this preference. Participants are not allotted dedicated time for personal photography; instead, the tour's photographic activities are primarily for internal documentation purposes. On one occasion, a small group of participants paused to take selfies in front of a temple, but the guide quickly redirected them, saying, “Let's take a group photo instead”. This approach overlooks the contemporary tourist's desire to capture and share personal experiences in real-time.

Recent studies underscore the significance of photography in enhancing tourist engagement. [Tang et al. \(2022\)](#) found that taking travel photos serves as a form of involvement in the consumptive experience, increasing the sense of meaning and pleasure derived from the activity. Furthermore, the act of photographing has been shown to enhance memory retention and satisfaction, as it encourages tourists to focus more intently on their surroundings ([Barasch et al., 2017](#)).

To address this gap, it is recommended that the Glodok Walking Tour incorporate designated intervals for personal photography. These intervals would allow participants to capture images without feeling rushed, thereby enriching their overall experience. Additionally, integrating visually

appealing and culturally significant sites into the tour itinerary can cater to the aesthetic preferences of modern tourists. By aligning the tour's structure with contemporary travel behaviors, organizers can enhance participant satisfaction and foster greater engagement.

### 3. Integration of Popular and Iconic Destinations.

Glodok, Jakarta's historic Chinatown, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and iconic culinary establishments. Notable among these are Kopi Es Tak Kie, established in 1927, a cherished locale for traditional iced coffee enthusiasts, and Djauw Coffee, known for its unique offerings and historical ambiance. Additionally, Lao Hae has gained popularity after being featured in the Indonesian film *Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini* (NKCTHI), attracting a younger demographic seeking culturally significant and socially shareable experiences.

Despite the prominence of these establishments, observations indicate that the current walking tour merely passes by these sites without providing participants the opportunity to engage with them meaningfully. Notably, iconic venues such as traditional coffee shops, herbal medicine stores, and historic buildings were mentioned only in passing, with no stops or contextual storytelling. Interview data further reveal that several participants expressed disappointment regarding the lack of scheduled visits or in-depth narrative explanations at these renowned locations. One participant remarked, *"We walked past a famous coffee shop that I've seen on Instagram, but we didn't even go inside or hear its story."* Another shared, *"I was really hoping to sit down and try the old-style coffee—just passing by made the experience feel rushed."*

This omission overlooks the growing trend among contemporary tourists, particularly younger generations, who value immersive experiences that enable personal storytelling and social media sharing ([Annisa Husnul Latifah & Hapsari Setyowardhani, 2021; Latifah et al., 2024](#)). Research indicates that such experiential engagements not only enhance visitor satisfaction but also contribute to more memorable and meaningful travel experiences. For instance, [Cho \(2022\)](#) highlights that memorable experiences are strongly connected to satisfaction, repeat visitation, and positive recommendations, underscoring the importance of facilitating such experiences.

To align the tour experience with these insights, it is recommended that the walking tour incorporate scheduled stops at these iconic establishments, allowing participants to engage directly with the locales, capture personal photographs. Such enhancements would not only enrich the participant experience but also foster a deeper appreciation of Glodok's cultural heritage and align with best practices in experiential tourism development.

Finally, for the escapism element, two areas requiring improvement were identified: (1) the issue of ambient noise and (2) the potential of doing direct engagement with local stakeholders. These aspects are discussed in detail below.

#### 1. Noise

Based on field observations, one of the primary factors inhibiting participants from experiencing a sense of *escape*—defined as the ability to temporarily immerse oneself in an environment distinct

from the surrounding metropolitan context—is the pervasive presence of ambient noise. Sounds from nearby traffic, market vendors, and passersby created a constant auditory backdrop that disrupted the immersive potential of the walking tour. This environmental noise not only diminished the experiential atmosphere but also interfered with participants' ability to hear and engage with the guide's commentary.

Several participants voiced frustration about this issue. One remarked, *"I couldn't really hear what the guide was saying most of the time—there were just too many distractions."* Another commented, *"The microphone was too soft, and with the motorbikes and crowd noise, it was hard to focus."* Field notes similarly recorded moments during which participants leaned in or asked the guide to repeat information, especially near congested intersections or busy street corners.

The impact of soundscapes on tourist experiences has been substantiated in recent studies. For instance, [Bai et al. \(2024\)](#) found that both natural and human-made soundscapes significantly influence tourists' flow experiences and the memorability of their visits. Their research emphasizes that excessive noise can detract from the overall quality of the tourist experience, leading to decreased satisfaction and engagement. Similarly, [Liu et al. \(2018\)](#) demonstrated a positive correlation between soundscape satisfaction and overall tourist satisfaction, highlighting the importance of auditory environments in shaping visitor perceptions.

To mitigate these issues, it is recommended that tour operators equip participants with individual audio receivers or earphones connected to the guide's microphone system. This approach would ensure clear communication, minimize the impact of external noise, and enhance the overall immersive experience. Implementing such technology aligns with best practices in tour management and has been shown to improve visitor satisfaction in similar contexts ([Liu et al., 2018](#)).

## 2. Direct Engagement with Local Stakeholders

Based on participant interviews, it was evident that many did not experience a strong sense of escapism during the Glodok walking tour. Participants reported difficulty disengaging from their daily routines, indicating that the tour lacked immersive elements that could facilitate a temporary departure from everyday life. This lack of immersion can be attributed to the absence of a well-crafted experiencescape—a combination of physical and interpersonal elements that create an engaging and immersive environment. According to [Zhou and Wang \(2024\)](#), an immersive tourism experiencescape, encompassing thematic atmosphere, functional facilities, and interactive performances, significantly enhances tourists' emotional experiences and behavioral intentions. Without these elements, participants may find it challenging to fully engage with the tour, leading to a diminished sense of escapism.

Interviews also revealed that several participants expressed a desire for more direct engagement with local residents, such as shop owners, food vendors, and restaurant operators. They indicated that such interactions would have enriched the overall experience by making it feel more authentic, personal, and memorable. One participant shared, *"I wanted to hear stories from the people who actually live and work here—not just from the guide."* Another noted, *"It would've been great to talk to the owner of the herbal store or someone from the coffee shop. That kind of interaction sticks with you more than just listening."*

This feedback highlights a missed opportunity to incorporate human-centered elements into the tour experience.

To address this, it is recommended that the walking tour design incorporate curated thematic elements and structured opportunities for active engagement with local stakeholders. Specifically, facilitating discussions with the owners of shops, restaurants, or cultural locales can deepen participants' immersion. Research by [Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier \(2009\)](#) highlights that direct interaction with locals significantly enhances tourists' experiential authenticity and emotional engagement, both of which are critical components for fostering a sense of escapism. Similarly, [Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen \(2016\)](#) emphasize that participatory cultural encounters—such as storytelling sessions with business owners—promote meaningful engagement and create memorable experiences. By integrating opportunities for active dialogue, the Glodok walking tour can transform from a passive sightseeing experience into a dynamic cultural immersion that encourages deeper emotional connection and enhances the sense of escapism.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated how the Chinatown (Glodok) Walking Tour could be optimized using the 4E Experience Framework—*Entertainment, Education, Esthetics, and Escapism*—to enhance tourist involvement in cultural preservation. By identifying experiential gaps and proposing targeted enhancements, the research not only sought to improve visitor engagement and satisfaction but also to foster deeper emotional and cognitive connections with cultural heritage. The findings revealed that although elements such as the guide's humor and incorporation of traditional practices were well received, limitations were observed across all four experiential dimensions, restricting the tour's potential to activate tourists as meaningful participants in cultural conservation.

In the *entertainment* dimension, although the guide's humor and storytelling style initially captured participants' interest, sustained engagement was lacking due to reliance on dense historical narratives without visual or interactive support. Additionally, the creative tourism component—specifically the tea ceremony workshop—was limited to passive observation rather than active participation. To address these shortcomings, it is recommended that future tours incorporate dramatized storytelling or performative elements that animate historical narratives in a more engaging manner. Commencing the tour with a brief, interactive icebreaker or trivia quiz on Glodok's history is also suggested to create a more lively and participatory atmosphere from the outset. Furthermore, it is advised that future activities emphasize hands-on cultural participation rather than passive observation, particularly in segments such as the tea ceremony. Active involvement not only sustains engagement but also fosters deeper personal investment in the cultural practices being presented, thereby encouraging a stronger preservation ethic among participants.

Turning to the *education* dimension, the study found that excessive information density and the rapid delivery of content impeded participants' ability to process and retain important cultural



narratives. Moreover, the limited emphasis on culinary heritage and significant landmarks further diminished the tour's educational impact. To address these issues, it is recommended that cognitive load management strategies be employed, including the integration of multisensory learning tools such as historical photographs, illustrated maps, and object replicas during explanations. Additionally, linking historical narratives to contemporary social issues can foster a deeper and more personal understanding of cultural heritage. Enhancing educational engagement is critical for transforming passive tourists into informed advocates who value and actively support cultural preservation efforts.

In the *esthetic* dimension, the tour's overall appeal was diminished by unsanitary and unsafe environments along the route, a lack of opportunities for personal photography, and missed engagement with iconic cultural destinations. Improving environmental conditions, creating structured moments for photography, and ensuring visits to key heritage sites would not only elevate the aesthetic experience but also strengthen tourists' emotional connection to the cultural landscape. A positive esthetic experience reinforces pride and appreciation for heritage, which are essential motivators for preservation behaviors.

Finally, in the *escapism* element, the study revealed that participants struggled to achieve the deep immersion necessary for a transformative cultural experience. Disruptive ambient noise and a lack of interactive thematic elements hindered the sense of escape from daily routines. While the implementation of technological solutions, such as individual audio systems, can improve communication and reduce the impact of external noise, participants also expressed a desire for more direct engagement with local stakeholders, such as shop and restaurant owners. Facilitating structured discussions and cultural exchanges with locals can create more meaningful, personalized experiences that foster deeper immersion and emotional connection. Such engagement strategies are particularly effective for younger audiences, who prefer participatory and experience-driven tourism activities, and can encourage them to take a more active role in appreciating and preserving cultural heritage.

In addition, this study offers several practical recommendations to support the optimization of the Glodok walking tour. *First*, the local government should actively promote the Glodok walking tour as a strategic cultural tourism asset. Given its potential to strengthen cultural identity, support local businesses, and foster heritage appreciation among younger generations, this tour deserves greater visibility in official tourism campaigns. Promotion could take the form of inclusion in Jakarta's city tourism website, collaboration with influencers, or integration into school and university cultural programs to attract both domestic and international visitors.

*Second*, immediate action is needed to address infrastructure barriers along the tour route—particularly the recurring issue of vehicles parked on pedestrian walkways. These obstructions reduce the safety, comfort, and accessibility of the walking tour experience. To resolve this, the local government should enforce regulations that prohibit informal parking in designated pedestrian zones and implement physical barriers such as bollards or planters to preserve walkway access. This should be accompanied by coordination between tour organizers, local businesses,

and city authorities to ensure that heritage walking routes remain clean, safe, and welcoming for tourists.

Despite the valuable insights generated by this study, several limitations must be acknowledged, which in turn offer important directions for future research. *First*, the study's findings are based on a relatively small and homogeneous sample, primarily consisting of domestic participants from younger age groups. As such, the results provide general insights that may not fully capture the diversity of tourist preferences across different demographic or experiential backgrounds. Future studies could investigate how different tour delivery formats resonate with varied tourist segments, such as younger versus older visitors or first-time versus repeat participants. For example, Gen Z tourists may prefer short, app-assisted, self-guided tours incorporating augmented reality (AR), gamified features, or social media integration. In contrast, older or more culturally inclined tourists may respond more positively to longer, guide-led experiences emphasizing deeper historical interpretation and reflective discussion. Exploring these differences would enable the development of adaptive, segment-specific tour formats that better meet diverse audience needs.

*Second*, while this study qualitatively identified gaps in emotional engagement and immersion, it did not measure these dimensions in real time. Future research could apply emotion-tracking tools—such as facial expression analysis apps or self-reported emotion diaries—to evaluate tourist emotional responses at different points in the tour. Such methods would provide more granular, data-driven insights to refine storytelling techniques and improve the entertainment and escapism dimensions of walking tours.

In sum, this study contributes both conceptually and practically to the growing discourse on experiential tourism by demonstrating how the 4E Experience Framework can be used as a strategic tool to redesign urban cultural walking tours. By highlighting experiential gaps and proposing context-specific enhancements, the research offers a replicable model for improving tourist engagement, satisfaction, and emotional connection with heritage destinations. Beyond the case of Glodok, these findings hold broader relevance for tourism practitioners, local governments, and community-based organizations seeking to revitalize underutilized cultural sites through participatory, experience-driven approaches.

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