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Decolonization of Lifestyle and Local Values in the Nightlife Tourism Experience in Yogyakarta

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Abstract (maximum 200 words) (Times New Roman 11 Points, bold)

The phenomenon of nightlife tourism in Yogyakarta represents a form of urban lifestyle consumption while simultaneously serving as a site of value negotiation between global and local cultures. The purpose of this study is to understand the process of decolonization occurring within the practices of lifestyle and nightlife experiences through the perspective of local knowledge and sociocultural resilience. A qualitative approach was employed using participatory observation and in-depth interviews with visitors and stakeholders in several prominent nightclubs in Yogyakarta. The findings reveal that while nightlife is often identified as a hedonistic practice, it also reflects local communities' efforts to negotiate identity and traditional values amid the forces of globalization. The study shows that nightlife spaces function as venues for social solidarity, self-expression, and reinterpretation of local values such as familiarity, mutual cooperation, and tolerance. Nightlife tourism in Yogyakarta can thus be understood as a form of *cultural resilience*—a mechanism through which communities negotiate colonial influences on lifestyle and economic practices. This research contributes to expanding the discourse on decolonizing tourism by demonstrating that urban lifestyles can serve as symbolic resistance to Western dominance while simultaneously reinforcing local cultural sovereignty.

Keywords: Decolonization, Lifestyle, Local Values, Nightlife Tourism, Cultural Resilience

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1. Introduction

Nightlife in Yogyakarta has, over the past four years, evolved into an integral part of the city's socio-economic dynamics (Rahajeng et al., 2023; Anggraini et al., 2025; Christianto & Gunawan, 2025). As one of Indonesia's most prominent cultural tourism destinations, Yogyakarta is widely recognized for its historical heritage and spirituality, while also emerging as a hub of nightlife entertainment that reflects the transformation of contemporary urban lifestyles (Prasojo et al., 2020). Nightclubs, bars, lounges, discos, and cafés have become social spaces where individuals from diverse backgrounds interact, express themselves, and build new social networks (Kolins, 2022; Orzel, 2023; Eba et al., 2025). Nightlife can no longer be viewed merely as a recreational activity, but rather as a sociocultural phenomenon that illustrates the shifting values, lifestyles, and increasingly diverse urban economic structures.

Beneath the modern and global image attached to nightlife lies a process of negotiation between Western cultural influences and the local values that underpin Yogyakarta's social identity. The forces of globalization and the dominance of Western cultural symbols within the entertainment industry often lead to a form of cultural hegemony rooted in colonial legacies (Artz, 2018; Rahman, 2020; Chen & Shen, 2021). This raises a fundamental question about how local communities negotiate space and meaning amid the expansion of global lifestyles. The decolonial perspective in tourism provides an essential framework for understanding how local societies strive to preserve their identity and traditional wisdom within modern lifestyle structures (Omodan, 2023; Tella & Oladokun, 2024). Nightlife practices in Yogyakarta represent both an adoption of global culture and an adaptive strategy by local communities to negotiate social and symbolic spaces while maintaining relevance to traditional values.

A decolonial approach in tourism studies challenges the epistemological and cultural dominance of Western paradigms that have historically shaped the understanding of tourism, progress, and modernity (Boukhris & Peyvel, 2019; Nimführ & Meloni, 2021; Bellato et al., 2024). Tourism is thus viewed not only as an economic activity but also as a site for the production of meaning, resistance, and local knowledge (Kannisto, 2018; Mura & Wijesinghe, 2023). Nightlife lifestyles serve as manifestations of how local communities reinterpret modernity by integrating local values such as intimacy, togetherness, and politeness into seemingly globalized entertainment spaces in Yogyakarta. This adaptive process illustrates the community's efforts to build cultural resilience through symbolic negotiation against colonial value dominance.

Previous studies on nightlife in Indonesia have predominantly focused on the themes of consumerism and hedonistic behavior (Clarke, 2024; Al Faruq et al., 2025; Wang & Azizurrohman, 2025). Research that frames nightlife as a sociocultural arena reflecting local values and community resilience remains limited. The decolonial approach offers an opportunity to reconceptualize

nightlife as a social practice encompassing interconnected economic, cultural, and identity dimensions. Decolonizing tourism entails both rejecting Western cultural dominance and recognizing as well as revitalizing local knowledge as an equally valid epistemic resource (Grimwood & Johnson, 2022; Masuku, 2025).

This study aims to examine the process of decolonizing lifestyle and local values within the context of nightlife tourism in Yogyakarta. The central focus is to understand how local communities and nightlife stakeholders negotiate cultural values within their everyday practices in entertainment venues. Specifically, this research seeks to address three main questions: (1) How does globalization influence the formation of nightlife lifestyles in Yogyakarta? (2) How are local values interpreted and negotiated within the context of nightlife tourism? and (3) How does nightlife practice contribute to the social and cultural resilience of the local community. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of decolonial tourism scholarship in Yogyakarta by highlighting forms of cultural resilience emerging within urban entertainment spaces. Practically, the findings are expected to provide insights for tourism managers and policymakers regarding the importance of acknowledging local values in managing inclusive and sustainable nightlife sectors. Nightlife, therefore, represents not only a segment of the global entertainment industry but also a medium through which communities preserve and reconstruct their cultural identities amid rapid social change.

2. Literature Review

The literature review aims to explore the conceptual framework and empirical findings relevant to the themes of decolonization, urban lifestyle, and local values within the context of nightlife tourism. This section focuses on three interrelated theoretical perspectives, decolonial tourism theory, consumption culture, and socio-cultural resilience, which together provide a comprehensive lens for understanding the dynamics of nightlife phenomena in Yogyakarta.

The Decolonial Perspective in Tourism and Socio-Economic Studies

Decolonization in tourism studies has evolved as a critique of Western epistemological dominance that positions tourism as a product of modernity and global progress (Zhang, 2018; McEwan, 2018; Harril et al., 2024). This approach seeks to shift the paradigm from a colonial framework toward the recognition of local knowledge, community experience, and social values that shape how societies understand place and identity. Within the field of tourism, decolonization emphasizes the importance of epistemic disobedience, the intellectual courage to reject colonial ways of thinking that universalize Western notions of modernity in tourism practices (Nuryazidi, 2024; Kamyuka, 2024; Rieger &

Das, 2025). Decolonial scholarship also highlights how local communities in Yogyakarta negotiate forms of tourism that align with their own cultural identities and indigenous knowledge systems.

Postcolonial tourism represents both an economic form and a site of meaning making where identity, culture, and resistance to external domination converge. The decolonial approach within the framework of resilient economies allows for an analysis of how communities build economic and social resilience through the revitalization of cultural values and local solidarity (Wijsman & Feagan, 2019; Glynn & Cupples, 2024; Chaiechi, 2025). Decolonization demands a repositioning of the sources of knowledge, placing local experiences and cultural values not as objects of study, but as epistemic subjects with the authority to define the direction of tourism development (Acharya, 2025; Bouwer, 2025).

The decolonial approach opens a space for new understandings of community resilience that can be assessed not only through economic performance but also through the ability to preserve cultural values amidst global pressures. Tourism is thus viewed as a vehicle for social reconstruction, enabling local communities to renegotiate the relationship between tradition and modernity in a dynamic way (Pujaastawa, 2023; Wilantara, 2024; Suharson et al., 2025). The concept of resilient economies from a decolonial perspective offers new directions for tourism development, ones that are not solely growth-oriented but also committed to strengthening local identity, cultural sustainability, and social cohesion.

Urban Lifestyles and Consumption Culture in Nightlife Tourism

Urban lifestyles within the context of nightlife tourism are often interpreted through the paradigms of consumption and modernity (Eldridge, 2021; Smith & Eldridge, 2021). According to Ziyace (2018) and Kelly (2019), lifestyle represents an expression of identity shaped by symbolic consumption patterns and social interactions within public spaces. Forms of consumption in nightlife venues are not only associated with tangible goods or services but also with social experiences and the construction of self-image (Kersten & Lotze, 2020; Hoose & Rosenbohm, 2024). Nightlife tourism serves as a site where individuals negotiate their social positions through global symbols such as music, fashion, beverages, and modes of interaction (Boogaarts, 2025; Jensen, 2021). However, the urban nightlife lifestyle in Yogyakarta is not merely an imitation of global culture; rather, it is a space of adaptation where local values such as togetherness, politeness, and social solidarity continue to persist beneath the veneer of modernity.

The phenomenon of urban lifestyles and consumption culture in nightlife tourism reveals a dual identity among nightlife consumers, between the desire to belong to global culture and the need to preserve local identity (Tomasella, 2023; Xiong et al., 2024). The nightlife lifestyle in Yogyakarta can be seen as a social

practice that merges modern aesthetics with cultural values deeply rooted in local traditions (Prabaniza, 2024). Nightlife venues thus function as arenas for identity representation, where individuals project idealized self images through fashion, musical preferences, and patterns of social interaction. The practice of nightlife tourism in Yogyakarta demonstrates a new form of cultural hybridity, a fusion between modern lifestyles and traditional values that produces a distinct urban identity among local communities. This phenomenon reinforces the idea that globalization does not entirely erase cultural values but rather creates a dialogical space between tradition and modernity, leading to the emergence of new cultural expressions.

Local Values and Cultural Resilience in the Context of Globalization

The concept of cultural resilience can be understood as a community's ability to preserve and adapt traditional values amidst social change and global pressures (Holtorf, 2018; Bocci, 2021; Järvelä, 2023). Within the context of tourism, cultural resilience refers to both the preservation of traditions and the capacity to reinterpret local values so that they remain relevant to contemporary needs and realities (Bui et al., 2020; Pratiwi & Wikantiyoso, 2022). Core values in Yogyakarta, such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and mutual respect, serve as vital foundations for sustaining social harmony (Siswadi & Puti, 2024; Tohari & Nafuiddin, 2024). Local cultural practices have been successfully integrated into modern lifestyles, demonstrating a high degree of adaptive capacity that combines local knowledge with global awareness (Makondo & Thomas, 2018; Kohsaka & Rogel, 2019; Choudhury et al., 2021). The process of cultural resilience in this context reflects the notion of reclaiming the night, a symbolic act of reclaiming space and meaning from the dominance of homogenized entertainment capitalism. In Yogyakarta's nightlife tourism, cultural resilience not only helps preserve local identity but also strengthens community-based resilience by positioning local values as sources of social strength.

Cultural resilience within the decolonial framework of tourism represents a form of symbolic resistance against the homogenizing forces of the global entertainment industry. Local communities in Yogyakarta preserve traditions both passively and actively by reconstructing cultural values and practices to maintain their relevance in an ever-changing modern landscape (Pillai, 2020; Olugbenga, 2025; Kaur et al., 2025). This dynamic can be seen in how residents reinterpret nightlife spaces, not as moral threats, but as new mediums through which identity and communal solidarity are reaffirmed. Cultural resilience in Yogyakarta's nightlife thus functions as both a mechanism for preserving local values and an adaptive strategy for achieving balance between tradition, modernity, and the increasingly diverse urban economic dynamics.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative interpretive approach within a decolonial framework, as it is considered effective in uncovering the social and symbolic meanings embedded in the nightlife lifestyle practices produced by Yogyakarta’s local community in the intersection between global and traditional values. The decolonial paradigm is applied to challenge the dominance of Western narratives in understanding tourism and to position local experiences and knowledge as legitimate epistemic sources in the analytical process. Research participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their active involvement in nightlife tourism activities within Yogyakarta’s nightclub scene. All participants were between the ages of 22 and 45, representing diverse occupational backgrounds such as students, entrepreneurs, creative industry workers, and young professionals. A total of 25 individuals participated in this research. Table 1 presents the composition of the study participants.

Table 1- Research Participants

Category of Participants	Number (Persons)	Selection Criteria
Nightclub visitors	15	Regular visitors (≥ once per month), representing diverse social and economic backgrounds
Workers (DJs, bartenders, servers, security staff)	5	Directly involved in operational and social interaction within the nightclub environment
Managers/ Owners	5	Provide strategic perspectives on management, business values, and perceptions of local culture

Data were collected using two primary techniques, participant observation and in depth interviews. Participant observation was conducted over a six month period (March to August 2024), with the researcher directly engaging in several nightclub venues across Yogyakarta. The observations included the examination of social behaviors, lifestyle symbols, consumption patterns, and the ways in which local values were manifested within nightlife settings. The second technique employed was semi structured in depth interviews, designed to explore personal narratives regarding nightlife experiences, perceptions of local values, and interpretations of modernity. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was recorded with the participants’ consent. After data collection, the materials were analyzed inductively following the analytical model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of four interconnected stages presented in table 2.

Table 2- Data Analysis

Data Analysis Stage	Analytical Activities	Objective
Data Familiarization	Reading all interview transcripts and observation notes	To understand the social context and symbolic meanings within nightlife practices
Data Reduction	Grouping data into key themes: (a) global lifestyle, (b) negotiation of local values, (c) cultural resilience	To filter and retain information relevant to the research focus
Data Display	Developing thematic matrices and narrative descriptions derived from interview and observation results	To present the relationships among themes and patterns of social interaction
Conclusion Drawing	Interpreting findings reflectively through decolonial and resilient economies frameworks	To generate new insights into the decolonization of lifestyle and local values within nightlife experiences

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed a source triangulation technique by comparing data obtained from three participant groups, visitors, workers, and nightclub managers, to verify the consistency and coherence of emerging social meanings. Additionally, member checking was conducted to validate the researcher’s interpretations by confirming them with several informants, ensuring that the findings accurately represented participants’ authentic perspectives. This study adhered to ethical principles in social and cultural research, emphasizing respect for dignity, privacy, and individual autonomy. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to interviews and observations. All identities were kept strictly confidential to maintain anonymity, given the sensitivity surrounding nightlife settings, which are often associated with issues of morality and social image.

4. Results

This section presents the main findings of the study derived from participatory observations and in depth interviews with visitors, workers, and nightclub managers in Yogyakarta. The data analysis reveals social, symbolic, and cultural patterns that illustrate the role and mechanisms through which the process of decolonization unfolds within nightlife practices.

Negotiating Values Between Modernity and Tradition

The findings indicate that nightlife in Yogyakarta represents a space of negotiation between global culture and the traditional values of the local community. Visitors perceive night entertainment venues not only as spaces of consumption but also as arenas for expressing social identity. International music, modern fashion styles, and interaction patterns resembling Western lifestyles serve as symbols of connection to global culture. However, visitors also continue to uphold local social norms such as politeness, familiarity, and solidarity, a balance clearly reflected in several interviews. Informant 3, a regular nightclub visitor in Yogyakarta, emphasized that “Even though I go to the club, I still need to behave properly and avoid going overboard.”

This illustrates a form of cultural filtering, namely the community’s ability to filter and adapt global values to align with local social ethics. The negotiation of values from the perspective of nightclub workers and managers is evident in how they manage the entertainment atmosphere to remain culturally respectful. Several venues intentionally incorporate local elements such as batik-patterned interior designs, traditional Indonesian beverages, and remixed traditional music presented within a modern ambiance. These practices affirm that globalization does not necessarily erase cultural values; instead, it fosters the emergence of a hybrid culture that bridges global symbols with local identity (see Figure 1).

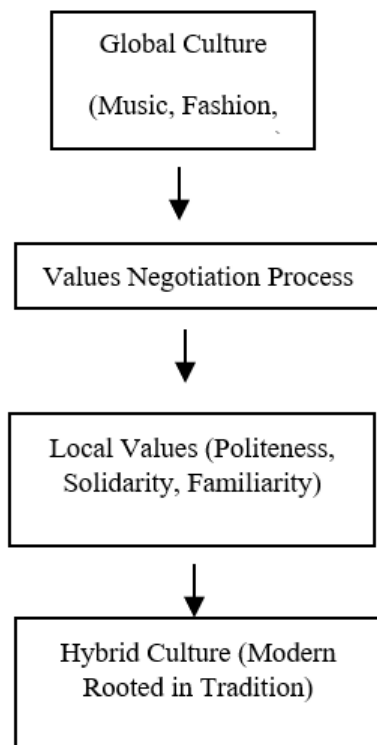


Figure 1-The Process of Value Negotiation in Yogyakarta’s Nightlife

Reinterpretation of Urban Lifestyle as a Social Space

Nightlife practices function as arenas for the formation of urban identity among individuals seeking to construct a modern, open, and dynamic self image. Clothing styles, musical preferences, and social interactions serve as status symbols used to signify affiliation with particular communities. However, such lifestyles are not always perceived as purely hedonistic. The majority of participants indicated that nightlife activities serve as a means to relieve work-related stress and to build new social connections, as expressed by Informant 13 “I don’t come to the club just to party, but because here I can feel free and talk to many people without being formal. After a week of work, I need a space for myself and my friends.”

Night entertainment venues, particularly nightclubs, operate as social spaces that bring together cross-class and cross-professional networks and form part of the well-being economy of Yogyakarta’s urban society. Nightlife also represents a form of participation in the city’s progressive culture, especially among younger groups such as students and young professionals. These younger generations do not merely imitate Western styles but modify them according to local contexts. Such behavioral patterns reveal a dimension of decolonial agency, namely the ability of local communities to transform global consumption patterns into social practices that reflect cultural identity and autonomy. This phenomenon demonstrates that nightlife spaces can simultaneously represent consumption and serve as platforms for social articulation, strengthening interpersonal cohesion within urban communities. Nightclubs thus play a role in constructing new forms of solidarity that transcend class and economic boundaries through spontaneous and egalitarian interactions.

Cultural Resilience and the Recontextualization of Local Values

Nightlife practices have become spaces for the formation of cultural resilience. Traditional values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), familiarity, and politeness remain preserved even within modern entertainment environments. This condition is evident in the mutual care behavior among visitors, the solidarity of workers assisting their colleagues, and the social responsibility demonstrated by club managers toward ensuring the safety and comfort of guests. This phenomenon, within the decolonial framework, can be understood as an act of reclaiming the night, a process by which local communities reclaim the meaning of nighttime spaces from the dominance of global entertainment capitalism and transform them into social spaces reflecting communal solidarity.

Furthermore, several nightclub managers acknowledged deliberate efforts to maintain Yogyakarta’s reputation as a polite and cultured city. Some explicitly reject extreme business models that emphasize excessive sensuality, opting instead to present entertainment that

highlights cultural values. Such strategies illustrate a form of resilient adaptation within the nightlife industry, an approach that aligns with global market trends while maintaining a balance between economic interests and local cultural values. The persistence of traditional values such as *gotong royong*, warmth, and politeness in nightlife venues indicates the emergence of cultural resilience, reflected in Yogyakarta’s community capacity to preserve traditional values while adapting to modernity.

5. Discussion

Decolonization as an Adaptive and Emancipatory Process

The findings of this study reinforce the notion that decolonization in tourism represents both a rejection of Western dominance and a form of creative adaptation undertaken by local communities to restore cultural and regional autonomy. In the context of Yogyakarta’s nightlife, the local community has consumed global culture while reinterpreting its symbols to align with local social values and ethical norms. Nightlife thus becomes an emancipatory space that demonstrates the community’s capacity to construct its own narrative of modernity, a localized form of modernity that is participatory and reflective of its cultural roots. The decolonial approach provides insight into how Yogyakarta’s society builds agency and negotiates power within a globally influenced entertainment industry. Rather than merely rejecting Western influence, Yogyakarta’s residents transform nightlife spaces into arenas of social meaning-making that strengthen both cultural resilience and social solidarity.

The decolonization process in this context also signifies a paradigmatic shift from passive consumption to active meaning production grounded in local values. The people of Yogyakarta use nightlife venues as media to assert their cultural presence amid globalization while simultaneously constructing an inclusive urban identity rooted in community solidarity. The community has succeeded in creating an alternative modernity that does not conflict with traditional values through the creative adaptation of global symbols such as music, lifestyle, and body language. The decolonization of lifestyle within nightlife represents both an act of resistance and a form of social innovation, affirming that modernity can emerge from the grassroots through continuous cultural reflection and the assertion of epistemic independence based on local knowledge (see Figure 2).

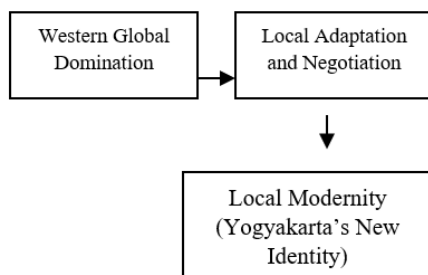


Figure 2- Framework of Nightlife Lifestyle Decolonization

Urban Lifestyle as a Representation of Identity and Social Resilience

The urban lifestyle within Yogyakarta’s nightlife demonstrates that entertainment consumption can transform into a form of social value reproduction. People engage in nightlife activities as a means to build social relationships, expand professional networks, and express self identity in public spaces. These findings are consistent with the perspectives of Eldridge (2021) and Smith & Eldridge (2021), who argue that urban lifestyle is not merely a form of consumer behavior but also a mode of social communication and identity construction. The urban lifestyle in Yogyakarta serves as a medium through which individuals negotiate their identities between modernity and local wisdom. The social interactions that take place within nightlife spaces illustrate a form of social resilience, reflecting the community’s ability to maintain social connectedness amid the pressures of modernity and the homogenization of global culture. Nightlife in Yogyakarta, therefore, should not be seen as a moral threat but rather as a social mechanism that fosters inclusivity and solidarity across different social classes.

Yogyakarta’s nightlife lifestyle is not purely hedonistic, it also functions as a mechanism of social resilience that strengthens social networks. Interactions within nightlife venues serve as channels for cross-class and cross professional communication, displaying a high degree of social inclusivity. Such activities enable symbolic exchanges among different social groups, where values like tolerance, openness, and mutual respect become part of a newly emerging social ethic. In this context, nightlife serves as a cultural dialogue space, bringing together individuals from diverse social backgrounds regardless of economic status or educational level. This dynamic affirms that the urban lifestyle within Yogyakarta’s nightlife reflects global cultural consumption while simultaneously generating new social structures grounded in solidarity, togetherness, and emotional connectedness. The nightlife lifestyle in Yogyakarta thus represents an actualization of social and cultural resilience, demonstrating the local community’s capacity to respond to change without losing its cultural identity.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals that nightlife practices in Yogyakarta are not merely expressions of consumerist or hedonistic behavior but serve as vital social and cultural spaces for the active process of lifestyle decolonization. The local community adopts and reinterprets global cultural symbols of modernity to align with their own social values and ethical norms. This process gives rise to a form of local modernity that is reflective, participatory, and deeply rooted in Yogyakarta’s cultural identity. Nightlife functions as an emancipatory arena that demonstrates the community’s ability to build cultural and social resilience. Core values such as familiarity, politeness, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and solidarity continue to thrive amid the forces of

globalization and the modernization of the entertainment industry.

This phenomenon reinforces the concept of cultural resilience, which views adaptation to global culture as an opportunity to reaffirm cultural identity through social innovation and local creativity. Theoretically, this research expands the understanding of tourism decolonization by showing that nightlife venues, particularly nightclubs, can serve as loci of symbolic resistance and local knowledge production. Decolonization within the tourism context represents an adaptive strategy by which communities construct meaning, identity, and balance among economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Practically, this study provides implications for nightlife industry managers and policymakers to integrate local values and cultural ethics into the sustainable development of nightlife tourism. Such an approach can strengthen Yogyakarta's image as a dynamic and inclusive cultural city while simultaneously preserving social resilience and ensuring the sustainability of community-based creative economies.

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