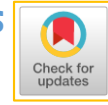





An exploration of participants' views and experiences of cultural museums and their challenges



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ABSTRACT

Cultural museums have always been considered guardians of culture, promoting the core concepts of cultural preservation and conservation. This paper delves into the challenges faced by two cultural museums from various perspectives and examines the transformation of museums in supporting Papuan culture through values centered on conservation and preservation, as gleaned from the experiences and views of the participants. This study is qualitative research that employs an interpretive strategy, with participants including museum personnel, cultural agencies in Papua Province, academics, and teachers from Cenderawasih University. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and literature studies. The study identified three themes: (1) Collection and space management, (2) Museum image, and (3) Capacity building and moral responsibility of human resources. To enhance cultural services, the study suggests that museums in Papua need to focus on strengthening collection management, enhancing visitor convenience, and providing increased staff support in the cultural field.

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1. Introduction

The development and significance of museums themselves have shifted compared to the previous decades. Museums, once primarily spaces for storing and displaying different but original ancient artworks and artifacts, have now transformed into institutions devoted to interpreting the human world and the environment [1]. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as a permanent, not-for-profit institution serving the community and its development, open to the public. Museums acquire, maintain, connect, and exhibit artifacts for the purposes of study, education, and enjoyment, providing evidence of humans and their environment [2]. As a result, museums are positioned not only as learning laboratories but also as spaces for visitors and collections to connect and communicate, serving as a medium for imparting specific values contained in the collection of tangible artifacts. The type of museum is also determined by the specialty of the displayed category of collectibles. This results in a wide variety of museum categories, including history, art, nature, science and technology, encyclopedias, marine, archaeology, ethnology, and culture, among others. Museums, especially cultural museums, have always been considered as cultural gatekeepers that advocate for the main concepts of cultural preservation and conservation [3], [4]. Cultural visits, for example, are often considered effective stimulants in raising cultural awareness, as well as strengthening the cultural identity of visitors. The inculcation of cultural values and concepts through the collection of material objects and storytelling methods, whether through information panels, dioramas, or tour guide explanations, provides a different dimension of experience and satisfaction based on direct and authentic experience. Due to their contextual nature and the provision of an experience involving physical and emotional aspects, as well as objects, museums provide an unforgettable experience for visitors [5]-[7].

The significance of museums in facilitating cultural exposure is well acknowledged. Museums serve as efficient mediums for reconstructing the historical and cultural identity of an ethnic group and community, thereby reflecting their collective heritage. Furthermore, they can serve as a means of facilitating cross-cultural learning and fostering mutual understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds. According to Brown, museums must possess the ability to effectively engage visitors through the provision of a culturally significant and historically rich experience, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects of heritage [8]. This necessitates the implementation of skillful packaging strategies. Furthermore, the utilization of this tool holds similar significance in the realms of education and academia, as it presents a viable substitute for hands-on and efficient learning environments. Museums have the capacity to acquire, condense, and disseminate historical and cultural knowledge to individuals such as public visitors, students, lecturers, and researchers who seek information [9], [10]. As an inseparable component and a forum for the reconstruction of historical, cultural, or natural identities, the development of museums in Indonesia reveals significant inequality. According to the Republic of Indonesia Data and Information Technology Center, the province of East Java has the most museums in Indonesia, with 64 museums [11]. The province with the fewest museums is West Papua Province, which has none, followed by Papua Province, which has two culturally oriented museums managed by Papua Province and Cenderawasih University. This is an essential issue because there are more than 250 traditional and tribal communities in Papua, each with its own culture and history, as well as extraordinary natural conditions [12]. Therefore, the growth prospects for new museums in Papua should be considerable. In addition to these two, museums can play an important role in presenting an overview of cultural diversity and executing the notion of Papuan culture preservation and conservation with professional administration and the availability of skilled human resources.

The Papua State Museum is the largest cultural museum in terms of infrastructure and the number of collections administered by the Papua provincial administration. In contrast, the Lokakultur Museum is administered by Cenderawasih University and has a smaller infrastructure and collection size. For example, the Papua State Museum has at least 3619 collections of cultural objects, divided into 10 types of collection classifications, including archaeological, historical, and ethnographic collections [13]. Despite its strategic location, this museum receives very few visits. According to literature, the obstacles faced include many collections that are minimally maintained and damaged, the unattractive arrangement of the museum space, the lack of adequate human resources, and concerns about location safety [13]–[15]. Meanwhile, the Cenderawasih Lokakultur Museum at the University has approximately 2500 cultural collections, mostly ethnographic collection grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, exploring the tribes scattered in the Agats region. Although this museum, in terms of visiting and maintenance, is slightly better than the Papua Province State Museum, challenges in structuring collections and providing tour guide services in the education section of the museum are still considered inadequate [16].

It is imperative to acknowledge that the current body of research on museum development in several contexts within Papua remains limited. The lack of allure as a topic and the uninteresting portrayal of museums, not only in Papua but also in Indonesia as a whole, has an impact on our limited understanding of issues in museums. In contrast to Dabamona's research, which discussed the arts and culture learning experience from the perspective of students visiting museums [17] or Gosal *et al.*, which explored aspects of interior and cultural education effectively implemented in Papuan museums, our main objective is to understand the challenges museums in Papua confront, focusing on their function, preservation, and conservation [13]. We argue that there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the problems faced in this domain, necessitating a deeper exploration of the perspectives and experiences of seasoned museum players. Our analysis will highlight challenges within museum management aspects and from the external environment, as well as actions toward the improvement of innovations for museums. The specific research questions arising from this objective are: What are the challenges faced by cultural museums in Papua? Taking these perspectives is crucial to understanding the development of Papuan culture and helps draw conclusions that are holistic in value. Moreover, the dimensions of the discussion also highlight the transformation of

museums into Papuan culture and the viewpoint of ideal conservation and preservation values based on the experiences and views of the group. This is also important, considering that the research results can identify weaknesses and challenges faced by museums in Papua, as well as formulate effective suggestions for solving problems. On the other hand, research is also useful in providing criticism and input on the role and function of museums in Papua regarding the culture and values inherent and integrated into the museum.

2. Method

The research method used is qualitative with an interpretive approach. We believe that interpretive approaches encompass social theories and perspectives that uphold a view of reality as socially constructed or as having meaning based on actors' interpretations of events. Data collection employs several techniques, such as in-depth interviews, field observations, and literature studies relevant to the research. Participants in the study were divided into four main groups: museum staff, cultural-related agencies such as the Papua Provincial Culture Service and the Papua Cultural Conservation Center, academics from Cenderawasih University, and teachers with experience in cultural tour studies, taking their students to study art, Papuan culture, and local Papuan content in accordance with the school curriculum. The total number of participants in this study was 16. Thirteen participants were Papuans, and the remaining participants were not Papuans. It is essential to note that, despite not being Papuans, they have an in-depth understanding of the research topic because they are senior employees who have worked in the museum, education, and culture sectors in Papua for over 20 years. The technique used for determining participants is snowball sampling. Although Woodley *et al.* note that this technique is biased, under-representative, and has limited subject diversity [18], the authors argue that it is difficult to identify participants who are representative of the data population and understand the context specifically. If possibilities exist, it will take time to identify them individually.

The selection of initial participants was based on their formal positions, roles, responsibilities, and experience in the field of museum management or utilization. The initial participants who have completed their interviews will be asked whether they know other people with the characteristics referred to for research purposes and will recommend the next participant who is relevant and understands the research issue. The length of in-depth interviews ranges between 15 and 20 minutes per participant and is recorded using a digital recorder, transcribed, and stored in cloud storage and a password-protected external hard disk. Participants were also provided with a consent form detailing concise research information and inherent participant rights. To protect the privacy of participant information, the researchers ensured anonymity. The analysis process uses an inductive approach to allow participant meaning to emerge from the data and involves a systematic but iterative process to develop a thematic analysis of empirical data [19]. Thematic analysis offers an applicable and theoretically flexible approach used to organize and analyze qualitative data [19]. The organized thematic network 'aims to facilitate the arrangement and depiction of these themes' [20]. In the analysis process, the author follows a phase guide to conduct thematic analysis, including (1) Data introduction; (2) Preparation of initial codes; (3) Theme development; (4) Review of themes and their relationships; (5) Theme refinement; and (6) Writing based on data analysis [19], [20]. In addition, to simplify the process of coding data analysis, researchers used the help of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) NVivo 12 software. Other data collected, such as observation notes and additional documents, are also useful for enhancing research credibility. This is because this research employs triangulation by using multiple information sources, which helps clarify the research findings.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of the data analysis revealed numerous significant themes derived from the coding results, elucidating the role of museums as agents of cultural development. Additionally, a comprehensive depiction of the obstacles encountered by museums was provided. The theme is thoroughly examined by dissecting it into many sub-themes.

3.1. Aspects of Collection and Space Management

The primary themes highlighted by participants were aspects of collections and space management depicted in two cultural museums in Papua. This provides an overview of current issues as well as the ideal scenario that cultural museums in Papua should have. Due to a lack of attention to collection objects and inefficient use of space, such as space management, great expectations for the function of the museum as a place that conserves and preserves past culture for the present and the future cannot be separated from the elements of the collection and the concept of the exhibition space [21], [22]. Both of these are the main factors that contribute to bridging visitors' understanding and imagination in capturing symbolic meaning and interpreting cultural collections. From the coding results, for example, the dominant aspects emerged as part of the collection and space management aspects, namely (1) Material management for the collection of cultural objects and (2) Aspects of space and meaning of cultural objects. These two things are very important because they are the main elements that help enrich the visitor's experience while visiting.

3.1.1 Material management for the collection of cultural objects

In the management of material collections of cultural objects, many participants expressed the opinion that the collections displayed in the two museums were not attractive enough to draw visitors. This issue has been previously discussed by Gosal *et al.* [13] who described the condition of the museum, noting that it is not very attractive, including the current collection materials. For instance, during the interview, one participant commented that the museum collection displayed by the State Museum of the Papua province has not been well-maintained:

“Most of the collections in the museum are neglected. Feathers of Cenderawasih bird have fallen out while the statues have lots of rotten wood. If visitors look carefully, the background of the fabric in the collection glass is all worn, dusty”. (Interview with participant 3).

This response also indicates weaknesses in the management of collection materials, particularly in maintaining the preservation of the collections through proper conservation, handling, storage, and display methods. From the results of observations, the Cultural Museum of Papua Province has many collections, the majority of which are poorly maintained, and some are even damaged. However, many of these collections are still forced to be exhibited. For visitors, this not only affects the aesthetic value of objects and cultural experiences but also influences the overall impression of the museum and its collections. One of the participants (participant 5), a teacher, for example, said that the material collection is vital and an integral, inseparable part for visitors to learn and understand civilization and the values contained and attached to culture. Cassar previously emphasized that museum collections play an important role in helping decipher history and forming concepts about culture through appropriate presentation processes [23]. Participant 11, a teacher, admitted that this discouraged him from visiting or proposing a Cultural Museum of Papua Province tour to the school board. Moreover, participant 15, who is also a teacher, illustrated similar concerns and admitted that he was not interested in bringing his students there as it had not applied rolling collection. Many of the collections they owned were no longer suitable for display. The teachers choose to keep teaching their students in school and assume the value of cultural knowledge gained will not be much different. The participants considered the details of cultural objects to be very helpful in providing information and descriptions of certain ethnic cultures, such as colors, motifs, or shapes. While the Cenderawasih University Cultural Museum is quite well maintained, according to some participants, it is slightly better in terms of maintenance than the Cultural Museum of Papua Province. However, many supporting facilities for object materials, such as information panels, look damaged and unreadable. The maintenance of the collection adds value to the decision to visit. One participant, for example, described that he preferred to go to the Cenderawasih University Cultural Museum because the collection was better and well-maintained than the Cultural Museum of the Papua Province. The fundamental aspect in understanding the management of cultural object collections is maintaining and preserving cultural heritage for future generations. The management must also ensure that the collection is protected, enhanced, developed, documented, and made available to the general public in accordance with ideal museum standards.

3.1.2. Aspects of space and meaning of cultural objects

In terms of space and the interpretation of cultural objects, some participants also felt that the rooms in the two museums did not effectively convey the essence of cultural artifacts. Inadequate lighting and the constant flow of visitors were identified as factors limiting their ability to fully appreciate the collections. For instance, one participant commented that the museum rooms lacked proper lighting arrangements. Meanwhile, other participants critiqued the cultural museum of Papua province:

“The first room (entrance) was already a bit dark. Moreover, the 2nd floor is no different. The museum does have mystical impressions, only in the museum room the impression is not mystical, but the lighting is indeed bad.” (Interview with participant 7).

Effective illumination of both spaces and artifacts is pivotal in creating an engaging atmosphere that captivates visitors and encourages interaction with intriguing objects. Participant 9 underscored the spatial limitations of the Uncen Local Cultural Museum, expressing concern over closely displayed collections that impede movement. The need for caution arises due to the lack of protective coverings for some objects, hindering active exploration of the cultural exhibits. Spatial optimization remains a challenge for both museums, evident in underutilized areas. The Cenderawasih University Cultural Museum's audiovisual room is seldom activated, typically responding to specific requests, such as school visits. Similarly, the Cultural Museum of Papua Province, despite its size, predominantly opens only two rooms, leaving various spaces, including temporary exhibition areas and libraries, unused due to damage. Rooms like the security room and cafeteria, deemed crucial for the museum's role as a cultural education center, appeared vacant during the researchers' visit. According to several participants, these rooms, including the security room and cafeteria, are integral to supporting the museum's function as a cultural education center for introducing Papuan culture. Participant 8, an expert in Papuan cultural and linguistic matters, emphasized that cultural education activities, including programmed events for school students, were conducted in these rooms several years ago. These events involved observations, explanations in the auditorium, and hands-on activities like drawing tribal patterns. However, over subsequent years, these valuable spaces fell into disuse, as explained by the participant during the interview:

“Our experience was normal a few years ago. We thought maybe the museum could maximize the use of space. Students are only focused in the main room (entrance) and auditorium. There are lots of rooms that should be usable, but somehow they cannot be used. After that, we no longer used that location and moved to another location.” (Interview with participant 11).

This indicates dissatisfaction with the utilization of spatial planning and the associated accessibility limitations. Participants' expectations regarding the benefits of museums, particularly in terms of space and collections for students, were deemed suboptimal. This impact creates a negative impression and influences the decision to revisit the museum. Another participant pointed out how this issue is exacerbated by the collection display technique, which has undergone almost no significant changes in each room. The participant elaborated that the initial experience of visiting the cultural museum of Papua province was intriguing. However, after returning for several years, there has been no alteration in the arrangement of the collections. During the interview, the participant further explained:

“I'm a bit confused by the way they organize the collection which remains the same. The first and last visits remained the same, there was an information panel but it was not clear and it was pretty much broken. The museum should also have a storyline in its collection. It can help visitors to engage in imagination while viewing the collection.” (Interview with participant 3).

According to the participant, this fosters boredom and diminishes the overall experience gained at the museum. Museums should enhance the visiting experience by presenting systematic stories through the exhibition of their cultural collections. Meanwhile, another participant (Participant 4) echoed the same sentiment, emphasizing that the museum's layout

does not offer a clear storyline. A well-structured storyline enables visitors to form a more engaging connection with cultural objects, as it supports the interpretation of meaning from various perspectives. In his writings, Nielsen argues for the importance of museums paying attention to the layout of exhibitions to stimulate visitor interaction and participation [24]. Essential for a comprehensive interpretation and fresh perspectives, the integration of interactive elements in museum exhibits fosters meaningful experiences. Visitor participation signals the encouragement of interaction, promoting active exploration and a participatory role as both observers and learners. Direct experiences with collectibles, facilitated by interactive presentations, sharpen critical thinking more effectively than information panels alone. Immersing visitors in the cultural stories behind artifacts is equally crucial, enhancing receptivity to new ideas. This interactive packaging not only engages but educates, offering a dynamic alternative to passive observation. Notably, the two museums under discussion lack audiovisual support facilities, such as viewing rooms or interactive buttons, relying solely on collection information panels—some of which are missing. The absence of interactive engagement, be it through sound, visuals, or touch, diminishes the overall value of understanding and enjoyment for visitors.

3.2. Museum image

For the participants, their perception of museums in Papua Province over the past few years is closely tied to the trend of museum visits. The more secure a location is, the more appealing it becomes to visit. The process of creating an image, for example, plays a crucial role in promoting the attraction of visitors to a community. According to Chovanová *et al.* and Cohen *et al.*, the brand image of a place or product, as perceived by consumers, has a significant impact on various aspects of consumer behavior, including decision-making, choices, satisfaction, recommendations, trust, and loyalty [25] [26]. Meanwhile, Amalia *et al.* propose that the formation of an image of a product can occur both before and after consumers travel [27]. The image received will help shape consumer perceptions, eliciting positive or negative responses to a place/product. In the interviews, most participants expressed that the image of both museums had not portrayed a positive picture, with safety and cultural representation identified as crucial aspects that should be fulfilled. For them, these aspects play a pivotal role in their decision to visit. During an interview, one participant specifically mentioned the security factor at the location of the cultural museum of Papua province, citing inconvenience due to the museum being used as a location for some individuals to consume liquor. Another participant emphasized the security situation in an interview, stating:

“How will visitors want to come to the place if there are many people who consume liquor around the museum. The access is too open, there is no security guard. So people enter arbitrarily”. (Interview with participant 12)

Participant 14, an educator who passes by the cultural museum of Papua province almost daily, acknowledged that safety has always been one of the primary considerations when taking students outside of school for educational purposes. Unfortunately, the museum cannot entirely guarantee these factors. He acknowledged that it was not difficult to identify individuals from outside the museum who entered the museum area while intoxicated. During the observation, one of the researchers also noticed several individuals consuming alcoholic beverages. Several participants agreed that the museum's location in recent years was uncomfortable and not conducive. Apart from frequent criminal activities in front of the museum, they considered the location of the museum to be directly at the gathering point for public and university student demonstrations. In recent years, the escalating political situation in Papua has led to an increase in demonstrations that often result in chaos. In addition to public roadways, demonstrators frequently use the museum yard as a congregating point. On the other hand, some participants believed that the Cenderawasih University Cultural Museum tends to be less safe for visitors. Despite a few participants encountering individuals drinking alcohol in the area, they emphasized that this was extremely rare compared to the cultural museum of Papua province. Additionally, a key concern related to the image of both museums is the aspect of cultural representation. Although both museums highlight Papuan culture, some participants perceived challenges facing the museums in this regard.

“If you look carefully, the characteristics of museums in Papua only focus on collections from a few places. Not all tribes have collections. This means that the existing collections (in the museum) are certainly not a full representation of Papuan identity as a whole. It is feared that there will be tribes who feel neglected and feel they are not important because they are not in the museum” (Interview with participant 9).

The challenge of capturing the material characteristics of cultural objects in Papua stems from the vast number of tribes, each possessing its own unique features and traits. Geertz previously asserted that the cultural identity of a society or community is established through a shared agreement [28]. This agreement becomes a defining factor in shaping culture as a representation of a community or society. According to Al-Ragam, cultural representation indicates that material objects emerge from social and cultural structures [29]. This implies that cultural representation plays a crucial role in shaping how meaning is understood and how the world is socially constructed and represented to be meaningful in the eyes of visitors. In Papua, for instance, there are over 250 identified tribes scattered across the island, many of which exhibit differences due to their division into seven customary territories [12], [30]. In the multifaceted context of Papua, tribal collections offer valuable glimpses into daily life, yet the assertion of representing a comprehensive Papuan identity confronts formidable challenges due to the intricate nature of the cultural landscape. The primary mission of the two museums in question, focused on culture preservation and conservation while serving as hubs for introducing Papuan identity, positions these institutions as cultural representation centers for data seekers. Interviews revealed a significant hurdle faced by the museums concerning the recognition of the distinct identity and characteristics of each ethnic entity in Papua. This challenge is compounded by limited and repetitive displays in both museums, preventing a holistic representation of the diverse cultures in the Papua region. The museums grapple with this challenge due to constraints in information about the tribes and complexities in obtaining objects in the field, encompassing issues of access and funding for cultural artifact acquisition. For instance, a participant shared during the interview that the cultural objects at the Cenderawasih University Cultural Museum predominantly hail from the Asmat tribe and surrounding tribes, originally collected by the Rockefeller Foundation and later donated. The participant delved deeper into this insight during the interview, shedding light on the nuanced challenges faced by the museums in authentically portraying the cultural richness of Papua:

“It is very difficult to display all the collections of each tribe in Papua. Our tribes are many and scattered to settle in far inland. This is what makes our museums a bit trapped in the word representing Papuan culture, because each ethnic group is unique, including its social and belief system. Showing only a small part of course cannot be a whole reference.” (Participant 3)

For other participants, connecting the context of museums as cultural representations is easier when comparing them to museums in other provinces with fewer ethnic groups, such as in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, or Sulawesi. This aids the museum in the identification and collection of cultural objects.

3.3. Human resource capacity and moral responsibility of the museum

One recurring topic raised by participants concerns the constrained human resources of the museum. This involves two key areas: the quantity and proficiency of tour guides and curators and the management of cultural museums, with a focus on ethical and professional accountability.

3.3.1. Limited number and ability of tour guides and curators

In terms of the limited number and proficiency of personnel, the tour guide profession is predominantly highlighted by all participants. The participants interviewed generally portrayed the tour guide as a museum officer representative with in-depth knowledge who could explain the exhibits systematically and in an organized manner. Museum tour guides are also expected to interact pleasantly, actively engaging visitors in various age groups through a question-and-answer process. According to participants, this condition is not fully met in either

museum. Tour guides are typically provided by the museum upon visitor request, but the availability of these guides is sometimes limited. During initial observations of museum locations, for example, researchers did not find educational guidance officers, only regular museum staff on duty. In an interview, one museum staff member explained that there are limited educational guidance personnel, and visitors usually need to make an official request for their services. In another interview, one participant described the situation:

“We have limited educational guidance staff. Even those who were not in the tour guide position had to be transferred to that section because of demands. There are also those who have retired, sometimes we call back to help.” (Interview with participant 1).

Being a tour guide in a museum is a challenging occupation due to the need for comprehensive cultural expertise and the ability to present it in a captivating manner. Furthermore, the role of the tour guide lacks appeal as it primarily involves the continuous curation of cultural artifacts rather than being responsive to guest demands at all times. This notion is further supported by educators who had previously sought instruction during a study tour of the museum. Nevertheless, this also raises concerns over the proficiency in elucidating information and engaging with the tour guides. The duty of enhancing participants' comprehension is an inherent responsibility; therefore, tour guidance officers should ideally have a significant role in facilitating this process. The participants who indicated that the tour guide staff are vital to the value and experience received by visitors [31]. Huang *et al.* explained that the task of a tour guide is not only to be present to guide and accompany but to mediate the understanding of visitors [31]. The possession of cognitive interpretation is crucial in facilitating visitors' understanding of the historical significance and cultural value of events, individuals, and artifacts within cultural collections. Simultaneously, it can enhance the overall experience and serve as a source of inspiration for visitors by offering pertinent and verified information. During the course of the interview, a particular participant expressed discontent regarding the manner in which the museum tour guide provided responses.

“There are certain moments when our students critically ask about cultural collections and the scope of indigenous territories. The guidance officer did not seem to be able to explain in detail to our students' questions.” (Interview with participant 5).

Several other participants considered that the officer's ability was still not optimal because sometimes he only repeated reading the information panels on the collection objects. This is not effective and just wastes a lot of time for visitors. When they had the opportunity to receive educational guidance from officers during their visit, the researchers also found several moments where the education officers did not confidently explain the cultural collections. Furthermore, although they did not specifically emphasize the issue of curators, the participants commented on several aspects that were weaknesses in both museums, such as collection, maintenance, and presentation, which, in general, fall under the curator's authority as a competent person in this regard. Participants from the two museums in the previous interview explained that museums in Papua do not have curators. These tasks are generally delegated to staff who, although lacking curator qualifications, are considered capable. The majority of participants, for example, thought that the museum needed to be more active in collecting objects to increase the number of items on display. Although this task is not easy, the demand for renewing the collection to be displayed will provide freshness and a new atmosphere for the museum.

3.3.2. Museums with moral and professional responsibility

The cultural museums are expected to fulfill a significant role in terms of moral and professional duty by serving as organizations dedicated to the conservation and preservation of Papuan culture. Simultaneously, they are tasked with imparting knowledge and fostering understanding among visitors, particularly future generations. The moral obligation mentioned is intricately linked to the cultural background of Papua, which is experiencing a gradual erosion

due to the influences of industrialization and advancements in digital technology. Containing contemporary technological advancements poses challenges due to their unrestricted flow and lack of adequate filtration [32]. Museums serve as a valuable educational tool for the majority of participants, offering a means for the younger generation to engage in thoughtful contemplation of their heritage and cultural identity. The museum is morally obligated and responsible for displaying exhibits that align with the cultural values of the Papuan people. Moreover, the authors underscore the incomparability of the museum with other institutions due to its distinctive characteristics that have the potential to attract visitors at any given moment. Museums serve as a symbolic embodiment and public representation of a region and its inhabitants through cultural reconstruction and the presentation of interpretive exhibitions. One participant asserts that Papua hosts a substantial number of cultural events annually while recognizing the distinct advantages associated with museums.

"There have been a lot of cultural events, and that's good for us. But most of the emphasis is on elements of competition, such as dances. The time limit for the event is also only a few days, and we can only see it briefly. We can't also ask a lot or freely because there are too many visitors." (Interview with participant 5).

In contrast to other cultural events, such as cultural festivals or exhibitions that emphasize the element of entertainment, museums provide space and time for visitors not only to personally build relationships with cultural objects but also to reflect deeply on these cultural artifacts. This requires the museum to function not only as a cultural laboratory but also as an ethical laboratory to instill the moral values of Papuan culture that are good and appropriate for the community. Furthermore, the moral responsibility of the two museums, which is no less important for Papuan culture, is to assist in realizing efforts to preserve the nation's cultural heritage for future generations [17], [33].

4. Conclusion

Globally, museums face an ongoing imperative to innovate, striving to fulfill their multifaceted roles as not only repositories of knowledge but also as dynamic spaces for interactive engagement. Beyond serving as educational venues, museums are tasked with providing cultural learning experiences and aesthetic enjoyment as visitors engage with material collections within specific cultural contexts. This paper underscores that the primary challenge confronting the Cenderawasih University Cultural Museum and the Cultural Museum of Papua Province revolves around collection management, spatial constraints, and issues in the interpretation of meaning. In the complex process of interpreting meaning, a crucial consideration is how the collections in both museums effectively communicate and convey messages. The transformation of meaning not only influences the interpretation process but also shapes the interaction between visitors as they engage in discussions and inquiries about cultural meanings. To address these challenges and fulfill the museum's role as a representative of Papuan culture, leveraging digital technology emerges as a promising approach. Both museums can harness touchscreen QR technology and virtual or augmented reality to enhance visitors' experiences, creating diverse and authentic encounters. This technological integration not only enriches cultural significance but also mitigates potential harm to artifacts, serving as a valuable tool for documentation and cultural education. Additionally, the adoption of digital technology could contribute to optimizing space utilization, albeit potentially limiting the available area for visitors. However, it is crucial to acknowledge certain limitations, particularly in methodology. The use of a small sample size, consisting of only 16 participants, raises questions about the broader applicability of the findings to a larger population. Despite these constraints, the exploration of innovative solutions through digital technology highlights a potential avenue for overcoming challenges faced by these cultural museums.

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- Author contribution** : JD: Data analysis, rewriting ideas of discussion, writing and polishing the manuscript, and involvement in revision. SAD: Data analysis, rewriting idea of methodology and discussion, engaging in the revising process of manuscript.
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