

SPICE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN GEOTOURISM TRAIL

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Abstract

The presence of the geopark concept tends to focus on the conservation of the earth's heritage. To this relation, efforts are needed to integrate the earth's heritage with the cultural heritage of spices, especially in geoparks that are passed by the spice route through the development of geotourism routes. The purpose of this study is to design a geotourism route based on spice cultural heritage. An inventory and interpretation of the cultural heritage of spices is also carried out as a tourist attraction. The research was conducted from May to October 2021 with the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark, Indonesia, as the scope of the research area. The type of research data is qualitative data with primary data sources and secondary data referring to the research analysis unit. Primary data were obtained through indirect observations, online interviews, geographic information systems, online guided group discussions, and documentation. Meanwhile, secondary data collection was carried out by means of a desk study. The data analysis used included content analysis, map analysis, and qualitative descriptive analysis. In the design of the geotourism route, the spatial data obtained is then processed for data input, data management, as well as plotting and data conversion using geographic information system software and graphic design software. The integration between geological heritage and spice cultural heritage has resulted in the right geotourism path for the development of thematic tourism in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark. Spice-based geotourism routes have the potential to be applied in geoparks traversed by spice shipping lanes on a national and global scale.

Keywords: Belitong Geopark, Geotourism, Spice routes, Thematic route.

1. Introduction

The establishment of the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark on April 15, 2021 is the first step in a series of efforts to preserve the earth's heritage in the Belitong Island region and small islands around it [1, 2]. In addition to the geological diversity that includes the process and formation of Belitong Island, its relationship with biodiversity and culture is considered to play an important role in the realization of Belitong UNESCO Global Geoparks [3]. Located on a historic trade route known as the spice route, Belitong Island has been visited by various nations in the world as evidenced by the existence of cultural heritage that is spread across Belitong Island and its surroundings [4, 5].

Pepper as a leading commodity made Belitong Island traversed by trade routes and spice networks in the past and became an ideal medium of exchange equivalent to gold [6]. Besides pepper, there are other cultural heritages inspired by the spice route, including traditions (traditional clothes and dances), handicrafts (batik with sempur leaf motifs), culinary (Gangan Fish and Aik Secang), cultural heritage sites (Vihara Burung Mandi and Dewi Kwam Im Temples) [7]. The existence of the cultural heritage of spices is an attraction for tourists visiting the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark, so the East Belitong Regency government held the Exploration of the Enchantment of the East Belitong Spice Route in 2019 and 2020 [8-10]. The tourist attraction based on spice cultural heritage is able to trigger cultural preservation and create tourism destination identities, one of which is through the development of thematic tourism routes that are adapted to regional conditions [11, 12]. On the other hand, the geological, biological, and cultural diversity on Belitong Island and its surroundings is the basis for geotourism development that relies on aspects of conservation, education, and economic growth of the local community in supporting the realization of sustainable development [13].

Efforts to conserve the earth heritage of Belitong Island and its surroundings have been realized through its designation as UNESCO Global Geoparks. However, it is necessary to integrate the earth's heritage with cultural heritage, especially those related to the spice route. The integration of the two can be realized through the development of geotourism routes as the theme of tourism activities in geoparks. This study aims to inventory the cultural heritage of spices in Belitong UNESCO Global Geoparks and interpret it as a tourist attraction. In addition, mapping of its distribution is also carried out through the design of geotourism routes.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Spice cultural heritage as a tourist attraction

Cultural tourism makes several elements of culture as a tourist attraction which includes heritage, works of art, to community traditions which become the main motivation for tourists to travel [14]. Cultural heritage tourism involves tourist activities in the cultural landscape [15], it changes the paradigm from cultural heritage preservation to economic improvement [16]. Cultural heritage that can be used as a tourist attraction includes monuments, groups of buildings and sites with historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological, or anthropological

values [17]. Furthermore, cultural heritage that has the potential to be used as a tourist attraction is classified into object and intangible cultural heritage [18, 19].

Assessment of cultural heritage that has the potential as a tourist attraction refers to five main values, including symbolic, historical, informational, aesthetic, and economic values [20]. Cultural heritage values are useful for providing interpretation in tour guides to provide tourist experiences and cultural heritage conservation [18]. Spices are an inherent part of the cultural heritage of a place and the traditions of the local community, so that various stories of spices appear as cultural heritage of a place and make them a tourist attraction [12]. Spices are also a symbol and cultural identity in supporting the theme of a tourism destination. The link between tourism and spices triggers the theme of developing a tourism destination, including the identity of the community or country, marketing of tourism destinations, diversification of tourism products, interpretation and management of spice tourism attractions, recognition of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; development of tourism products (ecotourism, geotourism, agrotourism, historical tourism, and village tourism) [11].

2.2. Geotourism and thematic tourism trails in geopark

Geoparks Geotourism is described as tourism services and facilities for tourists to gain knowledge and understanding of the geology and geomorphology of a geological site [21]. Geotourism attraction is something that has unique geological processes and forms supported by tourism elements that are the destination of tourist visits [22]. Geological sites that have the potential to become geotourism attractions are assessed based on the concept of a geotourism box, including process, form, tourism, geobase, geohistory, and geo+ [23]. The development of tourist routes is a strategy for disseminating tourists to marginal areas and offers several opportunities including entrepreneurship development, increasing tourism demand, creating jobs, preserving culture, increasing community capacity, and infrastructure development [24]. The development of tourist routes basically involves three spatial elements, namely tourist entrances, tourist service centres, and grouping of tourist attractions [25]. Tourist routes are classified into five patterns which include single destination patterns, en-route patterns, base camp patterns, regional tour patterns, and travel patterns [26].

3. Methods

3.1. Object of the study

This qualitative research was conducted for six months starting in May to October 2021 and was carried out at the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark (Fig. 1). Research subjects include actors who are directly involved in the implementation of tourism in Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark, including government institutions in Belitong Regency and East Belitong Regency in charge of culture and tourism, Belitong Island Geopark Management Agency, Belitong cultural preservation community, and attraction managers. In addition, there are also actors who indirectly contribute to the implementation of tourism at the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark, namely geologists from the Geological Agency and tourism experts from the Center for Tourism Planning and Development.

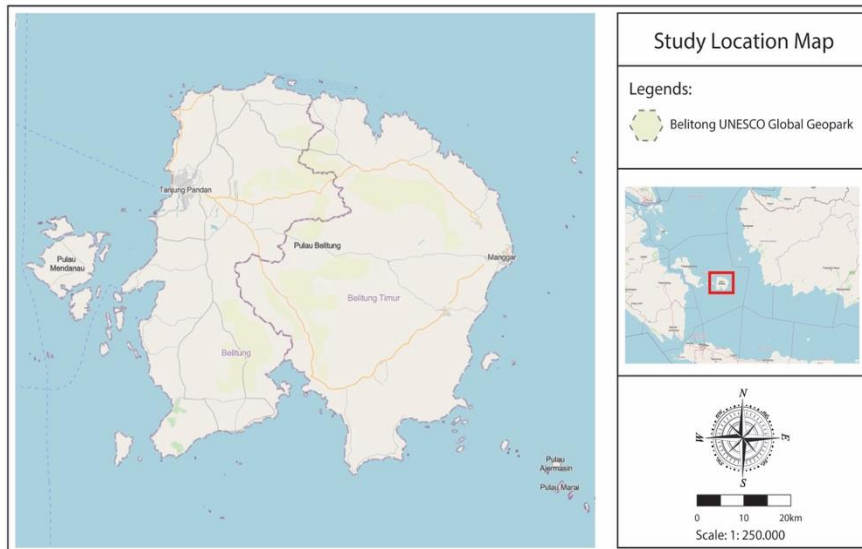


Fig. 1. Map of the research site.

3.2. Types and sources of data

The type of data used in this study is qualitative data obtained through indirect observations, online interviews, and focused group discussions with participants of the study. The data regarding the cultural heritage of spices and tourist attractions were obtained directly to the research subjects by conducting indirect observations, positioning, and documentation. Sources of research data in the form of primary data and secondary data that refers to the research objectives, namely the inventory and assessment of cultural heritage of spices and geotourism route design.

Data sources for the inventory and assessment of the cultural heritage of spices include an overview and interpretation of the cultural heritage of spices in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark. The assessment of the cultural heritage of spices as a tourist attraction is carried out through the identification of cultural heritage values based on symbolic, historical, informational, aesthetic, and economic values [20]. While the design of the geotourism path in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark refers to the spatial model of tourism destinations in which there are geotourism paths, including spatial elements of tourist entrances, tourism zoning, tourism service centres, route circulation, and tourist attractions [25, 27]. Also identified the need for the development of geotourism paths that include attractions, accessibility, and amenity [28].

3.3. Data collection

Primary data were obtained through indirect observations, online interviews, geographic information systems, online guided group discussions, and documentation. The indirect observation technique provides an assessment and documentation of the cultural heritage of spices and tourist attractions, while online interviews are conducted in a structured and in-depth manner with related institutions in charge of culture and tourism at the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark. The online focused group discussion technique was used to determine the

theme of the spice-based geotourism trail at the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark. In addition, geographical positioning is also carried out in determining the coordinates of the cultural heritage of spices and tourist attractions in designing geotourism routes. Meanwhile, secondary data collection was carried out by means of a desk study which aims to collect data and information from various policy documents, literature, and previous research regarding the cultural heritage of spices and geotourism routes.

3.4. Data analysis

This research uses content analysis and map analysis methods and is equipped with qualitative descriptive analysis methods. Qualitative descriptive analysis method was used to analyse the perspective of research subjects related to the cultural heritage of spices through online interviews, guided group discussions, and documentation. In designing a geotourism route, the data and spatial information obtained are then processed for data input, data management, as well as plotting and data conversion using geographic information system software (Esri ArcGIS and Google My Maps) and graphic design software (Adobe Illustrator). The data and information obtained in the research are then compared and tested against various existing concepts and theories, through the stages of qualitative analysis developed which include data analysis before being in the field, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

Belitung Island is astronomically located at 107°31.5' - 108°18' East Longitude and 2°31.5' - 3°6.5' South Latitude. On the world map, it is known as *Billitonit* with a diameter of +79km East-West and a diameter of +77km North-South. Administratively, Belitung Island consists of Belitung Regency and East Belitung Regency which is bordered by the Gaspar Strait in the west, Karimata Strait in the east, the South China Sea in the north, and the Java Sea in the south. The entire island of Belitung reaches 4,800 km² with an altitude of 500 meters above sea level. Neighboring areas on Belitung Island are the main market potential, both for foreign tourists and foreign tourists, such as cities/regencies on Bangka Island, Sumatra Island, Java Island, Kalimantan Island, to tourists from Singapore and Malaysia. In addition to residents, domestic tourists and foreign tourists visiting neighboring cities/regencies can be a source of market for Belitung Island tourism through joint marketing development efforts and integrated tourism product development across cities and regencies.

The design of geotourism routes needs to pay attention to the geographical conditions of the research area and the policy studies that have been carried out which aim to facilitate the design of geotourism routes. Regional tourism is one of the efforts in analysing the geographical conditions of the research area which is synthesized with local tourism development policies [29]. The tourism zoning includes aspects of the tourism area along with its area coverage, service centres, and tourism development targets. The regional aspects of tourism make it easier for stakeholders to develop tourism according to the potential and characteristics of the region [27, 30]. Referring to the local government policy on Belitung Island regarding the Tourism Master Plan, there are 17 tourism areas consisting of seven tourism areas in Belitung Regency and ten tourism areas in East Belitung Regency.

Meanwhile, service centres as places of concentration for tourism services for tourists visiting Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark are set in Tanjungpandan and Manggar (primary service centres) as well as Tanjung Kelayang, Kelapa Kampit, and Pantai Punai (secondary service centres).

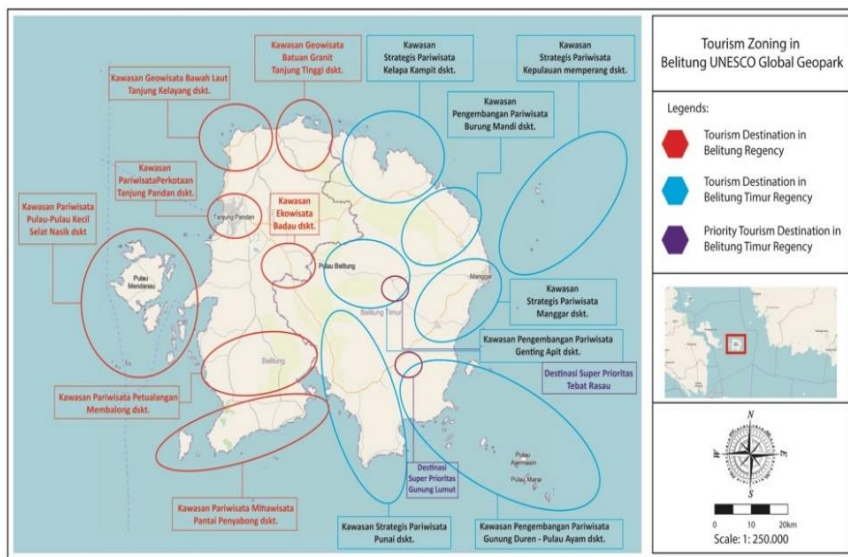


Fig. 2. Tourism area in Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark.

The entire tourism area in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark has different development targets that are tailored to the physical conditions and tourism potential of each region. In Belitung Regency, the trend of tourism development is directed at *geoheritage* and *cultural heritage*. This is because the Belitung Regency area has a geological diversity of germanium stones located both on land and on the seabed, such as the Tanjung Kelayang Underwater Tourism Strategic Area and the Tanjung Tingi Granite Rock Geotourism Development Area. Meanwhile, the tourism area in East Belitung Regency is directed at developing cultural tourism based on the identity of Belitung Island. These areas include the Manggar-Hantung Strategic Area with the target of developing educational tourism based on distinctive culture and nature, as well as educational recreation based on ex-tin mining land, and the Kelapa Kampit Strategic Area with the target of developing tin history tourism.

The division of tourism development targets in tourism areas in Belitung UNESCO Global Geopark provides diversity and unique tourist attractions that are able to create added value for tourists while exploring geotourism routes. In addition, geotourism routes are also able to contribute to the economy. The diversity of tourist attractions found on the geotourism route is able to provide experiences for tourists and have the opportunity to improve the economy of the local community [31, 32].

After determining the tourism area in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark, the next step is to take an inventory of geological or-based tourist attractions *geosite*. Overall, there are 34 *geosites* scattered in the Belitong UNESCO Global

Geopark, 22 *geosites* are in Belitung Regency while the rest are in East Belitung Regency. The determination of the location coordinates of 34 *geosites* in Figure 3 refers to 17 *geosites* that have been recognized by UNESCO, 13 *geosites* based on the study of the Geological Agency, and 4 *geosites* that will be proposed by the Belitung Island Geopark Management Agency to UNESCO. *Geosites* that have been designated by UNESCO have advantages compared to *geosites* other and are designated as superior *geosites*, this is due to the existence of supporting facilities for the sustainability of tourism activities such as interpretation boards, tour guides, eating and drinking facilities, to homestays. *Geosites* that are supported by tourism facilities can be designated as *superior* *geosites* or primary geotourism attractions [23].

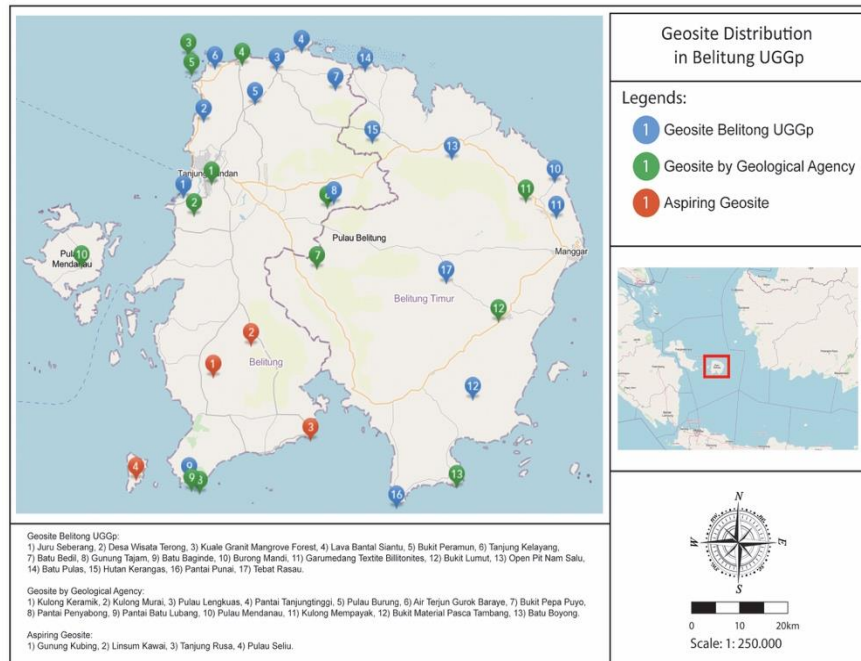


Fig. 3. Geosite distribution map in Belitung UNESCO Global Geopark.

The existence of the distribution of geosites is a benchmark in determining the geotourism path in Belitung UNESCO Global Geopark. The tendency of the geosite to be centered in the north of Belitung Island, it makes it easier to determine the path of geotourism. On the other hand, there are two separate geosites from Belitung Island, namely the Mendanau Island Geosite, Seliu Island Geosite, Lengkuas Island Geosite, and Burung Island. The delineation of the two geosites covers the entire land area of the island. The geotourism route on Mendanau Island and Seliu Island is classified as a single route around the island, while the Lengkuas Island Geosite and Burung Island are part of the geotourism route on Belitung Island.

The availability of accessibility is the main factor for connecting between geosites on Belitung Island. In addition, the distance between geosites and physical conditions are also considered in designing geotourism routes. There are three main

geotourism routes in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark, namely the northern geotourism route, the southeast geotourism route, and the southwest geotourism route. The northern geotourism route includes 16 geosites located in Tanjungpandan, Sijuk, Damar, and Kelapa Kampit sub-districts. While in the southeast and southwest geotourism routes, each has 8 geosites. Primary service centres are located in Tanjungpandan and Manggar, while secondary service centres are located in Tanjung Kelayang, Kelapa Kampit and Pantai Punai.

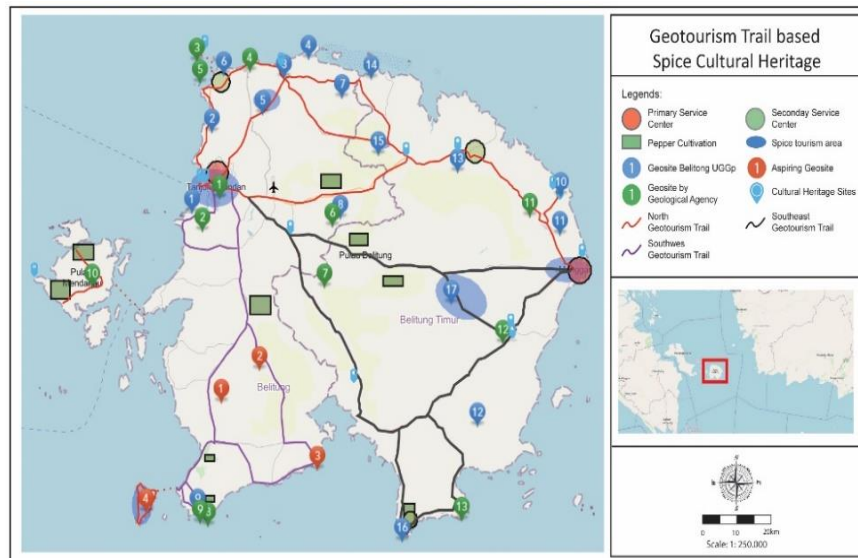


Fig. 4. Geotourism trail based on spice cultural heritage.

Tanjungpandan, Manggar, Bukit Peramun Geosite, and Tebat Rasau Geosite are areas that have a diversity of spice cultural heritage. Tanjungpandan and Manggar have been cities in the past on Belitong Island, this is evidenced by the remains of underwater sites around the waters of Belitong Island [33]. On the other hand, the existence of colonial heritage cultural heritage on the mainland strengthens that Tanjungpandan and Manggar became the center of government during the Dutch East Indies period. The current condition, the cultural heritage of spices in both cities can still be seen and enjoyed by tourists, especially culinary rich in spices. Some of the culinary delights at the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark have a distinctive spice taste that has been passed down from generation to generation. Culinary made from spices is still the flagship offered to tourists. In addition, the culinary spices in Belitong are able to strengthen the image of Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark as a spice tourism destination. Spices are able to provide a strong branding for an area that makes it a tourism destination [11]. Some culinary spices and their interpretations at the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Traditional Belitung spice culinary.

No	Spice Culinary	Interpretation
1	Aik Sepang Pucok Gelam (Melaleuca Leucadendra)	Herbal drink made from Sepang wood, shoots of gelam, and hot water which is good for health. This drink is efficacious to eliminate internal heat, ward off toxins/antitoxins, nourish internal organs, treat flatulence and diarrhea to prevent cancer.
2	Aik Sepang Jeruk Kunci (Limau)	Efficacious is the same as aik sepang pucok gelam only because it uses lime so it can be useful for maintaining blood pressure and nerve function
3	Aik Sepang (Caesalpinia Sappan I)	Aik Sepang is only made of two materials, namely Sepang wood and hot water. Broadly speaking, it has the same functions and properties as the Aik Sepang above.
4	Aik Sepang Asam Belande	drink mixed with tamarind or better known as rosella. Aik Sepang can be consumed every day until there is a wedding ceremony.
5	Aik Sepang Madu	Has the same benefits as other Aik Sepang.
6	Aik Sepang Sire Mira (Daun Sirih Merah)	Has many other benefits such as treating inflammation of the liver, lowering blood sugar levels, relieving joint pain, lowering blood pressure and eliminating vaginal discharge.
7	Gangan	is a typical Belitung dish made from yellow sea fish made with lots of spices.
8	Pulut Panggang	Pulut Panggang is a food made from sticky rice with a core in the form of fish sauce known as Sambal Lingkong. Pulut Panggang is sold along with various other wet cakes in East Belitung.
9	Mie Rebus Belitung	Is a typical Belitung food that is much liked by tourists outside Belitung Island. Mie Rebus Belitung is made from wet noodles which is a Chinese culture, potatoes as vegetables are part of European culture while the spices used such as cayenne pepper, red chili and shrimp are part of Belitung Island.
10	Lepat	Is a culinary made from sticky rice and can be consumed daily. Lepat is often served during the traditional Maras Taun ceremony. Usually, Lepat is enjoyed with rice chips and combined with a sauce made from coconut milk and brown sugar
11	Pais	Is a fish that is cooked and seasoned with spices that have been mashed then wrapped in simpor leaves or banana leaves and then burned
12	Renca Bumbu	Renca Indicates what type of food is served. In the spice plan there is usually turmeric, candlenut, chili, leaves, and various other spices

There is pepper cultivation throughout Belitung Island. The pepper is cultivated for generations by the local community and became a source of livelihood long before the existence of tin mining. Besides pepper, there are other spice plants found at the Bukit Peramun Geosite, and the Tebat Rasau Geosite. Spice plants are useful for traditional medicine and traditional foods (Table 1). Currently, the results of spices are used as geosouvenirs that can be found at the UMKM Gallery located in Tanjungpandan and Manggar.

5. Conclusions

The use of the spice-based geotourism route is to strengthen public insight and awareness in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark on the cultural heritage of spices that has existed for generations. The cultural heritage of spices, both tangible and intangible, provides a variety of tourist attractions in the Belitong UNESCO Global Geopark and has the potential to become a spice tourism destination. The integration between geological heritage and spice cultural heritage contributes to the development of geoparks in supporting the realization of sustainable development, especially geoparks traversed by spice shipping lanes on a national and global scale. It is suggested that future research put more focus on broader contexts and more various routes as making comparison between those in developed and developing countries.

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