

ANALYSIS OF CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES IN OPTIMIZING EDUCATION AND FACILITIES AT THE MULTATULI MUSEUM

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Abstract. *The Multatuli Museum in Rangkasbitung is a historical museum that serves as a means of public education about Eduard Douwes Dekker, anti-colonial thought, and the history of Lebak Regency. In its implementation, the museum still faces various obstacles and challenges in optimizing the quality of education and facilities for visitors. The study, entitled "Analysis of Obstacles and Challenges of the Multatuli Anti-Colonialism Museum in Optimizing Education and Facilities in Rangkasbitung," aims to identify the obstacles, challenges, and efforts made by the museum in improving the quality of education and museum facilities. This study used qualitative methods with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, documentation, and literature studies. The research informants numbered six people consisting of the head of the museum, the Lebak Regency Culture and Tourism Office, educators, museum staff, and visitors. The results of the study indicate that the main obstacles include the limited number of educators, the less than optimal quality of educators, limited supporting facilities, suboptimal accessibility for people with disabilities, and limited space capacity. Efforts undertaken include revitalizing the museum, increasing the capacity of educators, and developing more friendly and comfortable facilities for visitors.*

Keywords: *Multatuli Museum, optimization, quality of education, facilities, obstacles, challenges.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Museums play an important role in preserving cultural heritage, historical knowledge, and collective memory while simultaneously serving as educational and recreational destinations. (Heimlich, 2025) In recent years, museums have evolved from being mere repositories of historical artifacts into interactive learning spaces that facilitate public engagement, cultural understanding, and historical awareness. Educational tourism has gained increasing attention as travelers seek meaningful experiences that combine recreation with learning opportunities. Educational and historical tourism are important for preserving historical and cultural values, ensuring that such heritage remains recognized, understood, and passed on to future generations while fostering public awareness of the importance of Indonesian history. (Angita & Ritonga, 2025) As part of educational tourism, museums contribute significantly to informal learning by providing visitors with opportunities to gain knowledge through exhibitions, collections, interpretation programs, and various educational activities. Therefore, the effectiveness of educational services and supporting facilities has become an important factor in determining the quality of visitor experiences and the achievement of educational objectives. (Ozdemir and Zonah, 2025)

Educational tourism has gained increasing attention as travelers seek meaningful experiences that combine recreation with learning opportunities. Museums are among the most prominent educational tourism attractions because they provide direct access to historical, cultural, and social narratives. (Belal M, et al., 2021) Through exhibitions and educational programs, museums encourage visitors to understand historical events, appreciate cultural diversity, and develop critical perspectives on societal issues. Consequently, museums are expected not only to preserve artifacts but also to deliver educational experiences that are engaging, accessible, and relevant to diverse visitor groups.

One museum that plays a significant educational role in Indonesia is the Multatuli Museum located in Rangkasbitung, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The museum is unique because it specifically focuses on anti-colonialism and the historical legacy of Eduard Douwes Dekker, better known by his pen name, Multatuli. Through its collections and exhibitions, the museum presents narratives related to colonialism, social injustice, and the historical conditions of Lebak during the Dutch colonial period. Established on February 11, 2018, the museum is the first and only museum in Indonesia dedicated specifically to the theme of anti-colonialism. The museum was founded to connect contemporary visitors with the historical experiences of the people of

Lebak during the Dutch colonial period, while preserving the legacy of Multatuli. As an educational institution, the museum aims to increase public understanding of colonial history, the social conditions of Lebak and Banten, and the broader impact of colonialism on Indonesian society (Prihartini and Purnomo, 2024).

The museum is closely associated with Multatuli, a Dutch colonial official who served as Assistant Resident of Lebak in 1856. During his service, he witnessed abuses of power and exploitation of local communities under the colonial administration. His experiences inspired the publication of *Max Havelaar* in 1860, a novel that exposed the injustices of colonial rule and became one of the most influential anti-colonial literary works in history. Located in Rangkasbitung, where many of the events described in *Max Havelaar* took place, the museum serves as a site of historical memory that links the literary narrative of the novel with the lived experiences of local communities during the colonial era. Consequently, the museum has become an important educational tourism destination that promotes historical awareness, critical reflection, and cultural preservation. (Prihartini and Purnomo, 2024)

TABEL 1. MUSEUM VISITOR STATISTICS (2018-2025)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Visitor Target</i>	<i>Number of Visitors</i>
2018	-	30,949
2019	-	71,965
2020	-	9,748
2021	15,000	3,872
2022	15,000	26,405
2023	20,000	34,467
2024	20,000	28,735
2025	26,000	29,844

Source: Internal Museum Data (2026)

Visitor numbers at the Multatuli Museum fluctuated significantly between 2018 and 2025. The museum experienced substantial growth in its early years, increasing from 30,949 visitors in 2018 to a peak of 71,965 visitors in 2019. However, visitor numbers declined sharply in 2020 and 2021, reaching only 3,872 visitors in 2021, primarily due to restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the easing of restrictions, the museum gradually recovered, recording 26,405 visitors in 2022 and 34,467 visitors in 2023, exceeding the annual target of 20,000 visitors. Although visitor numbers slightly decreased in 2024 and 2025, the museum continued to attract a relatively high number of visitors, with 28,735 and 29,844 visitors respectively. These findings indicate that the museum remains an important educational tourism destination in Rangkasbitung; however, the fluctuation in visitor numbers shows the need for continuous improvements to maintain visitor interest and achieve future visitation targets.

The Multatuli Museum serves as an educational tourism destination by providing learning experiences through exhibitions, guided tours, and Multatuli collections. However, the museum faces several challenges in optimizing its educational services and facilities, including limited human resources, inadequate educational media, accessibility barriers, and infrastructure constraints. Educational tourism is influenced by the quality of educational services provided as well as the level of comfort of available facilities at the destination. The growing number of school visits and the diversity of visitor characteristics have increased demands on museum educators, while improvements in interactive learning media, foreign language communication, accessibility features, and visitor facilities remain necessary. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the constraints and challenges faced by the museum in optimizing its educational services and facilities, as well as the efforts undertaken to enhance its overall performance. The museum also has introduced a virtual tour platform, allowing visitors to explore parts of the museum remotely without leaving their homes and expanding access to educational content (Putra & Sarudin, 2025). Further development is needed to optimize interactivity and maximize its potential as a digital learning medium.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the constraints and challenges faced by the Multatuli Museum in optimizing its educational services and facilities. Qualitative research was selected because it enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, organizational conditions, and stakeholder perspectives within their natural settings. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for examining complex issues and understanding how and why certain challenges occur in service contexts.

The observation was done at the Multatuli Museum, located in Rangkasbitung, Lebak Regency, Banten Province, Indonesia. The museum was selected as the research site because of its unique role as an educational tourism destination that focuses on anti-colonialism, historical learning, and cultural preservation. In recent years, the museum has experienced increasing visitor numbers, particularly from educational institutions, creating new challenges related to educational service delivery and facility management. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were

conducted with key informants who possessed direct knowledge and experience regarding museum operations and visitor services. The informants consisted of the Head of the Multatuli Museum Unit, museum educators, museum staff, representatives from the Department of Culture and Tourism of Lebak Regency, and museum visitors. Data triangulation was used by comparing information obtained from different informants and data collection methods.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

TABEL 2. Data Interpretation

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Main Issues</i>	<i>Implications</i>
Educational Services	Limited educators, diverse visitor characteristics, limited interactive media, and language barriers.	Reduced effectiveness of educational delivery and visitor learning experiences.
Museum Facilities	Limited accessibility features, inadequate family-friendly facilities, restricted exhibition space, and insufficient visitor amenities.	Lower visitor comfort, inclusiveness, and service quality.
Museum Optimization Development	Need for facility improvement, educator capacity building, and modernization of educational media.	Revitalization is required to optimize the museum's educational and tourism functions.

Source: Internal Museum Data (2026)

A. Constraints and Challenges in Educational Services

One of the main challenges is the limited number of museum educators. The museum currently employs only two educators who are responsible for providing guided tours and educational interpretation to visitors. This condition becomes particularly challenging during school visits, where large groups of students require educational guidance simultaneously. As a result, other museum staff often assist in educational activities, creating additional workloads beyond their primary responsibilities.

Another challenge relates to the diversity of visitor characteristics. Museum visitors consist of students, university groups, local communities, domestic tourists, and international visitors. Each group possesses different levels of historical knowledge, learning preferences, and attention spans. Museum educators must therefore adapt their communication strategies to ensure that educational content can be understood by diverse audiences.

Foreign language competency remains an area requiring improvement. Although museum educators are able to communicate with international visitors, limitations in English-language proficiency may affect the effectiveness of information delivery. This finding is particularly important considering the museum's role as a tourism destination that attracts visitors from various countries.

Furthermore, educational media within the museum are still relatively limited. Several visitors noted the need for more interactive educational tools, including audio-visual presentations, documentary films, and digital interpretation media. Some collections also lack detailed explanatory information, reducing opportunities for visitors to fully understand their historical significance.

B. Constraints and Challenges in Museum Facilities

One of the most significant issues is the limited availability of accessibility facilities for visitors with disabilities. Facilities such as Braille information panels, wheelchair-accessible pathways, and audio-based interpretation systems are not yet fully available. Consequently, visitors with special needs may experience difficulties in accessing educational content and museum services. The museum also lacks family-friendly facilities, particularly child-oriented recreational spaces. Considering that a large proportion of visitors are school-aged children, the absence of dedicated play areas may reduce visitor comfort and engagement. This may also cause them to be bored during tour activities.

Another challenge concerns the limited capacity during large school visits, exhibition spaces often become crowded, affecting both visitor comfort and the effectiveness of educational activities. The restricted size of the museum also limits the opportunity to accommodate larger visitor groups. Several supporting facilities also require improvements. These include audio

systems used during guided tours, multimedia displays, public toilets, ticketing facilities, and staff working spaces. Museum staff reported difficulties in doing their job effectively due to the limited availability of supporting equipment and operational facilities.

C. Museum Revitalization as an Optimization Strategy

To address existing constraints and challenges, the Multatuli Museum and the Department of Culture and Tourism of Lebak Regency have planned a comprehensive revitalization program. A museum revitalization program is an effort to improve museum quality so it can better serve education, culture, and visitors. (Putro, 2019) Revitalization aims to improve both educational services and supporting facilities while strengthening the museum's role as a historical educational tourism destination. The program includes physical improvements to exhibition spaces, updates to museum storylines, and enhancements to visitor facilities. Modern museum management emphasizes the importance of creating engaging, accessible, and visitor-centered environments that encourage active learning and participation. By improving exhibition design, educational media, and supporting facilities, museums can provide more meaningful learning experiences while accommodating the needs of diverse visitor groups. In the case of the Multatuli Museum, the planned revitalization may contribute to increasing visitor satisfaction, expanding educational outreach, and reinforcing the museum's role as an important historical and educational tourism destination in Banten. Similar studies have shown that facility development, interactive interpretation, and improved accessibility can positively influence visitor engagement and the effectiveness of museum learning experiences (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2020; Black, 2021).

Planned developments include family-friendly facilities such as playgrounds, nursing rooms, expanded visitor areas, and improved interior design. Additional facilities for museum staff, including educator rooms, meeting rooms, and security facilities, are also expected to improve operational efficiency. This finding supports the interview results indicating that improvements in educational facilities, accessibility, and educator capacity are necessary to address existing operational challenges and accommodate future visitor growth.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings reveal that the museum faces several challenges related to educational service delivery, including a limited number of educators, diverse visitor characteristics, the need for improved foreign language communication skills, and limited interactive educational media. These factors affect the effectiveness of educational activities and the museum's ability to provide engaging learning experiences for a growing number of visitors, particularly school groups. In addition, the museum faces challenges related to supporting facilities, including limited accessibility features for visitors with disabilities, inadequate family-friendly facilities, restricted exhibition space, and insufficient visitor amenities. To address these issues, the museum and the local government have initiated a revitalization program focusing on facility improvement, educational media development, accessibility enhancement, and educator capacity building. The study concludes that revitalization represents an important strategy for strengthening the museum's educational function and improving visitor experiences, thereby supporting the sustainable development of the Multatuli Museum as a historical and educational tourism destination in Rangkasbitung. Furthermore, continuous collaboration between museum management and local government is necessary to ensure the successful implementation of revitalization initiatives. Strengthening human resources, improving educational media, and expanding accessible visitor facilities are essential steps toward enhancing the museum's role in historical education and educational tourism development.

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