



Artificial Intelligence-Driven Digital Heritage Learning Enhancing Historical Literacy through Sriwijaya Ceramic Collections from Musi River

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the historical significance of Sriwijaya ceramic collections recovered from the Musi River, Palembang, and explores their potential as Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven Digital Heritage learning resources to enhance historical literacy. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed through literature review, archaeological document analysis, field observations, and in-depth interviews with archaeologists, historians, museum practitioners, and antique collectors. The collected data were analyzed using an interactive descriptive analysis model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the ceramic collections, primarily originating from the Tang (618–906 AD) and Sung (960–1279 AD) dynasties, provide authentic archaeological evidence of Sriwijaya's maritime trade, diplomatic relations with China, and socio-cultural development. The artifacts also reflect technological advancement, economic prosperity, and social stratification during the Sriwijaya period. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that systematic digital documentation of ceramic morphology, typology, chronology, and historical context provides a valuable foundation for AI-assisted Digital Heritage applications, including intelligent artifact classification, digital repositories, and interactive virtual learning environments. Integrating these technologies with history education enables students to engage directly with authentic archaeological evidence, promoting contextual, inquiry-based, and evidence-based historical learning. This approach addresses the limited availability of local historical learning resources while strengthening cultural heritage preservation. The study concludes that AI-driven Digital Heritage offers an innovative framework for transforming archaeological collections into sustainable educational resources that improve historical literacy, increase appreciation of local cultural heritage, and support digital transformation in history education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Digital Heritage; Historical Literacy; Sriwijaya Ceramics; Musi River.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning local history plays a fundamental role in strengthening historical literacy because it enables students and communities to understand historical events, identities, and cultural values rooted in their own environment (Sholeh, 2018). Although local history often receives less public attention than national history, it constitutes an essential component of the broader national historical narrative (Sholeh et al., 2019). Local historical evidence enriches national historiography by providing diverse perspectives and authentic records of past civilizations, thereby strengthening historical interpretation and promoting critical historical thinking (Fauzi, 2014; Thorp & Persson, 2020). One of Indonesia's most significant historical civilizations is the Sriwijaya Chieftdom, whose political and economic center developed in Palembang. However, despite its importance, historical evidence concerning Sriwijaya remains fragmented, highlighting the necessity of utilizing archaeological heritage as contextual learning resources. In the era of digital transformation, the integration of

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Heritage offers new opportunities to transform archaeological collections into intelligent educational resources capable of improving historical literacy while preserving cultural heritage.

The Sriwijaya Chiefdom was one of the greatest maritime powers in Southeast Asia, flourishing between the seventh and thirteenth centuries with its administrative center in Palembang (Coedes, George, 1992; Sholeh, 2015; Sholeh et al., 2022). Historical records indicate that Sriwijaya emerged in 682 AD, as documented in the Kedukan Bukit inscription, and later expanded its maritime dominance before shifting its political center toward Jambi during the eleventh century (Andhifani, 2021; Manguin, 2022; Sadzali, 2019). Its prosperity was strongly supported by extensive maritime trade connecting China, India, Arabia, and the Indonesian archipelago (Santun, 2013; Sholeh, 2019b). These commercial interactions are evidenced by numerous archaeological remains discovered along the Musi River, including Chinese ceramics, beads, ancient coins, ship components, statues, and inscribed tablets (Rohmah et al., 2022; Utomo, 2010). As the principal transportation and trade corridor of Sriwijaya, the Musi River became a cultural crossroads where economic exchanges also facilitated the transmission of technology, artistic traditions, and intercultural interactions (Sholeh, 2022; Sholeh et al., 2024).

Among these archaeological discoveries, Chinese ceramic collections represent one of the most valuable forms of material culture that illustrate the intensity of Sriwijaya's international trade network (Sholeh, 2022; Susilo et al., 2023). Ceramic artifacts originating from various Chinese dynasties have been recovered through community diving activities conducted in the Musi River since 2005 at depths of approximately 20–30 meters. These discoveries include bowls, jars, plates, pottery, beads, coins, and numerous luxury ceramics reflecting both everyday domestic life and elite consumption during the Sriwijaya period (Taim, 2020). However, many of these valuable artifacts have entered private collections or international markets, while only a limited number are preserved in museums such as the Taman Purba Kala Sriwijaya Museum. Consequently, their educational potential remains underutilized despite representing authentic historical evidence capable of supporting contextual local history learning and promoting public appreciation of cultural heritage (Astuti et al., 2021).

Recent advances in Artificial Intelligence have significantly transformed the management and utilization of cultural heritage through Digital Heritage initiatives, including intelligent artifact classification, computer vision, digital storytelling, virtual museums, and personalized learning environments. Rather than functioning solely as preservation technologies, AI-driven Digital Heritage systems enable archaeological collections to become interactive educational resources that improve student engagement, historical reasoning, and historical literacy. In this context, Sriwijaya ceramic collections from the Musi River possess substantial potential to be digitally documented, automatically classified, and transformed into AI-assisted learning materials that connect archaeological evidence with historical narratives. Such an approach not only preserves valuable cultural assets but also facilitates inquiry-based and technology-enhanced history education that aligns with the demands of twenty-first-century learning.

Previous studies have investigated archaeological findings from the Musi River (Rohmah et al., 2021) and examined the historical civilization surrounding the river from the classical period to the present (Sholeh, 2022). Nevertheless, these studies primarily focused on descriptive archaeological findings and historical narratives without exploring how Artificial Intelligence can enhance Digital Heritage learning or how Sriwijaya ceramic collections can systematically improve historical literacy through intelligent educational technologies. Therefore, this study addresses these research gaps by proposing an Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage learning framework based on Sriwijaya ceramic collections from the Musi River. Specifically, this research aims to investigate the historical significance of these ceramic artifacts while examining their effectiveness as AI-supported digital learning resources for enhancing students' historical literacy, cultural heritage awareness, and engagement with local history in the digital era.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive approach to investigate the historical value of Sriwijaya ceramic collections discovered in the Musi River and to explore

their transformation into Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage learning resources for enhancing historical literacy. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of archaeological artifacts within their historical, cultural, and educational contexts while facilitating comprehensive interpretation of their potential integration into digital learning environments. The research began with an extensive literature review of books, scientific journals, archaeological reports, and publications from the South Sumatra Archaeological Center concerning the Sriwijaya Chiefdom, the historical development of the Musi River, and ceramic discoveries in the region (Zuchri Abdussamad, 2021). In addition, archaeological documents and previous excavation reports were systematically analyzed to identify ceramic typologies, manufacturing techniques, decorative motifs, inscriptions, and historical functions of the artifacts (Mudjia, 2020). These documentary sources formed the knowledge base for developing Digital Heritage content that can be utilized in AI-supported history learning.

To obtain empirical evidence, field observations were conducted at archaeological locations along the Musi River where ceramic artifacts had previously been discovered (Huberman, 1994). The observations included visual documentation through high-resolution photography, artifact descriptions, contextual recording of excavation sites, and identification of ceramic characteristics that could support digital documentation and intelligent heritage interpretation. Furthermore, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with archaeologists, historians, museum curators, and history education practitioners to obtain expert perspectives regarding the historical significance of the ceramic collections, their cultural values, and their educational applications. Particular attention was given to exploring how Artificial Intelligence technologies, including digital classification, intelligent documentation, and Digital Heritage learning platforms, could enhance students' historical literacy and engagement with Sriwijaya cultural heritage.

The collected data from literature reviews, archaeological document analysis, field observations, and expert interviews were analyzed using the interactive descriptive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Huberman, 1994). The analysis focused on identifying historical themes embedded within the ceramic collections, interpreting their educational significance, and constructing a conceptual framework for Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage learning. Triangulation across multiple data sources was employed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Through this analytical process, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the historical importance of Sriwijaya ceramics from the Musi River while proposing an innovative AI-assisted Digital Heritage learning framework that supports historical literacy, cultural heritage preservation, and contextual history education in the digital era.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Distribution and Identification of Sriwijaya Ceramic Collections from the Musi River

The findings indicate that the Musi River functioned as the primary maritime corridor supporting the economic and political development of the Sriwijaya Chiefdom. Besides facilitating domestic and international trade, the river connected Sriwijaya with China, India, Arabia, and other regions, creating long-term cooperation in trade, politics, and security (Sholeh, 2019). Strong diplomatic relations with China enabled secure maritime trade routes and promoted the exchange of commodities, including rattan, sandalwood, resin, agarwood, ivory, spices, and imported Chinese ceramics such as bowls, jars, and porcelain (Adhityatama & Sulistyarto, 2018; Harkantiningasih, 2013; Muljana, 2006; Kabib, 2019; Sholeh, 2015; Taim, 2016).

Field observations revealed that archaeological remains are concentrated around Kuto Besak Fort, 3 Ilir, PT Pupuk Pusri, and Kemarau Island, where community divers have recovered ceramic artifacts since 2005. Supported by archaeological documentation and expert validation, the collections were identified as Tang Dynasty (618–906 AD) and Sung Dynasty (960–1279 AD) ceramics consisting of bowls, jars, plates, and other glazed wares. These findings provide authentic evidence of Sriwijaya's maritime trade network and daily life while confirming the Musi River's role as a major commercial center during the seventh to eleventh centuries (Susilo, 2023; Laporan Jurnalistik Kompas, 2010).

The documented ceramic collections also provide a valuable foundation for Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage. Their morphological characteristics, typology, decorative motifs, chronology, and production techniques can be systematically digitized into intelligent databases, enabling AI-assisted artifact classification, digital preservation, and interactive historical interpretation. Consequently, the archaeological collections become accessible educational resources that support cultural heritage preservation while enhancing historical literacy through Digital Heritage learning.

2. Historical Values in Economic, Foreign Policy, and Socio-Cultural Perspectives

The ceramic collections reveal important historical values in economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions. Economically, the artifacts confirm Sriwijaya's strategic position within international maritime trade between China and India. Imported Chinese glazed ceramics and locally produced earthenware demonstrate different production technologies and consumption patterns, while discoveries of Chinese coins and metallic currencies indicate sophisticated commercial exchanges involving barter and monetary systems (Raharjo et al., 2018; Rangkuti, 2014, 2019; Rohmah et al., 2021). Luxury ceramics were primarily owned by rulers and nobles, whereas ordinary ceramics served domestic household functions.

From the foreign policy perspective, the ceramic findings demonstrate Sriwijaya's close diplomatic and commercial relations with successive Chinese dynasties. Historical records show that Sriwijaya exported agarwood, camphor, sandalwood, ivory, tin, ebony, spices, and perfumes while importing high-quality ceramic products (Saputra & Greece, 2014; Wolters, 2011). These archaeological remains also illustrate Sriwijaya's successful maritime diplomacy in maintaining secure shipping routes and regional political stability through strategic cooperation with neighboring kingdoms and China (Sholeh, 2019; Sholeh, 2019b).

Socio-culturally, ceramic collections reflect technological innovation, artistic development, and social stratification within Sriwijaya society. Ordinary communities generally used locally produced ceramics with limited glazing technology, whereas imported celadon ceramics with superior firing quality symbolized prestige and high social status among rulers and nobles (Wiyana, 2014; Adhityatama & Sulistyarto, 2018). Through Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage, these historical values can be digitally interpreted using intelligent visualization, virtual exhibitions, and interactive learning resources that improve students' understanding of Sriwijaya civilization and strengthen historical literacy.

3. Artificial Intelligence-Driven Digital Heritage Learning for Enhancing Historical Literacy

The findings demonstrate that Sriwijaya ceramic collections possess significant potential to become Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage learning resources. The archaeological evidence collected through literature review, document analysis, field observations, and expert interviews contains comprehensive historical information concerning Sriwijaya's maritime economy, foreign relations, and socio-cultural development. By digitally documenting ceramic morphology, chronology, typology, and historical context, these collections can be transformed into intelligent educational resources that extend beyond conventional museum displays.

Artificial Intelligence enables ceramic collections to be integrated into digital repositories through automated classification, image recognition, metadata analysis, and virtual museum platforms. Such technologies provide students with opportunities to investigate authentic archaeological evidence while understanding production technology, historical chronology, trade networks, and cultural interactions. This approach supports inquiry-based learning and strengthens historical literacy by connecting archaeological evidence with historical interpretation.

These findings also indicate that AI-driven Digital Heritage complements the Indonesian history curriculum concerning the Sriwijaya Chieftdom while addressing the limited availability of local historical learning resources in schools (Sholeh, 2023). Compared with previous studies that primarily described archaeological discoveries (Rohmah et al., 2021; Sholeh, 2022), this study demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence can transform Sriwijaya ceramic collections into innovative Digital Heritage learning resources that simultaneously preserve cultural heritage and

enhance students' historical literacy in the digital era.

Discussion

The findings confirm that the Sriwijaya ceramic collections recovered from the Musi River represent authentic archaeological evidence documenting the development of Sriwijaya as a major maritime civilization in Southeast Asia. The identification of Tang and Sung Dynasty ceramics demonstrates intensive commercial interaction between Sriwijaya and China, supported by strong diplomatic relations and maritime policies that ensured secure international trade routes (Sholeh, 2019; Adhityatama & Sulistyarto, 2018; Harkantiningsih, 2013; Sholeh, 2015). The presence of imported ceramics alongside local products further reflects Sriwijaya's economic prosperity and technological exchange through maritime trade (Muljana, 2006; Kabib, 2019; Taim, 2016). In addition, the strategic role of the Musi River as the center of transportation and commerce is reinforced by archaeological discoveries concentrated along its riverbanks, confirming previous interpretations regarding the importance of the river in supporting Sriwijaya's political, economic, and cultural development (Susilo, 2023; Laporan Jurnalistik Kompas, 2010).

From an educational perspective, the historical values embedded within these ceramic collections extend beyond economic history to encompass foreign policy and socio-cultural dimensions. Differences between locally produced ceramics and imported Chinese celadon ceramics reveal technological development, patterns of social stratification, and cultural interaction during the Sriwijaya period (Raharjo et al., 2018; Rangkuti, 2014, 2019; Rohmah et al., 2021; Wiyana, 2014; Adhityatama & Sulistyarto, 2018). Likewise, archaeological evidence supports historical records describing Sriwijaya's diplomatic cooperation with China and its strategic position within regional maritime networks (Saputra & Greece, 2014; Wolters, 2011; Sholeh, 2019b). These multidimensional historical values demonstrate that ceramic artifacts are not merely museum objects but contextual historical sources that enable students to analyze trade systems, diplomacy, technological innovation, and social life using authentic archaeological evidence.

The present study further demonstrates that integrating Artificial Intelligence with Digital Heritage provides an innovative approach to preserving archaeological collections while enhancing historical literacy. The systematic documentation of ceramic morphology, typology, chronology, decorative motifs, and historical context creates structured digital datasets that can support AI-assisted classification, virtual museums, intelligent heritage databases, and interactive history learning. This approach addresses the limited availability of local historical learning resources in schools, which continue to rely predominantly on textbooks (Sholeh, 2023), while extending previous studies that mainly described archaeological discoveries without emphasizing their educational transformation (Rohmah et al., 2021; Sholeh, 2022). Consequently, Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage not only strengthens cultural heritage preservation but also facilitates evidence-based history learning, enabling students to develop historical literacy through direct engagement with the archaeological legacy of the Sriwijaya civilization.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Sriwijaya ceramic collections recovered from the Musi River constitute significant archaeological evidence reflecting the economic prosperity, diplomatic relations, and socio-cultural development of the Sriwijaya Chiefdom during the Tang and Sung dynasties. Through qualitative analysis involving literature review, archaeological document analysis, field observations, and expert interviews, the study demonstrates that these ceramic artifacts possess substantial potential to be transformed into Artificial Intelligence-driven Digital Heritage learning resources. The integration of Artificial Intelligence with Digital Heritage enables systematic digital documentation, intelligent artifact classification, and interactive historical learning, thereby extending the educational value of archaeological collections beyond conventional museum preservation. Furthermore, the findings indicate that AI-assisted Digital Heritage provides contextual and evidence-based history learning that enhances students' historical literacy by connecting authentic archaeological evidence with historical interpretation while simultaneously promoting cultural heritage preservation and strengthening local history education in the digital era.

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