

RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MALANG REGENCY: WHAT ABOUT LOCAL COMMUNITY READINESS?

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Abstract. *The rural areas of Malang Regency have experienced enormous growth in tourism development in recent years. Villages in this region strive to create tourism-related activities by exploring their unique potential. However, the idea of emerging tourism development often originates from a limited number of sources, leading to many villages experiencing failures. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the level of community engagement in tourism development to address this issue. The assessment was conducted by measuring the local residents' perception of local involvement and government agencies in tourism development in six villages in Malang Regency. Furthermore, the survey method with descriptive statistical analysis was employed to measure the perception of society. The results showed that the community was eager to engage in the formulation of village government policies related to tourism development. They also expected the village to consult with the local community before making any decisions on the development of tourism in their area. Notably, the success and sustainability of tourism development were dependent on the full support of all parties, specifically the local community.*

Keywords: *rural tourism; rural tourism development; community readiness; sustainable development; sustainable tourism*

1. INTRODUCTION

The potential of tourism industry has long been realized in developed countries (Briedenham & Wickens, 2004; Siswanto, 2015), as a logical choice for economic development and expansion. The necessity to develop and put into action tourism initiatives as an alternative to the economic expansion and social recovery of rural areas is driven by the fall in economic activity, the restructuring of the agricultural sector, and the depleted rural industrialization. Meanwhile, tourism has long been considered as a potential catalyst for rural community development and socio-economic advancement (lorio & Corsale, 2010; Roberts et al., 2004; Siswanto, 2015). Every village in Indonesia has local potential managed as a business concept that works with the farmers community. As a result, rural tourism can contribute significantly to the growth of the economy.

Malang District is one of the largest rural areas in Indonesia and has enormous tourism potential with yearly increments. The successful tourist villages in Malang Regency, namely Pujon Kidul, Gubugklakah, and Sanankerto have received many acknowledgments and accolades from various parties. The recognition and gratitude owed to the villagers have effectively contributed to the enhancement of the economy, welfare, and overall quality of life within their communities, through the proficient development and management of tourism ventures.

However, there are several villages in the regency, specifically Petungsewu, Mulyorejo, and Sumberagung, that have not succeeded in developing tourism. It is worth noting that the failure of these villages occurred at various stages of development. According to Butler (1980), these failures may occur at the stages of exploration, engagement, development, consolidation, stagnation, reform, and degradation. The unsustainability of being a tourist village is due to different factors including the identification of the main purpose of tourism development, the lack of knowledge of the operator, the rise of boredom among tourists, the inability to manage resources, better local policies, and the emergence of inhibitory factors (George et al., 2009; López-sanz et al., 2021).

The failure of rural tourism development can also be caused by the lack of support from the local community. Meanwhile, the local community is an important component of the concept of rural tourism, promoting the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being of tourism (Mancini et al., 2003). The community provides a platform for tourists to experience local cultural activities and create a level of familiarity with visitors. As a result, the local community's participation is crucial to the successful growth of rural tourism (Jaafar et al., 2015; Thongma et al., 2011). Participating in such developments provides additional opportunities that empower people to mobilize their capacity in managing resources, make decisions, and control different activities (Campbell, 1999). Furthermore, strong community participation ensures that tourism development will benefit the local community without government planning and intervention. Participation can lessen the negative effects of tourism on rural communities, but necessary measures must be taken to prevent tourism from eliminating strong economic activities. (Jafaar et al., 2015).

To identify more tourism benefits to the local community, such as needs, initiatives, and opportunities, model development should begin with public awareness. The majority of countries have adopted the concept of community-based or rural tourism as an empowerment method to enhance local engagement in development efforts. (Manaf et al., 2018). Achieving sustainable tourism objectives necessitates striking a balance between all stakeholders in the tourism industry. It is crucial to promote social equity, ecological integrity, and economic milestones for all operators involved to ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry (Seba, 2011). In addition, various relationships of dependency and interest from operators can encourage effective collaboration in creating tourism development (Donohoe et al., 2015; Yodsuwan & Butcher, 2012).

However, developing the economy of society through the development of the concept is not easy. Various challenges can hinder the development of tourism in different stages closely related to the readiness of a community to engage in tourism. The absence of this critical element can result in failed tourism development. It is also imperative to comprehend the preparedness of the local community to participate in tourism activities. Therefore, this study ascertains the level of readiness of the community for involvement, as well as their perception of the role played by government agencies in promoting tourism development. It is expected to be a guide to the operators by

understanding the behavior of the local community in terms of readiness and awareness before planning, implementing, and developing tourism activities in rural community areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community-based tourism (CBT) is the main agent contributing to the power of rural areas. It brings great benefits to the local economy to improve the welfare of the people and reduce unemployment (Ibanescu et al., 2018; Manaf et al., 2018). Furthermore, the management and decision-making can convince the community of the need to integrate tourism into the local economy (Aas et al., 2005; Simmons, 1994; Wager, 1995). Community involvement in tourism provides more opportunities for host residents to benefit from tourism development (Sebele, 2010).

The process of involvement commences with an individual's interest in exploring a particular field. Meanwhile, the continued engagement of participants holds the potential for greater returns. This is because the involvement activities can yield more promising outcomes. (Li et al., 2020). (Li et al., 2020) It avoids negative sociocultural changes due to the development of rural tourism, as well as maximizes economic benefits (Idziak et al., 2015). In addition, it is an important factor to ensure the sustainability of community-based rural tourism (Ćurčić et al., 2021; Sakata & Prideaux, 2013; Salazar, 2012).

Emphasis is placed on maximizing community involvement in the development of rural tourism, apart from social, economic, and environmental factors (Sakata & Prideaux, 2013; Saufi et al., 2013). However, participation in tourism is not without any challenges due to a "sense of belonging" (Han & Hyun, 2018). It is very important to develop the readiness of the local community in participating in tourism activities (Mayaka et al., 2019). The involvement can be seen from two sides of the decision-making process and the benefits of tourism (Anggraheni et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, Scheyvnes (1999) stated that Economic (income-related and employment), psychological (taking into account social pride and self-esteem), social (cohesion and well-being of society), and political (the shifting of the balance between the powerful and the powerless, as well as the dominant and the dependent, for greater political equity) dimensions may all be integrated into the concept. Therefore, the local community needs to be involved in the management of rural tourism development to ensure that all community-related issues are considered during the development of the tourism (Lekaota, 2015).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Location

The study was conducted in six tourism villages in Malang Regency namely Pujon Kidul, Sanankerto, Gubugklakah, Petungsewu, Mulyorejo, and Sumberagung. Locations of the villages where this study was done are located over the eastern, western, northern, southern, and central regions of Malang Regency.

3.2 Instruments and Sampling

The study instrument consists of questionnaires that adopted questionnaires from Muganda (2009) and Tosun (2004). The questionnaire using a likert scale is a tool employed to assess the perception, attitude, or opinion of an individual or group concerning a social event or phenomenon based on the operational definition. Therefore, the questionnaire used a five-level Likert scale of 1 to 5, ranging from strongly disagree to agree, and the respondents involved 180 individuals from the successful and unsuccessful tourism villages areas.

3.3 Analysis Methods

The quantitative analysis method of data was conducted using SPSS (*Statistical*

Package for The Social Sciences) software. Descriptive statistics, specifically demographics, frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that 50% of males and females were successful, while 46.7% and 53.3% were unsuccessful. The majority of respondents were married 90% (successful) and 87% (unsuccessful) and in terms of education level, 40% (successful) and 52.2% (unsuccessful) had Senior High School. Furthermore, the respondent's income of Rp. 2.000.001 – Rp. 2.500.000 was classified in the income category for both areas, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents

Information	Successfully		Unsuccessful	
	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender:				
Male	45	50.0	42	46.7
Female	45	50.0	48	53.3
Marital Status:				
Single	8	8.9	1	1.1
Married	81	90.0	87	96.7
Divorce	1	1.1	2	2.2
Level of education:				
Elementary School	15	16.7	16	17.8
Junior High School	16	17.8	17	18.9
Senior High School	36	40.0	47	52.2
Diploma	2	2.2	-	-
University (Degree and above)	21	23.3	10	11.1
Level of Average Income:				
Rp. 250,000 – Rp. 500,000	14	15.6	13	14.4
Rp. 501,000 – Rp. 1,000,000	14	15.6	9	10.0
Rp. 1,000,001 – Rp. 1,500,000	9	10.0	12	13.3
Rp. 1,500,001 – Rp. 2,000,000	19	21.1	17	18.9
Rp. 2,000,001 – Rp. 2,500,000	27	30.0	33	36.7
Over Rp. 2,500,000	7	7.8	6	6.7

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

4.1 Perception of Community Involvement in Tourism

The perception of the community in tourism consists of seven (7) items, as shown in Table 2. The main item for the group of successful respondents is "Local communities should be consulted but the final decision on tourism development needs to be made by the official body" with the highest mean value of 4.278. The second is "local activities should be referred to after formulating the tourism policy" with a mean value of 4.178. The third is "the local community should take the leading role as an entrepreneur" with a mean value of 4.111.

The main perception for the unsuccessful group is that "the local community should be consulted when the policy is made" with a mean value of 4.311. The second item is "the local community should take the leading role as an entrepreneur" with a mean value of 4.289. The third is "the local community should be consulted but the final decision on tourism development needs to be made by the official body" with a mean value of 4.289.

Table 2. Perception of Local Residents of Community Involvement in Tourism Development

Items	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Local communities should take a leading role as entrepreneurs.	4.111	0.799	4.289	0.723
2. Local communities should take a leading role as workers at all levels.	3.889	0.879	3.922	0.782
3. Local communities should have a say in the process of making local tourism development decisions.	4.033	0.678	4.156	0.616
4. Local communities should be consulted when the tourism policy is in place.	4.178	0.696	4.311	0.574
5. Local communities should be consulted but the final decision on tourism development must be made by the official body.	4.278	0.619	4.289	0.566
6. The local community should not participate in anything.	2.167	0.927	2.478	1.173
7. Local communities should get financial support to invest in tourism development.	3.889	0.756	3.967	0.678

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

4.2 Perception of Government Agency Involvement

The perception of the role of a government agency consists of six (6) items. The main item for the successful and unsuccessful group is "The appointed and selected local agencies should jointly decide on the development of tourism in consultation with the locals" with a mean value of 4.200 and 4.278. The second item is "the selected local government should decide on the development of tourism" with a mean value of 4.044 and 4.089. Meanwhile, the third item is "an agency in the appointed local government should decide on the development of tourism" with a mean value of 3.833 for the successful group and the item. A committee selected by the public to manage and control tourism should decide on the development" with a mean value of 3.844 for the unsuccessful group.

Table 3. Perception of Local Residents of Government Agency Involvement in Tourism Development

Items	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf)/ Pariwisata and Culture (DISPARBUD) has to decide on the development of tourism in this village.	3.800	0.877	3.667	0.960
2. The elected local government should decide on the development of tourism .	4.044	0.652	4.089	0.744
3. Appointed local government agencies, which usually represent the central government should make decisions on the development of tourism.	3.833	0.768	3.833	0.753
4. The appointed and elected local government agencies must jointly decide on the development of tourism in consultation with the residents.	4.200	0.584	4.278	0.671
5. A committee selected by the public to	3.800	0.657	3.844	0.820

develop, manage and control tourism specifically should decide on the development of tourism.				
6. Market forces should decide on the development of tourism in the village.	3.667	0.821	3.722	0.821

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

4.3 Comparison by area

This comparative analysis analyzes the level of agreement between successful and unsuccessful areas. The mean analysis shows that the level of community involvement in tourism development was 3.792 (successful) and 3.916 (unsuccessful). Meanwhile, the mean values are compared by using an ANOVA analysis that shows the value $F = 3.535$ and a significance (0.062) above 0.050. Therefore, there are no different levels of suffocation between the two groups and the mean analysis of government agency engagement perceptions indicates that the mean values were 3.891 (successful) and 3.906 (unsuccessful). The result also shows the test value $F = 0.042$ and a significance (0.838) above 0.050. This means that there is no different level of affinity between the two groups.

Table 4. Comparison of Local Residents' Readiness of Successful and Unsuccessful Tourism Villages

Status	Community Involvement	Government Agency Involvement
Successful	3.792	3.891
Unsuccessful	3.916	3.906
ANOVA		
F-test	3.535	0.042
Significant	0.062	0.838

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

4.4 Locals' View of Their Role in Tourism Development

Many local communities believe that official bodies must make well-informed decisions in striking a balance between the needs of present and future generations. This is because they consist of substantial knowledge and expertise possessed in various domains. Moreover, the local population often has limited exposure to pertinent information, as well as low levels of literacy, which renders them ill-equipped to make informed decisions related to tourism. The decision should be final and conclusive as local people alone may fail to make informed decisions due to the limited ability to analyze issues associated with a lack of education. Furthermore, there will be an opportunity for the official body to hear considerations, and views from the local community.

The second most widely accepted local community should be consulted when the tourism policy is intact. This suggests an important idea where locals have the opportunity to express their views to policymakers. It also ensures policymakers get insights to provide policies consistent with the needs of stakeholders and address their concerns. The result is concerned with the participation of more stakeholders, including local people, in the industry, driven by a sense of commitment through their involvement in policy design. Furthermore, this approach fosters greater receptiveness on the part of policymakers towards the perspectives, requirements, inclinations, and apprehensions of the local population.

The presence of a diverse range of individuals from the local community can prevent policymakers from favoring the interests of the government. However, this pertains to one of the most pressing issues concerning the local community alongside

tourism resources situated on land owned by the state for an extended period. Concerning the perception, the government is not involved in formulating policies that protect tourism resources. Moreover, it restricts the access of residents to related areas even though significant income can be generated.

4.5 Locals' Views on Who Should Make Decisions on the Development of Tourism Organizations

The largest mean score of selecting "agency of appointed and elected local government should jointly decide on the development of tourism in consultation with the locals". This is because the appointed government agencies are selected by the locals to represent the interests of the people. In addition, this increases transparency, accountability, and efficiency, as well as eliminating office malpractice and abuse, which is a rampant action among decision-makers.

Many locals reject the idea of officials being appointed by the district government. This perception arises because elected officials, as opposed to those appointed by the district government, are reliable people. The idea erodes corruption while ensuring the manifestation of fair decisions. Regarding the overall result, tourism will obtain more support from the locals to motivate their participation.

The second most selected mean score is 'the elected local government should decide on the development of tourism in this village'. The local community holds the view that elected leaders are typically better attuned to the requirements, apprehensions, and priorities of their constituents. However, from the existing response, there was a response that rejected the statement. This is because of the difficulty of making wise decisions on the issue of tourism development. Therefore, the officials are considered unsuitable for making such decisions on their own, unless they are jointly made with other professional people.

However, elected officials may sometimes make decisions that are imprudent due to a lack of education. This same rationale is cited by individuals who are not in favor of the notion of an elected committee. There is also a belief that these officials are perceived as political leaders inclined to promote their political interests, potentially hampering efforts to foster tourism in their region. The result is the slow awareness and recognition of the key role played by tourism development in job creation and the rise of the local economy.

CONCLUSION

The readiness of the local community is one of the main factors for the success of tourism development in rural areas. It is indispensable in achieving sustainable tourism and the activities of the population greatly contribute to the development of rural areas. The results show that the local people in the villages are willing and aware of the importance of their approval for tourism development. Meanwhile, there is no difference in the agreement of the locals between the six villages of successful and unsuccessful tourism villages. For suggestion, the village government should also engage the residents in every policy-making activity to fully support the development of tourism.

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