

Enhancing Human Resource Capacity for Sustainable Tourism Village Management in Ciamis Regency

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ABSTRACT

Tourism villages in Ciamis Regency, West Java, possess significant potential for sustainable tourism development. Nevertheless, village tourism managers encounter numerous challenges, including limited comprehension of sustainability principles, insufficient environmental management, lack of access to financial and human resources, and constraints in strategic planning. This qualitative study, conducted through observations, interviews, and document analysis, investigates these challenges and evaluates the effectiveness of a capacity-building training program tailored for tourism village managers. Grounded in community engagement theory, the program emphasized participatory learning, innovation, and collaborative governance. The findings demonstrate that the training enhanced managerial competencies in sustainable tourism development, fostered innovation in tourism product design, and improved stakeholder engagement. The integration of local wisdom, environmental conservation, and community empowerment emerged as key components in building competitive and sustainable rural tourism destinations. The study contributes to the academic discourse on sustainable rural tourism and highlights the strategic role of targeted training and community involvement in achieving long-term development goals.

Keywords
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Introduction

Tourism plays a pivotal role in Indonesia's economic development, particularly within rural areas. The tourism village (*desa wisata*) model has been recognized as a strategic initiative capable of generating local income and improving community livelihoods [1]. Scholars have argued that tourism villages have substantial potential to enhance socio-economic conditions, especially when managed using sustainable and participatory approaches [2]-[4].

Ciamis Regency, located in West Java Province, currently lists 57 officially registered tourism villages. These villages are characterized by unique natural and cultural assets with considerable potential for sustainable tourism development. Nevertheless, local tourism village managers encounter several significant obstacles in optimizing human resource management. Key among these challenges is the limited comprehension of strategic planning and sustainable tourism practices necessary to foster long-term development [5].

Furthermore, shortcomings in the identification of village potential, the lack of effective partnerships with stakeholders, minimal promotional efforts, and insufficient development of tourism attractions have hindered tourism growth. These constraints contribute to low tourist visitation rates, which in turn negatively impact local income and community welfare [6][7].

To overcome these challenges, strategic and collaborative measures are needed. These include improving managerial knowledge of sustainable tourism development, conducting in-depth assessments of village potential, enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration, intensifying tourism promotion, and innovating visitor attractions. Prior research suggests that targeted training and capacity-building programs are effective tools for equipping tourism managers with the necessary skills to implement sustainable tourism strategies [8][9].

In response, a community engagement initiative has been planned in collaboration with the Ciamis Regency Government and STIABI Tasikmalaya. This initiative will consist of a structured training program aimed at enhancing the capacity of tourism village managers. The program will focus on sustainable tourism management, human resource development, stakeholder collaboration, and strategic promotion, thereby enabling tourism villages to better utilize their resources and improve their competitiveness in the tourism sector.

Through this program, it is expected that tourism villages in Ciamis will achieve greater levels of development and deliver broader economic and social benefits to their communities. Ultimately, sustainable tourism development will not only improve community welfare but also position tourism as a central pillar of rural economic growth in the region.



Fig. 1. Group photo with the Head of the Tourism Office of Ciamis Regency, faculty members from STIABI Tasikmalaya, and tourism village stakeholders

Methods

This study is grounded in community engagement theory, particularly the framework developed by Arnstein [10] and further expanded in contemporary community-based participatory research (CBPR) models. Community engagement, in this context, refers to the process of collaborating with local stakeholders to identify problems, co-design solutions, and build capacity for sustainable development [11].

The engagement activity in this study involved the co-development and implementation of a capacity-building program aimed at empowering tourism village managers. By engaging the community through participatory training, the research adheres to the principles of mutual respect, co-learning, and long-term commitment to capacity building [12]. The training program was structured to reflect the "collaborative participation" stage on the ladder of community engagement, wherein both academics and community stakeholders work together to share knowledge and solve practical problems [13]. This collaborative approach ensures that the community is not merely a subject of study but an active partner in the development process.

The primary data for this research was obtained directly from tourism village managers in Ciamis Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture the depth of experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by community members involved in tourism village management. This aligns with the principle that qualitative inquiry seeks to understand social phenomena from the perspective of the participants [14]. Data collection in qualitative research can be conducted through various methods, including Observation, Interviews, and Documentation. This study primarily utilized semi-structured interviews and participant observation during the training sessions provided to tourism village managers. Observations were carried out in a natural setting during community training activities to gain insights into

real-time practices, interactions, and engagement. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted to explore participants' understanding of sustainable tourism, the challenges they encounter, and their expectations for future development.

Results and Discussion

A. Challenges of Sustainable Tourism Management: Strategies for Effective Governance

Tourism is one of the economic sectors with great potential to drive local development, especially in rural areas such as Ciamis Regency, West Java. The tourism villages in Ciamis have unique characteristics and significant potential for sustainable tourism development. However, tourism village managers in Ciamis face various challenges in implementing sustainable tourism management. One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding of the concept and principles of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism management requires managers to balance environmental, economic, and social aspects in the development of tourism destinations.



Fig. 2. A Lecturer in Historical Tourism on village tourism governance.

Tourism village managers often struggle to integrate these aspects into their management policies and practices. They also face difficulties in managing natural resources and the environment. An increase in tourist visits, if not properly managed, can negatively impact the environment. Managers must ensure environmental conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources to keep the destination enjoyable for future generations.

Another challenge is limited access to funding and skilled human resources. Developing tourism infrastructure, providing training for managers and the local community, and promoting tourist destinations require significant investment. Tourism village managers often have difficulty securing adequate funding and competent personnel to support sustainable tourism development.

To address these challenges, concrete steps are needed, such as enhancing understanding of sustainable tourism principles, developing sustainability-oriented management practices,

involving local communities in decision-making, and collaborating with relevant stakeholders. With coordinated and continuous efforts, tourism village managers in Ciamis Regency are expected to overcome challenges in sustainable tourism management and develop environmentally friendly, competitive, and community-beneficial tourism destinations. Sustainable tourism is not only about increasing tourist numbers but also about ensuring that tourism has a positive impact on the environment, economy, and local community.

To substantiate the discussion on the challenges faced by tourism village managers in integrating sustainable practices, managing natural resources, and addressing limitations in funding and skilled human resources. Tourism village managers often struggle to balance various interests due to overlapping regulations and policies, leading to conflicts in tourism management. This challenge is prevalent across many regions, including those surrounding the Borobudur Temple area, where managers face difficulties in aligning development with ecological justice principles [15].

The increase in tourist visits, if not properly managed, can negatively impact the environment. Sustainable tourism requires effective policies and oversight to mitigate adverse effects on local ecosystems. For instance, in Bali, the implementation of sustainable tourism programs faces challenges in aligning with the critical pillars outlined by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, emphasizing the need for sustainable management and environmental considerations [16]. Limited access to funding and skilled human resources hampers the development of tourism infrastructure and services. Despite the potential for tourism to accelerate economic growth in rural areas, the lack of competent human resources in tourism management, hospitality, and communication skills poses significant barriers [17].

Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach, including enhancing understanding of sustainable tourism principles, developing sustainability-oriented management practices, involving local communities in decision-making, and collaborating with relevant stakeholders. With coordinated and continuous efforts, tourism village managers are better equipped to overcome these challenges and develop tourism destinations that are environmentally friendly, competitive, and beneficial to the local community.

B. The Crucial Role of Training in Strengthening the Capacity for Sustainable and Innovative Development

Tourism has been recognized as an important sector in Indonesia’s rural economic development. Tourism villages have great potential to provide income sources for local communities. However, managers are often challenged in sustainably and innovatively developing tourism attractions. One solution to this challenge is capacity-building training for tourism village managers. These training programs aim to enhance managers' understanding and skills in developing sustainable and innovative tourism attractions.

Through improved capacity, managers can manage tourism destinations more effectively and offer more engaging experiences for visitors. Capacity-building training provides several benefits. First, managers gain a deeper understanding of sustainable tourism concepts and principles. They can integrate environmental, economic, and social aspects into destination development, ensuring long-term sustainability [18]. Second, training fosters innovation in destination management. Managers learn about the latest practices in the tourism industry, technologies to enhance visitor experiences, and strategies for introducing new and attractive products and services [19][20].



Fig. 3. Participants in the tourism village manager training in Ciamis engage in group discussions to solve tourism village-related problems.



Fig. 4. Participants in the tourism village manager training in Ciamis engage in group discussions to solve tourism village-related problems

In addition, training helps managers understand the importance of cooperation with stakeholders, including local governments, educational institutions, and tourism actors. Building strong partnerships enables greater support for destination development. Training sessions are

guided by facilitators who initiate discussions and provide feedback. The following is the training module used during the session held on Thursday, July 11, 2024, at Kraton Selagangga.

Table 1. Module Information

Package	**1**
Module	1.1
Learning Session	Training for Tourism Village Managers
Learning Hours	5 hours
Target Competencies	• Understanding the potential of village tourism: Managers should identify natural, cultural, and culinary attractions. • Marketing and Promotion Skills: Ability to create creative marketing strategies through various media. • Tourism Product Management and Development: Skills in managing resources and continuously innovating tourism products.
General Outcome	Managers can create unique tourism experiences, attract visitors through effective promotions, and manage tourism villages sustainably.
Specific Outcome	Managers are able to create unique tourism experiences, attract visitors through effective promotions, and manage tourism villages sustainably.

Thus, capacity-building training is crucial for improving tourism destination management. With enhanced understanding and skills, tourism village managers can develop sustainable and innovative attractions, bring greater benefits to local communities, and enhance their destination's competitiveness both regionally and globally.

Follow-up Plan

To ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the capacity-building program for tourism village managers in Ciamis Regency, the following follow-up actions will be implemented:

1. Post-Training Monitoring and Evaluation. Regular follow-ups will be conducted with participants to evaluate how the knowledge and skills gained from the training have been applied in managing their respective tourism villages. This includes site visits, interviews, and periodic progress reports.
2. Establishment of a Support Network. A communication forum or online community will be created to facilitate ongoing interaction among tourism village managers, trainers, and local government officials. This network will serve as a platform to share best practices, troubleshoot challenges, and collaborate on tourism initiatives.
3. Advanced Training Sessions. Based on the feedback from participants and the outcomes of the initial training, advanced workshops will be organized. These sessions will focus on more specific topics such as digital marketing, sustainable tourism certification, eco-tourism product development, and community-based tourism management.
4. Collaboration with Stakeholders. Efforts will be made to strengthen collaboration with local governments, educational institutions, private sectors, and tourism associations to provide ongoing technical, promotional, and financial support to the tourism villages.

By implementing these follow-up measures, it is expected that the managers of tourism villages in Ciamis will continuously improve their competencies and contribute to the growth of sustainable, competitive, and inclusive rural tourism.

Conclusion

The management of sustainable tourism in rural regions such as Ciamis Regency necessitates a holistic and strategic approach that integrates education, innovation, and community participation. This study confirms that village tourism managers face substantial challenges in adopting and operationalizing sustainable tourism principles. The implementation of a capacity-building training program, informed by community engagement theory, proved effective in enhancing knowledge, improving strategic planning, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders. The program enabled participants to understand and apply sustainable tourism practices more comprehensively, particularly in environmental conservation, economic development, and cultural preservation. Furthermore, the training facilitated innovation in tourism products and strengthened local networks for collaborative governance. It is recommended that future initiatives include continuous mentoring, cross-sectoral partnerships, and institutional support to ensure the sustainability and scalability of rural tourism development efforts. This research underscores the critical role of educational interventions and participatory frameworks in empowering rural tourism managers to create resilient and competitive destinations.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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