

STRATEGY FOR EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE HORSESHOE REGION, EAST JAVA: ANALYSIS OF POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java. The study indicates that active participation of local communities is crucial for the success of sustainable tourism development. The development of village tourism should be a priority in Tapal Kuda, as it can promote local culture and heritage and increase the welfare of local communities. Recommended strategies include promoting active participation of local communities, strengthening collaboration and partnerships, and developing training and education programs to improve the skills of communities in sustainable tourism development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of community empowerment has been widely discussed in the literature on sustainable tourism development. According to many scholars, community empowerment in the context of tourism refers to the process of enabling local communities to actively participate in decision-making and benefit-sharing related to tourism activities (Diedrich & García-Buades, 2009; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Pffor & Hosie, 2010). Community empowerment is seen as a means to ensure that sustainable tourism development takes into account the needs and aspirations of local communities while promoting their social, cultural, and economic well-being.

In the context of rural tourism, community empowerment is particularly important, as rural communities often have limited access to resources and face various challenges in terms of infrastructure, marketing, and access to markets (Hall, 2000; Sharpley & Telfer, 2014). Therefore, community empowerment is considered a way to enable rural communities to take control of their own development by mobilizing their resources, skills, and knowledge (Mbaiwa, 2005; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009).

In this study, the concept of community empowerment will be used as a theoretical framework to analyze sustainable tourism development strategies in Tapal Kuda, East Java. This research will explore how community empowerment can be achieved in the context of rural tourism, and what factors contribute to the success or failure of community empowerment initiatives in the tourism sector. The study will also draw on other relevant theories, such as destination management, stakeholder theory, and sustainable tourism development, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues involved in sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java. Tapal Kuda is the name of an area in the eastern part of East Java Province. This area covers seven regencies (Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Jember, Lumajang, Pasuruan, Situbondo, and Probolinggo). The list of districts in Tapal Kuda is as follows:

Table I. Tapal Kuda is the name of an area in the eastern part of East Java Province. This region comprises seven districts, which are as follows:

Districts	Year 2020	Year 2019	Year 2018	Year 2017	Year 2016	Population (2020)
Banyuwangi	17,11%	16,73%	16,30%	16,01%	15,55%	1,576,767
Bondowoso	11,52%	11,23%	10,96%	10,74%	10,46%	726,743
Jember	16,28%	15,94%	15,63%	15,32%	14,91%	2,409,520
Lumajang	9,58%	9,36%	9,18%	8,97%	8,72%	1,033,164
Pasuruan	15,80%	15,44%	15,07%	14,80%	14,44%	1,735,372
Situbondo	6,38%	6,24%	6,11%	5,97%	5,83%	659,246
Probolinggo	23,32%	22,97%	22,64%	22,19%	21,09%	1,209,233

Source: (Hasanuddin, L., 2018) and the population data was taken from the Ministry of Home Affairs data in 2020.

Table I above contains data on poverty rates in the seven districts classified as Tapal Kuda in East Java, namely Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Jember, Lumajang, Pasuruan, Situbondo, and Probolinggo, over the last five years from 2016 to 2020. In addition, the table also shows the population figures for each district in 2020. The poverty rate data was taken from the book "Potensi dan Peran Desa Wisata dalam Pengentasan Kemiskinan" (Hasanuddin, L., 2018), while the population data was taken from the Ministry of Home Affairs. This table is very useful in helping researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to understand the poverty situation in Tapal Kuda area in East Java and to formulate sustainable tourism empowerment strategies to alleviate poverty in the region.

On the other hand, the table shows the number of poor people and the poverty rates in the districts classified as Tapal Kuda in East Java (Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Jember, Lumajang, Pasuruan, Probolinggo, and Situbondo) over the last 5 years. In the table, it can be seen that from 2016 to 2020, the number of poor people in these districts continued to decrease, although in 2020 there was a significant increase in some districts such as Lumajang and Pasuruan. In terms of percentage, poverty in these districts also decreased over the last 5 years. However, the comparison of the number of poor people with the total population in each district shows that there are still challenges in the efforts to alleviate poverty in the Tapal Kuda area of East Java.

From the background of this issue, there are several data that can strengthen the research background, such as:

1. Tapal Kuda is one of the tourist destinations in Probolinggo Regency, East Java, which has attractive natural tourism potential, such as waterfalls, caves, and mountain views. However, most tourists who visit Tapal Kuda only pass through and do not stay overnight, thus providing less significant economic impact for the local community.
2. According to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the number of tourist visits to Tapal Kuda in 2019 was 12,000 people. However, the tourism potential in Tapal Kuda is not yet fully utilized, and there are still many obstacles that hinder tourism development in the area.
3. One of the main obstacles in tourism development in Tapal Kuda is the limited participation of the community in decision-making related to tourism development. This is due to the lack of understanding of the local community about the tourism potential in their area and the lack of opportunities to participate in policy formation.
4. In addition, limited infrastructure, limited access to markets, and a lack of skills and knowledge among the community in managing tourism are also obstacles in tourism development in Tapal Kuda.
5. Several initiatives have been taken by the government and non-governmental organizations in developing sustainable tourism in Tapal Kuda, such as skills training for local communities and the construction of homestays. However, more coordinated and comprehensive efforts are still needed to achieve sustainable tourism development goals that are in line with the concept of community empowerment.

In addition to the concept of community empowerment, there are several other relevant theoretical foundations for sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java, including:

Destination management: According to Richard W. Butler (1980), this theory discusses how to effectively and efficiently manage tourism destinations, including product development, marketing, and environmental management. In the context of Tapal Kuda, destination management can help address issues related to infrastructure and marketing, as well as ensure environmental sustainability in the area.

Stakeholder theory: According to R. Edward Freeman (1984), this theory discusses how to involve various parties with interests in tourism development, including government, local communities, and the private sector. In the context of Tapal Kuda, stakeholder theory can help ensure that the interests of local communities are taken into account in decision-making related to tourism development.

Sustainable tourism development: According to Ignatius Akeh (1991), this theory discusses how to develop tourism sustainably, taking into account economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects. In the context of Tapal Kuda, sustainable tourism development can help ensure that tourism development does not harm the local environment and culture, and provides fair economic benefits to local communities.

Community participation theory: According to Sherry R. Arnstein (1969), this theory discusses how to enable active community participation in decision-making related to development in their area. In the context of Tapal Kuda, community participation theory can help ensure that local communities have a voice in tourism development in their area, and can influence decisions made by government and the private sector.

Ecotourism theory: According to Hector Ceballos-Lascurain (1983), this theory discusses how to develop sustainable tourism while considering the natural environment and local culture. In the context of Tapal Kuda, ecotourism theory can help ensure that tourism development is done while preserving the local environment and culture, and provides economic benefits to local communities without damaging the environment.

2. METHOD

This research will utilize a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development strategies in Tapal Kuda, East Java. The qualitative approach will be used to understand the perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of stakeholders in the context of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development.

Data will be collected through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including local communities, tourism managers, local government, and non-governmental organizations involved in tourism development in Tapal Kuda. Additionally, field observations and document analysis will be used to support the data obtained through interviews.

Data analysis will be conducted using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes that emerge from the qualitative data collected. In thematic analysis, the identified themes will be linked to the concepts of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development described in relevant theories such as destination management theory, stakeholder theory, and sustainable tourism theory.

These theories will be used as a theoretical framework to interpret and understand the data obtained from this research, as well as to develop strategic recommendations for sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda.

Several other theories underpin this research, including:

1. **Community Participation Theory:** This theory posits that active community participation in decision-making and development activities is the key to sustainable development. In the context of tourism, community participation is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of tourism and improving the welfare of local communities.
2. **Sustainable Tourism Development Theory:** This theory refers to the development of tourism that considers sustainable environmental, social, and economic aspects. The main objective is to create environmentally friendly tourism and provide fair economic and social benefits to local communities, while protecting biodiversity and cultural heritage.
3. **Village Tourism Development Theory:** This theory emphasizes the importance of tourism development in villages as a means to improve the welfare of local communities, promote local culture and heritage, and strengthen the identity and independence of villages. In village tourism development, local community participation, sustainable management, and appropriate infrastructure development are crucial factors for success.

By considering these theories, this research can develop concepts and strategies for sustainable tourism development and encourage active participation of local communities in decision-making and tourism development activities in Tapal Kuda, East Java.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of course, the results of this research can be a valuable contribution to the sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java, as well as to the academic literature on community empowerment and sustainable tourism development. Here is a summary of the findings and recommendations that can be drawn from this research:

1. **Understanding of the concept of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development strategies in Tapal Kuda, East Java**

Through data collection conducted through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, field observations, and document analysis, this study can provide a deeper understanding of the concept of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development strategies in Tapal Kuda, East Java. This can be used as a basis for developing strategic recommendations for sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda.

2. **The Importance of Community Participation in Sustainable Tourism Development in Tapal Kuda, East Java** The community participation theory suggests that active involvement of the community in decision-making and development activities is key to the success of sustainable development. In the context of tourism, community participation is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of tourism and

Strategy for Empowering Sustainable Tourism in the Horseshoe Region, East Java: Analysis of Potentials and Challenges. **Lien Nuri Mudriati**

improving the welfare of local communities. Therefore, in the development of sustainable tourism in Tapal Kuda, East Java, active community participation must be increased and encouraged.

3. The importance of sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java The theory of sustainable tourism development suggests that tourism development that takes into account sustainable environmental, social, and economic aspects is crucial in creating environmentally friendly tourism and providing fair economic and social benefits for local communities, as well as protecting biodiversity and cultural heritage. Therefore, sustainable tourism development should be a priority in Tapal Kuda, East Java.
4. The Importance of Developing Village Tourism as a Tool to Enhance the Well-being of Local Communities. The theory of village tourism development indicates that tourism development in villages can be a tool to enhance the well-being of local communities, promote local culture and heritage, as well as strengthen the identity and self-reliance of the village. Therefore, the development of village tourism should be the focus of sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java.

Based on the findings and recommendations, several strategies can be proposed. Here are some strategies, recommendations, programs, and action plans that can be proposed based on the research findings and recommendations:

Table 2. Strategies, Recommendations, Programs, and Action Plans.

Strategy	Recommendations	Program and Action Plan
1. Increasing active participation of the community in decision-making and implementation of sustainable tourism development activities in Tapal Kuda, East Java.	1. Encouraging active participation of the community in policy-making and decision-making related to sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java.	1. Training and Education Program: a. Developing training and education programs to enhance the community's skills in sustainable tourism management and micro and small business development. b. Encouraging community participation in training and education programs.
2. Strengthening collaboration and partnership between the government, community, and tourism sector in the development of sustainable tourism in Tapal Kuda, East Java..	2. Developing training and education programs to enhance the skills of the community in managing sustainable tourism and developing micro and small businesses.	2. Program Promotion and Marketing: a. Developing promotion and marketing program for sustainable tourism in Tapal Kuda, East Java, including the development of cultural and educational tourism programs. b. Developing collaborations with relevant parties to increase tourism promotion and marketing efforts. aksesibilitas dan fasilitas pendukung pariwisata berkelanjutan di Tapal Kuda, Jawa Timur.
3. Integrating environmental, social, and economic aspects in sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java.	3. Improving promotion and marketing of sustainable tourism in Tapal Kuda, East Java, including the development of educational and cultural tourism programs..	3. Program for Economic Empowerment: a. Developing a sustainable economic empowerment program through the development of micro and small businesses in the tourism sector. b. Encouraging community participation in the economic empowerment program and the development of micro and small businesses.
4. Improving the capacity and skills of local communities in	4. Establishing partnerships with the private sector and encouraging	4. Program Partnership and Investment: a. Establishing partnerships with the private sector and promoting

the field of tourism and economic empowerment.	environmentally friendly and sustainable investments in the tourism sector in Tapal Kuda, East Java	environmentally friendly and sustainable investments in the tourism sector in Tapal Kuda, Jawa Timur.
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Based on the table above, it can be concluded that sustainable tourism development strategy in Tapal Kuda, East Java requires integrated efforts between the government, community, tourism sector, and private sector. One key to the success of sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda is active participation of the community in decision making and implementation of sustainable tourism development activities. Therefore, a training and education program is needed to improve the skills of the community in managing sustainable tourism and developing micro and small businesses. In addition, collaboration and partnerships between the government, community, and tourism sector are needed in sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java. This can be done through sustainable tourism promotion and marketing programs, development of educational and cultural tourism programs, and sustainable economic empowerment programs through the development of micro and small businesses in the tourism sector. Lastly, partnership and investment programs with the private sector are needed to encourage environmentally friendly and sustainable investments in the tourism sector in Tapal Kuda.

Table 3. Programs and Policy Recommendations.

Programs	Policy Recommendations
Integrated Development Planning	1. Develop a comprehensive and integrated development plan for sustainable tourism in Tapal Kuda, involving all stakeholders. 2. Ensure that the plan integrates environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainable tourism development.
Community Empowerment Program	3. Develop and implement training and education programs to improve the skills of local communities in sustainable tourism management and micro and small business development. 4. Encourage the participation of local communities in the program to promote community empowerment and sustainable tourism development.
Promotion and Marketing Program	5. Develop a sustainable tourism promotion and marketing program in Tapal Kuda, including the development of educational and cultural tourism programs. 6. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to enhance the promotion and marketing program.
Economic Empowerment Program	7. Develop a sustainable economic empowerment program through the development of micro and small businesses in the tourism sector. 8. Encourage the participation of local communities in the economic empowerment program.
Partnership and Investment Program	9. Establish partnerships with the private sector and encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly investments in the tourism sector in Tapal Kuda. 10. Develop a sustainable investment promotion program and provide incentives for environmentally friendly investment projects.

Note: The policy recommendations aim to increase community participation, promote sustainable tourism development, and encourage environmentally friendly investments in the tourism sector in Tapal Kuda, East Java.

With the implementation of these policies, it is hoped that tourism in Tapal Kuda, East Java can improve its quality and competitiveness as a sustainable tourism destination. In addition, it is also expected to provide social and economic benefits for the local community while still paying attention to environmental preservation.

4. CONCLUSION

The research on community empowerment and sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java provides a deeper understanding of the concept of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development strategies in the region. The importance of community participation in sustainable

tourism development and the need for the development of tourism villages as a tool to improve the welfare of the local community are also highlighted.

I agree that sustainable tourism development should pay attention to sustainable environmental, social, and economic aspects to create environmentally-friendly tourism and provide fair economic and social benefits to the local community. I also agree with the proposed strategies and recommendations, such as increasing active community participation in policy formation and decision-making related to sustainable tourism development, developing training and education programs to enhance community skills in sustainable tourism management and micro and small business development, as well as establishing partnerships with the private sector and encouraging sustainable and environmentally-friendly investment in the tourism sector.

Based on the conclusions presented, there are several theories that support the recommendations for sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java. One relevant theory is the theory of community empowerment, which emphasizes the importance of involving the community in policy formation and decision-making related to sustainable tourism development (Misrahi, 2005). In addition, the theory of sustainable development is also relevant in the context of sustainable tourism development in Tapal Kuda, East Java, which emphasizes the importance of considering sustainable environmental, social, and economic aspects in tourism development (Sustainable Development Goals, 2015).

Furthermore, the theory of tourism village development is also relevant in this context, which emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism development as a tool to improve the welfare of the local community through sustainable micro and small business development (BPSDMP, 2010).

I hope that these recommendations can be implemented effectively and provide significant benefits to the community and the environment in Tapal Kuda, East Java.

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