

RESEARCH ARTICLE



The Participation Level of The Local Community Towards Community-Based Tourism Development in Sopapei Tourism Destination, Ambon, Indonesia

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**Abstract**

Community-based tourism is owned and managed by the community and intended to deliver wider community livelihood benefits. Sopapei Beach is one of the tourist destination spots in Ambon, and it is visited mostly by local tourists. This area has six tourism spots, all managed by individual local communities. This study aimed to investigate the potency of developing community-based tourism in this area. The study was conducted between July – September 2023. Descriptive statistical analysis was used in this study. An interview, field observation, and literature review were used to obtain information on tourism activity and mechanisms in Sopapei Beach. A purposive sampling method was used to collect the informant to be interviewed. The SWOT analysis was used to develop strategy management for community-based tourism (CBT) development possibilities. The result shows that most informants claim that Sopapei is an attractive tourist spot with a fascinating marine view, a friendly atmosphere, a nice beach, and attractive culinary dishes. There was a small probability of conflict potency between the local tourism owners. The CBT management approach was a possibility to reduce the conflict potency. Participatory of the local community in the local community in tourism was considered fair. SWOT analysis proposes 13 management strategies for developing CBT in Sopapei Beach.

Keywords: coastal community, development strategy, management strategy, people participation, SWOT analysis

1. Introduction

The coastal and marine tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing global tourism sectors [1-3]. Coastal and marine tourism has been defined by The International Coastal and Marine Tourism Society as including recreational activities that involve traveling away from one's residence, which has as their host to the marine environment and the coastal zone [2]. The Indonesian tourism sector's performance has been indicated by an increase in the number of foreign tourists since 2009. In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism stated that the government had reached the target of 12 million jobs in the tourism sector because of the ease of investment and increase in the number of tourism businesses [4]. Tourist arrivals increased from approximately 8 million visitors in 2013 to more than 14 million by 2018 [5].

Maluku Province is widely known as a thousand-island province since approximately 1.388 islands are found in this area, and 99.71% are classified as small islands [6]. Ambon is a small island with fascinating coastal and marine environments that magnetize tourists, local, regional, and international [7]. Tourism development in Maluku Province and Ambon is particularly slow compared to other tourist destinations, such as Bali, Senggigi Lombok, Wakatobi, and other major tourist destinations.

Sopapei Beach is a tourist destination on Ambon Island in Suli Village, Central Maluku Regency, Indonesia. The local community owns and operates six tourism spots in this area, and potential conflicts arise based on this management (personal communication). Information on Sopapei tourism is limited; only studies on the economic aspect [7] and

visitors' perceptions [8] are available. For better development, research should be conducted on this tourism destination.

Despite some challenges and barriers to community-based tourism (CBT), development has gained momentum, especially in the developing world. This is because it is considered a viable tourism development option to attain socioeconomic and environmental conservation tourism [9-12]. A study on the participation level of the local community in CBT development in Sopapei Beach aims to analyze the possibility of implementing CBT to improve tourism management, including community empowerment, economic benefits to the local community, and protection of the environment.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Description of the Study Sites

One of the tourist destinations situated in Central Maluku District is Sopapei Beach close to Natsepa Beach. The Sopapei Beach is not popular enough compared to Natsepa Beach but provide natural beauty, white sandy beach, attractive marine environment for snorkling, swimming, and canoeing [8]. This area is close to Ambon City and become an alternative tourism site apart from Natsepa. The research was conducted in Sopapei Beach, Suli Village, from July to September 2023 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Sopapei tourist destination site.

2.2. Data Collection

A total of 40 informants were selected purposively [13] for this study. To answer these questions, a close questionnaire [14] was distributed to the informants. Field observations were also conducted to observe the tourism conditions *in situ*.

2.3. Data Analysis

The potency of CBT analysis is based on five criteria: Planning, organizing, implementation, controlling, and evaluation [15]. The analysis was performed according to the formula proposed by Joshi et al. [16]. The PI was then classified into five categories (Equation 1), from very low participation to very high participation, using a Likert scale [16]. Table 1 lists the categories of PIs.

$$PI = \frac{Tot_s}{Max_s} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

Where PI is participation index (%), Tot_s is total score, Max_s is maximum score.

Table 1. Participation index category classification

No.	Participation index/PI Range (%)	Category
1	0 ≤ PI < 20	Very low participation
2	20 ≤ PI < 40	Low participation
3	40 ≤ PI < 60	Fair participation
4	60 ≤ PI < 80	High participation
5	PI ≥ 80	Very high participation

2.4. Management Strategy

SWOT analysis approach, a qualitative and descriptive method [17,18], was utilized to design a strategic management plan for community-based tourism development at Sopapei Beach. This analysis focuses on four components: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, categorized into two dimensions. Strengths and weaknesses refer to internal attributes of the subject being analyzed, while opportunities and threats pertain to external factors. IFAS and EFAS approaches were used to determine strategic planning for Sopapei Beach [19,20]. SWOT analysis helps evaluate these elements to identify potential advantages and challenges for a project or organization.

3. Results

3.1. Coastal Community Socio-Economy Life

The total population of Suli Village, where Sopapei Beach is situated, was 12,642 people; 51.75% were female, and 48.25% were male. According to the village database, community occupations vary among fishermen, farmers, civil service workers, unskilled workers, small traders, and the self-employed. Table 2 presents the job classification and percentage of each classification.

Table 2. Job classification of the people of Sopapei Beach, Suli

No.	Job classification	Number of people	Percentage (%)
1	Fishermen	614	5.05
2	Farmers	1,853	15.23
3	Civil services	2,654	21.82
4	Unskilled workers	4,800	39.46
5	Small traders	790	6.50
6	Self-employed	1,452	11.94
	Total	12,163	100.00

Tourism employment can be categorized into two levels depending on its involvement in or contribution to the tourism supply side. Front offices in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tourism information offices, aircraft, cruise lines, resorts, and shopping outlets provide direct employment because their employees are in contact with tourists and cater to tourist demand. Tourism also supports indirect employment in activities such as restaurant suppliers

and construction companies that build and maintain tourist facilities, necessary infrastructure, etc [19,20].

The relationship between education and tourism is interesting due to the significant role of tourism in tourism. Education specifically tourism education shapes the workforce, the managers, the policymakers, and the consumers involved in tourism [21]. Based on the informants selected, 71.40% had senior high school backgrounds and 15.70% had undergraduate backgrounds. The proportion of those education levels was not considered appropriate enough since tourism needs special education related to tourism.

The number of communities involved in tourism activities in Sopapei Beach is considered very low. Tourism at Sopapei Beach is primarily owned and operated by the local community, particularly by families. Some small traders participate in the business indirectly, but the income they receive from their activities is considered low. Further analyses are required to elucidate this aspect.

Table 2 needs to provide information specifically on jobs related to tourism. Still, field observations show that there are jobs related directly to tourism, mainly those that own the tourism site, and indirect jobs related to tourism, such as parking attendants and food sellers. At some point, the socio-economic life of people at Sopapei Beach was related to tourism, but its contribution to economic life still needed to be higher.

3.2. Participation Level of The Local Community Towards CBT Development

Community-based tourism potency analysis is based on five criteria: planning, organizing, implementation, controlling, and evaluation. Table 3 presents the results of the analysis. In sustainable CBT development, the active involvement of the community in the planning process [12,22] becomes an important aspect. The results showed that community participation was considered low, even in non-tourism activities, and the participation of the local community was considered low.

The second aspect related to the development of CBT is organizing, which affects the stage of CBT development [12,22]. Establishing an organizing mechanism involving various community members and ensuring their active participation is important for developing CBT. The results show that the involvement of local residents in various tourism activities is rare, although this is an important aspect.

CBT concerns people initiating, owning, and controlling the development process from the beginning. They do not participate if the process is controlled by external entities [12]. The power of local people in controlling CBT reflects their aspirations [10]. This study determined that the involvement of non-tourism practices in the local community was considered low, as reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentage of the participation level of the local community towards CBT development

No.	Criteria CBT	Combine score	Participation score (%)	Classification
1	Planning	831	59.36	Fair
2	Organizing	740	52.86	Fair
3	Implementation	805	57.50	Fair
4	Controlling	667	47.64	Fair
5	Evaluation	724	51.71	Fair

3.3. Management Strategy

A SWOT analysis is useful when assessing prevailing conditions in the social, physical, policy, and tourism industry contexts [23,24]. It is one of the many possible strategic planning tools used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or any other situation requiring a decision. SWOT analysis is a useful tool for various industries, including tourism.

From the interviews, FGD, and field observations, the strengths (S) of Sopapei Beach were tourism potential (natural marine and coastal environments), community potency, and strategic location. The weaknesses (W) were less local community involvement, poor

management, poor infrastructure, proximity to residential areas, the tourist site operated individually, and less participation by the local government. The opportunity (O) is the potential income, accessibility, and national regulations of tourism development. The threat (T) towards Sopapei Beach was competition with other tourism destinations in the Ambon area, settlement development, and rip currents. Table 4 shows matrix of EFAS (External factor analysis summary) and IFAS (Internal factor analysis summary) in SWOT analysis for Sopapei Beach management strategy.

The EFAS matrix analysis shown in Table 4 shows that the Sopapei Bay resort has strong external capability hence the CBT could be developed. This is also supported by the total EFAS weighting score of 2.83, which indicates the external superiority of Sopapei Beach tourist resort. The IFAS analysis for internal factor of Sopapei Beach has strong internal potential which therefore able to be established to CBT. The total internal factor was also positive even smaller compared to internal factor.

Table 4. EFAS and IFAS SWOT analysis for Sopapei Beach management strategy

EFAS	Weight	Ratings	Score
Strength			
Tourist potential	0.25	4.00	1.00
Community potency	0.10	3.31	2.00
Strategic location	0.15	4.00	1.00
Total strength score	0.5	11.31	4.00
Weakness			
Less community involvement	0.05	1.00	0.05
Poor management	0.05	2.00	0.10
Poor infrastructure	0.1	2.00	0.20
Proximity to residential area	0.1	2.00	0.20
Operated on individual base	0.1	3.67	0.37
Less local government participation	0.1	2.50	0.25
Total weakness score	0.5	13.17	1.17
Total	1.00		2.83
IFAS			
Opportunity:			
Potential income	0.15	3.17	0.48
Easy accessibility	0.30	3.33	1.00
Regulation on tourist development	0.15	3.33	0.50
Total opportunity score	0.60	9.83	1.98
Threats			
Competition with other tourist destination	0.05	3.58	0.18
Residential development	0.25	3.00	0.75
Rip current	0.10	3.50	0.35
Total threats score	0.40	10.08	1.28
Total	1.00		0.70

Based on the SWOT analysis diagram, Figure 2 indicates that Sopapei Bay Resort occupies a favorable position on the opportunity and strength axes, corresponding to Quadrant 1 (Q1). According to SWOT strategy analysis, this placement is classified as an Aggressive Strategy [19,20]. By capitalizing on these opportunities, Sopapei Bay tourism has the potential to be developed into a community-based tourism (CBT) destination. The region's tourism assets, community strengths, strategic location, accessibility, and supportive regulations can be effectively utilized to establish and promote CBT development.

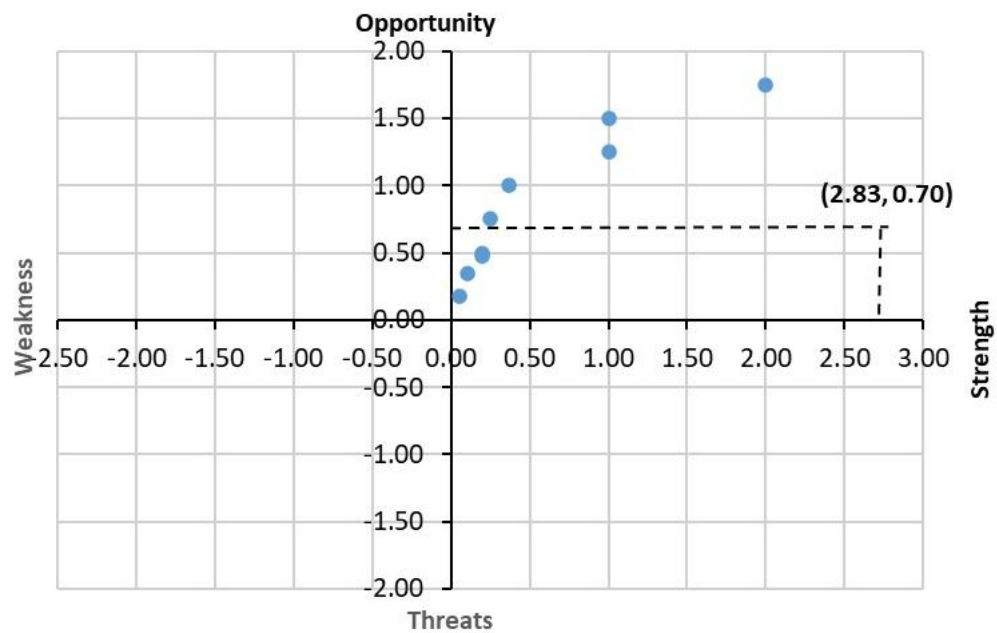


Figure 2. Sopapei quadrant position based on IFAS-EFASs SWOT analysis.

4. Discussion

The growth of the tourism industry has resulted in the need for higher education in tourism and hospitality. There are significant relationships that exist between tourism learning outcome and other indicators. Education level is important in CBT development [9,22,25]. Recent concerns regarding tourism suggest that vocational and academic integration is necessary to ensure career prospects and lifelong learning in tourism [25]. The percentage of undergraduates at the study site (15.7%), considered a critical aspect of tourism development, needed to be higher, and there needed to be more specific information regarding the undergraduate background field of study.

The educational level of the community related to tourism development is important because it can foster the development of the tourist site as well as the socio-economic aspects of the local community [21,26]. Higher educational background is important for tourism development. However, research has shown that a community with a diploma (higher education level) is less involved in the tourism sector, especially in jobs such as guides, homestays, administrators, and food and beverage providers [22].

Strong local community involvement is important for successful CBT development. In this study, the involvement of the local community in non-tourism practices in the planning process, knowledge sharing, financial sharing, and cooperation was considered low. Effective CBT requires extensive community participation in assessment and planning, as well as in implementation/delivery [25].

Monitoring and evaluation processes in all management systems will enable CBT to respond appropriately to tourist and stakeholder needs and expectations [21,25]. According to the interview and FGD, the evaluation was impartially conducted, but only by the owner; the local community was not included in the evaluation. The valuation was not done regularly, and the management system probably did not consider the results.

Attractiveness, such as natural beauty (amenity), local food, good participation of local people, white beaches, accessibility, and attractions [24,27], are some of the factors that contribute to tourism development and sustainability, including CBT. Sopapei Beach provides the factors that make it one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Ambon.

Government and local community participation, including CBT, is considered an important asset in tourism development [28,29,30]. Management (organization, information, and financial) is another important aspect of a tourist development program [31,32].

Infrastructure is a complex system that can be presented in categories such as traffic (transportation and telecommunications), community infrastructure (water, energy, waste management), complementary infrastructure (cultural-educational, health, banking, trade), and thematic-tourist infrastructure (tourist-recreation, accommodation, information), which is another important factor in tourist development [32,33].

Coastal areas and ecosystems are pressured by population, tourism, pollution, habitat degradation and loss, overfishing, and increased hazards [34]. Sopapei Beach is located in Suli Village, which is a small area with a relatively dense population. If not managed properly, the local growth rate will cause problems for either the tourist site or the coastal ecosystem.

Tourism has significant potential to generate positive social, cultural, and economic benefits to the local community, depending on how tourism activities are managed and developed [35,36]. Accessibility in tourism is a complex study since it's not just transportation but covers many areas such as people with disabilities, information, telecommunication, bank facilities, etc [37]. In terms of transportation, Sopapei is considered easy to access, but not so for bank facilities, people with disabilities, and internet facilities.

Three important indicators in policy and regulation of sustainable tourism are the utilization of environmental resources based on minimal use, respect for the socio-cultural identity of the host community and local traditional values, and redistribution of benefits to the entire community, including employment and opportunities for access to social services for host communities [38]. Adequate regulations are needed to foster tourism sustainable development [38,39]. For sustainable tourism destinations, the Ministry of Tourism and Economy Creative of the Republic of Indonesia issued Minister Regulation Number 9 of 2021 regarding sustainable tourism destinations [40].

Based on the variables found on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the strategy (SO) to start CBT in the Sopapei Beach area is as follows: increase the potency of Sopapei Beach by promoting, creating more attractive events, proposing tourism development plans for the government, and empowering local community skills in tourism. The ST strategy is as follows: Increasing local community involvement in tourism management to promote better management of tourism and increase awareness of the danger of rip currents at some snorkelling/swimming spots. The strategy of WO is as follows: create various job opportunities and collaborative plans with the government to manage the residential area, establish tourism management under village management, and increase infrastructure. The WT strategy is as follows: renovation supporting tourism infrastructure, increasing local communities, and local government in tourism development plans towards CBT under village management.

5. Conclusions

Sopapei Beach possesses considerable potential as a tourist destination, characterized by its exceptional natural beauty and rich coastal and marine ecosystems. However, conflicts arising from tourism-related activities underscore the necessity for sustainable and inclusive development strategies, such as Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Despite its natural assets and logistical advantages, the initial assessment indicated the feasibility of establishing CBT was relatively low. A SWOT analysis was conducted, identifying 13 strategic management initiatives to enhance the development and implementation of CBT at Sopapei Beach. Positioned within Quadrant 1 of the SWOT matrix (progressive strategy), Sopapei Beach benefits from its natural endowments, accessibility, and supportive governmental policies, indicating strong potential for sustainable tourism development through CBT.

Author Contributions

MW: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing & Editing; **JMST:** Writing - Review & Editing, Supervision; **FWA:** Writing - Review & Editing; **JABM:** Writing - Review & Editing; **R:** Writing - Review & Editing; **TBH:** Sample collecting, Writing & Editing.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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