

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN MANAGING COMPETITIVE TOURIST VILLAGES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF KUTUH TOURIST VILLAGE

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Abstract

The development of community-based tourism villages is an important strategy for realizing sustainable and competitive tourism. *The Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) approach positions local communities as the primary actors in tourism management, including planning, implementation, and utilization of tourism products. This study aims to analyze the implementation of *Community-Based Tourism* in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village, Badung Regency, Bali Province, and to examine the role of the community, governance dynamics, and the contribution of CBT to the competitiveness of tourism villages. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies involving village governments, traditional villages, tourism village managers, Pokdarwis (tourism group groups), MSMEs, and community leaders as research informants. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes related to CBT implementation. The results show that CBT implementation in Kutuh Tourism Village has been ongoing, but is not yet fully optimal. Community participation is more dominant in the operational aspects of tourism, while involvement in strategic decision-making is still limited. The governance of tourism villages shows the dominance of certain actors, which has implications for limited space for community participation and the unequal distribution of tourism economic benefits. Nevertheless, the implementation of CBT contributes to increasing the competitiveness of tourist villages by strengthening local cultural identity and community involvement in tourism activities. This study concludes that strengthening community participation, enhancing human resource capacity, and improving more inclusive and transparent governance are essential prerequisites for optimizing the implementation of *Community-Based Tourism* in enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of tourist villages.

Keywords : *Community Based Tourism* , tourist villages, community participation, competitiveness, sustainable tourism

1. Background

The development of tourist villages has become a crucial strategy in tourism development in Indonesia, particularly in promoting economic equality and empowering local communities. Tourist villages are understood as a form of tourism development that utilizes local potential—both natural, cultural, and social—by involving village communities as an integral part of tourism activities (Utami, 2023). This approach aligns with the direction of sustainable tourism development, which emphasizes a balance between economic, social, and cultural aspects. Within this framework, *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) has developed as an approach that positions local communities as key actors in tourism management. CBT emphasizes community involvement in planning, decision-making, management, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Phongpradist (2024) argues that CBT is a strategic instrument for realizing sustainable tourism because it can strengthen the economic capacity of communities while maintaining the social and environmental sustainability of tourist destinations. Although conceptually considered ideal, CBT implementation at the tourism village level is not always optimal. Several studies have shown that the success of CBT is greatly influenced by the quality of community participation, the strength of local institutions, and the synergy between the government, tourism village managers, and tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis). Musleh (2023) emphasized that weak community empowerment and the dominance of certain actors in tourism village

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management are often major obstacles to the substantive implementation of CBT. Bali Province, as a leading national tourism destination, is also developing tourism villages as part of its strategy to diversify destinations and equitably distribute tourism benefits. However, the dynamics of tourism village management in Bali indicate that the implementation of CBT is not yet fully equitable. Hastuti (2024) revealed that in some tourism villages, community involvement is still symbolic, while strategic decision-making is largely dominated by the village government or certain managers, potentially impacting the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism villages. Kutuh Tourism Village in Badung Regency is a developed tourist village with significant economic contributions to the local community. Its success is often attributed to the management of its leading destinations and the support of village institutions. However, Fitriana (2023) emphasized that the economic success of a tourist village does not necessarily reflect the optimal implementation of CBT principles, necessitating a more in-depth study of the extent to which local communities play a role in decision-making and the distribution of tourism benefits. Most studies on tourist villages and destination competitiveness have used a quantitative approach, focusing on measuring the influence of specific factors on competitive advantage. This approach is important for explaining the relationships between variables, but is considered inadequate for depicting the social dynamics, power relations, and community participation practices that are at the core of CBT (Fauziah, 2023). Therefore, a qualitative approach is needed to more comprehensively understand the reality of CBT implementation. Based on this research gap, this study aims to analyze the implementation of *Community-Based Tourism* in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village through a qualitative approach. The research focuses on the role of the local community, the dynamics of relationships between actors, and the supporting and inhibiting factors in CBT implementation in increasing the competitiveness of tourist villages. Thus, this research is expected to enrich academic studies on CBT while providing practical recommendations for the management of sustainable community-based tourism villages (Depari, 2023).

Based on the results and discussion of the research which shows the limitations of substantive community participation, the dynamics of governance that are not yet inclusive, and the distribution of economic benefits that are not yet equal, the problem formulation in this research is as follows:

1. What is the form and level of local community participation in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village, especially in the strategic decision-making process?
2. What are the dynamics of governance and relations between actors (village government, traditional villages, tourism village managers, Pokdarwis, and the community) in managing Kutuh Tourism Village?
3. What is the pattern of community empowerment and distribution of economic benefits of tourism in the development of Kutuh Tourism Village?
4. What factors hinder the optimization of the implementation of *Community Based Tourism* (CBT) principles in the management practices of Kutuh Tourism Village?
5. How does *Community Based Tourism* contribute to the competitiveness of Kutuh Tourism Village, as well as its sustainability challenges?

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the practices, processes, and dynamics of *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) implementation in tourism village management. This approach allows researchers to explore the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of actors involved in tourism village management contextually and comprehensively. According to Yusuf (2017), qualitative research is highly relevant when researchers want to deeply understand social phenomena in their natural context. The case study design was chosen because this research focuses on a single research location with unique characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Case studies allow researchers to conduct in-depth exploration of a specific and contextual phenomenon. Wibhisana (2021) emphasized that case studies are highly appropriate for answering "how" and "why" research questions, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly visible.

This research was conducted in Kutuh Tourism Village, Badung Regency, Bali Province. This location was selected purposively, considering that Kutuh Tourism Village is one of the rapidly developing tourist villages and has a significant contribution to the local economy. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique for selecting informants based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. Informants were selected because of their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain rich and in-depth data (Creswel, 2018). The informants in this study were the Head of Kutuh Village, Traditional Village Head, Tourism Village Manager, Chair or member of Pokdarwis, tourism MSME actors, and local communities. The number of informants is adjusted to the research needs until data saturation is reached, namely the condition when no significant new information is found from additional interviews. The data analysis in this study used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted through the following stages: (1) data transcription, (2) initial coding, (3) grouping codes into themes, and (4)

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extracting meaning and interpreting findings. This method was chosen because it is able to systematically identify the main patterns and themes that emerge from qualitative data (Clarke, 2006). To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation techniques, including both source and method triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as from various informants. This technique aims to increase the credibility and validity of the research findings, as suggested by Miles (2014).

2. Results and Discussion

Community Participation in the Management of Kutuh Tourism Village

The research results indicate that community participation in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village has occurred, but it is not yet fully substantive. Local communities are actively involved in tourism operational activities, such as managing small-scale tourism businesses, providing tourism support services, and participating in local culture-based activities. However, community involvement in strategic decision-making processes, particularly those related to the direction of tourism village development and policies, is still relatively limited and tends to be consultative in nature. This pattern indicates that community participation has not yet fully reached the *decision-making level*, as emphasized in the *Community-Based Tourism approach* (Aberu, 2024). This finding aligns with Adawiyah's (2022) concept of community participation in *Community-Based Tourism*, which asserts that ideal participation in CBT encompasses community involvement from the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of tourism management. In the context of Kutuh Tourism Village, community participation is more prominent during the implementation stage, while participation in the planning and evaluation stages remains limited. This reflects a gap between the normative concept of CBT and its implementation practices at the local level, as also found in several studies of tourism villages in Indonesia. When compared with other studies, this study's findings align with Aliyah's (2020) findings, which state that community participation in tourism villages is often symbolic and operational, rather than strategic. However, this finding does not fully align with studies of ideal CBT, which show that successful tourism villages generally have strong community participation mechanisms in decision-making (Das, 2024). Therefore, community participation in Kutuh Tourism Village is still in the transitional stage toward a more substantive CBT.

Dynamics of Governance and Relations Between Actors

Interviews indicate that the management of Kutuh Tourism Village involves various actors, including the village government, traditional villages, tourism village managers, tourism groups (Pokdarwis), and the local community. The relationships between these actors demonstrate a relatively good pattern of cooperation in implementing tourism operations, such as organizing tourism activities and managing attractions. However, this collaboration has not been fully integrated into inclusive strategic governance, particularly in policy formulation and long-term planning for tourism village development. This study found that the village government plays a dominant role in strategic decision-making regarding the development direction of Kutuh Tourism Village. Meanwhile, the community and the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) play a more focused role in implementing established programs. This finding corroborates Alauddin's (2023) research, which states that tourism village governance in Indonesia still tends to be *top-down*, despite formally adopting a community-based approach. The dominance of certain actors has the potential to limit community participation and undermine the fundamental principles of CBT as an inclusive approach. Compared with other studies, these results align with Yanti's (2023) findings, which indicate that weak integration between actors and the dominance of village governments are key challenges in managing community-based tourism villages. However, these findings differ from CBT studies in institutionally established tourism villages, where relations between actors are more horizontal and collaborative (Tohopi *et al.*, 2025). This difference suggests that local context and institutional capacity significantly influence tourism village governance patterns.

Community Empowerment and Distribution of Economic Benefits

This research shows that the development of the Kutuh Tourism Village has provided economic benefits to the local community, primarily through business opportunities in the tourism sector, such as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), tourism support services, and community-based economic activities. The existence of the tourism village opens new economic access and increases the income of some residents. However, the distribution of these economic benefits is not entirely equitable across all levels of society, thus not fully reflecting the principle of justice in CBT. Some informants revealed that access to tourism business opportunities is still influenced by capital ownership, social networks, and proximity to tourism village managers. This situation indicates that community empowerment is not yet fully inclusive. This finding aligns with Waruwu's (2024) assertion that the success of CBT is measured not only by the increase in aggregate village income, but also by the extent to which

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tourism benefits are equitably felt by local communities. When compared with other studies, this study's findings align with those of Tjilen (2023), who stated that unequal access to economic benefits is often a problem in the management of community-based tourism villages. However, this finding is not entirely consistent with the CBT study, which showed a more equitable distribution of benefits in tourism villages with strong institutional and regulatory systems (Mere, 2023). This indicates that strengthening local institutions is a key factor in achieving more inclusive community empowerment.

Community Based Tourism Principles in Practice

Conceptually, the management of Kutuh Tourism Village has adopted the principles of *Community-Based Tourism*, particularly in its narrative of village tourism development and community involvement as local economic actors. However, research shows that implementing CBT principles in practice still faces various challenges, particularly in strengthening the capacity of local communities and institutions. Limited human resource capacity, lack of ongoing training, and dependence on specific actors are factors that hinder the optimization of CBT. These findings reinforce Hadziyah's (2023) argument that the success of CBT is largely determined by the ability of local communities to manage tourism independently, not merely by symbolic involvement in tourism activities. Compared with other studies, these results align with Hakim's (2023) findings, which assert that many tourism villages are still at the *pseudo-CBT stage*, that is, adopting CBT conceptually but not yet fully implementing it in institutional practice. However, this study shows that Kutuh Tourism Village has the potential to develop more substantive CBT if capacity building and reducing dependence on dominant actors are implemented.

Community-Based Tourism and the Competitiveness of Kutuh Tourism Village

The research results show that the implementation of *Community-Based Tourism* contributes to the competitiveness of Kutuh Tourism Village, primarily through the creation of local culture-based tourism experiences and community involvement in tourism activities. The unique social and cultural aspects managed by the local community are one of the distinguishing factors of Kutuh Tourism Village compared to other tourist destinations, thus strengthening its competitive position. However, the competitiveness of CBT-based tourism villages still faces sustainability challenges if community participation and empowerment are not consistently strengthened. Kamuli (2023) emphasized that CBT without institutional strengthening and equitable benefit distribution has the potential to lose competitiveness in the long term. This finding aligns with the results of this study, which demonstrates that the sustainable competitiveness of Kutuh Tourism Village is highly dependent on the quality of CBT implementation. Compared with other research, this study's findings align with those of Hidayanti (2023), who stated that CBT can be a source of competitive advantage for tourism villages if implemented consistently and inclusively. However, if CBT is only implemented partially, its contribution to competitiveness tends to be short-term. Therefore, strengthening the role of local communities and equitable governance are key prerequisites for maintaining the sustainability and competitive advantage of Kutuh Tourism Village.

3. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the implementation of *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village through a qualitative approach, emphasizing aspects of community participation, governance, economic empowerment, and its contribution to the competitiveness of the tourism village. Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of CBT in Kutuh Tourism Village has been implemented and has made a real contribution to the development of the tourism village. However, this implementation has not fully optimally reflected the principles of community-based tourism substantively and comprehensively. Local community participation in the management of Kutuh Tourism Village has been evident, particularly in operational aspects and supporting economic activities for tourism, such as involvement in tourism MSMEs, tourism support services, and local culture-based activities. Community participation in these activities demonstrates the open space for economic participation for the local community. However, community involvement in strategic decision-making processes, particularly those related to planning, policy direction, and evaluation of tourism village management, remains relatively limited. This condition indicates that the participation that occurs tends to be functional, namely limited to implementing activities, and is not fully participatory as ideally in the concept of *Community-Based Tourism*, which places the community as the primary subject of tourism management. In terms of governance, the management of Kutuh Tourism Village involves various actors, including the village government, traditional villages, tourism village managers, Pokdarwis (tourism group), and the local community. This multi-actor involvement demonstrates a collaborative effort in tourism village management. However, research results indicate that the village government and certain managers still play a fairly dominant role in determining the

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direction of tourism village development policies. This top-down governance pattern has the potential to limit community participation in strategic decision-making processes, thereby weakening the basic principles of CBT as an inclusive and participatory approach. This condition also indicates that collaborative governance mechanisms still need to be strengthened to improve the relationship between actors.

This study also found that the development of Kutuh Tourism Village has provided economic benefits to the local community, particularly through increased business opportunities in the tourism sector. These economic benefits are reflected in the growth of tourism MSMEs and increased community-based economic activity. However, the distribution of these economic benefits is not entirely equitable across all levels of society. Inequality in access to business opportunities, influenced by factors such as capital, networks, and proximity to tourism village managers, indicates that the community empowerment process still requires further strengthening. This situation emphasizes that the success of CBT is measured not only by the increase in aggregate village income, but also by the extent to which the benefits of tourism are felt fairly and sustainably by the entire local community. Overall, the implementation of CBT in Kutuh Tourism Village contributes to increasing the competitiveness of the tourism village, primarily through the creation of local culture-based tourism experiences and community involvement in tourism activities. The unique social and cultural heritage managed by the local community is one of the factors that differentiates Kutuh Tourism Village from other tourist destinations. However, the sustainability of this competitiveness depends heavily on strengthening community participation, improving human resource capacity, and implementing more inclusive, transparent, and equitable tourism village governance. Without strengthening these aspects, CBT's contribution to tourism village competitiveness is potentially short-term.

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