Transformations in Coastal Communities: A Case Study of Tourism Development at BTN Lungkak Beach, East Lombok

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - Coastal tourism has rapidly expanded in Indonesia, yet its impact on local community structures and cultural values remains underexplored. This study aims to understand how tourism at BTN Lungkak Beach has triggered socio-cultural transformation in Ketapang Raya Village. The study is significant due to the lack of context-specific research focusing on social change from the perspective of coastal communities.

Design/Methods/Approach - A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving community leaders, tourism stakeholders, and local residents. Thematic analysis was used to identify emerging patterns of social and cultural change associated with tourism activities.

Findings - The study found significant shifts in social structure, gender roles, communication patterns, and local value systems. The community showed ambivalence between adapting to modernity and preserving traditions. Furthermore, tourism created unequal economic participation across social groups.

Research Implications/Limitations - The findings highlight the necessity of community-based tourism management that balances economic benefits with the preservation of local socio-cultural values. The study's limitations include its geographically narrow scope and context-specific qualitative data, which may limit generalizability of the results.

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Introduction

Tourism is a sector that exerts broad influence on communities, not only in terms of economic impact but also in shaping the social and cultural dynamics of society. Particularly among coastal communities that previously relied on traditional fisheries, the development of tourism destinations often leads to significant structural transformation. This transformation involves shifts in societal worldviews, patterns of social interaction, and the foundational values that sustain local culture. Such a process is referred to as socio-cultural transformation—a dynamic evolution occurring when a society experiences changes in its social and cultural structure due to external factors such as globalization, modernization, and economic development interventions like tourism (Abdulaeva et al., 2019; Skvorets & Kudinov, 2021). Studies across various countries indicate that this transformation can strengthen local communities' adaptive capacity, yet it also often triggers value conflicts between tradition and modernity (Tarasov et al., 2023; Zabneva, 2024).

In Indonesia, coastal tourism development has become a key strategy adopted by regional governments to stimulate local economic growth. Numerous studies have shown that tourism can increase household income, expand employment opportunities, and accelerate local infrastructure development ((Baihaqi & Annida, 2024; Markhamah et al., 2024). However, alongside these benefits, social consequences emerge, including horizontal conflict, the marginalization of traditional groups, and the erosion of cultural values through intense interactions with tourists who bring foreign norms (Enemuo, 2012; Jovičić, 2011). Several frameworks have been proposed to address these challenges, with one of the most prominent being the community-based tourism (CBT) model, which emphasizes active community participation in tourism planning and management to ensure sustainability and the preservation of local cultural relevance (Gantait et al., 2024; Heuwinkel, 2024). Nonetheless, implementation of CBT often faces significant obstacles, especially in regions with limited human and infrastructural resources.

Previous research has extensively explored the economic and environmental impacts of tourism development; however, studies that focus explicitly on socio-cultural transformation—especially within emerging coastal communities such as BTN Lungkak Beach in East Lombok—remain limited. For instance, Baihaqi and Annida (2024) revealed changes in social interaction values in Tanjung Lesung Beach due to tourism development, but their study did not provide an in-depth examination of shifts in social structure or local value conflicts. Similarly, Unhasuta et al. (Unhasuta et al., 2021) emphasized the need for more sustainable tourism practices in Thailand's Cha-am Beach but did not explicitly address identity transformation among host communities. These examples highlight a research gap, particularly in understanding how tourist-community interactions catalyze long-term and complex shifts in community values, social roles, and communication systems.

To address this gap, this study adopts a comprehensive theoretical framework that incorporates several socio-cultural models. First, Kingsley Davis and William F. Ogburn's theory of social change is used to explain value shifts and cultural lag that occur when traditional structures are challenged by rapid change. Second, Sztompka (2017) theory of social interaction is applied to understand patterns of associative (economic cooperation) and dissociative (value conflict) interactions between locals and tourists. Third, Doxey's Irridex Model (Mathieson & Wall, 1982) is employed to map the community's changing attitudes toward tourism—from initial euphoria to potential antagonism. Lastly, Mathieson and Wall's ((1982) theory of tourism's social impacts provides a lens to identify direct and indirect, short- and long-term effects on local lifestyles. Together, these frameworks allow for a nuanced analysis of socio-cultural transformation in coastal communities following tourism development.

This study is particularly relevant as it offers deeper insights into how local communities reorganize their values, norms, and identities in response to the growing influence of tourism. Amid the global debate on sustainable tourism, this research contributes by presenting grassroots narratives often marginalized in national policy discourse. This article systematically maps the process of socio-cultural transformation in Ketapang Raya Village after the development of BTN Lungkak Beach tourism, identifying both its positive and negative dimensions, and formulating context-specific recommendations. It is hoped that the findings will not only enrich academic discourse but also serve as a practical reference for policymakers and tourism stakeholders in designing more inclusive and sustainable coastal tourism strategies.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural transformation experienced by the community of Ketapang Raya Village following the development of tourism at BTN Lungkak Beach. The qualitative approach was selected due to its capacity to explore social phenomena in their natural settings and to capture the lived experiences and subjective meanings held by local actors (Creswell, 2018; Lexy J. Moleong, 2017). The case study strategy was adopted as it allows for an intensive, context-specific investigation of a particular issue—namely, the social and cultural shifts induced by tourism development within a single local community.

Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to identify behavioral patterns, community interactions, and economic activities around the tourism site. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as the village head, tourism managers, local entrepreneurs, street vendors, and residents living near the beach. Documentation served as a supporting tool to capture visual data, community records,

and policy documents relevant to tourism development. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with first-hand knowledge or direct involvement in the observed phenomena (Patton, 2015). The researcher served as the main instrument of data collection and interpretation throughout the research process.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis guided by Miles and Huberman's interactive model (2014), which consists of three concurrent stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis was conducted iteratively alongside data collection, enabling a dynamic interplay between data and interpretation. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, engagement with key informants, and member checking to validate findings in the field. This approach was considered most appropriate for capturing the contextual, dynamic, and value-sensitive nature of the socio-cultural changes being investigated, thereby aligning closely with the research objective.

Result

1. Changes in Local Social Structure

The first key finding reveals that the development of BTN Lungkak Beach as a tourism destination has significantly altered the social structure of the community in Ketapang Raya Village. Prior to the emergence of tourism, the majority of residents relied on traditional fishing and small-scale agriculture, with social interactions confined mostly to extended family and close neighbors. Since the establishment of tourism infrastructure in 2017, however, there has been a clear restructuring of roles and a diversification of social hierarchies. New actors have emerged—such as tourism managers, food vendors, parking attendants, and creative entrepreneurs—forming a more complex and outward-looking social order. These developments have also led to increased interaction between locals and outsiders, including both tourists and small-scale investors.

Several informants indicated that traditional roles, such as fishermen or housewives, have begun to shift due to emerging economic opportunities in the tourism sector. For instance, Nurul Hasanah, a previously unemployed local resident, now runs a small café along the beachfront. She expressed that the business has given her a new social identity and allowed her to engage more frequently with visitors. This case exemplifies a broader shift from domestic to commercial roles and from insular to more open forms of social engagement. Such changes are indicative of an evolving community dynamic influenced by tourism-induced modernization.

2. Shifts in Cultural Values and Everyday Practices

In addition to changes in social structure, the study identified transformations in cultural values and everyday life practices among residents. Traditionally, the community upheld conservative values centered on mutual cooperation (gotong royong), social harmony, and modesty in daily living. The influx of tourists and the rise of commercial

activities have introduced new cultural influences, subtly shaping local behaviors, communication styles, and consumption patterns.

Field observations revealed that some residents have begun adopting modern practices previously unfamiliar to the community. These include the use of standardized product packaging, promotional language in Indonesian or English, and the redesign of local businesses to align with tourists' aesthetic preferences. While some community leaders see these adaptations as progressive and necessary, others have voiced concern about the erosion of cultural identity. One controversial example is the nighttime karaoke entertainment, which is perceived by some as disrupting traditional values of modesty and public decorum.

3. Dynamics of Interaction between Locals and Tourists

Another key finding relates to the nature of social interactions between local residents and tourists. These interactions are mostly transactional—centered around food sales, rental services, and guiding tours—but they are not always harmonious. Several residents noted that some tourists exhibit disrespectful behavior, such as littering, speaking rudely, or disregarding local norms. Although such incidents are not widespread, they recur often enough to create tensions within the community.

In an interview, Mr. Abdullah, a resident living near the beach, mentioned that noise disturbances from karaoke cafés have frequently triggered complaints from locals. He stated: "Sometimes visitors come here just to sing loudly at night. We used to enjoy peaceful evenings. Now, it's noisy until late at night." This reflects a growing disconnect between community expectations and visitor behaviors, pointing to the need for better management of public space and mutual understanding.

4. Community Empowerment and Participation in Tourism

The final finding highlights the growing participation and capacity-building efforts among community members in tourism management. The village government, in collaboration with the regional tourism office, has conducted various training programs for members of the local tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis) and youth organizations (Karang Taruna), focusing on hospitality, homestay management, and digital marketing. Interviews and observations indicate that these programs have had a positive impact, especially in raising awareness about cleanliness, safety, and visitor service standards.

Some residents have also demonstrated entrepreneurial creativity by establishing bamboo cafés with traditional architecture, selling Lombok's signature cuisine, and producing handicrafts from recycled materials. These initiatives reflect not only value adaptation but also a grassroots form of economic empowerment rooted in cultural identity. Nonetheless, challenges persist, including unequal access to training, limited financial capital, and the absence of clear regulations governing interactions between tourism stakeholders and the wider community.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that tourism development at BTN Lungkak Beach has triggered significant socio-cultural transformations within the community of Ketapang Raya Village. Changes in social structure, gender roles, communication patterns, and local cultural values reflect a complex and simultaneous transition process. This transformation can be interpreted as a consequence of modernization, where local communities are increasingly exposed to market-driven economic logic and global social norms through interactions with tourists. This is consistent with the argument of Skvorets & Kudinov (2021), who noted that transitions from traditional systems to market-based structures often lead to identity dislocation and the commodification of social life. In BTN Lungkak, these processes are manifested in the emergence of new social actors, evolving community hierarchies, and the shift from cultural insularity to openness.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize that socio-cultural change in coastal communities is not only driven by internal dynamics but also significantly influenced by external pressures such as globalization and cultural consumption (Abdulaeva et al., 2019). The adoption of new communication styles, modern business practices, and more open social imagery by local residents suggests a form of selective cultural adaptation. However, this adaptation also poses risks, including the erosion of traditional values such as public order, modesty, and social restraint. Similar phenomena have been documented elsewhere, such as in Baihaqi & Annida's (2024) study of Tanjung Lesung, where increasing tourist interactions altered community norms and social behaviors.

Theoretically, the study supports Ogburn and Davis's social change theory, particularly the concept of cultural lag, which describes the misalignment between rapidly changing material culture (e.g., economy, technology) and more slowly evolving non-material culture (e.g., values, norms). This is evident in the nighttime karaoke controversy, which sparked tension between tourism actors and local residents. Soekanto's (1983) and Suryono (2019)theory of social interaction is also validated by the dual presence of associative interactions—such as economic cooperation in the food sector—and dissociative interactions, such as cultural miscommunication or conflict. Doxey's Irridex model further contextualizes how initial enthusiasm for tourism can gradually give way to saturation and resistance.

The implications of these findings are critical for designing sustainable tourism practices in coastal regions. A stronger commitment to community-based tourism (CBT), which emphasizes local participation in planning and cultural preservation, is essential to prevent alienation and foster equity. Previous studies by Gantait et al. (2024) and Heuwinkel (2024) demonstrate that inclusive planning and active community involvement help mitigate tourism's negative impacts while enhancing local resilience. In the case of BTN Lungkak, specific measures—such as empowering local tourism groups (Pokdarwis),

regulating operational hours, and promoting cultural heritage-based tourism—could contribute to a more harmonious and inclusive tourism ecosystem.

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the data were gathered from a limited number of informants within a relatively short field period, restricting the breadth of perspectives. Second, there was no comparative analysis with other coastal tourism sites experiencing similar developments, which could have enhanced the generalizability of the findings. Third, although triangulation was used, deeper exploration into non-verbal and symbolic aspects of cultural change would require a longer-term ethnographic approach.

Future research should consider expanding the scope of inquiry to include diverse community voices—especially youth, traditional leaders, and tourists themselves. A collaborative approach involving academics, local governments, and community stakeholders is highly recommended to formulate more contextual and participatory tourism strategies. Ultimately, tourism should not only serve as an economic growth driver but also as a transformative space that cultivates cultural resilience, critical awareness, and long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

This study concludes that tourism development at BTN Lungkak Beach has significantly triggered socio-cultural transformation in the Ketapang Raya Village community, marked by changes in social structure, gender roles, communication patterns, and local values in response to intensive interactions with tourists. These findings not only address the research question concerning tourism's impact on local socio-cultural systems but also reinforce the relevance of social change theories and community-based tourism approaches in the Indonesian context. The study contributes meaningfully to the understanding of cultural adaptation and resistance dynamics in coastal communities. Therefore, sustainable tourism strategies centered on active community participation are crucial to ensure that economic benefits do not compromise cultural integrity. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches across regions to enrich theoretical and practical insights on the socio-cultural impacts of tourism.

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