

The Impact Of Tourism Policies On Local Economic Empowerment

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of tourism policies on local economic empowerment in the Jember Regency through a literature study. The tourism policy implemented focuses on the development of community-based destinations with an inclusive, participatory, and sustainable approach. The results of the study show that the policy can improve community welfare through increasing employment, income, and cultural and environmental preservation. Success factors for economic empowerment include active community involvement, multi-stakeholder collaboration, capacity building through training, and the use of digital technology. However, challenges such as inequality of benefits, socio-cultural damage, and environmental risks must be a concern so that economic empowerment can run sustainably. The study recommends strengthening adaptive policies and further empirical research to support inclusive and sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: *Tourism Policy, Local Economic Empowerment, Community-Based Tourism, Sustainable Development, Digital Technology in Tourism*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak kebijakan kepariwisataan terhadap pemberdayaan ekonomi lokal di Kabupaten Jember melalui studi literatur. Kebijakan pariwisata yang diterapkan menitikberatkan pada pengembangan destinasi berbasis masyarakat dengan pendekatan inklusif, partisipatif, dan berkelanjutan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan tersebut mampu meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat melalui peningkatan lapangan kerja, pendapatan, dan pelestarian budaya serta lingkungan. Faktor keberhasilan pemberdayaan ekonomi meliputi keterlibatan aktif masyarakat, kolaborasi multi-pihak, penguatan kapasitas melalui pelatihan, dan pemanfaatan teknologi digital. Namun, tantangan seperti ketimpangan manfaat, kerusakan sosial budaya, dan risiko lingkungan harus menjadi perhatian agar pemberdayaan ekonomi dapat berjalan berkelanjutan. Studi ini merekomendasikan penguatan kebijakan yang adaptif dan penelitian empiris lebih lanjut untuk mendukung pembangunan pariwisata yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: Kebijakan Kepariwisata, Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Lokal, Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat, Pembangunan Berkelanjutan, Teknologi Digital dalam Pariwisata

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a strategic sector in the Indonesian economy, including in Jember Regency. The abundant natural and cultural potential makes Jember an attractive tourist destination. However, to maximize this potential, appropriate government policies are needed in developing the tourism sector that can empower the local economy in a sustainable manner.

In 2023, the number of tourist visits to Jember will increase significantly to reach 745,952 visits, and is expected to be even higher in 2024 due to the focus on tourism development (Jember Tourism, 2024). Tourist destinations such as Watu Ulo Beach, Rembangan, and Sukorambi Botanical Garden have experienced an increase in visits of up to 50% in early 2024 (wikipedia.org, 2024).

Table 1: Graph of Tourist Visits and Hotel Occupancy Trends in Jember Regency (2023–2024)

Month/Year	Number of Tourist Visits	Hotel Occupancy (%)
Jan 2023	45,000	60
Apr 2023	55,000	65
Jul 2023	65,000	70
Oct 2023	75,000	75
Jan 2024	80,000	80
Feb 2024 (JFC)	85,000	93

Source: data in 2025

In supporting the development of the tourism sector, the Jember Regency Government has implemented various policies, including the development of tourist villages and the implementation of national-scale events such as the Jember Fashion Carnival (JFC) (Gibran, 2025). JFC 2024, for example, managed to increase hotel occupancy in Jember by 93% on the second day of its implementation (Solichah, 2024).

However, despite the tourism sector showing growth, challenges in empowering the local economy still need attention. The policies implemented must be able to encourage the active participation of local communities in the management of tourist destinations, so that economic benefits can be felt equally by all levels of society.

The study of the relationship between tourism policy and local economic empowerment has been of concern to many researchers. According to (Faozen &

Jatmiko, 2022), the development of tourism villages with a community empowerment approach is able to improve the welfare and sustainability of the local economy through participatory resource management. This study confirms the importance of policies that support the active participation of the community in tourism development.

(Setyanti et al., 2021) highlight the role of ecopreneurship in the development of ecotourism in Jember as an environmental and social-based economic empowerment model, supported by local government policies to strengthen local capacity.

(Purnomo & Dewi, 2022; Syah & Adi, 2024) in his research on the impact of tourism policies in Banyuwangi Regency found that inclusive and transparent policies can increase community participation and have a positive impact on the local economy. This is an important reference for other areas such as Jember that have similar potential.

The success of economic empowerment through tourism policy is highly dependent on close coordination between the government, the private sector, and the community. This collaboration allows for the creation of inclusive policies, the development of local creative products, and community capacity building through training and mentoring, so that the community is not only the object, but also the main subject in tourism development (Kusuma, 2022).

The government plays a role in providing regulation, infrastructure, and policy support, while the private sector can contribute through investments and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs that empower local MSMEs (Kusuma, 2022). Active community involvement, from planning to evaluation, has been shown to increase a sense of ownership, create jobs, and strengthen local cultural identity (Sulaiman et al., 2021). This collaborative model also encourages tourism product innovation and expands market access, so that economic benefits can be felt equally (Kartika et al., 2024). Thus, synergy between the government, the private sector, and the community is the main key in realizing successful tourism-based economic empowerment and sustainable. (Kusuma, 2022).

In a broader context, (Dwyer, 2023; Guo et al., 2019) emphasized the need for a sustainable development-oriented approach to tourism policies to ensure economic impacts are not only short-term, but can also provide long-term benefits to local communities.

Lastly, research (Kumar & Barua, 2024; Polukhina et al., 2025) stated that the use of digital technology in tourism promotion is one of the effective policies to increase tourist visits while empowering local economic actors through wider market access.

This study seeks to present a comprehensive synthesis of various current literature on the impact of tourism policies on local economic empowerment, with a special focus on the context of Jember Regency. Although many studies have discussed the relationship between tourism policy and community empowerment, studies that integrate various success factors and challenges across the Jember region are still very limited. Based on this, the formulation of the problem raised is: What is the impact of tourism policy on the economic empowerment of local communities in Jember Regency? The main purpose of this paper is to analyze and review the results of previous research related to tourism policy and its implications for the economic empowerment of the community in the area. The scope of this article includes a literature review from various sources that discusses local government policies in the tourism sector and their impact on local economic empowerment in Jember Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Policy

Tourism policy is a set of rules, strategies, and actions designed by the government or relevant institutions to regulate the development of the tourism sector in a directional and sustainable manner. This policy includes aspects of destination promotion, natural and cultural resource management, and strengthening the role of local communities so that tourism not only provides economic benefits, but also maintains social and environmental sustainability (Dwyer, 2023; Guo et al., 2019). Modern policy approaches emphasize sustainability and multi-stakeholder engagement so that tourism can thrive without damaging local ecosystems and cultures.

Theory Of Local Economic Empowerment

Local economic empowerment is a process that allows people to master, manage, and utilize economic resources in their area to improve welfare and independence. In the context of tourism, this theory emphasizes the active participation of the community in the development and management of tourist destinations, so that they become the

main subjects in creating economic value. Empowerment also includes capacity building through training, access to markets, and strengthening local institutions so that economic outcomes can be felt widely and sustainably (Faozen & Jatmiko, 2022; Kusuma, 2022).

The Relationship Between Tourism Policy And Economic Empowerment

Effective tourism policies must be able to integrate local economic empowerment with the aim of improving community welfare while maintaining existing resources. Studies show that inclusive, transparent, and participatory policies increase community involvement in decision-making, open up local business opportunities, and encourage collaboration between governments, the private sector, and communities (Purnomo & Dewi, 2022; Syah & Adi, 2024). Thus, this policy strengthens the community's capacity to develop tourism products, increase income, create jobs, and preserve culture and the environment (Kusuma, 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2021).

Previous Studies On The Impact Of Tourism Policies In Different Regions

Research in Banyuwangi and Jember Regencies shows the positive impact of tourism policies that prioritize community empowerment. In Banyuwangi, policies that combine aspects of inclusivity and sustainability increase the participation of indigenous peoples in the management of cultural tourism thereby improving their welfare (Purnomo & Dewi, 2022). In Jember, the development of tourist villages with an ecopreneurship approach strengthens local capacity and creates new economic opportunities based on ecotourism (Setyanti et al., 2021). In addition, the role of digital technology in destination promotion has proven effective in expanding markets and increasing tourist visits, while providing wider economic access to local businesses (Kumar & Barua, 2024; Polukhina et al., 2025). However, the study also highlights the need for coordination and synergy between various stakeholders so that economic empowerment can run sustainably and benefit equally (Kartika et al., 2024; Kusuma, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is literature review. Literature study is a research approach that focuses on collecting, reviewing, and synthesizing various

written sources relevant to the research topic. Through this method, researchers do not collect primary data, but rely on secondary sources such as books, journals, reports, and policy documents that discuss related issues. The literature study was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of theories, concepts, and results of previous research that are relevant in the context of tourism policy and local economic empowerment (Creswell, 2014; Riduwan, 2018).

The sources used in this literature study were selected based on the following criteria:

- a) **Topic relevance:** The source must contain a discussion of tourism policy, community empowerment, or local economic empowerment.
- b) **Source type:** Prioritize academic books, scientific journal articles, official reports, and policy documents that are academically recognized as reliable sources (Neuman, 2013).
- c) **Up-to-date information:** Prioritize literature published in the last 10 years to ensure that the data and theories used are still relevant (Moleong, 2018)
- d) **Publisher credibility:** Sources published by official academic publishers and recognized research institutions.
- e) **Accessibility:** A fully accessible resource to ensure thorough analysis.

Data obtained from various sources are analyzed using the following techniques:

- a) **Literature synthesis** is combining and summarizing various findings from the literature that has been reviewed to produce a complete overview of the relationship between tourism policy and local economic empowerment. This synthesis also helps identify patterns and trends that emerge in various studies (Miles et al., 2014)
- b) **Critical analysis**, which is an in-depth evaluation of the content, methodology, and context of existing literature to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in previous research. Thus, researchers can assess the validity and relevance of literature findings to the context of this study (Bungin, 2017)
- c) The results of the analysis are then systematically organized to answer the formulation of the problem and achieve the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summary Of Commonly Applied Tourism Policies

Tourism policies that are commonly implemented, especially in areas such as Jember Regency, focus on the development of community-based tourist destinations with the main goal of empowering the local economy in a sustainable manner. The Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approach is one of the widely adopted models, where the local community not only plays a role as a tourist attraction, but also as an active management subject. This is in line with the findings (Scheyvens, 1999) which affirm that community-based tourism is able to improve community welfare through participatory and inclusive management of local resources. Local governments typically implement training and capacity building programs to ensure that people have adequate skills in managing tourism businesses, ranging from business management to marketing local products. This approach is in line with studies (Kartika et al., 2024; Kusuma, 2022) which shows the importance of community empowerment through training that focuses on developing ecopreneurship so that tourism activities run sustainably.

In addition, modern tourism policies increasingly utilize digital technology as a promotional and marketing tool for destinations. An integrated digital marketing strategy allows local tourism players to expand market reach, including to international tourists, as well as provide easier access to economic opportunities (Kumar & Barua, 2024; Polukhina et al., 2025). Synergy between the government, the private sector, and the community is a key aspect in realizing the success of this policy. Such collaboration not only creates a dynamic and innovative tourism ecosystem, but also ensures regulatory support, investment, and product development that suits local needs, as outlined by (Bramwell & Lane, 2003).

Furthermore, tourism policies that are oriented towards sustainable development are the main foundation in the development of this sector. Efforts to preserve the local environment and culture are combined with the goal of improving the economy, so that negative impacts such as environmental degradation and cultural erosion can be minimized. (Dwyer, 2023) and (Guo et al., 2019) underscore the importance of balanced and responsible tourism policies so that the benefits obtained are not only short-term, but can also be enjoyed sustainably by future generations. Thus, commonly applied

tourism policies integrate social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects holistically, which is the key to the success of local economic empowerment through the tourism sector.

Positive Impact Of Tourism Policies On The Local Economy

Tourism policies that are effectively implemented have a significant positive impact on the local economy, especially in terms of job creation and increased community income. By prioritizing a participatory approach through the development of tourist villages and community empowerment, this policy opens up new business opportunities for local residents, both in the service, handicrafts, culinary, and other tourism services sectors. (Faozen & Jatmiko, 2022) emphasized that the development of community-based tourism villages in Jember Regency has improved economic welfare by expanding community access to diverse sources of income. In addition, the increase in tourist visits directly encourages the growth of supporting industries such as hospitality and transportation, which also increases occupancy rates and local income, as happened at the Jember Fashion Carnival (JFC) 2024 which succeeded in increasing hotel occupancy by up to 93% (Solichah, 2024).

Furthermore, tourism policies oriented towards the empowerment of ecopreneurship have helped communities develop local environmental and culture-based businesses, which not only increase income but also maintain the sustainability of natural resources (Setyanti et al., 2021). With training and mentoring, local communities are increasingly able to manage tourism businesses independently and innovatively, thereby creating greater economic added value. International studies also show that sustainable tourism can be an effective tool to improve the quality of life of local people by strengthening the microeconomy and reducing poverty rates (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010; Tosun, 2006). Thus, inclusive and sustainable tourism policies contribute positively to encouraging significant and equitable local economic growth.

Challenges And Negative Impacts That May Arise

Although tourism policies have many positive benefits, their implementation is inseparable from various challenges and negative impacts that need serious attention. One of the main challenges is economic inequality that often arises due to the unequal distribution of tourism benefits. In many cases, certain community groups that have

greater access to resources and capital benefit more, while disadvantaged groups remain marginal (Sulaiman et al., 2021). This inequality can widen social and economic disparities within local communities, which can ultimately lead to conflict and reduce social cohesion. In addition, poorly planned tourism development can trigger socio-cultural damage, where local culture begins to be eroded by the uncontrolled influence of commercialization and modernization. (Purnomo & Dewi, 2022) highlight that changes in indigenous peoples' cultural behaviors and values as a result of commercial tourism pressures can threaten the preservation of local traditions and identities.

Another negative impact that often arises is environmental damage due to excessive exploitation of natural resources. (Guo et al., 2019) explained that without proper management, tourism activities can cause ecosystem degradation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity that is the attraction of tourism itself. This condition has the potential to reduce the quality of destinations and harm the community in the long term. In addition, the high economic dependence on the tourism sector can make people vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist visits, which are often influenced by external factors such as the global economic crisis, pandemics, or changes in tourist trends. This poses a risk of income instability for local communities (Dwyer, 2023).

Another challenge is the need for more inclusive and transparent policy management so that all parties, especially marginalized groups, can actively participate in the decision-making process. (Shah & Adi, 2024) emphasizes that without the full involvement of the community, tourism policies tend to be unsustainable and less responsive to local needs. Therefore, mitigating these negative impacts requires a holistic approach that not only prioritizes economic growth, but also pays attention to socio-cultural and environmental aspects in a balanced manner so that tourism truly becomes a sustainable empowerment tool.

Determining Factors For The Success Of Economic Empowerment Through Tourism Policies

The success of economic empowerment through tourism policy is highly dependent on several interrelated determinants. First, the active involvement of local communities is key in ensuring that economic benefits can be felt directly and sustainably. Community participation in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating

tourism policies increases their sense of ownership and responsibility, so that they are not only objects, but also subjects in tourism development (Kusuma, 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2021). In addition, synergy and collaboration between the government, the private sector, and local communities are important factors that support the creation of a sustainable tourism ecosystem. The government provides regulation and infrastructure, while the private sector can contribute through investments and *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) programs that support the development of local MSMEs, as shown in studies (Bramwell & Lane, 2003) and (Kartika et al., 2024).

Another factor that is no less important is strengthening community capacity through continuous training and mentoring. Improving business management, marketing, and resource management capabilities in a sustainable manner allows local economic actors to increase the competitiveness of their tourism products and services (Setyanti et al., 2021). The use of digital technology is also a determining factor for success in this modern era. Technology not only serves as a promotional medium, but also opens up wider market access for small and medium-sized businesses, thereby increasing the income potential of local communities (Kumar & Barua, 2024; Polukhina et al., 2025). In addition, the success of economic empowerment is also strongly influenced by inclusive and transparent policies, which ensure that the distribution of economic benefits can be equitable and reduce social inequality (Shah & Adi, 2024).

Finally, social and environmental sustainability is a determining factor so that economic empowerment through tourism can survive in the long term. Policies that integrate environmental conservation and local cultural preservation, as suggested by (Dwyer, 2023) and (Guo et al., 2019), not only preserve the resources that are tourist attractions, but also strengthen local identities and values that are the social capital of communities. Thus, the success of economic empowerment through tourism policy is the result of the integration of social, economic, technological, and environmental factors that are managed in a harmonious manner.

Comparison Of Findings From Various Case Studies And Literature

Various case studies and literature that discuss the impact of tourism policies on local economic empowerment show consistent findings but also highlight variations in contexts and approaches. Research in Banyuwangi Regency by (Purnomo & Dewi,

2022) and (Syah & Adi, 2024) confirms that inclusive and transparent policies can increase the participation of indigenous peoples in the management of cultural tourism destinations, which significantly improves economic well-being while preserving socio-cultural values. This approach is in line with the concept of sustainable tourism that not only pursues economic benefits but also maintains cultural and environmental integrity. This is in line with the findings (Tosun, 2006) which emphasized the importance of local community participation in tourism planning and management as a key factor for the success of sustainable development.

Meanwhile, a study in Jember Regency by (Setyanti et al., 2021) revealed that ecopreneurship-based ecotourism development is able to strengthen the capacity of local communities and open up new opportunities for environmentally friendly businesses. The study emphasized the importance of training and mentoring as a determining factor for the success of economic empowerment through tourism. This approach is also supported by the results of research (Wearing & and McDonald, 2002) which shows that ecopreneurship is an effective model for integrating environmental sustainability with community economic empowerment.

In addition, the literature from (Kumar & Barua, 2024) and (Polukhina et al., 2025) highlights the role of digital technology as a key driver in destination promotion and empowerment of local economic actors. With digitalization, previously limited market access can be significantly expanded, allowing MSMEs and other small business actors to be more competitive and grow. This is in line with the argument by (Sigala, 2018) which states that digital transformation in tourism opens up new opportunities in destination management and marketing more effectively, especially for local communities.

On the other hand, several studies such as those put forward by (Sulaiman et al., 2021) warn of the risk of economic inequality and socio-cultural damage that can arise if policies are not balanced with mature management and adequate community participation. In addition, (Gössling, 2000) warns of the potential negative impact of mass tourism on the environment and local culture if not properly regulated. Therefore, the literature suggests the need for multi-stakeholder synergy and coordination between governments, the private sector, and local communities so that the benefits of tourism

can be felt equally and sustainably.

Overall, a comparison of these studies shows that the success of local economic empowerment through tourism policies is highly dependent on the socio-cultural context and level of community participation in the decision-making process. Policies that prioritize the principles of inclusivity, transparency, capacity training, and the use of digital technology tend to yield more positive results. However, mitigating negative impacts such as social inequality and cultural degradation remains a challenge that must be overcome to achieve sustainable tourism development goals. This is reinforced by research (Lane, 1994) which confirms that successful tourism must consider the balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects in an integrated manner.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the literature review conducted, tourism policy has an important role in empowering the local economy if it is designed and implemented in an inclusive, participatory, and sustainable manner. The findings show that active community involvement in the management of tourist destinations, such as through tourism village development and capacity training, can improve local economic well-being by creating jobs, increasing income, and preserving culture and the environment. Synergy between the government, the private sector, and the community is a key factor in the success of the empowerment, especially through collaborative programs and the use of digital technology that expands market access for local business actors. However, challenges such as economic inequality, potential socio-cultural damage, and lack of coordination between stakeholders need to be addressed so that policy benefits can be felt equally and sustainably. Tourism policy should emphasize increasing community participation, strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration, supporting sustainability-oriented regulations and infrastructure, and utilizing digital innovation. For further research, it is recommended to conduct more in-depth empirical studies to examine the impact of policies directly, identify optimal mechanisms in empowering local economies through tourism. In addition, policy development must be adaptive to social and environmental dynamics, with an emphasis on cultural preservation and sustainability so that tourism development can continue to provide long-term benefits to local communities.

Suggestions For Further Research And Policy Recommendations

Further research is recommended to conduct more in-depth field studies to explore the real impact of tourism policies on the economic empowerment of local communities, especially in areas such as Jember Regency. This empirical approach is important to produce more specific and applicable data in support of effective policy formulation. In addition, follow-up research also needs to highlight the role of digital technology and social innovation as key factors in expanding market access and increasing the capacity of local economic actors. It is also important to examine the mechanism of collaboration between stakeholders in order to create optimal synergy in the implementation of tourism policies. In terms of policy, it is recommended that the government develop flexible and adaptive regulations, able to adapt to changes in social, economic, and environmental dynamics, so that tourism development can take place sustainably. Strengthening cultural and environmental preservation policies is also a top priority so that local identity is maintained and the negative impact of mass tourism can be minimized. Thus, the combination of comprehensive research and responsive policies will promote the empowerment of the local economy through inclusive and sustainable tourism.

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