

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN NATURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS FROM PINDUL CAVE IN YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRAK

Partisipasi masyarakat lokal sangat penting untuk pengembangan pariwisata, terutama di destinasi wisata alam seperti Gua Pindul di Kabupaten Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta. Selain berkontribusi terhadap keberlanjutan wisata alam itu sendiri, partisipasi masyarakat dapat memberdayakan masyarakat setempat karena mereka biasanya mendapat manfaat dari kegiatan pariwisata yang berjalan di wilayah mereka. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tingkat partisipasi masyarakat dalam pengembangan pariwisata berbasis alam dan hambatan-hambatan terhadap partisipasi masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada 60 warga yang dipilih secara acak (*random sampling*) serta melalui wawancara dengan warga dan pengelola wisata. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata tingkat partisipasi masyarakat adalah tinggi dalam hal usia, jenis kelamin, pekerjaan, pendapatan, dan latar belakang pendidikan masyarakat. Kan tetepi, tingkat partisipasi masyarakat masih rendah dalam tahap evaluasi sehingga dibutuhkan sebuah monitoring team agar partisipasi dapat meningkat terutama dalam hal transparansi keuangan. Selain itu, masyarakat setempat masih menghadapi beberapa hambatan dalam berpartisipasi, yaitu ketidaktahuan tentang dunia pariwisata, kemiskinan, kebijakan manajemen, dan kurangnya kemampuan berbahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, dibutuhkan program-program advokasi dari para pemangku kepentingan yang ada untuk meminimalisasi masalah-masalah tersebut.

Kata kunci: *Goa Pindul; Kebijakan Manajemen; Partisipasi masyarakat; Pengembangan wisata alam; Yogyakarta.*

ABSTRACT

Local community's participation is essential for a tourism development, especially in a nature tourism destination like Pindul Cave in Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta. In addition to contributing to the sustainability of the nature tourism itself, community participation can empower the local community since they are usually benefited from the tourism activities running in their area. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the level of community participation in nature-based tourism development and barriers to the community participation. This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach. The data was collected by randomly distributing questionnaires to 60 residents and conducting interviews with the locals and village tourism managers. The results suggested that the level of community participation is averagely high in terms of age, gender, job, income, and education. Nevertheless, their participation level is low in the evaluation so there should be a monitoring team to handle this issue. In addition, the local community still faces several barriers to participation, including incompetency of tourism industry, poverty, management's policy, and lack of ability to speak English. Therefore, there should be advocating programs to overcome those problems.

Keywords: *Community participation; Management's policy; Nature tourism development; Pindul Cave; Yogyakarta.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most dynamic economic sectors in many countries. According to UNWTO Annual Report 2016, about 1.184 billion tourists worldwide visit different parts of the world in 2015 - an increase of 50 million compared to that in 2014 (UNWTO, 2016). The increasing number of tourists on a global scale seems also to occur in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta Special Region. This regency with diverse natural attractions has been currently experiencing an increase in the number of tourists in recent years.

The increasing number of visitors to Gunungkidul has brought significant economic benefit. This is proven by the amount of Regional Original Income (PAD) earned by the regency in 2015, i.e. IDR 20,436,975,531 (Dinpar DIY, 2015). This amount is the highest among other regencies in Yogyakarta including Bantul (IDR 11,146,632,500), Sleman (IDR 4,526,405,500), and Kulonprogo (IDR 2,272,396,000).

The increasing amount of tourist visits to Gunungkidul cannot be separated from the massive opening of natural tourist objects like beaches and caves. In this case, Gunungkidul offers a natural tourist object that is very popular because of the uniqueness of its attractions, i.e. Pindul Cave. The cave which is located in the village of Bejiharjo, Karangmojo Sub-District, Gunungkidul offers exotic landscapes with the main attraction of tracing the cave using a tube so that this attraction is called *cavetubing*.

One of the interesting things in Pindul Cave is that the tourism is managed by the local community. This is one aspect that is very clearly visible in the application of the concept of community-based tourism (CBT). Community participation is important because one of the keys to successful CBT is the involvement of local community (Timothy, 1999).

Pindul cave was unofficially established as a tourist destination on October 10, 2010, in an event called *fam tour* attended by officials of Gunungkidul Regency. Afterward, the cave had its first secretariat which became

the first tourism management in Pindul Cave. The Secretariat was named Dewa Bejo, which was officially established on April 21, 2011. The development of Pindul Cave as a tourist attraction was marked by the number of tourist visits for the first time on the 2011 Eid al-Fitr. Due to the increasing number of visitors each month, several tourism operators (locally called secretariat) were established, not only Dewa Bejo. Almost all hamlets in Bejiharjo village have a tourism operator serving visitors enjoying Pindul cave.



Figure 1. Visitors floating in line waiting their turn to enter Pindul cave

Source: www.wisatagoapinduljogja.com

In its development, many stakeholders also participated in developing Pindul cave, including: *Firstly*, Local Government (Gunungkidul Tourism Office). At the beginning of development, the Office played a role in coordinating with the locals to develop Pindul cave. They also had a contribution by providing regulations related to the management, carrying capacity, DED, and also mediating conflicts between operators (secretariats).

Secondly, Dewa Bejo Tourist Village Management (called *Pokdarwis*). This group was the first to pioneer the opening of Pindul cave tourism and the only legal management (designated by the local government) who has the right to manage the cave. *Thirdly*, University. The role of the university in the development of tourism in Pindul cave is quite significant. The UGM students conducting KKN (student community service) in 2011 made the Cavetubing SOP, English training,

and others. Furthermore, Sanata Dharma University also conducted an English training program and Faculty of Geography UGM conducted research on cave carrying capacity and guidance training.

Fourthly, Village Government. The village was very instrumental in supporting the development of tourism in Pindul cave, one of which was by issuing the Decree of the Formation of Pokdarwis Dewa Bejo. Currently, the management group deposits IDR 2.5 million per-month to the Village Government.

Taking into account some things above, a scientific study on the participation of local community in tourism development in Pindul Cave is necessary. It is important to obtain an empirical description of the contribution of the local community towards the development of tourism. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the level of local community's participation in the Pindul Cave tourism development as well as the barriers to the community participation.

Participation is a central concept and the basic principle of community development because, among many cases, participation is closely related to the notion of human rights (Ife, 2008). Specifically related to tourism, Drake (1991) explains that community participation is the ability of the local community to influence the outcome of development programs, e.g. ecotourism, which affects them.

In terms of community participation stages, Drake (1991) claims that the local community can participate in a tourism program/project in the planning stage, implementation stage, and in the sharing benefits. The participation stages proposed by Drake (1991) were used as a theoretical basis in this study. In relation to the forms of local involvement, Damanik & Weber (2006) classify community involvement into three categories, i.e. direct, indirect, and no participation. According to Slamet (1993), the factors that influence community participation include gender, age, level of education, level of income, and livelihood/profession. Slamet (1993) also

claims that community participation in a development process will be successful if the factors supporting it are fulfilled. The factors include: (a) opportunity, i.e. an atmosphere or condition enabling an individual to have an opportunity to participate; (b) willingness, i.e. something that encourages or fosters someone's interest and attitude to participate (for example, the perceived benefits as a result of his/her participation); and (c) ability, i.e. someone's awareness or belief that he/she has the ability to participate (for example, thoughts, energy, time, or other means and materials). The willingness and ability are the potential possessed by the participating actors, individually or in groups, while the opportunity is more influenced by the situation or the environment outside the actors.

In term of community participation, one of the types of tourism approach used to develop a tourist destination is the community-based tourism (CBT). In this approach, community participation is the main requirement for the success of a CBT project. The community-based tourism (CBT) approach appeared in the 1970s and was affected by two major reasons. First, an improved acknowledgment that tourism development is not "benevolent" and has destructive environmental, economic, and socio-cultural effects on local residents. Second, the understanding that stakeholders are often needed to be engaged in the policymaking process to succeed (Cooper & Hall, 2008).

In addition to issues related to the success of a program/project in tourism, CBT is also very closely related to the issue of sustainable tourism. A development including tourism needs sustainability concept for the sake of its continuity, not only for the moment.

Community-based tourism, according to Häusler & Strasdas (2002), has multiple definitions: *Firstly*, CBT is a form of tourism that provides the opportunity for local communities to control and be involved in the management and development of tourism; *Secondly*, Communities who are not directly involved in tourism can also receive its benefits; and

Thirdly, CBT requires political empowerment, democratization, and distribution of benefits to disadvantaged communities in rural areas.

Some studies have shown the success of community-based tourism. Wahyuni and Wahjoedi (2017) suggest that community participation in a tourism development has brought positive impacts, i.e. changing the community life significantly as they become more creative and independent.

This study was conducted in Gelaran II Hamlet, Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region. The data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. There were 31 questions compiled from a number of indicators in which the responses using the Likert scale were scored as follows: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (doubt), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).

The total population of Gelaran II Hamlet was 600 people (Population Data of Beji-harjo Village, 2015). To generate the samples, this study employed the formula “10% of the population” (Nasution, 2009). Therefore, the generated samples were as many as 60 respondents. This study, subsequently, randomly selected the respondents (random sampling) to distribute the questionnaires.

The respondents’ responses were accordingly classified into several categories from which the class interval value was 0.8. The level of community participation is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1.
Category for the Levels of Community Participation

Level of Participation	Score
Very Low	1.00 - 1.80
Low	1.81 - 2.60
Medium	2.61 - 3.40
High	3.41 - 4.20
Very High	4.21 - 5.00

The collected data was then calculated using Microsoft Excel. The quantitative data calculation results were further supported by the data obtained from the interviews.

DISCUSSION

Forms of Local Community’s Participation

A direct participation form occurs when the community provides goods and services for visitors. They can interact directly through working in rural “guest houses”, cafes, or restaurants, selling handicrafts on streets or running various types of transportation (ITC, 2010). Meanwhile, an indirect participation form takes place when local people work in micro businesses that supply something like farming vegetables or fruits to hotels, guest houses, cafes, restaurants, etc. or when they work in manufacturing businesses that make clothing/textiles or equipment consumed by tourists and hotels (ITC, 2010).



Figure 2. A villager working as a guide
Source: author’s documentation, 2016

Out of 60 surveyed respondents in this study, 51 ones (85%) were directly involved in the tourism activities and the remaining 9 (nine) ones (15%) were not involved. In general, there were two ways to participate directly in the tourism activities in Pindul Cave: (1) the community can participate by working as the staffs of the Secretariat of Wira Wisata as guides, photographers, and many others or (2) running various businesses/ becoming vendors like selling foods, soft drinks, clothing, and others.

The first way (being an employee) is preferred more by the locals. Of the 466 residents of Gelaran II Hamlet, there were around 150 people who became employees at Wira Tourism Operator. Most of them work as guides (50 men, 1 woman) and consumption

section (women). In addition, some also work as photographers, cleaning service staffs, and event and outbound staffs with a maximum of 5 (five) people. The second way (running a business) is also mostly chosen by the villagers. There were 30 people running homestays, 13 people running businesses (selling *bakso*, soft drinks, clothes, credit, etc.), 6 (six) people providing toilets, 9 (nine) people providing parking lots.



Figure 3. Villagers working as administrators in one of Pindul cave tourism operators
Source: author's documentation, 2016

Thus, almost all forms of community participation in the tourism development of Pindul Cave are direct participation. Meanwhile, in Pindul cave, there are no forms of indirect participation such as supplying vegetables

for restaurants/hotels, textiles for clothing traders, or handicrafts for souvenir shops. The absence of supply of farming vegetables/fruits is caused by the lack of agricultural land in the area. The women also prefer to shop vegetables/fruits and cooking materials in the market. There are a small number of people who supply catfish for catering, but the supply can be done only at the harvest time. In term of souvenirs, the villagers do not have the skills to make crafts. Therefore, these commodities are obtained from the market, not supplied by the locals. However, there are some people, i.e. the guides' wives, who make printing shirts to be supplied to the clothing sellers in Pindul Cave tourism object.

Level of Community Participation

In relation to the concept of community-based tourism (CBT), local community participation in the tourism development of Pindul Cave includes four stages, including planning, implementation, sharing benefit, and evaluation. There are 11 parameters for all of these stages with the following details: planning (3), implementation (3), sharing benefits (4), and evaluation (1). Overall, the local community participation and its parameters in the development of community-based tourism can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2.
Parameters of Community Participation in Tourism Development

Stages of Participation	Parameters	Score
Planning	1. Identification of tourism potential	3.18
	2. Identification of problems	3.18
	3. Alternative development plan (resources)	3.27
Implementation	4. Involvement in attraction management	3.96
	5. Involvement in programs or activities	3.83
	6. Involvement in the development of tourism services and access	3.50
Sharing Benefits	7. Economic benefits	4.12
	8. Environmental benefits	4.28
	9. Cultural benefits	4.20
	10. Social benefits	4.25
Evaluation	11. Assessment and monitoring	3.40
	Average	3.74

Source: primary data

From Table 2, it appears that the level of community participation in nature tourism development was averagely high (3.74). This

is actually an ideal condition which is necessary for a successful CBT project. For more detailed explanation, it can be seen in Figure 4.

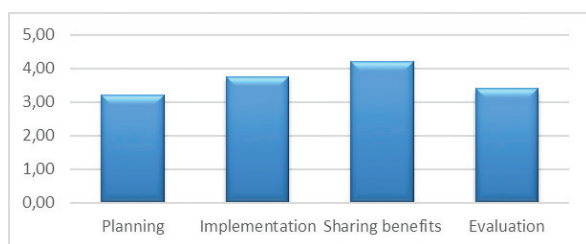


Figure 4. Overall community participation per participation stage

Figure 4 shows that the score in sharing benefits is the highest one (4.21). This is not surprising, considering a lot of economic benefits generated from tourism activities in Pindul Cave. As it is known, from the rough calculation of revenue from tickets (IDR 30,000) multiplied by the number of visitors in 2015 (143,553 visitors) is IDR 4,306,59,000.

The high economic clappers are directly proportional to the high level of community participation has been described by researchers. Sánchez (2009) said, “residents’ positive attitudes are essential for participating in tourism; economic benefits are the main reason behind the positive attitudes”. Feighery (2002) also said that there is a highly significant factor in making the minor level of community participation in tourism development, i.e. the skepticism that “tourism can deliver economic and social prosperity”.

Feighery’s and Sánchez’s statements can be used to explain the high level of participation of the local community in the tourism development of Pindul Cave. Since the people understand well that the tourism activities in their village produce a huge economic and social prosperity, they have a positive attitude towards tourism activities. Because of this positive attitude, they have a high involvement in tourism development.

As an additional illustration concerning the high economic benefits, most of the people of Bejiharjo village now have 1 (one) up to 2 (two) motorcycles. This situation is far different from the situation about 3 (three) years ago before the establishment of Pindul cave as a tourism object. At that time, the community relied more on agricultural activities by becoming farm laborers or processing the land. From the

social side, now the community in Gelaran II Hamlet is more cohesive and united. The locals now often hold meetings, ranging from neighborhood to farmer group meetings. They interact with each other in these meetings.

In addition, the study results of Van Breugel (2013) found that the two success keys to a CBT project are community participation and perceived tourism impact. This means the higher the positive impact of tourism, the higher the level of community participation. This also may explain the high participation of the community in Pindul Cave whereby people perceived significant positive economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts.

Factors Affecting the Level of Community Participation

According to the type of gender, it is apparent that the high level of participation is dominated by male respondents compared to female ones. This phenomenon confirms a study conducted by Samson *et al* (2017) that indicates that women’s low level of participation is influenced by cultural practices, education level, gender roles and religious beliefs.

This significant difference can be understood given that at the beginning process turning Goa Pindul into a tourist object, men were more often involved, e.g. cleaning the river. Even in the initial meetings, the audience was dominated by men, especially members of the youth organization. Until now, this dominance is still visible in the management in which the members are dominated by men. Therefore, the decision-making process tends to be dominated by men. Usually, women are involved in cooking, being an admin, guest recipients, and rarely involved in the management positions. For more details, see Figure 5.

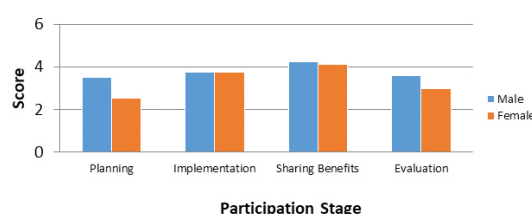


Figure 5. Level of community participation by gender

Based on age, public participation does not vary. All age groups have higher participation level. However, when viewed carefully, the high age level (≥ 41 years old) outperforms the low age level (≥ 20 years old) and medium (40-21 years old). This phenomenon makes sense considering, as claimed by Slamet (1993), the elderly (represented by groups of medium and high age levels) are considered more experienced or more senior so they will be given more opportunity to express their opinions in the decision-making. For more detail, see Figure 6.

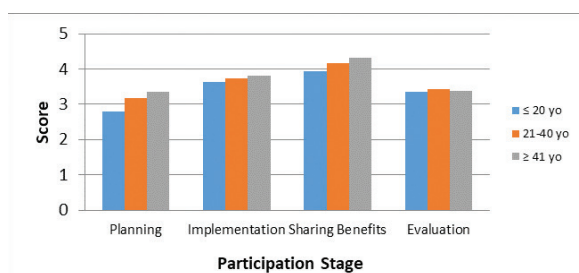


Figure 6. Level of community participation by age

Based on the educational background, residents with the highest level of education have the highest level of participation, and vice versa; residents with the lowest level of education have the lowest level of participation. One of the factors that affect the level of knowledge is education level. The higher education, people will have a broader knowledge of construction, form and participation procedures. As suggested by Mustapha & Azman (2013), the professionals tend to consider that their ideas and works are better than those with low education level. For more detail, see Figure 7.

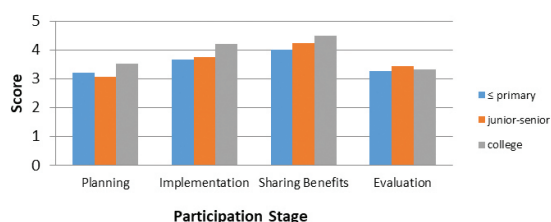


Figure 7. Level of community participation by education level

Based on types of jobs, businessmen have the lowest score, while the retired man has the highest score. The above results certainly give us information jobs are related to spare time, in particular, to engage in activities such as attending meetings, community service and so on. For more detail, see Figure 8.

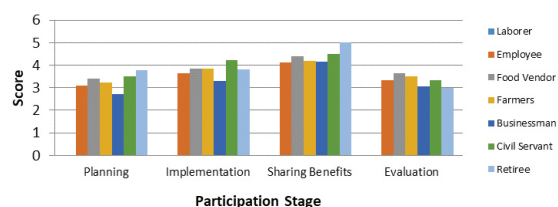


Figure 8. Level of community participation by job

Based on the level of income, residents with low, medium, high and incomes, all have a high level of participation. But the interesting thing is that for all stages of participation, those with high income actually have the highest participation level. This is in line with the study conducted by Mugizi, *et al* (2017) that confirms that income significantly determines households' participation in tourism activities. For more detail, see Figure 9.

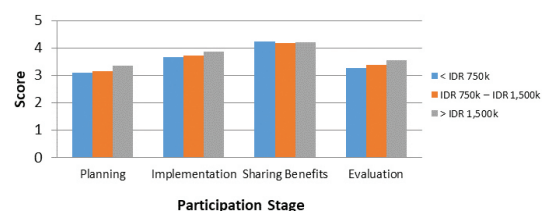


Figure 9. Level of community participation by income

Barriers to Community Participation

In a CBT project, ideally, the community participation is high. As revealed by Scheyvens (2002), CBT is a tourism business where members of the local community have a high level of control over the activities that occur, and a significant proportion of economic benefits to them. However, the participation of a local community depends on the factors that influence it and their barriers to participating. The following are barriers to

the participation of local people in the tourism development of Pindul cave.

The first barrier is the local community's ignorance of the tourism field. Moswete (2008) and Timothy (1999) claim this problem as the main barrier to community involvement in tourism development. In Cave Pindul, this issue is reasonable since the residents are mostly farmers who have to engage in a tourism sector serving as a guest host.

The second barrier related to the tourism development is the poverty. Due to financial constraint, they cannot make their houses as a homestay or even run a business. So, only residents who are economically established have more chance to engage in the tourism sector.

The third barrier to community involvement in tourism is the village tourism management's regulation or policy. As the attraction manager, Wira Wisata Secretariat prioritizes the members of *Karang Taruna* (Youth Organization) to be recruited as their staffs. Thus, such a policy creates limited access to the whole community to participate in.

The last barrier is the lack of ability to speak English. The residents have to speak English since many international visitors visit their village or Pindul Cave. In the case of the tourism industry in Pindul Cave, this is a serious problem.

CONCLUSION

The level of community involvement in tourism in Pindul Cave is averagely high. Referring to the concept of CBT key success (community participation and perceived tourism impact), tourism in Pindul Cave can be said successful. In general, the form of community involvement in Pindul Cave tourism is direct participation. The ways the community directly participates in are: (1) running a business or selling something for tourists and (2) being employees in the management.

Analysis of factors affecting the community involvement in tourism activities shows that there is no significant difference between

gender, age, education, employment, and income in the level of community participation. This is a very positive signal for a CBT project because CBT requires equality and justice for all members of the community.

Although the level of community involvement in tourism is high, there are still some constraints on the community participation, i.e. lack of knowledge about the tourism industry, family economic condition, management's regulation/policy, and the lack of ability to speak English.

Despite the limited scope, this study can still be used as a basis to propose the following recommendations: *Firstly*, The need for strengthening community involvement in the evaluation phase. The way is to establish a special monitoring team consisting of government and local communities from various professions and social status. *Secondly*, The management should be more transparent in finance (revenue and expenditure) to the community and tourists. This needs to be done, for instance, to avoid conflicts in CBT due to an uneven profit distribution.

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