



Community Participation through Village Tourism Development in Kampung Batik Semarang

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore community participation in the development of Kampung Batik Semarang as a rural tourism destination. This research uses an exploratory qualitative approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews with 11 informants, observation, and documentation from March to July 2025. The Kampung Batik Semarang Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) is the main actor in mobilizing participation, facilitating communication, and sustaining tourism development. This study concludes that effective village tourism development requires a balance between external support and local autonomy, as well as strengthening democratic processes through bottom-up and horizontal communication models that will ensure a fair distribution of benefits. Pokdarwis in Kampung Batik Semarang shows that empowering the community as active agents in tourism makes a positive contribution, especially for economic and social well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry plays a crucial role in sustainable development and positive economic growth worldwide, including for Indonesia. Tourism not only contributes to economic development but also plays a significant role in community development (Cárdenas-García et al., 2015; Cheng et al., 2023). Job creation, foreign exchange earnings, and gross domestic product (GDP) are evidence of tourism's contribution to economic activity. This complementary growth clearly illustrates how tourism plays a crucial role in a country's development (Cárdenas-García et al., 2015).

This evidence can be derived from the role of tourism in bringing economic circulation through tourist visits and also in generating human resources. These human resources have an impact on reducing unemployment and poverty. In Indonesia, this is also supported by a statement from Bank Indonesia (BI) stating that tourism is the most effective sector for increasing foreign exchange earnings for Indonesia. Therefore, tourism becomes one of the spaces where the resources needed to develop tourism are available domestically (Rahma, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, tourism development requires community participation as the implementers and main actors. This involvement also benefits the well-being of the participating communities due to the integral relationship between the two. Various programs are being implemented to support practical actions by the community in tourism development. However, this top-down dominated model form is often called unrealistic and utopian due to its complexity and high transaction costs (Zielinski et al. 2018) (Idris et al., 2021). Furthermore, many activities from the central government to local governments are stalled, and efforts have not yet been made at the level of the main driver, which is the community.

One of the tourism development programs implemented in Indonesia is "Village Tourism." Rural tourism is beneficial for building tourism, villages, and communities for social, economic, and environmental interests. Therefore, rural tourism places community participation as the driving force behind tourism development, which has mutually beneficial impacts on the well-being of the community itself (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018).

As research results related to sustainability show, it is increasingly important to develop community-involved programs for tourism development. This is because sustainable tourism not only encompasses the three dimensions of economy, society, and environment, but also aims for the twelve (12) aspects set by UNWTO (2013). These aspects include local control, job quality, economic viability, local prosperity, social equity, community well-being, cultural heritage, physical integrity, biodiversity, resource efficiency, visitor satisfaction, and environmental purity. Therefore, the community, as the main driver of tourism development, is important to consider in terms of sustainable planning and management that can create independent policies and investments targeted at improving community outcomes (Kessy, 2022)

Providing support such as providing space that can be managed by the community in the tourism sector will result in a diversity of livelihoods. Facility support will enable communities to plan independently for tourism

development, such as the management systems implemented by local communities in providing various products or services in tourism activities, which can continue to develop even without government support. In its development, tourism managed based on direct interaction between local communities and tourists in providing tourism products or services can offer an exchange of knowledge, serving as a basis for independent reflection to continuously improve and grow (Idris et al., 2021). It is precisely this kind of local community participation in various tourism activities that ultimately brings about various benefits, especially in the economic sector as mentioned earlier, and even sustainability planning accompanies the process. Therefore, it is important to provide support and motivation to the community to participate.

Kampung Batik Semarang is a village with tourism potential from historical and cultural aspects that also implements this program. Kampung Batik, located in Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang District, is not far from the Old City area, specifically across from the Old City Museum (Suliyati & Yuliati, 2019; Yuliati, 2010).



Figure 1. Picture of Kampung Batik Semarang

This Batik Village in Semarang is said to have been the center of batik crafts during the colonial era, where batik merchants who wanted to market their batik outside of Java would gather. After a period of inactivity due to the lack of batik-making activity, the Batik Village was reactivated in 2005 to revive its identity as a Batik Village, and to this day, the Batik Village remains a must-visit cultural tourism destination when visiting the city of Semarang (Rohmaniyah et al., 2023; Sarwono et al., 2023; Syarifa & Wijaya, 2019). The naming of this Batik Village is due to many of its residents being batik craftsmen by profession and livelihood. According to Colonial Reports (Kolonial Verslag), Kampung Batik is estimated to have existed since the first quarter of the 20th century (Indrianingrum et al., 2021; Pertiwi, 2014). This research aims to examine the existing participation model in Kampung Batik Semarang for developing the village into a tourist destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sastropoetro (1986), as cited by Idris (2021), participation is the thoughts and/or actions taken by an individual to contribute to a common goal, based on a sense of responsibility. Then the forms of participation are both material and non-material, and involvement can be individual or group-based. Therefore, the conclusion regarding community participation in tourism is the involvement of the community in all development processes, starting from identifying problems and tourism potential in the environment, choosing solutions to solve problems, implementing them, and finally evaluating (Idris et al., 2021).

Previous studies show that sustainable development in the tourism field is not only limited to the nature but also oriented to the past and future welfares of a community. The welfare of the community and its sustainability could be brought if communities are given more chances to participate in tourism development. She further state that tourism development might hardly yield sustainable results if the indigenious community are left behind. In that study the author describes how communities are a part of tourism and how they could better be engaged in tourism activities that are capable of generating beneficial income and ensure sustainability of destination (Kessy, 2022).

Essentially, tourism development is the task of the government, tourism agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance tourism potential. However, achieving the goals of tourism development to increase the number of visiting tourists, boost local economic income, preserve culture and the environment, and benefit the local community requires community participation as the main driver, as the community understands the needs and conditions of the tourism site better (Lolita & Barusman, 2024). Eyisi and Lee (2021) formulated a proposition for community participation in tourism development, adapted from Tosun and Timothy (2003), with details as shown in the following table (Eyisi & Lee, 2021).:

Table 1. Community participation proportion in tourism

No	Proposition content
1.	Community participation is a vital element in the implementation of tourism plans and strategies: making the application of results easier.
2.	Community participation contributes to sustainable tourism development in several ways: thus, helping to plan for the future.
3.	Community participation increases tourist satisfaction: helping to improve locals' favorable disposition towards tourists.
4.	Community participation helps tourism professionals design better tourism plans: making tourism more achievable.
5.	Community participation ensures a fair distribution of costs and benefits among community members: helping to balance the positive and negative impacts of tourism development for local people.
6.	Community participation can help satisfy locally identified needs: facilitating local people to express their needs and concerns about tourism.

7.	Community participation strengthens the democratization process in tourist destinations: helping to balance the process of power-sharing and encourages the flow of communication.
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Community participation means they have the opportunity to voice their ideas, thoughts, hopes, desires, and concerns regarding tourism development. It is then hoped that this opportunity can be used as input in the planning process for tourism development programs. Because it is hoped that the community can have the opportunity to gain financial benefits from tourism, the development of tourism destinations that allow for job creation, business opportunities, and also open up opportunities for the community to receive community development programs such as providing training and education for the community so that they can understand the benefits and manage tourism. With this in mind, a simple definition of tourism is "an industry of the people" because the community is the main supporter and determinant of the sustainability of tourism development. Certainty for the community is a benchmark in defining community participation in tourism development as a community industry. Regarding this, Tosun (1999) divides community participation in the tourism development process into three level:

1. Pseudo-community participation; non-participation; the goal of tourism development is not collective community involvement; decisions are related to meeting basic needs to minimize risk; short-term policies; top-down; indirect; only involving local elites; government dominance.
2. Passive community participation; only as an endorsement/ratification of decisions made for the community - not by and for the community, only involved in implementation, minimal community contribution, the community is not decision-makers but decision-takers (decision-implementers), effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the goals of external parties.
3. Spontaneous community participation; direct participation, active participation, and authentic participation (Adikampana, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses an exploratory qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a form of research intended or aimed at describing the state of the research object based on visible or existing facts (Fasa et al., 2022; Wicaksono, 2020). Data collection was conducted from March 1, 2025, to July 15, 2025, in Kampung Batik, located in RW 2, Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang District, Semarang City. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For the interview technique, this study interviewed 11 informants. Observation is used to observe the general picture of Kampung Batik Semarang and the activities related to the development program in Kampung Batik Semarang. Documentation certainly involves evidence documents related to the village tourism development program in Kampung Batik Semarang. The object of this research is community

participation in the development of a tourist village, while the research subject is the activities of the Pokdarwis Kampung Batik Semarang community (Syarif & Wijaya, 2019). Data analysis was conducted using techniques from Miles and Huberman, which consist of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014)

RESEARCH RESULTS

Kampung Batik Semarang is one of the tourist villages in Indonesia that utilizes the historical and cultural value that occurred in the area. Since its establishment as a batik center, this tourist village has continued to grow and develop. Some evidence of the success of batik villages is shown by several achievements obtained thru Pokdarwis competitions, such as:

- a. 1st Place for the Jamboree Stand at the Pokdarwis Competition throughout the City of Semarang in 2023
- b. 2nd Place for the Jamboree at the Pokdarwis Competition throughout the City of Semarang in 2023
- c. 1st Place for the Pokdarwis Jamboree throughout the City of Semarang in 2024
- d. 3rd Place for the Pokdarwis Jamboree throughout Central Java in 2024 in Kudus

The achievements of the Kampung Batik Semarang tourist village are inseparable from the participation of the community. With these achievements, the community is also becoming more enthusiastic to continue developing the village in terms of village facilities, institutions, and the community itself. As for the description of community participation, it is explained in the following sections.

Propositions for community participation in tourism by Eyisi & Lee (2021) which adapted from Tosun and Timothy (2003) explained below:

1. Community participation is a vital element in the implementation of tourism plans and strategies: making the application of results easier.

The central and local governments are the main stakeholders in the village tourism program. The goal of sustainable development, which produces positive impacts on the economy, society, and the environment, places local communities as the implementers. Considering that the ultimate goal of the program is the well-being of society itself, the government places community participation as a vital element. Sustainable development will proceed and succeed if attention is focused on the community. Therefore, the government supports both materially, such as village funds and tourism and non-tourism development funds, and non-materially, such as facilities for community empowerment programs for Village Tourism development actors. This step is a plan and strategy to achieve goals more easily.

2. Community participation contributes to sustainable tourism development in several ways: thus, helping to plan for the future.

One of the activities carried out by the community as a form of implementing the village tourism development plan is by forming a Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). This Pokdarwis serves as a

public space and the driving force behind the development of the Kampung Batik Semarang village tourism. The activities of the Pokdarwis that support the development of a tourism village and involve planning and strategic activities are:

- a. The preservation of history and culture, which is highlighted as the value and attraction of the Kampung Batik Semarang tourist village thru the Titiran event held annually in October to commemorate the shooting and burning of Kampung Batik during the Japanese occupation.
- b. Village infrastructure development initiated by Pokdarwis, such as mural creation, reliefs, village design, and others.
- c. Improving the quality of life for the community, which impacts the development of village tourism, such as; participating in village tourism marketing training activities, participating in institutional training activities, obtaining tour guide certification, and so on.

Adapting to the needs of the times thru the participation of Pokdarwis in Pokdarwis competition activities to gain new knowledge from both the competition organizers and other tourism villages. Additionally, the participation of Pokdarwis in study tour activities to other tourism villages that are more advanced or have been established longer.

3. Community participation increases tourist satisfaction: helping to improve locals' favorable disposition towards tourists.

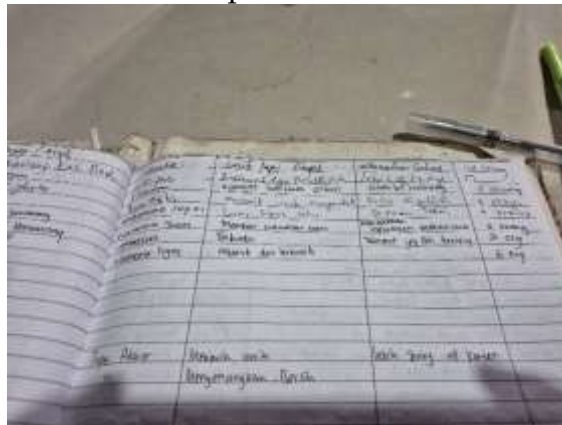


Figure 2. Customer and Impression Tourist Book

The Pokdarwis community of Kampung Batik Semarang offers several programs as services to tourists, such as batik training, sales of typical Semarang batik, culinary experiences, and visual tours of Kampung Batik Semarang. To serve as a reference for the Semarang Batik Village service program, the Pokdarwis community created a guest book so that visitors could leave their impressions of their visit and provide input for the development of the tourist village. The guest book shows that visitors described their impression of the tourist village as unique, interesting, and surprising to find such an interesting place in Semarang. For their input, they hoped that the community would upload these

unique places to social media. But there were also criticisms that the tourist village turned out to be small and difficult to find parking for vehicles. This serves as input for the community to continue developing the potential of the Kampung Bati Semarang tourist village.

Then, in addition to being a source of employment for workers in activities such as producing and selling batik, the village also opened up other new job opportunities. These job opportunities include photographers for tourism activities, batik training, and small and medium-sized enterprises that support tourism. The SMEs supporting tourism in Kampung Batik Semarang are food and beverage SMEs and tailoring businesses for sewing batik products.

4. Community participation helps tourism professionals design better tourism plans: making tourism more achievable.

They found it easier to implement development programs. The involvement of the community made it easier for these stakeholders to implement development programs. Example:

- a. The existence of a village tourism marketing training program organized by the Semarang City Culture and Tourism Office.
 - b. A branding management training program from Soegijapranata Catholic University provided to the community involved in village tourism development.
 - c. The development of village tourism infrastructure provided by the Rejomulyo village in Semarang and the Semarang City government, carried out by the community involved in village tourism development.
5. Community participation ensures a fair distribution of costs and benefits among community members: helping to balance the positive and negative impacts of tourism development for local people.

When there are activities held in the tourist village, such as a minister's visit, the activities will be planned, organized, and carried out by the community involved in developing the tourist village. Other activities, such as if there is batik training, will be compensated for the community members participating in the training. Furthermore, the village frequently participates in competitions to showcase its tourism village's strengths, and the resulting proceeds are distributed equally among the participants.

6. Community participation can help satisfy locally identified needs: facilitating local people to express their needs and concerns about tourism.

The community involved in developing the tourist village continues to strive to develop the village. The services provided to facilitate the dissemination of information related to tourist villages can be seen from several social media accounts, such as Instagram at the account: @kampoenkdjadhoe, as well as the listed contact person to assist with information services. There is also a digital book about the Kampung Batik Semarang tourist village that can be accessed on the page: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/mrjny/tkay/#p=1>

7. Community participation strengthens the democratization process in tourist destinations: helping to balance the process of power-sharing and encourages the flow of communication.

The village tourism program places community participation as the most important element. Therefore, the bottom-up communication model is a dialogic communication style that implements the democratic process in tourist villages. Then, the support for the existence of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) program becomes a public space that provides horizontal communication, allowing the community to exchange thoughts, ideas, and concepts thru a horizontal communication model, even though there is an organizational structure within it. Another piece of evidence for Kampung Batik Semarang in the village tourism development program is that the implementation of the programs and facilities provided by this village often occurs during working hours, allowing village tourism residents who have non-formal jobs, flexible schedules, or who are not formally employed to collaborate in carrying out these programs. This is a democratic practice that takes place in the Batik Village of Semarang.

From the explanation above, it shows that most communities in Kampung Batik Semarang have implemented their participation in the development of the tourist village. The development of the tourist village is also supported by the local government. The community not only continues to develop the potential of village tourism but also improves themselves to continuously provide the best service to tourists. Thru a horizontal communication model to all community members and a bottom-up model when negotiating and collaborating with stakeholders using a dialogic approach, it demonstrates that the community has practiced democratic processes. The maturity of the community in participating serves as the foundation for understanding why the Pokdarwis in the Batik Village Tourist Village in Semarang often wins Pokdarwis competitions at both the city and provincial levels. According to the interview results from the Head of the Pokdarwis and the Digitalization Section of the Pokdarwis, the next achievement is to become one of the 100 best tourism villages in Indonesia. Therefore, there is still much that needs to be developed to achieve that goal.

Next, regarding the levels of community participation in the tourism development process based on Tosun's (1999) concept in the Batik Village Tourist Village in Semarang, which is described as follows:

1. Pseudo community participation

Next, regarding the levels of community participation in the tourism development process based on Tosun's (1999) concept in the Batik Village Tourist Village in Semarang, which is described as follows: In this type of participation, the form of communication is more top-down, usually dominated by the government. It usually takes the form of short-term policies that only involve local elites. An example of what Semarang Batik Village did in this participatory

model is the implementation of the Pokdarwis competition. This activity is organized by the Semarang City Culture and Tourism Office or the Culture and Tourism Office at the provincial level. This program is dominated by the government. Although the activities were aimed at assessing the feasibility of the tourist village and the Pokdarwis of Kampung Batik Semarang, the implementation process of the competition, the judging, and the evaluation decisions were entirely determined by the government. The Pokdawris community in Semarang Batik Village only implements the suitability and regulations that are the judging criteria for the Pokdarwis competition.

2. *Passive community participation;*

This type of participation is not as decision-makers but as decision-takers (decision-implementers), only involved in implementation. Program establishment and goal achievement are determined by external parties. Activities in this type of participation are demonstrated by several programs launched by the government for the Kampung Batik Semarang Tourism Village, such as assistance for village infrastructure and visualization, and official or working visits from the central, regional, and local governments. The majority of such activities are determined by the Semarang City Culture and Tourism Office and the Pokdarwis community as the implementing body. The entire preparation and performance process was left to the community.

3. *Spontaneous community participation;*

This type of participation is direct, active, and authentic. The Pokdarwis community in Semarang Batik Village has developed significantly on its own due to the enthusiasm of the community members, which stemmed from the creative ideas of the community itself. The community also participates in various activities that allow for the advancement of the village, the group, and individually, namely financial income from the ongoing activities. This is implemented thru programs created by the community. Some of these participations are described as follows:

a. *Direct participation*

Direct participation can be seen in how enthusiastic the community is about developing the village by creating icons that will highlight its uniqueness and support the village's identity. Some of the icon creations include: creating visual elements for the public space in Kampung Batik with an old-fashioned or conventional style. These public spaces include: a mini meeting room, the construction of gazebos, and village lights and gardens in Kampung Batik Semarang.

b. *Active participation*

Direct participation can be seen in how enthusiastic the community is about developing the village by creating icons that will highlight its uniqueness and support the village's

identity. Some of the icon creations include: creating visual elements for the public space in Kampung Batik with a vintage or conventional style. These public spaces include: a mini meeting room, the construction of gazebos, and village lights and gardens in Kampung Batik Semarang. Active participation is demonstrated thru the enthusiasm of the community in attending the training provided by stakeholders, which enables the development and progress of the village and its people. As mentioned earlier, the Kampung Batik Community has received training several times, including tour guide training and digital marketing training from the Semarang City Culture and Tourism Office, branding and online media marketing training from Soegijapranata Catholic University, batik making training for elderly villagers from the NGO Relawan Gesit, and other training from other stakeholders.

c. Authentic participation

Authentic participation is also widely practiced by the Kampung Batik Semarang community thru several activities such as Oyster Procurement and Batik Training. This activity is carried out independently by the community due to their enthusiasm in developing, showcasing, promoting, and preserving the identity and values of the local wisdom of the Kampung Batik Semarang tourist village.

The annual Titiran procurement in October, which aims to commemorate the five-day battle during the Japanese occupation. This activity is a performance based on the story of the burning and shooting that occurred in the village. This activity was attended by the entire community of Kampung Batik Semarang. The purpose of this activity is to commemorate the event and preserve the history that has become a tourist attraction in the village.

Next, batik training can be conducted both within and outside the village. This activity involves community participation in the implementation, procurement, preparation, training, and mentoring processes. Batik training is the main service of Semarang Batik Village. Besides being a tourist attraction, batik training is the main activity contributing to the local community's economy because there are costs involved in conducting the training. The Titiran activity and batik training are authentic village participatory activities that attract visitors and are a way for the community to continue preserving the culture and history of the village.

DISCUSSION

This research shows that based on the opinion of Eyisi & Lee (2021), the community of Kampung Batik Semarang is proven to be involved in participating in facilitating the implementation of tourism programs, increasing tourist satisfaction, and strengthening the democratization process at the local level. Furthermore, the community of Kampung Batik Semarang also participated in implementing all levels of participation based on Tosun's (1999)

framework, which emphasizes various levels of community participation ranging from pseudo, passive, to spontaneous participation.

The experience of Kampung Batik Semarang, which demonstrates the dynamic interaction between these three levels. On the one hand, pseudo-participation is evident in government-initiated programs like Pokdarwis competitions, where decision-making remains top-down. On the other hand, spontaneous participation is highly visible thru community-initiated activities such as the annual Titiran event and independent batik training programs. These activities demonstrate authentic participation, rooted in the community's motivation to preserve cultural heritage while generating economic benefits. This research also highlights the role of Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Groups) as both facilitators and collective actors in bridging local communities with external stakeholders. Pokdarwis not only serves as a driver of tourism development but also as a platform for knowledge exchange, horizontal communication, and capacity building. This reflects Murphy's (1985) idea of tourism as a "community industry," where the sustainability of tourism is highly dependent on local acceptance and ownership. Based on the findings of this research, the argument that community participation is an important pillar in the success of village tourism development is clear and strong.

Based on the experience in the Kampung Batik Semarang tourist village, it explains that effective village tourism development is not just about creating attractions, but about empowering the community to become active agents of change. This community empowerment serves as a measure of the government's success in establishing the Village Tourism program, the final results of which also impact community well-being as social development, tourism development as economic and environmental development. Therefore, the Village Tourism program is one of the programs that supports the SDGs for Indonesia.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concludes that Kampung Batik Semarang implements all three levels of participation, ranging from superficial and passive forms of participation to spontaneous involvement driven by the community's own initiative. Although the participation of various stakeholders also plays an important role, community involvement is the main determinant of the success and sustainability of Semarang Batik Village. The existence of Pokdarwis as the main driving force community plays an important role in mobilizing, coordinating, and sustaining this participation.

The research findings indicate that the democratic process in tourism development planning and implementation is supported by a bottom-up communication model and horizontal collaboration among stakeholders. Then, the sustainability of Semarang Batik Village as a tourist village depends on the role of community participation in continuously adapting, innovating, and collaborating with external actors. Ultimately, community participation contributes significantly to the preservation of cultural heritage, the improvement of community well-being, and the enhancement of the tourist experience. The results of this study provide a reference that policymakers and

tourism stakeholders should prioritize a community-based approach in developing village tourism. The availability of community development training facilities serves as an example for external parties in supporting the development of the Kampung Batik Semarang tourist village.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research has deeply explored the role of participation through exploration and interviews. Further research is needed to determine which level and proportion of participation have the most and least impact on the development of the Kampung Batik Semarang. Therefore, future research may further need to integrate with quantitative methods to provide deeper insights into the measurable impact of community participation on tourism development across economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

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