

## Community Empowerment Strategy in Maritime Tourism: A Qualitative Approach in Pari Island, Thousand Islands, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze community empowerment strategies in marine tourism management in Pari Island using a qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The results showed that community empowerment has increased local participation in tourism, particularly in economic activities such as homestay management and tourist equipment rental. However, challenges in environmental sustainability and gaps in access to economic resources remain an issue. In conclusion, inclusive empowerment strategies and continued support from various parties are needed to ensure tourism develops sustainably.

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## INTRODUCTION

Marine tourism in Indonesia, especially in coastal areas and islands, has become one of the mainstay sectors in supporting sustainable economic development. Pari Island, part of the Thousand Islands, has significant marine tourism potential, with beautiful beaches, preserved coral reefs, and rich marine ecosystems. Marine tourism development in Pari Island has encouraged increased tourist visits and brought positive economic impacts to the local community. However, this development also poses challenges, especially about environmental conservation and the welfare of local communities (Jubaedah and Anah, 2019; Raihan and Oktavianus, 2023).

Community empowerment is key in ensuring that marine tourism development on Pari Island is sustainable. Through appropriate empowerment strategies, local communities can actively participate in tourism management and feel the economic benefits generated. This empowerment not only includes training and skills enhancement but also involves the community in decision-making processes related to natural resource management (Setiawati and Safitri, 2020). This approach is important to avoid social inequality and minimize tourism's negative impacts on local communities' lives.

This research uses a qualitative approach to community empowerment strategies in marine tourism on Pari Island. This approach allows researchers to dig deeper into the experiences and views of local communities related to their involvement in the tourism sector. The study's results are expected to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and sustainable community empowerment model and support community-based tourism that maintains environmental sustainability and local values (Prayogi and Sari, 2019).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study of community empowerment in marine tourism, several relevant theories and research form the basis for understanding empowerment strategies and their impact on local communities, especially in coastal areas such as Pari Island. This literature will discuss theories of community empowerment, previous research on marine tourism, and the results of previous studies relevant to research on Pari Island and in other locations.

### *Community Empowerment Theory*

Community empowerment is the process by which individuals and community groups increase their control over resources and decisions that affect their lives. According to the empowerment theory proposed by Zimmerman (1995), this process involves three main dimensions: psychological control (personal empowerment), participation in decision-making (community participation), and increased economic capacity (economic empowerment). In marine tourism, empowerment often involves communities in natural resource management, entrepreneurial capacity building, and active participation in tourism activities.

### *Community-based Tourism*

The Community-Based Tourism model emphasizes community active participation in tourism management and equitable benefit sharing. According to Suansri (2003), this model aims to provide direct economic benefits to local

communities while preserving the environment. Research by Scheyvens (1999) shows that community-based tourism positively impacts the economic welfare of the community, but only if the community has control over resources and sufficient skills to manage them.

#### *Previous Research on Pari Island*

Several researchers have researched community empowerment in marine tourism on Pari Island. Sari and de Fretes (2021), stated that the Pari Island community has been actively involved in various tourism activities such as snorkeling equipment rental, homestay management, and tour guide services. This study highlights the increase in community income through marine tourism but also underlines the importance of education and training in improving the quality of local tourism businesses.

On the other hand, research by Leonard et al. (2020) shows that environmental sustainability is still a big challenge in Pari Island. Some tourism activities, such as snorkeling and diving, that are not well managed have the potential to damage coral reefs. Therefore, community empowerment in environmental management is very important to ensure tourism develops without damaging the marine ecosystem.

Similar research was also conducted in other areas with characteristics similar to those of Pari Island. Setiawati and Safitri (2020), examined community empowerment strategies in Seribu Island and found that community participation in tourism has improved economic and social welfare. However, they also identified challenges such as lack of access to business capital and adequate training. In other locations, such as Lombok Island, community empowerment in marine tourism has successfully increased local income and encouraged the preservation of local culture, but only when communities are provided with ongoing training and fair access to markets (Mareni and Septiviari, 2018).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Time and Place*

The research was conducted in Pari Island, on June 6, 2024, one of Jakarta's main marine tourism destinations. The research subjects consisted of local community members, traditional leaders, small tourism entrepreneurs, and local government parties involved in tourism management on Pari Island. Informants were selected purposively, based on their role and involvement in tourism and community empowerment activities (Sugiyono, 2019). Data collection techniques use interviews and participatory observation where researchers directly observe tourism activities and community interactions with tourists.

This research uses a qualitative method to explore in-depth community empowerment strategies in marine tourism on Pari Island. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to understand local communities' experiences, perceptions, and participation in a complex social and cultural context. This research focuses on the subjective experiences and views of local communities related to marine tourism and how they are involved in the management and development of such tourism. This approach is considered suitable for understanding dynamic and contextual phenomena and looking at

the relationship between local actors and the tourism sector (Creswell, 2014; Miles and Huberman, 2018).

#### *Data Analyst*

The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques by identifying the main themes that emerged from interviews, observations, and documents. Stages of analysis included data transcription, coding, categorization, and interpretation to find patterns relevant to community empowerment strategies. Data validity was maintained through the triangulation of data sources and member checking, which confirmed research findings with informants (Miles and Huberman, 2018).

## **RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research results in Pari Island, the community empowerment strategy in marine tourism shows several key findings related to community participation, economic impact, and environmental sustainability. The empowerment strategy implemented in Pari Island has mixed results, both in terms of positives and challenges that must still be faced.

### **1. Community Participation**

This research shows that the Pari Island community has a fairly high level of participation in tourism management. Most residents are involved in various economic activities related to tourism, such as the rental of snorkeling equipment, homestay management, and tour guide services. Training provided by the local government and non-governmental organizations also helps to increase the community's capacity to run local-based tourism businesses (Setiawati and Safitri, 2020).

In addition, community empowerment is carried out through training in business management and environmental management to improve their ability to preserve nature while attracting more tourists. Local communities, especially the younger generation, also have greater access to tourism education, enabling them to professionally manage their businesses. (Prayogi and Sari, 2019).

### **2. Economic Impact**

The economic impact of marine tourism is significant for the people of Pari Island. Community income increases substantially, especially for those directly involved in the tourism industry. For example, renting water tourism equipment, managing local transportation, and selling food products and souvenirs are the main sources of income for many families (Sari and de Fretes, 2021). In addition, tourism infrastructure development also has a positive impact on other sectors, such as education and health, as funds from tourism are channeled to social programs.

### **3. Environmental Sustainability**

While tourism provides economic benefits, the study also revealed some challenges in terms of environmental sustainability. Some tourism activities, such as diving and snorkeling that are not well managed, can potentially damage the coral reefs around Pari Island. Communities and

related parties must work harder to balance tourism development and marine ecosystem preservation (Jubaedah and Anah, 2019; Raihan and Oktavianus, 2023). As part of the empowerment strategy, there are community-based environmental management initiatives, such as coral reef conservation programs and waste management training. However, implementing these strategies still needs to be improved in terms of environmental awareness and ongoing monitoring.

#### 4. Challenges

Despite tourism's many benefits, the research also identified challenges such as a lack of financial support for small businesses and gaps in access to tourism education for underprivileged communities. In addition, the government's role in providing consistent regulations and involving communities in tourism planning still needs to be improved (Setiawati and Safitri, 2020).

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the community empowerment strategy in Pari Island provides positive results in increasing the involvement of local communities in the marine tourism industry and improving economic welfare. Through various training and empowerment programs, the community can actively participate in tourism development, create business opportunities, and improve its quality of life. However, the success of this empowerment needs to be balanced with greater attention to environmental sustainability.

To increase the effectiveness of empowerment strategies, improvements are needed in terms of environmental education, small business funding, and strengthening collaboration between local communities, government, and the private sector. Thus, marine tourism in Pari Island can develop sustainably and provide long-term benefits for all parties involved.

### ADVANCED RESEARCH

To maintain the sustainability of marine tourism, research needs to pay special attention to educating the public about the importance of environmental conservation, including ways to maintain marine and coastal ecosystems. This strategy could include community-based programs that focus on environmental conservation.

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