

## The Social and Cultural Impact of Marine Tourism on Coastal Communities: A Qualitative Study at Tanjung Lesung Beach

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### ABSTRACT

This research explores the social and cultural impacts of marine tourism on coastal communities in Tanjung Lesung Beach through a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews and observations were conducted to understand changes in social structure, cultural values, and community interactions due to tourism development. The results show that tourism provides positive economic impacts for the community but also triggers changes in local cultural values and social interaction patterns. However, there are community efforts to balance economic benefits and cultural preservation. This research recommends a more sustainable and inclusive approach to tourism to maintain the balance between local culture and tourism.

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## INTRODUCTION

Marine tourism is one of the growing tourism sectors, especially in coastal areas rich in natural beauty and biodiversity (Gautama & Sunarta, 2011). In Indonesia, the marine tourism sector plays a vital role in driving the regional economy, one of which is in the Tanjung Lesung Beach area. This area is famous for the beauty of its beaches, coral reefs, and water tourism potential, which attracts both local and foreign tourists (Martoyo et al., 2022).

However, behind the rapid development of marine tourism, there are various social and cultural changes felt by coastal communities. These impacts can be both positive and negative. Positively, tourism can improve economic welfare through increased employment and tourism-related businesses. On the other hand, changes in cultural values, lifestyles, and the potential for social conflict are often negative impacts that must be watched out for (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how marine tourism development affects local communities' social and cultural aspects (Waani, 2016).

This study explores the social and cultural impacts of marine tourism on coastal communities in Tanjung Lesung Beach. Using a qualitative approach, it will reveal the experiences, perceptions, and views of local communities regarding the changes that occur along with the development of tourism in this area. This research focuses on understanding how marine tourism plays a role in changing the social structure, habits, and cultural values of coastal communities around the tourist area.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on marine tourism's social and cultural impacts on coastal communities has become an important topic in social studies, especially in coastal areas whose economies depend on the tourism sector. The literature on this topic generally incorporates theories of social change, tourism development, and the cultural impacts of interactions between local communities and tourists.

### *1. Theory of Social Change in Tourism*

The theory of modernization and globalization is relevant to marine tourism. According to Ashoer et al. (2021), tourism acts as an agent of social change, introducing new values, economic practices, and different patterns of interaction in local communities. In coastal contexts, tourism development can drive structural transformations in communities, often leading to a shift in employment from traditional sectors such as fishing to the tourist services sector (Raihan & Oktavianus, 2023).

Giddens (1991), in his theory of globalization, highlights how local communities in tourism areas experience "disembedding," where interactions with global culture increasingly influence social relations. This often results in changes in local cultural norms, values, and social structures.

### *2. Social Impacts of Maritime Tourism*

Previous studies have shown that marine tourism brings significant social impacts on coastal communities. One of the main impacts is the change in economic structure and employment. In many marine tourism destinations, as studied by Hampton and Jeyacheya (2015), communities that previously relied on fishing are turning to the tourism sector for livelihoods. This creates new

economic opportunities but can also widen the gap between those who gain access to the tourism sector and those dependent on traditional economic activities.

The study by Boley and Green (2016) highlights the importance of community participation in tourism management to minimize negative social impacts. Local communities are more likely to adapt to social changes when they are involved in tourism planning and management. However, lacking community involvement can lead to conflict and dissatisfaction with tourism development.

### *3. Cultural Impacts of Maritime Tourism*

In addition to social impacts, marine tourism also affects local culture. Research by McKercher and du Cros (2002) shows that tourism can lead to cultural commodification, where local traditions and customs are showcased for tourist consumption, sometimes losing their original meaning. This phenomenon often occurs in coastal tourism destinations, where local communities may need to adapt their culture to better suit tourists' expectations.

Another study by Juan et al. (2011) revealed that local culture in marine tourism destinations can undergo profound changes, especially in areas frequented by foreign tourists. Globalization often introduces new values that may conflict with traditional local values, such as lifestyle, dress, or social interactions between men and women. In some locations, Indigenous cultures can become more vulnerable to rapid changes triggered by intense interaction with outside cultures.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted in June 2023. This research used a qualitative approach to understand the social and cultural impacts of marine tourism on coastal communities in Tanjung Lesung Beach. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in depth through direct interaction with research subjects and the environment under study (Creswell, 2014). The main objective of qualitative research is to gain a rich and in-depth understanding of the community's experiences, perceptions, and views towards changes caused by tourism.

### *1. Research Design*

The research design used is a case study. Case studies provide an opportunity to study phenomena contextually and holistically in one specific location, namely Tanjung Lesung Beach (Yin, 2018). This research focuses on coastal communities involved and directly affected by marine tourism in the area.

### *2. Research Subject*

The research subjects were local people living around Tanjung Lesung Beach, including fishermen, local businesses, and community leaders. The subjects were selected by purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). These criteria include people directly involved with the tourism sector or who have long lived in the coastal area.

### 3. *Data Collection Technique*

The data in this study was collected through the following techniques:

- **In-Depth Interview:** This interview technique was used to explore local communities' views, experiences, and perceptions regarding marine tourism's social and cultural impacts. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with semi-structured guidelines to remain flexible and allow new information to emerge during the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
- **Participatory Observation:** Researchers made direct observations of the community's daily activities and their interactions with tourists and the tourism industry. Observations are made to capture the social and cultural dynamics that occur in the field naturally (Angrosino, 2007).

### 4. *Data Analysis*

Data analysis in this study was conducted using thematic analysis. The analysis steps include:

- **Interview Transcription:** All interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the data.
- **Coding:** After transcription, the data was coded by identifying themes that emerged from the interviews and observations (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- **Theme Categorization:** The emerging themes were then grouped into categories relevant to tourism's social and cultural impacts on coastal communities.
- **Inference Drawing:** Conclusions were drawn based on the identified themes and categories, which were linked to the relevant theoretical framework.

### 5. *Data Validity and Reliability*

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study used triangulation techniques, which combine data from various sources like interviews and observations to verify the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the researcher also used member checking, which asked participants to review their interviews to ensure the appropriateness of interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Based on various existing literature, marine tourism's social and cultural impacts on coastal communities can be seen through two main aspects: positive and negative. This research found that marine tourism in Tanjung Lesung Beach brought significant changes to the local community's social order, cultural values, and economic structure.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Positive Impact**

#### 1. *Local Economic Enhancement*

Marine tourism in Tanjung Lesung Beach has created many new jobs and sources of income for local communities, especially in the hotel, restaurant, tour guide, and water sports equipment rental sectors (Martoyo

et al., 2022). Many people who previously worked as fishermen began to switch or combine their professions with tourism-related activities. This is in line with the research of Ferdian et al. (2019) on how Tourism will trigger the arrival of tourists to visit a country, and the country can be widely known. Demand for tourists to fulfill their spiritual and physical needs will bring extensive employment opportunities for the surrounding community, which will provide quite good economic value for the community.

2. *Infrastructure Improvement*

Infrastructure development, such as roads, electricity, and public facilities, has also increased due to investment in the tourism sector. This facilitates access and improves the quality of life of local communities. The development of tourism has a significant impact on the improvement of infrastructure in Bali. Investment in the tourism sector not only improves the accessibility and quality of facilities but also provides economic benefits to local communities (Sari & Supriyanto, 2020).

3. *Community Empowerment*

Community-based tourism programs, such as training in tourism and marketing local products, are starting to develop. This helps communities become more independent and competitive. Permatasari (2022) examines the role of Community Based Tourism (CBT) as a tool to improve the welfare of local communities in Bali. With the increasing interest in sustainable tourism, CBT is emerging as a solution to involve communities in the management of tourism resources, including:

- Training and Empowerment: Training programs in tourism, such as homestay management, local product marketing, and tourist services, have been implemented. These programs help the community develop the necessary skills to compete in the tourism market.
- Increased Economic Independence: Local communities have become more economically independent with this training. They can manage tourism-related small businesses, such as accommodation and food provision, thus increasing their income.
- Local Product Marketing: These programs also focus on local product marketing, which introduces local culture to tourists and creates opportunities for local artisans to sell their products.

## **Negative Impact**

1. *Changes in Social Structure*

Significant changes occur in the community's social interaction patterns. The presence of tourists and outside investment often triggers changes in lifestyle and local values. Ernawati (2016) argues that there has been a shift from a gotong-royong culture to a more individualistic lifestyle, especially among the younger generation.

2. *Commercialization of Local Culture*

Unique local cultures are often commercialized to attract tourists. Traditional rituals and arts that were once sacred are now often performed as entertainment for tourists, resulting in an erosion of the meaning of the

tradition (Pitana & Gayatri, 2015). This has caused local communities to lose part of their cultural identity.

3. *Potential for Social Conflict*

Tourism also creates the potential for conflict between residents and outside businesses that come to invest. Communities often feel left out in the decision-making process related to tourism infrastructure development, which can lead to social tension. This is reinforced by research by Yufrizal and Asmoro (2020), showing that the development of tourism has further emphasized the plurality of society, where the plurality in question is horizontally characterized by the fact that there are ethnicity units that can be distinguished based on ethnicity, customs, religion, and other regional identity characteristics. Vertically, it is characterized by sharp differences between social layers. The existence of horizontal and vertical differences causes the tourist area community to be known as a pluralistic society. Social interactions that occur lead to social conflict or the creation of social integration in society.

4. *Environmental Degradation*

Negative environmental impacts must be considered in addition to social and cultural impacts. Marine tourism development can lead to a decline in the quality of the coastal and marine environment, especially through pollution and damage to coral reefs due to uncontrolled snorkeling and diving activities.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research concludes that marine tourism in Tanjung Lesung Beach has complex impacts on coastal communities. While tourism provides economic opportunities and infrastructure development, there is an urgent need to manage social and cultural impacts more sustainably. Community participation in sustainable tourism planning and implementation is essential to balance economic development, environmental sustainability, and preservation of local culture.

To ensure sustainable tourism at Tanjung Lesung Beach, community participation in planning and decision-making must be strengthened, empowering locals to contribute to eco-friendly practices and cultural preservation. Training programs should enhance community capacity to manage tourism sustainably while promoting equitable economic benefits for all. Cultural preservation initiatives, such as supporting traditional crafts and organizing local festivals, are essential to maintaining cultural identity. Environmental protection efforts, like stricter regulations and community-led conservation, should mitigate damage to marine ecosystems. Lastly, fostering collaboration among stakeholders and implementing regular impact assessments will help balance economic development with environmental and cultural sustainability.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Future research should explore innovative strategies to enhance community participation in sustainable tourism planning, particularly in

balancing economic development, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. Studies could investigate the effectiveness of specific training programs, such as eco-tourism management or cultural heritage promotion, in empowering local communities. Additionally, research on adaptive tourism policies that integrate multi-stakeholder collaboration and real-time environmental monitoring could provide valuable insights. Exploring case studies of similar coastal regions successfully managing tourism impacts may also help identify transferable best practices. This future work will contribute to a deeper understanding of sustainable tourism models that ensure long-term benefits for communities and ecosystems alike.

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