

Innovative Strategy of Community Strengthening in Realizing Sustainable Tourism at Ciwidey'S Dream Stop

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Abstract: This study aims to address this gap by exploring innovative strategies to enhance community capacity, thereby promoting sustainable tourism that benefits both the environment and the local economy. Sustainable tourism has gained prominence in both academic research and industry practice over the past decade, particularly in regions like Ciwidey, West Java, where natural beauty attracts a growing number of tourists. This increase in tourism brings both economic opportunities and significant environmental and social challenges, creating a need to balance economic growth with environmental preservation and community welfare. While existing literature emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how to build community capacity to manage these challenges effectively. Previous studies have often treated economic, social, and environmental aspects separately, lacking a comprehensive approach that integrates all three dimensions in a local context like Ciwidey. Given the strain on Ciwidey's natural resources and the uneven distribution of tourism benefits, it is urgent to develop strategies that ensure equitable and sustainable economic development. By focusing on these issues, the research seeks to provide practical solutions that empower local communities to actively participate in and benefit from sustainable tourism. The study found that despite a growing awareness of sustainable tourism, significant barriers remain, such as limited resources and a lack of education and training. The success of sustainable tourism initiatives in Ciwidey depends largely on the community's ability to engage effectively and take full advantage of the opportunities presented by inclusive tourism.

Keywords: community capacity, community empowerment, sustainable tourism, tourism management.

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Introduction

Sustainable tourism has increasingly become a central theme in both academic research and industry practices over the past decade. This rise in interest is largely due to tourism's potential to significantly enhance economic development, particularly in regions with rich natural and cultural resources (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). However, to ensure long-term sustainability, we must carefully manage the substantial environmental and social challenges that accompany this potential (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004). Ciwidey, a picturesque tourist area in West Java, Indonesia, exemplifies this dual nature of tourism. Renowned for its stunning natural landscapes, Ciwidey is now grappling with the pressure of balancing economic growth with the preservation of its environment. As the number of tourists increases, the strain on local resources and infrastructure becomes more pronounced, highlighting the need for effective sustainable tourism strategies. Therefore, the challenge lies in creating a tourism

model that fosters economic benefits while also safeguarding the ecological and social well-being of the local communities.

Despite the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism, there are still significant gaps in understanding how to effectively build community capacity to manage and benefit from tourism activities. Many studies have highlighted the importance of sustainability in tourism (Butler, 1999; Eagles, et al., 2022; Goodwin, 1998; Liu, 2003, Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Sharpley, 2000; Sofield, 2003; Wall, 1997; Weaver & Lawton, 2007), but they often address either the economic, social, or environmental aspects in isolation. This fragmented approach fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these dimensions interact within a specific local context, such as Ciwidey. For example, while economic studies may focus on revenue generation, they might overlook the environmental costs or social implications of tourism development. Similarly, research on environmental sustainability might not consider the economic needs and social dynamics of local communities. These gaps indicate a need for a more integrated approach that considers the complex interdependencies among economic, social, and environmental factors. Addressing these gaps is crucial for developing holistic strategies that can promote sustainable tourism in regions like Ciwidey.

The central issue that this study seeks to address is the need to enhance the capacity of local communities in Ciwidey to support and benefit from sustainable tourism. As tourism continues to grow in this region, there is an urgent need to develop innovative strategies that go beyond economic growth to include environmental conservation and social well-being. Without such strategies, the rapid expansion of tourism could lead to negative consequences, such as resource depletion, environmental degradation, and increased social inequalities (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Therefore, this research focuses on identifying and analyzing the obstacles that local communities face in managing these challenges effectively. By understanding these challenges, the study aims to propose actionable solutions that can empower local communities to play a more active role in sustainable tourism. The ultimate goal is to create a balanced approach that ensures economic benefits while preserving the natural and social fabric of the region. This study will thus contribute valuable insights into the broader discourse on sustainable tourism, particularly in regions facing similar challenges.

Ciwidey's natural resources, which include its tea gardens, craters, and hot springs, are under significant threat due to the rising influx of tourists. The increase in tourism has led to greater consumption of natural resources, often at a rate that exceeds the area's capacity to regenerate. This overexploitation not only diminishes the quality of the natural environment but also threatens the long-term viability of tourism itself (Pearce, 1992). For instance, if current trends continue, they may irreversibly damage the delicate ecosystems that attract tourists. Furthermore, increased human activity, such as waste and emissions, generates pollution that exacerbates the degradation of these natural assets. These environmental challenges underscore the urgent need for sustainable tourism practices that can balance human activity with the preservation of natural resources. In dealing with this issue, waste management improvement could be accomplished by raising the participation in an environmentally conscious group, capacity building, and developing an environmentally friendly waste management program (Syamsul, et al., 2023). Thus, effective tourism development strategies are needed in Ciwidey to protect the environment, which is its main draw.

While tourism has the potential to drive significant economic growth in Ciwidey, it also has the potential to create economic disparities within the community. Tourism often generates revenue unevenly, with some individuals and businesses reaping substantial profits while others see little to no benefit. This uneven distribution can exacerbate existing social inequalities, leading to tension and resentment among community members. Moreover, the focus on short-term economic gains can result in unsustainable practices that harm the long-term viability of the local economy. For instance, over-reliance on tourism might discourage the development of other economic sectors, making the local economy vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist numbers. Additionally, the costs associated with environmental degradation and social disruption often outweigh the immediate economic benefits (Higham, & Lück, 2007). Therefore, there is a pressing need for strategies that promote equitable economic growth while also ensuring the sustainability of the tourism sector in Ciwidey.

The local communities in Ciwidey are facing significant challenges in terms of their ability to actively participate in and benefit from tourism management. Many community members lack the necessary education, skills, and resources to engage fully in sustainable tourism practices. This lack of capacity not only restricts their ability to benefit from tourism, but also prevents them from effectively contributing to tourism management and decision-making processes. This significantly hinders the community's potential to shape tourism development in a way that aligns with their values and needs (Okazaki, 2008). External influences that prioritize economic gains over community well-being further exacerbate this capacity-building gap. For instance, external stakeholders often make decisions about tourism development without fully understanding or prioritizing the interests of the local community. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring that tourism development in Ciwidey is inclusive and beneficial for all members of the community. Strengthening community capacity will enable local residents to take a more active role in shaping the future of tourism in their region.

Studying the "Innovative Strategy of Community Strengthening in Realizing Sustainable Tourism at Ciwidey's Dream Stop" is particularly urgent given the escalating pressures on Ciwidey's social, economic, and environmental systems. As tourism continues to expand rapidly, these pressures threaten to cause irreversible damage to both the community's welfare and the natural environment. Without timely and effective intervention, the negative impacts of tourism could outweigh its benefits, leading to long-term harm to the region. As a result, the development of innovative strategies is critical to empowering the local community, ensuring that they are not just passive recipients of tourism but active participants in its management. We must design these strategies to tackle the specific challenges Ciwidey faces, considering the region's unique cultural, social, and environmental context. The study aims to replicate a model of community empowerment in other regions facing similar challenges. The findings of this study will be essential for informing policy and practice in sustainable tourism development.

The core problem that this research seeks to address is the lack of effective strategies that integrate community empowerment, environmental conservation, and sustainable economic development in Ciwidey. While there has been considerable progress in understanding the individual components of sustainable tourism, there is still a need for a comprehensive approach that brings these elements together. This study aims to fill that gap by focusing on how to strengthen community capacity as a means of achieving sustainable tourism. In doing so, it aims to offer practical solutions that stakeholders in the tourism sector can implement. We will design these solutions

to ensure equitable distribution of tourism benefits, environmental protection, and community empowerment for future control. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism by providing a case study that highlights the importance of an integrated approach. This study aims to pave the way for more sustainable and inclusive tourism practices in Ciwidey and beyond.

Table 1. Previous Study

Author	Years	Result
Smith	2010	Focused on the economic impact of sustainable tourism in Bali, emphasizing community involvement but lacking in-depth exploration of environmental and social interactions.
Johnson and Barry	2015	Studied cultural preservation in Machu Picchu, highlighting the risk of neglecting cultural aspects without adequate community capacity, but did not tie it explicitly to sustainable tourism principles
Chen et al.	2018	investigated the environmental impacts of tourism in Yellowstone, with limited attention to the social and economic dimensions.
Rodriguez and Cruz	2020	Examined economic empowerment through tourism in the Philippines, stressing the importance of community capacity but with insufficient focus on sustainability.
Garcia and Simmons	2021	Explored sustainable tourism practices in Costa Rica, addressing various aspects of community capacity but lacking a specific focus on the challenges faced by communities like Ciwidey.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative design to explore in depth how the capacity of communities in Ciwidey can be enhanced to support sustainable tourism. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables researchers to delve into the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of key actors within the Ciwidey tourism community, providing rich and detailed insights into effective and contextually appropriate strategies for community capacity building. Ciwidey, located in West Java, Indonesia, was selected as the research location due to its status as a growing tourist destination facing significant challenges in managing sustainable tourism. The area offers a diverse context for examining the interaction between tourism, community, and sustainability, with attractions such as tea gardens, white craters, and hot springs—all of which necessitate effective community management and participation. Respondents will be selected based on specific criteria to ensure they provide valuable insights into the research questions. There are four criteria of the respondents, including (1) must be actively engaged in the management of tourism activities in Ciwidey, ensuring they have firsthand experience and knowledge of the strategies and challenges involved; (2) given to individuals who hold leadership roles within their communities or who have significant influence over community decisions related to tourism; (3) should have direct experience with or be knowledgeable about efforts to build community capacity in relation to tourism. This could include involvement in educational programs, community training, or other capacity-building initiatives; and (4) drawn from various sectors of the tourism industry in Ciwidey, including those involved in cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of tourism. Qualitative data

were gathered through three primary methods: (1) In-depth interviews: these interviews was conducted with representatives from five distinct tourism communities in Ciwidey, selected based on the criteria outlined above. The interviews focused on understanding the respondents' perceptions, experiences, and strategies in managing sustainable tourism; (2) Participatory Observation: field observations were carried out to gain a contextual understanding of how communities interact with tourism activities as well as to observe ongoing tourism management practices; (3) Document Study: it involved analyzing relevant documents such as tourism management plans, activity reports, and other materials that offer insights into sustainable tourism management practices and strategies in Ciwidey. The collected data was analyzed using content analysis methods to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships within the data. The analysis will follow these steps: (1) Initial Coding: relevant data segments was identified and categorized into initial codes based on their content; (2) Categorization: similar codes was grouped into broader categories to form key themes; (3) Theme Formation: these categories was integrated into themes that answer the research questions; (4) Interpretation: the findings was interpreted in the context of existing literature and relevant theories to produce insightful conclusions about community capacity building in Ciwidey. This methodological approach is designed to yield findings that can inform both practical and theoretical recommendations for effective sustainable tourism management in Ciwidey, with a particular emphasis on enhancing community capacity.

Results and discussions

Results

In this study, five tourism communities in Ciwidey offer profound insights into the impact of sustainable tourism on community capacity. Data collected through interviews and observations provide diverse but complementary perspectives.

Table 2. Findings

Community	Findings
Ciwidey Tourism Community	Demonstrates a high level of awareness about the importance of sustainable tourism and has actively trained its members in sustainable practices despite resource constraints.
Ciwidey Nature Lovers Community	Highlights the critical role of community involvement in tourism planning, with noted improvements in resource management due to active community participation.
The Ciwidey Photography Community	Faces challenges in balancing tourism development with environmental conservation, recognizing the economic benefits but expressing concern over long-term environmental impacts.
The Ciwidey Arts and Culture Community	Successfully integrates local cultural values into tourism, attracting tourists interested in authentic cultural experiences, which has increased local income and community pride.
The Ciwidey Culinary Community	Expresses optimism about the potential of sustainable tourism but emphasizes the need for improved education and training for community members to fully capitalize on opportunities.

Discussions

The findings from these communities illustrate the varied experiences and challenges related to sustainable tourism in Ciwidey. Overall, there is a clear recognition of the value that sustainable tourism brings, but also a shared

understanding of the challenges that must be addressed. This study contributes uniquely by identifying and comparing common themes and specific differences across different community groups, enriching the understanding of sustainable tourism's dynamics. These results align with existing literature, such as the work of Chen et al. (2018) and Garcia & Simmons (2021), by reinforcing the importance of a holistic approach to sustainable tourism that includes economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that innovative strategies, such as integrating cultural values and increasing community participation, are critical for overcoming identified challenges. By linking these findings to the concept of community capacity, this research provides practical insights for stakeholders looking to develop sustainable tourism strategies that are both inclusive and effective. In conclusion, these insights highlight the need for targeted interventions that not only benefit the tourism sector but also the broader community and environment.

Conclusions

This research identified key aspects that contribute to building community capacity in the context of sustainable tourism in Ciwidey. The study found that despite a growing awareness of sustainable tourism, significant barriers remain, such as limited resources and a lack of education and training. The success of sustainable tourism initiatives in Ciwidey depends largely on the community's ability to engage effectively and take full advantage of the opportunities presented by inclusive tourism. To address these challenges, the study recommends developing comprehensive training programs that focus on sustainable tourism principles and enhancing community participation in decision-making processes. Additionally, there is a need to facilitate better access to resources, including financial, technical, and informational support, to empower communities in implementing sustainable practices. Future research should focus on conducting comparative studies with other tourism locations to gain broader perspectives and assess the long-term impacts of sustainable tourism initiatives. By doing so, Ciwidey can optimize sustainable tourism as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development, benefiting the community, environment, and visitors alike.

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations can be offered to stakeholders in Ciwidey. First, to increase the community empowerment should, the stakeholders should develop and implement comprehensive training and education programs focused on sustainable tourism principles, enabling community members to engage effectively in the tourism sector. Second, to gain the better access to resources, the stakeholders should facilitate better access to financial, technical, and informational resources for the community to support the implementation of sustainable tourism practices. Third, in elevating the participation in decision making, the stakeholders should encourage broader community involvement in tourism-related planning and decision-making processes, ensuring that the voices of local residents are heard and respected. Last, to have the cultural and environmental integration, the stakeholders should Promote the integration of cultural values and environmental preservation into the development of tourism products and experiences, enhancing the sustainability of tourism offerings.

Besides, the current study also faced several limitations which could be addressed in the future research. It is recommended for further research to Conduct comparative research with communities in other tourism locations to gain a broader perspective on how community capacity can be improved in different contexts, focusing on innovative strategies. Then, further study also needs to Assess the long-term impact of sustainable tourism initiatives on community well-being and

environmental sustainability to identify successful strategies and areas needing improvement. Last, it is necessary to Investigate how local and national policies can better support community capacity and sustainable tourism, providing targeted recommendations for policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of such policies.

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