

# Assessing the Sustainability of Village-Owned Tourism: A Case Study of Mbalong Kawuk, Tulungagung

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**Abstract.** The management and development of Mbalong Kawuk Tourism are one of the efforts to improve the economy, society, and environment in Sumberejo Kulon village. Studies are needed for management strategy preparation so the results can be accounted for, measurable, and can be evaluated correctly. The analytical approach used to assess the tourism sustainability of Mbalong Kawuk is multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) analysis with the RALED (Rapid Assessment for Local Economic Development) approach. Data were collected by observation, interviews, and distributing questionnaires. The results showed that Mbalong Kawuk Tourism has a sustainability index, on average, of 86.17 which means it is in the "Very Good" category". However, from the 6 dimensions analyzed, the Target Group dimension is included in the "Less Sustainable" category, so it is recommended for Mbalong Kawuk Tourism Stakeholders to reform tourism management and rearrange the target group.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Multi-Dimensional Scaling, RALED, Culinary Tourism

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Tourism and Local Economic Development

In recent years, tourism has received the greatest attention. Many countries throughout the world are beginning to build their tourist industries. Unfortunately, as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, it became the industry most hit by the lockdown policy enacted by practically all governments in nations afflicted by Covid-19 across the world. Tourism is reviving as the pandemic is being managed by governments throughout the world [1]. Tourist restrictions began to be gradually relaxed. Yes, after all, the tourism industry may bring in a lot of money quickly, especially in countries with a lot of tourist attractions.

Indonesia has enormous tourist potential. Many tourism spots in Indonesia are well-known among both domestic and international visitors [2] [3] [4]. One of the regions in Indonesia that has great tourism potential is Tulungagung Regency. So far, tourism development in Tulungagung has been focused on local economic development. The varied challenges encountered by each area are not dissimilar to economic problems and are frequently caused by the regions' inability to keep up with changing economic conditions.

Local Economic Development (LED) is considered to be able to overcome these problems. Local Economic Development (LED) is an effort to optimize available local resources to create jobs and encourage economic activity by involving the government, business actors, local communities, and communities or community organizations to develop a sustainable economy in an area [5] [6] [7]. The success of local economic development is inextricably linked to the collaboration of all stakeholders [8]. Economic growth and job creation will be more successful and effective if they are tailored to the characteristics and potentials of each region or community.

According to Palit et al. [9], the tourism sector has quite promising opportunities, because apart from being one of the factors influencing economic growth, tourism is also expected to have the opportunity to become a growth driver for other sectors. Tourism is often used to create local economic development strategies in various locations. Tourism development has the ability to help achieve inclusive development goals [10] [11]. According to Fang et al., [12], Tourism has the potential to contribute to local economic growth, offer money to local communities and enterprises, and is an important industry to develop in both emerging and developed countries. Therefore, this study discusses tourism-based Local Economic Development (LED) in Mbalong Kawuk, Sumberejo Kulon Village, which is analyzed through the hexagonal LED concept. Hexagonal LED can help stakeholders to understand the complexity of LED.

## **1.2 What is Mbalong Kawuk?**

People's life in rural places are challenging despite the abundance of natural resources available to them. This occurs because the village community has not made the best use of the abundance of available natural resources [13] [14]. Geographically, Sumberejo Kulon Village has a strategic location because almost the entire area is on flat land and is used as an important route to access between parts of the Sumbergempol sub-district to the Ngunut sub-district with a fairly dense level of mobility. One of the potential natural resources owned by Sumberejo Kulon Village is its natural resources. Sumberejo Kulon village has a family tour based on rice field views. This tour is known as Mbalong Kawuk Tourism.

Mbalong Kawuk Tourism is located in Sumberejo Kulon Village, Ngunut District, and is managed by a village-owned enterprise. Although it is not yet well known, this tourist spot which is targeted for completion in 2022 has been visited by many people, especially the surrounding community. Most of them come to fish, and some just enjoy the beauty of nature, play, and learn. This tourist spot was once just a river filled with lots of wild plants so it looks like a swamp. The place is lush, making this area seem haunted. To change this thinking, this tourist spot was built. However, in the midst of the existence of tourism potential, the development of Mbalong Kawuk Tourism is still not maximized. This has resulted in Mbalong Kawuk Tourism being still less competitive with other tourism. The management and

development of Mbalong Kawuk tourism is one of the efforts to improve the economy in Sumberejo Kulon.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the background and several previous studies, further research related to Local Economic Development (LED) is still needed, especially in the Tourism sector. In addition, there are still research limitations from several previous studies. Previous research related to LED predominantly used descriptive qualitative methods. The main purpose of this research is to help the local economic growth of the people who manage Mbalong Kawuk tourism in Sumberejo Kulon Village. The concept of LED is one of the effective strategies to develop economic potential and can create economic strength and encourage local community independence. So, this research is expected to be able to analyze the status and levels of local economic development, as well as produce the formulation of strategies and design of tourism-based LED programs in Mbalong Kawuk in order to optimize LED through Mbalong Kawuk Tourism.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Local Economic Development Policy**

The Local Economic Development (LED) process combines the interests of the government, the private sector, producers, and the community to promote economic growth and job opportunities by maximizing human resources and local natural resources (endogenous development) [15] [16] [17]. The LED process contains several missions of activities such as regional business and economic development, means of community participation, empowerment of producers or communities, poverty alleviation, transparency, accountability, and cross-sectoral regional cooperation.

The LED program is a regional economic policy that focuses on leveraging sectors that have the potential to significantly improve the regional economic system. The LED program's goal is to give a significant development impulse in order to achieve sustained economic growth and appropriate job creation [18] [19]. The LED strategy is based on three key principles [20] [21]: (1) sectoral, which shows the complementarity of both central and regional development policies/priorities; (2) regional, where the government sets a Regional Economic Development Strategic Plans through Inter-Regional Cooperation, cluster development, and provides a conducive atmosphere for the commercial world; and (3) participatory, which indicates collaboration between the government, the business world, and local communities.

LED must be realized collaboratively in its deployment. Partnerships are essential for maximizing the potential of a region's resources, because the government has constraints (particularly in terms of cash), necessitating the participation of the private sector and the community in development [22] [23]. Partnerships are required to establish a participatory discussion on economic development among stakeholders. Through partnership forums, matters related to planning activities, policy formulation, service facilitation, and decision formulation are made and discussed. In addition, LED acceleration also requires an "economy cluster" strategy to increase livelihood opportunities.

## **2.2 Studies on LED**

Because there hasn't been much study on tourism-based Local Economic Development (LED), the writers are still having difficulty accessing previous studies. Huda [24] found that Local Economic Development (LED) carried out in Serang Village through the tourist industry fulfilled six components of LED, including target groups, site considerations, synergy and policy emphasis, development sustainability, governance, and management processes. According to Adi [25], the findings of the Local Economic Development (LED) study utilizing RALED in Sukoharjo Regency still require significant consideration from all stakeholders so that numerous areas of LED may be improved. Prasetiari [26] found that the variables driving and impeding the Local Economic Development of Kampong Batik Jetis Tourism include geographical circumstances, capital and marketing issues, and human resource issues.

Retno and Harsasto [27] stated that the LED initiative aims to build community-based tourism as well as networks between Tourism Villages in order to enhance the economy of Bantul Regency. Rasyadi and Nasdian [28] found that the Kampung Baru community's significant engagement in establishing the Mandeh Tourism Region had an influence on the economic level in the Kampung Baru area. In addition to improving the quality of its human resources, local economic development also requires the existence of organizations or institutions that have been trained, to manage adequate human resources and require a supportive environment to enable these local economic organizations or institutions to develop. So, regional development is an effort by the regional government together with the community in building economic opportunities that are compatible with their human resources, as well as optimize the use of natural resources and local institutions. In many areas, tourism is the core basis for planning local economic development programs.

## **2.3 Rapid Assessment for Local Economic Development (RALED)**

The RALED model is a modified version of the RAPFISH (Rapid Assessment Techniques for Fisheries) Program established by Canada's Fisheries Center. The only changes have been made to the size and indications. The indicators in RALED are indicators designed expressly for LED by the Directorate of Regional Economic Affairs (BAPPENAS). The indicator was created using the Hexagonal LED concept, which has six components: target group, location factors, synergy and policy focus, sustainable development, governance, and management process. The results of the analysis using the RALED Program are in the form of indices and levers of each aspect of LED. However, the RALED Program cannot determine the overall LED status.

Other programs are used to determine the total LED status. Specifically, the LED weight determination software. The weights of each LED aspect are the findings of this program's study. By knowing the index score of each LED aspect from the results of the RALED analysis and the weight of each LED aspect from the program for determining the weight of the LED aspect, the overall LED status will be known.

### 3 Method

A quantitative descriptive method is used in this study. Questionnaire forms and in-depth interviews with Mbalong Kawuk stakeholders were used to collect data. Data were collected from 28 persons, including 5 village authorities, 5 Village-Owned Enterprise management, 7 tourists, 6 enterprises, and 5 Tulungagung government officials.

One of the most well-known tools for assessing the LED status is the RAPFISH model which is modified into the RALED model. Multidimensional scaling is used to see which indices are dominant. The reference criteria in this RALED are if the index value is  $<50$  then the LED aspect is said to be lacking, if the index value is in the range 51 - 75 then the LED is in "good" status, and if the index is  $>75$  then an aspect is said to be "very good".

As mentioned in the previous section, the six dimensions to assess the LED in Mbalong Kawuk are: 1) Target Group, indicated by training and assistance for tourism management, incentives from the government, entrepreneurship, technology and institution, financial access, marketing, and business prospectus; 2) Location, indicated by the existence of research institution, financial institution, clean water, facilities, the quality of the environment, community settlement, the ease of communication, transportation, road signs, and accessibility; 3) Policy Focus, measured by development policy, poverty alleviation policy, empowerment policy, tourism policy, promotion policy, and investment policy; 4) Sustainability, including natural conservation, environmental impact analysis, local institution, community well-being, community soft-skill, local participation, business opportunities for local, job creation, and knowledge about sustainability; 5) Governance, indicated by organization benefit for members, role of the organization, public administration, financial, infrastructure, and promotion partnership; 6) Management Process, including evaluation of plannings, problem solving, preparation of evaluation indicators, the quantity of stakeholders, competitiveness, and mapping.

### 4 Results and Discussions

#### 4.1 Leverage Analysis

Using RALED, we analyze the six aspects that indicate the sustainability status of Mbalong Kawuk.

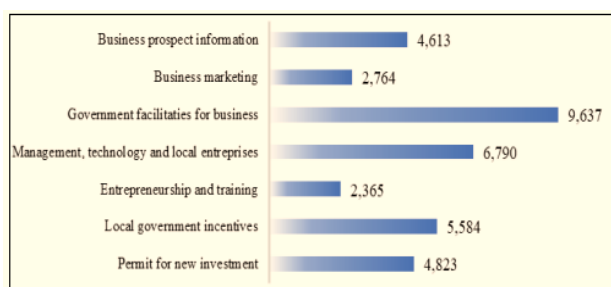
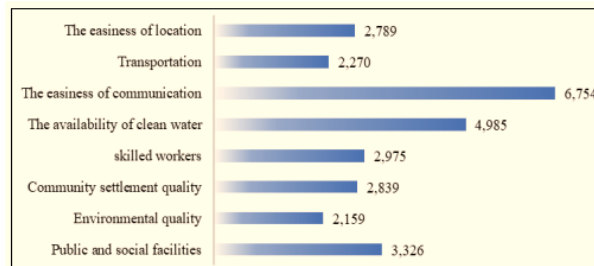


Fig 1. Target Group Scores

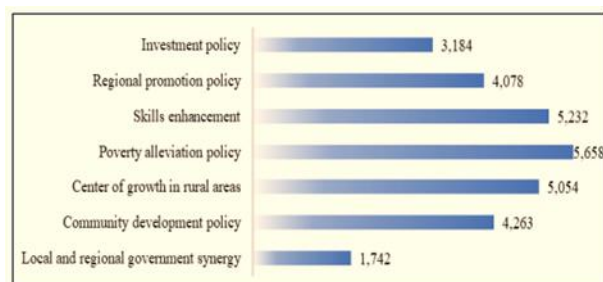
In general, the target group dimension score ranges from 2.764 to 9.637. First most sensitive indicator is business facilities, whereas entrepreneurship and training have the lowest value. According to the study's findings, the government has sponsored entrepreneurial initiatives and training for residents. The basic logic is that an entrepreneurship program may encourage people to be entrepreneurs, thus increasing their economic well-being. Therefore, it is necessary to optimize pieces of training on entrepreneurship so that this aspect can be improved.



**Fig 2.** Location Factor Scores

Figure 2 provides details on the location's leverage value. According to the diagram, the three most essential things are communication ease, clean water affordability, and public and communal amenities. The biggest issue in Mbalong Kawuk is communication networks. It is devoid of a telecommunications provider signal. Despite its excellent position, it was hampered by a shortage of available water. In this situation, the absence of clean water reflects Mbalong Kawuk tourism's inability to provide clean water in the location. Some rural tourism businesses have failed to meet the national criteria for toilets. Additionally, public amenities including mosques, parks, and roads have been given in the center; however, they have not yet been created in the rural areas of Tulungagung, East Java. The development of the three primary variables has a high priority.

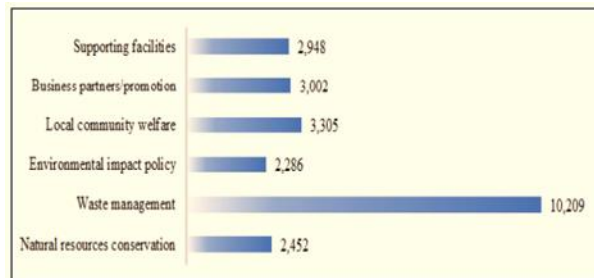
This study verifies past research that found a link between public amenities and rural tourism [29], communication ease and rural tourism [30], and clean water in boosting the tourism sector [31].



**Fig 3.** Policy Focus Scores

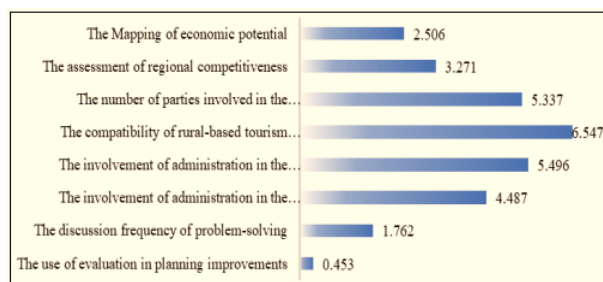
Figure 3 provides information regarding the leverage number for policy focus and synergy. The result shows that the most sensitive indicator is poverty reduction, whereas the least sensitive indicator is both local and regional collaboration. Furthermore, the second and third sensitives are a rural development center and a talent enhancement center. These findings demonstrate that

the three greatest sensitive issues must be addressed if rural tourism and local economic development are to be boosted. Xu et al. [32] previously discussed poverty eradication through tourism growth. Based on this fact, it is advised that a strategy be developed that concentrates on the outcomes of rural tourism and poverty reduction.



**Fig 4.** Sustainability Scores

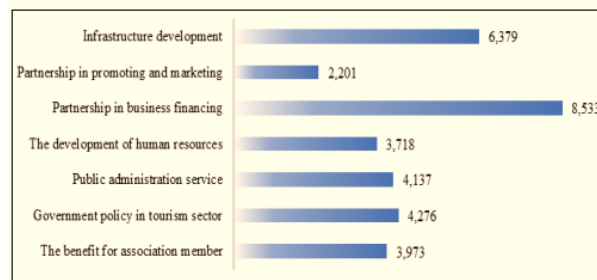
Figure 4 depicts the outcome of the RALED test in terms of sustainability. Six factors represent sustainability: supporting facilities, business partners, local community welfare, environmental effect, waste management, and wildlife conservation. According to the chart, waste management is the most important factor, while the environmental effect is the least important. The expansion of rural tourism in some areas of Tulungagung precludes garbage control. They concentrate on giving diverse picture opportunities rather than providing rubbish management. Actually, numerous locations have given waste management, well-known as a waste bank that serves as an intermediary, similar to a typical bank that handles money. According to Wulandari et al. [33], trash banks can boost the well-being of the local community. The community has localized waste banks in the housing complex, but they have not yet been deployed in rural tourism. As a result, it will be the primary issue for future growth. Furthermore, due to the vital role in enhancing the tourism site, commercial collaborations and advertising must be addressed. This conclusion is consistent with Hashimoto and Telfer [34], who noted the importance of collaboration in rural tourism planning. Given reality, in the current state of affairs, money is the critical issue that makes tourism growth improper.



**Fig 5.** Management-Process Scores

Figure 5 depicts the management process's leverage score. According to the chart, the government has effectively evaluated planned improvement. Other assessments, however, must be developed. Take, for example, the compatibility of rural tourism development. Some managers and owners focus entirely on the financial rewards rather than the compatibility with

culture, geography, and the locals. As a result, this creates a challenge for the growth of tourism. Second, the number of persons active in the growth of the local community is limited. As a result, the participation of many stakeholders is required to boost local economic growth. This finding supports previous research by Panyik et al. [35] and Pongponrat [36], which found that the success or failure of tourism development is highly related to the management process.

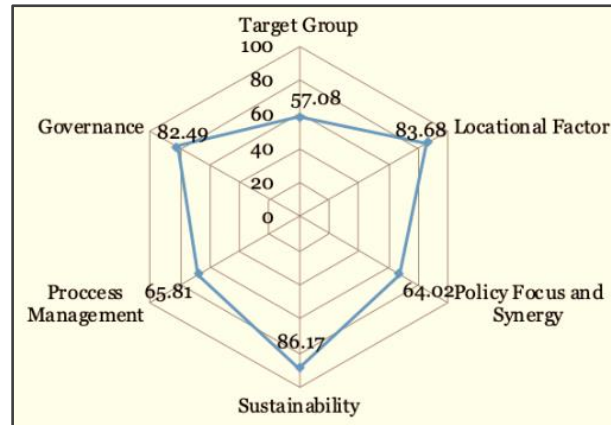


**Fig 6.** Governance Scores

Figure 6 displays the governance leverage index. The chart shows that the key concern is a partnership in company finance. Graci [37] stated that cooperation through multi-stakeholder relationships was viewed as an effective strategy to assist tourist development projects in Indonesia. Furthermore, infrastructure improvements in some rural-based tourism locations suffer from an insufficient brand image. In theory, the presence of rural-based tourism should take into account underlying factors such as infrastructure. The third factor is government assistance in tourist policy. In truth, the local administration is more interested in large-scale tourism than in small-scale rural tourism. These variables must be attracted in order to improve rural tourism expansion and local community development. This conclusion backs up prior research by Amore and Hall [38], who discussed the significance of government in supporting procedures and community reactions to rural tourist growth.

#### 4.2 Hexagonal LED and LED Status

Figure 7 depicts the current state of local economic growth in Mbalong Kawuk tourism, as measured by six variables: target groups, location considerations, synergy and policy emphasis, sustainable development, governance, and management procedures. According to the graph, Sustainability achieved the greatest index value of 86.17 or was at the index value of the local economic development element of more than 75. This suggests that the sustainability component of local economic growth in Mbalong Kawuk Tourism is extremely good. This shows how Mbalong Kawuk stakeholders evaluated topics such as nature protection, environmental impact analysis, community economic betterment, local community institutions, trash management, and tourism's capacity to generate decent jobs for people.



**Fig 7.** Mbalong Kawuk's Hexagon LED

Figure 7 also shows that the Target Group element has the lowest index value of 57.08, which is in the index value of the Good category's local economic development aspect. Other factors have an index value of 82.49 for governance, 64.02 for synergy and policy emphasis, 62.08 for location, 65.81 for management process, and 83.68 for governance. According to the index value, the six components of local economic development in Mbalong Kawuk Tourism are in fine condition. This describes how the stakeholders viewed the leverage element of the six aspects. Although all six elements are in the "Good" category, one has to be improved: the target group aspect, which carries the poorest index score. As a result, effective strategies and plans are required to enhance these features by focusing on the most sensitive indicators or those that need to be improved on target group elements.

Developing a collaborative forum between Village-Owned Enterprises and business entities in Mbalong Kawuk is one of the methods utilized to increase the frequency as a problem-solving mechanism. Because of their personal interests, the lack of professionalism among Village-Owned Enterprises and business players may generate challenges, resulting in unfavorable market conditions and impeded the expansion of Mbalong Kawuk Tourism. So, by establishing forums and partnerships, it is believed that they would be able to resist the impulse to prioritize personal interests and may be utilized as assessment material to promote Mbalong Kawuk Tourism, thereby fostering professionalism among parties. It is vital to focus on participation and intense conversation forums by including stakeholders in the development of Mbalong Kawuk Tourism that is more effectively coordinated, and connected to planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Mbalong Kawuk Tourism development program while developing institutions (Capacity Building) amongst LED forums. By maximizing the One Stop Service system, rules and policies pertaining to ease of investment may be deregulated. Furthermore, one solution for enhancing the number of stakeholders participating in the process of establishing Mbalong Kawuk Tourism is to cooperate with academics in designing innovative and new programs that promote the development of Mbalong Kawuk Tourism.

## 5 Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to look at the relationship between rural tourism and local economic growth in Mbalong Kawuk, Tulungagung. The outcomes of the rapid assessment of local economic development (RALED) revealed that the six aspects satisfied the good and outstanding categories. However, priority must be given to the three smallest elements, which are the target group, management process and policy emphasis, and synergy. These findings imply that rural tourism is inextricably tied with the local community as a result of community engagement in tourist development. It is suggested that future research expand on the model for local economic growth by collaborating with governments, academics, localities, and businesspeople.

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