

Research/Review

Optimization of Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism as a Pillar of Sustainable Green Tourism in Kledung District, Temanggung Regency

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Abstract: Research on sustainable tourism in Kledung, Central Java, plays a crucial role, especially in today's modern era, where environmental conservation and local community empowerment have become top priorities. With the rapid development of the tourism sector, it is necessary to identify and implement development models aligned with the principles of sustainable tourism and the preservation of local wisdom to achieve long-term sustainability. The roles of the central government, local government, and tourism business stakeholders are also essential in realizing sustainable tourism. Kledung District, located at the foot of Mount Sindoro and Mount Sumbing, holds significant potential to be developed as a green tourism destination by integrating natural beauty, cultural richness, and local wisdom. The aim of this research is to optimize the tourism potential of Kledung through an ecotourism and sustainable green tourism approach rooted in local wisdom. By utilizing the area's natural wealth and strong cultural traditions, Kledung is envisioned as an environmentally friendly tourism destination. As stated by, environmentally conscious sustainable development and improvement are necessary to ensure the preservation of resources and that the benefits can be enjoyed by both present and future generations. Furthermore, emphasizes that ecotourism empowers local communities to preserve their traditions and culture while also gaining economic benefits from tourism activities. The concept of ecotourism will be integrated with sustainability principles, focusing not only on environmental conservation but also on local community empowerment and social welfare improvement. This study analyzes the natural and cultural potential as well as the environmental impacts of tourism to ensure sustainability. Supporting the view of, the economic aspect of sustainable tourism includes sustainable income and community involvement in cultural preservation. The research is expected to provide recommendations for more effective and sustainable tourism development in Kledung, along with an innovative and inclusive tourism management mode.

Keywords: Ecotourism; Green Tourism; Local Community; Local Wisdom; Optimization

1. Introduction

Kledung District, located in Temanggung Regency, Central Java, is an area rich in natural beauty and strong local wisdom. Its stunning mountain views, cool climate, and the presence of various natural tourist destinations such as forests, waterfalls, and fertile agricultural lands make Kledung a region with significant potential in the tourism sector, particularly in ecotourism. The unique combination of natural and cultural elements in this region offers a substantial opportunity to develop environmentally friendly tourism while simultaneously supporting the local economy. The role of ecotourism in Kledung is vital for establishing sustainable tourism that not only protects the environment but also improves the welfare of the local community.

Ecotourism provides a foundation for tourism destination management that not only conserves natural beauty but also generates economic benefits for local communities and

Received: July 09, 2025

Revised: July 25, 2025

Accepted: August 09, 2025

Online Available: August 11, 2025

Curr. Ver.: August 11, 2025



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supports the conservation of natural resources for future generations. According to, the involvement of local communities as tourism actors is a prominent feature of ecotourism enterprises, indicating that community participation is essential in ecotourism development. Involving the community in planning and managing ecotourism will allow them to benefit directly, improving their quality of life and preserving local culture.

Although Kledung District has considerable natural potential and local wisdom, its development still faces challenges, especially in sustainably utilizing local resources. Many natural attractions, such as Embung Kledung located between Mount Sumbing and Mount Sindoro, have not yet been optimally managed as tourism destinations. To optimize development, a sustainable strategy through community assistance using a participatory approach is needed. This process includes discussion, observation, and the preparation of a master plan based on ecotourism to enhance the capacity and understanding of the local community.

The richness of Kledung's local culture can add value to tourism experiences. Therefore, optimizing its potential requires a strategy that integrates environmental sustainability and the involvement of local communities in every aspect of tourism development. As stated in, the empowerment of local communities is an essential aspect of developing a tourism destination. Thus, mapping the area's natural and cultural potential, providing education and training for local communities, developing tourism products based on local wisdom, and building eco-friendly infrastructure are necessary steps to realize sustainable green tourism in Kledung.

The abundant natural attractions must be supported by improved infrastructure and promotional management to realize sustainable green tourism appeal. Referring to, local community participation is a critical element in ecotourism management that can provide economic benefits while preserving environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the support of managers and other stakeholders is crucial to disseminate knowledge and raise public awareness of the importance of ecosystem preservation. Therefore, developing sustainable green tourism in Kledung requires a more holistic approach involving all stakeholders and the active participation of local communities.

Another challenge is the lack of community involvement in tourism management. Tourism development in Kledung is often managed by external parties who may lack an understanding of local wisdom. This situation can lead to dissatisfaction among local residents who feel excluded from decision-making processes regarding tourism destinations. Conflicts between tourism operators and local communities often arise due to poor communication and differing interests. Successful ecotourism development must be based on the active participation of the local community to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability and success.

Based on the background and existing issues, the research questions targeted in this study on local wisdom-based ecotourism as a pillar of sustainable green tourism in Kledung include:

- How can the optimization of local wisdom-based ecotourism be achieved in Kledung?
- What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the development of local wisdom-based ecotourism?
- What are the impacts of ecotourism development on the well-being of the local community?

Solving the problem of optimizing local wisdom-based ecotourism development in Kledung District can be approached through several strategic steps. First, optimization can be achieved by mapping natural and cultural potentials, providing education and training to the local community, developing tourism products rooted in local wisdom, and establishing eco-friendly infrastructure. According to, integrating local wisdom in tourism development not only aids cultural preservation but also contributes to economic and environmental sustainability. Second, supporting factors such as community awareness of sustainability, natural beauty, and government support must be maximized, while inhibiting factors such as inadequate infrastructure, reliance on mass tourism models, and disharmony among stakeholders must be addressed through more inclusive and participatory policies. In line with, community service programs are essential for tourism potential development in Kledung Village. This approach is expected to foster tourism development that supports sustainable development and local community empowerment.

The impact of ecotourism development on local community well-being can be seen through economic, social, and cultural lenses. Therefore, referring to, it is essential for the government and stakeholders to support community-based tourism initiatives through policies that promote training, market access, and destination promotion. emphasizes that community participation in ecotourism management is crucial to ensuring that the economic benefits of ecotourism are directly felt by local residents.

Research on the integration of local wisdom in ecotourism development remains limited, with most studies focusing on general aspects without considering local characteristics. This study aims to build on previous research by analyzing the role of local wisdom in ecotourism development strategies in Kledung, with its novelty lying in positioning local wisdom as the core aspect of sustainable ecotourism development.

Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the development of more innovative and inclusive ecotourism concepts as a pillar of sustainable green tourism in Kledung District. Citing, community-based ecotourism development significantly impacts local income, contributing to improved quality of life and economic well-being. Supported by, implementable strategies such as ecotourism development and tourism product diversification have proven to provide long-term economic benefits while minimizing environmental impacts. To support this strategy, recommends enhancing the quality of human resources capable of identifying tourism trends and leveraging local wisdom with new innovations to attract tourists. The findings of this research are expected to serve as a valuable reference for more effective and sustainable tourism policy-making in Temanggung Regency and other regions with similar potential.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Development of ecotourism as part of sustainable tourism has become a major focus over the past few decades, especially due to increasing awareness of the importance of environmental conservation and community empowerment. Numerous studies have been conducted to understand how ecotourism can be optimized while maintaining sustainability principles and preserving local values. This section outlines the conceptual framework and relevant literature, highlighting the differences and new contributions of this study compared to previous research.

The Concept of Ecotourism and Community Empowerment

Ecotourism is defined as a form of responsible travel to natural areas that aims to conserve the environment while improving the welfare of local communities. Various studies, such as, indicate that ecotourism plays a crucial role in creating ecological awareness, conserving natural resources, and distributing economic benefits fairly to local residents. Previous research shows that the success of ecotourism is greatly influenced by active community participation. For instance, emphasizes the importance of community empowerment in four aspects: economic, psychological, social, and political. Similar studies in Indonesia, such as, also demonstrate that community-based tourism (CBT) models have a positive impact on cultural and environmental preservation.

However, there is still a gap in research related to the in-depth integration of local wisdom in ecotourism development strategies. Most studies remain general and have yet to explore how local values such as traditions, beliefs, and customary practices can serve as the foundation for sustainable tourism development. This study aims to fill that gap by positioning local wisdom as a central pillar in the development of community-based ecotourism.

Local Wisdom and the Development of Sustainable Green Tourism

Local wisdom encompasses knowledge, values, and practices that are passed down through generations and have proven adaptive to the local environment. In the context of tourism, local wisdom serves as both an ethical and operational guide to maintaining harmony between humans and nature. In various regions in Indonesia, local wisdom has served as the foundation for conservation efforts and sustainable natural resource management.

A study by Widianingsih et al. (2020) reveals that the integration of local wisdom into tourism destination development can enhance the tourist experience while strengthening the cultural identity of local communities. Another study by in the Borobudur area shows that synergy between local cultural values and green tourism concepts can create destinations that are economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable.

Nonetheless, few studies have specifically examined the relationship between local wisdom and community-based ecotourism development strategies in mountainous areas such as Kledung. Therefore, this research offers a new contribution by emphasizing the importance of participatory approaches and mapping local wisdom as strategic steps in developing sustainable green tourism.

Sustainability Indicators in Ecotourism

Sustainability indicators are essential tools to assess how well tourism development meets sustainability criteria across environmental, social, and economic dimensions. According to the UNWTO (2004), sustainability indicators include aspects such as biodiversity conservation, efficient use of natural resources, community participation, tourist satisfaction, and economic contributions to local communities.

A study by developed the Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale (SUS-TAS), which reflects community attitudes toward sustainable tourism aspects. Meanwhile, emphasize the importance of both qualitative and quantitative indicators in evaluating the long-term impact of tourism destination management.

In the context of Kledung, sustainability indicators can be applied to measure the success of integrating ecotourism and local wisdom. This study attempts to adapt these indicator frameworks to assess the effectiveness of community-based tourism management and the extent to which ecotourism principles are consistently implemented in practice.

Tourism Policy Framework for Green Tourism Development

The tourism policy framework plays a vital role in supporting the strategic direction of sustainable tourism development. Inclusive policies that are responsive to local conditions are fundamental to creating synergy among governments, communities, and businesses.

state that an ideal tourism policy should include long-term planning, economic incentives, environmental regulations, and public education. In Indonesia, sustainable tourism development strategies are outlined in the National Tourism Development Master Plan (RIP-PARNAS), which encourages destination strengthening through community-based approaches and local wisdom.

Research by highlights the importance of aligning national and local policies in tourism development. In the context of Kledung, local policies that support community involvement and environmental conservation are essential to ensure the continuity of local-wisdom-based green tourism. Therefore, policy framework analysis is a key component in understanding the potential success of the strategies proposed in this study.

3. Proposed Method

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive-exploratory approach to investigate the ecotourism potential of the Kledung District by integrating local wisdom as a foundation for sustainable development. The proposed method is structured in several systematic stages that involve data collection, interactive analysis, and participatory evaluation, as described below.

Research Algorithm (Qualitative Process Flow)

Algorithm 1. Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism Development Process

INPUT:

- Observation findings on natural and cultural assets
- Stakeholder perspectives (local community, tourism actors, government)
- Literature review on sustainable ecotourism and local wisdom models

OUTPUT:

A participatory and sustainable ecotourism development framework for Kledung District

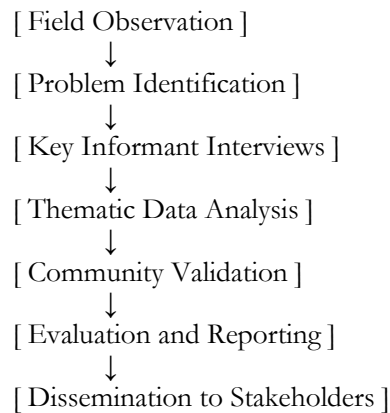
Steps:

- Conduct Field Observation
Identify local resources and ecotourism potential in Kledung District.
- Identify Core Issues and Development Gaps
Based on initial observation and stakeholder engagement.
- Engage in Semi-Structured Interviews
Collect qualitative insights from key informants: village officials, Pokdarwis, farmers, tourism managers.
- Perform Data Condensation
Reduce and categorize data based on recurring themes and patterns.
- Present Data Visually
Use thematic mapping, matrices, and charts to display insights.
- Draw Conclusions and Validate Findings
Involve triangulation and cross-verification with community representatives.

- Draft and Disseminate Final Report
Communicate findings to stakeholders and propose implementation strategies.

Participatory Research Flow Diagram

Below is the flow diagram representing the integrated participatory and qualitative process:



Thematic Analysis Framework

Data analysis is guided by the interactive model of Miles & Huberman, involving:

Eq. (1)

$$\text{Data_Insight} = f(\text{Condensation, Display, Conclusion/Verification})$$

Where:

- Condensation: Simplification of interview transcripts and observation notes into relevant codes.
- Display: Visualization using matrices, diagrams, or narrative categories.
- Conclusion/Verification: Inference-making based on patterns, validated through triangulation.

Key Techniques Applied

- Observation: Field visits to map ecotourism potential.
- Interview: Semi-structured format with district officials, Pokdarwis, and local communities.
- Literature Review: To contextualize findings with previous research and national ecotourism policies.
- Triangulation: Ensures reliability through cross-verification of different data sources.
- Participatory Validation: Involving stakeholders in verifying the model before dissemination.

4. Results and Discussion

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method.

Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews with stakeholders (mangrove area managers, members of the Bina Tapak Lestari Tourism Awareness Group [Pokdarwis], and fish farmers), as well as document analysis (Figure 2). In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the application of local wisdom practices and the challenges faced in managing the mangrove area. The data obtained were analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.



Figure 1. Research Stages



Figure 2. Research Roadmap

Observation Results

Field observations in Kledung District indicate that the potential for ecotourism development especially in relation to natural and cultural resources has not yet been optimally utilized. Key sites such as Embung Kledung, organic farming areas, and community forests face various challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and low public awareness of eco-friendly and sustainable tourism principles. Similar issues related to sustainable tourism development from an environmental perspective have also been found in other areas.

Based on the assessment, Kledung Village possesses unique geographical and cultural features. Located on the slopes of Mount Sindoro, the village hosts a popular basecamp that serves as a starting point for hikers. However, this potential has yet to be fully managed within a sustainable ecotourism framework. Tourism-supporting infrastructure such as access roads, tourist information centers, sanitation, and safety facilities remain very limited. In addition, local community participation in tourism management is still low. Many tourism sector actors lack formal training in hospitality, tourism management, or digital marketing. Nevertheless, a strong form of social capital exists in the form of community initiatives to manage land, preserve culture, and protect the environment. This demonstrates that the spirit of environmental and cultural preservation, as well as local empowerment, is already present and serves as a solid foundation for ecotourism development.

Interview Findings

In-depth interviews with community leaders, Pokdarwis managers, and local entrepreneurs in Kledung Village revealed valuable insights into the application of cultural values and local wisdom in ecotourism management. Traditional practices such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and the use of local materials in building tourism facilities function as strong social capital to support the sustainability of community-based tourism development.

Additionally, the preservation of arts and local traditions through traditional performances serves as an important foundation that not only strengthens cultural identity but also enhances tourist appeal. A particularly interesting finding was the implementation of informal zoning by the community, which divides areas into conservation, cultivation, and tourism zones. The conservation zone includes forests and water sources protected to maintain natural ecosystems. The cultivation zone is designated for organic farming that supports soil and environmental sustainability. The tourism zone includes places such as

Embung Kledung and the Mount Sindoro basecamp, which are strategic points for nature-based tourism and environmental education.

This zoning approach has proven effective in balancing tourism activities with environmental conservation, while also facilitating environmental education programs that raise visitor awareness about the importance of nature conservation. These findings underscore the critical role of community participation in ecotourism development.

However, interviews also revealed various challenges faced by the community in managing these destinations. Limitations in managerial skills and lack of access to continuous training are major barriers to improving the professionalism of destination management. Furthermore, tourism promotion remains traditional and underutilizes digital technology, limiting the reach and visibility of local destinations. External support from local government, academics, and NGOs is still seen as insufficient. Cross-sector collaboration is essential to strengthen human resources and develop a more effective promotional system based on local potential. Therefore, the people of Kledung Village strongly hope for increased support in the form of training for tour guides, destination management, development of eco-friendly infrastructure, and assistance with digital marketing so that ecotourism based on local wisdom can grow sustainably and provide optimal economic benefits for the local community.

Data Analysis

Based on data processing and field observations, local values in Kledung Village play a crucial role in supporting sustainable ecotourism management. Long-standing traditions, especially environmentally friendly agricultural practices such as compost use and natural pesticides, as well as cultural rituals for water source preservation, not only help maintain ecological balance but also reinforce the harmonious relationship between the community and nature.

The integration of cultural values and conservation efforts aligns with the principles of community-based tourism, which emphasize active community involvement in decision-making and tourism activities. These efforts also highlight the importance of cultural and environmental preservation and local community empowerment in ecotourism.

Furthermore, the implementation of area zoning combining conservation, education, and tourism utilization zones has proven effective in maintaining environmental balance while supporting conservation education programs for visitors. Zoning functions as a tool to manage tourism activity impacts, ensuring that natural resources are preserved while allowing the community to benefit from them responsibly. This participatory approach has also helped reduce potential stakeholder conflict and increased local ownership of tourist destinations.

However, data analysis also revealed some remaining challenges in ecotourism management in Kledung Village. Limited human resource capacity in tourism management and the absence of an effective promotion strategy especially in digital technology utilization—remain key obstacles in maximizing tourism potential. Despite this, the community's collective awareness of environmental sustainability and cross-sector support from local government, academia, and the community itself serve as valuable social capital. This social capital offers great opportunities for developing a more professional, targeted, and sustainable ecotourism management system in the future.

Thus, the analysis concludes that strengthening community capacity, developing a more structured zoning system, and improving digital promotion tools based on local potential are

key focus areas in achieving sustainable ecotourism that provides economic benefits while maintaining environmental and cultural integrity in Kledung Village.

Development of Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism

Kledung Village, located on the slopes of Mount Sindoro, has significant potential to become a sustainable, environmentally friendly ecotourism destination that directly involves the community. The existing Mount Sindoro basecamp can be utilized as a starting point for designing tourism packages that highlight not only natural beauty but also focus on conservation education.

This potential can be enhanced through collaborations in agrotourism, cultural preservation, and the creation of thematic tourism packages centered on environmental education, delivering long-term benefits to the local community. Community participation is a crucial aspect of the success of various forms of ecotourism development. Therefore, strengthening human resource capacity is a top priority.

Culturally aligned training for tour guides and managers is provided to ensure they carry out their duties professionally while honoring the local wisdom that characterizes the village. Implementing a zoning system in tourism areas is also essential to maintain a balance between conservation, agriculture, and tourism development. This zoning is established through participatory processes with community groups, such as Pokdarwis, which play a key role in sustainable and well-managed tourism. This approach aims to protect nature and culture while enhancing local community empowerment.

The development of local tourism products is one of the key strategies to attract visitors while preserving cultural values. Various products including traditional performances, regional cuisine, and organic farming-based tour packages are continuously created as equitable income sources for the community. Additionally, promotion through digital platforms and regular cultural events is carried out to draw tourists. This strategy also serves as an educational tool regarding environmental preservation.

Collaboration among stakeholders is an essential element in building ecotourism in Kledung Village. Partnerships between village governments, Pokdarwis, local businesses, academics, and the community aim to strengthen resources, provide ongoing technical support, and expand promotional networks. Through this approach, ecotourism development is expected to improve community welfare, preserve the environment, and maintain culture holistically.

Kledung Village holds great potential to become a successful example of environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism development, grounded in a strong commitment to nature protection, cultural heritage, and community empowerment.

Summary of Research Findings

The following table summarizes key findings collected through field observation, in-depth interviews, and qualitative data analysis. The research provides a comprehensive overview of the local context's potential, challenges, and development strategies. These include aspects from natural and cultural assets, strategic barriers, to community initiatives in ecotourism management. Strategic recommendations and an ecotourism concept for future sustainable development were also formulated.

Table 1. Research Result

No	Research Finding	Description
1	Natural and cultural potential	Mount Sindoro, Embung, traditional rituals, and local arts are tourist attractions. Basecamp as a hiking starting point supports nature tourism.
2	Development barriers	Poor road access, underprepared human resources, and insufficient tourism promotion.
3	Community-based tourism planning	Residents are involved to balance conservation with tourism utilization.
4	Local wisdom	The community still practices mutual cooperation, organic farming, and carries out preservation rituals.
5	Development direction	Focus on improving human resources, tourism area management, and local potential promotion.
6	Community empowerment	Training provided to enable residents to manage tourism independently and sustainably.

Source: Processed Data, 2025.

5. Comparison

This study contributes to the growing discourse on sustainable and community-based ecotourism by comparing its findings with previous state-of-the-art research. In particular, the integration of local wisdom as a core element in ecotourism development in Kledung District presents a unique and localized approach, distinct from conventional models that often adopt a top-down or generic framework.

A comparison with recent studies is summarized in

Table 2. highlighting differences in focus, methodology, and implementation outcomes.

Study	Location	Focus	Method	Community Involvement	Local Wisdom Integration	Contribution
[Susanti et al., 2023]	Bali	Eco-cultural tourism	Mixed methods	Medium	Yes (rituals, crafts)	Cultural preservation
[Zhang & Liu, 2022]	China	Eco-village model	Quantitative	Low	Limited	Tourism impact on environment
[Lestari et al., 2024]	Java	Agro-ecotourism	Qualitative	High	Moderate	Sustainable farming and tourism
This Study	Kledung, Indonesia	Local wisdom-based ecotourism	Qualitative (participatory)	Very High	High (folklore, farming, architecture)	Community empowerment & participatory planning

Compared to previous research, this study emphasizes bottom-up participatory design, allowing the community not only to be respondents but active contributors in designing the ecotourism model. The Miles & Huberman interactive model used in the analysis enables deeper thematic exploration, which is often absent in studies using purely quantitative methods. Furthermore, while many studies mention "local wisdom," this research operationalizes it through real practices like local storytelling, sustainable agriculture techniques, and traditional house design, all embedded into the ecotourism offerings.

Brief Discussion:

The uniqueness of this study lies in its emphasis on long-term sustainability through socio-cultural preservation, not just environmental management. This aligns with the principles of green tourism while ensuring that the identity of the local community remains central. The participatory validation step also ensures greater model legitimacy, distinguishing this study from others that only recommend frameworks without stakeholder validation.

6. Conclusions

This study investigated the optimization of local wisdom-based ecotourism as a pillar of green and sustainable tourism development in Kledung District, Temanggung Regency. Using a qualitative descriptive-exploratory approach, the research highlighted the potential of integrating local cultural assets and community participation into ecotourism planning.

- **Main Findings**

The findings revealed that Kledung possesses abundant natural and cultural resources suitable for ecotourism development. Through participatory engagement, key elements of local wisdom such as traditional farming systems, vernacular architecture, and oral traditions were identified as core values that can be embedded into a sustainable tourism framework. The application of thematic analysis using the Miles & Huberman model facilitated the extraction of recurring community-driven themes, ensuring grounded and context-sensitive insights.

- **Synthesis with Research Objectives**

These findings are consistent with the initial research objective to design a development model for ecotourism based on local wisdom and community collaboration. The integration of local values does not only strengthen cultural identity but also enhances the authenticity and sustainability of the tourism experience. The participatory method applied further validates the feasibility and acceptance of the proposed model among key stakeholders.

- **Research Contribution:**

The study contributes to the broader field of sustainable tourism and community-based development by offering a replicable participatory framework that is grounded in cultural and ecological contexts. It advances knowledge by demonstrating how local wisdom can serve not only as a tourism attraction but also as a guiding principle for tourism governance, aligning with green tourism ideals.

- **Limitations and Future Research Suggestions:**

While this study provides valuable insights, it is limited to one district and relies primarily on qualitative methods. Future research should consider comparative studies across multiple rural destinations, incorporate quantitative assessments (e.g., economic impact), and explore the long-term implementation outcomes of local wisdom-based ecotourism models. Further investigation into policy integration and capacity-building strategies is also recommended to support wider adoption.

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