



Sustainable Community-Based Tourism Development Model in Malang, Indonesia: A Participatory Action Research

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Abstract. The goal of this work is to promote a sustainable community-based tourist industry in Bringin Village, Malang District, Indonesia, by using the participatory action research methodology (PAR) to a practical example of the village. The PAR model utilized in this study is divided into three circles: 1) problem identification and tourist capacity analysis; 2) strategic planning and community-based tourism implementation at the place; and 3) assessment of long-term tourism development and plan revision. The PAR methodology uses 50 people's replies to questionnaires, site surveys, in-depth conversations, and three rounds of discussion with village policymakers to plan tourism implementation in each circle. Our result indicates that by using PAR, the involvement of communities in Bringin can contribute to the sustainability of tourism sites in Bringin. The involvement of all stakeholders is the key to create a sustainable tourist spot. An important note from our research is that because the PAR method is highly dependent on the social capital of a region, the PAR methods or steps used in our study cannot be directly applied to other regions.

Keywords: Participatory Action Research · Community-Based Tourism · Sustainable-Tourism Development

1 Introduction

The whole world is facing economic uncertainty. The task of economic stakeholders in all countries today is how to deal with these uncertainties by taking advantage of existing opportunities. In addition, another economic challenge is how to face an uncertain future while still paying attention to sustainability. One sector that is closely related to sustainability is the tourism sector which in recent years has been greatly shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nowadays, the development of the tourism sector is centered on long-term sustainability and a positive impact on the local communities. Despite the fact that tourism implementation is difficult in practice, tourist policymakers should emphasize the importance of their objectives. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in

Madrid, this study attempted to analyze challenges to tourism sustainability and their responses through a practical example in Bringin Village, citing Spain's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals [1] as well as the expansion of Indonesia's tourism industry. Bringin Village is located in the Malang District of Indonesia. Malang District is a significant part of East Java Province, which is one of Indonesia's most economically important provinces.

Based on initial observations, we found that the village community in Bringin is less involved in tourism development in their village. Only certain people are involved in every process of tourism development in Bringin and even they are only invited as small traders in the corners of tourist attractions. Thus, they are less concerned about the sustainability of village tourism in Bringin Village.

As a result, the focus of this research was on identifying potential solutions to the current tourist scenario, along with measures to sustain the benefits in terms of improving locals' quality of life. Another focus is how the community can be more involved in the process of developing village tourism in Bringin Village so that they have a sense of belonging and are willing to participate in maintaining the sustainability of village tourism. PAR, which began with the investigation of actual issues and included all crucial stakeholders in the entire research process as well as problem-solving, was the best research approach to fulfil the aims. The conclusions of this study are used as a reference for stakeholders in achieving sustainability of tourism development in the location.

2 Literature Review

2.1 What are the Benefits of Conducting Participatory Research?

Top-down approaches, according to evidence, provide statistically considerably worse results in terms of achieving local community goals and final satisfaction [2–4]. Second, retaining scholarly arguments solely in the scholarly domain while excluding citizens from the process is increasingly seen as inappropriate [5], because the public may assist in putting scientific theories into practice. Finally, while PAR “often represents a great improvement over conventional methodologies of study,” economic researchers lack self-critique and self-reflection.

Social scientists have left a fairly tatty and embarrassing record in the communities of their studies by objectivizing individuals, their lives, and cultures [6]. PAR, on the other hand, requires incorporating local groups and individuals in the activities, structures, settings, and decisions that affect their lives in order to achieve long-term outcomes on their own desires [7, 8]. PAR blends academic research with community participation, which is significant divergence from traditional research. For PAR, the research method is just as crucial as the academic conclusions. Because researchers are increasingly working ‘with’ rather than ‘on,’ some writers refer to it as part of a greater shift toward increased openness in academia [9, 10]. PAR contributes to development initiatives and not only ‘produces’ academic research findings, but also teaches and instructs locals, non-academics, and NGOs in order to regenerate local people, particularly in social sciences. Because the methodology framework is more important than the procedures themselves, Minkler and Wallerstein [11] emphasize that PAR is not a research method

in and of itself, but rather an 'attitude to research.' The methodological setting frequently entails a particular mindset on the side of the researchers, blurring the line between who studies and who is examined.

More than fifty years ago, PAR had its roots in development projects that focused on ethnic, racial, and poverty challenges. To tackle their problems, they employ Kurt Lewin's problem-solving research framework of planning, acting, and evaluating the outcomes of those activities. They attempt to do specialized studies in order to question power relations within communities and boost the local community [11]. Community-based PAR, according to Racadio et al. [12], is rooted in the 'Southern' paradigm of 'action research,' in which scientists believe that their role is to assist and give education to the communities, but the transformative change should emerge from within them. The 'Northern' tradition, on the other hand, emphasizes academics' participation in institutional settings such as schools and organizations. They can work together to address problems on a tiny level and thereby have an impact on their own life. The participatory approach is defined by Tress et al. [13] as a work in which academic and non-academic people who participated exchange ideas in a parallel process in order to solve an issue, but the focus is not on combining new knowledge cultures to create innovative theoretical and practical knowledge. In an essence, the difference between conventional and participatory method is the reason for which it is conducted.

2.2 Objectives

We want to verify Bergold and Thomas' argument that scientists and local communities can work together to develop additional knowledge that benefits each one of them [14]. The fundamental purpose of this project is to develop and explain a PAR strategy based on a local community case study. As a result, we provide a public relations strategy whose major purpose was to promote and create cultural tourist activities in order to support development. We want to contribute to the growth of public relations in development economics, often known as 'methodological pluralism,' which is critical for the discipline's advancement [15]. We want to examine if scientific and local communities can be integrated into PAR. Second, we aim to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of PAR in community development versus "traditional" top-down studies in development economics, both for the local community and for researchers. We aim to see if PAR provides short- and long-term economic benefits for the locals (in this case, the establishment of new tourism destinations) while also allowing researchers to learn new local knowledge. Third, we want to see how successful our PAR was in terms of avoiding the most common essential traps associated with PAR.

3 Research Methods

Our approach is based on conceptual and applied research from a variety of fields. Theoretically, we drew on Checkoway's work [16], which presented fundamental concepts for people transformation, particularly the need of 'becoming organized,' which is the vital

process of community development. Other research served as a springboard for developing our PAR idea [17–20], however, in fact, our method emerged primarily organically, with us adhering to the following concepts employed in other researches:

- Researchers plays role as guides, moderators, or, in the best scenario, advisors if the local people desire it.
- Stakeholders are actively involved in the research rather than being passive who are ‘asked for their opinion.’
- Stakeholders are allowed to express their concerns and suggestions, and their input is properly considered, resulting in a policy or program that they are proud of.

3.1 Data Collection

The PAR Model is designed to the research findings for tourism implementation in each part or circle by adopting the framework of the PAR model or methodology, which is separated into four processes for each circle: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The PAR methodology for this study has three important circles: 1) problem identification and tourism performance analysis; 2) policy formulation and implementation of community-based tourism at the location; and 3) evaluation and plan revision for sustainable tourism development. The development of tourism in each circle of the PAR (which is shown in Fig. 1 is supported by findings from tourist satisfaction surveys, area surveys containing three hamlets, in-depth personal interviews with villagers, and three rounds of group discussion with key policy-makers from local authorities and ten tourism business owners. The respondents involved in this study were not less than 50 people.

3.2 Data Analysis

During the mixed-method research technique of this study, data analysis was carried out in every circle of the PAR model, as well as the implementation of the findings and results. Content analysis was used to evaluate qualitative data, and triangulation was double-checked using descriptive statistical analysis for quantitative data.

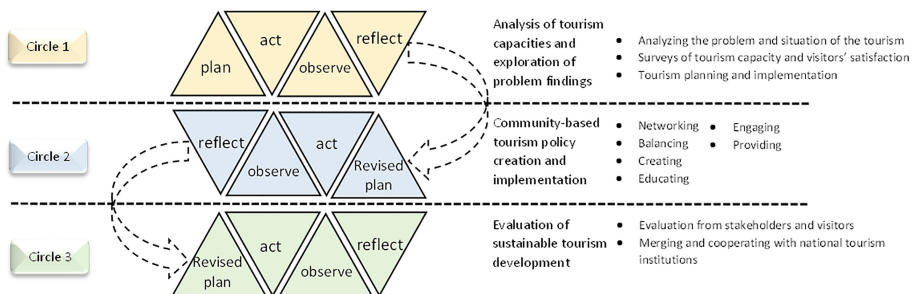


Fig. 1. PAR Model for Sustainable Community-based Tourism Development. Source: Kindon et al., [7]

4 Results and Discussion

Bringin is one of the villages in Malang District. Topographically, Bringin is at an altitude of 200 - 1000 above sea level and has a slope between 0–40%. The purpose of this study is to adapt the participatory action research (PAR) methodology to a case study of Bringin Village in Malang District, Indonesia, in order to promote sustainable community-based tourism. The investigation's findings in each circle of the PAR model indicated the following:

4.1 Investigation of Issue Findings and Tourism Capacity Analysis

The initial step of this research was to investigate the situation and facts of the current collaboration. Tourism situation analysis and tourists' satisfaction were the two primary aspects of the problem investigations. The data for the first circle of the PAR model's challenges and tourist situation analysis was gathered through brainstorming or discussing with local villagers, key policymakers, and tourism businesses in the village. According to the facts, the tourist situation in the area had deteriorated, the number of visitors had decreased, and there had been some serious clashes between local inhabitants and tourism-related enterprises. The main reason for this uncomfortable situation were business rivalry, over-consumption of tourism resources, and the establishment of additional tourism destinations in nearby districts. The majority of tourists travelled for vacation and relaxation; they used the internet to find tourism information, accommodations, and services; the costs of travel included meals, lodging, and transportation; they were satisfied with attractions provided on the sites, activities, accessibility, and accommodations; they suggested improving visitor information, new tourism routes, and events; and they were satisfied with attractions, activities, and accessibility; and they were satisfied with attractions, activities, and accessibility.

In addition, research teams, senior policy strategists, and national park authorities assessed present tourism hotspots in adjacent areas and inspected 2 additional sites. The findings revealed that the district was experiencing issues such as overconsumption in present destinations, uninteresting activities, business sector issues, and a lack of new tourism destination maintenance and promotion.

As a result, the study teams, locals, tourism business owners, tourism policymakers, and national park authorities met for a second brainstorming session to discuss solutions and tourism rejuvenation. For this stage, all participating stakeholders agreed to work together and share money to solve problems and develop tourism policies that are sustainable in terms of the advantages and resource capability of local communities.

4.2 Community-Based Tourism: Policy Development and Practice

Through discussion in the PAR model's second circle, all main participants focused on practice and development of community-based tourism policy in this study. They started by developing a community-based tourism association in the area, considering the village's needs for tourism development, capability, and budget cooperation from appropriate authorities and local governments. The appropriate tourism strategies for

the present situation were addressed to three main issues using the qualitative and quantitative analysis: new tourism place innovation, creative tourism activity preparation, and tourism destination advertising and branding in the ‘Visit Bringin’ campaign. Key policy-makers and national park agencies also provided opportunities for local inhabitants and business owners to connect tourism promotion opinions and obtain satisfactory benefits from new spot developments, as well as attempt to educate all interested parties on tourism sustainability and local expert training.

The second phase is the phase that consumes the most time. From the discussion, the stakeholders decided that the tourism icon in Bringin is in a natural spring known as “Sumber Wiwit”. In addition to constructing the location of the spring, they also built a row of stalls used by businessmen around the location of the spring. Another plan is to prepare the yard of the residents’ houses around the location to be used as a parking lot for visitors. That way, the whole community can benefit from the development of village tourism.

4.3 Assessment of Long-Term Tourism Development and Plan Revision

The PAR model’s last circle focused on evaluating and practicing the sustainability of tourism development and practice through the development of new tourism routes and destinations, the number of tourism activities and events in the location, as well as tourists’ opinions and satisfaction. The application of the tourism master plan and practices was considered to be very successful and to have resulted in major improvements in the site, particularly in terms of integrated collaboration among all key stakeholders and dispute resolution. This achievement in PAR and the sustainable development of community-based tourism was a great inspiration for all stakeholders and local communities in terms of sustainability values. All stakeholder has continued to promote tourism, including putting local sustainable tourism development into the development of provincial planning plan and collaborating with the national tourism support organization. Furthermore, it served as an achievement-based encouragement for adjacent villages to study and implement the PAR model in their own areas.

In relation to the uncertainty being faced, the PAR model can be a good way to minimize it. Synergy, collaboration, and interaction among stakeholders clearly reduce uncertainty in tourism management, especially at the research sites. during our PAR period, the commitment of the community, village government, district government, and traders was carried out properly. This is a good social capital for tourism development in Bringin Village. This commitment also illustrates that if properly directed and guided, PAR can increase the value of human capital. These capitals are a good provision for stakeholders in the village of Bringin to face the upcoming future.

However, we cannot guarantee that using our PAR strategy in other locations would provide identical results, which is an empirical limitation of conducting this type of research. Although the process is the same, the background, problems, and priorities of the local community may indeed be vastly different. However, we believe that we may accomplish a more comprehensive PAR by repeating the guiding phases of our methodology (knowledge collection, knowledge synthesizing, implementation, and evaluation) and using standardized participation techniques. This is a requirement for the

development of more universal theories and concepts that will address potential global socioeconomic concerns and community demands.

5 Conclusion

In light of the PAR paradigm and the study findings, these findings suggest that PAR is a viable method for accomplishing objectives in terms of sustainable and realistic community-based tourism development. Meanwhile, the research design's difficulty was determined by the state of tourism in the study area and the likelihood of a bargaining process between key players. Problems that occur in Bringin Village can be resolved through discussions with stakeholders. In this case, the direct involvement of the Bringin village community is also the main key. This community involvement makes them feel they have a tourist spot in Bringin so they want to keep it sustainable. On the other hand, these three circles of the PAR framework for sustainable community-based tourism planning might serve as a core concept that could be extended to other areas in similar situations. Scientists and tourism organizers could begin by investigating issue findings, future goals, and an evaluation of tourism capacities in the spots; then involve all interested parties in planning and implementing concrete tourism strategies based on the research findings; and, at last, evaluate and revise the tourism development strategies expected to be sustainable as the sustainable development cycles proceed.

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