Governance of Sustainable Tourism in Developing Countries: Between Ideality and Reality

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Abstract. Arnessing tourism can be used as a tool to achieve economic growth, rural development, and improved quality of life. However, this hope can be obtained if the governance implements the principles of sustainable tourism. This is because effective governance influences sustainable tourism. This article aims to compare the ideal and real governance of sustainable tourism in developing countries. The paper is compiled through literature review of Scopus indexed articles from Q1 to Q4. This paper finds that the negative impact of tourism on humans, the environment, and disrupting the economy and even privileging foreign companies and businessmen is due to no planning and lack of community participation in tourism development.

Keywords: Developing Countries, Governance, Sustainable Tourism

1   Introduction

Tourism has been valued as a significant contributor to economic, rural, and urban development, unemployment, environment, and sustainability [1-3]. Tourism-based development is considered as one of the approaches in rural development to improve community welfare and overall quality of life [4]. In addition, tourism might improve the quality of life of the community when social capital empowers the community, preserves the environment, and improves the quality of life [5,6].

Some scholars describe governance as the process by which either citizens or other organizations design public decisions. [7,8]. Governance implies a pluralistic approach to policy making by emphasizing the role of non-state actors while de-emphasizing the power of the state in social networks [9]. In the context of tourism, some experts explain the concept of governance in tourism destinations consists of developing rules, policy implementation mechanisms and business strategies that allow the involvement of institutions and communities [10]. Governance has important implications for sustainable tourism because it affects the relationships between tourism actors, the nature of tourism policy, the capacity of actors to act, and the ways in which policy issues are defined [11].

From the previous researches on tourism governance, this theme has been widely studied from various points of view, namely, management perspectives [12], interactions

between actors in tourism [13,14], value of sustainable services [15, 16], organizational characteristics [17], dimensions and governance models in tourism system [18], the urgency of understanding the tourism policy-making process [19-24], the effects of tourism on poverty [25], governance relationships, power and citizen participation in tourism planning [26], the urgency of tourism development design [27, 28], spatial design such as land use planning and physical planning [29], participatory governance and its implications [30, 31], the role of local communities in designing tourism governance [32], and integration of the business sector, government and society towards accountable, transparent and efficient tourism governance [33]. There is also previous research on tourism governance that focuses on the importance of the role of local communities (residents) to participate in consensus-building in the design of tourism management decisions and arrangements [34], and public participation to achieve high orientation in partnership-based tourism governance [35].

In some previous studies, it has also been explained about the relationship between tourism and hedonic well-being [36], which is characterized by the implication of feelings of pleasure and sadness towards tourism activities. Prosperity is an outcome of tourism [37-39] in the context of positive psychology studies [40, 41]. In addition, Seligman has also examined the relationship between tourism and models of excitement such as pleasant life, good life, and meaningful life [42]. These factors can be measured by tourism's contribution to pleasantness and meaning for tourists, local communities, and the environment in the form of the implementation of ecotourism and indigenous cultural tourism. Another finding describes public health as an effect of tourism, in which public health is a measure of well-being from the Sustainable Development Goals [43]. It should be noted that the studies linking tourism and welfare are still relatively new and rare [44].

Previous research on tourism governance shows that governance with a community-based tourism perspective is referred to as a motor in village development [45]. However, some other researchers [46, 47] argued that community-based tourism (CBT) has failed to deliver empowerment and economic viability. This is due to the complex web of social, cultural, economic, and political factors at the time of CBT implementation in the village. Initiatives in CBT are no longer found due to the absence of locations for tourism development [48]. In addition, this CBT management mechanism does not consider knowledge based on actual evidence [49, 50]. Since governance is an integral element of sustainable tourism, the discussion of this topic becomes important to explore. This is because the success in achieving sustainable tourism is determined by effective governance [1]. Unclear intentions and objectives of sustainable tourism have led to sporadic and unsystematic tourism [52]. This paper aims to compare the ideal governance of sustainable tourism and the reality in developing countries.

2   Materials and Methods

This study used the literature review method, by comprehensively understanding the existing literature studies can better answer research questions [53]. Data processing was carried out through data sets obtained from the Scopus database. Scopus was selected as the index because it is the world's largest abstract and citation database for peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings. In this study, we focus and specifically use key words "governance of sustainable tourism in developing countries".

3   Result and Discussion

3.1   Governance of Sustainable Tourism in Developing Countries

In its implementation, tourism does not always provide positive implications but has brought negative impacts [54, 55]. Tourism development can also have negative impacts on tourism, such as crime, higher cost of living for communities, resentment of tourists, and lower quality of life for local communities [56], which further bring effects on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental [57, 58, 59]. In the context of sustainable tourism governance, the principle is based on social, economic, and environmental equality [60]. In addition, sustainable tourism has five conditions, namely economic, environmental, and social responsibility, and is responsible for tourist satisfaction, and fairness and equality for all [61]. The negative impact of tourisme can be seen for example in Goungezhuang China, where villages were transformed into tourist destinations in a big way for 30 years, turning village development out of focus [62]. There is land conversion in the village from agricultural land to non-agricultural [63]. In addition, deforestation and environmental degradation in villages have also been reported [64]. In Kenya, large capital-accumulating tourism has had adverse impacts on local communities where the community experiencing difficulties in meeting basic needs such as employment opportunities, income distribution and access to capital [65]. It shows that tourism in its governance marginalizes the local communities [66]. Other obvious threats are observed in the Sante Anne park in the Seychelles of East Africa which include poaching, coastal development, and unsustainable tourism. This is due to a lack of state capacity, political will, and capacity in the law enforcement process as a key driver undermining fair and effective governance, a lack of community engagement, and a lack of accountability [67].

The problem of sustainable tourism governance also found in developing countries in South-East Asia region such as those in in Ha Long Bay Vietnam, Gili Trawangan Indonesia, Ngapali Beach Myanmar, Mabul and the Perhentian islands Malaysia because the employees are given low salaries, showing the limitations of tourism sector in poverty alleviation [68]. Tourism-led growth widens inequality in local communities and weakens local economic linkages [68]. Local households and businesses are affected by the development of large tourism projects. Even though they bring in many tourists but there is another effect on the local communities, i.e., the loss of land, business premises, and livelihoods. In addition, the practices of favoring big investors,

foreign companies, and crony conglomerates have hindered the ideals of inclusive development [68]. Similar issue has also happened in Kota Wisata Batu (KWB) in East Java Province. This city has been declared as the largest tourist destination city in Indonesia. However, behind the rapid development of tourism in Batu City there has been extensive land acquisition. Spatial planning was highly controlled by investors [69], Regional Regulation Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARDA) has been stipulated by the government but in favor of investors [69].

TABLE I: COMPARISON OF GOVERNANCE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

No	Indicators	Ideality	Reality
1.	Positions of local communities	Actively involved	Passive
2.	Government	Regulator	Player
3.	Tourist	Passive	Active
4.	Tourism Industry	Ordinary	Powerful
5.	Capital	Complement	Determinant
6.	Government's position	Impartial	Partisan
7.	The main purpose of tourism	Achieving prosperity, environment and culture preserved	Profit oriented
8.	The impacts on	Pro-economic, social, and environmental	Social, economic, and environmental degradation
9.	The existence of tourism destinations	Empowering local communities	Exploitation for companies

Source: Analyzed by the author, 2023

Table I described a comparison of sustainable tourism governance in developing countries between the ideal and the real. The ideal type is that local communities were given the opportunities to be involved so that there is no resistance and harm to the tourism industry. On the other hand, local communities are often passive due to lack of awareness about the importance of sustainable tourism, no information about sustainable tourism governance by the government and non-governmental organizations. Based on research in Batu City, the government "brings in" investors to develop mass tourism without going through a process of community involvement or deliberative process and local communities are designed to be mere spectators [69].

The many problems that arise in tourism governance are indicated by the absence of tourism planning [70] and lack of community participation in tourism planning [71]. Tosun has explained that there are three types of barriers to stakeholder participation in tourism governance: operational, structural, and cultural [72]. Operational barriers to participation include lack of access to information, inefficient decision-making structures, lack of discussion platforms, lack of knowledge about sustainable tourism, and lack of transparency and accountability. Structural barriers include lack of access to planning experts, weak community development, lack of budget, lack of education of both local communities and government officials, and inappropriate policies and governance. Socio-cultural barriers include the history of colonialism, community awareness, local people's distrust of government, power gaps, unequal distribution of costs and benefits and conflicts between groups.

This is in line with the conclusions of several researchers [73, 74] that the existence of tourism does not always produce benefits but also causes social, cultural, and environmental problems suffered by the community. These problems are an implication of the complexity of tourism governance [75].

4   Conclusion

Tourism can be both a blessing and a problem for the economy, socio-culture, and the environment. The goal of tourism to achieve prosperity can only be a dream due to mismanagement of tourism. The weak bargaining position of the state and communities towards the tourism industry has widened the poverty.

5   Acknowledgement

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