

# The Dissemination of “Sustainable Tourism” Idea Among Stone Garden’s Local Community

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**Abstract.** Many scholars argued that tourism did give not only benefits but also give deprivation. Namely social cost, economic cost, and environmental damage. To address this side effect, WTO launched “sustainable tourism” as a new concept in developing tourism. This concept tried to balance between the advantages and the disadvantages. In Indonesia, sustainable tourism is not widely known by tourism practitioners. This research aims to examine the dissemination of sustainable tourism concept among the local community (Pok darwis). Authors applied case study design in addressing the event. The interview was chosen by authors as a tool in gathering data. Results showed that the local community has known about sustainable tourism but they cannot elaborate it in detail. Interestingly, they have employed it in developing its tourism object although they do not have adequate knowledge about it. They knew the concept from local government who used mass media (book) in spreading it. Local community became an early adopter since they were the first person who perceived the concept from the innovator (local government).

**Keywords:** Tourism, Community, Sustainable Tourism

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is a leading sector for the Indonesian economy[1] since it has a big contribution to Indonesian income. Last year, the tourism sector gave 205 trillion to Indonesian income[1]. It is bigger than other sectors such as tax. Ministry of Tourism predicts that it will continue to grow. Thus, the Indonesian government focus on developing tourism.

The number of foreign tourists who come to Indonesia is increasing each year. In 2017, the growth was 21,88%[1]. It is higher than in other ASEAN countries such as Thailand and Malaysia. For the first time, in 2017, Indonesia has succeeded Thailand as Destination of the Year. This award was given by TTG Travel Award which has known as a prestigious tourism organization in Asia-Pacific.

West Java is one of the most favorites destinations for local tourist. In 2016, 16.21% of local tourist visited West Java [2]. It made them the second most visited place after East Java (see **figure 1**). Meanwhile, West Java Tourism and Culture offices claimed there is 63 million tourists (foreign and local) came to visit West Java[3]. Data from West Bandung Tourism and Culture offices showed that there are 1.7 million tourists visited West Bandung in 2016, both local and foreign tourists. Mostly the visitors are a local tourist who came to West Bandung for various purposes such as, sport, business, entertainment, etc.

Tourist attraction in West Bandung divided into three zones that is north, south, and west. Each zone has a unique tourist attraction. Those tourist attractions can be categorized into two categories, i.e. nature and lifestyle tourism. Each of these categories managed by differ organization. Lifestyle tourism managed by the private sector due to the government does not have enough capital to develop it. Some of the lifestyle tourism are Dusun Bamboo, Maribaya Lodge, and the Floating Market. The lifestyle tourism concept is one stop entertainment where we could find entertainment and food in one place. This concept attracts more tourists than the nature concept.

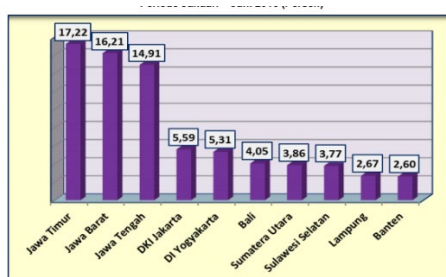


Figure 1. Tourist attendance per province[2]

Nature attraction managed by two different organizations. They are the local government and the local community. Based on our preliminary research, the local government can only handle those destinations because of its limited capital. Preventing a conflict of interest also became a reason why the local government only could handle those tourist attractions.

Meanwhile, tourist attraction managed by the local communities is WanaWisataPasirIpis and Stone garden. The local communities are well known as *KelompokSadarWisata (Pokdarwis)*. The local government initiated these communities in 2012. The local government claimed that tourism development is not only their responsibilities but also the local communities' responsibilities. Thus, they required each tourism destination to establish *Pokdarwis*.

*Pokdarwis* is an informal organization established by society (especially people who care about tourism development in their area) and has a role in creating awareness about tourism and *SaptaPesona*[4]. Furthermore, *Pokdarwis* is an advocate who participates in generating a conducive environment and positive effect on its tourism development. Specifically, there are several functions of *Pokdarwis* that is: 1) increasing knowledge about tourism; 2) advocating resident to participate in tourism development; 3) widening the advantage of tourism for the society; 4) succeeding the tourism development[4].

Planning is a crucial point in developing tourism since it could direct the development in the right path. Recently, many practitioners and academician adopt sustainable tourism concept in planning and developing tourism. The concept of sustainable tourism was presented to response the Agenda 21 which required the government to promote ecotourism [5]. After that, the concept continues to grow, and some practitioners and academicians used differ phrase.

Meantime, UNESCO argued that sustainable tourism presented because tourism activity has not only advantages but also the disadvantages. The advantages of are generating jobs, increasing the resident's income and creating a new market [6], [7]. Furthermore, the disadvantages are decreased the local moral value, culture commercialization, and damaging the ecosystem [6], [7].

In agreement with UNESCO, World Commission Environment and Development (WCED) asserted that sustainable tourism come out as response to solve the negative effects of tourism to the society and culture[8]. Other scholars also argued that sustainable tourism presented because there is an unequal benefit that tourist and local communities got from the tourism activity [7], [9], [10]. Most of them claimed that the local communities got more disadvantages than the tourist, especially when the tourist disturbed the local communities' culture.

The concept of sustainable tourism is interpreted differently by academician and practitioners. For instance, World Trade Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism as an effort in fulfilling tourists' and destinations' need, and at the same time, the resident could protect or maintain their tourist attraction for future generations [7]. Meanwhile, WCED defines sustainable tourism as a tourism development concept which has an effort to balance current needs and future needs [8]. This statement also in line with Liu (2013) who argued that sustainable tourism should balance between the sustainable of profit and the sustainable of resources [8].

The concept of sustainable tourism already known in some countries namely Indonesia. Ministry of tourism of Republic Indonesia used the concept in their vision and mission. However, they do not use them in specific sentences. They describe it as "be responsible for nature and socio-cultural environment" [11]. This mission was implemented into "Sustainable Tourism Observatory (STO)" and "Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Award (ISTA)."

West Java is one of the tourist destinations that already implemented sustainable tourism. It can be seen from its local communities involved in developing its tourism destinations[12]. It has the role to manage its tourism destination and to persuade the local people to participate. But, the concept of sustainable tourism is not only about the locals' participation. It also has other dimensions such as environment and culture[6], [13].

The growth of practical use of sustainable tourism is not in line with the number of scholars who researched sustainable tourism[14]. The author searched for the research through Google Scholar and found only a few researchers discussed it. Most of them discussed ecotourism and marketing tourism. Moreover, sustainable tourism in Indonesia is relatively a new concept; hence it is significant to be investigated, especially regarding how this concept is adopted.

Authors applied diffusion of innovation theory in addressing this event. This theory accounts for the dissemination of innovation from innovators to adopters [15]. Rogers, the innovator of this theory. Claimed that there are four characteristics of innovation that could influence the rate of adoption [15], [16], that is a relative advantage, complexity, trial ability, and observability. Meanwhile, Katz (1963) also proposed four characteristics namely *communicability* (the degree of innovation could be explained), *pervasiveness* (the degree of innovation's ramifications are readily apparent), *risk* (the degree of innovation similarity with its replacement), and *profitability* (the degree of innovation effectiveness than alternatives) [17].

## 2. Methods

The qualitative method was employed for this study. Data collection incorporates interviews and observation. Key informant of this study is the chief of kelompok sadar wisata (pokdarwis) and the local communities at Stone Garden. The informant was selected by authors because of their achievement as second runner up Pokdarwis at the national level. Moreover, they become the role model for Pokdarwis in West Java.

Pokdarwisas the informant of the study because of its role in developing tourism destination. They initiated tourism to earn a profit for the locals and host communities. Further, they also persuade the locals to take part in developing and managing tourism. Thus, Pokdarwis has a strategic role in its tourism development.

The questions were open-ended questions which we used three sustainable tourism dimensions as the guidance. The foregoing study used two dimensions in sustainable tourism such as stakeholder and environment[13]. Other scholars suggested there are seven dimensions of sustainable tourism namely environmental sustainability, tourism planning, community participation, community-center economy, economic benefit, visitor satisfaction, and social costs[18]. Each dimension comprises of several questions. In this study, authors employed sustainable tourism dimensions which promoted by Choi and Sirakaya (2005). These seven dimensions were deployed as a basis for the research question.

### **3. Results and discussion**

#### **3.1 The recognition of sustainable tourism**

The informant's knowledge level of sustainable tourism could be categorized into two that is informants who know the concept and the ones who do not know. Dabphet et al. (2012) labeled these two groups under different terms in which the informants who know the concept but could not account to it labeled as unidentified while the informants who have no clue about the concept labeled as unknown [16].

The local community (as in *Pokdarwis*) belonged to the "unidentified" group. They have heard the concept of sustainable tourism but have a false definition regarding the concept. They defined sustainable tourism as "one-stop tourism" in which visitors can carry out varied activities in the tourism destination.

So, one of our missions is to build up everything at one, and if we could, we would build a one-stop tour. For example, like a campsite, there is Stone Garde, another one is Jungle Stone. So, we are happy, and when the tourists come they don't just for one or two hours then go home.

Meanwhile, most of the workers in the tourism site, who also members of the *Pokdarwis*, never heard the concept of sustainable tourism. Hence, they could be categorized as the "unknown" group. This finding confirms the previous study claimed that the stakeholders do not have comprehensive knowledge and comprehension regarding the sustainable tourism concept [16].

The difference level of knowledge caused by the different level of participation amongst the members of the tourist attraction development planning. The informant who has comprehensive knowledge is one of the *Pokdarwis* members who fully responsible for managing the tourist attraction. Meanwhile, the informant who does not have any clue about the sustainable tourism concept is the *Pokdarwis* members who is not active and only served as the field officers. This finding is in line with the previous study which claimed that the stakeholder's involved in the development affecting the knowledge level regarding the sustainable tourism concept [6].

Interestingly, this study found how *Pokdarwis* unintentionally has been implementing the sustainable tourism concept in managing its tourist attraction although they do not have adequate comprehension regarding the concept itself. This finding has refused the previous

study claimed that inadequate understanding regarding the sustainable tourism concept of the tourist attraction managers confusing how to implement the concept [16].

*Pokdarwis* has been implementing the seven dimensions of sustainable tourism that is environmental sustainability, tourism planning, community participation, community-center economy, economic benefit, visitor satisfaction, and social costs [18]. In the context of environmental sustainability, *Pokdarwis* has generated several programs and policies to preserve the environment. For example, *Pokdarwis* has planted trees in the prone to erosion area to prevent the erosion also they have been giving out plastic bags to the visitors so they can manage their own waste. These are significant actions to preserve the tourist attraction area which is also a cultural heritage area. They are also adding more cleaning staffs to control the waste in the tourist attraction area.

The involvement of the locals and host communities in the planning and production process of tourist attraction management is the example of good implementation of community participation and community-center economy dimensions. The locals' involvement refers to their role as the food and ticket seller, tour guide, lifeguard, and cleaning service in the tourism site. Also, the participation itself is evenly distributed not limited to certain groups which provide economic benefit for the locals and host communities.

Well, the unemployment rate has been slightly decreasing since the open of Stone Garden (N1)

Yes, because Stone Garden provides new job vacancies for the unemployed locals (N4)

In social costs context, both *Pokdarwis* and the locals do not consider tourism activities have a negative impact on their culture because most of the tourists are a domestic tourist who has the same norm and rules with the locals. Moreover, *Pokdarwis* also provides life guard time who assigned to prevent any inappropriate or impolite activities such as kissing, etc. Hence, they consider there is no negative impact on the tourism activities on their life.

All is well, so far nothing has bothered us (N5).

Yes, once there was somebody who tried to start a commotion, but then it could be overcome by the staffs of Stone Garden (N8).

### **3.2 The dissemination of Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism was first introduced by the local government. *Pokdarwis* claimed that they knew of the concept from the Ministry of Tourism's program called *SaptaPesona* (seven charms) although it did not include the "sustainable tourism" term. They used the term "clean, cool, and attractiveness" as the synonyms. Clean refers to the destination cleanness which could give cozy and healthy ambiance. Meanwhile, Cool refers to the preserved and conserved nature.

Sustainable tourism information dissemination does not employ specific communication channels. The government as the innovator or agent of change [16] does not directly disseminate the information resulting in uneven comprehension regarding the sustainable tourism concept. The government only disseminates the concept through tourism awareness guidebooks.

*Pokdarwis* also claimed that the main concept of sustainable tourism obtained by their interaction with the geological academics who often researched the tourism site. These academics often taught them the appropriate procedures in preserving the conservation areas. This finding relevant with the previous study in Kret Island Thailand where the people of Kret Island learned about sustainable tourism from academics or students [16].

*Pokdarwis* always distributes the information they gained to the locals and host communities whether they directly involved or not in tourism activities. The information dissemination usually in the form of information communication because of the locals varying educational background which also needed different approaches. The term “sustainable tourism” never been used to the locals. They choose simpler and more applicable terms due to the inadequate educational background of the locals.

Based on the dissemination process, we could categorize the adopter based on the adaptation of the sustainable tourism concept. Local government (Ministry of Tourism), in Indonesia context, could be categorized as an innovator as an individual or a group who has a comprehensive knowledge of sustainable tourism. Although, this concept was first introduced by WTO. Meanwhile, *Pokdarwis* could be categorized as early adopter because of its good leadership, succeed in encouraging people to change, aware and willing to change also interested in new ideas [19]. The locals could be categorized as early majority though they have no awareness of sustainable tourism significance. They only adapted to the concept because of the needs to follow their opinion leaders [20].

#### 4. Conclusion

Sustainable tourism considered to be an innovation for Indonesia tourism industries. This concept is relatively new and rarely adopted by tourism industries. It was caused by the complexity, trialability, and observability of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is a complex concept resulting in no consensus on how to properly implementing it. Because of its complexity, tourism industries have little chances to apply it; hence people cannot observe the result. In consequence, people see it as a complicated idea.

*Pokdarwis* (local community) claimed that they know the “sustainable tourism” term. They recognized it from local government but were not able to elaborate it further. Meanwhile, the locals did not know about “sustainable tourism.” Interestingly, they were able to put it into practices despite having inadequate understanding regards the concept.

The idea of sustainable tourism was disseminated through mass communication from local government through *Pokdarwis*. Moreover, this idea was disseminated through informal interaction of *Pokdarwis* with the locals. Based on this dissemination process, we argue that local government is the innovator, *Pokdarwis*, the early adopter, and the locals are the early majority.

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