

The Social Impact of Batu Lombeng Tourism on the Coastal Community of Lebani Village, Mamuju Regency

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ABSTRACT

Coastal tourism has evolved into a strategic sector that generates not only economic effects but also social consequences for local communities. This study examines how the coastal community of Lebani Village constructs the social meaning of Batu Lombeng Tourism and identifies its positive and negative social impacts. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed using purposive sampling of 31 informants comprising tourism managers, residents, and visitors. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model and reinforced by SWOT analysis. The results show that Batu Lombeng Tourism tends to generate positive social impacts, including increased social interaction, the emergence of local business opportunities (food stalls, gazebo rental, parking services), community involvement, and socioeconomic adaptation through livelihood diversification. As many as 96.77% of respondents responded positively to the presence of tourism. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which holds that communities support tourism when perceived benefits outweigh costs. Although negative impacts are not yet dominant, potential risks exist in the form of suboptimal waste management, uneven community participation, and possible shifts in sociocultural values. The study recommends community-based and sustainable tourism management to ensure equitable distribution of benefits

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in the last two decades has developed into a strategic sector that not only impacts the economic aspect, but also brings significant social consequences for local communities, especially coastal communities. Coastal areas have unique social characteristics, characterized by dependence on marine resources, strong community solidarity, and fisheries-based livelihood patterns and maritime enterprises. The transformation of coastal areas into tourist destinations often triggers changes in the social structure, interaction patterns, and value systems of local communities (Saufi et al., 2020; UNWTO, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, Social Exchange Theory explains that local communities will support tourism development if they feel the benefits are greater than the social costs incurred (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020). However, various recent studies show that social impacts are not always linear. Increased tourist visits can trigger social conflicts, changes in cultural norms, commercialization of traditions, and inequality in the distribution of economic benefits (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Seraphin et al., 2021). Population perception of the impact of tourism has long been one of the most researched themes in tourism studies (Ap, 1992; Sharpley, 2014).

In the context of coastal communities, these dynamics have become more complex due to a shift in livelihoods from the fisheries sector to the tourism services sector. These changes can increase people's incomes, but also have the potential to weaken the social identity and solidarity of traditional communities (Wondirad et al., 2023). The existence of tourist destinations also often affects local power relations, land ownership, and access to coastal resources (Bramwell & Lane, 2021). From a sustainability perspective, coastal natural resource management is required to be done wisely so as not to cause environmental and social damage.

Lebani Village as a coastal area that has the potential for Batu Lombeng Tourism faces similar social dynamics. The presence of these tourist destinations is suspected to bring changes in social structure, community interaction patterns, and local economic orientation. However, until now, empirical studies that specifically analyze the social impact of the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism on the coastal communities of Lebani Village are still very limited. The absence of this contextual study creates research gaps that are important to be filled through an in-depth qualitative approach (Lee & Jan, 2023).

Based on this background, this study aims to: (1) examine and describe the construction of the social meaning of the community towards the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism in their social, cultural, and economic life; and (2) identify and analyze the positive and negative social impacts felt by the coastal community of Lebani Village. This research is expected to enrich the literature on the social impact of coast-based tourism as well as the basis for the formulation of sustainable and socially just tourism development policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coastal Tourism and Local Communities

Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that involves the movement of people to a place outside their environment for recreational purposes and other activities (Cooper, 2020; UNWTO, 2023). Sharpley (2020) views tourism as a system that involves interaction between tourists, the tourism industry, the government, and local communities in destinations. Coastal tourism specifically utilizes the natural resources of coastal and marine areas as the main attraction (Baitalik & Bhattacharjee, 2023), with marine resource-based characteristics, involving local communities, depending on environmental conditions, and has the potential to have a socio-economic impact on coastal communities (Hamzah et al., 2024).

Social and Economic Impact of Tourism

The social impact of tourism refers to changes in the social structure, values, norms, behaviors, and social relations of communities due to tourism activities (Widodo & Santoso, 2023). Positive impacts include increased social interaction, job opportunities, and increased community insight (Nanda & Yanti, 2024), while negative impacts include shifts in values and norms, social conflicts, cultural commercialization, and socioeconomic disparities. Economically, tourism creates a multiplier effect and encourages diversification of coastal communities' livelihoods (Sari & Nugroho, 2022), although the benefits are not always even and can cause inequality (Putra et al., 2023).

Social Exchange Theory and Previous Research

Social Exchange Theory is the main framework in explaining public support for tourism: support increases when the perceived benefits exceed the social costs (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020; Gursoy et al., 2022). A number of studies in Indonesia support this pattern. Imran et al. (2025) found that tourism development in Lantan Village increased income and created jobs despite creating inequality; Sahir et al. (2014) showed that Camplong Beach tourism contributes to local welfare; and Pratama (2013) noted the shift in the livelihood of fishermen in Pangandaran towards the tourism sector. This study positions itself to fill the gap in the study of the social impact of coastal tourism in the local context of Lebani Village.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the subjective experiences, perceptions, and social meanings built by the community towards the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The research was carried out in the Batu Lombeng Tourism area, Lebani Village, Simboro District, Mamuju Regency, in May–June 2026.

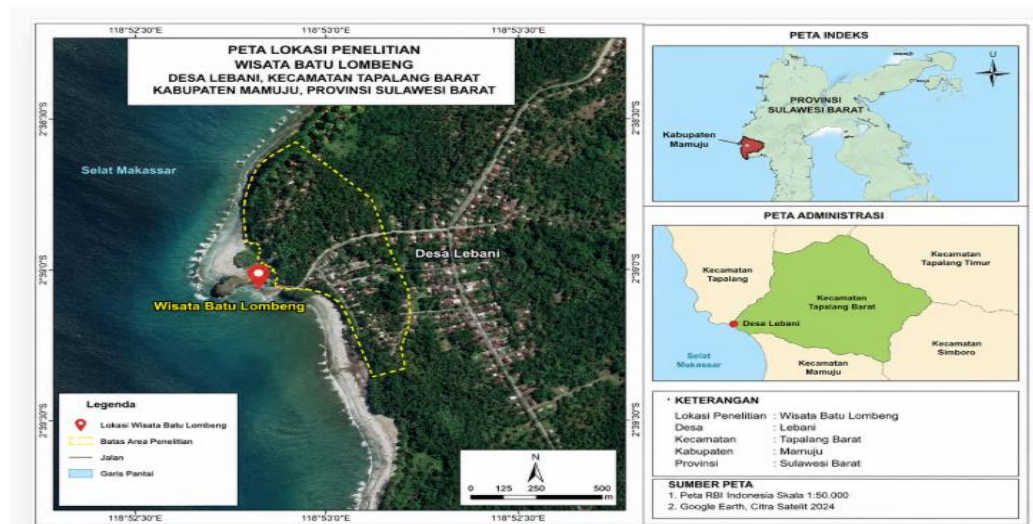


Figure 1. Research Location

The research population is all parties related to the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism, including coastal communities, tourism managers, and visitors. The sample was determined through purposive sampling techniques of 31 informants consisting of tourism managers, Lebani Village people, and visitors/tourists. The three groups were selected because they had experience and knowledge directly related to the social impact of tourism.

The data type consists of primary data (results of in-depth interviews and field observations) and secondary data (village documents, official reports, scientific journals, and relevant references). Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation (Moleong, 2021). The three techniques are used simultaneously (triangulation) to increase the validity of the data.

The data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2018). The process begins with data organization, transcription, and coding to identify important themes. To strengthen management recommendations, the results of the qualitative analysis are complemented by a SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of tourism development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview and Socio-Economic Conditions

Batu Lombeng Tourism is a coastal tourist attraction in Lebani Village whose main attraction is related to the natural conditions of the coast as a recreational space. Its existence creates a meeting space between local communities, managers, and visitors from outside the area. Before tourism developed, some people depended on fishing and farming activities for their livelihoods. As tourism activities developed, additional economic activities related to the needs of visitors emerged, such as food stalls, snack sales, gazebo rentals, and parking services. People did not completely abandon their previous livelihoods, but

instead obtained alternative economic activities as a form of livelihood diversification in line with Sari and Nugroho (2022).

Positive Social Impact

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the positive social impact of the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism can be summarized as follows:

Increasing social interaction of the community with visitors and parties related to tourism activities.

The opening of local business opportunities through trade, parking services, facility rental, and food businesses.

Increasing community involvement in activities that support the existence of tourism.

The occurrence of socio-economic adaptation, namely the ability of people to adjust their economic activities to new opportunities.

Increasing public acceptance of the existence of tourism.

These findings are in line with Imran et al. (2025) who show that tourism development opens up new business opportunities and economic activities for local communities. Tourist areas also serve as new social spaces: tourism activities not only generate economic links between sellers and buyers, but also expand people's communication and social networks with outsiders. **Community Acceptance Rate**

The results of the study showed a high level of acceptance of the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism. Of the 31 respondents, 28 people (90.32%) agreed and 2 people (6.45%) said they strongly agreed, while 1 person (3.23%) was in the neutral category. If the categories of agree and strongly agree are combined, as many as 30 out of 31 respondents or 96.77% gave a positive response. This high acceptance is consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020; Gursoy et al., 2022): the community supports tourism because the perceived benefits – business opportunities, economic activities, and social interactions – are considered to be greater than the costs. The existence of one neutral respondent shows that the acceptance is not completely uniform so management still needs to pay attention to groups that have not supported it firmly.

Potential Negative Social Impacts

Based on the available data, no dominant negative social impact or strong community rejection has been found, as shown by the absence of a disagreement or strongly disagree response. However, this condition does not mean that tourism is free from potential negative impacts. The results of observation and SWOT analysis show that waste management is not optimal and the potential for increased pressure on the coastal environment if the number of tourists increases without proper management. From a socio-cultural aspect, the increasing intensity of interaction with foreign tourists has the potential to shift the interaction pattern, lifestyle, and social values of the community (Widodo & Santoso, 2023; Wondirad et al., 2023). This potential needs to be anticipated from an early age.

SWOT Analysis and Management Strategy

The SWOT analysis identified strengths in the form of coastal natural potential and positive community-tourist interaction; weaknesses in the form of

suboptimal community involvement, limited local businesses, and waste management that has not been maximized; opportunities to be developed as community-based tourism; as well as threats in the form of environmental pressure and socio-cultural shifts. Recommended strategies include SO strategies (utilizing natural potential and positive interactions for community-based tourism), WO (improving community skills and participation), ST (protecting the area from environmental damage and uncontrollable social change), and WT (improving waste management, facilities, and tourism management systems).

Overall, the existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism has a positive social impact on the coastal community of Lebani Village. However, the high level of public acceptance cannot be a reason to ignore the potential negative impact. Waste management, equitable distribution of economic benefits, community involvement, and the protection of socio-cultural values must remain the main concerns so that tourism development takes place in a sustainable and equitable manner (Bramwell & Lane, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The existence of Batu Lombeng Tourism has a social impact that tends to be positive for the coastal community of Lebani Village. Tourism is a space for social interaction with tourists from outside the region as well as opening up business opportunities through food stalls, food sales, gazebo rentals, and parking services, which marks the social and economic adaptation of the community. The acceptance rate is relatively high, with 96.77% of respondents giving positive responses, consistent with Social Exchange Theory. Although the negative impact is not dominant, there are potential risks in the form of suboptimal waste management, uneven community involvement, limited local businesses, and potential socio-cultural shifts. Therefore, the development of Batu Lombeng Tourism should be directed towards a community-based and sustainable tourism model that balances economic, social, cultural, and environmental interests, by ensuring equitable distribution of benefits through increased participation, community training, improved environmental management, and support for village and regional governments.

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