

Ecotourism in Indonesia: Local Community Involvement and The Affecting Factors

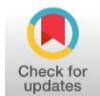
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Abstract: Travel and tourism have become a fast-growing industry and a major source of income for many developing countries including Indonesia. However, wrong perceptions and poor management of ecotourism concept arise; one of them is the low level of local community involvement in ecotourism management. Even though the existence of community interaction is a guarantee to the sustainability of ecotourism development. This study aims to analyze the local community involvement as well as the affecting factors in managing ecotourism in Indonesia by systematic literature review method. The discussion about local community involvement was reviewed from the ecotourism planning level, participation in the ecotourism development implementation, and participation in its use. Meanwhile, the affecting factors were analyzed from the operational, structural, and cultural perspectives. The results showed that the involvement of the local community in ecotourism management in Indonesia was still limited to the level of utilization. From the operational perspective, limits to local community involvement came from limited information availability about ecotourism to the local community, centralized tourism management, and the lack of coordination among stakeholders. A limited number of trained human resources, a legal system that did not support the participatory practices, the uncooperative attitude of professionals, and the dominance of the local elite have become the limitations to local community involvement from a structural perspective. Meanwhile, cultural barriers included apathy and a low level of public awareness of the potential benefit of ecotourism in their area.

Keyword: *Local Community Involvement; Ecotourism; Conservation; Systematic Literature Review.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of rural tourism could be identified through various disciplines ([Jaafar et al., 2015](#)). Tourism itself is a proper medium to stimulate rural economies in both developed and developing countries ([Hall & Page, 2014](#)). Rural tourism encompasses various activities and concepts such as agrotourism, ecotourism, green tourism, and nature tourism ([MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003](#); [Su, 2011](#)), which could be great alternatives for vacation compared to mass tourism. Ecotourism was designed as a form of protest against the expansion of the mass tourism model by promoting environmental conservation, cultural preservation, community engagement, economic benefit, and empowerment of vulnerable groups ([Cobbinah, 2015](#)). This eco-friendly option appeared as a result of the devastating and negative impact of mass tourism, such as (1) environmental, social and cultural degradation, (2) unfair distribution of financial benefit, (3) promotion of paternalistic attitude, and (4) spread of disease ([Mowforth & Munt, 2008](#)). Compared to mass tourism, ecotourism could offer better sectoral relationships, reduce leakages of international tourism, create local jobs and encourage sustainable development ([Belsky, 1999](#); [Khan, 1997](#)). Hence, ecotourism is a popular way of conservation in economic development, specifically in developing countries ([Campbell, 1999](#)). Rural tourism could benefit the local

community in economic growth, socio-cultural development, service provider, and living standards ([Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012](#)). Those benefits resulted in the positive development of behavioral and attitude toward local community related to tourism development ([Jaafar et al., 2015](#); [Jurowski et al., 1997](#)). However, rural tourism also presents many drawbacks, and its growth could be negatively affected as it contributed to the increasing amount of waste and criminal cases, and no-more-peaceful villages ([Andereck, K. L. et al., 2005](#)).

The local community is the most vulnerable group that can experience those negative impacts. Ecotourism destinations are generally located and dispersed in remote areas. They need the local community's participation, especially in remote areas and islands ([Fotiou et al., 2002](#)). In a recent study, it is reported that the engagement of local community's participation plays an essential role in the development and environmental conservation as well as local resources. In developing countries, tourism is considered a sustainable source of income for rural and local communities. The participation of the local community is generally one of the sustainable tourism components and ecotourism precisely ([Drake, 1991](#)). The important benefit of ecotourism policy and planning is to benefit the local community and surroundings in several ways through the creation of new jobs, additional income, the market for local products, infrastructure improvements, community's facility and service, technology, and new skills, increasing cultural and environmental awareness, protection and conservation as well as improving land-use patterns ([Dowling & Fennell, 2003](#)).

Travel and tourism have become a fast-growing industry and a major source of income for many developing countries ([Wood, 2002](#)), including Indonesia. The average growth of foreign tourists traveling to Indonesia in 2014-2018 reached 14% annually. This figure is higher than the average growth of foreign tourists in 2009-2013, which was only 9% per year ([BPS, 2019](#)). As the third-largest mega-biodiversity country in the world besides Brazil and Kongo, tourists visiting Indonesia will be indulged by the exotic flora and fauna, magnificent panoramic landscape, and adventure experiences. Approximately 35% of the major nature tourism product portfolio is ecotourism ([Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 2019](#)). Ecotourism is defined as a journey full of responsibility toward the natural area by keeping the environmental conservation and involving interpretation and education. Education, in this concept, is inclusive for both tourism management and the tourists ([The International Ecotourism Society, 2015](#)). Ecotourism development is based on the awareness of every environmental condition oriented toward conservation and concern for local culture and civilization. Besides, the tourism activities do not demand any requirements like mass tourism, which requires complete recreational facilities. It only requires the ideal quality of a beautiful tourism landscape. Despite the benefits offered by the concept of ecotourism, several problems arise in its implementation. Several critics against the concept of ecotourism are firstly related to environmental issues ([Ko & Stewart, 2002](#)), which are the results of the lack of knowledge and awareness of local community and tourists about this concept, as well as the lack of management and role of government to promote conservation and decisive action in managing the environmental problems. Secondly, poor management.

Several problems arise in ecotourism management in various regions in Indonesia, one of them related to the low involvement of the local community - which often leads to conflict or disturbance in ecotourism activities ([Laapo et al., 2010](#); [Mawardi, 2006](#); [Tiga et al., 2019a](#)). Hence, the main goal of ecotourism as a support for conservation efforts and local economic improvement becomes difficult to achieve. It happens due to the lack of understanding of the concept of ecotourism ([Tiga et al., 2019a, 2019b](#)) as well as poor supervision and role of government in developing the tourist area to a better condition - which can be seen from the high dominance of the private sector involvement in ecotourism management ([Darmawan & Putradi, 2010](#); [Ibrahim et al., 2019](#); [Wildan et al., 2016](#)). Ecotourism management often passes up community participation as an important stakeholder. The local community is sometimes considered an object or onlooker solely without actively involved in the economic process. The local community participation in ecotourism has been widely used as a focus in various studies. Community participation is defined as cooperation, involvement, and similarities among the community members in certain activities directly or indirectly, from the ideas, policy-making process, program implementation, and evaluation. Direct participation means that the

community members are involved in extending support through human resources assistance in every activity, while indirect participation consists of ideas, funding, and materials needed. According to (Cohen, J. M., & Uphoff, 1977), participation is an active engagement of the local community in the decision-making process, implementation, research utilization, and evaluation. Local community participation is an essential component in ecotourism as it draws together the interest of current and future generations (Drake, 1991). Local community participation in ecotourism does not only contribute to the improved quality of life but also toward sustainability in conservation practice.

This research aims to synthesize the literature on local community participation in the context of ecotourism management. This study reviewed and analyzed the participation of the local community in ecotourism management in Indonesia as well as the factors affecting the local community participation. The local community participation was analyzed from the ecotourism planning level, participation in the ecotourism development implementation, and participation in its use (Lukman, 2017). Meanwhile, the factors affecting it were reviewed through three obstacles faced by the community to participate in managing the tourism, such as operational, structural, and cultural obstacles (Tosun, 2000). The further section systematically elaborates the methods used in this literature review. Following the literature review and analysis, the discussion regarding the findings is presented. Finally, the conclusion is displayed by theoretically and practically elaborating the implication of this study as well as offering several recommendations for further research in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

This paper employed content analysis to review updated literature about the local community participation in managing ecotourism in Indonesia. This study reviewed scientific articles published in *Sinta Ristekdikti's* accredited journals with the qualifications of *Sinta 1* and *Sinta 2*, proving the high-quality articles used in this paper. The articles were searched by typing the subject area of "Social", "Science", "Agriculture" and "Economy" and narrowed it down using the keywords of "Local Community", "Community Involvement", "Citizen Participation", "Public Participation" and then carried out a more specific search on the keywords of "Ecotourism", "Tourist Villages" and "Rural Tourism".

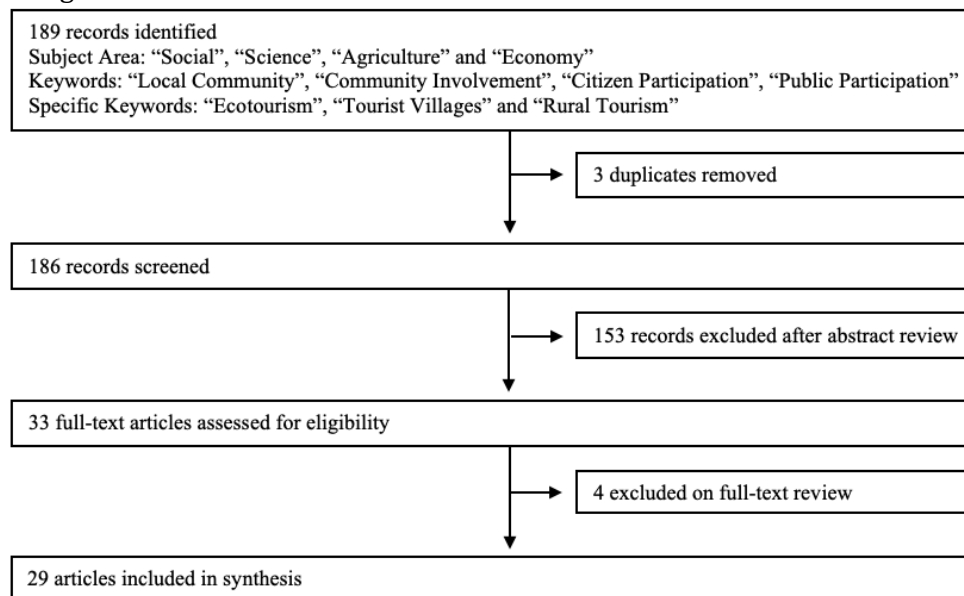


Figure 1. The Systematic Literature Review Process
Source: Processed by the researcher (2021)

From the process of article search, approximately 189 articles were identified, comprising 11 *Sinta 1*-accredited articles and 178 *Sinta 2*-accredited articles. Those articles were further assessed by considering relevant topics according to the purpose of the study, deleting duplicate articles, and abstract screening for each article. The in-depth screening process resulted in 29 articles. Each article was reviewed and analyzed to identify the types of local community

participation and factors affecting it in managing ecotourism in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the articles reviewed, 38 ecotourism destinations were identified in several provinces in Indonesia (Figure 2). These ecotourism destinations are managed by various actors such as cooperatives, village-owned enterprises, the private sector, local and central governments, and the local community. This study aims to analyze the local community involvement as well as the affecting factors in managing ecotourism in Indonesia. The local community involvement was reviewed from the ecotourism planning level, participation in the implementation process, and participation in its use. Meanwhile, the affecting factors were analyzed from the operational, structural, and cultural perspectives.



Figure 2. Ecotourism Destination Distribution Map

Source: Processed by the researcher (2021)

The local community involvement in ecotourism management

The types of community involvement in managing ecotourism vary in different development levels of tourism objects. Several types of community involvement in supporting ecotourism development are ecotourism planning level, participation in the ecotourism development implementation, and participation in its use ([Lukman, 2017](#)). Community involvement in planning ecotourism explains the supports of tourism development ideas, involvement in the tourism design plan process, and roles in planning socialization. As mentioned by ([Slamet, 1994](#)), there are four levels of engagement in planning, such as an ability to define situations that expect a decision, choose the most proper alternatives, determine strategies, and measure the impact of decision and action. Several published articles reviewed revealed the local community involvement in the planning level.

The involvement included several activities such as planning the development of local areas into ecotourism destinations ([Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014](#)), discussing customary or local regulations regarding to conservation efforts for ecotourism areas ([Asriyani & Verheijen, 2020](#)), discussing the conservation methods or strategies ([Asriyani & Verheijen, 2020](#); [Ayuningtyas & Dharmawan, 2011](#); [Harahab & Setiawan, 2017](#); [Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014](#); [Ibrahim et al., 2019](#); [Muaz et al., 2017](#); [Ridlwani et al., 2017](#)), discussing the current ecotourism problems ([Ayuningtyas & Dharmawan, 2011](#); [Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014](#); [Ibrahim et al., 2019](#); [Ridlwani et al., 2017](#)), finding out people's responses or perceptions regarding to the perceived benefits of ecotourism ([Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014](#); [Ibrahim et al., 2019](#); [Ridlwani et al., 2017](#)), establishing visiting rules or policies for tourists ([Harahab & Setiawan, 2017](#); [Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014](#); [Ibrahim et al., 2019](#); [Muaz et al., 2017](#)), and determining who would be involved in the development of ecotourism ([Ayuningtyas & Dharmawan, 2011](#); [Nuraini et al., 2019](#)). The form of local community involvement at the planning level was only discussed in nine out of the 29 articles.

Community involvement in the execution stage is an implementation of planning arranged on the planning stage, including the funding process and the implementation of tourism development. The forms of engagement, for instance, are human resources assistance, fund, and

materials. The funding process can be done by sending and supervising proposals to various agencies. A small-scale tourism development model, not capital intensive, and implementation of mutual cooperation, open up a big area or participation for the local community to avoid them from the marginalization of tourism development.

The local community involvement in the implementation process was reflected in several activities such as patrolling the ecotourism destination from disturbances by the local community such as illegal encroachment, fires, etc. (Muaz et al., 2017). A patrol was also carried out to monitor the occurrence of criminal acts around the ecotourism area to provide convenience for tourists (Ayuningtyas & Dharmawan, 2011). Reforestation of the ecotourism area supported the conservation efforts to support ecotourism management (Harahab & Setiawan, 2017; Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014; Wahdaniar et al., 2019; Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011). The local community also participated in funding the ecotourism development, and sources of funding could come from cooperatives (Ibrahim et al., 2019), a group of residents (Harahab & Setiawan, 2017), local community, and local village government (Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011). As much as 25% of development funds came from the local community, and the rest were from the village government. In addition, the local community also contributed to the development and maintenance of the public infrastructure such as irrigation and ecotourism facilities, cleaning and maintaining the ecotourism area, and storing and maintaining the cultural heritage objects (Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2019; Nuraini et al., 2019). The local community involvement type at the implementation level was discussed in nine of the 29 articles reviewed in this study.

Community involvement in utilization level is related to how the community members gain results in managing tourism in job and business opportunity utilization. Compared to the previous levels, the local community involvement in ecotourism management was mainly found at the utilization level. It can be seen from the 29 articles analyzed, 23 discussed the local community involvement at this level. Almost the whole article stated that ecotourism directly provided economic benefits to the local community through various activities such as providing accommodation or homestays, becoming tour guides, renting the tourist activity equipment such as canoes, snorkeling equipment, boats, etc., providing transportation services, providing culinary delights by opening restaurants or catering services, providing souvenirs or local handicrafts, providing tour packages as well as cultural attractions packages and providing other services such as parking area, public toilets, and photographer service. Ecotourism also benefited the local community regarding job recruitment opened by tourism managers or investors, both as cooks, hotel employees, and local micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs). Some ecotourism destinations, most of which were managed by the local community, such as cooperatives, village-owned enterprises, local youth organizations, even shared the profits from ecotourism in their area.

Those were all economic benefits that provided immediate benefits for the local community directly involved in ecotourism management. There were also the indirect benefits that came from the results of conservation efforts, such as fishing for sale or personal consumption. Then, the maintenance of village infrastructures such as roads and bridges also facilitated the delivery of local community agricultural products, impacting better prices for agricultural products (Nuraini et al., 2019). Of course, the flow of benefits obtained could not be separated from the mechanisms of access and power possessed by the local community. In addition to economic benefits, the local community also obtained social benefits, such as increasing the local community's knowledge and abilities about ecotourism, preserving the local culture, and transferring information among the local community and tourists. Meanwhile, from an ecological perspective, the community actively contributed to conservation efforts to protect ecotourism areas.

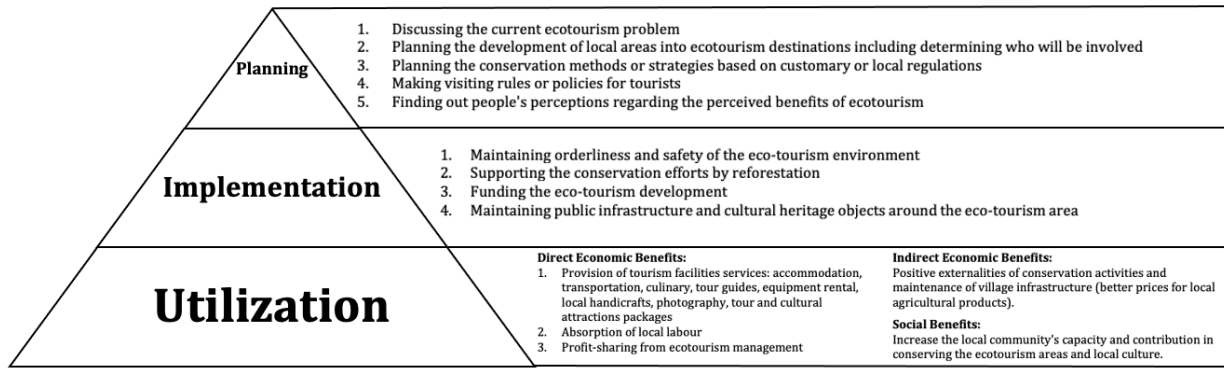


Figure 3. The Forms of Local Community Involvement in Ecotourism Management in Indonesia

Source: Processed by the researcher (2021)

The affecting factors of the local community involvement

Local participation is highly important for the tourism industry's success as it is considered one of the tourism products, and their input in the tourism development decision-making process should be a focal point. In organizing facts relating to barriers to the factors affecting the local community participation for tourism development in developing countries, (Tosun, 2000) mentioned three obstacles faced by the community to participate in managing the tourism such as operational, structural, and cultural obstacles. Limitations at the operational level included centralization of public administration in the tourism sector (Anisaldi et al., 2013; Ridlwan et al., 2017; Wildan et al., 2016; Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011), the lack of coordination between the involved parties (Darmawan & Putradi, 2010; Wildan et al., 2016; Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011) and the lack of information for the local community about the tourism destination (Anisaldi et al., 2013; Sari & Santoso, 2016; Tiga et al., 2019b; Wildan et al., 2016; Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011). Regarding the centralization of public administration in the tourism sector, any formulation and implementation of public participation required the decentralization of political, administrative, and financial power from the central government to local governments. However, in many developing countries, planning was a centralized activity (Tosun, 2000). It impacted limiting the influence of groups at the community level in the planning and implementation process so that centralization hindered community participation in the planning process. It indeed increased the span vertical relationship between the policymaker and the community.

The lack of coordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism industry has been a 'well-known problem' to tourism professionals. A participatory tourism development strategy surely invited more actors to play a role in the tourism development process; thus, increasing the need for interaction between institutions. However, the lack of coordination could derail potential opportunities for communities to be involved in ecotourism development. In most developing countries, insufficient tourism data, even if collected, have not been disseminated to the public. Because most people did not receive complete information about tourism development in their environment, community involvement in ecotourism development was limited. A knowledge gap between centralized authorities and the local community made it difficult for the local community to participate in the tourism development process. Likewise, on the other hand, it could be that decision-makers or the central authority did not have the latest information on the social and economic structure of the local community so that the goal of developing better ecotourism has not been achieved.

Limitations at the structural level included professional attitudes, lack of expertise, elite domination, lack of a proper legal system, lack of well-trained human resources, relatively high participation costs, and lack of financial resources. In many developing countries, most professionals did not have close relationships with the local community and tourism backgrounds, causing them to be unable to accept the participatory tourism development model as an effective approach. It was because professionals believed in the quality of their work in formulating ecotourism development plans so that the possibility of accepting opinions from

amateurs or local people became impossible. This reason is understandable because involving lay people in the decision-making process will affect time and cost inefficiency. The absence of a positive attitude from professionals to involve the local community made it difficult for the community to participate in the development of ecotourism in their area. The lack of expertise in tourism management was also a major obstacle to participatory tourism development. The participation of the local community required not only tourism planners but also sociologists, economists, socio-psychological and political experts to formulate and implement participatory-based tourism development ([Tosun, 2000](#)).

From the operational perspective, limits to local community involvement came from limited information availability about ecotourism to the local community ([Tiga et al., 2019a](#)), centralized tourism management, and the lack of coordination among stakeholders ([Ridlwani et al., 2017](#); [Wildan et al., 2016](#); [Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011](#)). The low understanding of the local community about zoning or area boundaries, coupled with a high dependence on ecotourism areas to meet their daily needs, caused conflicts between the local community and the ecotourism manager. The conflict triggered disturbances from the local community, including illegal logging, encroachment, hunting of animals, and fires ([Anisaldi et al., 2013](#); [Tiga et al., 2019b](#)). Lack of data and information availability regarding ecotourism management had an indirect impact on the low access of the local community in managing their area. The centralization of ecotourism management is still happening in ecotourism management in Indonesia. Licensing systems and investment-related decision-making were often carried out centrally by the government without involving the local community ([Anisaldi et al., 2013](#); [Ridlwani et al., 2017](#); [Wildan et al., 2016](#); [Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011](#)). Another operational obstacle could be seen from the unclear status of tourism area management so that the funds allocated by local governments were limited for ecotourism development. This lack of funds impacted the availability of facilities and infrastructure and inadequate accessibility ([Anisaldi et al., 2013](#)). Some other obstacles were such as inconsistent government policies related to ecotourism, lack of clarity in legal authority and a planning framework for ecotourism management, weak institutional capacity, and lack of integration between programs caused by weak coordination between the government and local community around ecotourism destinations ([Darmawan & Putradi, 2010](#); [Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011](#)).

The limited number of trained human resources, a legal system that did not support the participatory practices, the uncooperative attitude of professionals, and the dominance of the local elite became the limitations to the local community involvement from a structural perspective. The local community involvement in ecotourism management in Indonesia was often hampered by their low capacity ([Darmawan & Putradi, 2010](#); [Ginting et al., 2010](#); [Ibrahim et al., 2019](#); [Muaz et al., 2017](#); [Ridlwani et al., 2017](#); [Wildan et al., 2016](#); [Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011](#)). Thus, ecotourism management was delegated to external parties. This limited capacity affected the ecotourism manager's decision to recruit external workers. It further made the practice of ecotourism away from its actual concept, namely the welfare or empowerment of the local community. Apart from not being supported by a legal structure that could encourage participatory practices ([Kasmiati et al., 2016](#); [Wulandari & Sumarti, 2011](#)), this limited ability was also caused by the attitude of the professionals (consultants) who tended to feel the most competent in formulating the ecotourism development plans. Hence, they did not need to involve the lay community ([Ginting et al., 2010](#); [Muaz et al., 2017](#)). Likewise, the local elite's high dominance in ecotourism management has created opportunities for local community involvement.

From the cultural perspective, limitations to local community involvement were in the form of apathy and low awareness about the potential of ecotourism in their area. The management of tourism and conservation, dominated by the central government or the local elite, without paying attention to local people's concerns, has made them apathetic to the ecotourism area development program ([Asriyani & Verheijen, 2020](#); [Ridlwani et al., 2017](#); [Tiga et al., 2019b](#)). The form of protest took the form of rejection of the rules or policies, especially those related to conservation regulations. The local community still carried out hunting, encroachment, illegal planting activities, etc., which often interfered with conservation efforts, in addition to their high

dependence on these conservation areas. The low support—even tended to be antagonistic — indeed became a significant obstacle in the development of the tourism industry.

Community is related to groups of people who share geographical areas and are bound by similar cultures, values, races, or social classes ([S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh & Jaafa, 2016](#)). Community engagement is a relationship built by its members through collaboration to reach a common goal and make the community a better place to live. In World Health Organization's module ([Haslina Hashim & Garai Abdullah Regina, 2009](#)), local participation benefits individuals and groups of people to build long-term relationships with a shared vision for the common interest of the community. This definition highlights that local community engagement contains efforts to build relationships among stakeholders in long term to develop a shared vision to extend benefits wider to all community members, individually or in groups. In other words, community engagement is a form of cooperative relationship designed for long-term interest among community members with a shared vision to overcome problems and promote benefits for the common interest. Therefore, the purpose of community engagement works as a learning process to build trust, develop priorities, obtain resources, develop networking, build effective communication channels, and gain beneficial results through a comprehensive and sustainable collaboration process.

Participation is an essential concept in the community to gain benefits in managing ecotourism ([France, 1998](#)). Conceptually, ecotourism is ideal to be developed by the local community as defined for the following reasons. First, small-scale tourist objects and attractions can be easily accepted and managed by the local community. Second, participation and ownership for the local community. Third, the benefits of managing tourism will be gained by the local community as tourism management. The local community that fully supports and develops the tourism objects can guarantee sustainable tourism development and elevate the quality of tourists' experiences ([Wood, 2002](#)). A participative approach facilitates the principles' implementation of sustainable tourism development by creating better opportunities for the local community to gain bigger and more balanced benefits from the tourism development ([Tosun, 2000](#)).

The increasing number of areas developed for mass tourism affected the balance between local ownership and external ownership of resources and control over tourism resources. If the local community in the tourist area is not empowered, the involvement will be very limited to the elite in the community. It often resulted in their interests being prioritized over the interests of the community. In other words, elite domains in participatory decision-making can enhance their status and legalize what they do at the expense of the excluded local community. Therefore, it is not surprising if the tourism development in many developing countries is not driven by the community but by the local elite together with the external tour operators. The legal structures in many developing countries did not encourage local people to participate; legislative structures tended to distance grassroots communities and formal authorities. The legal structure did not encourage the local people by educating them about their rights and setting up organizations to promote their interests. In addition, such organizations must obtain government approval, where the level of illiteracy is still prevalent in the lower classes.

Most economists would probably agree that it is the human resources of a nation, not its capital or its natural resources, that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development. Lack of qualified human resources in the tourism sector in many tourist destinations in developing countries has encouraged labor entry from other regions to work in their areas. It shows that the principle of maximizing the benefits of ecotourism for the local community from tourism has failed to apply. The scarcity of financial and human resources in developing countries prioritized resources for physical development rather than administrative procedures usually required in the early stages of tourism development. As a result, public agencies might not want to spend their limited financial resources on managing community participation and the private sector, which would avoid practicing participatory tourism development strategies because it was not in accordance with the investment principles. Because the participation of the local community in ecotourism development could increase the need for these limited resources, it was an obstacle to local community participation. Ownership and

investment are essential variables that can determine the power of the tourism industry. The financial resources of the local community were usually limited to build or develop ecotourism, so they required capital from outside their community. When the financial resources did not come from the local community, the local community would lose control to formulate or organize the tourism development model or strategy.

Finally, cultural limitations included the limited capacity of the poor, apathy, and low levels of awareness of the local community. Cultural barriers were the highest barriers limiting community participation. The condition of the community around the ecotourism area would greatly affect their involvement in ecotourism development. The poor would have less time and energy to participate because they have been used up to meet their basic needs. Apathy and a low level of awareness of the local community arose because, after a long time, the grassroots community has never been involved in the decision-making process regarding the problems around them, making them apathetic to give their opinion because they believed that their ideas would not be considered. This alienation caused low public awareness of the potential benefits of tourism development in their area. The findings indicate that culture is an internal factor, while operational and structural are external barriers that hinder community participation. Internal barriers are related to factors that the local community can control while external obstacles are outside their jurisdiction. The biggest obstacle for the community to manage ecotourism was a structural obstacle, for instance, the absence of a proper system to encourage community engagement, the low capacity of low-income citizens, and lack of financial resources.

Table 1. The affecting factors of local community involvement in Indonesia

Persepective	Limitation to Local Community Involvement
Operational	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited information about ecotourism 2. Centralized tourism management 3. The lack of coordination among stakeholders
Structural	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited number of trained human resources 2. Unsupportive legal system 3. The uncooperative attitude of professionals 4. The dominance of the local elite
Cultural	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apathy 2. The low awareness of the benefits of ecotourism

Source: Processed by the researcher (2021)

CONCLUSIONS

The local community involvement in ecotourism management in Indonesia was still limited to the utilization level. Ecotourism directly provided economic benefits to the local community through various activities, job recruitment, and profit-sharing, especially for some ecotourism destinations fully managed by the local community. The indirect benefits also came from the results of conservation efforts by the maintenance of village infrastructure, which facilitated the delivery of local agricultural products, which impacted the better prices. Indeed, the flow of benefits obtained could not be separated from the mechanisms of access and power possessed by the local community. The social benefits included increasing the local community's knowledge and abilities about ecotourism, preserving the local culture, and transferring information among the local community and tourists.

Meanwhile, from an ecological perspective, the community actively contributed to conservation efforts to protect ecotourism areas. The affecting factors of local community involvement from an operational perspective came from the limited information available about ecotourism to the local community, centralized tourism management, and the lack of coordination among stakeholders. A limited number of trained human resources, a legal system that did not support the participatory practices, the uncooperative attitude of professionals, and the dominance of the local elite became the limitations to local community involvement from a structural perspective. Meanwhile, cultural barriers included apathy and a low level of public awareness of the potential benefit of ecotourism in their area. The empowerment efforts to the local community in ecotourism destinations must be further improved. Educating the local

community to understand their rights, informing them about ecotourism management would be the right first step to execute. However, due to the lack of knowledge and information they had, it frequently triggered disturbances from the local community, which would thwart them the ecotourism purposes.

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