

INTEGRATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN GEDEPANGRANGO TOURISM VILLAGE, SUKABUMI

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the integration of inclusive education and inclusive tourism in Gedepangrango Tourism Village, Sukabumi, with the aim of reducing socio-economic disparities and supporting sustainable community development. Gedepangrango, which has a rich cultural and natural heritage, has the potential to develop inclusive tourism, but faces challenges in accessibility for the community, both in terms of infrastructure and educational facilities. This study aims to analyze how inclusive education can improve access to education for all groups, and how the synergy between inclusive education and inclusive tourism can support local economic empowerment. Additionally, this study identifies major barriers such as limited resources, infrastructure, and public awareness. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participatory observation, and document analysis. The results show that although initial steps towards the implementation of inclusive education and tourism have been taken, further development of more accessible infrastructure and increased public awareness are crucial. This study recommends enhanced training for educators, the construction of more disability-friendly infrastructure, and a more inclusive approach to tourism in order to reduce social disparities and strengthen long-term economic resilience in Gedepangrango.

Keyword: *Inclusive Education; Inclusive Tourism; Local Economic Empowerment; Infrastructure Accessibility*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive tourism aims to provide equal experiences for all individuals, regardless of their physical, social, or economic conditions. In Indonesia, Gedepangrango Tourism Village in Sukabumi holds great potential for developing inclusive tourism, with its rich cultural and natural resources. However, the village faces significant challenges in improving accessibility, both in terms of infrastructure and educational facilities. This raises the question of how the integration of inclusive education and inclusive tourism can support the reduction of socio-economic inequality and empower the local economy (Mowforth & Munt, 2020; Buckley, 2020). Inclusive education, which ensures equal access to education for all people without discrimination, is a critical element in the development of human resources in the region. Previous research has shown that inclusive education can create a more just and equitable society, as well as support other sectors, including tourism (Ainscow, Slee, & Best, 2020). However, challenges in implementing inclusive education, such as a lack of educator training and adequate facilities, remain obstacles, particularly in underdeveloped areas (Tschirhart & O'Brien, 2020).

One major challenge faced by Gedepangrango is the limited availability of disability-friendly infrastructure. Accessibility is key to achieving inclusive tourism. Adequate infrastructure not only includes physical facilities, such as disability-friendly roads and accommodations, but also accessible information that can be reached by people from diverse backgrounds and abilities (Sánchez, López, & García, 2021). Without improvements in infrastructure, the potential for inclusive tourism will be difficult to fully develop (Nogueira, 2020). Therefore, empowering the local economy through inclusive tourism becomes essential. With the development of more inclusive tourism, local communities are expected to directly benefit through increased income and improved quality of life. The synergy between inclusive education and inclusive tourism can be a long-term solution to reduce socio-economic inequality in Gedepangrango (Jordan, 2019; Pineda & Rodríguez, 2021). Public awareness of the importance of inclusive education and tourism is also crucial as Tareze et al., 2022 mentioned that public awareness can start from schools by recognizing SDGs as a pillar in education. Research shows that public awareness is a key factor in the successful implementation of inclusive tourism (Sharma & Sharma, 2018). However, low awareness of the accessibility of education and tourism remains a challenge in some tourist destinations (Tschirhart & O'Brien, 2020). Inclusive education not only provides greater access for communities, including people with disabilities, but also raises awareness of their rights in the context of tourism (Vlachou & Kanti, 2021).

Disability-friendly infrastructure in tourism remains a key

challenge. Without supportive infrastructure, people with disabilities will find it difficult to enjoy tourism services (Williams & Thomas, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to develop infrastructure that meets both physical standards and accessibility for information for all individuals. Inclusive tourism can serve as an economic empowerment tool for local communities by involving them in tourism activities, creating job opportunities, and boosting income (Smith et al., 2019). Public awareness of the importance of inclusive education and tourism is key to sustainable change. The implementation of inclusive tourism policies in remote areas requires support from both the government and the private sector. The synergy between government policies and active community involvement is essential for the success of inclusive tourism development (Liu & Kim, 2021). Technology also plays an important role in facilitating information access for people with disabilities, such as mobile apps with accessibility features (Glover et al., 2020). In Indonesia, several regions, such as Bali and Yogyakarta, have successfully developed disability-friendly tourism, providing valuable lessons for Gedepangrango (Marbun & Hasibuan, 2022). This research aims to analyze the integration of inclusive education in improving educational accessibility and explore the challenges of developing inclusive tourism in Gedepangrango Tourism Village. The research results are expected to provide guidance for policymakers in designing sustainable and empowering inclusive tourism strategies.

METHODS

Qualitative research heavily relies on a deep understanding of social phenomena. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to understand individuals' perspectives from their own point of view, providing the researcher with insights into how they experience an event or phenomenon. Saldana (2016) highlights the importance of coding techniques in qualitative research to identify significant themes that emerge from data collected through interviews, observations, and documents. Yin (2018) states that case studies are an appropriate approach when the research focuses on a single phenomenon in a realistic context, with the goal of deeply exploring experiences or events in their natural environment. Stake (1995) emphasizes that case studies offer an opportunity to study one case comprehensively, considering the background and context that shape the dynamics of the case. In-depth interviews are used to gain a broader understanding of participants' perspectives regarding the phenomenon being studied (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Participatory observation allows the researcher to observe direct interactions between the community and tourists, as well as how inclusive tourism is implemented in practice on the ground (Jorgensen, 1989). Thematic analysis is used to identify themes and patterns from the

collected data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic analysis is a process of finding, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within rich data. Data triangulation is a technique used to enhance the validity of research findings by verifying results from various sources and methods (Patton, 2002).

Table 1. Data and Data Sources

Sources: Head of Village, Tourism Awareness Group, Tourism Government Office, Local Community, Business Owners, Tourism Operators,Tourists.	
Methods: Interview, Direct field observation, Observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	
No	Data
1	Inclusive education can create a more open learning environment for all community groups.
2	Through inclusive education programs, the community in Gedepangrango Tourism Village can gain more equitable and quality access to education.
3	The integration of inclusive education increases community awareness about the importance of education for all social strata, including marginalized groups.
4	Better educational accessibility can help reduce social and economic gaps among underserved groups.
5	Challenges in the development of inclusive tourism include the lack of trained workforce to serve visitors with special needs.
6	Inadequate infrastructure, such as accessibility facilities at tourist sites, is a barrier to the development of inclusive tourism.
7	Public awareness of the importance of inclusive tourism can hinder the acceptance and implementation of policies that support accessibility.
8	Improving disability-friendly infrastructure can attract tourists from diverse backgrounds.
9	Inclusive education in improving human resource skills in Gedepangrango Tourism Village, which can support the development of inclusive tourism.
10	Collaboration between the education and tourism sectors in opening up job opportunities for the local community.
11	Inclusive education that fosters awareness of diversity can enrich tourists' experiences and enhance the appeal of Gedepangrango Tourism Village.
12	Local economic empowerment can be achieved by introducing inclusive tourism, involving various community groups in the development and management of tourist destinations.

Source: Researcher, 2024

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Inclusive Education in Enhancing Educational Accessibility in Gedepangrango Tourism Village

Inclusive education in Gedepangrango Tourism Village provides equal opportunities for the entire community to access quality education without discrimination. With equitable access to education, inclusive programs empower the community through skill development that is relevant to their social and economic life, as well as reduce socio-economic gaps between groups. In line with the findings of Lin & Lee (2022), awareness of the importance of inclusive education can improve the quality of life for the community. Equal access to education also opens fairer opportunities, supports the development of the local economy, and enhances skills that are essential for community development (Smith et al., 2019). The integration of inclusive education also strengthens social awareness and mutual understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities. This program helps create a more cohesive and harmonious society by teaching values of equality and diversity. This aligns with the views of Vlachou & Kanti (2021) and O'Reilly (2021), who emphasize that inclusive education strengthens social cohesion and reduces discrimination.

Challenges in Developing Inclusive Tourism

The development of inclusive tourism faces various challenges in Gedepangrango Tourism Village, including limited human resources (HR), infrastructure, and public awareness. One of the biggest challenges is the shortage of trained personnel to serve visitors with special needs (IR8). A potential solution is the collaboration between the education and tourism sectors to provide relevant training for the local community. Liu & Kim (2021) highlight the importance of synergy between government policies and the private sector to support the development of inclusive tourism. In addition, infrastructure that is not yet fully disability-friendly remains a major barrier to creating inclusive tourism, requiring facility improvements to support accessibility for all visitors (Williams & Thomas, 2020). Public awareness of the importance of inclusive education and inclusive tourism is crucial to overcoming these challenges. The more aware the community is of diversity and inclusivity, the easier it becomes for them to accept policies that support accessibility. Inclusive education plays a role in raising awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, which also impacts the development of more inclusive tourism policies (Lin & Lee, 2022; Vlachou & Kanti, 2021).

The Relationship Between Inclusive Education and Inclusive Tourism in Local Economic Empowerment

Collaboration between inclusive education and inclusive tourism has the potential to create new job opportunities and accelerate the transfer of skills relevant to the tourism industry. Inclusive training programs for the local community can enhance their professionalism and create new economic opportunities (Smith et al., 2019). Furthermore, the sustainable and inclusive management of tourism destinations will strengthen the local economy, creating a balance between economic growth and social empowerment of the community (Liu & Kim, 2021). The implementation of inclusive tourism can also encourage diversification of tourism products, opening new business opportunities for the local community, including marginalized groups. By involving various groups in tourism management, the tourism village can maximize local economic potential while maintaining social and cultural diversity (Smith et al., 2019; Marbun & Hasibuan, 2022). Overall, the integration of inclusive education and inclusive tourism in Gedepangrango Tourism Village not only creates a fairer society but also strengthens the local economy through enhanced skills and job opportunities for the entire village community.

CONCLUSION

The integration of inclusive education and inclusive tourism in Gedepangrango Tourism Village has significant potential to reduce socio-economic inequalities and empower the local economy. Inclusive education provides equal access for all members of the community, including marginalized groups, to acquire the skills needed for social and economic life. This contributes to reducing social gaps and supports the development of inclusive tourism, which can boost the local economy. The development of inclusive tourism also requires improvements in disability-friendly infrastructure and an increase in public awareness about accessibility, ensuring that all individuals, including those with disabilities, can benefit. The synergy between the education and inclusive tourism sectors, with the support of appropriate policies, can accelerate local economic empowerment and the reduction of socio-economic inequalities. Further research could delve deeper into the impact of collaboration between the education and inclusive tourism sectors on the quality of life for local communities, focusing on the enhancement of their skills and knowledge in the tourism industry. Research on government policies that support the development of inclusive tourism and their impact on the local economy should also be considered for future studies.

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