

## UNVEILING THE ENIGMA OF LOCAL WISDOM-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SUROWITI VILLAGE, GRESIK REGENCY

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### ABSTRACT

*Within the framework of community empowerment and sustainable development, this study presents a novel model for harnessing the potential of village tourism in Surowiti Village, Gresik Regency. The model pivots on the exploration of local wisdom to engender an authentic and sustainable tourism experience. Employing a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, this research illuminates the substantial existence of a rich reservoir of local wisdom, encompassing traditions, culture, and sustainable practices, that endures within Surowiti Village. The proposed village tourism development model adeptly interweaves constituents of local wisdom into the tourism experience, yielding palpable positive ramifications for both the local populace and the surrounding environment. The implications of this study underscore the pivotal importance of fostering local community empowerment, preserving cultural heritage, and advocating for sustainable tourism promotion. The model proffered herein exhibits substantial potential for adoption by diverse communities and governmental bodies in their pursuit of cultivating enduringly sustainable village tourism, yielding significant positive socio-economic impacts.*

**Keywords:** Village Tourism, Community Empowerment, Local Wisdom, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism.



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## LATAR BELAKANG

Tourism has firmly established itself as a pivotal sector within a region's economy. Nowadays, the mastery of English becomes very important for those people who are involved in Indonesia's tourism since English serves to bridge the difference of native language owned by the tour guides and the tourist from abroad, Jumadil, J., & Siswana, S. (2023). Gresik Regency, renowned as an industrial hub, also harbors a wealth of tourism potential encompassing natural beauty, cultural heritage, and spirituality. However, despite this abundance of potential, the full extent of its tourism resources remains inadequately explored. Among the captivating religious destinations is Surowiti Hill Tourism, where the revered resting places and sacred sites of Islamic religious figures harmoniously coexist with the enchanting allure of cave formations and the verdant expanse of the hillside. The prominence of this destination becomes manifest in its ability to allure travelers in quest of religious experiences interwoven with the grandeur of the natural landscape. Nevertheless, the optimization of this tourism potential continues to grapple with challenges stemming from management intricacies and promotional efforts that have not yet fully harnessed the wellspring of local wisdom and cultural elements. In this context, research into the development of a village tourism model founded upon local wisdom in Surowiti Village emerges as profoundly relevant

The significance of integrating local wisdom into tourism development has attracted attention in diverse scholarly investigations. As underscored by Gurung and Seeland (2021), the incorporation of

local wisdom within the tourism experience affords a distinctive allure, setting it apart from other destinations. This approach further engenders an authentic encounter for tourists who seek cultural depth and meaningful interactions. Studies such as those conducted by Kim et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2020) also underscore that involving the local community in tourism development enhances their participation and engagement, consequently fostering positive impacts on local economy and cultural preservation. Through the judicious utilization of local wisdom, Surowiti Hill Tourism is presented with a substantial opportunity to cultivate a sustainable tourism model, amalgamating the facets of culture, nature, and spirituality into a holistic tourism experience.



**Gambar 1** Bukit surowiti sebagai salah satu destinasi wisata di Desa Surowiti

However, within the context of Surowiti Village, the potential of local wisdom and tourism development still requires further exploration and optimization. Despite destinations like Surowiti Hill Tourism possessing unique allure, endeavors to more profoundly integrate local wisdom within the tourism experience remain imperative. With the objective of unearthing the potential of local wisdom and formulating a model for village

tourism development, this study will enrich our comprehension of how the local community can actively engage in sustainable tourism development. Through participatory approaches and a deeper incorporation of cultural elements, it is hoped that Surowiti Village can serve as an inspirational exemplar in delivering authentic tourism experiences that empower the local populace.

Nonetheless, the utilization of local wisdom in tourism development has not been fully investigated at Surowiti Hill Tourism. Therefore, this research bears a distinct and explicit objective: to delve into the potential of local wisdom in Surowiti Village and devise a model for village tourism development that propels community participation across all phases. Employing a holistic approach that engages all pertinent stakeholders, it is anticipated that robust strategic recommendations can be formulated to foster sustainable village tourism, while considering economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Through this approach, Surowiti Hill Tourism is envisaged to emerge as a successful paradigm illustrating how locally-rooted tourism development can create substantial positive impacts on the local economy, elevate community engagement, and preserve the cultural identity of Surowiti Village.

### **Tourism Village**

The Development of Sustainable Tourism supports a concept of tourism development that not only considers economic aspects but also social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. This sustainable approach aids in devising strategies for village tourism development that positively impact the

local community and the surrounding environment (Dallen & Boyd, 2017). Sustainable Tourism Development involves integrating economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects into the tourism sector's expansion. This approach doesn't solely emphasize economic growth; it also factors in its positive effects on the local community and the environment. Development strategies for village tourism grounded in sustainable principles yield broader and lasting benefits by respecting cultural heritage, engaging the community, and minimizing adverse environmental impacts.

Involvement of the local community in decision-making and destination management enhances a sense of ownership and participation in the destination's development, thus fostering sustainability (Mbaiwa, 2019). Engaging the local community in decision-making and destination management processes has a positive impact, fostering ownership and participation in the destination's development. This has the potential to promote better sustainability in tourism destination development. Emphasis on the vital role of the local community in crafting tourism products that reflect cultural heritage and local wisdom.

By involving the community in designing and executing tourism activities, a village tourism destination can offer an authentic experience to travelers (Hall, 2008). The Community-Based Destination Theory underscores the active involvement of the local community in developing tourism products that mirror cultural identity and local wisdom. By engaging the community in the planning and implementation of tourism activities, a tourist destination can

present an authentic and memorable experience to travelers. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on safeguarding the sustainability of local culture and traditions in tourism development. By incorporating cultural elements and local wisdom into tourism products, a village tourism destination can fortify its cultural identity and showcase cultural heritage to travelers (Richards, 2011). It's exceedingly crucial to underscore the necessity of preserving the sustainability of local culture and traditions in tourism development. By integrating cultural elements and local wisdom into tourism products, a village tourism destination can not only preserve cultural heritage but also strengthen its cultural identity. Through this introduction to travelers, local culture and traditions can be promoted more extensively. This approach doesn't just contribute to the destination's appeal but also aids the local community in feeling pride and a deeper commitment to conserving their cultural heritage.

### Local wisdom

Local Wisdom plays a pivotal role in the development of sustainable tourism. The Theory of Local Wisdom as Social Capital underscores that local wisdom can serve as social capital, propelling community participation in various sectors, including tourism. This creates opportunities to craft unique and authentic tourism experiences (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, the Theory of Relevance of Local Wisdom in Tourism states that employing local wisdom in tourism development holds a distinct appeal for travelers seeking distinctive and profound experiences. By harnessing local culture and traditions, destinations can offer tourism experiences imbued with

profound meaning (Richards & Wilson, 2006).

Another approach is the Theory of Development Based on Local Wisdom, which underscores the importance of understanding and respecting local wisdom in tourism development. Collaborating with the local community and integrating cultural elements into tourism activities helps destinations preserve cultural integrity and yield positive impacts on the community (Barnett & Fiala, 2015). Meanwhile, the Theory of Local Wisdom in Natural Resource Management suggests that the concept of local wisdom can also be applied to the management of natural resources in village tourism. By incorporating local knowledge into environmental management, village tourism destinations can uphold natural sustainability and the values of local wisdom (Berkes, 2007). Overall, these theories advocate for the essential role of utilizing local wisdom in tourism development. By integrating cultural elements and local wisdom, tourism destinations can enhance the tourist experience, preserve cultural identity, and promote social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

### Local Wisdom-Based Tourism Village Development Models

Several conceptual theories serve as the foundation for the development of the "Model of Local Wisdom-Based Village Tourism Development." Firstly, the theory of "Local Wisdom-Based Tourism Development Model" suggests that authentic and sustainable village tourism can be achieved through development models that integrate cultural and local wisdom elements. This concept enables village

tourism to create unique and appealing tourism products for travelers, while simultaneously preserving and promoting local cultural heritage (Hall & Zeppel, 2018). Secondly, the theory of "Community Empowerment in Tourism Development" provides insight that involving the local community in the planning and execution of village tourism development models can lead to sustainable development, enhancing community participation and well-being (Pandit & Thapa, 2019).

Meanwhile, the theory of "Environmental Sustainability in Tourism Development" underscores the importance of considering environmental impacts in designing village tourism development models. By focusing on sustainable practices, village tourism can offer captivating travel experiences without harming the surrounding environment (Gössling et al., 2012). Lastly, the theory of "Innovation in Local Wisdom-Based Tourism" emphasizes the significance of innovation in designing village tourism development models. By integrating local wisdom and cultural elements into innovations, village tourism can provide engaging and relevant travel experiences for modern tourists (Hall, 2016).

Overall, these theories provide valuable guidance in developing village tourism development models rooted in local wisdom, community participation, environmental sustainability, and innovation, with the ultimate goal of creating sustainable and highly competitive tourism destinations.

## **METODE PENELITIAN**

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a case study approach. This

approach allows researchers to conduct in-depth analysis of specific phenomena within a real context (Yin, 2018). The case study approach will enable the researcher to extensively explore the development of local wisdom-based village tourism in Surowiti Village. Informants are selected using purposive sampling technique, prioritizing individuals with relevant knowledge and experience regarding village tourism development. The total number of informants is 60 respondents, including local residents, tourists, and stakeholders.

Data will be collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. In-depth interviews will be conducted with local residents, tourists, and stakeholders to gain profound insights into village tourism development. Participatory observations will involve observing activities and interactions in Surowiti Village to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of village tourism development. Document analysis will be carried out on documents related to village tourism development and local wisdom.

The acquired data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analysis steps encompass data coding, theme development, identification of thematic patterns, and data interpretation. The results of data analysis will be linked to theoretical concepts outlined in the conceptual framework. Through the applied qualitative approach and data collection techniques, this research aims to provide profound insights into local wisdom-based village tourism development in Surowiti Village. The thematic analysis technique will aid in identifying patterns,

themes, and implications from the gathered data

## HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

The results of this study revealed that local wisdom plays a significant role in the development of Surowiti Village tourism. The local community possesses profound knowledge of culture, traditions, and local values that can be integrated into tourism activities. This aligns with the Theory of Local Wisdom as Social Capital (Putnam, 2000), emphasizing that local wisdom can be a valuable asset in developing the tourism sector. One informant, who is also a village government staff member, stated: "We have many unique traditions and cultures in Surowiti. For instance, we often hold traditional ceremonies involving the entire community. We believe this could be an attraction for tourists seeking to experience local culture." (AD, August 4, 2023). This statement indicates that the community in Surowiti is aware of the potential of local wisdom in tourism development. The assertion that they have numerous unique traditions and cultures, including community-involved traditional ceremonies, reflects the richness of the local culture that can be appealing to tourists seeking to experience it. This corresponds to the Theory of Local Wisdom as Social Capital, asserting that local wisdom can be a valuable asset in tourism sector development. By utilizing local wisdom as an attraction, the village can create authentic experiences for tourists while fostering positive relationships with the local community. Furthermore, the importance of community participation in the development of Surowiti Village tourism is highlighted. Through active involvement of the local community in

planning and implementing tourism activities, the village can create authentic experiences for tourists. This aligns with the Theory of Community Participation (Mbaiwa, 2019), emphasizing that community participation enhances destination development sustainability. This perspective is further reinforced by a community leader's testimony, who is also the local youth leader "We are glad to be involved in planning tourism events in our village. We feel responsible for preserving our cultural authenticity and ensuring that tourists feel comfortable here." (RA, August 6, 2023).

his opinion demonstrates the significant role of local community participation in Surowiti Village's tourism development. The statement that they are pleased to be involved in planning tourism events and feel

responsible for cultural authenticity and tourists' comfort reflects a high level of engagement in the destination development process. This is consistent with the Theory of Community Participation, which stresses that involving the community in decision-making and tourism activities enhances destination development sustainability. Through active community participation, the village can create authentic experiences for tourists while maintaining cultural integrity and ensuring their comfort during their visit. Furthermore, in the context of formulating a local wisdom-based village tourism development model for Surowiti, this model integrates cultural and local wisdom elements into tourism product development. This corresponds to the Community-Based Destination Theory (Hall, 2008), emphasizing the importance of integrating cultural practices into the tourism experience. One informant, a

custodian of a sacred site and a tour guide for visitors who come to pray, stated: "We must balance development and cultural preservation. By involving the local community in village tourism development, we can design authentic and meaningful tourism experiences.

The statement that involving the local community in the development process can design authentic and meaningful tourism experiences reflects the principles of the Community-Based Destination Theory. This theory underscores that tourism development involving the community in planning and implementing activities can create experiences that reflect local culture and community identity. Thus, the village can maintain cultural authenticity while providing authentic experiences for tourists.

#### Discussion

The discussion phase, the field findings will be elaborated and analyzed by referring to relevant series and previous research. The results of this study revealed several findings related to the development of Surowiti Village tourism based on local wisdom. First, the findings about the potential of local wisdom in the development of Surowiti Village tourism. In these findings, the local community in Surowiti possesses in-depth knowledge of culture, traditions, and local values that can be integrated into tourism activities. This aligns with the Theory of Local Wisdom as Social Capital (Putnam, 2000), emphasizing that local wisdom can be a valuable asset in developing the tourism sector. The statement of one informant from the village government, "We have many unique traditions and cultures in Surowiti. For instance, we often hold traditional ceremonies involving the entire community.

We believe this could be an attraction for tourists seeking to experience local culture," supports the local culture's richness as a tourist attraction. Furthermore, the findings about the importance of community participation in the development of Surowiti Village tourism are also highly significant. Through active community involvement in planning and implementing tourism activities, the village can create authentic experiences for tourists. This corresponds to the Theory of Community Participation (Mbaiwa, 2019), which emphasizes that community participation enhances destination development sustainability. The statement of a community leader, "We are glad to be involved in planning tourism events in our village. We feel responsible for preserving our cultural authenticity and ensuring that tourists feel comfortable here," reflects a high level of participation in the destination development process. In the context of formulating a local wisdom-based village tourism development model for Surowiti, these findings are consistent with the Community-Based Destination Theory (Hall, 2008). The utilization of cultural and local wisdom elements in tourism product development can create authentic experiences for tourists. The statement of a custodian of a sacred site, "We must balance development and cultural preservation. By involving the local community in village tourism development, we can design authentic and meaningful tourism experiences," supports this concept. Referring to previous research, earlier studies also emphasize the importance of leveraging local wisdom in tourism development. Research by Gurung and Seeland (2021) shows that incorporating local wisdom elements into the tourism experience can provide distinct and differentiated attractions. Studies by Kim et al. (2019) and Smith et al.

(2020) also underscore that involving the local community can enhance participation and engagement in tourism development. The goal of this study, which is to explore the potential of local wisdom in creating authentic and sustainable tourism experiences, has been achieved. By integrating field findings with previous theories and research, the local wisdom-based village tourism development model can serve as a foundation for tourism development in Surowiti Village. Through active community participation and the utilization of local wisdom, the village can create authentic tourism experiences, enrich cultural identity, and have a positive impact on the local economy and cultural preservation.

## KESIMPULAN

Local wisdom plays a central role in the development of Surowiti Village tourism. Active community participation and the development of a local wisdom-based model are also crucial factors in creating authentic and sustainable tourism experiences. Theories such as Local Wisdom as Social Capital, Community Participation, and Community-Based Destination underline the importance of these elements in sustainable tourism development. Thus, the research objective to explore the potential of local wisdom in creating authentic and sustainable tourism experiences has been achieved. The development of Surowiti Village tourism encompasses the establishment of educational programs and community training to harness local wisdom, the creation of unique cultural tourism products, increased community involvement in tourism-related decision-making, the formulation of cultural and environmental management plans, collaboration with educational and research institutions, local wisdom-based

promotion, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation to gauge impacts and make necessary adjustments as developments occur. By adhering to these recommendations, it is anticipated that Surowiti Village can achieve the goal of tapping into local wisdom to create authentic and sustainable tourism experiences.

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