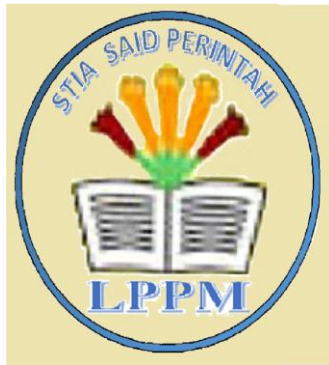


Public Policy: Jurnal Aplikasi Kebijakan Publik dan Bisnis

Optimizing Local Government Strategies for Developing a Creative Economy in Coastal Tourism Areas

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LPPM STIA Said Perintah
Volume 6, No. 1, Maret 2025

<https://stia-saidperintah.e-journal.id/ppj>

Received; 2024 - 05 - 28

Accepted; 2025 - 02 - 10

Published; 2025 - 02 - 12



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Abstract

Tourism significantly contributes to Indonesia's economic growth, with the creative economy enhancing destination competitiveness. This study examines the integration of the creative economy in developing coastal tourism at Tanjung Tatulain, Negeri Hitu Messing, Central Maluku. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observations, analyzed via SWOT and stakeholder synergy models. Findings highlight strong tourism potential but identify challenges such as infrastructure gaps, weak promotion, and land issues. Addressing these requires government support, stakeholder collaboration, and community involvement. Strategic improvements in infrastructure, marketing, and sustainability are essential for maximizing tourism's economic and social benefits.

Keywords : Development Strategy,
Coastal Tourism Areas

Introduction

Tourism is one of Indonesia's key economic sectors, playing a crucial role not only as an economic driver but also as a means to reduce unemployment. Comprehensive tourism development is expected to generate significant job opportunities in tourist destinations. According to the UNWTO, (2021) tourism contributes to employment growth in the service sector and supports the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Empirical studies also highlight tourism's role in employment creation. Dogru et al., (2019) found a positive correlation between an increase in tourist arrivals and employment growth, while Croes and Rivera, (2017) emphasized tourism's role in reducing unemployment, particularly in developing regions. These findings underscore the importance of tourism in fostering economic growth and job creation.

The Indonesian government actively promotes tourism as a pillar of national development, ensuring economic resilience during global crises. Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism highlights the necessity of tourism development to promote equal business opportunities, economic benefits, and adaptability to local, national, and global challenges (Ethika, 2016). The rapid growth of tourism has attracted significant attention from both domestic and international tourists, leading to the formulation of policies focused on regional development. Spillane and James J., (2011) assert that tourism contributes to national development across economic (foreign exchange earnings, taxation), social (job creation), and cultural aspects. Tourism is recognized as an industry capable of stimulating rapid economic growth through employment generation, income enhancement, and improvement in living standards, while also activating other productive sectors.

Beyond its economic impact, tourism also influences social and cultural dimensions. Tourists visiting various destinations contribute to creativity enhancement, work-life balance, business opportunities, and spiritual tourism (UNWTO, 2021). This highlights the strategic importance of tourism, particularly for local governments managing tourist attractions. Tourism revenues from attraction sites significantly contribute to regional economic activities (Yuwana, 2011).

The creative economy has emerged as a new economic paradigm, emphasizing information, creativity, innovation, and human capital as fundamental production factors. The primary objective of the creative economy is to achieve sustainable development

through a competitive economic environment supported by renewable resources. It embodies the survival spirit of developing countries by utilizing boundless resources such as ideas, talent, and creativity. The intersection between tourism and the creative economy is significant, fostering synergy when effectively managed. Creative economy development through tourism encourages destinations to produce innovative products that enhance competitiveness. Unique products attract tourists, serving as souvenirs and contributing to the economic sustainability of local communities. Additionally, the integration of creative industries into tourism fosters cultural preservation while adding aesthetic and economic value to tourist destinations (Pangestu, 2011).

Developing the creative economy as a tourism driver requires strategic initiatives, including enhancing cultural and artistic tourism, strengthening creative industry clusters, preparing skilled human resources, and mapping strategic assets. These initiatives involve regional development approaches that build networks among creative industry clusters, establish leadership structures, and expand cross-sectoral collaborations, including policy support for artisans. The success of the creative economy in tourism depends on synergy among key stakeholders, including the government, academia, and private sector entities. As outlined by Pangestu, (2011) in the 2009-2015 development convention, a synergy model for stakeholders in the creative economy particularly in the handicraft subsector was established. Handicrafts, such as souvenirs and memorabilia, serve as long-term reminders for tourists while fostering repeat visits. Furthermore, the creative economy model can be adopted by creative cities that leverage human resources to develop innovative spaces conducive to the production of economically valuable products. The creation of such spaces is crucial, as they stimulate the emergence of creative ideas, exemplified by cultural festivals that successfully attract tourists.

Central Maluku, particularly the coastal region of Jezirah Leihitu District, offers a diverse range of tourist attractions, including natural, cultural, and man-made tourism experiences. As a coastal area with rich ethnic and cultural diversity, Jezirah Leihitu appeals to visitors seeking unique tourism experiences. One of its most prominent attractions is Tanjung Tatulain, located approximately 1 km east of Negeri Hitu Messing. This site captivates tourists with its scenic beauty, particularly its breathtaking sunset views, while also offering affordable beverages and snacks. As a crucial economic driver for Jezirah

Leihitu, particularly Negeri Hitu Messing, Tanjung Tatulain has experienced a rise in tourist visits over the past five years. However, despite its growing popularity, the site faces challenges related to inadequate infrastructure.

Addressing infrastructure limitations in Tanjung Tatulain is essential to unlocking its full economic potential. Local and regional governments must implement strategic development plans to enhance the site's competitiveness in attracting tourists. This process involves conducting a comprehensive analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to facilitate appropriate strategic interventions.

Numerous empirical studies emphasize the necessity of government involvement in tourism development strategies across Indonesia. These studies cover various aspects, including public relations efforts, community participation, business models, and tourism strategies. Haerul, (2017) highlights the role of the Tourism Office's public relations division in promoting Tanjung Bira tourism through media engagement and governmental support. Haklatul Lutpi, (2016) reports low levels of community participation in beach tourism development in Jerowaru, while Susilawati, (2013) stresses the need to enhance human resource involvement in managing Bira Beach as a primary source of local revenue. Dewa Ayu Tenara Kardinia Cidhy, (2013) proposes a business model for environmental sustainability in tourism management, and Jasmawati, (2017) compares factors influencing repeat visits between Marina Beach and Tanjung Bira, finding a stronger impact in the latter. Additional studies by Riskum Imaduddin, (2017); Hugo Itamar, (2016); Dadan Mukhsin, (2013); Zuhdi Syaiful Anhar, (2016) and Gunawan, (2016) further contribute to understanding tourism development strategies in different regions across Indonesia.

This study distinguishes itself from previous research by focusing on a specific aspect that has been largely overlooked how local governments optimize the integration of the creative economy within coastal tourism development. While prior studies have examined tourism development from various perspectives, including public relations, community participation, business models, and tourism strategies, they have not thoroughly explored the mechanisms through which local governments can enhance the synergy between the creative economy and coastal tourism.

To address this research gap, this study analyzes government-led strategies aimed at fostering creativity, innovation, and sustainable local economic development. By

employing structured SWOT analysis, stakeholder synergy models, and strategic asset mapping, this research provides a comprehensive and practical approach to coastal tourism development. Based on the challenges and opportunities identified, this study specifically examines local government strategies for developing the creative economy in the coastal tourism area of Tanjung Tatulain, Negeri Hitu Messing, Central Maluku Regency.

Theoretical Study

Development Strategy

In this context, strategy refers to the art of optimizing core resources to achieve maximum performance (Timpal, Pati, & Pangemanan, 2021). In the industrial sector, development strategy involves both internal analysis (strengths and weaknesses) and external analysis (opportunities and threats) to determine strategic actions. Retail strategy, in particular, focuses on identifying target markets, defining product or service characteristics, and formulating long-term competitive advantage strategies. This analytical approach facilitates the selection of effective strategies to leverage opportunities, address weaknesses, and anticipate potential risks.

Creative Economy

The creative economy comprises economic activities driven by creativity to generate commercial value (Saefullah, Thantawi, & Putra, 2021). Its primary contributions include entrepreneurship, innovation, increased productivity, and economic growth. Creativity, innovation, and discovery are fundamental to the creative economy, emphasizing the utilization of human ideas and knowledge as key production factors. This concept fosters the development of competitive and innovative creative industries that generate added economic value.

Tourism Area Development

Tourism area development is an ongoing process aimed at balancing supply and demand within the tourism sector (Darmawan & Rahmawati, 2022). According to Yoeti, (2012) tourism development encompasses all elements of a tourist destination, serving as an attraction to encourage visitation. This process involves enhancing both physical and non-physical resources of tourist attractions to increase their appeal and productivity.

Tourism development has broad economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts, contributing to income generation, business opportunities, employment, and environmental conservation. Through a sustainable approach, tourism development can foster inclusive economic growth while maintaining social and environmental equilibrium.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The qualitative method, also known as the naturalistic method, is conducted in natural settings (Sigiyono, 2019). Meanwhile, descriptive research aims to provide a systematic and accurate depiction of the characteristics of a population or specific area without examining relationships or testing hypotheses (Zuriah, 2006).

The research was conducted at the Central Maluku District Government Office and relevant departments in Maluku Tengah Regency, Maluku Province. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their expertise, role, and relevance to the study. Key informants included the Regent of Central Maluku, the Head of the Tourism Office, the Head of Leihitu Sub-District, and local government officials of Negeri Hitu Messing, chosen for their strategic roles in policy-making and implementation. Additionally, 20 residents of Negeri Hitu were selected based on their involvement in tourism-related activities, traditional leadership roles, or long-term residency, ensuring diverse perspectives and rich contextual insights.

Primary data collection involved in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and observations, while secondary data were obtained through documentation studies and literature reviews. The data were analyzed using the SWOT framework to assess tourism development strategies in Tanjung Tatulain, Negeri Hitu Messing. To refine the findings, a descriptive analysis technique based on Miles and Huberman's framework was applied, involving data reduction (filtering and selecting relevant information), data display (organizing data systematically for interpretation), and conclusion drawing (identifying patterns and formulating insights to support policy recommendations).

Result and Discussions

Analysis of Development Strategy for the Coastal Area of Tanjung Tatulain

The development of the Tanjung Tatulain coastal area has driven economic growth and job opportunities but faces challenges such as land status issues and budget constraints. While the local government has focused on marketing and infrastructure, stronger stakeholder collaboration, improved infrastructure, and clear land regulations are crucial for sustainable tourism development.

Strategy Formulation

The formulation of tourism development strategies for the Tanjung Tatulain coastal area requires collaboration among the local government, the Department of Tourism and Creative Economy, and local stakeholders. Through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews, this study identified key opportunities and challenges in tourism development. The findings highlight infrastructure limitations, marketing gaps, institutional weaknesses, and unresolved land status issues as major concerns. Additionally, active community participation and environmental sustainability are essential considerations in strategy development.

To present these findings clearly, the SWOT analysis below summarizes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified through FGDs and interviews;

SWOT Analysis of Tanjung Tatulain Coastal Tourism

SWOT Factors	Findings from FGDs and Interviews
Strengths	Unique coastal attractions, strong local culture, and community interest in tourism.
Weaknesses	Limited infrastructure, lack of tourism promotion, weak institutional support, and unresolved land status.
Opportunities	Government support for tourism, potential for eco-tourism, and increasing tourist interest
Threats	Budget constraints, environmental degradation, and legal uncertainties regarding land use.

Source; FGDs and interviews, (2024)

Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities

An IFAS and EFAS analysis identified key factors influencing tourism development. Strengths include a rich natural ecosystem (0.40), diverse attractions (0.35), community support (0.30), and government attention (0.35). Weaknesses involve limited human

resources (-0.45), infrastructure (-0.40), budget (-0.35), and community awareness (-0.30).

Opportunities include continuous tourism potential (0.50), growing ecotourism (0.45), and economic benefits (0.40). Threats involve pollution (-0.50), cultural shifts (-0.45), and negative economic impacts (-0.40).

Suggested strategies:

1. SO Strategy; Develop thematic tourism and creative routes.
2. WO Strategy; Improve infrastructure and train human resources.
3. ST Strategy; Enforce environmental regulations and cultural preservation.
4. WT Strategy; Strengthen stakeholder collaboration for sustainability.

In the development of the Tanjung Tatulain Coastal Tourist Area, several strengths can be leveraged, such as the natural coastal ecosystem, the appeal of tourist attractions, community support, and substantial government attention to tourism. However, there are also weaknesses, such as the lack of qualified human resources, limited tourism infrastructure, budget constraints, and suboptimal community awareness.

On the opportunities side, there is significant potential for tourism development that is not constrained by time, boundaries, or regions, with tourist attractions serving as a significant source of income. However, there are also threats such as pollution, changes in local culture, and the economic impacts around tourist attractions that can reduce their aesthetic value. Suggested alternative strategies include the development of thematic tourism products, creative tourism routes, and promotion through various media to enhance the attractiveness and revenue of coastal tourist attractions.

Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy for developing the Tanjung Tatulain coastal area requires strong management functions from the local government, including effective planning, organization, coordination, and supervision. The Department of Tourism and Creative Economy must actively coordinate with relevant agencies, such as the Ministry of Tourism and village governments as landowners, while ensuring equitable profit-sharing with the local community. Supervision should extend beyond financial oversight to include

monitoring the development process through training programs and engagement with local business actors.

Evaluation Strategy

In the evaluation strategy, collaboration with village governments and local communities is essential for assessing the positive impacts of tourism development, including improved well-being and enhanced beach infrastructure through the involvement of local traders. Additionally, the evaluation should consider development priorities to ensure the efficient management of coastal tourism areas, maximizing benefits for all stakeholders.

Development Strategy

The development strategies for Tanjung Tatulain encompass several key aspects. First, tourism promotion is carried out through various media, including the internet, booklets, leaflets, and support from tourism ambassadors, with an emphasis on culturally based attractions. Second, accessibility improvements focus on enhancing visitor facilities, upgrading tourism infrastructure, and fostering active collaboration between the government and local communities in tourism area development. Additionally, the strategy includes developing tourism products that highlight the natural beauty and unique potential of Tanjung Tatulain Beach, strengthening human resources in tourism services, and promoting community engagement in tourism awareness campaigns to ensure the region's long-term tourism sustainability.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussions, several key points can be summarized. First, the formulation strategy for Tanjung Tatulain's development is derived from FGDs and in-depth interviews, highlighting the need for structured planning documents, including a Master Plan and a Design Engineering Document (DED). These documents are crucial for guiding infrastructure development and ensuring alignment with regional tourism policies. Second, the implementation strategy follows core management functions planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising—to ensure effective execution. Third, the evaluation strategy involves both internal and external assessments

to measure progress and effectiveness, engaging local government agencies, tourism stakeholders, and community representatives.

Supportive factors in the development process include the area's tourism potential, strong community and government support, and a sustainable tourism development framework. However, several challenges must be addressed, such as limited human resources in the tourism sector, inadequate tourism infrastructure, and budget constraints, all of which require careful consideration in future planning and implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed: enhancing community and village government involvement in development strategies, strengthening promotional efforts to attract more tourists, prioritizing infrastructure improvements with intensive support from local governments and relevant agencies, and addressing key challenges such as internal security concerns and inadequate infrastructure. These measures are essential to ensuring the successful development of the Tanjung Tatulain coastal tourism area in Jazirah Leihitu.

This study has several limitations. First, the research primarily relies on qualitative data from FGDs and in-depth interviews, which may be subject to participant bias. Second, the study focuses on stakeholder perspectives within a specific timeframe, potentially limiting its applicability to long-term development trends. Third, the scope of analysis does not include comprehensive financial assessments or environmental impact studies, which are crucial for sustainable tourism planning.

Future research should consider a mixed-methods approach incorporating quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Longitudinal studies tracking tourism development over time would offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of implemented strategies. Additionally, further research should explore the environmental and economic impacts of tourism in Tanjung Tatulain to support more sustainable and data-driven policy recommendations.

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