Comparative Study of Community Tourism Development Models in Baluran, Situbondo, and Banyuwangi National Parks

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Abstract

Background: Baluran National Park, located in Situbondo and Banyuwangi Regencies, is a strategic area for examining community-based tourism (CBT) development. Different tourism governance models adopted by the two regions result in varying levels of community participation, technological integration, and institutional readiness, which influence the effectiveness of sustainable CBT implementation.

Aims: This study aims to examine and compare community-based tourism development models implemented in two strategic areas, namely Baluran National Park in Situbondo Regency and Banyuwangi Regency, with a focus on community capacity-building efforts and local community participation.

Methods: This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data were collected from various scientific journal articles and relevant academic literature related to community-based tourism, regional tourism governance, and sustainable tourism development.

Result: The findings indicate significant differences in tourism development approaches as reflected in regional regulations. Situbondo Regency tends to emphasize the strengthening of local outputs as the foundation of tourism development, while Banyuwangi Regency demonstrates a stronger focus on institutional integration and managerial innovation. These differing approaches influence the level of community readiness and the effectiveness of CBT implementation in each region.

Conclusion: This study concludes that policy harmonization between regions and the enhancement of local community capacity are essential foundations for achieving sustainable community-based tourism development in the Baluran National Park area. Adaptive governance strategies that align with local social and institutional conditions are necessary to optimize community participation and long-term tourism sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Baluran National Park is a conservation area that extends across two administrative jurisdictions, namely Situbondo and Banyuwangi Regencies (Azizah & Cons, 2020). Each of these regions has implemented different strategies to develop and optimize its local tourism potential (Soeswoyo et al., 2021). Among the various approaches adopted, community-based tourism (CBT) has become one of the most prominent models, emphasizing the involvement of local communities as the main stakeholders in tourism development processes (Lemunge et al., 2025;

Mtapuri et al., 2022; Tuyen et al., 2025). This model is widely acknowledged for its capacity to stimulate local economic growth while simultaneously supporting the conservation of natural environments and the preservation of cultural heritage (Hoang, 2021). From a governance and risk perspective, tourism development in protected areas involves complex decision-making under uncertainty, similar to large-scale infrastructure and construction projects.

Weak institutional arrangements, optimism bias, and misalignment between planning and implementation are widely recognized as major sources of project failure across sectors (Dossou et al., 2025; Love et al., 2023). These challenges are particularly evident in decentralized tourism governance, where overlapping authorities and varying institutional capacities coexist within a single conservation area. Community-based tourism is particularly applicable in ecologically sensitive areas such as national parks, where tourism activities must be carefully managed to avoid environmental degradation (Bisht et al., 2025; Geng et al., 2025; Setiawan, 2021). Effective CBT implementation therefore requires structured risk management frameworks that integrate institutional readiness, stakeholder coordination, and adaptive governance mechanisms. Within the context of Baluran National Park, the dual administrative management exercised by Situbondo and Banyuwangi offers a distinctive opportunity to examine how differences in governance structures influence risk exposure, implementation effectiveness, and long-term sustainability (Aquino et al., 2018).

The urgency of this study is rooted in the evident disparity between the two regions in implementing community-based tourism. Banyuwangi Regency has received widespread recognition for its inclusive and strategically oriented tourism policies, particularly through initiatives such as the "Smart Kampung" program. In contrast, Situbondo Regency continues to encounter challenges related to community readiness, infrastructure availability, and stakeholder alignment (Herpamudji et al., 2024). Similar patterns of uneven institutional performance have been identified in project-based environments where risk assessment mechanisms are insufficient or poorly institutionalized.

Several key factors have been identified as determinants of CBT success, including the degree of community participation, government support, access to technology, and institutional readiness (Zielinski et al., 2021). The integration of digital systems and intelligent technologies has also been shown to improve coordination, transparency, and decision-making quality in project environments. These factors are consistent with findings in construction and infrastructure projects, where structured risk assessment tools—such as Bayesian networks and probabilistic models—are increasingly used to mitigate delays and performance uncertainty.

Table 1. Key Indicators of CBT Implementation in Baluran National Park Indicator

No.	Indicator
1.	Community Participation
2.	Government Support
3.	Digital Infrastructure
4.	Community Readiness
5.	Tourism Facilities

(Source: Field Observation & Local Reports, 2025)

Previous studies have explored CBT models across Indonesia, focusing on areas such as agro-tourism, marine tourism, and heritage tourism (Suyatna et al., 2024). However, few have specifically analyzed two adjoining regions within a shared conservation area and compared their CBT approaches in a comprehensive framework (Maruta, A. 2020). Research between 2020 and 2024 primarily focuses on single-case evaluations, lacking cross-regional comparative insights (Ganis, 2024). This research addresses that gap by offering a side-by-side evaluation of the tourism development frameworks in Situbondo and Banyuwangi. The novelty lies in the comparative methodological approach that captures variations in governance models, policy alignment, and grassroots engagement in a single protected area. It also integrates qualitative findings with community-driven development indicators for practical recommendations. Another contribution of this study is the integration of sustainability metrics within the CBT evaluation. It highlights how tourism models that promote cultural preservation, inclusive planning, and

technology adaptation are more likely to succeed in the long term (Xiao et al., 2024).

This analytical framework offers transferable knowledge to other regions aiming to implement CBT in protected or sensitive ecosystems. Moreover, as national parks face growing pressure from tourism and climate challenges, identifying resilient community-based strategies becomes essential (Sisneros et al., 2019). Situbondo and Banyuwangi provide contrasting yet complementary cases that reveal both structural weaknesses and adaptive innovations in community engagement. The study is also timely, given the increasing national focus on decentralization and local tourism empowerment. By comparing Situbondo and Banyuwangi, this research aligns with broader efforts in Indonesia to strike a balance between conservation goals and regional economic development. It highlights the importance of adaptive governance in managing shared ecological resources. Ultimately, this research aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform policymakers, community leaders, and conservation authorities on how to design and implement more effective CBT frameworks.

The findings are expected to support integrated tourism planning that is inclusive, participatory, and responsive to local capacities and ecological considerations. This study aims to analyze and compare the community-based tourism (CBT) models implemented in Situbondo and Banyuwangi Regencies within the Baluran National Park area, identify key success factors and challenges in each region, and formulate strategic recommendations for sustainable and inclusive tourism development. The findings of this research are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of comparative CBT frameworks in shared conservation areas, as well as practical benefits for policymakers, local governments, community leaders, and conservation authorities. By offering empirical insights into governance alignment, community capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration, this study supports evidence-based decision-making to enhance community participation, strengthen institutional readiness, and promote balanced outcomes between conservation objectives and regional economic development.

METHOD

Type of Research

This research uses a qualitative approach with a comparative study design. This approach was selected to capture governance complexity, institutional dynamics, and risk-related decision-making processes across two administrative regions. Comparative qualitative methods are particularly suitable for analyzing projects characterized by high uncertainty and multi-stakeholder involvement.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with local communities, tourism managers, and government representatives. Secondary data were obtained from official policy documents, agency reports, and academic literature related to CBT development, governance, and project risk management. Similar mixed-source approaches have been widely adopted in studies examining project delays, governance risks, and institutional performance.

Data Collection Technique

1. Interviews: conducted in-depth and semi-structured with key informants in each region.
2. Observation: directly observing community activities and tourism management practices at the research site.
3. Documentation: Collecting relevant documents, such as tourist brochures, local government reports, and tourism statistics.

Data Analysis Technique

The data was analyzed qualitatively through the following steps:

1. Data reduction: Filtering and selecting relevant information from the overall raw data to make it more focused and directed.
2. Data presentation: organizing data into narrative, table, or diagram form to facilitate the understanding process.
3. Withdrawal   Conclusions: Formulate results analysis based on findings of the comparison between the Situbondo and Banyuwangi regions.

Data Validity

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, which is essential for reducing bias and improving the robustness of qualitative risk assessments.

Research Ethics

The researcher adhered to research ethics, including obtaining consent from informants prior to interviews, maintaining data confidentiality, and using the information solely for academic purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results reveal significant differences in CBT implementation effectiveness between Situbondo and Banyuwangi. Banyuwangi demonstrates a more structured and proactive approach characterized by stakeholder integration, institutional readiness, and technology adoption (Akande & Ijeuru, 2025). Such characteristics are consistent with integrated risk management models that emphasize early stakeholder involvement and continuous monitoring.

Community Participation

High levels of community participation in Banyuwangi reflect effective governance mechanisms that reduce implementation risk and enhance local ownership. Similar patterns have been observed in project environments where participatory decision-making reduces schedule uncertainty and improves performance outcomes. In contrast, Situbondo's limited community involvement mirrors risk conditions commonly associated with project delays, such as low stakeholder engagement and weak communication channels.

Government Support and Collaboration

Strong government support in Banyuwangi aligns with institutional theory perspectives that highlight the role of formal structures and policy alignment in preventing project failure (Love et al., 2023; Ramukumba, 2025). Conversely, fragmented governance in Situbondo increases exposure to coordination risks, which are widely recognized as critical contributors to underperformance in complex projects (Lavaredas et al., 2025).

Technology Access and Digital Infrastructure

Banyuwangi's adoption of digital platforms reflects the growing role of intelligent systems in improving transparency, coordination, and performance monitoring. Digital integration has also been shown to support risk assessment and mitigation by enabling real-time data sharing and decision support. In Situbondo, limited technological capacity constrains tourism competitiveness and exacerbates governance and market access risks.

Institutional Readiness and Sustainability

Effective local institutions such as Pokdarwis and BUMDes in Banyuwangi function as risk-mitigating mechanisms by formalizing roles, ensuring benefit-sharing, and supporting monitoring processes. Institutional weakness in Situbondo increases dependency on external actors, a condition associated with long-term sustainability risks in both tourism and infrastructure projects.

Discussion

Analysis of Community Participation

Active community participation is the cornerstone of successful CBT. In Banyuwangi, early and ongoing involvement has fostered a sense of ownership and improved service quality. In contrast, Situbondo's limited participation has led to dependence on external authorities and a lack of local innovation. Participation levels are closely tied to access to information, education, and community awareness. Cultural festivals and regular training in Banyuwangi function as collective learning spaces, increasing community capacity and trust.

Government Role and Collaboration

Proactive regional government policies primarily drive Banyuwangi's CBT success. Initiatives such as "Smart Kampung" demonstrate a synergy between technology, cultural heritage, and grassroots economics. These frameworks have created an ecosystem involving BUMDes, local MSMEs, and youth groups. In contrast, Situbondo's policy approach remains fragmented and lacks a clear direction. Limited coordination between the regional government and the national park authority has marginalized community participation.

Technology and Digital Transformation

Digitalization is a clear differentiator. Banyuwangi has leveraged technology for destination promotion, education, and transaction systems. This aligns with global tourism trends that demand transparency, speed, and online visibility.

In Situbondo, weak digital infrastructure limits promotional efforts and reduces tourism competitiveness. However, technology is a powerful enabler of market access and economic growth. Digital infrastructure development and training must become urgent priorities.

Local Institutions and Sustainability

Strong local institutions such as Pokdarwis and BUMDes are key to sustainable CBT. Banyuwangi has demonstrated that effective institutional structures enable equitable benefit sharing and sustainable management. In Situbondo, institutional readiness remains poor. There is a lack of monitoring, evaluation, and transparent incentive systems, all of which are necessary to motivate local involvement. Overreliance on national park authorities also undermines local autonomy. Youth empowerment is crucial for driving innovation and promoting sustainability. Banyuwangi supports youth engagement through creative tourism incubators and digital competitions. Situbondo must initiate similar programs adapted to local needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussions, it can be concluded that there are significant differences in the effectiveness of the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) development model between the Situbondo and Banyuwangi regions in the Baluran National Park area. The Banyuwangi region employs a more participatory and innovative tourism development model, supported by regional policies and collaboration among multiple stakeholders. This makes tourism development in Banyuwangi more effective and sustainable. The Situbondo region, despite having the same natural potential, still faces constraints in terms of community participation, local institutions, access to technology, and low local government support. This has led to suboptimal and less sustainable tourism development in the region. Factors that most influence the successful development of CBT include: active community involvement in tourism planning and management. Policy and funding support from the government, (c) collaboration with the private sector. Readiness of human resources and supporting infrastructure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Conceptualization, research design, methodology development, literature review, primary data collection through in-depth interviews with local communities and tourism stakeholders in both Situbondo and Banyuwangi regions, data analysis and interpretation, manuscript drafting, and revision. Abdur Razak: Conceptualization, research framework validation, field observation coordination, secondary data collection from government agencies and policy documents, data triangulation and validity assessment, critical review of analytical findings, manuscript editing, and final approval. Both authors contributed to the formulation of strategic recommendations for sustainable community-based tourism development and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of this research.

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