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Policy Model for Sustainable Tourism Development in Semau Island: An Integrative Study of Economic, Socio-Cultural, Environmental, and Stakeholders

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Abstract: ***This research is motivated by the development of tourism on Semau Island, which faces infrastructure constraints, limited community capacity, and weak stakeholder coordination due to top-down policy frameworks. The purpose of this research is to formulate an integrative policy model based on economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and stakeholder dimensions. The method used is a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design. The results of the SEM-AMOS analysis showed that the integrative model had an R^2 of 0.74 (excellent), with stakeholder coordination (β=0.69) as the strongest predictor of sustainability. The qualitative findings confirm the need to transition from a top-down to a co-governance model by establishing the Semau Tourism Sustainability Forum.***

Keywords: tourism policy, sustainable tourism, island of the will, integrative model, stakeholders

1. Introduction

The sustainable tourism development policy model for Semau Island is a systemic framework designed to harmonize conflicting interests in the development of coastal areas. Fundamentally, this model emphasizes that tourism success is not measured solely by economic growth rates, but also by ecological resilience and social justice for local communities. The integration of economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and stakeholder dimensions is an absolute prerequisite for creating inclusive and sustainable development. This approach departs from the reality on the ground, which shows that top-down policies tend to ignore the aspirations of local communities and exacerbate inequality in the distribution of economic benefits. Therefore, a paradigm shift is needed towards an integrative model that balances the development pillars as the primary foundation. The use of sustainable tourism theory in this model aims to ensure the needs of current tourists are met without sacrificing the rights of future generations. Overall, the statement demands operational synergy between governance and local wisdom on Semau Island.

In the economic dimension, this model proposes an "Inclusive Economic Subsystem" that focuses on the equitable distribution of financial benefits across all layers of coastal communities. Tourism development on Semau Island must strengthen local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) so they are as competitive as foreign investors. Although the prices of local commodities such as honey and coconuts have increased significantly due to the presence of tourists, private land tenure remains an obstacle to equitable wealth distribution. Economic policies should be designed to minimize economic leakage by strengthening local supply chains and providing indigenous peoples with access to capital. Economic success in this model is measured through increased household income and the creation of decent jobs without discrimination. The use of *the Blue Economy* principle is also an important part of managing marine resources efficiently for the welfare of the fishing community. Strong economic integration is believed to be the primary driver of other dimensions of the island's tourism system.

The socio-cultural dimension in this integrative model focuses on preserving Helong ethnic identity as the primary basis for tourist attractions. Cultural identity is not just a performance commodity but a form of social capital that strengthens community cohesion in the face of changing times. The wealth of ikat weaving customs and traditions on Semau Island is positioned as an "Adaptive Socio-Cultural Subsystem" that must be protected from the risk of excessive commercialization. Community participation in decision-making is a key element to ensure that destination development remains aligned with local values. However, the findings show that the current level of citizen participation is still at the level of *placation* or calming, where their involvement has not yet reached the stage of strategic policy determination. Therefore, strengthening customary

institutions and providing formal spaces for local communities in planning forums is very basic. By making the community the main subject, social conflicts between tourists and locals can be significantly reduced.

The environmental dimension in the framework of sustainable tourism on Semau Island is crucial, given the vulnerability of small island ecosystems to external pressures. The physical environment, including white sandy beaches and underwater biodiversity, is a major asset that must be maintained intact. The SSGC (Semau Small-Island Governance Coherence) model emphasizes the importance of "Environmental and Resilience Subsystems" that integrate participatory oversight with ecological risk management. Pressure on the carrying capacity of the environment often increases with the number of tourist visits, and if not managed, can damage the quality of the destination itself. Effective waste management and the provision of environmentally friendly clean water infrastructure must be policy priorities in strategic areas such as Liman Beach. Environmental awareness among managers and tourists needs to be improved through sustainable education programs. Without strict ecosystem protection, short-term economic growth will only lead to future environmental degradation.

The stakeholder dimension acts *as a leverage variable that determines the effectiveness of integrating* the other three dimensions. Multi-stakeholder coordination among the government, the private sector, academia, and the community is the driving force of collaborative tourism governance. The results of the SEM-AMOS analysis show that stakeholder coordination (β=0.69) has the most dominant influence on tourism sustainability on Semau Island. This strong relationship pattern shows that policy success is highly dependent on mechanisms for sharing responsibility, rules, budgets*, and risk*. Local governments must play a role as facilitators, bridging the interests of private investors with the rights of local communities. The establishment *of the Semau Tourism Sustainability Forum* (STSF) is recommended as a formal forum to synergize cross-sector and cross-actor programs. Solid synergy between stakeholders is believed to create stable and adaptive governance coherence.

In conclusion, this integrative model resulted in a conceptual innovation, Semau Small-Island Governance Coherence, to address the complexity of small-island tourism. The model was successfully empirically validated with an R^2 value of 0.74, indicating an excellent level of accuracy in explaining the sustainability phenomenon. The novelty of this research lies in positioning governance coherence as the main axis that simultaneously binds the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental pillars. The implementation of this model requires political commitment from the governments of Kupang Regency and NTT Province to support the transformation from *a top-down* pattern to *co-governance*. Basic infrastructure, such as road access, electricity, and internet connectivity, remains a physical prerequisite that must be immediately fixed to support the operationalization of this model. In the future, the SSGC model can serve as a reference for replicating tourism development policies in other small islands in Indonesia. With a holistic, participatory approach, Semau Island has the potential to become a popular, inclusive, and sustainable tourist destination for all its citizens.

Public policy is fundamentally defined as a series of strategic actions by the government to solve societal problems through a participatory formulation and implementation process[1]. In the tourism sector, this policy results from cross-sectoral systemic interaction, involving negotiations among the government, the private sector, and the community to foster inclusive governance [2]. The primary theoretical foundation is sustainable tourism, which refers to the balanced integration of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions,[3]. This concept is rooted in the definition of sustainable development that seeks to meet the needs of the present generation without sacrificing the rights of future generations [4]. The integration of these various dimensions is crucial to creating a policy model that can have a broad multiplier impact on public welfare. Therefore, adaptive learning policies are needed to respond to the dynamics of global change and local needs functionally, [5].

Emphasis on systemic coordination among actors is an absolute prerequisite for transforming tourism policies in archipelagic areas such as Semau Island [6].

The economic dimension of sustainable tourism policy focuses on creating added value through economic growth and job creation [7] and includes efforts to ensure the long-term survival of the business by increasing the destination's competitiveness and the local community's prosperity. Tourism is positioned as an effective tool for poverty alleviation when managed through integrated policies that reduce inequality[8]. The application of blue economy principles is also an important element in optimizing marine resources efficiently for the welfare of coastal communities[9]. In addition, the concept of sustainable livelihoods emphasizes the need for economic freedom and social access for indigenous people in tourist sites[10]. Without strong local controls, tourism development risks triggering economic leakage that actually harms small-scale businesses[11]. Therefore, policies should be directed at strengthening local supply chains and ensuring the equitable distribution of benefits [12].

The socio-cultural pillar in destination development focuses on preserving traditional heritage and improving the community's collective quality of life[13]. The tourism sector must serve to strengthen cultural identity and respect for local wisdom[14]. The *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) theory provides the foundation that local control and ownership of tourism assets is the primary key to success[15]. National policies also mandate tourism management that upholds religious norms and cultural diversity as social capital.

Community involvement in every stage of planning is significant so that the local population is not only an object but a subject of development[16]. This active participation also serves to minimize the risk of excessive cultural commercialization and value conflicts with tourists[17]. The integration of local wisdom, such as the Helong tribal tradition, is an important moderator that strengthens social cohesion in the formulated policy model.

Environmental sustainability is an ecological foundation that maintains the integrity of the physical landscape and biodiversity on small islands, [18]. Environmental policies must set carrying *capacity limits* to prevent excessive pressure from mass tourism[19]. Effective waste management and the provision of environmentally friendly clean water infrastructure are priorities in maintaining the cleanliness of destinations[20]. A nature-aligned policy approach is believed to increase ecosystem resilience to the climate crisis[20]. Environmental awareness among managers and tourists plays a central role in promoting responsible tourism practices[22]. In addition, protecting natural habitats is a prerequisite for long-term economic sustainability that depends on panoramic attractiveness, [23]. Therefore, policy incentives are needed to encourage tourism business innovation that considers ecological impacts holistically, [24].

Stakeholder theory views multi-stakeholder collaboration as the central axis driving tourism governance, [25]. The *Collaborative Governance* mechanism assumes a consensual process of sharing responsibilities, rules, budgets, and risks[26]. The pentahelix coordination model involving the government, the private sector, the community, academia, and the media is highly relevant for synergizing various interests. Empirical results show that stakeholder coordination is the strongest predictor of achieving sustainable development. Role mapping using *the salience* model helps identify the levels of power, legitimacy, and urgency for each actor[27]. The establishment of a formal coordination forum, such as the Semau Tourism Sustainability Forum (STSF), is recommended to facilitate cross-sectoral policy integration[28]. Solid stakeholder synergy will ensure stable governance coherence despite changes in political dynamics.

Policy *Integration Theory* is used to overcome operational fragmentation between central and regional planning documents[29]. The character of small island governance requires the operational synchronization of roles between the district, village, and destination management levels[30]. The transition from *a top-down* policy pattern to a co-governance mechanism is indispensable to accommodate local communities' capacity. Strategic planning under the RPJMD and RIPPDA must include measurable, evidence-based sustainability indicators[31]. Modeling techniques such as *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) allow researchers to test the causal relationships among policy variables simultaneously. The use of mixed methods ensures the validation of meta-inference between quantitative statistical data and qualitative policy narratives. Finally, this theoretical basis leads to the formulation of the *Semau Small-Island Governance Coherence* (SSGC) Model as a sustainable policy innovation.

2. Methodology

This research applies a pragmatist paradigm that bridges positivism and interpretivism through a *mixed-methods approach*. The design used is *a sequential explanatory design, where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to deepen understanding*. The merger of these two approaches aims to produce a more comprehensive, valid, and objective picture of the sustainable tourism policy model on Semau Island. Ontologically, this study views the reality of tourism as a multidimensional policy system that includes the potential of nature, socio-cultural factors, and local economies.

The epistemology of research is built through a combination of statistical empirical data and knowledge reconstruction from stakeholders' real experiences. The prominent character of epistemology is pragmatic, so that the results are functional in solving infrastructure and institutional problems at the research site. This approach ensures that the "integrative policy model" is understood as the result of reconstructing real data from economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and stakeholder variables.

At the quantitative stage, the study uses an observational analysis design through a *cross-sectional* field survey. The research population comprised 150 subjects from various institutions, with a sample of 145 respondents selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The research instrument is a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to capture respondents' perceptions accurately. Primary data analysis was carried out using *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) techniques in AMOS software version 26 to test causal relationships among variables. The latent variables tested included economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and stakeholder dimensions as the main predictors of tourism sustainability.

Model measurements are carried out by analyzing confirmatory factors to reduce measurement error in each indicator. Using this SEM technique, researchers can comprehensively evaluate the model by examining individual coefficients and the relationships among interrelated variables.

The qualitative stage is conducted using an interpretive approach that aims to describe and understand policy phenomena in depth within their natural environments. Data collection techniques include *in-depth interviews*, participatory observations, document reviews, and *focus group discussions* (FGDs). The selection of key informants was conducted using a purposive sampling approach to reach strategic actors at the provincial, district, and village levels. Helong tribal traditional leaders, managers of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), and local MSME actors. This qualitative data serves as an explanatory component to reveal the reasons behind the quantitative results found in the previous stage. Supporting instruments, such as interview guidelines and field notes, are used by researchers to gather information. The qualitative analysis process follows an interactive model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.

The data integration strategy in this study follows a systematic procedure that includes reduction, display, and transformation of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were used to map the strength of the influence path and the value of the proposed integrative model determination coefficient. Through *sequential explanatory* strategies, researchers can explain the gap between the government's top-down policies and the real

aspirations of local communities at the grassroots level. This process ensures that the formulated policy model is not only theoretically valid but also applicable to the governance of small island tourism. This data synergy allows for the drawing of high-level conclusions or *meta-inferences* that combine statistical evidence with policy narratives. The analysis also maps the causal transformation of policy resources into sustainable systemic impacts on four key dimensions of the research. This stage is critical to producing operational policy recommendations supported by strong and multidimensional empirical evidence.

To ensure the quality of the research results, validity and reliability testing are rigorously conducted at both stages of the mixed-methods approach. Quantitative validity is assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure that the manifest indicators accurately reflect the latent variables under study. The reliability of the structural model is evaluated using the Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, with the minimum required threshold. Meanwhile, the validity of qualitative data is ensured through four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Observation extension and triangulation techniques are applied to increase the degree of confidence in findings in the field. Discussions with peers were also held to review the interim research results and address any unanswered questions. This entire testing procedure is carried out to ensure that the data collected is truly reliable and objective.

The study was conducted on Semau Island, Kupang Regency, which covers the administrative areas of North Semau and South Semau Districts.

The selection of this location is based on the great potential of seven major beach destinations, including Liman Beach, which has won national awards as a popular destination. The physical environment of the small island and the unique social structure of the Helong tribe are the right laboratories to test the coherence of tourism governance. The character of drylands and the limitations of basic infrastructure on this island are the main background for the need to formulate an integrative policy model.

The research is carried out by paying attention to seasonal patterns to ensure the stability of data on access to sea transportation and on citizens' economic activities. The analysis focuses on synchronizing roles among the district, village, and operational management of tourist destinations. The ultimate goal is to formulate the *Semau Model of Small-Island Governance Coherence* (SSGC) as a policy innovation for sustainable development.

3. Results and Discussion

Tourism development on Semau Island has been trapped in a *top-down* policy paradigm, leading to a low sense of community ownership of the development process. Theoretically, public policy should result from systemic interaction and negotiation among various interest groups to address public problems. However, the reality on the ground shows that there is a *gap* between the provincial government's vision through the "Estate Tourism" program and the local community's readiness at the grassroots level. The one-way information pattern from top to bottom results in citizen participation only at the *level of placation*, where they are involved in ceremonial activities but have no power in strategic decision-making. The synthesis of this problem confirms that without a transformation towards *a co-governance model*, the sustainability of tourism on Semau Island will continue to face structural obstacles that hinder the equitable distribution of economic benefits. Therefore, the formulation of an integrative policy model is urgent to bridge the bureaucracy's interests with the real needs of local communities.

The foundation of sustainable tourism theory, based on the Triple Bottom Line (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental), was used to dissect the inequality in development dimensions in the research site. The study's findings reveal the dominance of the economic dimension and the development of physical infrastructure that is not accompanied by institutional support or equivalent budgets for cultural preservation and environmental protection. Theoretically, the balance of these three pillars is an absolute requirement for long-term sustainability, but in Semau, the policy focus is still on growing the number of tourist visits alone. This risks triggering the degradation of the vulnerable small island environment and the commodification of Helong culture, which can erode the original identity of the population. The theoretical synthesis suggests that sustainability can only be achieved if policy performance indicators balance economic output with indicators of social satisfaction and ecological resilience. Therefore, the ideal policy model must be able to synergize economic growth with conservation efforts in a proportionate manner.

The stakeholder dimension has proven to be the *primary leverage variable* that determines the successful integration of all policy dimensions. The results of the SEM-AMOS analysis empirically confirm that stakeholder coordination has the most significant influence on sustainability (β=0.69), beyond the purely economic dimension. The theory *of Collaborative Governance* assumes the existence of a process of sharing responsibility, rules, *budgets, and risk that has not been formally institutionalized on Semau Island*. The fragmentation of implementation at the regional level weakens the role of the private sector and communities in planning and sub-sector coordination. The synthesis of these findings underscores the need to establish a formal collaboration forum, such as the Semau Tourism Sustainability Forum (STSF), to unite cross-actor visions. Strengthening the role of stakeholders as the center of policy-driving is the key to turning conflicts of interest into development synergies.

The application of *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) and *Blue Economy* theories in the coastal area of Semau still faces capacity barriers and limited access to capital for local communities. Normatively, CBT emphasizes local control and ownership of tourism assets, but the government and private landowners still dominate strategic control in Semau. Although tourism has increased the prices of local commodities such as honey and coconut, these financial benefits have not been evenly distributed due to limited access to the tourism value chain. The *Blue Economy Theory*

offers a solution through the development of efficient, low-waste coastal business clusters, but limited knowledge and internet/electricity infrastructure remain the main obstacles. The policy synthesis suggests the need for technical assistance and special financing schemes to strengthen the competitiveness of local MSMEs, thereby making tourism the backbone of the indigenous economy. Thus, community empowerment must be positioned as the main subject, not just the object of development impacts.

The limitations of basic infrastructure are physical constraints that, in theory, hinder the effectiveness of policy implementation and tourist satisfaction. Tourists often complain about damaged road access, weak cellular signal, and a lack of clean water facilities in leading destinations such as Liman Beach. Based on system theory, infrastructure is a vital component that supports the tourist experience and drives creative economy activities for the local community. Environmental conditions vulnerable to the climate crisis also demand the development of physical facilities that are environmentally friendly and adaptive to disaster risks. The synthesis of this problem shows that infrastructure revitalization should not only focus on functional aspects but also be in harmony with local cultural aesthetics and the environment's carrying capacity. Improving digital accessibility, in particular, will enhance the effectiveness of tourism promotion, which currently still relies heavily on tourists' social media content.

As a final synthesis, this research resulted in an innovation in the form of *the Semau Small-Island Governance Coherence* (SSGC) Model to overcome the fragmentation of tourism governance. The SSGC model positions governance coherence as the central axis that binds the pillars of an inclusive economy, adaptive socio-culture, and a resilient environment into a single systemic unity. The structure of this model differs from that in large destinations such as Bali or Lombok, as it makes the quality of the stakeholder network a direct prerequisite for achieving a measurable multiplier effect. Operationally, this model requires a transition from *a top-down* mechanism to network governance, in which local governments serve as facilitators and guarantors of the rules of the game. By integrating the local wisdom of the Helong tribe as a moderator, the SSGC model is expected to deliver tourism that is not only popular but also sustainable for Semau Island's future.

4. Research Conclusions

The tourism development model on Semau Island empirically demonstrates that tourism sustainability is highly dependent on stakeholder governance coherence, which is the strongest predictor with a significant influence (β=0.69). Although the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions have been integrated into a valid model (R^2=0.74), the economic dimensions remain over-dominant, and the development of physical infrastructure has not been followed by institutional support and equivalent budgets for cultural preservation and ecological protection. Structurally, development policies in Semau remain top-down, with planning and regulation dominated by the government, limiting local people's access to the tourism value chain. This condition keeps community participation at the level of placation, meaning residents are involved in ceremonial activities but do not yet have full power in strategic decision-making. Therefore, the sustainability of small-island tourism requires an urgent transition from a one-way bureaucratic pattern to a co-governance mechanism or networked governance

5. Suggestions

From the above conclusion, it can be recommended for the Regional Government (NTT Province and Kupang Regency)

1) **Establishment of a Formal Collaboration Forum:** The local government needs to immediately establish the Semau Tourism Sustainability Forum (STSF) through the Regent's Decree as a forum for cross-sector coordination involving the government, business actors, Helong traditional leaders, and academics.
2) **Governance Transformation:** Shifting the policy model from *top-down* to *network governance* by applying the principles of sharing responsibility, sharing rule, sharing budget, and risk sharing to improve policy coherence.
3) **Basic Infrastructure Priorities:** The government must prioritize the improvement of physical facilities that are crucial for tourists and citizens, including adequate road access, electricity stability, and internet signal coverage to support digital promotion.
4) **Empowerment of MSMEs and BUMDes:** The provision of technical assistance and special financing schemes is needed to strengthen the competitiveness of local MSMEs, Pokdarwis, and BUMDes so that indigenous village communities become the main owners and managers of tourist attractions.
5) **Implementation of Green Economy Incentives:** Local governments are advised to design tax incentive programs or levies for business actors who implement environmentally friendly practices and *blue* economy principles in their business operations

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Author Profile

Jacob Abolladaka is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Public Administration at Nusa Cendana University (Undana), Kupang, Indonesia. His research focuses on Sustainable Tourism Policy, particularly in formulating an integrative policy model that combines economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions, as well as the active role of stakeholders in small island regions. Previously, he actively contributed to the Economic Education study program at Undana's Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. Through his dissertation research, he successfully formulated the Semau Small-Island Governance Coherence (SSGC) model as a policy innovation for inclusive and sustainable tourism destination development.