

Sustainable Tourism Education in Lerep Village, Semarang Regency

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Article Info

History Articles
Received:
7 September 2025
Accepted:
11 Oktober 2024
Published:
30 Desember 2025

Keywords:
Education, Lerep
Village, Sustainable
Tourism

Abstract

This study aims to analyze sustainable tourism education in Lerep Tourism Village, Semarang Regency, by examining four key components: the forms of educational tourism offered, and the implementation of sustainable tourism principles. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were collected through questionnaires to assess tourist attraction potential and the effectiveness of educational programs, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation to evaluate Pokdarwis readiness and sustainability practices. The results show that Pokdarwis demonstrates good readiness in fulfilling its roles as facilitator, educator, representative, and technical operator, although improvements are still needed in technical skills and environmental management. The village possesses strong natural, cultural, and man-made attractions that support the development of educational tourism, including environmental education, cultural learning, and community-based training activities. Sustainable tourism principles have been applied, particularly in environmental conservation, community involvement, and local economic empowerment, yet some aspects require further optimization. The study concludes that Lerep Tourism Village has significant potential to strengthen sustainable tourism through structured educational programs, enhanced community capacity, and integrated management led by Pokdarwis.

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has become one of the pillars of development in Indonesia, as it contributes significantly to economic growth, community empowerment, and the preservation of local culture. Tourism villages have emerged as a model of community-based tourism development capable of integrating natural, cultural, and educational potential. In Central Java, the number of tourism villages has increased rapidly with strong government support, including Lerep Tourism Village, which was designated as an advanced tourism village through the Semarang Regent's Decree in 2020 (Mulyana et al., 2022). This village possesses various natural, cultural, and traditional resources that are highly relevant for the development of educational tourism.

The quantitative growth of tourism villages in Central Java is supported by the issuance of the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Tourism No. M.18/HM.001/MKP/2011 concerning the Guidelines for the National Program for Independent Community Empowerment through Tourism Villages. A village is viewed as a miniature of a nation, where development and empowerment activities take place independently. Consistent with this regulation, the number of tourism villages in Central Java reached 765 in 2023 (Youth, Sports, and Tourism Office of Central Java Province), supported by the commitment of the provincial government as reflected in Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2019 on Tourism Village Empowerment, which facilitates village tourism development through funding support.

In the context of sustainable development, the concept of a Green Economy has gained momentum. As part of Indonesia's economic transformation strategy, the Green Economy aims to produce inclusive and high economic growth while maintaining social welfare and environmental quality. Its implementation focuses on low-carbon development and climate resilience, both of which have been incorporated into the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN 2020–2024). The Green Economy

is one of six transformation strategies set by Bappenas to achieve Indonesia's 2024 national vision. The approach has been applied across multiple sectors, including finance, housing, public works, energy, materials, and tourism. Tourism contributes 4.8% to the national GDP and is projected to continue growing as a profitable industry (Andika et al., 2024). Sustainable tourism serves as a conceptual framework encouraging long-term resource management and emphasizes that tourism should not only mitigate negative impacts but also provide economic, social, and environmental benefits to local communities (Indra Surya Diputra, 2024).

As a destination, Lerep Tourism Village offers learning experiences rooted in local wisdom, including environmental education, waste management, agrotourism, livestock activities, and traditional handicraft training. These educational activities not only provide hands-on experiences for visitors but also help strengthen cultural and environmental preservation within the village. Furthermore, the implementation of sustainable tourism principles has begun to take shape through natural resource conservation, community involvement in tourism management, and local economic empowerment (Anggara et al., 2022). Community-based environmental management practices—such as the utilization of natural resources, conservation education, and efforts to minimize negative tourism impacts—are part of the village's strategies to uphold sustainability. Thus, Lerep's educational tourism potential and sustainable tourism practices form a strong foundation for destination development that is not only attractive but also beneficial for the community and environment in the long term (Yuliani & Aprilina, 2020).

Lerep Tourism Village continues to develop attractions across the hamlets of Soka, Lerep, and Indrokilo. Its natural landscape supports various tourism offerings, one of which is the traditional culinary attraction "Tempoe Doeloe." This attraction features traditional market snacks presented in an old-style setting, complete with bamboo huts, wooden coin

replicas as currency, and vendors wearing traditional Javanese lurik attire. These elements create an authentic nostalgic atmosphere and serve as a cultural attraction that draws many visitors.

Educational tourism refers to programs in which tourists visit a destination primarily to gain direct learning experiences. Aside from attracting visitors, educational tourism can serve as a learning medium for both communities and students. By utilizing natural, social, cultural, and local resources, educational tourism aligns with environmental-based learning. Teachers can connect classroom material with real-life contexts, helping students relate their knowledge to everyday applications. Such learning can involve field trips, project-based assignments, and other outdoor activities. Today, many people prefer destinations that offer not only recreational experiences but also educational value (Devi et al., 2019).

Lerep Tourism Village highlights educational aspects through the introduction of traditions and local wisdom in environmental management. Programs such as waste processing and recycling crafts in Soka Hamlet, local tradition education and agrotourism in Lerep Hamlet, and livestock management and processed dairy production in Indrokilo Hamlet demonstrate that tourism development emphasizes not only visitation but also knowledge and values. Meanwhile, sustainable educational tourism has also been implemented in Ngrancah Hamlet, integrated with the Climate Village Program (ProKlim) to raise awareness among residents and visitors about environmental conservation. Activities such as training, counseling, tree-house development, and educational forest construction reflect local-wisdom-based environmental preservation efforts. Visitors not only enjoy nature but also learn about climate change mitigation, natural resource conservation, reforestation, and water management (Setyowati et al., 2012).

Sustainable educational tourism in Ngrancah can be further developed by integrating environmental conservation with local economic development, especially through coffee-based

agrotourism. Conservation efforts such as reforestation and transitions to perennial crops have improved environmental conditions while increasing coffee production as the village's leading commodity (Aji, 2018). Visitors can therefore enjoy nature while learning about sustainable land management and eco-friendly coffee production. These programs strengthen the village's position as an educational tourism destination that raises environmental awareness and improves local livelihoods. The success of both Lerep and Ngrancah in developing environmentally based educational tourism underscores the importance of collaboration among the community, government, and tourism stakeholders, offering valuable insights and inspiration for other villages aiming to develop sustainable educational tourism modeled on local potential and wisdom (Iqbal Tajuddin, Ananto Aji, 2018).

The implementation of sustainable tourism in Lerep Tourism Village is therefore a crucial component of its development. Sustainable tourism aims to maintain a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects in destination management. Lerep applies several principles, including responsible natural resource management, community involvement in decision-making, and the preservation of cultural traditions. Thus, this village located on the slopes of Mount Ungaran not only attracts tourists but also ensures long-term benefits for the local community while preserving the environment (Prasetyo & Nararais, 2023).

METHOD

The first subjects in this study are tourists visiting Lerep Tourism Village, Ungaran Barat District, Semarang Regency. The second subjects are the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) Rukun Santoso and the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) Gerbang Lentera, who serve as the primary informants. The third subjects include the village head, youth organization (karangtaruna), and local community members of Lerep Tourism Village, who act as supporting informants. The selection

of these research subjects is based on the following considerations: tourists are chosen because they are the direct recipients of educational tourism activities and can provide insights into the effectiveness of the education programs and their overall experiences. Pokdarwis Rukun Santoso and BUMDes Gerbang Lentera are selected as the second group because they are the main actors responsible for managing and developing the tourism village, and thus possess in-depth knowledge of strategies, implementation, and challenges in tourism management. Meanwhile, the village head, youth organization, and local community are included as supporting informants due to their important roles in policymaking, social participation, and the preservation of local culture and the environment.

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach is used to identify the tourism attractions in Lerep Village as well as the forms of educational programs offered to tourists and the local community. The qualitative approach is applied to understand the readiness of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in implementing sustainable tourism. The quantitative method is carried out through questionnaire distribution to tourists and local residents to identify key attractions and evaluate the effectiveness of the existing educational programs. The qualitative method involves in-depth interviews with Pokdarwis members, direct observations, and document analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the village's readiness in developing sustainable tourism.

The sampling technique used in this study includes accidental sampling, in which respondents who happen to meet the researcher can be selected as samples. This technique is applied to the tourist population. Meanwhile, all 35 Pokdarwis members are selected as samples using the total sampling technique. Total sampling is used based on Arikunto in Siregar (2022), who states that when the population is fewer than 100, the entire population may be used as the research sample. The number of tourist

samples is determined using the Lemeshow formula, which is appropriate for populations with an unknown total size (Rosyida & Priantilianingtiasari, 2023). Thus, the sample size for tourists is 96 people, distributed proportionally using proportional random sampling.

The variables in this study consist of two components: educational tourism, which comprises five indicators (teaching, education, guidance, training, and implementation), and sustainable tourism, which includes three indicators (environmental aspects, cultural aspects, and socio-cultural aspects).

Data collection techniques include observation, documentation, interviews, and questionnaires. The data analysis techniques used in this study consist of quantitative descriptive analysis, as described by (Sahara, 2012), and tourism attraction potential analysis according to the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA), 2003.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Tourism Education in Lerep Tourism Village

Educational tourism in Lerep Tourism Village is experience-based learning that is obtained directly by tourists during their visit to the village. In this study, educational tourism consists of five indicators: teaching, education, training, guidance, and implementation, all of which are experienced by tourists when they visit Lerep Tourism Village. The assessment of educational tourism in Lerep Village was conducted using a questionnaire instrument distributed to tourists. Based on the results of the study, the findings related to educational tourism in Lerep Village are described as follows. The teaching component examined in this study refers to the delivery of educational materials by tourism managers to tourists, including instruction on local cultural values and history, the use of interesting and interactive teaching methods, the enhancement of environmental awareness, and the involvement of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in providing

education to visitors. Teaching delivered to tourists can create a more meaningful experience when it is presented in a way that stimulates curiosity and engagement. Effective and memorable teaching can be observed as shown in Figure 1.

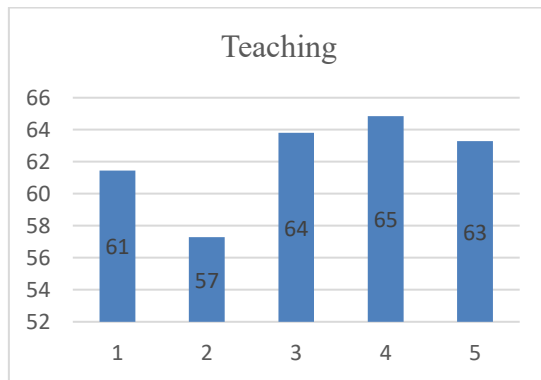


Figure 1. Bar Chart of Teaching Results

Based on Figure 1, it can be explained that the average score of the teaching indicator is 62%, which, according to the classification described in the data analysis technique section, falls into the good category. This indicates that the teaching activities conducted by the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) have been implemented effectively and have had a positive impact on tourists. Among the teaching items, the highest score was obtained by instruction related to ecotourism in increasing tourists' environmental awareness.

The education indicator in this study includes tourism programs that are able to increase public awareness of environmental conservation, the provision of information to tourists regarding local customs and traditions in Lerep Village, environmental education, the availability of educational media for tourists, and educational programs that can enhance community understanding of sustainable tourism management. Based on the questionnaire results presented in the form of a diagram, these findings can be observed in Figure 2.

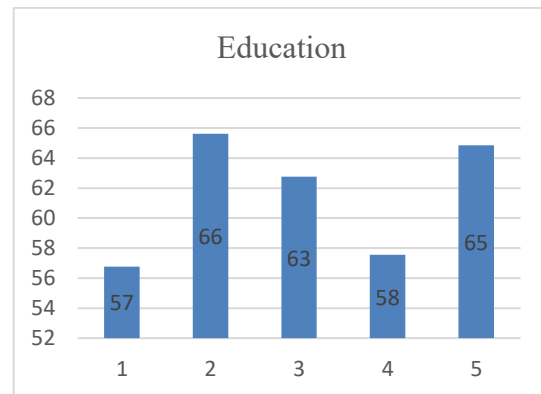


Figure 2. Bar Chart of Education Results

Based on Figure 2, it can be explained that the guidance indicator obtained an average score of 64%, which, according to the established classification criteria, falls into the good category. This criterion indicates that both tourists and local community members benefit from the guidance provided by the tourism managers during their visits and stays in Lerep Tourism Village.

The guidance indicator in this study focuses on guidance related to skills that support tourism, appropriate behavior in daily life, guidance for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), guidance to improve economic welfare, and guidance provided by the local community regarding daily life practices. Based on the distributed questionnaires, the results for the guidance indicator can be observed in Figure 3.

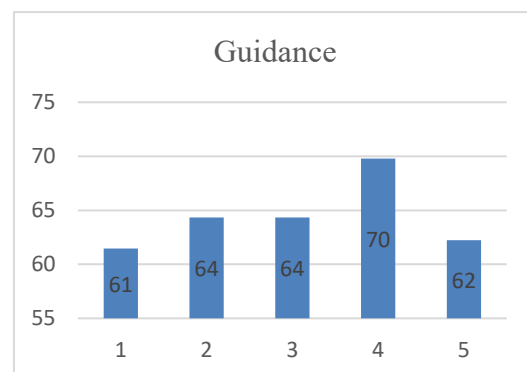


Figure 3. Bar Chart of Guidance Results

Based on Figure 3, it can be explained that the guidance indicator obtained an average score of 64%, which, according to the predetermined classification criteria, falls into the good category. This result indicates that both tourists and local community members benefit from the guidance provided by the tourism managers during their visits and stays in Lerep Tourism Village.

In this study, the scope of training includes training programs for both tourists and the local community, such as training to improve the quality of tourist services, waste management training, community skills development, as well as training activities that can be obtained by tourists, including waste processing, livestock product management, and cultural training. Based on the results of the study, the outcomes of the training indicator can be observed in Figure 4.

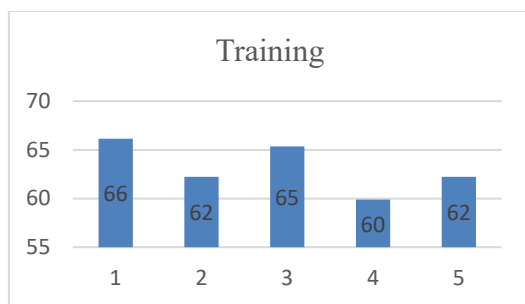


Figure 4. Bar Chart of Training Results

Based on Figure 4, it can be explained that the results for each item in the training indicator vary considerably. The highest score was obtained for the statement that tourism business actors in Lerep Tourism Village receive regular training to improve the quality of tourist services. Meanwhile, the lowest score was found for the statement that tourists who are interested can participate in short training sessions on local culture and skills in the tourism village, with a score of 60%.

The implementation of educational tourism in this study focuses on its application in daily life, changes in tourists' behavior after visiting Lerep Tourism Village, increased awareness of environmental and local cultural preservation, sustainable tourism practices, and tourism management. Implementation is achieved when tourists and community members

are present in Lerep Tourism Village and receive educational experiences that subsequently influence them to apply the knowledge and values they have gained. In this study, the results of the implementation indicator can be observed in Figure 5.

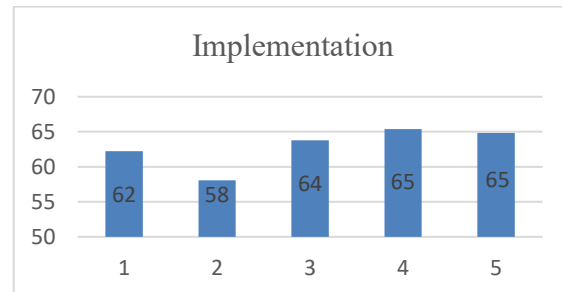


Figure 5. Bar Chart of Implementation Results

Based on Figure 5, it can be explained that the implementation carried out by both the local community and tourists obtained an average score of 63%, which, according to the established classification criteria, falls into the good category. This indicates that the educational tourism programs in Lerep Tourism Village have been successful in influencing tourists to apply the knowledge and values they acquired during their visits.

Educational tourism in Lerep Tourism Village represents a form of contextual learning that integrates direct experience with the values of local wisdom. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the five indicators of educational tourism, namely teaching, education, training, guidance, and implementation has generally been carried out well and has had a positive impact on both tourists and the local community. These findings are in line with previous studies by Pertiwi et al. and Winandar et al., which state that education integrated with local wisdom can generate positive impacts through relevant cultural understanding and social values (Pertiwi et al., 2025).

In terms of the teaching aspect, the educational activities conducted by the tourism managers have proven to enhance tourists' learning experiences. This indicates that the methods used to deliver educational content in Lerep Village are sufficiently effective. The teaching approach is not limited to the delivery of

information but also employs interactive methods that encourage tourists to become actively involved. Direct participation by tourists contributes positively and provides unique learning experiences (Laming et al., 2023). One clear example of this success is reflected in ecotourism education, which encourages tourists to understand the importance of environmental conservation. The effectiveness of teaching in Lerep Village is closely linked to the active role of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), which serves as the main facilitator in educational activities.

The guidance provided by tourism managers to both tourists and the local community serves as an important means of strengthening understanding and encouraging positive behavior toward tourism activities. This guidance includes various forms, ranging from skills training and MSME management to environmentally friendly behavior development. Such guidance not only focuses on improving technical capabilities but also instills social and cultural values that support the sustainability of the tourism village. Effective guidance contributes to the establishment of harmonious interactions between tourists and the local community (Astuti & Suyatno, 2025).

The training programs offered are not only intended for the local community but can also be attended by tourists who wish to learn traditional skills, such as waste management, livestock product processing, or local cultural practices. The study results show that regular training provided to local business actors has helped improve the quality of tourism services and strengthen the competitiveness of the destination. The education received during visits to Lerep Tourism Village has also led to positive behavioral changes, such as increased awareness of environmental conservation, local culture, and sustainable tourism practices. Tourists who previously acted only as visitors are now actively involved in maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of the tourism village. This active participation indicates that the concept of sustainable tourism has been effectively implemented (Maryani et al., 2022).

2. The Implementation of Sustainable Tourism in Lerep Tourism Village

Based on the results of observations and in-depth interviews with Pokdarwis, BUMDes managers, and community leaders in Lerep Tourism Village, the implementation of sustainable tourism has begun to take shape through approaches grounded in local potential and community participation, as described below. “The implementation of sustainable tourism in Lerep Village began with the potentials owned by the village. However, only several hamlets have been able to highlight sustainable potentials, namely Indrokilo, Lerep, and Soka Hamlets. Each hamlet has its own distinct potential according to its characteristics. These three hamlets have been designated as pilot hamlets for other hamlets to follow and develop.”

Sustainable tourism practices in Lerep Tourism Village have become an integral part of the village’s development strategy, which not only focuses on increasing the number of tourist visits but also on environmental conservation, community empowerment, and the preservation of cultural values. According to Daniel Bayu Anggara, the Head of Pokdarwis Rukun Santoso, the sustainable programs in the socio-cultural aspect are explained as follows: “This activity does not stand alone; it is part of a broader cultural education program in which tourists are also invited to interact directly with the community through activities such as learning batik-making, playing gamelan instruments, and understanding local customs. These activities serve as a means to strengthen the community’s pride in their cultural heritage while also fostering social relationships between local residents and tourists.” Based on Daniel Bayu Anggara’s explanation, community participation is a key component in the success of this culture-based tourism initiative. Nearly all tourism activities from welcoming guests and guiding tours to managing homestays involve local residents. This indicates that the people of Lerep Village are not merely objects of tourism development but have become active subjects who direct the progress of

the destination according to their values and norms.

Indrokilo Hamlet is well known for its livestock-based agro-tourism potential, particularly the processing of dairy products and palm sugar production. The sustainable tourism model in this hamlet focuses on the wise use of natural resources and community assistance in developing environmentally friendly livestock businesses. Bu Sriyatun, a community figure and member of the Women Farmers Group in Indrokilo Hamlet, explained the implementation of sustainable tourism in the hamlet as follows: “We are always guided in managing dairy cattle and their derivative products, which not only helps preserve the environment but also increases family income. The education and training have greatly helped us to grow.” Indrokilo Hamlet also applies principles of water source conservation and environmental management to ensure that agro-tourism activities do not have negative impacts on the surrounding environment.

Soka Hamlet has been designated as a climate-conscious village that has implemented sustainable tourism concepts with a focus on waste management and environmental education. The hamlet is equipped with a 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) waste management facility operated by the local community with active participation from residents. The program for recycling plastic waste into handicraft products provides economic added value while keeping the environment clean. According to Mrs. Alfiah, a community leader in Soka Hamlet and a member of the climate program organization “Sokaku Asri,” the implementation of sustainable tourism in Soka Hamlet is described as follows: “In Soka Hamlet, we involve the community in waste management and climate change mitigation education. Both visitors and residents learn together about maintaining cleanliness and utilizing waste in beneficial ways.” Soka Hamlet serves as the center of environmentally based sustainable tourism implementation in Lerep Village. Its designation as a Climate Village makes it a model for waste management and climate change mitigation education.

Lerep Hamlet serves as the center of tourism activities in Lerep Village, with strengths in cultural tourism and traditional culinary experiences. Local traditions such as iriban, sadranan, and mert desa are presented as educational attractions that introduce ancestral cultural values to visitors. In addition to cultural heritage, Lerep also has significant potential in organic agriculture, which serves as a learning medium for environmentally friendly farming practices. Training for homestay operators and MSME actors helps improve tourism service standards. According to Mr. Susiyanto, a community leader in Lerep Hamlet and the Director of BUMDes Gerbang Lentera, the implementation of sustainable tourism in Lerep Hamlet is described as follows: “In Lerep Hamlet, the community is highly enthusiastic about preserving culture and traditions, and they actively participate in every tourism activity. The development of traditional culinary products and the management of homestays offer real economic opportunities.” Lerep Hamlet continues to improve the quality of tourism services by providing training for business actors to meet sustainable tourism standards and to remain competitive in a broader tourism market.

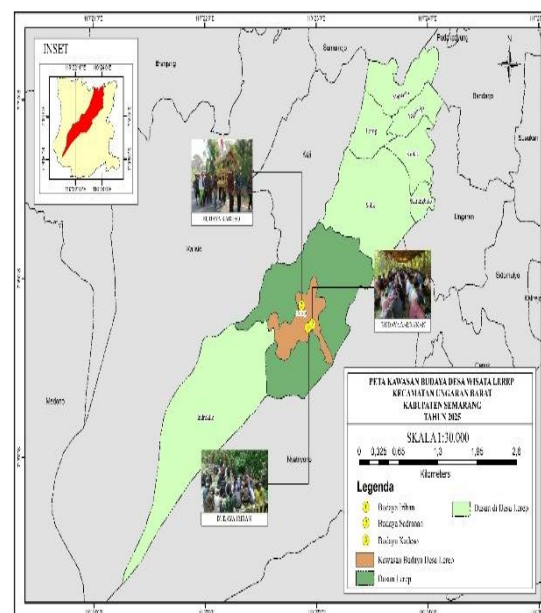


Figure 6. Cultural Area Map of Lerep Tourism Village

Tourism is utilized by the government as a development strategy to reduce poverty and promote regional development (Tian et al., 2023). The development of Lerep Tourism Village has applied the principles of sustainable tourism, which encompass environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. In the environmental aspect, waste management is carried out through waste collection by the village-owned enterprise (BUMDes), waste sorting at the TPS 3R facility, an integrated waste bank connected to the Social Security Agency for Employment (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan), organic waste composting, maggot cultivation, and plastic waste processing through the waste bank. However, several challenges remain, including limited waste transport vehicles, low community participation, and a lack of trash bins and informational signage in several locations. Go-green initiatives are also implemented through tree planting, restrictions on motorized vehicles, and environmentally friendly tourism practices such as the “Djadjanan Ndeso Tempo Doeloe” traditional market and the reduction of single-use plastics. This aligns with (Chen, 2025) who emphasizes that sustainable tourism must provide economic benefits without harming the environment. In the economic aspect, the tourism village creates business opportunities and employment through MSMEs, food stalls, tourist parking services, catering businesses, and local food suppliers. Although these provide additional income, the economic benefits remain seasonal and concentrated in Lerep Hamlet. These findings align with (Shuvo & Ahmed, 2025) and (Raihan et al., 2025), who state that tourism can create jobs and improve the local economy, although benefit distribution still requires improvement.

In the socio-cultural aspect, Lerep Tourism Village has successfully preserved local culture through the Iriban, Kadeso, and Sadranan traditions, supported by customary laws for environmental protection. Cultural tourism serves as the main attraction, as noted by (Kodas et al., 2025) and (Baghirov et al., 2025), who argue that cultural tourism can create emotional experiences for visitors and enhance their satisfaction. Cultural values in Lerep remain well

preserved because the community is actively involved as the main actors rather than merely objects of tourism (Blotongan et al., n.d.). Community participation is a key factor in the success of community-based tourism, including in planning, implementation, and evaluation (Pratt et al., 2023). However, participation is still concentrated in certain hamlets and requires strengthened leadership, resources, and community skills, as suggested by (Wu et al., 2018).

From an economic perspective, sustainable tourism has had a significant positive impact on improving community welfare. According to Susiyanto, the Director of BUMDes Gerbang Lentera, the economic connection of tourism in Lerep Village is described as follows: “Tourism in Lerep Village has made a real contribution to the community’s income, both directly and indirectly. Many residents are now involved in homestay businesses, traditional culinary services, tour guiding, and the sale of handicraft products.”

Based on this statement, tourism in Lerep Village has significantly contributed to improving the economic conditions of the local community. As the number of tourist visits increases, a shift in livelihoods has occurred, with some residents transitioning from traditional agriculture to service-oriented and creative tourism-based enterprises.

CONCLUSION

Based on respondents’ responses to the five indicators of educational tourism, the overall implementation of educational tourism in Lerep Tourism Village falls into the good category, with an average score of 63%. The highest indicator is the implementation of educational tourism (64%), indicating that direct learning activities such as livestock product processing, environmental training, and cultural practices have been carried out quite effectively. Meanwhile, the lowest indicator is guidance (62%), which suggests that mentoring for tourists and participants in educational programs still needs to be strengthened. Overall, educational

tourism in Lerep Tourism Village is able to provide contextual and meaningful learning experiences based on environmental and local cultural values, and it encourages positive behavioral changes among tourists toward environmental and cultural preservation. However, the educational programs remain non-formal, less structured, and lack a standardized curriculum. The readiness of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) is considered fairly good, but further improvements in capacity building, management system strengthening, and program structuring are still required to better support more competitive and sustainable tourism.

The implementation of sustainable tourism in Lerep Tourism Village has been carried out by integrating environmental, socio-cultural, and economic aspects based on local potential and community participation. Conservation efforts are implemented through waste management, water resource preservation, the Climate Village Program, and environmental education. In the socio-cultural aspect, the community actively preserves traditional practices and presents cultural attractions such as Kuliner Djajanan Tempo Doeloe. Meanwhile, the economic aspect is reflected in the empowerment of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the development of homestays, and tourism management through the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) and the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). Each hamlet develops its distinctive potential, such as Soka Hamlet with its environmental management focus, Indrokilo Hamlet with eco-friendly agrotourism and livestock activities, and Lerep Hamlet with traditional culture and culinary tourism. Although economic and educational benefits have been realized, challenges remain in terms of equitable benefit distribution, strengthening the capacity of Pokdarwis human resources, and optimizing digital promotion. Overall, Lerep Tourism Village has gradually and systematically implemented sustainable tourism while maintaining environmental and cultural sustainability.

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