

Integrating Tourism Policy with Socio-Economic Development in Morowali

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ABSTRACT

Tourism plays a crucial role in economic diversification and sustainable development, particularly in resource-dependent regions like Morowali and Central Sulawesi. This study examines the integration of tourism policy with socio-economic development, focusing on balancing industrial activities with environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Morowali's economy is predominantly driven by mining, which, while contributing to infrastructure and employment, has led to environmental degradation and socio-cultural disruptions. Tourism presents an alternative pathway for economic resilience by leveraging the region's natural landscapes and cultural heritage. This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions across five villages to assess tourism potential and local perceptions. Findings indicate strong community interest in eco-tourism, agro-tourism, and cultural tourism, particularly in traditional villages. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, environmental damage, governance gaps, and socio-economic disparities hinder sustainable tourism development. Key policy recommendations include establishing a comprehensive tourism master plan, enhancing community participation, promoting sustainable tourism practices, and improving infrastructure. Strategic investments in tourism can mitigate the adverse impacts of industrialization, provide alternative livelihoods, and foster cultural revitalization. Integrating tourism with environmental stewardship and inclusive governance is essential for ensuring long-term socio-economic benefits. This study underscores the importance of aligning tourism policies with local aspirations and sustainable development goals, positioning tourism as a catalyst for inclusive growth in Morowali.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism; Economic diversification; Community based tourism; Environmental conservation; Cultural preservation; Morowali; Tourism policy

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as a powerful driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and environmental awareness worldwide (Li et al., 2022; Mustafa et al., 2024). In regions like Morowali, Central Sulawesi rich in natural beauty, cultural heritage, and diverse ecosystems tourism holds immense potential to complement existing economic sectors, particularly mining and agriculture (Thung et al., 2024). However, to fully harness this potential, strategic tourism policies must be integrated with local development plans, with an emphasis on sustainability, community empowerment, and environmental stewardship. The success of sustainable tourism relies heavily on the active involvement of local communities in every stage of planning and management. This paper explores the critical role of tourism policy in fostering inclusive growth and social harmony in Morowali, with a particular focus on communities affected by industrial activities (Hafid et al., 2022).

Morowali's socio-economic dynamics are predominantly shaped by its thriving mining sector, which has brought both opportunities and challenges to local communities (Worlanyo & Jiangfeng, 2021). While mining has contributed to infrastructure development and employment, it has also led to environmental degradation, displacement of indigenous populations, and socio-cultural disruptions (Worlanyo & Jiangfeng, 2021). In such contexts, tourism can act as a counterbalance offering alternative livelihoods, promoting cultural preservation, and encouraging environmental conservation. However, this requires a coherent policy framework that aligns tourism development with the principles of sustainability, equity, and community participation (Ali et al., 2024).

Tourism policy is more than just a regulatory tool; it is a strategic framework that guides how tourism can contribute to broader development goals (Challoumis, 1983). Effective tourism policies address key areas such as destination management, infrastructure development, cultural heritage protection, environmental sustainability, and community involvement (Khan et al., 2021a). In Morowali, where the interplay between industrial activities and traditional communities is complex, tourism policies must be designed to mitigate negative externalities while maximizing socio economic benefits (Cziesielski et al., 2021). This involves identifying and leveraging the region's unique cultural and natural assets, from pristine coastal areas and marine biodiversity to indigenous customs and local crafts (Prihadi, 2024).

One of the fundamental challenges in Morowali is balancing economic growth with environmental protection and cultural integrity. The expansion of mining operations has often led to land-use conflicts, resource depletion, and environmental pollution, affecting both terrestrial and marine ecosystems (Galih et al., 2024a). These environmental issues not only threaten biodiversity but also undermine the potential for eco-tourism and sustainable tourism activities (Ivasyshyna, 2024). Therefore, tourism policy must incorporate environmental management strategies, including the conservation of natural habitats, promotion of eco-friendly practices, and restoration of degraded areas. By positioning environmental sustainability at the core of tourism development, Morowali can create resilient tourism destinations that attract environmentally conscious travelers while safeguarding its natural heritage (Roem et al., 2025).

Equally important is the role of tourism policy in promoting cultural preservation and social cohesion (Mzembe et al., 2023). Morowali is home to diverse ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, traditions, and customs. However, rapid industrialization and the influx of migrant workers have led to cultural homogenization and the erosion of traditional practices. Tourism, if managed properly, can serve as a platform for cultural revival, providing economic incentives for communities to maintain their heritage through traditional arts, crafts, festivals, and rituals (H. H. Lin et al., 2022). Policies that support cultural tourism initiatives, such as heritage trails, community-based tourism, and cultural exchange programs, can help strengthen local identities while

generating income for indigenous populations (Moric et al., 2021).

Community participation is a cornerstone of sustainable tourism development. Policies should encourage local ownership and management of tourism enterprises, ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism are equitably distributed (Moric et al., 2021). In Morowali, where many communities have experienced marginalization due to industrial activities, tourism can empower local populations by creating employment opportunities, supporting small businesses, and enhancing skills through training and capacity-building programs (Nurhidayah et al., 2023). Participatory governance mechanisms, such as community tourism boards and stakeholder forums, can facilitate inclusive decision-making processes, giving voice to local communities in shaping tourism development strategies.

Infrastructure development is another critical component of tourism policy (Moric et al., 2021). Access to reliable transportation, clean water, energy, telecommunications, and hospitality services is essential for attracting tourists and ensuring a positive visitor experience (Tiwari et al., 2022). While mining operations have led to some infrastructural improvements in Morowali, these developments are often concentrated around industrial zones and may not benefit remote communities with high tourism potential (Naryono, 2024). Integrated tourism policies should advocate for infrastructure investments that serve both tourism and local development needs, such as improving road networks to cultural sites, enhancing port facilities for marine tourism, and expanding eco-friendly accommodations in rural areas.

Moreover, tourism policies must address the economic dimensions of sustainability. Diversifying the local economy through tourism reduces dependency on extractive industries and enhances resilience to economic shocks (Khan et al., 2021b). In Morowali, nature-based tourism, such as diving, snorkeling, trekking, and wildlife observation, can attract eco-tourists seeking authentic experiences in pristine environments. Agrotourism, where visitors engage with local farming activities, and cultural tourism, focusing on indigenous traditions, offer additional avenues for economic diversification (Khanal et al., 2024). Policies that support entrepreneurship, provide access to financing, and promote tourism marketing can stimulate the growth of these sectors, contributing to

inclusive and sustainable economic development (Dias et al., 2022).

To be effective, tourism policies must be grounded in comprehensive research and stakeholder collaboration (Sánchez et al., 2021). This study aims to map the existing socio-economic, cultural, and environmental conditions in Morowali, identifying both opportunities and challenges for tourism development. This study aims to map the existing socio-economic, cultural, and environmental conditions in Morowali, identifying both opportunities and challenges for tourism development. It emphasizes the need for active involvement from the public sector, private sector, civil society, and local communities in every stage of planning and management. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data from communities directly affected by industrial activities, the study provides valuable insights into local perceptions, needs, and aspirations. The findings will inform policy recommendations that integrate sustainable, community-based approaches to tourism development, ensuring that tourism not only promotes economic growth but also serves as a catalyst for positive social and environmental change (Brooks et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of tourism policy's potential impact on the socio-economic and cultural landscape of Morowali. The methodology is designed to explore the dynamic interactions between tourism development, community empowerment, environmental sustainability, and socio-cultural preservation, particularly in areas affected by industrial activities such as mining. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical design, aiming to describe existing conditions related to tourism potential, community livelihoods, and socio-cultural dynamics, while also analyzing policy gaps and opportunities for sustainable tourism development. This approach allows for a thorough examination of both the qualitative aspects of community experiences and the quantitative data related to economic indicators, infrastructure, and environmental conditions. The study is conducted in five key villages within Morowali Regency Matarape, Sambalagi, Were'a, Lamontoli, and Mbokita which are directly or indirectly impacted by mining activities. These areas were selected due to their diverse socio-economic profiles, rich cultural

heritage, and potential for tourism development.

The data collection process integrates both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a holistic perspective. Structured questionnaires were distributed to households and local businesses in the selected villages to gather quantitative data on demographics, income levels, employment status, perceptions of tourism, and attitudes toward environmental conservation. The survey targeted a representative sample of community members, including youth, women, and indigenous groups, to capture diverse perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including Local government officials (tourism and development departments) Community leaders and indigenous elders Representatives from the mining industry Local entrepreneurs tourism operators NGOs, and environmental activists.

These interviews aimed to uncover detailed insights into community needs, existing policy frameworks, tourism opportunities, and challenges faced in implementing sustainable tourism practices. FGDs were organized in each village, involving community members from various backgrounds farmers, fishers, artisans, youth groups, and women's organizations. These discussions facilitated the exploration of collective perceptions about tourism's potential, the socio-cultural impacts of mining, and recommendations for inclusive tourism policies. FGDs also served to validate survey findings and gather qualitative data on cultural practices, traditional knowledge, and community aspirations. Researchers conducted field observations to document the physical and cultural landscape, tourism-related infrastructure, environmental conditions, and local livelihoods. This method provided contextual insights into how tourism could be integrated sustainably within the existing socio-economic fabric.

Government reports and statistical data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) Morowali Policy documents related to tourism, environmental management, and community development Academic articles, previous research studies, and reports from NGOs operating in the region Documentation from mining companies on their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs and environmental impact assessments These sources provided background information on demographic trends, economic performance, environmental issues, and existing tourism policies at the local, provincial, and national levels.

A purposive sampling method was used to select key informants for interviews and FGDs, ensuring that participants had relevant knowledge or experiences related to tourism, community development, and environmental issues. For household surveys, a stratified random sampling approach was employed to ensure representation across different demographic groups, including age, gender, occupation, and socio-economic status. The sample size for surveys was determined based on the population of each village, achieving a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$. A total of 300 respondents surveyed across five villages were selected to represent diverse perspectives of the local community, taking into account relevant demographic and socio-economic factors. In addition to the survey, we also complemented the data with 25 key informant interviews, which provided in-depth insights into the local conditions, as well as 10 focus group discussions (FGDs) designed to explore collective perspectives and social dynamics in the context of tourism and industrial activities. This combination of methods aims to generate comprehensive data and ensure more accurate triangulation of information.

Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize demographic information, income levels, employment patterns, and perceptions of tourism. Measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to present the data. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to examine relationships between variables such as tourism potential, community participation, and socio-economic well-being. This helped identify key factors influencing tourism development and its potential impacts. Interview transcripts and FGD notes were coded and analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, key issues, and emerging themes related to tourism policy, community empowerment, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. NVivo software was used to assist with coding and organizing qualitative data.

Policy documents and secondary data sources were analyzed to identify gaps in current tourism policies, assess alignment with sustainable development goals, and evaluate the effectiveness of existing community development programs. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was conducted to assess the internal and external factors influencing tourism development in Morowali. This provided a strategic

framework for formulating policy recommendations that capitalize on local strengths while addressing potential risks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Tourism has the potential to serve as a transformative force in Morowali, Central Sulawesi, by fostering economic diversification, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting environmental sustainability. While the region's economy is heavily reliant on the mining sector, this dependence has led to significant socio-economic and environmental challenges, including land-use conflicts, resource depletion, and cultural displacement. Recognizing tourism as an alternative development strategy, this study examines the opportunities and constraints in implementing sustainable tourism policies in Morowali. By analyzing socio-economic conditions, community perceptions, infrastructure gaps, and environmental concerns, the research highlights the potential for tourism to complement existing industries while ensuring inclusive growth.

The data coverage is an effort to fulfill the study needs in Ring 1, which consists of five villages located around the mining operation area and directly affected, as shown in the following map:

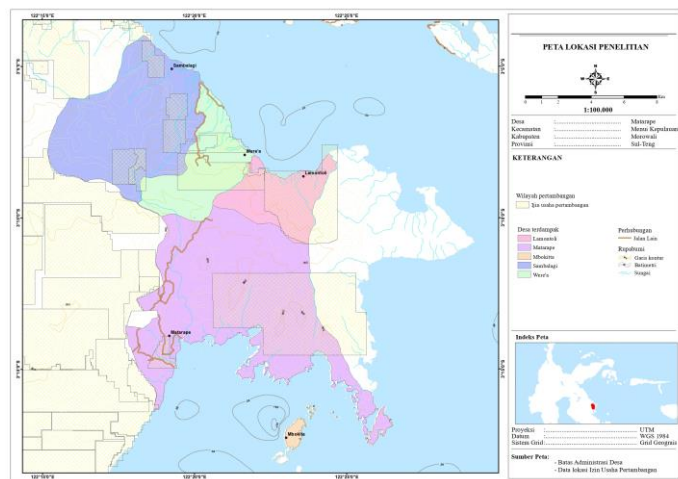


Figure 1. A map of the five villages affected directly by mining operations

Source: Secondary Data, 2024

This study will also expand into the dimension of social change to tourism development, as an implication of various cultural contact processes in socio-cultural relations. The interaction between local communities and

tourists can shape new social dynamics, influence cultural expressions, and impact traditional livelihoods. Additionally, the economic implications of tourism serve as an empirical depiction of how investment operations contribute to village communities in the sub-district. The increasing presence of tourism-related activities can create new job opportunities, promote local businesses, and enhance community welfare, while also posing challenges in maintaining cultural authenticity and environmental sustainability.

The following section presents the key findings, focusing on socio economic disparities, tourism potential, infrastructural limitations, environmental challenges, governance gaps, and opportunities for sustainable tourism development.

Table 1. Socio Economic Conditions of Local Communities

Aspect	Mining-Affected Villages (Matarape, Sambalagi)	Traditional Villages (Were'a, Lamontoli, Mbokita)
Main Income Sources	Mining-related jobs	Fishing, agriculture, small-scale trading
Employment Type	Temporary, contract-based	Self-employed, subsistence-based
Income Levels	High (due to mining wages)	Low to moderate (seasonal variability)
Economic Vulnerability	High (due to dependence on mining cycles)	High (due to natural resource depletion)
Interest in Tourism	Moderate (concerned about job stability)	High (seeking alternative income sources)

This table compares the socio-economic conditions between mining-affected and traditional villages. While mining provides higher income, it creates economic dependency and vulnerability. In contrast, traditional villages show greater interest in tourism as an alternative income source.

Table 2. Tourism Potential and Community Perceptions

Category	Key Findings	Percentage of Respondents
Natural Attractions	Pristine beaches, coral reefs, forests, islands	85% identified eco-tourism potential
Cultural Attractions	Traditional arts, crafts, local festivals, rituals	70% value cultural tourism potential
Positive Perception	Tourism as a source of new jobs and cultural preservation	65% support tourism development

Negative Perception	Fears of cultural erosion, environmental degradation	30% express concerns about tourism impacts
Willingness to Participate	Interested in community-based tourism initiatives	60% willing to engage in tourism-related activities

This table outlines the tourism potential in Morowali, highlighting natural and cultural attractions. The majority of respondents view tourism positively, though concerns about environmental and cultural impacts remain. There's a strong willingness to participate in tourism if managed sustainably.

Table 3. Infrastructure and Accessibility Challenges

Infrastructure Type	Current Condition	Impact on Tourism Development
Road Infrastructure	Poor in remote areas, unpaved roads	Limited access to tourist sites
Marine Transportation	Small boats, irregular schedules	Safety concerns, limited tourist mobility
Public Facilities	Lack of accommodations, basic amenities	Discourages overnight stays and long visits
Telecommunications	Limited network coverage in rural areas	Hinders tourism marketing and communication
Energy and Water Supply	Inconsistent electricity, water shortages	Affects tourist comfort and service quality

This table summarizes infrastructure challenges affecting tourism development in Morowali. Poor transportation, limited public facilities, and weak telecommunication networks are major barriers to attracting and sustaining tourism activities.

Table 4. Environmental Challenges Affecting Tourism Potential

Environmental Issue	Cause	Impact on Tourism
Coastal Erosion	Mining runoff, deforestation	Loss of beach tourism potential
Marine Pollution	Industrial waste, mining discharge	Damage to coral reefs, reduced biodiversity
Deforestation	Land clearing for mining roads	Loss of eco-tourism sites and wildlife habitats
Waste	Lack of proper	Decreased aesthetic

Management Issues	waste disposal	value of tourist areas
Biodiversity Decline	Habitat destruction	Reduced appeal for eco-tourism and wildlife tours

Environmental degradation due to mining activities is a critical threat to Morowali's tourism potential. Pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss affect both natural attractions and the overall sustainability of eco-tourism.

Table 5. Governance and Policy Gaps in Tourism Development

Governance Aspect	Current Status	Impact on Tourism Development
Tourism Master Plan	Absent or fragmented	Lack of strategic direction for tourism growth
Institutional Capacity	Weak local tourism agencies	Ineffective planning and promotion efforts
Policy Integration	Limited coordination with environmental and cultural bodies	Inconsistent sustainable tourism practices
Community Participation	Minimal involvement in tourism decisions	Low sense of ownership among local residents
Funding and Investment	Limited government and private investment	Inadequate infrastructure and service development

This table highlights gaps in tourism governance in Morowali. The absence of a comprehensive tourism master plan, weak institutional capacity, and minimal community involvement hinder the development of sustainable and inclusive tourism.

Table 6. Social and Cultural Impacts of Industrialization

Impact Area	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Cultural Preservation	Increased interest in cultural identity	Erosion of traditional practices in mining areas
Social Cohesion	Strengthened community ties in remote villages	Social fragmentation due to migrant influx
Population Dynamics	New cultural exchanges through migration	Rising conflicts over land and resource use
Gender Roles	Opportunities for women in tourism activities	Gender inequality persists in industrial employment
Youth Engagement	Interest in tourism-related	Disconnection from traditional values in

	entrepreneurship	urbanized areas
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Industrialization has both positive and negative effects on Morowali's social fabric. While it creates opportunities for cultural revival through tourism, it also leads to social fragmentation and the erosion of traditional values, particularly in mining dominated areas.

Table 7. Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development

Tourism Opportunity	Potential Activities	Benefits for the Community
Eco-Tourism	Snorkeling, diving, trekking, wildlife tours	Promotes environmental conservation, creates green jobs
Community-Based Tourism	Homestays, cultural workshops, guided tours	Empowers local communities, retains economic benefits locally
Agro-Tourism	Farm visits, traditional cooking classes	Diversifies income sources, preserves traditional agriculture
Cultural Heritage Tourism	Festivals, traditional performances, craft markets	Revitalizes local culture, generates cultural pride
Marine Tourism	Island hopping, boat tours, fishing experiences	Boosts coastal economies, supports sustainable fishing practices

This table outlines key opportunities for sustainable tourism in Morowali. Eco-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and community-based initiatives have the potential to diversify the local economy while preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage.

Discussions

The socio-economic disparities between mining-affected and traditional villages underscore the urgent need for economic diversification in Morowali (Joana Tannor aus Ajumako & Bonn, 2024). While mining has provided significant employment and income opportunities, it has also created economic vulnerabilities due to the sector's dependence on fluctuating global commodity prices and the temporary nature of mining contracts (Worlanyo & Jiangfeng, 2021). Tourism presents a viable alternative to reduce this economic dependency. Communities in traditional villages such as Were'a, Lamontoli, and

Mbokita showed a strong interest in tourism as an additional income source (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2021). This aligns with global trends where community-based tourism (CBT) has been effective in promoting local entrepreneurship, reducing poverty, and enhancing livelihoods in rural areas.

However, for tourism to contribute meaningfully to economic development, it requires targeted investments in capacity-building programs, such as training for hospitality management, tour guiding, and eco-tourism operations. Moreover, policies should facilitate microfinance opportunities for small businesses, enabling local entrepreneurs to establish tourism-related enterprises. This approach ensures that tourism benefits are equitably distributed and not concentrated in the hands of external investors.

One of the most significant findings is the potential for tourism to act as a catalyst for cultural preservation. Despite the socio-cultural disruptions caused by mining activities, many communities in Morowali retain rich traditions, including local festivals, traditional arts, crafts, and rituals (Junaidi, 2024).

Tourism can provide the economic incentive needed to sustain these cultural practices. For example, the revival of traditional dances, weaving techniques, and local crafts can attract cultural tourists while generating income for artisans (Cave & Dredge, 2020). Additionally, cultural exchange programs and heritage tourism initiatives can foster pride in local identities, especially among younger generations who may feel disconnected from traditional values due to industrialization.

However, there is a risk of cultural commodification, where traditions are modified to meet tourist expectations, potentially eroding their authenticity (COŞKUN, 2021). To mitigate this, tourism policies must emphasize ethical tourism practices, promoting cultural sensitivity and authenticity in tourism experiences. Communities should have control over how their culture is represented, with participatory governance structures ensuring that tourism development aligns with local values and traditions.

Environmental degradation, particularly due to mining activities, poses a significant threat to Morowali's tourism potential (Galih et al., 2024b). Issues such as coastal erosion, deforestation, and marine pollution have not only

affected local livelihoods but also diminished the natural beauty that could attract eco-tourists.

Eco tourism includes activities

Despite these challenges, Morowali's biodiversity hotspots, including the Sombori Islands and pristine coral reefs, offer tremendous potential for eco-tourism. Eco-tourism, when properly managed, can promote environmental conservation while providing economic benefits to local communities (Wartini et al., 2022). This includes activities such as: Snorkeling and diving tours focused on coral reef conservation Wildlife observation in protected forest areas Mangrove restoration programs combined with educational eco-tours (Lin, 2021).



Figure 2. Environmental Changes in the Surrounding Area
Source: Secondary Data, 2024

Tourism policies should incorporate environmental impact assessments and promote sustainable practices, such as eco-friendly accommodations, waste reduction programs, and renewable energy usage in tourism facilities (Challoumis, 1983). Furthermore, community-based environmental stewardship programs can engage local residents in conservation efforts, ensuring that tourism contributes to both environmental protection and economic development (Raschke, 2005).

The lack of basic infrastructure including roads, transportation services, telecommunications, and public facilities remains one of the most significant barriers to tourism development in Morowali (Naryono, 2024; Teuku et al., 2021a). Remote villages like Mbokita and Lamontoli face severe accessibility challenges, limiting

their ability to attract domestic and international tourists.

Improving infrastructure

Improving infrastructure is not solely the responsibility of tourism stakeholders (Achmad et al., 2023). It requires integrated planning between the tourism sector, local governments, and private investors (Pyke et al., 2018). For instance: Improved Road networks can facilitate easier access to tourist sites. Upgraded marine transportation can enhance island-hopping tourism experiences. Investment in telecommunications can support digital marketing strategies and attract tech-savvy travelers.



Figure 3. Village Infrastructure Development
 Source: Secondary Data, 2024

Tourism policies must advocate for public-private partnerships (PPPs) to finance infrastructure projects (Panadès-Estruch, 2021). Additionally, infrastructure development should follow sustainable design principles, minimizing environmental impacts while enhancing the visitor experience. The absence of a comprehensive tourism master plan and weak institutional capacity are critical gaps that hinder tourism development in Morowali (Teuku et al., 2021b). The study revealed fragmented governance structures, with minimal coordination between tourism, environmental, and cultural agencies. This lack of integration results in inconsistent policies that fail to address the complex, cross-sectoral nature of sustainable tourism.

Effective tourism governance requires

Clear regulatory frameworks that define roles and responsibilities among stakeholders Capacity building

programs for local government officials in tourism planning and management Participatory governance mechanisms that involve community members in decision-making processes (Rahmadian et al., 2023).

Establishing local tourism boards or destination management organizations (DMOs) can enhance coordination between stakeholders, ensuring that tourism development aligns with sustainable practices and community interests (Rahmadian et al., 2023).



Figure 4. Matarape Community Demonstration
 Source: Kailipost.com

Foster social cohesion and empower marginalized groups, it also carries risks, particularly in areas experiencing rapid industrialization and social change (Sánchez et al., 2024). The study identified several social risks, including: Land conflicts due to overlapping claims between mining, tourism, and indigenous community's Cultural homogenization resulting from uncontrolled tourism growth Increased cost of living in tourism hotspots, potentially displacing local residents.

To mitigate these risks, tourism policies should prioritize: Land-use planning that balances the needs of tourism, industry, and indigenous communities social impact assessments as part of tourism development projects Equity-based tourism models, such as community-owned tourism enterprises, to ensure that economic benefits are shared fairly. Despite the challenges, Morowali holds immense potential for sustainable tourism. Key opportunities for tourism development include eco-tourism, agro-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and marine tourism, all of which can leverage local resources

and promote sustainable practices. To realize these opportunities, it is essential to implement holistic tourism policies that integrate economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects while fostering collaboration across sectors and encouraging responsible investments and travel behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the potential for sustainable tourism development in Morowali, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges that shape the region's tourism landscape. The findings emphasize that while Morowali's economy is heavily reliant on the mining sector, the region possesses significant untapped potential in eco-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and community-based tourism. The rich natural landscapes, vibrant cultural traditions, and diverse ecosystems offer promising avenues for diversifying the local economy, enhancing community livelihoods, and fostering environmental conservation. One of the key conclusions is that tourism can serve as a strategic tool for promoting socio-economic resilience and reducing over-dependence on extractive industries. In villages like Were'a, Lamontoli, and Mbokita, communities have shown strong interest in engaging with tourism as an alternative income source. Conversely, mining-dominated areas such as Matarape and Sambalagi reveal economic vulnerabilities linked to fluctuating commodity markets, underscoring the need for economic diversification through tourism.

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DECLARATIONS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

All research activities were conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines to ensure confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary participation of all respondents.

INFORMED CONSENT

All participants in this study provided informed consent before their involvement. They were fully informed about

the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data used in this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author. Access to the data may be subject to ethical or legal restrictions to protect participant confidentiality.

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