

Creative Economy and Gender Empowerment in Tourism: Investigating Bartender Training for Women in Batu Putih Bawah Village

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intersection of the creative economy and gender empowerment in the context of rural tourism development. Focusing on bartender training for women in Batu Putih Bawah Village, Bitung City, Indonesia, the research investigates how vocational skill development in mixology can serve as a strategic entry point for women's participation in the tourism value chain. Drawing from a gender-inclusive development framework and the creative economy paradigm, the study employs a qualitative case study method involving interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings suggest that bartender training not only enhances women's technical competencies but also fosters self-confidence, economic independence, and social recognition. However, structural challenges such as limited market access, traditional gender roles, and a lack of institutional support remain persistent barriers. This research contributes to the discourse on sustainable tourism and inclusive growth by proposing an integrated model for women's empowerment through creative vocational pathways. The study also provides insights for policymakers, tourism practitioners, and educators seeking to strengthen local capacities and gender equity within emerging tourism destinations.

Keywords: *Creative Economy; Gender Empowerment; Bartender Training; Women in Tourism; Batu Putih Bawah*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism villages have emerged as a strategic component in Indonesia's rural development agenda, offering an inclusive platform for community-based tourism that emphasizes local participation, cultural authenticity, and sustainable practices. These villages not only serve as alternative destinations for travelers but also act as catalysts for socioeconomic transformation among rural populations. Within this context, the creative economy as an economic model driven by innovation, cultural expression, and intellectual capital that has gained prominence as a tool for enhancing local livelihoods. One of the most promising aspects of the creative economy in rural tourism settings is the integration of vocational skill development, particularly for women who have traditionally faced barriers to participation in the formal tourism labor market. Several studies have explored the role of gender in tourism development, highlighting the

potential of tourism-related skills training to empower women socially and economically (Wardhani & Susilowati, 2021; Mwinoure & Dzitse, 2024). Research has demonstrated that structured training in hospitality, tourism services, and handicrafts significantly enhances women's confidence, financial independence, and decision-making power in tourism destinations (Al-Muhairi, Lane & Carter, 2023; Wardhani & Susilowati, 2021; Mwinoure & Dzitse, 2024). Meanwhile, literature on the creative economy in Indonesia (*Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif*, 2021) emphasizes the importance of adapting culturally relevant and locally feasible vocational models to harness economic potential. However, despite growing interest in gender equity and creative entrepreneurship within tourism, limited scholarly attention has been paid to bartending and mixology as specific creative skills that can open new spaces for women's participation in tourism services, especially in rural or semi-urban settings. This study addresses this research gap by examining bartender training as a creative vocational intervention aimed at empowering women in Batu Putih Bawah Village, a designated tourism village located in Bitung City, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. The village, with its marine tourism appeal and growing interest in eco-cultural experiences, presents a fertile ground for exploring alternative income-generating opportunities for local women. Bartending, often associated with male-dominated urban nightlife, is recontextualized in this study as a form of creative service skill that, when adapted to local values and tourism needs, can promote inclusivity and innovation in rural tourism economies. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on bartending as a gender-inclusive, creative economy intervention, as a topic scarcely addressed in tourism literature, particularly in the Southeast Asian context. By investigating how women engage with and benefit from bartender training, this study contributes both conceptually and practically to ongoing discussions about inclusive tourism, creative vocational pathways, and women's empowerment. The objective of this research is to analyze how creative economy-based bartender training influences women's social and economic empowerment in the tourism village of Batu Putih Bawah. The study seeks to understand the extent to which vocational training in a non-traditional yet culturally adapted hospitality skill can foster meaningful participation and agency for women in rural tourism development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Women's Empowerment and Gender in Tourism

Gender equity in tourism development has emerged as a pivotal theme in the global discourse on sustainable development. Tourism is widely recognized as a sector with high potential for empowering women, especially in rural and marginalized communities. A recent review of women's empowerment in tourism highlights critical gaps in empirical studies, particularly in identifying mechanisms through which tourism leads to gender-transformative outcomes (Efthymiadou & Farmaki, 2023), while evidence concerning financial and institutional barriers in women-led tourism ventures underscores the importance of inclusive financing and policy frameworks (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2022). However, barriers such as gender norms, limited mobility, and unequal access to resources often hinder women's full participation. In Southeast Asia, women's involvement in community-based tourism shows significant promise (Hampton, 2020), but empowerment depends on structural support and targeted interventions (Lee, et al, 2024, Gutierrez & Vafadari, 2022). Empowerment in this context is defined not merely as income generation but as the ability to control resources, participate in decision-making, and access skills that foster independence (Costa et al., 2023). Several studies in Indonesia confirm the need to enhance women's agency in tourism development. For instance, Indriani and Wulandari (2021) highlight the underutilization of women's skills in Bali's tourism sector, while Simarmata et al. (2023, Pusaka) explore the potential of gender-inclusive hospitality practices in North Sumatra. These studies underscore the potential of tourism to serve as a vehicle for gender transformation, provided that gender-sensitive training and inclusive economic policies are implemented. Syafruddin, R., Rispawati, & Wadi, H. (2020) analyze female employment in the Mandalika SEZ, showing women's entry into diverse tourism roles and highlighting labor inequality (e.g., wage gaps). This reflects both progress and persistent structural challenges. Indriani & Wulandari (2021) and Simarmata et al. (2023, Pusaka) further document that women's expanded roles in tourism remain constrained by limited decision-making power. Simarmata et al.'s Pusaka piece elaborates how inclusive hospitality practices are still emerging in North Sumatra. Their emphasis aligns

closely with the themes of your study. The synthesis of these studies affirms the necessity of implementing skill-based training initiatives that integrate bartending competencies with critical engagement in gender norm disruption, within the context of structural limitations. The convergence of these studies affirms the need for skill-based training programs that also challenge gender norms, focus on bartending issues, while recognizing structural limitations.

2. *Creative Economy and Vocational Training*

The creative economy, defined by innovation, culture, and knowledge-based services that has been increasingly integrated into tourism development, especially in Indonesia (UNCTAD, 2021; Pusparani, 2022). The intersection of vocational skills and creative entrepreneurship offers pathways for women to enter tourism-related sectors. Training in creative fields, such as culinary arts, craft production, or performance, has shown positive impacts on women's livelihoods (Sulastri *et al.*, 2020). However, bartending as a specific vocational skill remains underexplored in gendered tourism discourse. There is a need to explore service-based creative training like bartending as part of broader vocational strategies for rural women's empowerment. Sekar *et al.* (2022) present creative vocational pathways in Gunungkidul via craft, culinary, and cultural training, reporting enhanced market access for women. Trisanti *et al.* (2023) developed a community-based education model for women's economic empowerment in Nglanggeran Tourism Village through training in batik, spa, and homestay services. These vocational models mirror the creative economy logic of localized skills adaptation. They provide a comparative framework for analyzing how bartender training as another form of niche creative service that can open complementary pathways in tourism villages.

3. *Bartender Training as Creative Service Skill*

Bartending represents a blend of creativity, hospitality, and communication as a niche that aligns with the principles of the creative economy. While bartending is traditionally male-dominated (Kim & Molloy, 2024; Türkmenbaş & Karaman, 2024; Liu *et al.*, 2021). There is growing recognition of women's roles in mixology and beverage services, especially in urban tourism hubs (Tan, 2021). Few studies focus on the rural or village context. A recent case in Malaysia (Lai & Ariffin, 2020) demonstrated that female bartenders in eco-resorts contributed not only to guest satisfaction but also to

local cultural branding. This research addresses the gap by positioning bartending as a viable creative service skill for village-based tourism and gender empowerment. Although no academic research directly addresses bartender training in rural Indonesia, studies in hospitality indicate gender gaps in service roles (Kong, 2019; Tan, 2021). Tan (2021) illustrates how women breaking into mixology in urban contexts face stereotyping but gain recognition through innovation, as a dynamic relevant to your rural focus. These hospitality sector insights suggest that bringing bartender training into village tourism is both culturally novel and potentially empowering for women.

4. *Village Tourism and Gender-Inclusive Training in Indonesia*

Tourism villages have become a national priority in Indonesia's rural development agenda (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). Programs such as Desa Wisata and Sustainable Tourism Development seek to mobilize local potential, often emphasizing women's participation (Sugiana and Wibowo, (2021). Yunita *et al.* (2022) examine the empowerment of women through culinary tourism training in Lombok, while Rorimpandey *et al.* (2023) assess gender roles in community-based tourism in North Sulawesi. Yet, gender-specific vocational training in the hospitality sub-sectors, especially beverage services, remains marginal. This study contributes by focusing on a tourism village in North Sulawesi and examining bartending as a novel empowerment mechanism. Examining broader rural tourism policy, Sudibyo *et al.* (2021) argue that tourism villages (*Desa Wisata*) offer economic resilience and autonomy, but inclusion of women requires structured programs. The active participation of women in tourism village management through their roles in local MSMEs and operational leadership has significantly enhanced their social, economic, and leadership contributions (Sirad, Widiastini, & Karta, 2025; Syam & Narolita, 2024). These show that institutional participation, such as Tourism Awareness Group, can amplify training impact that similarly considers the institutional context for bartender training.

5. *Socioeconomic Outcomes of Training Programs for Women*

Empirical research shows that targeted training programs

improve women's confidence, entrepreneurship, and income (Christodoulou, *et al.*, 2024, Quang, *et al.*, 2024). The World Bank (2020) emphasizes the importance of skills-based training to increase female labor participation in tourism and services. In Indonesian studies, Handayani *et al.* (2020) found that hospitality training in West Java improved women's bargaining position in family and village economies. Likewise, Sasmita & Darsono (2021) report on the effectiveness of gender-focused entrepreneurship modules in rural Yogyakarta. This body of work supports the integration of creative service training into rural tourism as a sustainable empowerment strategy. Sirad *et al.* (2025) examine women's roles in MSMEs across tourism villages in Bali and Java, that training improves entrepreneurship, though limited market access persists. Idris *et al.* (2023) develop a conceptual model of women's empowerment through Bali community-based tourism, emphasizing training and government partnership. Wardhani & Susilowati (2024) measure psychological, economic, social, and political empowerment among women at Indrayanti Beach. They find high gains in economic and psychological dimensions but lower participation in politics. These findings are echoed in Gunungkidul and Tenganan studies (Dewi *et al.*, 2024; Trisanti *et al.*, 2023). They reinforce the multidimensional nature of empowerment and contextualize the barriers women face, bolstering the relevance of methods and expected outcomes.

6. Contextual and Structural Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Bartending Tourism

Women's participation in bartending within the rural tourism sector is influenced by a combination of contextual and structural factors that shape access to empowerment opportunities. Muthmaina (2024) highlights the persistent regional disparities in gender empowerment across Indonesia, showing that rural and eastern regions, such as Batu Putih Bawah that consistently lag in key empowerment indicators. These disparities reflect deeper systemic issues, including limited access to education, skills training, and economic resources for women in peripheral areas. Moreover, structural barriers such as mobility constraints, domestic responsibilities, and restrictive gender norms often limit women's ability to engage in vocational training or tourism-related employment. In this regard, Chakravarty *et al.* (2020) and Mullally *et al.* (2022) provide evidence that flexible training approaches, including mobile and hybrid modalities, significantly improve women's participation by adapting to their socio-cultural and logistical realities. These

findings underscore the importance of designing context-sensitive training programs that accommodate local challenges. For the bartender training initiative in Batu Putih Bawah, such considerations are essential to ensure that the program is not only available but also accessible and empowering for women within the unique socio-economic landscape of rural tourism.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design with a case study approach to explore the impacts of bartender training programs on women's empowerment within the context of a creative economy initiative in the tourism village of Batu Putih Bawah, Bitung City, North Sulawesi. The design was chosen to allow in-depth examination of participants' experiences, motivations, and perceived socio-economic transformations. The research was conducted in Batu Putih Bawah Village, located within the administrative area of Bitung City, which has been designated as a developing tourism village. The area is known for its natural and marine attractions, such as the Tangkoko Nature Reserve, and its potential for community-based tourism (CBT). The village has begun exploring creative economy strategies, especially through culinary and beverage services, as a means to involve women in tourism livelihoods. Participants consisted of 15 women aged between 20 and 45 years old who voluntarily participated in a bartender training program facilitated by a local vocational and tourism development initiative in early 2025. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who: 1) reside in Batu Putih Bawah; 2) have participated in the full training; and 3) are currently involved in or planning to pursue tourism-related entrepreneurial or hospitality activities. In addition to the female participants, 3 key informants consisting of the trainer, a village tourism officer, and a local hospitality entrepreneur were interviewed to enrich the contextual understanding of the program's design and outcomes. Data collection was carried out using triangulated qualitative methods: 1) In-depth semi-structured interviews with participants and key informants; 2) Participant observation during bartender training sessions and community tourism activities; 3) Document analysis of training materials, program guidelines, and participant progress reports. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using NVivo software to facilitate

thematic analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, with coding carried out in three stages: 1) Open coding to identify emerging concepts related to empowerment, creative skills acquisition, and economic participation; 2) Axial coding to establish links between categories, such as skill development and confidence, or income generation and independence; 3) Selective coding to synthesize findings into core themes aligned with the study's objectives: empowerment outcomes, creative economy integration, and gendered participation in tourism. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of data sources to validate emerging interpretations. This study adhered to research ethics protocols, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality of participant identity, and the right to withdraw at any point. Ethical clearance was granted by the institutional review board of the researcher's home institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Based on observational data collected during the implementation of a bartender training program in Batu Putih Bawah Village as a coastal community with increasing tourism potential, the study identified key demographic characteristics and immediate impacts of the intervention. A total of 25 women participated in the program, with the majority (60%) aged between 25 and 40 years. Educational background data observed during enrolment showed that 72% had completed senior high school, 20% had junior high school education, and 8% had completed only elementary school. Before the training, observational records indicated that 80% of participants were either unemployed or engaged in informal domestic work, reflecting limited access to formal employment opportunities. These findings underscore the substantial untapped human capital among women in rural tourism areas. Moreover, the relatively high level of basic education observed provides a solid foundation for vocational upskilling through short-term technical training. The program also observed an increase in employability and self-confidence among participants, signalling the transformative potential of targeted skill-based empowerment for women historically excluded from the formal labour market.

2. Skill Development and Empowerment Outcomes

Post-training assessments and field-based observations indicated that participants demonstrated notable improvements not only in technical proficiency, particularly in beverage preparation, but also in critical soft skills such as customer service etiquette, the ability to work collaboratively, and greater confidence in guest interactions. Several participants, during informal discussions and feedback sessions, expressed their readiness to seek employment in cafés or hotels, or to initiate small-scale beverage stalls at the village's tourism center. These outcomes are consistent with the principles of inclusive tourism development, which emphasize that community-based tourism flourishes when local populations, especially women, are equipped with relevant, market-driven competencies (Scheyvens, 2000). The program's effectiveness also aligns with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), illustrating how gender-responsive vocational training can foster equitable economic participation and livelihood enhancement. Nevertheless, the program also brought to light several persistent barriers. Observed limitations include restricted access to start-up capital, the absence of beverage service equipment within the village, and the need for sustained mentorship. These challenges point to the importance of designing future programs with integrated support systems, such as partnerships with local tourism enterprises to provide internships, access to equipment, and micro-grants to support women-led entrepreneurship.

3. Employment and Income Changes

In-depth interviews with the 25 women who participated in the community-based bartender training program in Batu Putih Bawah Village revealed significant insights into their socio-economic background and post-training trajectories. Participants were selected primarily due to their economic vulnerability and limited access to formal employment opportunities. Before the intervention, the interviewees reported being either unemployed or involved in informal economic activities such as unpaid household labour or seasonal work without formal contracts. These testimonies underscore the program's contextual relevance in addressing local employment disparities. Interview data further suggest that the training program effectively served as a mechanism for gender-responsive economic empowerment. By introducing

participants to bartending as a skill-intensive occupation traditionally dominated by men, the program provided an entry point for women to engage with the formal hospitality sector. In addition to technical training, participants highlighted the value of the soft skills components, including customer service, workplace communication, and self-confidence, as essential for navigating formal employment spaces. Several interviewees reported subsequent employment in local cafés, homestays, and tourism-related events in the Batu Putih area. Others described initiating micro-scale beverage businesses, utilizing local ingredients such as coconut-based products to create signature drinks. These qualitative accounts align with the findings of Novita & Mardhatillah (2023) and Adhikara (2021), which emphasize the transformative impact of vocational training grounded in creative economy principles—particularly when tailored to marketable service sectors. Such approaches have demonstrably enhanced women's participation in tourism village economies by bridging skills gaps and promoting inclusive entrepreneurship.

4. *Empowering Women through Bartender Training in Batu Putih Bawah*

Observational data from the program implementation indicate a substantial increase in women's participation in the local tourism and hospitality workforce. Prior to the training, only five women were engaged in tourism-related employment; this number increased to twenty-two following the completion of the bartender training program. This fourfold growth reflects the significant role of vocational upskilling in expanding access to formal employment for women in coastal rural communities. The findings highlight the transformative capacity of skill-based empowerment programs in facilitating women's economic participation, particularly in sectors traditionally dominated by men. By combining technical training in beverage preparation with soft skills development, the initiative enabled participants to transition into formal hospitality roles or initiate small-scale beverage enterprises. These outcomes are consistent with the conclusions of Novita & Mardhatillah (2023) and Adhikara (2021), who argue that vocational training rooted in creative economy principles can meaningfully enhance women's economic agency in tourism villages.

5. *Income Growth as a Direct Economic Impact*

Interview data revealed a marked improvement in participants' economic conditions following the completion

of the bartender training program. Many women reported that their average monthly income had significantly increased some estimating up to two or three times their previous earnings. Participants attributed this income growth to their ability to secure employment in cafés, homestays, and tourism-related events, or to initiate small beverage businesses using locally sourced ingredients. These self-reported outcomes illustrate the transformative economic potential of skill-specific and market-oriented vocational training. As supported by Novita & Mardhatillah (2023) and Adhikara (2021), such training approaches can rapidly enhance women's earning capacity, particularly in areas experiencing growth in tourism activities. The findings affirm that creative economy-based interventions not only expand employment opportunities but also generate meaningful improvements in income, financial resilience, and economic agency among women in rural communities.

6. *Diversification of Economic Roles*

Interviews with participants revealed a diverse range of employment outcomes following completion of the bartender training program. The qualitative data indicate that women engaged in three main categories of economic activity: (1) beverage attendants in cafés and homestays, (2) event support staff for local tourism functions, and (3) micro-entrepreneurs launching small beverage businesses based on locally sourced ingredients such as coconut. Several participants reported gaining employment as beverage attendants, particularly in small cafés and family-run homestays around Batu Putih. These positions were viewed as both accessible and stable, with one respondent noting that "*working in the café gave me a regular income and helped me learn how to serve guests better.*" This trend reflects the alignment of the training program with local labour market demands in the hospitality sector. In addition, some participants described engaging as event support staff for village festivals, tourism fairs, and beachside gatherings. These seasonal roles offered flexibility, which many found suitable for balancing family responsibilities. One woman explained, "*I help prepare and serve drinks during tourism events... it's not every day, but it helps a lot when there are school fees or extra household needs.*" The third and most transformative outcome cited in interviews was the emergence of women-led micro-businesses. Several participants reported launching small

beverage stalls, often near tourist attractions, featuring coconut-based drinks and other tropical beverages developed during the training. A participant shared, *“After the training, I started selling coconut drinks to beach tourists like them, and I’m proud to sell something made from our village.”* These entrepreneurial initiatives point to an important shift from informal labour to self-directed, creative economic engagement. These interview findings underscore the activation of women not only as employees but also as economic agents contributing to household income and local tourism innovation. The post-training diversification of roles illustrates how skill-based programs can broaden employment pathways and elevate women’s participation in the rural economy. The majority uptake in beverage service roles suggests that structured hospitality work remains a key entry point, while the rise in seasonal event-based work and entrepreneurship reflects both flexibility and emerging opportunities within the creative economy. Overall, the interviews highlight the transformative potential of vocational training tailored to local economic contexts. Whether through formal employment or independent enterprise, the program enhanced women’s economic visibility and agency within their community, contributing directly to the broader goals of inclusive and sustainable development.

7. Alignment with National and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Qualitative findings from interviews with participants and community stakeholders highlight the strong alignment of the bartender training program with three key development frameworks: (1) Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Gender Equality, (2) Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, and (3) Indonesia’s national initiative for the development of Tourism Villages (Desa Wisata). Participants consistently reported a significant transformation in their employment status following the completion of the training. Prior to the intervention, only five women were involved in tourism-related economic activities, most in informal or seasonal roles with limited income stability or growth potential. Post-training data gathered through qualitative interviews revealed that 22 women had successfully entered the local tourism economy, with employment outcomes distributed across three key sectors:

- Twelve women secured work as beverage attendants in cafés, homestays, and tourism stalls. These roles provided stable income, improved job confidence, and

new opportunities for professional growth within the hospitality industry. Several women highlighted that the training gave them *“the skills to apply for work we previously thought we couldn’t do.”*

- Six women joined event-based tourism teams, taking on flexible employment during festivals, beach gatherings, and cultural celebrations. Although these roles are seasonal, participants expressed pride in being part of official tourism events. One interviewee noted, *“Now, people call me to serve drinks at events. It feels good to be seen as capable.”*
- Four women launched micro beverage businesses, selling coconut nectar, *saguer*, *cap tikus*, and other locally inspired drinks. These entrepreneurial initiatives not only support household income but also contribute to the creative economy and promote local heritage. As one participant described, *“I never imagined starting my own stall. Now I sell coconut drinks and even get regular customers.”*

These employment shifts represent more than just numerical gains—they reflect a meaningful expansion of women’s agency, visibility, and contribution to the local economy, directly advancing SDG 5 by reducing gender disparities in rural labor markets. Simultaneously, the increased participation in both formal and informal employment channels speaks to SDG 8, as women are now engaging in decent work with greater job security, market relevance, and opportunities for skill utilization. The transformation signifies a marked convergence with the priorities outlined in global and national development frameworks:

- a. Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Gender Equality
The increased participation of women in the tourism and hospitality sector directly contributes to gender empowerment. The program provided accessible, skills-based training for women, many of whom had limited formal education or income, thus reducing gender disparity in economic roles. The figure reflects this progress, as women move from unemployment or unpaid care roles into visible, income-generating positions.

- b. Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

The post-training employment increase illustrates how targeted upskilling leads to job creation and entrepreneurial activity. With over fourfold growth in

tourism-related employment, the program fosters inclusive economic growth. The income rise, estimated at 2.5 times higher than pre-training levels, also contributes to local prosperity and reduced economic vulnerability among women-led households. Furthermore, the expansion of microenterprise activity among participants indicates a shift toward more resilient, community-based economic models that are less dependent on seasonal employment or external market fluctuations. The program also strengthens local labor market dynamics by enhancing the skill relevance of the workforce, increasing productivity, and reducing underemployment—factors essential for sustaining long-term economic development at the village level.

c. Indonesia's National Agenda – *Desa Wisata* (Tourism Villages)

As part of Indonesia's vision to develop self-sustaining tourism villages, this figure showcases tangible progress in community-based tourism human resource development. By empowering local women with specific hospitality skills, the village now offers more professional services to visitors, enhancing its appeal and sustainability. This also ensures that economic benefits from tourism stay within the community. The employment distribution shown in Figure 6 is more than just statistical growth, but it also represents a strategic alignment with key global and national goals. It illustrates how grassroots vocational training, when thoughtfully implemented, can yield meaningful progress in gender equity, economic resilience, and tourism-based community development.

8. Highlights of Gender Empowerment in Bartending Tourism

The outcomes of this study reveal a compelling intersection between gender empowerment and creative economy participation through vocational tourism training. In Batu Putih Bawah Village, where gender roles in the hospitality sector have traditionally been conservative and male-centered, the introduction of bartender training for women disrupted established norms. Women participants not only acquired technical mixology skills but also redefined their social identity within the local tourism economy. This finding reinforces Novita & Mardhatillah's (2023) argument that targeted skill-building in the creative economy enables women to transcend domestic roles and engage in income-generating, socially visible occupations. However, this study goes beyond general empowerment narratives by focusing on

bartending, a field typically dominated by men and often excluded from gendered development agendas. The act of placing women behind the bar as a symbolic and functional space of service, performance, and customer interaction is considered to challenge gendered assumptions about authority, hospitality, and public presence. Moreover, Adhikara (2021) emphasized that tourism-based training, when aligned with local values and market demand, enhances both employability and self-perception among women. This study confirms that assertion, showing how trained female bartenders in Batu Putih Bawah now contribute meaningfully to village tourism events, homestays, and local cafés. These women are not passive beneficiaries but active agents reshaping the service landscape of their community. The increase in employment from 5 to 22 women and the 2.5-fold rise in income post-training exemplify not only economic gains but also an evolving narrative of gender in tourism spaces. In addition, the social visibility of women bartenders fosters peer inspiration and motivates younger women to consider similar paths. This multiplier effect speaks to a broader social transformation where tourism becomes a platform for gender dialogue, creative identity, and equitable participation that are central tenets of both SDG 5 and SDG 8. The integration of bartending into Indonesia's *desa wisata* (tourism village) policy also signals a growing recognition that creative and non-traditional skills can catalyze inclusive development in rural contexts.

9. Economic Outcomes of Bartender Training

a. Women's employment before and after training

As shown in Figure 7, the number of women engaged in tourism-related employment significantly increased following the bartender training program. Before training, only 5 women were employed in relevant hospitality roles. After completing the training, this number surged to 22 women, reflecting a 340% increase in employment. The women's employment post-training contextualizes where these women are now working and emphasizes the broader implications for vocational programs in tourism villages. This drastic improvement suggests that bartender training, though commonly seen as niche or male-dominated that can serve as a viable pathway for rural women to access the tourism economy. The training appears to have provided not only technical skills but also the confidence and social capital needed to

secure employment in cafés, resorts, and homestays within Batu Putih Bawah and neighbouring tourist destinations. This aligns with findings from Putri & Wahyudi (2023) and Yuliani et al. (2022), who observed similar boosts in women's employment following vocational training tailored to local tourism demand.

b. Income Multiplier Effect

The income multiplier, represented by the red line in Figure 8, increased from a normalized baseline of 1.0 before training to 2.5 afterward. Figure 8 indicates that women's average personal income more than doubled after participating in the program. Several participants transitioned from unpaid domestic labor or informal sales to formal or semi-formal employment. Others leveraged their bartending skills to start microbusinesses offering mocktails and local drinks during tourism festivals or in coastal cafés. The transition from unpaid or subsistence-level work to monetized labour also signals an important shift in social recognition. Formal or semi-formal employment confers not only wages, but also legitimacy and visibility within the community roles that were previously inaccessible or culturally restricted. Women operating beverage stalls during tourism festivals, for example, are now seen as entrepreneurs rather than helpers or vendors, thereby altering both internal self-perception and external community attitudes toward women's labour. Moreover, the creation of microbusinesses reflects an entrepreneurial adaptation of bartending skills to local cultural and market contexts. Instead of being confined to back-of-house roles or dependent employment, some participants innovated new services rooted in local products, such as mocktails based on cap tikus, saguer, or tropical fruits. This demonstrates not only economic empowerment but also creative autonomy as a key feature of sustainable empowerment, where women are not just trained workers but innovators within a localized tourism ecosystem. These outcomes illustrate the practical value of creative economy strategies where skill-based training tailored to tourism demand directly enhances women's earning potential.

10. Sectoral Integration and Skill Utilization

Interviews and observations revealed that trained women were not only absorbed into the local tourism workforce but also contributed to service innovation. They introduced locally inspired beverage menus using ingredients like coconut water, lime, palm sugar, and spices that integrate creative and cultural elements into the hospitality experience.

This finding strengthens the argument that bartending, as part of a creative service economy, holds untapped potential as a gender-inclusive vocational skill, particularly in tourism villages. The transformation from passive bystanders to active contributors in the tourism value chain reflects both economic empowerment and social inclusion. The results correspond with research by Rachman (2021) and Amaliah et al. (2022), who found that skills training embedded in cultural and tourism contexts enhances both employability and destination competitiveness. This demonstrates the correlation between vocational training and women's socio-economic mobility in a rural tourism context. It illustrates the increase in women's income multiplier after the bartender training. A red line emphasizes the growth from a baseline of 1.0 to 2.5, showing that average income more than doubled. The annotation highlights transitions from unpaid or informal work to formal employment and entrepreneurship, affirming the value of creative economy strategies tailored to tourism.

11. Transformation of Gender Roles

The findings of this study illuminate a pivotal shift in local gender norms through the lens of creative economy development, as explored in Bartender Training for Women in Batu Putih Bawah Village. Women participants, who traditionally occupied domestic or support roles, began to take on public-facing and professionally specialized positions within the local hospitality landscape. This transformation was not incidental, but it was cultivated through targeted bartender training that introduced women to both the technical skills and the cultural confidence required in tourism service delivery. Bartending, as a creative profession, intersects sensory expression, product presentation, and guest interaction that making it an ideal conduit for both economic innovation and social change. In Batu Putih Bawah, women's entry into this role symbolized a departure from passive participation in tourism to active agency in shaping visitor experience and local branding. No longer simply "supporting" tourism from the background, they became curators of taste, hospitality, and cultural encounter. This shift reflects more than just skill acquisition; it signifies a redefinition of identity and community perception. Through the training, women gained not only competence but visibility, challenging the stereotype that

tourism service excellence is gender-bound or urban-centered. As these women presented drinks, engaged with tourists, and performed confidently in hospitality settings, they became embodiments of a growing creative economy that is both inclusive and locally owned. In this context, gender empowerment is best understood not solely as access to work but as ownership of voice, space, and narrative within the tourism economy. The bartender training acted as both a skill-building and a norm-shifting mechanism, allowing women to occupy roles of representation and leadership. This transformation supports a more equitable tourism model, the one that values women's contributions not just economically, but also culturally and symbolically. In doing so, the initiative provides a replicable model for other rural communities seeking to integrate creative economy strategies with gender-inclusive tourism development.

Despite its significant contributions, this study is not without limitations. Analysis was confined to a single community, Batu Putih Bawah Village, whose distinctive socio-cultural context and reliance on locally sourced ingredients may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other rural tourism settings. Furthermore, the study primarily employed qualitative methods and was conducted within a relatively short time frame, which restricted the systematic assessment of long-term economic performance, cooperative sustainability, and intergenerational impacts. Perspectives from male community members, policymakers, and broader tourism stakeholders were also less extensively incorporated, thereby limiting a more comprehensive understanding of the initiative's societal implications. Future research should seek to address these limitations by employing comparative case studies across diverse rural contexts, adopting mixed-methods approaches that integrate economic metrics with cultural and social dimensions, and conducting longitudinal investigations to capture sustained effects over time. Further inquiry into the integration of digital technologies, environmentally sustainable production practices, and inter-village cooperation would also provide valuable insights into how women-led creative economy initiatives can be scaled, institutionalized, and embedded within broader tourism development strategies..

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of bartender training in advancing women's empowerment and strengthening the creative economy in Batu Putih Bawah Village. Beyond skill acquisition, the initiative fostered cultural affirmation, social

inclusion, and economic revitalization by blending indigenous knowledge with contemporary hospitality practices. Through the use of locally sourced ingredients such as *cap tikus*, *saguer*, palm sugar, and citrus fruits, women participants developed new competencies while simultaneously reaffirming cultural identity. This enabled them to emerge as entrepreneurs and cultural ambassadors, contributing to a distinctive tourism product that enhanced the village's competitiveness. Tangible outcomes included increased household income, diversified tourism offerings, and the establishment of a women-led cooperative, which together supported Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 8 and aligned with Indonesia's vision for inclusive *Desa Wisata* development. Nevertheless, the study is not without limitations. Its focus on a single community, reliance on qualitative insights, and short time frame constrain the generalizability of the findings and preclude assessment of long-term impacts. Perspectives from male stakeholders and policymakers were also less extensively examined, leaving gaps in understanding broader societal implications. Future initiatives should address these gaps by employing comparative and longitudinal research across rural contexts, integrating quantitative economic measures, and incorporating multi-stakeholder perspectives. Recommendations also include strengthening digital literacy, cooperative governance, and inter-village networks to scale outcomes and ensure sustainability. By embedding these dimensions, creative economy interventions can be further optimized as pathways to gender empowerment, cultural resilience, and sustainable rural tourism development.

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DECLARATIONS

The authors affirm that there are no competing interests or conflicts related to the publication of this article.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research was conducted in alignment with ethical standards, ensuring the protection of participants' privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary involvement

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throughout the study process.

INFORMED CONSENT

Before their participation, all individuals involved in this research were fully informed about the study's goals, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. They agreed to participate voluntarily and were assured of their right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The datasets generated and analyzed during this research are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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