



Women's Empowerment Model Based on Cultural Literature to Realize Tourism Aware Villages in Sustainable Development

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Abstract: The aim of this research is the theoretical development of cultural values to understand the unique human differences from the women's empowerment approach, implementing strengthening of the cultural literacy-based women's empowerment model in order to create a tourism-aware village in sustainable development. Employing a virtual ethnographic approach, the study involved an online search for digital literacy materials related to women's empowerment and literacy, applied specifically to women residing in the Serdang Bedagai tourist area. The model applied here blends with virtual data to derive contemporary findings. The empowerment model integrates educational, cultural, and health therapies to bolster literacy awareness and foster development, particularly targeting students in the Serdang Bedagai area. Educational therapy trains women in providing training on how to provide special services to tourists from the country and abroad. When cultural therapy is applied, it is adapted to the local culture through the introduction and training of rhymes and traditional Malay games. Furthermore, for health therapy, women are trained to do traditional kuduk, which can be developed in the Serdang Bedagai tourism area.

Keywords: Empowerment, Women, Cultural Literature, Literacy, Sustainable Development, Therapy

1. Introduction

Development, especially tourism, constitutes a fundamental asset for a country (Rasool et al., 2021). A nation's progress is reflected in its supporting programs, particularly in promoting the tourism sector (Munanura et al., 2021). This aligns with the goals outlined in the Nawacita of the Indonesian President, specifically number five, which aims to enhance the quality of human life (Nopiyan & Wirawan, 2021). The president's nawacita emphasizes the welfare of the community through various programs, reflecting a commitment to this factor. Amid the global era and the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Indonesian government actively pursues the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program, notably the Sustainable Indonesia initiative—a globally applicable, non-binding pact (Grainger-Brown & Malekpour, 2019).

The implementation of the SDGs commenced with a conference in New York from September 25-27, 2015, attended by 193 nations. It established 17 SDGs, and this study centers on SDG number five—gender equality. The goal is to attain full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women, men, youths, and individuals with disabilities, along with ensuring equal pay for equal work (Rai et al., 2019).

Presidential Decree No. 59/2017 mandates the Indonesian government's commitment to achieving the SDGs' objectives. It stresses alignment with the national long-term and medium-term development plans. Several Indonesian women's movements strive for similar objectives as the SDGs, aiming to enhance the social and economic status of women (Bayeh, 2016).

According to data from the Ministry of National Development Planning (2011), the population stood at 58 million, including 28 million men and 35 million women, constituting a workforce of 68%. Male participation in the labour force is higher than that of females, at 83% and 54%, respectively, indicating significantly lower female participation (Banerjee, 2019). This disparity in participation stems from societal sti-

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gmas, like perceiving women as weaker or more suited only for traditional domestic roles. The role of women in supporting development programs, particularly in the tourism sector, is pivotal in addressing poverty issues, especially in marginalized areas distant from urban centers (Cave & Kilic, 2010). This aligns with the government's emphasis on women's empowerment programs (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021). Women's empowerment involves enhancing awareness and capacity building (Eger et al., 2018), aiming for women's independence and the realization of their potential (Pullen & Vachhani, 2021) to support sustainable development initiatives (Wati et al., 2021). Indonesia has implemented various strategies to synergize and empower women, including gender mainstreaming in collaborative development efforts across government sectors (Rawluszko, 2019).

The implementation of gender-responsive development is not merely through regulations and policies but also through substantial movements and changes in societal mindsets (Anderson et al., 2019). Policies are built on recognizing the role of women and integrating social protection into poverty alleviation efforts in Indonesia (Fitritia & Matsuyuki, 2022). Indonesia's national development vision underscores the pivotal role of women in poverty alleviation, economic growth, and sustainable development (Mohamed et al., 2019).

Indonesia faces critical issues with poverty despite its abundant natural resources and rich cultural diversity, making it an attractive destination for other countries. However, its tourism sector management lags behind neighboring nations. North Sumatra Province, particularly Serdang Bedagai Regency, possesses potential natural resources for tourism development, including its coastal areas and distinctive Malay culture.

The foremost issue in the Serdang Bedagai area's tourism sector is the inadequate involvement of women (Achu, 2016). Existing programs often overlook women's participation, resulting in a lack of cultural awareness among stakeholders, specifically in engaging women sustainably within the tourism sector (Arajo-Vila et al., 2021). Efforts to empower women have yet to impact the tourism sector or foster tourism-literate communities supporting sustainable development (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). Thus, the focus of this research lies in formulating policy strategies for women's empowerment models to develop tourism-literate villages. Cultural literacy programs are fundamental to accelerate tourism sector development in Serdang Bedagai Regency and align with government objectives oriented toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study's findings emphasize the necessity of strengthening women's empowerment models to formulate policies for the development of tourism-aware villages.

Based on the problem, it raises two important questions that can be answered by researchers from the findings, including: a) How can the practice of empowering women based on cultural literacy to create a tourism-aware village in sustainable development increase the development of the tourism sector; b) What are the strategies for empowering women to support conscious village tourism through a cultural literacy-based strengthening model for sustainable development.

An important contribution to this research can provide opportunities to increase the capacity of women in managing local tourism businesses, organize tourist attractions that can contribute to helping environmental development, and strengthen women's involvement in formulating local tourism development policies that can attract foreign tourists. Theoretically, this research can formulate an important study on the involvement of women in the local tourism sector, strengthening the role of women in the public sector through a feminist theory approach, women's empowerment, and cultural literacy to provide a framework involving women as the main subject in decision-making. This research can find new developments in developing tourism areas where previous studies have not revealed the involvement of women in participating so that people in these areas can be independent and can reduce poverty. This research will increase people's literacy regarding their local culture so that it can contribute to preventing the weakness of culturally illiterate people in implementing sustainable development. This effort is to increase the independence of women in the tourism development sector.

2. Literature Review

This research uses literature reviews from previous authors to help strengthen and support each research process regarding the Cultural Literature-Based Women's Empowerment Model in Sustainable Development.

2.1. Women's Empowerment and SDGs

Through the participation of women, especially housewives, tourism-aware villages can be formed, which of course, has an impact on the economic independence of village communities. Women's empowerment can have an impact on the economic growth of society (El-Manhaly et al, 2024). Women's empowerment through MSMEs encourages the formation of reviving villages and emphasizes efforts for economic independence in villages by outlining the roles and functions of women through the application of relevant models, which can certainly be used as a government policy formulation (Manurung, 2023). In line with what Ramonita (2013) stated, explaining that women's empowerment is an effort for gender awareness and women's independence in implementing sustainable development. This study actually shows the gender aspect, which is the balance of the roles of men and women in developing aspects of tourism, but the needs of tourism areas are not only oriented towards the concept and implementation of theory. In this research, the role of women is more dominant and emphasized in the model applied because it can facilitate the acceleration of regional tourism development. Efforts to empower

women and culture independently and have an impact on the sustainability of tourism areas and economic prosperity by training women as a strategy to improve family welfare (Kumari, 2022; Iriani, 2023).

The efforts that can be made to develop sustainable tourism villages are by taking a spatial approach, a sectoral approach through increasing Village-Owned Enterprises, utilizing human resources, and developing resources to involve village communities in managing local potential and utilizing information technology to improve service quality, transparency, and accountability (Purnomo, 2020). These studies have the same pattern and objectives in encouraging efforts to develop tourist villages, but have different functions and models developed. The similarity is an empowerment model that is integrated with sustainable village development planning. Meanwhile, theoretically and methodologically, this research can complement the cultural literature-based women's empowerment model to create tourism-aware villages in sustainable development by applying three elements that are implemented through therapy for women in tourist areas through active participation and in-depth interviews, and implemented in the prepared model. The difference lies in the special subject that involves women and can be applied to tourist villages that have not developed sustainably and research regarding the application of this model is still limited. Therefore, it can have an impact on the sustainability of the development of tourist villages that are unable to develop tourist villages sustainably and can complement similar research.

2.2. Cultural Literacy and Tourism Aware Village Development

Cultural preservation is a driving factor for sustainable village progress to develop tourism-conscious villages. The impact of strengthening villages' awareness of sustainable tourism can be implemented in households at tourist locations by strengthening community cultural literacy. The use of tangible cultural resources and intangible cultural heritage to develop rural tourism encourages changes in household livelihood strategies. This can increase the financial, human, and social capital of local communities (Ma et al, 2021). The strategy to encourage the development of tourism-aware villages in previous research was carried out by tourism-aware groups by involving and training the community to become competent and qualified workers. Tourism awareness groups face obstacles in involving and training community members to become competent and qualified workers in the tourism sector, such as tour guides, accommodation managers, and culinary entrepreneurs (Husin and Sari, 2023).

Development in the tourism sector certainly has an impact on improving the economy of communities in tourist areas. Participation in development to realize community independence in the tourism sector in this research was carried out through the involvement of women who work as housewives through community empowerment activities. This is also in line with Febrianto's (2022) statement explaining that the development of tourist villages can be done by forming tourism awareness groups that offer tourist attractions through empowerment activities. To achieve a tourism-aware village, of course, cooperation from various stakeholders is needed. This statement was also reinforced by Arida (2019), who explained that the community empowerment model in planning tourist villages can encourage the development of tourist villages and provide a way out for developing tourist villages involving traditional leaders and village offices.

3. Methodology

The research method plays a crucial role in any study. In this particular study, a qualitative research method was employed, utilizing a virtual ethnographic approach. "Virtual ethnography" is a methodology aimed at exploring the internet and investigating its users (Hine, 2000). Researchers must adhere to research ethical principles and be prepared to confidently engage in both offline and online communities (Caliandro, 2018). Effective interpersonal communication skills in cyberspace are pivotal in determining researchers' acceptance within these communities, thereby necessitating a constant honing and enhancement of communication abilities for seamless engagement in research activities. This skill set is vital not only in formulating and refining research queries but also in interacting with community members.

Researchers need to exercise discretion and adhere to observation guidelines, knowing what is appropriate or not during observations. While they aim to comprehend the community's culture, it's crucial to maintain a degree of detachment and realization of their role as researchers. The virtual world mirrors the dynamism of real-life social interactions, requiring researchers to employ various strategies to gather data effectively.

This study adopts a virtual ethnographic approach, focusing on extracting and collecting data through comprehensive observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation retrieval. Although primarily conducted within an online community, researchers have the flexibility to conduct offline data collection for a holistic exploration if informants consent. The key stages involve: (1) in-depth identification of informants, (2) active communication with the public to determine access times, (3) establishing intensive contact with informants, (4) conducting in-depth interviews, and (5) maintaining detailed ethnographic notes.

At this stage, researchers are involved in implementing the model given to the community by participating in activities to educate the community in tourism management, helping prepare concepts that are demonstrated to visitors to introduce the cultural characteristics of the local wisdom of the tourist spot and participating in providing examples of how to attract visitors through health programs. . The process of adapting to society is also carried

out actively and structured for 6 months and evaluates the implementation of the model every 4 months which is carried out both online and offline.

The initial stage of identifying informants in-depth aims to secure more precise and naturalistic data. The authenticity of the informants' responses greatly influences the accuracy of this study's data. In virtual ethnographic research, direct and in-depth communication is essential to ensure the validity and integrity of the obtained data. The practice of conducting in-depth interviews serves as a triangulation of data, enhancing the research's credibility by obtaining genuine and reliable information. The meticulous recording of ethnographic notes is imperative in this research to produce concrete and detailed findings.

The relationship between data collection through comprehensive observation and in-depth interviews helps in efforts to implement the women's empowerment model and can bridge communication with the village government in developing strategies for the tourism area. The cultural literature-based women's empowerment model is implemented through education, health and cultural therapy and the results are obtained from the interviews conducted. Observation and interview data was taken from 10 housewives who were involved in the empowerment model training. Determining informants and sampling based on a purposive sampling technique to strengthen the implementation of the model that has been designed so that it can produce data as a basis for follow-up monitoring and evaluation of the model that has been implemented with the community and partners.

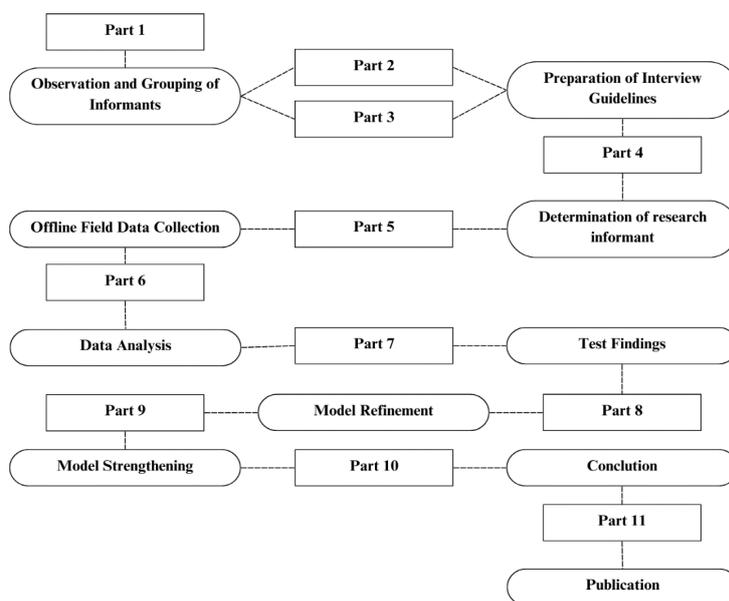


Figure 1: Flow Chart of Research
Sources: Process by Researcher (2023)

3.1 Data Analysis

The data collection techniques employed in this research included observation and both online and offline interviews with informants and references from various indicators supporting research accomplishments in the field, along with an overview of literature studies. The direct interviews were conducted face-to-face, online, or offline without representation, aiming to acquire more relevant and reliable information. Following this, data collection utilized research instruments in the form of question lists (question models) to be presented to informants. Through these inquiries and subsequent answers, more focused questions were formulated to enhance reporting outcomes. Subsequently, an analysis was conducted, involving a process of conjecture and provisional consideration, wherein the data required verification and re-examination to ascertain actual facts. After testing and deriving confirmed facts, the research findings were summarized concerning the research model application, and the results continued to be cross-checked for validity through interviews and similar means.

The empowerment of women is pivotal to supporting and expediting the attainment of a quality life and fostering gender equality in all fields or sectors (Alquwez et al., 2021). The success of women's empowerment can be gauged through several indicators:

- i. Provision of adequate facilities supporting women's pursuit of education.
- ii. Increased participation and enthusiasm of women in acquiring education and teaching for themselves.
- iii. Enhanced opportunities for women to develop careers by reaching higher education levels, similar to men.
- iv. Augmented representation of women in legislative, executive, and government institutions.
- v. Heightened involvement of women activists in campaigns advocating for women's education and empowerment.

Women's empowerment can be achieved through an awareness-building process. Women are expected to critically analyze the community atmosphere, master discriminatory practices that describe social constructions (Usta et al., 2016), and differentiate between natural and gender roles (Hu & Cheung, 2021). By providing women with information during the awareness process, through learning, training, and motivation, they can understand their identity, gain confidence, make informed decisions, advocate for themselves, take on leadership roles, and motivate change to rectify situations for a fairer share in accordance with common human values.

The affairs of women's empowerment and child protection are currently located at the base of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection), the department which has the task of carrying out affairs in the field of women's empowerment and child protection in the government to assist the President in administering the country's government with the task of as follows:

- i. Formulation and establishment of policies in the field of women's empowerment and child protection
- ii. Coordination and synchronisation of policy implementation in the fields of women's empowerment and child protection
- iii. Management of state property and wealth, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection.
- iv. Supervision the implementation of tasks in the area of the Department of Women's Empowerment and child protection

The research area implements a model consisting of three stages: educational therapy, cultural therapy, and health therapy to empower women. This model reinforces the resilience of independent women and fosters competitiveness (Sudirman et al., 2021) in tourism development. Assisting women in tourist areas, particularly coastal regions, requires a clear and community-accepted concept, especially among women in these areas. The challenges posed by low education levels (Haryana, 2020) and a poor economy in coastal tourism areas call for strategies to educate local communities, particularly women. Implementing activities such as educational therapy aims to enhance sustainable development in tourism zones (Korez-Vide, 2013). The community is directed through stages involving providing digital insights about tourism services both online and offline, training women in public speaking and adaptability to visitors, and assisting women in conceptualizing and fostering creativity to achieve independence and sustainable development in tourism areas (Richards, 2020).

The following illustrates the activities conducted through educational therapy for the community, particularly women in the area.



Figure 2: Women's educational therapy.



Figure 3: Educational therapy directly shows tourism potential.

Furthermore, the application of cultural and health therapy models as an effort to encourage women to develop literacy to support sustainable development programs and carry out tourism development (Padin Fabeiro et al., 2013), especially in the Serdang Bedagai area.



Figure 4: Cultural therapy through arrogant beach play.



Figure 5: Cultural therapy by learning rhymes with local cultural clothes.

4. Multiple Discussion

This article explains that the study of women's empowerment based on cultural literature with a model through 3 program therapies for developing tourist areas can offer the right program to the government as an effort to

develop tourist areas that are not yet developed and sustainable. Programs are given to women who are not productive but can develop tourist areas through strengthening literacy and urging the government to follow up as an appropriate program to implement. Involvement of housewives, community leaders, communities, partners and local government to strengthen the implementation of models in sustainable policy development.

This research is a part of the applied research initiatives within the Anthropology Education Study Program, involving students in research activities. It significantly contributes to studies on women's anthropology, gender studies, and regional autonomy regarding women. In this study, there is a subsequent need for a specialized investigation focusing on enhancing digital literacy platforms. This will involve training individuals to acclimate to the virtual world, particularly in promoting tourism areas worldwide (Adeyinka-Ojo et al., 2020).

Research involving research subjects through a therapeutic model in implementation carried out in the Serdang Bedagai area during the COVID-19 era had a positive impact and built intense collaboration between them. This model is considered appropriate for developing tourism in the Serdang Bedagai government area with community leaders through functional collaboration and assisting with management on media platforms) and can reveal tourism development problems that have occurred so far during the COVID-19 crisis and its sustainability. The cultural literacy-based women's empowerment model that has been carried out by housewives and in collaboration with the local government, especially for developing tourism potential, although not yet optimal, has been carried out quite well and is applicable, and has had an impact on the gradual introduction of regional specialities. This condition shows changes that the women's empowerment program, especially housewives in Serdang Bedagai, has been successful in building a tourist village area that is adaptive and maintains its sustainability.

The women's empowerment model implemented in this research is geared towards reinforcing the resilience of independent women and fostering competitiveness in local tourism development. Assisting women in tourism, especially in coastal areas, is a nuanced activity that requires a clear concept, especially within the community. This research holds the potential to contribute to local governments, particularly in the Department of Tourism, for the advancement of tourism development, enticing tourists to the area. The model applied within the research encompasses three stages: (1) educational therapy, (2) cultural therapy, and (3) health therapy.

Research applying this model involving women as housewives increases understanding of women in the tourism area. The program achievements of the new model can be applied as a reference as a strategy for developing facilities in tourism areas. These findings should complement previous findings from previous research results. However, this study has limitations in the context of formulating research results that obtain results in numbers and percentages to measure the success of the model that has been tested. However, the dominant activity carried out is data mining through in-depth interviews online and offline based on virtual ethnographic analysis as a reference which can help formulate a sustainable development policy, especially in tourism areas. Based on the findings from the applied model, it can be concluded that the application of this model can have an impact on the sustainable development of tourism areas, especially areas that still maintain local culture. Based on the findings from the application of the model presented, it can be revealed that to develop tourism areas, innovation is needed that is applied to similar tourism areas and programmed based on the characteristics of the area. This innovation is through a model of strengthening women's empowerment which is linked to the application of local culture in tourist areas. In implementing this model, arrangements are needed in institutionally organized women's empowerment groups, making it easier for the community and partnering with local governments for sustainable development.

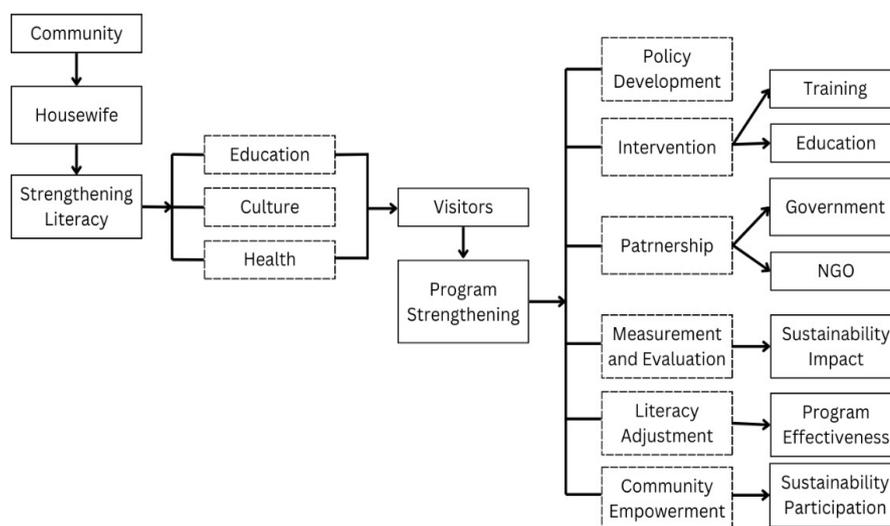


Figure 6: Implementation of Women's Empowerment Model Based on Cultural Literature

5. Study Implications and Future Research

This research contributes significantly to policy directions that could potentially bring about changes in the development of tourism in the area. Managing tourist areas rooted in regional uniqueness has the potential to capture tourists' interest in visiting exotic destinations by showcasing their distinctiveness and natural assets. The model developed in this study serves as a foundation for both theoretical and practical implications and aids in formulating government regulations.

Future research will focus more on community involvement, gender responsive programs, and building a network of media platforms so that tourism will develop more and have significant sustainability on the impact of tourism management that is culturally friendly and unique to the local wisdom of local communities. The social, economic and cultural implications in this research show that building educational, cultural and health awareness by implementing the women's empowerment model is more effective and can help implement synergistic cooperation and accelerate tourism development and restore tourism conditions, especially involving local governments, NGOs and communities, society and various parties. The implications of social, cultural and economic values for tourism development in implementing the women's empowerment model is research that uses cultural literacy in implementing tourist village development. A cultural literacy-based women's empowerment development model that emphasizes local cultural contexts and digital-based networks for further development by future researchers.

In the research and implementation of a sustainable women's empowerment model, more intensive community assistance is strengthened and the involvement of a government that takes sides and is fully involved in developing tourism potential by preserving local wisdom becomes an urgent tourism competitiveness. On the other hand, media networks are further strengthened to play an important role in the development of sustainable tourist areas.

This research could be further enhanced by refining the model presented herein. Government decision-making that incorporates insights from this study and formulate policies will significantly impact bolstering development to address the challenges outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the future. The policy framework derived from the presented model will serve as a cornerstone for the government's future management of tourism, particularly in coastal areas, emphasizing the potential of local culture to allure visitors. Future development of this research could involve creating an application aimed at introducing tourist areas to foreign countries.

6. Conclusions

This research focuses on collaboration between researchers and informants, such as housewives, community leaders, communities, partners and the government of Serdang Bedagai Regency. As an ethnographer in women's empowerment, the researcher introduces and facilitates housewives and communities to apply educational, cultural and health therapy models in building community participation in developing environmentally friendly tourist areas. Researcher assistance through direct adaptation, and through conventional media to housewives and the community so that changes towards a culturally aware society can be seen to increase tourism in the region and strengthen the sustainability of women's independence for the SDGs. Based on the findings of the research and its innovative aspects, this study has formulated a women's empowerment model designed to shape policy strategies in the development of tourism-aware villages. Cultural literacy programs are fundamental in expediting growth within the tourism sector of Serdang Bedagai Regency, aligning with government initiatives directed towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The empowerment model integrates educational, cultural, and health therapies aimed at enhancing literacy skills to expedite development, particularly for students in the Serdang Bedagai area.

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