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Development of Community-Based Tourism of Culinary: A Case Study of Lembah Desa Pulutan, Pulutan Village, Wonosari District, Gunungkidul Regency

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ABSTRACT

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has become an essential approach in destination development, particularly in rural areas. This study aims to analyze the implementation of CBT principles in the development of culinary attractions in Lembah Desa Pulutan, Klaten, Central Java. The research employed a qualitative case study approach, using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The informants included destination managers (BUMDES and Pokdarwis), culinary stall owners, visitors, and local government representatives. The findings reveal that 25 out of 26 stalls are locally owned culinary businesses with an average monthly profit of IDR 2,500,000, positioning food and beverages as the main attraction of the destination. Community participation is reflected in economic, cultural, and decision-making aspects, although political involvement and destination branding remain suboptimal. Environmental sustainability is supported by rice–fish farming (*mina padi*) and waste management practices, while cultural identity is strengthened through traditional art performances in *gejog lesung*. However, the destination lacks a strong culinary narrative and a well-structured branding strategy. The study concludes that CBT-based culinary tourism development in Pulutan has provided direct economic benefits to the Community but requires capacity building, product innovation, and digital marketing strategies to enhance its competitiveness as a sustainable culinary tourism destination.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism development in rural areas has increasingly emphasized the importance of Community involvement, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as an alternative model that positions local communities as active stakeholders, ensuring that tourism generates both economic and social benefits (Murphy, 1985; Suansri, 2003; Scheyvens, 2011). Within this framework, culinary tourism has gained growing attention as a strategic tool to strengthen Community empowerment and enhance destination competitiveness. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2019, 2021) highlights that gastronomy tourism is not only a driver of local economic growth but also a means to preserve culinary heritage and create authentic tourist experiences.

In Indonesia, CBT-based tourism has been widely applied, particularly in Lembah Desa Pulutan tourism programs (desa wisata). Several studies demonstrate the effectiveness of CBT in empowering local communities and creating sustainable destinations. For example, Hermawati (2020) found that Desa Nglanggeran Tourism successfully combined cultural preservation with economic benefits, while Siahaan et al. (2023) showed that Community participation in Toba contributed to social cohesion and destination sustainability. Similarly, Permatasari (2022) emphasized that CBT in Bali enabled inclusive decision-making and promoted sustainable rural tourism. Parallel to these developments, culinary tourism has become an important and growing sector. Pramezwary et al. (2021) revealed that culinary and shopping tourism significantly enhance urban tourism competitiveness in Bandung, particularly when supported by local entrepreneurship and digital marketing. Okumus, Kock, and Scantlebury (2013) also argued that culinary tourism enriches tourist experiences and contributes to destination branding through the use of local food products. More recent studies reinforce this perspective: Richards (2021) stressed that food is both a cultural performance and a medium of identity, while Cankül et al. (2024) demonstrated that gastronomic experiences influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the overall image of a destination. In West Sumatra, for instance, the Community's active involvement in maintaining traditional culinary practices not only enhances tourism but also strengthens cultural identity and creates job opportunities (Novesar & Hafid, 2024). In Ubud, local readiness to participate in gastronomy tourism is evident, with Community efforts needing enhancement to fully leverage their culinary potential (Tirtawati, 2023). Furthermore, the co-creation of local dishes in slow cities demonstrates how Community engagement can revitalize regional identity and attract tourists, thereby fostering sustainable tourism (Emmendoerfer et al., 2023).

Community empowerment in various tourism activities is the fundamental principle of CBT, which seeks to maximize local communities' share of tourism benefits. As Timothy (1999) explained, the primary goal of tourism development should be to improve Community welfare by providing training, education, employment, and business opportunities, while ensuring that communities directly benefit from tourism. This is particularly relevant in the case of Lembah Desa Pulutan, part of Desa Pulutan Tourism (Dewi Kapulut) in Klaten, Central Java. Since its establishment in 2019, this destination has involved the Community extensively in its management. Moreover, it has rapidly gained popularity, as evidenced by the sharp increase in visitor numbers: in 2022, the site welcomed 101,839 visitors, while by the end of 2023 to January 2024, visitor numbers had risen by more than 50% to 254,077.

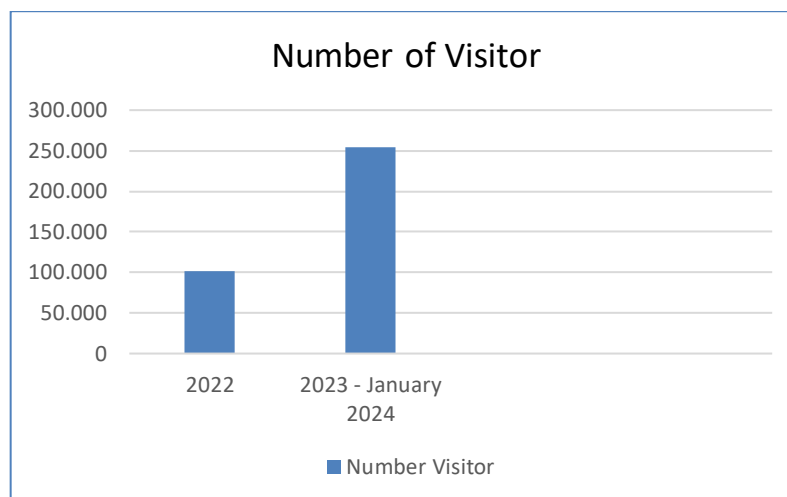


Figure 1. Number of Visitors to Lembah Desa Pulutan

Source: Author, 2025

Field observations indicate that culinary businesses have become the primary attraction at Lembah Desa Pulutan. Currently, there are 26 kiosks managed by local entrepreneurs, most of which focus on food and beverages. Culinary tourism here reflects a broader trend in global tourism, where visitors seek not only recreation but also memorable food-related experiences. As Wolf in [Suriani \(2009\)](#) explained, culinary tourism is not exclusive or pretentious but includes any unique and memorable gastronomic experience, encompassing food and beverages across a variety of contexts. [Suwantoro \(2004\)](#) further argued that tourism products are immobile and must be experienced at their source — a notion that fits closely with culinary tourism, as visitors must come to the destination to enjoy its culinary offerings.

Despite these developments, Pulutan Valley has not yet been formally branded as a culinary tourism destination, even though culinary businesses dominate its attractions. The lack of branding and structured capacity development raises concerns about its long-term sustainability and competitiveness. At the same time, there is a growing need to ensure that the Community not only participates in culinary tourism but also benefits from training, product innovation, packaging, and marketing so that local food products can be managed and sold independently.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyze how CBT principles are implemented in the development of culinary tourism at Lembah Desa Pulutan. Specifically, the research examines the extent of Community participation in managing and developing culinary attractions, assesses the role of culinary businesses in shaping destination identity and competitiveness, and explores challenges and opportunities in branding Pulutan as a culinary tourism destination, including the capacity-building needs of local entrepreneurs. From these objectives, three research questions are formulated: (1) How do local communities participate in the management and development of culinary attractions at Lembah Desa Pulutan? (2) To what extent do culinary businesses contribute to the identity and attractiveness of Lembah Desa Pulutan as a tourism destination? and (3) How can CBT principles be optimized to strengthen culinary tourism and empower local communities in Pulutan? By addressing these questions, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of Community-led culinary tourism in strengthening rural destinations and provides insights for designing strategies that align sustainability, cultural preservation, and Community empowerment in Indonesia's tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism Development Concept

Yoeti (2001) said that tourism development is a way to improve tourist attractions, improve them, and make them even better so that more people come to see them, which helps the Community and the government. He said that tourism development is also an effort to improve a product, develop it, or add types of tourism products. Suwarti and Yuliamir (2017) stated that there are three important components needed in tourism development, namely:

- a. In every tourism activity, humans are the main subject.
- b. A place is a physical form that serves as a container for all tourism activities.
- c. Time is the length of time tourists need to reach a tourist destination.

Yoeti (2006) identified four basic principles in tourism development, namely:

- a. Ecological sustainability means that increasing tourism can ensure its sustainability.
- b. Along with the growth of tourism, Community involvement in daily life and culture also increases. This is good for both culture and life.
- c. Economic feasibility means that increasing tourism ensures the sustainability of economic efforts in the long term.
- d. Providing a place for the Community to develop tourism in an area is one of many ways to improve and enhance their quality of life.

2.2 Community-Based Tourism

The concept of managing local tourist destinations through Community participation in planning, management, and decision-making is called Community-based tourism, abbreviated as CBT. Adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and ecotourism are tourism concepts that can help CBT. The World Bank states that CBT will also involve the Community in decision-making, especially regarding income, employment opportunities, environmental conservation, and indigenous culture. Local residents' sense of identity and pride will ultimately increase with increased tourism (Arifin, 2017). Another aspect of the CBT concept is the direct application of people's economy in the real world, supported by the local Community. The planning principle can be applied in two ways in the tourism industry. The potential benefits of tourist destinations are emphasized in the first perspective, which is associated with the formal planning system. The goal of the second perspective, called "participatory planning," is to achieve a fairer balance between controlled planning and development. This method places more emphasis on the impact of the natural environment.

Community-based tourism is one of the many development strategies and forms of participatory planning in tourism development (Arifin, 2017). The following definition of Community-based tourism was put forward by Blackstock (2005):

- a. This type of tourism provides opportunities for local communities to control and participate in the management and development of tourism.
- b. Communities that do not directly participate in tourism initiatives also benefit.
- c. Requires empowerment of political and democratic groups and distribution of benefits to disadvantaged communities.

According to Blackstock's (2005) perspective, CBT is an approach to tourism development that emphasizes local communities, who participate directly or indirectly, by providing opportunities to access tourism management and development. This leads to political

empowerment and a more democratic life, including a fairer distribution of tourism activity profits.

2.3 Community-Based Tourism Development

The arrangement of tourism areas is based on the principle of harmony and balance between the interests of various partners in tourism development, government, regions, and local communities. In addition, arranging tourism areas by tourism development emphasizes the principle of "from the region, by the region, and for the region". The surrounding Community must be involved effectively and allowed to participate in each stage of transformation, planning, development, management, coaching, and monitoring and evaluation, because the ultimate goal is to support tourism development and the satisfaction of the local Community (Demartoto, 2013).

The local Community living near the tourist location plays an important role in supporting the results of tourism development in their area. The role of the local Community in maintaining natural and social assets that have the potential to become tourist destinations cannot be ignored. Thus, the local Community is given more power by being involved in various tourism development activities. Thus, the government, as a facilitator or stakeholder, must involve the local Community in a participatory manner by encouraging them to participate actively in development. Even if the rights of this Community are not fully respected, Community-based tourism development will not be realized if the local Community feels neglected, exploited, or threatened by tourism activities in their area (Demartoto, 2013).

Maintaining unique values in the form of customs, traditional ceremonies, beliefs, traditional performing arts, and unique crafts owned by the Community in an area is another thing that must be considered in managing and developing tourism based on the Community. The development of tourism, which has the potential to provide benefits to the Community in all economic, social, and cultural fields, is considered successful. In developing the tourism industry based on Community groups, environmental networks can be involved in various business activities, such as selling food and drinks and souvenirs, where the results can help them earn additional income. The multiplier effect of the Community can be increased due to the distribution of these economic benefits, allowing the local economy to develop further. This can inspire local communities to continue to maintain their tourism assets.

Tourism that pays attention to cultural, social, and environmental sustainability is called Community-based tourism. The goal is to provide tourists with an opportunity to better understand the local environment and the lifestyle of the surrounding Community. Thus, Community-Based Tourism is different from mass tourism. Hadiwijoyo (2012) emphasized that the Community-Based Tourism development model must begin with an awareness of the values of Community needs and strive to build tourism that is more beneficial to the needs, initiatives, and opportunities of the local Community.

CBT is more related to tourism's impact on local communities and environmental resources than to tourism businesses that aim to generate more money for investors. In addition, Hadiwijoyo (2012) stated that CBT is the result of a Community development strategy that uses tourism to improve local communities' organizational capacity.

According to Hadiwijoyo (2012), the concept of Community-Based Tourism has principles which can be used as a tool of Community development for local communities, namely:

- a. Recognize, support, and promote tourism where the Community is owned,
- b. Involve Community members from the beginning in every aspect,
- c. Promote Community pride,
- d. Improve the quality of life,

- e. Ensure environmental sustainability,
- f. Maintain unique local character and culture,
- g. Help develop cross-cultural learning,
- h. Respect cultural differences and human dignity,
- i. Distribute benefits fairly among Community members,
- j. Contribute a set percentage of income to Community projects.

Murphy was the first to introduce the idea of Community-based tourism development. According to [Murphy \(1985\)](#), tourism products are expressed and consumed personally; tourism products and their buyers must be visible to residents who are often very aware of the impact of tourism. In line with that, tourism must include local communities as one of the features of tourism products. In addition, businesses must also include local communities, who must be involved in decision-making, because local communities are the ones who bear the combined consequences of tourism development. They must have more prominent information on how local communities are packaged and sold into tourism products ([Hadiwijoyo, 2012](#)).

The Community approach model is also a standard for the tourism development process in remote areas, where Community involvement is significant for the success of tourism products. The following are some recommendations from [Hadiwijoyo \(2012\)](#) for developing a Community-based tourism model:

- a. Based on local development priorities,
- b. Encourage and promote residents,
- c. Involve residents in business,
- d. Local entrepreneurship or capital investment is required.
- e. Resident participation in various events and activities,
- f. Tourism goods that reflect the identity of the local area,
- g. Address problems before they affect future growth.

The Community approach is summarized in the points above. The involvement of local communities is needed so that they not only benefit from tourism but also support tourism development, where the Community can provide lessons and deeper explanations about its history and characteristics. More and more people are interested in making products for sustainable tourism. The need to engage in various forms of Community participation becomes a very urgent issue. For quality tourism to be realized and sustainable tourism to be realized, Community participation is needed. Natural and cultural resources, Community organizations, management, and learning must be considered if Community-Based Tourism is to be implemented successfully.

In addition, [Suansri \(2003\)](#) has put forward his opinion regarding the principles that must exist in implementing CBT, including:

- a. Involving Community members when starting every aspect,
- b. Paying attention to environmental sustainability,
- c. Distributing income to the Community,
- d. Maintaining the unique character of the culture in the local area,
- e. Playing a role in determining the percentage of income (income distribution) in the Community,
- f. Sustainable economy,
- g. The Community can participate in decision-making.

According to [Topowijono \(2018\)](#), the four things needed to implement the concept of Community-based tourism (CBT) in the management of sustainable tourist destinations are as follows: (1) local Community participation, (2) the formation of organizations or institutions,

(3) environmental conservation, and (4) Community business activities.

From various definitions of Community-based tourism (CBT), core things must be implemented in the concept of Community-based tourism (CBT). These things are local Community participation, forming organizations/institutions, paying attention to environmental sustainability, forming Community business activities, and maintaining local culture.

2.4 Community Participation in Culinary Attractions Development

Culinary Tourism refers to “Tourism activities related to food and beverages to enhance knowledge and travel experiences, strengthen social relationships, and express lifestyles” (Kemenparekraf, 2011). As for UNWTO, in the 2012 Global Culinary Tourism Report, Culinary Tourism is a travel experience to a gastronomic location, for recreation or entertainment; which includes visits to primary and secondary food producers, festivals and exhibitions, farmers and markets, cooking events and demonstrations, tasting quality food products, and other tourism activities related to food. Culinary tourism has grown rapidly in various forms in various places (Swarbrooke, 2002), including food and beverage themed events and festivals, culinary markets, traditional foods, food or beverage industries that offer educational tours to production sites, food and beverage producers that create power so that tourists are interested in seeing directly, buying products, while strengthening their brand image. The definition of culinary tourism needs to consider the perspective of visitor experience, like other types or themes of tourism, tourism activities depend on market interest. Therefore, culinary tourism is a combination of consumer behavior, where tourists use culinary to explore different cultures and tastes, and strategies implemented by destinations to enhance and promote the appeal and image of culinary itself. Thus, culinary tourism is a tourism activity that plays a role in enriching the holiday experience at tourist locations and achieving economic goals and synergies in the use of local products, a distinctive way to differentiate destination offerings through brands (Okumus, F., Kock, G., Scantlebury, 2013).

3. METHODS

The research was conducted at Lembah Desa Pulutan, a Community-based rural tourism destination established in 2019 as part of the Desa Pulutan Tourism (Dewi Kapulut). The location was selected because culinary activities are the dominant attraction, and the destination demonstrates strong Community participation but lacks formal branding as a culinary tourism site. This aligns with recent calls to investigate gastronomy tourism in rural settings where Community involvement plays a central role (Wijaya, 2023; Ayuningsih et al., 2023).

This study employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach, focusing on Lembah Desa Pulutan in Klaten, Central Java, as the research site. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of Community experiences, participation, and perceptions related to culinary tourism development. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize, qualitative methods are suitable for understanding complex social phenomena within their natural context, while Yin (2018) highlights that case study designs are particularly useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. Recent tourism studies also confirm that qualitative approaches are effective for capturing local narratives in gastronomy and rural tourism (Benalcázar et al., 2024; Liutikas, 2024).

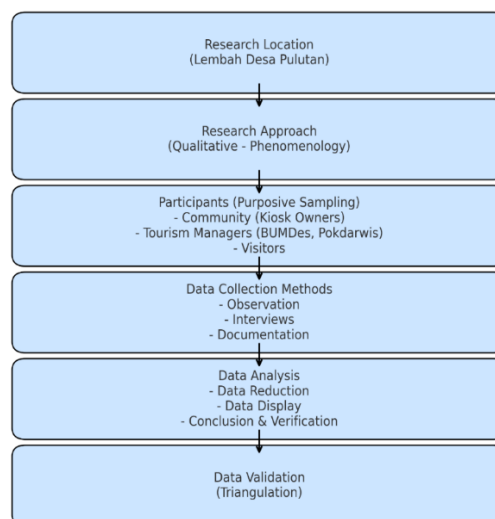
Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting stakeholders directly

involved in culinary tourism activities. These included local Community members managing food kiosks and small restaurants, representatives of the destination management organization (Pokdarwis and BUMDES), visitors, and local government officials. In total, 20 key informants were interviewed, representing diverse perspectives to ensure data triangulation. Purposive and snowball sampling have been recommended in recent gastronomy tourism research to capture multiple perspectives of stakeholders (Kovalenko et al., 2023; Cankül et al., 2024).

Data Collection Techniques: three main data collection techniques were used: In-depth interviews – Conducted with local entrepreneurs, Community leaders, and government representatives to capture perceptions of Community participation, challenges, and opportunities in culinary tourism development. Similar interview-based methods have been applied in recent gastronomy tourism studies to explore tourist experiences and stakeholder roles (Cankül et al., 2024). Participant observation – Researchers observed culinary activities, visitor interactions, and Community engagement. Observational methods are increasingly highlighted in gastronomy tourism research as they provide insights into cultural performance and food practices (Richards, 2021; Benalcázar et al., 2024). Document analysis – Secondary data such as visitor statistics, local government reports, and promotional materials were examined. The triangulation of primary and secondary data sources enhances credibility, as recommended by recent methodological reviews.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was chosen because it enables the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to CBT and culinary tourism. Recent applications of thematic analysis in gastronomy and rural tourism research confirm its suitability for capturing Community narratives and visitor experiences (Rahman et al., 2024; Ayuningsih et al., 2023). To ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the study followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of interviews, observations, and documents. Transferability was ensured by providing rich contextual descriptions. Dependability was addressed by maintaining an audit trail, and confirmability was achieved through reflexivity and transparency. Similar approaches have been adopted in recent gastronomy tourism case studies (Liutikas, 2024; Kovalenko et al., 2023).

Research Model - Culinary Tourism Development at Lembah Desa Pulutan



Figures 2. Research Model

Source: Author, 2025

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. General Description of the Research Location

Lembah Desa Pulutan is a tourist area that offers family and educational tourism, established in February 2019. This destination is part of Desa Pulutan Tourism, popularly known as Dewi Kapulut. The Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDES) Maju Mandiri initiated the development of Lembah Desa Pulutan by utilizing-owned rice fields. The managers of BUMDES Maju Mandiri aimed to realize their vision of creating an environmentally friendly tourism destination for the local Community.

The tourist area provides flower gardens, gazebos, fish ponds, and a rice field fishing program. Since July 2022, the Community has expanded the destination to cover approximately 20 hectares of Desa Pulutan farmland.

Table 1. Lembah Desa Pulutan Visit Data

No.	Month	Number
1.	June 2022	3,523
2.	July 2022	13,232
3.	August 2022	19,522
4.	September 2022	17,522
5.	Oktober 2022	13,991
6.	November 2022	8,676
7.	December 2022	25,373
8.	January 2023	30,066
9.	February 2023	20,194
10.	March 2023	21,326
11.	April 2023	19,628
12.	May 2023	20,826
13.	June 2023	20,316
14.	July 2023	15,647
15.	August 2023	14,076
16.	September 2023	16,914
17.	October 2023	17,496
18.	November 2023	17,071
19.	December 2023	28,855
20.	January 2024	11,662
Total		355,916

Source: Lembah Desa Pulutan Data, 2024.

From the data above, visitors who do activities such as feeding the fish in the pond are adding to the natural and beautiful village atmosphere. Visitors only need to pay an entrance ticket of IDR 5,000 to enjoy this location. Teapot tea will also be provided as a welcome drink for each visitor. After that, visitors can relax in several huts around the rice fields. While relaxing, several menus can be ordered, such as various types of grilled food, snacks, processed noodles, and grilled fish. You can take selfies amid the natural atmosphere.

Table 2. List of Culinary Business Owners Lembah Desa Pulutan

No Kiosk	Name	Business
1	Ngadilam	Village-style Dishes
2	Supriyadi	Food and Beverages
3	Asti Widyaningsih	Eatery and dawet ireng
4	Evi Nuryani	Soto and Instant Noodle Soup
5	Tawin/Lilis	Boba Drink

No Kiosk	Name	Business
6	. Marsono	Food and Beverages
7	Alifa Shofiyati	Kupat Tahu, Coffe Jelly, Tahu Walik, Various Foods and Drinks
8	Rujilah	Pecel, Tiwul, Dawet Jowo, Sego Rames
9	Armat	Traditional Snacks, Sego Berkat
10	Margiyanto	Food Stalls, Nasi Rames, fried chicken, catfish, and tilapia, Fried Snack, Seafood
11	Rani Cahyaningsih	Hearty Meals, Various Noodles, Snacks, Ice Cincau, Fresh Fruit Juice, Tropical Squash, Milkshake
12	Rini	Dumplings, bakso, rib soup
13	Suhendri	Jadah Puli Tempe, Es Tape, Batagor, Siomay, Intip fried
14	Santoso	Ketoprak, Bakso Egg, Pentol, Fried snacks, Pickled Vegetables, Toast
15	Lasminah	Pecel, Tiwul Fried, Coconut Drink
16	Muhani	Kupat Tahu, Snacks and Drinks
17	Dinaryanto	Fried Tiwul, Fried Pentol, crispy tofu, various fried foods, cup noodles, Ice Tea, coffee, and powdered drink.
18	PKK women's group	grilled rice, various snacks, various cooked vegetables
19	Sumidah	Bakmi Jawa, Ronde
20	Nuning Rohmningsih	Meatballs, Sambal Gami, Fried snacks, Burger, Tempura, Drinks
21	Rusmanto	Various food and drinks, Angkringan
22	Hendra	Various food and drinks
23	Wiwik Handayani	Seblak, Grilled Sausage adn chicken, Cincau Capucino Ice
24	Heri Sujarwanto	Various food and drinks
25	Sunaryati	Various children's snacks and drinks
26	Hadi Suyoto	Children's games

Source: *Lembah Desa Pulutan Data*, 2024.

From the data, it can be observed that there are 26 kiosks in the Lembah Desa Pulutan tourist destination, of which 25 kiosks are food and beverage businesses. While 1 kiosk is for children's games. This is undoubtedly due to the concept of a destination that carries culinary tourism, and the 25 kiosks have survived since Lembah Desa Pulutan was first established. This is enough proof that establishing a business in this destination is promising. If not, they certainly will not survive. In addition, several business founders also provided an overview of their average monthly income, which is IDR 2,500,000, and their business generates quite a significant income.

4.2. Implementation of the Community-Based Tourism Concept

Ideally, the principle of CBT development emphasizes tourism development. "From the Community, by the Community and for the Community". From planning, construction, management, and development to monitoring (supervision) and evaluation, the local Community must be actively involved and allowed to participate in every stage of development because the ultimate goal is to improve the Community's welfare and quality of life. The results of the CBT principle research were identified as follows;

The existence of Local Community Participation in the Form of Ideas, Mental, and Physical: the Desa Pulutan Community has provided the idea for the establishment of the Village Valley, which was finally successfully built and developed together with other communities with the primary goal of increasing income and opening up new jobs for the Community. The Director of BUMDES, Maju Mandiri, owned by Desa Pulutan, has succeeded in mobilizing the Community to build the Desa Pulutan Valley. This is relevant to Arifin's theory (2017), which states that CBT will involve the Community in making decisions, especially about income and employment opportunities.



Figures 3. Members of Pokdarwis Pesona Pelangi

Source: Author Documentation, 2024

From the documentation above, it can be seen that one of the organizations in the Lembah Desa Pulutan, namely the Pesona Pelangi Tourism Awareness Group, is holding a meeting in one of the areas Lembah Desa Pulutan.

Environmental sustainability refers to balancing ecosystems, natural resources, and human activities. The goal is to ensure that the needs of the current generation are met without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Lembah Desa Pulutan destination certainly pays attention to the environment because cleanliness is always maintained and the surrounding rice fields are not damaged and are even preserved with the presence of the rice mina. Efforts to maintain environmental sustainability at the Lembah Desa Pulutan tourist destination have been quite successful, with the rice mina activities handled directly by the Fish Cultivation Group (Pokdakan) and assisted by the Fisheries Service, the rice fields are still maintained and can still produce agricultural products. Then from this activity, the cultivated fish can also be utilized. In addition, with the routine waste processing and disposal, it can maintain environmental cleanliness. In addition, [Hadiwijoyo \(2012\)](#) also put forward the theory that Community-Based Tourism has principles that can be used as a tool of Community development for local communities, one of which is ensuring environmental sustainability (Environmental Sustainability). According to [Suansri \(2003\)](#) CBT must also apply its principles, one of which is maintaining environmental sustainability.



Figures 4. Fish Farming in Lembah Desa Pulutan

Source: Author Documentation, 2024

The existence of Local Cultural Arts Performance activities is one of the traditional art performances that are always performed in the Desa Pulutan Valley every month. This aims to maintain the local original culture so it does not become extinct. According to SH, the efforts of the Desa Pulutan Valley management to maintain local culture are by holding local original performances called *gejog lesung*. This performance is also held so the Community does not forget its existence. Efforts to maintain local culture in the Desa Pulutan Valley by Suansri's (2003) theory have also expressed his opinion regarding the principles that must exist in implementing CBT, one of which is maintaining the unique character of the culture in the local area.



Figures 5. Art Performance *Gejog Lesung*

Source: Author Documentation, 2024

4.3. Community Participation in Culinary Attractions Development

According to UNWTO, in the Global Report Foods Tourism 2012, Culinary Tourism is a travel experience to a gastronomic area, for recreation or entertainment with a CBT principle approach that emphasizes local communities are directly involved in the culinary industry. Tourism activities in the Desa Pulutan Valley are dominated by tourists seeing the natural beauty of rice fields while enjoying food and drinks provided by the Community. Kiosks rented by BUMDES to improve the Community's economy, this attracts tourists to go on culinary tours. From the results of interviews, all kiosk owners or those who trade in the destination are only given to local people. This is to ensure benefits for the local Community. Moreover, it has been proven that local people benefit from their efforts both at the destination and in places around the tourist destination.



Figures 6. Community Independent Business Kiosk

Source: Author Documentation, 2024

From the picture above, you can see the culinary stalls that tourists can visit. Culinary tourism is a combination of a form of consumer behavior and feelings of experiencing new tastes; this strategy is used by destinations to develop and market culinary attractions and imagery. Therefore, culinary tourism is a tourism activity that contributes to enriching the holiday experience at tourist destinations and to achieving economic goals and synergies in the utilization of local products (Okumus, F., Kock, G., Scantlebury, 2013).

In the tourist destination of Lembah Desa Pulutan, the manager has not realized culinary tourism as a destination product, and the branding used for educational and family tourism is not in line with the activities of visiting tourists. The results of several tourist interviews stated that the interest in visiting was based on an interest in culinary, while enjoying nature in the form of rice fields. Another identification is regarding the CBT principle, whose Community participation is active through this culinary tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to review the manager in increasing targeted educational tourism activities and developing local culinary tourism as a cultural identity and destination icon.

The active involvement of Pulutan's Community in culinary attractions development can be seen as a practical implementation of CBT principles:

- a. Economic Participation → All kiosks are run by locals, ensuring that financial benefits remain within the Community.
- b. Cultural Participation → Local dishes (pecel, tiwul, kupat tahu) serve as cultural symbols, reinforcing local identity through food.
- c. Decision-Making Participation → Through BUMDES and Pokdarwis, the Community has a role in planning and managing tourism activities.

However, when compared to best practices suggested in the literature, Pulutan still needs to strengthen political participation by giving communities more structured roles in strategic decision-making (Scheyvens, 2011), enhance cultural storytelling around food to enrich the visitor experience (Richards, 2021), Integrate training programs to improve skills in food innovation, branding, and digital marketing (Pramezwary et al., 2021).

Thus, Community participation at Pulutan already provides a strong foundation, but future development should focus on transforming local culinary practices into a branded, marketable identity that enhances both tourism appeal and Community empowerment.

4.4. Role of Culinary Businesses in Destination Identity and Competitiveness

The dominance of culinary kiosks positions food as the defining element of Pulutan's identity. While the destination also offers cultural performances and recreational areas, interviews with visitors indicate that culinary experiences are the primary motivation for visiting. This suggests that culinary tourism is not a supplementary attraction but rather the core product of the destination.

The success of local businesses in attracting repeat visitors demonstrates how culinary tourism can function as a competitive advantage for rural destinations. Similar patterns have been observed in Bandung, where culinary tourism significantly contributes to urban competitiveness (Pramezwary et al., 2021), and in Desa Tista, Bali, where local gastronomy enhances cultural pride and diversifies the tourism portfolio (Wijaya, 2023). Pulutan's case shows that even in non-urban contexts, culinary businesses can serve as the primary branding element of a destination.

Nevertheless, Pulutan lacks a formalized culinary branding strategy. Currently, there is no signature dish or unified culinary narrative that represents the destination. International literature emphasizes that branding and storytelling are crucial for transforming food clusters into gastronomic destinations (Richards, 2021; Kovalenko et al., 2023). Without these

elements, Pulutan risks remaining a popular local attraction rather than achieving broader recognition as a culinary tourism destination.

5. CONCLUSION

The development of culinary tourism based on Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Lembah Desa Pulutan illustrates how active Community involvement can transform a rural area into a sustainable tourism destination. The findings reveal that the local Community is not merely a supporting actor but the main driver of tourism development. With 26 kiosks—25 of which are dedicated to food and beverage businesses—the Community has successfully positioned culinary activities as the central attraction, generating an average monthly income of IDR 2,500,000 per kiosk. This proves that tourism in Pulutan provides direct economic benefits, aligning with Scheyvens' (2011) and Murphy's (1985) principles of Community empowerment in CBT.

Beyond economic gains, Pulutan also demonstrates environmental and cultural sustainability. The practice of rice–fish cultivation (*mina padi*) and proper waste management ensures that tourism growth does not compromise ecological balance, consistent with Yoeti (2006) and Hadiwijoyo's (2012) emphasis on sustainability as a foundation of tourism development. Meanwhile, the regular performance of *gejog lesung* reflects a strong commitment to preserving local culture, which adds cultural value to the tourist experience and resonates with Suansri's (2003) notion that CBT must safeguard cultural identity.

Culinary tourism, in particular, has emerged as the core of Pulutan's attractiveness. Tourists are drawn not only by the local food but also by the authentic rural atmosphere of rice fields that enrich their gastronomic experience. However, despite this potential, Pulutan has not yet been branded explicitly as a culinary destination. The absence of a strong culinary identity risks limiting its competitiveness, especially when compared to other destinations such as Bandung (Pramezwarly et al., 2021) and Toba (Siahaan et al., 2023), where culinary tourism is strategically developed and promoted.

In conclusion, Pulutan Valley has laid a strong foundation for CBT-based culinary tourism, yet challenges remain in the areas of branding, product innovation, and capacity-building. To realize its full potential, the destination must invest in training programs for local entrepreneurs, develop signature culinary products, and implement digital marketing strategies. Strengthening branding as a culinary tourism village and embedding cultural storytelling into food experiences will not only enhance visitor satisfaction but also secure Pulutan's position as a sustainable rural tourism hub. By doing so, the Community will continue to benefit economically, culturally, and socially, ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism development in the region.

6. REFERENCES

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