

THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN WAKATOBI: A GOOD GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Wakatobi, located in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, is recognized as one of the country's leading marine tourism destinations and designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. However, the sustainability of tourism development in this region relies not only on ecological potential but also on the role of indigenous communities in governance practices. This article examines the role of indigenous communities in sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi through the lens of good governance. Data were collected using a qualitative approach, including semi-structured interviews with customary leaders, village officials, tourism actors, and domestic and international tourists. The findings demonstrate that indigenous communities play a pivotal role in ensuring transparency through customary marine regulations, fostering participation via homestays and cultural festivals, strengthening accountability in community-based tourism funds, enhancing effectiveness through the integration of customary and formal rules, and promoting equity in the distribution of economic benefits. This study contributes to the literature on sustainable tourism governance by highlighting the centrality of indigenous knowledge in achieving inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

Keywords: *Indigenous Communities, Sustainable Tourism, Good Governance, Wakatobi*

INTRODUCTION

Wakatobi, an island district in Southeast Sulawesi Province, has been designated as one of the National Strategic Tourism Areas (KSPN) and is included in Indonesia's ten priority tourism destinations. The area also received international recognition thru its designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2012, thanks to its exceptional marine biodiversity, including over 750 coral species representing approximately 90% of the world's coral species. (Clifton, 2013; UNESCO, 2012). (Clifton, 2013; UNESCO, 2012). This potential positions Wakatobi as one of the premier marine tourism destinations, attracting not only domestic but also international tourists. However, despite its significant ecological advantages, the contribution of the tourism sector to improving the well-being of local communities remains relatively limited. Data from BPS Wakatobi (2024) shows an increase in the number of tourists year after year, but the economic impact felt by the community is not yet optimal. This condition is exacerbated by ecological vulnerabilities, such as coral reef damage due to destructive fishing practices and less controlled tourism development pressure. (Huffard et al., 2010). (Huffard et al., 2010). Thus, the sustainability of tourism in Wakatobi requires governance that emphasizes not only economic aspects, but also ecological and socio-cultural ones. In this context, indigenous communities play an important role as both guardians of tradition and preservers of natural resources. Thru customary practices such as sasi laut, thanksgiving rituals, and customary rules prohibiting the use of destructive fishing gear, indigenous communities have been proven to possess social mechanisms that support ecosystem sustainability. (Ostrom, 1990; Nurhayati, 2019). (Ostrom, 1990; Nurhayati, 2019). This role makes indigenous communities not just objects of development, but key actors in sustainable tourism governance. Nevertheless, research on Wakatobi is still relatively limited, particularly in integrating the role of indigenous communities with the principles of good governance. Most studies focus more on the ecological dimension and the potential for marine tourism, while socio-cultural aspects and indigenous-based governance receive less attention. (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). In fact, the

concept of good governance emphasizes the importance of transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and justice (UNDP, 1997), all of which are relevant to customary practices in Wakatobi. Therefore, this research aims to: (1) examine the role of indigenous communities in sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi; (2) analyze this contribution based on the principles of good governance; and (3) provide theoretical and practical implications for the development of inclusive and sustainable tourism governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Tourism and Triple Bottom Line

The concept of sustainable tourism is fundamentally rooted in the idea of sustainable development, which emphasizes a balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental interests. According to UNWTO (2015), sustainable tourism is the development of tourism that "fully considers its economic, social, and environmental impacts, both now and in the future, while meeting the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities." This principle is known as the triple bottom line framework, which means development that not only pursues economic growth (profit) but also considers social well-being (people) and environmental sustainability (planet). (Elkington, 1997; Font & McCabe, 2017). (Elkington, 1997; Font & McCabe, 2017).

The application of the triple bottom line framework becomes highly relevant in island destinations like Wakatobi, which have characteristics of both ecological vulnerability and economic dependence on natural resources. From an economic perspective, tourism can drive local growth thru job creation, the development of micro-enterprises, and increased regional revenue. (PAD). (PAD). From a socio-cultural perspective, sustainable tourism must preserve the values, traditions, and local wisdom of the community, including traditional ceremonies and daily cultural practices, which are their identity and tourist attractions. Meanwhile, from an environmental perspective, sustainability is determined by the destination's ability to protect marine ecosystems, coral reefs, and biodiversity from degradation due to overexploitation (Hall, Gössling, & Scott, 2015).

Some studies show that without a triple bottom line approach, small island destinations tend to experience imbalances. Focusing solely on economic growth often leads to environmental degradation and the marginalization of local communities (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2015). Conversely, three-dimensional development integration allows island destinations to maintain their tourist appeal while ensuring economic and social benefits are inclusively felt. In the context of Wakatobi, the triple bottom line approach is important for balancing marine tourism development with marine conservation, and for ensuring that indigenous communities, as the holders of local knowledge, remain the main actors in sustainable tourism governance.

2.2 Indigenous Communities and Commons Governance

The role of indigenous communities in natural resource management can be explained thru the common pool resources framework developed by Elinor Ostrom. (1990). (1990). Ostrom demonstrates that local communities have the capacity to sustainably manage common resources thru customary rules, social sanction mechanisms, and collective monitoring systems. This approach challenges the classical view that common resources will always lead to the tragedy of the commons. (Hardin, 1968). (Hardin, 1968). In fact, thru living customary institutions, communities can create effective and efficient governance without being entirely dependent on state control or market mechanisms.

Various studies in Indonesia support Ostrom's findings. For example, in Raja Ampat, West Papua, the sea sasi system revived by indigenous communities has proven effective in protecting fish and coral reef populations while also serving as a community-based ecotourism attraction. (McLeod et al., 2009; Mangubhai et al., 2015). (McLeod et al., 2009; Mangubhai et al., 2015). In Bali, the concept of the traditional village with its awig-awig rules not only maintains social harmony but also ensures the sustainability of cultural tourism, including the practice of subak management, which is recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site. (Cole, 2012). (Cole, 2012). Meanwhile, in Toraja, traditional rituals and authorities are central to the management of cultural tourism, demonstrating how indigenous identity and values can become social capital in tourism. (Adams, 2006). (Adams, 2006).

The relevance to Wakatobi is very clear. As an archipelago with a strong indigenous community, local practices such as fishing bans in certain areas, sea blessing rituals, and the Karia tradition are tangible forms of community-based governance. In the context of sustainable tourism, these customary mechanisms are not only instruments of ecological conservation but also cultural assets with high commercial value as tourist attractions. Thus, integrating Ostrom's commons governance with customary practices in Wakatobi can serve as a model for more sustainable, inclusive, and locally rooted tourism governance.

2.3 Good Governance Framework

The concept of good governance has become one of the important paradigms in development, including in the tourism sector. According to UNDP (1997), good governance is supported by several key principles, namely transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and justice. Transparency emphasizes the openness of public information so that the public can understand and oversee the policies being made. Participation demands the active involvement of all stakeholders, including government, community, private sector, and non-governmental organizations. Accountability requires every actor to be responsible for the decisions and actions they take. Effectiveness refers to achieving development goals efficiently, while equity emphasizes the inclusive distribution of benefits without discrimination.

In the context of tourism, the framework of good governance is highly relevant given the complexity of the relationships between the actors involved. Ansell and Gash (2007), thru the concept of collaborative governance, emphasize the importance of a deliberative process where government and non-government entities come together to reach a consensus. Meanwhile, Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) offer an integrative framework of collaborative governance that emphasizes three dimensions: collaborative capacity, collaborative dynamics, and shared action. These two frameworks confirm that tourism governance cannot be effective without synergy and trust between state and non-state actors, including indigenous communities as guardians of tradition and resources. Its application in sustainable tourism governance is evident in several studies conducted in island destinations. For example, research in the Philippines and Fiji shows that when the principles of good governance are applied to ecotourism management, the results not only improve environmental quality but also strengthen social legitimacy and the participation of local communities. (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). Thus, applying the good governance framework to destinations like Wakatobi can serve as a foundation for creating inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance.

2.4 Research Gap

Studies on sustainable tourism governance are generally still dominated by a focus on the roles of government and the private sector. The government is often positioned as the main actor in regulation, planning, and infrastructure provision, while the private sector is seen as the driving force behind investment and job creation. (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Some studies highlight the importance of public-private partnerships in destination development, particularly in the context of enhancing tourism competitiveness. (Dredge & Jamal, 2015). (Dredge & Jamal, 2015). However, the involvement of indigenous communities within the framework of good governance is still rarely studied systematically. Some studies only mention the role of indigenous communities as a supplement to ecological conservation or cultural preservation, but have not yet positioned them as the main actors in the structure of sustainable tourism governance. (Cole, 2012; Clifton, 2013). (Cole, 2012; Clifton, 2013). In fact, in practice, indigenous communities often have unwritten rules, social sanction mechanisms, and local wisdom that are aligned with the principles of transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and justice. (Ostrom, 1990). (Ostrom, 1990). In Wakatobi, previous research has focused more on marine ecological aspects, biodiversity, and the potential for marine tourism. (Huffard et al., 2010; Clifton, 2013). (Huffard et al., 2010; Clifton, 2013). Meanwhile, studies integrating the role of indigenous communities with the good governance framework are still very limited. This is the research gap that this study aims to address: how indigenous communities contribute to sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi, specifically from a good governance perspective.

METHOD

Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study strategy. (case study approach). (case study approach). This approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the role of indigenous communities in sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi, not merely quantitatively measure the phenomenon. (Creswell & Poth, 2018). (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case studies allow researchers to explore the interactions between actors (government, indigenous communities, tourism operators, tourists) within a contextual and dynamic framework of good governance.

Research Site

The research location includes the four main islands of Wakatobi:

1. Wangi-Wangi: the center of government and cultural tourism activities (festival, culiner).
2. Kaledupa: strong in traditional maritime practices (sasi) and fishing regulations.

3. Tomia: known as a center for marine tourism (diving) and community-based homestays.
4. Binongko: a traditional fishing community with customary prohibitions on fishing practices.

The selection of this location considers the diversity of customary practices, tourism potential, and the interaction between indigenous communities and local government policies.

Participants

The research participants were selected using purposive sampling (Patton, 2015), meaning they had direct experience related to sustainable tourism in Wakatobi. There are a total of 16 key informants, consisting of: 4 traditional figures (masing-masing perwakilan dari Wangi-Wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia, Binongko), (masing-masing perwakilan dari Wangi-Wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia, Binongko), 3 village/local government officials, 5 local tourism business operators (homestay, culinary, crafts, diving), 4 tourists (2 domestik, 2 overseas).

Data Collection & Analysis

Data was collected thru three main techniques: Semi-structured interviews: exploring indigenous experiences, perspectives, and practices in tourism governance. The questions cover aspects of transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and fairness. Participatory observation: the researcher directly observes traditional activities (e.g., the karia ritual), cultural festivals, and marine tourism activities. Document study: includes Regional Regulations (Perda), BPS reports, tourism policy documents, and local customary records. Data analysis in this study used the model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three main stages. The first stage is data reduction, which is the process of sorting, selecting, and focusing the data obtained from interviews and observations according to the research theme related to the principles of good governance. The second stage is data presentation, where the reduced data is organized into matrices, interview summary tables, or descriptive narratives, making it easier for the researcher to identify patterns and relationships between variables. The third stage is drawing conclusions and verification, which is the process of interpreting findings based on the conceptual framework of good governance to ensure that the research results are not only descriptive but also provide a deep understanding of the role of indigenous communities in sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi.

Data Reliability

To ensure credibility, the research employed qualitative data validation strategies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): Source and method triangulation (interviews, observations, documents). Member checking by confirming the interpretation results with the informants. Audit trail thru detailed recording of the research process. Thick description ensures that the results can be understood in both local context and theoretical relevance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transparency

Transparency is one of the main principles of good governance, emphasizing the openness of public information so that all parties can understand the applicable rules. In the context of Wakatobi, the practice of transparency is evident in the indigenous community's mechanism for announcing customary sea rules. For example, on Kaledupa Island, traditional leader La Ode Baso (55 years old) stated: "We announce at the traditional hall when the sea is open and when it is closed. Tourists are also advised not to dive in prohibited zones. This statement indicates that customary rules are not only intended for the local community but are also disseminated to tourists so they understand the limitations on activities within the conservation area. A similar point was also emphasized by Wa Dula (60 years old), a traditional elder in Wangi-Wangi, who stated: "If there are new traditional rules, such as a ban on harvesting sea cucumbers in certain months, they are announced in the mosque and village hall. That way, everyone, including newcomers, knows and can help maintain it. This practice demonstrates deliberative community-based information openness, where customary rules are disseminated thru public spaces with high social legitimacy, such as traditional halls and mosques. This customary transparency serves as a mechanism for social control, ensuring community compliance with marine conservation regulations. In the literature, transparency is considered an important prerequisite for the governance of common resources because it increases accountability and reduces the potential for conflict among stakeholders. (Graham, Amos, & Plumptre, 2003; UNDP, 1997). (Graham, Amos, & Plumptre, 2003; UNDP, 1997). This finding aligns with Clifton's (2013) study in Wakatobi, which showed that the success of conservation in this area is inseparable from open communication between traditional leaders, fishermen, and tourists. Thus, transparency in customary rules not only ensures ecological sustainability but also strengthens the social legitimacy of indigenous communities in sustainable tourism governance.

Participation

Participation is a crucial pillar in the framework of good governance, which emphasizes the active involvement of all stakeholders in the development process. In the context of Wakatobi, the participation of indigenous and local communities is evident thru community-based homestay management, traditional cuisine, and cultural festivals. These forms of participation not only enrich the tourist experience but also serve as a direct source of income for the community. One of the culinary entrepreneurs in Wangi-Wangi, Wa Darni (24 years old), stated: "Many foreign tourists are looking for the experience of eating kasuami and grilled fish. *They want to experience the local atmosphere.* This statement describes how traditional cuisine serves a dual purpose: as part of cultural heritage and as a tourist attraction. In Tomia, community participation is evident in the management of homestays, which involves local families. A homestay owner, Wa Oti (37 years old), explained: "Tourists love to help cook kasuami and learn to weave. *They feel like they are part of our lives.* This indicates a reciprocal interaction that strengthens social bonds between tourists and the local community.

Participation is also evident in the organization of traditional festivals. Binongko traditional figure, La Ode Iman (52 years old), revealed: "When there's a traditional festival, young people are involved. *They learn while also being tour guides.* The involvement of the younger generation shows how participation is not just about economic contribution, but also about passing on cultural values to the next generation. In the literature, participation is seen as an instrument that strengthens sustainability because it allows local communities to feel a sense of ownership toward the tourist destination. (Timothy, 2007; Tosun, 2006). (Timothy, 2007; Tosun, 2006). Studies in various island destinations show that when communities are actively involved in tourism management, the quality of the tourism experience improves and conflicts between actors can be minimized. (Scheyvens, 1999). (Scheyvens, 1999). Thus, the practice of indigenous community participation in Wakatobi not only creates an authentic tourism experience but also strengthens social legitimacy and the sustainability of community-based tourism.

Accountability

Accountability in sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi is realized thru the involvement of indigenous communities in overseeing the management of community-based tourism funds. This mechanism demonstrates the existence of social control that originates not only from formal authorities but also from customary authorities that hold high legitimacy in the eyes of the community. A village official in Wangi-Wangi, Rahmat (45 years old), affirmed: "Traditional leaders are present to ensure nothing is misappropriated." This quote reflects that the presence of traditional figures in the tourism fund management forum serves as moral and social guardians, providing symbolic pressure to ensure that every financial decision is made transparently and responsibly. Additionally, the involvement of indigenous communities is also strengthened thru joint meetings with tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis) and village officials. Sitti Aminah (40 years old), the head of the Pokdarwis in Kaledupa, revealed: "We regularly meet with village officials and traditional leaders. *All financial reports are open. If there's a problem, we discuss it together right away.* This practice demonstrates the existence of a deliberative mechanism involving all key actors in fund management decision-making, thus reducing the potential for misuse and strengthening trust among stakeholders. Within the framework of good governance theory, accountability is seen as one of the fundamental principles for ensuring that public policies are implemented in accordance with common goals and interests. (UNDP, 1997). (UNDP, 1997). Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) also emphasize the importance of accountability within the collaborative governance framework, where social legitimacy can only be built if each actor can be held accountable. The findings in Wakatobi show that integrating customary authorities into the accountability process not only strengthens social legitimacy but also broadens oversight, making tourism governance more inclusive and sustainable.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is one of the main principles of good governance, measuring the extent to which policies or regulations are able to achieve the desired goals. In the context of Wakatobi, the effectiveness of sustainable tourism governance is largely supported by customary rules, which have proven to be more widely adhered to by the community than formal regulations. Customary law not only has material sanctions, but also contains moral and spiritual dimensions that deter violators. A fisherman in Binongko, La Nggawu (48 years old), said: "If it's just government regulations, they are often violated. *But if it's a traditional prohibition, everyone obeys. Because there are social sanctions that are more severe than monetary fines.* This statement indicates that the effectiveness of customary prohibitions in preserving the sea is stronger than formal legal rules, which are often difficult to enforce on the ground. A similar sentiment was also expressed by Tomia traditional leader, La Ode Syahrir (50 years old):

Custom has moral force. If anyone violates the rules, they won't just be fined, but also embarrassed in front of the community.

These two quotes show that effectiveness in tourism governance in Wakatobi arises from the integration between the formal system (government regulations) and the informal system. (aturan adat). (aturan adat). With social legitimacy, people are more motivated to comply with conservation-related prohibitions, such as the ban on using fish bombs, the closure of fishing areas during certain periods, or the prohibition of damaging coral reefs in diving tourism areas. Governance literature emphasizes that the effectiveness of a policy is not solely determined by regulatory strength, but also by the social legitimacy that accompanies it. (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Studies in Papua and Maluku show that customary rules like sasi laut are more effective in protecting ecosystems than central government policies because they have a compliance base rooted in social norms. (Cinner et al., 2005). (Cinner et al., 2005). In the context of Wakatobi, the effectiveness of sustainable tourism governance is achieved when customary mechanisms are strengthened and integrated into the formal policies of the local government.

Equity

Equity is an important principle in good governance that emphasizes the equitable distribution of development benefits so that they are not enjoyed by only certain groups, but are also felt inclusively by all segments of society. In the context of sustainable tourism in Wakatobi, justice is realized thru the distribution of economic and social benefits from community-based tourism activities, particularly local homestays, traditional cuisine, and indigenous crafts. An Australian foreign tourist, John (32 years old), stated: "I prefer staying in a local's homestay rather than a large resort. *I know my money is directly helping local families.* This quote confirms that tourists prefer to contribute directly to the economies of indigenous communities, rather than just to large-scale businesses. A similar sentiment was also expressed by Nurul (28), a domestic tourist from Makassar: *If I stay at a homestay, I can learn to cook kasuami. I feel like my money is going back into the community, not to outside investors.*

Beside economic benefits, justice is also evident in socio-cultural aspects. Thru homestays and traditional festivals, indigenous communities have the opportunity to showcase their cultural identity directly to tourists. This not only strengthens the economic position of the community but also preserves the sustainability of traditional values. Thus, justice in the context of sustainable tourism in Wakatobi is not limited to income distribution, but also includes social inclusion, community empowerment, and cultural preservation. In tourism literature, social justice is seen as one of the important dimensions that determine the legitimacy of development. Scheyvens (1999) emphasizes that inclusive tourism must be able to empower local communities in economic, psychological, social, and political aspects. Meanwhile, Jamal and Camargo (2014) highlight that justice in tourism is not only about access to economic benefits, but also about recognizing the cultural value and identity of communities. The findings in Wakatobi align with this perspective, where justice is achieved when tourism provides direct economic benefits while also elevating the role of indigenous communities as key actors in governance.

DISCUSSION

Integration of Governance

The findings of this research indicate that the effectiveness of sustainable tourism governance in Wakatobi is not only determined by formal government regulations, but also by the customary rules that are alive and adhered to by the community. The integration of formal regulations and customary rules gives rise to a more effective hybrid form of governance because it possesses both social legitimacy and legal force. Within the framework of good governance, this shows how customs complement formal regulations and make them more relevant to the local context. Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012); Al Hafis et.al (2024) emphasize that cross-actor collaboration can only succeed if there is a mechanism for recognizing established informal institutions within the community.

Comparative Cases

The research findings in Wakatobi are also relevant to customary-based governance practices in other destinations. In Bali, the traditional village system and the awig-awig rules serve as a social mechanism that preserves cultural sustainability while also supporting the tourism industry. (Cole, 2012). (Cole, 2012). In Raja Ampat, the practice of sea sasi has become an effective customary instrument for marine ecological conservation and has been proven to improve the quality of coral reefs. (McLeod et al., 2009). (McLeod et al., 2009). In Toraja, traditional rituals are not only a cultural heritage but also a tourist attraction that is a major draw for international visitors. (Adams, 2006). (Adams, 2006). Meanwhile, Wakatobi showcases a combination of cultural and ecological aspects,

where customary sea laws maintain ecosystem sustainability, while traditional ceremonies and local cuisine strengthen cultural identity as a tourist attraction.

Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the good governance literature by incorporating the dimension of local wisdom as an integral part of governance. Previously, the literature on good governance tended to emphasize formal actors such as government and the private sector. (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). However, this research shows that indigenous communities play an equally important role in creating transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and justice. Thus, this study contributes to the expansion of the collaborative governance framework (Ansell & Gash, 2007) by adding a local-indigenous perspective that has been relatively neglected until now.

Policy Implications

From a policy perspective, the research findings confirm the need for a hybrid governance model in tourism management in Wakatobi. This model integrates government actors, indigenous communities, the private sector, and local communities within a collaborative governance framework. Local governments can function as regulatory facilitators and infrastructure providers, while indigenous communities serve as guardians of social and ecological norms. The private sector provides investment and innovation, while local communities are key players in community-based enterprises such as homestays, culinary businesses, and crafts. This hybrid approach is believed to be more inclusive, rooted in local wisdom, and capable of addressing the challenges of tourism sustainability in island regions like Wakatobi.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that indigenous communities in Wakatobi play a central role in achieving sustainable tourism thru the application of good governance principles. Customary laws passed down thru generations not only serve as a mechanism for ecological conservation but also as an instrument of governance that complements formal regulations. Field findings show five main contributions from indigenous communities: (1) maintaining transparency by announcing customary sea rules in public spaces; (2) strengthening participation thru homestays, traditional cuisine, and cultural festivals; (3) ensuring accountability in managing tourism funds with village officials and Pokdarwis; (4) increasing governance effectiveness thru social sanctions and customary legitimacy; and (5) promoting justice thru a more equitable distribution of economic benefits to the local community. Overall, this study confirms that the success of sustainable tourism in Wakatobi cannot be separated from the integration of customary governance with the formal system. The existence of indigenous communities is not just a complement, but a key actor in maintaining the balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this research expands the literature on good governance and collaborative governance by adding the dimension of local wisdom as a determinant of governance success. Previously, many studies emphasized the dominance of government and private actors (Bramwell & Lane, 2011), while this research shows that indigenous communities are capable of playing a key role in creating transparent, participatory, accountable, effective, and just governance. Thus, the results of this study contribute to the development of a more inclusive and contextual conceptual model of tourism governance in island regions.

Practical Implications

From a policy perspective, these findings have several important implications:

1. Formal recognition of customary law: Local governments need to incorporate customary norms into tourism and conservation regulations to give them legal force and social legitimacy.
2. Strengthening collaborative forums: A hybrid governance framework involving government, indigenous communities, the private sector, and local communities is needed to reduce jurisdictional overlaps.
3. Local economic empowerment: Support for homestays, culinary arts, and traditional crafts should be expanded thru access to capital, training, and promotion.
4. Integrating conservation and tourism: Customary rules about fishing bans or seasonal closures should be integrated with formal policies to protect marine ecosystems while supporting ecotourism. By implementing a

hybrid governance model based on local wisdom, tourism in Wakatobi has the potential to become a best practice example of sustainable tourism governance in the Indonesian archipelago.

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