

Revisiting Sustainable Tourism Practices in ASEAN Member State: A Study on the Saba Baduy in Indonesia

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Abstract

Being brought in as a tool to empower socio-cultural integration between Southeast Asian countries, the ASEAN Tourism Strategy Plan (ATSP) has become a standard norm among Southeast Asian countries to achieve sustainable tourism practices. Discussing local tourism policy prospects for regional integration is central to understanding whether compliance with ATSP standards, which is notably regarded as a non-sensitive issue in the ASEAN socio-cultural pillar, is applicable at the regional level, and beneficial for the local authorities. Despite that ASEAN countries have strongly relied on the tourism economy, scholars have yet to understand whether member states are ready to comply with ATSP. This research aimed to thoroughly evaluate sustainable tourism development in one destination site in Indonesia, using the case study of Saba Budaya Baduy of Banten Province. By reviewing policy measures, aspirations and interests of diverse actors in Banten, the research argued that adherence to ATSP is constrained by the dilemma between promoting economic development and preserving the cultural heritage of the Baduy Indigenous people. The research applied a qualitative method with a case study approach, which involves in-depth interviews, field observations, and analysis of policy documents. It also suggests that to ensure the readiness to comply with ATSP, the Indonesian authority needs more participatory policies.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, public policy, local culture, indigenous peoples, Baduy

Introduction

Tourism in Southeast Asia has experienced substantial growth, with international arrivals rising from 21.2 million in 1990 to 96.7 million in 2014, highlighting the region's increasing global appeal (Dolezal & Trupp, 2015; Putri & Purnawarman, 2021). This boom in tourism has not only bolstered the economies of Southeast Asian nations but has also facilitated job creation and community development, making it a vital sector for regional prosperity (Putri & Purnawarman, 2021). The region's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and vibrant cities have attracted millions of tourists annually, solidifying its status as a premier global travel destination. This steady influx of tourists not only showcases Southeast Asia's appeal but also highlights the importance of tourism as a cornerstone of economic development and regional integration (Dolezal & Trupp, 2015; Putri & Purnawarman, 2021).

Tourism in Indonesia has undergone significant evolution over the past few decades, significantly contributing to the nation's economic growth and development. Historically, the tourism sector gained importance as Indonesia recognized its potential as one of the world's largest archipelagos, rich in cultural heritage and natural resources (Aida et al., 2024). By the mid-2010s, the sector became one of the country's key contributors to foreign exchange earnings, with international tourism receipts reaching \$1.84 billion in 2019 (Rahmayani et al., 2022). Despite this growth, challenges persist. Inadequate infrastructure and inconsistent regulatory frameworks have hindered further expansion. Issues such as complex licensing processes and limited transportation networks make it difficult for tourists to access remote areas (Fafurida et al., 2020).

In addition to the economic challenges, tourism has had a negative impact on the quality of life of people and the environment in tourist destination areas (Nopiyani & Wirawan, 2021; Rahmi & Setiawan, 2020; Saqib et al., 2019). The rapid commercialization of tourist areas has led to the degradation of cultural values and traditions, as local communities often adapt their practices to cater to tourists, which risks diluting Indonesia's rich cultural heritage (Khamdevi & Bott, 2018). Furthermore, many tourism jobs are low-wage and seasonal, leading to income disparities and limited economic stability for workers (Firman et al., 2023). Thus, addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring that tourism remains a sustainable and inclusive driver of economic progress, particularly as the sector increasingly competes on a global scale.

As a member of ASEAN countries, the Indonesian government also aspires to achieve sustainable tourism development following the strategic plan outlined in the ATSP. While appearing as one of top major tourism destinations in Southeast Asia, studies have yet to discuss the integration of tourism policy in regional level, and focused too much on glorifying the economic discourse over tourism (Tung & Cuong, 2023). Research on tourism development in developing countries has also discovered that tourism has brought various negative impacts, including creating income inequality (Fang et al., 2021), benefiting non-

native residents (Hamzah et al., 2018; Kolopaking, 2015), degrading livelihood in the destination sites (Nopiyani & Wirawan, 2021; Rahmi & Setiawan, 2020; us Saqib et al., 2019), as well as inducing identity crisis among native residents in tourism sites (Khamdevi & Bott, 2018).

Instead of focusing on the development and economic nexus of tourism, the research attempts to examine the local tourism policy prospects for regional integration. Discussing local tourism policy prospects for regional integration is central to understanding whether compliance with ATSP standards, which is notably regarded as a non-sensitive issue in the ASEAN socio-cultural pillar, is applicable at the regional level, and beneficial for the local authorities. The research thoroughly evaluates sustainable tourism development in a single destination site in Indonesia, using the case study of Saba Budaya Baduy in Banten Province. By reviewing the policy measures, aspirations, and interests of diverse actors in Banten, the research argues that adherence to ATSP has become problematic because tourism development is constrained by the dilemma between promoting economic development and preserving the cultural heritage of the Baduy indigenous people. The research applies a qualitative method with a case study approach, which involves in-depth interviews, field observations, and analysis of policy documents. It also suggests that to ensure the readiness to comply with ATSP, the Indonesian authority needs more participatory policies.

Literature Review

Tourism development has been a priority focus of state policymaking in the postwar era. This sustainable tourism development aligns with the principle of sustainability on three main pillars, namely environmental, economic, and socio-cultural (UNEP & WTO, 2005). While boosting economic performance, international organizations have maintained the importance of preventing environmental damage in tourist destination areas. The aspect of preserving cultural values is expected to be maintained with sustainable tourism. Furthermore, in the economic context, sustainable tourism is also expected to bring prosperity to people in tourist destination areas.

At regional level, ASEAN recognizes the strategic role of tourism in driving regional economic growth and fostering integration among its member states. The ASEAN approach to tourism development emphasizes the integration and competitiveness of the region as a single tourism destination while prioritizing sustainability and inclusivity. Moenir et al. (2021) suggest that those approaches can be seen through the establishment of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) and the ATSP blueprint. The ATSP 2016–2025 builds upon the success of its predecessor (2011–2015), aiming to position ASEAN as a competitive, sustainable, and inclusive tourism destination (ASEAN, 2015). The ATSP emphasizes two key objectives: enhancing competitiveness by promoting ASEAN as a single tourism destination and ensuring sustainability and inclusivity in tourism development (ASEAN, 2015). To achieve these goals, the plan outlines ten strategic action programs focusing on areas such as destination marketing, human resource development, connectivity enhancement, environmental protection, and cultural heritage conservation (ASEAN, 2024). A core aspect

of the ATSP is its commitment to responsible tourism, which balances economic benefits with social and environmental sustainability.

The ATSP envisions ASEAN as a quality tourism destination offering diverse experiences by 2025. It incorporates strategies to engage local communities, integrate subregional tourism initiatives, and promote climate resilience and heritage conservation (ASEAN, 2015). The plan also emphasizes the need for seamless connectivity across ASEAN member states, facilitated through infrastructure development and simplified travel procedures (Antariksa et al., 2024). Moreover, it prioritizes the adoption of ASEAN tourism standards to ensure service excellence and visitor satisfaction (ASEAN, 2024). By addressing challenges such as unequal benefit distribution, environmental pressures, and policy constraints, the ATSP seeks to create a more integrated and inclusive regional tourism economy, benefiting both the communities and the broader ASEAN region (ASEAN, 2015).

Previous research on ATSP by Putri and Purnawarman (2021) has demonstrated that the ATF has played a significant role in enhancing tourism in Southeast Asia through the implementation of ATSP II, which focuses on sustainable and inclusive tourism as well as improving competitiveness. Post-pandemic, tourist arrivals have gradually increased, supported by infrastructure investments such as Kertajati International Airport and the Indonesia-China High-Speed Rail, along with a rise in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which reached US\$154 billion in 2019 before experiencing a temporary decline in 2020. Sustainable tourism initiatives, such as the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF) with funding exceeding US\$1 billion, further underscore ASEAN's commitment to establishing itself as a leading global tourism destination.

As a country that recognizes tourism as a key driver for economic growth, cultural promotion, and regional integration, Indonesia's tourism policies align closely with the ATSP (Damiasih, 2023). Moreover, as a major player in ASEAN, Indonesia was actively involved in drafting the ATSP, ensuring that its objectives and strategies resonated with national priorities. Indonesia's active participation in the drafting process of the ATSP is evident through its engagement in ASEAN forums related to tourism, particularly during the 2024 sessions held in Laos (Hendriyani, 2024). Furthermore, Lasally et al. (2023) shows that Indonesia's focus on sustainable tourism development aligns seamlessly with the ATSP's goals of creating an inclusive, competitive, and environmentally responsible tourism sector. This synergy is reflected in Indonesia's prioritization of connectivity improvements, environmental conservation, and the promotion of cultural heritage as outlined in the ATSP (Damiasih, 2023).

The Indonesian government has demonstrated a strong commitment to the ATSP by incorporating its principles into national policies and programs. For instance, the "Ten New Balis" initiative focuses on creating diverse tourism hubs that highlight Indonesia's unique cultural and natural attractions while adhering to sustainability principles emphasized in the ATSP (Rahayu & Sulistyawati, 2021). Additionally, Indonesia has hosted key ASEAN tourism events, showcasing its leadership and dedication to regional collaboration in the sector (Damiasih, 2023). The government's emphasis on infrastructure development, enhanced air

and sea connectivity, and simplified visa policies mirrors the ATSP's strategic actions aimed at making ASEAN a seamless and attractive single tourism destination (Antariksa et al., 2024). The alignment not only underscores Indonesia's commitment to regional tourism development but also highlights its strategic interest in leveraging ASEAN's collective strength to enhance its own tourism growth and global appeal.

While Indonesia has attempted to adhere to the ATSP nationally, research has yet to reveal its implementation and compliance at lower levels of governance, such as the regency and provincial levels. In the context of tourism policymaking, stakeholders in tourism governance have been less interested in preserving cultural assets compared to their economic value. Policymaking has focused mainly on aspects ranging from evaluating cultural tourism management practices (Luekveerawattana, 2020; Środa-Murawska et al., 2021) to how to develop a strategy so that cultural tourism can meet the sustainability aspect (Caciora et al., 2021; Mohale et al., 2020; Soebiyanto et al., 2020; Soufiane et al., 2021). However, research positions culture and its derivatives, such as ethnicity, religion, and authenticity, as a potential that needs to be developed into a tourism product. Tourism generates a big economic market, which leads the government to focus only on the economic aspect (Bianchi, 2017).

Some research has focused on the role of local communities and tourists in developing sustainable cultural tourism. More specifically, research on tourism in Baduy has generally highlighted the impact of tourism on the local community (Prasetyo et al., 2021) and the potential for developing Baduy attractions for tourism purposes (Priyombodo et al., 2022; Suhud et al., 2019).

Literature on tourism has rarely addressed policy analysis in the context of developing sustainable cultural tourism, particularly regarding compliance with normative standards set by higher levels of administration, such as those established by ASEAN. This gap in the literature is significant because compliance with such standards is often viewed as an essential mechanism in international relations to counteract the negative consequences of overdevelopment at the national level. Overdevelopment can lead to environmental degradation, loss of cultural heritage, and social inequality in tourist destinations. By adhering to international guidelines and frameworks, countries can better manage tourism growth, ensuring it aligns with sustainability principles.

In the context of ASEAN, compliance with normative standards can help member states balance economic growth between the preservation of cultural and environmental assets. Sustainable cultural tourism policies are not only essential for protecting local traditions and practices but also play a crucial role in fostering regional cooperation and integration. Despite the importance of such policies, existing research has largely focused on the economic aspects of tourism development, overlooking the need for more comprehensive policy frameworks that integrate socio-cultural and environmental dimensions. The lack of policy analysis in this area highlights the need for further investigation into how international standards, such as those promoted by ASEAN, can be effectively implemented at the national and local levels to promote sustainable cultural tourism.

Research Method

The research examines the sustainable tourism destination policy in Kanekes Village, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The research applies qualitative methods, focusing on understanding phenomena in their natural context to interpret what people say (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). Specifically, the research uses a case study approach to explore the complexity of social phenomena and real-life events (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher conducts a policy analysis using the Basic Policy Analysis Process outlined by Patton et al. (2016), following six key stages: verifying, defining, and detailing the problem; establishing evaluation criteria; identifying alternative policies; evaluating alternative policies; displaying and distinguishing among alternative policies; and monitoring and evaluating the implemented policy. The aim is to assess whether the policy supports sustainable tourism in terms of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability.

Primary and secondary data are collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and literature reviews, supplemented by field notes, archives, websites, and the researcher's interpretations. Then, informants are selected using the snowball sampling technique, which involves expanding the pool of participants based on recommendations from key informants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research includes insights from twelve key informants and supporting informants, representing various stakeholders involved in tourism policy in the Baduy region. These stakeholders include members of the Baduy indigenous community, local government representatives, tourists, non-Baduy residents, and cultural activists or academics concerned with the socio-cultural aspects of the Baduy people. Data analysis follows the model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which involves four main steps: data collection, data presentation, data condensation, and conclusion. The approach ensures a comprehensive and systematic examination of the policy and its impact on sustainable tourism practices in Kanekes Village.

Analysis

Baduy and Kanekes Village Community

The Baduy are an indigenous community residing in Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. They uphold the traditions and rituals of their ancestral heritage while maintaining a distinct local governance system that coexists with the modern administrative framework. Despite these overlapping structures, the Baduy people acknowledge and adhere to central government regulations (Wicaksono et al., 2022). Kanekes Village, located within Leuwidamar District, is approximately 21 km from the district capital and 42 km from Rangkasbitung, the capital of Lebak Regency (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Lebak, 2023).

The Kanekes Customary Village jurisdiction encompasses the territory of the Baduy Customary Law Community, which holds customary rights over land, water, and natural resources, as well as traditional heritage that reflects their ethnic historical identity within defined boundaries. The legal status of Baduy customary land is governed by Lebak Regency Regional Regulation No. 32 of 2001, Lebak Regent Decree No. 590/Kep.233/Huk/2002, and Lebak Regent Regulation No. 38 of 2023, which regulates the administration of the Kanekes Traditional Village Government.

The residents of Kanekes Village, known as the Kanekes people, are more commonly referred to as the Baduy by the wider public. The origins of the Baduy people are rooted in various historical accounts. One perspective, as highlighted in the local publication "Opening the Veil of Life of the Cultural Traditions of the Baduy and Cisungsang Communities and the Historical Relics of the Lebak Sibedug Site," traces their lineage to priests (*wiku*) who adhered to the Jatisunda tradition. This connection is supported by the ancient manuscript *Koropak 630 Sanghyang Siksakandang Karesian*. The remnants of Kabuyutan Jatisunda can still be found in Sasaka Domas, located in Baduy Dalam, which is considered the cultural and spiritual center of the Baduy community. Additionally, a traditional Baduy saying, "Far away from the praise that is taken, the rest of the people are not praised, here they are tired and they have to fight the war with the combination or the *baraya* who are still the same as the old people," suggests that the Baduy may be descendants of the Pajajaran Kingdom. It is believed they sought refuge in Mount Kendeng to escape the advancing influence of the Islamic kingdoms of Banten and Cirebon.

Previous research by Setiawan et al. (2023) emphasizes that the Baduy people are renowned for their rich cultural heritage and traditions, maintaining a lifestyle largely isolated from external influences. The Baduy community is divided into three distinct groups: Tangtu Tilu, Panamping, and Dangka (Moeis, 2010). The Tangtu Tilu, also known as Baduy Dalam, are the most traditional group, strictly following ancestral customs and residing in three villages within Kanekes: Cibeo, Cikartawana, and Cikeusik. The Panamping group includes individuals living in various villages across Kanekes, such as Cikadu, Kadukolot, and Cisagu. The Dangka group comprises Baduy people who have settled outside Kanekes, particularly in Padawara, serving as a buffer zone against external influences.

The primary distinction between the Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar communities lies in their varying degrees of openness to modern influences. The Baduy Dalam strictly adhere to ancestral customs as mandated by the *Karuhun* and maintain a highly secluded way of life, rejecting external innovations, particularly technology. In contrast, the Baduy Luar exhibit greater flexibility in adapting to changes. Several prohibitions observed by the Baduy community include damaging or exploiting the sacred *leuweung* (forest), poisoning fish, bathing with soap and toothpaste, wearing footwear, women wearing gold jewelry, attending formal education, using vehicles as a transportation, operating electronic devices, engaging in trade or running stalls, possessing luxury household items, and practicing polygamy.

The cultural authenticity of the Baduy community has increasingly drawn the interest of tourists. Over the years, the number of visitors to Kanekes Village, Banten, has fluctuated

significantly (see Figure 1). In 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the village welcomed 21,316 domestic tourists, and the following year, the number increased almost twofold to 42,174. However, the pandemic led to a sharp decline, with visits dropping to 20,319 in 2020 and reaching a low of 6,274 in 2021. Tourism began recovering in 2022, with visitor numbers rising to 20,817, and this upward trend continued in 2024, reaching 78,568—the highest in seven years. Notably, 2024 also marked the return of international tourists, with 40 foreign visitors recorded. However, this number is still lower compared to the 74 foreign visitors in 2018. This pattern reflects the resilience of Kanekes Village as a cultural tourism destination and the growing appeal of the Baduy community to both domestic and international travelers.



Figure 1. Data of Tourists Visiting Kanekes Village 2018-2024
Source: Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Kabupaten Lebak, 2025

Although the government seeks to develop Baduy as a tourist village, the Baduy community perceives this designation as inconsistent with their cultural values. The situation creates a tension between the government's goal of promoting tourism and the Baduy people's commitment to preserving their traditions. Given this contradiction, it is essential to analyze the tourism policies applied to Baduy to determine whether they align with the broader objectives of tourism development in Lebak Regency. This aligns with Banten Province's Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2016 on the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan 2016-2031, which aims to foster economic growth, improve community welfare, conserve the natural environment, and advance cultural heritage.

The government's pragmatic economic approach undeniably brings benefits, particularly in stimulating regional economic growth and enhancing local livelihoods. However, preliminary observations in Kanekes suggest that an excessive emphasis on economic expansion may lead to profound socio-cultural consequences. From a public administration perspective, prioritizing economic gains risks overshadowing the core identity and cultural heritage of the Baduy people, which serve as the village's main appeal and intrinsic value. Therefore, policy-making must strike a balance between economic advancement and cultural preservation. A more integrated and holistic strategy in managing Kanekes as a tourist destination would be crucial for long-term sustainability, ensuring that

economic, social, and environmental aspects work in harmony to support sustainable regional development.

Challenges in the Development-Economic Nexus

Dynamics of tourist visits to Baduy, both domestic and international, have shown significant changes between 2018 and 2024. In 2018, the region welcomed 21,316 domestic tourists and 74 foreign tourists. This number increased to 42,174 domestic tourists, while the number of foreign tourists decreased to 54 in 2019. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 caused a sharp decline, with domestic visits dropping to 20,319 and foreign visits plummeting to just 8. This drastic reduction was largely due to global travel restrictions and health concerns, which severely impacted tourism activities worldwide. The downward trend continued in 2021, with only 6,274 domestic tourists and no foreign tourist visits, marking one of the lowest points in Baduy's tourism activity. However, signs of recovery began to emerge in 2022, as domestic visits increased to 20,817, and foreign tourists were recorded at two visits, indicating a gradual revival in the domestic tourism sector alongside the easing of restrictions. By 2024, the recovery gained stronger momentum, with domestic tourist numbers surging to 78,568 and foreign tourists increasing to 40. Although foreign tourist numbers have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, this upward trend reflects growing optimism and a steady recovery in Baduy's tourism sector, highlighting its resilience and adaptability in the face of global challenges (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Condition of Visitors to Kenekes Saba Baduy Village
Source: Authors, 2024

The influx of tourists, particularly those from abroad, has significantly impacted the cultural values and traditional norms preserved by the Baduy community for generations. A major concern is the introduction of modern technology, such as electronic devices and gadgets, which directly conflicts with their strict customary laws aimed at maintaining cultural purity. The Baduy people, especially those in the more isolated Baduy Dalam area, have clear prohibitions against the use of technology and photography. However, many visitors, including content creators and tourists, often ignore these rules, capturing images in restricted areas and sharing them on social media. The behavior not only violates their cultural

norms but also undermines the community's efforts to protect their traditions. The misuse of technology and the disregard for local customs highlight the challenges the Baduy face in preserving their way of life amidst increasing external influences.

While the village-level governments uphold Saba Baduy, the upper-level government seems indifferent to the lack of response. The concept has been in the spotlight by the Ministry, as well as discussions in several regions that are copied and pasted by several Indigenous Institutions. To this day, the Ministry has yet to reach a consensus on the use of the term Saba Budaya Baduy, which holds potential as a unique attraction in the tourism industry. It is crucial to honor the wishes of the Baduy community, who oppose the use of the term "tourism" to describe visits to their region. Despite this, several initiatives have been undertaken to frame visits to Baduy more respectfully, such as adopting the term Saba Budaya, which emphasizes cultural appreciation over conventional tourism.

While local governments continue to uphold the concept of Saba Baduy, higher-level authorities have shown little response, despite the concept receiving attention from the Ministry and various Indigenous Institutions. To date, no consensus has been reached on the term Saba Budaya Baduy, which could serve as a unique cultural attraction in tourism. The Baduy community, however, opposes the use of the term "tourism" to describe visits to their area, emphasizing the need to respect their traditions. In response, efforts have been made to frame these visits in a more culturally sensitive way, such as adopting the term Saba Budaya, which prioritizes cultural appreciation over commercialization. This approach aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism, particularly in terms of cultural and environmental preservation. By rejecting the commercialized notion of tourism and introducing Saba Budaya, the Baduy people aim to manage visits in a way that respects both their cultural values and their environment, ensuring the sustainability of their traditions.

Moreover, the socio-cultural divide between the Baduy Dalam and the Baduy Luar becomes evident in how each community interacts with external influences, particularly in relation to technology and modernization. While the Baduy Dalam maintains a strict commitment to preserving traditional values, they reject modern technology, such as gadgets and social media, to protect their cultural identity. These prohibitions are intended to shield their way of life from outside contamination. On the other hand, the Baduy Luar, which is more open to the outside world, has begun adopting technological advancements, such as using online platforms for trade, thereby expanding their market reach. This difference in openness creates a significant challenge for the development of both the economy and tourism in the Baduy region. The conservative nature of the Baduy Dalam limits their ability to participate in broader economic and tourism opportunities, hindering potential growth.

In addition, tourism in Baduy also presents significant environmental challenges, particularly due to the improper disposal of plastic waste by visitors. Plastic waste, which is difficult to decompose, accumulates around the village and poses a serious threat to the natural ecosystem. This issue is further compounded by the absence of customary regulations on the disposal of plastic waste, as such modern materials are seen as taboo by the Baduy people. The environmental problems arising from tourism in Baduy add another layer of

complexity to the region's efforts to develop its economy and tourism. The growing waste issue reflects the difficulty of balancing economic and tourism growth with the preservation of the environment and local customs, making it a major challenge for sustainable development in the area (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Trash on Sites
Source: Authors, 2024

The development of tourism in Baduy presents a challenge as it tends to focus primarily on economic gains, often neglecting the ecological and socio-cultural dimensions that make the Baduy traditional village unique. These two aspects—environmental sustainability and cultural preservation—are key attractions for tourism in the area. To address this imbalance, an alternative approach should be adopted that integrates the physical environment, cultural heritage, and the role of tourists. Achieving this requires collaboration between local governments, the private sector, and the Baduy community. The approach highlights the challenge of balancing economic development with the need to preserve both the environment and the cultural values that define Baduy.

In terms of management, tourism in Baduy faces several significant challenges. First, there has been a sharp increase in tourist visits, especially domestic tourists, despite a notable decline during the 2020-2021 pandemic. Second, tourism has brought cultural and social impacts, particularly on the younger generation of Baduy Luar, who are becoming increasingly exposed to modernization. Third, the use of technology, such as social media and digital devices, is also influencing their lifestyle and traditional practices. Fourth, plastic waste discarded by tourists poses a serious threat to the natural ecosystem of Baduy, as waste management is not regulated by local customary norms.

To address these challenges, several mitigation strategies must be implemented. In response to the surge in tourist visits, strategic adjustments are necessary to attract more foreign tourists while maintaining a manageable overall visitor volume. The cultural impacts of tourism on the Baduy must be carefully managed to preserve their traditions, with special attention paid to minimizing negative effects on local customs and values. It is also crucial to

balance technological advancements with the preservation of social and cultural order, ensuring that traditional practices are not disrupted. To address the issue of plastic waste, stricter policies on waste management and visitor regulations should be implemented to protect Baduy's natural environment and cultural heritage.

Subnational Regime of Sustainable Tourism Practices

The Lebak Regency Government in Banten Province, Indonesia, has established Regent Regulation (Perbub) No. 97 of 2020 to evaluate sustainable tourism practices in Saba Budaya Baduy. The success indicators of these policies are assessed based on three key dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. Economically, success is measured through increased local community income and the growth of small businesses. The socio-cultural dimension focuses on the preservation of traditions and active community participation in tourism management. Meanwhile, the environmental dimension emphasizes ecosystem protection and sustainable natural resource management. These indicators serve as a framework to ensure that tourism development in Baduy is balanced and sustainable.

The success of sustainable tourism in Saba Budaya Baduy, guided by Regent Regulation (Perbub) No. 97 of 2020, is assessed through economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. Economically, it focuses on increased local income from handicrafts, agricultural products, and new jobs in tourism-related roles, alongside fair benefit distribution and contributions to the Gross Regional Income (GRI). Socio-culturally, it emphasizes the preservation traditions, such as adherence to customary rules in Baduy Dalam, public acceptance of *Saba Budaya*, and community involvement in tourism management. Environmentally, success is measured by effective waste management, controlled tourist capacity, and sustainable resource use, ensuring balanced development that supports economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

The summarized results of the research on sustainable tourism practices in Saba Budaya Baduy highlight significant progress and challenges across economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. Economically, the income of the Baduy Luar community has increased, particularly from the sale of handicrafts and tourism services, while economic benefits for Baduy Dalam remain limited. New job opportunities, such as roles in tour guiding, transportation, and microenterprises, have been created, especially in buffer villages. However, economic disparities persist, with Baduy Dalam receiving fewer benefits compared to Baduy Luar and buffer villages. The tourism sector's contribution to the GRI of Lebak Regency has grown significantly, from IDR 8.59 million in 2018 to over IDR 20 billion in 2022, with Saba Budaya Baduy becoming a leading destination for domestic tourists, particularly post-pandemic.

Socioculturally, the preservation of traditional values remains strong in Baduy Dalam, where the prohibition of technology is strictly maintained. However, the younger generation in Baduy Luar is increasingly influenced by technology, such as social media. Moreover, the term "Saba Budaya" is well-received by indigenous communities as it emphasizes cultural preservation and rejects the commodification of tourism. Although proposed village regulations aim to support the recognition of customary rights, implementation at higher

administrative levels is still pending. While traditional rituals, such as Seba Baduy, continue to be practiced, modernization is gradually affecting the cultural practices of the Baduy Luar. Furthermore, community participation in tourism management is high in the Baduy Luar, whereas the Baduy Dalam limits involvement to preserve their customs.

On the other hand, challenges such as plastic waste from tourists are prominent in Baduy Luar, whereas Baduy Dalam remains clean due to strict customary rules. Despite this, the lack of visitor limits has led to surges in tourist numbers, reaching up to 1,000 per day during peak seasons, raising concerns about environmental sustainability. Additionally, pressure on water resources is increasing, particularly in buffer villages that cater to tourist needs. Therefore, these issues underscore the importance of implementing effective waste management systems and setting visitor capacity limits to ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism in Saba Budaya Baduy.

Feasibility and Compliance to Regional Norms

The sustainable tourism practices in Banten, particularly in the Baduy region, illustrate both opportunities and significant challenges in aligning with the ATSP. Economically, tourism has brought measurable benefits to the Baduy Luar community, providing income through the sale of traditional crafts, agricultural products, and tourism services such as guiding and hospitality. These activities align partially with the ATSP's Strategic Direction 1, which emphasizes the diversification of tourism products and the inclusion of local communities in the tourism value chain (ASEAN, 2015). However, the economic benefits remain concentrated within the Baduy Luar, while the Baduy Dalam, adhering strictly to cultural traditions, have largely opted out of tourism-related activities. The inequitable distribution of economic opportunities reveals a fundamental gap in achieving the ATSP's goal of inclusive and sustainable economic development. Policies aimed at fostering equitable participation that respects the Baduy Dalam's cultural boundaries are critically lacking, highlighting the region's unpreparedness to address the economic inclusivity envisioned by the ATSP.

Building on the economic disparity, the socio-cultural dimensions of Baduy tourism further highlight the challenges of aligning with ATSP objectives. The Baduy Dalam community serves as a strong example of cultural preservation, maintaining ancestral traditions which also align with the ATSP's Strategic Direction (ASEAN, 2015). However, the growing influence of tourism on the Baduy Luar community reveals significant vulnerabilities. The adoption of modern technologies, changes in social practices, and increased interactions with tourists have begun to alter the cultural fabric of the Baduy Luar. While efforts such as branding tourism as *Saba Budaya* reflect an intention to preserve cultural values and resist commodification, they are insufficient to address the broader socio-cultural transformations induced by tourism.

The socio-cultural imbalance then feeds directly into environmental challenges that further complicate the region's alignment with ATSP principles. The Baduy Dalam community's adherence to customary environmental laws has maintained a pristine natural

environment. Their sustainable agricultural practices, rejection of chemical products, and stewardship of sacred forests underscore a model of environmental sustainability on the one hand. On the other hand, in the Baduy Luar, where tourism activities are more concentrated, environmental challenges have become increasingly apparent. The unchecked accumulation of plastic waste, over-extraction of natural resources, and the absence of effective waste management systems highlight a stark misalignment with ATSP principles. Despite the ATSP's clear emphasis on addressing environmental carrying capacity and promoting resource efficiency, these issues remain unaddressed in Banten's policy framework. The lack of infrastructure and regulatory mechanisms to manage tourism's environmental impact highlights the challenges the region faces in fully supporting ATSP's environmental objectives.

As environmental degradation grows, it also reflects the gaps in community participation, a cornerstone of the ATSP Strategic Direction. While the Baduy Luar community actively plays in tourism-related activities, such as guiding and craft production, the Baduy Dalam community's deliberate non-participation highlights a significant divergence from ATSP's inclusivity goals. This divergence reflects the cultural complexities of the Baduy region, where the preservation of traditional lifestyles often conflicts with the economic integration demanded by tourism.

The lack of community-wide engagement is mirrored by weaknesses in visitor management, which remain a critical area of misalignment with ATSP Strategic Direction 2.3.2, which focuses on managing the environmental carrying capacity of destinations (ASEAN, 2015). The absence of a formal visitor management system has led to significant overcrowding during peak tourism seasons, placing immense pressure on local resources and disrupting the ecological balance. The lack of a structured framework for regulating tourist numbers contradicts the ATSP's emphasis on maintaining destination sustainability. Without measures such as visitor quotas, carrying capacity thresholds, and enhanced monitoring systems, the Baduy region risks exacerbating environmental degradation and diminishing the quality of the tourism experience. These interconnected challenges highlight the urgent need for comprehensive visitor management strategies that align with ATSP principles and ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism in the region.

The governance and policy frameworks exacerbate these interconnected challenges, reflecting a fragmented approach to sustainable tourism development. Regent Regulation No. 97 of 2020, while signalling an intention to integrate sustainability principles, lacks actionable mechanisms for implementation. Key dimensions such as equitable economic benefit distribution, cultural preservation, and environmental protection are addressed only superficially, leaving significant gaps in alignment with the ATSP's comprehensive approach to governance under Strategic Direction 2 (ASEAN, 2015). Additionally, the absence of accountability and monitoring systems limits the effectiveness of existing policies. This weak governance framework underscores the region's unpreparedness to address the complexities of sustainable tourism development as envisioned by the ATSP.

Finally, the governance challenges are further exacerbated by deficiencies in infrastructure development, a critical aspect under Strategic Direction 1.6 of the ATSP (ASEAN, 2015). From a public administration perspective, the absence of essential facilities such as waste management systems, visitor information centers, and eco-friendly transportation options reflects gaps in policy implementation and coordination among governing bodies. While proposals for infrastructure improvements exist, their limited execution highlights systemic weaknesses in administrative capacity and prioritization. These shortcomings not only constrain the government's ability to manage tourism sustainably but also signal broader challenges in aligning local governance practices with the ATSP's objective of connectivity and sustainability.

Moreover, one of the critical issues hindering the implementation of sustainable tourism practices is the absence of an ATSP-specific committee or dedicated implementation body directly operating in the field. Without such a mechanism, a clear disconnect exists between ASEAN-level strategic commitments and local-level practices. This lack of direct intervention, oversight, and adaptive support weakens efforts to translate ATSP principles into actionable, context-specific policies that could address the unique challenges faced by destinations like Baduy. Consequently, sustainable tourism practices are left to fragmented local governance, further compounding the inefficiencies and gaps in implementation.

Banten's current approach to sustainable tourism in the Baduy region is not adequately prepared to support the comprehensive and integrated objectives of the ATSP. Without immediate and transformative interventions, including policy revisions, infrastructure investments, participatory governance mechanisms, and the establishment of field-level ATSP committees, Banten risks falling short of ATSP compliance and undermining the cultural and environmental assets that are fundamental to its tourism appeal. These weaknesses underscore the urgent need for a more cohesive and sustainable approach to align with ASEAN's broader goals for inclusive and responsible tourism development.

Conclusions

Tourism development, both in Indonesia and globally, appears to be primarily driven by economic considerations. Tourism has always been aimed at increasing economic growth and creating jobs. Tourism has indeed been proven to have a positive impact on the community's economy, including a reduction in poverty rates. Tourism not only has a positive economic impact, but also has other beneficial effects, such as preserving cultural heritage. Tourism can help in maintaining the local culture. With the increasing number of tourists interested in learning about the culture and traditions of an area, local communities tend to pay more attention to and maintain their local cultural heritage. In addition, sustainable tourism also often promotes environmental awareness and environmentally friendly practices.

Sustainable tourism destination policies often pose a counterproductive risk if not formulated and applied appropriately. An example of a cultural tourism destination that faces

the challenge of sustainable tourism development is Tourism in Baduy. The Baduy people are renowned for their adherence to traditional customs and the teachings of their ancestors. Obedience to these customs gave rise to a unique way of life, particularly among the Baduy Dalam community. The Baduy people still hold fast to their ancestral teachings which are reflected in their rejection of change or modernization, such as not using soap, detergent, vehicles, and electronic devices. Even so, the Baduy people are open to residents from outside as long as they follow the customary rules that guide the lives of the residents there. The increasing presence of tourists in Baduy may lead to overtourism, posing a threat to the preservation of nature where the Baduy people live and to the cultural values they uphold.

Furthermore, sustainability principles are only mentioned in general terms without providing clear implementation guidelines. It means the policy has the potential to weaken cultural preservation and local ecosystem balance. Efforts such as consistent indigenous education, the implementation of a tourist quota system to reduce the environmental pressure, and community-based waste management need to be adopted to ensure that these policies are more inclusive, sustainable, and in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the Baduy indigenous people. The research presents a new perspective on evaluating tourism policies holistically, considering not only their impact on economic growth but also their contributions to cultural and environmental preservation. Thus, the findings make an important theoretical contribution to expanding the understanding of the effectiveness of tourism policies oriented towards local cultural sustainability, as well as filling gaps in the literature that have focused more on generic policy approaches.

The sustainable tourism practices in Banten, particularly in the Baduy region, exhibit partial but insufficient alignment with the ATSP. While some progress has been made in cultural preservation and limited community engagement, significant gaps in economic equity, environmental sustainability, governance, and infrastructure reveal a critical lack of readiness to support the ATSP's vision. The economic benefits of tourism remain inequitably distributed, with the Baduy Dalam community largely excluded from meaningful participation. Environmental degradation caused by unchecked tourism activities, coupled with inadequate waste management and the absence of a visitor management system, further exposes the region's inability to meet the ATSP's environmental objectives.

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