

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AND LOCAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study examines the role of community-based tourism (CBT) in strengthening local economic resilience through sustainable tourism development. Using a library research approach, the study reviews and synthesizes relevant literature indexed primarily in Scopus, focusing on community participation, community empowerment, local entrepreneurship, economic diversification, sustainable tourism development, adaptive capacity, and local economic resilience. The findings reveal that CBT contributes to local economic resilience through a sequential and interconnected process rather than through direct economic benefits alone. Community participation promotes empowerment by increasing local involvement, control, and access to tourism resources. Empowerment subsequently stimulates local entrepreneurship and economic diversification, reducing dependence on a single source of tourism income. Sustainable tourism development further integrates economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, while adaptive capacity enables communities to respond to crises, market changes, and external shocks. The framework shifts the CBT perspective from short-term economic benefits toward a resilience-building approach and provides a conceptual foundation for future empirical research and sustainable tourism policy.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism; Community Empowerment; Sustainable Tourism Development; Economic Diversification; Adaptive Capacity; Local Economic Resilience

Introduction

Tourism has evolved from a mere visit-based economic activity to a regional development instrument that increasingly emphasizes sustainability, community empowerment, and the distribution of economic benefits in a more inclusive manner. In this development, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has gained attention because it places local communities not only as tourism beneficiaries, but as key actors in planning, managing, decision-making, and distributing economic benefits from tourism activities. This approach is in line with the *sustainable tourism development* paradigm that seeks to balance economic, socio-cultural, and environmental interests in the long term. CBT has

the potential to create economic and social value through the use of local resources, strengthening community businesses, reducing economic leakage, and increasing linkages between the tourism sector and the local economy (Mtapuri et al., 2022). Therefore, CBT is increasingly seen as a strategic mechanism to transform local resources into sustainable livelihoods while increasing the capacity of communities to face economic changes and various external shocks.

Developments in the literature suggest that academic attention to CBT and sustainability has increased substantially in recent decades. A bibliometric review of 869 Scopus-indexed documents on sustainability in CBT shows that research is evolving towards issues of economic growth, stakeholder participation, decision-making, community and tourist satisfaction, and heritage conservation, with research attention increasingly shifting to developing countries (Hallinger et al., 2023). A more recent study by Tuyen et al. (2025), based on 847 documents in bibliometric analysis and 69 documents in a systematic review from Scopus and the Web of Science, also showed a strong increase in CBT research, especially since 2015, with the dominant themes being *community participation*, *empowerment*, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainability. Meanwhile, Nguyen and Nguyen (2026), through an analysis of 365 Scopus indexed articles for the period 2000–2024, identified eight CBT research groups, including community participation, empowerment, poverty alleviation, leadership, and sustainable development; they also found that *resilience* and innovation are beginning to emerge as new research directions. The findings show that CBT has evolved into a multidimensional field that is increasingly linked to the development and resilience agenda of communities. Although CBT offers promising benefits, increased tourism activity does not automatically result in economic resilience for local communities. Tourism-dependent destinations remain vulnerable to demand fluctuations, disasters, policy changes, health crises, climate change, dependence on external markets, and weak diversification of income sources. In addition, issues such as limited capital, low human resource capacity, inequality in benefit distribution, dominance of external actors, weak governance, and limited substantive community participation can reduce the contribution of CBT to local development. The literature even suggests that the sustainability of CBT is not an automatic consequence of community participation, but is highly dependent on the institutional and governance qualities that underpin it. In the Indonesian context, these vulnerabilities are seen when tourism villages face policy shocks and changing demands; adaptive responses then emerge through digital promotion, product innovation, and market diversification. This condition underscores the need to shift attention from the question of whether CBT creates economic benefits to how it can build local economic capacity to survive, adapt, and recover from shocks.

Previous research has provided a solid foundation for the relationship between CBT and sustainable development. Mtapuri et al. (2022) show that CBT can generate commercial and social value, enhance local economic development, and reduce *economic leakage* through resource utilization and local economic linkages. Hallinger et al. (2023)

show that *sustainable community-based tourism* research develops around the economic, social, stakeholder participation, conservation, and sustainable development dimensions. Cutting-edge research is further beginning to link tourism to the concept of community resilience. A study in the *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, for example, developed a framework linking the tourism sector, *community resilience*, and *community quality of life*, and showed that community resilience can play a mediating role in the relationship between tourism and people's quality of life (2024). Another study on Bali found the importance of the socio-cultural dimension and community collectivism in rebuilding destination resilience during the COVID-19 crisis. Thus, the literature began to show a shift from the orientation of short-term economic benefits to the ability of communities and destinations to adapt and sustain well-being in conditions of uncertainty. However, there are important gaps in the literature. First, most CBT research still places *community participation*, *empowerment*, *sustainability*, *conservation*, and *economic growth* as relatively separate themes, while the mechanisms that explain how these overall dimensions generate local economic resilience have not been comprehensively synthesized. Tuyen et al. (2025) specifically found theoretical fragmentation and limitations of integrative conceptual frameworks in the development of the CBT literature. Second, previous bibliometric studies have mapped the knowledge structure of CBT and sustainability, but resilience is still emerging more as a new research direction than as a key outcome integrated with sustainable tourism development (Hallinger et al., 2023; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). Third, the relationship between community participation, empowerment, local entrepreneurship, economic diversification, destination sustainability, and adaptive capacity has not been sufficiently assembled into a conceptual mechanism that explains the formation of local economic resilience. Thus, a literature synthesis is needed that shifts the focus from the "economic benefits of CBT" to the "resilience-building mechanisms of CBT", namely how CBT transforms local participation and resources into more adaptive and sustainable economic capacity.

Studies on CBT and local economic resilience are becoming increasingly important because the sustainability of destinations is no longer measured by increasing the number of tourists, income, or employment opportunities alone, but also through the ability of communities to maintain their livelihoods in the face of crises and structural changes. Destination resilience itself is multidimensional and includes social, economic, institutional, community, infrastructure, and environmental dimensions. Recent developments in CBT research also show a growing focus on *resilience*, *innovation*, *digital transformation*, and *entrepreneurial empowerment* as part of the future research agenda (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). Therefore, integration between community-based tourism, sustainable tourism development, and local economic resilience is needed to produce a more complete understanding of how tourism development can create a local economy that is not only growing, but also inclusive, diversified, adaptive, and able to withstand various shocks.

Based on these gaps, the research entitled "Community-Based Tourism and Local Economic Resilience: A Literature Review of Sustainable Tourism Development" aims to

analyze and synthesize the development of the literature on the relationship between community-based tourism, sustainable tourism development, and local economic resilience. More specifically, this study is directed to identify the contribution of CBT to the empowerment and livelihoods of local communities; analyze the social, economic, institutional, entrepreneurship, and environmental factors that determine the sustainability of CBT; and explain the mechanisms through which community-based tourism development can strengthen the ability of local economies to face, adapt to, and recover from various shocks. The framework places local economic resilience as a long-term outcome of the community-based sustainable tourism development process, while providing the basis for the next empirical research agenda.

Literature Review

Community-Based Tourism

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is an approach to tourism development that places local communities as the main actors in planning, decision-making, resource management, provision of tourism products and services, and the distribution of economic benefits resulting from tourism activities. In contrast to conventional tourism models that tend to be oriented towards the growth of visits and external investments, CBT emphasizes local ownership, community participation, empowerment, and sustainable use of local resources. In this context, the success of CBT is not only determined by the ability of destinations to attract tourists, but also by the extent to which tourism activities increase community capacity and generate socio-economic benefits that can be sustained in the long term. Mtapuri et al. (2022) explain that CBT has the potential to create commercial and social value through local economic development and reduction of *economic leakage*. Meanwhile, mapping of the literature by Hallinger et al. (2023) shows that stakeholder participation, community empowerment, decision-making, economic growth, and conservation are important elements in the development of sustainable CBT research. Thus, CBT can be understood as a mechanism that links community participation to the creation of economic benefits, local capacity building, and destination sustainability.

Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is a tourism development paradigm that seeks to maintain a balance between achieving economic benefits, environmental protection, socio-cultural preservation, and the welfare of local communities. From a sustainability perspective, the success of tourism development is not only assessed based on an increase in the number of tourists or destination income, but also on the ability of destinations to maintain resources and community welfare in the long term. The CBT literature shows that sustainability is strongly influenced by the quality of community participation, institutional structure, stakeholder collaboration, distribution of benefits, and the ability of communities to control tourism resources. Hallinger et al. (2023) found that the development of *sustainable community-based tourism* literature has integrated economic, social, environmental, heritage conservation, and stakeholder engagement issues. Tuyen

et al. (2025) further show that *community participation, empowerment, collaboration, and sustainability* are central themes in the development of CBT research. The findings show that community-based tourism sustainability requires a transformation from mere community involvement to community capacity to gain control, create economic value, develop local businesses, and sustain destination resources.

Local Economic Resilience

Local economic resilience refers to the economic ability of a community or region to face shocks, maintain key economic functions, adapt, and recover or transform after experiencing changes or crises. In the context of tourism destinations, this concept is important because high dependence on tourists can increase people's vulnerability to health crises, natural disasters, climate change, economic fluctuations, and changes in market behavior. Resilience is therefore not only related to the ability to return to pre-crisis conditions (*bounce back*), but also the ability to adapt and transform towards a stronger economic structure (*bounce forward*). Recent literature on CBT shows that *resilience, innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development* are increasingly developing as important research themes (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). From a CBT perspective, local economic resilience can be strengthened through increasing local business ownership, diversifying sources of income, improving community skills, strengthening social and institutional networks, and reducing dependence on external actors. Therefore, economic resilience can be placed as one of the long-term outcomes of sustainable community-based tourism development.

Community Empowerment dan Local Entrepreneurship

Community empowerment is an important mechanism that connects participation in CBT with the creation of sustainable economic benefits. Participation that is only symbolic does not necessarily provide the ability for the community to determine the direction of destination development. On the contrary, empowerment allows people to improve their knowledge, skills, access to resources, decision-making skills, and control over tourism economic activities. In its development, this empowerment can encourage *local entrepreneurship* through the establishment of homestays, culinary businesses, handicrafts, guide services, local transportation, creative economy products, and various tourism support businesses. Nguyen and Nguyen (2026) show that empowerment, participation, poverty alleviation, leadership, and sustainable development form important groups in the CBT knowledge structure. Meanwhile, Tuyen et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of the interconnectedness between participation, empowerment, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainability. Thus, empowerment can function as a transformational process that transforms community involvement into productive ability, while local entrepreneurship becomes an economic channel that translates these capabilities into income, employment opportunities, and community economic ownership.

Economic Diversification dan Adaptive Capacity

Economic diversification is one of the important mechanisms in the formation of local economic resilience because it can reduce people's dependence on one type of product, market, or source of income. In CBT, diversification can be realized through the integration of tourism activities with agriculture, culinary, handicrafts, creative economy, local culture, conservation, and various forms of micro-enterprises based on local resources. A more diverse economic structure allows communities to distribute risk when one of the activities declines. However, diversification needs to be complemented by *adaptive capacity*, namely the ability of people to learn, innovate, develop networks, access technology and information, and adapt products and business strategies to environmental changes. The emergence of *resilience* and innovation in the latest CBT research agenda shows the increasing importance of adaptability as a link between sustainability and economic resilience (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). With this perspective, sustainable tourism development does not stop at resource conservation and equitable distribution of benefits, but must improve the ability of communities to respond to change and create new economic opportunities.

Research Methods

This study uses a literature review approach with the *library research* method to identify, analyze, and synthesize the development of knowledge about the relationship between *community-based tourism* (CBT), *sustainable tourism development*, and *local economic resilience*. This approach is used because it allows researchers to integrate findings from various previous studies while identifying conceptual patterns, interconstruct relationships, research gaps, and opportunities for theoretical framework development. In contrast to *systematic literature review* which uses the PRISMA protocol, this study does not use PRISMA, but implements a structured literature search process through the stages of source identification, selection based on relevance, thematic grouping, content analysis, and conceptual synthesis. The literature was mainly searched through the Scopus database using a combination of keywords such as "*community-based tourism*", "*sustainable tourism development*", "*community participation*", "*community empowerment*", "*local entrepreneurship*", "*economic diversification*", "*adaptive capacity*", and "*local economic resilience*." Peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to the research theme are prioritized to maintain the quality and credibility of academic sources.

The analysis was carried out using thematic content analysis and *conceptual synthesis* approaches. The articles that have been obtained are read, classified, and compared based on the research focus, main concepts, theoretical approaches, findings, and implications for community-based tourism development and local economic resilience. The analysis process is directed at several main themes, namely community participation, community empowerment, local entrepreneurship, economic diversification, sustainable tourism development, adaptive capacity, and local economic resilience. Furthermore, the relationship between themes is synthesized to identify mechanisms on how CBT can contribute to the formation of community economic

resilience. With this method, the research not only summarizes previous research, but also conducts conceptual integration to produce a more comprehensive explanation of the mechanism of building local economic resilience through community-based tourism.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the literature synthesis show that community participation is the main foundation in the sustainable development of *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT). Community participation is not only related to involvement in tourism operational activities, but also includes involvement in planning, decision-making, resource management, and distribution of economic benefits. Mapping of 365 Scopus indexed articles for the period 2000–2024 shows that *community participation*, *empowerment*, *poverty alleviation*, *leadership*, and *sustainable development* are important clusters in the structure of CBT research, while *resilience* and *innovation* are emerging as new research themes (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). The findings show that the quality of participation is important because community involvement provides opportunities for local people to control destination resources, maintain socio-cultural values, and derive economic benefits from tourism development. Thus, participation can be seen as the starting point for the transformation of society from beneficiaries to actors of tourism development.

The results of subsequent studies show that community empowerment is an important mechanism that transforms participation into more productive economic capabilities. Empowerment improves people's ability to access information, develop skills, manage resources, build networks, and make decisions about tourism development. However, the benefits of empowerment are not always evenly distributed. Studies in mountain communities in Vietnam show that the impact of CBT on empowerment is influenced by household capacity, financial access, local identity, women's empowerment, and the ability of communities to maintain value in the CBT chain (Duc et al., 2026). This means that the existence of CBT alone does not guarantee the creation of empowerment. Community capacity and institutional structures are needed that enable communities to transform participation into control over economic resources. In this process, the empowerment further provides a foundation for the growth of local entrepreneurship, such as accommodation, culinary, handicrafts, tour guides, transportation, creative economy, as well as products based on local culture and resources.

The third finding shows that local entrepreneurship and economic diversification play an important role in linking community empowerment to local economic resilience. CBT allows communities to develop a variety of economic activities so that income does not come from just one activity. Diversification becomes even more important when destinations face external shocks. Thomsen et al.'s (2024) study of CBT in Kalunga Territory, Brazil, shows that diversification of livelihoods and tourism experiences, community solidarity, integration of local knowledge and culture, and shared governance and decision-making are important factors for CBT resilience. Similarly, a CBT study in

Floreana, Galapagos, showed the link between community participation, economic diversification, and socio-ecological resilience. These findings indicate that community economic resilience is stronger when tourism functions as part of a local livelihood portfolio, rather than replacing all traditional economic activities.

The fourth result shows that sustainable tourism development is an integrative mechanism that links the economic benefits of CBT with social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. Sustainability in the context of CBT is not only related to resource conservation, but also to the ability of communities to maintain local control, identity, social structure, and sources of livelihood in the long term. The pandemic experience shows the importance of this dimension. Noorashid and Chin (2021) show that CBT in Brunei is undergoing a process of adaptation and transformation during COVID-19, so that *resilience* and transformation are an important part of the sustainability of CBT operations. In the context of Bali, Hanita et al. (2024) also show that cultural communities are not only a tourist attraction, but also have a function in the formation of *tourism community resilience* when facing crises. Thus, sustainable tourism development needs to maintain a balance between income generation, protection of local resources, strengthening social cohesion, and community capacity to cope with change.

The fifth result shows that adaptive capacity is an important link between *sustainable tourism development* and local economic resilience. The ability of communities to learn from crises, innovate products, utilize technology, build networks, diversify markets, and adjust business models determines the ability of the local economy to survive and recover. Studies on tourism villages in Indonesia show that changes in demand due to policy shocks encourage adaptation strategies that include digital promotion, market diversification, and tourism product innovation, among others. These findings are consistent with the development of the CBT literature that begins to place *resilience*, innovation, and tourism experiences as new research directions (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). The flow shows that local economic resilience is not a direct impact of tourism activities, but the result of a gradual process of transforming community capabilities.

Discussion

The findings of the study broaden the understanding of CBT by shifting the orientation from the tourism benefit paradigm to the resilience-building process. The CBT literature has so far emphasized that community participation can increase empowerment, income, employment opportunities, cultural preservation, and sustainability. However, the synthesis of this study shows that increasing economic benefits is not enough to build resilience if communities continue to have a high dependence on one market or tourism source of income. The experience of the CBT community during the pandemic shows that the ability to maintain their livelihoods is closely related to the availability of alternative sources of income. A study of families in two tourist villages in Yogyakarta, for example, found that when tourism income declined due to the pandemic, the existence of agricultural activities and alternative sources of

income helped the household economic adaptation process. Thus, the success indicators of CBT need to be expanded from mere income growth to the ability of people to maintain and reconfigure their economic activities when facing shocks.

In these mechanisms, community empowerment, local entrepreneurship, and economic diversification form an important chain of transformation. Participation provides communities with access to the development process, while empowerment increases their ability to control economic resources and decisions. These capabilities can then be converted into local entrepreneurship that increases the retention of economic value at the community level. At the same time, diversification reduces vulnerability due to dependence on a single activity. Thomsen et al. (2024) empirically emphasize the importance of livelihood diversification, solidarity, local knowledge, and shared governance in increasing CBT resilience. Recent developments also place CBT in the perspective of *the entrepreneurial ecosystem*, namely that the sustainability of CBT businesses depends on an environment that allows communities to create, develop, and sustain local businesses (Jackson, 2026). Therefore, *local entrepreneurship* can be understood as a conversion mechanism between social empowerment and the economic capacity of the community.

Further findings show that adaptive capacity is a critical component in explaining why some tourism communities are able to survive better than others in the face of crisis. Resilience does not mean maintaining the same economic structure, but rather includes the ability to learn, innovate, diversify, reorganize, and transform. Evidence from Kalunga shows that CBT resilience is underpinned by diversification, community values and solidarity, the integration of local knowledge, and the foundation of shared governance (Thomsen et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Brunei's experience demonstrates the importance of transformation in CBT sustainability during the pandemic (Noorashid & Chin, 2021). This reinforces the argument that the relationship between sustainability and resilience should not be seen as static. Sustainable tourism development provides economic, social, cultural, and environmental foundations, while adaptive capacity allows these foundations to be converted into the ability of communities to respond to change.

Based on this synthesis, the main conceptual contribution of this study is the development of the Community-Based Tourism Economic Resilience Framework (CBT-ERF). This framework integrates themes that previously tended to be discussed in a fragmented manner in the CBT literature. This is relevant to the bibliometric findings of Nguyen and Nguyen (2026) which show that participation, empowerment, poverty alleviation, leadership, and sustainable development have become important structures of CBT research, while *resilience* and *innovation* are developing as *research frontiers*. Thus, CBT-ERF offers the perspective that the ultimate goal of CBT is not solely to increase people's incomes, but to build participatory, diversified, sustainable, and adaptive local economic capabilities, so that communities have a stronger ability to face, absorb, adapt to, and recover from various economic shocks.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusion

This study concludes that Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has a strategic role in building *local economic resilience* when tourism development is not only oriented towards increasing visits and income, but also on community empowerment, economic diversification, sustainability, and adaptive capacity building. Based on the synthesis of the literature, the relationship between CBT and local economic resilience is not direct, but takes place through an interrelated transformation process. Community participation is the foundation that encourages empowerment, while empowerment strengthens the community's ability to develop local entrepreneurship. The development of local businesses further creates diversification of sources of income and strengthens economic linkages at the community level. If the process is carried out by paying attention to economic, socio-cultural, and environmental balance, it will form a more sustainable tourism development and be able to increase the adaptive capacity of the community to change and various shocks. The framework expands the perspective of CBT from an economic benefits-oriented approach to a resilience-building approach, which is the development of people's ability to survive, adapt, innovate, and recover their economic activities in the face of a crisis. Thus, the success of CBT should not only be measured through increased income, employment opportunities, or the number of tourism businesses, but also through the level of local ownership, diversification of livelihoods, entrepreneurial capacity, resource sustainability, and the adaptive ability of the community. This synthesis also shows that local economic resilience is the cumulative result of the interaction between social, economic, institutional, and sustainability dimensions in community-based tourism development.

Suggestions

Further research is recommended to conduct empirical testing of CBT-ERF through quantitative, qualitative, and *mixed methods* approaches. Quantitative research can develop indicators for each construct and test the relationship between Community Participation, Community Empowerment, Local Entrepreneurship, Economic Diversification, Sustainable Tourism Development, Adaptive Capacity, and Local Economic Resilience using *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM). Comparative studies are also needed on various destination characteristics, such as tourist villages, coastal destinations, ecotourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, and post-critical destinations, to find out whether the mechanisms of economic resilience formation are different based on the social, economic, institutional, and geographical characteristics of the destination. Longitudinal research is also important to explain changes in people's adaptive capacity and economic resilience before, during, and after the occurrence of shocks.

From a practical perspective, local governments, destination managers, community organizations, and tourism industry players are advised not to make the community only

a workforce or provider of supporting services, but to strengthen ownership, entrepreneurship, decision-making capacity, and community access to economic resources. CBT policies need to be directed at entrepreneurship training, strengthening tourism MSMEs, access to financing, digital transformation, product and market diversification, business network development, and the integration of tourism with agriculture, culinary, handicrafts, creative economy, and other local economic activities. With this approach, CBT can develop from an income-generating instrument to a regional development strategy that is able to form a local community that is independent, diversified, adaptive, sustainable, and economically resilient.

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