

Tourism as a Driver of the Local Economy: Analysis of the Impact of Mutiara Beach Development on the Livelihoods of Gumanano Village Community, Central Buton Regency

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Abstract

Tourism as a Driver of the Local Economy: Analysis of the Impact of Mutiara Beach Development on the Livelihoods of Gumanano Village Community, Central Buton Regency. This study aims to analyze the economic impact of Mutiara Beach tourism development on the livelihoods of local communities in Gumanano Village, Mawasangka District, Central Buton Regency. A qualitative approach with a case study method was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation, with informants selected via purposive sampling. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, with validity ensured through source, technique, and time triangulation. The findings indicate that the tourism sector positively influences community livelihoods through increased income, employment creation, and micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) growth. Based on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, tourism has strengthened communities' financial, social, human, and physical capital. An economic multiplier effect from tourism activities was also identified. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including limited business capital, suboptimal destination promotion, and the risk of economic dependency. The study recommends community-based tourism management oriented toward sustainable empowerment to ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the strategic sectors contributing to regional economic growth through job creation, income improvement, and the development of micro and small enterprises. From the perspective of tourism economics, tourism activities not only generate direct economic benefits through tourist spending but also create a multiplier effect that can stimulate the growth of other sectors such as trade, transportation, culinary, and creative industries (Figini & Patuelli, 2022). Therefore, the development of tourist destinations has become one of the important instruments for improving the welfare of local communities (Ciascai et al., 2022).

The presence of tourism activities opens new economic opportunities for local communities. The increasing number of tourist visits encourages the growth of various community businesses such as food stalls, gazebo rentals, transportation services, souvenir sales, and other micro-enterprises related to tourist needs (Riniwati et al., 2025). In addition, local tourism also has a creative economic potential in the form of traditional woven crafts that can be developed as supporting products for tourism and an additional source of income for the community ((Choobchian & Niazmand, 2026). The economic benefits generated by the tourism sector are not always felt equally by all members of the community (Rastegar, 2026). Several studies indicate that the management of tourist destinations still faces various problems, including the suboptimal involvement of local communities in decision-making, the not fully transparent management of tourism levies, and the not yet maximized distribution of economic benefits to village communities. These conditions have the potential to reduce the effectiveness of tourism as an instrument for improving the welfare of local communities (Ririmasse et al., 2026)

On the other hand, the sustainability of the tourism sector highly depends on the participation of local communities as the main actors in the management and utilization of tourism resources (Erkılıç et al., 2026). Therefore, it is important to examine the extent to which tourism activities can have an impact on the livelihoods of local communities, both in terms of income, employment opportunities, business development, and changes in the socioeconomic conditions of the community (Sharma et al., 2026)

Central Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, is one of the regions with considerable natural tourism potential. One of the leading destinations developing in this area is Mutiara Beach, located in Gumanano Village, Mawasangka District (Kadir Sabilu et al., 2023). The beach is known for its beautiful white sandy shoreline and has become one of the regional tourism icons continuously developed by the local government. The natural beauty of Mutiara Beach makes it an attractive destination for both local and out-of-region tourists.

Tourism development has become a government priority because it is considered to have great potential in supporting the economic development of the local community. Research indicates that Mutiara Beach is one of the priority destinations in Central Buton Regency that has promising tourism resources yet still faces various challenges in its management and development.

Based on the above description, research on “The Economic Impact of Tourism on Local Community Livelihoods: A Case Study of Gumanano Village, Central Buton Regency” becomes important to conduct. This research is expected to provide empirical insights on the contribution of the tourism sector to the economic life of local communities and to serve as input for the local government and stakeholders in formulating sustainable tourism development policies that prioritize community welfare.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Tourism and Its Economic Impact

Tourism is a travel activity undertaken by a person to a destination outside their usual place of residence for recreational, business, cultural, or other purposes. From an economic perspective, tourism is regarded as a sector capable of generating income, employment, investment, and driving

regional economic growth (Fisu, 2026). Various studies show that tourism has a strong relationship with economic development through increased tourist consumption and local economic circulation.

According to the Tourism-Led Growth Hypothesis (TLGH), the growth of the tourism sector can serve as a driver of economic growth in a region through increased community income, job creation, and the development of supporting sectors such as trade, transportation, and services (Roy & Medhekar, 2026)

Theory of Economic Impact of Tourism

a. Direct Impact

Direct impact refers to the economic benefits directly received by the community or business actors from tourist spending. Examples include income received by food stall owners, transportation service providers, accommodation managers, and souvenir vendors in tourist (Intakarn et al., 2026).

b. Indirect Impact

Indirect impact occurs when tourism business actors purchase goods and services from other sectors to meet their operational needs. For example, food stalls in tourist areas purchase raw materials from local farmers or fishermen (Hu & Lin, 2026).

c. Induced Impact

Induced impact arises when income received by the community from the tourism sector is spent again to meet household needs, thereby creating new economic activity (Nicolajsen & Geys, 2026).

These three impacts form the multiplier effect or economic multiplier, which is an important indicator in assessing the contribution of tourism to the welfare of local communities.

Local Community Livelihoods

The concept of community livelihoods refers to the ability of individuals or households to utilize their available resources to meet their needs sustainably (Gutiérrez-Rojas et al., 2026). The Sustainable Livelihood Framework explains that community livelihoods are influenced by five types of capital:

- Human capital
- Social capital
- Natural capital
- Physical capital
- Financial capital

In the context of tourism, an increase in the number of tourists can strengthen the financial capital of the community through increased income, while simultaneously enhancing social capital through community participation in tourism activities. However, if not properly managed, tourism can also cause inequality in the distribution of economic benefits (Nurhayati et al., 2026).

Community-Based Tourism

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a tourism development approach that places local communities as the main actors in managing tourist destinations. This model aims to ensure that the

economic benefits generated by tourism can be enjoyed fairly by the local community (Priatmoko et al., 2026).

Systematic studies on CBT show that the involvement of local communities can increase household income, expand employment opportunities, strengthen MSMEs, and encourage the preservation of local culture. Furthermore, community participation is an important factor in creating sustainable tourism (Rukpollmuang et al., 2026).

Impact of Tourism on Local Community Livelihoods

Various studies indicate that the development of tourist destinations has positive impacts on the socioeconomic conditions of local communities, including:

a. Income Improvement

Tourist visits create demand for local products and services, thereby increasing community income. MSMEs operating in culinary, crafts, transportation, and tourism services receive direct benefits from tourism activities (Arockiaselvi, 2026).

b. Employment Creation

Tourism is a labor-intensive sector capable of absorbing local labor both directly and indirectly. A meta-analysis of various studies found a positive relationship between tourism development and increased employment opportunities for the community (Shah, 2026).

c. MSME Development

Tourism encourages the growth of small businesses such as food stalls, souvenir kiosks, tourism equipment rentals, and creative businesses based on local culture. The strengthening of MSMEs is one of the indicators of the success of tourism-based economic development (Nugroho et al., 2026).

d. Infrastructure Improvement

The development of tourist destinations is often accompanied by road construction, public facilities, communication networks, and other supporting infrastructure that can be utilized by local communities (Kaya & Karakuş, 2026).

Negative Impacts of Tourism on Local Communities

In addition to providing economic benefits, tourism can also cause several negative impacts, such as:

- a. Income distribution inequality among community groups
- b. Rising land prices and cost of living
- c. Economic dependence on the tourism sector
- d. Environmental degradation due to increased tourism activities
- e. Commercialization of local culture

Therefore, the management of tourist destinations must adhere to sustainability principles so that economic benefits can be felt by the community without sacrificing social and environmental aspects (Roselló-Nadal & Sard, 2026).

Previous Research and Research Gap

The research by Safuridar et al., (2025) shows that mangrove forests and urban forests are tourist objects with high potential and worthy of development based on criteria of tourist objects, accessibility, environmental conditions, accommodation, supporting facilities and infrastructure, security and management, as well as services.

Liu et al., (2022) conducted a systematic literature review on the economic impact of tourism between 1975 and 2020, analyzing general bibliometrics and examining the main themes and methods of assessing the economic impact of tourism. This research contributed to accurate assessment of the economic impact of tourism, attempting to identify gaps in the literature, highlight emerging trends in the field, and propose future research directions.

Furthermore, research by Alcalá-Ordóñez & Segarra, (2025) reviewed 57 published articles (from 2005 to 2022) examining the relationship between tourism and economic development. Specifically, the empirical results of the reviewed works indicate that tourism has a positive impact on socioeconomic development, serving as a tool that reduces poverty, minimizes inequality, and improves the living conditions of local residents. In line with this, the reviewed articles propose various policy recommendations, such as facilitating access to financing, trade, tourism campaigns, or emphasizing the importance of investment from the public and private sectors.

Based on these gaps, research on the Economic Impact of Tourism on Local Community Livelihoods: A Case Study of Gumanano Village, Mawasangka District, Central Buton Regency becomes important to provide empirical evidence on the extent to which the tourism sector contributes to improving the welfare of the local community.

3. METHOD

Research Type and Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the economic impact of tourism on the livelihoods of local communities in Gumanano Village, Mawasangka District, Central Buton Regency. The case study method was used to obtain a comprehensive picture of the social and economic phenomena resulting from tourism activities, particularly in the Mutiara Beach area as the village's leading tourist destination.

According to Perreault (2011), qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning considered to derive from social or human problems. Meanwhile, a case study allows researchers to investigate a phenomenon in a real-life context in depth.

Research Location

The research was conducted in Gumanano Village, Mawasangka District, Central Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The location was chosen based on the presence of Mutiara Beach as one of the developing tourist destinations that provides economic opportunities for the local community.

Research Informants

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, i.e., deliberate selection based on the consideration that they possess knowledge and experience related to the research subject. The research informants consisted of:

- a. Head of Gumanano Village
- b. Manager of Mutiara Beach tourist site
- c. MSME actors in the tourist area
- d. Traders and tourism service providers
- e. Community leaders
- f. Community members earning income from the tourism sector
- g. Tourists (as supporting informants)

The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, i.e., the data collection process was stopped when the information obtained had become repetitive and no new information was found.

Data Sources

The research used two types of data sources:

1. Primary Data

- a. In-depth interviews
- b. Field observations
- c. Documentation of economic activities of the community around the tourist area

2. Secondary Data

- a. Local government documents
- b. Profile of Gumanano Village
- c. Tourist visit data
- d. MSME data
- e. Scientific articles and previous research results
- f. Statistical reports related to tourism and regional economy

Data Collection Techniques

1. Observation

Observation was carried out to directly observe the economic activities of the community related to the tourism sector, such as trade, services, culinary, and other micro-enterprises developing around the tourist area.

2. In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using a pre-prepared interview guide. The interviews aimed to obtain information regarding:

- a. Changes in community income
- b. Employment opportunities arising from tourism
- c. Development of community businesses
- d. Community perceptions of the economic benefits of tourism

- e. Challenges faced in tourism development

3. Documentation

Documentation was conducted by collecting photographs, archives, reports, statistical data, and other documents supporting the research.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis used the interactive model developed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, (2023), which includes:

a. Data Reduction

Data obtained from the field were selected, simplified, and focused on information relevant to the research objectives.

b. Data Display

The reduced data were presented in narrative, tabular, matrix, or diagram form to facilitate the researcher’s understanding of patterns and relationships among data.

c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

This stage involved interpreting the analyzed data to draw conclusions about the economic impact of tourism on the livelihoods of local communities in Gumanano Village.

5. Data Validity Testing

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the research employed triangulation techniques, including:

a. Source Triangulation

Comparing information obtained from various informants such as the village government, MSME actors, tourism managers, and the community.

b. Technique Triangulation

Comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation.

c. Time Triangulation

Conducting data collection at different times to ensure the consistency of information obtained.

Research Analysis Framework

This research analyzes the economic impact of tourism on local community livelihoods through four main indicators:

Table 1. Main Indicator

Variable	Indicator
Economic Impact of Tourism	Income improvement, employment opportunities, business development, economic multiplier effect

Local Community Livelihoods	Financial capital, social capital, human capital, household welfare
Positive Impact	Income improvement, MSME growth, employment opportunities
Negative Impact	Inequality in economic benefits, dependence on tourism, rising cost of living

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Tourism in Gumanano Village

Gumanano Village is one of the villages in Mawasangka District, Central Buton Regency, with outstanding natural tourism potential in the form of Mutiara Beach. The presence of this tourist destination has attracted visits from local tourists as well as those from outside the region, particularly on weekends and public holidays. Tourism activities developing in the Mutiara Beach area have created new economic opportunities for the local community through various business activities related to tourist needs.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the community of Gumanano Village has taken advantage of these opportunities by opening culinary businesses, food and beverage kiosks, gazebo rentals, parking services, souvenir trading, and other service businesses. These economic activities demonstrate that the tourism sector has become an alternative source of livelihood for the community, in addition to the fishing and agriculture sectors that have long been their primary livelihoods.

Impact of Tourism on Community Income

The research findings indicate that the development of Mutiara Beach tourism has made a positive contribution to improving the income of local communities. Business actors operating around the tourist area reported receiving additional income, particularly during the holiday season and weekends when tourist numbers increase.

This income improvement comes from the sale of food and beverages, tourism facility rental services, and trade in local products. Several informants stated that income earned from tourism activities has helped meet household needs and children's educational expenses.

These findings indicate that tourism has created a new source of income for the community of Gumanano Village. This situation is consistent with the concept of direct economic impact, which states that tourist spending directly benefits the community involved in tourism activities.

Impact of Tourism on Employment Opportunities

In addition to increasing income, the tourism sector also creates employment opportunities for local communities. The management of the tourist area requires labor for various activities such as managing tourist facilities, environmental cleanliness, area security, visitor services, and trading activities.

Several village youths who previously had no permanent employment found the opportunity to work seasonally or permanently in the tourist area. The presence of tourists also encourages the development of small businesses that can absorb labor from the surrounding community.

Thus, the tourism sector plays a role in reducing unemployment and increasing the economic participation of the village community.

Impact of Tourism on MSME Development

The research findings show that tourism development has spurred the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Gumanano Village. Various types of businesses that have developed include:

- a. Food and beverage stalls
- b. Sales of local fishery products
- c. Sales of local specialty foods
- d. Traditional Buton woven crafts
- e. Tourism facility rentals
- f. Local transportation services

MSME development shows that the economic benefits of tourism are not only felt individually but also contribute to the overall economic growth of the village. Traditional Buton woven crafts produced by local communities are beginning to have a wider market opportunity through tourist visits to Mutiara Beach.

Impact of Tourism on Local Community Livelihoods

Based on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework approach, the impact of tourism on community livelihoods can be seen from the following aspects:

a. Financial Capital

Increased income from tourism activities strengthens the economic condition of community households. Some community members have been able to increase their savings, renovate their homes, and finance family educational needs.

b. Social Capital

Tourism encourages the formation of cooperation between the community, village government, and tourism managers in developing the Mutiara Beach area. Social interactions among business actors have also increased.

c. Human Capital

Community involvement in the tourism sector enhances service skills, entrepreneurship, and the management of small businesses.

d. Physical Capital

The development of tourist destinations encourages infrastructure improvements such as road access, public facilities, parking areas, and other supporting facilities that can be utilized by the community (Junaidi et al., 2026; Wei & Huang, 2026).

Discussion

1. *Tourism as a Driver of the Local Economy*

The research findings indicate that the tourism sector in Gumanano Village has become one of the drivers of the local economy. This finding supports the Tourism-Led Growth Hypothesis, which states that the growth of the tourism sector can drive economic growth through increased consumption, investment, and job creation.

Tourist spending at Mutiara Beach creates demand for various goods and services provided by the local community. This condition generates income flows that directly improve community welfare.

2. *Economic Multiplier Effect of Tourism*

The research found the presence of an economic multiplier effect from tourism activities. Income earned by tourism business actors does not stop at the first recipient but circulates back within the village economy through the purchase of raw materials, payment of labor, and household consumption.

For example, food vendors purchase fish from local fishermen, while the income received by the fishermen is used to buy daily necessities from village stores. This process creates a chain of economic activities that expands the benefits of tourism to the community.

These findings are consistent with the theory of tourism economic impact, which distinguishes direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

3. *Tourism and Strengthening Sustainable Livelihoods*

Based on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, tourism has strengthened several livelihood assets of the Gumanano Village community, particularly financial, social, and human capital. Diversification of income sources from the tourism sector reduces the community's dependence on the fishing and agricultural sectors, which are highly influenced by seasonal conditions. Furthermore, community involvement in tourism activities enhances entrepreneurial skills and broadens social networks that support local economic development.

4. *Challenges in Tourism Development*

Despite its positive impacts, the research also identified several challenges that need to be addressed, including:

- a. Limited business capital for the community
- b. Tourism facilities that still need improvement
- c. Suboptimal destination promotion
- d. Limited tourism service skills
- e. Potential economic dependence on the tourism sector

If not properly managed, these challenges can hinder the sustainability of economic benefits obtained by the community.

5. *Policy Implications*

The research findings highlight the importance of tourism development policies oriented toward empowering local communities. The local government needs to:

- a. Enhance entrepreneurship and tourism service training
- b. Strengthen access to capital for MSMEs
- c. Develop digital destination promotion
- d. Encourage community participation in tourism management
- e. Integrate local products such as Buton woven textiles into the tourism value chain

Thus, the economic benefits generated by the tourism sector can be felt more broadly and sustainably by the community of Gumanano Village.

5. CONCLUSION

This research indicates that tourism development at Mutiara Beach, Gumanano Village, has had a positive economic impact on the livelihoods of local communities through income improvement, employment creation, MSME development, and the strengthening of community livelihood assets. Nevertheless, a sustainable management strategy is needed to address various challenges so that the economic benefits of tourism can continue to grow and be enjoyed equitably by all village community members.

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The authors acknowledge that this article still has limitations. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are highly expected for the improvement of future research. May the results of this research contribute to the development of knowledge, particularly in the field of tourism economics, and serve as consideration for local government and stakeholders in formulating sustainable tourism development policies that prioritize the welfare of local communities.

7. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this research were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation in Gumanano Village, Central Buton Regency. As this research involves human participants and contains information that could potentially reveal the identity of informants, raw data in the form of interview transcripts and field notes are not publicly available in order to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of participants. However, anonymized data and research supporting information can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable

request. This statement is consistent with general practice for qualitative research that allows restrictions on access to sensitive data while maintaining research transparency.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of the research, preparation, or publication of this article.

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