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# Co-Creating Sustainable Tourism through Stakeholder Collaboration: Insights from Mandalika, Indonesia

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**Abstract**

Sustainable tourism development requires effective collaboration among multiple stakeholders to ensure balanced economic growth, environmental conservation, and community well-being. Despite increasing attention to stakeholder collaboration in tourism studies, limited research has explained how collaborative governance facilitates value co-creation in emerging tourism destinations. This study aims to explore how stakeholder collaboration contributes to sustainable tourism development through collaborative governance in Mandalika, Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was employed using semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key patterns of stakeholder interaction and governance processes. The findings reveal that stakeholder collaboration is strengthened through institutional coordination, trust-building, and participatory decision-making, which collectively enable value co-creation in the form of tourism innovation, community empowerment, cultural preservation, enhanced tourist experiences, and local economic development. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including unequal community participation, disparities in economic benefit distribution, and differences in institutional capacity. This study proposes an Integrated Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model that demonstrates the dynamic relationship between stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, value co-creation, and sustainable tourism development. The proposed model extends the understanding of sustainable destination governance while providing practical insights for policymakers and destination managers seeking to strengthen collaborative tourism development in emerging destinations.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has evolved into one of the most strategic sectors contributing significantly to economic growth, employment generation, and improvements in social welfare across many countries (Li et al., 2024; Raihan et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the rapid expansion of the tourism industry has also introduced increasingly complex challenges, particularly those associated with environmental degradation, unequal distribution of economic benefits, socio-cultural transformations within local communities, and growing pressure on the carrying capacity of tourism destinations (Buhalis et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2022). These challenges have prompted a paradigm shift in tourism development from a growth-oriented approach toward sustainable tourism, which emphasizes a balanced integration of economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Within this paradigm, the success of destination development is no longer measured solely by tourist arrivals or investment volume, but also by the destination's capacity to generate long-term benefits for all stakeholders (Dwyer, 2022; Panagiotopoulou & Skoultsos, 2025).

As the concept of sustainable tourism has continued to evolve, scholarly attention has gradually shifted from the physical aspects of destination development toward the governance processes that facilitate sustainability. This shift is grounded in the understanding that tourism destinations constitute complex systems involving multiple actors with diverse interests, resources, and levels of influence (Farsari, 2023; Hartman, 2023). Governments, private sector organizations, local communities, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and tourists all play complementary roles in destination development. Consequently, the success of tourism development cannot be achieved through unilateral intervention but instead requires collaborative mechanisms capable of integrating these diverse interests into planning, management, and decision-making processes (Nurhasanah & Van den Broeck, 2022; Ting, 2026).

In recent years, the concept of co-creation has emerged as an increasingly influential framework for explaining how value is generated in tourism through interactions among stakeholders. This perspective recognizes that local communities, tourism businesses, governments, and tourists are not merely passive beneficiaries of development but active participants in creating tourism experiences, destination innovation, and sustainable tourism management (Bhuiyan et al., 2022; Carvalho & Alves, 2023; Melis et al., 2023). Accordingly, stakeholder collaboration serves not only as a coordination mechanism but also as a process of value co-creation that enhances destination competitiveness while simultaneously strengthening the sustainability of tourism development.

Indonesia provides a particularly compelling context in which to examine this phenomenon. In recent years, the Indonesian government has designated tourism as one of its national development priorities through the establishment of Super Priority Tourism Destinations (Destinasi Pariwisata Super Prioritas, DPSP). This policy aims to promote more balanced regional economic development while enhancing the international competitiveness of Indonesia's tourism destinations. Among these priority destinations, Mandalika in West Nusa Tenggara Province has received considerable attention. The area has been developed as an integrated tourism destination through large-scale infrastructure investments, the hosting of international events, and increased tourism-related investment. This transformation has positioned Mandalika as one of the most representative examples of destination development driven by synergies among government agencies, destination management authorities, investors, local communities, and other key stakeholders (Cantika Yuli et al., 2025; Putera et al., 2025).

Despite its rapid development, Mandalika has also encountered a range of significant challenges. Previous studies have demonstrated that accelerated destination development is often accompanied by issues related to community participation, land-use transformation, the distribution of economic benefits, environmental conservation, and conflicting interests among stakeholders involved in the development process (Butler, 2025; Reindrawati, 2023). These findings suggest that the success of destination development depends not only on the scale of investment or infrastructure expansion but also on the quality of relationships and collaboration among stakeholders in managing diverse and sometimes competing interests. In other words, destination sustainability is strongly influenced by stakeholders' ability to establish trust, share resources, resolve conflicts, and develop common objectives throughout the destination management process (Fafurida et al., 2023; Scorza & Gatto, 2023).

Existing research on Mandalika has predominantly focused on infrastructure development, the economic impacts of tourism, destination marketing strategies, international event hosting, and tourist behavior. These studies have made valuable contributions to understanding Mandalika's evolution as one of Indonesia's premier tourism destinations. However, most have concentrated on the outcomes of development initiatives and policy implementation, while giving comparatively limited attention to the collaborative processes through which multiple stakeholders jointly contribute to destination sustainability. Furthermore, previous studies have generally examined government agencies, local communities, and private-sector actors as independent entities, thereby failing to explain how interactions among these actors shape co-creation mechanisms in sustainable tourism development.

These limitations reveal an important research gap. To date, relatively few studies have integrated the perspectives of stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, and value co-creation to explain how sustainable tourism development emerges through the interactions of multiple stakeholders in rapidly developing destinations such as Mandalika. Such an understanding is essential for explaining why destination development policies can be implemented successfully in certain contexts while encountering significant challenges in others. Therefore, further research is required not only to identify the stakeholders involved but also to explore how collaborative processes unfold, the factors that facilitate or hinder collaboration, and the implications of these dynamics for destination sustainability.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore how stakeholder collaboration contributes to the process of co-creating sustainable tourism in Mandalika, Indonesia. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the forms of collaboration established among government agencies, destination management authorities, tourism businesses, local communities, and supporting organizations, while also examining the factors that influence the effectiveness of such collaboration in promoting sustainable destination development.

This study is expected to make three primary contributions. First, from a theoretical perspective, it extends the sustainable tourism literature by integrating the concepts of stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, and value co-creation within the context of tourism destinations in developing countries. Second, from an empirical perspective, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of stakeholder collaboration dynamics within one of Indonesia's Super Priority Tourism Destinations. Third, from a practical perspective, the findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, destination management organizations, and tourism industry practitioners in formulating more inclusive collaborative strategies to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism destinations in the future.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism represents a development paradigm that emphasizes a balanced integration of economic growth, environmental conservation, and the social well-being of local communities. This concept emerged in response to the adverse consequences of tourism development strategies primarily focused on economic growth, including environmental degradation, the overexploitation of natural resources, economic inequality, and the declining quality of life experienced by residents in tourism destinations (Dwyer, 2022; Hariram et al., 2023). Accordingly, sustainable tourism development seeks not only to increase tourist arrivals but also to ensure that economic benefits are equitably distributed among local communities without compromising environmental integrity and cultural heritage.

In practice, the success of sustainable tourism development depends largely on the ability of diverse stakeholders to collaborate in formulating policies, managing resources, and resolving the conflicts of interest that inevitably arise throughout the destination development process. Consequently, destination sustainability should not be viewed solely as the outcome of government policies but rather as the product of dynamic interactions among governments, private-sector organizations, local communities, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and tourists (Achmad et al., 2023; Panagiotopoulou & Skoultsos, 2025).

A growing body of empirical research indicates that destinations characterized by high levels of stakeholder collaboration are generally better positioned to preserve environmental sustainability, enhance the quality of visitor experiences, and generate more equitable economic benefits for local communities. Conversely, weak coordination among stakeholders frequently leads to conflicting interests, limited community participation, and suboptimal implementation of tourism development policies, thereby undermining the long-term sustainability of tourism destinations.

### Stakeholder Collaboration in Tourism

Tourism is an industry that relies heavily on interactions among multiple organizations and individuals with diverse objectives, interests, and resources. Consequently, Stakeholder Theory has become one of the most widely adopted theoretical frameworks for explaining how relationships among actors influence the success of tourism destination development. According to Hannan & Freeman, (1984), stakeholders are individuals or groups that can affect or be affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives.

In the context of tourism destinations, stakeholders include national and local governments, destination management organizations, tourism businesses, investors, local communities, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, media organizations, and tourists. Each stakeholder possesses distinct roles, interests, levels of influence, and resource capacities. As a result, the success of destination development depends substantially on their ability to establish mutually beneficial relationships and effectively coordinate their efforts.

Stakeholder collaboration facilitates information exchange, resource sharing, capacity building, and conflict resolution through continuous processes of communication and negotiation. From a sustainable development perspective, collaboration also enhances the legitimacy of policy decisions, as outcomes are derived from collective agreements rather than being driven solely by governments or investors. Accordingly, collaboration should be viewed not merely as a coordination mechanism but also as a strategic approach for fostering trust, strengthening mutual commitment, and promoting collective responsibility in the governance and management of tourism destinations.

### Collaborative Governance

The concept of Collaborative Governance has evolved to explain how governments and non-governmental actors work collectively in the formulation and implementation of public policies. Ansell & Gash, (2008) define collaborative governance as a collective decision-making process that engages multiple stakeholders through dialogue, consensus-building, and the sharing of responsibilities. This model emphasizes the importance of inclusive participation, transparency, mutual trust, facilitative leadership, and long-term commitment among stakeholders.

Within the tourism sector, collaborative governance has become increasingly important because destination management involves multiple institutions with diverse authorities, responsibilities, and interests. Governments are responsible for establishing regulatory frameworks and providing essential infrastructure, while the private sector contributes through investment and service innovation. At the same time, local communities play a vital role in preserving cultural and environmental resources while providing a wide range of tourism products and services (Sentanu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). In the absence of collaborative governance mechanisms, destination development is more likely to generate social conflicts, unequal distribution of economic benefits, and environmental degradation.

Emerson & Nabatchi, (2015) subsequently expanded the collaborative governance framework by emphasizing the importance of collaboration dynamics, which comprise principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. These three interconnected dimensions enable stakeholders to develop more adaptive and resilient relationships, thereby enhancing their collective ability to address the increasingly complex challenges associated with sustainable tourism destination development.

### Value Co-Creation in Tourism

The evolution of Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) has introduced the concept of value co-creation, which refers to the process through which value is generated through active interactions between service providers and service users. Within the tourism context, value is not created solely by tourism service providers but emerges through collaborative interactions among governments, tourism businesses, local communities, tourists, and other relevant stakeholders (Brodie et al., 2019; Cruz et al., 2024).

The value co-creation perspective recognizes local communities not merely as passive beneficiaries of tourism development but as strategic partners possessing valuable local knowledge, cultural heritage, and unique resources that significantly enhance the quality of tourist experiences. Through collaborative engagement, stakeholders can jointly develop destination innovations, including the creation of tourism attractions, environmental management initiatives, and the organization of cultural activities rooted in local traditions and identities.

In rapidly developing destinations such as Mandalika, the process of value co-creation has become increasingly critical because destination development is determined not only by physical investment and infrastructure expansion but also by stakeholders' collective capacity to generate shared value. Such collaborative value creation strengthens destination competitiveness while simultaneously promoting the long-term sustainability of tourism development.

### Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

Based on the existing literature, most previous studies have examined sustainable tourism development from the perspectives of economic development, destination marketing, or the impacts of government policies. Research focusing on Mandalika has likewise concentrated primarily on infrastructure development, the hosting of international events, and the economic impacts of tourism on the region. In contrast, studies that integrate the perspectives of Stakeholder Theory, Collaborative Governance, and Value Co-Creation to explain how destination sustainability is shaped through interactions among multiple stakeholders remain relatively limited.

To address this gap, the present study develops a conceptual framework that posits the success of sustainable tourism development as being fundamentally influenced by the quality of stakeholder collaboration. Within this framework, collaborative governance functions as the institutional mechanism that facilitates communication, coordination, and collective decision-making among stakeholders. Meanwhile, the process of value co-creation represents the collaborative outcome of stakeholder interactions, generating destination innovation, strengthening community participation, and enhancing destination competitiveness. Accordingly, this study seeks to explain how the dynamic relationships among stakeholders shape the co-creation process that underpins sustainable tourism development in Mandalika.

## 3. METHOD

### Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study research design. This approach was selected because the study aims to develop an in-depth understanding of how stakeholder collaboration unfolds in the process of co-creating sustainable tourism in Mandalika, Indonesia. A case study design enables researchers to explore complex phenomena comprehensively within their real-world context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon under investigation and its contextual environment are not clearly distinguishable.

The qualitative approach also provides an opportunity to explore stakeholders' perceptions, experiences, interpretations, and the dynamics of interorganizational relationships that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods alone. Accordingly, this study focuses on understanding how governments, destination management authorities, tourism businesses, local communities, and supporting organizations collaborate in the development of a sustainable tourism destination.

### Research Site

The study was conducted in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), located in Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Mandalika was selected as the research site because it is one of Indonesia's Super Priority Tourism Destinations (SPTDs) and has experienced rapid development through large-scale infrastructure expansion, substantial tourism investment, and the hosting of numerous international events.

In addition to being a major focus of Indonesia's national tourism development strategy, Mandalika faces a range of challenges in achieving sustainable destination development. These include inter-institutional coordination, local community participation, environmental management, the equitable distribution of economic benefits, and the strengthening of destination governance and institutional capacity. These characteristics make Mandalika a highly relevant case for examining the dynamics of stakeholder collaboration in supporting sustainable tourism development.

**Participants and Sampling**

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby individuals with substantial knowledge, relevant experience, and direct involvement in the management and development of the Mandalika tourism destination were intentionally identified and recruited. This sampling strategy enabled the researcher to obtain rich, detailed, and contextually relevant insights into the processes of stakeholder collaboration.

The participants represented a broad range of stakeholder groups, including:

- Representatives from the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Tourism Office;
- Representatives from the Central Lombok Regency Tourism Office;
- Management representatives from PT Pengembangan Pariwisata Indonesia (ITDC), the destination management authority responsible for the Mandalika Special Economic Zone;
- Hotel and tourism accommodation managers;
- Representatives of travel agencies and tour operators;
- Owners and managers of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating within the tourism sector;
- Members of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis);
- Community leaders and traditional leaders; and
- Academics or tourism practitioners with expertise in the development of Mandalika.

The number of participants was not predetermined. Instead, data collection followed the principle of data saturation, whereby interviews continued until the information obtained became repetitive and no substantial new themes or insights emerged. In this study, data saturation was anticipated to be achieved with approximately 20–25 participants.

**Data Collection**

Data were collected throughout the research period using three primary methods: in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis.

**In-Depth Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview protocol developed based on the theoretical perspectives of Stakeholder Theory, Collaborative Governance, and Value Co-Creation. The semi-structured format provided sufficient flexibility for the researcher to explore emerging issues during the interviews while maintaining alignment with the study's research objectives.

The interviews explored several key topics, including:

- the forms of stakeholder collaboration;
- coordination mechanisms in destination management;
- the level of local community participation;
- challenges associated with building and sustaining collaboration;
- innovations generated through inter-stakeholder cooperation; and
- stakeholders' perceptions of the sustainability of Mandalika's tourism development.

All interviews were conducted with the informed consent of the participants, audio-recorded, and subsequently transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic qualitative analysis.

**Field Observation**

Non-participant observation was undertaken to examine destination management activities, interactions among stakeholders, the physical condition of tourism sites, supporting infrastructure and facilities, and community activities associated with the tourism sector. Detailed field notes were recorded systematically throughout the observation process to provide contextual evidence and support the interpretation of the interview findings.

**Document Analysis**

The study also employed document analysis as a source of secondary data. The documents examined included tourism development planning documents, government reports, reports produced by the destination management authority, policy documents related to the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), publications issued by the national statistical agency, official government press releases, and other relevant institutional documents. Document analysis was conducted to complement and validate the findings obtained from interviews and field observations through data triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness of the research findings.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis as proposed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. This analytical approach was selected because it enables the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of patterns of meaning emerging from the diverse perspectives of multiple stakeholders.

The analysis was conducted through six sequential phases:

1. Data familiarization by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dataset;
2. Open coding to identify and label relevant segments of information;
3. Generating initial categories by grouping codes with similar meanings and conceptual characteristics;
4. Developing themes by synthesizing related categories into broader thematic patterns;
5. Reviewing and refining themes to ensure consistency, coherence, and alignment with the entire dataset; and
6. Interpreting the findings within the theoretical frameworks of Stakeholder Collaboration, Collaborative Governance, and Value Co-Creation.

To enhance the transparency and auditability of the analytical process, all interview data were managed using NVivo. The software facilitated systematic coding, theme development, and the exploration of relationships among categories, thereby improving the rigor and consistency of the qualitative data analysis.

**Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured by applying the four criteria proposed by Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was established through data source triangulation, whereby information obtained from government agencies, destination management authorities, tourism businesses, and local communities was systematically compared and cross-validated. In addition, member checking was conducted by inviting selected participants to review and verify the researcher's interpretations of the interview data, thereby enhancing the accuracy and authenticity of the findings.

Transferability was strengthened through the provision of a rich and detailed description of the research context, enabling readers to assess the potential applicability of the study's findings to other tourism destination settings with similar characteristics.

Dependability was maintained by documenting every stage of the research process, including data collection, coding procedures, and analytical decisions, thereby establishing a transparent audit trail that allows the research process to be examined and replicated.

Finally, confirmability was ensured by maintaining researcher objectivity through the use of a reflexive journal to document methodological decisions and personal reflections throughout the study. Furthermore, multiple sources of evidence were employed to minimize interpretive bias and to ensure that the findings were grounded in the empirical data rather than the researcher's subjective assumptions.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Stakeholder Collaboration in Sustainable Tourism Development**

The findings indicate that sustainable tourism development in Mandalika depends not only on infrastructure development and physical investment but also on the capacity of diverse stakeholders to establish collaborative working relationships. Based on the interview data, the majority of participants emphasized that local government agencies, PT Pengembangan Pariwisata Indonesia (ITDC), tourism businesses, Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), local communities, and various supporting organizations have developed multiple forms of collaboration to support destination development. Such collaboration was widely regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for reconciling the diverse interests that emerge throughout the destination development process, which involves actors with different backgrounds, resources, and objectives.

Collaboration is manifested through regular inter-agency coordination, the joint formulation of destination development programs, community participation in tourism-related activities, and the development of tourism products based on local cultural assets. Local governments perform dual roles as regulators and facilitators, being responsible for policy formulation, infrastructure provision, and community empowerment initiatives. Meanwhile, PT Pengembangan Pariwisata Indonesia (ITDC), as the destination management authority, plays a strategic role in coordinating investment, managing the tourism area, and facilitating communication between government institutions and tourism industry stakeholders. Local communities contribute by providing homestays, culinary businesses, handicrafts, local transportation services, and cultural attractions that enrich visitors' tourism experiences.

One participant representing the local government explained:

*"The development of Mandalika cannot succeed if it relies solely on the government. Every stakeholder must contribute according to their respective capacities, including local communities, tourism businesses, and investors."*

This statement suggests that destination development is perceived as a form of shared responsibility requiring the active involvement of all stakeholders. Such a perspective reflects a paradigm shift from a government-centered approach toward a governance-centered model, in which government no longer serves as the sole decision-maker but instead acts as a facilitator promoting cross-sectoral collaboration. This finding reinforces Stakeholder Theory (Hannan & Freeman, 1984), which argues that the success of an organization or destination is largely determined by its ability to manage relationships with stakeholders who have an interest in achieving shared objectives.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that collaboration extends beyond formal institutional arrangements to encompass continuous social interactions among government agencies, tourism businesses, and local communities. Several participants noted that frequent communication—both through formal coordination forums and informal meetings—has facilitated the timely resolution of issues arising during destination development. Consequently, collaboration should not be understood merely as an administrative mechanism but rather as a process of collective learning, through which stakeholders exchange information, share experiences, and strengthen their commitment to common development goals.

The findings also reveal that the involvement of local communities has made a positive contribution to destination development. Community empowerment initiatives, entrepreneurship training programs, support for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and the strengthening of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) have significantly enhanced community participation in tourism-related economic activities. Through such involvement, local communities are no longer positioned as passive recipients of development but as strategic partners in creating authentic tourism experiences while safeguarding the social and cultural sustainability of the destination. This finding indicates that effective collaboration fosters a stronger sense of ownership among local residents, which in turn encourages greater participation in maintaining environmental cleanliness, public safety, and ecological conservation (Geremew & Kleynhans, 2025; Turčinović et al., 2025).

Despite these positive developments, the findings also indicate that the intensity of collaboration has not been evenly distributed across all stakeholder groups. Several MSME operators and community representatives reported limited access to information regarding various destination development programs. In addition, some participants observed that communication processes remain largely confined to formal coordination forums and therefore do not fully reach all segments of the local community, particularly micro-enterprises operating outside established institutional networks. These findings suggest the existence of a communication gap that may reduce the long-term effectiveness of stakeholder collaboration.

The results further indicate that the success of collaboration depends not simply on the number of participating stakeholders but more importantly on the quality of the relationships established among them. Such relationships are characterized by information transparency, effective two-way communication, meaningful participation in decision-making, and stakeholders' shared understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. In other words, symbolic collaboration or participation aimed merely at satisfying administrative requirements is insufficient to achieve genuinely sustainable destination development.

These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that the success of sustainable tourism development is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of stakeholder collaboration. Existing research has consistently shown that destinations characterized by high levels of coordination and stakeholder participation are generally better equipped to maintain a balance among economic growth, environmental conservation, and the well-being of local communities (Degirmenci et al., 2026; Feng, 2023). However, this study contributes an additional perspective by revealing that the principal challenge in Mandalika is not a lack of willingness among stakeholders to collaborate, but rather the need to establish more inclusive communication mechanisms that provide all community groups with equitable opportunities to participate in destination development.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend the application of Stakeholder Theory within the context of emerging tourism destinations. While previous studies have primarily emphasized stakeholder identification and the management of competing interests, this research demonstrates that the quality of stakeholder interactions is equally critical. Collaboration supported by open communication, continuous coordination, and clearly defined roles strengthens a destination's capacity to address increasingly complex development challenges.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that local governments and destination management authorities should broaden community participation mechanisms by establishing more inclusive communication platforms, improving the transparency of information regarding development programs, and strengthening the institutional capacity of local communities. Such measures are expected to reinforce stakeholder relationships, enhance local communities' sense of ownership of the destination, and establish a stronger foundation for sustainable tourism development in Mandalika.

## Collaborative Governance Mechanisms in Sustainable Tourism Development

Further analysis revealed that collaborative governance in Mandalika is shaped through three primary mechanisms: institutional coordination, trust-building, and participatory decision-making. These mechanisms are closely interconnected and collectively constitute the governance foundation that enables diverse stakeholders to pursue shared development objectives. The findings demonstrate that collaboration in Mandalika extends beyond administrative cooperation and has evolved into a governance process characterized by continuous interaction, negotiation, and collective learning among multiple stakeholders.

### Institutional Coordination

Institutional coordination emerged as the most prominent collaborative governance mechanism identified in this study. Based on the interview findings, coordination is facilitated through various forums involving the provincial government, the Central Lombok Regency government, PT

Pengembangan Pariwisata Indonesia (ITDC) as the destination management authority, tourism businesses, Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), community organizations, and educational institutions. These forums serve as platforms for discussing destination development planning, the organization of international events, destination management, tourism promotion, and community empowerment programs.

A representative of the destination management authority explained:

*"Every major program is discussed collectively. We strive to ensure that the government, local communities, and business actors share the same objectives so that implementation in the field becomes more effective."*

This statement illustrates that coordination functions not merely as a channel for information exchange but also as a mechanism for interest alignment (Fu et al., 2026; Sabbaghnia et al., 2024). Within a rapidly developing destination such as Mandalika, stakeholders pursue diverse priorities, including economic growth, environmental conservation, and community welfare. Consequently, coordination forums provide an essential platform for reducing potential conflicts and fostering a shared understanding of the strategic direction of destination development.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of institutional coordination is influenced by the organizational capacity of individual stakeholders. Several participants reported that cross-sectoral coordination is occasionally constrained by differences in organizational procedures, limited human resource capacity, and the absence of integrated information-sharing systems across institutions. These constraints have resulted in delays in the implementation of several development programs relative to their original schedules.

These findings suggest that the mere existence of coordination forums is insufficient to ensure effective collaborative governance. Rather, governance effectiveness depends on the quality of coordination, reflected in the extent to which information is openly exchanged, decisions are collectively formulated, and all stakeholders are provided with equitable opportunities to express their perspectives.

**Trust Building**

Beyond institutional coordination, the study identified **trust** as the most critical factor sustaining long-term collaboration. Nearly all participants emphasized that effective partnerships can only be established when stakeholders have mutual confidence regarding the distribution of responsibilities, transparency of information, and commitment to shared development goals.

One tourism business operator stated:

*"When all parties are transparent with one another, coordination becomes much easier. However, when information is held by only one party, misunderstandings usually arise."*

This statement demonstrates the close relationship between information transparency and the development of trust. In practice, openness regarding development plans, promotional strategies, and the allocation of responsibilities provides stakeholders with greater certainty about their respective roles. Conversely, limited access to information may generate negative perceptions, reduce stakeholder participation, and potentially intensify conflicts of interest.

The findings further reveal that trust is not established instantaneously through formal regulations or institutional arrangements. Rather, it develops gradually through repeated interactions among stakeholders. Regular meetings, informal communication, collaborative problem-solving, and accumulated experience from joint initiatives all contribute to strengthening inter-stakeholder relationships. Thus, trust represents the cumulative outcome of sustained collaborative engagement over time.

These findings reinforce the Collaborative Governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2008), which identifies trust as a fundamental prerequisite for effective collaboration. However, the present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that, within an emerging tourism destination such as Mandalika, trust is influenced not only by institutional procedures but also by social proximity, informal communication, and long-term collaborative experience. These findings underscore that the social dimension of governance is equally as important as its institutional dimension in fostering effective destination governance.

**Participatory Decision-Making**

The third collaborative governance mechanism identified in this study is participatory decision-making. Most participants reported that destination development policies generally involve consultation with stakeholders, particularly through coordination forums and public consultation activities. These mechanisms provide local communities, tourism businesses, and community organizations with opportunities to express their views regarding proposed development initiatives.

However, the findings indicate that stakeholder participation remains uneven. Several community representatives observed that their involvement is generally concentrated during the implementation phase rather than during the policy formulation stage.

*"We are usually involved once the program is already underway. It would be much better if local communities were invited to participate from the beginning so that our needs could be considered during program planning."*

This finding suggests that participatory decision-making in Mandalika continues to face challenges in achieving genuinely inclusive participation. Current participation is predominantly consultative in nature, whereas community involvement in policy formulation remains relatively limited. This indicates that collaborative governance in Mandalika is still evolving and requires mechanisms capable of improving the quality of dialogue while broadening stakeholder representation.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the framework proposed by Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), which argues that collaborative governance depends not only on institutional structures but also on principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. Within the Mandalika context, these three dimensions have begun to emerge; however, the capacity for joint action requires further strengthening through enhanced institutional capacity among community organizations, greater transparency of information, and more inclusive communication mechanisms.

**Discussion**

Overall, the findings demonstrate that collaborative governance in Mandalika evolves through the dynamic interaction of institutional coordination, trust-building, and participatory decision-making. These three mechanisms reinforce one another in establishing a governance system capable of adapting to environmental, social, and economic changes associated with destination development.

Unlike several previous studies that conceptualize collaborative governance primarily as a formal mechanism for inter-institutional coordination, this study demonstrates that effective destination governance is also shaped by social factors, including informal communication, accumulated collaborative experience, and interpersonal relationships among stakeholders. These findings suggest that the success of collaborative governance in emerging tourism destinations depends not only on the existence of formal institutions but also on the quality of the social relationships that develop among stakeholders.

From a practical perspective, these findings highlight the need to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination through more inclusive governance forums, improve public access to development-related information, and establish more transparent communication systems among government agencies, destination management authorities, tourism businesses, and local communities. Such initiatives are expected to enhance the quality of destination governance while providing a stronger institutional and social foundation for sustainable tourism development in Mandalika.

### Value Co-Creation for Sustainable Destination Development

The findings indicate that stakeholder collaboration not only enhances coordination in destination management but also fosters value co-creation, which contributes significantly to sustainable tourism development in Mandalika. These findings suggest that value within a tourism destination is not generated unilaterally by governments or tourism businesses; rather, it emerges through the interactions, participation, and collective contributions of the multiple actors involved in the tourism ecosystem.

Based on the interview data, the process of value co-creation is manifested through three principal forms: the development of tourism innovations rooted in local culture, community empowerment and local economic development, and the enhancement of tourist experiences. These three dimensions are closely interconnected, demonstrating that destination sustainability depends not only on the quality of physical infrastructure but also on stakeholders' collective ability to create authentic, inclusive, and meaningful tourism experiences for all participants.

#### Tourism Innovation through Local Cultural Integration

The first major finding reveals that the co-creation process has stimulated the development of innovative tourism products that integrate local cultural heritage with the demands of contemporary tourism markets. Community groups actively participate in organizing cultural festivals, traditional performing arts, community-based tourism initiatives, and tourism packages that showcase the cultural identity of the Sasak people.

One representative of a Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) explained:

*"Tourists no longer come only to enjoy the beaches. They also want to learn about Sasak culture, taste traditional cuisine, learn weaving techniques, and interact directly with local communities."*

This statement illustrates that local communities are no longer positioned merely as supporting elements of tourism activities but have become central contributors to the creation of tourism experiences. By leveraging local knowledge, cultural traditions, and community identity, residents generate distinctive value that differentiates Mandalika from competing tourism destinations.

From the perspective of **Service-Dominant Logic**, these findings indicate that value does not reside within tourism products themselves but instead emerges through interactions among tourists, local communities, tourism businesses, and destination managers (Jaakkola et al., 2024; Manurung et al., 2023). Authentic tourism experiences are therefore co-produced through the collaborative engagement of all stakeholders involved in tourism activities. Consequently, destination innovation extends beyond physical infrastructure and technological advancement to encompass **social innovation**, whereby cultural capital serves as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

**Community Empowerment and Local Economic Development**

The second manifestation of value co-creation is the strengthening of local economic empowerment. According to the interview findings, most participants agreed that the rapid development of Mandalika has created a wide range of new economic opportunities for local communities. Residents benefit not only from increased tourist arrivals but also from their direct participation in providing tourism-related goods and services.

Businesses such as local restaurants, handicraft production, homestays, local transportation services, equipment rental, and cultural performances have expanded as integral components of the destination's tourism economy. These developments suggest that the economic benefits of tourism are increasingly being distributed across multiple sectors of the local economy.

One MSME owner explained:

*"Previously, we sold our products only to people within the local community. Now, tourists have become our primary customers, encouraging us to develop higher-quality products with a distinctive local identity."*

This finding demonstrates that the co-creation process establishes a mutually beneficial relationship between the destination and the local community. Tourists enjoy more authentic experiences through locally produced goods and services, while residents gain broader economic opportunities (Leal et al., 2022; Melis et al., 2023). Such reciprocal relationships reinforce the economic sustainability of the destination by ensuring that development benefits extend beyond the formal tourism sector to include micro-enterprises and local communities.

Nevertheless, the study also identifies several challenges regarding the equitable distribution of economic benefits. Some MSME operators reported that limited financial capital, restricted market access, inadequate digital capabilities, and insufficient human resource capacity continue to constrain their ability to capitalize fully on tourism-related opportunities. These findings indicate that the value co-creation process has not yet generated uniformly distributed benefits across all segments of the local community.

**Enhancing Tourist Experience through Co-Creation**

The third major finding demonstrates that stakeholder collaboration contributes substantially to enhancing the tourist experience. Participants representing the hospitality and travel sectors reported that visitors increasingly value experiences involving direct interaction with local communities rather than merely enjoying modern tourism facilities.

A hotel manager explained:

*"Our guests increasingly ask for recommendations for activities that involve local communities, such as visiting community-based tourism villages, participating in cultural activities, or experiencing traditional cuisine."*

This statement reflects a shift in tourist preferences toward experiences that are more personal, authentic, and community-based. Within this context, local communities function not only as service providers but also as co-creators who actively shape tourists' overall experiences.

The findings further indicate that high-quality tourism experiences are influenced not only by accommodation facilities and infrastructure but also by the quality of social interactions between tourists and local residents. The greater the level of community participation in tourism activities, the stronger tourists' perceptions of the destination's uniqueness, authenticity, and cultural richness.

These findings extend the concept of value co-creation by demonstrating that value in tourism emerges through shared experiences. In other words, tourists should not be viewed merely as consumers of tourism services but as active participants in the value creation process through their interactions with various stakeholders within the destination (Carvalho & Alves, 2023; Chuang, 2023).

**Discussion**

Overall, the findings demonstrate that value co-creation is a direct consequence of effective stakeholder collaboration and collaborative governance. When communication functions effectively, trust is established among stakeholders, and local communities are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate, social and economic innovations emerge organically. These findings suggest that value co-creation cannot be separated from the quality of stakeholder relationships. The stronger the collaborative relationships that develop, the greater the potential for innovation, community empowerment, and the delivery of high-quality tourism experiences.

The findings support the principles of Service-Dominant Logic, as proposed by Vargo and Lusch, which conceptualize value as the outcome of interactions among multiple actors rather than as a product created solely by service providers. However, this study extends the existing literature by demonstrating that, within an emerging tourism destination such as Mandalika, the co-creation process generates not only economic value but also strengthens local cultural identity, enhances community capacity, and reinforces the social resilience of the destination.

Compared with previous studies, which have primarily emphasized the role of co-creation in enhancing tourist experiences, this research demonstrates that co-creation also functions as a mechanism for promoting more inclusive destination development. The value generated through collaborative processes is shared not only by tourists but also by local communities, tourism businesses, and government institutions through improved livelihoods, stronger cultural identity, and enhanced destination competitiveness.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that destination development strategies should extend beyond infrastructure investment to prioritize the creation of collaborative spaces that enable governments, businesses, and local communities to jointly develop tourism innovations. Such an approach is expected to foster more inclusive development, broaden the distribution of economic benefits among local communities, and further strengthen Mandalika's position as a leading sustainable tourism destination in Indonesia.

## Challenges, Future Directions, and an Integrated Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model

Although the findings demonstrate that stakeholder collaboration has made a positive contribution to sustainable tourism development in Mandalika, the study also identifies several challenges that require continued attention. These challenges extend beyond institutional issues to encompass human resource capacity, the equitable distribution of economic benefits, communication mechanisms, and the long-term sustainability of community participation in decision-making processes. Collectively, these findings suggest that successful destination development is a dynamic and evolving process that requires continuous improvement and adaptive governance.

**Unequal Community Participation**

The first challenge concerns the uneven level of community participation in destination planning and decision-making. Based on the interview findings, several participants indicated that local communities are generally involved during the implementation stage of development programs, whereas opportunities to participate in strategic planning remain relatively limited. Consequently, some community members have only a partial understanding of the overall direction of destination development and the opportunities available to improve their livelihoods.

Limited participation creates the potential for a disconnect between government policies and the actual needs of local communities. If such conditions persist over time, residents' sense of ownership toward the destination may gradually weaken, thereby undermining the long-term sustainability of development initiatives. Therefore, more inclusive participatory mechanisms are required to ensure that local communities function not merely as program implementers but also as active partners throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of tourism policies (Aivalli et al., 2024; Kyambade et al., 2026).

**Unequal Distribution of Economic Benefits**

The second challenge relates to the unequal distribution of economic benefits generated by tourism development. Although the expansion of Mandalika has created numerous business opportunities, several MSME owners reported that limited access to financial capital, technology, marketing networks, and business capacity development continues to constrain their ability to benefit fully from tourism growth. Consequently, a disproportionate share of development benefits tends to accrue to businesses possessing greater financial resources and stronger commercial networks.

These findings demonstrate that destination development does not automatically lead to equitable socioeconomic outcomes. Without affirmative policies that support small enterprises and local communities, economic disparities may widen alongside increasing tourism investment (Buhalis et al., 2023; Kumail et al., 2023; Mason et al., 2023). Accordingly, community empowerment strategies should be integrated more systematically into destination development policies to ensure that economic benefits are distributed more fairly and sustainably.

**Institutional Capacity and Adaptive Governance**

The third challenge concerns institutional capacity. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of collaborative governance depends heavily on the ability of organizations to perform coordination, communication, and collective decision-making functions effectively. Several participants observed substantial differences in organizational capacity, particularly regarding program management, digital literacy, data utilization, and the ability to engage in cross-sectoral collaboration.

Furthermore, the increasing complexity of tourism development requires governance systems capable of adapting to environmental changes, technological advancements, and evolving tourist expectations. Strengthening institutional capacity, therefore, extends beyond improving individual competencies to include the enhancement of coordination systems, information-sharing mechanisms, and organizations' capacity to establish broader collaborative networks (Gooding et al., 2022; Saputra et al., 2024).

**Toward an Integrated Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model**

Drawing upon the overall findings, this study proposes an Integrated Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model that synthesizes the relationships among stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, value co-creation, and sustainable tourism development. The proposed model suggests that destination sustainability cannot be achieved solely through infrastructure development or government intervention; rather, it emerges through continuous interactions among multiple stakeholders who share common visions, responsibilities, and development objectives.

Within the proposed framework, stakeholder collaboration serves as the foundational element that enables communication, coordination, and partnership among diverse actors. Through sustained interaction, this collaboration evolves into collaborative governance, characterized by mutual trust, a shared vision, collaborative leadership, and participatory decision-making.

Effective collaborative governance subsequently facilitates the emergence of value co-creation, whereby value is generated through tourism innovation, community empowerment, the preservation of local cultural heritage, enhanced tourist experiences, and strengthened local economies. These co-creation processes ultimately contribute to sustainable tourism development, reflected in increased destination competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and improved community well-being.

The proposed conceptual model also incorporates a feedback loop, illustrating that successful sustainable tourism development reinforces trust among stakeholders, strengthens their motivation to collaborate, and stimulates further innovation in destination management. Accordingly, destination development is conceptualized as a continuous adaptive process driven by iterative cycles of collaboration, learning, and innovation.

**Theoretical Implications**

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by integrating three major theoretical perspectives—Stakeholder Theory, Collaborative Governance, and Service-Dominant Logic—into a unified analytical framework for sustainable tourism development. Previous studies have generally examined these perspectives independently, whereas the present research demonstrates that they are complementary and collectively explain how destination sustainability emerges through collaborative processes.

Moreover, this study extends the concept of value co-creation, which has traditionally been applied primarily to explaining tourist experiences, by positioning it as a broader destination governance mechanism capable of generating social innovation, community empowerment, cultural preservation, and enhanced destination competitiveness. Consequently, the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how value in tourism is created, shared, and sustained through interactions among multiple stakeholders.

**Practical Implications**

From a practical standpoint, the findings provide several recommendations for destination managers and policymakers. First, local governments should strengthen community participation by establishing more inclusive consultation mechanisms and improving public access to information regarding destination development programs. Second, destination management authorities should enhance cross-sectoral coordination by implementing more transparent and open communication systems that provide all stakeholders with equitable opportunities to contribute to destination development.

Third, community empowerment initiatives should prioritize strengthening MSME capacity, improving digital literacy, encouraging tourism product innovation, and promoting community-based entrepreneurship. Fourth, destination performance should be evaluated not only in terms of tourist arrivals and investment levels but also through indicators such as community participation, the quality of stakeholder collaboration, the equitable distribution of economic benefits, and the effectiveness of environmental and cultural sustainability initiatives.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the future of sustainable tourism development in Mandalika depends fundamentally on the ability of all stakeholders to establish more inclusive, adaptive, and innovative forms of collaboration. By strengthening stakeholder relationships through collaborative governance and value co-creation processes, Mandalika is better positioned to evolve into a tourism destination that is not only economically competitive but also socially inclusive, culturally resilient, and environmentally sustainable.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how stakeholder collaboration contributes to the process of value co-creation in sustainable tourism development in Mandalika, Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that sustainable destination development is determined not only by infrastructure expansion and tourism investment but also by the quality of collaborative relationships established among government institutions, destination management authorities, tourism businesses, local communities, and supporting organizations.

The study reveals that stakeholder collaboration constitutes the fundamental foundation for developing an adaptive and sustainability-oriented system of destination governance. Through the mechanisms of collaborative governance—characterized by institutional coordination, trust-building, open communication, and participatory decision-making—stakeholders collectively facilitate value co-creation processes that generate destination innovation, community empowerment, the preservation of local cultural heritage, and enhanced tourist experiences.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that value co-creation produces benefits that extend beyond economic outcomes. In addition to improving local livelihoods, it strengthens the social and cultural sustainability of the destination by increasing community participation, fostering a stronger sense of ownership among local residents, and encouraging the emergence of community-based innovations. Accordingly, sustainable tourism development in Mandalika should be understood as the product of dynamic interactions among stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, and shared value creation, rather than merely as the outcome of government policies or physical investment.

Despite these positive findings, the study also identifies several challenges that warrant continued attention. These include the uneven participation of local communities in decision-making processes, the unequal distribution of economic benefits, and the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of local organizations. These challenges underscore that destination sustainability is not a static achievement but an ongoing process requiring continuous learning, institutional adaptation, and sustained collaboration among stakeholders.

Overall, this study concludes that the success of sustainable tourism development in Mandalika depends fundamentally on the ability of all stakeholders to establish collaborative, adaptive, and trust-based relationships. The stronger the quality of stakeholder collaboration, the greater the potential to stimulate innovation, improve community well-being, and enhance the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the destination.

Finally, this study proposes an Integrated Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model that conceptually links Stakeholder Collaboration, Collaborative Governance, Value Co-Creation, and Sustainable Tourism Development. This integrated framework provides a comprehensive explanation of how collaborative relationships among multiple stakeholders generate sustainable development outcomes and offers a useful theoretical and practical reference for future tourism governance initiatives in emerging destinations. Future research is encouraged to validate and extend this model through comparative studies across different tourism destinations and by employing mixed-method or longitudinal research designs to capture the evolving dynamics of stakeholder collaboration over time.

**Theoretical Implications**

This study contributes to the sustainable tourism literature by integrating Stakeholder Theory, Collaborative Governance, and Service-Dominant Logic into a unified conceptual framework. Unlike previous studies, which have generally examined these theoretical perspectives independently, the present research demonstrates that they are complementary and collectively provide a more comprehensive explanation of the processes underlying sustainable tourism destination development.

The findings reveal that stakeholder collaboration constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for the emergence of collaborative governance, while collaborative governance serves as the institutional mechanism through which value co-creation can occur. In turn, the value co-creation process generates a range of positive outcomes, including social innovation, community empowerment, enhanced tourist experiences, and improved destination competitiveness. Accordingly, this study extends the conceptualization of value co-creation beyond its traditional focus on tourist experience by positioning it as a strategic governance mechanism that supports sustainable destination development.

Furthermore, this study proposes an Integrated Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model that synthesizes the relationships among stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, value co-creation, and sustainable tourism development. The proposed model offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for explaining how collaborative interactions among diverse stakeholders contribute to sustainable destination outcomes. As such, it provides a valuable foundation for future research seeking to advance conceptual and empirical understanding of tourism destination governance, particularly within the context of emerging and developing economies.

**Practical Implications**

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for key stakeholders involved in tourism destination development. For local governments, the results underscore the importance of strengthening cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, improving information transparency, and expanding opportunities for meaningful community participation throughout all stages of destination development, from strategic planning to implementation and program evaluation. Such measures are expected to enhance policy legitimacy while ensuring that development initiatives better reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities.

For destination management authorities, the findings highlight the need to establish more open and transparent communication systems, strengthen partnerships with local communities, and develop more adaptive coordination mechanisms capable of responding to the evolving dynamics of destination development. These efforts are expected to improve the effectiveness of destination governance while fostering greater trust and long-term collaboration among stakeholders.

For tourism businesses, closer collaboration with local communities represents an important strategy for developing more authentic and competitive tourism products. Promoting tourism products based on local cultural heritage, supporting the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and continuously improving service quality can enhance visitor experiences while simultaneously broadening the economic benefits generated for local communities.

More broadly, the findings suggest that sustainable tourism policies should extend beyond infrastructure development and investment promotion to prioritize stakeholder collaboration, community empowerment, and inclusive governance. By embedding these principles into destination management strategies, stakeholders can create tourism systems that are not only economically competitive but also socially inclusive, culturally resilient, and environmentally sustainable over the long term.

**Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research employed a single-case study design focusing exclusively on Mandalika. Consequently, the unique social, cultural, and institutional characteristics of the destination may limit the generalizability of the findings to other tourism destinations with different contextual conditions. Second, the study primarily examined the perspectives of key stakeholders directly involved in destination governance and management. As a result, it did not comprehensively explore the perspectives of tourists, who also play a critical role in the process of value co-creation. Third, the study adopted a qualitative research approach; therefore, its primary emphasis was on understanding collaborative processes and stakeholder interactions rather than empirically testing causal relationships among theoretical constructs.

In light of these limitations, future research is encouraged to validate and extend the proposed conceptual framework by employing quantitative or mixed-methods research designs. Such approaches would enable researchers to empirically examine the relationships among stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, value co-creation, and sustainable tourism development, thereby providing stronger evidence regarding the proposed theoretical model.

Future studies are also encouraged to undertake comparative research across multiple Super Priority Tourism Destinations (SPTDs) in Indonesia, including Labuan Bajo, Borobudur, Lake Toba, Likupang, and other emerging destinations. Comparative analyses across diverse destination contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how collaborative governance mechanisms and value co-creation processes vary according to institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions. Such research would further enrich the theoretical development of sustainable tourism governance while offering context-sensitive policy recommendations for tourism destinations in developing economies.

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## 7. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, interview transcripts and other qualitative data are not publicly available. Any shared data will be anonymized in accordance with ethical research standards.

## 8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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