

## Human Resource Development Strategies Analysis for Competitiveness Enhancement: A Case Study of Jopuro Nature Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze human resource development strategies, the role of local culture, and their impact on improving tourism competitiveness in Jopuro Nature Tourism. The method used is a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews with Jopuro nature tourism managers, Pokdarwis, the Kampung Anyar village government, and tourists, as well as documentation. Data analysis techniques used data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing models. Then, data validity testing was conducted. The results showed that development strategies can be implemented through regular training, institutional strengthening (AD/ART), and inclusive recruitment based on the principle of "from the people for the people." Cultural integration, such as the "Ithuk-Ithukan" tradition, and active community participation have been proven to increase competitiveness in terms of PCI, EI, and HRI indicators. Therefore, community-based human resource development is key to the sustainability of tourism, although the challenge of competency standardization still needs to be addressed.

**Keywords:** Development Strategy, Human Resources, Competitiveness, Jopuro Nature Tourism.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a role as a sector that contributes to increasing state revenue and creating job opportunities for the community (Evans, Campbell, & Stonehouse, 2016). One form of tourism that is currently growing rapidly is ecotourism, which focuses on environmental conservation, local economic empowerment, and preservation of local culture. Ecotourism not only supports economic benefits, but also emphasizes social responsibility and nature conservation (Syahputra Eko, Novianty Lily, 2023). In the context of regional development, tourism villages as part of ecotourism prioritize community-based management, so that village governments have an important role in developing competent and creative local human resources to improve service quality and strengthen the competitiveness of tourist destinations in a sustainable manner (Susilo et al., 2024).

Human resources play an important role in the development of tourism so that it can grow and increase tourist visits. However, many people are still unaware of tourism's potential to boost

their economy. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the role of the local community in tourism development so that they can directly feel the benefits (Nawaningrum & Atmaja, 2022).

Jopuro Nature Tourism is one of the areas that has the potential for nature and culture-based tourism, located in Rejopuro Hamlet, Kampung Anyar Village, Glagah Subdistrict, Banyuwangi Regency. This tourism offers the beauty of mountainous nature, cool air, and the charm of the local community's culture and traditions. However, some people do not fully understand the importance of professionalism and skills in tourism services. Training and capacity-building activities remain limited, resulting in suboptimal service quality and tourism management. This situation has the potential to hinder Jopuro's competitiveness compared to other destinations in Banyuwangi that have made greater strides in human resource management.

Organized human resource development, including knowledge, training, and guidance, is essential to improve service quality and preserve culture and the environment in Jopuro nature tourism. The local community not only plays a role as a provider of tourism services but also as a preserver of cultural and environmental values, as reflected in the Ithuk-Ithukan tradition in Jopuro. Therefore, improving the competence of culture-based natural resources and the managerial capabilities of the community is key to strengthening the competitiveness of Jopuro Nature Tourism.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze human resource development strategies in improving the competitiveness of Jopuro Nature Tourism. The results of this study are expected to provide effective recommendations for managers and local communities to support sustainable tourism development and directly empower communities.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study was conducted at Jopuro Nature Tourism, located in Rejopuro Hamlet, Kampunganyar Village, Glagah Subdistrict, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java. It used a descriptive qualitative research method to provide an understanding of human resource development strategies in improving competitiveness at Jopuro Nature Tourism. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which is a technique of selecting informants based on specific objectives, namely based on criteria, characteristics, or specific traits relevant to the research (Lepar, B. S., & Sari, 2024). The criteria for informants included Jopuro Nature Tourism managers, local communities or tourism awareness groups, Kampung Anyar village government officials, and visiting tourists.

The data sources obtained were primary data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation at the research site. Secondary data consisted of official documents, academic literature, relevant reports or archives, and reliable online sources. The data collection techniques used in this study were interviews, documentation, and participatory observation, such as participating in cleaning activities at the location or promoting the tourist village, and non-participatory observation, such as observing interactions at the research site.

The data analysis technique used was data reduction by selecting data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Then, data presentation and conclusion drawing were carried out with the aim of clearly describing effective human resource development strategies. Finally, data validity testing was carried out by conducting validation such as triangulation, member checking, and extended participation, as well as persistent observation.

## **3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

Jopuro Nature Tourism was initiated in 2017 by the youth of Karang Taruna Dusun Rejopuro, Kampung Anyar Village, Glagah District, Banyuwangi Regency. In the early stages, the tourism activities were still simple and did not have official legal status. Over time, Jopuro Nature Tourism was managed by Pokdarwis, which consisted of local residents of Rejopuro Hamlet, based

on the principles of participation and community empowerment. The following is a description of the research data obtained through interviews:

- 1) The Human Resource Development Strategy in the management of nature tourism at Jopuro Nature Tourism is carried out through a participatory approach that focuses on empowering local communities. There are four main strategies that are implemented:
  - a. Training and Education: Managers regularly attend training sessions held by the Banyuwangi Regency Tourism Office every three months, covering topics such as tourism services, financial management, and digital promotion. As stated by Mr. Dwi Handoko, Head of Pokdarwis: "We regularly participate in training from the office every three months. The hope is that our services will be more professional and we can improve the quality of our tourists." In addition to external training, internal learning (sharing sessions) between members and comparative studies to other destinations, such as Mustika Beach, are conducted to adopt best management practices.
  - b. Institutional Development and Strengthening: Management transformation was carried out by drafting Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART) as written and sustainable guidelines. As stated by Mr. Dwi Handoko: "Now there are articles of association and bylaws, and rules have been made in writing through mutual agreement meetings. The hope is that these rules will be sustainable." Thus, institutional development not only strengthens the foundation of the organization, but also ensures the management of tourism because the system that has been built no longer depends on a single leadership period, but on permanent and binding joint rules.
  - c. Local-Based Recruitment: Jopuro Nature Tourism applies the principle of "from the community, for the community," prioritizing the people of Rejopuro Hamlet as workers without strict administrative requirements, with the aim of expanding employment opportunities for the local community and fostering a sense of belonging, thereby encouraging active participation in promoting the tourist destination. This is emphasized by Mr. Dwi Handoko: "Recruitment must be of local residents, no one else. There are no special requirements, everyone learns together." The impact is evident in increased community involvement, operational stability, and the creation of a destination image based on the values of togetherness and local empowerment.
  - d. Changes to the Management System: Changes to the system were made to adjust the organization's procedures, structure, and policies to remain relevant to the dynamics of the external environment. Following internal conflicts in 2021, the chairperson's term of office was shortened from five years to three years (maximum two terms) to accelerate regeneration and prevent individual domination. According to Mr. Dwi Handoko's explanation: "In the upcoming election, only the chairperson will be elected, and the chairperson will then select the staff and members. The chairperson can serve again once, for a maximum of two terms." Overall, these changes to the management system are an effort to professionalize Pokdarwis, which will have an impact on increasing accountability, organizational responsiveness, and the institutional sustainability of Jopuro Nature Tourism.
  - e. Limitations of Human Resources: Despite high motivation, there are significant obstacles in the form of the low educational background of managers, the majority of whom are only junior high school graduates and do not have tourism competency certification, resulting in service standards that are not yet fully consistent. This situation creates a gap between the need for professionalism and the actual capabilities of the workforce in the field. Therefore, improving the quality of human resources through regular training, technical guidance, professional mentoring, and accelerated competency certification is an urgent need so that Jopuro Nature Tourism can compete sustainably and provide the best experience for tourists.



Figure 1. Interview with the Head of Pokdarwis

2) The Role of Local Culture and Community Participation in Supporting Human Resource Development Jopuro Nature Tourism implements the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), in which culture and community participation are key assets.

- a. Preservation of Local Culture through the implementation of cultural activities involving the local community, such as coordination and preparation of activities involving local traditional leaders, collection of traditional funds, and organization of events, as well as maintenance of the facilities used, which is a shared responsibility.
- b. Economic and Social Participation: Residents are directly involved in various economic activities such as ticket management, cleaning services, parking area management, local culinary production, and informal promotion through community social networks. In addition, part of the tourism revenue is allocated for social activities and the development of public facilities, especially to help underprivileged residents and build places of worship. This condition proves that the existence of Jopuro Nature Tourism is able to strengthen social solidarity and create equitable benefits for the surrounding community.
- c. Young People as Agents of Innovation: Local youth are actively involved in digital promotion activities, particularly through managing social media content used to introduce destinations, provide information on activities, and promote natural and cultural attractions. The contribution of the younger generation directly strengthens the Technology Advancement Indicator (TAI) because it demonstrates the community's ability to adapt to digital technology in tourism management. Thus, the younger generation plays an important role as agents of innovation who are able to increase the competitiveness of Jopuro Nature Tourism through creativity, the use of technology, and more effective and sustainable promotional strategies.

3) Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Human Resource Development, including:

- a. Supporting Factors: The results of the study indicate several important aspects in human resource development, namely a spirit of collectivity, high motivation, and a culture of mutual cooperation. Furthermore, regular training provided by the Tourism Office provides opportunities to improve the technical skills of managers and strengthen the organization. In addition, there is the strength of local culture, the existence of community traditions, and the

holding of annual cultural events. Finally, the active involvement of youth groups and students. These factors indicate that the success of tourism management does not only depend on individual motivation, but also on social and cultural strengths, as well as external support that shapes a more professional and adaptive management system.

- b. Inhibiting Factors: The results of the study show that one of the main obstacles is the low level of education and competence of some of the management members, which has an impact on the quality of service that does not fully meet standards. This condition is related to the Human Resources Indicator (HRI), which emphasizes the importance of technical skills and professionalism in providing services to tourists. In addition, there are also issues with the provision of facilities and tourism development planning. The lack of support from the village government has a direct impact on the Infrastructure Development Indicator (IDI).

4. Contribution to Improving Competitiveness as a Nature and Culture-Based Tourism Destination.

- a. Improvement in Service Quality (Human Resources Indicator – HRI), the interview results also show that service quality is not consistent between weekdays and weekends: “The service is good, but there is a difference between weekdays and weekends.” This indicates the need for improved schedule management and equal distribution of competencies across all operating days. These findings indicate that improving the quality of human resources through continuous training and better service management can strengthen HRI.
- b. Price Competitiveness Indicator (PCI): The efficiency of management based on local human resources allows for very competitive ticket prices (Rp5,000), making Jopuro an accessible destination for various groups. Thus, a competitive pricing strategy not only attracts visitors but also proves the effectiveness of tourism management based on independence and optimization of local potential.
- c. Strengthening Cultural Identity and Environmental Character (Environment Indicator – EI & Social Development Indicator – SDI), Innovations in the form of cultural attractions, local art performances, or educational activities can be opportunities for managers to optimize the cultural potential of Rejopuro. Through environmental education, regular community service, and village social activities, the destination is increasingly known as a natural, clean, and community-friendly tourist destination. This impact encourages increased loyalty among tourists who return to visit and even promote Jopuro. These efforts contribute to an increase in SDI through community involvement in social activities and the preservation of local cultural values for others.
- d. Digital Innovation and Promotion (Technology Advancement Indicator – TAI), youth involvement in media management can expand the reach of promotion, such as Instagram, Facebook, short video content, digital word of mouth (reviews, reposts, and recommendations).
- e. Economic and Social Impact on the Community (Human Tourism Indicator – HTI), improving human resources not only impacts tourism services, but also community welfare, whereby community income can be allocated for infrastructure development, social activities, employment opportunities for young people, and economic support for MSME actors around the tourist site. This management model reflects the implementation of HTI, which strengthens the sustainability of tourism while building a sense of community ownership of Jopuro Nature Tourism.



Figure 2. Interview with Visiting Tourists

The discussion of this research shows that the results indicate that human resource development plays a very important role in increasing the competitiveness of Jopuro Nature Tourism. Community-based management carried out by Pokdarwis Rejopuro has succeeded in creating sustainable tourism while providing positive social and economic impacts on the surrounding environment. The human resource development strategy implemented not only focuses on improving technical skills but also on fostering attitudes, awareness, and social responsibility based on local wisdom. Training, informal education, regular coaching, and leadership regeneration are concrete efforts to improve community competence, in line with the view (Syahputra Eko, Novianty Lily, 2023) that human resource development is a continuous process to maximize individual contributions.

This study reinforces the findings (Bulukumba, 2023) which emphasize the importance of improving managerial, technical, and behavioral competencies in the tourism sector. In Jopuro, regular training from the Tourism Office and the implementation of a more structured administrative system mark a shift towards more professional management. The impact of human resource development is evident in three key indicators of competitiveness: service quality, price and efficiency, and environmental sustainability. Friendly service and active community participation make tourists feel comfortable, affordable ticket prices indicate effective management, and efforts to maintain cleanliness and environmental integrity strengthen the sustainability of tourism assets. The findings also reveal a unique aspect of Jopuro Nature Tourism, namely community-based management without the involvement of outside investors, demonstrating strong independent potential. In addition, social activities such as donations and the construction of public facilities highlight social and spiritual values that are rarely found in studies of other destinations. However, the main challenge lies in managerial and administrative skills, such as the drafting of MoUs and financial record-keeping, which require more specific human resource development in the areas of institutional and governance aspects.

Conceptually, this study broadens the understanding of the role of human resources in community-based tourism, not only as labor, but as social and cultural drivers of the destination. Strengthening community capacity through training and informal education has shaped an independent and sustainable management pattern, although external support is still needed to overcome technical and administrative limitations. The practical implications of this research

include the need for the government to expand training and certification programs, provide professional assistance to Pokdarwis, and encourage educational institutions to play an active role in developing the management, hospitality, and digital marketing skills of local communities. Thus, human resource development is central to the strategy of enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of Jopuro Nature Tourism, while strengthening village-based tourism based on local wisdom.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and data analysis, it can be concluded that the human resource development strategy at Jopuro Nature Tourism plays an important role in increasing tourism competitiveness through strengthening the Pokdarwis institution by drafting Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART) to ensure professionalism and sustainability in tourism. Furthermore, the application of the principle of “from the people for the people” is also important. In addition, socio-cultural strengths, particularly the preservation of traditions such as “Ithuk-Ithukan,” are key factors that strengthen the identity of the destination and social cohesion within the community.

Furthermore, the competitiveness of Jopuro Nature Tourism has proven to be superior in three main indicators, namely the Price Competitiveness Indicator through very affordable ticket prices, the Environment Indicator in the form of rural natural beauty, and the Human Resources Indicator reflected in the friendliness and active participation of the local community. However, the development of this tourism still faces challenges in the form of limited human resource competencies, minimal support from the village government, and a lack of diversification of tourist attractions. Therefore, a follow-up strategy is needed in the form of competency improvement, tourism product innovation, and more intensive collaboration between sectors to ensure the sustainability of tourist destinations in the future.

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