

Mapping Ecotourism Policy Studies in Indonesia: The 3C Approach - Conservation, Community, and Control

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to investigate the evolution of studies on ecotourism policy in Indonesia. A systematic literature review was conducted using the Scopus and Google Scholar databases to identify articles relating to ecotourism policies in Indonesia. This study's results mapped out the discussions that had taken place and identified the three main subtopics that researchers had discussed. First, "Focusing on Conservation" discusses the significance of protecting nature and minimizing the environmental impact of tourism. Second, "Strengthening the Communities" emphasizes that engaging local communities in decision-making and empowering them economically can increase tourism participation. Third, "Ensuring Regulatory Control" discusses law enforcement, policymaking, and government oversight of sustainable tourism. This study examines the primary issue of ecotourism policy studies in Indonesia. This discussion map emphasizes balancing nature conservation, local community empowerment, and regulation control in ecotourism development. Identifying the research gap and future research direction is also proposed here. Thus, this study's findings can serve as the basis for future research and contribute to formulating more effective policies for promoting sustainable ecotourism in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

After the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia must raise the issue of ecotourism as part of a sustainable economic recovery effort. Tourism has been one of the industry's most severely impacted by the pandemic and others in the financial sector (Värzaru et al., 2021). By emphasizing ecotourism, Indonesia can utilize its natural richness and natural resources to recover the tourism industry responsibly. In addition, ecotourism offers opportunities to increase tourist visits, create new employment, and increase the local communities' income (Saidmamatov et al., 2020). Bringing up the ecotourism issue is

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essential for environmental preservation and its economic advantages. It is because tourism is one of Indonesia's leading financial sectors. According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) tourism competitiveness index, Indonesia's ranking rose from 50th in 2015 to 42nd in 2017, a positive development. Tourism grew by 22% in 2017, ranking second after Vietnam (29%) (Fitriana, 2020). After the pandemic, the significance of preserving nature and minimizing tourism's negative impact on the environment has become more widely recognized. By promoting ecotourism, Indonesia can promote sustainable tourism practices such as refuse management, renewable energy use, and preserving sensitive ecosystems. It not only contributes to the preservation of Indonesia's natural attractiveness but also prevents further environmental damage. Based on the 2005-2025 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN), all development sectors in Indonesia must apply the principles of sustainable development. In the context of tourism, the tourism development paradigm has evolved from mass tourism to sustainable tourism (Nasution et al., 2018b).

Examining the most recent rules about sustainability-based tourism in Indonesia, it is noticeable that various legal requirements form the foundation for tourism management. These regulations include the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009 on tourism, Minister of Home Regulation No. 33 of 2009 on guidelines for ecotourism development in regional areas, and Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia No. P.13/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/5/2020 on developing natural tourism facilities and infrastructure in forest areas and Regulation of the Minister of Tourism. These legal frameworks and guidelines demonstrate the Indonesian government's commitment to ecotourism management. Nonetheless, it looks like this commitment will meet challenges in reality. Large-scale tourist development has resulted in environmental damage in various natural tourism projects (Akhmad et al., 2018; Rusdiana & Nugraha, 2021; Siregar, 2019). As a result, it is critical to examine how ecotourism policy studies concerns are observed in Indonesia using the existing body of research.

Ecotourism research is essential for managing the tourism industry and conserving the environment (Hasana et al., 2022). The significance of protecting biodiversity and natural ecosystems has received increased attention in recent decades. Consequently, developing ecotourism studies is crucial to comprehending and addressing the challenges of preserving natural resources and promoting sustainable tourism. Observing the latest trends and innovations in conservation and tourism approaches is one of the primary reasons why it is essential to examine the development of ecotourism studies. Through comprehensive analysis, it is possible to comprehend how new approaches to studying ecotourism can maximize tourism's economic and social benefits while preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems. In addition, examining the evolution of ecotourism studies reveals how local communities and indigenous people are involved in natural resource management and tourism growth (Kim et al., 2019). The interaction between tourism and local communities can substantially impact environmental sustainability, social life, and economic prosperity. By comprehending the most recent developments and practices in ecotourism studies, we can create more effective policies and management plans that involve the active participation of local communities.

Previous research has been done to look at the research trend in ecotourism policy, but it is limited to bibliographical information (Sisriany & Furuya, 2020). Thus, there is a need to develop an effective eco-process that could facilitate a role for the environment and maintainability of tourist places (Firman et al., 2023). Therefore, a comprehensive mapping study was undertaken to examine the ecotourism trend in Indonesia, with the primary objective of identifying and categorizing the critical issues associated with this topic. This research endeavor will provide crucial data and valuable insights for accurate planning and development initiatives and enhance existing regulations. These insights play a vital role in developing effective policies and identifying necessary actions to guarantee the long-term viability of the industry.

METHOD

In this study, ecotourism policies in Indonesia are investigated through the lens of a systematic literature study, following the steps by Akomea-Frimpong et al. (2022). The first step was compiling a list of relevant results from Scopus and Google Scholar using the terms "ecotourism policy" and Indonesia in English and Indonesian. We collected the data in June 2023 and set no time limits for the data mining process. The first search on Scopus identified 67 papers, while Google Scholar generated 110 items, which were then put through a language screening stage, during which only English articles were kept. Only publications with full access to their papers were included in our study, whereas those without entire material or restricted access were eliminated. After this stage, only English and Indonesian articles with full documents remained. As a direct consequence, this study's research material consists of 77 papers. The information collected from these publications was subjected to a qualitative analysis that focused on the most pressing concerns of Indonesia's ecotourism strategy. In addition, the investigation findings will be assessed and analyzed to determine discussion grouping in ecotourism policies. The article's results are subsequently analyzed using a descriptive analysis method with the facts presented. In this instance, it examines, describes, provides insight, and suggests a new framework (Putra & Sajida, 2023). It is intended that this research can give a better knowledge of the ecotourism policy in Indonesia by employing this technique and providing recommendations for the continued growth of this area of study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before we get into the specifics of mapping the subtopics in this research, let us first look at how the topic of ecotourism policy in Indonesia has evolved throughout the past few years. When it comes to analyzing the literature, we make use of the research rabbit—app tool. The ResearchRabbit tool was used to visualize bibliographic networks in which the articles included after the formal full-text review were incorporated into the website <https://researchrabbitapp.com> to visualize the literature development (Lu, 2023). The findings are depicted in Figure 1 below, and the origin of this topic can be traced back to a conversation about the swift expansion of tourism across Asia, including in Indonesia, driven by a large population (Cochrane, 2007). Then, there is research conducted by Bottema & Bush (2012) that examines the longevity of entrepreneurial marine protected areas (EMPAs) by investigating the role of the private sector in marine conservation by looking at the example of Lombok. Additionally, ecotourism policy has received much attention from 2019 to 2022, as shown in Figure 1's depiction of this

study. One of the fascinating studies that stands out most in this data visualization is one that looked at the effects of tourism on coastal ecosystems in Karimunjawa from the point of view of the local communities there from three different points of view: socio-cultural, economic, and environmental (Lukman et al., 2022).

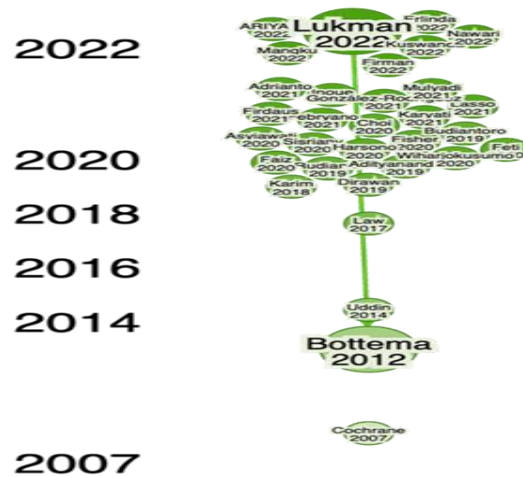


Figure 1. Ecotourism Policies in Indonesia Studies Periodically
 Source: Author`s Analysis. 2023

Next, according to the findings of our mapping, three primary pillars make up ecotourism policy in Indonesia. These approaches serve as the basis for sustainable ecotourism initiatives to be designed and implemented. The primary focuses of these approaches include focusing on conversation, enhancing local communities, and ensuring regulatory control. In the following paragraphs, we will now provide an in-depth explanation of each of these approaches.

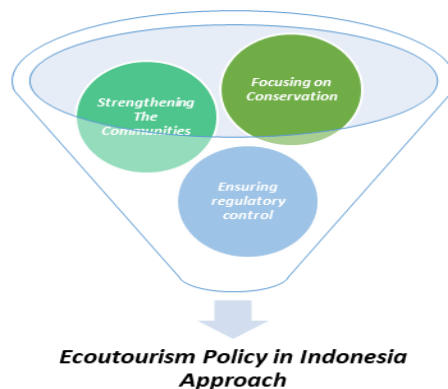


Figure 2. Ecotourism Policy in Indonesia Approach Based on Mapping of Studies
 Source: Author`s Analysis, 2023

Focusing on Conservation

To begin, the ecotourism policy approach must place a significant emphasis on conservation efforts if it is to be successful. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, conservation and tourism have combined (Stronza et al., 2019). The term "conservation" refers to the actions taken to preserve and guard the natural ecosystems and biodiversity

that prevent overexploitation or extinction (Schelhas & Lassoie, 2001) and the primary draw for ecotourism. Ecotourism policy should use this approach to guarantee that tourist activities do not harm or jeopardize the natural environments in which ecotourism sites are based (Eryani & Jayantari, 2019). It involves reducing negative consequences such as pollution, ecosystem degradation, and land fragmentation, restoring and preserving ecosystems, protecting endangered species, and sustainably managing natural resources. Ecotourism policies that emphasize conservation aim to bring harmony between tourism and the natural environment (Anup, 2017). It is done to ensure that both present and future generations may appreciate the natural world's wonders and riches.

Our findings found that some of the research on ecotourism policy in Indonesia started by focusing on conservation. It began with a discussion about the financial aspect of ecotourism protection. Walpole et al. (2001) investigate the financial contribution of ecotourism to mitigating the costs of park management and conservation, focusing on the potential for increased revenue through the propensity of visitors to pay higher entrance fees. In addition, they emphasize the need to establish a balance between financial benefits, visitor numbers, and local economic benefits. It contributes to a greater comprehension of conservation policy, including various stakeholders' participation and the conservation efforts' financial viability. In the case of Gili Trawangan, for instance, travelers can demonstrate their support for conservation efforts by implementing entry/exit fees, voluntary contributions, taxes, and licensing fees (Lukman et al., 2022; Nelson et al., 2019). Other exciting research is about Elephant Management Based on Ecotourism. Kuswanda et al. (2022) discuss how two conflict-mitigating conservation measures are restoring degraded habitats and constructing elephant corridors. Next, Bottema Bush (2012) emphasizes the private sector's role in marine conservation, particularly within entrepreneurial marine protected areas (EMPAs). These areas investigate whether tourism entrepreneurs can contribute to marine conservation's long-term vision, funding, and management. It is acknowledged that durable, institutionalized arrangements require state support even though the private sector can potentially increase conservation awareness among tourists and coastal communities.

Meanwhile, Fisher et al. (2020) emphasizes the significance of understanding community conservation through frameworks that address the crucial institutions involved in conservation and development negotiations. It includes considering means of subsistence, natural resource relationships, and the participation of institutions such as Adat, adaptive local institutions, and the State. Finally, Pearson Thompson (2023) examines the potential synergies between underwater cultural heritage and marine biodiversity conservation, highlighting overlaps in the definitions of world heritage, marine protected areas, and effective area-based conservation measures. In addition, they emphasize synergies between shipwreck and fisheries management, sustainable tourism, and livelihoods.

Strengthening The Communities

The second essential approach in ecotourism policy is community building, which positions the local people as the primary partner and beneficiary in ecotourism development (Gumede & Nzama, 2021). This strategy aims to reduce negative impacts on the environment (Anup, 2017). This strategy incorporates the community's active

engagement and involvement in the planning, management, and decision-making processes connected to the development of ecotourism (Gumede & Nzama, 2019). because the local community is occasionally viewed as a mere object or observer without active participation in the economic process (Kia, 2021). Through their involvement in ecotourism activities, members of local communities may be helped to improve their social, economic, and cultural standing. It is the goal of community strengthening. It involves implementing training and education programs, respect for local wisdom and traditional culture, and empowering local economies by creating job opportunities and growing local businesses (Respati et al., 2017). Ecotourism policies have the potential to promote long-term sustainability and produce fair benefits for local communities if they focus on building local communities. It would result in a reduction in social inequality and an increase in the well-being of the community.

It begins with Goreau & Hilbertz (2007), who discussed how The Global Coral Reef Alliance (GCRA) collaborates with community-based management initiatives to use Biorock technology to restore coral reefs and fisheries. The paper examines community-based coastal zone management and ecotourism initiatives in Bali, Indonesia, Panama, and Palau. It emphasizes the importance of government policies and funding to support community-based restoration initiatives. On the same type of habitat, Husamah et al. (2019) investigate the application of Community-Based Ecotourism (CBE) principles in Gili Labak, East Java, Indonesia. It identifies deficiencies in implementing conservation principles and culture preservation efforts, highlighting the management team's dearth of knowledge and skills. Their study suggests the importance of community development and environmental education. Later, Wildan and Sukardi (2018) later developed a model of ecotourism-based social asset development to strengthen the local community's economy in Lombok. Then, Kusmana and Sukwika (2018) examine the perceptions and preferences of coastal communities regarding the utilization of mangrove and channel bar ecosystems. It suggests that mangrove ecosystems must be rehabilitated and alternative employment opportunities must be provided. The paper recommends supporting habitat preservation policies such as mangrove forest protection.

Firdaus et al. (2021) also investigates the perceptions and willingness to pay for mangrove restoration among fishery communities in Lampung Province, Indonesia. It highlights the significance of education in influencing willingness to pay and reveals differences in willingness to pay among various fishery community groups. The research proposes a policy scenario incorporating ecotourism development, knowledge education, restoration, and community-based management of mangroves.

Nurrochmat et al. (2019) examine the role of community participation in preserving forests, specifically through ecotourism and agroforestry initiatives in Gunung Rinjani National Park, Lombok Island. This paper investigates the integration of Community Forestry and REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) schemes. This study examines deforestation trends and the effect of Community Forestry on deforestation reduction.

After that, Fisher et al. (2020) introduces and evaluate articles published in a special section on community conservation in the Wallacea region of Indonesia. It proposes a framework known as ASLi that addresses institutions that negotiate conservation and development, subsistence, and natural resources. The article evaluates

empirical contributions concerning illicit species trade, community participation, ecotourism, policy analysis, and other topics.

Next, [Sulistiowati et al. \(2022\)](#) explore the process of delivering permits for community forestry in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It identifies regulatory restrictions and policy inconsistencies as the primary reasons why many groups of producers have not received forestry management permits. The paper suggests streamlining the forest permit management procedure, especially for community forests. In addition, [Widyaningsih et al. \(2022\)](#) emphasize social innovation as a crucial success factor for social forestry. It examines how permit holders for social forestry establish networks with diverse stakeholders to implement new ideas and acquire necessary resources.

The study identifies resilience, adaptability, persistence, leadership, and government policy as influential factors in social innovation in two Indonesian communities. Also, [Nawari et al. \(2022\)](#) investigate the feasibility of indigenous community-based ecotourism management (CBEM) in Pelalawan District, Indonesia. It identifies voids in the current management, including tenancy permits, marketing, environmental education, and infrastructure construction. This study recommends using the research to guide indigenous CBEM planning and proposes strategies to eliminate these gaps. Finally, [Lasso and Dahles \(2023\)](#) analyze the transition to an ecotourism-based economy in Indonesia's Komodo National Park. It queries whether ecotourism has been a suitable strategy for achieving sustainability and meeting community requirements. This paper accentuates the failings in achieving sustainable development objectives and proposes tourism policies that involve multiple stakeholders, including local communities.

Ensuring regulatory control

Lastly, one of the most significant approaches in ecotourism policy is ensuring appropriate regulatory controls are in place. Tourism development will necessitate proper control regulation because not all tourism is environmentally conscious or socially responsible ([Tisdell, 2003](#)). A robust regulatory structure that is efficiently administered is required to back up a policy that ecotourism is of high quality and ensures the sustainability of ecotourism ([Purnamawati et al., 2022](#)). It includes developing and enhancing the legislation, policies, and standards that govern ecotourism operations. Also, the participation that leads the governed to comprehend, value, and comply with the regulatory framework is the condition that guarantees and shapes its legitimacy ([Yanes et al., 2019](#)). These practices include environmental management, visitor safety, service quality, and company ethics. Implementing efficient regulatory measures ensures that ecotourism operations are carried out following the principles of sustainability, therefore protecting both the integrity of the environment and the interests of the people directly impacted by these activities. It is still related to the local community approach; local communities have a substantial control role in tourism development, particularly in rural areas, because control over the decision-making process must be given to those who will ultimately bear the consequences of development implementation, such as failure or negative impacts that result from the development of tourism villages.

Consequently, local communities should also be granted decision-making power ([Setini et al., 2021](#)). In addition, there is a requirement for efficient monitoring and the

enforcement of laws to prevent unlawful techniques harmful to the growth of ecotourism. When it comes to guaranteeing the successful execution of the regulatory restrictions that have been established, collaboration between the government, the tourist sector, and any other relevant parties is of the utmost importance.

This subtopic of discussion contributed by [Nasution et al. \(2018a\)](#) examines the stance, substantive content, and duration of Indonesian ecotourism laws and policies. The substantive content of ecotourism laws and policies in Indonesia is only partially evident and lacks comprehensive and structured goals. Therefore, it is essential to integrate stakeholders to comprehensively, systematically, and objectively revise ecotourism laws and policies to maximize ecotourism development. Then, [Feti et al. \(2020\)](#) evaluate local authorities' intervention in mangrove ecotourism by the local community and highlight the potential threat to mangrove sustainability posed by local government intervention. They suggest that co-management, which involves the community in mangrove management, can mediate community-government conflicts and focus on the significance of pertinent policies following the successful community-based rehabilitation and environmental protection of mangroves.

[Karyati \(2021\)](#) also discusses the absence of legal instruments as the premise for ecotourism policy in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Indonesia. It examines the government's legal policies to support ecotourism development and the NTB provincial government's legal policy model. It also emphasizes the significance of statutory regulations that provide ecotourism actors with guidelines and incentives and the need for regional regulations to support ecotourism development. Others, [Tresiana et al. \(2022\)](#), evaluate the efficacy of mangrove forest policy in the Indonesian city of Karang and find that existing policies for safeguarding and managing mangrove forests have not been optimal. Therefore, they suggested that to improve policy quality, transparency, accountability, and costs, the study recommends the development of wise regulations, with a particular emphasis on ecotourism and green open space policies.

Meanwhile, [Mangku et al. \(2022\)](#) contrast laws and policies regarding tourism development and the legal protection of indigenous peoples in Bali, Indonesia, and Atauro, Timor-Leste. In Indonesia, few regulations design culture as an economic resource, while the ecotourism administration in Beloi Village falls short of the plan in Timor-Leste. Their study emphasizes the need for comprehensive and structured objectives in ecotourism laws and policies and the need for policymakers and facilitators to be involved in integrated management.

Identifying The Gap and Future Research Direction

Previous studies have identified a research gap concerning the need for a more in-depth investigation into developing comprehensive and well-structured ecotourism laws and policies, specifically focusing on their impact on conservation, community empowerment, and regulatory control in the Indonesian context. While our findings underscore the significance of these approaches, a thorough analysis of how robust and comprehensive ecotourism laws and policies contribute to the successful implementation of conservation initiatives, community development, and effective regulatory measures remains insufficient. Indonesian regulations have demonstrated a commitment to sustainability in ecotourism. However, weak supervision and strategic directions at the implementation level remain problematic ([Hasim, 2018](#); [Jubaedah &](#)

Anas, 2019). Moreover, research that holistically evaluates the overall influence and effectiveness of ecotourism laws and policies in achieving conservation objectives, empowering local communities, and ensuring appropriate regulatory measures is lacking despite prior studies addressing specific aspects within these domains. This gap in understanding highlights the need for more comprehensive research in this area.

Future ecotourism policy research may concentrate on three critical areas: conservation strategies, strengthening local communities, and ensuring effective regulatory oversight. Sustainable waste management systems and eco-friendly transportation options are innovative approaches and technologies that can be explored to improve conservation efforts (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2022). Also, future studies could explore synergies between underwater cultural heritage preservation and marine biodiversity conservation, as well as the financial aspect of conservation as formed by (Walpole et al., 2001), including ecotourism's contribution to mitigating park management costs. To empower communities, research can investigate ecotourism's socioeconomic and cultural effects, evaluating the efficacy of training programs, the incorporation of indigenous knowledge, and job creation. Community-based ecotourism management initiatives can be studied to comprehend obstacles and develop comprehensive engagement strategies. Moreover, investigating the role of social innovation in social forestry and community-based ecotourism can shed light on the factors that influence innovation and its effect on local communities.

The following studies can predict future challenges in protecting and managing natural resources, such as mangrove forests (Sumarmi et al., 2022). Also, it is possible to do a more in-depth investigation of the legal frameworks and protection of indigenous peoples in the context of tourism development, intending to achieve comprehensive and structured objectives in ecotourism laws and policies (Mangku et al., 2022). In addition, research can investigate the intervention of local authorities in ecotourism administration and potential threats to sustainability while promoting co-management models to mediate community-government conflicts. To maximize the development of sustainable ecotourism initiatives, comprehensive revisions of ecotourism laws and policies, incorporating stakeholders and ensuring objectivity, may be considered. Future research can contribute to the advancement of ecotourism policy by addressing these issues, thereby assuring the preservation of natural resources, the empowerment of local communities, and the implementation of effective regulatory measures. These research directions can assist policymakers and stakeholders in developing ecotourism initiatives that strike a balance between environmental preservation, community well-being, and quality standards.

CONCLUSION

A good ecotourism strategy will employ efficient approaches to conservation, community development, and regulatory constraints. These three pillars support the ecotourism industry. According to previous research, Indonesian ecotourism development must be holistic and integrated to use the 3C Ecotourism Policy approach (Conservation, Community, and Control). The combination of these three strategies will result in the development of sustainable ecotourism, the protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, the empowerment of local populations, and the control by regulation

of ecotourism practices appropriately. To implement this strategy, the government, tourism industry, local communities, and other relevant organizations must collaborate closely. It is essential for the effective implementation of a comprehensive ecotourism policy. Ecotourism can only become a valuable tool in the fight to preserve the environment and foster sustainable economic growth if it is approached in an integrated and sustainable manner. The study is limited due to the manual method of systematic literature review.

Additionally, limited literature database sources can restrict access to pertinent ecotourism policy studies. Therefore, the development of this research may involve conducting interviews with ecotourism stakeholders as part of field research. This method will facilitate direct comprehension of policy implementation and the obstacles encountered in developing ecotourism in Indonesia. In addition, quantitative analyses can provide a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships between policy variables and ecotourism outcomes, as well as the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders regarding these policies. Additionally, a comparative approach can be used to compare ecotourism policies in Indonesia with specifics on different types of tourism, such as forest and marine tourism. This will provide more insight into each type of tourism and identify more specific, applicable best practices approaches.

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