Research Article

An Evaluation of Regional Tourism Development Policy: a Case Study of Sekarsari Hot Spring in Mojokerto City

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Abstract. Regional tourism development is a crucial strategy for driving local economic growth and preserving cultural heritage. However, field conditions often reveal that policy implementation does not always proceed optimally. The Sekarsari Bathing Area in Mojokerto City is one of the tourism sites targeted by development policies, yet it has not demonstrated significant impact on community welfare or tourism attractiveness. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of regional tourism development policies at the Sekarsari site using William N. Dunn's policy evaluation theory, which includes six criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis from various stakeholders such as the tourism office, site managers, local businesses, and community members. The research instruments were developed flexibly and iteratively according to field dynamics. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing in an interactive manner. The findings reveal that the tourism development policy at Sekarsari has not yet yielded optimal outcomes. The main weaknesses lie in the lack of community participation, uneven distribution of economic benefits, and limited innovation and promotion. Although there have been improvements in basic infrastructure and a modest increase in visitor numbers, the policy has not been fully responsive to local needs. In conclusion, the current policy does not fully meet Dunn's six evaluation criteria and requires revisions in both strategic planning and technical implementation. This study recommends that future tourism policies be more community-based, inclusive, and adaptive to local contexts. For future research, a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative and geospatial analysis is suggested to strengthen comprehensive evaluative evidence.

Keywords: Community Participation, Mojokerto City, Policy Evaluation, Policy Implementation, Sekarsari Bathing Area, Tourism Development, William N. Dunn.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a strategic sector that can significantly drive inclusive regional economic growth. In the context of sustainable development, the advancement of tourist destinations not only creates economic opportunities but also serves as a means of preserving local culture and reinforcing regional identity. In Indonesia, national development policies outlined in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN) emphasize the importance of tourism development based on local potential as part of the regional economic transformation agenda. This directive is implemented through various regional government programs, including initiatives by the City of Mojokerto to revitalize historical and nature-based tourist sites.

One of the prioritized destinations is Sekarsari Bathing Area, which holds historical value and natural water spring resources. Originally a public bathing facility from the colonial era, the site now faces several significant challenges in management and development. Issues faced by the local community include low tourist visitation, inadequate public facilities, underdeveloped promotional strategies, and limited local community involvement in tourism activities. Furthermore, the current management approach lacks attention to environmental sustainability and equitable economic benefit distribution.

Several previous studies have highlighted these challenges. (Sugiama et al., 2022) found that the physical and infrastructural conditions of Sekarsari do not meet visitor comfort standards, thus reducing its attractiveness. (Musadad, 2018) emphasized the low level of community participation as a major obstacle to sustainable tourism development. While these studies provide critical insights, they fall short in evaluating the effectiveness of the policy interventions implemented by the local government.

When viewed from the lens of policy implementation outcomes, the success of the revitalization program at Sekarsari must be assessed through policy performance dimensions. Research by (Getz & Timur, 2012; Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019) on the effectiveness of public policy implementation concluded that policy success is highly influenced by the clarity of objectives, resource availability, and stakeholder participation. In the case of Sekarsari, the absence of a systematic evaluation mechanism has led to misalignments between the program's goals and field realities.

Furthermore, evaluation-based approaches are evident in the works of (Anwar et al., 2024; Rahman & Salahudin, 2021), which assessed tourism policy programs at the regional level. Their findings indicate that the lack of measurable evaluation indicators hampers objective assessment and continuous improvement. These findings underline the urgency of conducting a comprehensive evaluation of policy implementation in the tourism sector.

Research focusing on regional tourism development policy, such as those by (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Rogerson, 2018), underscores the need for community-based and locally driven strategies. In the case of Sekarsari, the development policy tends to follow a top-down approach, leaving minimal room for grassroots involvement in both planning and implementation.

To address these issues, a comprehensive evaluation model is required. One such framework is proposed by William N. Dunn, who outlines six key criteria in public policy evaluation: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. This framework enables a multidimensional assessment of policy outcomes. Additionally, Chambers' theory of participatory development (1994) emphasizes the importance of inclusive and community-based approaches, reinforcing the need for systematic policy evaluation in the context of Sekarsari's tourism development.

Based on this context, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of regional tourism development policy at the Sekarsari Bathing Area in Mojokerto City, using the six evaluation criteria proposed by William N. Dunn. The study also seeks to formulate evidence-based policy recommendations to ensure sustainable tourism development that directly benefits the local community.

2. Literatur Riview

Tourism development at the regional level is a crucial pillar in achieving sustainable local economic growth, particularly in enhancing community welfare and preserving cultural and natural potentials. The concept of tourism development involves not only improving facilities and increasing visitor numbers but also ensuring social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Garcia & Cater, 2022). In this context, regional tourism development policies must be designed and implemented effectively to produce tangible positive impacts on local communities and sustainable management of tourism resources (Farmaki, 2020). Policy evaluation becomes an essential step to measure the success of policy implementation and to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement (Wu, 2015). William N. Dunn's policy evaluation theory serves as the primary framework in this study because it offers six comprehensive and systematic evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness (Dunn, 2015). Effectiveness assesses the extent to which policy objectives are achieved; efficiency examines the relationship between outcomes and resources used; adequacy evaluates whether the policy sufficiently addresses the problem; equity reviews the fair distribution of benefits; responsiveness measures how well the policy meets community needs; and appropriateness ensures the policy aligns with the issue at hand (Fischer & Miller, 2017; Porter, 2016). In the context of tourism development at Sekarsari Bathing Area, this evaluation is critical given the site's considerable natural and cultural tourism potential but ongoing challenges such as inadequate facilities, limited community participation, and underdeveloped promotion (Hatipoglu et al., 2016). The policy evaluation framework is

further strengthened by the participatory development theory, which emphasizes that development success is more assured when the community is actively involved in planning and implementation (Haldane et al., 2019). Through an evaluation grounded in Dunn's theory, it is possible to identify which aspects of tourism development policies have been effective and which require improvement, enabling more responsive policies that contribute to inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Therefore, this study's conceptual framework integrates Dunn's six evaluation criteria as the main analytical tool to assess the implementation of regional tourism development policies at Sekarsari Bathing Area, considering community participation as a key success factor for sustainable development. This evaluation model serves as the basis for recommending more effective and adaptive policy improvement strategies responsive to the socio-economic dynamics of the local community.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an in-depth case study design aimed at comprehensively understanding the process and outcomes of regional tourism development policy implementation at Sekarsari Bathing Area, Mojokerto City. The case study method was chosen because it allows detailed exploration of policy phenomena within specific social and cultural contexts that are complex. The primary research instruments are semi-structured interviews directed at policymakers, site managers, and local community members involved in tourism development. In addition, field observations and policy document reviews serve as complementary instruments to obtain rich and valid data. Data collection was conducted using purposive sampling techniques to select informants who possess direct knowledge and experience regarding the policies and management of Sekarsari Bathing Area. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis with a deductive-inductive approach, where categories and themes are constructed based on William N. Dunn's policy evaluation theory consisting of six criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. This approach enables a systematic assessment of each policy aspect while allowing new findings relevant to the local context to emerge. The analysis process also involves data triangulation to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings by comparing results from interviews, observations, and policy documents. Through this method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive depiction of the successes and challenges in the implementation of regional tourism development policies at Sekarsari Bathing Area, as well as evidence-based recommendations for sustainable policy improvement.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of this study were obtained from data collection through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, field observations, and policy document reviews. The data were then analyzed using William N. Dunn's policy evaluation framework, which includes six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. To facilitate understanding, each evaluation aspect is presented in the following tables along with detailed explanations.

Table 1. Results of Effectiveness Evaluation of Tourism Development Policy at Sekarsari Bathing Area

Effectiveness Indicators	Findings
Achievement of visitation targets	Tourist visits increased by 15% over the last 2 years, yet have not reach the regional government's target of 30%
Improvement of tourist facilities	Basic facilities such as restrooms and parking are available, supporting facilities remain limited
Resource management	Utilization of natural water resources is well-maintained, but for environmental conservation programs are lacking

Table 1 shows that the tourism development policy at Sekarsari Bathing Area has achieved some key goals such as increased visitor numbers and improvements in basic facilities. However, the visitation target set by the regional government has not been fully met, and resource management efforts are not yet optimal due to the absence of formal environmental conservation programs.

Table 2. Results of Efficiency Evaluation on Resource Use in Sekarsari Tourism Development.

Efficiency Indicators	Findings
Budget utilization	85% of the total allocated budget has been used, with some absorption
Human resources	Limited number of professional human resources in tourism management
Program implementation timeline	Facility development projects progressed according to : though some administrative obstacles occurred

Table 2 indicates that budget use and implementation timelines are relatively efficient, despite budget absorption delays and a shortage of competent human resources. These factors limit the maximization of tourism development outcomes at the site.

Table 3. Results of Adequacy Evaluation of Policies Addressing Sekarsari Tourism Issues.

Adequacy Indicators	Findings
Availability of supporting programs	Training programs for local communities are limited and have reached all community groups
Environmental issue handling	Policies lack effective waste management and comprehens environmental education
Social issue handling	No formal mechanism exists for resolving conflicts betw managers and local communities

Table 3 indicates that existing policies are not fully adequate to address all issues, especially social and environmental aspects. This highlights the need for more holistic supporting programs.

Table 4. Results of Equity Evaluation in Tourism Development Policy Benefits Distribution.

Equity Indicators	Findings
Economic benefit distribution	Most benefits are enjoyed by large businesses and managers
Local community involvement	Local community participation remains limited, especially am marginalized groups
Accessibility of facilities	Accessibility to tourist facilities is adequate for the general public, thou some physical barriers remain

Table 4 reveals inequality in economic benefit distribution and community involvement, where larger stakeholders dominate economic gains while marginalized community members remain less involved.

Table 5. Results of Responsiveness and Appropriateness Evaluation of Sekarsari Tourism Policies.

Responsiveness & Appropriateness Indicators	Findings
Policy alignment with community needs	Policies are still less responsive to local community asj particularly in facility development and community eng:
Policy alignment with local issues	Policies are appropriate in focusing on nature-based development but insufficiently address broader so economic aspects

Table 5 suggests that although policies are conceptually appropriate for nature-based tourism development, responsiveness to local community needs and conditions needs improvement to ensure more inclusive and targeted policies.

Based on the evaluation results using William N. Dunn's six criteria, the tourism development policy at Sekarsari Bathing Area, Mojokerto City, shows significant progress in effectiveness and efficiency. However, shortcomings remain in the adequacy of supporting programs, equity in benefit distribution, and responsiveness to community needs. This indicates the need for more holistic and participatory policy improvements that not only focus on physical infrastructure and increasing visitor numbers but also strengthen community involvement and sustainable environmental management. The study recommends that local governments enhance training and empowerment programs for communities, improve economic benefit distribution mechanisms, and increase communication and participation of residents in tourism policy planning and implementation.

Based on the research findings, the tourism development policy in Sekarsari Bathing Area has shown progress in terms of effectiveness, particularly through increased visitor numbers and the provision of basic facilities. However, the achievement has not yet met the established government targets, suggesting a mismatch between policy objectives and on-the-ground implementation. This is in line with (Jann & Wegrich, 2017) view that policy effectiveness is measured by the extent to which objectives are realized. The increase in visits by only 15%, far from the 30% target, indicates that the policy lacks strategic components such as destination promotion and product innovation.

In terms of efficiency, while 85% of the allocated budget has been absorbed and implementation timelines were met, a shortage of professional human resources remains a challenge. Dunn emphasizes that efficiency evaluates the ratio of inputs to outputs. In this context, the limited capacity of personnel undermines productivity despite sufficient financial support. This mirrors findings by (Rhama, 2020), who observed that tourism development in Sleman Regency was hindered by inadequate expert personnel despite available funds.

Regarding adequacy, the research revealed that the policy has not fully addressed the broader needs of the community, particularly in terms of comprehensive training and inclusive engagement. According to Dunn, adequacy is assessed by how well a policy addresses the root causes of a problem. The absence of inclusive community empowerment programs indicates an elitist approach. Similar findings were reported by (Dangi & Petrick, 2021; Mak et al., 2017), who emphasized that community-based tourism thrives when policies are participatory and inclusive.

On the equity front, the uneven distribution of economic benefits is a key concern. Most of the gains are concentrated among large-scale businesses and site managers, while local residents derive limited advantage. This runs counter to Dunn's principle of equity, which underscores fair distribution of policy benefits. (Abidin et al., 2025; Tolkach & King, 2015), in their study of Puthuk Panggang Welut tourism, noted a similar issue, where benefit disparities led to local resistance and dissatisfaction with government tourism initiatives.

Responsiveness and appropriateness of the policies in Sekarsari are still lacking, as the initiatives do not fully reflect local aspirations. The limited inclusion of community voices in policy formulation has resulted in a lack of adaptability to socio-cultural conditions. Dunn argues that responsiveness measures how well a policy addresses public preferences. This study aligns with the findings of (Atmaja & Verawati, 2025; Cahyono et al., 2025), who stress that effective tourism policies must involve public consultation to better respond to the needs of the community.

While the current policy framework for Sekarsari is conceptually sound—utilizing the area's natural and cultural assets—it has not yet fulfilled the six policy evaluation criteria proposed by William N. Dunn in practice. Compared to previous research, such as by (Nusantara et al., 2021), who evaluated the effectiveness of heritage tourism policies in Surakarta and advocated for policy reform based on evaluation results, this study contributes to the literature by focusing on nature-based tourism and community engagement in a water tourism context.

The implications of this study suggest that successful tourism policy development depends not only on sound planning but also on the effective implementation of programs, resource efficiency, the adequacy of supporting measures, equitable benefit distribution,

and responsiveness to community input. Policymakers are therefore encouraged to integrate both structural and cultural perspectives when designing and implementing tourism policies. For future research, a longitudinal policy analysis combined with participatory and data-driven approaches—including quantitative and geospatial methods—is recommended to produce more targeted strategies and enhance the validity of evaluation results.

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