

Community Participation in the Development of the Piala Waterfall Tourist Attraction in Banggai Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction in Hanga-Hanga Village, South Luwuk Sub-district, Banggai Regency. The study focuses on the level of community participation, the factors influencing participation, and the role of the government in supporting the development of the tourist attraction. The study employs a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The research informants comprised the tourist attraction managers, the Head of Hanga-Hanga Village, local residents, and visitors selected using purposive sampling. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, documentation, and the distribution of questionnaires using a Likert scale. The data were analysed descriptively through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing of conclusions, supported by an analysis of the questionnaire results expressed as percentages. The research findings indicate that community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction falls into the 'high' category, as reflected in the community's involvement in maintaining environmental cleanliness, supporting management activities, and capitalising on the economic opportunities generated by tourism activities. Factors supporting community participation include attractive natural potential, government support, the existence of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), and the economic benefits gained by the community. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited supporting facilities, sub-optimal tourism promotion, and the still limited training available to the community. The government acts as a regulator, facilitator, motivator, coordinator, and promoter in supporting the development of tourist attractions. Synergy between the government, managers, and the community is a key factor in realising sustainable community-based tourism development.

Keywords: Community participation; Tourism development; Community-based tourism; Piala Waterfall

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INTRODUCTION

Nature-based tourism is increasingly recognised as an important component of regional development because it can generate economic opportunities while encouraging the conservation of local natural resources. However, the sustainability of tourism development cannot rely solely on the attractiveness of natural resources. The involvement of local communities is also essential because communities are directly connected to

tourism activities and experience their social, economic, and environmental impacts. Community participation can take various forms, including involvement in tourism management, environmental conservation, provision of tourism services, and the utilisation of economic opportunities generated by tourism activities (Tosun, 2000).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) places local communities as important actors in tourism development rather than merely as beneficiaries. In this approach, community involvement is expected to occur throughout the tourism development process, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (Suansri, 2003). Therefore, the level and form of community participation become important indicators for understanding whether tourism development has provided opportunities for local communities to contribute to and benefit from tourism activities.

Piala Waterfall, located in Hanga-Hanga Village, South Luwuk Sub-district, Banggai Regency, is one of the natural tourist attractions with potential for further development. The attraction is characterised by a waterfall surrounded by tropical vegetation and natural scenery that attracts local and non-local visitors. Its development provides opportunities for the surrounding community to participate in tourism activities and obtain economic benefits. Nevertheless, the development of Piala Waterfall still faces several challenges, particularly limited supporting facilities, sub-optimal tourism promotion, and limited training opportunities for the local community. These conditions indicate that the existence of natural tourism potential alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable tourism development.

Previous studies have demonstrated that community participation contributes significantly to tourism development. For example, studies on community-based tourism have highlighted the importance of community involvement in tourism planning, management, and utilisation of tourism benefits (Rahman et al., 2023; Sobra et al., 2023). However, studies specifically examining community participation in the development of Piala Waterfall remain limited. In addition, previous studies generally discuss community participation in tourism destinations in a broader context, whereas the present study specifically examines the forms of participation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the role of government in the development of a particular natural tourism attraction.

This study therefore seeks to analyse community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction in Hanga-Hanga Village, South Luwuk Sub-district, Banggai Regency. Specifically, the study examines the forms of community participation, the factors that support and hinder participation, and the role of government in supporting tourism development. The findings are expected to provide practical information for strengthening community-based tourism management and supporting the sustainable development of Piala Waterfall.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction in Hanga-Hanga Village, South Luwuk Sub-district, Banggai Regency. The study focused on three aspects: the

forms of community participation, the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting participation, and the role of government in supporting tourism development.

The informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in, knowledge of, and experience with the development and management of Piala Waterfall. A total of 17 informants participated in the study, consisting of one tourism attraction manager, one Head of Hanga-Hanga Village, five local residents living near the tourist attraction, and ten visitors. The tourism manager and village head served as key informants, while local residents provided primary information concerning community participation. Visitors were included as supporting informants to provide additional information regarding the condition and development of the tourist attraction.

Data collection was conducted on 22 April 2026 at the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction in Hanga-Hanga Village, South Luwuk Sub-district, Banggai Regency. The data were collected through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and questionnaire distribution. Interviews were conducted with selected informants who were considered to have relevant knowledge and experience regarding the development and management of the tourist attraction. The interviews focused on community participation, supporting and inhibiting factors, tourism management, and the role of government in the development of Piala Waterfall.

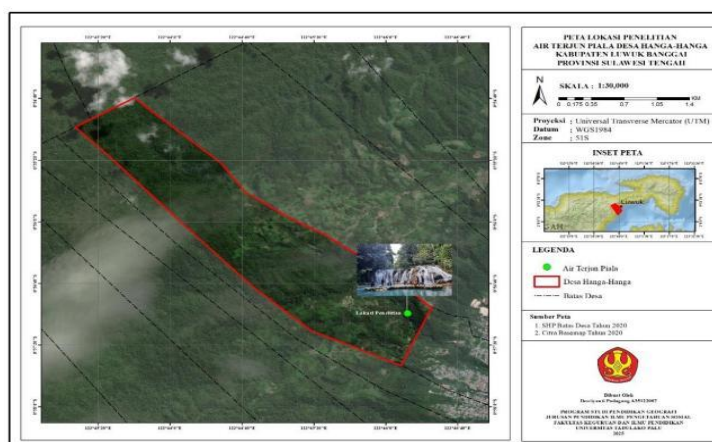


Figure 1. Map of the Research Location

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and questionnaires. Interviews and observations were used as the primary sources of qualitative information concerning community participation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the government's role. The questionnaire was used as supporting data to describe the level of community participation and perceptions related to the development of the tourist attraction. The questionnaire was administered to five local residents and ten visitors using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The use of the questionnaire was intended to complement the qualitative findings rather than change the overall qualitative character of the study.

Table 1. Rating Scale

Category	Score
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

The percentage of questionnaire responses was calculated by comparing the obtained score with the maximum possible score using the following formula: Percentage = (Obtained Score / Maximum Score) × 100%

The resulting percentages were interpreted using five categories: very high (81–100%), high (61–80%), medium (41–60%), low (21–40%), and very low (0–20%). These categories were used to provide a descriptive interpretation of the supporting questionnaire data.

Table 2. Interpretation

Category	Score
Very high	81–100%
High	61–80%
Medium	41–60%
Low	21–40%
Very low	0–20%

Qualitative data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation were analysed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was strengthened through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the tourism manager, village government, local residents, and visitors. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing findings obtained through interviews, observations, documentation, and questionnaires. This process was used to identify similarities and differences among the sources and methods and to strengthen the credibility of the research findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

Level of community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction

Table 3. Characteristics of the Research Informants

No	Informants	Number (of people)	Notes
1	Managers of the Piala Waterfall Tourist Attraction	1	Key informant
2	Head of Hanga-Hanga Village	1	Key informant
3	Local community living near the tourist attraction	5	Primary informant
4	Visitors to the tourist attraction	10	Supporting informant
Total		17	

Source: Primary research data, 2026

The local residents were the primary source for assessing community participation because they live in the area surrounding the tourist attraction and are directly involved in tourism-related activities. Therefore, the questionnaire responses from the five local residents were used as the main supporting quantitative description of community participation. Meanwhile, the ten visitors were included as supporting informants to provide additional information regarding their perceptions of the condition and development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction. The visitor responses were not used as a direct measure of community participation.

The research findings indicate that the local community has demonstrated a fairly high level of participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction. Community involvement is evident through collective work initiatives, maintaining the cleanliness of the tourist area, providing feedback to the management, and supporting various tourism development programmes carried out by the government and the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). This situation indicates that the community has recognised the importance of the tourist attraction as a key source of improved economic well-being for the surrounding community. This high level of community involvement reflects a sense of belonging towards the tourist destination, thereby motivating the community to ensure the sustainability of the existing attraction (Wardani et al., 2023).

Table 4. Forms of Community Participation in the Development of the Piala Waterfall Tourist Attraction

Description	Results
Number of Respondents	5 people
Number of Statements	8 items
Average Score	4.03
Percentage	80.50%
Category	High

Source: Results of interviews with local residents and managers, 2026

Based on Table 4, the questionnaire administered to five local residents consisted of eight statements related to community participation and produced an average score of 4.03, corresponding to 80.50%, which falls within the high category. This finding indicates that local residents have actively participated in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction. Their participation is reflected in maintaining the cleanliness of the tourist area, supporting tourism management activities, providing input regarding tourism development, and participating in activities that contribute to the sustainability of the attraction.

The relatively high level of community participation indicates that local residents have developed an awareness of the social and economic importance of Piala Waterfall. Their involvement is not limited to practical tourism activities but also reflects a sense of responsibility for maintaining the attractiveness and sustainability of the destination. This finding is consistent with Tosun (2000), who emphasised that local communities are important actors in sustainable tourism development because they are directly affected by tourism activities. It also supports the Community-Based Tourism concept proposed by Suansri (2003), which positions local communities as important actors rather than merely beneficiaries of tourism development.



Figure 1. Interviews with local residents

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Community Participation

Table 5. Visitors' Perceptions of the Development of Piala Waterfall

Description	Results
Number of Respondents	10 people
Number of Statements	11 items
Average Score	3.98
Percentage	79.64%
Category	High

Source: Results of Interviews and Observations, 2026

The questionnaire completed by ten visitors produced an average score of 3.98 or 79.64%, which falls within the high category. This result represents supporting information concerning visitors' perceptions of the condition and development of Piala Waterfall and should not be interpreted as a direct measurement of community participation. The positive visitor assessment indicates that the tourist attraction has development potential and that tourism activities may provide economic opportunities for the surrounding community. The existence of this tourist attraction provides business opportunities for the local community, thereby encouraging them to become involved in tourism management and development activities. The economic benefits experienced by the community are one of the main factors increasing their motivation to participate in tourism development (Ginting et al., 2023).

Several factors support community participation in the development of Piala Waterfall. These include the attractiveness of the natural tourism potential, government support, the existence of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), and the economic benefits generated by tourism activities. The natural potential of Piala Waterfall provides a strong basis for community involvement because tourism activities create opportunities for local economic activities. These economic benefits can encourage residents to maintain the tourist attraction and participate more actively in tourism development. Despite these supporting factors, several obstacles continue to limit community participation. The main inhibiting factors identified in this study are limited supporting facilities, sub-optimal tourism promotion, and limited training and guidance for the local community. These limitations may reduce the capacity of residents to develop tourism-related skills and participate more independently in tourism management. In particular, limited training may explain why community participation is more visible in practical activities than in planning, evaluation, and decision-making.

The findings indicate that community participation is stronger during the implementation of tourism activities than during planning and decision-making. Local residents are more frequently involved in practical activities, such as maintaining cleanliness, supporting tourism management, and assisting tourism activities, while their involvement in determining tourism programmes and evaluating development policies remains more limited. This condition may be related to limited access to formal planning processes and the limited capacity of community members to participate in tourism

decision-making. This finding is consistent with Timothy (1999), who explained that local communities may participate more actively during the implementation stage than during planning because access to decision-making processes is often limited. Tosun (2000) similarly identified structural, operational, and cultural barriers that can restrict meaningful community participation in tourism development.

The government's role in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction

The research findings indicate that the government plays a significant role in supporting the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction. The forms of support provided include the provision of tourism support facilities, the establishment of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), and tourism promotion efforts to increase visitor numbers. Furthermore, the government also acts as a facilitator, bridging cooperation between the local community and tourism managers in efforts to develop existing tourism potential. Research (Sobra et al., 2023) found that participatory communication by the Pokdarwis in the development of the Batu Dinding Waterfall tourist attraction took place through three main stages: planning, implementation, and utilization of results. During the planning stage, the community is involved in providing advice, carrying out monitoring, and expressing their views regarding tourism management. During the implementation stage, the community participates directly in the various tourism development programmed being carried out. Meanwhile, during the utilization of results stage, the community helps to utilise and support the outcomes of tourism development through the contribution of labour and involvement in tourism activities.

Table 6. The Government's Role in the Development of the Piala Waterfall Tourist Attraction

Informant	Number of questions	Average score	Percentage	Category
Tourism manager	17	4,29	85,88%	Very high
Head of the village	7	4,29	85,71%	Very high

Source: Results of interviews with the village head and tourism managers, 2026

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that government support for the development of Piala Waterfall is very high. The tourism manager provided an assessment of 85.88%, while the Head of Hanga-Hanga Village provided an assessment of 85.71%. These findings indicate that government support is perceived positively by the key informants involved in tourism management.

However, government support should not be limited to infrastructure provision and promotional activities. Greater attention should also be given to strengthening community capacity and creating opportunities for local residents to participate in planning, decision-making, and evaluation. Continuous training is important to enable community members to develop tourism-related skills and contribute more meaningfully to destination management.

Therefore, the government's role should be directed toward strengthening collaboration among government institutions, tourism managers, Pokdarwis, and local communities. This approach is consistent with Rahman et al. (2023), who found that community involvement in tourism planning, management, and evaluation contributes to sustainable tourism development. It is also consistent with Timothy (1999), who emphasised the importance of collaboration between government and local communities in tourism planning and management.



Figure 2. Interview with a tourism manager



Figure 3. Interview with representatives of the Hangah-hangah sub-district office

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction is categorised as high, with an average score of 4.03 or 80.50% based on the responses of five local residents. The participation of local residents is reflected in activities such as maintaining the cleanliness of the tourist area, supporting tourism management activities, providing input, and taking advantage of economic opportunities generated by tourism activities. These findings indicate that the community has an awareness of the importance of Piala Waterfall as a tourism resource that can provide social and economic benefits for the surrounding community.

However, the findings also indicate that community participation is not equally strong at every stage of tourism development. Local residents are more actively involved in the implementation of tourism activities than in planning, decision-making, and evaluation. Their involvement is more visible in practical activities, such as maintaining cleanliness and supporting tourism management, while their involvement in determining tourism programmes and evaluating development activities remains more limited. This condition suggests that community participation has developed at the implementation level but still needs to be strengthened at the planning and decision-making levels.

This finding is consistent with Tosun (2000), who explained that community participation in tourism development may be constrained by structural, operational, and cultural barriers. Limited access to decision-making processes can result in communities becoming more involved in implementing programmes that have already been planned than in determining the plans themselves. In the context of Pila Waterfall, strengthening community participation in planning and evaluation is therefore important to ensure that local residents are not only involved as supporters of tourism activities but also have opportunities to influence decisions concerning the development of the tourist attraction.

The findings further show that several factors support community participation, including the natural potential of Pila Waterfall, government support, the existence of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), and the economic benefits obtained from tourism activities. The natural attractiveness of Pila Waterfall provides a strong basis for tourism development, while economic benefits create an incentive for local residents to maintain and support the tourist attraction. Government support and the existence of Pokdarwis also provide an institutional mechanism for encouraging community involvement in tourism activities. These findings support Ginting et al. (2023), who highlighted the importance of community participation and the economic benefits generated through sustainable tourism development.

Despite these supporting factors, community participation is still influenced by several inhibiting factors, particularly limited supporting facilities, sub-optimal tourism promotion, and limited training and guidance for local residents. These limitations may affect the ability of the community to participate more independently in tourism management. Limited training, in particular, may contribute to the stronger involvement of residents in practical activities compared with planning, promotion, management, and evaluation. Therefore, community capacity-building through continuous training is necessary to improve the quality and scope of community participation.

The role of government is also an important factor in the development of Pila Waterfall. The questionnaire results show that the tourism manager gave an assessment of 85.88%, while the Head of Hanga-Hanga Village gave an assessment of 85.71%, with both results categorised as very high. These findings indicate that government support is perceived positively by the key informants involved in the management and development of the tourist attraction. Government support is reflected through the provision of supporting facilities, the establishment and strengthening of Pokdarwis, and tourism promotion activities.

However, government support should not be limited to infrastructure development and promotional activities. The government also needs to create greater opportunities for local residents to participate in tourism planning, decision-making, and evaluation. This is important because sustainable community-based tourism requires collaboration among government institutions, tourism managers, Pokdarwis, and local communities. Rahman et al. (2023) found that community involvement in tourism planning, management, and evaluation contributes to sustainable tourism development. Similarly, Sobra et al. (2023) demonstrated that participatory communication through Pokdarwis can encourage community involvement in tourism planning, implementation, and the utilisation of tourism benefits.

The questionnaire completed by ten visitors produced an average score of 3.98 or 79.64%, which falls within the high category. This result provides supporting information concerning visitors' perceptions of the condition and development of Piala Waterfall. The result should not be interpreted as a direct measurement of community participation because the respondents were visitors rather than local residents. Nevertheless, the positive visitor assessment indicates that Piala Waterfall has development potential and that improvements in tourism facilities, promotion, and services may strengthen the economic opportunities available to the surrounding community.

Overall, this study demonstrates that community participation is an important component of the development of Piala Waterfall as a community-based tourism destination. The relatively high level of participation demonstrates that local residents are already involved in maintaining and supporting tourism activities. However, participation needs to be strengthened beyond the implementation stage by providing greater opportunities for residents to participate in planning, decision-making, evaluation, tourism promotion, and capacity-building programmes. Strengthening these aspects can help create a more inclusive form of community-based tourism and support the sustainable development of Piala Waterfall while increasing the social and economic benefits received by the surrounding community.

CONCLUSION

Community participation in the development of the Piala Waterfall tourist attraction is categorised as high, with the questionnaire administered to five local residents producing an average score of 4.03 or 80.50%. Community participation is mainly reflected in maintaining environmental cleanliness, supporting tourism management activities, providing input, and taking advantage of economic opportunities generated by tourism.

Community participation is supported by the natural potential of Piala Waterfall, government support, the existence of Pokdarwis, and the economic benefits generated by tourism. However, participation remains constrained by limited supporting facilities, sub-optimal tourism promotion, and limited training and guidance. The findings also indicate that community participation is stronger during the implementation of tourism activities than during planning and decision-making.

The government plays an important role as a regulator, facilitator, motivator, coordinator, and promoter. To strengthen sustainable community-based tourism, future development should focus on increasing community capacity through training, improving tourism facilities, strengthening promotion, and providing greater opportunities for local residents to participate in planning and evaluation.

This study has a limitation in the relatively small number of local community respondents, with only five residents included as the primary respondents for assessing community participation. In addition, the study focuses specifically on Piala Waterfall and therefore its findings should not be generalised to all communities or tourism destinations in Banggai Regency. Future studies may involve a larger number of local residents and examine community participation across different tourism development stages in order to provide a broader understanding of community-based tourism development.

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