

Institutional Synergy in Village-Based Tourism Diversification: Governance Challenges in West Manggarai, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Tourism development in West Manggarai Regency remains highly dependent on Komodo National Park as the region's flagship destination, creating economic vulnerability and limiting the development of alternative tourism areas. This study examines the contribution of institutional synergy in advancing the diversification of village-based tourism in West Manggarai, Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative case study approach focusing on Komodo National Park, Labuan Bajo, and Liang Dara Village. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 19 informants, focus group discussions, field observations, and analysis of national and local policy documents. The findings indicate that tourism diversification remains limited due to fragmented institutional authority, weak cross-actor coordination, uneven tourism human resource capacity, limited accessibility, and insufficient integration of promotion strategies for non-Komodo destinations. Despite these challenges, Liang Dara Village demonstrates potential for developing nature-based, cultural, and handicraft tourism as part of integrated tourism packages. The study concludes that tourism diversification requires stronger institutional synergy among local government, the Labuan Bajo Flores Authority Agency (BPOLBF), village governments, tourism awareness groups, communities, and tourism businesses through institutionalized coordination, capacity strengthening, and integrated promotion strategies. This study contributes to tourism governance literature by highlighting the importance of institutional synergy in supporting tourism diversification in conservation-based destinations. Practically, the study recommends the establishment of formal coordination platforms among local government, BPOLBF, village governments, Pokdarwis, communities, and tourism businesses, alongside village capacity-building programs and integrated regional promotion strategies for non-Komodo destinations.

A. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has increasingly been positioned as a strategic instrument of regional development in Indonesia, particularly in peripheral regions with limited economic diversification. In West Manggarai Regency, tourism has been designated as a leading sector for regional economic growth, with Labuan Bajo and Komodo National Park (Taman Nasional Komodo/TNK) functioning as the main tourism hub. Regional policy documents promote sustainable and inclusive tourism through the development of attractions, promotion, community empowerment, and institutional strengthening (Dinas Pariwisata, Ekonomi Kreatif, dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Manggarai Barat, 2021). However, this development pattern has created structural dependence on TNK, concentrating tourism activities geographically and limiting the development of alternative destinations and the wider distribution of tourism benefits.

This concentration is reflected in recent tourism performance. The 2024 regional performance report shows that the average tourist length of stay reached only 4.6 days, still below the RPJMD target of 6.9 days, despite tourist visits reaching 933,062 visitors. The report also identifies persistent structural constraints, including limited tourism human resource capacity, weak destination planning, inadequate accessibility and amenities, suboptimal promotion, and budget constraints (Dinas Pariwisata, Ekonomi Kreatif, dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Manggarai Barat, 2024). These conditions indicate that tourism development in West Manggarai remains highly dependent on Komodo National Park and has not yet been supported by a diversified tourism system. In response to this challenge, national and regional institutions have introduced several initiatives to strengthen tourism governance and promote village-based tourism development. The Labuan Bajo Flores Authority Agency (BPOLBF) has implemented programs to support tourism promotion and community participation, including event proposal training and the *Senandung Dewi* program involving tourism villages in West Manggarai as part of destination diversification efforts (Badan Pelaksana Otorita Labuan Bajo Flores, 2024). Despite these initiatives, tourism diversification outside TNK remains limited due to fragmented authority, uneven village readiness, and weak coordination among tourism stakeholders.

From a public administration perspective, this problem can be understood through the lens of governance networks and collaborative governance. Governance network theory explains that contemporary public policy problems increasingly involve multiple actors who are interdependent in resources, authority, and information, making coordination and collaboration essential for achieving policy outcomes (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2020). Similarly, collaborative governance emphasizes structured interaction among stakeholders to address complex policy problems through collective decision-making, shared responsibility, and resource integration (Ansell & Torfing, 2021). These approaches are particularly relevant in tourism governance, where development depends on coordination among government institutions, communities, and private actors.

Within this perspective, institutional synergy refers to the alignment and integration of authority, resources, information, and actions among multiple institutions to achieve shared policy objectives. Institutional synergy emerges when collaboration among actors generates outcomes that exceed those achievable through isolated institutional efforts (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2020). In tourism governance, institutional synergy is essential to support coordinated destination development, integrated promotion strategies, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Recent tourism governance studies highlight that effective destination management requires strong institutional coordination and collaboration among stakeholders to prevent structural dependence on limited tourism resources (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). These theoretical perspectives are supported by several

studies published in *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi*. Anwar, Trilestari, and Agustina (2022) demonstrate that tourism development policies are shaped by relational interactions among government, community, and private actors. Afandi and Aulia (2022) highlights the importance of collaborative governance in strengthening village economic institutions, while Anggraeni et al. (2023) show that inter-organizational collaboration plays an important role in strengthening regional innovation capacity. Similarly, Taufiq, Afandi, and Sohaimi (2025) argue that addressing complex public problems such as stunting requires structured collaborative planning involving cross-sector stakeholders within the SDGs framework.

In the context of tourism villages, studies also indicate that tourism development depends on the integration of local assets and institutional support. Apriani, Saefullah, and Cupian (2023) find that tourism village development is influenced by natural, social, human, and infrastructure assets that require coordinated governance support. Meanwhile, Mathory, Murtafia, and Narwis (2023) highlight the role of partnerships and innovation ecosystems in sustaining local initiatives. A similar finding is reported by Darmanto et al., (2024), who show that public participation, tourism marketing, regulatory clarity, and stakeholder collaboration significantly influence tourism village development. These theoretical and empirical insights are particularly relevant to the case of West Manggarai. Regional policy documents emphasize the need to develop new tourism destinations, strengthen community capacity, integrate local tourism institutions such as Pokdarwis and BUMDes, and expand tourism cooperation networks. However, tourism diversification beyond Komodo National Park (TNK) remains constrained by institutional fragmentation, uneven capacity among tourism villages, and limited coordination among stakeholders. Therefore, the key challenge lies not only in identifying tourism potential but also in strengthening institutional synergy among relevant actors. Accordingly, this study positions institutional synergy as an analytical bridge between governance network theory, collaborative governance, and the empirical need for tourism diversification in conservation-based destinations.

Despite the growing literature on tourism development and tourism village initiatives, most studies focus primarily on destination attractiveness, community participation, or the economic impacts of tourism, while the institutional dimension that enables tourism diversification in practice remains relatively underexplored. This issue is particularly important in conservation-based tourism areas such as West Manggarai, where tourism governance involves overlapping authorities among national agencies, local governments, and community institutions. This study addresses this gap by examining tourism diversification from a governance perspective rather than merely as a destination development strategy. Specifically, it analyzes how institutional synergy – shaped by coordination among district government, BPOLBF, village institutions, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), and community actors – supports the development of tourism villages as alternative destinations. Empirical evidence from West Manggarai contributes to the literature on public administration and tourism governance by demonstrating that successful tourism diversification depends not only on local tourism potential but also on effective institutional coordination, collaborative governance mechanisms, and local governance capacity. To understand the governance dynamics behind tourism diversification in West Manggarai, this study adopts a conceptual perspective that links tourism dependence, governance challenges, and institutional synergy among tourism stakeholders. The following discussion outlines the theoretical foundations that explain how institutional coordination can support the development of village-based tourism diversification.

Building on governance network theory and collaborative governance, this study positions institutional synergy as a coordinating mechanism through which interdependent tourism actors can align authority, resources, and actions to support village-based tourism diversification (Klijn &

Koppenjan, 2020; Ansell & Torfing, 2021). This conceptual positioning provides the basis for the framework presented in Figure 1.

This study aims to analyze how institutional synergy among tourism stakeholders contributes to village-based tourism diversification in West Manggarai. The study focuses on the interactions among government institutions, tourism authorities, village governments, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), and local communities in addressing tourism dependence on Komodo National Park and promoting the development of alternative tourism destinations. Based on the theoretical perspectives of governance networks and collaborative governance, this study develops a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between tourism dependence, governance fragmentation, institutional synergy, and tourism diversification. The conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of Institutional Synergy in Village-Based Tourism Diversification in West Manggarai*

Source: Author's elaboration based on governance network theory and collaborative governance perspective (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2020; Ansell & Torfing, 2021).

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between tourism dependence, governance fragmentation, and institutional synergy in shaping village-based tourism diversification in West Manggarai. The dominance of Komodo National Park creates structural

dependence within the regional tourism system, which may limit the development of alternative destinations. This condition often leads to governance fragmentation due to overlapping authority and limited coordination among tourism stakeholders. Institutional synergy among government agencies, BPOLBF, village governments, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), and local communities is therefore expected to strengthen coordination and support the development of tourism villages as complementary destinations beyond Komodo National Park.

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze institutional synergy in village-based tourism diversification in West Manggarai Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was chosen to explore governance dynamics, institutional relationships, and collaborative interactions among tourism stakeholders involved in tourism development. West Manggarai was selected as the research site because the region represents a tourism system that is strongly dependent on Komodo National Park while simultaneously promoting tourism diversification through tourism villages. This context provides an empirical setting to examine how institutional coordination and collaboration influence the development of alternative tourism destinations.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in tourism governance, including officials from the West Manggarai Tourism Office, representatives from the Labuan Bajo Flores Authority Agency (BPOLBF), village government officials, tourism awareness groups (*Pokdarwis*), tourism actors, and community leaders. The informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in tourism development and governance processes. A total of 19 informants participated in this study. Data collection was conducted between June and September 2025.

The 19 informants were individual actors occupying relevant professional or community roles in tourism governance. They were selected to capture diverse perspectives on tourism policy, destination coordination, village administration, community-based tourism, cultural development, tourism services, coastal livelihoods, and conservation. To protect confidentiality, Table 1 presents the informants by individual role and institutional or stakeholder affiliation rather than by personal name.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

No.	Informant category (individual role)	Institutional/stakeholder affiliation
1	Tourism policy and program officials	West Manggarai Tourism Office / local government
2	Destination development and coordination officials	Labuan Bajo Flores Authority Agency (BPOLBF) / tourism authority
3	Village heads and village government officials	Village governments, including Liang Dara Village / village administration
4	Pokdarwis chairpersons and members	Pokdarwis / community tourism groups
5	Cultural studio leaders and members	Cultural studios / cultural community
6	Tourism entrepreneurs, tour operators, guides, and workers	Tourism businesses / private sector
7	Coastal community leaders and members	Coastal communities / local community

No.	Informant category (individual role)	Institutional/stakeholder affiliation
8	Conservation observers and practitioners	Conservation community / civil society

Note: The study involved 19 individual informants. Personal names are omitted; informants are identified by code and role in the findings.

Source: Author's compilation (2026)

Although not all informant categories are presented through direct quotations, perspectives from coastal community leaders and conservation observers were used to triangulate findings on tourism dependence, environmental sensitivity, community livelihoods, and the need for more balanced tourism diversification.

Field observations were carried out in several tourism locations in West Manggarai, particularly in Labuan Bajo and Liang Dara Village, to understand tourism activities, community participation, and tourism infrastructure conditions. In addition, document analysis was conducted on relevant tourism policy and planning documents, including the Tourism Strategic Plan (Renstra), the Government Performance Report (LKIP), and the BPOLBF Annual Report.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview transcripts, field notes, and documents were coded thematically to identify patterns of institutional interaction, governance dynamics, and collaboration mechanisms related to tourism diversification. To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study applied data triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and policy documents.

C. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Tourism Dependence and the Structure of Regional Tourism Development

The findings indicate that tourism development in West Manggarai remains structurally dependent on Komodo National Park and Labuan Bajo as the main tourism gateway, reflecting the spatial concentration of tourist flows around dominant nodes within a tourism network (Liu, Luo, & He, 2023). This pattern of tourism dependence reflects a structural configuration in which a single flagship attraction functions as the core of the regional tourism system. In many tourism destinations, iconic attractions often become the primary drivers of tourist flows, investment concentration, and tourism-related services. As a consequence, tourism infrastructure, accommodation facilities, transportation services, and tourism businesses tend to cluster around the main destination, while surrounding areas remain relatively peripheral in the tourism system. Such a spatial and institutional concentration may generate economic growth in the core destination but often limits the diversification of tourism activities in other parts of the region and creates unequal distribution of tourism benefits among local communities.

Empirically, this concentration is reflected in the dominant role of Labuan Bajo as the primary gateway for accommodation services, tour operations, tourism transportation, and tourism events for visitors to Komodo National Park. As a gateway destination, Labuan Bajo attracts most tourism infrastructure and services, which reinforces its position as the operational hub of the regional tourism system (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2021). However, this pattern also limits the integration of

surrounding villages into tourism routes and reduces opportunities for local communities outside the main tourism corridor to benefit from tourism development.

As a result, tourism flows and economic benefits are unevenly distributed across the region due to differences in governance structures, network connectivity, and inter-organizational collaboration among tourism stakeholders (Raisi et al., 2024) with many villages that possess tourism potential receiving limited direct benefits from tourism development (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2021). This uneven distribution occurs because tourism development tends to follow existing tourism networks and market accessibility, which often prioritize destinations that already possess strong infrastructure, international visibility, and established tourism services. As a result, areas located outside the main tourism network receive fewer tourist visits and limited tourism investment. In such conditions, local communities in peripheral villages may have tourism resources and cultural attractions but face difficulties in integrating their potential into the broader tourism system. Consequently, tourism development becomes spatially concentrated, reinforcing the dominance of established destinations while slowing the growth of alternative tourism areas within the region.

An official from the West Manggarai Tourism Office explained that tourism activities remain highly concentrated in Labuan Bajo and Komodo National Park, a pattern that frequently occurs in tourism-dependent regions where visitor flows are concentrated in a single flagship destination (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). According to the informant:

“Most tourists come only to visit Komodo National Park. After visiting the park, they usually return directly to Labuan Bajo. Many villages actually have tourism potential, but they are not yet included in the main tourism routes.” (Informant A, local government official)

This pattern reflects a common phenomenon in tourism development where tourism activities tend to concentrate in destinations that already possess stronger infrastructure and supporting facilities. Tourism clusters often emerge in areas where accommodation, transport accessibility, and tourism services are well developed, enabling these destinations to attract higher tourist flows and investment (Kulakov et al., 2024). Similarly, Baggio and Cooper (2010) explain that tourism destinations function as networks of interconnected stakeholders, where certain actors occupy more central positions in the network, influencing the distribution of information, resources, and collaborative activities within the destination. In such conditions, peripheral areas with tourism potential often struggle to attract investment and visitor attention.

Several studies also emphasize that tourism dependence on a single destination may create governance vulnerabilities. Gössling, Scott, and Hall (2021) argue that tourism systems with high dependence on a single attraction are more vulnerable to environmental risks, economic fluctuations, and policy changes. Destinations that rely heavily on a narrow tourism base or a single tourism product tend to be more exposed to external shocks such as economic crises, environmental change, and fluctuations in tourist demand. This structural concentration can increase the vulnerability of tourism systems and highlight the importance of diversification strategies that distribute tourism activities across multiple destinations (Arbulú et al., 2021).

In the Indonesian context, tourism dependence on flagship destinations has also been widely discussed in the literature. Research on tourism governance in Bali and Yogyakarta shows that tourism flows tend to concentrate in major destinations while surrounding areas remain underdeveloped (Mulyani, Ahsani, & Wijaya, 2021). Research on tourism development in Bali indicates that tourism activities are highly concentrated in established destinations, while rural tourism areas remain less competitive and underdeveloped (Wiranatha et al., 2024).

Governance Challenges in Tourism Village Development

The study also identifies several governance challenges that limit the development of tourism villages in West Manggarai. Governance challenges frequently emerge in the development of tourism villages because tourism management involves multiple actors operating at different institutional levels. Tourism villages require coordination between local governments, village administrations, community tourism groups, and private tourism actors, each of which possesses different resources, authority, and development priorities.

In many cases, weak institutional coordination, limited managerial capacity, and insufficient community participation become major constraints that hinder the effectiveness of tourism village development, particularly in post-pandemic recovery contexts (Nasution et al., 2023; Purnomo et al., 2020). Furthermore, governance fragmentation often occurs when tourism programs are implemented by different institutions without integrated planning mechanisms, leading to overlapping initiatives and limited policy coherence (Prasetyo, 2023). Studies on tourism governance also highlight that successful tourism village development depends on collaborative governance arrangements that enable community participation, institutional learning, and shared decision-making among stakeholders (Rochman et al., 2023; Wibowo & Nur, 2024). Without such coordination mechanisms, tourism villages may struggle to integrate their tourism potential into wider tourism networks and to achieve sustainable local economic benefits.

One of the main issues is the fragmentation of authority among institutions involved in tourism governance. Tourism development involves various actors, including district government agencies, BPOLBF as a national tourism authority, village governments, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), and tourism business actors. However, coordination among these actors often occurs on a project-based basis rather than through institutionalized governance mechanisms. A representative from the Labuan Bajo Flores Authority Agency (BPOLBF) acknowledged that coordination among institutions involved in tourism development is still evolving. As the informant explained:

“There are many actors involved in tourism development, including the district government, BPOLBF, village governments, and community organizations. Coordination does exist, but it is often program-based and not yet fully integrated in a long-term institutional framework.” (Informant B, BPOLBF representative).

However, tourism village development often faces challenges related to coordination and institutional capacity, particularly when local governance structures and stakeholder collaboration mechanisms remain weak (Nasution et al., 2023). Coordination among multiple actors – including government institutions, community organizations, and tourism businesses – is essential to support sustainable tourism development and ensure that tourism benefits are distributed effectively across local communities (Roxas, Rivera, & Gutierrez, 2020; Reina-Usuga et al., 2024).

Effective coordination enables tourism stakeholders to align policies, programs, and development initiatives across different institutions and governance levels. Through coordinated actions, stakeholders can integrate tourism planning, infrastructure development, community empowerment, and tourism promotion into a more coherent tourism development strategy. Such coordination is particularly important in tourism villages where local communities play a central role in managing tourism resources while government institutions provide regulatory frameworks and development support. Without adequate coordination, tourism development initiatives may become fragmented and less effective in supporting sustainable and inclusive tourism growth.

Institutional capacity at the village level also varies significantly. While some villages have begun to develop tourism initiatives based on local cultural and natural attractions, others still face

limitations in tourism management skills, infrastructure, and institutional organization. Similar challenges have been observed in other tourism destinations, where the development of rural tourism depends largely on the capacity of local institutions, effective governance arrangements, and collaboration among local stakeholders (Chen, Cai, & Chen, 2025; Saputro et al., 2023).

Variations in village capacity were also observed during fieldwork. A village government official in Liang Dara explained that the development of tourism villages still faces institutional and managerial challenges:

"We have tourism potential such as nature attractions and cultural activities, but managing tourism is not easy. Our community still needs training in tourism management, marketing, and hospitality services." (Informant C, village government official)

From the perspective of governance networks, complex policy issues often require coordination among multiple actors who possess different resources and authority (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2020). Without effective coordination mechanisms, governance fragmentation can reduce the effectiveness of tourism development policies. Ansell and Torfing (2021) argue that collaborative governance mechanisms are essential to overcome institutional fragmentation by promoting joint decision-making and resource sharing among stakeholders.

Studies on tourism governance also emphasize that collaboration among stakeholders plays a crucial role in sustainable tourism development (Rochman et al., 2023); Reina-Usuga et al., 2024). For example, research shows that community participation and stakeholder collaboration significantly influence tourism development outcomes (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Similarly, studies on tourism governance in Southeast Asia demonstrate that collaborative governance arrangements can improve policy coordination and enhance tourism destination resilience (Reina-Usuga et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, research on collaborative governance in tourism development also highlights the importance of coordination among government agencies, communities, and tourism actors. Studies conducted by Anhar, Mastika & Oktawirani (2026) demonstrate that collaborative governance mechanisms can enhance community participation and strengthen tourism management capacity in tourism villages. Tourism village development involves multiple stakeholders, including government institutions, village governments, tourism awareness groups, tourism businesses, and local communities, reflecting the collaborative nature of tourism governance in destination development ((Roxas, Rivera, & Gutierrez, 2020; Wondirad, Tolkach, & King, 2024).

The involvement of multiple stakeholders reflects the complex governance structure of tourism village development, where tourism initiatives must be coordinated across different institutional levels and community groups. Each actor plays a distinct role in supporting tourism activities, such as policy formulation by government agencies, local planning and management by village administrations, community participation through tourism awareness groups, and service provision by tourism businesses. Effective collaboration among these actors is essential to ensure that tourism development is aligned with local development goals, community interests, and sustainable tourism practices. Without adequate coordination and communication mechanisms, tourism village programs may face difficulties in implementation, particularly in integrating local tourism potential into broader tourism networks and regional tourism systems.

Institutional Synergy and Collaborative Governance

Institutional synergy in tourism governance is closely associated with collaborative governance arrangements that facilitate coordination among diverse tourism stakeholders. Tourism development increasingly requires cooperation among government institutions, tourism authorities, private tourism actors, and local communities in order to manage complex destination systems effectively. In such governance settings, collaboration enables stakeholders to combine their

institutional resources, knowledge, and capacities to achieve shared development goals (Wondirad, Tolkach, & King, 2024). These collaborative mechanisms allow tourism destinations to mobilize collective resources and develop integrated tourism strategies that support sustainable regional development (Roxas, Rivera, & Gutierrez, 2020).

Despite the governance challenges identified above, the findings indicate emerging forms of institutional synergy among tourism stakeholders in West Manggarai. Field observations and interviews also highlight the tourism potential of Liang Dara Village as an emerging alternative destination. The tourism potential of Liang Dara Village was also highlighted by community members involved in tourism activities. A local community leader stated:

“Liang Dara has many attractions, including traditional weaving, cultural performances, and natural scenery. If these assets are developed together with proper promotion, the village can become a complementary destination for visitors coming to Labuan Bajo.” (Informant F, community leader). In addition to village and tourism actors, coastal community leaders and conservation observers emphasized that tourism diversification should not only expand tourist flows but also protect coastal livelihoods and environmental sustainability. Their perspectives indicate that village-based tourism must be developed carefully so that new tourism routes do not reproduce the same concentration and environmental pressure found in core destinations.

Collaboration between government institutions, tourism authorities, village governments, and community groups has gradually developed through tourism village programs, tourism promotion initiatives, and community training activities. A member of a tourism awareness group (*Pokdarwis*) emphasized the importance of cooperation among institutions:

“Tourism villages cannot grow if we work alone. We need support from the government, BPOLBF, and tourism businesses, especially for promotion and training programs.” (Informant D, *Pokdarwis* member)

Tourism awareness groups (*Pokdarwis*) play an important role in organizing tourism activities, managing tourism attractions, and promoting local cultural heritage. These community-based initiatives demonstrate how local actors can contribute to tourism diversification when supported by institutional collaboration.

From a theoretical perspective, these collaborative initiatives reflect the concept of institutional synergy, which refers to collective actions among institutions that produce outcomes greater than individual institutional efforts. Ansell and Torfing (2021) argue that collaborative governance enables public institutions and communities to address complex policy problems through shared decision-making and resource integration. Tourism governance research also emphasizes that tourism village development requires multi-stakeholder participation and coordination among government institutions, local communities, and tourism actors to support sustainable tourism development (Nasution et al., 2023). Within such governance networks, institutional synergy enables stakeholders to combine resources, knowledge, and policy instruments to develop integrated tourism strategies.

Several studies emphasize that tourism development increasingly depends on effective collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and private actors. Collaborative governance frameworks can improve tourism planning processes, strengthen coordination among actors, and enhance community participation in destination management (Sarhan et al., 2025; Sudirman, 2022). Similarly, studies conducted in Indonesia indicate that collaborative governance approaches can enhance tourism development by strengthening partnerships between government institutions, local communities, and other stakeholders (Maturbongs & Lekatompessy, 2025; Pane, 2025).

Tourism Diversification and Sustainable Regional Development

Institutional synergy among tourism stakeholders has contributed to the gradual development of tourism villages as alternative destinations in West Manggarai. Tourism diversification is widely considered an important strategy for supporting sustainable regional development, particularly in destinations that rely heavily on a single tourism attraction or product. Diversification allows tourism destinations to expand tourism activities, develop alternative tourism products, and distribute tourism flows more evenly across regions. By reducing dependence on a single tourism attraction, diversification can strengthen the economic performance of tourism destinations and support more resilient and sustainable tourism development (Solarin, Ulucak, & Erdoğan, 2024).

In addition, diversified tourism systems enable regions to integrate cultural, natural, and community-based tourism resources into broader tourism networks, thereby creating more inclusive economic opportunities for local communities (Winchenbach, Hanna, & Miller, 2022). Several studies highlight that tourism development can contribute to economic resilience by strengthening the role of tourism in regional and national economies (Sekreter et al., 2025; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2025). When integrated with sustainable tourism policies and governance mechanisms, tourism development strategies can contribute to broader sustainability objectives, including more inclusive economic benefits and balanced regional development (Lavaredas et al., 2025).

Tourism villages offer tourism experiences that differ from the wildlife-based attractions of Komodo National Park, including cultural tourism, traditional village experiences, and nature-based tourism activities. Local tourism actors also highlighted the importance of developing alternative destinations beyond Komodo National Park. As explained by a local tour operator:

“Many tourists are interested in experiencing local culture and village life. If tourism villages are properly developed and promoted, they can become attractive destinations besides Komodo.” (Informant E, tourism entrepreneur).

Village-based tourism development is increasingly recognized as an important strategy for sustainable tourism. Community-based tourism enables local communities to participate actively in tourism activities while preserving cultural and environmental resources (Goodwin, 2020). In addition, tourism diversification can help distribute tourism benefits more evenly across rural areas.

Research on sustainable tourism governance also emphasizes the importance of diversification strategies in strengthening destination resilience. Gössling, Scott, and Hall (2021) argue that tourism diversification reduces the vulnerability of tourism destinations that rely heavily on a single attraction. Similarly, Gu and Ryan (2022) highlight that diversified tourism systems can enhance the resilience of tourism destinations by expanding tourism products and reducing dependence on a single tourism resource.

Therefore, strengthening institutional synergy among tourism stakeholders becomes a key factor in supporting sustainable tourism development in West Manggarai. By improving coordination among government institutions, tourism authorities, village organizations, and local communities, tourism governance can facilitate the development of tourism villages as complementary destinations that support a more balanced and resilient regional tourism system.

D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This study examines institutional synergy in supporting village-based tourism diversification in West Manggarai Regency, a region that remains highly dependent on Komodo National Park as

its dominant attraction. The findings show that tourism development is structurally concentrated in Labuan Bajo and Komodo National Park, resulting in an uneven distribution of tourism benefits and limited integration of villages with tourism potential into the regional tourism system. Tourism village development also faces governance challenges, particularly institutional fragmentation, uneven local capacity, and limited coordination among stakeholders. Tourism governance involves multiple actors, including local government agencies, the Labuan Bajo Flores Authority Agency (BPOLBF), village governments, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), tourism businesses, and local communities, yet coordination among these actors is not always institutionalized.

Despite these challenges, the findings indicate that emerging institutional synergy among tourism stakeholders has begun to support tourism diversification. Collaborative interactions among government institutions, tourism authorities, village organizations, and community groups facilitate the development of tourism villages as complementary destinations beyond Komodo National Park. Overall, the study concludes that strengthening institutional synergy is essential for supporting tourism diversification and sustainable regional tourism development, as it enables better coordination, integration of resources, and a more balanced distribution of tourism benefits. This study contributes to tourism governance literature by emphasizing the role of institutional synergy in enabling tourism diversification in emerging destinations.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the research focuses on West Manggarai Regency as a single case study; therefore, the findings may not be directly generalized to other tourism destinations with different institutional, geographical, and socio-economic contexts. Second, the study relies primarily on qualitative data obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis, which may involve interpretive bias from both informants and researchers. Third, the study does not include quantitative comparative data on tourist flows, income distribution, or village-level economic impacts. Future research may address these limitations by conducting comparative studies across different tourism regions and integrating quantitative data to strengthen the analysis of tourism diversification outcomes.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several actor-specific recommendations can be proposed to strengthen tourism governance and support sustainable tourism diversification in West Manggarai.

First, BPOLBF and the West Manggarai Tourism Office should establish a formal cross-village tourism coordination forum involving village governments, Pokdarwis, tourism businesses, community leaders, and relevant civil society actors. This forum should function as a regular mechanism for aligning tourism planning, village destination development, event calendars, promotion strategies, and infrastructure priorities across Labuan Bajo and surrounding tourism villages.

Second, the West Manggarai Tourism Office, BPOLBF, and village governments should jointly implement capacity-building programs for tourism villages. These programs should focus on tourism management, hospitality services, destination marketing, digital promotion, packaging of local attractions, and the strengthening of Pokdarwis as community-based tourism institutions.

Third, village governments, Pokdarwis, tourism businesses, and local communities should develop integrated village-based tourism packages that connect cultural attractions, traditional weaving, coastal livelihoods, local food, and nature-based tourism with existing Labuan Bajo-

Komodo travel routes. This strategy can help distribute tourist flows more evenly and increase the participation of rural communities in the regional tourism economy.

Fourth, BPOLBF, the West Manggarai Tourism Office, and tourism businesses should integrate non-Komodo destinations into official regional promotion channels, digital platforms, travel packages, and tourism events. This actor-based promotion strategy is necessary to reduce dependence on Komodo National Park and strengthen village-based tourism as a complementary destination within the broader regional tourism system.

Finally, future research should examine multi-level governance and stakeholder networks in tourism diversification across different regions. Comparative studies involving other conservation-based destinations may provide deeper insights into how institutional collaboration can support sustainable tourism governance

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