



Sustainable Tourism: Assessing Sustainable Tourism Practice at Impos Beach, North Lombok

Muhamad Faizan*, Febrian Rizki

Mataram University, Mataram, Indonesia

Mataram University, Mataram, Indonesia

*Correspondence: faizan@gmail.com

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Abstract

In the broader framework of sustainable development, the tourism sector holds significant potential not only to stimulate and strengthen economic growth, but also to contribute actively to the preservation of the natural environment, while at the same time playing an important role in enhancing the overall welfare, quality of life, and prosperity of local communities. However, if not managed properly, tourism can be a source of environmental damage, social degradation, and economic inequality. One form of tourism development that is now intensively encouraged by various parties is the concept of sustainable tourism. The study aims to investigate the extent to which sustainable tourism principles are implemented by management and local communities at Impos Beach in North Lombok. This research used a qualitative descriptive approach. The data collection technique of this research used observation and literature study. The research team went directly to the field to observe the condition of the implementation of sustainable tourism on Impos Beach, North Lombok. The study found that the implementation of sustainable tourism in Impos Beach is still informal and has not been systematically designed. Community involvement is the key to the successful development of Impos Beach as a sustainable tourism destination. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights and practical recommendations that can significantly contribute to the enhancement of sustainable tourism management, ensuring that the destination remains both ecologically viable and socially inclusive for future generations.

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the leading sectors that contributes significantly to the national and regional economies (Setijawan, 2018). In the context of sustainable development, tourism has great potential to support economic growth, environmental conservation, and improve community welfare (Wibowo, M. & Belia, 2023). However, if not managed properly, tourism can be a source of environmental damage, social degradation, and economic inequality (Taufik et al., 2024). Thus, it is essential to focus our attention on how to protect nature in a way to support tourism sustainability.

North Lombok Regency is one of the areas in West Nusa Tenggara Province that has great potential in the development of nature-based tourism. In addition to the Three Gili area (Gili Trawangan, Gili Meno, and Gili Air), which is already well-known worldwide (Kurniawan et al., 2016), other natural destinations have not been widely exposed, one of which is Impos Beach. Impos Beach is located in Tanjung Village, North Lombok Regency. This beach has a stunning natural charm with clean white sand, clear sea water, and views of the surrounding green mountains. The uniqueness of Impos Beach lies in its natural beauty that is still maintained and the lack of mass tourism activities, so it is very potential to be developed with a sustainable concept.

One form of tourism development that is now intensively encouraged by various parties is the concept of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is an approach to developing tourist destinations that considers environmental, social, cultural, and economic aspects, to maintain the sustainability of natural resources and the welfare of local communities (Sana, 2025), (Wibowo, M. & Belia, 2023) (Desbiolles, 2018). Ensuring that the economic advantages of leisure and travel do not come at the expense of the environment, local communities, and culture requires sustainable tourism. Promoting ethical behavior aids in the conservation of biodiversity, natural resources, and cultural heritage for future generations (Budeanu 2007). By giving



locals economic opportunities and enabling them to take part in the decision-making processes that affect their environment, sustainable tourism also promotes community involvement. Long-term, this strategy keeps destinations resilient and healthy, ensuring that they continue to be appealing and profitable for many years to come, in addition to improving visitor experience (Walker and Moscardo 2014).

In addition, this research is designed to conduct an in-depth investigation into how far the principles of sustainable tourism have been applied at Impos Beach, North Lombok, by both destination managers and local community members. The study places particular emphasis on exploring the various strategies that have been introduced, the concrete practices carried out, and the degree of community involvement in preserving environmental balance, safeguarding cultural heritage, and generating long-term economic benefits. Through this comprehensive analysis, the research seeks to reveal the extent of alignment between the existing tourism activities and the broader goals of sustainability. The outcomes expected from this research extend beyond enriching the academic debate on sustainable tourism, as the study also aims to provide concrete, applicable insights for policymakers, tourism operators, and local stakeholders who are directly involved in managing tourism development. The findings are projected to serve as a valuable reference point for designing strategies and actions that can improve the quality and effectiveness of tourism management at Impos Beach. By presenting evidence-based recommendations, the study seeks to encourage the adoption of more responsible practices in utilizing both natural and cultural resources, ensuring that they are preserved while still contributing to economic growth. In addition, the research aspires to highlight the importance of community participation and collaborative governance in shaping a tourism model that balances ecological preservation, cultural appreciation, and social inclusivity. Such an approach underscores that sustainability is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical framework that can guide decision-making at multiple levels. Ultimately, the central contribution of this study lies in its potential to support Impos Beach's transformation into a tourism destination that is ecologically resilient, culturally sensitive, and socially equitable. By achieving this balance, the beach will be able to maintain its appeal and long-term sustainability, ensuring that future generations can continue to experience and benefit from its unique natural and cultural assets.

Materials and Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The Qualitative descriptive is a research method that aims to describe systematically, factually, and accurately certain phenomena or events based on data obtained from the field (Kim et al., 2017). This approach does not use numbers or statistics, but places more emphasis on meaning, understanding, and in-depth interpretation of social situations or human behavior (Yuliani, 2018). The method of data collection applied in this study relied on a combination of direct observation and an in-depth review of relevant literature. Observation was chosen as one of the primary techniques because it allowed the research team to directly examine the existing conditions at Impos Beach, North Lombok, particularly with regard to how sustainable tourism practices are being implemented in the area. By visiting the site in person, the researchers were able to gain firsthand insights into the actual environmental, social, and managerial aspects that characterize tourism activities at this destination. This approach also made it possible to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that might not have been fully captured through secondary sources alone. In addition to field observation, a literature study was carried out to complement and enrich the findings. The literature review involved the collection and analysis of various academic references, policy documents, previous research reports, and other relevant publications related to sustainable tourism, coastal management, and community-based tourism development. By synthesizing this information, the researchers were able to place their field findings within a broader conceptual and theoretical framework, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the dynamics at Impos Beach. The combination of these two methods—direct observation and literature study—was considered essential in order to ensure the validity, reliability, and comprehensiveness of the research. Observation provided practical and contextual evidence from the field, while literature study contributed a wider perspective by offering established knowledge and lessons learned from other cases. Together, they created a robust methodological foundation for analyzing the extent to which sustainable tourism principles are applied in Impos Beach and how these practices can be improved.

The process of data collection followed a structured research flow, beginning with preparation and preliminary studies, continuing with field visits for observation, followed by the systematic collection of literature, and finally, the integration of both sources of data for analysis. This research flow was designed to maintain clarity, consistency, and focus throughout the study, ensuring that the outcomes would provide

meaningful insights and practical recommendations for strengthening sustainable tourism development at Impos Beach.

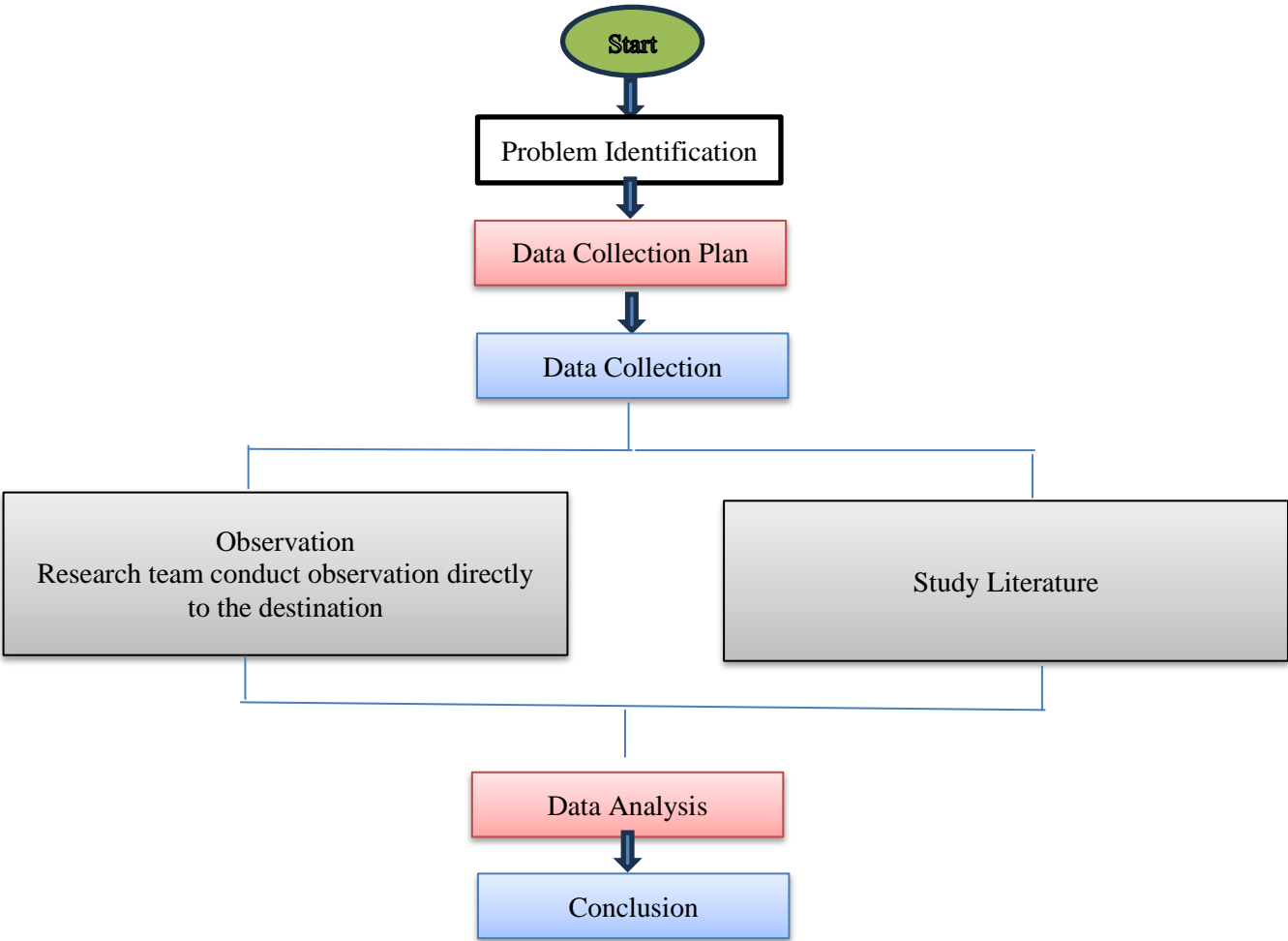


Figure 1. *Research Flow* (Taufik, et al. 2025)

Results and Discussions

Impos Beach, locally known as Sunset Beach, is situated in Karang Anyar Hamlet, Medana Village, Tanjung District, within the North Lombok Regency of West Nusa Tenggara. The beach is relatively easy to access, located only about 2.5 kilometers, or approximately a five-minute drive, from the center of Tanjung, and around 35 kilometers, which takes roughly one hour, from the provincial capital, Mataram. Its strategic location makes it a convenient destination for both local residents and visiting tourists. The beach has earned its popular name because of its breathtaking panoramic views at sunset, which have become one of its main attractions. Visitors can enjoy the stunning natural scenery along the shoreline, where stretches of fine white sand meet with calm, clear, and greenish-blue seawater. The coastal environment provides a tranquil setting for relaxation, while also serving as a hub for marine-based tourism activities. Impos Beach presents itself as an ideal destination for marine-based recreational activities, especially snorkeling and diving. The waters surrounding the beach are home to colorful coral reefs that remain relatively well-preserved, creating a captivating underwater landscape. These reefs serve as a natural habitat for a wide range of tropical fish species, each contributing to the richness and diversity of the marine ecosystem. For visitors, this unique setting provides a remarkable opportunity to directly engage with the beauty of the ocean environment by observing marine life in its natural surroundings. The combination of clear waters, vibrant corals, and abundant fish populations makes Impos Beach highly attractive to both novice and experienced enthusiasts.

of underwater exploration. Beyond recreation, such experiences also raise awareness of the ecological importance of coral reefs, emphasizing the need for conservation to ensure that these marine resources continue to thrive for future generations.

From the observations conducted in this research, it was found that Impos Beach also reflects several sustainability components that are important for tourism development in the region.

1. Environmental Components

Environmental sustainability is an important issue for individuals, businesses, and governments. It is also a key requirement for achieving social sustainability. For businesses, it has become a major concern. This encourages companies to adopt green practices across their supply chains, leading to green and sustainable supply chain management (Kasemsap, 2020). The implementation of environmental elements in Impos Beach can be seen from the awareness of the surrounding community to keep the tourist area clean. Villagers, especially youth groups, routinely carry out mutual cooperation activities to clean the beach area from plastic waste, wood, and other waste carried by the sea currents. In addition, some people have an awareness not to damage marine ecosystems such as coral reefs or other biota. However, there is no official regulation or conservation program facilitated by the local government or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The biggest challenge in the environmental aspect is traditional waste management. A lot of garbage from tourist stalls is still burned around the beach area, which has the potential to pollute the air and damage the image of sustainable tourism. Some concrete steps have been taken, such as: installation of banners to maintain cleanliness, the provision of simple trash bins by residents, and personal initiatives of some residents to convey messages of nature conservation to tourists. However, for the long term, Impos Beach needs a formal environmental management program, such as the construction of an integrated TPS system and community-based environmental education.

2. Economic Component

As tourism expands globally, assessing its sustainability at regional and national levels has become a key goal of strategic planning. This assessment helps maintain a balance between present needs and future development, particularly in areas that rely heavily on tourism (Doncheva, 2019). From an economic perspective, the application of sustainable tourism principles at Impos Beach has begun to reveal encouraging signs of progress. One of the most notable developments is the emergence of various small-scale local businesses, including food stalls, beverage vendors, and informal parking services, which are directly linked to the growth of tourism activity in the area. These enterprises, although still relatively modest in scale, represent the early foundation of community-based economic activity. They not only provide essential services to visitors but also create new income opportunities for local residents, thereby allowing the surrounding community to benefit directly from tourism-related activities.

At the present stage, however, the tourism business model operating at Impos Beach remains largely informal and is primarily managed by individuals or small family groups. Unlike more structured destinations, there are as yet no established institutional frameworks, such as village cooperatives or village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), that could take on a central role in coordinating, organizing, and optimizing the management of the existing tourism potential in a more systematic and sustainable manner. Despite this limitation, the active participation of local residents in running these micro-businesses provides clear evidence that the economic dimension of sustainability is gradually taking root, even if only in a modest and organic way.

The direct involvement of local actors, both as contributors and as beneficiaries, also demonstrates that the community is beginning to recognize and appreciate the potential of tourism as a catalyst for economic development (Giampiccoli, 2018). Nevertheless, one of the major challenges that continues to hinder progress is the unequal access to financial resources. Those with sufficient capital are able to expand their operations more easily, while those lacking financial support remain marginalized. To overcome this imbalance, it is essential to promote more equitable community empowerment initiatives and to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism development are distributed fairly across all members of society.

3. Socio-Cultural Component

The socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism at Impos Beach has gradually begun to take shape, although its implementation remains relatively modest. One visible aspect is the continued opportunity given to local residents to engage in traditional practices around the beach area. These activities include fishing, shell gathering, and conducting small-scale rituals that reflect cultural values and community heritage. Such practices not only preserve local traditions but also serve as living cultural expressions that enrich the identity of the destination. Awareness among the community regarding the importance of maintaining cultural authenticity in interactions with visitors has also begun to grow. Many residents have realized that the hallmark of Sasak hospitality should remain an integral part of their engagement with tourists. This awareness contributes to creating meaningful and respectful cultural exchanges, ensuring that tourism activities reflect the unique character of Lombok's people.

The presence of tourists has further stimulated the formation of social groups, particularly youth communities concerned with tourism (Zhang et al., 2021). These groups act as agents of change by initiating social activities, such as volunteer programs, environmental awareness campaigns, and community education. Their involvement demonstrates the potential of tourism to strengthen social cohesion while fostering a sense of responsibility towards both culture and the environment. Although cultural performances remain limited, simple traditional music presentations have occasionally been held to entertain tourists during certain moments. This indicates a promising foundation for further development. In fact, the cultural potential of Impos Beach is considerable, especially if combined with its natural beauty. Opportunities exist to expand cultural tourism by organizing regular performances of local art, showcasing traditional crafts unique to North Lombok, and integrating these attractions with nature-based tourism. Such integration would not only enhance the visitor experience but also provide broader benefits for cultural preservation and community empowerment.

In summary, the current practice of sustainable tourism at Impos Beach, North Lombok, is still in its early stages and can be described as largely informal. Most of the efforts that exist today are carried out on a case-by-case basis and are not supported by a systematically designed framework that could guarantee consistency, accountability, and long-term effectiveness. While some initiatives are visible, they tend to lack coordination, standardized guidelines, and clear monitoring mechanisms. This condition creates a vulnerability where sustainability efforts may remain fragmented, temporary, or heavily dependent on individual or community initiatives, rather than being part of an integrated system of management.

To overcome this challenge, it becomes crucial to design a more formal structure that can guide the implementation of sustainable tourism in a consistent and measurable way. A key strategy for achieving this is through fostering strong collaboration among multiple stakeholders who have an interest in or responsibility for the development of Impos Beach (Graci, 2016). These stakeholders include local government authorities who have the mandate to regulate and allocate resources, tourism managers who oversee daily operations, local community representatives who act as both beneficiaries and protectors of the destination, as well as environmental organizations that can provide technical expertise and advocacy.

By establishing cooperative partnerships, these actors can jointly develop and implement formal regulations, policy frameworks, and long-term strategic plans that are aligned with the principles of sustainable tourism (Liburd et al., 2022). Such frameworks would not only provide clearer guidance but also ensure that ecological preservation, socio-cultural protection, and economic empowerment are addressed in a balanced manner. Ultimately, this approach would transform the current informal practices into a more structured, participatory, and accountable model of tourism governance, ensuring that Impos Beach can remain ecologically viable, culturally respectful, and economically beneficial for future generations.

The implementation of sustainable tourism at Impos Beach continues to face several significant challenges that hinder its progress. First, there is a lack of formal regulations or official policies, either from the village authorities or the local government, that specifically govern tourism management in this area. This absence of a legal framework results in limited direction and coordination for sustainability practices. Second, the availability of supporting facilities remains inadequate. Essential public amenities such as toilets, rinse stations, permanent trash bins, and pedestrian pathways have not yet been developed, reducing the comfort

and convenience of visitors. Another major obstacle relates to human resources. A portion of the community still lacks a comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism, particularly with regard to balancing environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Furthermore, access to business capital poses difficulties for local residents who are interested in engaging more actively in tourism-related enterprises, creating inequality between those with financial resources and those without. Finally, there is limited institutional support. At present, no external organizations or institutions are assisting the community in planning, capacity-building, or managing sustainable tourism programs. Collectively, these challenges highlight the urgent need for stronger governance, infrastructure investment, education, and institutional collaboration at Impos Beach.

Conclusion

Impos Beach is endowed with extraordinary natural charm that makes it a destination of great potential. Its pristine shoreline, adorned with fine white sand, is complemented by crystal-clear seawater and panoramic sunset views that leave a lasting impression on visitors. Beyond its scenic beauty, the area is enriched with diverse marine life, particularly the colorful coral reef ecosystems, which not only enhance its ecological value but also establish a strong basis for promoting nature-based tourism. These attributes position Impos Beach as a destination with the capacity to attract both domestic and international tourists who are seeking authentic and environmentally oriented travel experiences. However, despite its remarkable natural assets, the current practice of sustainable tourism in the area remains largely informal and fragmented. There is no structured framework or systematic plan that ensures consistency, accountability, or long-term sustainability. This condition highlights the need for more organized efforts that can integrate ecological, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions into a balanced development strategy. Central to this transformation is the role of the local community. As custodians of the area, they hold a pivotal position in shaping the direction of tourism activities. Their participation, awareness, and commitment are essential to preserving natural resources while simultaneously reaping the economic and cultural benefits of tourism. To achieve this, building synergy and fostering collaboration among the local community, village government, regional authorities, and relevant stakeholders is indispensable. By fostering collective action and encouraging a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders, Impos Beach has the opportunity to transition gradually towards a more sustainable model of tourism development. This approach requires the active participation of local communities, visitors, and supporting institutions in order to protect and preserve the natural environment that forms the foundation of the destination's appeal. At the same time, sustainable practices should be directed at strengthening and promoting the cultural identity of the community, ensuring that local traditions and values remain an integral part of the tourism experience rather than being overshadowed or diminished by external influences. Equally important is the emphasis on generating fair and inclusive economic benefits, so that tourism growth does not concentrate wealth in the hands of a few, but instead provides opportunities that are accessible to a wide range of residents. By balancing environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and economic empowerment, Impos Beach can cultivate a tourism system that is both responsible and resilient. In the long term, this integrated approach will guarantee that the destination continues to thrive, while also maintaining its value and relevance as a sustainable asset for future generations.

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