

Developing Tourism Products Through Social Media Training for Rural Communities

Pengembangan Produk Wisata Melalui Pelatihan Media Sosial Pada Masyarakat Desa

Nur Farah Fajriaty Muchlis^{a,*}, Andi Fatimah Maoudy AB^b, Sri Wahyuni^b

^a*Pengelolaan Konvensi dan Perhelatan, Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar, Indonesia*

^b*Destinasi Pariwisata, Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar, Indonesia*

Abstract

The development of Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, is an effort to enhance community welfare by utilizing the area's natural and cultural potentials. The village offers natural attractions such as waterfalls and hilly landscapes, along with key products like honey, palm sugar, and mushroom-based goods. This article discusses the village's potential, community empowerment strategies, and the challenges and solutions encountered in tourism village development. Community empowerment through training and digital marketing plays a crucial role in enhancing the value of local products and promoting community engagement. The adoption of technology, infrastructure improvement, and collaboration with the government and private sector are essential to ensure the sustainability of the program. With an integrated approach, Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village is expected to become a sustainable tourism destination that provides economic and social benefits to the local community.

Abstrak

Pengembangan Desa Wisata Bonto Masunggu di Kabupaten Bone, Sulawesi Selatan, merupakan upaya untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat dengan memanfaatkan potensi alam dan budaya yang ada di daerah tersebut. Desa ini menawarkan atraksi alam seperti air terjun dan lanskap perbukitan, serta produk utama seperti madu, gula aren, dan produk berbasis jamur. Artikel ini membahas potensi desa, strategi pemberdayaan masyarakat, serta tantangan dan solusi yang dihadapi dalam pengembangan desa wisata. Pemberdayaan masyarakat melalui pelatihan dan pemasaran digital memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan nilai produk lokal dan mendorong keterlibatan masyarakat. Penggunaan teknologi, perbaikan infrastruktur, dan kolaborasi dengan pemerintah dan sektor swasta sangat penting untuk memastikan keberlanjutan program. Dengan pendekatan yang terintegrasi, Desa Wisata Bonto Masunggu diharapkan dapat menjadi tujuan wisata berkelanjutan yang memberikan manfaat ekonomi dan sosial bagi masyarakat setempat.

Keywords: Tourism village; Bonto Masunggu; community empowerment; local products; sustainable tourism.

1. Introduction

Tourism has emerged as a vital sector for driving sustainable economic development. Its contributions extend beyond generating revenue, as it also creates employment opportunities and bolsters local economies (UNWTO, 2019). One notable form of tourism development gaining momentum in Indonesia is the establishment of tourist villages, leveraging natural and cultural resources to attract visitors while enhancing community welfare (Gusti Ayu Eka Suwintari et al., 2023; Kementerian Pariwisata Dan Ekonomi Kreatif / Badan Pariwisata Dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 2024). In this context, Bonto Masunggu Tourist Village, located in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, showcases unique attractions combining natural beauty and local traditions. The village is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, including waterfalls and hilly terrains, as well as signature products like honey, palm sugar, and mushroom-based delicacies. Additionally, Bonto

* Corresponding author:

E-mail address: nurfarahf@poltekparmakassar.ac.id

Masunggu preserves traditional wisdom and practices such as *Ma'bangung Bola* (a local form of communal cooperation) and the traditional production of palm sugar, which highlight the richness of its cultural heritage (Perwira et al., 2020).

Despite its significant potential, Bonto Masunggu Tourist Village faces several challenges. These include limited access to technology, a lack of knowledge about digital marketing, and inadequate distribution networks for local products (Bagus et al., 2020; Endrawati et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2023). Addressing these issues is critical to unlocking the village's full potential. Empowering the local community through training and mentorship programs is essential for enabling residents to actively participate in managing and developing their village's tourism potential (Wiweka et al., 2020). Moreover, collaboration with stakeholders—including government agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector is crucial to supporting the sustainable development of this tourist village (Jamal & Getz, 1995). Such partnerships can create synergies that drive the village toward becoming a compelling tourism destination while delivering significant economic benefits to the local population.

This study aims to explore the potential of Bonto Masunggu Tourist Village, focusing on strategies for community empowerment, challenges faced, and relevant solutions. It highlights the role of social media training in enhancing the value of local tourism products while engaging the community in sustainable tourism practices (Quang et al., 2023). By examining the village's strengths and addressing its developmental hurdles, this article seeks to provide actionable insights for establishing Bonto Masunggu as a model tourist village in Indonesia. A well-planned and sustainable approach to village tourism not only enhances community welfare but also strengthens local cultural identity and preserves the natural environment (Liberato et al., 2021; Serrão & Costa, 2020). Through this discussion, Bonto Masunggu can serve as an inspirational example of how community-based tourism initiatives can thrive while balancing economic growth with cultural and environmental preservation.

2. Methods

This community service program utilized a participatory action research approach, which focuses on actively involving local stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program (Lexy J, 2019). The program took place over six months from May to August 2024, divided into two main phases: Phase 1 (May-June) focused on observations and needs assessments (GAP analysis), while Phase 2 (July-August) was dedicated to training activities. In Phase 1, the team conducted surveys and interviews with a total of 5 informants, consisting of 1 village head and 4 village administrators. The aim was to identify the village's potential products, such as honey, peanuts, mushrooms, and traditional handicrafts, and to determine the challenges faced by the community in terms of production and marketing. These interactions allowed the research team to assess the existing gaps in local knowledge and resources that hindered the development and promotion of the products. The team also conducted direct observations of the village's natural resources and facilities, which helped in formulating strategies for improvement.

In Phase 2, training sessions were organized to address the identified gaps and equip the participants with skills in product quality improvement, branding and packaging, and digital marketing. These sessions aimed to enhance the community's ability to promote local products via social media and online marketplaces. The program emphasized hands-on learning, with practical exercises on branding, product packaging design, and utilizing digital platforms to increase market reach. Throughout this phase, the team provided ongoing mentoring and monitoring to ensure that participants applied the new knowledge to their products effectively.

By the end of the six months, a final evaluation was conducted to measure the impact of the training on the community's product development and marketing capabilities. A comprehensive report was compiled, outlining the outcomes of the community service program, and submitted to the Research and Community Service Center at Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Findings from the Community Service Activity

The community service activity held on August 11 2024, had a significant positive impact on the management of Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village. The main findings from this training indicate a heightened awareness regarding the importance of utilizing technology and digital media in the development of the tourism sector. The village managers showed strong interest and enthusiasm in implementing digital marketing to promote their village. This training opened participants' perspectives on various digital platforms, such as Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and Facebook, which can be used to enhance the visibility and competitiveness of the tourism village. Additionally, the training highlighted

the importance of the Sadar Wisata (Tourism Awareness) concept and the development of events within the village as a tourist attraction. Participants realized that well-developed events can attract more visitors, both local and international. By using social media, especially Instagram, they can introduce events taking place in the village to a broader audience. This has the potential to increase tourist visits from those seeking authentic experiences rooted in local culture.

Regarding technology implementation, participants paid particular attention to using WhatsApp Business and Facebook as effective communication and promotional tools. WhatsApp Business allows managers to handle bookings and interact directly with tourists, while Facebook serves as a platform to promote the village's products and events. By leveraging this technology, the tourism village managers can expand their market reach efficiently and effectively, maintain good relationships with customers, and enhance brand awareness in the digital marketplace.

Overall, the training successfully provided valuable knowledge and skills that are highly relevant for the management of Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village in facing the challenges of the digital tourism world. With the knowledge gained, it is expected that the managers can leverage technology and digital marketing to strengthen the village's competitiveness, both locally and globally. Proper use of social media can help introduce local products, increase tourist visits, and open greater economic opportunities for the local community.

3.2. Community Service Activity Schedule

Stage 1: Thursday to Sunday, June 13-16, 2024 (Four Days)

In the first stage, the activity focused on delivering foundational material about the concept of tourism and needs analysis. Over the course of four days, participants were trained to understand the importance of strategic planning in the development of **Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village**, with discussions on the basic concepts of tourism, event development, and an analysis of the needs present in the village, especially concerning the management and use of digital technology. During this stage, participants were also involved in the needs analysis related to local product development and digital marketing.

Stage 2: Monday to Tuesday, September 23-24, 2024 (Two Days)

The second stage focused on hands-on training, where participants gained direct experience in applying technology and digital media to promote the tourism village's products. The training covered the use of Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and Facebook to enhance the visibility of local products and attract tourists. This hands-on session aimed to provide participants with technical skills that could be directly applied, such as content creation, business account management, and the implementation of effective digital marketing strategies. With a clear division between the conceptual and needs analysis stage in the first phase, and the practical training in the second phase, it is hoped that participants will develop the skills necessary to manage and market Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village more effectively and efficiently.

Table 1 of Community Service Activities outlines a two-phase training program for Desa Wisata Bonto Masunggu, focusing on digital marketing to enhance tourism. The first phase covers foundational knowledge in tourism, need analysis, and digital marketing strategies, while the second phase provides hands-on training in using platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and Facebook for promoting local products and events. This approach aims to improve the village's competitiveness in the digital tourism market.

The following images depict two important activities carried out as part of the community service project in Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village. The first image shows the observation and analysis of community needs, where the team conducts a needs assessment related to the management and development of tourism products by involving the village managers in discussions. The second image illustrates the delivery of training on the use of applications, aimed at teaching the village managers how to effectively use digital applications such as Instagram and WhatsApp Business to create promotional content that can attract more tourists and widely introduce their tourism products. These activities represent the initial steps in optimizing technology for the development of the tourism village.

3.3. Discussion

The training provided by the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic has had a significant impact on improving the skills of the village community in processing, packaging, and marketing local products. The knowledge imparted during the training enables the community to produce high-quality products that can compete in broader markets. This aligns with findings from (Baird & Parayitam, 2019; Vaculčíková et al., 2020), who showed that skills training plays a crucial role in

enhancing production capacity and product quality to meet the challenges of competitive markets. With the knowledge gained, products such as honey, brown sugar, and mushrooms are expected to gain more recognition in both national and international markets. Knowledge about using social media and e-commerce provides the village community with effective tools to promote their products more widely (Lim & Rasul, 2022; Shin & Xiang, 2020).

Table 1. Community Service Activities: Enhancing Tourism Products through Social Media Training

Activity	Date	Stage	Objective	Expected Outcome
Stage 1: Concept and Needs Analysis	June 13-16, 2024 (Four Days)	Introduction & Needs Analysis	To introduce basic tourism concepts and analyze the digital marketing needs of the Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village.	Participants will gain insights into tourism concepts, local product development, and the digital marketing needs of the village. They will also conduct a needs analysis.
Stage 2: Practical Training	September 23-24, 2024 (Two Days)	Hands-on Training	To provide participants with practical skills in using social media platforms for promoting tourism products.	Participants will acquire practical skills in using Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and Facebook for marketing and engagement, learning how to create content and manage accounts.
Social Media & Digital Marketing	Throughout both stages	Content Creation & Strategy	To help participants create effective social media content for promotion.	Participants will learn how to create engaging content and develop strategies to promote local products and events, reaching a wider audience.
Event Promotion & Tourism Awareness	Throughout both stages	Event Development & Promotion	To educate participants on creating and promoting local events as a tourism attraction.	Participants will understand how to leverage social media to promote events and boost local tourism, focusing on authentic experiences and local culture.
Follow-up & Evaluation	Post-Training (October 2024)	Follow-up Support	To provide post-training support and assess the application of skills learned.	Continuous guidance and feedback for applying social media skills effectively. Evaluation of progress in increasing tourism through digital means.

Source: Community Service Team, 2024



Figure 1. Observation and analysis of community needs **Figure 2.** Delivery of training on the use of applications

Although the training offers great potential for economic development in the village, significant challenges remain, including limited technological knowledge, access to capital, and inadequate infrastructure. This is in line with studies (Pham et al., 2021), who found that one of the biggest barriers in the development of micro and small businesses is the lack of access to technology and capital. To address this issue, training should focus on the application of simple

technologies accessible to the village community, as well as providing access to business capital through cooperatives and microfinance institutions. The technology-based approach taught in this training can help the village community overcome these limitations ((Leonandri & Rosmadi, 2018; Priatmoko et al., 2021).

The training focused on digital marketing skills has proven effective in expanding the market reach of local products. In line with existing findings, (Salim et al., 2012) stated that the use of social media and digital platforms can enhance the competitiveness of local products, especially in rural areas. This training provides an understanding of how to manage social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook to promote village products and increase consumer interaction. With digital marketing training, village products can gain international recognition, which will certainly increase community income and foster more inclusive economic growth (Murniati et al., 2023). This also contributes to strengthening the village tourism sector as a mutually beneficial sector for local products.

To enhance the economic potential of the Bonto Masunggu Tourism Village community, the development of integrated training programs is crucial. Continuous training will ensure that the community stays updated with technological advancements and market trends. One key recommendation is to strengthen partnerships between the government, financial institutions, and the private sector to provide better access to capital for the village community (Chen & Tao, 2023; Wang et al., 2021). In addition, infrastructure improvement, particularly internet access and transportation facilities, is essential to support more effective digital marketing. Training programs should also focus on product diversification so that the community can reduce dependence on a single product, which can help mitigate seasonal fluctuations (Hasan et al., 2023).

4. Conclusion

The community service activities conducted in the Village of Bonto Masunggu, Kabupaten Bone, were successfully carried out in two phases: Phase 1 (Thursday to Sunday, June 13–16, 2024) and Phase 2 (Monday to Tuesday, September 23–24, 2024). During Phase 1, participants received valuable training in local product development, packaging, and marketing, equipping them with practical skills to enhance the quality and competitiveness of their products in the broader market. Phase 2 focused on further refining the digital marketing skills of the community, with an emphasis on social media utilization and e-commerce platforms to expand their market reach. The collaboration between Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar and the Village of Bonto Masunggu proved to be highly beneficial, resulting in increased community engagement, enhanced skills, and a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within local economic development. Moving forward, continuous support and training are essential to sustaining the progress made, ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the community's efforts.

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