

Human Resource Management Strategies for Community-Based Tourism Homestay Management in Wakatobi

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Abstract

Homestays not only provide accommodation but also serve as a means of economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and the strengthening of local identity. However, the main challenge in managing community-based homestays is the lack of a targeted and sustainable human resource (HR) management strategy. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and formulate an effective HR management strategy for CBT-based homestays in Wakatobi. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. The results indicate that homestays on Hoga Island play a significant role in supporting CBT-based tourism. However, their sustainability still faces several challenges, including limited HR capacity, infrastructure issues (especially water), high maintenance costs, and dependence on the tourist season. The implementation of a targeted HR management strategy based on training, implementation of SOPs, utilization of digitalization, infrastructure strengthening, and policy support for homestays in Wakatobi has the potential to develop effectively, competitively, and sustainably. The implementation of this strategy is expected to increase competitiveness and sustainability, while maintaining social, cultural, and environmental values in Wakatobi.

Keywords: *Homestay, Community, HR management, Wakatobi*

A. INTRODUCTION

Background and Problem Formulation

Wakatobi is a regency in Southeast Sulawesi Province known as a leading national and international marine tourism destination (Karto & Trisetyasi, 2023). This area is part of the Wakatobi National Park, which boasts extraordinary marine biodiversity and a rich, well-preserved local culture (Tarani, 2025). Given this potential, tourism development in Wakatobi presents a strategic opportunity to boost local economic growth through a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approach.

CBT emphasizes active community involvement in tourism activities, including the management of homestays as an alternative form of accommodation based on local values (Khusnawati, M.A & Wahyudi, 2023). Homestays not only serve as temporary accommodations for tourists, but also serve as a means of introducing the local community's culture, customs, and daily life (Takome et al., 2021). Therefore, the quality of homestay management is largely determined by the capabilities of local human resources (HR), both in terms of service, cultural knowledge, and management.

However, in reality, homestay management in Wakatobi still faces various challenges, such as a lack of training, limited managerial skills, and the absence of a structured and sustainable human resource strategy. This situation can impact the quality of service and the homestay's suboptimal contribution to community welfare. Therefore, an appropriate human resource management strategy is needed to ensure effective and sustainable CBT-based homestay management.

Based on the above background, the research questions are as follows:

1. What is the current state of human resource management in community-based tourism homestays in Wakatobi?
2. What obstacles do local communities face in managing homestay human resources?

3. What human resource management strategies can be implemented to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of community-based tourism homestays in Wakatobi?

This research is highly urgent given the crucial role of homestays as the spearhead of community-based tourism services. Appropriate human resource management strategies will not only improve service quality and tourist satisfaction, but also strengthen the capacity of local communities to manage their regional potential independently and sustainably. Furthermore, the results of this research are expected to provide a tangible contribution to local governments and other stakeholders in formulating tourism development policies that are inclusive, participatory, and oriented toward community empowerment.

Problem Solving Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze human resource (HR) management strategies in managing homestays based on Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Wakatobi. This qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural conditions and challenges faced by the community in managing homestays. Furthermore, this approach also provides an opportunity to understand the perceptions of local communities, homestay managers, and tourism industry players regarding HR management within the context of CBT.

Based on the problem formulation and initial findings, several problem-solving strategies are proposed in this study, such as:

1. Human resource management concepts in managing homestays based on Community-Based Tourism in Wakatobi.
2. Overcoming obstacles faced by local communities in managing homestay human resources.
3. Human resource management strategies to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of CBT-based homestays in Wakatobi.

State Of The Art and Newness

Several previous studies, including one conducted by (Wijaya & Sudarmawan, 2019), entitled "Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Ceking Tourist Attraction, Tegallalang Traditional Village," have shown that the negative impacts of such development must be minimized to prevent damage to the attraction. The positive economic impacts of developing Ceking's tourist attractions will be enjoyed by the government, the community (as managers and participants), and tourism entrepreneurs. A similar study by (Widyaningsih, 2020) entitled "Development of Homestay Management to Support the Diro Tourism Village in Sendangmulyo, Minggir District, Sleman Regency" concluded that Diro Tourism Village, as a fostered village under the Yogyakarta Tourism Academy, collaborated with the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism in homestay management training and tourism awareness training from the Sleman Regency Tourism Office, the Sleman Culture Office, and the Yogyakarta Special Region Culture Office in cultural performances. Homestay development actors are also a crucial component in the sustainability of the tourism village. The tourism development actors in Diro Tourism Village include the village community empowerment group and homestay owners. The products of Diro Tourism Village attract tourists to come and stay in homestays in Diro Tourism Village. Local attractions of the Diro tourist village that tourists staying at homestays in the village include the natural beauty of rice paddies, learning how to plow, plant, and harvest rice, mountain field trips, and the Sendang Beji cultural site, home to Ki Ageng Tunggul Wulung and Sendang Gunung Kinjeng.

The novelty of this research is that there has been no research on Human Resource Management Strategies in Community-Based Tourism Homestay Management. Based on Google Scholar searches using the keywords "Human Resource Management Strategies in Community-Based Tourism Homestay Management in Wakatobi," no similar articles were found.

Some of the new aspects of this proposal include:

1. Approach
Combining a human resource management approach with a Community-Based Tourism framework, rarely used simultaneously in homestay studies, allows for the development of human resource strategies that are relevant to the principles of sustainability and empowerment.
2. Method
Using thematic analysis and participatory validation through focus group discussions (FGDs), which provide space for the community to participate in formulating strategies, this method produces solutions that are not only theoretical but also implementable.

3. Object

This research focuses on community-based homestays in Wakatobi, which have been little explored academically despite their significant potential for sustainable tourism development in eastern Indonesia.

4. External

Practical and Academic: In addition to producing scientific publications, the formulated HR strategies can be adopted by local governments or communities to develop training modules, homestay standard operating procedures (SOPs), or community-based tourism business development policies.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Concept

CBT emphasizes the active participation of local communities in the planning, management, and receipt of economic benefits from tourism activities (Sary & Santoso, 2024). According to Tohopi et al., (2025), the main principles of CBT include community empowerment, local benefit distribution, cultural and environmental preservation, and participation in decision-making. CBT also emphasizes an inclusive and sustainable local management model.

Human Resource Management (HR) in Tourism and Homestay

Tourism human resource management encompasses recruitment, training, competency development, performance appraisal, empowerment, and incentives (Anshori & Gunawan, 2025). In the context of community-based homestays, key aspects are:

1. Hospitality training (guest service, cleanliness, and service standards).
2. Managerial skills (microfinance, reservation management, and facility maintenance).
3. Digital marketing skills (social media promotion and online bookings).

Human resource performance directly impacts service quality, tourist satisfaction, and the sustainability of homestay businesses.

Infrastructure and Operational Support

Coastal tourism research emphasizes the importance of basic infrastructure (clean water and transportation access) and capital (initial investment and maintenance costs). Limited infrastructure reduces the quality of the tourist experience and increases the operational costs of homestay managers (Anshori & Gunawan, 2025). The availability of capital/maintenance affects the feasibility of the building and the continuity of services.

Local Economic Impact and Seasonality

Homestay tourism generates local revenue through consumption, accommodation, transportation, souvenirs, and other services. However, many small destinations face seasonal dependence, resulting in fluctuating income and employment opportunities. Product diversity and an extended visiting season are crucial for local economic stability.

Community Institutions and Local Policies

The formation of homestay management communities, policy support (funding, fair regulations), and development programs (training, access to credit) play a role in strengthening local capacity (Hamsiati et al., 2024). Tax/levy policies need to be designed in a balanced manner to support governance without burdening micro-enterprises.

C. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Types of research

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. According to Waruwu, (2024), qualitative descriptive research is defined as a research and understanding process based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and human problems, producing descriptive data in the form of narratives from observed individuals and behaviors. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of human resource management practices and challenges in homestays managed by local communities based on Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Wakatobi.

Research Subjects

The subjects in this study were local homestay managers (owners or operators of community-based homestays), community leaders and traditional leaders, village officials or local government officials involved in tourism, and local tourism industry players.

Time and Place of Research

This research was conducted in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, specifically on a tourist island that already has community-based homestays. The research period was approximately eight months.

Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments

The data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews with key informants, participant observation (direct observation of homestay managers' activities), focus group discussions (FGDs) to validate and deepen strategies, and documentation of homestay management activities.

The research instruments used were a semi-structured interview guide, homestay activity observation sheets, a field notes format and research logbook, and FGD instruments.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique used in this study was Miles and Huberman, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Mayestika & Hasmira, 2021). Data reduction in this study includes data from observations and in-depth interviews. These results are then presented in narrative form in accordance with the research objectives. Conclusions are drawn by formulating an HR management strategy based on field findings validated through focus group discussions (FGDs).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research result

1. Human Resource Management Conditions in CBT-Based Homestay Management in Wakatobi

Research shows that there are approximately 140-142 homestay units on Hoga Island, built independently by the local community. These homestays are wooden stilt houses with roofs partially made of sago leaves. The local community is the primary manager, from construction to service to maintenance.

However, of these, only 120 homestays are still habitable, while the rest do not meet comfort standards due to poor maintenance. This indicates limited human resource management capacity, particularly in terms of maintenance planning, investment management, and consistent service provision. Despite this, homestays have become a primary source of accommodation for tourists and have created local economic opportunities. Foreign tourists spend an average of IDR 230,000 per day, with IDR 180,000 for meals and IDR 50,000 for the homestay. If the average length of stay is 40 days, then foreign tourist expenditures can reach IDR 9.5 million per person per visit. This demonstrates that homestay management by local communities has a significant economic impact.

2. Obstacles Faced in Homestay Human Resource Management

The research identified several major obstacles faced by the community in managing CBT-based homestays, namely:

a. Limited human resource capacity.

Most homestay managers lack formal training in hospitality and business management, resulting in inconsistent service quality.

b. Limited basic infrastructure.

Fresh water supply is very limited. With a standard requirement of 70 liters per tourist per day, the water capacity on Hoga Island can only serve 103-411 people per day. Shortages of water must be supplied from Ambeua Village, Kaledupa Island, via a boat trip of approximately 30 minutes. This adds to the cost and time burden on homestay managers.

c. Dependence on the tourist season.

Economic activity is only active during March-April (low season) and July - September (high season), which coincides with the European holiday season. Outside of this season, most businesses are closed.

d. High investment and maintenance costs

Homestay construction costs range from IDR 5-15 million, while routine maintenance costs are around IDR 250,000-300,000 per month. For homestay owners who cannot afford these costs, the buildings quickly deteriorate, reducing their appeal to tourists.

e. Tax/levy policy

Local governments impose levies on homestay management. Although intended to regulate governance, this policy can be an additional burden for communities with limited capital.

3. Human Resource Management Strategies to Improve Homestay Effectiveness and Sustainability CBT

Based on the analysis and field findings, the following strategies can be implemented:

- a. Improving human resource capacity
Through sustainable training in hospitality, homestay management and digital marketing. This can enhance service professionalism and expand promotional reach.
- b. Developing standard operating procedures (SOPs)
Implementing SOPs for homestay services to maintain consistent service quality and tourist comfort.
- c. Utilizing digital technology
Encouraging managers to use online reservation platforms, social media, and digital marketing strategies to reach global tourists, so they are not solely dependent on the European holiday season.
- d. Strengthening basic infrastructure
Collaboration between the community, government, and private partners to provide adequate clean water infrastructure to sustainably meet tourist needs.
- e. Financing and subsidy schemes
Local governments can provide access to capital, microcredit, or homestay renovation programs for communities to reduce maintenance costs.
- f. Collaboration and Institutionalization
Establish a forum or cooperative for homestay managers to facilitate more structured coordination and facilitate advocacy with the government and investors.

Discussion

This research confirms that homestays on Hoga Island play a vital role in the development of community-based tourism in Wakatobi. However, limited human resources, infrastructure issues, and dependence on the tourist season are challenges that must be addressed.

By implementing human resource management strategies based on empowerment, digitalization, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, homestays on Hoga Island have the potential to develop more sustainably, improve community welfare, and strengthen Wakatobi's position as a world-class marine tourism destination.

E. CONCLUSION

This research shows that homestays on Hoga Island, Wakatobi, play a crucial role in supporting community-based tourism. Homestays are a major driver of the local economy, generating significant tourist spending, reaching IDR 9.5 million per person per visit. However, the sustainability of homestay businesses still faces several challenges, including limited human resource capacity, infrastructure issues (especially freshwater), high maintenance costs, and dependence on Muslim tourists.

With the implementation of targeted human resource management strategies based on training, the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs), the use of digitalization, infrastructure strengthening, and policy support, homestays in Wakatobi have the potential to develop more effectively, competitively, and sustainably. This will not only improve the welfare of local communities but also strengthen Wakatobi's image as a world-class marine tourism destination.

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