

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF THE TOURISM VILLAGE IN KAWALI VILLAGE, KAWALI SUBDISTRICT, CIAMIS REGENCY

Shifa Zahratuni salsabila* , Ela Nurlaela, Fika Febriani , Ikhtia Faizatuz Zahrah, Fina, Dio Alif fadilla, Rhagiel Latuconsina, Muhammad dzulfan Gymnastiar, Rifqi Maulana & Azra Keanu Prakudia

Universitas Galuh Ciamis, Indonesia

*Email: shifa_zahratuni@student.unigal.ac.id**

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Abstract

Kawali Village in Kawali District, Ciamis Regency, has great potential as a tourism village based on history, culture, culinary, and the creative economy. The existence of the Astana Gede site as a legacy of the Sunda Galuh Kingdom, Kampung Nila, the Ki Bawong Cultural Studio, and creative economic activities in four hamlets are the main attractions of the tourism village. However, the management of this potential still faces various challenges, especially in the institutional aspects, human resources, and coordination between destination managers. This study aims to analyze the institutional conditions of Kawali Tourism Village and formulate strategies to strengthen institutional capacity to support integrated and sustainable tourism village management. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach through field observations, coordination, and discussions with tourism managers, the village government, and the local community. The results show that tourism destination management is still partial, not yet integrated within a single tourism village management institution, and supported by limited human resource capacity and funding. This condition has an impact on less than optimal promotion, tourism services, and the development of integrated tourism packages. The discussion emphasized that institutional strengthening through the establishment of a tourism village management body, increasing human resource capacity, utilizing information technology, and strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration networks are key to the development of Kawali Tourism Village. In conclusion, strengthening institutional capacity is a crucial pillar in realizing an integrated, competitive, and sustainable Kawali Tourism Village. Therefore, a joint commitment between the village government, the community, and other stakeholders is required to support the optimal implementation of tourism village management.

Keywords: Institutions, Tourism Village, Tourism Management.

A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, tourism villages have increasingly been viewed as a rural tourism strategy capable of linking local economic improvement, cultural preservation, and a more equitable distribution of benefits through community involvement (Priatmoko et al., 2021; World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2023). In practice, many tourism villages repeatedly face persistent problems, including weak management institutions, fragmented actor coordination, and insufficient human resource capacity to execute programs consistently (Firdaus et al., 2021; UNWTO, 2023). At the same time, the demands of digital promotion, experience curation, and the packaging of integrated tour products are becoming increasingly

decisive for the competitiveness of rural destinations (Rodrigues et al., 2023). This phenomenon is evident in Kawali Village, Kawali District, Ciamis Regency, which possesses cultural-historical assets and a creative economy base, yet its management remains partial and is not supported by a strong overarching tourism-village institution (UNWTO, 2023). Based on these conditions, this study focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity for managing Kawali Tourism Village so that governance, collaboration, and the use of technology can operate in a more integrated and sustainable manner (Firdaus et al., 2021; Mutmainah et al., 2025).

A number of previous studies reinforce that the key to progress in tourism villages lies not merely in “potential,” but rather in governance and implementer capacity. Firdaus et al. (2021), in their study of Pujonkidul Tourism Village, show that village government plays a steering role by consolidating management, empowerment, and coordination among local actors so that development proceeds more directionally. From a destination marketing perspective, Rodrigues et al. (2023) emphasize that the quality of digital marketing initiatives influences destination image and intention to visit, which in turn becomes an important asset for the sustainability of rural destinations. Meanwhile, Mutmainah et al. (2025) find that commitment to digital transformation in tourism villages is shaped by perceived benefits, attitudes toward change, and the technological context, making HR readiness and change management practical issues that cannot be overlooked.

When compared, these three studies similarly position actor collaboration, managerial capacity, and the use of digital channels as key determinants of tourism village performance (Firdaus et al., 2021; Mutmainah et al., 2025; Rodrigues et al., 2023). The similarity with this study lies in the shared concern for governance and strengthening managerial capacity so that economic and social benefits are more tangibly experienced by the community (Priatmoko et al., 2021). The difference is that this study is narrowed to the locus of Kawali Village, which has several attraction nodes (history, culture, culinary, and creative economy) but is still managed by different groups without a coordinating institution that provides an overarching umbrella; thus, the core problem is not a lack of attractions, but rather a disconnect in the management system and product integration (UNWTO, 2023). Accordingly, this article places the issue of integrated institutional arrangements as the primary entry point to organize destination synergy, promotion, services, and integrated tour packages (Firdaus et al., 2021; UNWTO, 2023).

Based on this difference, the originality of this study lies in its effort to formulate an institutional capacity-strengthening strategy that specifically responds to the fragmented management conditions of Kawali Village (UNWTO, 2023). The proposed contribution is directed toward an integrated management design that emphasizes the establishment or restructuring of a managing body, clear functional division (promotion, services, partnerships, and product development), and the strengthening of cross-actor collaboration networks so that all destination nodes move within a single narrative and service standard (Firdaus et al., 2021). Within this framework, the digital dimension is not positioned as an add-on, but rather as an enabler of governance and destination marketing that increasingly shapes destination image and intention to visit (Rodrigues et al., 2023; Mutmainah et al., 2025).

The urgency of this study arises because, without institutional strengthening, Kawali’s potential risks continuing to generate dispersed performance that is difficult to convert into collective competitiveness, especially as competition among rural destinations is increasingly determined by the consistency of visitor experiences and digital visibility (Rodrigues et al., 2023). UNWTO reports also emphasize that rural tourism challenges are often tied to governance, human resource capacity, and digitalization, making institutional intervention a prerequisite for ensuring that the benefits of village-based tourism development remain

sustainable (UNWTO, 2023). In this context, strengthening Kawali's institutions becomes a strategic step so that digital promotion, MSME partnerships, and integrated tour-package development can be implemented in a coordinated and measurable way (Mutmainah et al., 2025; UNWTO, 2023).

In line with this, the objectives of the study are: (1) to analyze the institutional conditions of Kawali Tourism Village management and the patterns of coordination among actors currently in place, and (2) to formulate a relevant institutional capacity-strengthening strategy to promote integrated tourism village management that is adaptive to digital needs and sustainable (Firdaus et al., 2021; Mutmainah et al., 2025). These objectives are directed toward producing an actionable framework that can be operationalized by the village government, destination managers, MSME actors, and cultural communities as a single management ecosystem (UNWTO, 2023).

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of a Tourism Village

The development of tourism villages is one strategy of community-based tourism development aimed at improving local community welfare through the sustainable utilization of natural resources, culture, and local wisdom (Rochman, 2016). A tourism village functions not only as a tourism destination but also as a space for community empowerment that positions rural residents as the main actors in planning, managing, and benefiting from tourism development outcomes (Mulyadi, 2015). Therefore, the success of tourism village development is strongly determined by the strength of local institutions and the supporting capacity of human resources. Kawali Village, located in Kawali Subdistrict, Ciamis Regency, has substantial potential to be developed as a tourism village based on history, culture, religion, culinary tourism, and the creative economy. The presence of the Astana Gede Kawali Site as a relic of the Sunda Galuh Kingdom, the educational and culinary tourism area of Kampung Nila Kawali, the Ki Bawong arts and cultural studio, and the creative economic activities of communities across various hamlets constitute key attractions with historical, educational, and economic value. This potential reflects a rich local identity that can become an important asset for developing a competitive tourism village.

However, the considerable tourism potential of Kawali Village has not been fully matched by an integrated and sustainable management system. Destination management remains partial, carried out by different groups or parties without a strong tourism-village institution serving as a coordinating umbrella. This condition results in weak synergy among stakeholders, limited promotion, low utilization of digital technology, and the underdevelopment of integrated tourism packages. According to Fahrudin (2012), local institutions play a strategic role in coordinating resources, strengthening community participation, and ensuring the sustainability of community-based development programs. Strengthening the institutional capacity of tourism villages therefore becomes a crucial aspect in addressing these problems. Strong institutions enable effective, transparent, and participatory governance, while also promoting collaboration among the village government, tourism managers, MSME actors, cultural communities, and the wider community. In addition, enhancing human resource capacity through mentoring, training, and the use of information technology is an important prerequisite for responding to the dynamics of modern tourism (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Based on these conditions, this community service activity is conducted to analyze the institutional condition of Kawali Tourism Village and to formulate strategies for strengthening institutional capacity in support of integrated and sustainable tourism-village management. This activity is expected to provide tangible contributions by improving

stakeholder synergy, strengthening the role of the community as the subject of development, and encouraging the realization of a competitive and sustainable Kawali Tourism Village.

A tourism village is a form of rural area development that integrates natural potential, culture, and the social life of the community as tourism attractions. According to Nuryanti (1993), a tourism village is an integration of attractions, accommodation, and supporting facilities presented within a community life structure that is closely interwoven with local traditions. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia (2019) explains that a tourism village is a rural area that possesses unique potential and tourism attractions developed through the empowerment of local communities as the main actors. Thus, tourism villages are oriented not only toward increasing tourist visits but also toward improving the welfare of rural communities. In the context of regional development, tourism villages serve as a strategy to promote local economic growth, cultural preservation, and the strengthening of regional identity (Yoeti, 2008).

Institutional Capacity

Institutional capacity refers to the ability of an organization or institution to perform its functions, tasks, and roles effectively and sustainably. According to Grindle (1997), institutional capacity includes the capability of human resources, organizational structure, work systems, and cooperation networks in achieving development objectives. UNDP (2009) adds that strengthening institutional capacity involves three levels, namely:

- Individual capacity (human resource competencies)
- Organizational capacity (structure, governance, management)
- System capacity (regulations, policies, networks)

In the context of village governance, institutional capacity is a decisive factor for the success of community-based development programs, including the management of tourism villages.

Village Institutions in Development

Village institutions constitute an organizational apparatus that functions to administer governance and empower the community. Under Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, village governments have the authority to regulate and manage community interests based on local initiatives, origin rights, and customary traditions. According to Dwipayana (2003), strong village institutions foster community participation, enhance accountability, and promote village self-reliance. Therefore, strengthening village institutions becomes a prerequisite for village development grounded in local potential.

Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of Tourism Villages

Strengthening the institutional capacity of tourism villages involves enhancing the capabilities of tourism village managers (Pokdarwis, BUMDes, village government, and community groups) in planning, management, promotion, and tourism services. Suansri (2003) argues that the success of tourism villages depends heavily on community participation and the ability of local institutions to manage tourism potential sustainably. In addition, Goodwin and Santilli (2009) emphasize that community-based tourism requires strong local institutions so that economic benefits can be directly experienced by local residents. Thus, strengthening the institutional capacity of tourism villages is an important strategy for creating tourism governance that is professional, participatory, and sustainable.

Kawali Village as a Tourism Village

Kawali Village in Ciamis Regency has tourism potential grounded in history, culture, religion, and culinary attractions. The Astana Gede Kawali Site, a legacy of the Galuh Kingdom, serves as a key attraction for heritage tourism. This potential needs to be managed optimally through strong village institutions in order to improve community welfare while preserving local cultural heritage.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) positions local communities as the owners of the tourism development agenda by setting goals, managing resources, and steering the distribution of benefits to residents as the primary recipients of tourism impacts (Okazaki, 2008; Dangi & Petrick, 2021). Participation in CBT is understood as a process of redistributing power community members are involved from planning and decision-making to program evaluation so that destination control does not shift to external actors (Okazaki, 2008; Stone & Stone, 2011). In terms of outcomes, CBT can contribute to local development and poverty reduction, but its effectiveness depends strongly on the design of community organizations, business capacity, and governance arrangements that prevent domination by local elites (Zapata et al., 2011; Stone & Stone, 2011). The sustainability principle in CBT requires the protection of culture, the environment, and host community well-being as the basis of social legitimacy and as the core of the tourist experience (Giampiccoli et al., 2022; Dangi & Petrick, 2021). Accordingly, CBT-based tourism village development requires institutions capable of integrating attractions, services, and local products into coherent experience packages, while also expanding local economic benefits (Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, 2021; Sebele, 2010):

- Community participation in planning–implementation–evaluation
- Local ownership/management of attractions and tourism enterprises
- Clear mechanisms for sharing economic benefits
- Cultural and environmental conservation as operational norms
- Strengthening capacity and the role of local groups (community/SMEs)
- Quality of the tourist experience grounded in authenticity

Institutional Capacity

Institutional capacity refers to an institution's or organization's ability to carry out its mandate effectively through collective capabilities, legitimacy, and adaptation to changes in the operating environment (Morgan, 2006; Brinkerhoff & Morgan, 2010). This concept emphasizes that performance is not determined solely by individual competence, but also by the rules of the game, organizational structures, relationships, and processes that shape collective action (Morgan, 2006; Venner, 2015). In assessment practice, capacity can be mapped through dimensions such as purpose, internal processes, external relations, and learning capability, all of which influence organizational performance (Lusthaus et al., 2002). Capacity strengthening therefore involves reinforcing coordination, leadership, accountability, and resource mobilization so that organizations can cope with cross-actor operational complexity (Brinkerhoff & Morgan, 2010). Because capacity interventions are process-oriented and often produce medium- to long-term effects, measures of success should capture institutional change and sustainability rather than merely training outputs or short-term indicators (Vallejo & Wehn, 2016):

- Managerial staff competencies (management, service delivery, partnerships)
- Clear organizational structure and role division
- Standard operating procedures/work guidelines (operations, services, finance, partnerships)
- Leadership and decision-making mechanisms
- Availability of resources (funding, facilities, working time)
- Cross-actor coordination and communication (village government, tourism awareness group/Pokdarwis, MSMEs/UMKM, community groups)
- Collaborative networks and external partnerships
- Monitoring and evaluation, and performance accountability

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This community service activity was carried out in Kawali Village, which is administratively located in Kawali District, Ciamis Regency, West Java Province. The selection of the site was based on Kawali Village's potential as a tourism village grounded in history, culture, and the local economy. The activity locations included the Astana Gede Kawali Site, the Kampung Nila Kawali Educational and Culinary Tourism area, local art and cultural studios, as well as community settings directly involved in managing the tourism village. The determination of the community service site aligns with Sugiyono's view that research and service locations should be chosen purposively based on the relevance of the problem and the potential being examined. The target groups in this community service activity involved various stakeholders who play strategic roles in tourism village development. The primary targets included the Kawali Village Government, particularly village officials involved in planning and managing the tourism village. In addition, local destination managers—such as those responsible for the Astana Gede Kawali Site, Kampung Nila Kawali, and cultural tourism—were also included as target groups. The activity further engaged community groups, including fish cultivation groups (*pokdakan*), MSME actors producing processed tilapia products, creative economy groups, and cultural communities and art studios. The general public of Kawali Village was also involved as those directly affected by tourism village development. This multi-actor involvement is consistent with Eko Mulyadi's perspective emphasizing that community empowerment is most effective when it engages all local elements in a participatory and sustainable manner.

Data collection employed multiple techniques to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information. Direct observation was used to examine field conditions, tourism activities, destination management patterns, and the level of community participation. This technique is important because, according to Lexy J. Moleong, observation enables researchers to understand social phenomena contextually based on real situations in the field. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with village government representatives, tourism managers, MSME actors, and community leaders to explore information related to potential, challenges, and development needs for the tourism village. In addition, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to gather collective perspectives on the institutional arrangement of tourism management, patterns of collaboration among parties, and the formulation of integrated tourism village development solutions. Documentation study was also conducted by collecting supporting data such as the village profile, demographic data, village planning documents, and visual documentation of activities. The use of multiple techniques aligns with the concept of data triangulation proposed by Norman K. Denzin to enhance data validity and trustworthiness.

In implementing this community service activity, several supporting tools and materials were used. Office stationery such as notebooks, pens, folders, and paper were used for recording field data. Documentation devices, including cameras or mobile phones, were utilized to capture the activities, site conditions, and community engagement. In addition, information technology tools such as laptops and data-processing applications were used in the data analysis process and report preparation. The use of these tools and materials supports the effectiveness of community service as suggested by Adi Fahrudin, who argues that educational media and supporting tools play an important role in improving community understanding and participation. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. Data obtained from observations, interviews, FGDs, and documentation were grouped, interpreted, and analyzed in depth to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the

institutional conditions, tourism potential, existing problems, and opportunities for tourism village development. This approach was chosen because, according to Miles and Huberman, qualitative analysis enables researchers to systematically interpret meanings behind social data through the processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The presentation of the community service results was delivered in the form of a systematic narrative description, complemented by visual documentation in the form of activity photographs. This mode of presentation was intended to help readers more easily understand the process, outcomes, and impacts of the community service activity. This is in line with Creswell's view that narrative and visual presentations of qualitative data can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the community service program indicate that Kawali Village has the characteristics of a village with strong tourism potential rooted in history, culture, religion, culinary traditions, and the creative economy. This potential is manifested in four main destinations: Astana Gede Kawali, the Kampung Nila Kawali Educational and Culinary Tourism Area, the Ki Bawong Art Studio, and creative-economy tourism activities distributed across four hamlets. These four destinations reflect local cultural identity while also contributing to strengthening the community's economy through tourism and local-wisdom-based enterprises. The main subjects involved in the community service program include the Kawali Village Government, tourism destination managers, fish-farming groups (pokdakan), SMEs producing processed tilapia products, creative economy groups, arts and cultural communities, and the general public. These groups function as managers, supporting business actors, and direct beneficiaries of tourism village development. Field observations show that community involvement has emerged organically, yet it has not been organized within an integrated tourism village management system.

Field observations further reveal that each destination has distinct strengths. Astana Gede Kawali excels as a historical and religious tourism destination, Kampung Nila Kawali as an educational and culinary tourism site based on fisheries, the Ki Bawong Art Studio as a center for preserving arts and culture, and creative-economy tourism as a driver of local SMEs. However, these strengths have not been fully optimized due to several constraints, including limited human resources, weak promotion and insufficient use of digital technology, the absence of integrated tour packages, suboptimal environmental and facility management, and the lack of strong economic and tourism institutions. Institutionally, the program findings show that tourism management in Kawali Village remains partial and fragmented. Each destination is managed by different groups or parties without effective coordination. This situation results in overlapping programs, inefficiencies in management, weak joint promotion, and limited collective competitiveness of the tourism destinations. In addition, low human resource capacity and limited funding support are major barriers to sustainable tourism development in Kawali Village.

These findings confirm that strong tourism potential does not automatically guarantee successful development if it is not supported by a robust institutional system and adequate human resource capacity. This aligns with Eko Mulyadi's view that the success of community empowerment based on local potential is strongly determined by the ability of institutions to coordinate actors and resources in a sustainable manner. The fragmented condition of tourism management in Kawali Village reinforces the urgency of establishing an integrated tourism village management institution as a cross-sector coordinating umbrella. This institution is expected to synergize all tourism destinations, the village government, community groups, and business actors into a single, planned management system. The findings also resonate

with Adi Fahrudin's perspective, which emphasizes institutional strengthening as a core mechanism for enhancing community capacity and ensuring the sustainability of development programs.

Beyond institutional issues, weak utilization of digital technology and the absence of integrated tour packages in Kawali Village indicate low destination readiness in responding to the dynamics of modern tourism. In fact, integrating destinations through cohesive tour packages and utilizing digital technology for promotion and reservations are crucial strategies for improving the competitiveness of tourism villages. This is consistent with community service insights that stress the importance of innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration in community-based tourism management, as highlighted by Creswell in the broader context of community-based social program development. When compared with other community service initiatives focusing on strengthening cultural- and creative-economy-based tourism villages, the Kawali Village program shows similar main issues, particularly in institutional capacity, human resources, and technology utilization. The key difference lies in Kawali Village's distinctive combination of historical, religious, cultural, and creative economy potential within a single area, which requires a more complex and adaptive integrated tourism village management model.

This discussion underscores that without institutional reform and strengthened human resource capacity, Kawali Village's potential as a leading cultural tourism destination in West Java will be difficult to realize optimally and sustainably. Therefore, this community service program recommends establishing an integrated tourism village management institution as a key strategy to enhance cross-sector synergy, strengthen cooperation networks, develop integrated tour packages, and optimize the use of digital technology to support the development of a competitive and sustainable tourism village.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the community service program, which were aligned with the objectives of the activity, it can be concluded that Kawali Village has substantial potential to develop as a tourism village grounded in history, culture, religion, culinary heritage, and the creative economy. This potential is reflected in four main attractions: Astana Gede Kawali, Kampung Nila Kawali, Sanggar Ki Bawong, and creative-economy tourism at the hamlet level, all of which can strengthen local identity while supporting the community's economy. The community, village government, business groups, and cultural communities have been involved in tourism management; however, this involvement has largely evolved organically and has not yet been organized within an integrated tourism-village management system. Each destination has distinct strengths, yet development remains suboptimal due to limited human resource capacity, weak digital promotion, the absence of integrated tour packages, underdeveloped facility management, and the lack of strong tourism and economic institutions. Destination management is still partial and fragmented, resulting in insufficient coordination, program inefficiencies, and low collective competitiveness of the tourism village. Therefore, the success of developing Kawali Village as a leading tourism village depends heavily on strengthening the managing institutions and enhancing human resource capacity so that existing potential can be managed in an integrated and sustainable manner.

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