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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: THE RELEVANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT OF ECOPRENEURSHIP IN MARINE ECOTOURISM

Sri Wahyu Lelly Hana Setyanti, Sudarsih

Abstract:

Ecopreneurship is an environment based on entrepreneurial activities to fulfill their business goals that have an impact on ecotourism development. Marine ecotourism is one sector that has the potential to develop the ecopreneurship business concept. This paper focuses on how to take the potential of marine tourism based on community empowerment to encourage more entrepreneurs to overcome environmental problems. This study will examine the interface between entrepreneurs and the environment which is the domain of ecology. Business growth is expected to be sustainable in line with the maintenance of environmental quality. The analytical technique used is a descriptive analysis technique with a qualitative approach.

Keywords: community empowerment, ecopreneurship, marine ecotourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism as a sub-sector of the economy is the largest and fastest growing industry in the world. The main and first priority of tourism is to build people, especially local communities and those who directly interact with tourists. Ecopreneurship is an entrepreneurial activity through an environmental lens. Ecopreneurship is characterized by several fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial activity oriented to management systems or technical procedures and more focused on personal or team initiatives and skills to achieve market success with environmental innovation (Schaltegger and Peterson, 2001; Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002;) . Kainrath (2009) stated that the environmental impact is positive for the company and provides a real and substantial contribution to environmental development. The focus is on environmental sustainability to gain momentum in the business environment. This trend has created various opportunities for entrepreneurs: creating green technology, using technology to promote environmental sustainability. According to (Montes and Kafley, 2019; Salazar, 2012), it is explained that ecotourism has been actively marketed as an effective environmental resource and opportunity to have a significant influence on climate for rural communities.

Strategically designed and managed ecotourism attractions provide direct benefits that can reduce the burden on non-productive businesses. However, to ensure the right direction of ecotourism, there are some basic principles that must be followed. Ecotourism is about bringing together biodiversity, culture, and sustainable tourism (Nugroho, 2011; Sasongko, 2017, Asyari, 2021). Community-based ecotourism is a type of ecotourism that aims to involve the community and local communities in natural resource management with the aim of preserving economic, cultural and environmental diversity. The main objective of community-based ecotourism is to encourage local communities by involving them in these ecotourism activities and at the same time empowering them to secure their habitation. Good ecotourism must be based on Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability (MOA) (Sonjai et al. 2018).

This study tries to find key indicators of community involvement in ecotourism management that can ensure that local communities are involved and take part in ecotourism activities and must uphold the values of ecotourism. Next is

about how to minimize negative impacts; build awareness and appreciation of ecosystems and culture; provide positive opportunities for visitors and hosts. Ultimately it is expected to provide direct financial benefits for conservation; provide monetary and empowerment benefits to local residents and increase the friendliness of coastal communities. This study uses the desk study method with online data and information search techniques, secondary sources, and other sources of scientific publications.

The purpose of this study is to explain the concept of implementing ecopreneurship in marine ecotourism. The implementation of ecopreneurship is used as a way to raise public awareness of the environment, to improve environmental conditions, and improve the economy by building independent communities to gain mutual benefits. This study proposes a conceptual model and shows the practical benefits that can be taken to encourage ecopreneurship in a new policy framework and promote marine ecotourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of Marine Ecotourism through community empowerment

Ecosystems in coastal areas can be natural such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, sandy beaches, rocky beaches, and artificial (manmade) such as ponds, tourism areas, industrial areas, and residential areas (Dahuri et al 2001). The coastal area ecosystem has a lot of potential in it therefore the coastal area has an important role in the community's economy and regional economic development, especially around the coastal area.

Tourism development is a continuous business. Community-based ecotourism is an ecotourism business that focuses on the active role of the community and community-based ecotourism patterns form a pattern of ecotourism development that supports and allows full participation of local communities in the planning, implementation, management of ecotourism businesses and all the benefits derived. The development must be able to provide competitiveness against other tourist destinations, both in terms of services, attractions and tourist objects and so on so that it can adjust to the tastes of tourists. There are two reasons for developing tourism, the first for economic reasons. Tourism development will be able to create ample

job opportunities for local residents. Directly with the construction of tourism facilities and infrastructure in the area, the workforce will be sucked up by various kinds of development projects. In addition, indirectly, there will be new demand for agricultural products, livestock, plantations, home industries, small crafts and education to serve tourists who come for non-economic reasons. One of the motivations for tourists who visit a tourist destination is to witness and see the natural beauty and the customs and habits of the local population. This will cause the desire and desire to maintain all these tourism assets.

Ecotourism and Ecopreneurship

Ecotourism cannot be separated from the term of conservation. Therefore, ecotourism is likened to a responsible travel process. Tourism development is carried out in destinations for ecological tourism with the maximum benefit for the ecological, socio-cultural, economic aspects for the community, managers and the government. Schaltegger's (2002) research study states that ecopreneurship comes from two words, ecology (eco) and entrepreneurship. Ecopreneurship is all entrepreneurial activities related to environmental protection. Ecopreneurship is characterized by several fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial activity that is oriented to management systems or technical procedures and focuses on individual or team expertise to achieve goals with environmental innovation. Research studies (McEwen, 2013, Schaltegger, 2002) show that a good environment will provide contribution to the ecosystem and it all requires the support of all parties, in this case the surrounding community. The wider contribution will benefit not only the residents living around the tourist area, but also a solution for the wider environment. An ecotourism business that focuses on solutions to preserve the environment, especially matters related to environmental ecology, is called ecopreneurship.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is literature study. Researchers conducted a review of several literatures on the concept of community-based ecotourism in tourism development. Literature research or literature study itself is research that is only based on written works, including research results that have been or have not been published. Meanwhile, the analytical technique used is descriptive qualitative analysis technique, and a comparison of several research results and other scientific publications related to ecotourism issues.

4. DISCUSSION

The Concept of Marine Ecotourism Development Through Community Empowerment

Ecotourism describes a form of tourism that is managed through a conservation approach. If ecotourism is in the management of nature and culture, the community will be responsible for sustainability and welfare, while conservation is an effort to maintain the sustainability of the use of natural resources for the present and the future. The most dominant concept in coastal areas is Ecotourism, where this concept is a tourism activity that is not just nature tourism but is responsible for nature to preserve the environment, empowering communities by supporting the welfare of local communities (The International Ecotourism Society 2015).

Tourism is positively correlated with conservation means providing effective economic incentives to preserve and

enhance cultural biodiversity. The second aspect, namely the aspect of economic empowerment, is ecotourism involving local communities, which means increasing the capacity, employment opportunities of local communities.

Ecotourism is a complex idea that involves many components, principles and criteria of McEwen (2013). Without applying the principles and criteria, nature tourism cannot be categorized as ecotourism. Therefore, the development of natural tourism needs to have proper planning so that it can be useful for all components in it so as to produce ecotourism nature tourism. The existence of planning for the development of natural tourism objects, especially coastal areas, is needed to provide a clear picture so that the development program is properly socialized in both the short and long term. In the planning, aspects are needed that become a reference for planning a tourism object such as marketing aspects, aspects of community resources, and others. These aspects are then accompanied by strategies so that the success of planning is even greater. Ecopreneurship is an environment based on entrepreneurial activities to fulfill their business goals that have an impact on economic sustainability (Gibbs, 2009).

The terminology definition of an existing community-based ecotourism concept is defined as a concept that emphasizes full community involvement in tourism development, management and planning. In addition, it is also a form of participatory alternative tourism development planning approach, which is used to describe forms of tourism that recognize important environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts caused by tourism activities, especially tourism that is beneficial to local communities (Baskoro, 2017). Sasongko 2017, Asyari et al., 2021).

The implementation of tourism development carried out from community-based ecotourism emphasizes 5 aspects of development, including: (1) institutional aspects, (2) marketing aspects, (3) human resources aspects, (4) education aspects, and (5) spatial aspects. Community-based marine ecotourism development can be done through: (1) integrated and sustainable tourism, (2) Nature conservation education, (3) attractive tourism, (4) local customs and culture, (5) community involvement, (6) institutional strengthening, (7) improving human resources, (8) home tourism supporting industries (Sasongko, 2011; Baskoro, 2017; Lellotery et al., 2020; Setyanti, 2021).

The Challenge of Establishing a Marine Ecotourism Area with the concept of Ecopreneurship

There are fundamental findings from the analysis carried out on the concept of ecotourism based on ecopreneurship. The context of ecopreneurship in supporting the development of marine ecotourism is a factor that is still not discussed in the existing community-based ecotourism concept. The concept of ecotourism areas based on ecopreneurship has a role in providing reciprocity or benefits from ecotourism areas. Concrete examples are through educational programs, namely naming tree species and giving warning signs to preserve nature, economic programs by identifying local products that have high selling values, as well as outreach to environmentally conscious groups that have been formed in the community (Widiyanto et al., 2019).

The challenge currently being faced is the involvement and participation of the community who contribute to ecotourism development areas without providing effective direction for the empowerment process (Zaenuri, 2012, Muriyanto and Mahyudi, 2017). Not directed and still partial, such as understanding ecopreneurship not only from the community and marine ecotourism managers but also involving tourists who visit as subjects, Wrihatnolo and Dwidjowijoto (2007) Ecopreneurship in forming marine ecotourism areas requires support from all stakeholders, namely the government as regulatory holders,

ecotourism managers, the public and visiting tourists.

The solution for increasing environmental conservation, green products in marine ecotourism areas is related to the lack of socialization of community empowerment and education programs, which causes people's mindsets that are only money oriented (Fitriyana, 2015). The process of community empowerment is a "becoming" process, not an instant process. So the ecopreneurship process in marine ecotourism starts from systematic community empowerment starting from public awareness of the assets and potential they have, increasing literacy in sustainable environmental protection, green product innovation and preparing human resources who will later play an important role as actors.

5. CONCLUSION

Educating and making local communities and tourists aware of the importance of conservation is one of the principles of marine ecotourism development that must be fulfilled in order to ensure the integrity and sustainability of ecotourism destinations. It can be concluded that research related to the concept of community-based ecotourism in the future also needs to pay attention to tourists as one of the stakeholders or research subjects. Ecopreneurship encourages public awareness to care about environmental sustainability. Socialization, assistance and training are needed for environmentally friendly ecotourism management. If this effort is carried out continuously, the benefits will be felt in the long term. Not only benefits for the people living around marine ecotourism but also an example for the development of other ecotourism. This conceptual study of ecotourism and community empowerment can be used by entrepreneurs, academics, government, communities and all parties to focus on increasing ecopreneurship.

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