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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS AN ECOTOURISM ENABLER: EVIDENCE FROM PELIATAN, BALI

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Abstract

Ecotourism development frameworks commonly treat evaluation criteria as independent, parallel entities, overlooking the dynamic interdependencies among them. This assumption carries practical consequences, when criteria are isolated as standalone units, their cascading effects on one another remain invisible to planners and policymakers. Peliatan Village in Ubud, Bali, presents a compelling empirical case in which community participation demonstrably drives outcomes across higher-weighted criteria a relationship that existing frameworks have not yet articulated. This study aims to examine whether community participation, positioned third in an AHP-derived expert hierarchy, functions as an enabling criterion that underpins the realisation of the two highest-weighted criteria: environment (0.281) and socio-culture (0.210). Two complementary datasets were integrated, an AHP-weighted ecotourism criteria hierarchy generated from assessments by 15 cross-disciplinary experts, and empirical data on community participation in Peliatan Village. Inter-criteria relational analysis was applied to trace causal patterns within the data. Findings confirm that community participation (weight: 0.168) operates as an enabling criterion in practice. In Peliatan, initiatives spanning river management across four focal points, waste programmes (PEGO, TEKI), the one-million-biopore campaign, the Puspa Aman programme, preservation of 237 hectares of rice fields across 12 subak, and revival of the meanyud-anyudan ritual collectively enabled improvements in both environmental and socio-cultural outcomes achievements culminating in Peliatan's recognition as the highest-scoring village in Indonesia's 2018 Village Development Index (IDM). These findings challenge conventional hierarchy-based planning and propose a reorientation toward enabling criteria sequencing in ecotourism development.

Keywords: Enabling Criterion, Ecotourism, Community Participation, AHP, Peliatan Village

1. INTRODUCTION

The global paradigm shift from mass tourism toward sustainable tourism has positioned ecotourism as one of the most strategically significant models of destination development, particularly for developing countries endowed with exceptional natural and cultural assets (Fennell, 2008; Western, 1995). Ecotourism, in this context, extends well beyond nature-based leisure, it constitutes an integrated system that simultaneously advances environmental conservation, local economic empowerment, and socio-cultural sustainability as inseparable dimensions of a single developmental framework (TIES,

2006; Page & Ross, 2002). In Indonesia, the urgency of this transition has intensified in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed with unprecedented clarity the fragility of mass tourism-dependent economies in the face of global crises, while at the same time revealing the comparative resilience of community-based destination models (Akis, 2011). Within this broader context, Bali confronts a challenge that is both distinctive and consequential: how to reorient its tourism development trajectory away from visitor volume and toward qualitative sustainability, without compromising the ecological and cultural values that constitute its most fundamental comparative advantage. A growing body of research has identified numerous Balinese villages as having substantial potential for ecotourism development, among them Peliatan Village in the Ubud sub-district, a settlement that has demonstrated demonstrably robust ecological, cultural, and institutional assets (Adnyana, 2020; Dewi, 2017; Sulistyawati, 2011).

A central challenge in ecotourism development planning concerns the question of how evaluation criteria should be prioritised as the basis for intervention design. Scholars have approached this question through diverse frameworks, from Cooper et al.'s (1995) 4A model to ecological sustainability criteria (Page & Ross, 2002) and community-based indicators (Jaini et al., 2019; Aziz et al., 2015). Yet most of these frameworks share a common methodological limitation, criteria are evaluated in parallel and independently of one another, with little examination of how individual criteria interact with or condition the achievement of others. The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), developed by Saaty (1993), has been widely applied as a multi-criteria decision-making instrument in ecotourism planning contexts (Suryabhagavan et al., 2015; Ren, 2022). Its principal strength lies in its capacity to transform expert judgements into structured, quantitatively consistent priority weights. Drawing on this framework, Prasandya et al. (2022) produced a weighted hierarchy of six ecotourism criteria, environment (0.281), socio-culture (0.210), community participation (0.168), education (0.166), economy (0.100), and institutional (0.075) derived from the assessments of 15 cross-disciplinary experts, with an inconsistency ratio of 0.03, confirming the validity of the data. A subsequent empirical study confirmed that community participation, despite occupying the third rank in this hierarchy, manifests concretely across multiple dimensions in Peliatan Village from collective decision-making and environmental programme implementation to economic benefit-sharing and awig-awig-based evaluation mechanisms (Prasandya et al., 2022; Cohen & Uphoff, 1977).

It is at this juncture that a critical scientific gap emerges. The prevailing literature treats ecotourism criteria as independent entities, yet no study has directly addressed a more fundamental question, whether these criteria are genuinely causally independent, or whether some of them function as enabling criteria prerequisites whose absence would prevent the realisation of higher-weighted criteria, regardless of how well those criteria are targeted by intervention. This question carries practical implications that extend well beyond theoretical interest. If community participation ranked third in the expert hierarchy, in fact causally drives improvements in the environmental and socio-cultural criteria ranked first and second, then the prevailing logic of ecotourism planning interventions warrants fundamental reconsideration. Interventions that prioritise the highest-weighted criteria without first consolidating the enabling criterion that underpins them risk producing improvements that are structurally fragile and ultimately unsustainable (Wondirad et al., 2020). The present study addresses this gap by integrating two complementary datasets, the AHP-weighted ecotourism criteria hierarchy and the empirical data on community participation in Peliatan Village to examine analytically

whether community participation functions as an enabling criterion that conditions the realisation of the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions. In doing so, this study makes a dual contribution, methodologically, it demonstrates how an AHP-derived weighting framework, previously employed solely as a prioritisation instrument, can be operationalised for relational analysis between criteria; and substantively, it proposes a reorientation of ecotourism planning strategy toward an enabling criteria sequencing approach as an alternative to the parallel-hierarchy model that has dominated the field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ecotourism: Concepts, Dimensions and Evaluation Criteria

Ecotourism has evolved considerably beyond its early iteration as a marketing label for nature-based destinations, emerging instead as a development framework that integrates three dimensions of sustainability simultaneously, environmental conservation, local community economic empowerment, and socio-cultural continuity (Fennell, 1999; Western, 1995; TIES, 2006). A critical elaboration of this integrated conception was offered by Eplerwood (2002), who argued that these three dimensions cannot be optimised in isolation the neglect of any single dimension inevitably generates negative consequences for the others. Despite this well-established theoretical premise, however, the majority of ecotourism evaluation frameworks developed in subsequent decades have continued to treat these dimensions as parallel and independent components, amenable to separate assessment without regard to their mutual interdependence (Page & Ross, 2002; Swarbrooke, 1999).

The most influential tradition within ecotourism criteria assessment is the expert weight-based multi-criteria approach. Cooper et al. (1995) introduced the 4A framework, comprising attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services as a foundational model for destination evaluation, one that was subsequently adapted across a wide range of ecotourism studies in Southeast Asia. Later scholarship expanded and refined this framework by incorporating environmental quality, socio-cultural integrity, community participation, and institutional capacity as additional evaluative dimensions (Aziz et al., 2015; Jaini et al., 2019; Yusnikusumah & Sulystiawati, 2016). Within the Indonesian context specifically, Dalem (2004) and Choy (1997) developed more contextually grounded ecotourism principles that took into account the distinctive ecological and cultural characteristics of tropical regions, including Bali.

The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), developed by Saaty (1993), subsequently became the most widely adopted instrument for operationalising multi-criteria assessments into consistent, verifiable quantitative weights. Saaty's framework rests on four core principles, hierarchical decomposition, pairwise comparative judgement, priority synthesis, and logical consistency testing, a methodological sequence that enables experts from different disciplinary backgrounds to arrive at measurable, consensus-based priority weights. Suryabhagavan et al. (2015) demonstrated, in their Ethiopian case study, how AHP can identify potential ecotourism sites through the integration of multi-criteria weights, an approach subsequently replicated in Malaysia (Aziz et al., 2015) and Indonesia (Rahayu et al., 2019). Ren (2022) further established that AHP offers a comparative advantage in ecotourism resource evaluation precisely because of its capacity to convert qualitative expert judgements into measurable priority ratios, thereby mitigating the subjective biases inherent in single-assessor evaluations.

One structural limitation of AHP-based ecotourism evaluation, however, has received remarkably little critical attention in the literature: the assumption that the

criteria under evaluation are mutually independent. As Wondirad et al. (2020) observed in their study of stakeholder collaboration in developing-country ecotourism contexts, the success or failure of ecotourism programmes is determined far more by the relational dynamics between components than by the relative weight assigned to any individual component in isolation. When a criterion such as community participation is evaluated merely as one item among many in an assessment checklist without accounting for its potential function as an enabling factor for other criteria, the planning interventions that follow are at risk of being fundamentally misdirected.

2.2 Community Participation as a Strategic Component of Ecotourism

Among all the criteria that constitute ecotourism frameworks, community participation occupies a position that is conceptually the most complex and the most extensively debated. Cohen and Uphoff (1977) defined community participation in development as active involvement across four cyclically interrelated stages: decision-making, implementation, benefit-taking, and evaluation. These four stages are not merely sequential phases, each reinforces the others in a mutually conditioning relationship. The absence of genuine participation in decision-making, for instance, tends to compromise the quality of implementation and ultimately diminishes the benefits that communities are able to derive from ecotourism programmes.

In the context of ecotourism, local community engagement is far more than an ethical requirement, it constitutes a functional prerequisite for programme sustainability (Swarbrooke, 1999; Nugroho & Negara, 2014). Wondirad et al. (2020) argued compellingly that stakeholder collaboration, with local communities at its core, is the single most consequential determinant of ecotourism success in developing countries, consistently outweighing technical factors such as infrastructure provision or site accessibility. This finding is corroborated by Sulistyawati (2011), whose Balinese case evidence demonstrated that community-based ecotourism models succeed in preserving both ecological integrity and socio-cultural continuity precisely because communities retain meaningful control over resource management rather than functioning merely as passive beneficiaries of externally directed programmes.

A parallel pattern is evident across multiple Indonesian studies. Hanum (2013) observed that facilitative capacity-building in Indonesian ecotourism development only produces durable outcomes when communities are engaged from the earliest stages of planning not after programme frameworks have already been determined by outside parties. In Bali specifically, the subak system the communally managed rice irrigation network provides centuries of evidence that institutionalised community participation in decision-making constitutes the foundational condition enabling agricultural ecosystems to remain both productive and ecologically sustainable (Dewi, 2017; Adnyana, 2020). Rahayu et al.'s (2019) study of Tenganan Pegringsingan village further demonstrated that Balinese villages maintaining the awig-awig system as a communal evaluation instrument consistently achieve higher sustainability scores than those relying exclusively on externally imposed regulatory frameworks. Taken collectively, these findings point toward a proposition that has yet to be explicitly tested: that community participation is not simply one criterion among many in ecotourism evaluation, but rather an enabling criterion, one whose fulfilment creates the conditions under which higher-weighted criteria can be empirically realised.

2.3 Criteria Interdependence and The Concept of Enabling Criterion

The concept of an enabling criterion, a criterion whose fulfilment creates the conditions for other criteria to be realised is rooted in systems thinking traditions within development planning, which conceive of a system's components not as self-contained entities but as elements connected through causal and conditional relationships (Swarbrooke, 1999). In the destination development literature, this inter-component dependency has frequently been overlooked, largely due to the dominance of atomistic indicator-based approaches in which each criterion is measured, weighted, and interpreted in isolation from the others (Page & Ross, 2002).

Wondirad et al. (2020) argued that the failure of ecotourism programmes in developing countries is rarely attributable to poor performance on high-weighted criteria such as environmental quality or socio-cultural integrity in any direct sense. Rather, failure tends to originate in the absence of a collaborative foundation that constitutes the prerequisite for those criteria to be achieved at all. Interventions that prioritise environmental improvements without first building the community participation capacity on which those improvements depend will produce gains that are inherently temporary, vulnerable to degradation as soon as external pressures intensify.

The present study carries this argument to a more specific and empirically grounded level. By integrating the AHP-weighted ecotourism criteria hierarchy derived from 15 expert assessments with the empirical community participation data from Peliatan Village (Prasandya et al., 2022), it examines analytically whether community participation, ranked third in the expert hierarchy in fact performs a causal function as an enabling criterion with respect to the two highest-weighted dimensions: environment and socio-culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Approach and Data Sources

This study employs a secondary data integration with relational analysis approach, drawing on two complementary existing datasets, the AHP-weighted ecotourism criteria hierarchy and the empirical community participation data from Peliatan Village (Prasandya et al., 2022). Rather than generating new primary data, the study analytically integrates these two datasets to examine a relational question that neither dataset alone was designed to address, whether community participation functions as a causal prerequisite for the realisation of higher-weighted ecotourism criteria.

The first dataset was produced through an AHP procedure involving 15 cross-disciplinary experts spanning the fields of tourism, architecture, environmental studies, socio-culture, and economics. Each expert assessed the relative importance of six ecotourism criteria through a structured online questionnaire, and the resulting judgement data were processed using Expert Choice 11 software to generate criterion weights alongside an inconsistency ratio of 0.03, confirming the validity of the expert assessments (Saaty, 1993). The weighted hierarchy produced by this procedure ranked the criteria as follows: environment (0.281) → socio-culture (0.210) → community participation (0.168) → education (0.166) → economy (0.100) → institutional (0.075).

The second dataset derives from a qualitative field study conducted through in-depth observation and interviews with village officials and community leaders in Peliatan Village, Ubud sub-district. Data collection and analysis were structured around Cohen and Uphoff's (1977) four-dimensional framework of community participation: (1) participation in decision-making, (2) participation in implementation, (3) participation in

benefit-taking, and (4) participation in evaluation. The empirical material encompasses documented narratives of concrete community programmes, including river management at four focal points, the PEGO (Peliatan Ngogo) and TEKI (Teges Kawan Yangloni) waste management campaigns, the one-million biopore initiative, the Puspa Aman programme, the maintenance of 237 hectares of rice paddies across 12 subak networks, and the revitalisation of the meanyud-anyudan ritual procession.

3.2 Data Analysis Procedure

The integration of both datasets was carried out through three sequential analytical stages.

a. Stage One: Causal Mapping of Programmes onto Criteria

Each community participation programme documented in the second dataset was mapped against the criteria in the AHP hierarchy to identify which criteria were empirically affected by each programme. This mapping was guided by the operational definitions of each criterion as formulated through the theoretical synthesis in the first study. River management, the biopore initiative, and the Puspa Aman programme were mapped as programmes with direct impacts on the environmental criterion. The revitalisation of the meanyud-anyudan ritual procession and the maintenance of the subak networks were mapped as programmes bearing on the socio-cultural criterion. Critically, both sets of programmes were found to have materialised throughvand only because of a robust institutional foundation of community participation.

b. Stage Two: Conditionality Analysis

Following the causal mapping, the analysis examined whether the relationship between community participation programmes and improvements in the environmental and socio-cultural criteria is conditional in nature, that is, whether improvements in these two highest-weighted criteria could only occur if and only if community participation was already institutionally embedded. This conditionality analysis was conducted through narrative examination of the empirical evidence in the second dataset, with particular attention to the temporal patterns between the activation of community participation structures and the subsequent achievement of outcomes on the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions.

c. Stage Three: Reinterpretation of the AHP Hierarchy

Drawing on the findings from the two preceding stages, the study proceeded to reinterpret the meaning of the AHP weight hierarchy. The conventional reading of AHP weights treats them as expressions of the intrinsic importance of each criterion in isolation. The present study proposes an alternative interpretation: that weights do not solely reflect intrinsic importance, but under conditions empirically demonstrated in the field also reflect the desired sequence of outcomes to be achieved, while the mechanism through which those outcomes are realised is determined by the criterion functioning as the enabling criterion.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The AHP Hierarchy and The Empirical Conditions of Community Participation in Peliatan Village

The assumption that ecotourism evaluation criteria operate in parallel and independently of one another represents a structural limitation long embedded in the multi-criteria literature, yet rarely subjected to explicit critique. The weighted hierarchy of six ecotourism criteria: environment (0.281), socio-culture (0.210), community

participation (0.168), education (0.166), economy (0.100), and institutional (0.075), rests on an inconsistency ratio of 0.03, confirming the validity of assessments provided by 15 cross-disciplinary experts, and the resulting hierarchy is methodologically beyond question. What the weight hierarchy does not answer, however, is a more fundamental question: whether each criterion can genuinely be achieved independently, or whether certain criteria can only be realised once others have first been fulfilled. This question falls outside the scope of most multi-criteria evaluation models, including AHP, which are not methodologically designed to model causal relationships between criteria. It is this limitation that the present study takes as its point of departure.

Table 1. Pairwise Comparison Rating Scale and Hierarchy of Ecotourism Development Criteria

	Lingkungai	Tingkat Pai	Pendidikan	Ekonomi	Sosial Bud	Institusion
Lingkungan		2.90509	1.93424	2.72778	1.13852	2.57937
Tingkat Partisipasi Masyarakat			1.34113	1.34912	1.13207	3.09142
Pendidikan				2.35738	1.37973	2.68392
Ekonomi					1.63362	1.26747
Sosial Budaya						2.52216
Institusional	Incon: 0.03					
Priorities with respect to: Menentukan hirarki kriteria ekowisata						Combined

Source: Researchers (2022)

Treating ecotourism criteria as separate entities is not merely a methodological issue, it carries direct consequences for how planning interventions are designed and implemented in the field. As Wondirad et al. (2020) demonstrated in their study of stakeholder collaboration in developing-country contexts, ecotourism programme failures more frequently originate in the absence of the collaborative preconditions that enable other criteria to be achieved, rather than in any intrinsic weakness of the high-weighted criteria themselves. Bello et al. (2017) reinforced this finding, showing that protected area ecotourism programmes encounter their most significant obstacles precisely when local community participation is not institutionalised from the planning stage even when environmental resources are abundantly available. A DEMATEL-based study in Thailand further established that community participation functions as a causal attribute driving ecotourism potential and community support for conservation activities, rather than simply one criterion among equals (Tseng et al., 2019). Taken together, these three findings indicate that the parallelism assumption in multi-criteria ecotourism evaluation warrants considerably more rigorous empirical scrutiny.

Peliatan Village in the Ubud sub-district of Bali provides a well-suited empirical context for that scrutiny. Organised through Cohen and Uphoff's (1977) four-dimensional participation framework, the community participation conditions in Peliatan evidence a matured institutional structure across all four dimensions. In the decision-making dimension, the community collectively resolved to revitalise the meanyud-anyudan ritual procession and to preserve 237 hectares of rice paddies spanning 12 subak networks through village awig-awig and perarem instruments. In the implementation dimension,

community participation generated two clusters of programmes directly affecting the highest-weighted criteria: first, an environment-oriented cluster comprising river management at four focal points (Beji Tukad Mas Temple, Bulakan Tirta Mas, Tukad Ulun Pangkung, and Tukad Mas), the PEGO (Peliatan Ngogo) waste awareness campaign, integrated waste management through TEKI (Teges Kawan Yangloni) and the village-owned enterprise BUMDes, the one-million biopore initiative, and the Puspa Aman programme integrating riverbank revegetation along the Tukad Mas; and second, a socio-culture-oriented cluster encompassing the preservation of 12 subak networks as living heritage of the traditional irrigation system and the revitalisation of the meanyudanyudan procession as an expression of communal cultural identity. In the benefit-taking dimension, the Yangloni area previously degraded by waste from sculptors' workshops was transformed into a tourism destination supporting 105 households through homestay management, backed by hospitality and English-language training delivered through BETA Campus. In the evaluation dimension, an awig-awig-based monitoring system with financial penalty sanctions operates as a communal accountability mechanism sustaining the continuity of all these programmes.

Figure 1. Forms of Institutionalised Community Participation in Peliatan Village as Empirical Evidence of The Enabling Criterion Function
Source: Peliatan Village (2020)

The analytically significant feature of this data pattern lies not in the diversity of the programmes themselves but in their causal structure. All improvements on the environmental criterion river water quality, waste management, riverbank revegetation are the direct products of programmes that could only have materialised through collective mobilisation driven by institutionalised community participation. All improvements on the socio-cultural criterion the continuity of the subak system and the revitalisation of customary ritual are the products of communal commitments formalised through awig-awig. The Village Development Index (Indeks Desa Membangun, IDM) best-village award received in 2018, which simultaneously measures ecological, social,

and economic resilience, does not represent the parallel achievement of three separate dimensions it reflects the operation of a single mechanism that underpins all three.

4.2 Community Participation as an Enabling Criterion and Its Implications for Ecotourism Planning

The causal pattern identified in the Peliatan Village data points toward one conclusion that is difficult to set aside, improvements in the environmental and socio-cultural criteria in this village did not occur through direct intervention targeting those criteria, but because a strong institutional foundation of community participation had first taken shape and set everything else in motion. The rivers at four focal points were cleaned not through externally driven environmental rehabilitation programmes, but because village residents themselves decided, implemented, and monitored the cleaning process through the PEGO campaign and the integrated TEKI management system. The 237 hectares of rice paddies spanning 12 subak networks survived the pressure of land conversion not primarily through government regulation, but through awig-awig instruments formulated and enforced by the community itself. In both cases, community participation is not simply one criterion contributing to ecotourism sustainability it is the mechanism that makes other criteria achievable at all.

This finding resonates with Tseng et al. (2019), who demonstrated that in the Thai ecotourism context, community participation is the sole attribute that consistently functions as a cause for all other attributes including environmental conditions and attraction value while those other attributes tend to position themselves as effects. Wondirad et al. (2020) reached a parallel conclusion through qualitative analysis: ecotourism programme failures in developing countries more frequently originate in a weak communal collaboration foundation than in any deficit of environmental resources. Bello et al. (2017) went further still, showing that the presence of abundant natural resources is insufficient to secure ecotourism success when community participation has not been institutionalised from the planning stage. What happened in Peliatan, these three bodies of evidence collectively suggest, is not a local anomaly it is an expression of a broader pattern in developing-country ecotourism dynamics.

The Peliatan evidence also extends beyond confirming what is already known. Cohen and Uphoff (1977) defined community participation as a process spanning four dimensions decision-making, implementation, benefit-taking, and evaluation and emphasised that all four must operate synergistically for participation to produce sustainable outcomes. What the Peliatan data reveals is that when these four dimensions are genuinely and fully institutionalised as evidenced in river management, subak preservation, and the sanction system embedded in awig-awig the effects do not remain contained within the participation dimension itself. They cascade causally into dimensions that, within the AHP hierarchy, rank above it. The 2018 IDM (Indeks Desa Membangun) best-village award received by Peliatan, which simultaneously measures ecological, social, and economic resilience, is the most concrete confirmation of this pattern: the three dimensions were not achieved separately but grew together from the same root.

This understanding challenges the operational logic of ecotourism evaluation as it has been conventionally practiced. Within the standard AHP framework, villages being considered for ecotourism development are typically assessed on how strongly each criterion is fulfilled environment, socio-culture, community participation, education, economy, and institutional in parallel. The intervention logic that follows then prioritises

the highest-weighted criteria as the primary targets of programme investment. If the argument advanced in this study holds, that logic contains a risk that is structurally invisible: direct intervention on environmental or socio-cultural criteria without first ensuring that the community participation structures capable of sustaining those gains are sufficiently robust risks producing improvements that are inherently fragile and unlikely to endure. Investing first in strengthening communal capacity through awig-awig consolidation, BUMDes empowerment, and community deliberation platforms creates the foundation from which environmental and socio-cultural improvements can emerge organically and persist without dependence on continuous external impetus.

For ecotourism planning in Bali, these implications are both practical and pressing. In the post-pandemic tourism transformation context which is driving a shift away from visitor volume and toward qualitative sustainability the evaluation framework applied to ecotourism priority villages needs to consider not only how strongly each criterion is fulfilled, but also whether the communal mechanisms required to sustain high-weighted criteria are already in place. Peliatan Village offers a replicable model: not because its programmes are the most ambitious, but because its participatory institutional structures allowed those programmes to emerge from within the community rather than being imposed from outside. An enabling criteria-based planning orientation one that positions the strengthening of community participation as a prerequisite rather than a supplementary component is the direction toward which the empirical evidence from this village consistently points.

5. CONCLUSION

Drawing on the integration of the AHP-weighted ecotourism criteria hierarchy derived from 15 expert assessments with the empirical community participation data from Peliatan Village (Prasandya et al., 2022), this study finds that community participation ranked third in the expert hierarchy with a weight of 0.168, empirically functions as an enabling criterion: a criterion whose presence constitutes a prerequisite for the realisation of environment (0.281) and socio-culture (0.210) as the two highest-weighted dimensions. In Peliatan, all improvements on the environmental dimension and all acts of preservation on the socio-cultural dimension occurred not through direct intervention targeting those dimensions, but through participatory institutional structures that set both in motion from within. The fact that Peliatan Village received the 2018 IDM (Indeks Desa Membangun) best-village recognition an award that simultaneously measures ecological, social, and economic resilience confirms that all three dimensions grew from a single shared mechanism.

This finding gives rise to a new conceptual proposition, which the present study terms the enabling criteria principle in ecotourism planning. Not all criteria occupy an equivalent causal position, there exist criteria which, despite not consistently receiving the highest weights from expert assessments, perform the function of drivers that make it possible for higher-weighted criteria to be sustainably realised. To disregard this causal ordering in the design of planning interventions is to disregard the mechanism most consequential to the long-term success of village ecotourism programmes.

Several limitations of this study warrant acknowledgement. The findings are grounded in a single village case characterised by exceptionally strong customary institutional structures Peliatan Village with its well-established subak and awig-awig systems and the transferability of the proposition to village contexts with different institutional capacities requires further empirical testing. Future research is encouraged

to examine the enabling criteria principle using methods explicitly designed to model interdependencies, such as DEMATEL or ANP, across more diverse village samples in Bali and in other Indonesian provinces currently developing ecotourism village programmes. For planners and policymakers, this study recommends that ecotourism village readiness assessments measure not only how strongly each criterion is independently fulfilled, but also whether the community participation structures are sufficiently robust to serve as the foundation for achieving other criteria because without that foundation, the improvements attained are at risk of proving unsustainable.

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