

Collective Action in Tourism Village Development: A Case Study of Sade Village, Lombok

Annisa Husnul Latifah¹, Vera Inne Juni Simamora², Gladys Giandi Zahra³, Ani Yanah⁴

¹²³⁴Matana University, Indonesia

Correspondent: annisa.latifah@matanauniversity.ac.id¹

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the dynamics of collective community participation in Sade Village, one of the recognized tourism villages in Central Lombok. Despite its long-standing status as a tourist destination, Sade's progress toward achieving Desa Mandiri remains hindered by limited collective involvement. This condition raises questions about the community's role in advancing sustainable tourism. To explore this issue, the research investigates residents' perceptions of tourism as a shared good, the motivations that drive participation, and the barriers that restrict effective collective action. A qualitative case study was conducted through in-depth interviews and participatory observations with residents and key stakeholders during a three-day field visit in June 2025. The data were analyzed thematically using the Miles and Huberman framework, with credibility strengthened through triangulation, expert review, and inter-coder reliability checks. The findings reveal that while residents recognize tourism as beneficial for the community, their participation remains limited. Material incentives, particularly financial benefits that support daily needs, serve as the strongest motivators, complemented by solidary incentives expressed in communal bonds and cultural preservation. However, these drivers seldom translate into coordinated action due to a passive participation mindset, limited awareness of innovation, and the absence of formal organizational structures. The study concludes that low participation in Sade Village reflects cultural and structural constraints rather than disinterest, enriching CAT's propositions on institutional emergence and free-rider dynamics. It recommends demonstration-based approaches, selective financial incentives, and formal tourism institutions, linked to national programs such as ADWI, to foster sustainable, community-led development in other villages.

Keywords: Tourism Village, Collective Action, Community Based Tourism, Sade Cultural Village.



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INTRODUCTION

Tourism holds a strategic position in Indonesia's national development agenda. It is recognized not only as a vital contributor to economic growth but also as a key driver of broader community development ([Hubungan Masyarakat Ekonomi Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia, 2024; Satrya et al., 2023](#)). To realize this vision, the Indonesian government

has made tourism villages a strategic priority. These villages are designed to connect tourism growth with local empowerment by combining community potential, adequate infrastructure, and active participation. Within this model, communities are not merely recipients of tourism benefits but are encouraged to take proactive roles in planning, managing, and developing their villages as tourism destinations. Building on this framework, the government set an ambitious target in 2024 to certify 244 villages as *desa mandiri* or self-reliant village. These self-reliant villages are expected to manage local resources in innovative and sustainable ways, ultimately functioning as independent entrepreneurial units ([Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, 2019; Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, n.d.; Sulistyanto et al., 2022](#)).

However, according to the most recent data from the Tourism Village Network (*Jejaring Desa Wisata*) as of March 2025, only 35 villages have successfully achieved this certification ([Jejaring Desa Wisata \(Jadesta\), 2025](#)). This number accounts for less than 15 percent of the initial target, revealing a substantial gap between intended outcomes and actual progress. The gap underscores persistent challenges in fostering self-reliance among tourism villages across Indonesia ([Latifah et al., 2025](#)). In practice, many villages face stagnation, with some even encountering developmental setbacks or failure ([Indawati et al., 2021; Rosalina et al., 2023; Wiweka et al., 2021](#)). These challenges are further compounded by the continued preference among Indonesian tourists for international destinations, which diverts domestic interest and undermines the growth potential of local tourism villages ([Latifah et al., 2024; NURHAYAT & SHIRATINA, 2021](#)).

One illustrative case of this stagnation is *Desa Wisata Rembitan*, more commonly known as *Desa Wisata Sade*, located in Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Despite having been promoted as a tourism destination since 1975, it continues to be categorized as a *Desa Berkembang* (developing tourism village) and has made little measurable progress toward attaining the status of *Desa Mandiri* (self-reliant tourism village) ([Humas P3E Bali Nusra, n.d.; Jejaring Desa Wisata \(Jadesta\), 2025](#)).

Previous research conducted by the author indicates that the stagnation in Sade's development is largely driven by the lack of community participation ([Latifah et al., 2023](#)). Importantly, the issue extends beyond individual awareness or motivation. It reflects a deeper structural challenge: the absence of a cohesive framework for collaboration within the community. In many cases, residents living in Sade Village display a passive attitude, often waiting for external parties to take initiative. This behavior exemplifies the *free rider* problem, where individuals benefit from collective efforts without actively contributing to them. Compounding this issue is the lack of institutional mechanisms necessary to facilitate and coordinate collective participation, which further hinders the village's ability to progress toward self-reliance ([Latifah et al., 2023](#)). The limited involvement of local residents remains a significant obstacle to the successful development of self-reliant tourism villages in Indonesia ([Ardianti & Eprilianto, 2022; Puspitaningrum & Lubis, 2018; Yanes et al., 2019a](#)). In light of this, there is a clear need for in-depth research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

To respond to this need, the present study adopts Collective Action Theory (CAT) as its primary analytical framework. CAT offers a robust lens for understanding why individuals, even when they share common interests, often fail to act collectively, especially in contexts characterized by limited incentives, low levels of social trust, or weak institutional structures ([Czech, 2016; Midgley & Olson, 1969; Ostrom, 2015](#)). In the case of Sade Village, such constraints appear to significantly

inhibit the emergence of collaborative action needed for sustainable tourism development. By applying CAT, this study seeks to interpret the complex social dynamics that influence, and often impede, effective collective participation within tourism village initiatives.

Although CAT has been widely applied in studies of community development ([Bamberg et al., 2015](#); [Letsoalo & Oladele, 2019](#)), its application in tourism research, particularly in the Indonesian context, remains limited. Previous studies on Sade Village have primarily examined themes such as social capital ([Muaini et al., 2021](#)), local wisdom ([Hasanah, 2019](#)), and the cultural impact of tourism development ([Sari & Nugroho, 2018](#)). While these perspectives offer valuable insights, they have yet to explicitly explore the social-psychological mechanisms that shape residents' willingness or reluctance to engage in collective action. In this regard, **the novelty** of the present study lies in introducing Collective Action Theory (CAT) as a framework for analyzing the dynamics of collective participation in Sade Village. While numerous studies have emphasized the normative importance of community participation in tourism village development ([Ardianti & Eprilianto, 2022](#); [Puspitaningrum & Lubis, 2018](#); [Yanes et al., 2019b](#)), there has been limited scholarly focus on the practical realities that shape such participation on the ground. This approach provides a fresh analytical perspective that has not been widely adopted in previous Indonesian tourism studies.

This study builds upon the author's previous study, which identified limited collective participation as a central factor contributing to the stagnation of tourism development in Sade Village ([Latifah et al., 2023](#)). Similar findings were reported by [Mayasari and Yoniartini \(2023\)](#), who observed a general passivity among residents and a reluctance to participate in tourism planning and decision-making processes. These insights point to a recurring issue: despite being involved in tourism for decades, Sade Village continues to experience low levels of community engagement.

Building on this theoretical framework, the present study focuses on three key themes that are essential for understanding the conditions shaping the limited collective participation within the community. These themes include: community perceptions of the importance of tourism village development for the common good, the motivations or driving factors behind participation, and the barriers that hinder effective collective action ([Garcia Lucchetti & Font, 2013](#); [Manyara & Jones, 2007](#); [Midgley & Olson, 1969](#); [Ostrom, 2015](#); [Reindrawati, 2023](#)). Together, these dimensions form the basis for the study's research questions, which will be explored through field data collection and analysis. The research seeks to address the following **research questions**: (1) How do residents of Sade Village perceive the importance of tourism village development for the common good? (2) What factors influence the motivation of Sade residents to participate in the collective development of the tourism village? (3) What barriers do community members face in working together to support tourism village development? By addressing these research questions, **the study aims to** develop a nuanced understanding of the conditions that contribute to the low level of collective participation in Sade Village. This is done by examining the community's perceptions, motivations, and perceived barriers to involvement in tourism development. Ultimately, the research seeks to generate insights that can inform more effective strategies for fostering collective action and advancing the development of self-reliant tourism villages in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena, including perceptions, motivations, and barriers to collective action within a specific community context (Malhotra, 2015; Sugiyono, 2019). A qualitative design enables an in-depth investigation into the underlying social dynamics that influence the level of community participation in tourism village development, particularly in Sade Village.

To achieve this, the study employs a case study strategy, which allows for a comprehensive and context-sensitive analysis of a single bounded system. In this case, the study focuses on the development trajectory and participatory dynamics of Desa Wisata Sade in Central Lombok. Case study research is especially valuable in tourism and community development studies, as it facilitates the detailed examination of real-life processes, including the interplay between individual behavior, social structures, and institutional settings (Yin, 2018). Sade Village is selected as the case study site due to its status as a tourism destination since 1975. Despite more than 40 years of exposure to tourism, it remains categorized as a *Desa Berkembang* (developing tourism village), showing little sign of substantial progress towards the *Desa Mandiri* (self-reliant tourism village) certification.

This study employed purposive sampling to select four primary informants representing diverse stakeholder roles within Desa Sade, including village leadership, community coordination, tourism management, and everyday residents (Sugiyono, 2019). Their perspectives provided complementary insights into cultural norms, governance mechanisms, and community-level experiences of tourism development. To enrich the data, additional informal interviews were conducted with local women, youth performers, and small-scale vendors, capturing grassroots perspectives and everyday participation in tourism-related activities. This combination of formal and informal voices strengthened the study's capacity to reflect the complex and layered dynamics of collective action in tourism village development.

This study was conducted in Desa Adat Sade (Sade Cultural Village), situated in the Rembitan area of Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Recognized nationally as a cultural tourism village, Desa Sade has been promoted as a tourism destination since 1975. It is widely known for its preserved Sasak architecture, rich cultural traditions, and staged performances that serve as key attractions for both domestic and international visitors.

The selection of Desa Sade as the research site was driven by its unique status and developmental paradox. Despite its long-standing engagement with tourism, spanning nearly five decades the village remains officially classified as a *desa wisata berkembang* (developing tourism village) and has yet to achieve the status of *desa mandiri* (self-reliant village). This prolonged developmental stagnation presents a compelling case for investigation, especially in the context of government initiatives that promote community-based tourism as a pathway to rural empowerment.

Fieldwork was conducted over a period of three consecutive days, during which both structured interviews and participative observation were carried out. Data collection took place in two key areas: the tourism-oriented zone, where tourist activities and performances are concentrated, and the residential zone, where daily life unfolds beyond the direct influence of tourism. This dual spatial approach enabled the researcher to capture a more comprehensive picture of the village's internal dynamics. It allowed for an analysis not only of how tourism is managed and presented

but also of how local residents engage or refrain from engaging with tourism development efforts in their everyday environments.

This study adopted a qualitative approach, using in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection instrument. To guide the interview process, a question list was prepared in advance based on the research questions. However, in line with qualitative research principles, the interview structure remained flexible to accommodate the natural flow of conversation and to allow for context-sensitive follow-up questions ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)).

The design of the interview questions was closely aligned with the three research questions, each grounded in established theoretical dimensions. For Research Question 1, which explores how residents perceive the importance of tourism village development for the common good, the study employed three key: *perceived shared interest*, *perceived collective efficacy*, and *perceived fairness* ([Alamineh et al., 2023; Lv & Xie, 2017](#)). To address Research Question 2, which investigates the factors that motivate community participation, the study adopted the classic yet relevant framework of *material incentives*, *solidary incentives*, and *purposive incentives* ([Clark & Wilson, 1961; Tang & Tang, 2001](#)). For Research Question 3, which examines the barriers to collective participation in tourism development, the study applied a tripartite framework comprising *cultural*, *operational*, and *structural barriers* ([Reindrawati, 2023; Wanner & Pröbstl-Haider, 2019](#)).

To complement the interview data and enrich the overall findings, the study also employed three days of participatory observation. During the observation period, the researcher documented all relevant activities, interactions, and contextual details by taking detailed field notes. This allowed for systematic recording of behavioral patterns, communal routines, and forms of participation as they naturally unfolded in daily life, tourism-related activities, and traditional cultural practices.

To enhance the validity of this study, the interview guide and observation focus were developed based on a comprehensive review of literature on community participation and tourism development. Furthermore, to ensure the credibility and appropriateness of the instruments, the question list was reviewed and validated by two lecturers specializing in tourism development and sustainable tourism. Their feedback was used to refine the content and structure of the questions, helping to maintain conceptual clarity and relevance. Moreover, triangulation was employed by integrating data from both interviews and observations, enabling cross-verification of findings and contributing to a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Reliability was ensured through the consistent application of data collection procedures across all participants and settings. All interviews were conducted using the same semi-structured guide, and the observations followed a uniform focus across key areas. To maintain consistency in documentation, detailed field notes were taken throughout the observation process. Additionally, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in data capture. An intercoder reliability check was also conducted, in which members of the research team independently reviewed and coded a subset of transcripts. Any discrepancies in coding were discussed and resolved collaboratively to ensure consistency in the thematic analysis.

Data were collected using two primary qualitative methods: in-depth interviews and participatory observation, both widely recognized for their ability to capture rich, contextual insights in natural settings ([Malhotra, 2015; Sugiyono, 2019](#)). A series of face-to-face interviews with key informants

and community members, each lasting 30–60 minutes. This duration allowed meaningful interaction and deeper exploration. These formal interviews were complemented by informal conversations during daily activities, which added spontaneous perspectives from grassroots participants.

To enrich the findings, three days of participatory observation were conducted, focusing on social interactions, tourism practices, and cultural events called *besembek* ritual (a traditional Sasak ceremony involving communal visits to ancestral graves). Observations provided direct insights into everyday cooperation, residents' engagement in tourism-related activities, and collective participation in cultural traditions. Together, the interviews and observations produced complementary insights, ensuring that the reported themes were both grounded in narratives and supported by lived experiences.

The data in this study were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which involves three core components: *data reduction*, *data display*, and *conclusion drawing and verification* ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)). This model was chosen for its iterative nature, allowing for continuous interaction between data collection and analysis, which is particularly suitable for qualitative research. In addition, a thematic analysis was conducted, guided by key dimensions identified through a comprehensive literature review on community participation and tourism development. These theoretical dimensions served as a framework for coding and interpreting the data, ensuring that the analysis remained grounded in established concepts while still allowing for the emergence of new insights from the field.

The analysis process began with *data reduction*, where raw data from interview transcripts and field notes were organized, coded, and condensed into key categories. This step involved coding the data and condensing them into manageable categories. The codes were developed based on theoretical dimensions identified through the literature review, each linked to specific research questions. This approach ensured that the data were systematically processed while remaining grounded in the study's conceptual framework.

Following *data reduction*, relevant information was organized and presented through data display in the form of thematic summaries. This stage helped visualize key patterns, relationships, and emerging themes across various sources, such as interview narratives and observational field notes.

Finally, conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the displayed data to formulate findings that directly addressed the research questions. Verification was achieved by revisiting the raw data to assess the consistency of themes across participants and data sources. Triangulation of interview and observation data further reinforced the credibility and trustworthiness of the conclusions.

All participants provided informed consent before taking part in the study, with interview transcripts and field notes securely stored to maintain integrity and prevent unauthorized access. The research was carried out with respect for local customs and cultural sensitivities, and all procedures adhered to the Indonesian *Undang-Undang Nomor 27 Tahun 2022 tentang Pelindungan Data Pribadi* (UU PDP), which mandates that personal data be collected and processed only with explicit consent and protected against misuse.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented in this section are derived from in-depth interviews and participatory observations conducted with key stakeholders and local residents of Sade Village between 23 and 25 June 2025. These results reflect the perspectives, behaviors, and experiences of the community in relation to tourism village development. To provide a clear and structured analysis, the results are presented based on key themes identified during the data analysis process. These themes were developed through coding of interview transcripts and observational notes, and are organized according to the theoretical dimensions used to guide this study. Direct quotes from participants and field observations are included to support and illustrate the findings.

Residents' Perceptions of the Importance of Tourism Village Development for the Common Good

The analysis highlights how residents of Sade perceive tourism development as a collective good, focusing on its value as a shared asset, the reliance on replication rather than innovation, and the strong sense of fairness that shapes community views. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

1. Tourism is Valued but Innovation Remains Absent

Residents of Sade Village widely recognize tourism as a collective good that improves both individual livelihoods and communal well-being (Wei et al., 2024). Interviewees consistently highlighted that tourism contributes not only to household income but also to the maintenance of public facilities and the continuation of cultural ceremonies. As one resident explained, *"Tourism doesn't just help individuals; it benefits the whole village. For example, we now have better public facilities, and the money we earn can help support traditional ceremonies."* Such statements reflect a shared sense of benefit and a strong alignment between tourism development and collective interests.

Despite this broad acknowledgment, the findings reveal limited motivation to pursue innovation or expand tourism-related initiatives. Many residents expressed satisfaction with their current roles—primarily as guides or souvenir sellers—and showed little interest in diversifying into new ventures such as homestays, tour package design, or local food production. This reluctance does not stem from resistance but rather from a lack of awareness of how innovation could strengthen tourism as a long-term community asset. As one resident explained, *"For me, what we have now is already enough. Guiding tourists is sufficient, so we don't really think about doing more."* Such responses suggest that while tourism is seen as valuable, it is also perceived as static—something that need not evolve. According to [Lv & Xie \(2017\)](#), residents' willingness to participate actively in tourism is closely tied to their perception of shared benefits and long-term value. Without targeted efforts to raise awareness about the strategic value of innovation, there is a risk that tourism in Sade will plateau, preventing the village from reaching its full potential as a *Desa Mandiri* (self-reliant village).

The case of Sade suggests that innovation requires external stimulation to break this cycle of contentment. A turning point in the village's tourism history illustrates this dynamic: years ago, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced basic tourism skills such as guiding, souvenir production, and cultural performance. According to Ardinata Sanah, this

intervention created visible improvements in household income, education opportunities, and access to daily necessities. Importantly, early adopters became role models, and as their success became evident, more residents followed suit. The growth of tourism in Sade was therefore not driven by abstract development plans, but by tangible outcomes that validated the value of participation.

This pattern reflects the demonstration effect, whereby observing peers' success motivates others to adopt new practices ([Monterrubio & Marivel Mendoza-Ontiveros, 2014](#)). For Sade, it underscores that innovation is most likely to emerge when residents can directly witness practical benefits that extend to the wider community. Pilot projects that showcase measurable outcomes may therefore provide the necessary stimulus to overcome stagnation and sustain tourism development in the village.

2. Reliance on Replication in Tourism Development

Findings reveal that while the Sade community demonstrates a strong belief in collective effort, this confidence does not fully translate into tourism development. The concept of *semangat gotong royong* (the spirit of mutual cooperation) remains deeply embedded in daily life. As one resident described, *"People in Sade have a strong semangat gotong royong. For example, when one resident's house is damaged and would normally take a week to repair, the community comes together and finishes it in just five days"*. However, when it comes to tourism initiatives, residents often express uncertainty about acting independently. Limited formal education and technical knowledge constrain their ability to design or manage tourism strategies. As Bapak Thalib, the village coordinator, noted, *"Many of us didn't even go to school, let alone know how to make tourism strategies."* A female resident echoed this view, explaining, *"We don't really know what to do on our own, but if someone organizes and shows us what to do, we're happy to help—and we're sure it will turn out well."*

These accounts highlight the dynamics of collective efficacy in Sade, which refers to a community's shared belief in its ability to work together to achieve common goals ([Zhang et al., 2022](#)). However, in this context, collective efficacy is largely rooted in replication rather than innovation. Residents are most engaged when following concrete examples or established models. As Ardinata Sanah, head of the Pokdarwis, observed, *"The people of Sade are very good at copying and following things, so if someone shows us and sets up a project, we surely know how to do it."* This reliance on imitation is evident in tourism practices, such as guiding, where narration scripts from the 1980s are still widely used with little modification.

While replication ensures continuity and shared participation, it also limits the potential for sustainable tourism growth. One of the key criteria for achieving *Desa Mandiri* (self-reliant village) status is the ability to innovate and transform tourism potential into entrepreneurial ventures. Addressing this challenge requires collaborative planning, suggesting that any future tourism strategy should be co-developed with local residents through inclusive dialogue. Rather than simply introducing ready-made solutions, development efforts should involve accompaniment from external actors, a participatory approach that fosters shared ownership of ideas and builds the community's capacity for innovation.

This observation is consistent with recent empirical research. For instance, a case study in Cam Kim, Vietnam, revealed that structured guidance and collaborative project development significantly enhanced local engagement, moving residents from passive recipients of tourism initiatives to active co-creators ([Ngo et al., 2024](#)). Similarly, in Sade, replication can serve as a

starting point, but external support is essential for converting inherited practices into innovative, sustainable, and community-driven tourism development.

3. Tourism in Sade is Perceived as Fair and Harmonious

In Sade Village, tourism-related benefits and responsibilities are widely perceived as being distributed fairly across the community (Adams, 1963; Lv & Xie, 2017). Interviews and observations revealed that residents rarely express feelings of envy or unfairness, even when earnings from tourism differ. As Bapak Talieb explained, *“We never feel jealous if someone earns more from tourists, because everyone’s fortune is already determined by God.”* This perspective reflects a deeply rooted belief in shared destiny and contentment, which helps explain why perceptions of fairness remain strong and envy is largely absent among residents.

This collective outlook is grounded in Sasak cultural values that prioritize harmony, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility. Unlike modern, individualistic societies where social comparison can foster envy (Tan et al., 2016), the Sasak ethos emphasizes restraint, mutual respect, and positive social conduct. Values such as *solah pēratēq* (avoiding resentment) and rejection of *talon ate* (envy or jealousy) are actively taught and reinforced (Habibuddin et al., 2021). Alongside *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), these principles cultivate cohesion and minimize conflict, making fairness less about strict equality and more about sustaining harmony within the community.

Fairness is further reinforced through transparent and collective management of tourism contributions. Income from visitor donations or shared activities is consistently directed toward communal needs, such as repairing homes or supporting families in times of difficulty. These funds, although modest, are distributed without discrimination based on status, income, or direct involvement in tourism. Such practices not only embody the values of *gotong royong* but also foster trust in communal decision-making. In this way, fairness is not simply an outcome but a cultural norm—embedded in tradition, reinforced through practice, and central to sustaining social harmony in Sade.

Motivational Drivers Behind Collective Participation in Tourism Village Development

Building on these perceptions of tourism for the common good, the analysis also highlights the underlying motivations that shape how residents engage in collective participation. In depth interviews and field observations reveal how financial necessity, social solidarity, and cultural pride intersect to sustain collective action in the tourism development of Sade Village, as explained below:

1. Financial Motivation as the Trigger for Collective Tourism Development

In Sade, material rewards such as financial gain and access to economic resources emerge as the primary driver of community participation in tourism development (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Tang & Tang, 2001). This became most apparent during the village’s initial involvement in tourism. Residents explained that their motivation arose once they realized tourism could provide tangible financial benefits—helping to cover household expenses, pay for children’s education, and support basic needs. As Ardinata Sanah, head of the Pokdarwis, recalled: *“At first, people didn’t understand*

what tourism was for. But when they saw they could earn money, send their kids to school, fix their homes, that's when they started to get involved."

This reliance on economic motivation remains strong today, as residents continue to view material incentives as the key factor in sustaining participation. During interviews, many emphasized that additional financial support would immediately encourage more structured engagement. For instance, Bapak Talieb explained: "*We once planned to develop a culinary business, but it was halted due to a lack of capital. The donations we have are only enough for basic repairs like roof replacements.*" Similarly, Ardinata Sanah noted: "*Someone has to start something and others will follow, but I don't have the funds to make it happen yet.*" These reflections illustrate that collective willingness is firmly in place, and that greater access to material incentives would directly unlock broader community action.

The centrality of material incentives was also evident in discussions with the *ibu-ibu* (local women). When asked why they had not initiated collective efforts such as producing and selling traditional snacks, their response reflected a sense of contentment with current roles. However, their responses shifted dramatically when a hypothetical scenario was introduced: a monthly stipend of Rp 2 million to start a snack production venture. Their reply was immediate—"Yes, we would do it right away." This response underscores that passivity is not rooted in unwillingness, but in a rational aversion to financial risk when returns are uncertain. Material security is thus a prerequisite for initiating collective economic activity.

These findings align with research by [Fathizadeh et al. \(2022\)](#) who found that early-stage financial assistance significantly increases participation in rural tourism initiatives by reducing risk and making engagement more viable for marginalized or low-income groups. In this way, material incentives not only encourage individual involvement but also catalyze collective action, especially when structured around shared goals. Policy measures such as conditional stipends, rotating community loan funds, or profit-sharing schemes may therefore serve as effective mechanisms for activating wider participation.

However, evidence from other Lombok villages cautions against dependence on financial incentives alone. [Paramita et al. \(2023\)](#) found that when government subsidies ended, communities often reverted to reliance on external aid rather than developing self-organizing solutions. This outcome undermines the *Desa Mandiri* principle of independence and resilience. To avoid this, capacity building is essential. Strengthening leadership, organizational competence, and problem-solving skills can enable communities to pursue tourism initiatives autonomously. In this sense, external incentives should act as initial triggers rather than long-term crutches. Without such measures, material incentives risk fostering dependency and crowding out intrinsic motivation, as emphasized by motivational crowding theory ([Frey & Jegen, 2001, 2021](#)).

2. Social Bonds as Drivers of Collective Engagement

In Sade Village, solidarity is deeply embedded in social life and expressed through strong interpersonal bonds, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and a collective spirit that underpins community relations ([Clark & Wilson, 1961; Tang & Tang, 2001](#)). This sense of togetherness remains highly visible, especially in ceremonial and everyday contexts, where cooperative practices continue to shape village life. A vivid example was observed during the *besembek* ritual, a traditional Sasak ceremony involving communal visits to ancestral graves. Over several days, men and women

worked collaboratively, with men preparing meat and women handling the cooking. These coordinated efforts reflect not only a cultural commitment to shared responsibilities but also the operationalization of social cohesion as a basis for collective action within the community.

This dynamic extends beyond ritual life. As community member Bapak Talieb explained: *"We in Sade are already used to gotong royong. For example, when there is a broken tourism facility, the villagers usually gather and fix it together."* His statement highlights how cooperation is also applied to the upkeep of tourism infrastructure, reflecting the practical value of solidarity in supporting tourism operations. Research by [Sayuti et al. \(2023\)](#) further confirms that rural communities in Lombok, including Sade, display higher levels of social solidarity than urban areas, largely due to the persistence of *gotong royong* as a system of mutual support and shared responsibility.

Yet, while solidarity remains strong, its potential to drive tourism development is underutilized. Field data show limited awareness among residents about the need for innovation and creative adaptation in tourism. As Ardinata Sanah observed: *"No one is currently initiating any form of innovative development, and the tourism landscape in Sade Village remains largely unchanged from what it was ten years ago."* This reveals a gap: solidarity sustains social cohesion and routine collective efforts, but it has not been strategically mobilized to stimulate innovation or expand tourism initiatives.

This stagnation highlights the urgent need for a transformative process that channels solidarity beyond cultural rituals and maintenance tasks toward innovation-driven collective action. With solidarity already deeply rooted in Sade's social fabric, such a reorientation could enable the community to act cohesively and decisively in adopting new practices, thereby ensuring that solidarity becomes not only a cultural strength but also a foundation for sustainable tourism development.

3. Preserving Heritage as a Source of Collective Motivation

The following section turns to an analysis of *purposive incentives*, which seek to examine whether individuals are motivated to engage in collective participation due to a sense of purpose, shared values, or personal fulfillment derived from contributing to something meaningful for the community ([Clark & Wilson, 1961](#); [Tang & Tang, 2001](#)). In this part, findings from both interviews and field observations indicate that when collective activities are rooted in rituals or traditional values, the people of Sade consistently demonstrate a heightened level of commitment, often going beyond what is typically expected. Their willingness to go the extra mile reflects a deep emotional investment in preserving cultural identity and fulfilling communal obligations. This suggests that purposive incentives, particularly those linked to cultural and traditional objectives, hold significant motivational power for the community. As noted by Amak Cendage, the *kepala dusun* of Sade, *"When it comes to customary matters, we are always eager. Even without being asked, people will come and help."*

This intrinsic sense of purpose tied to cultural preservation presents a meaningful entry point for encouraging innovation in tourism, especially when such innovation is framed as a means to sustain and honor local traditions. Moreover, the community's openness toward outsiders further reinforces the relevance of purposive incentives. During fieldwork, the author was consistently welcomed with warmth and generosity. One local woman remarked, *"We are happy to welcome guests. We feel proud when Sade becomes well known, and we want our heritage to live on."* According to [Abdelazim et al. \(2025\)](#), residents' attachment to their locale and desire to preserve its heritage were key

motivators for engagement in conservation efforts. Therefore, in the context of Sade Village, this strong emotional attachment to place and heritage can be viewed as a critical motivational resource for fostering long-term community engagement in tourism development. When innovation is presented not as a disruption to tradition but as a strategy for safeguarding and revitalizing cultural identity, it aligns closely with the community's intrinsic values and aspirations.

This insight underscores the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to tourism innovation in traditional communities. Rather than imposing external models of development, stakeholders should work collaboratively with local residents to design tourism initiatives that reinforce cultural continuity while introducing sustainable change. In the case of Sade, innovation efforts that highlight and celebrate local rituals, architecture, craftsmanship, and social practices are more likely to gain traction, as they tap into the community's deeply rooted sense of purpose and pride. In turn, this alignment between innovation and heritage preservation not only enhances community participation but also contributes to the authenticity and resilience of tourism in the village.

Barriers to Community Collaboration in Tourism Village Development

While various motivational drivers encourage community participation in tourism development, the findings also reveal several barriers that constrain collaboration in Sade Village. These barriers highlight how cultural orientations, practical constraints, and institutional dynamics interact to limit the community's capacity to fully engage in tourism development.

1. Passive Participation as the Central Barrier to Tourism Collaboration

A central barrier to tourism collaboration in Sade Village lies in what can be described as a passive participation mindset. Rather than being the result of a lack of knowledge or technical skill, this barrier is rooted in cultural orientations, long-standing values, and ways of thinking that prioritize stability and simplicity over change and expansion ([Reindrawati, 2023; Wanner & Pröbstl-Haider, 2019](#)). As one key informant, Bapak Talieb, explained: *“People in the community don’t want to do things that are too complicated, either because they lack the capability or simply the willingness. Here, for example, they farm just for food, not for money—they already feel it’s enough.”* This subsistence-based outlook shapes participation in tourism: while residents are aware of tourism’s potential and possess basic capacity, they often show little drive to initiate collective or innovative efforts on their own.

Interestingly, one of the key findings from this study suggests that such cultural barriers can be partially mitigated through the introduction of material incentives, as discussed earlier in the section on material incentives. From the perspective of Collective Action Theory, these incentives function as selective material benefits. They lower the perceived costs of participation and reduce the risks associated with free-riding. In doing so, they motivate individuals to join collective endeavors they might otherwise avoid. By altering the cost–benefit calculation, material incentives can temporarily align individual self-interest with group objectives, making cooperation more likely to occur ([Midgley & Olson, 1969; Ostrom, 2015](#)). However, even when motivated by financial support, residents emphasized that they would only participate if external actors guided them step by step. As several informants explained, *“We are not comfortable creating new ideas, but we are good at copying.”*

This pattern reflects a deeper cultural dynamic in which participation tends to occur only when initiatives are externally initiated, clearly structured, and led by others. Prior studies have shown

that in many low-income communities, this form of passive engagement is common, as residents follow instructions from NGOs or local elites rather than shaping development processes themselves (Rashied & Begum, 2016). In Sade, this has produced a community that is receptive to tourism projects but rarely self-mobilizing, as initiatives that demand independent organization or innovation are seen as beyond their responsibility.

It is important to stress that this mindset should not be misinterpreted as laziness or resistance. Instead, it is a culturally embedded response shaped by structural and historical conditions: limited access to education, minimal exposure to participatory approaches, and a legacy of top-down aid programs focused on short-term assistance rather than long-term empowerment. Over time, such experiences have normalized externally driven solutions and fostered dependency, making self-reliance more difficult to achieve.

Overcoming this barrier requires more than material incentives. A dual strategy is needed: short-term material support to meet immediate livelihood needs, and long-term empowerment to build confidence, autonomy, and problem-solving capacity (Gao et al., 2025; Wani et al., 2024). Practical measures may include demonstration-based models in which small groups are trained to act as peer examples, performance-based incentives tied to specific roles, and sustained mentoring to gradually transfer responsibility to the community. Ultimately, the key lies in capacity building—strengthening leadership, organizational competence, and local initiative—so that tourism collaboration can shift from dependency toward genuine self-reliance (Paramita et al., 2023).

2. Lack of Information and Infrastructure as Barriers to Tourism Participation

Tourism participation in Sade Village is constrained by operational barriers, particularly those related to access to information and the availability of adequate infrastructure (Reindrawati, 2023; Wanner & Pröbstl-Haider, 2019). Among these, the lack of information emerged as one of the most pressing challenges. During informal interviews, many residents stated that they had never heard about tourism development activities or training opportunities. Their absence from such initiatives was not due to disinterest, but because *they “never got the information” or were “never informed that it was happening.”* This information gap prevents willing individuals from contributing to tourism, as they lack the knowledge necessary to join planning processes, access resources, or build relevant skills. Studies therefore recommend creating consistent and accessible communication channels—such as local information boards, community liaisons, or mobile-based alerts—to ensure that tourism-related opportunities reach all community members (Hermawan et al., 2023).

Infrastructure limitations represent another major operational barrier. As highlighted by Bapak Talieb, there has been clear interest from tourists to stay overnight in the village and experience local life more intimately. However, this demand cannot currently be accommodated due to the absence of homestay facilities or guest houses. He explained that, “*it'd be nice if we got help in terms of building proper infrastructure from the government,*” pointing to the community’s reliance on external support to improve or expand their tourism offerings. In addition, he noted that some of the traditional houses used as part of cultural demonstrations for tourists are in poor condition and in need of repair, something that requires financial resources the residents often do not have.

These operational barriers are compounded by a dependency on external support. While infrastructure gaps are a practical constraint, the deeper issue lies in the community's reliance on government aid or external actors to provide solutions. Rather than mobilizing collective action to gradually improve facilities, residents often wait for assistance from external actors. This reflects the passive participation mindset discussed earlier: a tendency to remain reactive while expecting external agents to initiate and implement change. As long as this mindset persists, operational barriers such as lack of infrastructure and inadequate communication will continue to undermine effective participation. Addressing these issues requires not only financial and material investment but also a shift in community perspective—toward self-reliance, proactive engagement, and collective responsibility in tourism development.

3. Structural Barriers of Status, Authority, and Organization in Sade

Structural barriers play a decisive role in shaping collective participation in Sade Village. They arise from systemic limitations related to status recognition, authority distribution, and organizational clarity. These structural weaknesses shape how responsibilities are allocated and how decisions are made, both within formal governance systems and through customary leadership practices ([Reindrawati, 2023](#); [Wanner & Pröbstl-Haider, 2019](#)). As a result, institutional dynamics that should enable coordination instead constrain the community's capacity to self-organize and to participate meaningfully in tourism development.

A central issue is the absence of a clear and formal organizational structure for tourism management. Although residents often refer to Bapak Ardinata Sanah as the head of the local Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), this role has never been legalized or formalized through administrative procedures. The lack of recognized authority has led to uncertainty over roles and decision-making, leaving residents unsure of what should be done and who should lead. As many admitted in interviews, "*we don't know what to do because no one is in charge.*" For a community that tends to rely on external cues and role models, this lack of organizational clarity reinforces inertia: individuals are willing to follow, but no one is formally empowered to lead ([Goldschmeding et al., 2024](#)).

When attempting to understand the root cause behind the absence of a formal tourism organizational structure in Sade, a deeper structural issue emerges: Sade has never been officially recognized as a *desa wisata* (tourism village). Contrary to common assumption, what is widely referred to as *Desa Wisata Sade* does not legally exist. Administratively, Sade is classified as a *dusun* (sub-village) under the jurisdiction of Desa Rembitan. This status was confirmed through a search on Jadesta, the official platform for registered tourism villages in Indonesia, where only Desa Rembitan is listed ([Jejaring Desa Wisata \(Jadesta\), 2025](#)). Interestingly, although the Jadesta listing uses the official name "Desa Rembitan," the descriptive content on the page refers specifically to Desa Sade. This highlights a key tension: while Sade is widely recognized by locals and visitors as a tourism destination, its official administrative status remains unchanged, creating a mismatch between public perception and legal classification.

This lack of formal recognition has significant implications. Without legal status as a *desa wisata*, Sade cannot access formal tourism certifications, or participate in official tourism village competitions. More importantly, it creates confusion and uncertainty regarding how to establish a

legitimate tourism organizational structure, such as a formal *Pokdarwis* (Tourism Awareness Group). Community members voiced their concerns and aspirations, noting that only through legal recognition as an independent *desa wisata* would they be able to create a structured and effective tourism institution. As Bapak Ardinata articulated, “*Although Sade is administratively classified as a dusun, when it comes to tourism attraction, Sade should be recognized as a tourism village, because that's what people know. They don't know Desa Rembitan, they only know Desa Sade*”

Despite these limitations, there are signs of readiness for structural reform. Ardinata expressed a vision for tourism development that includes creating a small, dedicated team of five individuals to coordinate activities and introduce innovation, as he stated, ‘*If there is a small team such as five people, I'm sure we can do more innovation.*’. His proposal reflects both awareness of the problem and a willingness to address it—provided that organizational clarity and status recognition are in place. This underscores the interdependence of status, authority, and organization: only by securing legal recognition and clarifying leadership structures can Sade overcome its structural barriers and create the institutional capacity necessary for sustainable tourism collaboration.

Although this study provides valuable insights into motivations, perceptions, and barriers influencing collective participation in Sade Village’s tourism development, several limitations warrant consideration. First, the qualitative approach, based primarily on interviews and observations, is vulnerable to biases such as selective memory, social desirability, and hesitation to express criticism openly. Future research should employ mixed-method approaches, including surveys or participatory mapping to ensure triangulation, minimize subjectivity, and enhance data reliability.

Second, despite nearly five decades of tourism activity in Sade, this research did not adopt a longitudinal approach, limiting its capacity to reveal changes in community attitudes, participation, or perceptions of fairness over time. Longitudinal studies could capture important dynamics such as intergenerational shifts or evolving community responses to tourism, thereby offering deeper insights into sustained community engagement and its outcomes..

Lastly, this study exclusively reflects internal community perspectives, neglecting the views of external stakeholders, such as government officials, tourism agencies, NGOs, and private-sector actors. Given community claims of inadequate external support and expressed needs for comprehensive guidance (pendampingan), future studies should adopt a multi-stakeholder approach. This would help identify potential gaps between community expectations and institutional responsibilities, revealing structural constraints that currently hinder effective collaboration

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the central barrier to collective participation in Sade Village lies in a passive-participation mindset. While residents value tourism for livelihoods and cultural preservation, they tend to see what they already have as sufficient and hesitate to initiate innovation. This reflects Collective Action Theory’s (CAT) logic of free-riding: people expect to benefit whether or not they contribute, and many believe their individual effort will not make a difference ([Czech, 2016](#); [Midgley & Olson, 1969](#)). In Sade, however, free-riding is not rooted in deliberate self-interest but

in a cultural orientation toward stability, modest aspirations, and dependence on external guidance. Solidarity is strong in rituals and heritage, but it does not automatically extend to tourism innovation, leaving participation largely replication-based and externally driven. Theoretically, these findings enrich CAT by showing that free-rider dynamics in traditional, resource-dependent communities are sustained as much by culturally embedded passivity as by rational cost–benefit calculation.

Selective incentives, often proposed as solutions ([Bakhtiar et al., 2023](#); [Kerr et al., 2014](#); [Sandler, 2015](#)). In Sade, however, this logic does not hold fully. Even when incentives are offered, many residents feel their individual effort will not matter. They believe what they already have is “enough” and prefer to wait for external guidance rather than initiate action themselves. This reluctance is rooted in low levels of formal education, limited confidence, and a cultural orientation toward subsistence and simplicity. As a result, incentives alone are insufficient: people doubt their own capacity even when participation promises clear benefits. What emerges is less a rational cost–benefit calculation and more a mindset shaped by long-term dependence on external actors. Overcoming this requires more than financial schemes; it demands changes in mindset, clear allocation of responsibility, and formal institutional structures before collective innovation can take hold.

Moreover, in Sade, the absence of legal recognition as a *desa wisata* and the lack of a formal Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) further weaken collective participation. Without these institutions, there is no legitimate authority to allocate responsibilities, enforce rules, or ensure accountability. As a result, free-rider tendencies persist because no structure exists to channel solidarity into coordinated action. This underscores that for CAT mechanisms to function effectively, institutional emergence, legitimacy, and cultural orientations must be addressed together.

Practically, these insights point to four priorities. *First*, we recommend that governments to design targeted financial schemes—such as conditional stipends for homestays or culinary ventures, or rotating community loan funds (koperasi simpan pinjam) through Dana Desa as regulated under Permendesa No. 13/2020. However, this schemes should be paired with structured capacity building to prevent dependency and build self-reliance. *Second*, pilot projects and demonstration-based programs could be developed in collaboration with NGOs or universities. For example, small-scale homestay clusters or culinary ventures with mentoring and transparent monitoring can showcase measurable benefits and reduce free-riding by tying participation to visible contributions. Embedding such initiatives within Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia (ADWI)—a national program promoting tourism villages—ensures alignment with policy agendas and provides transferable models for other rural communities ([Kementerian Pariwisata RI, 2021](#)). *Third*, linking innovation with cultural preservation can mobilize solidarity more effectively, for example through programs that promote Sasak craftsmanship, cuisine, and rituals. *Finally*, institutional reform is urgent: formal recognition as a *desa wisata* and the legal establishment of a Pokdarwis would provide the organizational clarity needed to transform passive compliance into proactive collaboration.

In closing, the Sade case shows that overcoming free-rider dynamics in rural tourism requires more than incentives or external interventions. It demands mindset change, institutional legitimacy, and alignment of solidarity with innovation. By situating these findings within CAT, this study

highlights that cooperation in traditional communities is shaped as much by cultural orientations as by institutional rules. Beyond Sade, these lessons hold broader significance for rural tourism development across Indonesia and other contexts worldwide, where building self-reliant, innovation-oriented communities is central to both sustainable tourism and long-term collective empowerment.

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