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Case Study on Sustainable Tourism Development in Edelweiss Park in Wonokitri Village: A Stakeholder Theory Perspective

**by
Dr. Andini Risfandini**

A. Stakeholder Theory

Sustainable tourism development requires a comprehensive understanding of its environmental, social, and economic impacts. Stakeholder theory plays a crucial role in sustainable community development by emphasizing the need for stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes to enhance social sustainability (Bag, 2023). This theory is vital for organizations aiming to address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to overall sustainable development (Mehmood et al., 2022). Effective stakeholder engagement is essential in managing sustainable tourism destinations, as it promotes partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders to achieve sustainability objectives (Rakitovac & Urošević, 2023). Additionally, stakeholder theory facilitates the balancing of various stakeholder interests, enabling the harmonization of economic, social, and ecological aspects of sustainable development (Valentinov, 2023).

In the context of sustainable rural development, stakeholder theory is key to understanding stakeholders' objectives and ensuring the successful implementation of sustainability initiatives (Fogwe et al., 2019). It is particularly important in less developed regions, where stakeholder participation in community development projects is critical for long-term sustainability (Ochunga & Awiti, 2017). Furthermore, stakeholder engagement is a fundamental element of any sustainable development plan, highlighting the importance of involving stakeholders in decision-making processes (Habumuremyi & Tarus, 2021).

Stakeholder perceptions of sustainability performance are crucial for organizations, as they reflect shared expectations and interests, contributing to corporate image and behavior (Amoako, 2023). According to stakeholder, legitimacy, and institutional theories, pressure from stakeholder groups, institutions, and communities drives organizations to improve their sustainability performance (Sarkar, 2023). By exceeding stakeholders' needs and expectations, project managers and local communities can effectively collaborate to achieve sustainable development over time (Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019).

In the tourism sector, stakeholder theory is essential for understanding how stakeholders perceive factors influencing tourism progress, leading to a sustainable competitive advantage (Amoako et al., 2021). The involvement of various stakeholders, including employees, government entities, and the private sector, is crucial for sustainable tourism development (Amoako et al., 2021). Stakeholder theory also supports the interconnection relationship between corporate governance, stakeholder engagement. In summary, stakeholder theory provides a fundamental framework for promoting sustainable community development by highlighting the importance of engaging stakeholders, working together, and aligning interests to attain sustainability objectives.

B. Case study on sustainable tourism development in Edelweiss Park in Wonokitri Village

The case study of Edelweiss Park in Wonokitri by Risfandini et al. (2023) illustrates the application of stakeholder theory in developing sustainable tourism within a village setting. The stakeholders involved include the government, private sectors, local community, and visitors. By empowering the local community, ensuring government involvement in creating Edelweiss Park, and fostering community engagement in Wonokitri Village, a sustainable tourism destination has been established. This development brings social and economic benefits to the local community, preserves the environment, and provides visitors with a memorable experience at Edelweiss Park. This case study demonstrates that engaging stakeholders, collaborating, and aligning interests can achieve sustainable tourism development that benefits all involved.

Located in Wonokitri village, Tosari, Pasuruan District, East Java, Edelweiss Park is positioned as the gateway to Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park from Pasuruan District. Originally founded as a conservation center for Edelweiss flowers, it has grown into a major tourist destination.

1. Local Community Empowerment and Sustainable Tourism Development

Edelweiss Park was established primarily to conserve Edelweiss flowers, culturally significant to the Tenggerese tribe. These flowers faced extinction due to overharvesting, prompting the park's creation as a conservation initiative. Guided by Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TNBTS) and supported by both government and private sectors, the park aimed to protect the endangered flowers, promote sustainable tourism, and empower the local community. Conservation strategies, sustainable practices education, and integration with the community's cultural and economic activities were implemented. Consequently, Edelweiss Park has evolved into a model of sustainable tourism and community empowerment, demonstrating successful collaboration between government entities, private companies, and local communities. The park preserves the Tenggerese tribe's cultural heritage, protects the environment, and creates economic opportunities for Wonokitri village residents.

2. Stakeholder Involvement and Benefits

- **Government:** The government has played a pivotal role in protecting Edelweiss flowers by law and supporting the park's development. Initiatives like the cultivation program and infrastructure development have facilitated sustainable tourism practices.
- **Private Sector:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions from private companies, such as Bank Indonesia Malang, have provided essential facilities and training, enhancing the park's offerings and benefiting the local community.
- **Local Community:** Active engagement of the local community has been crucial. By involving the local community in the management and operation of the park, they have reaped economic benefits and preserved their cultural heritage.

- Tourists: Visitor feedback has been integral to validating and improving the park's offerings, ensuring a satisfying experience that promotes repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.

3. Empowering the Local Community

The cultivation of Edelweiss flowers, initiated by TNBTS in 2016, has significantly empowered the local community by providing a sustainable and legal source of these flowers, crucial for cultural rituals and tourism attractions. This initiative addressed the overharvesting issue and ensured the preservation of the Edelweiss flowers, thus maintaining the Tenggerese tribe's cultural heritage. By transforming a local farming group into the managers of Edelweiss Park, the community was given direct control and responsibility over the tourism development process, fostering a deep sense of pride and ownership. The park has brought substantial economic benefits to the local community, boosting income for local businesses, and creating job opportunities, thereby enhancing the local economy. Furthermore, the park's management has contributed to the Village Original Income (Pendapatan Asli Desa), funding various development projects within Wonokitri village.

4. Government Involvement

Government involvement has been crucial in protecting the Edelweiss flower by law, paving the way for Edelweiss Park to become a responsible and sustainable tourism destination. The initiation of Edelweiss cultivation in 2016 by TNBTS, with government support, empowered the local Tenggerese community members and provided them with the knowledge and skills to cultivate Edelweiss flowers successfully. This initiative met the demand for Edelweiss flowers in cultural activities and contributed to conservation efforts and sustainable practices. The Ministry of Village, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration's addition of new spots to the park in 2019 demonstrates a continuous effort to enhance the visitor experience and expand the park's offerings.

5. Private Sector Contributions

The private sector's involvement, particularly through CSR initiatives, has been instrumental in Edelweiss Park's success. Bank Indonesia Malang's contributions included essential infrastructure and training programs, significantly enhancing the park's facilities and services. These improvements provided visitors with a better experience and supported the local economy by boosting tourism-related activities. The enhanced facilities attracted more tourists, increasing income for local businesses. Additionally, training programs equipped local community members with valuable skills for managing and maintaining the park.

6. Community Engagement

Active community engagement in Edelweiss Park's operations has led to significant economic and social benefits. Involving residents in the park's management and development fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility, promoting sustainable tourism practices. Economic benefits include increased income from local businesses,

directly impacting the community's well-being. Contributions to the Village Original Income from the park's management support the village's overall development.

In conclusion, the integration of stakeholder theory into sustainable tourism development is exemplified by Edelweiss Park in Wonokitri Village. This approach highlights the importance of involving various stakeholders, including government entities, the private sector, local communities, and tourists, in decision-making and management to achieve sustainable outcomes. The cultivation of Edelweiss flowers, initiated by TNBTS in 2016, empowered the local community by providing a sustainable source of the flowers for cultural rituals and tourism while preserving the Tenggerese tribe's cultural heritage. The transformation of a local farming group into park managers fostered pride and ownership, leading to increased economic benefits for the community through tourism-related activities. Government involvement was crucial in legal protection and development initiatives, while private sector contributions enhanced the park's infrastructure and services. Active community engagement further strengthened the park's operations, resulting in significant economic and social benefits for Wonokitri village. Overall, this case study demonstrates that collaboration, aligned interests, and strategic stakeholder engagement can achieve sustainable tourism development that benefits all stakeholders.

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