

Local Champion: A New Leadership Perspective to Create Sustainable Tourism in Rural Communities

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ABSTRACT

UNWTO called 2017 the Year of Sustainable Tourism. In Indonesia, tourism growth is increasingly prominent, with a trend towards non-mainstream destinations. In 2022, interest in cultural immersion will increase, as evidenced by the development of dozens of tourist villages. Rural tourism has a substantial role in the economy and tourist sector, exerting a favorable influence on economic expansion, population stability, and the enhanced worth of indigenous goods. Rural tourism is a sustainable development strategy, including cultural conservation, natural resources and community empowerment. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is targeting 224 independently certified tourist villages by 2024. The Community Based Tourism (CBT) approach is used in managing tourist villages to achieve sustainable tourism. Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2021, which outlines the Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations, demonstrates Indonesia's dedication to promoting sustainable tourism. Although rural tourism can provide economic benefits, effective leadership is required for competitive and sustainable development. A "local champion" with sensitivity to local culture, innovation skills, experience, team collaboration and networking skills is required. Destination leadership styles, including decision making, team direction, and resource management, are key in shaping rural tourism development. In this context, the leader needed for sustainable tourism village development is a local champion with an effective destination leadership style.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2017 was officially designated as the International Year for Sustainable Tourism, focusing on the concept of "Well-designed and well-managed

tourism" [1]. This is further substantiated by the placement of tourism as a prominent economic export sector in the world hierarchy, where it holds the third position, trailing only chemicals and fuel, and surpassing automotive and food items.

Economic diversification is crucial for both emerging and developed countries, especially in developing countries, it serves as a significant sector for exports.

In Indonesia, the tourism sector is growing and developing, making Indonesia increasingly known to the world with the large number of tourists coming, both local residents and foreign nationals. According to Law No. 25 of 2000 concerning National Development, the development of tourism productivity contributes to increasing Indonesia's economic growth as one of the state's revenues.

Travel trends change from year to year. Many people currently prefer to travel to places that are not mainstream. This is what drives tourism development in all corners of Indonesia. Tourism development is also a concern for the government so that it can become a source of income for the people of tourist destination areas. The government also provides adequate infrastructure support for the development of tourist villages so that tourist destination areas have high accessibility.

Indonesia, which has a very large territory, does not all have an urban pattern, in fact many still have a rural pattern. Based on this, we can conclude that Indonesia still has many potential villages that can be developed into tourist destinations, or what are currently known as tourist villages.

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) noted that by 2023 there will be 4,674 tourist villages in Indonesia. This number increased by 36.7 percent compared to the previous year, namely 3,419 tourist villages. The government also pays quite high attention to the potential of each region by providing development support to all corners of the country. Seeing the existing potential and the enormous government support in developing tourist villages, this opportunity should be seized by all village governments so that they can develop their villages towards independence. The aim of developing tourist villages relevant to the RPJMN is to try to reduce the number of underdeveloped villages so that they can become independent villages.

Tourism has a crucial role in promoting the growth of rural regions, with rural tourism making a substantial impact on both the rural economy and the broader tourism sector [2]. tourism in rural areas has a positive impact on economic growth, demographic stability, increasing added value for local products, providing stimulation in agricultural development and creating various business opportunities and employment (Ibanescu, Stoleriu, Munteanu, & Iațu, 2018). Tourism in villages can also be used as a sustainable development strategy, which leverages many aspects such as conservation efforts for local culture, natural resources, local wisdom and the environment based on community empowerment [3].

Rural tourism encompasses the exhibition of rural life, art, culture, nature, and heritage found in rural regions. Rural tourism is often regarded as an environmentally and socially sustainable type of tourism that generates economic and social advantages for local people. The conservation of culture, heritage, and customs is an essential element of rural tourism [4].

However, in developing rural tourism, village residents often do not receive direct benefits from tourism activities; only certain groups in society feel the benefits [5]. Within the framework of rural tourist development, rural communities frequently lack robust connections with relevant parties, posing challenges for the government to incorporate local and regional tourism strategies into the overarching national tourism strategy [6], [7]. Tourism development is commonly regarded as a means to empower rural and peripheral communities. However, issues occur due to an unequal distribution of power between local people and foreign entities such as investors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that are responsible for driving growth [8]. Rural tourism development is often characterized by inequitable power relationships between stakeholders within local communities and between local stakeholders [9], [10].

The role of figures or leaders in tourism development, both at the lowest and

highest levels, will of course be *role figures model* for his subordinates. Leadership is an important pillar in an organization or company. Leadership has an important meaning in tourism village governance, the context of leadership is not only seen from the individual side but more broadly in the aspect of building community capacity and utilizing social capital to realize sustainable tourism. Therefore, the implementation of competitive, sustainable, and beneficial rural tourist development plans necessitates the presence of a leadership role in its growth.

Leadership is a necessary component for any human group, including societies, countries, and organizations. The subject of leadership has emerged as a significant issue of discussion among professionals and scholars. Numerous research have focused on this subject, offering diverse viewpoints on the fundamental nature of leadership [11]. Leadership refers to an individual's capacity to exert influence, inspire, and empower others to make valuable contributions towards the efficiency and triumph of the organization [12].

Much research has been conducted on leadership, especially analysis of leadership styles in various organizational and management contexts [13]. In various leadership studies, the context of tourism village development and sustainability has not received much attention, even though leadership has an important role in the sustainability of tourist villages [14]. On the other hand, in various literature on tourist villages, research that focuses on leadership aspects in managing tourist villages is still very limited [15], [16].

This process entails intricate dynamics involving individuals (both leaders and followers) and their social and organizational contexts. It is the complexity of leadership, particularly in relation to followers, that is resulting in a significant paradigm shift. Although there are various ways to lead, the essence of leadership is the process of transforming one's strengths into a valuable role for society [17].

Despite its apparent simplicity, this notion is inherently complex and necessitates

profound comprehension. In order to accomplish the shared objectives of a collective, leaders and followers must engage in effective interaction to surmount the diverse challenges arising from the novel circumstances of our dynamic, unpredictable, and intricate environment.

Leadership may be seen as the act of enabling the attainment of desired results inside an organization. It may also be seen as the execution of acts that facilitate the group in attaining desired results [18]. Leadership essentially involves a leader acknowledging intended outcomes and assisting individuals and organizations in attaining them. The determinant factor that determines tourism success is the integration of policy, planning and managerial equipment. The integration of these three factors can be orchestrated by a leader. leadership is important to increase community capacity in tourism development [19].

Community-based tourism means providing more democratic empowerment, which gives local communities the opportunity or access to manage and develop tourism and enjoy the results more fairly and equally. Community-based tourism also has the aim of improving the standard of living of local communities or as an effort to manage local resources to improve the welfare of local communities. Basically, tourism management requires special leadership, because it involves so many actors and most of them do not realize the complexity of tourism management [15].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Rural Tourism

The UNWTO designates 2017 as the year of Sustainable tourist, presenting a chance to amplify the tourist industry's impact on the three pillars of sustainability, while highlighting the genuine significance of a sector that is sometimes undervalued [20]. Sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that considers and addresses the present and future economic, social, and environmental effects. It aims to meet

the requirements of tourists, the tourism industry, the environment, and local people. The concept of "Sustainable Tourism" was established by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCAD, 1987) the user explains that sustainable development refers to the process of achieving development that fulfills the requirements of the current generation without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to fulfill their own needs. This phrase implies that sustainable development encompasses the consideration of present requirements while also taking into account the capacity of future generations to fulfill their own needs. Likewise, the WTO (1993), Advocates for development principles that prioritize ecological sustainability, followed by social and cultural sustainability, and finally economic sustainability, for both present and future generations. Gradually, the notion of sustainable development was included into the framework of sustainable tourist development.

Sustainable tourism development refers to a process of tourist development that focuses on conserving the necessary resources for future development. The notion of sustainable development. Tourism is a discipline that encompasses the physical environment (location), the cultural environment (host community), and tourists (visitors) [21].

Rural tourism refers to a form of tourism that encompasses all activities taking place in non-urban locations, focusing on the preservation and exploration of the natural and cultural assets found in rural regions [22]. Rural tourism is seen as a tactic to enhance the rural economy. The reorganization of the agricultural industry and the

movement of young individuals to urban areas are promoting tourism as a means of revitalizing socio-economic conditions in rural regions [23]. Rural tourism has the potential to foster employment opportunities, enhance agricultural variety, and stimulate the marketing of regional cuisine and beverages. When effectively implemented, rural tourism can yield various advantages for communities, such as the acquisition of new skills and training, the preservation of essential services, an influx of new residents, the revitalization of housing facilities, enhanced opportunities for women and marginalized groups, an improved brand image, a fresh perspective for regional planning, and environmental and socio-cultural benefits [2]. Tourism industry players are usually small businesses owned by local residents, accommodation owners, tour guides who are directly involved in providing services to tourists. Therefore, it is crucial to guarantee the establishment of sustainable rural tourism that will enhance the well-being of local inhabitants by maximizing local resources, conserving the natural environment, and delivering a positive experience to visitors [24], [25].

Rural tourism encompasses natural landscapes (such as mountains, lakes/rivers, and forests), rural heritage (including traditional architecture, typical industries, history, castles, and villages), rural activities (such as fishing and hunting), and rural life, which encompasses handicrafts, regional cuisine, local events, and regional arts [26]. These four things will form a rural tourism community.

Rural tourism encompasses agricultural-focused vacations and encompasses niche holidays such as nature-based holidays, ecotourism,

walking, cycling, climbing, and horseback riding vacations. It also includes adventure, sports, and health tourism, hunting and fishing trips, educational excursions, arts, heritage, and historical recreation, festivals and events, food and wine tourism, cultural and social experiences, and, in certain regions, ethnic tourism [27].

Local knowledge is an integral component of a society's culture that is inseparable from the society's language. Local wisdom refers to the information acquired by specific local communities via a combination of practical experiences and a deep awareness of the culture and natural environment of a particular region or tourist destination [25], [28].

Sustainable rural tourist development refers to the implementation of suitable policies and techniques that provide positive outcomes for rural areas, while minimizing any adverse effects [16], [29], [30]. Sustainable rural tourism development is a program poverty alleviation as a tool to increase economic benefits in marginalized communities, providing a positive impact on the environment and culture local; generate income and employment; and ensuring the conservation of local ecosystems [24].

Sustainable rural tourism development refers to tourist initiatives that actively include the local community in all aspects of the project, hence promoting economic, social, and political empowerment within the community. Furthermore, the active engagement and participation of citizens in the process of developing tourism appears to be an essential requirement for attaining sustainability objectives and thus enhancing the overall well-being of society [22], [31].

Rural tourism serves as a means of achieving sustainable development in rural areas and may also function as a tool for distinguishing products in different locations [22], [32]. Rural tourism has an important role for the sustainability of rural areas. The most important risk for rural areas is seen as a threat to the expected economic benefits of natural resources. Therefore, excessive commercialization and commodification of rural resources and products can lead to a decrease in tourist visits to the region. In this concept, planning and determining well-managed tourism capacity is very important [26].

The focus is on expanding rural tourism in a manner that aligns the provision of tourism facilities and experiences with the need of host communities, the environment, and local suppliers, while also meeting the demands of visitors. There was concern about rural tourism developing as an unintended consequence of external factors, thus the focus was placed on the importance of local communities and companies in influencing rural tourism [28].

2.2 Factors Affecting Rural Tourism

Factors that influence the development of sustainable tourism villages include internal and external factors. Internal factors include the awareness and willingness of local communities to develop tourist villages as well as the many potentials of tourist villages in the form of economic potential and environmental potential. Meanwhile, external factors include changes in world tourism trends. In 2022, interest in *cultural immersion* will begin to increase in Indonesia. There are dozens of tourist villages developed and presenting a tourist style where tourists can directly

interact with local residents (Kemenparekraf RI).

Apart from these two factors, a leadership role in the tourism sector is very necessary in developing tourism, especially village tourism. Village communities who tend to still have a traditional *mindset* will find it very difficult to participate in village development. To increase awareness and active community participation in village development, a leader's role is needed who can influence the community in changing mindsets.

Local communities play an important role in energizing the neighborhood, developing a shared vision and setting goals. Local communities can be seen as local champions, that is, someone who takes the initiative to change social and institutional processes. Leadership is concerned with finding direction and purpose amidst critical challenges. Therefore, leadership in rural settings needs to be situated within an accountability framework that shows that all stakeholder interests are represented [2].

Local leadership refers to the act of a local leader exerting influence over other residents in order to accomplish shared objectives. In rural communities, effective local leadership is considered crucial for organizational efficiency and the achievement of endogenous development initiatives, thereby contributing to local economic and social progress [19]. Local leadership can be characterized as either transactional or transformative. Transactional leadership pertains to the connection between leaders and followers in the pursuit of common objectives [21], [33], [34], transformational leadership involves extraordinary forms of influence that encourage followers to achieve more than is usually expected of them' [35].

2.3 Leadership in Rural Tourism

Much research has been conducted on leadership, especially analysis of leadership styles in various organizational and management contexts [15]. The evolution of leadership concepts is also explored, especially in the context of community and business development, considering the orientation of society and the tourism industry. Early leadership traditions, which focused on leaders as exceptional individuals, are reflected in leadership theories that state that leaders are born, not made [36]. Transformational leadership influences branches of leadership style development including Shared / Community-Based Leadership, Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership [15].

The characteristics of community-based leadership are considered quite relevant in the context of tourism development [37]. Community-based tourism, also known as Community-based Tourism (CBT), is a form of sustainable tourism that advocates for measures aimed at alleviating poverty [38]. Community-based tourism (CBT) has the capacity to greatly contribute to the sustainable development of local communities [39], [40]. To build strong local leaders requires personal resources such as knowledge, abilities, competencies, experience and vision to maximize the resources they have [19].

Transformational Leadership is an evolution of Transactional Leadership and focuses on empowering leadership through processes, not just giving rewards for positive behavior of followers. Transformational leadership encompasses a leadership style that emphasizes a process-oriented approach, which includes community-based leadership,

genuine leadership, and servant leadership [41], [42]. Transformational leadership is defined by four key dimensions: idealistic influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual concern. This leadership paradigm has the potential to yield positive outcomes for the business [43].

One derivative of transformational leadership is a community-based leadership style [15]. A community-based leader is a local leader/local champion who has personal resources such as knowledge, abilities, competencies, experience and a strong vision to maximize the resources they have [44]. *Local champions* are important, and can be found in community participation in tourism activities [45]. *Local Champions* are those who can influence policies, opinions, or actions in a society because of their role and position in society [44]. These leaders have a crucial role in the development of community tourism. They establish collaborations that promote community-building, form relationships with facilitators, and ensure local control over tourist development. In short, this local leader can be said to be able to carry out three main roles, namely as facilitator, mediator and mobilizer.

Rural tourism is commonly perceived as a form of tourism that is both ecologically and socially sustainable, resulting in economic and social benefits for local communities. Rural tourism relies heavily on the conservation of culture, legacy, and customs [4]. In order to realize the potential good effects of rural tourism, it is crucial to have strong leadership in the destination. This leadership should take proactive and imaginative measures to address the social and economic degradation in rural

regions [46]. Rural tourism is full of local culture, leadership in rural tourism does not only focus on the leader's abilities as an individual but how leaders can build networks and integrate rural tourism with other sectors, which has an impact on the development of rural tourism [47]. The destination leadership style is shaped by the dynamic interplay of factors such as existence, primary drivers of growth, local expertise, and familiarity [4]. Destination leadership style can refer to the way a leader or party responsible for managing a tourism destination or tourist area make decisions, direct teams, and manage resources to achieve specific goals. Destination leadership refers to the presence of one or more entities that have the ability to exert influence on stakeholders, ensuring that good communication is maintained and organizing them to make agreed-upon choices or perform actions [48]. Leadership in rural locations should promote the development of tourist goods centered upon cultural and natural experiences, recognizing these places as valuable resources.

Effective leadership is crucial for achieving the beneficial effects of rural tourist development. To effectively lead rural tourism, one must possess a keen awareness of local culture and be adept at innovating rural tourist products [49]. Destinations at all levels require resolute, dedicated, and efficient leadership. This entails active participation from government, businesses, society, and stakeholders [6].

There is no concept of right and wrong in leadership styles, in practice leadership styles have benefits and consequences, the key is for leaders to find a form of leadership that is relevant to the context at hand. Leadership style mapping can be done by analyzing

various dimensions that influence it. Apart from that, leadership style mapping can also be used to determine leadership patterns in certain contexts and develop new leadership styles based on a combination of various dimensions that complement each other.

3. LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM

Tourism villages have been proven to be a rural development strategy that has a positive impact on regional development and community welfare [50]. In Indonesia, tourist villages are a priority program for the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in the 2020-2024 Medium Term Development Plan, with a target of having 224 independently certified tourist villages by 2024 (Kemenparekraf, 2021).

To achieve this target, the government uses various tourism village development strategies, including increasing financing capacity through village funds. Village Minister Regulation Number 13 of 2020 confirms that village funds can be used for village tourism activities, especially if managed by a Village-Owned Enterprise.

Tourism villages in Indonesia are divided into four types, namely natural resource based, local culture, creative and combination. The concept of tourism village development combines tourism products (cultural, natural and creative) with a tourist destination approach that involves attractions, accessibility, amenities and participation of the community, village-owned enterprises, government and industry. Important aspects towards a superior tourist village include infrastructure, cleanliness, health and information technology readiness.

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is an approach used mostly in managing tourist villages which aims to realize sustainable tourism [38], [51], [52]. Indonesia's commitment to sustainable tourism is contained in the Regulations Minister

Number 9 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations.

Rural development is often directed through tourism, which can provide income, reducing economic and social disparities between urban and rural areas. However, the benefits of tourism are not always felt equally by village residents [5], therefore, leadership has an important role in developing rural tourism so that it can be implemented competitively, sustainably, and have a positive impact on village communities [6], [19].

Leaders have an essential role in developing tourist villages [2]. One of the factors that most contributes to the success of community-based tourism is leadership competency [53]. Sustainable tourism industry development requires the active participation of destination communities so that local tourism potential can become an attractive attraction. To achieve optimal tourism development, spontaneous participation from the community is needed, where they become the initiators and creators of tourism activities in their respective villages. In this context, the role of "local champion" or local leader is very important. They are individuals from a community who have the ability to create change within their group [54].

Local champions have a crucial role in developing tourist villages, because they can trigger tourism activities that support active community participation in developing the tourism sector [55]. The characteristics of local champions include soul and enthusiasm as a driver who dares to take unusual actions, as well as a strong entrepreneurial spirit to create change and progress for the community [56]. The individual referred to in the local champion notion is not characterized by a prominent social status (such as a political or administrative post), but rather by possessing a strong leadership disposition and the ability to mobilize a significant number of others [57]. Hence, it is not possible to promptly identify a local champion; rather, their recognition necessitates thorough and ongoing observation and engagement [58].

Local champions were introduced by [59] as representatives of local communities who play a role in tourism development through their participation and support. Local champions are a key element in rural development in Malaysia, consisting of individuals or small groups who help drive progress in communities involved in tourism activities.

In the context of Sustainability Community Based Rural Tourism, leadership plays a role in building community involvement and commitment [31]. Applying an appropriate leadership style can motivate the community to commit to carrying out sustainable tourism activities, because community participation is the key to the success of tourism activities [60].

Rural tourism development has a positive impact that can be achieved through effective leadership. This leadership requires sensitivity to local culture and rural tourism product innovation, experience, ability to work together and lead a team [61]. Effective leadership must be seen as an important factor influencing competitiveness in tourist destinations [62]. An effective tourism leader in developing rural tourism must have a strong leadership spirit, be committed, have knowledge and enthusiasm in tourism, strong networking capabilities, and an extensive network in the community which is needed at all levels of the destination [6].

Leadership in rural destinations focuses on developing tourism products based on cultural and natural experiences and prioritizes these areas as potential resources and can foster cross-sector collaboration [14]. There is no unique formula for effective leadership, but the formula is developed over time and relies on learning from various experiences and different people [61].

Destination leadership refers to the capacity of institutions or persons to exert influence over stakeholders, facilitate efficient communication, and guide them towards making collective choices or taking coordinated activities. Long-term improvement of destination competitiveness is challenging without leaders that possess the ability to foster cooperation, effectively

convey values, and articulate a vision for progress. Efficient leadership fosters synergy within a destination network, wherein leaders establish a course of action and offer advice for inter-organizational collaboration [62].

Rural tourism encompasses the exhibition of rural life, art, culture, nature, and heritage found in rural regions. Rural tourism is often regarded as an environmentally and socially sustainable type of tourism that generates economic and social advantages for local people. An essential element of rural tourism is the conservation of culture, heritage, and customs. Rural tourism offers a chance to bridge the gap between urban and periphery regions by addressing the decline in investment in public infrastructure, such as inadequate public transportation, limited access to quality education, and basic social services. Proactive and inventive destination leadership is required to address the social and economic degradation in rural communities [46]. The implementation of rural tourist development plans is crucial for preserving and enhancing the quality of life in rural regions, as well as maximizing their economic impact on the rural economy. This leads to the growing significance of destination leadership in rural regions [63].

Destination leadership is very important in the development of local tourism policies and can overcome the challenges posed by changes in the destination environment [64]. Leadership in the development of rural tourism should result in a strategic partnership between tourist enterprises and other activities, where all partners are dedicated to ensuring a consistent and unified destination experience [63].

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the proposed leadership in developing sustainable tourism villages is:

1. A local leader / local champion. According to Ecoplan International (2005) a local champion is someone who has the initiative, ability and capability to encourage a process of change in a society, institution or institution. Local champions are considered an important factor in the concept of community-based tourism.

They play a role in persuading local communities to get involved, even in situations where assets are limited, therefore, the contribution of local champions is considered very significant to the success of community development in rural tourism destinations [65]. Local champions are those who can influence policies, opinions or actions in a community because of their role and position in society. As such, these leaders play an important role in community tourism development, as they build community-building collaborations, develop partnerships with facilitators, and maintain local control for tourism development. In short, this local leader can be said to be able to carry out three main roles, namely as facilitator, mediator and mobilizer [19].

2. Development can be achieved through an effective local leader, who has sensitivity to local culture and rural tourism product innovation, is experienced, able to work together and lead a team [61]. A leader with a destination leadership style focuses on developing tourism products based on cultural and natural experiences and prioritizes this region as a potential resource and can build cross-sector collaboration [14]. That rural tourism is full of local culture, leadership in rural tourism does not only focus on the leader's abilities as an individual but how leaders can build networks and integrate rural tourism with other sectors, which has an impact on the development of rural tourism. The destination leadership style is formed based on the dynamic interaction between presence, main causes of development, local knowledge, and familiarity. Destination leadership style can refer to the way a leader or party responsible for managing a tourism destination or tourist area makes decisions, directs a team, and manages resources to achieve certain goals [63], [64].

4. CONCLUSION

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) called 2017 the Year of Sustainable Tourism, which is an opportunity to increase the tourism sector's contribution to sustainability. In Indonesia, tourism growth is increasingly prominent, attracting the attention of both local residents and foreign tourists. There has been a shift in travel trends towards non-mainstream places, encouraging tourism development throughout Indonesia. In 2022, interest in cultural immersion will increase, as evidenced by the development of dozens of tourist villages in Indonesia.

Rural tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy and tourism industry, bringing a positive impact on economic growth, demographic stability and the added value of local products. In addition, rural tourism is a sustainable development strategy, including cultural conservation, natural resources and community empowerment. Tourist villages are the main focus of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, with a target of having 224 independently certified tourist villages by 2024.

The Community Based Tourism (CBT) approach is used in managing tourist villages, aiming to achieve sustainable tourism. Indonesia's commitment to sustainable tourism is reflected in regulations such as Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations.

Although tourism in rural areas can provide income and reduce the economic gap between urban and rural areas, the benefits are not always equally distributed. Therefore, leadership has a key role in developing rural tourism that is competitive, sustainable, and has a positive impact on society. The concept of a "local champion," a local leader who has the initiative and ability to influence the change process, becomes relevant in the development of sustainable tourism villages.

Effective local leaders in rural tourism development must have sensitivity to local culture, innovation skills, experience, team collaboration and networking skills.

Destination leadership styles, involving decision making, team direction, and resource management, are key in shaping rural tourism development. In this context,

the leader needed for sustainable tourism village development is a local champion with an effective destination leadership style.

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