



## LEARN TO EARN: ASSESSING ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN GILI TRAWANGAN, INDONESIA

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This article examines the economic impact of Gili Trawangan through qualitative approach by examining relevant stakeholders; government, business owners and local communities. Using the Doxey's irritation index and the concept of three elements of sustainability; this research indicates that Gili Trawangan is currently in the apathy phase. This phase is shown from the mass commercialization of tourism businesses within this island. As of result; there is also strong economic impacts towards the practices of community based tourism in the island. Direct and indirect impacts; affect even those who are not directly involved with tourism businesses. The locals also attempt to learn new skills, so they can also take part of this business. As business are mostly low scale, leakages are also minimum; making most of revenues goes to the locals. Tourism indeed has changed this once poor, uninhabited island into a mesmerizing destination which attract not only tourist to come but also creates a new hope of local welfare.

**Keywords:** Doxey, community, economic impact, local welfare

### Introduction

Gili Trawangan is an island located off the coast of Lombok in Indonesia and the largest island of the three Gilis (Gili Air and Gili Meno once un-inhabitant, this island has now become one of the top notch destination when travellers are visiting Bali. Island hop usually consist of visiting Bali and the three Gilis. The island got it's fame from shifting of travellers who shared their experience through blogs, vlogs and their social media.

Tourism is the foremost important economic activity on the island. Highly dependent from Bali, more than 85% of the families on Gili Trawangan are employed through tourism in some form (interview 20, 2018). Most travellers on this island are classified as backpackers as until to date there are only two high end resorts on this Island. Gili Trawangan along with the two Gilis, motorized vehicles are prohibited.



Island transportation consists of bicycles and cidomo's (horse drawn traps).

As the most developed island for tourism of all three Gili Island, Gili Trawangan is dedicated for young travellers infamous for its "magic mushroom". Even though it is illegal in Indonesia, some travellers are even putting where to find and how to consume this type of drug on their website ([www.jonesaroundtheworld.com](http://www.jonesaroundtheworld.com), 2018). Beside ease of access to drugs, the island is also infamous for "party goers". Jiggy boat party is one example with highly rated amongst travellers in TripAdvisor. This party scoring 4.5 out of 5 and ranked amongst 15 best things to do in the island (TripAdvisor, 2018). During interview with some participant, they clearly mention that they wouldn't mind to sleep by the beach or at a very low-cost homestay as long as they can party.

Another polemic identified is the issue of the existence and the resilience of its local communities. The issue of the existence of its inhabitants becomes interesting considering that most visitors on Gili Trawangan Island are foreigners. As Lombok is known as part of Halal Tourism (Sharia based tourism), inhabitants must necessarily adapt to it. From different looks, different capital, to different languages. All these differences then push the indigenous population to be persistent with three things: cultural diversity, pluralism, and lifestyle diversity.

Zoning violation of resort development area in Gili Trawangan by private parties is another problem which arises. In the spatial map released by the Governor Decree of Nusa Tenggara Barat No. 500 in 1992 has described the boundaries of zoning areas designated for development of tourism resort in Gili. The Spatial Map has actually portrays zoning of designated area for accommodation purpose, marine tourism, supporting facilities, buffer areas, embankment, golf course and designated for housing and cultivation. Unfortunately, this zoning which has been made is violated, various forms of accommodation are growing rapidly. Massive construction is not only built in the zoning area only, but has already reached the designated area of buffer and the residential area of the local population.

This phenomenon is likely due to increased number of private parties who are interested to make investment in Gili Trawangan. The local government took this as an opportunity as it will boost the regional income that can be used to develop the island. Hence, with the



proliferation of accommodation businesses, of course, the designated accommodation area can not accommodate existing accommodation efforts. In addition to the limitations of land for designated accommodation, the spread of accommodation business is also due to the accommodation business owners wanting to occupy a new, deserted location in order to get a different view from other accommodation businesses

There have been some leads for sustainable tourism implemented prior to this study being conducted. These initiatives however faced slow implementation, and although developed perfectly in theories, and as many theories, it has not been entirely implemented in the practice. One of the leads was developed by the Koperasi Janur Kuning which one of its business was to rent Cidomos. Even though this cooperative belongs to the local, there's also an attempt of monopoly as this horse cart only belongs to several people. Should anyone want to buy, it is being sold at an unreasonable price of IDR 700 million to 1.2 Billion (around USD\$ 500.000-800.000) per cidomo.

Despite its problems, the development of Gili Trawangan has become a magnet for the people outside the island. People who were originally farmers, traders and fishermen, eventually participated in the tourism business. They began to learn various skills to earn the sweetness of tourism.

The concept that developed in Gili Trawangan is a duplication of what is happening in Bali. Community Based Tourism becomes so strong on this island. Despite many literature doubts tourism benefits the community of small island, it is felt that tourism benefits even to those who are not directly involved in the business. Hence this article tries to analyze economic benefit to local community through qualitative approach. This article will become a part for our next research in foreseeing the other two elements of sustainability.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Community Based Tourism**

As part of creating sustainability in tourism destination, the urge of forging local community based tourism in a rural area has become the current trend. This form of tourism is promoted to give most benefit to the locals while at the same time create a memorable experience to its visitor. Community Based Tourism (CBT) according



to Goodwin and Santilli is tourism owned and managed by local community and proposed to deliver wider community benefits. In other words, CBT highlighted on local participation, and at the same time boosting control to the community in order to achieve more benefits to the local livelihood.

CBT provide gender equity on many destination. In many cases in Indonesia, CBT provide opportunities for women to be able to participate and contribute in developing it's region. In Bromo Tengger Semeru for example, woman is highly involved in managing local homestay (Putra and Pitanatri, 2016). Homestay development is highly dependable on women, and this was against the local culture which puts "men first" instead of women. In Bromo Tengger Semeru, business is managed locally and most revenues also goes directly to the local.

The concept of CBT provides opportunity to create jobs, and generate entrepreneurial chances for local communities even though they're from different backgrounds, skills, and experiences. CBT is also known as a worldwide plan where the concept has been used to increase rural economies while at the same time providing opportunities to improve community livelihood. In terms of community capacity building, CBT is also considered as part of community development tool. Through, CBT the ability of local communities to manage tourism resources while at same time ensuring its participation, is strengthen (Jamal & Getz, 1995). While according to Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (2000), CBT enables local community to generate income, diversify local economy, preserve culture, conserve the environment, and provide educational opportunities. At the same time it also provide local community with alternative sources of income as it also becomes a poverty reduction tool.

WWF defined CBT as a form of tourism "where the locals has significant control over, and participation in, its development and management, and a major percentage of the benefits remain within the community." WWF accepted that the concept of community depends on local "social and institutional structures" and accepted that it "must also embrace individual initiatives within the community" (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; WWF, 2001)

Pitanatri (2018), mention that homestay is an applied example of CBT in Indonesia. Homestays generate the concept that tourism



must takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. As part of Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism top priority program, homestay is managed and owned by the local of which it's existence is to benefit the local, while at the same time enables visitors increase their awareness and learn about the community and their way of life.

Even though local communities are the primary stakeholder in the tourism development, the local community's attitude can affect the development of CBT projects. Due to the lack of knowledge and resources as well as skills and expertise in tourism, local community in many destination is not always working together as one group. Thus, the effectiveness of CBT requires extensive community participation especially in assessment and planning as well as implementation of programs. The community involvement in this processes give high potential to empower its members to improvethier skills, knowledge, and confidence to ensure tourism development in their communities. Sebele (2001) highlight that rather getting benefits, some community members feel that cost they must incur by participating in CBT is far outweighed the benefits. One the reason is caused by the terms and conditions which has been set by the local government, due to encourage local community to participate in CBT.

Hence, there is a very wide range of examples and different linkages between the projects and the local community.As the major determinant of impact is scale and economic sustainability, it has not been possible to determine whether or not CBT initiatives contribute more than the others.

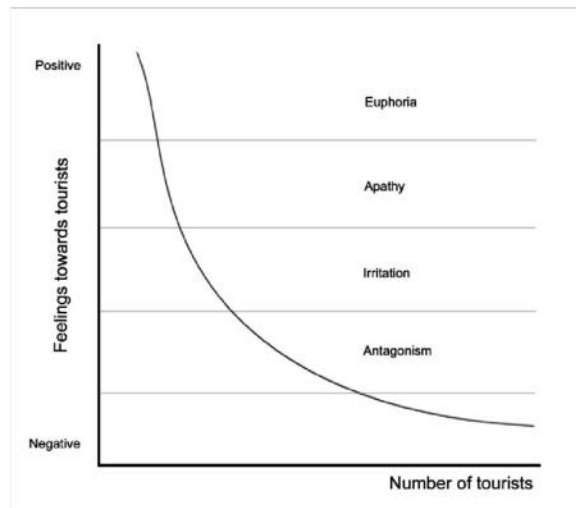
### **Doxey's irritation index**

There are many studies that evaluates social impacts of tourism to local community. Study of social impacts and issues regarding its measurement has been studied since many years ago (Milman and Pizam, 1988; Ap and Crompton, 1993; Deery et al., 2012). However, Hall and Richards (2000) claimed that measuring the social and cultural impacts of tourism is often a difficult task because firstly, they are mostly indirect and secondly, the lack of accepted methodology prevents exact measurement. On the other hand, Deery and Jago (2010) claimed that the methods to collect and analyze data regarding social impacts are often similar. However, there is something in

common that most of the studies implies-- monitoring both positive and negative indicators when at the same time measuring social impacts.

Butler (1975) came out with another stage of destination development known as Product Life Cycle (PLC). PLC consists of several stages beginning with exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and finally, stagnation. Since Gili Trawangan is considered as being in a new development stage, the study uses Doxey's Irridex Model in understanding residents' attitudes toward tourism. It should also be noted that attitudes do not predict support for tourism development very well in the tourism communities. This is supported by Andereck et al (2005) where they found that community benefits of tourism perceived by residents have a direct and positive relationship to support tourism development. However, the positive attitudes toward tourism are not strongly related to additional development of tourism products and the negative attitudes may not decrease residents' desire for development. In conclusion, there is a connection between attitudes and support for development although relationship is different for each community

Fig. 1. Doxey's Irridex Model 1975





	Social Relationships	Power Relationships
Euphoria	Visitors & investors welcome	Little planning or formalized control
Apathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors taken for granted</li> <li>• Formal relationships between hosts &amp; guests</li> </ul>	Marketing is the prime focus of plans
Annoyance	Residents misgivings about tourism	Planners attempt to control by increasing infrastructure
Antagonism	Irritations openly expressed	Power struggle between interests groups

Source: Doxey (1975)

### Three Elements of Sustainability

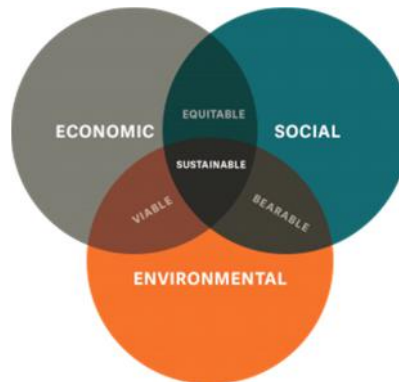
The concept of sustainable development, which was the foundation of three elements of sustainability in tourism was first communicated by the World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN 1980). Since then, the concept has developed from a series of international meetings beginning with the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED).

Sustainable development in tourism has become a hot topic in area of development research since the late 1980s, which has also been discussed in tourism research. The problem arises as many researchers discuss connection between host and guest may contribute to negative impact in a certain destination. For example in Bali, there has been an anxiety that tourism may lead to cultural destruction. Similar phenomenon also happen in Komodo (Flores) where tourism may harm the natural conservation of the Komodo dragons. These concern are actually trigger that take sustainable development as a guideline to tourism development.

Kahn (1995) through the United Nations Agenda 21 indicates that the paradigm of 'sustainable development', in fact, rests on three conceptual pillars. Originally were meant to counter environmental issues, these pillars are then being develop to achieve sustainability in

tourism destination. The three pillars consist of 'economic sustainability', 'social sustainability', and 'environmental sustainability' as shown on the diagram below

Fig. 2. Three Elements of Sustainability



Source: Kahn (1995)

1. Economic sustainability, in terms of growth, development, and productivity, sustained levels of growth and consumption. A sustainable economic growth will lead to 'trickle down' to the poor, minimize leakage and at the same time create multiplier effect.
2. Social sustainability encompasses notions of equity, cultural identity, accessibility, empowerment, participation, and institutional stability. This approach seeks to preserve the destination through economic growth and reduction level of poverty.
3. Environmental sustainability involves ecosystem integrity, biodiversity and carrying capacity. It requires natural capital to be preserved as a source of economic inputs and waste control. Resources must be harvested no faster than they can be restored. Waste management must be encourage to minimize impacts of tourism.

The theoretical framework elaborated by Kahn suggests that the three areas; economic, social and environmental 'sustainability' must be 'interlinked'. To achieve sustainability, each must be synchronized in a comprehensive manner. A hypothetical case of deforestation in a developing country as follow will illustrate this 'interlinkage' to





describes how each aspect of the economic, the social, and the environmental contributes 'sustainability' that relate to one another.

If a man in a rural area is jobless, he is likely to be poor and potentially became unskilled. If he is poor and unskilled, he has an incentive to engage in practices that harm ecology just to get "easy money", for example, by cutting down trees for firewood and to sell for extra money. His actions will lead others within his community to follow, hence more villagers will be cutting down trees. This will lead to deforestation that may cause flood during the rainy season. Flood will not only cause impoverishment, but may cause social impacts like increased numbers of jobless which potentially lead to increasing numbers of criminals.

## **Methodology**

This paper is based upon fieldwork research that was conducted in Gili Trawangan, Indonesia over two visits in June and July 2018. A multi-method research approach (Sommer and Sommer 1991) was used for this study. In-depth, semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with twenty seven business owners and managers (local and western) on the island resulting in a 85 percent response rate.

Snowball sampling was also used to obtain the key informant sample. To enrich quality of this research, in depth interviews were conducted with the current local government and selected key person who develop the island. Using a random sampling procedure, a total of 27 informal interviews were conducted. Interviews were also conducted with employees and the local community on the island.

The interviews was to discuss history of sustainable tourism initiatives on the island, to identify barriers to implementing sustainable tourism, to foresee strategies that overcome the identified barriers and innovative means in Gili Trawangan.

## **Findings and Discussion**

A number of findings were documented in this research. Using Doxey's irritation index and the concept of three elements of sustainability to compose the questionnaire, there are three results outlining the main impact of CBT in Gili Trawangan. Through this research CBT initiatives towards economic impact were identified, these three research findings consist of:



- (1) Direct and indirect economic impacts
- (2) Locals attempt to learn new skills
- (3) Mass commercialization of tourism businesses within this island.

### ***direct and indirect economic impacts***

Economic expediency is felt since tourism developed in this island. Through interviews with the locals who witnessed the island growth since early 1980-ies, tourism has made major change to social welfare. Not only for the creation of new jobs related to tourism, businesses that are not directly related to this sector also get positive benefits. For example, owner of building material is crowded because there are construction of villas and improvements of roads and infrastructure. Farmers and fisherman from another island also benefit from tourism though the needs of food to support the business. Not only give major improvement to local income and standards of living, tourism at the same time fosters numbers of public facilities. This was against the long known image of West Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB)) as the poorest province in Indonesia.

As the bread and breath of Gili Trawangan, the positive impacts of tourism leads consequently to a better standard of living for the local residents. This is in agreement with studies concerning on the positive economic impacts of tourism (Pitanatri, 2018, 2017; King et al., 1993; Akis et al., 1996; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996).

The result of questionnaire distribution shows that 87% of the people in Gili Trawangan earn enough income to meet their basic needs like food, health and education. Around 38% of them also have funds allocated for investment. This shows the quality of life of the people on this island is way better than without tourism.

Before tourism, local community used to rely solely on fishing. When high tide season arrives, many people experience difficulties because they cannot go fishing. "Before tourism, don't think about education, just for daily meals is very difficult" (Village Leader, interview 2018). One of the reason is the existence of a cooperatives belonging to local communities that helped improve community welfare called Janur Indah.

As mentioned earlier, there is no motorized vehicle on this island. One of the modes of transportation used is Cidomo (Cikar Dokar



Mobil) which is only limited to 32 unit. The ownership of Cidomo follows is managed by this local cooperative. Because it is managed by a cooperative, the revenues from Cidomo exclusively owned by the local community. The profits from Cidomo is divided into three, for horse owners, drivers and members of the cooperatives. Likewise, Dongol (horse cart which is not dedicated for tourists), also gain economic benefits from tourism.

However, local community of Gili Trawangan also faced the negative side of economic impact. Such impacts especially increased price of goods and services, increased price of land and housing and increased cost of living. These impacts also affected to many workers as they tend to only work in Gili Trawangan, but lived on the neighboring island like Gili Air and Lombok mainland. When this research was carried out, several hotel employees who became informants in this study also stated that in fact they were better off living on another island because the cost of living in Gili Trawangan was relatively more expensive. One of the problems also lies in the need for basic commodities which are almost entirely imported from other islands. The only thing produced on this island is only coconut, and even then the amount is not much as much because many fields have changed their designation for tourism.

Even so, the multiplier effect of tourism activities on Gili Trawangan is also felt by those who do not live on this island. Suppliers from outside the island and not directly involved as tourism players can also enjoy the sweetness of tourist. Lombok's regional income also increased dramatically, due to an increase in hotel and restaurant taxes, recreational businesses and from fast boat ticket sales. This allows local governments to carry out various activities related to the development of destinations

### ***Locals attempt to learn new skills***

Especially for Indonesians, Lombok's once known as the land of stealers. When villagers went "fishing" to the beach, they are not going home with carrying fish but sunglasses and tourist possessions. This created bad image of Lombok as tourist destination national and internationally. To avoid this, the Gili community then began to enforce social control by "shame stealers" by making them parade around the island by using sign on their neck before being handed over to the police. This were conducted to give a deterrent effect so Gili



Trawangan remains a safe and comfortable destination for tourists. Their skill in stealing, were directed to learn skills in tourism.

Tourism "forces" these local people to learn new skills if they want to feel the benefits from this sector. Thus, skills are actually formed due to the development of the tourism sector in this island. Skill of communicating with English, in diving and even skills as Disk Jockeys (DJs) and bartenders who used to be taboo, became formed with many clubs and bars on the island.

In supporting the improvement of skills and competencies owned by the community, the local government has also invested in development funds in the form of schools. On this island there are schools from an early age to high school and vocational high school to help improve skills and quality of local community in the destination.

Despite the enthusiasm from a number of business owners on the island, sustainable tourism initiatives also continuously faced a number of barriers. The first theme identified was related to the barriers associated with inadequate resources such as high costs, lack of information, skills, knowledge, expertise, time and the reluctance to acquire assistance from other consultants. It was these particular barriers that were identified as the most significant and often experienced.

#### *Mass commercialization of tourism businesses within this island*

No doubt Gili Trawangan is "shining" after tourism. Nights that used to be dark in this uninhabited island, now filled with lights from bars and restaurants that filled the streets. Even though the island still lack of street lighting, most places of the island is always bright because many tourism businesses along the way.

To increase revenues, the road is also crowded due to advertisement by business owners. Advertisement varied from small businesses owned by the community to large ventures and restaurants. Not only local advertising, there were quite a number of promotions carried out both at the initiative of the community itself and the local government in collaboration with the central government to promote Gili Trawangan.

When referring back, this island is actually an uninhabited island which was originally a place to plant coconut. A German traveler



came and stayed for a few nights on this island in the early 1980-ies and he wrote his experience in the form of articles. The article is then published by guide book in Germany, and then re-published in some guide books like Lonely Planet. After that, Bali was always associated with Lombok where Lombok highlights were dominated by the features of Gili Trawangan and two other Gili's.

Although administratively a part of Lombok, Gili Trawangan feels even closer to Bali. It does not feel that this island is also part of halal tourism which is a big concept of Lombok tourism development. The island of Lombok itself has won the award as 2015 Abu Dhabi World Halal Destination. What's interesting is the statement from the local community "if you want to do something crazy, do it in Gili; not in Lombok". This concludes how differences in tourism promotion are carried out for Lombok with Gili Trawangan. What is interesting is the terminology of local communities is actually not quite right because there are actually no "authentic" communities of Gili Trawangan. They are actually migrants from the island of Lombok who then settled for years to get a more decent living.

When referring to Doxey's Iridex theory, this phenomenon shows that Gili Trawangan is currently in the position of apathy where tourism is growing rapidly due to the massive promotion promoted on the island. On the one hand, the relationships that occur between hosts and guests are still warm. Although currently the number of tourist visits to Gili Trawangan is increasing, the collaboration actually appears between hosts and guests. There are quite a number of initiatives emerging from Gili youth such as GarbageHeroes, beach clean days every weekend, and many more. This also encourages promotion carried out on Gili Trawangan.

This situation is also supported by the development of the digital world as a result of technological progress. Research conducted by Pitana and Pitanatri (2016) mentions that through the move from offline to online travelers, the web and social media presence of destinations are crucial as e-destinations serving as platforms where potential travelers can be inspired, get all the information about their upcoming trip to a destination and eventually book the holiday. Examples that occur in Bali, quite a lot of destinations that were never touched but later became popular due to social media. Nusa Penida, for example is a religious tourism for Balinese destination as it has one of



the most sacred temples in Bali which then becomes one of the "hot spots" to take selfies to travelers. New terminology like Instagramable, YouTuber, Vloggers and so forth also arises in once not so popular destinations.

## Closing

Tourism does not always have a completely negative impact. As in Gili, tourism has proven to have a positive impact on local welfare. The purpose of this article was to investigate on the stages of development in tourism economic impact assessment. In order to reach the aim of this study, a comprehensive review on the most important models and approaches about social impacts of tourism and their evaluation has been applied. Based on the literature as well as the questionnaire and interviews conducted, it was determined that tourism has contribute positive economic impacts on the community as perceived by its members.

Therefore, it is very important to adopt the planning policies which can reinforce other positive impacts while reduce negative impacts by involvement of communities in tourism industry. This will result in further understanding of residents about tourism and their participation in tourism decision making which will consequently lead them to receive more benefits from the industry. These policies will let local people to be involved in the industry in a positive way and undertake both positive and negative impacts of tourism.

Hence, sustainable tourism development must take scientific evaluation plan which favors a comprehensive mastery of development performance indicators. There's also need in correcting deviations from traditional performance, avoiding blind promotion and inefficient development, strengthening industry management, protecting natural and cultural resources, while at the same time to improve management efficiency, achieving social equity, and ultimately promoting sustainable tourism development



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