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Perceptions and Community Participation in The Rebranding of Community-Based Tourism on Gili Iyang Island

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze host community perceptions of tourism development on Gili Iyang Island and to examine their implications for community-based tourism rebranding. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) identify local (host) perceptions toward tourism, (2) analyze the social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors shaping these perceptions, (3) evaluate perceived benefits and losses of tourism, and (4) examine changes in community attitudes over time. These objectives are directed toward strengthening community participation in the rebranding process, recognizing that sustainable destination transformation requires local ownership, legitimacy, and active engagement from host communities.

The study employs a host perception analysis framework implemented through four stages: perception identification, exploration of influencing factors, evaluation of impacts and benefits, and identification of changes in perceptions and attitudes. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 residents of Gili Iyang Island during July–August 2023. Quantitative descriptive analysis was used to capture patterns of attitudes toward tourists, involvement in tourism, perceptions of change, future expectations, and evaluations of social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts.

Findings indicate that the host community generally holds positive attitudes toward tourism: most residents welcome tourists, perceive ongoing changes as improvements, and express optimism about tourism's future. Economic impacts are perceived overwhelmingly positively, while social and cultural dimensions reveal ambivalence and concern, particularly regarding cultural erosion. Although 74% of respondents believe tourism benefits outweigh its losses, community participation remains extremely limited, with 92% not yet involved in tourism activities. A significant shift from initial ambivalence to current support demonstrates a critical window for rebranding.

Keywords: *Host Perception; Community-Based Tourism; Tourism Rebranding; Gili Iyang*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism on Gili Iyang Island, Sumenep District, Madura, East Java, faces several challenges that hinder its growth. Some of the key issues related to tourism on the island include low tourist arrivals, poorly managed attractions, low community engagement and unattractive destination branding. To overcome these challenges and increase tourism potential on Gili Iyang Island, a strategic approach is needed that can change perceptions and involve the community in the tourism development and marketing process.

A closer look at the available data, especially regarding the segmentation of Indonesian tourists by age, shows that Indonesian tourists are dominated by young tourists. Almost 55% of tourists are those under 35 years old. If you want to capture

Buletin Ekonomika Pembangunan
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Vol.6 No.2 September 2025, hal 194-211

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the market share of tourists in Indonesia, then at least the most potential market share at this time must be worked on properly.

One of the efforts to capture the potential of these young tourists' segment is to understand their needs for the type of tourism they want. Although basically the purpose of doing tourism activities is to get the utility of relaxation or "escape" from the routine so that it can become fresh again, but how it can be achieved is the difference between young tourists and tourists who are relatively "mature". Understanding the characteristics of young travelers is key if you want to get a share of the largest travelers currently in Indonesia.

The main selling point or main utility offered from tourism on Gili Iyang Island is currently "health tourism". This is very reasonable given the fact that the oxygen content on Gili Iyang Island is very high and even the second highest in the world. However, if you want to capture the opportunity of the large potential of young tourists in Indonesia, this is not quite right. On the other hand, actually the natural and cultural potential on Gili Iyang Island which is not solely related to health actually also has a high selling value or utility that can be offered that is attractive to potential consumers / tourists. In general, the utilities that can be offered to tourism consumers on Gili Iyang Island are: (i) Adventure Utility or Adventure, (ii)Health or Health Utility, (iii) Education or Learning Utility, (iv)Entertainment Utility or Fun.

The current branding or image suggests that Gili Iyang is an island for health therapy. This can connote that this island is a suitable and good tourist spot for those who are "unhealthy" and want to become healthy again. On the other hand, it refers to the connotation of relatively old age. This means that Gili Iyang Island is a suitable island for those who are old enough and want to restore their health by doing natural oxygen therapy on Gili Iyang Island.

The impression or image of the utility offered by tourism on Gili Iyang Island unconsciously limits the segment of tourists who will visit. It also limits the largest segment of travelers in Indonesia, namely those under 35 years old. Based on the age category of travelers, this is the largest segment in Indonesia, where almost 55% of travelers are in that category (BPS.2019). If you want to make tourism visitors on Gili Iyang Island increase, you also need to think about how to capture the tourism market opportunity with this largest segment.

The best way to be able to capture these market opportunities (young tourists) is to provide the right information through the image or impression with the tag-line of the existing branding. In other words, "rebranding" is needed for tourism on Gili Iyang Island with the right tag-line. A branding effort that is able to strongly demonstrate the utility that can be enjoyed by tourists visiting Gili Iyang Island. This process is commonly known as a 'rebranding' effort of a commodity in order to better reflect the utility offered, including efforts to capture the largest market opportunities for consumers in the tourism industry, especially in Indonesia.

Community-based tourism rebranding is a concept and approach in tourism development that aims to change or renew the image and identity of a tourism destination by involving the active role of the local community. This is done with the aim of creating sustainable tourism development and having a positive impact on local communities. The basic concept in community-based tourism rebranding is the recognition of the importance of the role and participation of the community as the main subject in the tourism development process. Local communities become an integral part of rebranding and have a central role in identifying the uniqueness, attractiveness, and cultural values of tourism destinations.

Experts in this field believe that there is no greater force than the active participation of communities in the process of community-based tourism rebranding. They are the custodians of the cultural and natural treasures that are the main attraction of tourist destinations." Therefore, involving the community in the rebranding process has a number of strong reasons (Jamal & Getz: 1995); (Scheyvens: 2002); (Tosun: 2002).

The first reason is that involving the community ensures that the decisions and steps taken in rebranding are based on the needs, expectations and aspirations of the local community. By understanding people's persceptions and interests, rebranding can become more authentic, relevant and sustainable. Secondly, involving the community also increases their sense of belonging and involvement with the tourism destination. Having a sense of belonging and involvement in the rebranding process, the community will feel more connected to the destination and more motivated to maintain and preserve the natural resources, culture, and local heritage on which tourism is based.

The third reason is that involving the community also contributes to improving the welfare of local communities. Community participation in tourism rebranding can open up new economic opportunities, such as the development of locally-based micro, small and medium enterprises, skills training and increased employment for local residents. This provides direct economic benefits and improves the living standards of local communities. Last but not least, involving the community in the rebranding process also helps in the preservation and promotion of local culture. Communities have deep knowledge of local traditions, customs and wisdom that can be integrated in rebranding efforts. By promoting distinctive local culture, tourism destinations can attract tourists who seek authentic and immersive experiences.

In the context of Gili Iyang Island, Sumenep Regency, Madura, East Java, community-based tourism rebranding is important to optimize the island's tourism potential. By involving the Gili Iyang Island community in the rebranding process, a deeper understanding of the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the island, as well as cultural values that can be integrated in tourism development, can be obtained. In addition, challenges faced by the community in implementing rebranding need to be identified and solutions sought to ensure the smoothness and success of the process. In addition, in the context of Gili Iyang Island, the role of the government and related institutions is also important in facilitating community participation in the tourism rebranding process. The local government can be a liaison between the community, the tourism sector, and other stakeholders. They can provide policy support, good planning, and adequate resource allocation to support community-based tourism rebranding in Gili Iyang Island. In addition, related institutions such as community organizations, local groups, and NGOs can also play a role in providing guidance, training, and advocacy for the community to effectively participate in the rebranding process.

The perception of the host (local community) and their participation is also very important in the success of the rebranding process. The community's perception of a tourist destination can affect the destination's image and reputation. If the local community has a negative perception of tourism, this can create barriers in attracting tourists. Conversely, if the community has a positive perception and feels involved in tourism development, they can be strong tourism ambassadors and play an important role in promoting and maintaining a positive image of the destination.

Buletin Ekonomika Pembangunan
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Vol.6 No.2 September 2025, hal 194-211

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Furthermore, Tosun (2002) states that, host perceptions of tourism impacts are critical in sustainable tourism development. It is important for governments and tourism managers to understand and pay attention to host perceptions and interests in tourism planning and management in order to create balanced and sustainable benefits for local communities. In more detail, there are two important things related to local community perceptions of tourism development: First, hosts who have a positive perception of the economic impact of tourism, such as increased income and employment, will have a significant impact on the success of tourism development in their area. This is because they are able to see tourism as a potential source to improve community welfare. Second, hosts who feel involved in tourism-related decision-making tend to have more positive perceptions of tourism impacts. They feel they have influence and control over the development of tourism in their area, and this will ultimately have a positive impact on tourism development in their area.

Community participation is also a key factor in community-based tourism development. Involving local communities in tourism decision-making, planning and management processes can strengthen their attachment to the destination and ensure more equitable benefits from tourism. Community participation can include collaboration with local stakeholders, such as tourism entrepreneurs, cultural groups, social organizations, and local government agencies. By involving communities in the rebranding process, they have the opportunity to contribute valuable local knowledge, skills and persceptions. This enables the development of sustainable tourism, which respects the local culture and environment, while improving the economic and social well-being of the community.

Collaboration in community-based tourism planning can bring several important points, such as (Jamal & Getz: 1995):

1. Local community involvement: Collaboration encourages the active participation of local communities in tourism-related planning and decision-making. Involving local communities helps to ensure that their interests are taken into account and that tourism development is conducted with sustainable social, cultural, and environmental impacts in mind.
2. Local knowledge: Local communities have valuable knowledge about the culture, natural resources, and uniqueness of their destinations. Collaboration allows this local knowledge to be recognized and integrated in tourism planning. By utilizing local knowledge, decisions can be more informed and take into account the needs and expectations of local communities.
3. Positive impact on the community: Through collaboration, community-based tourism planning can create economic opportunities for local communities. This can include small and medium enterprise development, increased employment, and social infrastructure development. Collaboration can also strengthen local communities' identity and pride in their destination.
4. Sharing of responsibilities: Collaboration in tourism planning involves various stakeholders, such as the government, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Through collaboration, responsibilities can be shared fairly between the stakeholders involved, thus creating sustainability in tourism management.

Based on the description above then the objectives of this study is to analyze how the community's perception of tourism on Gili Iyang Island. In addition, the host perception analysis will consist of several parts, they are; (1) Perception

identification, (2) Factor identification, (3) Benefit and loss identification, and (4) Change of perception identification.

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Analysis Method

Host Perceptions Analysis

Host Perceptions Analysis in tourism studies involves understanding and researching the perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of host communities towards the tourism industry. The purpose of this analysis is to understand how local communities experience, interpret, and respond to the impacts of tourism in their environment. The following are the stages in this analysis:

1. Identification of Perceptions: The first step in the "host pesception" analysis is to identify the perceptions that exist within the host community. This involves collecting data through surveys, interviews, or observations to understand the views and attitudes of local residents towards tourism. Questions can pertain to their perceptions of the benefits and impacts of tourism, their involvement in the tourism industry, and their feelings towards the changes taking place.
2. Exploring Influence Factors: A "host perception" analysis also involves exploring factors that influence the perceptions of the host community. This may include identifying social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that influence their views on tourism. For example, factors such as occupation, income, cultural identity, environmental sustainability, and participation in decision-making can be factors that influence community perceptions.
3. Evaluation of Impacts and Benefits: The "host perception" analysis also includes an evaluation of the impacts and benefits of tourism as perceived by the host community. This involves assessing the economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits generated by tourism, as well as identifying any negative impacts that may be felt by the community. This evaluation can aid in a better understanding of how host communities measure tourism benefits and losses.
4. Identify Changes in Perceptions and Attitudes: A "host persception" analysis can also help identify opportunities to change host communities' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism. With a deeper understanding of community concerns and expectations, tourism managers can adopt effective communication and education strategies to address misconceptions and change negative perceptions. This can involve counseling on the benefits of tourism, raising awareness on relevant issues, and providing transparent information to communities.

Location of the study and Informan

The study located at Gili Iyang Island of Sumenep Distric East Java Province, Indonesia. This study uses 100 informans that will be surveyed using a structured questionarire. The informants all are resident of Gili Iyang Island. Informants will be carefully choosen and by doing so can be representing the variety of population of Gili Iyang Island. In addition, the survey was conducted on July-August 2023.

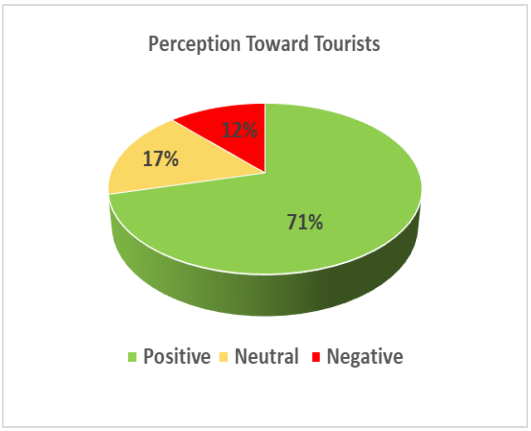
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

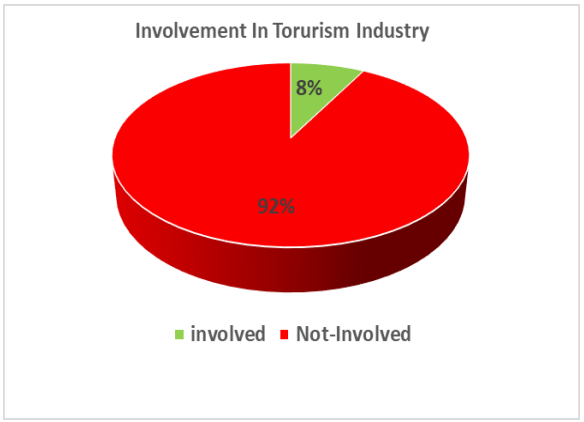
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Identification of Host Perceptions

The main purpose of perspective identification in the host perspective analysis is to understand the views and experiences of local or host communities about tourism that occurs in their environment. The identification of this perspective is important to do because local communities or hosts are the parties most affected by tourism development in their environment. The identification of host perception on Giliiyang tourism consist of 4 perceptions as perceived by the host, they are; (i) Perception toward tourists, (ii) Involvement in tourism industry, (iii) Feels toward change, and (iv) The future of Gili Iyang tourism industry. These next figures show the results of the host perception identification.





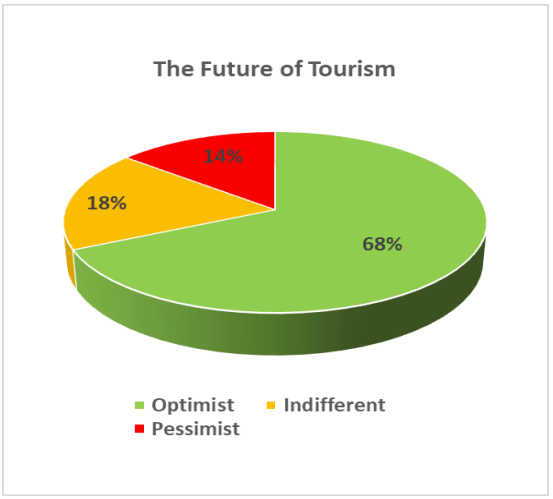
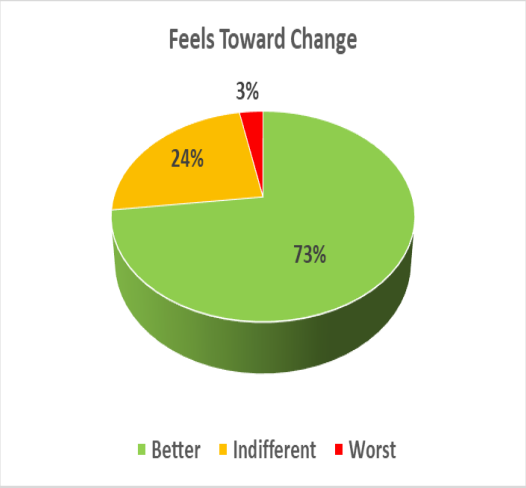


Figure 1. Identification of Host Perceptions



Based on the survey results presented in Figure 1. Identification of Host Perceptions, the community of Gili Iyang Island generally demonstrates a positive orientation toward tourism development, despite a very limited level of direct involvement. In terms of Perception Toward Tourists, the majority of respondents (71%) express positive views, while 17% remain neutral and only 12% hold negative perceptions. This pattern indicates that tourists are largely welcomed and are not perceived as an immediate threat to the social fabric of the community. Instead, their presence is commonly associated with potential opportunities, such as economic exchange, cultural interaction, and increased visibility of the island. The relatively small proportion of negative perceptions suggests that concerns related to social disruption or cultural intrusion remain marginal at this stage. However, the existence of a neutral segment signals a degree of ambivalence, likely reflecting limited interaction with tourists or uncertainty regarding future consequences. Collectively, these findings point to a receptive social environment in which tourism is viewed more as an opportunity than a risk. Such a favorable baseline is critical, as positive host attitudes constitute an essential precondition for the sustainability of tourism development and for fostering constructive host–guest relationships over time.

With respect to Feels Toward Change, the survey reveals that 73% of respondents perceive ongoing changes as an improvement, while 24% remain indifferent and only 3% view these changes negatively. This distribution indicates a strong openness among the host community toward transformation associated with tourism development and suggests that resistance to change is relatively minimal. Such receptiveness reflects a collective readiness to adapt to new social and economic dynamics, particularly when change is perceived to bring tangible benefits or future opportunities. The sizeable proportion of indifferent respondents, however, signals a group that remains cautious or unconvinced, possibly due to limited direct experience with tourism or uncertainty regarding its long-term implications. Meanwhile, the very small share of negative perceptions implies that overt opposition is marginal and does not constitute a dominant barrier to development. Together, these patterns highlight a favorable social climate for tourism-driven change, while also emphasizing the importance of inclusive engagement and communication. By ensuring that changes are transparent, participatory, and responsive to community concerns, tourism development can

Buletin Ekonomika Pembangunan
https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/bep
Vol.6 No.2 September 2025, hal 194-211

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strengthen acceptance and transform openness into active support.

Perceptions regarding The Future of Tourism are predominantly optimistic, with 68% of respondents expressing positive expectations, 18% remaining neutral, and only 14% indicating pessimism. This pattern reflects a forward-looking orientation among the host community and suggests that tourism is widely perceived as a promising pathway for local development. The prevailing optimism signifies expectations that tourism will generate new economic opportunities, improve household welfare, and enhance the visibility and competitiveness of the island. At the same time, the presence of neutral and pessimistic groups indicates that such expectations are not uniformly shared, pointing to underlying uncertainties related to social change, cultural continuity, and environmental sustainability. These divergent views underscore the importance of inclusive planning and transparent communication, as unmanaged expectations may lead to disillusionment if anticipated benefits fail to materialize. Consequently, optimism toward the future of tourism should be understood not merely as passive hope, but as a strategic asset that requires careful governance to ensure that projected gains are equitably distributed and aligned with community values. By translating these positive expectations into tangible outcomes, tourism development can reinforce trust, sustain community support, and strengthen the foundations for long-term, community-based tourism on Gili Iyang Island.

In contrast, the most striking finding emerges from the dimension of Involvement in the Tourism Industry. An overwhelming 92% of respondents report that they are not involved in tourism-related activities, while only 8% indicate active participation. This gap highlights a critical discrepancy between generally positive attitudes toward tourism and the limited realization of tangible benefits or opportunities for engagement among local residents. Although the community expresses openness and optimism toward tourism development, these attitudes have not yet translated into meaningful participation or economic inclusion. This condition suggests that structural barriers—such as limited access to capital, skills, information, and institutional support—may constrain local involvement. It also reflects the early stage of tourism development on the island, where opportunities remain concentrated among a small segment of actors.

The absence of broad participation risks creating a perception of tourism as an external activity that benefits only a few, potentially eroding long-term community support. Without deliberate efforts to expand access, positive perceptions may gradually shift toward indifference or opposition, particularly if expected benefits fail to materialize at the household level. Therefore, bridging this participation gap is essential for aligning community attitudes with lived experiences. Targeted capacity-building programs, inclusive business models, and community-centered governance mechanisms are required to transform latent support into active engagement. By enabling wider involvement, tourism can evolve from a perceived opportunity into a shared development pathway that strengthens local ownership and sustainability.

These findings reveal a strong social potential for the development of community-based tourism on Gili Iyang Island, especially for the rebranding process of Gili Iyang tourism. The principal challenge does not lie in attitudinal resistance, but rather in the low level of community participation. Consequently, tourism development strategies should prioritize expanding local involvement through empowerment initiatives, capacity building, and the creation of concrete avenues for participation. By doing so, the existing positive perceptions can be transformed

into active and sustainable community support.

Identification of Influence Factors

The analysis of "host perception" also involves exploring the factors that influence the perceptions of the host community. This may include identifying social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that influence their views on tourism. For example, factors such as employment, income, cultural identity, environmental sustainability, and participation in decision-making can be factors that influence community perceptions. The identification of influence factors consist of 4 perceptions as perceived by the host, they are; (i) Social factor, (ii) Cultural Factor, (iii) Environmental factor, and (iv) Economical factor. These next figures show the results of the host influence factors identification.

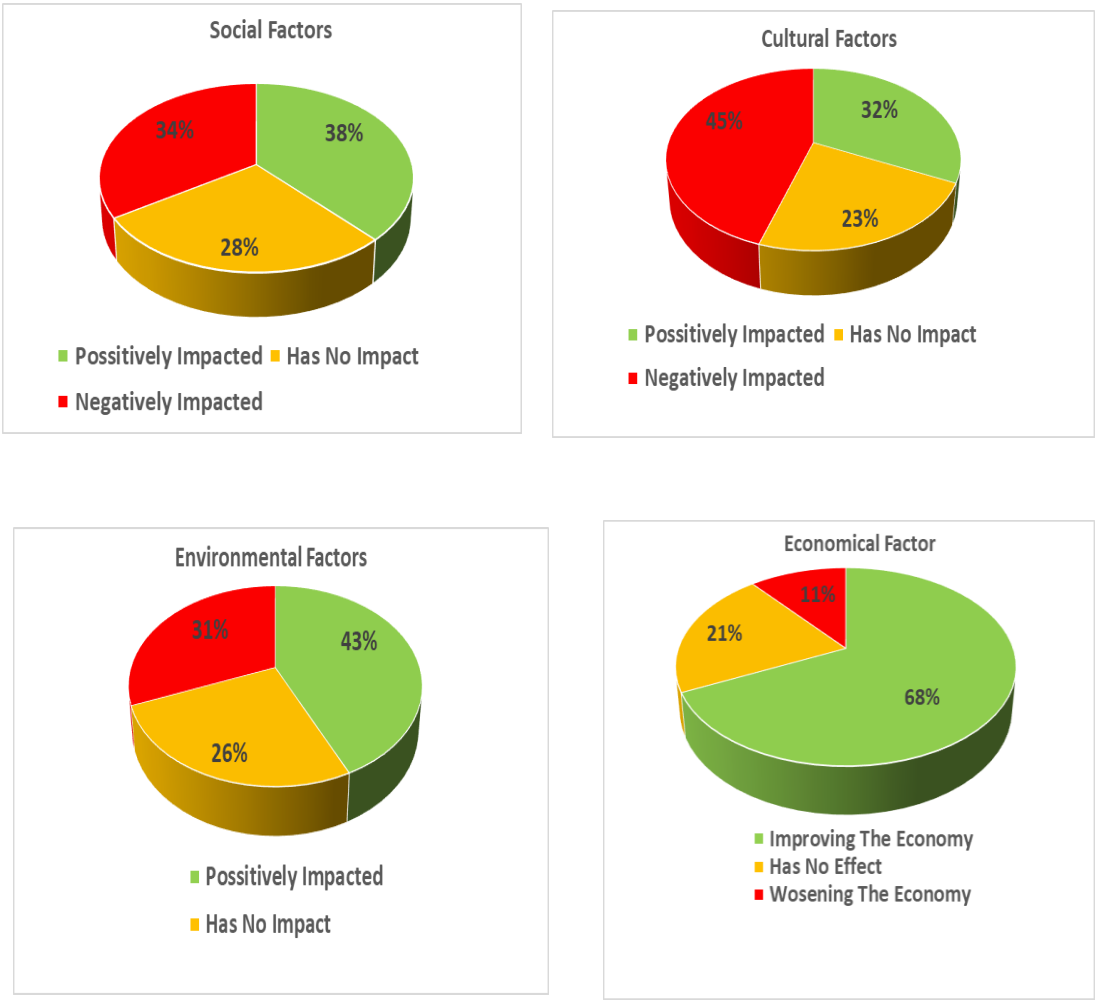


Figure 2. Identification of Influence Factors

The identification of influence factors reveals that host perceptions toward

Buletin Ekonomika Pembangunan
https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/bep
Vol.6 No.2 September 2025, hal 194-211

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tourism on Gili Iyang Island are shaped by a complex interaction of social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions. These four factors provide insight into how tourism is experienced and evaluated by the local community, and how such experiences inform their broader attitudes toward development.

With respect to social factors, 38% of respondents perceive tourism as having a positive impact, while 28% report no discernible effect and 34% perceive negative impacts. This relatively balanced distribution indicates that the social consequences of tourism are experienced in diverse and often contrasting ways. For a substantial segment of the community, tourism is associated with increased interaction, broader social networks, and a more dynamic social environment, which may enhance openness and collective vitality.

Conversely, a nearly equivalent proportion of respondents perceives tourism as socially disruptive, pointing to concerns over altered daily routines, shifting social norms, and potential erosion of community cohesion. These divergent views suggest that the social transformations brought about by tourism are unevenly distributed, benefiting some groups while burdening others. Such asymmetry may be influenced by differences in proximity to tourism activities, levels of interaction with visitors, or access to emerging opportunities. The coexistence of positive and negative perceptions highlights the need for socially sensitive tourism planning that mitigates disruption while reinforcing inclusive and harmonious community relations.

Cultural factors display a more critical pattern than other dimensions of host perception. Only 32% of respondents perceive tourism as having a positive cultural impact, while 23% report no discernible effect and as many as 45% express negative perceptions. The predominance of negative views underscores widespread concerns regarding cultural erosion, the commodification of local traditions, and the gradual weakening of indigenous values. For many residents, tourism is associated with changes in customary practices, shifts in behavioral norms, and the risk that cultural expressions may be reshaped to meet external expectations rather than community meanings. Such perceptions suggest that culture constitutes the most sensitive domain in the host–tourism relationship.

This pattern reflects an underlying anxiety that economic gains may come at the expense of cultural integrity. Unlike material benefits, which are often immediate and visible, cultural impacts tend to be gradual and cumulative, making them more difficult to manage and reverse. The high proportion of negative responses therefore signals a perceived imbalance between preservation and transformation. It also indicates that tourism is not merely an economic activity but a powerful social force capable of redefining identity and collective memory. Consequently, cultural sustainability must become a central pillar of tourism governance. Without deliberate safeguards, such as community control over cultural representation, respect for local norms, and intergenerational transmission of traditions tourism risks undermining the very heritage that constitutes its core attraction.

Environmental perceptions are comparatively more favorable than social and cultural dimensions, with 43% of respondents indicating positive impacts, 26% perceiving no discernible effect, and 31% perceiving negative consequences. This distribution reflects an ambivalent assessment of tourism's environmental implications. On the one hand, tourism is often associated with improvements in cleanliness, infrastructure development, and heightened environmental awareness, particularly in areas that receive attention due to their attraction value. The presence

of visitors can encourage better waste management practices, rehabilitation of public spaces, and greater recognition of natural assets as resources that require protection.

On the other hand, a substantial proportion of residents remain concerned about environmental degradation, pollution, and increasing pressure on fragile ecosystems. These concerns may stem from visible changes such as littering, water contamination, coastal erosion, or the overuse of natural sites. For communities whose livelihoods and identities are closely tied to their environment, even minor ecological disturbances can carry significant meaning. The coexistence of positive and negative perceptions suggests that environmental outcomes of tourism are uneven and context-dependent. This pattern underscores the necessity of proactive environmental governance. Without effective regulation, monitoring, and community involvement in conservation efforts, the ecological costs of tourism may outweigh its perceived benefits and erode long-term community support for development initiatives.

In contrast to other dimensions, economic factors are perceived in overwhelmingly positive terms. A clear majority of respondents (68%) view tourism as improving the local economy, while 21% perceive no effect and only 11% believe that tourism worsens economic conditions. This strong economic optimism confirms that material benefits—such as income opportunities, employment creation, and expanded market access—constitute the principal driver of favorable host perceptions. For many residents, tourism represents a tangible pathway toward livelihood diversification, reduced economic vulnerability, and enhanced household welfare. Even among those not directly engaged in tourism activities, the presence of visitors is often associated with increased circulation of money within the local economy, stimulating small-scale trade and service provision.

The relatively small proportion of negative responses suggests that, at this stage of development, economic externalities such as unequal benefit distribution, or competition over resources have not yet become dominant concerns. Instead, tourism is largely interpreted as an opportunity rather than a threat. This perception is particularly significant in peripheral or island contexts, where alternative sources of income are limited and development options are constrained. Economic expectations thus shape broader community attitudes, reinforcing openness toward change and optimism about the future.

However, the concentration of positive sentiment around economic gains also reveals a potential vulnerability. If anticipated benefits fail to materialize for a broader segment of the population, or if they remain concentrated among a small group of actors, economic optimism may erode over time. Sustainable tourism development therefore requires mechanisms that ensure inclusivity and equitable distribution of benefits. By aligning economic growth with local participation and capacity building, tourism can fulfill its perceived promise and serve as a durable foundation for community support.

These findings demonstrate that economic gains coexist with social ambivalence and pronounced cultural concerns. Host perceptions are multidimensional, shaped by continuous trade-offs between material benefits and perceived social, cultural, and environmental costs. While tourism is welcomed for its economic promise, it simultaneously raises anxieties regarding identity, cohesion, and ecological integrity. This complexity indicates that community support is conditional and may fluctuate as impacts become more visible. Consequently, tourism development strategies cannot rely solely on economic performance as a

Buletin Ekonomika Pembangunan
https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/bep
Vol.6 No.2 September 2025, hal 194-211

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source of legitimacy. They must extend beyond growth-oriented objectives and actively integrate cultural preservation, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship.

Identification of Benefits and Losses

Host-perspective analysis also includes an evaluation of the negative impacts (losses) and benefits of tourism as perceived by the host community. This involves assessing the economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits generated by tourism, as well as identifying any negative impacts (losses) that may be felt by the community. This evaluation can contribute to a better understanding of how host communities measure the benefits and drawbacks of tourism. The next figure show the result of the host benefits and Losses identification.

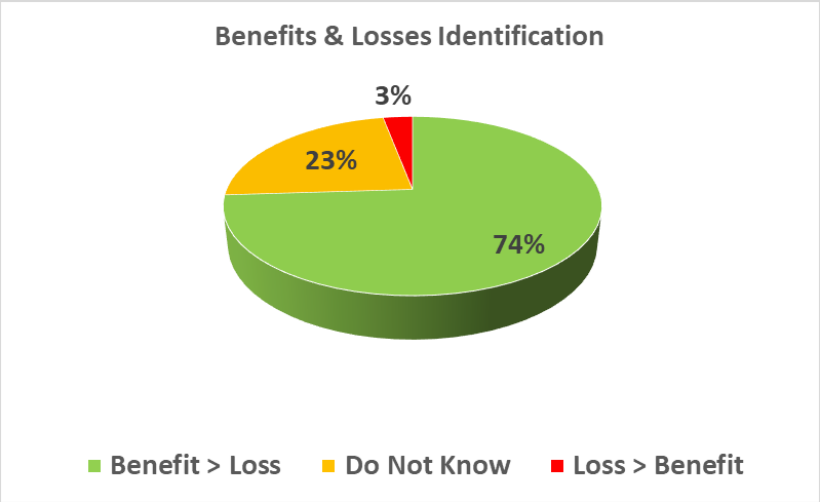


Figure 3. Benefits and Losses Identification

The identification of benefits and losses provides a comprehensive insight into how the host community evaluates tourism by weighing its perceived gains against its potential drawbacks. As illustrated in the figure, a substantial majority of respondents (74%) perceive that the benefits of tourism outweigh its losses, while 23% indicate uncertainty and only 3% believe that losses exceed benefits. This distribution reveals a strong overall orientation toward viewing tourism as a net positive force within the community.

The predominance of positive assessments suggests that tourism is widely associated with tangible advantages, particularly in economic terms, such as income generation, employment opportunities, and enhanced local economic activity. Beyond material gains, respondents may also associate tourism with broader social and infrastructural improvements, including increased visibility of the island, improved public facilities, and expanded social networks. These perceived benefits reinforce earlier findings that economic optimism constitutes a central driver of favorable host attitudes.

Nevertheless, the presence of a sizable “do not know” category (23%) indicates a degree of ambivalence or informational asymmetry. This group likely reflects residents who have limited direct interaction with tourism or who have not

yet experienced its effects in a concrete manner. Their uncertainty highlights the uneven distribution of impacts and suggests that benefits may not be universally accessible or immediately visible across the community. Such ambiguity represents a critical space where perceptions may shift over time, either toward stronger support or toward skepticism, depending on future experiences.

The very small proportion of respondents who perceive losses as outweighing benefits (3%) implies that overt opposition remains marginal. However, this minority is analytically significant, as it signals the existence of perceived negative externalities, potentially related to cultural disruption, social tension, or environmental pressure. Although currently limited, these concerns may intensify if tourism expands without adequate governance.

The finding shows that the host community largely interprets tourism as a favorable trade-off, where perceived gains exceed associated costs. Yet this positive balance is neither automatic nor permanent. Sustaining it requires deliberate efforts to ensure that benefits are broadly distributed, losses are mitigated, and community members remain informed and engaged. By doing so, tourism development can preserve its legitimacy and evolve as a genuinely inclusive pathway for local development.

Identification of Changes in Perceptions

Identifying changes in perceptions and attitudes is part of host perspective analysis, which aims to understand changes in the perceptions and attitudes of local communities or hosts towards tourism. These changes in perceptions and attitudes can occur alongside the development of tourism in a region.

In general, changes in the perceptions and attitudes of local communities towards tourism can be categorized into two types, namely:

1. Positive changes. Positive changes can include increased acceptance of tourism by local communities, increased benefits of tourism for local communities, and reduced negative impacts of tourism.
2. Negative changes. Negative changes can include decreased acceptance of tourism by local communities, decreased benefits of tourism for local communities, and increased negative impacts of tourism.

Understanding changes in the perceptions and attitudes of local communities towards tourism is important for formulating more friendly and sustainable tourism policies. Friendly and sustainable tourism policies can reduce the negative impacts of tourism and increase the benefits of tourism for local communities. The next figures show the results of the host changes in the perceptions and attitudes

Buletin Ekonomika Pembangunan
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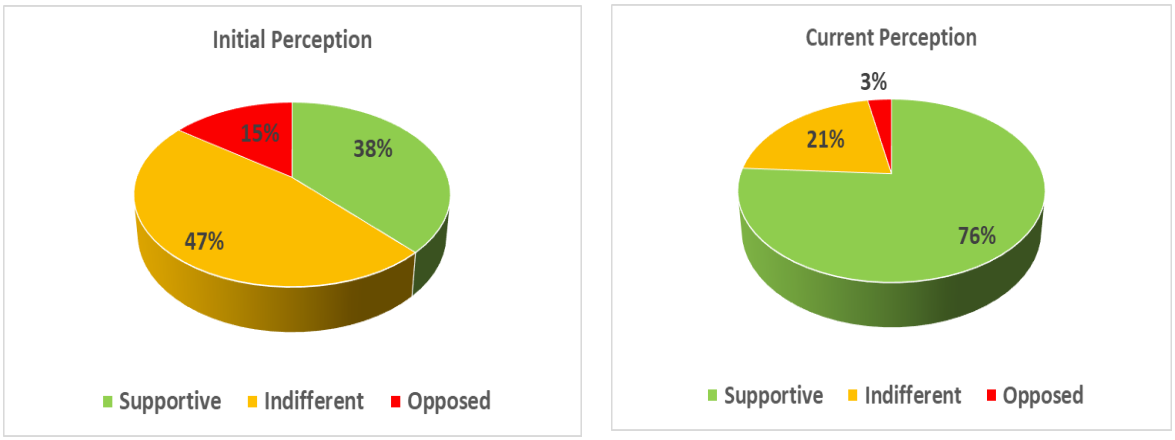


Figure 4. Identification of Changes in Perceptions

The identification of changes in host perceptions provides critical insight into how community attitudes toward tourism evolve over time in response to development dynamics. As illustrated in the figures, a substantial shift can be observed between initial and current perceptions. At the initial stage, only 38% of respondents expressed supportive attitudes toward tourism, while 47% were indifferent and 15% were opposed. This configuration reflects a community that was largely cautious and uncertain, with nearly half of respondents occupying a neutral position and a meaningful minority expressing resistance. Such a pattern is typical in early phases of tourism development, when anticipated benefits remain abstract and potential risks are more salient than tangible outcomes.

In contrast, current perceptions demonstrate a marked positive transformation. Supportive attitudes have increased dramatically to 76%, while indifference has declined to 21% and opposition has fallen sharply to just 3%. This shift signifies a strong positive change in host perceptions, indicating that tourism development has become more socially accepted and increasingly viewed as beneficial. The decline in opposition suggests that earlier concerns—whether related to social disruption, cultural change, or uncertainty about outcomes—have been mitigated, likely through direct experience with tourism and its effects. Similarly, the reduction in indifference implies that tourism has become more visible and meaningful in everyday life, transforming abstract expectations into concrete realities.

This pattern reflects a transition from cautious ambivalence toward active support, aligning with the category of positive change in host perceptions. The data indicate that tourism has begun to deliver perceptible benefits or at least reduce perceived risks, thereby reshaping community attitudes. Such a transformation is significant, as host support constitutes a foundational condition for sustainable tourism development. Without community acceptance, tourism initiatives are prone to conflict, resistance, and long-term instability.

Nevertheless, the persistence of a small indifferent and opposed segment underscores that perception change is not uniform. These groups may represent residents who remain excluded from benefits or who continue to experience adverse impacts. Their presence highlights the need for inclusive policies that

broaden participation and address residual concerns. Overall, the observed shift toward support demonstrates that host perceptions are dynamic and responsive to lived experience.

Implications of Host Perceptions for Community-Based Tourism Rebranding on Gili Iyang Island

The host-perception findings from Gili Iyang Island provide a decisive empirical foundation for shaping the island's rebranding toward a genuinely community-based tourism model. The survey reveals a community that is broadly receptive to tourism: 71% of respondents express positive perceptions toward tourists, 73% perceive ongoing change as an improvement, and 68% are optimistic about the future of tourism. At the same time, direct participation remains strikingly low, with 92% of residents not yet involved in tourism activities. This duality—high attitudinal support coupled with minimal material inclusion—defines both the opportunity and the risk embedded in Gili Iyang's rebranding process.

Contemporary destination branding literature emphasizes that places are not merely marketed but socially constructed through the interaction of multiple stakeholders, especially local communities (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). In this sense, rebranding Gili Iyang cannot be reduced to visual identity, slogans, or external promotion. Instead, it must operate as a governance process that aligns symbolic repositioning with lived experience. The positive baseline identified in the host analysis constitutes a rare strategic asset: a community that is open to tourism, optimistic about its future, and receptive to change. However, as Tosun (2000) argues, in peripheral destinations participation is often constrained by structural barriers—limited capital, skills, information, and institutional access. Without addressing these constraints, rebranding risks becoming a top-down narrative disconnected from everyday realities.

The influence-factor analysis reinforces this imperative. While economic impacts are overwhelmingly perceived as positive (68%), social and cultural dimensions reveal ambivalence and concern, with 45% of respondents reporting negative cultural impacts. This asymmetry is consistent with findings by Stylidis et al. (2014), who demonstrate that residents' support for tourism depends not only on economic benefits but also on perceived effects on identity, cohesion, and quality of life. For Gili Iyang, rebranding must therefore transcend growth-oriented messaging and embed cultural safeguarding, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion as core brand values. A "community-based" brand that foregrounds health tourism, ecological purity, and local wisdom—without empowering residents to control how these attributes are represented—would risk commodifying culture and intensifying existing anxieties.

The dynamic change in perceptions further underscores the strategic timing of rebranding. Initial perceptions show only 38% support and 15% opposition, whereas current perceptions reveal 76% support and merely 3% opposition. This transition from ambivalence to endorsement mirrors what longitudinal studies identify as a critical window of opportunity: early positive trajectories can consolidate into durable support if benefits become tangible and inclusive (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Conversely, if expectations remain unmet, optimism may erode. Social exchange theory, operationalized in post-2000 tourism research, demonstrates that host attitudes remain conditional on perceived reciprocity (Boley et al., 2014). Support persists only when residents experience tourism as a fair exchange.

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https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/bep
Vol.6 No.2 September 2025, hal 194-211

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Rebranding thus functions as an institutional bridge between perception and participation. It should not merely "tell a new story" about Gili Iyang, but reorganize the tourism system so that residents become visible authors of that story. This entails embedding local actors in the value chain—through homestays, guiding, cultural interpretation, wellness services, and micro-enterprises—so that the brand promise corresponds with lived economic and social reality. Zenker and Braun (2017) emphasize that place brands gain legitimacy when internal stakeholders recognize themselves in the brand narrative. In Gili Iyang's case, a community-based brand must be experienced not as an external label, but as a collective project.

The benefits-and-losses analysis further clarifies this logic. While 74% of respondents perceive tourism benefits to outweigh losses, 23% remain uncertain. This "uncertain middle" represents a fluid group whose attitudes may shift in either direction. Research by Choi and Sirakaya (2005) shows that uncertainty often reflects uneven access to benefits and limited information. Rebranding strategies should therefore explicitly target this group through participatory planning, transparent communication, and visible redistribution mechanisms. By making benefits legible—who gains, how, and why—the rebranding process can stabilize support and prevent the emergence of latent resistance.

Importantly, rebranding must also respond to the cultural sensitivity revealed in the data. The high share of negative cultural perceptions signals fear of identity dilution and symbolic dispossession. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) argue that place brands must evolve from dialogue rather than imposition; culture cannot be "used" without being co-governed. For Gili Iyang, this means granting communities authority over how traditions, rituals, and everyday life are represented to visitors. Rebranding should institutionalize community review boards, cultural protocols, and local storytelling platforms, ensuring that tourism does not merely consume culture but sustains it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in the Results and Discussion, this study demonstrates that the host community of Gili Iyang Island generally holds positive perceptions toward tourism development, accompanied by openness to change and optimism regarding its future.

Despite this favorable attitudinal environment, community participation in tourism remains extremely limited. This gap between positive perception and actual involvement highlights a structural challenge that may undermine the long-term sustainability of tourism development.

The analysis of influence factors reveals that economic benefits are widely acknowledged, while social and cultural dimensions generate ambivalent and often negative responses. These patterns indicate that tourism is experienced as both opportunity and risk.

The identification of benefits and losses further confirms that most residents perceive tourism as advantageous, although a substantial proportion remains uncertain. This uncertainty reflects uneven access to benefits and limited experiential engagement.

Finally, the observed shift from initial ambivalence to strong current support signifies a critical window for community-based tourism rebranding. Effective strategies must transform positive attitudes into meaningful participation through inclusive governance, empowerment, and equitable benefit distribution.

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