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Pathways toward transformation of sustainable rural tourism management: The Case Central Java Rural Tourism Indonesia

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Abstract: Managing sustainable rural tourism requires a strategic transformation adapted to local conditions and able to accommodate the dynamics of future changes. In addition, it must pay attention to the inclusivity aspect, especially in areas with many stakeholders and poverty problems. This paper presents a transformation path toward sustainable rural tourism management in the context of developing countries, including determining policy options, programs, and scenarios. The study was conducted in the Kedung Ombo area in Central Java, Indonesia, a representative area involving several districts and other public organizations as stakeholders. Data analysis applying the MULTI-POL method. The analysis results show that an integrated development policy that combines various potentials and resources and tourism plans from all stakeholders is the right approach to be implemented in this region. Priority programs that need to be implemented are infrastructure development, strengthening private investment, strengthening governance, developing amenities, and developing information and communication technology. Furthermore, the flight of the flamingo and the leapfrog scenarios can simultaneously be considered to achieve future tourism growth goals and objectives. This study is an essential input for the authorities in determining rural tourism development policies in research locations and can be applied in other areas with similar characteristics.

Keywords: transformation pathways; sustainable rural development; sustainable rural tourism strategies; multi policies; multicriteria analysis

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1. Introduction

Rural tourism has shown significant growth in recent decades [1] and is recognized as an essential means of economic development in rural areas [2]; [3]. Rural tourism is recognized both directly and indirectly as a catalyst for development progress in rural areas [4] and is capable of being a strategic lever in revitalizing the economy of the rural regions and supporting poverty alleviation [5]; [6]. Although the development of rural tourism sometimes triggers conflicts between various parties, the perceived social and economic benefits have encouraged the development of rural tourism in multiple countries [7]. Rural tourism exists as a vector of sustainable development capable of generating employment and income creation, combating rural exodus, becoming a socio-economic networking proposal, becoming a means of saving and enhancing cultural and natural heritage, and improving the quality of life for local residents [8]; [9]; [10]. During the Covid-19 pandemic in China, rural tourism became the main driving force for rural revival and the fight against poverty [11].

Rural tourism is an embodiment of community-based tourism, which is believed to counteract the negative impacts of mass tourism related to social equality, environmental degradation, and saving the community's culture [12]. Rural tourism is an endogenous alternative to developing tourism in less-developed areas, allowing local people to increase their income through new economic activities without replacing the dominant traditional activities [13]. Rural tourism is a form of sustainable tourism aiming to meet the needs of current residents and tourists without compromising the needs of future generations [14]; [15]; [16]. According to [17], rural tourism should not be understood only as a type of tourism but also as a tool for conserving and regenerating rural society and culture.

Indonesia is a beautiful country in tourism potential, and the tourism sector is a central issue playing a paramount role in the Indonesian economy [18]. In Indonesia, rural tourism is manifested in the form of developing tourist villages which since 2021 has been determined by the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs to be the direction of tourism development in rural areas. The goal is to increase economic growth, people's welfare, eradicate poverty, overcome unemployment, preserve nature, the environment, natural resources, and promote culture. The development of tourist villages is expected to accelerate village development in an integrated manner to encourage villages' social, cultural, and economic transformation. The success of the tourism village will become a lever for the village and regional economy, ultimately driving national economic growth.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2021, tourism villages in Indonesia totaled 1,831, and only 2.73% of them have become advanced tourist villages, which is indicated by the increasing variety of occupations of the population, the development of public facilities and infrastructure, and the improving social conditions community economy. However, this number is still tiny compared to the number of tourist villages, which continues to increase yearly. In Indonesia, tourist villages are categorized as a pilot, developing, developed, and independent villages. Many factors cause the low number of developed tourism villages. The lack of understanding of policymakers at the village government and regional government levels in comprehensively developing a tourism village, the absence of planning involving stakeholders, overlapping policies, and planning that emphasizes technical aspects are the contributing factors.

As a complex system, tourism development requires careful planning, which is supported by all stakeholders [19]; [20]; [21]; [22]; [23] and should be based on a strategic approach that is goal-oriented and comprehensive [24]. The absence of proper planning will generate tourism tend to have a detrimental effect on social and natural conditions [25]. According to [26], tourism development requires a planning and management process that brings together the interests and concerns of various stakeholder groups sustainably and strategically and must be based on the potential of an area [27]. Therefore, the success of tourism development is highly dependent on the integration between policies, planning, and management tools [28]. However, sustainable rural tourism development cannot be achieved instantly because it involves complex institutional arrangements and coordinated actions and policies. A different policy pathway might be needed for another type of action and under different scenarios. Therefore, a framework of analysis that provides such a pathway needs to be developed.

This paper aims to develop transformation pathways toward sustainable management of rural tourism in an institutional context in the Kedung Ombo reservoir area, Central Java Province, Indonesia. The Kedung Ombo area represents the complexity of the problem of developing tourism potential in Indonesia related to the many parties involved in an area, but the coordination and synergy are weak. As a result, conflicts often arise, especially concerning land use rights and division of authority. The parties involved

in the Kedung Ombo area are the local government, forest area managers, dam managers, and the community.

3 In the Kedung Ombo reservoir area, there are 8 (eight) tourist villages. However, tourism development in this area, which started in 1999, has not shown significant progress. As a result, to the criteria for improving tourism villages from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the tourism villages in the Kedung Ombo area, are just at status developing tourism villages [29].

So far, the approach to developing tourism villages in the Kedung Ombo area has been based more on conventional methods through several strategic analyses focusing on the in situ characteristics of tourist villages. However, the absence of development planning and policy directions, as well as weak coordination among stakeholders, has resulted in the development process being slow and almost unsustainable [29], and impacts on people's welfare have not been realized [30]. This condition requires strategic management to recognize tourism villages in this region as advanced tourism villages that can benefit all parties economically, socially, and environmentally.

This study provides alternative directions for the development of policy strategies that do not only implement the Kedung Ombo case but become bridges and can be scaled up at a broader level, especially tourist villages in several developing countries that have the same characteristics. This study is also the first to create a comprehensive policy strategy considering the interests of various stakeholders and possible scenarios that can be developed through multiple combinations of scenarios, policies, and programs according to the desired target criteria.

2. Literature Review

As one of the natural resource-based economic sectors, rural tourism is highly dependent on goods and services generated from natural capital. Therefore, one crucial aspect of managing natural capital-based tourism is the sustainability of the tourism sector itself.

Sustainable tourism is defined as all forms of tourism management and development activities that maintain natural, economic, and social integrity and ensure the maintenance of natural and cultural resources [31]. Tourism development will be sustainable only if it is planned strategically to reach goals whose effects manifest in the long term [32]. Sustainable tourism is a model of tourism development in which human resources and the environment are unified and well-coordinated with economic, social, resource, and environmental aspects, coordinating and balancing relationships between various stakeholders and emphasizing fairness of development opportunities between generations [33]. Sustainable tourism development will impact job creation, the protection of local culture, and the promotion of local products [34].

The success of sustainable tourism development is highly dependent on appropriate [35] and comprehensive [24] policy support, supported by all stakeholders [36], as well as ensuring a harmonious symbiosis with the environment and social life [37]. Successful tourism development requires an in-depth study of systems, performance, budget constraints, implications for the economy, and their impact on the local environment, cultural heritage, social acceptability, and local blessings [38]. Furthermore, sustainable tourism requires a sustainable development process supported by coordinating all parties concerned in regional tourism development [31].

In this context, the policy environment becomes a strategic element for maintaining the integration of stakeholders' various motives, interests, and objectives in realizing a sustainable tourism future [20]. Tourism policy is a set of discourses, decisions, and practices driven by the government to achieve various objectives in collaboration with private or social actors [39]. Effective tourism planning is a prerequisite for sustainable resource

management and ensuring inclusive decision-making takes place [28]. Sustainable rural tourism aims to increase sustainability regarding the long-term improvement of living standards by maintaining a balance between protecting the environment, promoting economic benefits, establishing social justice, and preserving cultural integrity [27] (An & Alarcón, 2020).

There is no single definition of rural tourism [40]; researchers from various countries have developed their descriptions based on the unique experiences or contexts they encounter [41]. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines rural tourism as products that give visitors personal contact, experiencing the physical environment and rural life, and enable them to participate in local communities' activities, traditions, and lifestyles [42]. Most authors define rural tourism as tourism in rural areas such as agriculture-based tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, spiritual tourism, nostalgia tourism, heritage tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, ecotourism, and other related activities in rural areas. [43]; [44]. Rural tourism is a new development model combining modern tourism with the traditional agricultural culture [45]. The three main attributes of rural tourism include culture, nature, and history [46].

The diversity of literature and the different meanings of terminology in defining rural tourism make the definition of a tourism village complex [47]. In Hungary, the tourist village has a special meaning: the tourist village refers to tourism in villages, presenting village life plus traditions with the active participation of visitors [46]. Nurhayati and Wiendu define tourism villages in Indonesia as a form of integration between attractions, accommodations, and supporting facilities presented in a structure of community life integrated with prevailing procedures and traditions [48].

From the various existing definitions, a tourist village can be interpreted as a rural area with particular characteristics to become a tourist destination through the local community's physical uniqueness, social life, and culture as an attraction. As for the crucial factors of rural tourism, namely: (1) takes place in rural areas and is functionally rural, (2) the purpose of visiting tourists is to study, be actively involved, experience or enjoy attractions, (3) tourism attributes in the form of culture, nature, history, and unique rural activities offered as attractions, (4) collaboration and involvement of key stakeholders, namely tourists, rural communities, businesses, and government agencies, (5) emphasizing sustainability in social, economic development, and environmental preservation [41]). In addition, the development of tourist villages can provide benefits in the form of (1) increasing the rural collective economy, (2) beautifying the appearance of the countryside, (3) strengthening the construction of rural civilization, (4) increasing people's income, (5) changing livelihood activities and lifestyle community traditional life, and (6) reduction of urban-ta-village disparities, and (7) building a harmonious society [49].

There are various methods for analyzing the potential for sustainability of rural tourism [50], for example, using a qualitative approach such as the Delphi Technique to determine the priority ranking for rural tourism development in Russia. Meanwhile, [51] uses an event-based approach to integrate rural tourism in Hungary. Furthermore, in several studies related to the impact of rural tourism in rural areas, surveys were used to obtain public perceptions of rural tourism in this study [52]. Meanwhile, [53] uses an Interpretative Structural Modeling (ISM) approach to develop a strategy for developing rural tourism in India.

Apart from the several approaches above, one method commonly used in developing sustainability strategies is to use the SWOT approach and its variations, such as AWOT, namely the combination of AHP and SWOT and TOWS as in the case of rural tourism in Turkey, which was carried out by [53]. This study focuses on the reassessment of rural sustainability tourism after Covid-19 by emphasizing strengthening the role and capacity

of the community. A similar approach was also taken by [54] in the case of rural ecotourism in the Bali region of Indonesia.

Recently, machine learning-based approaches have also been widely applied in cases of developing rural tourism. For example, recent studies [29] use a machine learning approach to forecast the sustainability and development of rural tourism in Indonesia. Likewise, [55] uses artificial intelligence (machine learning) to develop a marketing strategy, one of rural tourism's sustainability strategies.

This study uses a different approach whereby the prospective method, which has rarely been used in rural tourism, is used to develop future strategies for rural tourism. This study is the first to use prospective analysis for rural tourism in Indonesia. Still, this method can be scaled up to other contexts of rural tourism in different spatial and temporal dimensions.

3. Materials and Methods

This research is designed as a prospective study to explain the current situation in the Kedung Ombo area and reach future thinking. The Kedung Ombo Reservoir is the largest in Southeast Asia, with an area of 6,576 hectares consisting of 2,830 hectares of water and 3,746 hectares of plains. The dam's location crosses three districts: Grobogan Regency, Sragen Regency, and Boyolali Regency (Figure 1). From the aspect of accessibility, this area is easily accessible to reach. However, the infrastructure condition still needs improvement related to the quality and infrastructure of roads, lighting, and communication networks. Most of the population work as farmers and fishermen, and a few are self-employed.

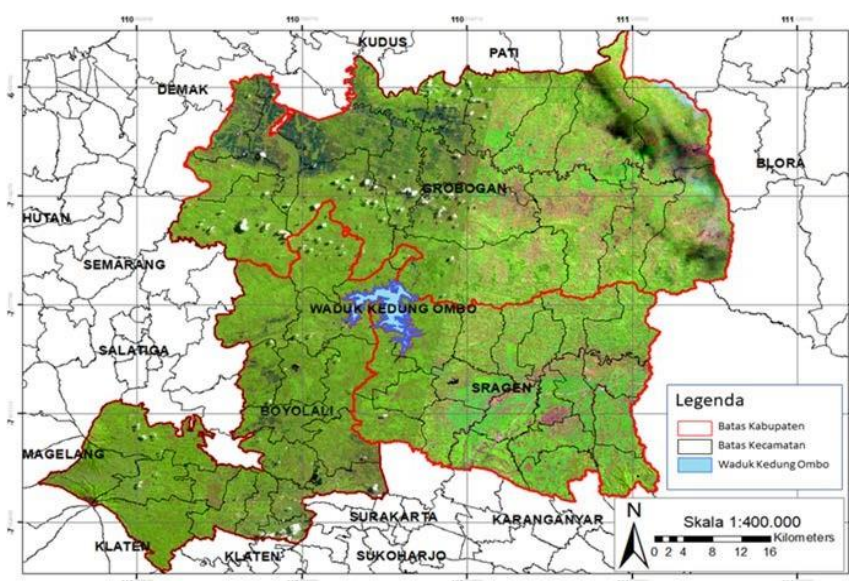


Figure 1. Map of Kedung Ombo Area

The Kedung Ombo area is in a hilly forest area. In addition to the dam landscape with beautiful natural panoramas, there are various tourist attractions in this area: water tourism, nature tourism, culinary tourism, and cultural tourism. Since its inauguration in 1991, several community groups, forest managers, local government, and the private sector have developed tourist attractions (tourism sites) around the reservoir. Some of them are designated by the local government as tourist villages.

This study uses a mix method approach. Data collection was carried out in a participatory manner using focus group discussion (FGD) methods and workshops involving district government officials, forest managers, dam managers, and the community. The

Multipol Method (Multicriteria-Policy) is applied to find a strategic framework for developing tourism villages.

Multipol is a multicriteria analysis method to support an effective evaluation and decision-making by determining scenarios, strategic or policy directions, and choices of actions or programs [56], in an institutional context [57]. Multipol combines two different types of evaluation, namely: 1) program evaluation of policies to determine which programs are most appropriate and prioritize specific policies; and: 2) evaluation of policies against scenarios to determine the most appropriate policies and become priority policies for specific scenarios [56].

The structure of the Multipol method consists of four elements, namely [58]:

1. Evaluation criteria. Namely the fundamental aspects of assessing the success of a decision that can be measured. Evaluation criteria form the basis of any evaluation process for evaluating the performance of alternative scenarios, programs, and policy measures. In this study, the criteria for assessing the success of rural tourism development in the Kedung Ombo area include economic, social, environmental, and institutional aspects (Table 1).

Table 1. Criteria for the Success of Kedung Ombo Rural Tourism Development

Criteria	Aspect	Weight	Description
Community income	Economy	6	Increase people's income
Regional income	Economy	6	Increase regional income
Investment	Economy	6	Increase investment in the area
Employment	Social	6	Increase job opportunities
Conflict	Social	5	Reduce conflict
Community competency	Social	4	Improving community competence
Pollution	Environment	4	Reduce population
Environment degradation	Environment	6	Reducing environmental damage
Compliance	Institution	5	Increase obedience
Transparency	Institution	4	Increase transparency
Accountability	Institution	4	Increase accountability

Source: FGD results

2. Scenarios. Show a structured picture of the future in which the goals and objectives will be achieved. In this case, the scenarios are ways that can be done to achieve successful rural tourism development in the Kedung Ombo area. From the FGD, decide on four alternative scenarios to be evaluated (Table 2).

Table 2. Alternative Scenarios for Kedung Ombo Rural Tourism Development

Scenario alternatives	Weight	Description
Leapfrogging	5	The way to achieve the success criteria for tourism development is fast, jumpy, not patterned,

		and has no relation to previous development strategies.
Evolutionary	4	The way to achieve the success of tourism development is slowly and gradually.
Resilience	3	The way to achieve the success criteria of tourism development is by using the existing method.
Flight of the flamingo	6	The way to achieve the success criteria of tourism development is supported by consistent and efficient policies, and moral investment.

Source: FGD results

3. Policy describes a strategy to achieve the goals and objectives of decisions² related to the political, social, economic, and physical context. In this case, the policy in question is tourism policy which is defined as a set of rules that guide the direction and objectives of the development strategy. It provides a framework for collective and individual decisions that directly affect long-term tourism development and the daily activities of destination tourism [59]. By the Multipole method, this study proposes four alternative policies (Table 3).

Table 3. Alternative Kedung Ombo Rural Tourism Development Policies

Policy alternatives	Weight	Description
Agro-based policy	5	The tourism development policies are based on agro potential.
Nature-based policy	5	Tourism development policies are based on natural potential.
Culture-based policy	4	Tourism development policies are based on cultural potential.
Integrated policy	6	Policies that combine various tourism potentials, resources, and plans from all stakeholders and allow all tourist attractions to be connected

Source: FGD results

4. Actions or programs are a series of actions to be carried out and potential interventions to support policy implementation. Development programs are proposed to develop rural tourism in the research location, as presented in Table 4.

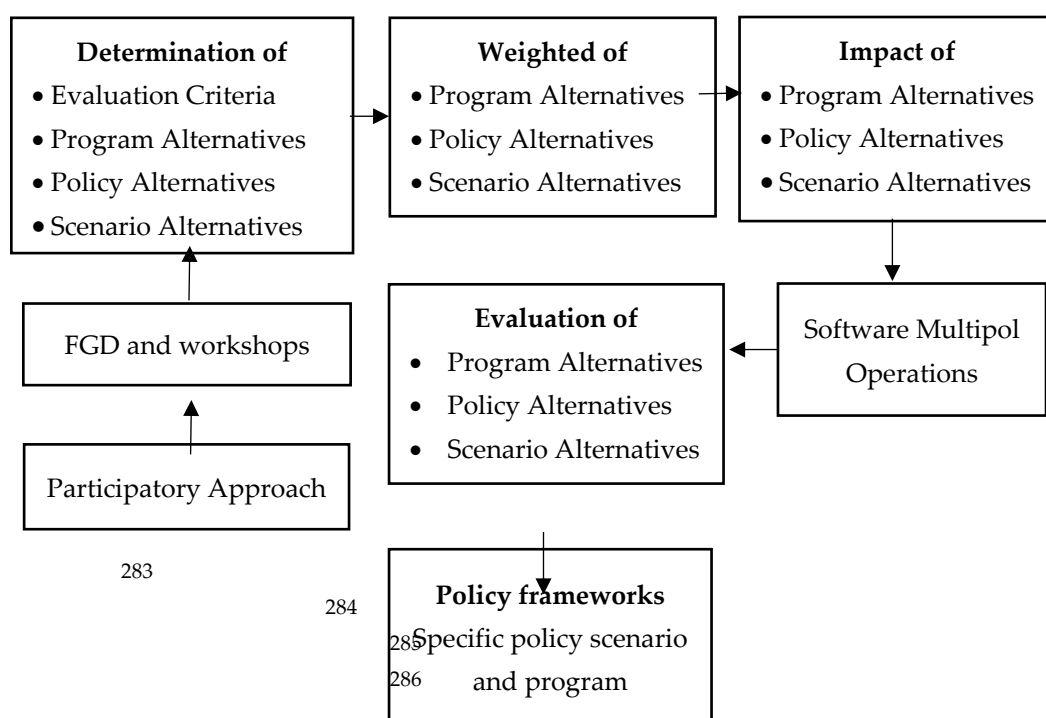
Table 4. Alternatives to the Kedung Ombo Rural Tourism Development Program

Program Alternatif	Description
Infrastructure strengthening	Addition and development of road infrastructure, lighting, and internet network
Amenities strengthening	Addition and development of tourism facilities and infrastructure

Private investment strengthening	Increased involvement and investment of the private sector
Governance strengthening	Governance strengthening
Information Communication Technology (ICT) strengthening	Strengthening technical equipment to process and convey various important information
Capacity building	Community capacity building and other institutions
Entrepreneurship development	Community entrepreneurship capacity development
Network development	Network development between tourism village managers, communities, and other institutions
Local financial development	Development of community financial institutions
Maintenance natural resources	Maintenance of potential natural resources

Source: FGD results

The programs, policies, and alternative scenarios are then evaluated for their performance according to the stages of the Multipol method (Figure 2). This process produces tables and graphs showing the relationship between programs and policies, and between policies and scenarios, their compatibility, and their probability of success.



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285 Specific policy scenario
286 and program

Figure 2. Stages of Determining the Best Strategy Based on Multipol**4. Results**

This session presents the results of evaluating the suitability between criteria, programs, policies, and scenarios shown in pictures and graphs.

4.1. Conformity Analysis between Programs and Policies

Table 5 shows the relationship and suitability between programs and policies. The mean (mean) and standard deviation values obtained for each program show the impact of its implementation on policy. Programs with low standard deviations and high mean values perform well for more than one policy. Conversely, programs with high standard deviations are only appropriate for specific policies, depending on the average value [58]. For example, Table 5 shows that the infrastructure strengthening program is the best, while the local funding strengthening program is poor.

Table 5. Evaluation of Program Performance Against Policies

Program/Policy	Agrotourism	Natural tourism	Culture tourism	Integrated tourism	Mean	Deviation Standard	Rank
Infrastructure strengthening	12.4	12.2	10.2	11.9	11.8	0.8	10
Amenities strengthening	10.6	10.1	9.9	11.5	10.6	0.6	6
Private investment strengthening	9.5	8.3	8.8	11.2	9.6	1.1	4
Governance strengthening	10.4	11.4	12.1	12.1	11.5	0.7	9
ICT strengthening	8.2	8.6	8.9	8.3	8.5	0.3	2
Capacity building	11.5	9.8	10.7	11.9	11.1	0.8	7
Entrepreneurship development	11.8	10.2	10.5	12.1	11.2	0.8	8
Network development	9.1	7.5	8.2	10.5	8.9	1.1	3

Local financial de- velopment	9.1	5.2	8.2	7.4	6.3	1.6	1
Maintenance natu- ral resources	9.9	10.3	9.7	9.6	9.9	0.2	5

Source: The Multipole Analysis Results

From the results of the program-policies evaluation, a graph called a Profile Map is obtained, which presents the behavior of the relationship between programs and policies to show programs that are more closely related to specific policies (Figure 3). On the other hand, Multipol also provides a graph known as a Sensitivity Classification Map, representing the probability of program success based on the effectiveness of its implementation (Figure 4). Again, the upper left quadrant is programmed with the most significant likelihood of success, while projects with high significance are most elevated on the graph.

As shown in Figure 4, natural resource-based development programs, amenities strengthening programs, and governance strengthening programs have the highest probability of success and programs with the most significant relevance because they support the fulfillment of policies. At the same time, the most effective programs are infrastructure-strengthening programs, governance-strengthening programs, capacity strengthening, amenities strengthening, and entrepreneur strengthening.

Figure 5 shows the closeness of each program to each policy; the closer a program is to a policy, the more suitable and effective the program is in supporting the policy's success. For example, Figure 5 shows that governance development programs and ICT strengthening programs are appropriate for culture-based tourism policies. Meanwhile, programs to strengthen infrastructure and maintain natural resources are the most appropriate for developing nature-based tourism policies. Likewise, capacity-building programs, amenities supporting programs, and entrepreneurial development programs are the most suitable for developing agro-based tourism policies. Meanwhile, local financial development programs, programs to strengthen private investment, and networking programs are most compatible with the integrated tourism policy development policy.

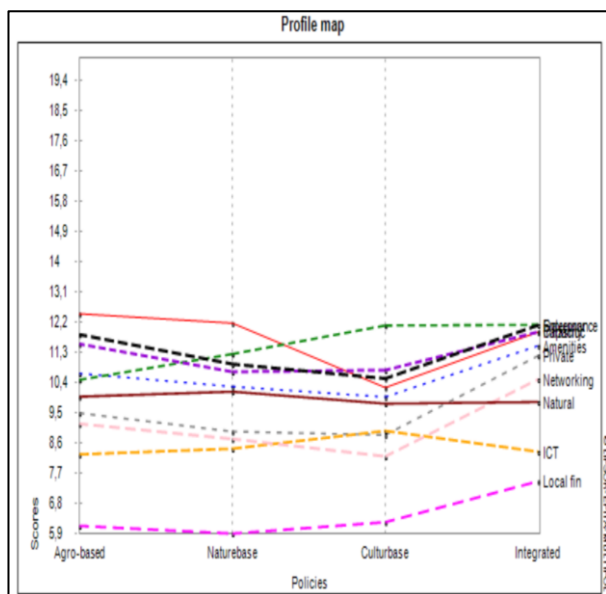


Figure 3. Program Profile Map
Source: The Multipol Analysis Results



Figure 4. Program Sensitivity Classification Map
Source: The Multipol Analysis Results

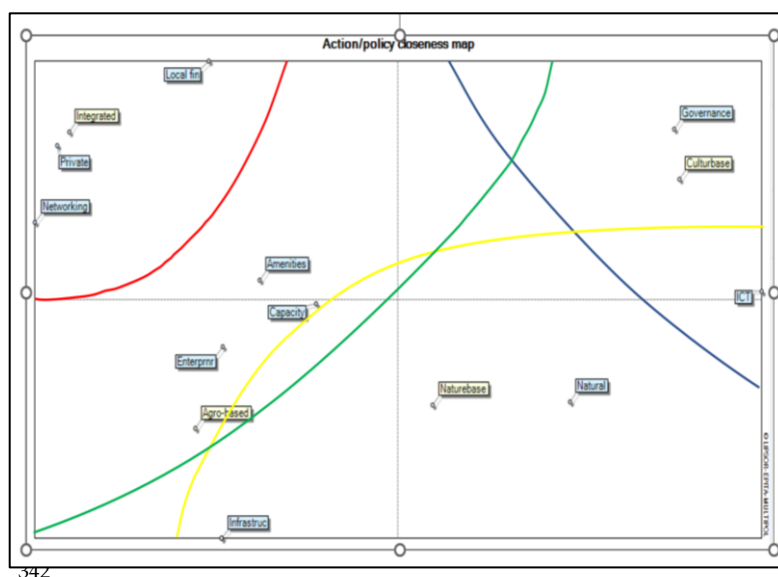


Figure 5. Map of the Program's Closeness to Policy

4.2. Conformity Analysis between Policy and Scenario

Next, the results of evaluating the relationship between policies and scenarios and performance ratings are presented (Table 6). Table 6 shows that an integrated policy is the best, while a culture-based policy is terrible. An integrated policy is a policy that combines various tourism potentials and resources, and plans from all stakeholders. The results of this study follow research [60] which states that integrated policies are standard policies on sustainable development in the agricultural, cultural, and tourism industries.

Table 6. Policy Performance Against Scenarios

Policies/ Scenario	Leapfrog	Evolution	Resilience	Flamingo	Mean	Deviation Standard	Rank
Agro-based	9.6	9.6	10.1	10.2	9.9	0.3	3
Nature-based	8.6	9.4	9.3	8.6	8.9	0.4	2
Culture-based	8.2	9	8.8	7.8	8.4	0.4	1
Integrated	11.1	9.3	9.8	11.6	10.6	0.9	4

Source: The Multipol Analysis Results

Integrated tourism policies that consider the use of various resources (cultural, social, environmental, economic), and the roles of related stakeholders, are part of a tourism development strategy that is considered capable of creating successful tourism destinations [61]. Integrated tourism policies are intended to develop integrated tourism destinations explicitly linked to the localities where tourism occurs and have clear links with local resources, activities, products, production and service industries, and participatory local communities [62]. Furthermore, integrated tourism policies refer to developing alternatives that emphasize a bottom-up approach, centrally involve local stakeholders in their implementation, and are based on local physical, economic, social, and cultural resources [61].

The fundamental objective of integrated tourism is to promote environmental, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability and to empower local communities, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the wider region's development system. Specifically, integrated tourism destinations cover two aspects, namely: 1) bringing together various interests, requirements, and needs, in a unified strategic tourism plan, and 2) Unifying tourism with the social and economic life of an area and its community [62].

Thus, integrated policies supported by local financial development programs, private investment strengthening programs, and networking maintaining programs are the best when viewed as a policy package. Strengthening private investment is a breakthrough for increasing personal involvement in development through mutually beneficial creative financing schemes. One such scheme is a public-private partnership (PPP), which will be an effective financing solution. The implementation of PPP will also have a positive impact in the form of cost savings for local governments, accelerated service level improvements, and the emergence of a multiplier effect in the form of broader economic benefits such as creating jobs and increasing income for the population.

The networking development program is intended to develop reciprocity relationships between all stakeholders based on mutual trust. This program is needed in the Kedung Ombo area because it is geographically located in a different district. Networking will encourage all parties' increased ability to optimize resource use, reducing conflicts and taking advantage of opportunities.

The local financial development program is intended to encourage the growth of community financial institutions driven by the mission of creating economic opportunities for individuals and small businesses in rural communities, which are not reached by the services of formal financial institutions. Unlike traditional banks, community finance institutions specialize in providing loans to individuals, organizations, and businesses in under-resourced communities, offering clients financial education, business training, and low-interest loans to increase their economic potential and help build wealth. Public.

Figure 6 presents the behavior of the relationship between policies and scenarios. 395
Figure 6 shows that integrated policies are the best in two scenarios: leapfrog and flight 396
of the flamingo. In contrast, agro-based policies are the best policies in evolutionary 397
scenarios and resilience policies. Figure 7 shows that agro-based policies have the highest 398
probability of success, while integrated policies are the most effective. 399

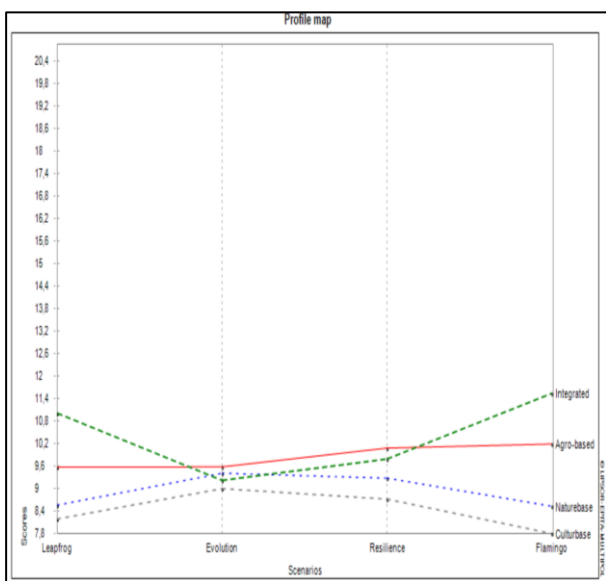


Figure 6. Policy Profile Map



Figure 7. Policy Sensitivity Classification Map

Based on the evaluation of the relationship between the policy and the scenario, it is known that the integrated development policy is effective for the leapfrog and flamingo scenarios. On the other hand, agro-based policies and nature-based policies are the best policies in the resilience scenario. Meanwhile, culture-based policies are the best for evolutionary scenarios (Figure 8).

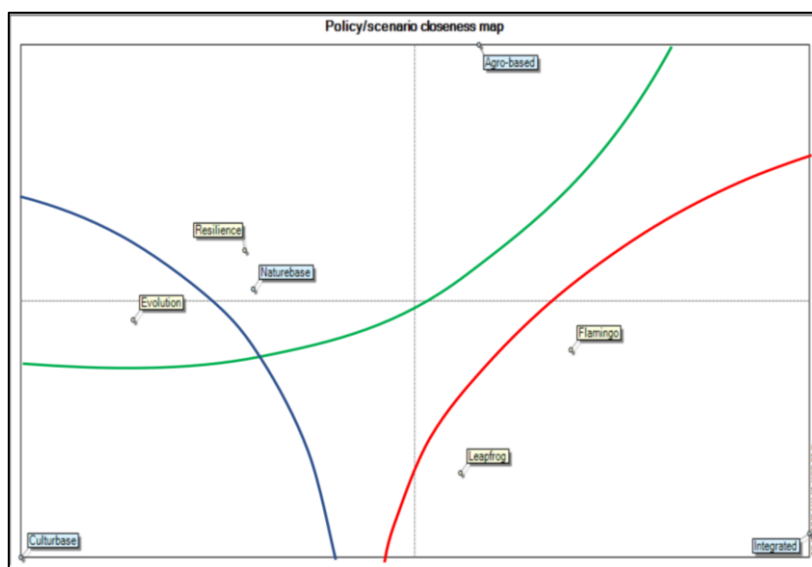


Figure 8. Map of Policy Adherence to Scenarios

From the results of the overall evaluation of performance and the relationship between programs, policies, and scenarios, a strategic framework for developing rural tourism in the Kedung Ombo area can be described (Figure 9). This strategic framework shows the development strategy policy packages and their priority programs in each alternative scenario.

As previously explained, the integration policy is the best for developing rural tourism in the Kedung Ombo area. The policy will be effective if it is supported by priority programs: strengthening private investment, developing networking, and developing

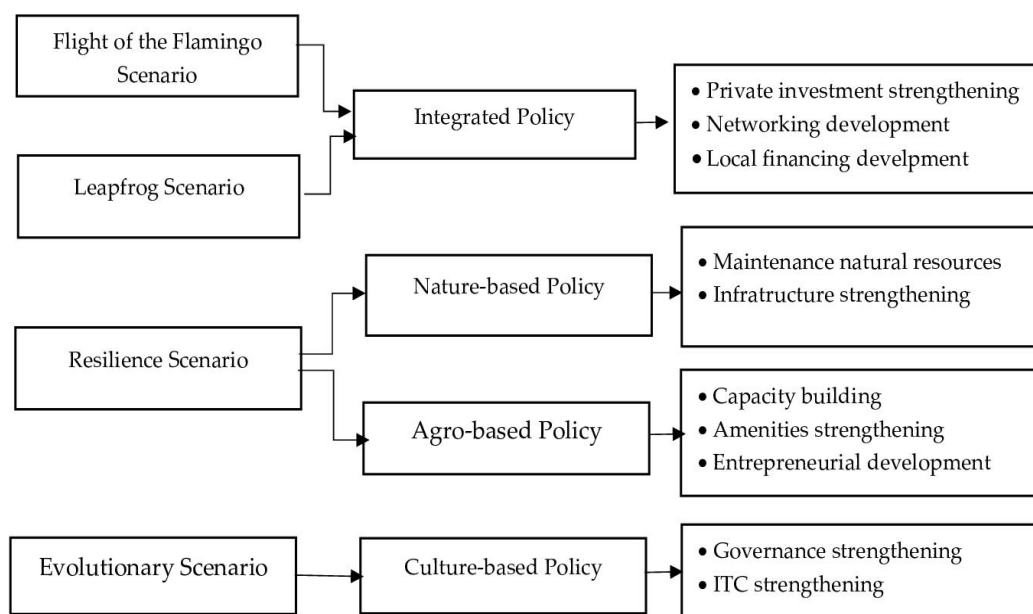
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local finance. To successfully carry out integrated policies, policymakers can run them through the flamingo and leapfrog scenarios. The risk from a leapfrog scenario that requires speed and is often patternless is worth considering, given the limitations in



governance.

Figure 9. Potential Policy Pathways to Achieving Each Future Scenario of Kedung Ombo Rural Tourism

5. Conclusions

Tourism plays a crucial role in rural development, especially in developing countries. However, lack of capacity, complex institutional settings and poor planning might hinder the effectiveness of rural tourism as a leverage and a catalyst for rural development. A strategic transformation toward sustainable management of rural tourism is one of the strategies that could be delivered to achieve sustainable rural tourism. Strategic transformation by providing different pathways toward sustainable management could reduce some obstacles associated with managing the complexity of rural tourism management.

This study emphasizes the discovery of transformation pathways that provide a policy framework for developing rural tourism to develop a comprehensive policy strategy considering the interests of various stakeholders. The research focuses on the sustainability of tourist villages in the Kedung Ombo reservoir area, Central Java, Indonesia. However, the results of this study can be a bridge or bridging. They can be scaled up at a broader level, especially rural tourism in several developing countries with the same characteristics.

The participatory approach used in data collection facilitated a variety of inputs from interested parties at the research sites. In addition, the Multipol method from La Prospective is used to evaluate a set of alternative programs, policies, and scenarios, to determine the best policy package as a policy direction for rural tourism development in the Kedung Ombo area. Both are new approaches in research on rural tourism, especially in developing countries.

The analysis results show that an integrated development policy involving all stakeholders, facilitating cross-regional cooperation, and the support or participation of all stakeholders is the best policy. The integrated policies allow all the tourism potential to be developed coordinated manner so that the interests of all stakeholders are met. Integrated policies are also a combination of agro-based, nature-based, and culture-based policies, which are prominent in the research locations. The programs that effectively support the success of integrated policies are: private investment strengthening programs, network development programs, and local financial development programs.

The exemplary scenario needs to increase the effectiveness of the policy packages and superior programs in the rural tourism development process. Based on the research findings, the inclusive flight of the flamingo and leapfrog scenario is the prominent scenario. This scenario guarantees the involvement of all parties in the rural tourism development process. Under the Multipol method, this best scenario has considered the availability of resources, the risks, and the probability of success.

The results of this study become a model for institutional-based rural tourism development in other regions, which often have problems with coordination factors related to the many parties involved. Finally, the results of this study can serve as a road map for policymakers in various regions in developing integrated nature-based rural tourism by considering the availability of resources, risks, and possible levels of success.

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