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Social Capital, Community Participation, and the Sustainability of Tourism Destinations: A Literature Review from a Sociological Perspective

Sitti Nurwalyah

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

Email Corresponding Author: shityshity442@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Tourism destination sustainability depends not only on economic growth and environmental protection but also on the social capacity of local communities to participate in tourism governance. However, community involvement in tourism development is frequently limited to implementation activities, while planning, decision-making, and benefit distribution remain controlled by external actors. This study aimed to analyze the relationship among social capital, community participation, and tourism destination sustainability from a sociological perspective. A qualitative literature review was conducted using 10 peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2021. Articles were selected from Scopus-, Web of Science-, ScienceDirect-, Google Scholar-, and SINTA-indexed sources through title and abstract screening, full-text eligibility assessment, and thematic content analysis. The synthesis identified that trust, reciprocity, shared norms, local leadership, and social networks were the principal dimensions of social capital supporting collective tourism action. The findings further showed that participation contributed more strongly to sustainability when communities were involved in planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and equitable benefit-sharing. Across the reviewed studies, destination sustainability was reflected in economic opportunities, social equity, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, institutional legitimacy, and community well-being. Conversely, elite capture, unequal access to resources, symbolic participation, and weak institutional trust constrained sustainable tourism outcomes. The review concludes that social capital functions as a relational resource that enables substantive community participation, while meaningful participation strengthens local ownership and the legitimacy of destination governance. Sustainable tourism policies should therefore prioritize inclusive planning, community capacity-building, transparent partnerships, and fair distribution of tourism benefits.

Keywords : Social Capital; Community Participation; Sustainable Tourism; Destination Governance; Sociological Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism destinations are increasingly expected to generate economic opportunities while protecting ecological resources, preserving local culture, and improving community well-being. This expectation is consistent with the principle of sustainable tourism, which emphasizes a balanced relationship among economic viability, socio-cultural justice, environmental protection, and intergenerational responsibility. However, in many destinations, tourism growth has not always been accompanied by equitable benefit distribution or meaningful involvement of local residents. Tourism planning may remain dominated by government agencies, investors, and external operators, while communities are positioned merely as

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beneficiaries, workers, cultural attractions, or passive recipients of development programs. Such conditions can generate unequal access to resources, declining trust, social conflict, cultural commodification, and environmental pressure. From a sociological perspective, destination sustainability cannot be understood solely through visitor numbers, revenue, infrastructure, or environmental indicators. It is also shaped by social relations, institutional trust, collective norms, networks of cooperation, local power structures, and the capacity of residents to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Social capital is therefore an important resource because it facilitates collective action, strengthens cooperation, and enables communities to coordinate tourism-related interests. Hwang and Stewart (2017) found that social capital supports collective action in rural tourism by strengthening relationships, shared values, and collaborative capacity among local actors. Similarly, Moscardo et al. (2017) argued that tourism can strengthen social capital when it expands social networks, encourages collaboration, and creates opportunities for community interaction; yet tourism may also weaken social cohesion when benefits are distributed unequally. Community participation is another central dimension of sustainable destination development. Participation should not be interpreted narrowly as attendance at meetings or involvement in tourism events. Rather, it includes community access to information, consultation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, benefit-sharing, and decision-making authority. Dangi and Jamal (2016) emphasized that community-based tourism requires inclusive participation, local control, and recognition of community knowledge. In practice, however, participation frequently remains symbolic or procedural. Residents may be invited to endorse pre-determined programs without having sufficient influence over tourism policy, land use, investment priorities, or environmental management. This condition raises a fundamental sociological question: how do social capital and the quality of participation interact to support, constrain, or transform tourism destination sustainability?

Recent tourism scholarship has increasingly positioned local communities as active actors in destination governance. Community-based tourism has been widely discussed as an approach capable of linking livelihood improvement, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and local empowerment. Lee and Jan (2019) demonstrated that community-based tourism can contribute to sustainable development when residents perceive economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits fairly. Stone and Nyaupane (2018) similarly showed that community tourism in protected areas may improve livelihoods and strengthen community assets, although its outcomes depend on governance arrangements and local control over resources. The social-capital perspective provides a useful explanation for why some communities are better able to organize tourism development than others. Social capital generally refers to trust, norms of reciprocity, social networks, and collective capacities that facilitate coordination for mutual benefit. In tourism destinations, bonding social capital may reinforce solidarity within communities, bridging social capital may connect different community groups, and linking social capital may improve access to formal institutions, markets, and policy actors. Kline et al. (2019) indicated that community assets and local networks can become catalysts for tourism development by connecting residents with business opportunities and destination resources. In addition, Islam et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of adaptive co-management, in which government, communities, and tourism stakeholders collaboratively respond to changing environmental and social conditions. Empirical studies also show that resident support for tourism is closely associated with perceived benefits, trust in institutions, and opportunities for participation. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) found that residents' perceptions of tourism development are shaped by their assessment of economic, social, and environmental consequences. When communities perceive that tourism provides employment, improves facilities, protects cultural identity, and does not create disproportionate costs, they are more likely to support destination development. Conversely, perceptions of exclusion, unequal profits, congestion, land conflict, or cultural disruption can reduce support and weaken social cohesion. Nunkoo (2017) further emphasized that trust in government and institutional legitimacy are crucial in shaping residents' attitudes toward tourism development. The literature has also moved beyond economic indicators toward broader measures of destination sustainability. Dwyer (2020) argued that sustainable tourism should be assessed through community well-being rather than tourism growth alone. This approach is important because destination success may be economically visible but socially fragile. Tourism can create income while simultaneously intensifying inequality, marginalizing vulnerable groups, or weakening local control over cultural and natural resources. Pasanchay and Schott (2021) showed that community-based tourism homestays can contribute to Sustainable Development Goals when tourism activities are integrated with local livelihoods, capabilities, gender inclusion, and environmental responsibility. Likewise, Liburd et al. (2020) emphasized co-design processes as a way to involve communities in creating tourism solutions that are locally

meaningful and socially legitimate. Studies on destination governance further underline the need for collaboration among government, private businesses, civil society, tourists, and local residents. Hall (2019) noted that sustainable tourism governance requires coordination across multiple institutions and scales. Zielinski et al. (2020) found that community-based tourism is facilitated by leadership, social cohesion, local participation, market access, supportive policy, and capacity building. These findings suggest that sustainability is not merely a technical outcome of planning; it is a social process shaped by relations of power, trust, participation, and collective responsibility.

Although the literature on community-based tourism, participation, and sustainability has expanded considerably, several gaps remain. First, many studies examine social capital, community participation, or sustainability as separate variables. This fragmented approach limits understanding of the relational mechanism through which social capital may encourage meaningful participation and subsequently strengthen destination sustainability. The role of trust, networks, reciprocity, and local institutions as mediating social processes requires more integrated analysis. Second, existing research often uses residents' perceptions as the primary indicator of sustainability. Perception-based studies are valuable, but they may not adequately explain how social structures, unequal power relations, elite capture, gender differences, and exclusion from decision-making affect tourism outcomes. Biddulph (2018) cautioned that community-based tourism should not automatically be assumed to empower communities, because local participation can be constrained by structural inequalities. Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) also showed that community tourism outcomes are influenced by the distribution of power and control, not merely by the existence of participatory programs. Third, research has frequently focused on rural villages, ecotourism sites, or protected areas, whereas the sociological dynamics of social capital and participation may differ across coastal, urban, cultural, heritage, and emerging tourism destinations. More synthesis is needed to identify common patterns and contextual differences across destination types. In Indonesia, the rapid development of tourism villages and local destination initiatives makes this issue particularly relevant. However, studies often prioritize program evaluation or economic impacts rather than examining tourism as a field of social relations, negotiation, and community power.

This literature review aims to critically analyze the relationship between social capital, community participation, and tourism destination sustainability from a sociological perspective. Specifically, the review synthesizes recent conceptual and empirical literature to explain: (1) how trust, networks, norms, and collective action shape community engagement in tourism; (2) how participation influences social, economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability; and (3) what institutional and power-related conditions determine whether tourism produces community empowerment or exclusion. The novelty of this review lies in its integrative sociological framework. Rather than treating social capital, participation, and sustainability as isolated concepts, this study positions them as interconnected processes within destination governance. Social capital is conceptualized as a community resource that can facilitate participation; participation is understood as a mechanism through which residents exercise agency and negotiate interests; and sustainability is interpreted as a multidimensional social outcome involving equity, resilience, cultural continuity, environmental responsibility, and local well-being. Thus, the review contributes to tourism scholarship by offering a more critical understanding of sustainable destinations as socially negotiated spaces. In conclusion, sustainable tourism is more likely to be achieved when communities are not merely included in tourism activities, but are recognized as legitimate decision-makers with the social capacity, institutional access, and collective power to shape their own destination futures.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative literature review design to examine the relationship among social capital, community participation, and tourism destination sustainability from a sociological perspective. A literature review was selected because it enables researchers to identify theoretical patterns, compare empirical findings, assess conceptual inconsistencies, and develop an integrated explanation of a research phenomenon across different contexts (Snyder, 2019). In tourism studies, this approach is particularly relevant because destination sustainability is a multidimensional issue involving social, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional, and political processes. Therefore, the review did not merely summarize previous publications; it critically interpreted how social relations, trust, networks, collective action, participation, and local power contribute to sustainable tourism outcomes.

The review process was guided by systematic and transparent principles adapted from PRISMA 2020 recommendations (Page et al., 2021). Literature searching was conducted through reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and selected Indonesian journal portals indexed by SINTA. The search used combinations of the following keywords: “social capital,” “community participation,” “community-based tourism,” “destination sustainability,” “sustainable tourism,” “tourism governance,” and “local community.” The search was limited to publications from 2016 to 2026 to ensure that the reviewed evidence represented current debates and recent empirical developments in sustainable tourism research.

The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles published in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus or Indonesian journals indexed by SINTA; (2) articles published in English or Indonesian; (3) studies directly discussing at least one relationship among social capital, community participation, tourism governance, and destination sustainability; (4) conceptual, qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method, or review studies containing clear research procedures and findings; and (5) articles published within the ten-year review period. Conversely, books, conference proceedings, non-peer-reviewed reports, duplicate publications, articles without accessible full texts, and studies focused exclusively on tourist satisfaction or marketing behavior without a community dimension were excluded.

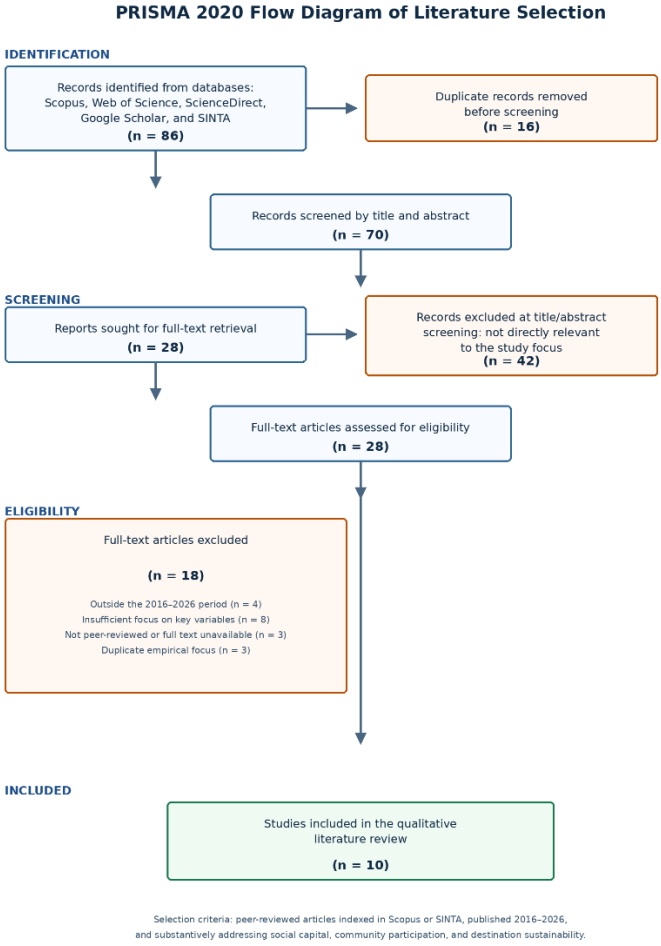


Figure 1. Prisma 2020 Flow Diagram of study selection

The initial search identified a broader pool of publications. After title and abstract screening, full-text assessment, and relevance evaluation, 10 articles were selected as the final objects of analysis. The limited number of articles was intentional to allow deeper conceptual interpretation of each study rather than a superficial bibliographic mapping. This strategy follows the argument of Torraco (2016) that integrative reviews should prioritize analytical depth, conceptual clarity, and meaningful synthesis. Each selected article was coded using a structured extraction matrix containing author and year, research location, tourism context, research design, sample or participants, dimensions of social capital, form of community participation, sustainability indicators, main findings, and identified limitations.

The analysis applied thematic content analysis. First, the selected studies were read repeatedly to identify recurring concepts and empirical patterns. Second, the findings were grouped into three principal themes: social capital as a resource for collective action; community participation as a mechanism of destination governance; and sustainability as a multidimensional outcome. Third, the review compared how bonding, bridging, and linking social capital influenced participation, access to decision-making, benefit distribution, environmental responsibility, and local resilience. This analytical orientation is supported by Moscardo et al. (2017), who emphasized the relationship between tourism and social capital in destination communities, and Hwang and Stewart (2017), who demonstrated the role of social capital in facilitating collective action in rural tourism.

To strengthen interpretive rigor, the analysis also considered differences in destination context, including rural tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, tourism villages, and protected-area tourism. Previous research indicates that local participation is influenced not only by willingness to engage but also by institutional trust, leadership, access to resources, and power distribution among stakeholders (Islam et al., 2018; Nunkoo, 2017). In addition, the review assessed whether participation was substantive meaning that communities had real influence over planning and management or merely symbolic. This distinction is essential because tourism initiatives may claim to be participatory while still maintaining external control over resources and decision-making (Biddulph, 2018).

Finally, the synthesized findings were interpreted through a sociological lens. Social capital was positioned as a relational resource; participation was understood as the expression of community agency; and sustainability was interpreted as an outcome of equitable social relations, institutional inclusion, local well-being, and environmental stewardship. This approach is consistent with studies showing that community-based tourism can support sustainable development when local communities obtain meaningful benefits, cultural recognition, and decision-making authority (Lee & Jan, 2019; Pasanchay & Schott, 2021; Zielinski et al., 2020). Thus, the method provides a conceptual and empirical basis for explaining how social capital and community participation jointly shape the sustainability of tourism destinations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Research Findings

The literature review synthesized 10 peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2021 that examined social capital, community participation, destination governance, and sustainable tourism. The selected studies included conceptual articles, qualitative case studies, mixed-method investigations, and quantitative resident-perception surveys. Although the studies were undertaken in different tourism contexts including rural tourism, tourism villages, community-based tourism, ecotourism, protected areas, and homestay enterprises they consistently indicated that destination sustainability is strongly influenced by the quality of social relationships and the extent of community involvement in tourism decision-making. The analysis identified three interrelated findings. First, social capital emerged as a fundamental relational resource for tourism development. Trust, reciprocity, shared norms, informal networks, local leadership, and collaboration between community members were repeatedly associated with stronger collective action. Second, community participation was found to be more effective when residents were involved not only in implementation but also in planning, decision-making, benefit-sharing, monitoring, and evaluation. Third, destination sustainability was not limited to economic growth; it included social equity, cultural continuity, environmental responsibility, community well-being, institutional legitimacy, and local resilience.

Table 1. Characteristics and Main Findings of the Selected Articles

Author(s) and Year	Tourism Context / Research Orientation	Main Conceptual Focus	Main Empirical or Conceptual Finding
Dangi and Jamal (2016)	Community-based tourism; conceptual study	Participation, empowerment, local control	Sustainable community-based tourism requires inclusive participation, community ownership, and recognition of local knowledge.
Hwang and Stewart (2017)	Rural tourism; empirical study	Social capital and collective action	Trust, social networks, and shared community norms strengthened collective capacity to organize tourism activities.

Moscardo et al. (2017)	Destination communities; conceptual and empirical synthesis	Tourism and social capital	Tourism can strengthen social capital through interaction and cooperation, but unequal benefits may also weaken community cohesion.
Nunkoo (2017)	Sustainable tourism governance; conceptual review	Trust, power, governance, and social capital	Institutional trust and power relations shape residents' willingness to support and participate in tourism development.
Islam et al. (2018)	Tourism destination governance; conceptual analysis	Adaptive co-management	Collaboration among communities, government, and tourism actors improves institutional adaptability and destination sustainability.
Biddulph (2018)	Community-based tourism; critical analysis	Participation and structural inequality	Participation may become symbolic when local communities lack access to resources, authority, and meaningful decision-making power.
Lee and Jan (2019)	Community-based tourism; resident-perception study	Sustainability perceptions	Residents supported tourism when they perceived fair economic, socio-cultural, and environmental benefits.
Zielinski et al. (2020)	Community-based tourism initiatives; comparative study	Enabling and inhibiting factors	Leadership, social cohesion, skills, market access, and policy support were important conditions for successful community tourism.
Pasanchay and Schott (2021)	Community homestay tourism; qualitative study	Sustainable livelihoods and SDGs	Community-based homestays contributed to livelihoods, women's participation, cultural preservation, and locally grounded sustainability.
Dwyer (2020)	Sustainable tourism; theoretical analysis	Well-being and sustainability measurement	Destination sustainability should be assessed through community well-being and equity, not tourism growth or income alone.

Social Capital as a Basis for Collective Tourism Action

The first major finding is that social capital functions as an important social infrastructure for sustainable tourism destinations. Seven of the 10 reviewed articles explicitly identified trust, social networks, reciprocity, community norms, or collaborative leadership as factors that strengthen tourism-related collective action. Hwang and Stewart (2017) showed that social capital enables rural communities to coordinate shared tourism interests, solve collective problems, and mobilize local resources. In this context, social capital reduces transaction costs because community members are more willing to cooperate when they trust one another and share expectations of reciprocity. Moscardo et al. (2017) further explained that tourism may create opportunities for social interaction among residents, local entrepreneurs, government agencies, and visitors. Such interactions can increase bridging social capital by connecting community groups with external markets, tourism knowledge, and institutional resources. However, the review also found that social capital is not automatically positive. When tourism benefits are concentrated among local elites, investors, or politically connected actors, tourism can generate jealousy, distrust, and conflict. Therefore, social capital should be understood as a dynamic social resource whose effect depends on fairness, transparency, and the distribution of tourism opportunities. From a sociological perspective, the evidence indicates that bonding social capital strengthens internal solidarity among residents, while bridging and linking social capital help communities access external support. Linking social capital is particularly important because it connects local communities with formal institutions, including local government, tourism offices, financial institutions, universities, and destination-management organizations. Islam et al. (2018) emphasized that adaptive co-management becomes more effective when communities possess institutional channels to communicate with government and other tourism stakeholders.

Community Participation and the Quality of Destination Governance

The second finding concerns the central role of meaningful community participation. Nine of the 10 articles indicated that participation is a key mechanism linking social capital to sustainability. However, participation varied in depth. Several studies distinguished between passive participation, such as attending meetings or providing labor, and substantive participation, in which communities influence tourism planning, resource use, benefit-sharing, and destination policy.

Dangi and Jamal (2016) argued that sustainable community-based tourism requires local control over tourism decisions and recognition of indigenous knowledge. This finding is reinforced by Lee and Jan (2019), whose study found that residents were more supportive of community-based tourism when development produced visible and equitable economic, socio-cultural, and environmental benefits. Residents' support is therefore not simply a matter of positive attitudes; it reflects whether tourism is perceived as fair, inclusive, and beneficial to everyday community life.

Nevertheless, the literature also reveals that participation can be constrained by unequal power relations. Biddulph (2018) warned that community participation may become symbolic when decision-making authority remains controlled by government institutions, private investors, or local elites. In such circumstances, residents may participate in tourism programs without having genuine influence over land use, investment priorities, cultural representation, or environmental management. This indicates that the existence of community meetings or tourism groups alone should not be treated as evidence of empowerment.

Sustainability as a Multidimensional Social Outcome

The third finding shows that tourism destination sustainability is multidimensional. Economic outcomes such as employment, household income, local enterprises, and market access were important in all reviewed studies. However, the evidence suggests that economic gains alone are insufficient to define a sustainable destination. Dwyer (2020) emphasized that sustainable tourism should be evaluated through well-being, equity, and long-term quality of life. Similarly, Pasanchay and Schott (2021) demonstrated that community tourism can support sustainable livelihoods when it improves local capabilities, expands women's participation, preserves cultural practices, and strengthens environmental awareness. The review identified five recurring sustainability dimensions: economic viability, social equity, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and institutional resilience. Zielinski et al. (2020) found that tourism initiatives were more likely to survive when supported by local leadership, community cohesion, tourism skills, market access, and favorable policy. These conditions illustrate that sustainability is not a one-time result; rather, it is a continuing process of community adaptation, collaboration, and governance. Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate a consistent relationship among social capital, participation, and destination sustainability. Social capital provides the trust and networks needed for collective action; meaningful participation enables communities to exercise agency and negotiate tourism interests; and sustainability is achieved when tourism benefits, responsibilities, and decision-making opportunities are distributed fairly. Therefore, tourism destination policies should prioritize community capacity-building, transparent governance, inclusive planning forums, equitable benefit-sharing, and institutional partnerships that strengthen local control over tourism development.

Discussion

The findings of this literature review demonstrate that social capital, community participation, and tourism destination sustainability are inseparable dimensions of destination development. Across the 10 selected articles, social capital was consistently identified as a social resource that enables local communities to cooperate, share information, resolve collective problems, and negotiate their interests within tourism development. The findings further indicate that participation becomes meaningful when communities possess not only willingness to engage but also trust, social networks, institutional access, and decision-making power. Therefore, sustainable tourism should be understood as a socially embedded process rather than merely an economic strategy for increasing tourist arrivals, local revenue, or destination competitiveness.

The first important finding concerns the role of social capital in strengthening collective action. Social capital includes trust, reciprocity, shared norms, formal and informal networks, and collective capacities that facilitate cooperation among individuals and institutions. Hwang and Stewart (2017) demonstrated that social capital supports collective action in rural tourism because community members are more likely to contribute time, knowledge, and resources when mutual trust is present. This finding is relevant to tourism destinations in which residents must jointly manage local attractions, cultural performances, homestays, waste management, security, and visitor services. Without trust, tourism activities may become fragmented, competitive, and dominated by individual interests rather than collective community objectives.

Moscardo et al. (2017) similarly argued that tourism can contribute to social capital by creating spaces for interaction among residents, local businesses, government agencies, and visitors. Tourism activities may strengthen social networks when residents collaborate in tourism groups, village-owned enterprises,

cooperatives, community associations, or cultural organizations. However, the present review also confirms that tourism does not automatically produce positive social capital. When tourism income is concentrated among a small number of actors, social relations may be characterized by jealousy, exclusion, and declining trust. This observation supports Nunkoo's (2017) argument that trust and power are central issues in sustainable tourism governance. Communities are more likely to support tourism policies when public institutions are transparent, responsive, and accountable in managing tourism resources and benefits.

The reviewed studies suggest that social capital has three interconnected forms in destination development. Bonding social capital refers to solidarity among members of the same community, such as families, neighborhood groups, youth organizations, women's groups, and customary institutions. This form of capital is useful for preserving local identity and mobilizing collective participation. Bridging social capital connects different social groups within a destination, including tourism entrepreneurs, farmers, artisans, youth, and community leaders. Such connections are important for reducing internal fragmentation and expanding collaboration across occupational or social boundaries. Linking social capital, meanwhile, connects local communities with external institutions, such as local governments, universities, tourism agencies, financial institutions, investors, and non-governmental organizations. Islam et al. (2018) emphasized that adaptive tourism governance requires collaboration across these multiple levels because destination problems, including environmental degradation, infrastructure limitations, and market uncertainty, cannot be resolved by local communities alone.

The second major finding concerns the depth and quality of community participation. The literature indicates that participation is not adequately measured through attendance at meetings, involvement in tourism events, or the provision of voluntary labor. Rather, participation should include access to information, consultation, planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and equitable benefit-sharing. Dangi and Jamal (2016) argued that community-based tourism requires local control, inclusive participation, and recognition of community knowledge. Their perspective is particularly important because local residents have direct knowledge of cultural practices, environmental limits, social norms, and everyday livelihood needs that may not be visible to external planners.

The findings of Lee and Jan (2019) reinforce this argument by showing that residents are more likely to support community-based tourism when they perceive economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits. Economic benefits may include employment, household income, new enterprises, and market access for local products. Nevertheless, the review indicates that income generation alone is insufficient to secure long-term participation. Communities also expect recognition of cultural identity, protection of local resources, fair distribution of opportunities, and respect for their role as legitimate destination actors. Stone and Nyaupane (2018) similarly found that community tourism in protected areas can strengthen local livelihoods and community assets when local people gain meaningful access to tourism benefits and natural-resource management.

However, the evidence also reveals a critical problem: participation may become symbolic when communities are invited into implementation but excluded from strategic decisions. Biddulph (2018) cautioned that community-based tourism can reproduce inequality when access to capital, land, information, and political influence is unevenly distributed. In many destinations, local elites, investors, or government representatives may retain control over planning decisions, while ordinary residents are expected to support tourism programs without sufficient authority to influence them. This pattern weakens the empowering function of participation. It may also reduce community trust, especially when residents perceive that tourism policies serve external economic interests rather than local well-being.

The third finding concerns the meaning of sustainability itself. The reviewed evidence demonstrates that destination sustainability is multidimensional. Economic viability remains important because tourism can generate employment, entrepreneurship, and local income. Nevertheless, sustainable destinations must also demonstrate social equity, cultural preservation, environmental responsibility, institutional resilience, and community well-being. Dwyer (2020) argued that tourism development should move beyond gross domestic product and visitor expenditure as primary indicators of success. This perspective is consistent with the reviewed studies, which show that a destination may be economically successful while experiencing social conflict, cultural commodification, unequal benefit distribution, or environmental decline.

Pasanchay and Schott (2021) provided evidence that community-based homestay tourism can contribute to Sustainable Development Goals when tourism is connected to local livelihoods, women's

participation, cultural continuity, and environmental awareness. Their findings suggest that tourism becomes more sustainable when communities are able to define the meaning of development according to their own priorities. This is also consistent with Liburd et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of co-design in tourism development. Co-design allows local stakeholders to participate in defining tourism problems, generating solutions, and evaluating outcomes. Consequently, it moves destination planning away from a top-down model toward a more collaborative and socially legitimate process.

The role of leadership and institutional support also emerged as an important theme. Zielinski et al. (2020) identified leadership, social cohesion, training, market access, and supportive policy as critical factors that facilitate community-based tourism. Community groups may possess strong social capital, but their ability to sustain tourism initiatives can remain limited without access to skills, financing, promotion, digital marketing, tourism standards, and government support. Kline et al. (2019) similarly indicated that community assets and built capital can catalyze tourism development when they are connected to local capacities and networks. Thus, social capital should not be viewed as a substitute for institutional investment; instead, it should be strengthened alongside physical infrastructure, human-resource development, and fair governance.

From a sociological perspective, the relationship among social capital, participation, and sustainability can be understood as a sequential but reciprocal process. Social capital creates the trust and networks necessary for collective action. Collective action increases the likelihood of meaningful participation in tourism planning and management. Meaningful participation, in turn, improves legitimacy, fairness, local ownership, and community responsibility for destination resources. These conditions support multidimensional sustainability, including economic opportunities, social cohesion, cultural protection, environmental stewardship, and resilience to tourism-related change. At the same time, fair and sustainable tourism outcomes can reinforce trust and strengthen social capital, creating a positive cycle of community development.

Overall, the findings imply that tourism policies should not position communities merely as beneficiaries or cultural objects. Communities should be recognized as rights-holders, knowledge-holders, entrepreneurs, environmental stewards, and co-governors of tourism destinations. Local governments and destination-management organizations should therefore establish transparent participatory mechanisms, strengthen community organizations, expand access to tourism education and financing, and ensure equitable benefit-sharing. Through these measures, social capital can be transformed into collective capacity, community participation can become substantive rather than symbolic, and tourism destinations can achieve a more inclusive and sustainable development trajectory.

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that social capital and community participation are fundamental determinants of tourism destination sustainability. Based on the synthesis of 10 peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2021, the findings show that trust, reciprocity, shared norms, social networks, and local leadership strengthen communities' capacity to undertake collective tourism action. Social capital supports cooperation among residents and facilitates connections with government agencies, tourism businesses, academic institutions, and other external stakeholders. Nevertheless, its positive contribution depends on transparency, fair benefit distribution, and inclusive institutional relations.

The review also demonstrates that community participation has a stronger sustainability effect when it extends beyond attendance or labor contribution. Meaningful participation requires residents' involvement in planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and benefit-sharing. Empirically, the reviewed studies indicate that residents are more likely to support tourism when they perceive equitable economic opportunities, cultural recognition, environmental protection, and improvements in community well-being. Conversely, symbolic participation, elite capture, and unequal access to tourism resources may reduce trust and weaken social cohesion.

Conceptually, destination sustainability should therefore be understood as a multidimensional social outcome encompassing economic viability, social equity, cultural continuity, environmental stewardship, and institutional resilience. The review confirms a reciprocal relationship: social capital enables substantive participation, participation improves governance legitimacy, and fair sustainability outcomes further reinforce community trust. Tourism policy should consequently prioritize inclusive governance, community capacity-building, transparent partnerships, and equitable control over destination resources.

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