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Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism is an interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that should contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences.

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Tourism Development and Local Community Welfare: A Case Study of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the impact of tourism development on the welfare of local communities in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, as well as a review of secondary sources. The results indicate that the development of tourism in Mandalika has had a positive impact on the welfare of the local community, specifically in the areas of education, economy, and health. The increase in the number of schools and training programs for entrepreneurship has equipped individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs, which has fostered an entrepreneurial mindset. Additionally, there has been an increase in income and employment opportunities for the local community, with the opening of various types of jobs both informally and formally. Finally, tourism has contributed to improving health facilities such as hospitals, health centers, and clinics. However, this study is limited by the small sample size and the focus on a specific area, which may not be generalizable to other contexts. Future research should explore the impact of tourism development on other aspects of local community welfare and consider the potential negative impacts of tourism development on the environment and cultural heritage.

Keywords: community; human development index; Mandalika; special economic zone; tourism; wellbeing.

JEL Classification: L83; O18; Z32.

Introduction

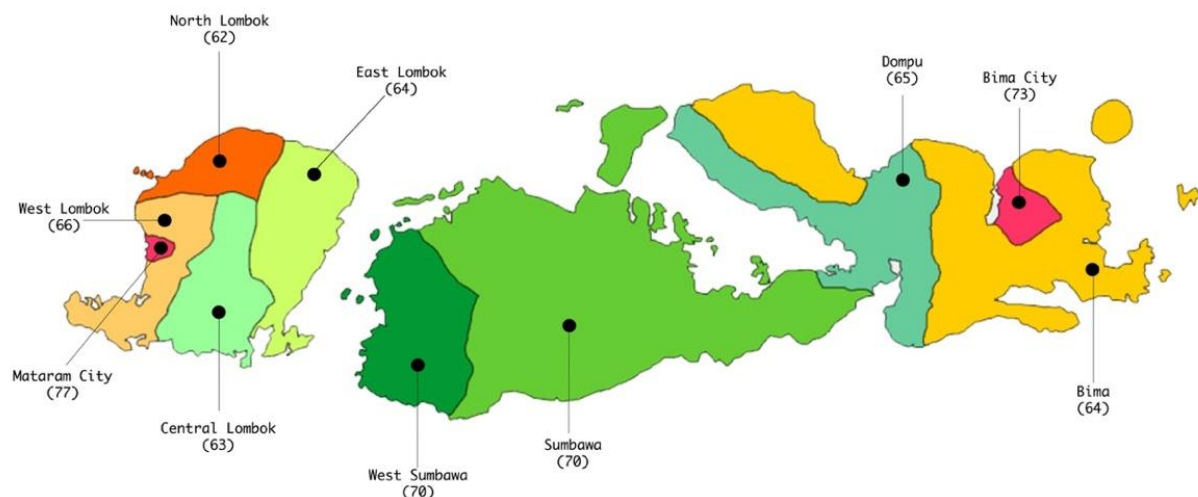
Tourism is a vital component of the global economy that can generate billions of dollars in revenue and create millions of jobs. Developing countries consider tourism as a tool to accelerate development and improve the quality of life (Abuhay *et al.* 2019). Sustainable tourism can be an important economic resource for achieving sustainable development. Careful and synergistic planning is necessary to obtain the maximum benefits from tourism (Stone and Stone 2020).

The impact of sustainable tourism on the well-being of the community is significant. Welfare is a state where people's requirements are satisfied, enhancing their quality of life and preventing them from experiencing poverty, ignorance, and fear (El Badriati *et al.* 2022). Achieving welfare ensures that people can live comfortably and develop while fulfilling their social responsibilities (Windayani and Marhaeni 2019). The concept of welfare is arbitrary, and each person has a unique perspective on life, aspirations, and routines (Putra *et al.* 2017).

Tourism has a substantial influence on economic growth and can enhance welfare and quality of life, assisting local needs satisfaction (Cozma and Coros 2017). Indonesia is one of the most popular tourist destinations globally, and the government has developed tourism Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to draw investment and speed up regional development (Habibi *et al.* 2021). Ten tourism SEZs have been established by the government, and they will serve as Indonesia's top travel destinations (Wijaya and Kunci 2015). Each destination will be unique according to the Indonesian government (Miswanto and Safaat 2018).

Mandalika is one of the areas targeted for ecotourism by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Government Regulation No. 52 of 2014 stipulates Mandalika as Tourism Area. The Mandalika SEZ with a land area of 1,035.67 ha and views of the Indian Ocean is expected to boost the community's economy through tourism activities (Estriani 2019).

Figure 1. Human Development Index of West Nusa Tenggara Province



Source: Data processed

The area of Mandalika in Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, is where this special area is being developed. Due to its lack of tourist development and human growth, Central Lombok was selected as the development site. Out of a total of 20 regencies and cities, Central Lombok and North Lombok are the least developed, with HDIs of 63 and 62 respectively in 2016, see Figure 1.

Several scholars have studied the relationship between tourism and social welfare. They have stated that the improvement of the general populace's economics must be the goal of the development of the tourism business (Badulescu *et al.* 2020, Dwyer *et al.* 2010, Fayissa *et al.* 2008, Mihalič 2014, Sinclair 1998, Spenceley and Meyer 2012). Tourism must be beneficial to welfare in terms of the economy and raising the capacity of the local population (Alshareef and AlGassim 2021, Butler 2017, Gohori and van der Merwe 2022, Khalid *et al.* 2019, Palikhe 2018).

However, there is still limited research evaluating the impact of government tourism policies on people's welfare from the HDI aspect. Most studies only discuss the influence of the concept of community-based tourism in increasing welfare (Dangi and Jamal 2016, Lee and Jan 2019, Rahayu *et al.* 2016, Weaver 2010, Yanes *et al.* 2019). There has been very limited study that tries to connect tourism with the human development index. This

study employs qualitative techniques and concentrates on assessing the three factors of the HDI, namely income, education, and health, particularly in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone. This research aims to establish itself as a new standard for qualitative analysis of the impact of tourism on human development.

1. Tourism and Community Welfare

According to assessments, the economic benefits of tourism to society are significant. It should be highlighted that the purchasing power created by revenue from visitor expenditure accounts for the majority of tourism's economic impact (Aguiló *et al.* 2017, Mercadé-Melé and Barreal Pernas 2021). For instance, foreign travelers spend billions of dollars in the host nations they visit while on their journeys, causing a tremendous rise in a variety of economic activity (Aguiló *et al.* 2017, Amir *et al.* 2016, Dileep 2019, Mercadé-Melé and Barreal Pernas 2021). The significant economic impact of tourism is shown in the nation's foreign exchange profits, which provide new employment, new infrastructure, and educational possibilities. According to published research, tourism is one of the most lucrative industries in the world and is currently regarded as a global leader in many regions. Because of its rapid expansion relative to other economic sectors, tourism's current significance to the global economy cannot be understated in many nations (Fotuhinia 2014). The expansion of business and industry as well as more chances for self-employment, such as opening online cafes, restaurants, and kiosks, which can provide quicker lives than traditional ones, are all fueled by tourism (Mbawgu *et al.* 2016).

Countries, communities, and individuals who have constructive views for growth in the age of globalization cannot overlook the social contribution of tourism to community development, as stated plainly by (Amalu *et al.* 2018), who also assert that at the moment, no country in the world can do so. the value of tourism to the country's growth on an economic, social, and cultural level. Nations are becoming more conscious than ever before of the immense social benefits that may be obtained from tourism. It is clear from Bhatia's statements from 2007 that travel has gained popularity as a global pastime (Mbawgu *et al.* 2016). More importantly, the host nation will learn about the outside world and can benefit from amenities like educational opportunities, access to libraries and the internet, and healthcare services given by the tourism sector (Sharma *et al.* 2012).

The overall economic, social, and health effects of tourism have not yet been evaluated by research. Particularly in Indonesia, most studies simply paid attention to one factor. In reality, tourism-related activities can have an impact on many facets of life, including other industries like agriculture, the maritime sector, and others.

2. Research Method

Based on the standard Human Development Index, three aspects are assessed: life expectancy, education, and per capita income. These three aspects are important indicators of development (Klasen 2018, UNDP 2018). Therefore, this study aims to explore the community's perspective on the impact of the development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) based on the HDI indicator.

To achieve the research aim, a qualitative approach is used. This approach enables the identification of significant themes and response patterns that can help explain the observed phenomena (Sofaer 1999; Rizkikadduhani *et al.* 2024). The authors argue that a qualitative approach is necessary to explain the actual conditions experienced by the community. The quantitative approach is seen as limited to macro aspects and unable to provide a detailed understanding of the real impact felt by the community.

The participants in the study were selected using purposive sampling and saturation technique, based on predetermined criteria such as the village government, workers in the tourism sector, the general public, business owners, and investors. A total of 20 participants were included, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with individuals who had been involved in tourism activities in the area for at least one year.

Data analysis involved five processes: data reduction, coding, data display, triangulation, and conclusion-making (El Badriati *et al.* 2022, Miles and Huberman 2014). To ensure data validity, the authors used a source triangulation technique, comparing information from each informant before drawing conclusions. The authors also used the Atlas.ti program to present the data.

The authors employed network analysis to investigate social structure using network and graph theory (Senthilnathan 2012). The interview process lasted for three days in September 2022, and the entire process was approved by the Centre of Tourism Research of Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Mataram.

3. Research Results and Discussion

Figure 2 below is the result of coding the data that has been obtained and then giving a relationship line for each code. This study divides the impact of tourism on the Human Development Index or people's welfare into three aspects including education, economy, and health. In the educational aspect, researchers found that there were

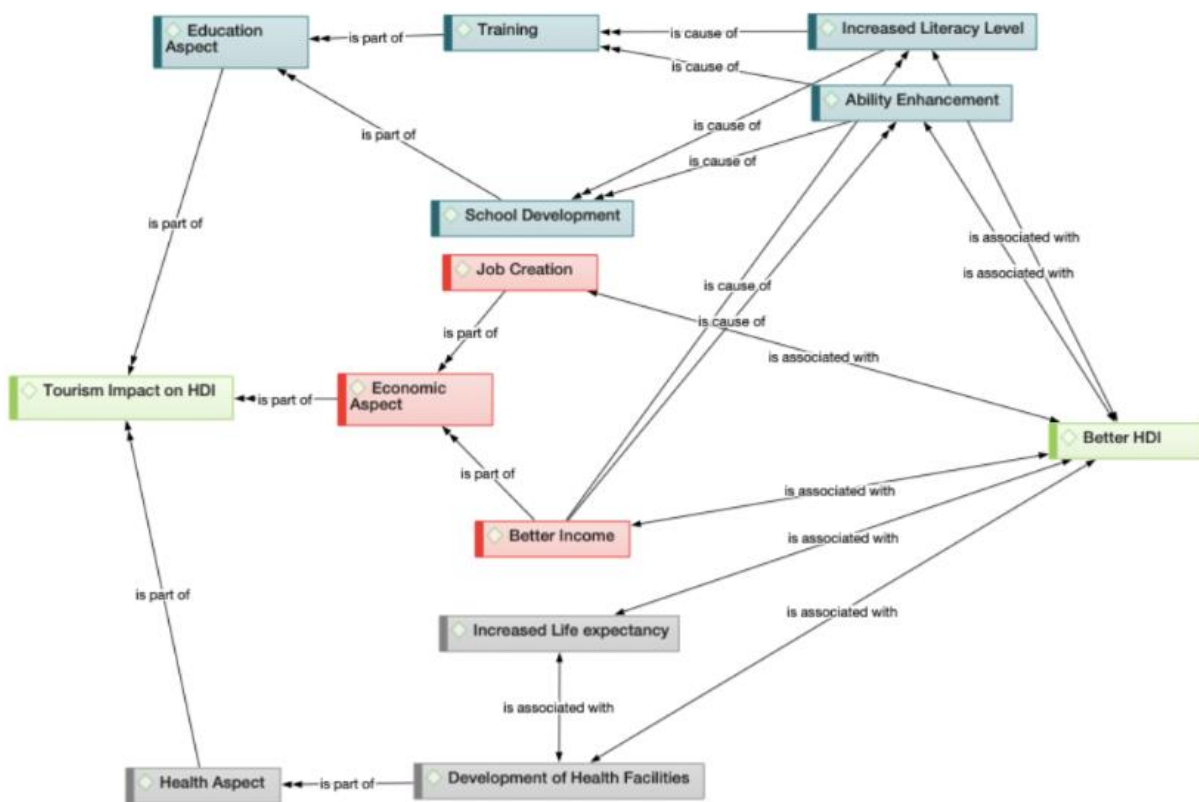
two things that happened, namely the emergence of new schools around the Mandalika SEZ. In addition, Tourism also has an impact on increasing the intensity of training. In the economic aspect, there has been an increase in income and employment opportunities due to ongoing activities. Finally, in terms of health, it can be seen that tourism has an impact on improving health facilities such as hospitals, health centers, and clinics.

Further explanation regarding the impact of tourism on the welfare of the people around the Mandalika Special Economic Zone will be described in the next section.

3.1. Education Aspect

Based on the information given by participants as Mandalika developer representatives, specifically PT. Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). For communities receiving assistance from the Mandalika Tourist SEZ, ITDC has provided entrepreneurship training in a variety of fields. "The aim of this program is to foster an entrepreneurial mindset within the neighborhood. Additionally, this program strives to give individuals the particular knowledge and abilities they require as independent contractors" (Participant 16)

Figure 2. Overall result



Source: data processed using Atlas.ti

With the help of the Mataram Business Development Institute, this training program was created. The reading materials provided as part of this entrepreneurship program will aid participants in changing their perspectives and developing into self-sufficient entrepreneurs. The study of group dynamics, evaluation of each participant's character, discipline, and marketing are all heavily stressed in this curriculum.

In addition, the development of the tourism industry in the Mandalika SEZ is supported by the central and regional governments with the establishment of the Lombok Tourism Polytechnic. The construction of this school is intended to meet the needs of human resources in the tourism sector, especially for the Mandalika Special Economic Zone. Moreover, the development of the tourism industry in the Mandalika SEZ is supported by the central and regional governments with the establishment of the Lombok Tourism Polytechnic. The construction of this school is intended to meet the needs of human resources in the tourism sector, especially for the Mandalika Special Economic Zone. "The final goal of developing the Tourism Polytechnic in Lombok is to meet the needs of tourism human resources. Meanwhile, the implementation of Academic activities at the Lombok State Polytechnic and Tourism has been regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2016 concerning the Organization and Work Procedure of the Ministry of Tourism. In addition, it is regulated

in the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2016 dated October 14, 2016, concerning the Statutes of the Lombok Tourism Polytechnic” (Participant 15)

Evidently, the local inhabitants in Mandalika have been significantly impacted by the growth of tourism. Individuals who believe that the tourist industry offers excellent work possibilities are beginning to understand how important education and training are. As a result, a lot of individuals have started enrolling their kids in school so that they can compete in the labor market:

- “I chose to sell food because I have no skills in tourism. I can't even read and write. Because of my shortcomings, I don't want my children to feel the same way. Now my child is studying at the Tourism Vocational High School level” (Participant 1);
- “I am now able to conduct business due to the education I received from various institutions. I am also proficient at using technology, including laptops and mobile phones. Through social networking sites like Facebook and Whatsapp, I rent out my motorcycle. Occasionally, at the busiest time of year, I also rent out my home” (Participant 2)

We can conclude that tourism has significantly impacted the educational side, where there has been an increase in educational facilities such as schools and training for the local community, based on claims from some of these participants and confirmation from multiple sources.

3.2. Economic Aspect

To determine how tourism affects the local economy, participants are encouraged to contrast their experiences in the Mandalika region before and after tourism development. Prior to the growth of tourism, they said that the poor soil conditions and difficulty in using it for agriculture prevented them from living in prosperity. As a result, fishermen and breeders make up the majority of the workforce in Mandalika SEZ. This particular circumstance makes the immediate area more susceptible to lacking necessities:

- “The problem of how to support oneself has always been a concern in these villages. If the sea conditions are bad, my family and I cannot find fish to sell” (Participant 3);
- “The dry land conditions make it difficult for us to manage it. We can only grow certain crops such as corn and beans” (Participant 4).

Some of these problems are the main obstacles for the community in improving their quality of life. However, after the Mandalika Special Economic Zone began to be built, the community experienced an increase in income with the opening of various types of new jobs both informally and formally:

- “My family's income has increased tremendously. My family and I used to depend on fishing for a living. I now rent boats for visitors who want to go around the island and surf. If there were more tourists, my daily income from renting this boat could increase from 200,000 to more than 1 million rupiahs” (Participant 5).
- “The number of tourists has grown rapidly since the Mandalika SEZ was built, exceeding the provision of lodging. As a result, I let my house be used as a homestay. In addition, many other people have also rented their homes to tourists before the MotoGP race starts in 2022” (Participant 6).

Various jobs and businesses are carried out by the local community as a result of the large opportunities available. In fact, even people who do not have expertise in tourism can benefit from this development:

- “My daily wage as a construction worker ranges between 125 and 250 thousand rupiahs. I typically work for a homestay, villa, hostel, and other property owners. They are mostly foreigners” (Participant 7);
- “Because I don't have any skills in the field of tourism, I'm just a small business. I sell retail gasoline in front of my house” (Participant 8)

For people who have skills in the field of tourism such as language skills, cooking skills, the ability to serve guests, to the smallest abilities such as housekeeping get enormous job opportunities. In fact, the indigenous people of Mandalika will be given the convenience to work in this tourism industry:

- “I am a graduate of the Mataram Tourism Polytechnic and was immediately accepted to work at this hotel as a front office. Local people are given greater opportunities to work in various places here” (Participant 9);
- “After receiving entrepreneurship training, I started to open a small business by selling typical Lombok souvenirs such as key chains, *songket*, traditional bags, and many more” (Participant 10).

Therefore, it is clear that the development of the tourism industry in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone has had an effect on the neighborhood, particularly in terms of the economy, which includes higher income and more employment options. This has been confirmed by various sources, such as other participants from both the community and the village government.

3.3. Health Aspect

As part of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone's construction to support various tourism activities, particularly sports-based tourism, health facilities are required. Many health clinics have been established in the Mandalika area so far. This was conveyed by the community and the truth has been confirmed by the Kuta Mandalika village government:

- "Before the Mandalika SEZ existed, I had to go to the city to get health services. But now there are many health clinics close to my house" (Participant 11);
- "Clinics and health centers are built to support tourism activities for both tourists and the local community. Furthermore, the Mandalika area is designated for sports tourism such as surfing, swimming, paragliding, and so on, making it extremely dangerous" (Participant 14).

Not only small health facilities such as clinics and community health centers, but the government has also recently built the Mandalika International Hospital to support MotoGP activities. This hospital has international standards and is the only hospital in the Mandalika Region. With this, people and tourists don't have to go far to the city to get health services. With the establishment of several of these health facilities, people can get health services easily and even for free for those who have health insurance (BPJS). In fact, some people admit that at this time they no longer experience difficulties when they want to find medicine or just consult a doctor. "Nowadays everything is very easy. If my child is sick, I usually take him to the Kuta Health Centre. And if I need medicine, I can buy it at the nearest pharmacy" (Participant 12).

In addition, there were several respondents who stated that with the existence of new health facilities in the Mandalika area, the life expectancy for newborns and the elderly was increasing. This was conveyed by participants 12 and 13, as follows:

- "Exactly a few months ago I gave birth to my second child at the Kuta Health Centre. During my pregnancy, I actively checked the condition of my womb with the midwife to ensure my child's health. In contrast to my first child whose birth process was very difficult. At that time, I gave birth with the help of a birth healer (dukun beranak)" (Participant 12);
- "Currently my parents are sick. Thankfully, if there is an emergency, I can take my parents to the nearest Kuta Health Centre or clinic" (Participant 13).

Based on the description above, it can be understood that the development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone has had a positive impact on the public health aspect through the construction of health service facilities such as clinics, health centers, pharmacies, and hospitals so that it has an impact on increasing the life expectancy of the local community.

3.4. Implications

The Mandalika SEZ has had a significant positive impact on the welfare of the surrounding community, as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI). Specifically, the HDI of Central Lombok Regency has continued to improve since the initial development of the area. In 2016, Central Lombok was ranked second lowest with an HDI of 63, but after six years of tourism activities, the ranking improved by 4 points to 68 (Figure 2). This improvement in the HDI indicates that the Mandalika SEZ has contributed to the local community's economic, educational, and health outcomes.

Moreover, the length of schooling in Central Lombok has increased since the establishment of the Mandalika SEZ. Prior to the project, the average length of education for the community was 12 years, equivalent to high school level. However, with the development of the Mandalika project, the average length of schooling has increased to 14 years, equivalent to a vocational level. This increase is consistent with the establishment of a vocational school for tourism, indicating that the community values skills in the industry and is aware of the career opportunities available.

The establishment of medical facilities to support tourism-related activities has also had a significant impact on the health of the community, as demonstrated by the increase in life expectancy. The average life expectancy for Central Lombok residents increased from 64 years in 2014 and 2015 to 67 years currently, following the Mandalika SEZ's creation. This increase is attributed to the presence of medical services that were initially intended to support tourism activities.

The Mandalika project has also increased the labor force participation rate, leading to more job opportunities for the local population. Prior to the project, the labor force participation rate in Central Lombok was 62%, but this increased to 70% once construction began. Since 2020, the participation rate has increased by 5%

* women who assist in traditional births

annually, reaching 75%. Therefore, the development of the Mandalika SEZ has directly affected the local economy, particularly in terms of job prospects.

This research provides tangible findings on the genuine effects of the Mandalika Tourism Special Economic Zone, serving as a guide for the government in developing new regulations to maximize the advantages experienced by Central Lombok residents. In terms of theory, this study offers a new baseline for evaluating the advantages of tourism and recommends that future studies include economics, education, and health indicators to provide a more comprehensive assessment of tourism's impact. Finally, this research is the first to use the HDI qualitatively to assess the impact of a development project.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of tourism in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone has had a positive impact on the welfare of the local community in terms of education, economy, and health. In the educational aspect, there has been an increase in the number of schools and training programs for entrepreneurship, which has fostered an entrepreneurial mindset and equipped individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs. In the economic aspect, there has been an increase in income and employment opportunities for the local community, with the opening of various types of jobs both informally and formally.

Finally, in terms of health, tourism has contributed to improving health facilities such as hospitals, health centers, and clinics. These findings suggest that tourism development has the potential to improve the welfare of local communities and should be promoted in a sustainable and responsible manner.

However, despite the positive impact, there are some limitations to this study that need to be addressed in future research. First, the study did not investigate the long-term effects of tourism on the local community, which could provide valuable insights into the sustainability of tourism development in the region. Second, the study did not explore the impact of tourism on the environment and cultural heritage, which are critical components of sustainable tourism development.

Moreover, the study's findings have important implications for future research and policy development. First, policymakers should recognize the importance of investing in education and training programs for local communities to foster entrepreneurship and equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to take advantage of the opportunities created by tourism. Second, policymakers should adopt a sustainable and responsible approach to tourism development that balances economic growth with social and environmental considerations. Finally, future research should explore the long-term effects of tourism on the local community, environment, and cultural heritage to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of tourism on the region.

Note

Participant 1, Local; Participant 2, Local; Participant 3, Local; Participant 4, Local; Participant 5, Local; Participant 6, Local; Participant 7, Local; Participant 8, Local; Participant 9, Local; Participant 10, Local; Participant 11, Local; Participant 12, Local; Participant 13, Local; Participant 14, Local Government; Participant 15, Tourism Polytechnic of Lombok; Participant 16, Indonesian Tourism Development Corporation; Participant 17, Business Owner; Participant 18, Investor; Participant 19, Investor; Participant 20, Business Owner.

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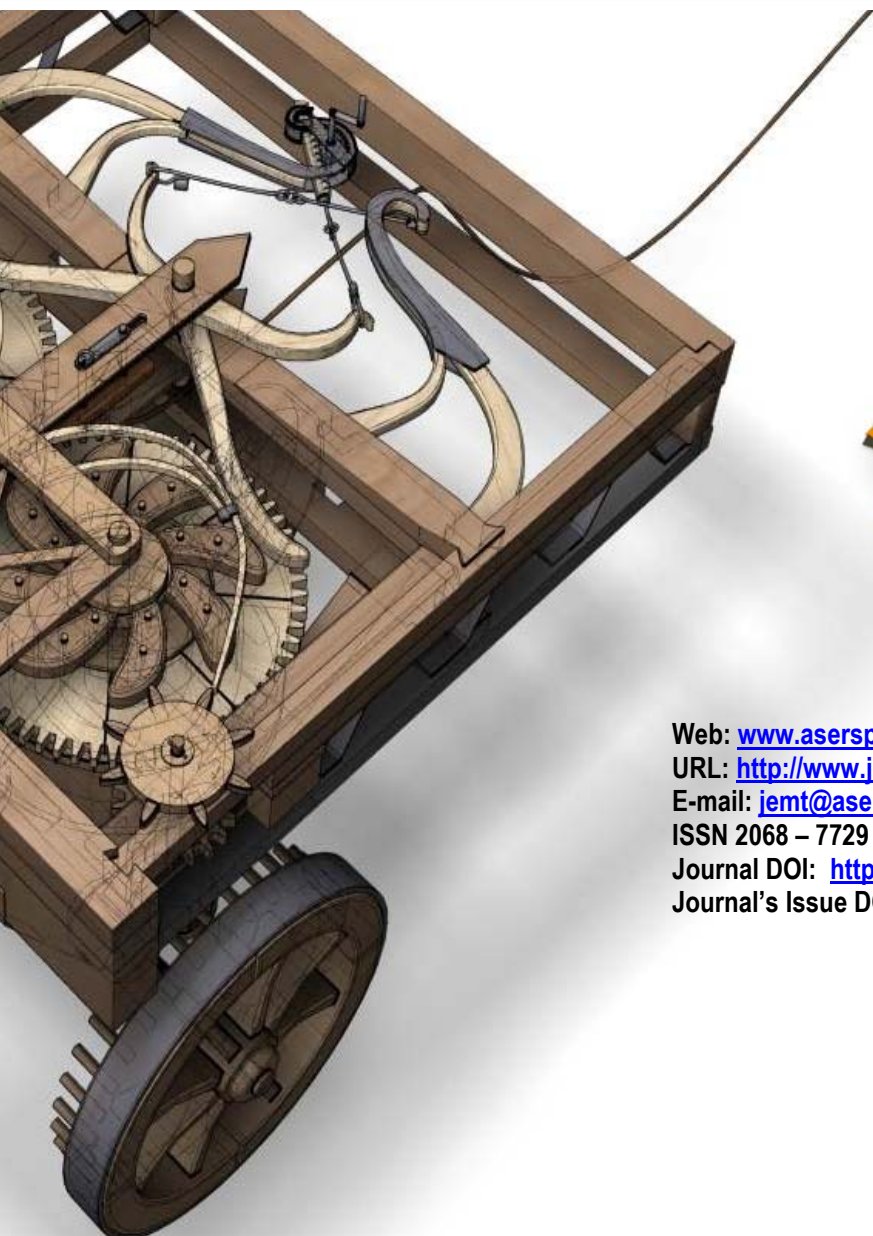
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