



## The Role of Social Capital in Tourism Awareness Groups for Tourism Management (Case Study: Tourism Awareness Group of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia, Koto XI Tarusan District, South Pesisir Regency)

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### **Abstract**

This study describes the role of social capital within the tourism awareness group of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia. Through qualitative analysis using purposive sampling techniques and a non-probability sampling approach. The results show that the role of Islamic religious norms and Minangkabau traditional values serves as the fundamental basis for interactions and activities among the tourism awareness group members. Cooperation among members, based on local solidarity and trust, plays a role in strengthening social and economic networks, promoting greater involvement in tourism management, and enhancing service quality. The role of the network formed between the tourism awareness group, the Nagari-Owned Enterprise, and the district government through collaboration serves as a medium for asset management and tourism training. This highlights the importance of social capital in facilitating access to resources and strengthening local economic development initiatives.

**Keywords:** *Cooperation; Network; Norms; Social Capital*

### **Introduction**

Tourism is a significant sector in the economic and social development of a region. Community involvement in tourism development extends beyond merely being affected parties to also being active contributors (Putrawan, 2019). Effective collaboration and coordination between the community, government, and private sector are essential for achieving sustainable tourism development (Prasia, 2013). Local knowledge and community participation are key in the sustainable management of tourism resources (Nurmayasari, 2017). The Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) serves as a crucial local

stakeholder in the development and management of natural and cultural potentials in the region (Nurmayasari, 2017).

The presence of Tourism Awareness Group as a facilitative medium for community management of tourism potentials is not without the threat of failure. According to research by Harnaningrum (2015) and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2022), there are four factors contributing to the failure of Tourism Awareness Group:

- Inappropriate management selection processes
- Differences in vision, mission, and objectives among managers
- Lack of skills and knowledge among the managers
- Insufficient human resource development and commitment

In the tourism sector, social capital creates a framework enabling more efficient collaboration among involved parties. The existence of shared norms and strong social relationships among local communities, government, business owners, and other societal groups can facilitate open dialogue, information exchange, and more effective decision-making participation. Thus, social capital can help build a common understanding of sustainable goals and bridge differences of interests that may arise among various groups within the community, necessitating ongoing efforts to maintain it. As articulated by Bourdieu (1986), social capital is a resource acquired through institutionalized networks and requires continuous effort to sustain. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986) explains that social capital can manifest as power and influence within a social network, hence necessitating investment strategies aimed at transforming incidental relationships into directly beneficial social connections for the individuals involved.

Additionally, Coleman (1990) defines social capital as a collection of resources inherent in family relations and community social organizations, which benefit the social and cognitive development of children and adolescents. According to Coleman (1990), these resources are individualistic and provide significant advantages in their human capital development.

Concurrently, Lin (2001) defines capital as resources that are invested and activated with the intent to achieve profits as the ultimate outcome. In the concept of capital, there are two main processes: firstly, preparing or transforming resources to be invested; secondly, using capital with the intention of gaining profits. Therefore, social capital emphasizes how various potentials and structures can be leveraged to seize opportunities.

Furthermore, Putnam's (1993) concept of social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that enhance cooperation and coordination for mutual benefit. In his theory, Putnam highlights several important aspects of social capital, namely:

- Trust  
A fundamental element supporting the weave of relationships among individuals within a community.
- Norms  
Crucial elements regulating behavior and interactions among community members, serving as jointly agreed guidelines that create order and social stability.
- Networks  
Refer to relationships among individuals within a community, both formal and informal, where strong and closely-knit networks can provide various benefits to individuals and the community.

This research was conducted in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia, Mandeh Area, Koto XI Tarusan Subdistrict, South Pesisir District, West Sumatra Province. Tourism Awareness Group Nagari Sungai Nyalo was chosen because it serves as a model for other Tourism Awareness Group in the Mandeh Area and South Pesisir District. Additionally, Tourism Awareness Group Sungai Nyalo has developed from initial failures and through a mentoring process to its current operational state.

### ***Research Objectives***

Describing the role of social capital in the Tourism Awareness Group of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia.

### ***Research Methods***

The approach to be used in this research is qualitative. It is crucial to understand the institutional management structure of tourism, specifically the Tourism Awareness Group, which involves interactions among its members who are the subjects of this study and other related parties within this tourism management system. Therefore, the qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it helps in understanding these interaction patterns in real situations and contexts. The selection of this approach is also in line with the views of Cresswell (2014), who describes the qualitative approach as a study of the lives of individuals, processes, activities, events, programs, and individual or group cultural behaviors.

This research is conducted in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia, Mandeh Area, Koto XI Tarusan Subdistrict, South Pesisir District, West Sumatra Province. Tourism Awareness Group Nagari Sungai Nyalo was chosen because it serves as a model for other Tourism Awareness Groups in the Mandeh Area and South Pesisir District. Furthermore, Tourism Awareness Group Sungai Nyalo has developed from initial failures and through a mentoring process to its current operational state.

The method of selecting respondents in this study uses purposive sampling technique (purposeful sampling) with a non-probability sampling approach. This technique refers to non-random sampling, but is based on specific considerations appropriate to the needs of the research (Neuman, 2014).

### ***Results***

#### **1. Social Capital Development Process**

Based on the theory proposed by Putnam (1993), which highlights features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that enhance cooperation and coordination for mutual benefit, the case of the tourism awareness group in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia illustrates the need to establish a network and trust based on communal norms rooted in customary and religious beliefs. Additionally, formal written rules sanctioned by the local government also serve as fundamental references for members in conducting tourism activities. Therefore, a process is necessary to form a network and trust among members. Here is the process involved in building norms, trust, and networks in the Tourism Awareness Group of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia:

##### **A. The Role of Values and Norms**

###### **a. Norms Islam and Culture Custom Minangkabau**

The community of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia is part of the Minangkabau ethnic group, widely known for its social system and culture, along with a deep commitment to the values of Islam. In

their daily life, they uphold the philosophy "*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*," meaning customs based on Islamic law, and Islamic law based on the Quran. This philosophy emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between local customs and Islamic teachings, ensuring that every aspect of their culture aligns with religious values.

As part of the Minangkabau community, the residents of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia cherish and uphold the values of Islam and their customs. These values guide not only their personal lives but also form the basis of all group activities, including the management and activities of the village's tourism awareness group. Adherence to religious teachings and customs is the primary foundation for forming norms and principles that govern social interactions and activities within the community.

In the context of the tourism awareness group, respect for Islamic values and Minangkabau customs is evident in how they interact and build a network. Members of this group follow not only the formal rules set by the government but also ensure that all their activities and decisions align with religious principles and customs. In some cases, religious and customary rules are considered more important than formal government regulations. This shows the profound influence of religious and customary values on the social and institutional structure in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia, thereby strengthening the social capital derived from their deep-seated traditions and spiritual beliefs.

#### b. Village or Nagari Government Regulations

These regulations are established by the Nagari government involving the community and stakeholders, reflecting collective participation in the decision-making process for community development. These Nagari rules are the third basis for the members of the tourism awareness group, following Islamic law and customs. The regulations govern not only the technical aspects of tourism activities but also ensure that these activities are conducted in a manner consistent with the prevailing social values and norms in the Nagari.

An important aspect of village or Nagari regulations is the management of tourism businesses, where every business operator is required to comply with established rules, including package cost regulations. Compliance is heavily emphasized, and non-compliance results in penalties according to the violated provisions. This shows that social capital not only strengthens cooperation and trust but also enforces discipline and responsibility among community members. Social capital in the context of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia also plays a role in reinforcing adherence to Nagari regulations. Social norms and trust formed through strong social networks motivate community members to follow mutually agreed-upon rules. This demonstrates how social capital, through networks of trust and reciprocal norms, becomes a vital asset in ensuring the sustainability and success of tourism development initiatives that are economically beneficial and in line with local values and traditions.

### B. The Role of Trust

#### a. The Role of Cooperation Among Members

Initially, Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia was a remote community isolated from governmental centers before road infrastructure was developed. This geographic seclusion actually strengthened kinship bonds and a strong sense of togetherness known as '*raso badunsanak*' (feeling of kinship).

When the tourism awareness group was formed, these basic principles of cooperation and solidarity not only persisted but were also reinforced. Members of the tourism awareness group help each other in solving emerging issues, such as mutual assistance in repairing damaged boats. Cooperation is not limited to emergency situations; in daily activities, inter-group cooperation within the tourism awareness group is also evident. For example, food stall owners, ferry operators, and lodging owners support each other in their respective business activities. Food stall owners contact ferry operators when

their customers want to go sightseeing, and vice versa, ferry operators direct tourists to specific food stalls. Similar relationships are formed between lodging owners and ferry operators, where this collaboration not only enhances operational efficiency but also strengthens existing social capital by creating trust and mutual reliance.

Social capital in the tourism awareness group of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia is not only a manifestation of customary values and religious beliefs but also an effective adaptation mechanism to geographic and economic limitations. This aligns with Coleman's (1994) view of social capital as a set of resources inherent in family relations and community social organizations that benefit social development. Through the cooperation and trust built, this tourism awareness group not only succeeds in enhancing the economic well-being of its members but also strengthens social cohesion and their communal identity, proving that social capital is an essential asset supporting social and economic development in challenging environments.

## b. Sharing Information Among

Members The kinship among members enables them to effectively address issues related to tourism knowledge and skills, especially considering that opportunities for formal training are often limited by regional quotas. Members of the group who have the chance to receive governmental tourism training actively share what they have learned with their peers. This creates an efficient teaching and learning system within the group, where each trained member becomes a resource for others, enhancing the overall quality and professionalism of tourism services.

Furthermore, group members are proactive in seeking the latest information and innovations in the tourism industry through the internet. This access allows them to continually improve their capabilities, service techniques, and tourism management strategies that can be adapted. This ongoing exchange of information and knowledge not only enhances individual competencies but also levels the playing field for tourist services. This aligns with Fukuyama's (1995) focus on social capital as everything that unites a society to achieve common goals, based on a sense of belonging and bound by values and norms that are developed and respected. With improved capacity, the tourism awareness group in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia believes that good tourism services will satisfy tourists, which in turn increases the likelihood of their return. Tourist satisfaction also correlates directly with local economic growth. Social capital, therefore, not only strengthens social networks within the community but also acts as a catalyst for economic progress through the tourism sector, demonstrating the importance of integrating social strength with economic development.

## C. Networking Function

### a. Network with Nagari-Owned Enterprises

The tourism awareness group plays a role as a manager of assets owned by the Nagari-Owned Enterprise, creating a synergy that benefits both parties. Managed assets include parking areas, beaches, and tourism attraction equipment. The management of these assets focuses not only on maintenance but also on optimizing their use to attract as many visitors as possible. Through effective management, these assets can become a stable source of income to support the nagari economy.

The profits obtained from managing these assets are then divided according to terms agreed upon initially by all involved parties. This profit-sharing not only demonstrates transparency and accountability in financial management but also strengthens social capital among community members. Community involvement in asset management and participation in profit sharing deepen a sense of ownership and joint responsibility for local economic sustainability. This aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) statement that economic capital is the primary source of all other forms of capital, including social capital. Thus, the

cooperative network between the tourism awareness group and Nagari-Owned Enterprise illustrates how social capital can be leveraged to achieve economic goals that benefit all group members, or conversely, how economic capital can create social capital between the tourism awareness group as managers and Nagari-Owned Enterprise as owners. Through this practice, social capital is not only strengthened through closer relationships among group members but also through the creation of sustainable economic value that can be enjoyed collectively.

## b. Network with District Government

The positive response from the Tourism Office to the initiatives of the tourism awareness group reflects the government's concern for developing tourism potential at the local level. As a form of concrete support, the Tourism Office organizes various tourism training programs designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of group members. These trainings cover topics such as *Sapta Pesona*, ferry operating skills, hospitality, and cooking skills. These programs aim not only to improve the quality of tourism services but also to equip group members with skills that can enhance their competitiveness in the tourism sector.

However, challenges are faced, especially related to the quota limitations imposed by the government on training. These limitations are often due to budget constraints, which prevent all group members from participating in training, especially if it is conducted outside the village, such as in hotels or training halls. This situation has led to a desire among group members for training to be organized directly in their village. Not only would this facilitate access for more members to participate, but it would also be more cost-efficient.

By moving the training location to the village, the district government can more effectively allocate resources and strengthen the existing social capital. This step also deepens local community involvement and solidifies the government's commitment to village capacity development. Thus, it not only addresses local needs but also strengthens the foundation of social capital, which is key to the success of sustainable tourism development.

According to Putnam (1993), features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. In this context, the cooperation between the Tourism Office and the tourism awareness group reflects the formation of social capital through strong networks and established norms of cooperation, ultimately supporting the development of the local community.

Additionally, this aligns with Woolcock's (2000) linking social capital theory, where there is formal recognition and support from the government. This support is not only moral but also tangible through the organization of training sessions that enhance the skills and capacities of the group members. This creates access paths that allow for the sharing of knowledge and resources for the development of local tourism.

## c. Assistance from Community Leaders

One important aspect of social capital is the role of community leaders in assisting the tourism awareness group. These leaders have significant influence and extensive networks, which can be utilized to support group initiatives in advancing village tourism. As a concrete example of the utilization of social capital, community leaders have successfully helped the tourism awareness group develop networks with several major companies. This collaboration resulted in significant sponsorship for group activities.

These sponsorships were used to fund various competitions at tourist locations, aimed at attracting more visitors. These competitions not only serve as a medium to introduce the natural beauty and local culture but also as a platform to enhance engagement and interaction among visitors, local community, and organizers. This creates a memorable experience for tourists, which in turn has the potential to increase repeat visits.

The success of this initiative demonstrates how social capital, through strong networks and cooperation among various entities, can be used to strengthen the tourism sector. Community leaders, with their networks and influence, play a vital role, ultimately aiding in the enhancement of the local economy through increased tourist visits. According to Lin (2001), social capital can be seen as access to resources controlled by social networks. In this case, community leaders use their social capital to access resources from major companies, which are then used to support activities that enhance tourism.

Here is the summary table of the role of social capital in the tourism awareness group in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudia Aia:

Table 1. The Role of Social Capital

Element of Social Capital	Description
The Role of Values and Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Norms Islam and Culture Custom Minangkabau:</b> The Minangkabau community in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia upholds Islamic and customary values, forming the basis of social interactions and group activities, particularly in tourism management.</li> <li>- <b>Village or Nagari Government Regulations:</b> Formal rules enforced to regulate tourism activities, emphasizing discipline and communal responsibility.</li> </ul>
The Role of Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The Role of Cooperation Among Members:</b> Kinship-based cooperation and solidarity that enhance operational efficiency and social capital.</li> <li>- <b>Sharing Information Among Members:</b> Exchange of knowledge and skills in tourism that enhances professionalism and tourist services.</li> </ul>
Networking Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Network with Nagari-Owned Enterprises:</b> Cooperation in asset management for mutual economic benefit.</li> <li>- <b>Network with the District Government:</b> Support through training and local capacity development.</li> <li>- <b>Support from Community Leaders:</b> Utilizing networks and the influence of community figures to support and advance the tourism sector.</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

The role of social capital formed in the Tourism Awareness Group of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia begins with the values of Islam and the Minangkabau traditional norms adopted by the community of Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia. These Islamic values and traditional norms play a crucial role in regulating the interactions and activities of the group. The Minangkabau philosophy "*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*" emphasizes that customary laws and Islamic laws mutually influence and support each other, guiding the social and business behaviors of the tourism awareness group. This is reflected in the respect and adherence to traditional and religious norms in every aspect of management and daily activities, including tourism.

In the context of trust and social networks, cooperation among members, influenced by the principle of kinship and local solidarity or 'raso badunsanak', strengthens social capital by enhancing cooperation and mutual dependency in tourism business activities. This trust is reinforced through active

participation in training and information exchange that provides the necessary knowledge and skills to improve service quality and the sustainability of tourism ventures.

The network formed between tourism awareness groups, Nagari-owned enterprises, and the district government, through collaboration and support in the management of village assets and tourism training, demonstrates how social capital plays a role in facilitating these groups to access broader resources and strengthen initiatives for local economic development.

Therefore, the role of social capital, built on the basis of Islamic values and Minangkabau customary norms, not only forms the foundation of social interaction in Nagari Sungai Nyalo Mudiak Aia but also strengthens cooperation and sustainability in tourism development. The philosophy of “*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*” and the concept of “*raso badunsanak*” or sense of family effectively integrate the social and business frameworks, which in turn enhances the capacity of the tourism awareness groups to advance the local economy through the utilization of broader resources and strategic cooperation with nagari-owned enterprises and the district government.

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