

Assessing resource-based theory in ecotourism management: The case of Sebangau National Park, Indonesia

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Abstract

Resource-based theory (RBT) has been widely used in strategic management, but only few studies apply it in the field of ecotourism. This research examines RBT in national park development in Indonesia in order to develop strategies and increase competitive advantage. Through an assessment using RBT, this study identifies and evaluates the management of Sebangau National Park (SNP) that has been known as one of the peatland national parks in the world and has been managed with the concept of ecotourism. The assessment was conducted on resources and capabilities using the methods of literature study, observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. This qualitative method targeted all actors except tourists, owing to the small sample size and hierarchical nature of the sample [including village heads, local government officials, and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders]. The result shows that the education and training of human resources at SNP remains focused on conservation issues; consequently, it has been difficult to maximize benefit to society. This study also shows that the challenges facing the development of ecotourism in SNP are interrelated and rooted in the problem of limited resources in the region. This paper makes a theoretical contribution by applying RBT to network-shaped stakeholders.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism had been initially discussed, since the 1980s, as an environmentally friendly travel that helps to preserve the environment and improves the well-being of local people (Fennell, 2010). However, the scope of ecotourism has been expanded to encompass ecological conservation, social inclusion, cultural embodiment, and ethical concerns (Cobbinah, 2015; Coria and Calfucura, 2012). Ecotourism has also been linked to poverty eradication and local development. Understanding ecotourism is important in finding a balance between environmental preservation and economic development (Agrawal, 2014) and supports sustainable tourism (Holden and Fennell, 2013; Sharpley, 2015).

Many tourist destinations with complex topography, heritage values, and high biodiversity (especially the existence of charismatic mega fauna and endangered species) have become ecotourism's favourite destinations. This factor can be attributed to the high value of cultural services, such as education and aesthetics. This is in line with the view that ecotourism is an important solution in contemporary tourism in ensuring that local people receive economic, social, and environmental benefits simultaneously from tourism management.

Ecotourism management is directed specifically at efforts to encourage the participation of local communities to increase the number of visitors and to preserve the destination. Many ecotourism management studies are directed at implementation management (Foucat, 2002; Rhama, 2017). These studies show a high degree of complexity in management, involving the complex relationship between bottom-up, top-down, and horizontal approaches (Saruman et al., 2017) and value and interest conflicts between stakeholders. Some studies have compiled an integrative model of ecotourism management. Li (2004), for example, developed a model of ecotourism management with three main elements: pressure (tourism activity and its impact on the environment), circumstances (environmental circumstances of a destination), and managerial response. Meanwhile, Sukserm, Thiengkamol, and Tengkamol (2012) developed a model involving planning, benefit, action, and evaluation components aimed at conserving natural resources and the environment. These models have been developed without the use of a theory basis and draw solely on specific cases of a particular destination, with a specific set of circumstances unique to that location (atypical case studies).

There are many theories that have been developed to better understand the factors that influence human-environment interactions (Barney, Ketchen, and Wright, 2011; D'Oria et al., 2021). Resource-based theory (RBT) is an influential and widely accepted theory of natural resource management and has encouraged a more holistic, interconnected approach to managing parks (Ponting and O'Brien, 2014). Resource-based theory seeks ways to explore connections, trade-offs, and potential synergies among physical resources, social resources, and cultural resources in order to address the needs of users while also conserving biodiversity (Li et al., 2006; Shi, Song, and Cheng, 2019; Zhang and Dhaliwal, 2009). Resource-based theory was developed as a response to the perceived disconnect between production-oriented theories and resource management (Barney, Ketchen, and Wright, 2011; D'Oria et al., 2021). In comparison with more traditional approaches, RBT has been considered successful as a theoretical framework in natural resource management (Burdett et al., 2010). How can RBT be applied in ecotourism? The competition between organizations for scarce resources can be an advantage; it forces organizations to become more efficient in the utilization of productive assets such as knowledge and human capital (Burdett et al., 2010). Resource-based theory suggests that there will always be a need for better ways to utilize those assets based on the resources that national parks have.

Resource-based theory has been used to explain the resources that an organization should possess to achieve its aims and to meet the requirements from the perspective of the organization's capabilities (Barney and N.Clark, 2007). Massukado-Nakatani and Teixeira (2009) are among the first to use RBT from the perspective of mass tourism management. Wu (2009) developed a conceptual framework of sustainable RBT-based tourism development at the industry level. Meanwhile, Verbeke and Tung (2013) revealed the importance of stakeholder management theory, which is currently the main theory in ecotourism management, integrated with RBT to obtain a comprehensive temporal dimension of organizations in general. All these studies, however, have not been directed empirically in the field of ecotourism. To address this gap, the current study analyses ecotourism management from an RBT perspective. Due to its emphasis on specified features of resources, such as complicated topography, biodiversity, and heritage, RBT can be a useful tool for managing ecotourism in national parks. National parks are generally an area that is intensely used to conserve biodiversity and the heritage that is increasingly becoming rare and endangered. The flora and animals of a national park are often unique and cannot be found elsewhere, including the park's heritage. Various studies on ecotourism management in national parks in Indonesia have been conducted; for example, in Meru Betiri National Park (Qomariah, 2009), Gunung Leuser National Park (Siburian, 2006), Sebangau National Park (SNP) (Setyadi et al., 2012), and Kutai National Park (Muntasib & Sunkar, 2013). The

application of RBT in ecotourism management has not been found in the studies of national parks in Indonesia. Resource-based theory involves many prerequisites for organizations to acquire sustained competitive advantage. Characteristics that are found in national parks are becoming valuable and rare resources that enable organizations to implement a strategy that can improve the effectiveness of ecotourism management. This theory has also supported the recent capability debate that the resources or a combination of resources and historical conditions must be unique or are the main characteristics of national parks.

As RBT is based on the assumption that organizations that are more competitive have higher levels of resources in their organization, in order to develop strategies and increase competitive ability, a resource-based competitive environment must be developed. In this regard, an organization should be capable of developing an environment that allows the application and development of strategies based on the internal resources (Kusumasari, Alam, and Siddiqui, 2010). Ecotourism industry has been associated with a number of positive social impacts, such as low environmental impacts across supply chains, reduced levels of deforestation, and economic growth (Van Hecken and Bastiaensen, 2010). Because the application of RBT in ecotourism is critical, this study examines how to implement RBT in the context of Indonesia's national parks. Resource-based theory is also used to study the evolution of technological, economic, and social innovations (Wills-Johnson, 2008). The theory has been applied successfully to a wide variety of examples ranging from multinational corporations, environmental policy, international trade, and tourism (Andersen and Suat Kheam, 1998).

On the other hand, RBT argues that development of a resource-based competitive environment will increase an organization's competitive advantage through the increase of resources available. This is sometimes referred to as "competitive advantage spill-overs". In this case, ecotourism may be understood as tourism industry that has a lower environmental impact because it uses natural resources as its input to produce ecotourism services (Abd Rashid et al., 2020). Through ecotourism, consumers can feel that they are giving nature back to the environment by supporting local communities as a way of giving them a better life while also supporting the economic growth of the region. Therefore, ecotourism is believed to support sustainable development through its contribution in creating "green" jobs and in maintaining biodiversity conservation (Schmidt and Keil, 2013). This study aims to explore this subject by applying RBT in developing strategies that will lead to competitive advantage.

The goal of this paper is to examine RBT in the development of national parks in Indonesia and to determine how it could be applied to the management of ecotourism in SNP. In order to apply RBT to the development of SNP, it is necessary to first identify and describe the four types of resources that are characteristic of the theory. These include human resources, financial resources, physical resources, and organizational resources. The second step is examining how each type contributes to management within a national park. It is important to note that RBT is a broad management theory that can be applied in multiple ways. It can be used to promote and facilitate the management of national parks; it can also be used to focus on human populations' needs and values within a park; or it could be used to find synergies between these two goals with hopes of finding common ground between humans and wildlife (Burdett et al., 2010).

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Resource-based theory

Resource-based theory is a key concept in strategy management and has been an advantage in explaining competitive phenomena in various industries (Hoopes, Madsen, and Walker, 2003) and local government institutions (Kusumasari, Alam, and Siddiqui, 2010). One advantage of RBT is that it explains that the superiority of an organization, whether formal or informal, is based on the resources of the organization (Habbershon and Williams, 1999). The advantages and competitiveness of an

organization are thus determined by the internal development, the nature of the resources, and the methods used to utilize such resources (Lavie, 2006).

In RBT, resources can be seen as the dimensions of an organization, such as financial, physical, and individual/organizational capital in implementing the strategies of the organization (Barney and N.Clark, 2007; Hill & Jones, 1992; Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 1997). These dimensions are focused on the organization's ability to learn and evolve and on previous organizational and policy routines through which leaders change their resource base to develop valuable strategies (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000, p.1107). Resources are also considered available contributions controlled by an organization in RBT (Newbert, 2008). This theory declares that organizations with valuable, scarce, and irreplaceable resources will gain additional benefits to compete with other organizations through their development and implementation of strategies by capitalizing on these resources (Hsu and Ziedonis, 2013). This idea is supported by the study of Crook et al. (2008), who said that valuable, rare, and irreplaceable resources are referred to as strategic resources. A resource has a value if there is a desire to pay at a certain price or to invest in developing the resource internally (Schmidt and Keil, 2013). However, this definition is taken from an organizational perspective, not from the perspective of a consumer who uses the product made from that resource. This definition of *ex ante* avoids the circular definition, that is, a resource has a value if it is considered to have meaning to the consumer. This definition is said to be circular because the value of a resource is determined at the end of the process, whereas to be meaningful, a resource must have a high value in the initial stage (input). Moreover, resources are inputs, not outputs of a process.

Moreover, resources are said to be rare if only few or no other organizations have the same resources (Newbert, 2007). Valuable and rare resources can achieve competitive advantage. However, this advantage is short term because other organizations will soon seek out valuable and rare resources that are comparable or even superior to the resources of the competing organization. To achieve a sustained competitive advantage, a third characteristic that "cannot be imitated or replaced" must exist. Resources with these three traits will encourage sustainable competitive advantage, and ultimately, bring organizations to sustainable performance (Newbert, 2007).

Barney (1991) mentioned three conditions that prevent resources from being replicated. The first condition is the linkage to history; some resources will be tied to a certain time and space, for example, historical relics and nostalgic brands that are also bound to that land and its history, making them impossible to be replaced and imitated. The second condition is causal ambiguity, which occurs when the relationship between resources and competitive advantage cannot be fully understood. Causal ambiguity becomes an inability of competitors to imitate because they cannot be sure how these resources can benefit their organization. This situation may encourage competitors to implement a wrong strategy; thus, competitive advantage is not optimally achieved, even when it is the only strategy path that can be used. The third condition is social complexity, which occurs when resources arise in a social relation beyond the organizational management and its influence capabilities. Interpersonal networks, organizational culture, and reputation are forms of resources with high social complexity. Competitors unlikely make imitation efforts because the complex social aspect has uniqueness that cannot be fully managed. In these organizations, the social aspect is beyond the reach of competitors.

However, Priem and Butler (2001) criticized RBT due to its several weaknesses. According to their study, a weakness of RBT is that it is tautological, indicating that several combinations of resources can produce the same value and hence are not sources of competitive advantage. Market roles are also not considered in RBT, and RBT has no prescriptive implications. To respond to this criticism, Barney (2001) argued that RBT is not tautological by showing how RBT variables (value, scarcity, and inimitable) operate. Barney (2001) also pointed out a number of empirical studies that serve as evidence that RBT can be tested and passed from Popper's falsification requirements. To respond to the criticism (i.e., a number of combinations of valuable, rare, and inimitable resources can produce the same value), Barney (2001) stated that meanings cannot be imitated; specifically, they can neither be duplicated (inimitable) nor replaced (non-substitutability). If the result of resource combination has the same value as before, then such combined resources can be replaced and do not qualify for a

combination that can lead to competitive advantage. Moreover, Barney (2001) revealed that market influence has been considered in RBT theory. Meanwhile, the criticism of non-practicality is rejected by various examples of RBT implementation in managerial decision making, such as choosing resources to escape from strategic disadvantages, implementing the potentials of resources and capabilities, and maintaining the resources and capabilities possessed to maintain competitive advantage. In conclusion, RBT has the empirical, conceptual, and practical powers that are worth including in a theoretical framework in many areas related to the issue of organizational competitiveness.

2.2 | RBT in tourism management studies

Studies on tourism management using the RBT approach have not been widely conducted. Massukado-Nakatani and Teixeira (2009) reviewed mass tourism management with the RBT framework using a qualitative approach to assess the types of resources and organizational capabilities of two destinations in Brazil. The framework only highlights the classification of resources, whereas the other variable (capability) is only based on qualitative findings that are not followed by conceptualization. For this type of resources, the researchers evaluated four types of resources which are human resources, financial resources, physical resources, and organizational resources. Human resources consist of training, experience, assessment, intelligence, control, employee insight, job, management, and technical team. Financial resources cover all types of financial resources, such as loans, financing, assets, royalties, and rent. Physical resources include visible resources, such as installations, equipment, technologies, and locations. Organizational resources consist of organizational structure and form. The organizational structure includes the system of control, coordination, internal relations, planning, and organizational culture. The organizational form includes relationships with other organizations (private and public).

Lee and King (2006) used the RBT approach and focused on evaluating organizational competitiveness. They combined RBT with an industrial organization (IO) approach that is at the industry level. The IO approach introduces environmental factors as an aspect other than the resources that can deliver competitiveness. Resources are natural, cultural assets, accommodation, food, transportation, while environmental factors include economic growth, sociocultural change, demand conditions, community participation and attitudes. The combination of resource strategy includes destination marketing management, human resource development, destination organizational management, destination planning and development, service quality management, cost management, and environmental management. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Walsh, Lynch, and Harrington (2011) is more complete in terms of the application of RBT to tourism and further shows a strong connection between valuable resources (valuable, rare, and irreplaceable) with organizational capabilities and those linked to competitiveness. However, this study did not divide resources in certain groups, neither capability.

Therefore, the current research attempts to gain some advantages by providing a complete RBT framework in classifying resources and capabilities to its characteristics (valuable, rare, and irreplaceable/non-replicable). Sebangau National Park's strategy was also assessed qualitatively by observing how its manager utilizes the resources and capabilities to attract visitors.

3 | RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 | Case study: Sebangau National Park, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

Tanjung Puting National Park, Bukit Baka-Bukit Raya National Park, and SNP are three national parks in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. Sebangau National Park, a newly constructed national park, was formed in 2004, whereas Tanjung Puting National Park was founded in 1982 and has been a wildlife sanctuary since 1936. It is one of Kalimantan's five provinces, Indonesia's portion of Borneo, an island rich in biodiversity, and one of the world's most popular ecotourism destinations.

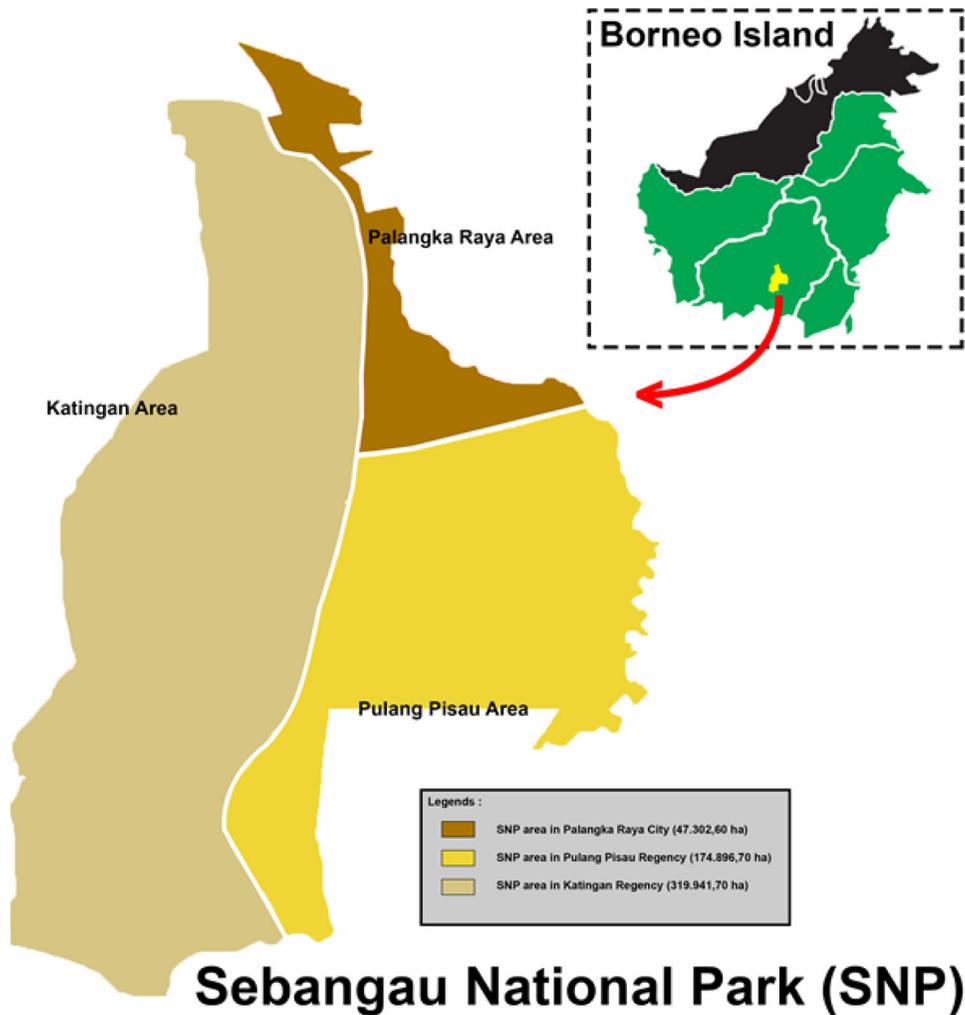


FIGURE 1 Map of Sebangau National Park [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

The Dayak people, who inhabit all five provinces of Kalimantan, have long maintained cultural linkages across the country due to their near homogeneity. Borneo's virgin forests totalled 75% in 1970, but only 8% survived in 2011. The orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus*) population in Kalimantan has declined due to deforestation. The Indonesian government is working with WWF and other partners to build a wildlife refuge in Sebangau to save this species. The Sebangau National Park in Central Kalimantan is divided into three districts: Katingan (60%) and Pulang Pisau (30%). 10% of the park's main goal is conservation and replanting, due to the devastation caused by illegal logging.

Sebangau National Park is one of the 53 national parks in Indonesia, which has an endemic charismatic fauna and is globally recognized as the home of orangutans. A total of 5800 orangutans live wild in their natural habitat in SNP, and their number continues to increase each year because of natural breeding and breeding in ex-situ conservation centres. The topography of the land and peat swamps with black water rivers with a variety of unique biodiversity also becomes another trademark of the park. Sebangau National Park has an area of 542,141 ha (Figure 1) with 808 plant species, 15 mammals, 182 birds, and 54 species of snakes.

SNP is selected as a case study because the national park is used as a pilot project for the management of national parks and peatlands in the world. In relation, in 2010, the government also promoted ecotourism access at three locations in SNP that offered ecotourism activities, such as orangutan observation within 6 years of the national park's formation. The ability of SNP to become a world-class conservation area and an ecotourism destination for 7 years shows that conservation and ecotourism functions can be integrated. Moreover, the government believes that ecotourism aspects must be added to support regional growth through collaborative management.

3.2 | Data gathering and data analysing

The qualitative approaches used in this study were interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). This qualitative method targeted all actors except visitors, owing to the small sample size and hierarchical character of the sample [including village heads, local government officials, and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders]. The interviews focused on the capabilities of SNP in order to ascertain whether capabilities are not being utilized or have been abandoned by the national park, as well as any barriers and solutions proposed. For this purpose, the researcher interviewed in person a number of stakeholders, including representatives from the state government, local government, local people, community organizations, and suppliers. In the participative paradigm, local residents were the primary actors. Local residents were chosen by their village leader to assist with the planning, designing, and implementing conservation of SNP. Five people of the local community took part in both the interviews and FGDs. Respondents were chosen to represent a range of functional groups as stated in Table 1. NVivo software was used to analyse and interpret the qualitative data collected in this study.

3.3 | Indicators of resources

This study used an evaluative approach by proposing a few quality indicators of resources owned by SNP (as presented in Table 2). Indicators were assessed using various sources of secondary data such as government reports and web pages. The government reports involved in this study were statistical reports on SNP and government performance reports. The web page assessed was from <https://www.tnsebangau.com/kunjungan-wisatawan-ke-kawasan-konservasi-tn-sebangau/>.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Human resources

Formal education, training, and work experience are the indicators of people's skill level and ability, which are the main elements of human capital. Sebangau National Park is managed by 46 employees, but none of them have a tourism background; the majority have forestry education background. Educational background indicates people's cognitive values and abilities. Educational background also reflects the knowledge base and skills of individuals. However, the interview with the chief of the SNP office showed that there is an absence of tourism background in the education of SNP personnel. He stated clearly: "We have limited employees who have tourism education background. The knowledge about ecotourism is then received from training. Ecotourism discourses are only obtained on the basis of general exposure or stories of their colleagues who have attended the training. Out of the three SPTN heads in our office, only the head of SPTN II (Park Management Sector II) has attended tourist training."

TABLE 1 List of actors interviewed

Number	Actor	Information	Position	Subtotal (person)
1	State government	Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy	Nature-based tourism officer	1
		Sebangau National Park office	Chief; administration officer	2
		Conservation and Natural Resources office	Staff	1
2	Local government	Culture and Tourism Agency of Central Kalimantan Province	Chief; tourism destination development officer	2
		Culture and Tourism Agency of Palangkaraya City	Tourism infrastructure officer; tourism staff	2
		Culture and Tourism Agency of Katingan Regency	Tourism staff	1
		Culture and Tourism Agency of Pulang Pisau Regency	Regent assistant in tourism	1
		Forestry Agency of Pulang Pisau Regency	Nature tourism officer	1
		environmental agency	Chief	1
3	Local people	Kereng Bangkirei Village, Palangkaraya	Headman; community	3
		Jahandang Village, Katingan	Headman; community	2
		Sebangau Kuala Subdistrict, Pulang Pisau	Headman	1
4	Community organizations	World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Indonesia (WWF)	Site coordinator	1
		Centre for International Cooperation in Sustainable Management of Tropical Peatland (CIMTROP)	Chief	1
		Orangutan Tropical Peatland Project (OUTROP)	Field coordinator	1
5	Suppliers	International hotel	General manager	1
		Ecolodge hotel	Owner	1
		Tour operator	Owner	1
		Ecotourism consultants		1
Total (person)				25

Most SNP employees have formal education background on forestry. However, without the values of tourism, exploiting aspects of conservation for people's benefit becomes difficult. As the training session title indicates, the majority of employees have recently attended tourism training, which is the Training Workshop on Visitor Services, Tourism Planning, and Outreach Program in Protected Areas Year 2017. A total of 21 people (or less than 50% of the employees) have some tourism training history and attended this training, which was the first tourism training for 16 SNP employees. Thus, practically before 2016, only seven of the SNP employees attended a tourism training. Note that the Ministry of Forestry and Environment uses the term "nature tourism" for ecotourism. Therefore, in relation to the content of the issue (comprehensive ecotourism training), SNP has been prepared for the implementation of ecotourism.

TABLE 2 Indicator resources and descriptions

Variable	Description
Human resources	The number of employees with tourism background; employees who attend ecotourism training; strategic personnel who attend ecotourism training, comprehensive ecotourism training, and training of the entire generation of employees
Financial resources	The ecotourism development budget and the increasing trends of foreign visitors, local visitors, and non-tax revenues
Physical resources	The attractiveness of a destination based on the value, scarcity, irreplaceability, and inimitability of the infrastructure
Organization resources	Ecotourism training on organizational structures, special ecotourism zoning, and ecotourism development plans

Meanwhile, the Employee Status Report 2017 shows that the number of trainings attended by all SNP employees is 354 compared with the number of tourism trainings, which is 29 (17 people once and six people twice). This ratio is lower than that of various types of trainings that have been attended by SNP employees. However, the Employee Status Report 2017 also shows that the ecotourism training had been provided to half of the employees during their working time at the SNP office. We have observed from the study that comprehensive training has been provided and trainees have been relatively distributed equally throughout the entire work period, although not specifically in tourism.

4.2 | Financial resources

Sebangau National Park has a special allocation for the development and utilization of nature tourism and tourist villages and a budget report of non-tax state enterprises for the nature tourism venture. We observed that there was a trend of an increasing number of visitors from 2005 to 2015. The recorded visits were in the range of 100–400 people per year. Increasing visitor numbers varied substantially from prior years (2014–2015), which saw a significant drop in visitor numbers. In previous years (2014–2015), which suffered a considerable visitor decrease. However, the significant decrease in the number of visitors in SNP is caused mostly by natural factors, such as a long dry season resulting in forest fires and the high price of entrance tickets, as stated in an FGD with staff from the Culture and Tourism Agency: “It should charge a lower admission cost. It seems unreasonable to spend more than 100,000 Rupiahs for a single entry, as the park is not the primary destination for travellers, who do not spend the entire day there.” Overall, the SNP financial resource indicators for ecotourism development are low, as clearly stated: “The government regulates the fees, and the money does not belong to us because it must be deposited in the state treasury within two days. Sebangau NP’s aim for next year is 80 million Rupiahs; however, I believe this will not be achieved.” (interview with a senior officer of the Culture and Tourism Agency of Palangkaraya City).

4.3 | Physical resources

Physical resources are shown by how many resort buildings and facilities are closely built based on the available budget. However, the quantity of buildings at an ecotourism destination is preferred to be low to reduce environmental impacts. From the perspective of mass tourism, SNP has minimal facilities. However, from the perspective of ecotourism, these minimal facilities can be positive for conservation efforts. One of the representatives of accommodation providers has clearly stated in the FGD: “The government’s definition of eco-tourism has thus far appeared to be synonymous with mass tourism,

TABLE 3 Sebangau National Park ecotourism quality

No.	Feature	Uniqueness	Value	Irreplaceability	Inimitability
1	Kalimantan orangutan	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high
2	Peatland ecosystem	High	High	Very high	Very high
3	Local culture	Moderate	Very low	Low	Very high
4	Accessibility	Very high	High	Very high	Moderate
5	Topography	High	High	High	Moderate

which is advantageous for marketing purposes.” Moreover, the physical resources of SNP are focused on the aspect of natural resources owned by an ecotourism destination with RBT approach that is about the uniqueness, value, irreplaceability, and inimitability of the destination. The condition was clearly stated in an interview with the representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia: “This park is a nature conservation area that is zoned for educational purposes, research, science, and the promotion of flora and fauna breeding, tourism, and recreation. Sebangau National Park is critical for studying sustainable tourism, even though not all of its functions are operating efficiently at the moment.”

The qualitative assessment of each indicator that varies from low to very high has several criteria. A very high assessment means “unique/changeless”, high means “unique but can be found in other areas”, moderate means “easy to find”, low means “can be substituted”, and very low means “easy to substitute”. Every stakeholder was given the criteria and made a judgment on the basis of their knowledge and data during FGDs, as summarized in Table 3.

First, Sebangau region is a conservation area with the largest orangutan population in Kalimantan, and it is estimated that the population of orangutans in Sebangau reaches 6,080 heads (Utami-Atmoko, et.al., 2017). Orangutans have long been known globally for having a very high value because they are endangered fauna. Their uniqueness makes them impossible to replicate. *Second*, the peat ecosystems in Sebangau include black water rivers, reptile tracks, and peat lakes. These peat ecosystems are unique but not special. Nevertheless, such ecosystems remain irreplaceable and cannot be replicated because of their complex biochemical components. *Third*, local culture in Sebangau is generally found in almost all areas of Kalimantan. Due to its general condition, the value of the attractiveness of local culture is very low. This culture can also be replaced easily because other areas of Kalimantan have different groups of people with similar traditions with little variety and uniqueness. However, local culture in Sebangau is difficult to imitate due to its attachment to the Sebangau ecosystem. *Fourth*, in terms of accessibility, SNP is the easiest to reach due to its proximity to Palangka Raya, the state capital. Sebangau National Park is being promoted as the “Ecotourism Gateway to Central Kalimantan”.

The interview with the representative from The Central Kalimantan Tourism Agency said that “Given the close access to SNP, the park can be easily visited and we will help to improve the promotion of SNP by giving a special arrangement from local airport directly to the park.” This factor is obviously an advantage with high value even though SNP is a conservation area that cannot be accessed massively. Access variables to SNP cannot be replaced because no other park can locate itself in the provincial capital. *Last*, SNP topography is considered good because it is a lowland. The lowland topography allows easy management and monitoring of any activities in the park. Nevertheless, it has high value because it allows SNP to be a conservation area that has rich biodiversity.

4.4 | Organizational resources

Regardless of the formal educational background, people can still have knowledge and acquire skills through training sessions. Forestry advisors and forest ecosystem controllers (PEHs) have a high

percentage of having ecotourism training, indicating that the ecotourism paradigm has been encouraged, at least at those levels. The forestry advisor can be empowered to encourage communities to support ecotourism as part of forestry to improve their welfare. However, only two forestry advisors exist in SNP, and this number is far below the minimum number of 11 persons, as stated in Article 16 paragraph (3) Joint Regulation of the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia and the Head of the State Personnel Agency No. PB.1/Menhut-IX/2014, No. 5 of 2014.

Forest ecosystem controllers are also considered important for the development of ecotourism in SNP in accordance with their role, which has been regulated by the Ministry of Forestry Regulation No. 10 Year 2014 on Technical Guidelines for Functional Position of Forest Ecosystem Controller and Credit Score. Moreover, the number of PEH position holders in SNP is above the minimum requirement of three people reaching 15 people. This situation highly supports ecotourism development because more power will be gained to encourage the development of ecotourism in SNP. From the FGD, it was found that related to the quality of training, ecotourism training is given to the head of the administration department, head of regional SPTN II, and functional division of PEH and Forestry Security. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the management area structure, the zoning of SNP utilization fails to clearly describe the ecotourism area. In terms of the legal aspect, however, SNP has a foundation for ecotourism development, as indicated in the publication Blueprint of Sebangau National Park Nature Tourism Management in 2017. However, beside attending ecotourism-related training, the quality of organizational resources is developed through a series of discussions with various stakeholders, as stated clearly: “We frequently exchange ideas with a large number of people who truly understand the notion of ecotourism and more commonly advocate for tourism that can coexist with nature and, most importantly, appreciate what is possessed.” (interview with the representative of Katingan Tourism Agency).

4.5 | Challenges of SNP development

In SNP, where tourism is in its infancy, the discourse of ecotourism is unsupported by tangible and real policies. The goal of SNP is to promote and plan and to avoid issues such as potential conflicts between diverse actors such as local communities, research institutes, local guides, SNP authorities, local sustainable development consultants, and local governments. In an interview with WWF Indonesia it was stated: “As a member of civil society, we are committed to bridging the information divide between citizens and government. We shall ensure that the needs of the people and the government in terms of nature are met. We take on the role of facilitator and implementer, bridging the divide.” To add to this information, FGDs with local governments, local community, and civil society addressed that “Consensus and tolerance are required when resolving environmental conflicts. For instance, there has been no opposition from the public or other key actors to the canal blockage initiatives aimed at reducing forest fires while enhancing fish productivity; hence, it can be claimed that all stakeholders understand the critical nature of environmental protection.”

4.6 | Local community

The development of SNP is coordinated with the local community in order to facilitate knowledge sharing and contribute to environmental protection. It is stated clearly in the interview with local communities: “As residents, we understand and adhere to the SNP requirements. We are also willing to assist with a variety of research-related activities, such as opening transects/pathways and identifying plants. We recognize the critical nature of conservation issues and are always in compliance with applicable government legislation.” However, although local people expect that the ecotourism activities in SNP will provide economic prosperity, in reality, the people are hampered in receiving this benefit.

The community has attended training, but the training has no follow-up action. For example, certain community groups are trained to make woven crafts. Even so, such crafts require a long time to process and take 10–15 days to be made. Once finished, the webbing is only sold for Rp.50,000 (approximately US\$3). Sometimes, these crafts are also difficult to sell because the community group lacks marketing skills and other related business knowledge. Local people receive economic benefits from ecotourism but are still limited to certain jobs, such as porters, boatmen, and forest guards in a special research area within SNP. People who do not benefit from ecotourism activities choose to maintain their traditional livelihoods. Unfortunately, some of these livelihoods have turned illegal due to the status of the area that has become a national park. They used to be able to hunt and gather forest products in Sebangau, but to continue these activities, they risk dealing with forest police patrols. Although the economic prosperity of the local community has yet to come, but the commitment of government that the villagers will benefit from ecotourism is high as stated clearly in the interview: “I was the chairman of a provincial investment agency and recognized that ecotourism would benefit the local population, particularly in the SNP area. Simultaneously, the community who profit from SNP will voluntarily protect the park’s ecosystem.”

Meanwhile, the perception of government employees towards the community is not good. Many local people think that the task of a government staff member who visits their village is to give them money, a residual hope that the villagers will benefit from ecotourism. This condition was found in an FGD with the local government staff: “Local residents are also astute in recognizing any possibility to earn money. If we appear in this government uniform, we must pay for any of their operations. While we do have a budget to pay for it because it is the government’s obligation to improve the people’s welfare.”

4.7 | Research institute

A local research institution with an international network within the SNP area was established before SNP. The expectation of the benefits from this research institution is the recognition of its original rights. Even so, in the zoning map designed by SNP, the institute does not have a special location. As a result, this institution has remained in its position within the area designated by the central government as SNP, as stated by a representative of the research institute CIMTROP: “I am unconcerned about the government’s ecotourism agenda because our site is not included in Sebangau National Park. Proceed with the ecotourism program if the Sebangau National Park Office want to deliver it. CIMTROP is located within the Forest Land Use Agreement and focuses on scientific nature tourism with an emphasis on environmental education.”

4.8 | Local guides

Local tour guides are looking forward to the benefits of SNP and to the assistance and facilities of the park that can support tourist service. Tour guides deal with the absence of guard officers at the post, and they cannot define their goals and destinations clearly when accompanying tourists who visit SNP. The guides also feel that SNP is not attractive enough and can only make tourists tired without receiving comparable benefits. Moreover, SNP destinations have overlapping management among the central (provincial) government, regional government, and the community. As a result, tourists are faced with several entrance fees managed by different stakeholders. In an FGD with local communities, a local guide described the condition clearly: “There is no direct collaboration between SNP and local governments to promote the park as an ecotourism attraction. We would, however, enthusiastically support such promotional activities if the local government undertakes them.”

4.9 | Sebangau National Park authority

Sebangau National Park has several management problems that have not been solved, while the effort to develop the park through ecotourism continues to emerge. Sebangau National Park strongly needs clear guidelines for its operations regarding the zoning of the area and for ecotourism activities. The zoning arrangement is difficult to establish due to disputes among stakeholders because ecotourism guidelines have not been provided. As a result, many issues about zoning and ecotourism development of SNP are unclear and ambiguous. This condition was found in an interview with the local government: “These issues were originally regarded significant; however, due to leadership rotation, a new policy has emerged, and the previous coordination has been lost. Additionally, collaboration with the SNP Office is restricted at the present, and as a result, we do not currently collaborate with them. The SNP Office may have a scheme for ecotourism development program, but they have never disclosed it, owing to their autonomy under central government control and, additionally, since we, as local government, see little potential in the park and are focused on a more immediate issue.”

4.10 | Local sustainable management consultants

The Central Kalimantan government has collaborated with particular institutions who act as consultants for sustainable tourism development. This government institution has had success in creating an ecotourism industry in Tanjung Puting National Park and a number of areas in Kalimantan. The task of this institution is to connect various interests in ecotourism, including the interests of the central and regional governments, entrepreneurs, and the local community. However, this institution cannot fully function due to its inadequate budget. As a result, the institution tends to be static and hence, its critical function to connect the interests of sustainable tourism in Sebangau cannot be implemented fully.

4.11 | Local governments

The region of the SNP is bounded by three distinct government borders. Unfortunately, one of the local governments informed us that it has not received significant benefits from the existence of SNP, and the people only received small economic benefits, such as working as porters or boat motorists. This expectation of benefits is not obtained; however, it has a constructive effect on tourism near the area. Rather than relying on SNP to support the community's economy, the local government seeks to develop its own area near the park that can be an alternative for tourists who want to visit SNP. Local governments construct attractive destinations and homestays, which can be decent tourism options when tourists feel disappointed about their trip to the park.

To summarize these findings, the researcher provides Table 4 to link the various issues of social exchange above with the common problems faced by ecotourism in Kalimantan.

5 | DISCUSSION

5.1 | Resource capability development

Capability is defined as the organizational capacity to utilize resources (Newbert, 2008). Capability enables organizations to use or exploit resources effectively. Capability actualizes the resources to achieve competitive advantage. Interview and discussion sessions provide information so that the human and financial resources of SNP can be developed through partnership programs in the form

TABLE 4 Benefits and consequences of ecotourism in Sebangau National Park (SNP)

Stakeholder	Expected benefit	Reality	Consequence	Surface problem
Local community	Economic prosperity	Training without follow-up action, conflict of dam project, attitudes of forest rangers, less economic handicraft products	Poaching; illegal logging; entering the forest to catch birds, pigs, and fishes and to collect wood; local people always ask government officials for money	Management, language, accommodation
Local research institute	Designated special area	Ignored	Dual management	Partnership
Local guide	Profit and help	Lack of staff members in the SNP post, not found on the map, the contents of the forest are unattractive	Deviation from ecotourism destination	Language, quality, interpretation
SNP authority	Guidance, zoning	Unestablished guidance and zoning	Unclear management	Partnership, management
Local sustainable development consultant	Budget	Insufficient budget	Static	Management, quality
Local government	Economic benefit	No revenue	Develop other tourism destinations	Partnership, quality, accommodation

of collaborative ecotourism development program and partnership in development at specific areas in the SNP zone. In addition, SNP managers have been working with non-government organizations and local communities to improve partnerships to address human and financial problems. However, the implementation has caused various perceptions, such as the lack of cooperation with the local people, improper assignment of tasks in managing ecotourism areas, obstacles to partnerships due to agrarian problems, and egotism between the central government and local government. Moreover, promotional capabilities related to physical resources encourage visitors to recognize the uniqueness of SNP. The accommodation provider in this case is one of the promotional partners, but much infrastructure is needed, which, in turn, will once again depend on the availability of financial resources. Meanwhile, promotion through partnerships with local governments still faces challenges, especially with regard to knowledge. The discussion reveals that partnership and promotional capabilities are two important capabilities needed to increase the value of resources owned by SNP, although the development of these capabilities remains constrained by sectorial egos, limited facilities, infrastructure, and knowledge.

To overcome these challenges, honest communication among stakeholders must be practiced. This idea is supported by a previous study of Damanik (2016), who explained that several ecotourism destinations in Indonesia are faced with weak communication and synergy among stakeholders. Furthermore, several studies conducted by Sartori, Mottironi, and Corigliano (2012) and Damanik (2016) also explain that the ecotourism program's disregard also happens globally. Sunarta, Pujani, and

Adikampana (2017) addressed a suggestion for building communications through informal meetings to establish mutual trust and avoid suspicions. A mediator is also necessary to facilitate consultations and ensure that inputs from stakeholders can be incorporated into an integrated management plan. An example of a mediator is the Jugeg Manuk community in Bali that facilitates ecotourism in West Bali and surrounding communities (Efransjah et al., 2012; Sunarta et al., 2017).

The synthesis of recent research on the challenges faced by Kalimantan ecotourism shows the need to understand the original causes. For example, the findings of this study show that product uniqueness is also related to the perception of profit. Souvenirs not only reflect social and tourist interactions with destinations historically and culturally but also reflect aspects of uniqueness from places, destinations, and images. This uniqueness can be highlighted in ecotourism destinations if a perception of the benefits possessed by souvenir craftsmen in Kalimantan exists; however, it does not and thus fails to provide the expected benefits. As a result, social exchanges between tourists and local residents fail to be implemented. Conversely, other studies in Borneo show better situations than in Kalimantan. Collaboration between local communities and accommodation providers in Sukau Forest Lodge, Malaysian Borneo delivers mutual benefit. In addition, the research on Ulu Temburong National Park, Brunei reveals that ecotourism in this area is sustainable and provides great benefits for local communities. However, the present study has wider aspects than other research conducted in Taiwan, Luang Prabang, and Hoi An because it not only reviews one aspect of ecotourism but also leads to all aspects that are problematic in ecotourism development. Moreover, this research shows a critical situation in developing ecotourism in Kalimantan.

In today's fast-paced, globalized world, it is important for organizations to train their employees in the different ways to become ecotourists (Beaumont, 2011; Chan and Baum, 2007; Newsome, 2014). Employees who are ecotourists know how to respect and admire the natural resources of a certain area while taking care of themselves and others with minimal harm (Ok et al., 2011; Perera and Vlosky, 2017). Depending on their location, they can also be included as local stakeholders in global sustainable development programs. Ecotourism can be defined as a sustainable form of tourism that safeguards biodiversity and supports local economies (Burns, 2005; Fennell, 2010; Herath, 2002). It is not just about going to third-world countries; it is also about understanding the situation of the people in these areas (Huang et al., 2019). From an employee perspective, it is important for them to understand why their company is visiting a particular country or how they can help the people there (Fennell and Nilson, 1998). Employees who are ecotourists can also understand the economic consequences of their actions on the local economy and the people there. This will make them more responsible in their job and help them decide how they can be more environmentally friendly without compromising productivity.

Training workers on how to become ecotourists is not just about making sure they do not harm the environment; it is also about understanding why it is important to preserve it (Fennell and Nilson, 1998; Huang et al., 2019). Employees who have become ecotourists know what the environment needs and how they can help it grow. The training can be as simple as offering the employee a tour of the area where the company is located (Fennell and Nilson, 1998; Huang et al., 2019). This way, they can see for themselves not only why their company needs to be there but also how they can help. The employees might read the stories that are written about places like this on travel websites or just find out for themselves what is happening in these areas (Huang et al., 2019; Newsome, 2014). This will make them more knowledgeable on how to act towards others and preserve the surrounding environment. Employees who are ecotourists know how to be more informed about the issues that are happening in their surroundings because they understand the global environment better (Fennell and Nilson, 1998; Huang et al., 2019). They are also aware of the long-term effects extinction will have on the inhabitants of these regions. This will make them more responsible for not contributing to such a situation and help them decide on how they can minimize their own impacts on others and the environment (Fennell and Nilson, 1998; Huang et al., 2019).

Ecotourism training for employees will not only make sure that they are well informed on how to become ecotourists, but it can also be a great attraction from the outside. Having employees who are

ecotourists will make sure their companies are known as ones who care deeply about environmental protection. This should attract more clients and potential sellers for them to do business with. In the long run, this could also mean better productivity and growth for their company (Xaba et al., 2018). In the end, it is important for SNP to include employees who are ecotourists. These people can easily be brought into the company if their employer will just take the time to explain what they are doing and why they need to do it. The advantages of this kind of training are that it makes employees more informed on how to become ecotourists, and it shows them why it is important for a company to be in a specific location and how their actions can affect the global economy.

5.2 | Barriers of SNP development

The study also highlights the challenges posed by conflicts among numerous stakeholders for SNP development, implying that the effective development of national parks requires collaborative governance. Different studies show that a collective approach can improve national park management. Diverse studies indicate that a collaborative approach can improve national park administration by, for example, boosting local management and knowledge and providing members with a sense of ownership over the natural resources available to indigenous people. In addition, the ecotourism approach, especially in relation to conservation and recreational utilization, is intended to promote a “win-win” solution (Fennell, 2013).

Although SNP has prospective resources such as high biodiversity, endangered native flora and fauna, and water infiltration, which are crucial considerations for promoting, planning, and managing ecotourism, these qualities alone are insufficient. Sebangau National Park has long been under political intervention, resulting in ethnic tensions and strife between the agrarian, wood, and palm oil businesses (Lestariningsih and Setyaningsih, 2017; Meilani, Thwaites, et al., 2019). In the circumstances of SNP, where tourism is still in its infancy, the ecotourism rhetoric has lacked any obvious policy support (Meilani, Andayani, et al., 2019; Sosilawaty, 2020).

This discussion suggests, in effect, that all stakeholders will share these three interest classes for an effective management and creation of national parks (Wood, 2002; Zografos and Allcroft, 2007). Specifically, the objectives of a designating national park should be to safeguard the natural environment while also providing chances for social and economic development. Environmental values must be promoted. Likewise, SNP’s conflict history will undoubtedly rely on further specific knowledge to effectively develop ecotourism in Sebangau. Specific environmental values promoted by policymaking actors must be examined to work on the development of an appropriate policy, which can provide benefit to the environment and to the public.

5.3 | Theoretical underpinnings

RBT is based on the principles that organizations are resource constrained and decisions must be made with reference to limited resource (Barney et al., 2011; Olalla, 1980). Using RBT for analyses of ecotourism explains some of the challenges faced. It helps us understand the limitations of existing ecotourism development models as well as some of the alternatives that are available. Resource-based theory is an important conceptual framework for addressing problems in development. In ecotourism, it is also an important framework for understanding why certain tourist destinations are better served than others in terms of the resources available to tourists (Li et al., 2006). Ecotourism is a modern phenomenon that has arisen with industrialization. It has its own niche markets around the world; however, its impact on the environment is increasingly considered negative because of the globalization of tourism and rising per capita income that go hand in hand (Li et al., 2006).

Ecotourism is the fastest growing tourism sector (Tang et al., 2015). Some estimates predict its growth will reach 20% per year over the next decade (Su et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2017). This makes

it important for ecotourism practitioners to better understand why some destinations are better served than others in terms of the availability of resources to tourists. Resources such as biodiversity, clean water, and traditional foods are important requirements for ecotourists, and their availability determines whether visitors decide to visit a destination or not (Li et al., 2006). This information should help them develop tourism products with a reduced negative environmental impact.

RBT helps to explain some of the reasons why tourism products are better served in certain destinations than others (Hornig and Tsai, 2012). First, this is because of the physical resources that are available. Resources, such as Kalimantan orangutan, peatland ecosystem, local culture, and topography, determine whether a destination has the potential to develop a sustainable ecotravel product. In addition, whether an ecotourism destination is effectively serving tourists depends on how well these resources are managed and used to provide goods and services for visitors. Second, it depends on the support from the government and SNP authority to develop ecotourism as a part of tourism products in Indonesia and Kalimantan that may influence tourist satisfaction rates.

The findings of this study show that SNP was faced with weak communication and synergy among stakeholders as well as the fact that social exchanges between tourists and local residents failed to be implemented. Therefore, the goal of ecotourism to help increase the sustainable socio-economic well-being of local people to reduce poverty is difficult to achieve. In this case, RBT provides a useful framework for developing tourism products in regard to sustainable development. It is important for ecotourism practitioners to develop products that are less environmentally damaging than alternative tourism products. In the case of SNP, it also means that SNP should work on improving socio-economic conditions of communities where tourist experiences can take place and not only develop ecotourist destinations but also policies and institutions that are responsive to local cultures.

From an RBT perspective, the first steps in sustainable development should include determining what activities people need or want, and then looking at how they achieve these activities. Sustainable development supports policies that are aimed at satisfying basic needs while allowing for future generations to satisfy their own needs (Agrawal, 2014). These policies are based on the belief that people have been resource constrained. Resource-based theory posits that resource constraints are pervasive and that there are a variety of strategies people employ to satisfy their needs. The second principle, which is often regarded as the essence of RBT, describes how unlimited actions are likely to be bad for development. It means that when people pursue unlimited ends, they will act in anti-sustainable ways.

Environmental sustainability, based on the principles of RBT, posits that development should be aimed at satisfying basic needs, and in the long run, it should permit overall well-being to increase. However, sustainable development requires consideration of the legal and cultural contexts within which people act (Agrawal, 2014). According to RBT, when people pursue unlimited ends, they are likely to act in anti-sustainable ways. This implies that we can identify the different forms of sustainable development as those that satisfy basic needs and maximize long-term well-being. The third principle is that unintended negative consequences are likely when people pursue unlimited ends. As all people face resource constraints in decision making, RBT suggests that sustainable development is possible by satisfying basic needs and maximizing long-term well-being through maximizing utility while minimizing costs (Costanza et al., 2014).

6 | CONCLUSION

The resource and capability evaluation of SNP ecotourism using RBT indicates that existing resources and capabilities must be improved. Capacity development is also needed to enhance the less potential resources and to provide the maximum impact of competitive advantage. Interviews with various stakeholders reveal that intense communication between various parties is necessary to create improved capabilities and comprehensive ecotourism strategies for SNP. This study also shows that sectorial ego is a major challenge in collaborative activities in Indonesia. Partnership problems occur

because some stakeholders, especially research institutions, feel neglected from the beginning of the destination development process. Management problems arise because some stakeholders do not feel that they will benefit from the program and have suspicion of being exploited by other parties. Because entrepreneurs and local communities view the benefits from a perspective that differs from that of the tourist, it is difficult for accommodations to arise. because of the way entrepreneurs and local communities think about the benefits that differ from the tourist perspective. Interpretation is unavailable because the guides feel that the benefits derived from developing competencies are far lower than the costs incurred. Language problems also arise because local people do not have the perception of the advantages of learning a foreign language. The uniqueness of products fails to develop because the benefits from selling souvenirs are not obtained by the community even though souvenirs have an essential role to play in relating tourist experiences to the culture and history of the destination. Stakeholders with various interests must have the perception of benefits from the development of ecotourism so that the effect of social exchange can occur. This issue is important because it is related to various problems that arise and appear to be independent of each other. Although this problem is complex, it must be addressed immediately to encourage the competitiveness of ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan.

Moreover, this study provides a theoretical contribution, that is, implications from RBT in the context of network-shaped stakeholders. Previous research only views the theory as a dyad relationship and is limited to the context of local communities and ecotourism, but this study shows that the relationships that occur become a network where its members expect mutual contributions from each other, and therefore problems in resources have become structural and interconnected with the interests of other stakeholders. Resource-based theory is commonly used as a policy approach in strategic management to help organizations explain the resources they have and the barriers they face to achieve their goals. Therefore, the purpose of using RBT in ecotourism is to combine all resources and encourage the involvement of local communities in an effort to increase the number of tourists, to protect destinations, and to promote the participation of local communities. However, the implementation of RBT in the ecotourism context may face some obstacles, which are caused by its assets, competences, However, the application of RBT in the context of ecotourism may be hampered by its assets, competencies, and capacities, as well as the understanding of its stakeholder. These obstacles have become challenges for organizations to acquire sustained competitive advantage.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article, as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

PEER REVIEW

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