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Building bonds for sustainable growth: social capital and networking in Indonesian tourism development

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Abstract

This research aims to identify and analyze the utilization of social capital in developing tourist attractions and networking in Kampar Regency. This study focuses on two potential tourist attractions owned by Kampar Regency, namely the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction and the Ulu Kasok views. The research design used is qualitative interpretative; in collecting information, primary data was obtained through observation and in-depth interviews. The interview results were entered into the Nvivo 12 Plus data processing application for coding and then analyzed using graphs and crosstab. The triangulation technique was used to obtain valid and credible results. The research findings show that the identified social capital in developing tourist attractions in Ulu Kasok and Pulau Cinta are networks built online and offline. First, tourist attraction organized online and offline promotions to attract visitors, but the improvement of the online platform requires further enhancement. Second, communication with stakeholders and the local community necessary to improve. Third, trust building between tourism destinations organizer and the local community enables tourist attractions to develop, and the fourth is Information openness about tourism destinations. The contribution of this research suggests maximum efforts in utilizing social capital in developing sustainable tourism destinations, through strengthening social networks, building trust, and enhancing communication among stakeholders and local communities.

Keywords: social capital, tourism, attracting, networking, sustainable development

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected all countries worldwide, including Indonesia, has impacted various community activities. Tourism is one sector that has felt the effects of this pandemic. The number of tourists visiting tourist attractions has decreased, affecting the income of the communities around these attractions. This situation allows the community to manage these tourist attractions to attract visitors again by developing the attractions. The development of tourist attractions is an effort to enhance or improve them to become more appealing and attractive to tourists regarding their location and the objects within them (Barreto & Giantari, 2015). The development of tourist attractions can be achieved by leveraging social capital. Social capital is a network of relationships that emphasizes values of togetherness and trust within and between communities. These values are assets in forming a solid and cohesive society, which is crucial in the current context because when a community

faces a problem, it can be addressed promptly without anyone being disadvantaged. (Suryono, 2012).

Social capital can be utilized through communication and networks to develop these attractions. Social capital has a role in the development of tourist objects. Tourism objects are a relatively effective means of developing the economy. The problem that often occurs is a lack of capital in the development process. Community-based tourism development is an option to improve people's livelihoods through natural resource management due to the government's limitations in developing tourism objects that have the potential to be developed. The method that can be applied in developing tourist objects is utilizing social capital (Utami, 2020). Developed tourist objects will bring in tourists who will impact increasing income and the community's economy around these attractions (Upadani, 2017). Slow development by the government makes the surrounding community not feel the benefits of this tourist attraction. These conditions require the community to be more active and participatory in utilizing the potential of these tourist objects. Social capital is essential in increasing social interaction and fostering trust and cooperation in developing tourist objects (Ozgun et al., 2022).

The characteristics of a group or community become a reference for the use of social capital in fulfilling desires as a whole. Social capital refers to organizational traits such as social networks, trust, mutual understanding, shared values, and behaviors that bind members. Coordination and cooperation will help them achieve specific goals (Cohen & Prusak, 2002; R. Putnam, 1993; Schuller, Baron, 2000). (Hawkins and Maurer, 2009) Note that the use of social capital results from the weakest relationship but provides the most valuable results because it provides access to and connections to power structures and institutions. Unlike the bridging and connecting bonds, which are characterized by exposure to and development of new ideas, values, and perspectives (Hawkins & Maurer, 2009). Trust is a fundamental element in social capital (Paraskevopoulos, 2010; Shimada, 2015). The mutual trust that neither party to the exchange will exploit the vulnerabilities of the other is the most critical component of social capital and is a prerequisite for competitive success (Paraskevopoulos, 2010). Ada and Bolat (2010) state that social capital facilitates the flow of information that provides a basis for action and helps achieve individual and community goals.

There are three forms of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. Ties of social capital refer to the relationships among network members who share characteristics such as demographic, social, or ethnic status or among community individuals who already know each other (Putnam, 2000). Social capital refers to relationships between people who differ in observable ways, such as age, socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, and education (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). The extent to which individuals build relationships with institutions and those with relational power over them to provide access to services, jobs, or resources is defined as utilizing social capital (Woolcock, 2001). Meanwhile, (Portes, 1998) and (Arrow, 2011) state that with social capital, members or groups within a community with access to benefits and resources tend to exclude non-members from access. Therefore, social capital has its caveats. Building social capital based on social interaction through social networks can significantly influence the development of an organization, including tourist attractions. Assistance in the form of promotions obtained from networks contained in social networks has a significant impact on tourist attractions (Cheung & Chan, 2010).

Social capital is defined by various interrelated factors, such as trust, solidarity, justice, networking, social inclusion and cohesion, communication, and empowerment (Rustinsyah et al., 2021). (Zhou, Chan, & Song, 2017) Social capital is utilizing potential resources associated with networks formed from long-standing and reciprocal relationships. (Zhou et al., 2017) also, social capital consists of social obligations (connections), which can be converted in specific contexts into economic capital (García-Villaverde et al., 2021). Social capital is essential in developing the community's economy because it can build strong communities, including tourist attractions (Knollenberg et al., 2021). (Musavengane & Kloppers, 2020), noting that societies with substantial social, economic, and environmental capital tend to be more resilient than places without social capital. Social capital emphasizes building social networks that lead to productive groups with shared norms, values, and understanding (Musavengane & Simatele, 2016). Social capital can be a vehicle through which the accumulation of various forms of capital can be achieved and contribute to sustainable environmental management (Musavengane & Kloppers, 2020).

Social capital is also defined as a network of relationships that promote the development and distribution of resources and benefits that can benefit both individuals and collectively (Nunkoo, 2017). Research (Zhou et al., 2017) regarding the use of social and entrepreneurial capital in developing tourism in a village in China found that the community had high expectations for this tourist attraction when carrying out tourism development. Tourism development is influenced by three dimensions of social capital: institutional support, community openness, and personal social networks. Local community integration makes a significant contribution to tourism development. Research (Lee & Hallak, 2020) in New Zealand looking at how social capital influences online and offline tourism businesses finds that social ties exist to find access to finance, innovation, and human resources. Other studies that look at the role of social capital in economic growth for many communities, such as the tourism and beverage craft industries, find that the results of economic development that tourism and beverage crafts can generate are influenced by the form of social capital needed to build and maintain these tourism objects, (García-Villaverde et al., 2021). Significant social capital is bonding resources to build and maintain tourism objects. This research looks at how the utilization of social capital through networking, openness, trust, and communication is intertwined with the development of the Pulau Cinta and Ulu Kasok tourist attractions.

Kampar Regency has several tourism objects that have the potential to be developed, such as Pulau Cinta and Panorama Ulu Kasok. These two tourist objects have their charm. Pulau Cinta offers river tours with sand on the banks of the river, while Ulu Kasok offers panoramic views with beautiful natural scenery. This tourism object has the potential to attract people to visit to provide benefits to the surrounding community, especially in increasing their income. The problem is that the government needs to maximize the development of this tourist attraction so that the use of social capital is essential in its development. The most important thing is the community's active role around the tourist attraction, which can be used as social capital in developing the tourist attraction. This study aims to analyze the forms of social capital the community carries around tourist objects in managing and developing these attractions.

Meanwhile, the specific objective is to map the use of social capital in two tourist objects in Kampar Regency, namely Pantai Cinta and Ulu Kasok. Social capital is crucial in developing tourism objects because tourism involves complex social

interactions between tourists, local communities, and other stakeholders. The link between social capital and the development of tourism objects lies in social relationships that enable collaboration, participation, and empowerment of local communities in the management and benefits of tourism. By building substantial social capital, tourism destinations can become more sustainable, inclusive, and competitive while enriching tourist experiences and improving the well-being of local communities. The research provides many benefits in developing Pantai Cinta and Ulu Kasok tourism objects. It can be used as a role model for other tourist objects that must be appropriately managed. The advancement of a tourist object will benefit the surrounding community, especially in boosting the economy.

Research Methods

This qualitative interpretative study tries to trace the use of social capital in developing tourism items on Pulau Cinta and Ulu Kasok. To obtain primary data or information, in-depth interviews were conducted with informants, including the Chairperson of Pokdarwis, the Head of the Tourism Office, the Head of Tourism Resource Development, the Village Head, and the Community, who also manage tourist objects. A documentation study was then conducted by collecting information available in online media. They are concerning tourist development. Figure 1. depicts the data-collecting procedure Related to tourism development. The data collection process can be seen in Figure 1. below:
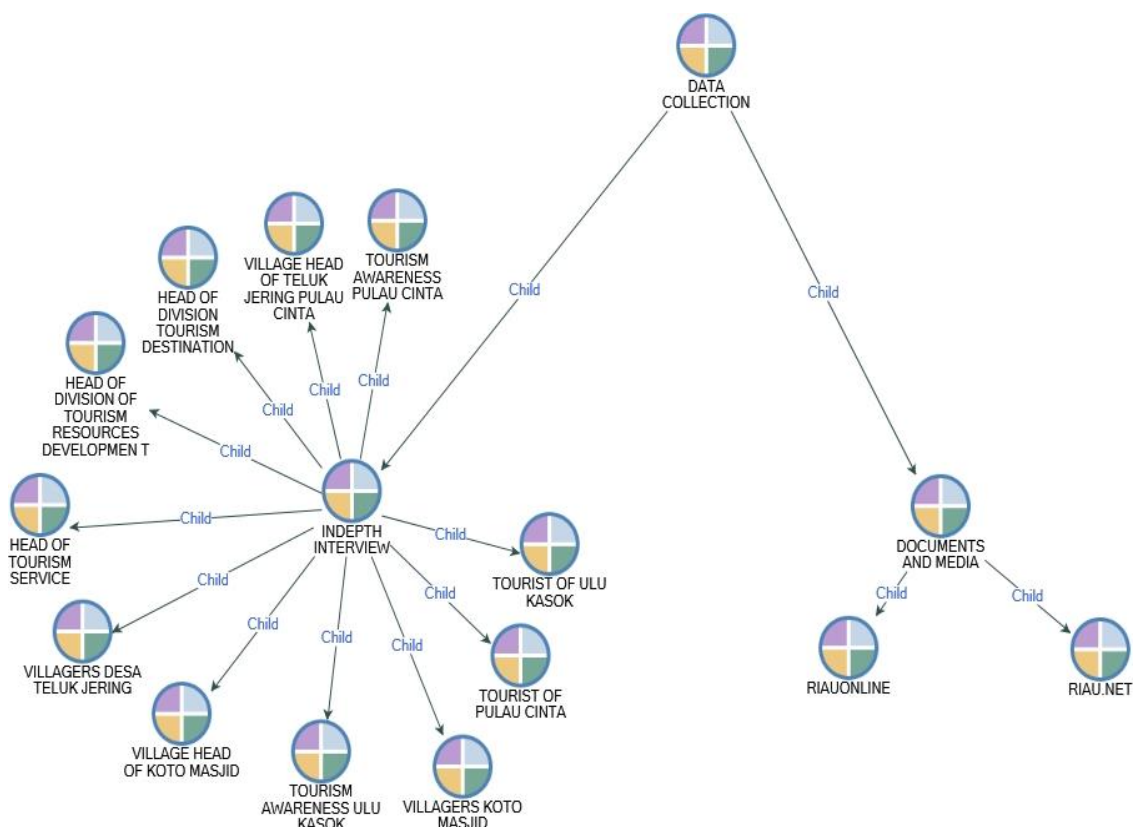
Figure 1. Data Collection Through In-depth Interviews and Analysis of Documents and Media
Source: Analysis Result Using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2022

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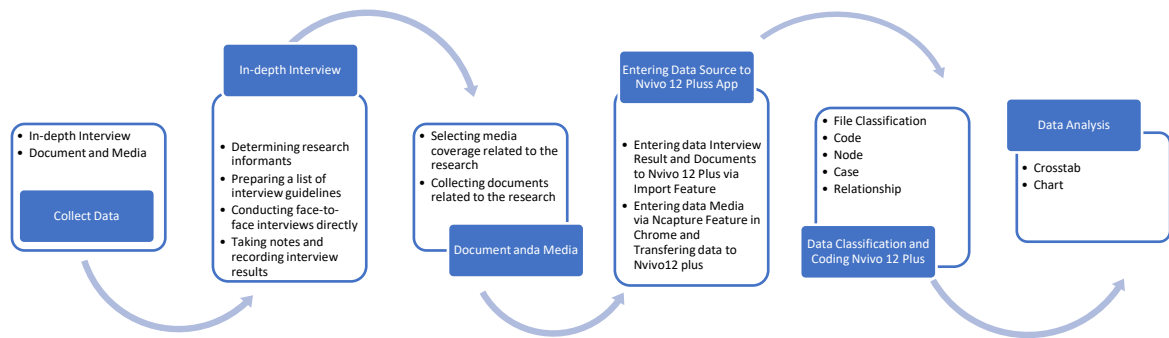
Figure 2. Research Data Analysis Process
Source: Process by the Author, 2023

This research is analyzed using a qualitative data analysis program called Nvivo 12 Plus. This application facilitates the collection, management, and analysis of research data. The interview results with research informants and the NCapture results of online media coverage are inputted into the dataset of the Nvivo 12 Plus data processing application. The data will be coded according to each research indicator in the form of nodes that follow the scope of research and data analysis using the crosstab, chart, and hierarchy chart feature in the Nvivo 12 Plus application. Data is obtained based on the coding results, which are then analyzed in a triangulation manner and produce an overview of the extent of capital utilization carried out in the development of tourist objects. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively.

Results and Discussion

Social capital has very varied coverage dimensions, according to the point of view and dimensions used as a reference for understanding social capital. In contrast to human capital, which refers more to the individual dimension related to the power and skills possessed by an individual, social capital places more emphasis on individual and group potential and relationships between groups in a social network, norms, values , and beliefs between people who born from group members and become group norms (Arta, 2012). *Social capital* is an ability that arises from trust in a community. A series of human relations processes are supported by networks, norms, and social trust that enable efficient and effective coordination and collaboration for mutual benefit (Jovita et al., 2019). Social capital is believed to be one of the main components in driving togetherness, mobility of ideas, mutual trust, and mutual benefit to achieve mutual progress. People with high social capital can solve complex problems more easily (Rustinsyah et al., 2021). Social capital with mutual trust, tolerance, and cooperation can build networks within and with other community groups.

Social Capital Utilized at the Pulau Cinta Tourism Object

Kampar Regency has several tourist attractions that have the potential to be developed; in this research, the focus is the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction and the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction. Pulau Cinta is a sandy river bank tourist attraction that attracts visitors' attention because it offers views like a beach in the sea. The Ulu Kasok tourist attraction is a hilly tourist attraction with natural views that resemble Raja Ampat. This research investigates how social capital is utilized in developing these two tourist

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attractions. Furthermore, based on data from research conducted at the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction, it is known that the social capital utilized consists of institutional support, networks, trust, openness, and communication, which can be seen in Figure 2 below:
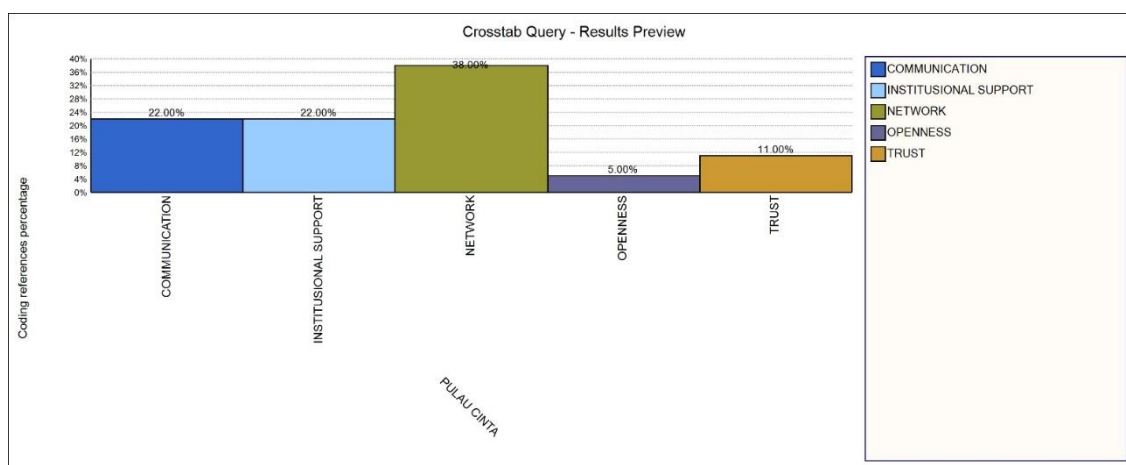
Figure 3. Social Capital Utilized at the *Pulau Cinta* Tourism Object
Source: Analysis Result Using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2022

Figure 3 shows research regarding social capital utilized at the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction. Based on interviews conducted with informants consisting of the Tourism Office, Head of Pokdarwis, Village Heads, and the Community, it can be seen that the social capital that is most widely used in developing tourist attractions is the network, with a percentage of 38. Network utilization in developing the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction is carried out to provide information to the government, investors, and the public regarding the potential of these tourist attractions. The information provided helps managers in planning tourist attraction development strategies. The network owned in developing tourist attractions provides benefits for promotion, development of facilities and infrastructure, and sustainable management. The network is utilized offline and online through social media and websites so that promotions are carried out to the community around the tourist attraction and reach the community of other districts and cities. A network is a relationship between the community around a tourist attraction and the tourism awareness group that manages the attraction (Hardison, 2013).

Support from the surrounding community for the progress of the tourist attraction is the basis for developing the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction. This support is included in the network utilized. The involvement and empowerment of local communities can be seen from their activeness in development planning, management, and promotion activities that they carry out on their social media. Empowering local communities makes them feel they own the tourist attraction, so they feel they have a responsibility to maintain the sustainability and development of the tourist attraction. This aligns with the opinion of (Lee & Hallak, 2020), which states that networks are essential for developing tourist attractions because they will reduce costs in managing and developing tourist attractions in Kampar Regency. Networks as capital have benefits in interactions between communities, which can play a role in reducing the costs that arise in development activities (Nunkoo, 2017). With social capital in the form of a network, the development of tourist attractions is carried out in an integrated and sustainable manner by involving stakeholders (Isni et al., 2022).

Institutional support also plays quite a role in developing the Pulau Cinta tourist attraction; research results show that 23% of institutional support is used for developing tourist attractions on Cinta Island; this can be seen from the support from the Riau Provincial government in making Kampar Regency a tourist destination. The Kampar Regency Regional Planning Agency, together with the Special Committee for Regional Spatial Planning of the Riau Province DPRD, made a direct visit to the Cinta Island Object to map the development and make Cinta Island one of the leading tourist attractions in Riau Province. The Kampar Regency Government shows its support by forming the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), an organization formed under the Tourism Office. This also shows that Institutional Support plays a role in developing Tourist Attractions. The government also provides guidance and assistance to Pokdarwis so that they can create and explore the potential of tourist attractions on Pulau Cinta. Apart from the Pokdarwis, the Village Government provides guidance and supervises every effort to develop this tourist attraction. The development of tourist attractions will influence the norms and culture around the tourist attraction. Therefore, institutional support plays a role in maintaining the norms and culture around the tourist attraction. The existence of institutional support will maintain norms with the existence of written and unwritten rules that will control the attitudes and behavior of tourists. Apart from that, institutions will also make resolving problems in developing tourist attractions easier. Apart from the government, entrepreneurs around Pulau Cinta also need institutional support. The research results show that entrepreneurs' support has yet to be utilized by managers in developing tourist attractions. The area around Pulau Cinta is used by sand mining entrepreneurs who need road access that should be utilized. Together with managers and visitors to tourist attractions, the roads to tourist attractions still need improvement. Managers must be able to collaborate with these entrepreneurs so that access to tourist attraction locations is better.

Another social capital utilized is communication, with a percentage of 23% indicating that communication is vital in developing tourist attractions. Communication is used in promotional activities for the Cinta Island tourist attraction, a form of communication carried out through social media such as disseminating information that can reach tourists from various regions, not only from Kampar Regency but also from districts and cities in Indonesia so that it has the potential to increase the number of tourists. Apart from promotions on social media, communication on social media also provides many benefits, such as visitor discussion forums, which provide information for potential visitors, such as favorable reviews and recommendations, thereby increasing the reputation of tourist attractions and encouraging other people to visit them. In social capital, established communication can increase openness and trust in developing tourist attractions (Simbolon, 2018). One of the communications carried out by the community around the tourist attraction is between the manager and the surrounding community involved, such as food traders, supporting vehicle owners, and parking managers who provide each other with information regarding visiting visitors. The social capital used in developing tourist attractions on Pulau Cinta is a series of relationship processes that occur in society, starting from the existence of networks, mutual trust, and maintained communication, which will positively impact the development carried out.

Trust and openness in the development of the *Pulau Cinta* tourist attraction, as seen from tourists' trust in the management and openness in interactions with tourists, is considered to still; this improvement can be seen from the interview results, which are only nine percent. The level of tourist trust could be higher due to the manager's

openness regarding entrance fees, parking fees, and food selling prices at tourist attractions. In developing tourist attractions, openness and transparency in the development and management process are very important. This includes providing information to local communities and other stakeholders regarding development plans, environmental impacts, and expected economic benefits. By actively involving the community and providing clear information, management can build trust and support community acceptance of tourism projects.

Social Capital Utilized at the Ulu Kasok Tourism Object

In the second tourist attraction, namely the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction, which is a tourist attraction with natural views seen from the hills, the most dominant use of social capital identified is the network; the network is the most profitable social capital for developing the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction, with the existence of a network. They were Formed in the community, enabling them to work together to make the Ulu Kasok area an attractive tourist attraction. The network used in developing tourist attractions is offline and uses online networks. Information gathering regarding the use of social capital in the development of the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction was carried out through interviews with informants; the results of the research can be seen in Figure 3 as follows:
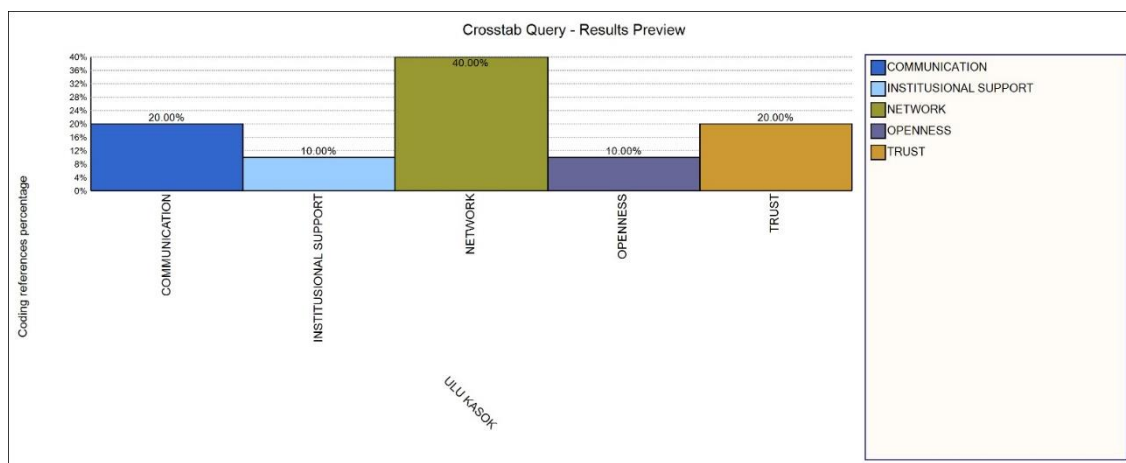
Figure 4. Social Capital in the Ulu Kasok Tourism Object
Source: Analysis Result Using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2022

Figure 7 shows that the social capital that is widely utilized is the network; this can be seen from the results of interviews coded and processed using Nvivo12 plus showing that the network utilized in developing the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction is 33%, meaning that the network is the most abundant social capital utilized. The network formed in building this tourist attraction is between the community managing the tourist attraction and business actors by adding infrastructure and restaurant facilities, which increases visitor interest. The collaboration formed from a network benefits the holistic development of Ulu Kasok as a tourist attraction. Collaboration between the management of the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction and the surrounding community that provides support is the right step in developing the tourist attraction because the support of the community, especially the local community, provides security guarantees for tourists who visit. Another form of benefit from the network formed between the management and the surrounding community is the convenience obtained by visitors to get to the tourist attraction location; the tourist attraction is located at the top of a

hill with an uphill road but is not yet adequate, the local community offers motorbike taxi services to take tourists to the tourist attraction location. Apart from collaboration with the local community, the collaboration formed due to networking with other tourist attraction managers provides strategic information in developing tourist attractions based on their experience in developing tourist attractions by identifying opportunities, overcoming challenges, and implementing innovative solutions in developing the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction.

With the increase in information technology, online networks are also being used to develop tourist attractions; promotions carried out through social media have increased the number of visitors to tourist attractions. Promotions carried out through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp Status significantly increase the number of visitors to tourist attractions. Based on the results of an interview with one of the visitors, it was discovered that they came to Ulu Kasok because they saw the social media status of one of their friends who took a photo of the panorama of Ulu Kasok. The use of social media in promoting tourist attractions is beneficial, especially for inviting tourists to visit. This is the opinion of (Isni et al., 2022), which states that digital technology dramatically benefits expanding networks in developing a business, including tourist attractions. The Ulu Kasok tourist attraction managers take advantage of their network to promote the tourism they offer. The network formed between the managers and tourists who have visited provides many benefits, especially by disseminating information and pictures of the natural scenery at the tourist attraction, which is distributed on their social media. Have. This shows that network utilization has been carried out in developing tourist attractions.

Apart from the network utilized in developing Ulu Kasok, the trust of fellow citizens in developing tourist attractions is also proper social capital. This can be seen from the 25% percentage obtained from the research results. The trust that is built makes them support each other for the progress of this tourist attraction. The management community and the community around Ulu Kasok work together to develop this tourist attraction. The community believes that the development of Ulu Kasok will benefit the community, especially in improving the economy. Therefore, they are very open to developing tourist attractions. The local community helps maintain the safety and comfort of visiting tourists; apart from that, the community is also entrusted with improving services in terms of parking and motorbike taxis to tourist attraction locations. The trust the Ulu Kasok management received from the Kampar Regency government improved development. The Kampar Regency Government supports Ulu Kasok as one of the best tourist destinations in Kampar Regency because it sees the seriousness of the management in building this tourist attraction. The Ulu Kasok tourist attraction manager realizes that building trust is important, so trust is the primary key to social capital in developing tourist attractions. There is mutual trust in the community that developing tourist attractions will positively impact the community's economy. Building community trust is carried out with serious participation from the community in developing this tourist attraction so that other communities will participate.

The social capital also utilized at the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction is institutional support, but compared to networks and trust, institutional support only contributes a little. This can be seen from the results of interviews conducted with the managers of the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction; institutional support needs to be improved in developing the object. Tourism only amounted to eight percent. The low level of institutional support is due to the lack of guidance provided by the government or

other organizations to managers on an ongoing basis. Hence, the ability and understanding of tourist attraction managers are still minimal, resulting in the potential of tourist attractions not being adequately explored. Institutional support dramatically benefits the development of tourist attractions (Knollenberg et al., 2021). This support provides convenience, especially for binding and bridging the development of tourist attractions (Tigginehe, 2020). In particular, the findings show that binding and facilitating social capital among stakeholders in the same group through institutional support still needs to be evident. Institutional support is important to build an integrated approach to tourism development. Institutional support that can bridge social capital and encourage collaboration between stakeholders with the same goals will make it easier to develop tourist attractions. At the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction, institutional support is still low because there is no clear government budget for the procurement of facilities and infrastructure to support the tourist attraction, and the investors who are expected to invest still need to be made available. Support from local entrepreneurs has also yet to be appropriately utilized. Collaborating with local entrepreneurs to invest in developing tourist attractions has been carried out in various tourist attractions worldwide. This has been proven to increase the number of visitors because the facilities built by investors will attract visitors' interest apart from the tourist attraction. Facilities and infrastructure such as toilets, seating or huts, viewing towers, and others must be immediately equipped so that the Ulu Kasok tourist attraction is suitable for domestic and foreign tourists.

Other elements utilized in social capital for developing tourist attractions are openness and communication, which are utilized at 16% each. Ulu Kasok Panorama has quite a good potential to be developed, with community participation and a sense of mutual ownership and mutual respect, so that the development of this tourist attraction runs well. However, the research results found that communication still needs to be improved between managers and the government, managers and the community, and managers and tourists have not contributed to the development of tourist attractions. Tourist attraction managers need to communicate strategies for developing tourist attractions internally so that the direction of tourist attraction development seems less clear; the problems faced are also not communicated well between managers, so problems cannot be resolved. Communication with the surrounding community regarding the large number of visitors, especially the provision of motorbike taxis, is also an obstacle for visitors to reach tourist attraction locations. Many visitors need motorbike taxis because they need help to walk and wait in long queues. After all, there needs to be more motorbike taxi drivers. Managers need to communicate better with tourists, mainly by providing reviews on social media, a very effective promotional tool. Utilizing social media as a place to discuss and share experiences and information about tourist attractions is good social capital because this is the easiest way to communicate with tourists who have visited or potential visitors. Opportunities to promote via social media have yet to be adequately implemented.

Overall, social capital benefits the development of tourist attractions at Pulau Cinta and Ulu Kasok. Tourist attraction managers and the community around the tourist attraction create a strong enough network to work together to advance the attraction. This network is formed with the surrounding community, and a network is created online on social media. This research also shows that social capital can change the management of tourist attractions, even though it has yet to be utilized optimally, especially in communication, which should be maximized, especially in promoting tourist attractions. Communication must also be established between stakeholders,

including local government, communities, land owners, investors and the general public. Effective communication with stakeholders allows managers to understand their needs, concerns, and expectations and build support for activities held at the tourist attraction location.

The social capital utilized in the development of the Ulu Kasok and Pulau Cinta tourist attractions has a positive impact, with community empowerment strengthening community participation in decision-making related to tourism development and providing opportunities to contribute and feel ownership of these tourist attractions. This also impacts improving the local economy because of the collaboration with entrepreneurs who own rides or restaurant owners, which provides increased employment opportunities and additional income.

Conclusion

Using social capital in developing tourist attractions positively impacts the progress and sustainability of the tourism industry. By utilizing existing social resources, developers can create an environment conducive to the growth and success of tourist attractions. This research shows that networks are social capital widely used in developing tourist attractions. The extensive online and offline network helps communities around tourist attractions promote tourism and jointly build facilities and infrastructure that support tourist attractions to provide visitors with comfort in enjoying tourist attractions. Online networks are built by utilizing digital technology through social media. The development of tourist attractions was hampered during the pandemic due to the closure of tourist attractions, but with the use of online networks, tourist attractions began to develop significantly. This research also reveals that communication with the community, building trust and openness, and institutional support also help develop tourist attractions. Theoretically, this research shows that the social capital utilized in developing tourist attractions is online and offline networks, communication, trust, and institutional support. Practically, the research results can be used as a reference in developing tourist attractions by utilizing social capital. Overall, based on the findings of this research, recommendations can be given to related parties to pay more attention to the role of social capital in developing tourist attractions in Kampar Regency. Concrete steps can be taken to strengthen social capital, increase collaboration between related parties, and optimize the potential of existing tourist attractions.

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