



## The Role of Sports Tourism In Improving The Economy of Local Communities of Natural Tourism Objects (Rafting) In Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of sports tourism, particularly whitewater rafting, in improving the local economy in Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency. The research method used a quantitative approach with a survey technique through the distribution of questionnaires to 15 respondents, consisting of tourism managers and business people around the tourist attraction. Data were analyzed using descriptive percentage techniques. The results showed that the majority of the community assessed the economic impact of whitewater rafting tourism in the categories of "Sufficient" (47%), "Good" (33%), "Poor" (13%), and "Very Poor" (7%). No respondents rated it in the category of "Very Good". These findings indicate that whitewater rafting tourism has the potential to improve community welfare, but is still hampered by limited infrastructure, low promotion, minimal community participation, and less than optimal support from the local government. This study recommends development strategies in the form of local community empowerment, infrastructure improvement, digital promotion, diversification of tourist attractions, and collaboration between stakeholders.

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### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

A. Conception and design of the study;  
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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sector that significantly contributes to economic, social, and cultural development in various regions. One form of tourism that has grown rapidly in recent decades is sports tourism. Sports tourism serves not only as a means of entertainment and recreation, but also as a driver of local economic growth, job creation, and strengthening a region's cultural identity (Darabi et al., 2020; Nasrulloh et al., 2019).

Indonesia has significant potential for developing sports tourism due to its diverse natural resources, ranging from mountains and oceans to lakes and rivers. One form of sports tourism that is highly sought after by tourists is white-water rafting. White-water



rafting combines elements of sport, adventure, and recreation, attracting tourists from all walks of life. This potential, if properly managed, can significantly impact the local economy (Riyana et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the government has prioritized the sports tourism sector as part of national development. Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism emphasizes that special interest tourism, including sports tourism, is a vital component of tourism development in Indonesia. Therefore, government regulation and support play a significant role in creating a conducive climate for the development of sports tourism, including whitewater rafting.

However, the development of sports tourism depends not only on government support but also on the participation of local communities. Community involvement in planning, management, and utilization of economic benefits is key to the sustainability of a tourism destination. According to Syahwaldi et al. (2024), community involvement in whitewater rafting tourism influences the success of management and the equitable distribution of economic benefits. Without active participation, tourism benefits often fall to only a select few.

In Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency, whitewater rafting has developed into a natural tourist attraction attracting tourists. This tourism industry has opened up business opportunities for residents, including transportation services, equipment rentals, and culinary businesses. However, not all residents have experienced the economic benefits equally. Most still consider whitewater rafting's contribution to improving their well-being to be moderate or sufficient. This indicates that the tourism potential has not been fully utilized.

Various factors contribute to the less-than-optimal economic impact of whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village, including limited facilities and infrastructure, minimal tourism promotion, low community participation, and limited government support. Furthermore, tourism management remains focused solely on whitewater rafting without diversifying supporting attractions. This limits opportunities for increasing tourist visits and developing the local economy.

Based on this description, this study focuses on analyzing the role of whitewater rafting tourism in improving the local economy in Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency. Furthermore, this study aims to identify factors influencing the development of whitewater rafting tourism and formulate strategies that can be implemented to optimize economic benefits for the local community. The results of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for the community, government, and tourism managers in developing sustainable sports tourism.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This research used a quantitative approach with a survey method. The survey method was chosen because it provides a descriptive overview of community

perceptions of the role of whitewater rafting tourism in improving the local economy. This research is ex post facto, meaning the researchers did not apply treatment to variables but instead analyzed existing phenomena in the field (Sugiyono, 2017).

### **Population and Sample**

The study population consisted of people directly and indirectly involved in whitewater rafting activities in Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency. The population consisted of 15 people, consisting of three whitewater rafting managers and 12 community business owners around the tourist area. The sampling technique used was total sampling (saturated sampling), so that all members of the population were included in the study sample (Maksum, 2012).

### **Data Types and Sources**

The data collected in this study consists of:

1. Primary data, obtained directly through distributing questionnaires and interviews with respondents regarding the economic impact of white water rafting tourism.
2. Secondary data, obtained from literature, scientific articles, government regulations, and documents related to sports tourism management.

### **Research Instruments**

The main instrument in this study was a closed questionnaire based on a Likert scale with five response categories, namely: strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire contained 20 items that measured indicators of community welfare, economic involvement, and the socio-economic impact of the existence of white water rafting tourism. Instrument validation was carried out by three experts, while reliability was tested through an internal consistency test.

### **Data collection technique**

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques, namely:

1. Observation, to obtain a general picture of the condition of the white water rafting tourist location in Oloboju Village.
2. Interviews with tourism managers and business actors to deepen information regarding economic impacts and management challenges.
3. The questionnaire was distributed directly to 15 respondents to obtain quantitative data regarding the role of white water rafting tourism on the community's economy.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages. Respondents' assessments were categorized based on score intervals with five categories: very good, good, sufficient, poor, and very poor (Azwar, 2016). This analysis aims to determine the role of whitewater rafting tourism in the local economy as a whole.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Categorization uses the mean and standard deviation. According to Azwar (2016),

the scoring criteria are determined using the Normal Reference Assessment (PAN).

NO	Interval	Information
1	$M + 1.5 S < X$	Very high
2	$M + 0.5 S < X \leq M + 1.5 S$	Tall
3	$M - 0.5 S < X \leq M + 0.5 S$	High enough
4	$M - 1.5 S < X \leq M - 0.5 S$	Not Tall Enough
5	$X \leq M - 1.5 S$	Very Low

Source. (Azwar, 2016)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This research was conducted to analyze the role of whitewater rafting in improving the local economy in Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency. Whitewater rafting is a form of sport tourism that has significant potential to support community welfare, especially in areas with natural resources like Oloboju Village.

The number of respondents in this study was 15 people, consisting of residents who were directly and indirectly involved in whitewater rafting activities. The analysis was conducted using interval-based assessment categories: Very Good, Good, Sufficient, Poor, and Very Poor. Distribution of Assessment Results

**Table 1.**

The results of data processing can be seen in the following table:

Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
$\geq 77.50$	Very good	0	0%
66.94 – 77.50	Good	5	33%
56.39 – 66.94	Enough	7	47%
45.84 – 56.39	Not enough	2	13%
$\leq 45.84$	Very less	1	7%
<b>Amount</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, it can be explained that:

#### **Very Good Category ( $\geq 77.50$ )**

No respondents (0%) assessed the role of whitewater rafting tourism in improving the local economy in this category. This indicates that respondents have not yet experienced a significant and maximal economic impact from the existence of whitewater rafting tourism attractions.

#### **Good Category (66.94 – 77.50)**

Five respondents (33%) gave a "Good" rating. This indicates that some residents are beginning to feel a positive contribution, for example, through increased revenue from equipment rental services, food and beverage provision, or local transportation services used by tourists.

#### **Fair Category (56.39 – 66.94)**

Seven respondents (47%) rated it "Sufficient." This category dominated the research results and indicates that whitewater rafting tourism generally has an impact on the local economy, but it remains moderate. Potential has not been optimally utilized,

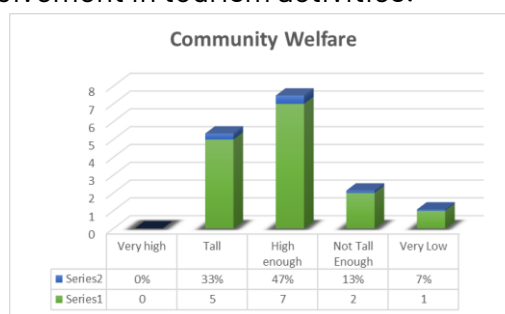
for example, due to limited tourism promotion, inadequate supporting facilities, and minimal community involvement in tourism management.

**Less Category (45.84 – 56.36)**

Two respondents (13%) rated the role of whitewater rafting as "Poor." This assessment came from communities that have not yet experienced direct economic impacts, for example, because they are not involved in tourism activities or because economic benefits are not evenly distributed across the community.

**Very Poor Category (≤45.84)**

One respondent (7%) rated it "Very Poor." This indicates that a small portion of the community feels they receive no benefit at all from whitewater rafting tourism, likely due to a lack of access or involvement in tourism activities.



**Figure 1.**

Graph of Community Welfare at White Water Rafting Tourist Attractions

Overall, the research results show that the role of whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village in improving the local economy is still in the "Sufficient" category (47%). This means that whitewater rafting has indeed made a contribution, but its impact has not been maximized.

This sports tourism potential can be developed better if strengthening efforts are made, such as:

- a) Improvement of facilities and infrastructure (road access, rafting equipment, security).
- b) Wider tourism promotion to attract more tourists.
- c) Empowering local communities, especially through training guides, small business managers, and tourism-based MSMEs.

Collaboration between government, communities, and business actors so that economic benefits can be felt evenly.

**Discussion**

The results of the study indicate that the role of white water rafting tourism in Oloboju Village on the local economy is mostly in the "Sufficient" category (47%), followed by "Good" (33%), "Poor" (13%), and "Very Poor" (7%), and no respondents rated it in the "Very Good" category. These findings indicate that white water rafting tourism has indeed provided economic contributions for some communities, but the impact has not been felt evenly and optimally.

Community involvement is a crucial factor in developing community-based tourism. In Oloboju Village, some residents have played a role in providing transportation services, equipment rentals, and culinary businesses, thus directly experiencing the economic impact (Rifki et al., 2023). However, others have not been actively involved, resulting in uneven economic distribution. This is consistent with research by Simanjuntak, Damis, & Mawara (2024), which found that low community participation results in economic impacts being felt only by certain groups. Therefore, community empowerment strategies are needed through tour guide training, MSME development, and the formation of tourism awareness groups to ensure a broader economic impact.

Furthermore, limited facilities and infrastructure are also a major obstacle. Limited rafting equipment and inadequate road access reduce tourist comfort. Research by Maslivah & Sugiarto (2021) at Lolong Adventure, Pekalongan, also showed that the quality of facilities is crucial to the success of whitewater rafting tourism. This means that improving infrastructure through local government support and private sector collaboration is key to strengthening the appeal of whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village.

Another factor that needs to be considered is the promotional strategy. Currently, promotion of whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village is still very minimal, and most tourists learn about this destination only through word of mouth. However, digital-based promotional strategies have proven effective in increasing tourist visits (Purwaningwulan & Ramdan, 2021). Therefore, developing a marketing strategy through social media, the official website, and collaboration with travel agents is essential to increase the awareness of this destination.

On the other hand, tourism development in Oloboju Village is still focused solely on whitewater rafting, despite the potential for additional attractions such as trekking, camping, local culinary delights, and environmental education. Diversifying tourist attractions can increase tourist appeal while opening up new economic opportunities for the community. This aligns with research by Darsiharjo, Kastolani, & Nayoan (2016), which emphasizes the importance of innovation and diversification of attractions to maintain the sustainability of special interest tourist destinations.

Besides the community, government support is also crucial. This study shows that local government support for whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village is still limited, particularly in terms of promotion, facility provision, and community support. However, research by Kualaria, Wijyantini, & Hanafi (2022) confirms that developing tourism villages requires strong collaboration between the community, government, and the private sector. Without adequate institutional support, it is difficult for the community to develop tourism independently and sustainably.

Comparing the results of this study with those of previous studies, it can be concluded that the "adequate" condition in Oloboju Village is caused by five main factors: suboptimal community participation, limited infrastructure, minimal tourism promotion, a lack of diversification of tourist attractions, and suboptimal government support. If these factors are improved, whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village has the

potential to develop from the "adequate" category to the "good" or even "excellent" category in supporting the local economy.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the role of whitewater rafting tourism in Oloboju Village, Sigi Regency, in improving the local economy is still in the "sufficient" category. The existence of whitewater rafting tourism has made a significant contribution to increasing community income through culinary businesses, transportation services, and equipment rentals, but the impact has not been felt evenly. This is influenced by suboptimal community participation, limited facilities and infrastructure, minimal tourism promotion, lack of diversification of tourist attractions, and suboptimal support from the local government.

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