


Youth-Led Community-Based Tourism as a Catalyst for Destination Image Reconstruction: Evidence from Wane Beach, Indonesia

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Article History	Abstract
Received: 27 April 2026 Accepted: 10 June 2026 Published: 27 June 2026	<p><i>This study examines the transformation of Wane Beach in Bima Regency from a poorly-managed and insecure area into an emerging tourist destination. The purpose of this research is to analyze the revitalization process through a community-based tourism framework. The research employs a qualitative method with a case study design, focusing on the voluntary initiatives and collective actions spearheaded by local youth from Tolotangga and Tolouwi Villages. The results show that the transformation was achieved through a series of tangible, community-driven improvements. These included enhancing cleanliness, organizing parking areas and micro-enterprise stalls, providing basic facilities, constructing a prayer room, and strengthening security and visitor hospitality systems. The study concludes that the community-based tourism approach, fueled by the awareness and concern of local youth, has effectively reshaped both the image and reality of Wane Beach. This shift has turned a once-neglected location into a safe and comfortable destination, generating new economic prospects for the local community. The primary novelty of this research lies in documenting a grassroots, youth-led model for destination turnaround, demonstrating how community initiative can establish a foundational framework for sustainable tourism development without relying on top-down interventions.</i></p>
	<p>Keywords: youth-led tourism initiative, community-based tourism, destination image, social capital, digital storytelling</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Tourism development in Indonesia has long been characterized by a paradox: destinations with significant natural and cultural assets often struggle to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. While tourism is expected to stimulate local economic growth, many destinations continue to face governance weaknesses, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and negative destination images that reduce their competitiveness (Rahman & Suryawan, 2025; Yahya et al., 2025). This challenge is particularly evident in coastal tourism areas, where the quality of visitor experiences is strongly influenced by safety, accessibility, environmental management, and community engagement. Consequently, recent tourism scholarship has increasingly questioned the effectiveness of conventional top-down development approaches and emphasized the importance of local participation, collective

action, and community empowerment as foundations for sustainable tourism development (Ding et al., 2023; Alcoriza & Policarpio, 2023; Pramono & Juliana, 2025).

This shift has strengthened the relevance of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which views local communities not merely as beneficiaries of tourism but as active agents who participate in planning, managing, and controlling tourism resources. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that destinations with strong local leadership, social cohesion, and institutional support tend to achieve more sustainable tourism outcomes because communities possess greater ownership of development processes and benefits (Soesanta et al., 2023; Surata et al., 2024). Nevertheless, much of the existing CBT literature focuses on relatively successful destinations that already enjoy positive reputations, established governance structures, or external support mechanisms. As a result, the literature provides limited insight into how communities initiate tourism development under conditions characterized by severe social stigma, weak governance, and low destination attractiveness.

A similar limitation can be observed in destination branding studies. Existing research generally examines branding strategies aimed at strengthening or repositioning already recognized tourism destinations through marketing communication and digital promotion (Tran & Rudolf, 2022; Chen & Kim, 2025). Although these studies highlight the importance of narrative construction and image management, they often overlook the underlying social processes through which communities transform negative perceptions into positive destination identities. In other words, destination recovery is frequently treated as a communication challenge rather than a broader process involving social mobilization, collective action, and community resilience. Consequently, the relationship between community empowerment, stigma reduction, and destination transformation remains insufficiently theorized.

The case of Wane Beach in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, offers an opportunity to address this gap. Located on the southern coast of Bima, Wane Beach possesses considerable tourism potential, including attractive coastal scenery, surfing opportunities, and relatively preserved natural resources. However, for many years the destination was associated with theft, extortion, and inadequate tourism facilities, resulting in a persistent negative image and low visitor confidence. The communities surrounding the destination, particularly those in Tolotangga and Tolouwi Villages, relied largely on agriculture, fisheries, and small-scale trading, while tourism remained underdeveloped despite its economic potential. This situation illustrates how negative stigma can become a significant barrier to destination development, even when natural tourism resources are abundant.

In response to these conditions, local youth initiated a grassroots movement aimed at transforming both the physical condition and public image of Wane Beach. Through voluntary environmental clean-up activities, construction of basic tourism facilities, community-based security initiatives, fundraising efforts, and strategic use of social media, local actors collectively challenged the destination's negative reputation and promoted a new narrative centered on safety, sustainability, and community participation. Importantly, this transformation emerged primarily from local initiatives supported by community organizations and village authorities rather than through large-scale government intervention.

The case therefore provides an example of how collective community action can compensate for governance limitations and facilitate destination recovery.

Despite growing scholarly interest in CBT and tourism resilience, two important gaps remain. First, limited research has examined how tourism development emerges in destinations burdened by long-standing negative stigma and social insecurity. Existing studies predominantly investigate destinations that already possess favorable reputations or institutional readiness for tourism development (Devi et al., 2023; Marsuki et al., 2025; Gayo et al., 2025). Second, although youth participation is frequently acknowledged in tourism development, the literature rarely conceptualizes youth as transformative agents capable of initiating and sustaining destination recovery through collective action. Most CBT studies focus on community participation in general, while the specific mechanisms through which youth mobilize social capital, reconstruct destination narratives, and strengthen community resilience remain underexplored.

Addressing these gaps, this study proposes a conceptual perspective of community-driven stigma transformation, which explains destination recovery as a process generated through the interaction of social capital, collective action, community-based security, physical revitalization, and strategic communication. Rather than viewing destination image reconstruction solely as a marketing activity, this perspective conceptualizes destination recovery as a resilience-building process rooted in local agency and community empowerment. In doing so, the study extends Community-Based Tourism theory by positioning youth not merely as participants or beneficiaries but as key actors capable of initiating institutional and social transformation in contexts characterized by weak formal governance.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following main research question: How did local youth utilize Community-Based Tourism principles to transform Wane Beach from a negatively perceived destination into an emerging tourism attraction? To provide a deeper analytical understanding, three sub-questions are also examined: (1) How was the process of destination transformation initiated and sustained by local youth? (2) What forms of social capital, collective action, and community participation contributed to the transformation process? and (3) How did physical revitalization, community-based security, and strategic communication interact to reshape the destination's image and resilience?

Based on these questions, this study adopts a conceptual framework that views destination transformation as a dynamic process linking community agency, collective action, destination revitalization, image reconstruction, and tourism resilience. Through the case of Wane Beach, the study contributes to tourism theory by advancing the concept of community-driven stigma transformation and providing empirical evidence on how youth-led collective action can facilitate sustainable destination recovery in marginalized coastal communities. The findings are expected to enrich ongoing discussions on Community-Based Tourism, tourism resilience, destination branding, and participatory governance, particularly in developing-country contexts where local communities often face significant structural constraints.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design with a participatory approach to investigate the transformation of Wane Beach in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, from a negatively stigmatized “red zone” into an emerging tourism destination. A qualitative case study was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena within their real-life context, particularly where community initiatives, local leadership, and collective action play central roles in destination transformation (Rashid et al., 2019). The participatory perspective was adopted to capture local experiences and community agency throughout the revitalization process, reflecting contemporary community development scholarship that emphasizes collaboration and grassroots involvement as key drivers of sustainable transformation (Banda, 2025).

The study was conducted in Tolotangga and Tolouwi Villages, the communities directly involved in the revitalization of Wane Beach since 2022. Participants were selected through purposive sampling followed by snowball sampling to identify additional actors who played significant roles in the transformation process. The purposive sampling criteria included: (1) direct involvement in Wane Beach revitalization activities since 2022; (2) participation in planning, decision-making, implementation, or promotion activities; (3) knowledge of the historical conditions of Wane Beach before and after revitalization; and (4) willingness to participate in the research. Snowball sampling was subsequently employed to identify other influential actors recommended by initial informants.

A total of 18 participants were involved in the study to ensure representativeness across stakeholder groups and role diversity. These consisted of eight youth leaders and volunteers who initiated and coordinated revitalization activities, three members of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), two village government representatives, three local micro-enterprise actors operating tourism-related businesses, and two community elders who provided historical perspectives regarding the destination's development. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 58 years and included both male and female community members. Such diversity was intentionally sought to capture multiple perspectives regarding the emergence, implementation, and outcomes of the revitalization movement.

Primary data were collected between January and April 2026 through participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participatory observation was conducted during community clean-up programs, tourism facility construction activities, promotional events, and community meetings. This immersive engagement enabled the researcher to observe interactions, collective decision-making processes, and forms of community participation directly. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with all 18 participants. Interview sessions lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, with an average duration of approximately 65 minutes. The interview protocol explored participants' experiences, motivations, perceptions of destination stigma, revitalization strategies, challenges encountered, and perceived impacts of the transformation process.

To complement primary data, the study incorporated extensive secondary sources, including village administrative records, organizational documents, tourism development

reports, fundraising records, photographs, promotional materials, and social media content, particularly Facebook posts documenting the revitalization process. This triangulated approach is consistent with contemporary qualitative research emphasizing the integration of lived experiences, documentary evidence, and digital traces to achieve a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena (Jason & Glenwick, 2016; Bryda & Costa, 2023). Furthermore, the inclusion of campaign artifacts, visual materials, and community-generated cultural products reflects recent developments in digital ethnography and community studies that recognize material and symbolic artifacts as important sources for understanding collective identity and social mobilization.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis began with transcription and familiarization of interview recordings, field notes, and documentary materials. During the data condensation stage, open coding was conducted to identify meaningful units of information related to community participation, youth leadership, stigma transformation, destination branding, social capital, and tourism development. Similar codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories through axial coding, enabling the identification of relationships among concepts and patterns across stakeholder narratives.

The categorized data were then organized into matrices, chronological timelines, and thematic displays to facilitate interpretation and comparison across different participant groups. Through an iterative process of constant comparison, several overarching themes emerged, including youth-led collective action, community-based security initiatives, physical revitalization, social media-driven image reconstruction, stakeholder collaboration, and tourism-related socio-economic impacts. These themes formed the analytical framework for understanding how Community-Based Tourism (CBT) principles were translated into practical actions and sustained community engagement.

The final stage involved interpretation and verification of findings through continuous comparison between interview data, observational records, and documentary evidence. Member checking was conducted with selected key informants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations and ensure that the findings reflected participants' experiences and perspectives. Methodological triangulation, source triangulation, and prolonged engagement in the field were employed to strengthen credibility, dependability, and confirmability. This rigorous analytical procedure aligns with contemporary qualitative research standards that advocate combining experiential and documentary evidence to enhance trustworthiness and analytical depth (Cena et al. (2024). Moreover, the emphasis on a transparent and replicable analytical framework responds to recent calls in tourism research for methodological approaches capable of capturing the complex dynamics of collective agency, place-making, and community-driven destination development (David & Matorel; 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community Agency and Destination Transformation in a Stigmatized Tourism Area

The findings reveal that the transformation of Wane Beach represents more than a simple improvement in tourism facilities; it reflects a broader process of community-driven

destination recovery in which local actors successfully altered both the physical reality and the social meaning attached to the destination. Prior to the intervention, Wane Beach was widely recognized as a “red zone” characterized by insecurity, weak governance, and the absence of basic tourism infrastructure. Frequent reports of robbery, vehicle theft, and illegal levies created a persistent perception of risk among visitors, discouraging tourism activities and limiting local economic opportunities. In destination studies, such conditions are commonly associated with tourism stigmatization, whereby negative narratives become deeply embedded in public perception and subsequently influence travel decisions more strongly than the destination’s actual physical potential (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018; Setiawan et al., 2024). The Wane Beach case demonstrates that the primary challenge was therefore not only the lack of facilities but also the existence of a socially constructed image that continuously reproduced visitor reluctance.

Table 1. Conditions Before and After Community Intervention

Aspect	Initial Condition (Red Zone)	Current Condition (Post-Community Initiative)	Supporting Evidence
Security	Rampant robbery, vehicle theft, and illegal levies	Volunteer security team, organized parking, and visitor assistance	Interviewees reported a significant decline in security incidents and increased visitor confidence.
Basic Facilities	No mushola, inadequate toilets, no waste bins, and no signage	Mushola, waste bins, tourism signage, and MSME stall markers provided	Field observations showed improved visitor comfort and convenience.
Management & Governance	No formal management or coordination	Establishment of Pokdarwis and coordination with village authorities	Community members reported better organization and tourism management.
Tourist Visitation	Low visitation due to negative image and safety concerns	Approximately 500 visitors on peak days and 3,000 visits over six weekends	Based on community monitoring and parking records.
Destination Image	Known as an unsafe “red zone destination”	Recognized as an attractive and community-managed destination	Interviews indicated a positive shift in public perception, reinforced by social media exposure.
Local Economic Impact	Limited tourism-related income	Growth of MSMEs, food stalls, and parking services	Residents reported increased economic opportunities from tourism activities.

Source: Authors' analysis based on interviews, observations, and community records, 2026.

The before-and-after comparison presented in Table 1 indicates substantial improvements across several dimensions, including security, infrastructure, governance, destination image, visitor numbers, and local economic activity. However, these changes should not be interpreted merely as independent outcomes. Rather, they formed an interconnected transformation process in which improvements in one-dimension reinforced progress in others. Security improvements, for instance, increased visitor confidence; growing visitation generated incentives for infrastructure development; improved facilities enhanced visitor satisfaction; and positive visitor experiences subsequently strengthened the destination’s reputation through social media exposure. This mutually reinforcing relationship suggests that

destination recovery emerged through a cumulative process rather than through a single intervention, supporting contemporary perspectives that tourism resilience is produced through interactions among social, institutional, and environmental systems rather than isolated development programs (Aquino, 2025; Giandomenico, 2025).

Among the observed changes, security emerged as the foundational catalyst for destination recovery. Interview findings consistently indicate that before the intervention, fear of criminal activity constituted the principal barrier preventing tourism growth. The establishment of volunteer-based security teams therefore served not only as a practical mechanism to reduce crime but also as a symbolic intervention aimed at rebuilding trust. This distinction is important because tourism destinations are often evaluated by visitors through perceived rather than objective risk. Even when actual crime rates decline, destinations may continue to suffer from negative reputations if public perceptions remain unchanged. In the case of Wane Beach, community-led security initiatives addressed both dimensions simultaneously by reducing opportunities for criminal behavior while providing visible evidence that local residents were actively protecting visitors. This finding reinforces previous research emphasizing that perceived safety is one of the strongest determinants of destination attractiveness and travel behavior (Setiawan et al., 2024). More significantly, the case suggests that community-based security can function as an effective form of destination branding by communicating responsibility, hospitality, and collective ownership to potential visitors.

The development of basic tourism infrastructure further accelerated this recovery process. Facilities such as a mushola, waste disposal units, tourism signage, parking arrangements, and designated spaces for local micro-enterprises improved visitor convenience and enhanced the overall tourism experience. While these interventions required relatively modest financial resources, their significance extends beyond their physical function. Within the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) framework, infrastructure development reflects the community's capacity to convert local knowledge and collective labor into tangible tourism assets (Jackson, 2025; Pikardo et al., 2024; Feriyadin et al., 2024). The findings therefore challenge assumptions that tourism competitiveness depends primarily on large-scale capital investment. Instead, they indicate that strategic, community-led improvements targeting visitors' immediate needs can substantially increase destination attractiveness, particularly in emerging rural destinations with limited resources.

The establishment of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) represents another critical dimension of the transformation process. Prior to the intervention, tourism activities operated informally and lacked coordination among stakeholders. The creation of Pokdarwis introduced an institutional structure capable of organizing community participation, coordinating tourism-related activities, and facilitating collaboration with village authorities. From an analytical perspective, this institutional development is significant because it transformed individual acts of volunteerism into a more sustainable governance arrangement. Existing CBT literature consistently identifies local institutions as essential mechanisms for maintaining collective action, resolving conflicts, and ensuring continuity beyond charismatic leadership (Aquino, 2025; Giandomenico, 2025). The Wane Beach experience supports this argument by demonstrating that community enthusiasm alone is insufficient for long-term

tourism development unless supported by organizational structures capable of coordinating and sustaining collective efforts.

Evidence of the destination's recovery is also reflected in visitor growth. Community monitoring records and parking management data indicate that Wane Beach attracted approximately 500 visitors during peak visitation days and accumulated around 3,000 visits over six consecutive weekends following the revitalization initiatives. Although these figures should be interpreted as community-generated estimates rather than official tourism statistics, they nevertheless provide an important indicator of changing visitor behavior. More importantly, the increase in visitation cannot be explained solely by improved facilities or security measures. Interviews suggest that visitor growth resulted from the interaction of improved destination conditions and strategic communication efforts that successfully disseminated information regarding these changes. Thus, visitor growth serves not only as an outcome indicator but also as evidence that the destination's new image had begun to gain public acceptance.

A particularly distinctive aspect of the Wane Beach transformation concerns the role of digital communication in reconstructing destination image. Community members actively utilized social media to challenge the long-standing negative narratives associated with the area. One notable strategy involved disseminating the provocative slogan, "Don't go to Wane, it's dangerous!", which employed reverse psychology to generate curiosity and online engagement. From a destination branding perspective, this approach illustrates how communities can strategically appropriate negative stereotypes and transform them into opportunities for narrative reconstruction. Rather than directly denying the destination's past reputation, the campaign acknowledged public perceptions while inviting audiences to reassess them through direct experience. This finding supports the argument that destination images are socially constructed and continuously negotiated through communication processes, storytelling practices, and shared experiences (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018; Tran & Rudolf, 2022; Chen & Kim, 2025). However, the effectiveness of this strategy was largely dependent upon the existence of genuine improvements on the ground. The case therefore highlights that successful destination branding requires alignment between communicated narratives and actual visitor experiences.

The findings further reveal that social capital functioned as the underlying resource enabling all dimensions of transformation. Trust, cooperation, reciprocity, and a shared sense of ownership enabled local residents to mobilize labor, coordinate activities, and maintain collective commitment despite limited financial resources. Youth groups from Tolotangga and Tolouwi Villages played a particularly influential role in sustaining this process by acting as mobilizers, coordinators, promoters, and guardians of the destination. Their involvement extends existing CBT literature, which traditionally positions local communities as beneficiaries and participants, by demonstrating that youth can function as transformative agents capable of initiating and sustaining destination recovery (Pramono & Juliana, 2025; Purnomo, 2025). The statement from one participant "We started from zero, only with the awareness that this beach is ours and could bring benefits if managed properly" illustrates how

community ownership became a motivational force driving long-term participation and resilience.

Overall, the Wane Beach case demonstrates that destination revitalization is best understood as a process of community-driven stigma transformation rather than merely a program of tourism development. The findings indicate that the recovery of a stigmatized destination requires simultaneous interventions in security, governance, infrastructure, communication, and community participation. These dimensions interact to gradually replace negative perceptions with positive experiences and renewed public trust. The study therefore contributes to the CBT literature by providing empirical evidence that local communities can serve as transformative actors capable of reversing negative destination trajectories through collective action and social capital. Furthermore, it extends destination image theory by showing that image reconstruction is most sustainable when rooted in tangible improvements to destination conditions rather than promotional activities alone. Ultimately, the transformation of Wane Beach illustrates how grassroots initiatives can convert a destination marked by insecurity and decline into a more resilient, attractive, and economically productive tourism destination while strengthening local empowerment and community cohesion.

Local Youth as Transformative Agents in Community-Based Tourism Development

The transformation of Wane Beach illustrates that destination recovery in stigmatized tourism areas is not merely the result of infrastructure improvement but is fundamentally driven by the mobilization of local social capital and collective agency. Rather than functioning as passive beneficiaries of tourism development, local youth emerged as transformative actors who initiated, coordinated, and sustained the revitalization process. Their involvement demonstrates how Community-Based Tourism (CBT) can evolve beyond a participatory framework into a mechanism of community empowerment, where local actors exercise substantial control over decision-making, resource mobilization, and destination management (Busaini et al., 2020; Feriyadin et al., 2025, 2022; Feriyadin, Anisa, et al., 2024; Feriyadin, Marswandi, et al., 2024; Aquino, 2025).

The significance of youth participation in Wane Beach lies not only in the activities they conducted but also in their ability to generate trust, strengthen social cohesion, and reconstruct the destination's social identity. The voluntary nature of their involvement indicates that intrinsic motivation and collective responsibility served as the primary drivers of change. This finding supports Widiartanto et al. (2022), who argue that long-term sustainability of CBT initiatives depends more on social capital, community commitment, and shared values than on external financial assistance. In the Wane context, collective action emerged as a response to perceived governance gaps, where community members assumed responsibilities traditionally associated with formal tourism authorities.

The youth-led initiatives also reveal the multidimensional character of community resilience. Environmental clean-up activities, facility construction, security enhancement, MSME development, and destination promotion were not isolated interventions but mutually reinforcing strategies aimed at rebuilding both the physical condition and social reputation of the destination. The establishment of volunteer-based security mechanisms was particularly

significant because it directly addressed the source of Wane Beach's negative stigma. By improving visitor safety and creating a welcoming environment, local actors transformed public perceptions and restored trust, reflecting the importance of security in destination image recovery as emphasized by Avraham (2016). This suggests that destination branding in emerging tourism areas cannot rely solely on promotional campaigns but must be supported by tangible improvements in visitor experience and community governance.

Furthermore, the diversity of roles assumed by local stakeholders demonstrates that tourism transformation was achieved through complementary forms of leadership and social capital. Ruslan (Ompu Jalo), for example, played a critical role in mobilizing community participation and external networks, illustrating the importance of bridging social capital in facilitating collective action. Juliansyah Dermawan strengthened connections between grassroots initiatives and government institutions, representing linking social capital that enabled local initiatives to gain legitimacy and access broader support systems. Meanwhile, Fiqraman Al Munawar institutionalized community efforts through the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), ensuring that voluntary actions evolved into more structured governance arrangements capable of supporting long-term tourism development.

Equally important are the contributions of actors whose roles are often overlooked in tourism development studies. Irma Daniati's involvement in coordinating local culinary services highlights how women and household-based enterprises contribute to expanding the local tourism value chain and increasing community-wide benefit distribution. Didi Supriadin's responsibility for documentation and visitor data collection illustrates the emergence of accountability and evidence-based management practices within a community-driven tourism model. Similarly, Ajhar (Bung Emon) demonstrates how digital storytelling and visual communication can function as strategic tools for destination branding, enabling local communities to challenge negative narratives and construct new representations of place. These contributions collectively indicate that destination transformation is not dependent on a single leader but rather on the interaction of multiple actors performing complementary functions within a shared vision of community development.

From a broader theoretical perspective, the Wane Beach case extends existing CBT literature by demonstrating that youth can act not merely as participants in tourism activities but as institutional entrepreneurs capable of initiating social change and destination recovery. Unlike many CBT cases where communities operate within already established tourism systems (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; Prayitno et al., 2024), Wane Beach illustrates how local actors can create governance structures, rebuild destination legitimacy, and generate tourism opportunities from a context characterized by negative stigma and limited institutional support. This process highlights the importance of endogenous leadership, social capital mobilization, and collective agency as fundamental mechanisms through which marginalized communities can reclaim control over local development pathways and foster long-term tourism resilience (Pribudi & Supardal, 2024; Yahya, Nawawi, et al., 2025).

Table 2. Profiles, Roles, and Analytical Contributions in the Transformation of Wane Beach

Name	Main Role and Contribution	Analytical Interpretation
Ruslan (Ompu Jalo)	Key figure in destination promotion and volunteer coordination; a former migrant worker who brought organizational experience and external networks.	Demonstrates the importance of community leadership and bridging social capital in mobilizing collective action. His experience outside the village facilitated knowledge transfer and strengthened local organizational capacity.
Juliansyah Dermawan	Acts as a liaison between the community, tourism office, and external stakeholders; actively promotes Wane Beach.	Represents linking social capital, connecting grassroots initiatives with formal institutions and external support systems. His role illustrates how community-based initiatives can gain legitimacy and wider recognition.
Fiqraman Al Munawar	Head of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis); responsible for destination management, area arrangement, and MSME development.	Reflects the role of local institutions in sustaining CBT initiatives by transforming informal community actions into structured tourism governance and economic empowerment programs.
Irma Daniati	Coordinates logistical needs, including the provision of fresh fish and support for local culinary services.	Highlights the contribution of women and local households in strengthening the local tourism value chain, ensuring that tourism benefits are distributed through community-based economic activities.
Didi Supriadin (Ijan Didi S)	Responsible for coordination, documentation, and reporting of tourism development progress, including visitor statistics.	Illustrates the significance of monitoring and accountability mechanisms in community-based tourism, providing evidence of progress and supporting adaptive management practices.
Ajhar (Bung Emon)	Produces visual documentation and supports operational activities at the destination.	Demonstrates the role of digital storytelling and place branding in reshaping destination image, helping transform Wane Beach from a stigmatized area into a more attractive tourism destination.

Source: Fieldwork and Author's Analysis, 2026.

Therefore, the stakeholder profiles presented in Table 2 should not be understood merely as a list of individual contributions but as evidence of how different forms of social capital, leadership, and community participation interact to produce transformative outcomes. The collective efforts of these actors reveal that successful destination recovery depends on the integration of community leadership, institutional collaboration, economic empowerment, security enhancement, and strategic communication, all of which are central principles of sustainable Community-Based Tourism development.

Community-Driven Stigma Transformation through Ironic Branding and Digital Storytelling

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Wane Beach transformation was the use of an ironic branding strategy embodied in the slogan “Don't Go to Wane, It's Dangerous!!!”. At first glance, the message appears contradictory to conventional destination marketing practices, which typically emphasize attractiveness, safety, and accessibility. However, the slogan deliberately employed reverse psychology by inviting audiences to question their existing assumptions about Wane Beach. Rather than directly denying the destination's long-standing negative reputation, local youth strategically appropriated the stigma and transformed it into a source of curiosity and engagement. In this context, the term “dangerous” no longer referred to crime or insecurity but symbolically conveyed the possibility that visitors would become emotionally attached to the destination and desire to return.

From a theoretical perspective, this approach can be understood through the lens of ironic branding and reverse psychology, where persuasive messages intentionally challenge audience expectations in order to generate cognitive dissonance and deeper message processing. By presenting an apparently negative statement that conflicts with conventional promotional language, the campaign encouraged audiences to reassess previously held perceptions and seek additional information. Such strategies have gained increasing attention in contemporary digital marketing because they can stimulate engagement, increase message memorability, and enhance online virality (Roxenius & Wikander, 2025). Nevertheless, ironic branding should not be viewed as universally effective. Its success depends heavily on audience familiarity with the context, cultural interpretation, and the availability of credible evidence that supports the intended meaning. Without these supporting elements, ironic messages risk reinforcing rather than dismantling negative stereotypes.

This critical perspective is particularly important in tourism destinations carrying strong negative stigma. In such contexts, reverse psychology may function as a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can successfully disrupt dominant narratives by attracting attention and encouraging audiences to reconsider established perceptions. On the other hand, if the audience lacks sufficient contextual understanding, the message may be interpreted literally, potentially reproducing the very negative image it seeks to challenge. García-roldán et al. (2025) emphasize that digital communication strategies are highly mediated by local cultural norms, audience characteristics, and platform dynamics, suggesting that ironic branding cannot simply be replicated across destinations without considering contextual factors. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Wane Beach campaign cannot be attributed solely to the slogan itself but rather to the broader ecosystem of community actions that gave credibility to the message.

The success of the campaign was fundamentally rooted in the integration of symbolic communication and tangible transformation. While the ironic slogan generated initial curiosity, the subsequent dissemination of visual evidence through social media provided validation for the emerging narrative. Local youth continuously shared images and videos of beach clean-ups, infrastructure improvements, community activities, tourism events, and security initiatives, enabling audiences to observe concrete changes occurring on the ground. This finding supports Tran & Rudolf (2022) argument that contemporary destination recovery increasingly depends

on the interaction between physical place-making and digital storytelling. In the case of Wane Beach, branding was not merely a communication exercise but a process of demonstrating authenticity through visible action.

Table 3. Community-Based Branding and Communication Strategy for Wane Beach

Strategic Aspect	Form of Implementation	Theoretical Foundation	Impact / Objective
Narrative Reframing through Ironic Branding (Reverse Psychology)	The campaign slogan <i>"Don't Go to Wane, It's Dangerous!!!"</i> intentionally employs irony, where the "danger" refers not to crime but to visitors becoming emotionally attached and wanting to return.	Reverse psychology and ironic branding strategies attract attention by creating cognitive dissonance and curiosity, encouraging audiences to reassess existing perceptions. Such approaches are effective in challenging negative destination stereotypes when supported by authentic experiences and credible communication.	Generating curiosity, increasing message virality, disrupting established negative narratives, and stimulating positive destination reconsideration.
Digital Storytelling and Social Media Advocacy	Intensive Facebook posts by local youth featuring coastal scenery, tourism activities, community engagement, and ongoing destination improvements.	Destination image is increasingly shaped through user-generated content and participatory digital storytelling, where local actors become active producers of destination narratives rather than passive recipients of external branding.	Replacing negative online discourse with positive destination representations and strengthening perceived attractiveness and safety.
Community Collaboration and Collective Action	Collaboration among youth groups, Pokdarwis, village governments, local entrepreneurs, and Turelli Bikers.	Community-Based Tourism (CBT) emphasizes stakeholder participation, collective ownership, and social capital as foundations for sustainable tourism governance and destination resilience.	Enhancing legitimacy, expanding communication networks, and strengthening public trust through visible community commitment.
Physical Revitalization and Evidence-Based Branding	Construction of public facilities, mosque development, organization of MSME stalls, environmental clean-ups, and community security patrols.	Destination branding becomes more credible when communication is supported by tangible improvements. Physical transformation provides experiential evidence that validates promotional claims.	Building visitor confidence, reducing perceived risk, and aligning destination image with actual conditions.
Cultural Identity and Place Meaning Construction	Promotion of the legend of Putri La Bibano and local values of <i>Maja Labo Dahu</i> through tourism narratives and community events.	Place branding literature highlights the importance of cultural authenticity, local identity, and storytelling in creating emotional attachment and destination differentiation.	Strengthening destination uniqueness, fostering emotional connections, and creating a distinctive tourism identity.

Source: Authors' Analysis, 2026.

The transformation can also be interpreted through the social constructionist framework of Berger and Luckmann, where social reality emerges through continuous processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. For many years, Wane Beach had been socially constructed as a dangerous “red zone,” a perception reproduced through community narratives and visitor experiences. The youth movement initiated a process of externalization by creating alternative narratives emphasizing safety, beauty, community solidarity, and environmental stewardship. These narratives subsequently became objectified through material symbols such as the construction of the Bahrun Kariandali Mosque, the establishment of MSME stalls, environmental improvements, and community-based security patrols. As these tangible changes were repeatedly communicated through Facebook and other digital platforms, broader audiences gradually internalized a new understanding of Wane Beach as an attractive and safe destination. This process supports the argument of Gravili & Rosato (2016) that destination identities are not fixed attributes but socially negotiated constructs continuously shaped through storytelling and collective interpretation.

Furthermore, the Wane Beach experience highlights the central role of community agency in destination branding. Unlike conventional top-down marketing campaigns, the rebranding process emerged organically from local actors who possessed intimate knowledge of the destination's challenges and potentials. The involvement of youth groups, Pokdarwis, village governments, local entrepreneurs, and the Turelli Bikers community created a collaborative branding network grounded in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) principles. Consistent with the findings of Sormin & Sihombing (2023), the active participation of local youth generated authentic destination narratives and strengthened community ownership of tourism development. The resulting destination image therefore reflected not only promotional objectives but also collective aspirations for social, economic, and environmental improvement.

Despite its success, the Wane Beach case also reveals important limitations of community-led branding initiatives. Much of the campaign relied on volunteerism, social commitment, and informal organizational structures. While these characteristics enabled flexibility and rapid mobilization during the early stages of destination recovery, sustaining such efforts over time may prove challenging without stronger institutional support, financial resources, and governance mechanisms. Consequently, the long-term resilience of community-based branding depends not only on creative communication strategies but also on the development of supportive institutional arrangements capable of maintaining momentum beyond the initial phase of enthusiasm.

Overall, the Wane Beach case demonstrates that ironic branding can serve as a powerful catalyst for destination image transformation when embedded within a broader process of physical revitalization, community participation, and strategic digital storytelling. The study therefore suggests that the effectiveness of reverse psychology in tourism branding does not stem from rhetorical novelty alone, but from its ability to stimulate public curiosity while being reinforced by credible evidence, collective action, and authentic community narratives.

Community-Driven Stigma Transformation through Collaborative Governance and Social Capital

The transformation of Wane Beach demonstrates that Community-Based Tourism (CBT) development is not solely the outcome of local participation but rather the result of dynamic interactions between community agency and broader stakeholder networks. While local youth initiated the revitalization process, the sustainability and acceleration of destination recovery were significantly strengthened through collaboration with external actors, including community organizations, local government institutions, business associations, and local residents. This finding suggests that successful tourism transformation requires not only bonding social capital within the community but also bridging social capital that connects local actors with wider networks capable of providing resources, knowledge, legitimacy, and promotional support.

Table 4. Multi-Stakeholder Contributions in Wane Beach Transformation

Stakeholder	Main Contributions	Immediate Outcomes	Analytical Interpretation
Turelli Biker's Community	Material donations, construction of a prayer room, social media promotion, technical assistance, and volunteer mobilization	Improved tourism facilities, broader destination exposure, and increased community motivation	The involvement of an external community network demonstrates the importance of bridging social capital, where connections beyond the local community provide additional resources, knowledge, and legitimacy. Their support accelerated destination recovery by linking local initiatives with wider public recognition and tourism promotion.
HIPMI of Bima City	MSME training, business mentoring, and provision of supporting facilities	Enhanced entrepreneurial capacity and tourism service quality	This contribution illustrates how local economic empowerment complements physical destination development. By strengthening community business skills, tourism benefits become more sustainable and align with CBT principles emphasizing local economic participation and benefit-sharing.
Tolotangga Village Government	Policy support, groundbreaking ceremonies, land arrangement, parking management, and coordination mechanisms	Improved governance, legitimacy, and operational stability	The village government's role highlights the importance of institutional support in sustaining grassroots initiatives. While the transformation originated from community action, formal governance structures provided legitimacy and regulatory support necessary for long-term destination management.

Youth Groups and Volunteers	Security patrols, environmental management, visitor services, and destination promotion	Improved safety, cleanliness, visitor satisfaction, and destination image	Youth acted as transformative agents rather than passive beneficiaries. Their collective action addressed critical barriers such as insecurity and environmental degradation, demonstrating how local agency can compensate for governance gaps and initiate destination recovery processes.
Local Community	MSME operations, participation in communal work (gotong royong), and preservation of local values	Increased local economic participation, social cohesion, and cultural sustainability	Community participation reflects the core principle of CBT, where tourism development is embedded within local social structures. Active involvement strengthened ownership, ensured equitable benefit distribution, and reinforced the destination's cultural authenticity.

Source: Authors' Analysis, 2026.

The involvement of the Turelli Biker’s Community illustrates how non-tourism actors can become strategic catalysts in destination development. Their contribution extended beyond material assistance and infrastructure support to include destination promotion and narrative construction through social media campaigns and cultural storytelling. This indicates that collaborative partnerships in tourism are increasingly characterized by co-creation processes in which stakeholders collectively generate value rather than merely transferring resources. Such findings support the argument of Paddison et al., (2024) that strong partnerships between local communities, supporting organizations, and public institutions are essential for sustainable tourism development. However, the Wane case also extends this perspective by demonstrating that informal community networks can play transformative roles traditionally associated with government agencies or tourism organizations. Unlike the stakeholder patterns identified by Fallon (2010) in Lombok, where tourism development was primarily supported by formal tourism actors, Wane reveals a more diverse collaborative structure in which social communities outside the tourism sector actively contribute to destination recovery and promotion. This finding reinforces the proposition of Dangi & Jamal (2016) that sustainable tourism increasingly depends on the ability of communities to mobilize diverse social assets and cross-sectoral partnerships.

Similarly, the involvement of HIPMI Bima highlights the importance of integrating economic empowerment into destination revitalization strategies. The provision of entrepreneurship training and business mentoring enabled local residents to strengthen their capacity to participate in tourism-related economic activities. This demonstrates that tourism recovery cannot be measured solely through physical improvements or increased visitation but must also be reflected in the community’s ability to capture economic benefits from tourism

development. The finding aligns with CBT principles emphasizing local ownership, equitable benefit distribution, and community welfare enhancement (Jackson, 2025). It further suggests that economic capacity-building serves as a critical mechanism through which tourism can contribute to long-term community resilience.

The role of the Tolotangga Village Government provides important insights into the relationship between grassroots initiatives and formal governance structures. Although the revitalization process emerged from community action, institutional support through policy facilitation, land management arrangements, and coordination mechanisms was crucial for ensuring continuity and legitimacy. This finding indicates that community-driven tourism development should not be interpreted as a substitute for government intervention; rather, it highlights the complementary relationship between local initiative and institutional governance. The success of Wane Beach therefore supports contemporary perspectives on participatory governance, where sustainable destination management emerges through collaboration between communities and formal institutions rather than through top-down planning alone.

Perhaps the most significant finding concerns the transformative role of local youth. Rather than functioning merely as participants or beneficiaries, youth acted as initiators, organizers, promoters, and agents of social change. Their activities addressed multiple dimensions of destination recovery simultaneously, including environmental rehabilitation, security improvement, visitor services, and image reconstruction. This expands existing CBT literature, which generally emphasizes community participation but gives limited attention to youth-led collective action as a driving force in destination transformation (Pramono & Juliana, 2025; Purnomo, 2025). The Wane experience demonstrates that youth possess the capacity to mobilize social capital, coordinate community resources, and create innovative responses to local development challenges, particularly in contexts characterized by weak formal tourism governance.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of youth leadership was the role of key figures such as Ruslan (Ompu Jalo) and Juliansyah Dermawan in reshaping public perceptions of Wane Beach through digital communication. Their efforts were not limited to organizing physical improvements but extended to rebuilding destination identity through strategic storytelling and social media advocacy. By continuously disseminating positive narratives about environmental improvements, community solidarity, and visitor experiences, they gradually replaced the long-standing stigma associated with the destination. This finding contributes to emerging discussions on digital storytelling and community-based destination branding, which emphasize the ability of local actors to influence tourism narratives through online platforms (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025). Furthermore, it resonates with the concept of digital grassroots place-making proposed by Xuan (2023), where communities actively use digital media to reclaim narrative control and shape place identity from the bottom up.

Collectively, these findings contribute to tourism scholarship by demonstrating that destination revitalization in marginalized regions is not merely a matter of infrastructure provision or regulatory intervention. Instead, the transformation of Wane Beach illustrates that social trust, collective efficacy, and positive narrative reconstruction constitute foundational

elements of sustainable tourism development. The findings support the argument of M. S.-U.-Rahman et al. (2021) that tourism development in peripheral regions should be understood through the lens of social and cultural capital rather than solely economic indicators. They also align with Higgins-desbiolles (2024), who advocates for regenerative tourism approaches that prioritize community well-being and social resilience. At the same time, the findings offer a critical complement to conventional tourism planning models that prioritize physical development and policy interventions Hall & Tewdwr-Jones (2020), suggesting that infrastructure investment alone may produce limited outcomes if not accompanied by efforts to restore social cohesion, trust, and community ownership. Consequently, the Wane Beach case proposes a community-driven stigma transformation model, in which destination recovery begins with the restoration of social confidence and collective identity before generating broader economic and tourism impacts.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as the Key to Transformation and Sustainability

The observed transformation of Wane Beach serves as a concrete manifestation of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) principles, fundamentally centered on empowering the local community as the primary agent and beneficiary of tourism development, resonating with Utami et al. (2023) foundational assertion that sustainable tourism should be planned and managed by locals. The initiative's core engine is a profound intrinsic motivation, exemplified by the youth group's declaration: "We are aware... that we have no personal interest in Wane; in fact, we spend our own money and resources for Wane... We just CARE!!!" This ethos reflects a high degree of place attachment and social capital, which identified as critical for sustainable community action. Contemporary research further validates this model; for instance, recent studies by Rop et al. (2023) emphasize that successful CBT hinges on strong communal bonds and shared values, while work by Dangi & Jamal (2016) highlights how volunteer-driven, non-materialistic motivations are pivotal in building resilient, community-owned tourism enterprises, distinguishing authentic CBT from more superficial participatory approaches. Thus, Wane Beach exemplifies how deep-seated social capital and altruistic place-care can operationalize theoretical CBT frameworks into tangible, sustainable outcomes.

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of tourism science by providing empirical evidence that youth-driven Community-Based Tourism (CBT) can serve as an effective and transformative solution even in contexts of financial constraint and nascent government support, as it demonstrates that motivated local youth can act as pivotal change agents who engineer both tangible physical repairs and, more crucially, profound shifts in a destination's social norms and external reputation. This aligns with Higgins-desbiolles (2024) who argue that tourism degrowth and alternative models often emerge from grassroots, pragmatic action rather than top-down planning, while the findings contrast with the common assertion that strong institutional frameworks are a prerequisite for successful CBT (Chatkaewnapanon & Lee, 2022; Sutomo et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the study's focus on youth agency specifically reinforces recent work by Moni et al. (2025), which highlights the unique capacity of younger generations to leverage digital tools and social networks to instigate rapid

perceptual change and destination recovery, underscoring that resourcefulness can effectively compensate for resource limitations in sustainable tourism development.

Therefore, while CBT has proven effective in the initiation and initial acceleration phases, close collaboration with the government and private sector is necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of this transformation, particularly in providing supporting infrastructure such as electricity and network signals, which remain challenges. This study not only confirms existing theories but also expands them by offering new insights into the role of community agency, the power of digital narratives, and contextual approaches in building sustainable and resilient tourism destinations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the youth-led Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiative at Wane Beach successfully transformed a destination previously stigmatized as a “red zone” into an emerging tourism destination through collective action, social capital mobilization, community-based security, environmental revitalization, and strategic digital promotion. Beyond its practical success, the study contributes theoretically to the CBT literature by demonstrating that youth can function not only as participants or beneficiaries but also as transformative agents capable of initiating and sustaining destination recovery in contexts characterized by weak formal governance. Furthermore, the study advances CBT scholarship by introducing the concept of *community-driven stigma transformation*, which highlights how tourism recovery involves the simultaneous reconstruction of physical conditions, destination image, social narratives, and public trust. These findings broaden existing understandings of CBT by linking community empowerment, social capital, resilience, and destination branding within a unified framework of sustainable tourism development.

From a practical and policy perspective, the Wane Beach experience offers a replicable model for other marginalized destinations seeking tourism recovery through local participation and collective ownership. Local and regional governments are encouraged to adopt collaborative governance approaches that support community-led initiatives through infrastructure development, digital connectivity, capacity-building programs, and youth empowerment policies. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its qualitative single-case design, which restricts the generalizability of findings, and by its focus on the specific socio-cultural context of Wane Beach. In addition, researcher interpretation may have influenced the analysis despite efforts to enhance credibility through data triangulation. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal and comparative approaches across different destinations to further examine the sustainability and broader applicability of community-driven stigma transformation within the Community-Based Tourism framework.

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