

BENEFITS AS DRIVERS OF RESIDENTS' POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: EVIDENCE FROM NGLANGGERAN, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a strategic approach to achieving sustainable tourism development because it positions local communities as the main actors in management and decision-making. In line with this concept, Nglanggeran Tourism Village in Yogyakarta represents one of the most successful implementations of the model; however, challenges remain in maintaining community support and ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits. This study aims to analyze the extent to which the benefits perceived by the community influence their attitudes toward sustainable tourism. A quantitative approach was employed through a survey of 350 respondents using the Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale (SUS-TAS). Four benefit-related variables were examined: dependence on tourism, proximity to tourism activities, economic benefits, and training experience. Data were analyzed using t-tests and one-way ANOVA at a significance level of 0.05. The results indicate that three variables, which are dependence on tourism, economic benefits, and training experience, significantly influence residents' positive attitudes toward sustainable tourism, whereas spatial proximity shows limited influence. In conclusion, the success of sustainable tourism at the local level largely depends on residents' perceptions of equitable benefit distribution, human resource capacity building, and the strengthening of collective values in destination management.

Keywords : community-based tourism, perceived benefits, residents' attitudes

A. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism has become an essential paradigm in the development of the modern tourism sector, as it seeks to balance economic gains, environmental preservation, and the social well-being of local communities (UNWTO, 2019). Within this context, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is regarded as an effective approach to ensuring community involvement as the main actor in destination management rather than merely being recipients of tourism impacts (ASEAN, (2022). Through CBT, local communities play an active role in planning, decision-making, and the equitable distribution of economic and social benefits derived from tourism (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

The CBT model is believed to strengthen the social and economic capacity of communities, foster a sense of ownership toward the destination, and ensure the sustainability of natural resources (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, (2021). In Indonesia, this approach has been implemented through the tourism village program, which serves as a national strategy for empowering rural communities by managing tourism based on local wisdom (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, (2019). One of the most successful examples of CBT implementation in Indonesia

is Nglanggeran Tourism Village, located in Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta, which has received recognition through the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Award (ASEAN, 2017) and the UNWTO Best Tourism Village Award (UNWTO, 2021).

The success of Nglanggeran as a community-based destination has been largely attributed to the active participation of its residents in managing natural resources and tourism activities (Putra & Damanik, 2021). Local people not only gain economic benefits through providing homestays, guiding services, and local products, but are also involved in conservation activities, training programs, and institutional capacity building through community organizations such as Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group). However, new challenges have emerged alongside the increasing intensity of tourist visits, including spatial inequality in the distribution of economic benefits, growing dependence on the tourism sector, and participation fatigue in several hamlets (Nugroho & Numata, (2021).

This phenomenon raises an important question about how local communities perceive the benefits they gain from tourism activities and to what extent these perceptions influence their support for destination sustainability. According to the Social Exchange Theory (Cook, 2015; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2017), residents are likely to support tourism development when the benefits they receive outweigh the costs or negative impacts they experience. Support for tourism is not only driven by economic gains but also by social benefits such as a sense of pride, enhanced capacity, and the strengthening of social networks (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2015).

Previous studies have shown that perceptions of economic benefits have a significant influence on community support for sustainable tourism (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Stone & Nyaupane, 2016). However, most of these studies have focused on urban or mass tourism contexts rather than rural, community-based destinations. In the context of CBT such as Nglanggeran, residents' motivation is not solely driven by financial gains but also by collective values and a sense of responsibility toward the community. Therefore, the relationship between perceived benefits and residents' attitudes toward sustainable tourism remains an important topic for further investigation.

Based on field observations, four key dimensions of benefits were identified as determinants of community perceptions: (1) dependence on tourism, (2) proximity to tourism activities, (3) economic benefits obtained, and (4) training or capacity-building experience. These four factors have the potential to influence how residents evaluate tourism sustainability. To examine this relationship, the study employed the Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale (SUSTAS) developed by Choi and Sirakaya (2005) as a measurement instrument to assess residents' attitudes toward the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the perceived benefits of tourism shape community support, as reflected in residents' attitudes toward sustainable tourism in Nglanggeran Tourism Village. Theoretically, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the application of Social Exchange Theory (SET) within the CBT context. Practically, the findings are expected to provide policy recommendations for destination managers and local governments to strengthen

community support through equitable benefit distribution and community capacity enhancement.

B. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design to analyze the relationship between perceived tourism benefits and residents' attitudes toward sustainable tourism. The quantitative method was chosen because it allows for an objective and measurable representation of community perceptions, while also testing the extent to which differences in perceived benefits influence residents' attitudes.

The research was conducted in Nglanggeran Tourism Village, located in Patuk District, Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region. This location was purposively selected as it represents one of the most successful CBT models in Indonesia and serves as a national best practice example. The village consists of five hamlets, which are Nglanggeran Wetan, Nglanggeran Kulon, Gunung Butak, Doga, and Karangsari, each of which has distinct social characteristics and varying levels of involvement in tourism activities.

The development of Nglanggeran Tourism Village began in 1999 when a local youth group initiated environmental conservation activities around the Ancient Volcano area, marking the early practice of CBT in the village. Following the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake, a new generation of youth revitalized community initiatives, leading to the establishment of the tourism village, the Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), and several supporting programs in 2008. The village reached its peak in 2014, attracting approximately 325,000 visitors per year. To manage environmental pressure and maintain visitor comfort, Pokdarwis implemented regulations to control tourist numbers, resulting in a gradual decline in visits starting in 2015. Nglanggeran received the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Award in 2017 and demonstrated strong resilience during the tourism downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In 2021, it gained further international recognition by earning the UNWTO Best Tourism Village Award and continues to serve as one of Indonesia's leading examples of successful community-based tourism practices (see Figure 1).

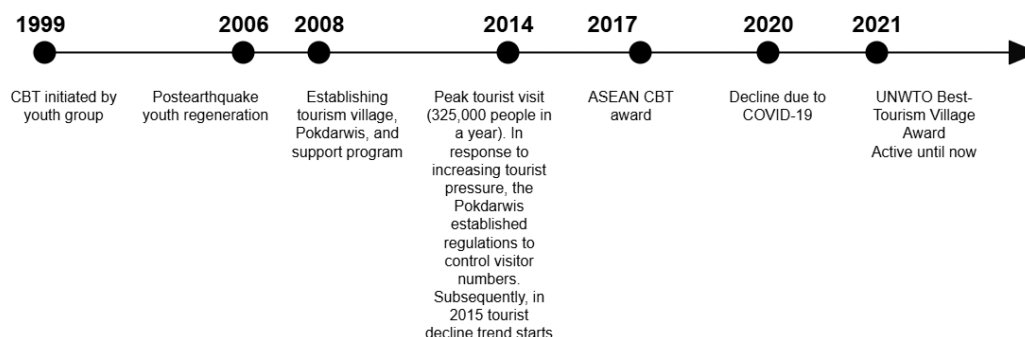


Figure 1. Key milestones of CBT development in Nglanggeran
Source: Author, 2025

Field data collection was conducted from January to March 2025 through direct surveys with the assistance of local enumerators. The study population consisted of all residents of Nglanggeran Village, totaling 2,860 individuals. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula with a five percent margin of error, resulting in 350 respondents. The selected participants were residents aged 17 years or older who had lived in the village for at least one year. A simple random sampling technique was applied to ensure that all residents had an equal chance of being selected as respondents.

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument adapted indicators from the SUSTAS developed by Choi and Sirakaya (2005). This scale was designed to measure residents' attitudes toward seven dimensions of sustainable tourism, namely economic benefit (EB), environmental sustainability (ES), long-term planning (LP), visitor satisfaction (VS), community participation (CP), community-centered economy (CCE), and perceived social cost (PSC). In this study, the total SUSTAS score was used as an indicator of residents' overall attitudes toward sustainable tourism.

Four perceived benefit variables were tested against the attitude scores, namely dependence on tourism, proximity to tourism activities, economic benefits, and training experience. Dependence on tourism refers to the extent to which residents' primary sources of income rely on the tourism sector. Proximity to tourism activities represents the distance between respondents' residences and the main tourism activity centers. Economic benefits reflect increased income or business opportunities generated by tourism development. Meanwhile, training experience indicates the level of community involvement in capacity-building activities, such as homestay management, tour guiding, or environmental management training.

The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure the clarity of items and their contextual relevance to local community conditions. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and 40 out of 44 SUS-TAS items were retained for further analysis. Descriptive analysis was applied to describe respondents' characteristics and their perception patterns of tourism benefits. Subsequently, inferential analysis was conducted to examine differences in residents' attitudes toward sustainable tourism based on the four perceived benefit factors. The independent-samples t-test was employed for variables with two categories, such as dependence on tourism and training experience, while the one-way ANOVA test was used for variables with more than two categories, such as spatial proximity and economic benefits. The significance level was set at a 95 percent confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Participation in the survey was voluntary after providing informed consent, and all personal data were kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Distribution of Residents' Attitudes toward Sustainable Tourism

The results of the SUSTAS measurement indicate that residents of Nglanggeran Tourism Village hold a positive attitude toward sustainable tourism. The overall mean score of 4.18 on a five-point scale demonstrates strong support for tourism

practices that consider economic, social, and environmental dimensions (see Figure 2).

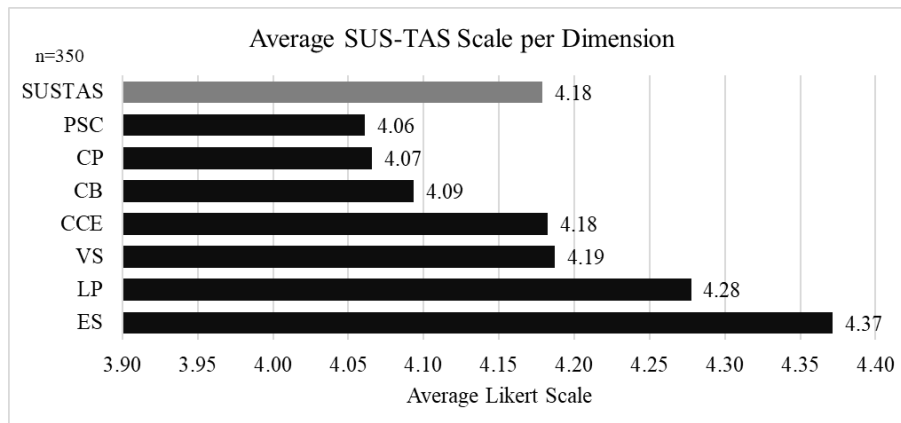


Figure 2. Average values on each dimension of SUSTAS
Source: Author, 2025

Among the seven dimensions measured, environmental sustainability obtained the highest mean score (4.37), indicating residents' strong awareness of the importance of environmental conservation. Other dimensions with high scores include economic benefit, visitor satisfaction, and community-centered economy, reflecting the community's positive perception of tourism's contribution to village well-being. Conversely, perceived social cost recorded the lowest score, although it remained within the positive category, suggesting that the negative impacts of tourism are not yet perceived as disruptive to residents' lives.

Most of the scores ranged between 4.0 and 5.0, with 4.0 as the mode value, demonstrating consistent positive attitudes across all dimensions (see Figure 3). These results reaffirm that the success of CBT in Nglanggeran is not solely driven by economic gains but also by social values such as cooperation, a sense of belonging, and strong collective participation among community members.

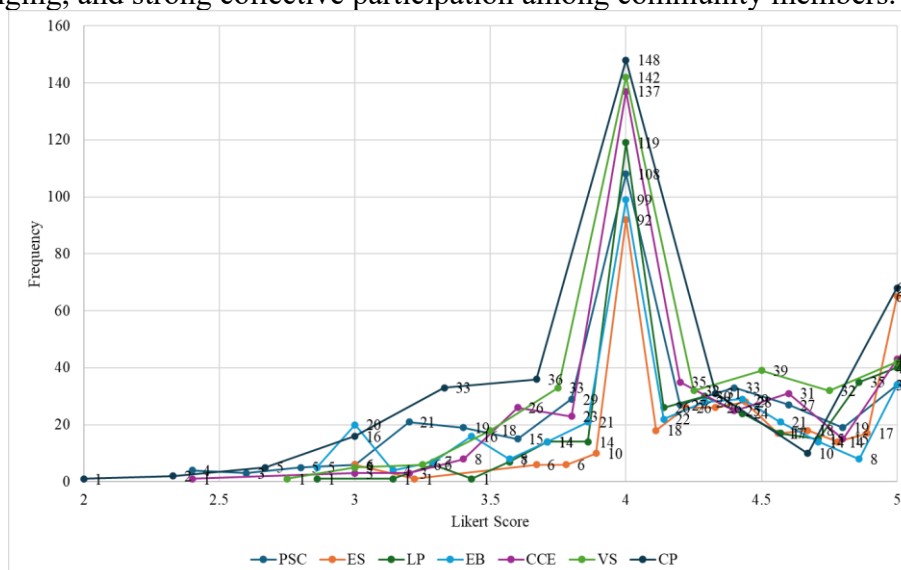


Figure 3. Distribution of grades given by respondents
Source: Author, 2025

2. Dependence on Tourism

The analysis results show that the level of residents' dependence on tourism has a significant influence on their attitudes toward sustainable tourism. Residents whose sources of income depend on the tourism sector, such as homestay operators, tour guides, and local vendors around the destination, recorded higher SUSTAS scores compared to those who are not directly dependent on tourism activities. The average SUSTAS score for the group dependent on tourism was 4.41, while the non-dependent group had an average of 4.18 (see Figure 4). The t-test significance value was 0.015, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups (see Table 1).

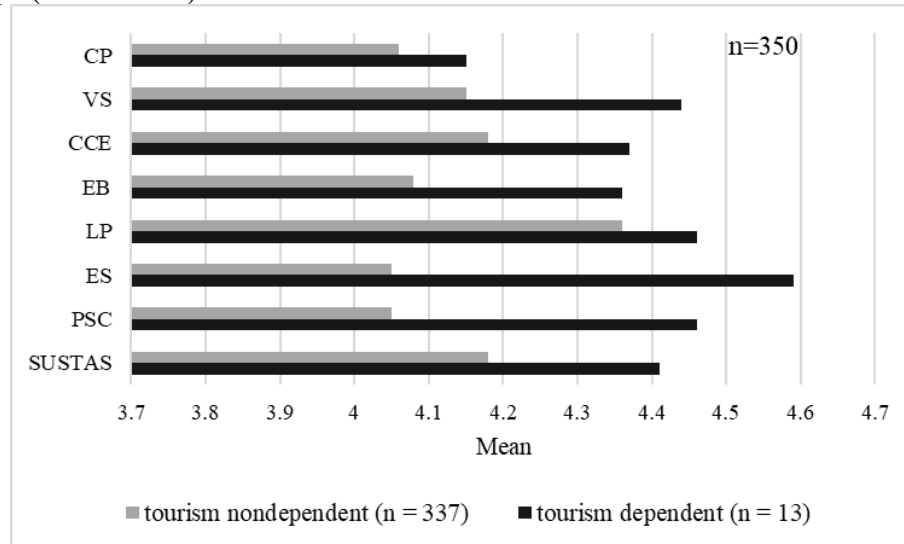


Figure 4. Mean comparison between tourism-dependent and non-dependent groups

Source: Author, 2025

Respondents working in the tourism sector demonstrated stronger support for sustainable practices because they directly experience the economic benefits generated by tourism activities. In contrast, those who do not have economic dependence on tourism tended to hold more neutral perceptions, although they generally remained supportive of tourism sustainability.

Table 1. Results of t-test and ANOVA on Perceived Tourism Benefits and Residents' Attitudes

Dimension	Sig. (p-value) *			
	Tourism dependency	Proximity to tourism activities	Economic benefits	Training experience
SUSTAS	0.015*	0.252	0.000*	0.003*
PSC	0.010*	0.000*	0.000*	0.001*
ES	0.008*	0.063	0.075	0.438
LP	0.106	0.007*	0.004*	0.212
EB	0.065	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*
CCE	0.133	0.734	0.099	0.286
VS	0.044*	0.004*	0.000*	0.016*
CP	0.593	0.118	0.338	0.981

Source: Author, 2025

These findings reinforce the view that economic dependence is a key driving factor behind community support for sustainable tourism management. However, a high level of dependence may also pose a risk of economic vulnerability when tourist arrivals decline. Therefore, diversifying sources of livelihood is essential to ensure that community well-being does not rely solely on the tourism sector.

3. Proximity to Tourism Activities

The analysis shows that the location of residents' homes in relation to the main tourism activity centers affects several dimensions of their attitudes toward sustainable tourism. The average SUSTAS scores varied among the hamlets: Doga (4.13), Nglanggeran Kulon (4.14), Nglanggeran Wetan (4.20), and Gunung Butak (4.23) (see Figure 5). Residents living closer to the main tourism centers, such as Nglanggeran Wetan and Gunung Butak, exhibited slightly more positive attitudes compared to those living farther away, such as in Doga.

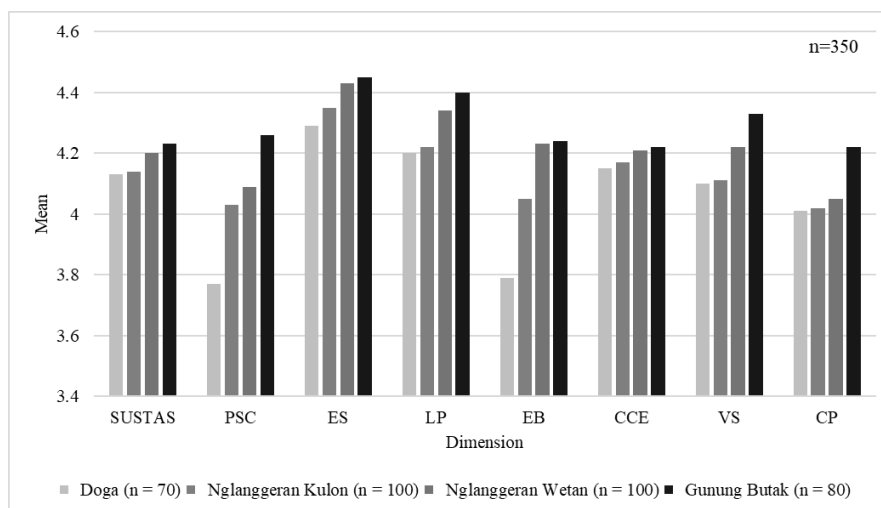


Figure 5. Average comparison between groups of residential locations

Source: Author, 2025

The results of the one-way ANOVA test show that significant differences were found in four dimensions: perceived social cost ($p = 0.000$), long-term planning ($p = 0.007$), economic benefit ($p = 0.000$), and visitor satisfaction ($p = 0.004$) (see Table 2). Meanwhile, other dimensions such as community participation, community-centered economy, and environmental sustainability did not show significant differences across hamlets.

Table 2. ANOVA test results between groups of residential locations

Dimension	F-value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
SUSTAS	1.368	0.252	Not significant
PSC	11.034	0.000*	Significant
ES	2.456	0.063	Not significant
LP	4.113	0.007*	Significant
EB	13.467	0.000*	Significant
CCE	0.427	0.734	Not significant
VS	4.567	0.004*	Significant
CP	1.972	0.118	Not significant

Source: Author, 2025

These findings indicate that the closer residents live to the main tourism activity centers, the greater their opportunities to participate in tourism-related economic activities and experience its benefits, while also directly observing the social impacts that arise. Nevertheless, the relatively small degree of variation suggests that communication and coordination among hamlets function effectively, allowing positive attitudes toward tourism to remain consistent throughout the village.

4. Economic Benefit

The analysis shows that economic benefits are the most significant factor shaping residents' positive attitudes toward sustainable tourism. The overall SUSTAS mean score among income-receiving groups was 4.29, which was higher than that of the non-income-receiving group (4.13) (see Figure 6). Statistical testing revealed a significant value of $p = 0.000$ (see Table 1), indicating a significant difference between residents who gain economic benefits from tourism activities and those who do not. In addition to the total SUSTAS score, several specific dimensions also showed significant differences, including perceived social cost, long-term planning, economic benefit, and visitor satisfaction.

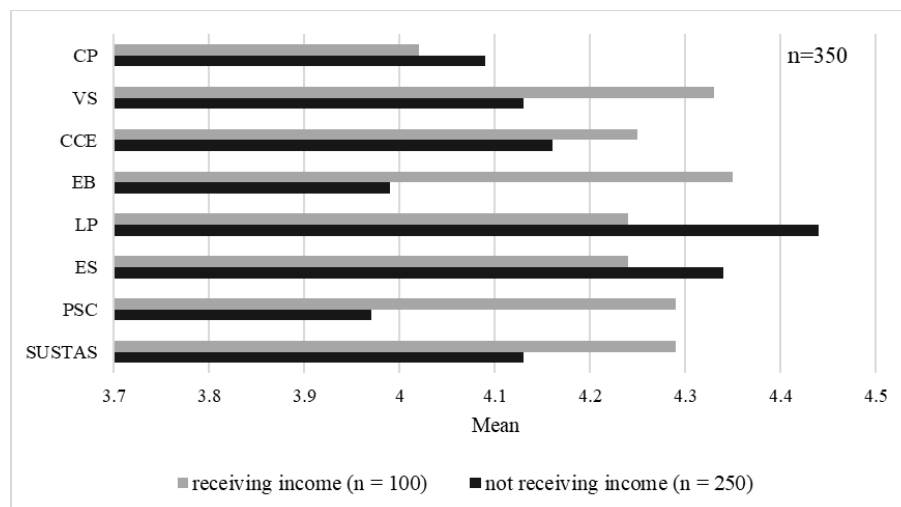


Figure 6. Average comparison between groups that earn additional income from tourism and those that do not

Source: Author, 2025

Respondents who earned additional income through tourism-related activities, such as homestay providers, tour guides, or souvenir vendors, recorded higher SUSTAS scores across almost all dimensions, particularly in economic benefit, visitor satisfaction, and long-term planning. This indicates that the experience of receiving direct benefits from tourism enhances residents' awareness of the importance of maintaining destination sustainability.

The economic benefits perceived by residents not only improve individual well-being but also strengthen collective contributions to public facilities, such as road maintenance, sanitation, and other community infrastructure funded by tourism revenues. Although some residents have not yet experienced direct economic gains, overall support for tourism remains high, as they perceive tourism to bring collective benefits to the village.

Therefore, ensuring an equitable distribution of economic benefits is crucial for maintaining long-term community support for tourism. When residents feel that tourism outcomes are distributed fairly, they are more motivated to participate actively and contribute to the sustainability of the destination.

5. Training Experience

The analysis shows that training experience has a significant influence on residents' positive attitudes toward sustainable tourism. Based on the results of the independent samples t-test, respondents who had participated in training programs recorded a higher average SUSTAS score (4.24) compared to those who had not (4.13) (see Figure 6), with a significance value of $p = 0.003$.

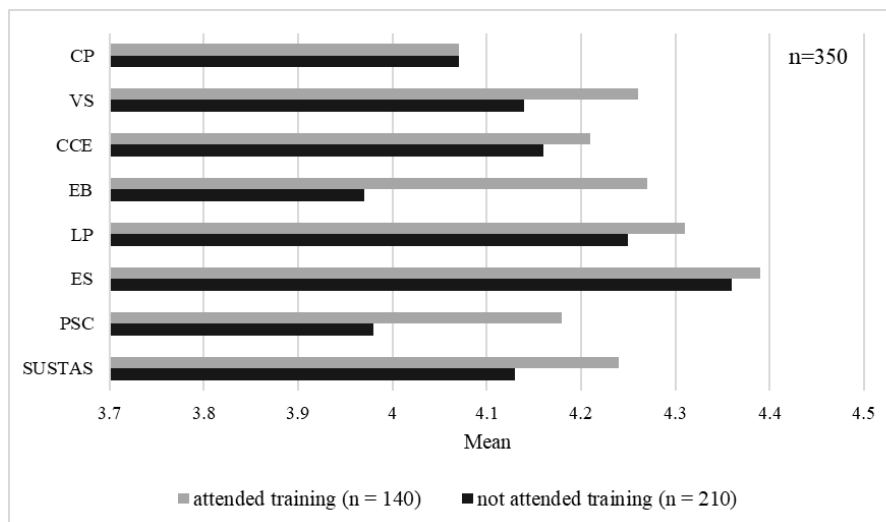


Figure 7. Average comparison between groups that had received training and those that had not
Source: Author, 2025

Significant differences were found in three dimensions: perceived social cost ($p = 0.001$), economic benefit ($p = 0.000$), and visitor satisfaction ($p = 0.016$) (see Table 1). This indicates that the training programs attended by residents have enhanced their understanding of the importance of managing social impacts, generating economic benefits, and improving the quality of tourism services. Meanwhile, dimensions such as environmental sustainability, long-term planning, and community participation did not show significant effects, suggesting the need for more in-depth and continuous training approaches.

Training activities provided to the community, such as homestay management, tour guiding, cleanliness, and guest service programs, have increased residents' awareness, technical skills, and sense of responsibility in tourism management. As individual capacities improve, the community becomes more prepared to take an active role in maintaining destination quality and participating in sustainable tourism planning.

Overall, these results confirm that capacity building through training serves as an essential instrument in strengthening community support for sustainable tourism.

With equitable and continuous training programs, residents do not merely act as beneficiaries but also become key drivers of tourism sustainability in Nglanggeran Tourism Village.

D. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that residents of Nglanggeran Tourism Village hold a positive attitude toward sustainable tourism, as reflected in the high SUSTAS scores across all dimensions. Such positive attitudes reaffirm the success of CBT implementation, which has fostered a sense of ownership, participation, and responsibility in local destination management.

The analysis of the four perceived benefit factors reveals that dependence on tourism, economic benefits, and training experience significantly influence residents' positive attitudes, whereas proximity to tourism activities shows a limited effect. Residents who receive direct economic benefits or have participated in training programs tend to exhibit stronger support for sustainability principles. This confirms that the greater the perceived benefits, the higher the likelihood of residents engaging actively in maintaining tourism continuity.

The findings also support the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that individuals will support a social activity when they perceive that the benefits outweigh the associated costs or negative impacts. In the context of Nglanggeran, community support for sustainable tourism emerges as a result of a balanced social exchange process between the economic and non-economic benefits they experience. Therefore, sustainable tourism can continue to thrive when residents perceive fairness, tangible benefits, and a positive reciprocal relationship between the community and the tourism system within their environment.

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