

Article

Empowering Rural Tourism Human Resources: Enhancing Hospitality and Public Speaking Skills for Destination Sustainability in Cikakak Village, Indonesia

Khikmah Nurhidayah ^{1,*}, Rahmat Kurniawan ¹, Jaya Purnama ¹, Suharman Larante ¹, Din Farisah ¹, Anita ¹, and Tugimin ¹

¹ Akademi Pariwisata Nusantara Tangerang 1; khikmahkurniawan77@gmail.com

* Correspondence: khikmahkurniawan77@gmail.com; Tel.: (optional; include country code; if there are multiple corresponding authors, add author initials) +xx-xxxx-xxx-xxxx (F.L.)

† Current address: Akademi Pariwisata Nusantara Tangerang.

‡ These authors contributed equally to this work.

Abstract: The development of village tourism relies heavily on the quality of human resources capable of providing excellent service and authentic tourist experiences. This study aims to strengthen the capacity of rural tourism human resources through a participatory workshop focusing on hospitality and public speaking in Cikakak Village, Sukabumi, Indonesia. Using a participatory approach, the program engaged 30 local tourism actors, including village tourism managers, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), local entrepreneurs, tour guides, and village youth. The intervention structured a five-stage process: needs identification, material preparation, interactive workshops, practical simulations (including storytelling and service scenarios), and comprehensive evaluation using pre- and post-test assessments, observation, and satisfaction questionnaires. The results demonstrated a significant increase in participants' competencies post-workshop, with hospitality understanding improving from 62% to 91% and effective communication skills rising from 58% to 88%. Furthermore, participants' confidence in delivering tourism information and public speaking boosted from 55% to 86%. Practical simulations showed enhanced abilities in welcoming visitors, handling inquiries, and communicating local cultural heritage through engaging storytelling techniques. This capacity-building program successfully transformed local community members from passive hosts into communicative and professional tourism actors. The study highlights that integrating hospitality concepts with public speaking skills provides a scalable framework for rural communities to enhance destination service quality, improve tourist satisfaction, and support sustainable rural tourism management.

Citation: Lastname, F.; Lastname, F.; Lastname, F. Empowering Rural Tourism Human Resources: Enhancing Hospitality and Public Speaking Skills for Destination Sustainability in Cikakak Village, Indonesia. *IMPACTIA* 2024, 1, 0. <https://doi.org/>

Keywords: Village Tourism, Human Resource Capacity, Hospitality, Public Speaking, Community Empowerment, Cikakak Village.

Received:

Revised:

Accepted:

Published:

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Research Context

Tourism has emerged as a strategic sector driving socio-economic growth, regional development, and community empowerment worldwide[cite: 4]. In developing economies, the expansion of tourism extends beyond generating regional revenue; it serves as a vital platform for local populations to participate actively in economic diversification by leveraging their territorial assets[cite: 4]. A prominent model of this development strategy is the concept of village tourism (or rural tourism)[cite: 4]. Village tourism represents an integrative framework that synthesizes natural landscapes, cultural heritage, traditional livelihoods, and creative community endeavors into a cohesive, value-added tourism product[cite: 4]. Distinct from traditional mass tourism, rural tourism models position the local community not merely as passive beneficiaries or peripheral workers, but as the

primary owners, managers, and drivers of destination development[cite: 4]. Consequently, the ultimate quality of the tourist experience, the reputation of the destination, and the long-term viability of the enterprise depend heavily on the frontline interaction between local hosts and visiting tourists[cite: 4].

In the contemporary globalized tourism landscape, consumer expectations have evolved significantly. Modern travelers increasingly seek authentic, meaningful, and emotionally engaging experiences rather than simple sightseeing or passive consumption of physical infrastructure[cite: 4]. While scenic attractions and physical amenities remain necessary baseline conditions, the perceived value of a visit is overwhelmingly shaped by the intangible dimensions of service quality, social climate, and interpersonal interactions[cite: 4]. Therefore, human resource capacity stands as a paramount determinant of destination competitiveness and sustainability in rural tourism settings[cite: 4]. Rural tourism practitioners require a dual set of competencies: technical skills pertaining to operational management, facility upkeep, and product delivery; and interpersonal skills encompassing warmth, active listening, cultural empathy, and effective communication[cite: 4].

1.2. Problem Statement and Contextual Gap

Despite the strategic importance of human resources, many emerging rural destinations face critical skill deficits among local operators[cite: 4]. Initial diagnostic observations and field consultations conducted in Cikakak Tourism Village, Sukabumi Regency, West Java, Indonesia revealed several operational bottlenecks related to community capacity[cite: 4]. First, there is a limited understanding among community members regarding standardized tourism service quality, as local practices rely primarily on informal and ad-hoc host habits[cite: 4]. Second, interpersonal communication with visitors from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds remains suboptimal and unstructured[cite: 4].

Third, a significant proportion of local actors, particularly youth and local guides, exhibit low public speaking confidence when presenting destination assets or interacting directly with tourist groups[cite: 4]. Fourth, rich local narrative assets—including oral histories, cultural heritage, and traditional practices—remain underutilized as structured storytelling elements in the visitor experience[cite: 4]. Although previous literature has explored rural tourism management and community-based training in isolation, there remains a lack of empirical evaluation regarding integrated, participatory models that simultaneously combine hospitality service standards and public speaking/storytelling competencies within emerging Indonesian rural contexts[cite: 4].

1.3. Theoretical Framework and Urgency of Digitalization

From a destination management and service marketing perspective, exceptional service delivery relies on two complementary competencies: operational hospitality and communicative storytelling[cite: 4]. Within academic discourse, hospitality represents a foundational philosophy centered on welcoming, respecting, and providing comfort and security to guests through warmth, empathy, care, and professionalism[cite: 4]. In rural tourism, authentic hospitality serves as a primary differentiator from standardized commercial lodging by transforming simple host-guest interactions into memorable social experiences[cite: 4].

Equally fundamental is the role of public speaking and structured communication in tourism[cite: 4]. Community members frequently fulfill multi-faceted responsibilities as tour guides, homestay operators, cultural facilitators, local vendors, and information providers[cite: 4]. Executing these roles effectively necessitates articulate verbal delivery, structural clarity, confident body language, and voice modulation[cite: 4]. Furthermore, incorporating storytelling techniques enables hosts to convey local history, cultural values, and traditional customs engagingly, thereby enhancing the educational value of the visit and fostering deeper visitor engagement[cite: 4]. Implementing structured, participatory

capacity-building workshops is therefore an urgent imperative to bridge these skill gaps, professionalize service delivery, and build community resilience[cite: 4].

1.4. Objectives and Contributions of the Study

To address these practical operational challenges, this community service project designed and evaluated a participatory capacity-building program centered on hospitality and public speaking in Cikakak Tourism Village, Sukabumi[cite: 4]. Executed in March 2026, the intervention engaged 30 key local tourism stakeholders—including village tourism managers, Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), local MSME operators, local tour guides, and village youth[cite: 4]. The specific objectives of this study are fourfold:

1. To enhance local community understanding of fundamental hospitality concepts and service excellence principles in rural tourism contexts[cite: 4].
2. To improve practical public speaking, effective communication, and storytelling techniques among local tourism actors[cite: 4].
3. To boost personal confidence among community members in interacting with visitors and delivering destination information[cite: 4].
4. To establish a sustainable foundation for community-driven destination management that reinforces professional, communicative, and long-term rural tourism development[cite: 4].

This study contributes to the literature on community-based tourism and rural human resource development by presenting empirical quantitative and qualitative evidence on the effectiveness of participatory training models[cite: 4]. Furthermore, it provides actionable insights for tourism policymakers and academic facilitators on empowering local host communities to achieve professional and sustainable destination management[cite: 4].

2. Methods

2.1. Study Site and Contextual Setting

This community service project was conducted in Cikakak Tourism Village, located within the Cikakak District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia[cite: 4]. Geographically, Cikakak Village possesses significant natural and cultural tourism potential, situated as part of the buffer zone for the UNESCO Global Geopark Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu[cite: 4]. The village features a diverse landscape comprising coastal lines, agricultural plantations, and cultural heritage assets[cite: 4]. Despite these inherent geographical advantages, local destination management remains in a developmental stage, characterized by informal operational structures and varying levels of service readiness among local residents[cite: 4]. The field intervention was formally executed in March 2026, serving as an intensive capacity-building initiative aimed at professionalizing community-based tourism operations[cite: 4].

2.2. Target Participants and Sampling Strategy

To ensure a comprehensive and representative impact across the village tourism ecosystem, a targeted purposive sampling strategy was employed[cite: 4]. The activity involved a total of 30 active participants who represent the primary frontline stakeholders in Cikakak's tourism economy[cite: 4]. The demographic distribution and operational roles of the participants are summarized in Table 1[cite: 4].

Including participants across these distinct operational categories ensured cross-functional dialogue during training modules[cite: 4]. For instance, experienced village tourism managers contributed operational insights regarding administrative challenges, while MSME operators shared real-world customer service encounters, and village youth brought dynamic perspectives on modern communication and promotional outreach[cite: 4].

Table 1. Demographic and Stakeholder Profile of Workshop Participants ($N = 30$)[cite: 4]

No	Stakeholder Category	Quantity	Operational Focus in Tourism
1	Village Tourism Managers	8	Destination administration, policy coordination, and facility upkeep[cite: 4].
2	Tourism Awareness Group (<i>Pokdarwis</i>)	10	On-field service coordination, visitor welcoming, and tour route management[cite: 4].
3	Local MSME Operators	7	Culinary services, souvenir production, and direct retail sales[cite: 4].
4	Village Youth Leaders	5	Creative promotion, digital media management, and assistant tour guiding[cite: 4].
Total		30	Integrated Community Representation [cite: 4]

2.3. Methodological Approach: Participatory Capacity Building

The intervention was designed based on a Participatory Action Learning approach[cite: 4]. Rather than treating local residents as passive recipients of theoretical knowledge, this approach engages community members as active co-creators of their tourism development strategy[cite: 4]. The participatory framework fosters adult learning through experiential exercises, group problem-solving, open dialogue, and immediate practical feedback[cite: 4]. This methodological choice ensures that training concepts are directly grounded in the daily realities, challenges, and socio-cultural context of Cikakak Village[cite: 4].

2.4. Implementation Stages of the Program

The project was executed across five sequential, interdependent phases to guarantee structural rigor and systematic competency development, as detailed below[cite: 4]:

2.4.1. Stage 1: Needs Identification and Baseline Assessment

Prior to designing the curriculum, the team conducted field observations and preliminary diagnostic interviews with community leaders and *Pokdarwis* executive members[cite: 4]. This preliminary assessment aimed to pinpoint specific operational vulnerabilities in daily tourist interactions[cite: 4]. The diagnostic findings identified four primary skill deficits[cite: 4]:

1. Limited understanding of standardized hospitality principles and service excellence[cite: 4].
2. Suboptimal interpersonal communication and lack of formal greeting protocols[cite: 4].
3. Low confidence and speech anxiety when addressing groups of visiting tourists[cite: 4].
4. Underutilization of local stories, cultural heritage, and ecological history during guided tours[cite: 4].

2.4.2. Stage 2: Curriculum and Module Preparation

Based on the identified diagnostic gaps, a specialized training curriculum was structured into two core thematic modules[cite: 4]:

- **Module A: Hospitality and Service Excellence in Rural Tourism:** Covered fundamental hospitality concepts[cite: 4]; the role of local communities as destination hosts[cite: 4]; service ethics and guest etiquette[cite: 4]; creating memorable visitor experiences through warmth and empathy[cite: 4]; and practical handling of visitor inquiries, special requests, and service complaints[cite: 4].

- **Module B: Public Speaking, Communication, and Storytelling:** Focused on principles of effective interpersonal communication[cite: 4]; public speaking techniques to reduce performance anxiety[cite: 4]; non-verbal communication, posture, and facial expression management[cite: 4]; voice modulation, pitch, and articulation[cite: 4]; and storytelling techniques designed to package local heritage and ecological attractions into engaging tourist narratives[cite: 4].

2.4.3. Stage 3: Interactive Workshop Execution

The training was delivered using a multi-modal instructional format over intensive sessions[cite: 4]. Educational activities included[cite: 4]:

- *Interactive Lectures:* Two-way presentations encouraging participants to share personal experiences and relate theoretical concepts to their daily activities[cite: 4].
- *Group Discussions:* Collaborative problem-solving sessions analyzing real case scenarios, such as managing difficult visitor interactions or resolving miscommunications[cite: 4].

2.4.4. Stage 4: Practical Simulation and Experiential Role-Playing

To translate theoretical knowledge into actionable behavioral skills, participants engaged in hands-on practical simulations[cite: 4]. Role-playing scenarios included[cite: 4]:

- *Service Simulations:* Participants simulated receiving incoming tourists, executing formal welcoming protocols, providing directional information, managing local culinary stalls, and handling simulated tourist complaints professionally[cite: 4].
- *Public Speaking and Guided Storytelling Simulations:* Participants took turns standing before the cohort to deliver live 5-minute presentations acting as local tour guides[cite: 4]. They applied voice modulation, open body language, and structured storytelling techniques to explain local village attractions, cultural traditions, and signature agricultural products (such as local durian cultivation and coastal ecology)[cite: 4]. Immediate peer reviews and facilitator feedback were provided following each simulation[cite: 4].

2.4.5. Stage 5: Multi-Tiered Program Evaluation

The final phase comprised a systematic, multi-tiered evaluation framework designed to capture quantitative skill gains, qualitative behavioral changes, and overall participant satisfaction[cite: 4].

2.5. Data Collection Instruments and Analytical Framework

To assess the efficacy of the capacity-building intervention objectively, three complementary data collection instruments were deployed[cite: 4]:

2.5.1. 1. Quantitative Knowledge Assessment (Pre-Test and Post-Test)

A structured questionnaire comprising identical pre-test and post-test instruments was administered immediately before and after the workshop[cite: 4]. The test evaluated participant knowledge across five key competency indicators[cite: 4]:

- Indicator 1: Understanding of fundamental hospitality concepts (*Pemahaman konsep hospitality*)[cite: 4].
- Indicator 2: Comprehension of tourism service excellence standards (*Pemahaman pelayanan wisata*)[cite: 4].
- Indicator 3: Effective interpersonal communication techniques (*Kemampuan komunikasi efektif*)[cite: 4].
- Indicator 4: Personal confidence in public speaking and presentation (*Kepercayaan diri berbicara*)[cite: 4].
- Indicator 5: Ability to structure and deliver destination information (*Kemampuan menyampaikan informasi wisata*)[cite: 4].

Quantitative data were processed to determine percentage score improvements across all five indicators to quantify aggregate knowledge gain[cite: 4].

2.5.2. 2. Practical Skill Observation Rubric

During Stage 4 simulations, two independent academic facilitators used standardized observational rubrics to evaluate participants' practical execution[cite: 4]. The rubric assessed body language, eye contact, vocal clarity, narrative structure, hospitality demeanor, and responsiveness during simulated guest encounters[cite: 4].

2.5.3. 3. Participant Satisfaction Questionnaire

At the conclusion of the workshop, an anonymous satisfaction survey was administered using a 5-point Likert scale[cite: 4]. The instrument evaluated four evaluation parameters[cite: 4]:

1. Relevancy and clarity of training material[cite: 4].
2. Quality and effectiveness of instructional delivery[cite: 4].
3. Direct practical utility of the skills acquired for daily tourism operations[cite: 4].
4. Perceived need for advanced follow-up mentoring modules[cite: 4].

By integrating quantitative pre- and post-intervention assessments with qualitative observational feedback, the methodological framework provided a robust, triangular evaluation of capacity growth among Cikakak Village tourism actors[cite: 4].

3. Results

3.1. Overview of Implementation and Participant Engagement

The community service capacity-building project in Cikakak Tourism Village, Sukabumi Regency, was successfully executed in March 2026[cite: 4]. Designed as an intensive, participatory intervention, the program addressed critical skill shortages in hospitality standards and public speaking[cite: 4]. A total of 30 active community members involved in the local tourism ecosystem attended and completed all stages of the workshop[cite: 4]. Participant attendance reached 100% across all instructional and practical sessions, reflecting strong community motivation to improve operational standards[cite: 4].

Prior to the formal training sessions, diagnostic interactions revealed that most participants possessed considerable practical experience in hosting visitors, operating local culinary businesses, or managing village facilities[cite: 4]. However, these activities were executed informally based on host habits rather than structured tourism service standards[cite: 4]. The execution of interactive lectures, group case discussions, service role-playing, and guided public speaking exercises created a dynamic learning environment[cite: 4]. Participants actively shared field experiences, identified recurring service bottlenecks, and practiced practical communication solutions[cite: 4].

3.2. Demographic and Stakeholder Profile Analysis

To ensure broad-based community empowerment, participants were selected from diverse functional groups across Cikakak Tourism Village[cite: 4]. The demographic composition of the 30 participants represents the core institutional and operational pillars of the destination, as detailed in Table 2[cite: 4].

The cross-functional composition of participants enriched collaborative learning during workshop modules[cite: 4]. Village Tourism Managers provided strategic context regarding village development plans[cite: 4]; *Pokdarwis* members contributed practical scenarios from direct tourist interactions[cite: 4]; MSME operators shared insights regarding customer service in retail settings[cite: 4]; and local youth introduced creative ideas for digital media engagement and modern communication techniques[cite: 4].

3.3. Quantitative Evaluation of Competency Enhancement

The primary objective of the quantitative evaluation was to measure aggregate knowledge gains resulting from the participatory workshop[cite: 4]. Identical pre-test and

Table 2. Detailed Demographic Breakdown and Operational Roles of Participants ($N = 30$)[cite: 4]

No	Stakeholder Category	Count (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)	Primary Operational Focus
1	Village Tourism Managers	8	26.67%	Strategic destination governance, facility coordination, and policy compliance[cite: 4].
2	Tourism Awareness Group (<i>Pokdarwis</i>)	10	33.33%	On-field service delivery, tour guiding, and visitor reception[cite: 4].
3	Local MSME Operators	7	23.33%	Local culinary production, homestay management, and handicraft retail[cite: 4].
4	Village Youth Leaders	5	16.67%	Digital media promotion, event support, and creative storytelling[cite: 4].
Total		30	100.00%	Comprehensive Ecosystem Representation [cite: 4]

post-test instruments were administered to evaluate participants across five core competency indicators[cite: 4]. The quantitative results demonstrate substantial skill acquisition across all evaluated parameters, as summarized in Table 3[cite: 4].

Table 3. Quantitative Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Evaluation of Participant Competency Scores ($N = 30$)[cite: 4]

No	Competency Indicator	Pre-Test Score (%)	Post-Test Score (%)	Absolute Gain (%)
1	Understanding of Hospitality Concepts	62%	91%	+29%[cite: 4]
2	Comprehension of Tourism Service Excellence	60%	90%	+30%[cite: 4]
3	Effective Interpersonal Communication Skills	58%	88%	+30%[cite: 4]
4	Public Speaking Confidence	55%	86%	+31%[cite: 4]
5	Ability to Deliver Destination Information	60%	90%	+30%[cite: 4]
Overall Aggregate Mean		59.0%	89.0%	+30.0% [cite: 4]

As illustrated in Table 3, the overall aggregate mean competency score increased from 59.0% prior to the workshop to 89.0% following completion of the training modules, representing an average knowledge gain of 30.0 percentage points across the cohort[cite: 4].

3.3.1. Analysis of Hospitality Concepts and Service Excellence Gains

Understanding of core hospitality concepts exhibited a marked increase from 62% in the pre-test to 91% in the post-test (+29% net gain)[cite: 4]. Prior to the intervention, participants predominantly interpreted hospitality as basic assistance provided to tourists upon request[cite: 4]. Following the theoretical and simulation modules, participants recognized hospitality as an active, continuous commitment centered on four foundational pillars:

- **Friendliness (*Keramahan*):** Proactive greeting, smiling, and maintaining an open, welcoming posture during initial visitor contact[cite: 4].
- **Empathy (*Empati*):** Anticipating guest needs and adjusting service styles to accommodate diverse visitor backgrounds[cite: 4].

- **Care (*Kepedulian*):** Ensuring guest comfort, health, safety, and personal security while within the village boundaries[cite: 4].
- **Professionalism (*Profesionalisme*):** Delivering consistent, reliable service standards and handling guest inquiries responsibly[cite: 4].

Similarly, comprehension of tourism service excellence improved from 60% to 90% (+30% net gain)[cite: 4]. Participants developed clear understandings of standard service protocols, including proper homestay reception, clean table presentation in MSME food stalls, and professional demeanor during group tours[cite: 4].

3.3.2. Analysis of Communication and Public Speaking Gains

The largest single percentage point gain occurred in public speaking confidence, which rose from 55% to 86% (+31% net gain)[cite: 4]. Initial baseline assessments showed that 45% of participants experienced speech anxiety or lacked confidence when required to present information to external visitor groups[cite: 4]. Through structured exercises on voice modulation, breath control, posture management, and eye contact, participants successfully overcame communication barriers[cite: 4].

Effective interpersonal communication skills increased from 58% to 88% (+30% net gain), while the ability to deliver destination information and local heritage narratives rose from 60% to 90% (+30% net gain)[cite: 4]. Participants acquired practical structure for presenting destination information, transitioning from disorganized responses to clear, chronological presentations highlighting Cikakak's natural, cultural, and agricultural attractions[cite: 4].

3.4. Qualitative Analysis of Practical Simulations and Role-Playing

To complement the quantitative test data, academic facilitators conducted systematic qualitative observations during Stage 4 practical simulations[cite: 4]. Participants were evaluated across two practical domains: hospitality service scenarios and guided storytelling presentations[cite: 4].

3.4.1. Evaluative Outcomes in Hospitality Simulations

During service simulations, participants acted out real-world scenarios, such as receiving incoming tour buses, registering homestay guests, answering complex inquiries, and resolving simulated tourist complaints[cite: 4]. Key qualitative shifts observed between initial baseline attempts and final post-training simulations include[cite: 4]:

1. **Standardized Welcoming Protocols:** Participants shifted from passive, distant postures to active, warm receptions featuring traditional Sundanese greeting gestures, clear eye contact, and genuine smiles[cite: 4].
2. **De-escalation and Complaint Resolution:** In simulated service breakdown scenarios (e.g., delayed food preparation or missing homestay amenities), participants demonstrated active listening techniques, empathetic language, and constructive problem-solving rather than defensive reactions[cite: 4].
3. **Hygiene and Professional Presentation:** MSME vendors demonstrated improved awareness regarding product packaging, stall cleanliness, and clear pricing communication[cite: 4].

3.4.2. Evaluative Outcomes in Public Speaking and Storytelling Simulations

In guided storytelling simulations, participants delivered live 5-minute presentations acting as village tour guides[cite: 4]. Facilitators evaluated non-verbal body language, vocal articulation, narrative structure, and thematic content[cite: 4].

Participants successfully transformed abstract local facts into engaging cultural narratives[cite: 4]. For instance, local youth and *Pokdarwis* guides incorporated regional heritage anecdotes, local durian harvest traditions, and ecological conservation efforts into structured guided tour itineraries[cite: 4]. Observational rubrics indicated noticeable im-

provements in vocal projection, reduced reliance on physical notes, and increased audience engagement through rhetorical questioning and open posture[cite: 4].

3.5. Perceived Impact and Stakeholder Assessment

Following the completion of the practical modules, participants completed an anonymous program evaluation questionnaire to capture perceived utility and satisfaction[cite: 4]. The qualitative and quantitative feedback confirmed overwhelming community satisfaction across four evaluation dimensions, as detailed in Table 4[cite: 4].

Table 4. Participant Program Evaluation and Satisfaction Survey Results (N = 30)[cite: 4]

No	Evaluation Dimension	Mean Score (1–5 Scale)	Approval Rate (%)
1	Relevancy of Training Material to Operational Needs	4.82 / 5.00	96.4%[cite: 4]
2	Quality and Clarity of Facilitator Delivery	4.90 / 5.00	98.0%[cite: 4]
3	Direct Practical Utility of Workshop Exercises	4.85 / 5.00	97.0%[cite: 4]
4	Desire for Advanced Follow-up Training Modules	4.95 / 5.00	99.0%[cite: 4]
Aggregate Mean Satisfaction Score		4.88 / 5.00	97.6%[cite: 4]

Participants highlighted that the participatory simulation format was the most effective element of the workshop, as it provided immediate, constructive feedback from academic facilitators and peers[cite: 4]. Furthermore, 99.0% of participants expressed a strong desire for continuous advanced mentoring, specifically requesting future modules on foreign language communication, digital marketing, and specialized homestay management[cite: 4].

3.6. Enabling Factors and Operational Challenges

Analyzing the implementation process revealed distinct enabling factors that facilitated success, alongside operational challenges that require ongoing mitigation[cite: 4].

3.6.1. Enabling Factors

The success of the capacity-building intervention was supported by four primary enabling conditions[cite: 4]:

- **Strong Institutional Support:** Full backing from Cikakak Village administrative leaders and *Pokdarwis* executives ensured high attendance and participant commitment[cite: 4].
- **High Community Motivation:** Local actors demonstrated genuine enthusiasm to upgrade their skills and professionalize destination management[cite: 4].
- **Contextualized Curriculum:** Module content was tailored directly to Cikakak's specific tourism assets, making the material highly relatable[cite: 4].
- **Experiential Pedagogy:** Combining theoretical concepts with interactive role-playing allowed immediate skill internalization[cite: 4].

3.6.2. Operational Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Despite overall success, three operational challenges were encountered during program execution[cite: 4]:

1. **Heterogeneous Baseline Literacy and Confidence:** Participants possessed varying levels of formal education and public speaking experience[cite: 4]. *Mitigation:* Facilitators implemented small-group mentoring and paired hesitant participants with more confident youth leaders during simulations[cite: 4].
2. **Initial Stage Fright and Speech Anxiety:** Several senior community members exhibited initial reluctance to perform individual presentations before the group[cite: 4]. *Mitigation:* Facilitators established a supportive, non-judgmental environment and utilized low-pressure paired exercises before individual presentations[cite: 4].

3. **Time Constraints for In-Depth Mastery:** The scheduled training duration allowed comprehensive coverage of fundamental skills, but required additional practice for advanced mastery[cite: 4]. *Mitigation:* The team provided participant handbooks and structured self-practice guides for post-workshop implementation[cite: 4].

In summary, the empirical results confirm that the participatory hospitality and public speaking workshop successfully generated substantial, measurable improvements in participant knowledge, practical service execution, and public speaking confidence among Cikakak Tourism Village actors[cite: 4].

4. Discussion

4.1. Theoretical Implications for Community-Based Tourism and Human Resource Empowerment

The empirical outcomes of the capacity-building intervention in Cikakak Tourism Village provide important insights into rural tourism management, human capital development, and service marketing[cite: 4]. Central to the theoretical contributions of this study is the validation of participatory action learning as a catalyst for professionalizing informal community hosts[cite: 4]. In rural tourism contexts, local communities are the principal co-creators of the tourism product[cite: 4]. However, as highlighted in rural development literature (UNWTO, 2021), community enthusiasm frequently encounters operational barriers due to the absence of standardized service protocols and professional communication skills[cite: 4].

The substantial knowledge gains observed across all five competency indicators—evidenced by an overall mean increase from 59.0% to 89.0% (+30.0% net improvement)—demonstrate that local community members, regardless of their prior formal training, can rapidly absorb and internalize professional service frameworks when instructional methods are contextualized and participatory[cite: 4]. This aligns with classic service quality theory (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which asserts that service excellence in human-centric industries depends fundamentally on personal interaction, responsiveness, and empathy[cite: 4]. By shifting the participants' perception of hospitality from passive assistance to a proactive commitment centered on friendliness, empathy, care, and professionalism, the intervention bridges the gap between informal local hospitality and commercial service expectations[cite: 4].

4.2. Integrating Hospitality Excellence and Storytelling for Destination Competitiveness

In contemporary destination marketing literature, competitive advantage extends beyond natural or physical assets to encompass the emotional and relational experience delivered to visitors (Kotler et al., 2017; Morrison, 2022)[cite: 4]. The results of this study demonstrate the synergy achieved by combining core hospitality principles with public speaking and storytelling training[cite: 4]. While hospitality training ensures operational consistency and guest comfort, public speaking empowers local actors to articulate their cultural heritage and ecological identity confidently[cite: 4].

The 31% net increase in public speaking confidence (rising from 55% to 86%) addresses a well-documented vulnerability in rural tourism destinations: speech anxiety and communication hesitation among local guides and village youth[cite: 4]. Through structured practice in voice modulation, body language, and narrative construction, participants transitioned from passive hosts into articulate brand ambassadors[cite: 4]. Utilizing storytelling techniques allows communities to convert local folklore, durian harvest traditions, and agricultural practices into unique narrative assets[cite: 4]. As Morrison (2022) emphasizes, effective destination storytelling enhances visitor engagement, increases length of stay, and differentiates rural destinations in an increasingly competitive market[cite: 4].

4.3. Comparative Analysis with Prior Interventions and Literature

The empirical findings align with and extend prior academic research on community-based tourism development[cite: 4]. Studies evaluating traditional top-down lecture training in rural communities often note high attrition rates and limited long-term behavioral

change due to a disconnect between theoretical concepts and daily village operations[cite: 4]. In contrast, the participatory methodology deployed in Cikakak—incorporating base-line diagnostic needs identification, interactive group discussions, and multi-scenario simulations—achieved a 100% completion rate and a 97.6% overall participant satisfaction score[cite: 4].

Furthermore, the significant improvements in interpersonal communication (58% to 88%) and service delivery (60% to 90%) support the service marketing framework established by Zeithaml et al. (2018)[cite: 4]. Zeithaml et al. argue that frontline employees (or community hosts in CBT settings) serve as the physical embodiment of the service brand[cite: 4]. When local actors possess high self-efficacy and clear behavioral guidelines, perceived service quality increases, leading to higher visitor satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Tjiptono, 2019)[cite: 4].

4.4. *Managerial, Policy, and Community Policy Implications*

The operational outcomes of this capacity-building project offer actionable implications for village administrators, local tourism awareness groups (*Pokdarwis*), regional governments, and higher education institutions[cite: 4]:

4.4.1. 1. Institutionalization of Service Standards for Local Governance

For Cikakak Village administrators and *Pokdarwis* executive committees, the workshop outcomes provide a foundation for establishing a standardized local Code of Service Conduct[cite: 4]. Moving beyond ad-hoc hospitality, village leaders should formalize basic welcoming protocols, hygiene standards for local culinary MSMEs, and guidelines for homestay operations[cite: 4]. Establishing village-level service benchmarks ensures operational consistency across all community touchpoints[cite: 4].

4.4.2. 2. Strategic Integration of Youth in Digital and Guided Communications

The strong performance of village youth during public speaking simulations highlights the importance of integrating younger demographics into destination management[cite: 4]. Local youth are well-positioned to bridge traditional community narratives with modern promotional channels[cite: 4]. Village management should empower youth leaders to manage digital media platforms, conduct online promotional campaigns, and lead guided storytelling tours for English-speaking or millennial visitor segments[cite: 4].

4.4.3. 3. Policy Directives for Sustainable Rural Development

For local government agencies, particularly the Regional Tourism Office (Dinas Pariwisata) and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf RI, 2021), this project underscores the necessity of prioritizing human capital development over exclusive investment in physical infrastructure[cite: 4]. Policy frameworks should allocate dedicated funding for continuous, community-level capacity building, recognizing that human resource readiness is a prerequisite for destination sustainability[cite: 4].

4.5. *Limitations of the Intervention*

While the capacity-building intervention achieved its immediate learning objectives, several methodological and operational limitations should be acknowledged[cite: 4]:

1. **Sample Size and Geographical Context:** The study was conducted with a sample of 30 participants within a single tourism village (Cikakak, Sukabumi)[cite: 4]. While representative of the local ecosystem, expanding the sample across multiple rural villages would enhance statistical generalizability[cite: 4].
2. **Evaluation Timeframe:** The quantitative evaluation captured immediate post-intervention knowledge gains and short-term simulation performance[cite: 4]. Longitudinal tracking over a 6-to-12-month period is required to assess long-term skill retention, actual visitor satisfaction levels, and economic returns[cite: 4].

3. **Language Barriers:** The workshop focused primarily on domestic visitor communication in Bahasa Indonesia and local Sundanese cultural contexts[cite: 4]. As international tourist arrivals expand, future modules must incorporate basic foreign language skills (e.g., conversational English for tourism)[cite: 4].

4.6. Future Research and Actionable Roadmap

To build upon the foundation established by this intervention and ensure long-term destination sustainability, future university-community partnerships should execute a structured multi-phase roadmap[cite: 4]:

- **Phase 1: Advanced Communication Training:** Implementing specialized conversational English and digital content creation workshops for *Pokdarwis* guides and village youth[cite: 4].
- **Phase 2: Digital Marketing and E-Commerce Integration:** Training local MSME operators and homestay managers on digital booking platforms, social media marketing, and online financial management (Buhalis & Law, 2022)[cite: 4].
- **Phase 3: Longitudinal Impact Assessment:** Executing a follow-up empirical study evaluating the direct relationship between community service quality enhancements, visitor repeat-visit rates, and local income generation in Cikakak Village[cite: 4].

In conclusion, the participatory hospitality and public speaking workshop in Cikakak Tourism Village successfully demonstrated that targeted human resource development strengthens community self-efficacy, enhances service quality, and establishes a robust foundation for professional, communicative, and sustainable rural tourism management[cite: 4].

5. Conclusion

The community service capacity-building project successfully demonstrates that a participatory workshop focusing on hospitality and public speaking significantly strengthens human resource capacity, professionalizes service standards, and boosts local confidence in Cikakak Tourism Village[cite: 4]. By engaging 30 key local tourism stakeholders—including village managers, *Pokdarwis* members, MSME operators, local guides, and youth—the intervention achieved substantial quantitative knowledge gains, with the aggregate competency score rising from 59.0% to 89.0%, alongside notable individual improvements in hospitality understanding (62% to 91%) and public speaking confidence (55% to 86%)[cite: 4]. Practical role-playing and storytelling simulations enabled local hosts to transition from passive, informal service habits to proactive, communicative ambassadors capable of articulating Cikakak's natural, cultural, and agricultural heritage[cite: 4]. The program's success highlights that combining operational hospitality principles with structured communication training provides a highly effective, scalable framework for community-based tourism development[cite: 4]. Ultimately, this capacity-building initiative establishes a vital foundation for community-driven destination management, fostering professional service delivery, higher visitor satisfaction, and long-term socio-economic sustainability in rural Indonesia[cite: 4].

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