

TOURIST CO CREATION BEHAVIOR IN REGENERATIVE TOURISM: EXAMINING MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AND GIVING BACK PRACTICES IN HANJELI TOURISM VILLAGE, SUKABUMI, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines tourist co creation behavior within regenerative tourism in Desa Wisata Hanjeli, focusing on meaningful engagement and giving-back practices. Despite increasing attention to regenerative tourism, limited research addresses tourists as active agents of regeneration in community based rural destinations. This study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach using an embedded case study and ethnographic techniques. Data were collected through in depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. The findings suggest an emerging pattern in which tourists who report deeper levels of meaningful engagement also describe stronger emotional, cognitive, and social connections to the destination. In the context of Hanjeli Tourism Village, these connections are often associated with active involvement in local activities and interactions with community members, reflecting forms of co-creation behavior. This engagement further evolves into giving back practices, including environmental conservation, support for local products, knowledge sharing, and digital promotion. The depth of engagement significantly influences the level of participation and contribution, forming a regenerative cycle that benefits tourists, communities, and the environment. The study contributes theoretically by integrating co creation and regenerative tourism, positioning tourists as both co creators and co regenerators who generate social and ecological value beyond experiential benefits. However, the study is limited by its context specific focus and qualitative design. Future research should explore the long term sustainability of giving back practices and apply comparative or mixed method approaches. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of designing participatory and meaningful tourism experiences that encourage active tourist involvement. Overall, this study underscores the potential of tourism as a platform for fostering regenerative outcomes through collaborative and experience based engagement.

Keywords: *Regenerative Tourism, Co Creation Behavior, Meaningful Engagement, Giving Back, Community Based Tourism*

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of global tourism from sustainability oriented practices toward regenerative paradigms reflects a growing recognition of tourism responsibility in restoring socio ecological systems. Over the past decades, sustainable tourism has been widely adopted as a dominant framework to mitigate environmental degradation and socio cultural disruption caused by tourism activities. However, increasing evidence suggests that approaches focusing primarily on impact reduction are insufficient to address complex challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio economic inequality in destination areas. In response, regenerative tourism has emerged as a transformative paradigm that emphasizes not only minimizing harm but also actively restoring ecosystems, enhancing community resilience, and generating net-positive impacts for both people and place (Bellato et al., 2023; Dredge, 2022).

Regenerative tourism is grounded in systems thinking and highlights the interdependence between ecological integrity, social well being, and economic sustainability. This paradigm adopts a place based perspective, where tourism development is tailored to the unique socio cultural and environmental characteristics of each destination. Recent studies underline that regenerative tourism requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders, including local communities, policymakers, and increasingly, tourists as integral actors within the tourism system (Rastegar et al., 2023; Iddawala & Lee, 2026). In this regard, rural and community based tourism destinations are considered strategic contexts for implementing regenerative practices due to their strong reliance on local resources, social capital, and cultural heritage.

In Indonesia, the transition toward regenerative tourism is reflected in the emergence of community based tourism initiatives that integrate local wisdom, environmental stewardship, and socio economic empowerment. One notable example is Desa Wisata Hanjeli, where tourism development is closely linked to the utilization of *hanjeli* as a cultural, ecological, and economic resource. The village demonstrates how local communities can actively engage in regenerative practices through sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. These initiatives align with the broader shift toward community based and place based tourism development, where success is measured not only by economic gains but also by the ability to strengthen local resilience and restore socio ecological systems (Giampiccoli et al., 2022; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023; Ginting et al., 2023).

Parallel to this development, tourism research has increasingly emphasized the evolving role of tourists within the tourism ecosystem. Tourists are no longer perceived merely as passive consumers but as active co creators of value who participate in shaping experiences and contributing to destination development. The concept of co creation behavior highlights the importance of interaction, participation, and collaboration between tourists and local communities in generating shared value (Sabiote et al., 2023). This shift is closely associated with the growing demand for meaningful and

transformative tourism experiences, where tourists seek deeper emotional, cultural, and social connections with destinations. Meaningful engagement, in this sense, reflects the depth of tourists involvement in local contexts, which can foster empathy, awareness, and a sense of responsibility toward host communities and environments (Filep, 2014; Doan et al., 2025).

Despite these theoretical advancements, a critical dimension remains insufficiently addressed within the regenerative tourism discourse, particularly concerning the extent to which tourists actively contribute to regenerative outcomes through their behaviors. While regenerative tourism emphasizes collaborative and participatory approaches, existing studies have largely focused on community roles and governance structures, with limited attention given to tourists as agents of change. In particular, giving back practices defined as voluntary contributions such as participation in environmental conservation, support for local livelihoods, and engagement in community initiatives remain underexplored both conceptually and empirically. Recent literature suggests that research on regenerative tourism is still fragmented and predominantly conceptual, lacking empirical depth in explaining behavioral mechanisms, especially in developing country contexts (Bellato et al., 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2024).

This gap raises important questions regarding how tourists experiences translate into regenerative actions. Specifically, there is limited understanding of how meaningful engagement influences co creation behavior and how such behavior subsequently leads to giving back practices within regenerative tourism settings. Addressing this issue is crucial, as it highlights the need to reposition tourists not only as beneficiaries of tourism experiences but also as active contributors to socio ecological regeneration. Therefore, this study aims to explore how meaningful engagement shapes tourist experiences, how co creation behavior is manifested in interactions with local communities, and how these processes lead to the emergence of giving back practices as a form of regenerative contribution.

To achieve this, the study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach that allows for an in depth exploration of tourists lived experiences and behavioral dynamics within a specific socio cultural context. The research is geographically and contextually bounded to Desa Wisata Hanjeli as a representative case of community based regenerative tourism in Indonesia. By focusing on a single case study, the research aims to generate rich, context-specific insights into the complex interactions between tourists and local communities, particularly in relation to meaningful engagement, co creation processes, and giving back practices. While the findings are not intended to be generalized across all tourism contexts, they are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions that are relevant to similar rural and community-based tourism destinations.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative interpretive research design to explore tourist co creation behavior within the context of regenerative tourism. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for understanding subjective meanings, lived experiences, and socially constructed realities that emerge from interactions between tourists and local communities. In line with recent tourism scholarship, qualitative inquiry is essential in capturing the complexity of human environment relationships and the experiential dimensions of regenerative tourism, which are inherently multidimensional and difficult to quantify (Bellato et al., 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2020). The chosen design is therefore aligned with the objectives of this study, which aim to explore how meaningful engagement shapes co creation behavior and how these processes lead to giving back practices within a specific socio cultural setting.

The research adopts an embedded case study strategy, focusing on Desa Wisata Hanjeli as the primary unit of analysis. This strategy allows for an in depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, which is particularly relevant for place-based and community driven tourism studies. To complement this, an ethnographic approach is incorporated to gain a deeper understanding of tourist experiences and interactions through direct engagement and immersion in the field. This combination enables the researcher to capture both the structural and experiential dimensions of regenerative tourism, consistent with contemporary qualitative approaches in tourism research (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

Data Collection and Instruments

Several qualitative methods were used in the data collection process to guarantee triangulation and improve the reliability of the results. Purposive sampling, a method frequently used in qualitative research to find persons with pertinent information, experiences, and participation in the topic being studied, was used to choose informants. Because the study aimed to provide comprehensive insights on visitor experiences, community involvement, and regenerative tourism practices within the particular setting of Hanjeli Tourism Village, this technique was deemed appropriate. First, in depth semi structured interviews were carried out with three main groups of informants: tourists, local community members, and destination managers. Five tourists, fifteen members of the local community, and three destination managers and tourism stakeholders made up the 23 informants that took part in the study. **To maintain participants' anonymity while ensuring traceability of the qualitative data, each interviewee was assigned a unique identification code (e.g., T01, T02, T03), where "T" refers to tourist participants.** These codes are consistently used when presenting verbatim quotations in the Findings section. Three criteria were used to choose tourist informants: (1) they had to have engaged in tourism activities in Hanjeli Tourism Village; (2) they had to be willing to reflect on and share their experiences; and (3) they had to participate in community-based experiences like agricultural, cultural, or environmental activities. Farmers, women working in hanjeli-based businesses, tour guides, and community

leaders who had actively contributed to the growth of tourism made up the local community informants. In the meantime, tourism stakeholders and destination managers were chosen due to their direct engagement in organizing, coordinating, and overseeing tourism-related activities in the village. The interview instrument was developed based on the study's conceptual framework, focusing on three key dimensions: meaningful engagement, co creation behavior, and giving back practices. Open ended questions were used to allow flexibility and enable participants to articulate their experiences in their own words. Second, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with community stakeholders to capture shared perspectives and validate insights obtained from individual interviews. Third, participant observation was undertaken to directly observe interactions between tourists and local actors, as well as their involvement in tourism activities such as cultural experiences, agricultural practices, and environmental initiatives. Field notes, reflective journals, and visual documentation were used as supporting instruments to systematically record observational data. This triangulated approach enhances the depth, richness, and credibility of the data (Koc, Erdogan., & Boz, 2014).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process followed a thematic analysis technique, which is widely recognized in qualitative tourism research for its ability to systematically identify and interpret patterns within complex datasets. The analysis was conducted through several stages: initial data familiarization, open coding to identify key concepts, categorization of codes into broader themes, and interpretation of themes in relation to the research objectives and theoretical framework. The main themes that emerged from the analysis include meaningful engagement, co-creation behavior, and giving back practices. This method enables a nuanced understanding of how tourist experiences translate into regenerative actions within the destination context.

The methodological choices in this study are justified by several considerations. First, regenerative tourism involves complex and interconnected socio ecological processes that require holistic and context-sensitive analysis, making qualitative methods more suitable than purely quantitative approaches. Second, tourist experiences are inherently subjective and context-dependent, necessitating in-depth exploration to capture their meanings and implications (Mkono, 2024). Third, existing literature on regenerative tourism is still largely conceptual, highlighting the need for empirical, evidence-based qualitative research to advance theoretical development (Bellato et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, several potential challenges were anticipated during the research process. One key issue relates to response bias, where participants may provide socially desirable answers, particularly regarding pro environmental behaviors. To mitigate this, the study employed triangulation across different data sources and methods, allowing cross validation of findings. Another anticipated challenge concerns researcher subjectivity, which is inherent in qualitative research. This was addressed through reflexivity practices, including maintaining a reflective journal and systematically

documenting analytical decisions. Additionally, access and time constraints in engaging with tourists who typically have limited time at the destination were managed by adopting flexible interview schedules and combining interviews with observational data collection.

During the fieldwork, some practical challenges did arise, particularly related to variability in tourist availability and language barriers. These issues were minimized by selecting informants purposively based on their willingness to participate and by simplifying interview questions to ensure clarity. Furthermore, data saturation was used as a guiding principle to determine the adequacy of the sample size, ensuring that data collection continued until no new themes emerged.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Hanjeli Tourism Village

Desa Wisata Hanjeli is geographically situated in a rural landscape of Sukabumi Regency, West Java, an area characterized by fertile agricultural land, undulating topography, and a relatively intact socio ecological system. The village environment reflects a strong interdependence between natural resources and community livelihoods, where land, water, and biodiversity are not only economic assets but also embedded within local cultural practices and belief systems. The spatial structure of the village is typically organized around agricultural zones, residential clusters, and communal spaces, creating a cohesive rural landscape that supports both production and social interaction.

From an ecological perspective, the village benefits from a favorable agro climatic condition that supports the cultivation of diverse crops, including *hanjeli* (*Coix lacryma-jobi*), which serves as the central element of the villages identity. The cultivation of *hanjeli* is not merely an agricultural activity but represents a form of ecological knowledge that has been passed down through generations. Traditional farming practices, often characterized by low external input and adaptive techniques, contribute to soil conservation, biodiversity maintenance, and environmental sustainability. This ecological embeddedness forms the foundation for the village's transition toward regenerative tourism, where tourism activities are designed to align with and enhance existing environmental systems.

Socio culturally, the community in Hanjeli Village exhibits strong social cohesion, which is reflected in collective practices such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), traditional ceremonies, and shared resource management. These social structures play a crucial role in supporting community based tourism development, as they enable collective decision making and equitable distribution of benefits. Cultural expressions, including local food traditions, agricultural rituals, and artisanal practices, are integral to the village's identity and are actively incorporated into tourism experiences. This integration not only preserves cultural heritage but also enhances the authenticity of the destination, making it attractive for visitors seeking meaningful and immersive experiences.

The development trajectory of tourism in the village is distinctly bottom-up and community-driven, rather than externally imposed. Local stakeholders, including farmer groups, women associations, and youth organizations, are actively involved in planning, managing, and operating tourism activities. This participatory governance model ensures that tourism development remains aligned with community values and priorities, while also fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents. The role of local leadership is also significant in facilitating coordination, capacity building, and external partnerships, which are essential for sustaining tourism initiatives.

From a conceptual standpoint, the tourism model implemented in Hanjeli Village aligns closely with the principles of regenerative tourism and community based tourism (CBT). Unlike conventional tourism models that prioritize economic growth, this approach emphasizes the restoration and enhancement of socio ecological systems. Tourism activities are intentionally designed to generate positive impacts, such as improving environmental quality, strengthening local livelihoods, and revitalizing cultural practices. For instance, agricultural activities are transformed into experiential tourism products, where visitors participate in planting, harvesting, and processing hanjeli. These activities not only provide educational value but also foster a deeper appreciation of local knowledge and environmental stewardship.

The integration of agriculture and tourism represents a key feature of the villages development model. This agro tourism approach enables visitors to engage directly with local production systems, thereby bridging the gap between producers and consumers. Through hands on participation, tourists gain insight into sustainable farming practices, food systems, and rural livelihoods. At the same time, these interactions create opportunities for knowledge exchange and co-creation, where both tourists and local communities contribute to the overall experience. This dynamic interaction is central to the concept of regenerative tourism, which emphasizes collaboration and mutual benefit.

Furthermore, the village can be conceptualized as a living laboratory for regenerative tourism practices. This notion reflects the continuous process of learning, adaptation, and innovation that characterizes the villages development. Tourism activities are not static but evolve in response to environmental conditions, community needs, and visitor expectations. This adaptive capacity is critical for ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience, particularly in the face of external challenges such as climate change and market fluctuations. The living laboratory concept also highlights the potential for the village to serve as a model for other rural destinations seeking to implement regenerative tourism.

In terms of infrastructure and accessibility, Hanjeli Village maintains a balance between development and preservation. Basic facilities such as homestays, community centers, and small scale tourism amenities are developed in a manner that is consistent with the local environment and cultural context. Rather than large scale infrastructure, the village emphasizes low-impact and community-based facilities, which support sustainable tourism while minimizing environmental degradation. Accessibility to the

village, although relatively modest compared to urban destinations, contributes to its appeal as an authentic and less commercialized tourism site.

Another important dimension of the villages general profile is its integration of environmental education into tourism experiences. Visitors are not only passive observers but are actively engaged in learning about ecological sustainability, traditional agriculture, and local culture. Educational activities are often facilitated by local guides and community members, who share their knowledge and experiences with visitors. This approach enhances the transformative potential of tourism, as it encourages visitors to reflect on their own behaviors and values in relation to sustainability.

Meaningful Engagement: Emotional and Transformational Travel Experiences

The research results show that tourists visiting Hanjeli Tourism Village are not solely motivated by recreational needs, but rather by the pursuit of educational, authentic, and meaningful experiences. The main findings indicate that meaningful engagement is formed thru direct participation in community-based activities, such as planting, harvesting, and processing hanjeli. This engagement not only provides practical experience but also facilitates a reflective process that strengthens the emotional connection between tourists and the environment as well as the local community.

Meaningful engagement in this setting is multifaceted, with three interconnected major elements, according to additional investigation. First, on the cognitive level, visitors learn new things about local values, environmental sustainability, and traditional farming methods that they were not previously aware of. Second, in terms of the affective dimension, the firsthand experience arouses sentiments of empathy, admiration, and even reverence for the village community's way of life, which is thought to be more in tune with the natural world. Third, in terms of the social dimension, the extensive interaction between visitors and the locals fosters a feeling of community and intimacy that improves the experience's overall quality.

This subsection's most important conclusion is that meaningful experiences are shaped by the degree of interaction. Compared to tourists who only observe, individuals who actively participate and engage with the community exhibit a greater degree of emotional attachment. This highlights that genuine, participatory, and experience-based interactions—rather than passive consumption of tourist attractions—are the key to achieving meaningful engagement.

These findings also demonstrate that meaningful engagement serves as a catalyst for the process of changing the traveler experience. Along with learning new things, tourists also experience a shift in viewpoint on sustainability challenges, human-nature relations, and local community values. Therefore, the encounters at Hanjeli Tourism Village can be classified as a transformative tourism experience, in which travel has long-term effects on visitors' attitudes and ways of thinking in addition to offering momentary satisfaction.

Co-Creation Behavior: Tourist as Partners in Value Production

The research results show that tourists in Hanjeli Tourism Village do not only play the role of experience consumers but actively act as co creators of value throughout the tourism process. Thematic analysis showed that tourists' participation in community-based activities, interactions with locals residents, and eagerness to contribute to the destination's future growth all contributed to the emergence of co-creation behavior. Instead of being passive consumers of services, travelers became involved in a cooperative process whereby shared knowledge and social interaction were used to cooperatively create tourism experiences. The importance of direct connection with people of the local community in generating co-creation experiences emerged as a significant **trend from the interviews**. A prominent theme emerging from the interviews was the importance of direct interaction with members of the local community in facilitating co-creation experiences. Meaningful conversations with local actors were consistently identified as an essential component of the visitors' experiences. As expressed by **Participant T01, a domestic tourist**: *"My experience in Hanjeli was truly memorable. The people were very welcoming, and we interacted very well. Earlier at the pavilion, I had a conversation with Pak Benny. I found out that he is one of the creative minds behind Hanjeli."* (Participant T01)

This statement illustrates that co-creation took place not only through involvement in events but also through social interactions that helped visitors comprehend local knowledge, values, and innovative processes. Instead of only consuming predetermined goods, these interactions enabled visitors to actively participate in the social manufacturing of tourism experiences. The results also demonstrate that experiential learning activities pertaining to the growing and processing of hanjeli promoted co-creation behavior. By actively participating, visitors contributed to the destination's immersive experience while also learning new things. As explained by **Participant T2**: *"I gained a new experience from the process of pounding the job's tears into rice. It was a firsthand experience."* (Participant T2)

According to this data, travelers were both physically and mentally involved, which facilitated the sharing of knowledge between tourists and locals. In this way, shared experiences and reciprocal involvement led to the development of value. Another significant finding concerns tourists' willingness to contribute ideas and support the future development of the destination. Several interviewees expressed aspirations to become involved in improving Hanjeli Tourism Village. **As stated by Participant T03**: *"Maybe in the future, God willing, I can help with accessibility to Hanjeli because the road access is still prone to landslides."* (Participant T03) This statement shows that co-creation extends beyond the tourism experience itself and may develop into future-focused collaborative participation. It also represents a shift from passive observation to active concern for destination development.

The main findings indicate that co creation behavior is manifested thru the direct involvement of tourists in various community based activities, such as participation in farming and hanjeli production, dialogic interactions with the local community, and contributions to promoting the destination thru social media. These forms of participation

demonstrate that tourism value is no longer generated unilaterally by destination managers but thru a collaborative process involving tourists as active partners.

Additionally, the analysis's findings demonstrate that co-creation activity is relational, experiential, and instrumental. Through social interactions, knowledge sharing, and emotional connection with the local population, tourists not only assist or participate technically but also help to shape the experience's meaning. In this instance, the tourist experience is enhanced overall by a process of co-construction of meaning between visitors and the community. As a result, co-creation improves the relationship between the two parties by producing social and cultural value in addition to economic gain.

The substantial correlation between meaningful involvement and co-creation behavior is the most important discovery from this subsection. According to interview data, visitors who are more deeply engaged typically participate more actively in the co-creation process. This suggests that a major factor in encouraging tourists to participate in cooperative activities is meaningful participation. Put another way, visitors are more likely to actively contribute to the destination's value when they have a more meaningful experience.



Figure 1: Co-Creation in Action: 'Giving-Back' Practices in Hanjeli Tourism Village

Overall, our findings support the idea that co creation behavior is a crucial component of the regenerative tourism system, where visitors actively shape, enhance, and increase the value of their travel experiences in addition to being beneficiaries. These results support the claim that a paradigm change from a passive consumption model to a collaborative participation model focused on experience and social interaction is necessary for the transition to regenerative tourism.

Giving Back Practices: Manifestation of Regenerative Tourist Behavior

The research findings reveal that one of the most significant discoveries in the context of regenerative tourism in Hanjeli Tourism Village is the emergence of giving back practices as a tangible contribution from tourists to the destination. The main findings indicate that these practices are not driven by formal obligations, but rather emerge voluntarily as a direct response to the meaningful experiences tourists have while interacting with the environment and local communities. This indicates a shift in the role

of tourists from mere consumers to individuals with awareness and social responsibility toward the destinations they visit.

Empirically, giving back practices manifest in various forms of contributions that are social, economic, and environmental in nature. Tourists engage in conservation activities such as planting and agricultural education, which reflect a concern for environmental sustainability. In addition, support for the local economy is evident through the purchase of hanjeli-based products, which directly strengthens the sustainability of community businesses. On the other hand, tourists also play a role in expanding the exposure of destinations through the dissemination of positive information on social media, as well as contributing ideas, knowledge, or new perspectives to the local community. The various forms of contribution show that giving back is not singular, but rather a spectrum of proactive actions that enrich the relationship between tourists and destinations.

The most important finding from this subsection is that giving back activities provide an additional example of meaningful and engaging travel experiences. Tourists who were previously involved in meaningful engagement and co-creation behavior tend to show a higher level of contribution to the destination. Thus, giving back can be understood as a behavioral outcome that arises from a process of deep experience and collaborative interaction. This strengthens the causal relationship between active involvement and emotional engagement and concrete acts that promote ecological and social regeneration.

Furthermore, these findings confirm that giving back activities are a crucial measure of regenerative tourism's effectiveness since they show the development of beneficial effects that go beyond visitors' own experiences. In this instance, tourists not only benefit personally but also support the local economy, empower people, and improve the condition of the environment. As a result, visitors can be seen as agents of renewal, strategically contributing to the creation of shared value within the tourism industry. All things considered, these results broaden our knowledge of visitor behavior in the context of regenerative tourism by highlighting the fact that visitors' contributions continue with tangible acts that promote the sustainability and revitalization of destinations rather than ceasing at the point of consumption or participation.

Thematic Integration: From Meaningful Engagement to Regenerative Outcomes

The results of the thematic analysis show a consistent and sequential pattern of relationships between three main concepts, namely meaningful engagement, co-creation behavior, and giving-back practices in the context of tourism in Hanjeli Tourism Village. The main findings of this study indicate that these three elements do not stand alone, but rather form a chain of interconnected behavioral processes that contribute to the creation of regenerative outcomes. Specifically, meaningful engagement serves as the starting point that triggers the emotional and cognitive involvement of tourists, which then encourages the emergence of co-creation behavior as a form of active participation, ultimately culminating in giving back practices as a manifestation of tangible contributions to the destination.

The most important conclusion drawn from this subsection is that the process's sustainability is mostly determined by the depth of experience. When tourists engage with the local community in a meaningful way, they are more likely to maintain their involvement in the form of cooperative participation. This involvement grows into thoughtful and voluntary acts of giving back. This process thus illustrates a transformative mechanism in which the travel experience not only produces satisfaction but also promotes behavioral and attitude changes that have an impact on the social and ecological environment.

Furthermore, the study's findings show that these three ideas work together to create a regeneration cycle with multifaceted advantages. This technique produces life-changing experiences for travelers that enhance their understanding, consciousness, and moral principles. Interaction with tourists benefits the local community socially through knowledge sharing and capacity building, as well as economically through higher revenue. In the meantime, from an environmental standpoint, tourists who participate in sustainable activities support conservation efforts and enhance the condition of the local ecosystem.



Figure 2: Regenerative Cycle in Hanjeli Tourism Village

These results thus confirm that regenerative tourism in Hanjeli Tourism Village is fueled by both dynamic and cooperative interactions between visitors and the community as well as local community initiatives. In this instance, tourists are viewed as essential components of the regenerative system that actively contribute to the generation of shared value rather than as outsider actors. This finding supports the claim that a destination's capacity to produce memorable experiences and promote sustained visitor engagement is critical to the success of regenerative tourism.

Theoretical Discussion: The Repositioning of Tourists in Regenerative Tourism

By showing that travelers play a key role in the regenerative tourism system as both active participants in the creation and distribution of value and recipients of experiences, the research's findings provide a substantial theoretical contribution. In particular, the results of this study confirm that visitors can act as co-creators and co-regenerators at the same time, whereby their participation not only creates experiencing value but also aids in the destination's social and ecological recovery. By adding a regenerative dimension that highlights active contributions to the sustainability and enhancement of the destination system, these findings broaden the prior understanding of co-creation, which typically focuses on the interaction between tourists and service providers (Buhalis et al., 2023).

The study's findings suggest that a crucial element mediating the connection between travel experiences and regenerative behavior is meaningful engagement. According to recent research on transformative tourism experiences, visitors' values and actions can change as a result of emotional and introspective interaction (Filep et al., 2023; Pung et al., 2023). Nevertheless, this study goes one step further by showing that this involvement develops into concrete acts in the form of giving back practices rather than ending at the level of personal development. As a result, our study closes a gap in the literature by elucidating how significant experiences can be converted into tangible contributions to destinations (Bellato et al., 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2024).

Furthermore, the discovery that giving back activities act as a link between experience and actual impact offers a fresh viewpoint on how regenerative tourism operates. In the regenerative context, the value of tourism is enlarged to include concrete contributions to the environment and society, whereas in the conventional approach, it is typically judged by visitor satisfaction or loyalty. This supports Higgins-Desbiolles' (2023) contention that tourism should be repositioned as a vehicle for sustainability and social justice, but this study offers concrete proof that travelers themselves can also play this role.

Deductively, the findings of this study support a broader assertion that the quality of meaningful travel experiences has the capacity to produce regenerative behavior in various destination contexts within the framework of community-based tourism and sustainability. In other words, even though Hanjeli Tourism Village is the focus of this study, Therefore, other community-based and regenerative tourism destinations that share similar socio-cultural, environmental, and participatory characteristics with Hanjeli Tourism Village may find useful insights from the relationship found between meaningful engagement, co-creation behavior, and giving-back practices, particularly those that place a high value on genuine interaction and community involvement. This research not only enriches theoretical development but also offers a conceptual framework that can be used to understand and develop regenerative tourism practices more broadly. Ultimately, these findings affirm that the shift toward regenerative tourism requires a redefinition of the role of tourists from mere consumers to collaborative actors who contribute to the simultaneous creation of social, economic, and ecological value. This expands the scope of co-creation theory by incorporating a deeper dimension of sustainability, while also

opening up space for further research to test and develop this model in various geographical and cultural contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior within the context of regenerative tourism in Desa Wisata Hanjeli by examining the interrelationship between meaningful engagement, co creation behavior, and giving back practices. The findings demonstrate that meaningful engagement acts as the primary driver shaping tourists' experiences through emotional, cognitive, and social connections with the destination. These experiences subsequently encourage tourists to actively participate as co-creators of value, engaging in collaborative interactions with local communities. More importantly, the study reveals that such participation evolves into giving back practices, representing voluntary contributions that generate tangible socio economic and environmental benefits. This confirms the existence of a behavioral pathway from meaningful engagement to co creation and ultimately to regenerative outcomes, positioning tourists as integral actors in the regenerative tourism system.

The study contributes to the literature from a theoretical standpoint by fusing regenerative tourism frameworks and meaningful travel experiences with co-creation theory. It reframes visitors as co-creators and co-regenerators by expanding the notion of value creation beyond economic and experiential aspects to encompass social and ecological regeneration. Empirically, the results fill a significant gap in earlier research that has mostly remained conceptual by demonstrating that transformative experiences can result in tangible pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors.

However, this study also has several limitations. Because the research is context-specific and concentrates on a single case study, the conclusions may not be as broadly applicable. Despite its depth, the qualitative method is prone to interpretation bias and fails to measure the scope of observed activities. Furthermore, the study does not look at the sustainability of giving-back activities over time; instead, it focuses on experiences during the visit. These limitations suggest that further research is needed to expand and validate the proposed framework across different contexts and methodologies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research and practical implementation. First, future studies should explore the long term continuity of giving back practices, particularly whether such behaviors persist after tourists return to their home environments. Comparative research across different types of destinations is also recommended to assess the transferability of the behavioral model identified in this study. In addition, the integration of mixed method approaches could strengthen the empirical robustness of future research by combining qualitative insights with quantitative validation.

Practically perspective, destination managers are urged to create engaging tourist programs that are experience-based and interactive. It is important to design activities like community engagement, cultural immersion, and environmental conservation in a way

that promotes active tourist participation. Additionally, mechanisms to support giving back practices should be created, such as digital platforms that allow for ongoing interaction after the visit, local product integration, or structured volunteer programs.

In order to keep local communities at the forefront of tourism development, governments must promote the growth of regenerative tourism through capacity building and community based governance. Regenerative efforts can be more successful if stakeholders including communities, visitors, and institutions work together more effectively.

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