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Tourism in the Fabric of Island Life: Livelihoods and Local Economic Linkages in Bangka Belitung, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines how tourism development interacts with local economic activities and livelihood systems in the small-island destinations of Pulau Panjang and Pulau Lengkuas, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was employed through semi-structured interviews with 18 purposively selected participants involved in tourism and tourism-related economic activities. The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to tourism opportunities, livelihood diversification, tourism–MSME linkages, and structural constraints. The findings show that tourism creates local economic opportunities through marine transportation, accommodation, food businesses, and local products. Tourism also interacts with existing maritime livelihoods, particularly fishing and boat building, by providing additional uses for boats, skills, and local resources. Local MSMEs participate in tourism while also accessing external markets through product distribution and digital marketing. However, tourism activities are constrained by infrastructure limitations, sea and weather conditions, limited facilities, and fluctuations in visitor demand. The study highlights that small-island tourism is embedded in a broader local economic and livelihood system, rather than functioning as an isolated economic sector.

Keywords: small-island tourism, sustainable livelihoods, local economic linkages, MSMEs, livelihood diversification

A. Introduction

Small islands have increasingly attracted tourism because their marine resources, coastal landscapes, cultural assets, and distinctive livelihood systems offer opportunities for tourism development and local economic growth. Tourism can generate employment, expand markets, stimulate entrepreneurship, and diversify household income. However, these benefits are shaped by geographical isolation, limited infrastructure, environmental sensitivity, and communities' dependence on natural resources. Previous studies have shown that tourism can create additional livelihood opportunities for coastal and fishing communities, while also transforming traditional livelihoods and placing pressure on local resources (Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, 2021; Lasso & Dahles, 2018; Su et al., 2016). Understanding tourism in small-island destinations therefore requires attention not only to tourism activities themselves, but also to their interactions with existing livelihoods and local economic systems, particularly where fisheries, maritime transportation, local businesses, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) operate alongside tourism.

The economic benefits of tourism do not necessarily remain within the destination or reach all local actors equally. Tourism generates demand for accommodation, food, transportation, recreation, and local products, potentially connecting visitors with a wider network of businesses and livelihood activities. Tourism-related livelihood diversification may provide complementary sources of income, although the extent to which communities benefit depends on local capabilities, market access, infrastructure, governance, and the distribution of tourism revenues (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020; Praptiwi et al., 2021). At the same time, dependence on visitor demand can expose local businesses and households to seasonality, market limitations, and fluctuations in tourist arrivals. Stronger connections between tourism and local enterprises may help retain more economic benefits within destination communities (Lasso & Dahles, 2018; Walker & Lee, 2021). These considerations highlight the importance of examining tourism not merely as a source of visitor expenditure, but as an economic process that interacts with existing livelihood strategies, local production, and enterprise networks.

Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia, provides a relevant setting for examining these relationships. As an archipelagic region, its coastal and marine resources are closely associated with community livelihoods and economic activities. Tourism operates alongside fisheries, maritime transportation, boat building, food businesses, accommodation, and the production and distribution of local goods. Previous studies of Indonesian small islands have examined relationships between tourism, community welfare, social-ecological systems, and resource-based livelihoods (Adrianto et al., 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2019; Praptiwi et al., 2021). Research in other island settings has also highlighted the interconnected roles of governance, economic performance, employment, social inclusion, transportation, and environmental conditions in tourism development (Fernandez-Abila et al., 2024). Nevertheless,

the relationships between tourism and the existing maritime economy need to be understood in their local context, particularly in destinations where tourism depends on resources, skills, and economic activities that communities have developed beyond the tourism sector.

Despite growing interest in island tourism, previous research has examined several relevant dimensions, including environmental carrying capacity, community attitudes, stakeholder perceptions, governance, livelihood transformation, and economic, social, and environmental indicators (Adrianto et al., 2021; Fauzel & Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2019). For example, research on Dachen Island has considered sustainable tourism through economic, sociocultural, environmental, tourism development, and tourism management dimensions (Ali & Li, 2024), while research in the Visayas has examined governance, economic performance, decent work, social inclusion, and environmental conditions across small islands (Fernandez-Abila et al., 2024). Although these studies provide important insights, less attention has been given to how tourism businesses, MSMEs, maritime transportation, fishing-related livelihoods, and local skills interact as components of a connected local economy across small-island destinations within the same archipelagic province. In particular, further qualitative understanding is needed of how local actors participate in these economic connections and respond to the practical constraints affecting their activities. This study addresses that gap by examining tourism as part of a wider local economic system rather than as a stand-alone sector.

The study makes three contributions. First, it connects the literature on small-island tourism with research on livelihood diversification and tourism–MSME linkages, recognising that tourism may provide complementary income opportunities while also creating uneven benefits and new vulnerabilities (Praptiwi et al., 2021; Su et al., 2016). Second, it provides qualitative evidence of how tourism demand interacts with maritime transportation, fisheries, boat building, food businesses, accommodation, local products, and MSME distribution networks. Third, it offers practical insights for destination development by highlighting the importance of strengthening local participation, connections between tourism and local enterprises, and community capacity to respond to infrastructure limitations, weather conditions, and fluctuations in tourist demand (Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, 2021; Fernandez-Abila et al., 2024; Sayuti, 2023). Together, these contributions provide an empirically grounded perspective on how tourism becomes connected with the broader economic and maritime livelihood systems of small-island communities.

Against this background, this study examines tourism development through the experiences of local economic actors and other relevant stakeholders on Pulau Panjang and Pulau Lengkuas in Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia. It addresses three questions: (1) How do tourism activities generate economic opportunities for local businesses and MSMEs? (2) How does tourism interact with existing maritime livelihoods and livelihood

diversification? and (3) What constraints and adaptive strategies shape local participation in the tourism economy? The study adopts a qualitative approach to understand how local actors experience and interpret tourism within their economic and social contexts. It draws on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) to examine the relationships between tourism, livelihood assets, and livelihood strategies, complemented by a tourism–local economic linkage perspective to explore connections among tourism businesses, MSMEs, and other local economic activities. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis are used to identify recurring patterns across participants' experiences. The following section reviews the theoretical and empirical literature on sustainable livelihoods, tourism–local economic linkages, and MSME participation.

B. Literature Review

Sustainable Livelihoods and Small-Island Tourism

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) provides a relevant theoretical perspective for understanding how tourism interacts with the livelihood systems of local communities. The framework views livelihoods in terms of the assets, capabilities, institutions, and strategies that people use to respond to changing economic and environmental conditions. In tourism destinations, tourism can serve as an additional livelihood strategy rather than simply replacing existing occupations, particularly where communities possess complementary natural, human, social, and economic resources (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021; Su et al., 2019). This perspective is particularly relevant to small islands, where households commonly combine tourism with resource-based activities and other forms of local economic activity. Evidence from Indonesia also indicates that tourism can provide alternative livelihood opportunities for small-island communities while remaining closely connected to existing marine-resource-based livelihoods (Praptiwi et al., 2021).

A central element of the livelihood perspective is diversification, through which households combine different activities to reduce their dependence on a single source of income. Tourism can contribute to this process by creating opportunities in accommodation, food services, transportation, guiding, local products, and other tourism-related activities (Ávila-Foucat et al., 2021; Cavalleri et al., 2022). However, tourism does not necessarily lead to sustainable livelihoods when communities become overly dependent on tourism or have limited access to markets and resources. Research on island destinations illustrates how tourism can transform traditional livelihoods while also creating new forms of vulnerability when local communities become highly dependent on tourism markets (Lasso & Dahles, 2018). Therefore, tourism should be considered one component of a broader livelihood portfolio rather than an automatic substitute for existing livelihoods.

The livelihood perspective also highlights the importance of community participation, governance, and local capacity. Tourism opportunities are more likely to contribute to local development when communities can access

resources, participate in tourism activities, and influence development processes (Dangi & Petrick, 2021; Weis et al., 2021). Institutional support, infrastructure, and local capacity can further shape how communities participate in tourism and benefit from tourism-related opportunities. Accordingly, this study applies the SLF to examine tourism as part of an existing livelihood system, particularly its interactions with maritime activities, local businesses, and other economic activities in small-island communities.

Tourism–Local Economic Linkages and MSME Participation

Tourism can generate local economic benefits through linkages between tourist demand and local economic activities, including accommodation, food services, transportation, retail, recreation, and local products. These linkages influence the extent to which tourism expenditure circulates within the destination economy. However, tourism growth does not automatically generate broad-based local benefits, as weak supply chains, geographical isolation, limited local capacity, and external ownership can restrict local economic participation (Jeyacheya & Hampton, 2020). Strengthening connections between tourism activities and local suppliers is therefore important for increasing the local economic benefits of tourism (Ji et al., 2022; Mathias & Nyongesa, 2020).

Within these linkages, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role by connecting tourism demand with local resources, products, skills, and employment. Entrepreneurship in island destinations is influenced by the characteristics of the local economic environment and the resources available to local businesses (Booth et al., 2020). Tourism entrepreneurship is also shaped by institutional, infrastructural, social, cultural, and market conditions (Zeng et al., 2024), Similarly, local resources, entrepreneurial capabilities, networks, and institutional support influence the development of rural tourism enterprises (Utami et al., 2023). These findings indicate that tourism development should be assessed not only in terms of tourist arrivals or the growth of tourism businesses but also in terms of local enterprise participation and the connections between these enterprises and other community livelihoods.

Nevertheless, the relationship between tourism and local businesses can create vulnerabilities when local economies become highly dependent on visitor demand. Research on island tourism highlights the exposure of tourism-dependent communities to external shocks and fluctuations in tourist flows (Adams et al., 2021; McLeod et al., 2021). At the same time, local resources, social networks, entrepreneurship, and community resourcefulness can support adaptive responses (McCormick & Qu, 2021; Partelow et al., 2023). Community participation can further strengthen local capacity to capture tourism benefits and respond to changing conditions (Ni & Say, 2023; Walker & Lee, 2021). Accordingly, this study considers local enterprises, MSMEs, and existing livelihood activities as interconnected components of the local tourism economy rather than as separate activities.

Tourism Research Gap and Positioning of the Present Study

The existing literature shows that tourism can support livelihood diversification, local economic development, entrepreneurship, and community resilience. Sustainable livelihood studies view tourism as an additional livelihood strategy (Praptiwi et al., 2021; Su et al., 2019), while research on tourism–local economic linkages highlights connections between tourism demand, local enterprises, and suppliers (Jeyacheya & Hampton, 2020; Ji et al., 2022). Other studies emphasise community participation, entrepreneurship, and resilience in sustainable tourism development (Booth et al., 2020; McLeod et al., 2021; Zeng et al., 2024). However, these perspectives are often examined separately, with less attention to how livelihood diversification, local economic linkages, and community adaptation operate together within the same small-island economic system. In particular, limited attention has been given to how tourism interacts with existing maritime livelihoods, including fishing, marine transportation, local production, and MSMEs, in Indonesian small-island settings.

This study addresses this gap through qualitative evidence from selected small islands in Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia. Building on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), it examines how existing livelihood assets are incorporated into tourism activities and connected with MSMEs, fisheries, maritime transportation, local products, and other community-based economic activities, while considering infrastructure, geographical, sea and weather conditions, and fluctuations in tourist demand. The study therefore extends existing perspectives on livelihood diversification, local participation, economic linkages, and resilience by viewing small-island tourism as a local economic ecosystem, in which tourism interacts with existing livelihood resources rather than operating as a stand-alone sector. This perspective provides a basis for understanding how local actors participate in tourism, diversify their economic activities, and respond to the infrastructure, market, and environmental conditions shaping everyday economic life on small islands.

C. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to examine the relationships between tourism, local livelihoods, and local economic linkages in small-island communities in Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia. The approach enabled an in-depth understanding of local actors' experiences, economic activities, and responses to tourism-related opportunities and challenges. The analysis was guided by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) and the tourism–local economic linkage perspective to examine livelihood diversification, local business participation, and the structural conditions influencing tourism-related economic activities.

The study was conducted on Pulau Panjang, South Bangka Regency, and Pulau Lengkuas, Belitung Regency. Data were collected from July to August 2026 through semi-structured interviews with 18 participants selected using purposive sampling. Participants were selected based on their involvement in tourism and local economic activities, including marine transportation, fisheries,

boat building, accommodation, food businesses, and local product sales. Table 1 presents the participant distribution by research location and economic activity.

Table 1. Profile of research participants

Profile characteristic	Description	Number of participants
Total participants	Participants selected through purposive sampling	18
Research location	Pulau Panjang, South Bangka Regency	8
	Pulau Lengkuas, Belitung Regency	10
Economic activity	Marine transportation and tourism services	4
	Fisheries	2
	Boat building	2
	Accommodation services	2
	Food businesses	4
	Local product production and sales	4

Source: Author's (2026)

The semi-structured interviews explored tourism-related economic opportunities, the relationship between tourism and existing livelihoods, local MSME participation, and the constraints affecting tourism-related activities. Particular attention was given to infrastructure, marine access, sea and weather conditions, fluctuations in visitor demand, and adaptive responses, including marketing and efforts to access markets beyond the islands. The interview format allowed participants to describe their experiences while maintaining a consistent focus on the research objectives.

The interview data were analysed thematically by identifying meaningful statements, assigning initial codes, grouping related codes into analytical categories, and identifying recurring patterns. This process generated four main themes: (1) tourism and local economic opportunities; (2) tourism and livelihood diversification; (3) tourism–MSME and local economic linkages; and (4) structural constraints and adaptive responses. The themes were reviewed against the interview material and interpreted using the SLF and the tourism–local economic linkage perspective. The SLF helped explain how existing livelihood resources and capabilities support economic diversification, while the linkage perspective highlighted the relationships between tourism demand, local businesses, and local product distribution. Together, these perspectives provided a basis for examining tourism-related opportunities and the structural conditions influencing local communities' participation in tourism-related economic activities.

D. Result

The thematic analysis of interviews with 18 participants from Pulau Panjang and Pulau Lengkuas identified four main themes concerning tourism and the local economy. The findings indicate that tourism is connected with marine transportation, fisheries, boat building, accommodation, food businesses, and local products. Existing maritime assets and skills support tourism-related activities, while infrastructure limitations, marine access, environmental conditions, fluctuations in visitor demand, and limited facilities influence local economic participation. To clarify how the themes emerged from the interview data, Table 2 presents the initial codes, analytical categories, and corresponding themes identified through the thematic analysis.

Table 2. Relationship between Initial Codes, Analytical Categories, and Main Themes

Initial codes	Analytical categories	Main themes
Island-hopping services; boat transportation; visitor demand; accommodation services; food services	Tourism-related demand and local business opportunities	Tourism and local economic opportunities
Fishing activities; use of boats for tourism; maritime skills; boat building; combining fishing and tourism activities	Use of existing livelihood assets and diversification of economic activities	Tourism and livelihood diversification
Local food products; seafood products; kemplang; bakery products; local product sales; access to markets beyond the islands	Tourism–MSME connections and local product distribution	Tourism–MSME and local economic linkages
Infrastructure limitations; marine access; sea and weather conditions; fluctuations in visitor demand; limited tourism facilities; digital marketing; market diversification	Structural barriers and adaptive business responses	Structural constraints and adaptive responses

Source: Author's (2026)

Table 2 illustrates the analytical process through which the initial codes were grouped into broader categories and subsequently organised into four main themes. The categories capture both the economic opportunities associated with tourism and the livelihood strategies, business relationships, and structural constraints shaping local participation. This thematic structure provides the basis for the summary of findings presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Thematic Findings

Main theme	Key findings from interviews	Main local economic activities
Tourism and local economic opportunities	Tourism generates demand for marine transportation, accommodation, culinary services, and other tourism-related activities.	Island hopping, boat services, accommodation, food services
Tourism and livelihood diversification	Existing maritime assets and skills are used for both traditional and tourism-related activities.	Fishing, tourism transportation, boat building
Tourism–MSME and local economic linkages	Tourism provides markets for local food and products, while businesses also seek markets beyond the islands.	Seafood, kemplang, bakery products, local products
Structural constraints and adaptive responses	Tourism is affected by infrastructure, sea conditions, visitor fluctuations, and limited facilities, while businesses respond through marketing and market diversification.	Infrastructure, marine access, social media, external markets

Source: Author's (2026)

Table 3 summarises the four themes and their principal findings. Tourism creates opportunities for transportation, accommodation, food services, and local product sales. Existing livelihoods, particularly fishing and boat building, are also connected with tourism through the use of boats and maritime skills. Local MSMEs participate in tourism-related markets while seeking opportunities to distribute their products beyond the islands. However, these economic activities remain influenced by infrastructure limitations, environmental conditions, and fluctuations in visitor demand. The following sections discuss each theme in greater detail, drawing on the interview findings to explain how tourism interacts with local livelihoods and economic activities.

Tourism and Local Economic Opportunities

The interviews indicate that tourism generates economic activities beyond the attractions themselves. Island-hopping activities create demand for boat transportation, while accommodation and food businesses provide additional services for visitors. One tourism transportation informant reported hundreds of boats operating for island hopping, with individual boats generally carrying 15–20 passengers and the lowest reported charter price at approximately IDR 800,000. Visitors included domestic tourists from Jakarta and international visitors, as well as family and corporate groups.

Local fishermen also used their boats or speedboats for tourism transportation while continuing fishing activities throughout the year. One informant reported a transportation charge of approximately IDR 500,000 per route. Accommodation was also available at approximately IDR 250,000 per unit, with a capacity of up to four people, while fishermen's boats could transport groups of visitors. Tourism activities included island visits, photography, bird watching, marine activities, and family-oriented visits.

Local food businesses further demonstrated the connection between tourism and local economic activity. A seafood business established around 2015 employed approximately five workers and reported customers from several Indonesian cities and some international markets. Another food business served customers from Palembang and other areas and distributed some products to Jakarta. These businesses provided food and local products within the tourism environment. The findings therefore show that tourism demand is associated with several small-scale local economic activities.

Tourism and Livelihood Diversification

The interviews show that tourism activities coexist with existing maritime livelihoods. Fishermen continued fishing while also using their boats for tourism-related transportation, creating an additional economic function for existing livelihood assets. Boat building represented another activity within the local maritime economy, with approximately three businesses producing different types and sizes of boats. Large boats reportedly required around six months to build, while smaller boats required approximately three and a half months, with prices ranging from around IDR 70 million to IDR 200 million depending on size and engine specifications. Orders were received from areas including Sukadamai and Tukak, while some production materials were sourced from Pulau Panjang.

The interviews also indicated that boat building relied mainly on practical experience and locally developed maritime skills. Boats could remain in use for many years depending on maintenance and condition. Fishing, tourism transportation, and boat building therefore represented interconnected activities within the local maritime economy. Tourism provided an additional use for existing boats and maritime capabilities without replacing established fishing activities. These findings indicate that local livelihoods involve multiple economic functions based on existing assets and skills.

Tourism–MSME and Local Economic Linkages

The interviews identified several connections between tourism and local MSMEs, particularly through food and local products. A seafood business employed approximately five workers, while another business operating since 2016 sold kemplang and distributed some products to Jakarta. A bakery operating since approximately 2009 employed around nine workers and produced approximately 400 packages per day, with products distributed to

Pangkalpinang. The bakery had also participated in training related to MSME management, legal requirements, halal certification, and packaging.

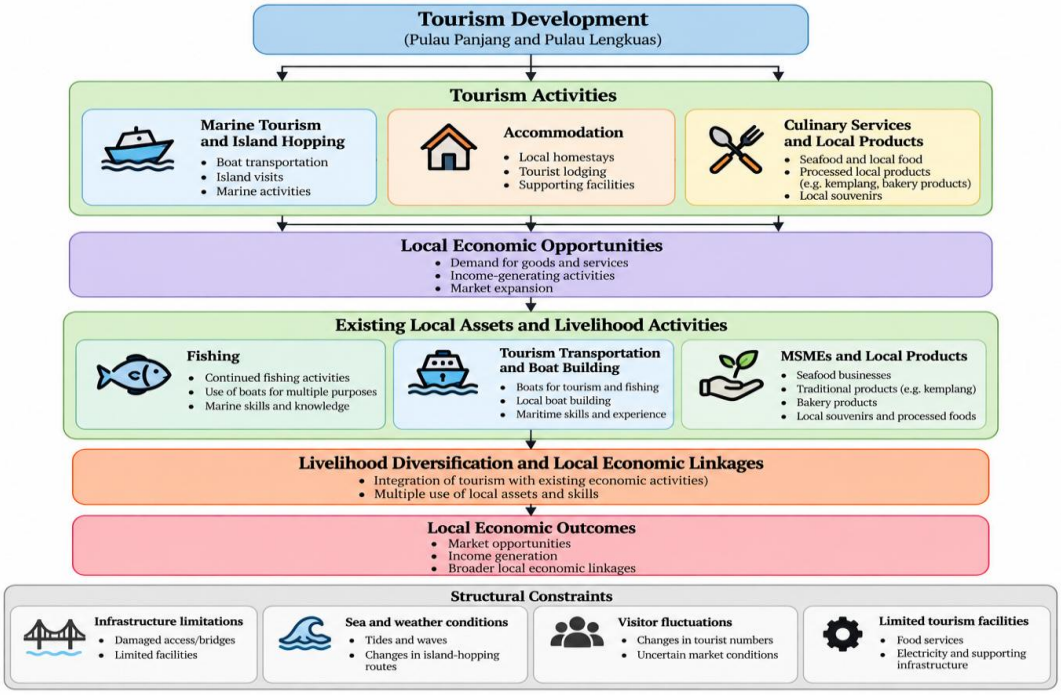


Figure 1. Tourism–Local Economic Linkages in the Studied Small Islands
Source: Author's (2026)

Other local products, including processed squid, were also sold to tourists and marketed beyond the immediate destination. The interviews indicated that lower tourist visits affected the market available to local MSMEs. At the same time, some businesses continued to access customers outside the islands through distribution and marketing activities. Social media was also used by some businesses as a marketing channel. These findings show that tourism represents one market for local businesses while external markets provide an additional channel for local products.

Figure 1 synthesises the relationships identified across the four themes. Tourism activities generate local economic opportunities through marine transportation, accommodation, culinary services, and local products. These activities interact with existing assets and livelihoods, including fishing, tourism transportation, boat building, and MSMEs. The resulting linkages support livelihood diversification and connections between tourism demand and local economic activities. These linkages, however, operate within conditions shaped by infrastructure limitations, sea and weather conditions, visitor fluctuations, and limited tourism facilities.

Structural Constraints and Adaptive Responses

The interviews identified several constraints affecting tourism activities in the two study locations. Destination-related information indicated that visitor

numbers had previously reached thousands but had subsequently declined to hundreds per month in some locations. Tourism activity was reported to be quieter during the more recent period, affecting businesses whose demand was partly connected to visitors. Infrastructure also affected accessibility, including damage to a bridge in one destination. These conditions were accompanied by limitations in supporting tourism facilities.

Sea and weather conditions also influenced tourism activities. Large waves could lead to changes in island-hopping routes, while tides affected access and tourism activities. Some locations had limited food services and electricity, with solar energy providing additional support. At the same time, marine resources, coastal scenery, boats, and fishing activities remained important components of the tourism environment. The findings therefore indicate that tourism development occurs alongside both valuable natural resources and limitations in infrastructure and supporting services.

Local businesses responded to changing tourism and market conditions through several forms of adaptation. Some used social media for marketing, while others distributed products to markets outside the destination. These strategies provided alternative market channels when visitor demand was uncertain or declining. Tourism-related actors also continued combining tourism with established activities such as fishing, food production, and boat building. Overall, the findings show that tourism in the two islands is embedded in an existing local economic and maritime livelihood system while remaining sensitive to infrastructure, environmental, and market conditions.

E. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that tourism in Pulau Panjang and Pulau Lengkuas generates local economic opportunities through interconnected services rather than tourism attractions alone. Island hopping creates demand for marine transportation, while accommodation, food businesses, and local products connect tourism demand with local economic actors. This finding supports the argument that tourism benefits depend on the strength of linkages between visitor demand and local suppliers (Jeyacheya & Hampton, 2020; Ji et al., 2022). It is also consistent with studies showing that livelihood diversification can involve transportation, food services, accommodation, and local products (Ávila-Foucat et al., 2021; Cavalleri et al., 2022). The significance of this finding is that tourism in small islands can be understood as a network of complementary economic activities in which visitor demand creates opportunities for different local actors.

A particularly important finding is that tourism is incorporated into existing maritime livelihoods rather than replacing them. Fishermen continue fishing while their boats can also be used for tourism transportation, while boat building represents a locally embedded skill that supports the broader maritime economy. This pattern is consistent with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which views livelihoods as combinations of assets and strategies used to respond to changing economic conditions (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021;

Su et al., 2019). It also supports evidence from Indonesian small islands showing that tourism can provide alternative livelihood opportunities while remaining connected to marine-resource-based activities (Praptiwi et al., 2021). The coexistence of fishing and tourism in the study locations therefore suggests that tourism functions as an additional component of a livelihood portfolio rather than as a substitute for established occupations.

The role of MSMEs further demonstrates how tourism becomes embedded in the local economy. Seafood businesses, *kemplang* producers, bakery businesses, and other local products are connected with tourism demand while also accessing markets outside the islands. This finding supports the literature identifying MSMEs as important connections between tourism demand, local resources, products, skills, and employment (Booth et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2024). The use of external markets and social media is particularly relevant because the findings also indicate fluctuations in tourist demand, suggesting that businesses cannot rely exclusively on visitors. This pattern is consistent with research on island tourism resilience, which highlights the vulnerability of tourism-dependent communities to changes in visitor flows and the importance of diversified economic responses (Adams et al., 2021; McLeod et al., 2021). Thus, the local economic contribution of tourism depends not only on attracting visitors but also on strengthening the capacity of local enterprises to participate in multiple markets.

The findings also address the research gap identified in the Introduction by demonstrating that livelihood diversification, tourism–MSME linkages, and local adaptation occur simultaneously within the same small-island economic system. A fisherman can participate in tourism transportation while continuing fishing, a boat builder can support maritime mobility, and an MSME can serve tourists while distributing products to external markets. These overlapping activities illustrate that tourism participation is not necessarily organised around a single tourism occupation or enterprise. The findings therefore extend previous research that has often examined livelihood diversification, tourism entrepreneurship, local economic linkages, and resilience as related but separate dimensions (Booth et al., 2020; McLeod et al., 2021; Su et al., 2019). In this context, viewing tourism as a local economic ecosystem helps explain how tourism interacts with pre-existing livelihoods, skills, enterprises, and market networks.

However, these economic linkages remain conditioned by structural and geographical constraints. Infrastructure limitations, damaged access, tides, waves, limited facilities, and fluctuations in visitor numbers influence the operation of tourism activities in the two destinations. These findings are consistent with small-island tourism research highlighting geographical isolation, infrastructure limitations, environmental sensitivity, and dependence on natural resources as important challenges (Adrianto et al., 2021; Fernandez-Abila et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2019). At the same time, the use of social media, access to external markets, and the continued combination of fishing, tourism transportation, food production, and boat building indicate forms of

local adaptation. This is consistent with research emphasising entrepreneurship, community resourcefulness, and local networks as mechanisms supporting resilience in island communities (McCormick & Qu, 2021; Partelow et al., 2023). Tourism development in small islands therefore needs to account for both the opportunities created through local economic linkages and the environmental, infrastructural, and market conditions that shape their sustainability.

The findings support the application of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and the tourism–local economic linkage perspective to small-island tourism. Tourism in the study locations is closely connected with existing assets, skills, businesses, and livelihood activities, including boats, maritime knowledge, food production, local products, and MSMEs. Rather than functioning as an isolated economic sector, tourism becomes part of a broader livelihood system in which local actors combine different activities and market opportunities according to the conditions they face. From a practical perspective, tourism development should therefore strengthen local enterprise participation, market access, digital marketing, maritime tourism services, and supporting infrastructure while allowing complementary livelihood activities to remain important. Seen from this perspective, the experience of Pulau Panjang and Pulau Lengkuas shows how tourism can become embedded in everyday local economic life, while its contribution continues to depend on the capacity of local actors to respond to changing markets, infrastructure conditions, and the realities of living in a small-island environment.

F. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine how tourism development interacts with local economic activities and livelihood systems in Pulau Panjang and Pulau Lengkuas, Bangka Belitung Islands Province. The findings show that tourism creates opportunities through marine transportation, accommodation, food businesses, and local products, while also interacting with existing livelihoods such as fishing and boat building. Local MSMEs participate in tourism while developing additional markets through product distribution and digital marketing. These findings show that tourism is embedded in the existing maritime and local economic system rather than operating as an independent sector.

The findings suggest that tourism policy should strengthen connections between tourism activities and local economic actors through better infrastructure, maritime tourism services, MSME capacity building, digital marketing, and market access, while maintaining existing livelihood activities as complementary sources of income. This study is limited by its focus on 18 participants from only two islands and its reliance on qualitative interview data, which limits broader generalisation and does not measure the quantitative economic or environmental impacts of tourism. Future research could involve more islands and participants and combine qualitative interviews with quantitative data on households, employment, enterprises, and tourism activity.

Further studies could also examine environmental dimensions and changes in local livelihoods over time to provide a broader understanding of small-island tourism development.

G. Acknowledgement

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H. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no competing interests exist in relation to this study or its publication. The research was undertaken with academic independence, and no personal, financial, or professional interests influenced the research process, the examination of interview findings, or the interpretation of the results. The authors have ensured that the arguments and conclusions presented in this manuscript are based on the research evidence and their scholarly assessment.

I. Declaration of AI Use

During the preparation of this manuscript, ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used as a language-support tool to improve grammatical accuracy and refine the overall structure of the written content. Its application was limited to enhancing sentence construction, language clarity, and the logical organisation of the manuscript. ChatGPT was not used to conduct interviews, generate research data, perform thematic analysis, or determine the study's findings. The authors carefully reviewed and revised the AI-assisted text to ensure that it accurately represented the research process and results. Full responsibility for the manuscript's content, academic arguments, and conclusions rests with the authors.

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