

# People Participation as Social Capital Form for Realizing Sustainable Ecotourism

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**Abstract**—As an entity of the tourism system, local communities were considered have better understanding of their region as well as influenced positively or negatively by the tourism activities in the region. This paper aimed to study role of community involvement in the development of ecotourism at Kintamani Bali from two perspectives of view, i.e. participation in the process of initiatives and participation in the utilizing the economic benefits of tourism. Thorough participation as an antecedent of social capital form, the sustainability of ecotourism at Kintamani could be expected.

**Keywords**—Community involvement, ecotourism, participation, social capital.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As one type of tourist activity, recently the development of ecotourism in various regions in Indonesia has increased. This was triggered by the growing belief that ecotourism is an activity that in addition to providing economic benefits, it is also contributes for the improvement of environmental conservation. Apart from the development of ecotourism as a means to improve the livelihoods of local people and conservation of the environment, very rare local community participation in ecotourism development planning and its management, considered. This often leads to discontinuation of ecotourism in the region [1], [2].

As tourist destination in the province of Bali, Kintamani district is experiencing gloomy times indicated by decline in tourist arrivals to the region. Various attempts were made by local government to recover bad image caused by street vendors as well as increasing tourist arrivals. One of many efforts that were developed relating to image restoration and enhancement of tourist arrivals is to build ecotourism in the region. Ideal outcomes of Kintamani's ecotourism development program are the creation of sustainable ecotourism that provides economic benefits for the local community while maintaining the socio-cultural dimensions of society and the protection of the environment.

In terms of implementation, efforts to realize sustainable ecotourism are not easy considering the participation of local communities in the planning and management of ecotourism is absolute. According to [3], community-based ecotourism is defined as “ecotourism enterprises that are owned and managed by the community. Furthermore, CBE[T] implies that a community is taking cares of its natural resources in

order to gain income through operating a tourism enterprise and using that income to better the lives of its members. Hence, CBE[T] involves conservation, business enterprise and community development”. This definition stated community is central point of community-based ecotourism development. Positive perceptions of local communities on planning and ecotourism activities in the area will reduce the conflicts possibilities with employers outside the area, even with the government. This is the first sign that through community participation in the development and ecotourism activities in the region, the sustainability of ecotourism could be expected [4]–[6].

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Synthesis of several studies on community participation in development process shows that participation can be assessed from two sides of view, namely the level of participation in the upstream and downstream enrollment. At the upstream level, participation can be viewed and analyzed from people involvement in the planning activities, meanwhile at the downstream level it is visible from their involvement in exploiting the benefits of development [2], [4], [7]–[9].

In order to community participation has optimal impacts, it is necessary to understand the motives behind participation. Reference [9] argued there are five motives of participation, namely: public goods investment, general social capital accumulation, production network formation, risk sharing network formation, and altruism. According to [9], there are two reasons we have to know and understand participation motives. First, meaningful policy implications cannot be derived unless we know the motives. Second, we have to understand ‘the cost for participation’ for community especially for member with resources scarcity such as skill and time in participatory activities.

The main issues about the relationship between community participation in ecotourism sustainability are the role of local communities in planning, governance, and control of ecotourism activities in their territory. Noting ecotourism tends to take place in the areas of conservation that its use is strictly regulated by the state, realizing public participation in the above issues tends not to be done easily [6].

In line with Leksakundilok's opinion, participation of local communities in planning and implementation of ecotourism in the region can be seen from the two dimensional public participation, i.e. in the decision-making process and benefit from participation in ecotourism activities. In the decision-making process, people are encouraged to have control over the resources of ecotourism, have initiative and able to make

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decisions that can affect and improve the quality of their lives [10]–[12]. Meanwhile community participation in tourism benefit is reflected in the increase in income, employment, and knowledge of ecotourism, coupled with increased public awareness about tourism. Increased awareness will create a more welcoming environment for tourists and is able to improve the destination image, in turn will increase the capacity of communities to benefit from tourism activities [10].

Referring to the essay of Joseph E. Stiglitz which has stated that the essence of development is a process of participation, it is not surprising that there is a wide range of development initiatives have failed given the lack of attention on efforts to build community capacity. Stiglitz reveals the success of development in the information age will be based on active community involvement in the process of formation initiatives and adaptation of development activities in the region [13]. According to [13], the development is the transformation of society. Previously, Pierre Bourdieu suggests three forms of capital, namely economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital should be considered in developing the society [14]. Thus, participation as an antecedent of social capital formation in the development of ecotourism is worth considering the transformation will occur in mindset and attitude of the community in the region.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Instrument and Source of Data

Referring to the literatures in community-based ecotourism, a survey instrument was developed to this study. Several items

were developed for each of indicator in the model, namely the initiative motives, management motives, norms and beliefs, social networking, trustworthiness, economic benefits, socio-culture benefit, and nature conservation. Pilot study was conducted to measure instrument's reliability and items' validity. The questionnaire with five levels Likert's scale was assessed by examining the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and total-item correlation.

Respondents in this study were community leaders from 15 villages at Kintamani. The selection of respondents was motivated by considerations of public leaders at Kintamani are representation of the villagers. Each village is represented by a non-formal leaders recognized by the villagers, and a formal figure set by the government. Thus, the total respondents in this study were 30.

#### B. Research Model

This study applied quantitative approach for modeling problems in the research. Conceptual models represented as Fig. 1 with the research hypotheses were:

- H1. initiatives motives in ecotourism planning affect people participation;
- H2. management motives in ecotourism activities affect community participation;
- H3. Participation positively affects the sustainability of ecotourism in Kintamani;
- H4. Participation positively affects social capital formation of Kintamani's people;
- H5. Social capital positively affects the sustainability of ecotourism in Kintamani.

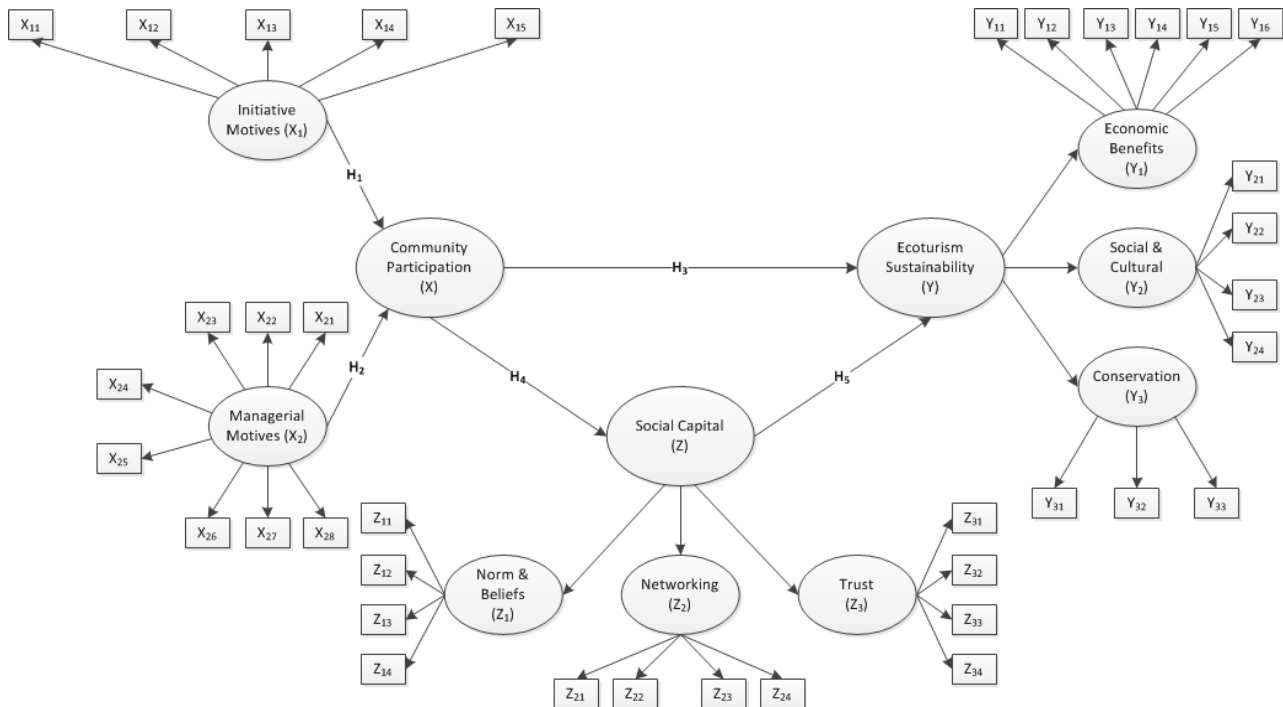


Fig. 1 Conceptual Model of Research

Considering the research model involved latent variables that could not observed directly, structural equation modeling (SEM) with component-based approach will applied with SmartPLS 2.0 from [15] to estimate the parameters. This method was chosen with following considerations:

1. As one method in soft modeling group, component-based SEM is not too strict about fulfilling the assumptions of normality, as required under covariance-based SEM (AMOS, LISREL);
2. The existence of formative and reflective indicators that cannot be handled by covariance-based SEM [16], and;
3. Can be used without any loss of power of the test for very small sample. Component-based SEM has proven its use in sample size is only 6 [17].

In studying the relationship between people participation, social capital, and ecotourism sustainability at Kintamani District in Bali; we conducted two types of analysis i.e. measurement model analysis to evaluate the appropriateness of items/indicators in explaining latent variable, and inner or structural model analysis to measure effect of exogenous towards endogenous latent variable and test the hypotheses.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### A. Quality of Research Instrument

Pilot study was conducted prior to data collection to assess quality of research instrument. Using SPSS 17.0 for Windows we got the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient and total-item correlation ( $\text{Corr}_{\text{total-item}}$ ) for items in every latent as below:

Latent	Items	$\text{Corr}_{\text{total-item}}$
Initiative Motives $\alpha = 0.785$	[X11] Villagers do not feel intimidated at meeting	0.518
	[X12] Villagers understand the decision of the meeting was the best	0.712
	[X13] Villagers have the opportunity to express their opinions	0.460
	[X14] Villagers often talk about tourism development initiatives at daily live	0.790
	[X15] Villagers do believe the decision of the meeting will be followed-up by local government	0.483
Management Motives $\alpha = 0.871$	[X21] Some villagers invest in ecotourism business	0.866
	[X22] Some villagers work in ecotourism business	0.848
	[X23] Villagers get economic benefit from ecotourism activities	0.862
	[X24] Villagers actively involve in maintaining the security of tourists' activities	0.850
	[X25] Villagers actively involve in maintaining the comfort of tourists' activities	0.868
	[X26] Villagers actively involve in preserving the environment	0.855
	[X27] Villagers actively involve in preserving local culture	0.856
	[X28] Villagers actively take advantages of business opportunities because of ecotourism activities	0.835

TABLE II  
QUALITY MEASUREMENTS FOR NORMS AND BELIEFS, NETWORKING, AND TRUST

Latent	Items	$\text{Corr}_{\text{total-item}}$
Norms and Beliefs $\alpha = 0.678$	[Z11] Villagers believe the community is the main actor in ecotourism planning	0.518
	[Z12] Villagers believe the community is the main actor in ecotourism management	0.621
	[Z13] Villagers believe the community is the main source in ecotourism activities	0.626
	[Z14] Villagers believe the community well-understood about ecotourism planning and management	0.676
Network $\alpha = 0.701$	[Z21] Villagers allocated their time for discussion about ecotourism planning	0.754
	[Z22] Villagers significantly contributed thorough constructive suggestions in ecotourism planning and management	0.582
	[Z23] Other stakeholder pay attention for community suggestions in ecotourism planning and management	0.598
	[Z24] Villagers make groups that affect awareness in ecotourism planning and management	0.631
Trust $\alpha = 0.811$	[Z31] Villagers trust each other in ecotourism planning and management	0.735
	[Z32] Villagers contribute physically in ecotourism planning and management	0.752
	[Z33] Villagers contribute ideas in ecotourism planning and management	0.717
	[Z34] Villagers contribute financially in ecotourism planning and management	0.840

TABLE III  
QUALITY MEASUREMENTS FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIO-CULTURE, AND CONSERVATION BENEFITS

Latent	Items	$\text{Corr}_{\text{total-item}}$
Economic Benefit $\alpha = 0.854$	[Y11] Ecotourism provides employment opportunities for villagers	0.851
	[Y12] Ecotourism increase the income for villagers	0.844
	[Y13] Ecotourism increase the quality of product and services consumed by the villagers	0.824
	[Y14] Ecotourism increase the number of physical project in the village	0.831
	[Y15] Ecotourism increase the quantity and quality of transportation and communication facilities	0.810
	[Y16] Ecotourism increase the quantity and quality of health facilities	0.813
Socio-Culture Benefit $\alpha = 0.732$	[Y21] Tourism improves the understanding of different cultures	0.642
	[Y22] Tourism increases the appreciation and respect for the different cultures	0.639
	[Y23] Tourism improves the quality of education	0.658
	[Y24] Tourism increases the quality of social infrastructure and places of worship	0.739
Conservation Benefit $\alpha = 0.702$	[Y31] Tourism increase the cleanliness of environment	0.825
	[Y32] Tourism increase the awareness of environment sustainability	0.356
	[Y33] Tourism increase the cleanliness of public facilities	0.605

According to [18] and [19], one set of indicators/items of a latent variable are considered have an internal consistency when its Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) is greater than or equal to 0.7. The second criterion to measure the quality of

instrument is to check the validity of each item that making up a latent variable. An item is considered valid if its coefficient correlation over the critical value equal to 0.3[20].

Examination of alpha coefficients shows seven out from 8 coefficients have values greater than 0.7 as a critical value. Only one latent, norms and beliefs, has value less than this critical value. However, for explanatory research, Cronbach's alpha less than 0.7 but greater than 0.6 is acceptable [19]. From this viewpoint, all of latents in the model have sufficient internal consistency. In addition, examination of corrected total-item correlation for each of items in the model shows all items have total-item correlation above the critical value and are valid to represent their latent variable. Furthermore, we conclude that the questionnaire used in the research have sufficient quality.

#### B. Profiles of the Respondents

From 30 questionnaires were administered, we found one did not completely filled. We decided to drop this, and the remaining data were analyzed. Briefly, all of the respondents are male; 31.0% were aged between 16 and 34 years and 69.0% were aged between 35 and 54 years, 10.3% had completed an elementary school or junior high school education, 48.3% had completed high school education, and the rest 41.4% had completed diploma, under graduate or graduate education. Almost all of the respondents have been living in Kintamani at least for 10 years and only one respondent (3.4%) has been living less than 10 years. In addition, 93.1% of total respondents were born at Kintamani.

#### C. Outer or Measurement Model Analysis

Measurement model analysis is conducted to assess latent variables with reflective indicator in terms of their observed or manifest variables [19], [21]. Typically, this is done by observing Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. At the construct level, convergent validity be assessed by examining whether the average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.50 [22]; and at item level the factor loadings are high (greater than 0.60) [19] and significant [22]. Refers to these critical values, we found one item ( $Z_{21}$ ) has loading as much as 0.453 and we decided to drop this item, and the data reanalyzed with the number of manifest items for network become three namely,  $Z_{22}$ ,  $Z_{23}$ , and  $Z_{24}$ .

Table IV lists the factor loadings,  $t$ -values, AVE, and composite reliability (CR) for all of latent with reflective manifests after  $Z_{21}$  has been dropped. At the item level, all of the factor loadings exceeded 0.50 and were statistically significant at 5% ( $t$ -values  $>$  1.96); thus we conclude the measurement model had convergent validity. In addition, all of the CR's values exceeded 0.60 showing a high level of internal consistency for the latent variables [22]. Moreover, all of the AVE's values greater than 0.50, showing the measurement achieved convergent validity at the item level and also discriminant validity at the construct level. From these findings, we concluded this research had appropriate levels of convergent and discriminant validity and structural model analysis worth to be conducted.

TABLE IV  
AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE) AND COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (CR)  
FOR LATENT WITH REFLECTIVE INDICATORS

Latent and Code of Item <sup>a</sup>	Loading	$t$ -values	AVE	CR
Initiative Motives			0.570	0.867
X <sub>11</sub>	0.750	24.997		
X <sub>12</sub>	0.832	23.084		
X <sub>13</sub>	0.622	9.279		
X <sub>14</sub>	0.879	39.650		
X <sub>15</sub>	0.655	9.351		
Management Motives			0.551	0.906
X <sub>21</sub>	0.662	9.699		
X <sub>22</sub>	0.757	16.701		
X <sub>23</sub>	0.632	11.455		
X <sub>24</sub>	0.798	18.310		
X <sub>25</sub>	0.630	10.144		
X <sub>26</sub>	0.755	17.781		
X <sub>27</sub>	0.769	19.365		
X <sub>28</sub>	0.891	48.637		
Norms and Beliefs			0.508	0.804
Z <sub>11</sub>	0.749	8.006		
Z <sub>12</sub>	0.611	4.972		
Z <sub>13</sub>	0.725	11.272		
Z <sub>14</sub>	0.717	11.011		
Network			0.669	0.847
Z <sub>22</sub>	0.865	44.334		
Z <sub>23</sub>	0.679	10.078		
Z <sub>24</sub>	0.882	57.016		
Trust			0.651	0.880
Z <sub>31</sub>	0.861	35.902		
Z <sub>32</sub>	0.840	21.997		
Z <sub>33</sub>	0.848	22.150		
Z <sub>34</sub>	0.637	9.853		
Economic Benefit			0.586	0.894
Y <sub>11</sub>	0.633	10.689		
Y <sub>12</sub>	0.666	9.472		
Y <sub>13</sub>	0.798	23.185		
Y <sub>14</sub>	0.752	17.012		
Y <sub>15</sub>	0.867	32.913		
Y <sub>16</sub>	0.846	27.602		
Socio-Culture Benefit			0.559	0.834
Y <sub>21</sub>	0.785	17.517		
Y <sub>22</sub>	0.793	20.374		
Y <sub>23</sub>	0.784	20.523		
Y <sub>24</sub>	0.607	7.110		
Conservation Benefit			0.651	0.880
Y <sub>31</sub>	0.710	13.858		
Y <sub>32</sub>	0.908	53.702		
Y <sub>33</sub>	0.804	16.069		

<sup>a</sup>Code refers to Tables I-III

#### D. Inner or Structural Model Analysis

As with the measurement model, it is essential to check the inner model estimates. Because of variance and covariance fit is not applicable in component-based SEM, which is primarily due to free-distribution variance assumption in component-based SEM, then we focus on non-parametric evaluation criteria to assess the inner's model quality. In doing this, we follow the guideline from [23], that suggests to examine the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for each of endogenous latent



variables in the model; the global criterion for goodness-of-fit of model; and to determine coefficients and its significance using resampling procedure. Table V lists the  $R^2$ , and communalities for every endogenous latent in the inner model.

According to [24],  $R^2$  values of 0.19, 0.33, or 0.67 for endogenous latent variables in the inner model are described as weak, moderate, or substantial; in representing amount of explained variance of constructs in the inner model[24]. Refers to these criterion,  $R^2$  values of each endogenous latent variable in the model has moderate or substantive capability to represent the variance. The global criterion for goodness-of-fit of model (GoF) is given by [16]:

$$\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\text{communality} \times R^2} \quad (1)$$

Equation (1) gave us the GoF of model as much as 0.619 and we believe this value is sufficient for saying our model qualified to analyze the relationship between community's participation, social capital, and ecotourism sustainability.

We used bootstrapping procedure available in SmartPLS 2.0 and set no sign changes with 100 cases and 200 samples in bootstrap setting. Following is the final estimates and their significance after running the bootstrap:

TABLE V  
R<sup>2</sup> VALUES, COMMUNALITIES, AND REDUNDANCIES OF ENDOGENOUS CONSTRUCTS

Endogenous Constructs	Number of Item	R <sup>2</sup>	Communality	Redundancy
Community Participation	13	0.998	0.487	0.254
Social Capital	11	0.626	0.412	0.255
Norms & beliefs	4	0.630	0.508	0.304
Networking	3	0.815	0.669	0.532
Trust	4	0.767	0.651	0.494
Ecotourism Sustainability	13	0.722	0.452	0.145
Economic benefit	6	0.911	0.586	0.527
Sociocultural benefit	4	0.693	0.559	0.384
Conservation benefit	3	0.590	0.659	0.376
<b>Average</b>		<b>0.750</b>	<b>0.510<sup>a</sup></b>	

<sup>a</sup> Weighted average with the weights is the number of items [16]

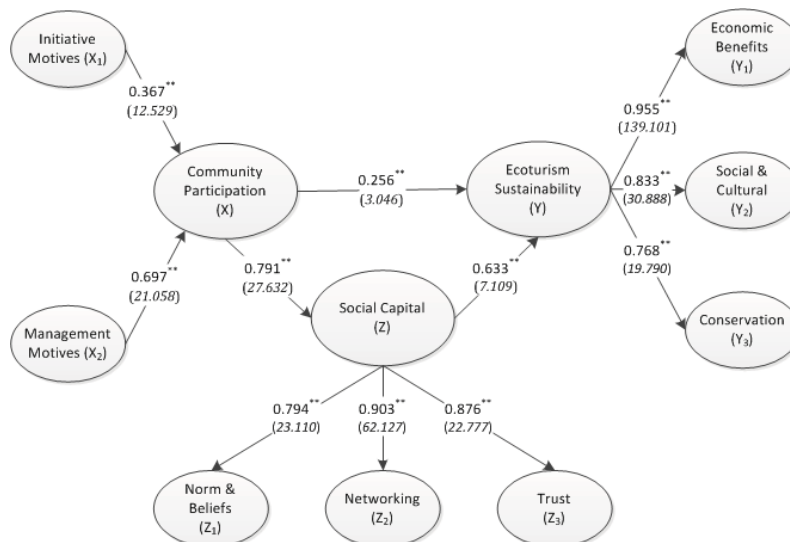


Fig. 2 Path Coefficients in the Final Model of Research (Numbers in bracket represent the respective  $t$ -values)

From final model depicted in Fig. 2, initiatives motives in ecotourism planning positively and significantly affected for community participation (path coefficient = 0.367,  $t$ -value = 12.529,  $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H<sub>1</sub> was accepted. The second motive, management motives also positively and significantly affected for community participation (path coefficient = 0.697,  $t$ -value = 21.058,  $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H<sub>2</sub> was accepted.

Community participation is proven had direct effect for ecotourism sustainability. Community participation positively and significantly affects ecotourism sustainability (path coefficient = 0.256,  $t$ -value = 3.046,  $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H<sub>3</sub> was accepted. Community participation also positively and significantly affects the social capital of community (path coefficient = 0.791,  $t$ -value = 27.632,  $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H<sub>4</sub> was accepted. In addition, social capital of community positively and significantly affects ecotourism sustainability (with path

coefficient = 0.633,  $t$ -value = 7.109,  $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H<sub>5</sub> was accepted. Briefly, all of the hypotheses were accepted.

Although we did not make hypotheses about the indirect effect of community participation towards ecotourism (this is similar to analyze the mediating role of social capital), we proved community participation had indirect effect as much as 0.501 (0.791 × 0.633), significantly affected for ecotourism sustainability. By combining its direct and indirect effects, we found community participation had significant total effect as much as 0.757 ( $t$ -value = 24.741,  $p < 0.01$ ).

## V. DISCUSSION

The means by which community participation affects the ecotourism sustainability has been studied by researchers with different backgrounds. Tosun and Timothy argued people

participation was one of some vital elements in tourism planning and promoting the strategies to enhance the benefits for local communities [25]. Community involvement in the beginning of development will affect the destination's quality and could minimize conflicts and misunderstanding regarding tourism development between local people and the initiators [4], [26], [27].

We found two types of motives significantly affect participation of local community at District of Kintamani Bali where ecotourism activities are intensively promoted and developed by the local government. From these two motives, management motives dominate initiative motives. Comparing the path coefficients, management motives affect community participation almost two times than effect from initiative motives. This finding is in line with the result obtained by [27]. From four factors significantly affected for the success of tourism development at Xingwen World Geopark at China, they found the most influential factor is people awareness about new business opportunity arose from the development.

Acts as an exogenous construct in determining social capital of community and ecotourism sustainability, participation plays an important role in building local capacity. We argue this finding based on characteristics of local people who prioritize the harmony of their lives with other people and to avoid conflicts between them. This argument is justified by comparing the path coefficients from social capital construct towards its reflective indicators. The biggest coefficient is found for path towards networking, and the smallest one is found for norms and beliefs. Local people tend to increase their social relationship through community participation.

The second reason lies on 'cost of participation' of villagers in achieving ecotourism sustainability. As shown by [9], facing negative [income] shock by allocating their time or skills in participatory activities, will reduce their participation. Observing the biggest path coefficient from ecotourism sustainability reflected on economics' indicator, followed by social and cultural indicator and environmental indicator in the last position; in order to make ecotourism at Kintamani sustainable one has to consider the economics' benefit gained by the villagers. This result is also in line with Untong et al. that found economic impact is the most influencing factor for tourism development [28].

## VI. IMPLICATIONS

### A. Management Implications

Ecotourism development is one of the important economic activities used to promote economic growth for communities and to conserve natural resources [1]. To keep ecotourism at District of Kintamani sustainable, contribution from community participation and social capital building have to be considered carefully [29]. Social capital from local community has greater effect for ecotourism sustainability compared to community participation. However, the total effect of participation as a combination of its direct and indirect effects has a bigger effect for ecotourism sustainability.

From these findings, we suggest local government and other initiators actively involved in the developing ecotourism in Kintamani, also in other areas in Bali, to carefully design their policies in enhancing local participation. Although common in developing countries where promotion in local tourism mainly focuses on raising the economics of local people [28], the policies should be developed not only for enhancing local participation but also directed to increase trust between the development agents and to boost impact in natural conservation benefit as well as in economic and socio-cultural benefits.

### B. Recommendation for Future Studies

Despite of the findings, this study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, this study focuses only on people at hinterland area. Different areas with different characteristics of people may give different results in studying the relationship between community participation, social capital building, and ecotourism sustainability. Second, Kintamani is an area with homogenous people. Areas with more heterogeneous people in tribe and culture may lead to different findings.

To overcome these limitations, future studies should be conducted within heterogeneous community and/or conducted at coastal area. It is also worth to make a comparative study between people living at hinterland and coastal area with or without different backgrounds.

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