

## Policy Formulation Analysis Based on Evidence from the Development of Lapindo Mud as a Dark Tourism Destination in Sidoarjo Regency

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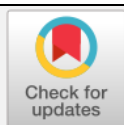
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### ABSTRACT

*The Lapindo Mud Disaster has the potential to be developed into a dark tourism destination. This study aims to provide information and evidence for the formulation of policies and models to support the development of Lapindo as a dark tourism site. The analysis employs Creswell and Poth's spiral analysis. The findings indicate that external factor components – competition, government policy, leadership, and finance – remain weak. Additionally, supply factor components, particularly the development of Lapindo as a dark tourism area, have not been addressed due to the absence of a specific dark tourism policy. Field evidence suggests that Lapindo has the potential to become a dark tourism destination, as it attracts many visitors, yet its sustainability remains uncertain. Therefore, an evidence-based policy must be formulated through a bottom-up, collaborative stakeholder approach. This study utilizes the Gunn & Var model to analyze field data, revealing that existing policies are still broad, top-down in nature, and fail to address the specific needs of dark tourism development. The proposed model enhances the Gunn & Var framework by incorporating a stakeholder synergy indicator, which emphasizes collaboration among five key actors in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies, all under the leadership of regional authorities.*

**Keywords:** Dark Tourism; Evidence-Based Policy; Lapindo Mud; Policy Formulation; Stakeholder Collaboration

## 1. Introduction

Efforts to improve the welfare of communities affected by the Lapindo Mud Disaster have led to the consideration of disaster areas as potential dark tourism sites. As Lennon stated, natural disasters, or those caused by human actions, despite their immense destructive power, paradoxically give rise to historically valuable cultural heritage sites, often forming a unique type of tourism known as dark tourism (Lennon, 2017). Similarly, Qian et al. explained that dark tourism encompasses the phenomenon of traveling to locations associated with death, disaster, or tragic events, including concentration camps, disaster zones, war memorials, and other places marked by suffering (Qian et al., 2022).

The Lapindo mudflow disaster, which originated from a drilling site operated by PT Lapindo Brantas, Inc. in Sidoarjo Regency, resulted from natural gas drilling leaks and small rock fractures near the site. The eruption, which occurred in May 2006 in Balongnongo Hamlet, Renokenongo Village, and Jatirejo Village in Porong District, East Java, Indonesia, affected densely populated areas, claiming 17 lives and disrupting the social and economic structures of eight villages, including Jabon District, Porong District, and Tanggulangin District.

The Lapindo Mud Area has the potential to be managed as a tourist destination, offering opportunities for development and promotion. The transformation of the site into a tourist attraction is expected to help affected residents transition into the tourism industry and explore new economic opportunities through dark tourism. This shift has already attracted both local and international visitors to the Lapindo disaster area. In response, affected residents initiated the development of the area as a disaster tourism site. The local government subsequently issued Regional Regulation Number 6 of 2014 on the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan, which includes provisions for Lapindo tourism. Various programs have been implemented, such as establishing Lapindo as an educational tourism area, providing training to stakeholders, facilitating tourist visits, ensuring the sustainability of tourism activities, creating tourism routes, and integrating educational laboratories. However, these efforts have not yet addressed the core development of dark tourism. To date, no specific policy (master plan) has been implemented for Lapindo as a designated tourism site, and the existing initiatives remain fragmented.

Lessons from the Chernobyl disaster illustrate how such sites can evolve into dark tourism destinations. Visitors experience representations of “poison,” “death,” and “suffering,” which significantly heighten interest in these locations. A deeper understanding of the tourist experience at such sites is necessary, as media portrayals and video games influence perceptions of Chernobyl as a dark tourism destination (Ojala, 2024). While dark tourism can provide economic benefits and new livelihoods for local communities, it may also have negative consequences for residents and the environment.

The local community has actively engaged in communication with the government to support tourism development in Lapindo, but only a limited number of initiatives have materialized. As a public service institution, the government should address such concerns by implementing policies that directly respond to public issues. According to Durrance, policy encompasses a comprehensive set of methods designed to achieve specific objectives (Durrance, 2022). Public policy refers to collective or individual government actions aimed at addressing societal challenges within a given environment. French noted that public policy is a structured process involving a series of government decisions and actions to tackle current and anticipated issues (French, 2016). Similarly, Brennan defined policy as “the relationship between a government unit and its environment” (Brennan, 2024). Fundamentally, public policy is based on rational considerations to achieve ideal goals, such as justice, efficiency, security, freedom,

and broader social objectives (Roddy, 2022). To enhance policy quality, engagement from non-governmental actors, including academia, universities, and civil society, is essential. Academics, in particular, play a critical role in providing an evidence base for policymaking.

The integration of evidence-based policymaking has become increasingly important due to the complexity of policy issues and the dynamic nature of societal changes. Evidence-based policy refers to a decision-making process grounded in empirical facts, ensuring that formulated policies align with public needs and interests (Cairney, 2016). Ideally, such policies are developed through rigorous research and scientific data analysis (Leuz, 2018).

The development of the Lapindo area, if based on academic studies and empirical evidence, will yield positive outcomes. Conversely, a lack of proper planning could lead to challenges for local communities or even pose risks. Prior to transforming the Lapindo site into a dark tourism destination, comprehensive research should be conducted to assess all supporting resources. This approach ensures sustainable tourism development, benefiting communities while minimizing potential negative impacts. Collaborative efforts among the community, businesses, local government, and regional authorities are crucial in managing Lapindo tourism, encompassing preparation, implementation, and evaluation processes. The successful development of tourist destinations requires well-structured planning and active participation from diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, site managers, and local communities (Gunn & Var, 2002).

Meyer and Meyer highlighted that social challenges such as poverty and a lack of skills training can be alleviated through the growth of the tourism sector (Daniel Meyer & Natanya Meyer, 2015). Tourism has a high multiplier effect, functioning as an “export” sector within the local economy by attracting external spending. However, effective tourism development relies on strategic marketing, proper management, and environmental conservation efforts. Local governments play a vital role in fostering an environment that enables small businesses and other stakeholders to thrive through entrepreneurship promotion and tourism development programs.

Several studies support the potential for Lapindo dark tourism to contribute to economic improvement. Andajani found that Lapindo is a viable tourism site with economic benefits for the surrounding community (Andajani, 2018). Winarto proposed that Lapindo tourism could be expanded to include a museum to commemorate the victims and affected communities (Winarto, 2024). However, research by Bataha et al. revealed a lack of coordination between Lapindo tourism management and local government authorities regarding licensing, administration, and financial planning despite the site’s hazardous conditions (Bataha et al., 2021). Similarly, Abdillah and Suryawan observed that while Lapindo tourism has economic potential, limited government involvement has hindered its full development (Abdillah & Suryawan, 2019). Moreover, Rohmah and Arif identified an opportunity to revitalize local industries through the integration of Lapindo dark tourism (Rohmah & Lukman Arif, 2022).

To optimize the development of Lapindo tourism, local government authorities must adopt a systematic and integrated approach. Additionally, innovation is required to ensure sustainability and prevent stagnation. Noviandari et al. concluded that the Lapindo disaster area has the potential to 1) Boost the local economy, 2) Expand employment opportunities, and 3) Enhance community welfare through tourism activities (Noviandari et al., 2021).

For this development to be successful, collaborative governance is necessary, requiring government involvement through policy implementation and facilitation efforts. Drake emphasized the importance of communication and dialogue among stakeholders in post-disaster management efforts (Drake, 2018). While such processes can be time-consuming and

require significant resources, they are essential for achieving fairness and adaptability in addressing challenges related to Lapindo's dark tourism potential. Sukmana and Sinduwiatmo similarly underscored the importance of stakeholder support in managing Lapindo tourism (Sukmana & Sinduwiatmo, 2018).

The role of government in tourism development has been widely analyzed. Shone et al. highlighted the need for local government accountability, budget transparency, performance monitoring of tourism destinations, environmental conservation, sustainable product development, and community participation (Shone et al., 2016). A well-structured organizational framework enhances efficient decision-making and coordination, while effective human resource management and financial planning contribute to the long-term sustainability of tourism initiatives.

Given previous research, Lapindo dark tourism has strong potential to become a recognized dark tourism site. The Sidoarjo Regency Government must actively engage in formulating evidence-based policies through a bottom-up, collaborative approach. Development should not solely rely on government efforts but must involve the private sector (for funding and training), academia, media, and the local community.

This study employs an evidence-based policy approach to explore field data and develop policies for sustainable Lapindo tourism management. The analysis follows the Gunn and Var model, providing empirical evidence for policy formulation. The novelty of this study lies in its critical evaluation of the Gunn and Var model, particularly in the context of stakeholder collaboration. The research presents field-based evidence highlighting the necessity of stakeholder involvement, advocating for a collaborative and structured policy framework overseen by regional leadership.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Evidence-Based Policy**

Tourism development is a strategic approach aimed at enhancing, expanding, and advancing tourist attractions to increase visitor numbers, thereby generating positive impacts for both the community and the government (Eric et al., 2020). Tourism policy specifically targets the tourism sector and serves as a framework for decision-making regarding tourism governance, development, and promotion. Policy documents outline governmental actions—whether taken or not—toward tourism. These documents, whether general or specific in their objectives, reflect the government's intentions for the sector, allowing tourism stakeholders to assess their behavior and make informed decisions about their future actions (Aguinis et al., 2023; Ariyudha et al., 2021; Oyalowo et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2024; Trezona et al., 2018; Valve et al., 2022).

Multiple factors influence policy formulation. First, viable policy options are often constrained by substantial parameters, such as resource scarcity, while political support is a crucial factor in the policymaking process. Second, the allocation of competencies among different actors plays a significant role in decision-making (Chhetri & Zacarias, 2021). Third, scientific policy advice is another key factor in policy formulation (Jann & Kai, 2006). This concept is rooted in the principle that scientific evidence should underpin policy decisions, a practice known as evidence-based policy.

Implementing an evidence-based approach in policymaking is challenging due to the complexity of the policymaking process. Moreover, producing reliable evidence itself is a demanding task, as evidence can appear straightforward but often carries broad interpretative nuances (Phillips et al., 2020). Smith-Merry asserts that evidence comprises various sources,

including expert knowledge, published research, statistical data, stakeholder consultations, previous policy evaluations, online information, consultation outcomes, cost analyses of policy options, and economic and statistical modeling results (Smith-Merry, 2020). Additionally, Botterill highlights that evidence does not always originate from formal research; rather, it represents the best available knowledge. According to Botterill, evidence must be relevant, representative, and valid to be effective in policy formulation (Botterill, 2017).

Evidence-based policy (EBP)—also known as evidence-based governance—is a public policy approach advocating for decision-making informed by rigorously established empirical evidence. This approach contrasts with policymaking driven by ideology, common sense, anecdotal experiences, or personal intuition. Key components of an evidence-based approach include accurate data, robust analytical skills, and political support for the use of scientific information (Oliver & Boaz, 2019).

A policy is evidence-based if it meets three criteria. First, it must include comparative evidence demonstrating the impact of a particular policy against at least one alternative policy. Second, the specific policy must be supported by empirical evidence, aligning with at least one individual or organizational preference within the relevant policy domain. Third, the policy should provide a clear rationale, explaining the evidence and preferences on which its formulation is based (Gade, 2024; Pali et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018).

The use of evidence-based policy in public administration is necessary due to the prevalence of decision-making pathologies in policy formulation. These include policy decisions based solely on intuition, general assumptions, experience, ideology, public opinion, or, in the worst cases, political interests (Scott & Gong, 2015; Strassheim, 2017). El Baradei notes that governments increasingly expect policies to incorporate innovative ideas, better use of empirical evidence, and a stronger emphasis on long-term goals (El Baradei, 2020). This perspective underscores the necessity of evidence-based approaches in policymaking.

The rationalism theory model of public policy formulation aligns with evidence-based policy, emphasizing that public policy must prioritize societal benefits. It further advocates for policy decisions that maintain an optimal balance between costs and expected outcomes (Dye, 2017). By integrating empirical evidence, evidence-based policies aim to minimize inefficiencies, reduce obstacles, and enhance the overall effectiveness of public policies.

## 2.2. Dark Tourism

Dark tourism refers to tourist visits to places associated with death, cruelty, suffering, and disaster (Light, 2017; P. Stone, 2013; P. R. Stone & Morton, 2022). This type of tourism provides visitors with opportunities to observe sites of tragedy, cruelty, and human suffering (Isaac, 2021). The study of dark tourism has gained increasing academic interest, encompassing a broad range of themes, including conceptualization, visitor emotions, ethical considerations, narrative and memory dimensions, community impacts, tourism management strategies, and educational implications (Iliev, 2021; Jang et al., 2021; Martini & Buda, 2020). Dark tourism sites often reflect social and political contexts while also demonstrating lessons about the consequences of human actions, science, and technology. These sites commemorate historical tragedies, humanitarian disasters, and the effects of mismanaged technological advancements—examples include Chernobyl, Wuhan, and the Lapindo Mud Disaster.

Dark tourism sites frequently exhibit tragedies through photographs, paintings, or other visual representations of suffering and death, shaping specific narratives for visitors (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013; Gillen, 2018; Hughes, 2008). These visual materials are curated and displayed in different ways, allowing each visitor to form their interpretation of the site and its

significance (Lv, Luo, et al., 2022; Stylianou & Stylianou-Lambert, 2016). Research on visitor motivations for dark tourism suggests that fascination with death is a common factor (Bauer, 2021; Magano et al., 2023). However, visitors may also be motivated by a desire to learn about historical events (Mionel, 2020; Yan et al., 2016), revisit personal or collective memories, explore cultural and political interests, engage in spiritual or religious reflection, satisfy curiosity and entertainment, or reinforce emotional connections, national identity, and self-understanding (Shome, 2023; Zhang, 2022; Zheng et al., 2020). Given these diverse motivations, there are multiple psychological and sociocultural factors influencing why individuals visit dark tourism sites (Iliev, 2021).

A defining characteristic of dark tourism is the prominent role of photography. Previous studies describe how tourists engage with dark tourism sites through photography, as visuals play a crucial role in constructing and maintaining the tourist gaze (Lv, Lu, et al., 2022). Photography is a central element of tourism experiences, as images are deliberately selected, framed, and presented to create specific perceptions of destinations (Dresler, 2024; Hilmar, 2016; Lennon, 2017, 2018). As Qian et al. argue, tourism is fundamentally about “consuming places visually.” Visualization practices shape tourist perceptions of place, history, political violence, and scientific or technological failures (Qian et al., 2023). Dark tourism sites provide visitors with historical context and visual evidence of past tragedies, shaping their understanding of the events (Lennon, 2017; Zhuo et al., 2024).

Photography also plays a vital role in documenting conflict, atrocities, and suffering at dark tourism sites (Hillier & Fu, 2024; Mehta et al., 2023). Tourists engage with photographs as historical evidence, transforming them into part of the dark tourism experience. These images are often curated and arranged to create a commercialized narrative, reinforcing specific themes and interpretations of the site. While photographs may appear as objective records, they function as narrative tools that influence visitor perceptions (Lin et al., 2024; Santoso et al., 2024). In dark tourism, photographic narratives encapsulate the political complexities surrounding the site, including its people, places, and histories.

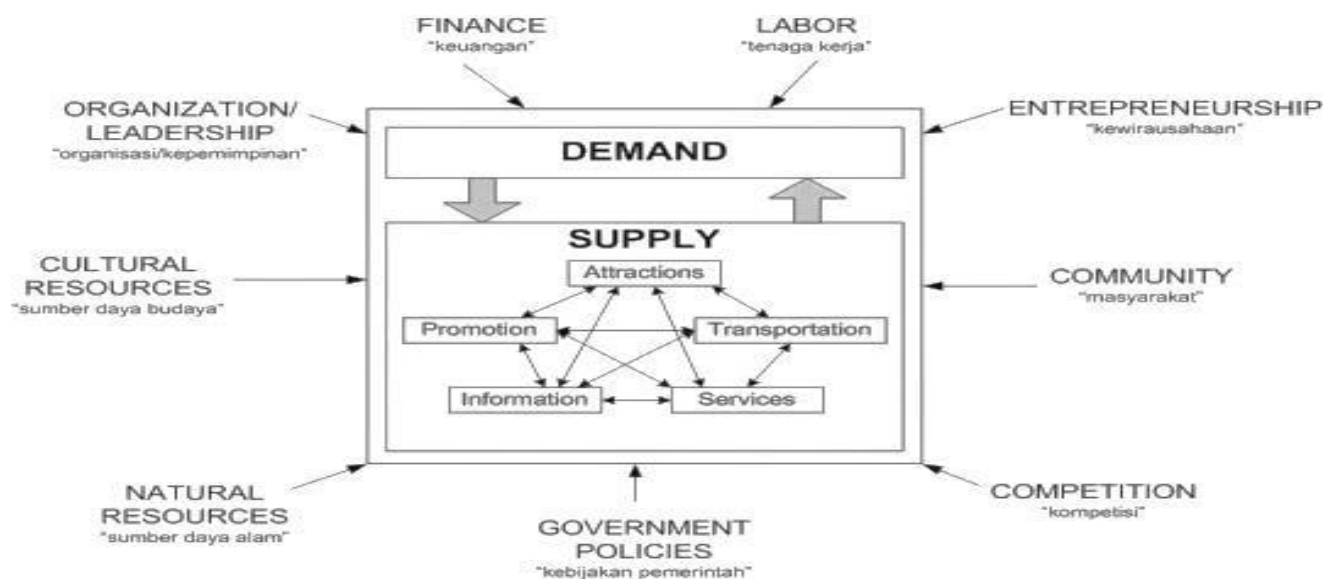
Images of atrocities, suffering, and death serve as visual guides, shaping the way visitors interpret dark tourism destinations. However, these images are not merely literal depictions of past events; rather, they offer curated interpretations of history (Hassapopoulou, 2018; Zuelow, 2011). As Soulard et al. argue, “gazing is not simply seeing, but involves the cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, comparing, and making mental connections between signs and their referents, and capturing representative signs photographically.” In this way, dark tourism does more than just present historical tragedies—it actively constructs and shapes visitors’ understanding of the past (Soulard et al., 2023).

### 2.3. Tourism as a System

Leiper was among the first to argue that tourism functions as a system where individual elements contribute to a larger whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Neil Leiper, 2004). Lohman and Netto explained that a complete system must contain the following components: environment (the system’s location), units (the system’s components), relationships (how the components interact), attributes (the characteristics of the system’s elements), and inputs, outputs, and feedback (Lohman & Netto, 2017).

One of the pioneers in tourism studies, Gunn and Var, developed the concept of Functional Tourism, emphasizing that each component of tourism is interconnected. Their model identifies two primary forces driving tourism: demand and supply. According to their

framework, destinations must analyze and develop services and infrastructure that align with consumer needs and expectations.



**Figure 1. Gunn & Var Functional System Model**

Source: (Gunn & Var, 2002)

Gunn and Var described the tourism system as being structured around a linear supply-and-demand model (Gunn & Var, 2002). The supply component consists of attractions, accommodation, transportation, services, information, and promotion. In contrast, the demand component encompasses all factors related to tourist preferences and behaviors, including their wants, needs, and financial capabilities (Gunn & Var, 2002). The demand side effectively functions as a market, shaping what tourists seek and their ability to pay for tourism-related experiences.

Four key factors influence tourism demand:

- 1) Motivation – The tourist must have a reason to travel.
- 2) Financial Capacity – The ability to afford tourism-related expenses.
- 3) Time Availability – Sufficient time to engage in travel activities.
- 4) Physical Ability – The health and fitness level required for travel.

These factors contribute to market segmentation, helping destinations identify their target audience based on geographic and demographic characteristics. Among all tourism components, attractions play the most significant role in influencing demand, as they directly appeal to tourists' interests. Other elements—such as accommodation, transportation, and services—act as facilitators, ensuring that visitors can access and enjoy attractions seamlessly.

Despite the importance of attractions, the travel services sector remains the largest economic contributor to tourism. This sector includes accommodation, food services, and transportation, all of which support the broader tourism infrastructure. Additionally, information plays a crucial role in linking consumers with destinations, extending beyond traditional promotional materials to include interpretation, environmental messaging, and visitor engagement strategies (Gunn & Var, 2002).

## 2.4. Collaborative Perspective in Tourism Development

Collaborative governance emphasizes the need for stakeholder synergy, where various actors share a commitment to optimizing public services. This governance paradigm requires strong leadership, clear stakeholder relationships, incentive alignment, collective policy formulation, and an outcome-oriented approach. Governance, in this context, positions the government as one of many development actors rather than the sole dominant entity. According to Keping, governance is a system of values, policies, and institutions that regulate economic, social, and political affairs through interactions among the community, government, and private sector (Keping, 2018). Governance institutions, therefore, operate within three interdependent domains: the state (government), the private sector (business), and society (the community), each carrying out distinct yet interconnected functions (Derakhshan et al., 2019). Governance, in this sense, involves the distribution of authority, shifting from a government-centric approach (rowing model) to a multi-stakeholder approach (steering model).

In a narrower sense, collaborative governance refers to the involvement of multiple actors in decision-making and policy implementation. Ansell and Gash defined collaborative governance as a structured partnership between government institutions for the provision of public services (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This approach to decision-making involves a series of joint activities where partners co-develop goals and strategies, share responsibilities and allocate resources (Brown et al., 2016; Carr Kelman et al., 2023). Collaboration is often integrated into all stages of decision-making, from implementation to evaluation. Unlike other forms of collaboration, where stakeholders play a supporting role, collaborative governance requires all involved parties to jointly determine policy directions through shared power and responsibility (Garner, 2024; Westin et al., 2024). Ansell and Gash proposed six key criteria for effective collaboration: a public agency or institution initiates the forum; the forum includes non-government actors; participants engage directly in decision-making rather than merely serving as consultants; the forum is formally structured and meets regularly; decision-making is based on consensus, even if consensus is not always achieved; and the primary focus is on public policy or governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Collaborative governance operates across multiple levels of government, in public-private partnerships, and within diverse policy frameworks (Aidi et al., 2024; Emerson et al., 2012).

According to Knollenberg et al., four key social models support the development of tourism in economic growth and community welfare: collaboration among stakeholders, support for new entrants into the tourism industry, community engagement, and clear goal-setting (Knollenberg et al., 2021). Among these, collaboration and community involvement are the most influential in addressing tourism development challenges. However, these aspects remain difficult to optimize in practice. Collaboration, as Chatfield and Reddick noted, is “a process of joint decision-making among key stakeholders from a given domain to determine the future of that domain” (Chatfield & Reddick, 2018). Community-based tourism planning, therefore, requires cooperation between independent stakeholders from government bodies, private enterprises, and local communities to address challenges in tourism planning and development jointly. The concept of community in tourism refers to a collective of people sharing a geographic space. Community-based tourism can be seen as an ecosystem in which visitors engage with residents, services, and environments to experience authentic tourism products (Amoako et al., 2022; Dewi et al., 2023; Jäckli & Meier, 2024).

Government bureaucracies must adapt to increasing environmental complexity, rapid changes, and interdependence among stakeholders (Xi, 2019). When dealing with complex challenges that surpass the capacity of a single organization, strategic management must

incorporate a shared perspective across multiple organizations and institutions. This aligns with concept of a “functional social system” –a structure that operates between society as a whole and individual organization (Gillingham, 2019; Tomkiv et al., 2017). Addressing societal challenges amid interdependence, complexity, and uncertainty requires collaborative strategies that optimize stakeholder roles while reducing disruptions (Agger & Sørensen, 2018). In tourism, stakeholders include the community, private sector, and government, each of which has distinct yet complementary roles. The government is responsible for regulating tourism activities, enforcing policies, and ensuring sustainable tourism management. The community, as the closest group to tourism destinations, plays a role in managing, preserving, and benefiting from tourism development. The private sector, primarily investors, provides financial and infrastructure support, ensuring the smooth operation of tourism enterprises. For successful and sustainable tourism development, these three components must collaborate, ensuring a balanced, inclusive, and mutually beneficial approach to tourism governance.

### **3. Research Methodology**

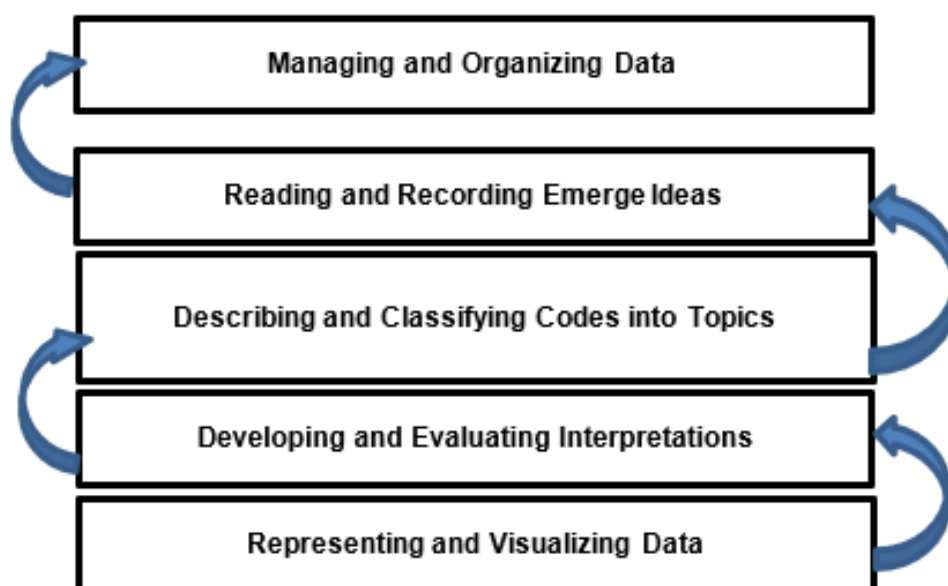
Research methods serve as tools that enable researchers to analyze existing data, ultimately leading to meaningful conclusions. This study employs a qualitative approach, which is used to capture and describe phenomena, explore emerging issues, and provide explanations of the subject under investigation. Qualitative research is grounded in philosophical assumptions, research strategies, and diverse methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Data collection was conducted face-to-face with informants, where researchers acted as key instruments, gathering secondary data and conducting behavioral observations and interviews with participants.

Before analysis, the collected data was tested for validity using triangulation techniques. Once the validity of the data was confirmed, the researcher proceeded with data analysis by identifying patterns, categories, and themes through an inductive process. This approach involved processing data from concrete observations into abstract units of information. Researchers then interpreted the findings from observations and face-to-face interviews, ensuring an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. An essential aspect of this process is the creation of visual models to illustrate key elements of the research findings.

Data analysis followed Creswell and Poth’s Spiral Analysis Model, which involves the following steps:

- 1) Managing and Organizing Data
- 2) Reading and Recording Emerging Ideas
- 3) Describing and Classifying Codes into Themes
- 4) Developing and Assessing Interpretations
- 5) Representing and Visualizing Data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The final step in the Data Analysis Spiral focuses on data representation and visualization, ensuring that findings are systematically structured and comprehensible. In this research, the Gunn and Var model was employed as a framework for analyzing data, providing a structured approach to tourism development and stakeholder collaboration.



**Figure 2. Qualitative Data Analysis Tutorial Using Creswell & Poth's Data Analysis Spiral**  
Source: (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

#### 4. Results

The information collected through direct interviews with informants was first subjected to a data validity test (triangulation) to ensure accuracy. The validated data was then analyzed using Creswell & Poth's qualitative spiral model, following the steps of labeling field data, identifying emerging themes, classifying codes, developing interpretations, and assessing findings. The research results are presented in the following table.

**Table 1. Analysis of Lapindo Mud Tourism Readiness Factors**

Element	Theme	Interpretation	Proposition
<b>Finance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No help from the government</li> <li>2. No assistance from the private sector</li> <li>3. The association manages finances from tourists</li> </ol>	The government has not been responsive in its policies and involvement of the private sector in managing Lapindo's dark tourism.	Government and private financial support (CSR) will support the development of Lapindo's dark tourism.
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many unemployed</li> <li>2. Affected communities need jobs</li> <li>3. Mud tourism opens</li> </ol>	Lapindo Dark Tourism opens up employment opportunities	Collaboration between all parties will further improve Lapindo's functionalization

Element	Theme	Interpretation	Proposition
	up new job opportunities		effectively and efficiently.
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People are not ready to become entrepreneurs</li> <li>2. Not yet professional as a guide</li> <li>3. Not yet mature in designing and managing a tourist area</li> <li>4. Services to tourists are provided as is and only serve what tourists want.</li> </ol>	An entrepreneurial spirit is formed.	Economic conditions, limited skills and capital, and economic opportunities open up with the existence of illegal tourism so people are enthusiastic about becoming entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.
<b>Public Perception</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic Pressure</li> <li>2. Limited Employment Opportunities</li> <li>3. Responsive Making Lapindo a Dark Tourism</li> </ol>	The economic situation and conditions require creativity, innovation, and work enthusiasm.	Economic pressures, limited capital, and scarcity of jobs with the economic opportunities from illegal tourism foster motivation to be innovative and creative.
<b>Competition</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The community is enthusiastic about developing Lapindo Dark Tourism.</li> <li>2. Forming a Tourism Association</li> <li>3. Innovating by presenting various tourist attractions, tourist souvenirs</li> <li>4. Improve your skills as a guide.</li> <li>5. Tourists came to complain about the tourist visit infrastructure and the lack of space to enjoy it comfortably.</li> <li>6. The lack of comfort in enjoying the Lapindo</li> </ol>	The spirit of competition is growing. But so far the Government has not been present with its role as a facilitator and coordinator.	If the government supports Lapindo Dark Tourism through policies and capital, the number of tourists will increase.

Element	Theme	Interpretation	Proposition
	dark tourism is feared to reduce the number of visitors to the Lapindo Mud tourism.		
<b>Government Policy</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The policy is still general, not specific to the Lapindo Dark Tourism Area</li> <li>2. Arranged in a top-down manner</li> <li>3. The implementation of existing programs does not meet the needs of the community and does not meet the needs of making it a tourist area.</li> </ol>	Programs lack alignment with community needs.	If the policy is specifically formulated, Lapindo will become an evidence-based Dark Tourism, formulated, implemented, and evaluated collaboratively.
<b>Source Power</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Lapindo area can become a dark tourism destination and attract tourists if it is managed well.</li> <li>2. The creativity and motivation of the community is very good.</li> <li>3. Physical and Cultural Support.</li> <li>4. There is connectivity with the surrounding tourist areas, for example, Taman Dayu, Taman Safari, Tanggunglangin craft village, Lusi Island River Tourism, and others.</li> </ol>	The Lapindo Lumur area has great potential to become Dark Tourism. The community fully supports the program. The government has not been present and has not collaborated with stakeholders. For example, optimizing CRS	Natural resources (Dark Tourism Areas) and enthusiastic communities are then supported by the government and private sector so that tourism development will be of high quality, effective, and efficient.
<b>Culture</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Lapindo mudflow has submerged</li> </ol>	The Lapindo Mud Disaster has an impact on cultural shifts. For	Cultural shifts as an impact of disasters, local wisdom to a

Element	Theme	Interpretation	Proposition
	<p>sociocultural values and existing sites.</p> <p>2. Revitalization to support Lapindo as Dark Tourism will increase the tourism value in Lapindo.</p> <p>3. Cultural innovation by highlighting disaster events is also needed.</p>	<p>communities that previously had no contact with tourism, the disaster pushed them to live in the tourism milieu. To increase the selling value of tourism, it is very necessary to revitalize existing local cultures and innovate to create new cultures in disaster and victim settings.</p>	<p>new culture, namely the tourism community, will certainly have tourism selling value if they revitalize local culture and innovate culture with disaster settings and disaster victims.</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p>1. Formal leaders/Government view Lapindo as having the potential to be a tourist area and followed this by forming an agency to handle the development of the Lapindo mudflow location, namely the Regional Tourism Promotion Agency (BPPD).</p> <p>2. The Regional Head believes that the 600-hectare area has good tourism potential.</p> <p>3. Community leaders also fully support Lapindo becoming an Illegal Tourism Area.</p> <p>4. So far, the problem is the commitment of the regional heads and local governments to make it happen.</p>	<p>There is no commitment from regional heads and local governments to build and manage the Lapindo Dark Tourism Area so that, the quality of tourism and its sustainability are worried.</p>	<p>Strong leadership is needed to integrate and manage dark tourism effectively.</p>

**Table 2. Analysis of Preparation Aspects**

Attractiveness Factor	Category	Description
Scarcity	Unique Natural Phenomenon	The Lapindo mudflow is an unintentional geological disaster caused by the misuse of technology. The affected area, spanning 640 hectares, has transformed into a vast mud lake.
Naturalness	Environmental Characteristics	The site consists of both hardened and liquid mud areas, with an active eruption center that continues to release mud to this day.
Uniqueness	Distinctive Features	The site remains one of the few continuously active mud volcanoes in the world, offering a rare and dynamic natural attraction for tourists.
Accommodation	Proximity to Urban Areas	Lapindo Mud is located in Porong District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, approximately 12 km south of Sidoarjo City. Accommodation facilities are concentrated in the city center, which is relatively close to the tourist site.
Transportation	Accessibility and Connectivity	The Lapindo Mud tourism area is strategically located along a major provincial highway connecting Surabaya, Pasuruan, and Malang, as well as other districts in East Java. However, transportation within the mud tourism area is poorly managed and lacks integration with other supporting tourism spots. Improved transport infrastructure is needed to enhance accessibility and connectivity.
Promotion & Information	Tourism Awareness & Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tourism information regarding Lapindo Mud Tourism in Sidoarjo remains unstructured, inconsistent, and lacks clarity.</li> <li>2. Promotional efforts via digital platforms and Internet media have gained recognition both nationally and internationally.</li> <li>3. However, on-site information dissemination and direct promotional strategies remain weak, requiring a structured marketing approach to increase tourism visibility.</li> </ol>

**Table 3. Analysis of Tourism Demand for Lapindo Dark Tourism**

Aspect	Findings & Implications
Visitor Interest	Tourists show strong interest in visiting Lapindo due to its historical and environmental uniqueness.
Sustainability Concerns	If proper infrastructure & management are not implemented, long-term viability is at risk.

Aspect	Findings & Implications
Market Potential	Demand is high among domestic & international visitors, but a lack of promotional efforts limits growth.

#### 4.1. Analysis of the Development Model for Lapindo Mud Tourism in Sidoarjo

Lapindo Mud Tourism is categorized as dark tourism, which is oriented toward tourist visits to sites associated with death, suffering, disasters, and human cruelty. These sites serve as historical reminders that provide moral lessons on social, political, scientific, and technological factors contributing to human tragedies. As illustrated by Chernobyl and Wuhan, dark tourism sites highlight the consequences of political mismanagement, scientific negligence, and environmental catastrophes, with Lapindo Mud being a relevant case. The exhibition of photographs, paintings, and other visual narratives of disaster-stricken areas plays a crucial role in framing visitors' experiences and historical interpretation. The motivations behind dark tourism visits extend beyond mere curiosity, encompassing cultural and political interests, spirituality, nostalgia, entertainment, national identity, and self-understanding. In this context, photography serves as more than just documentation; it becomes a tool for shaping perceptions of historical tragedies and capturing the broader political complexity of events. As scholars have argued, "gazing is not just seeing, but involves cognitive work to interpret, evaluate, make comparisons, and establish mental connections between signs and their referents" (Cairney, 2016).

The concept of dark tourism and its ability to attract visitors forms the foundation of this study in developing an evidence-based policy framework for Lapindo Mud Tourism. Evidence-based policy, also referred to as evidence-based governance, is a public policy approach that advocates for decisions to be driven by rigorously established empirical evidence rather than assumptions or political agendas (Oliver & Boaz, 2019). To generate evidence for effective policymaking, this study applies the Gunn & Var Model as an analytical framework (Gunn & Var, 2002). The findings reveal that Lapindo Dark Tourism remains largely a community-driven initiative developed as a response to the increasing number of visitors. The local community has established a tourism association to manage the site, yet due to limited financial resources and operational challenges, and the area has not been fully developed into a structured dark tourism destination. Sustainable development and effective management of Lapindo Mud Tourism require stronger financial support from both the government and the private sector, particularly through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. A collaborative governance model involving all key stakeholders is essential to enhance the functionality, sustainability, and economic potential of Lapindo Dark Tourism.

Lapindo Mud Tourism presents a significant economic opportunity for displaced residents, many of whom have struggled with limited employment opportunities, lack of entrepreneurial skills, and insufficient capital. The community demonstrates high motivation to improve its socioeconomic conditions through tourism entrepreneurship, recognizing dark tourism as a potential driver for economic revitalization. However, economic constraints, lack of capital, and limited job opportunities pose significant challenges. Thus, government intervention is crucial in providing financial support, policy frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives to transform Lapindo into a modern, structured dark tourism area. The absence of evidence-based policymaking has contributed to disorganized development efforts. Establishing specific policies for Lapindo's transition into a dark tourism destination—formulated, implemented, and

evaluated through a collaborative and evidence-based approach—would enable effective and sustainable growth.

Furthermore, the Lapindo disaster has led to a cultural transformation among the local population. A shift from traditional livelihood practices to tourism-based economic activities has occurred, necessitating the preservation and revitalization of local cultural heritage. By integrating cultural innovations with disaster tourism settings, Lapindo can develop a unique tourism identity that enhances its marketability. However, achieving this vision depends on strong leadership and commitment from regional and local governments in establishing a structured and well-managed dark tourism site.

From the demand perspective, the influx of tourists to Lapindo Mud Tourism has been significant, demonstrating strong visitor interest in the site. However, demand growth has not been matched by supply-side improvements, particularly in the areas of service quality, accommodation, and tourism promotion. The lack of infrastructure, promotional strategies, and organized service delivery stems from weak external factors, including the absence of competition, lack of government intervention, insufficient leadership coordination, and the absence of budget allocation for tourism development. The key challenges that hinder Lapindo's tourism development can be categorized into three primary areas. First, external factor constraints include the lack of competition within the local tourism industry, the absence of a structured government policy for dark tourism development, leadership challenges in integrating multi-stakeholder efforts, and inadequate financial resources for infrastructure development. Second, the lack of tourism infrastructure preparation, such as the limited development of essential tourist facilities, including parking areas, visitor platforms, toilets, food and beverage outlets, and souvenir shops, has restricted the potential for growth. Third, the absence of dark tourism-specific attractions, such as a Lapindo disaster museum, a disaster-themed cinema, and designated viewing spots, reduces the site's appeal and limits its ability to provide an engaging and informative visitor experience.

One of the main obstacles to transforming Lapindo into a structured dark tourism area is the lack of specialized attractions. Unlike other established dark tourism sites, Lapindo lacks essential visitor engagement features, such as historical museums, interactive disaster exhibits, and professionally curated film screenings. Additionally, the absence of trained professional tour guides who can effectively communicate the history and significance of the site further weakens the tourism experience. The success of Lapindo Dark Tourism relies heavily on government intervention through evidence-based policymaking, stakeholder collaboration, and financial investment. Government policies should be formulated through a bottom-up approach, incorporating community input, private sector investment, and academic research to ensure sustainable tourism management. This study maps out an alternative stakeholder synergy model that highlights the necessary roles of different actors in Lapindo's development.

Key policy actions should include establishing government regulations to formalize Lapindo as an official dark tourism site, developing an integrated tourism infrastructure plan, including visitor platforms, designated viewing spots, and a disaster heritage museum, introducing professional training programs for tour guides and local entrepreneurs, strengthening private sector engagement through CSR funding and investment incentives, and enhancing tourism promotion through digital marketing strategies and media collaborations. By implementing a structured development model, Lapindo Mud Tourism can evolve into a well-managed, sustainable, and globally recognized dark tourism destination.

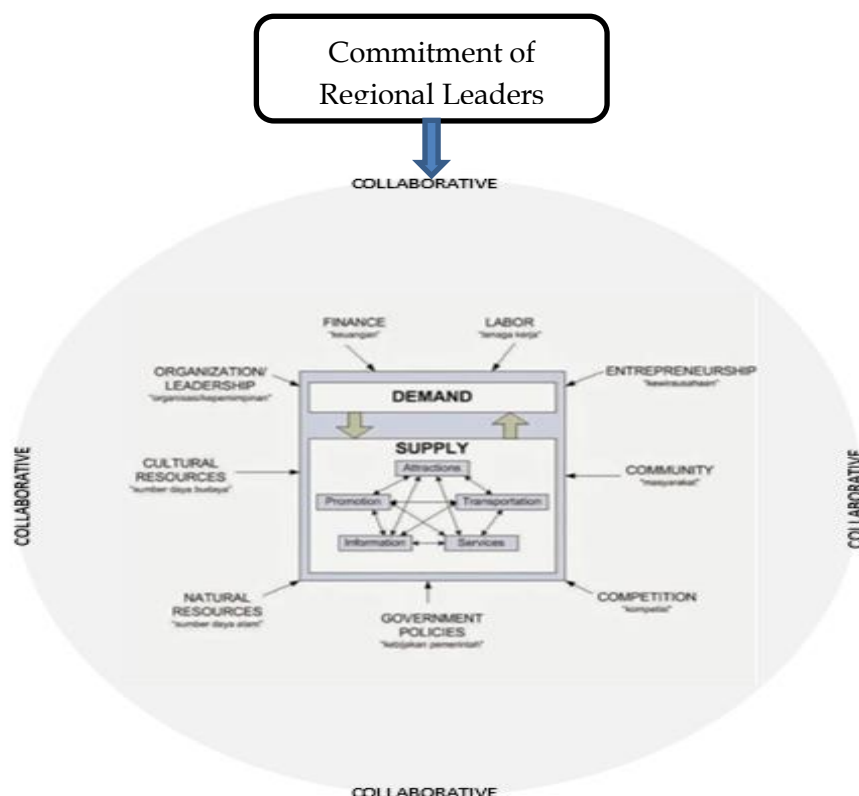
**Table 4. Lapindo Mud Tourism Development Model from a Stakeholder Synergy Perspective**

Indicator	Government	Private Sector	Local Community	Academia	Media
<b>Government Policy</b>	Acts as the initiator and facilitator of policymaking, ensuring regulatory frameworks align with sustainable tourism development	Provides input and participation in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of tourism policies	Engages in policy discussions to ensure community needs are reflected in decision-making	Conducts evidence-based policy analysis to support sustainable tourism development	Communicates policies to the public and monitors policy implementation through media reports
<b>Finance</b>	Allocates budgetary support for infrastructure development, community empowerment, and tourism facilitation through APBD (Regional Budget)	Contributes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for infrastructure, empowerment programs, and capital assistance for local businesses	-	-	-
<b>Accommodation &amp; Infrastructure</b>	Develops policies to facilitate investment in tourism infrastructure and accommodation	Collaborates with the government to invest in infrastructure development for Lapindo tourism	Engages in community-driven initiatives to support infrastructure improvements through collective efforts	Researches evidence-based infrastructure planning to enhance tourism sustainability	Promotes Lapindo tourism infrastructure development through public awareness campaigns
<b>Competition &amp; Entrepreneurship</b>	Encourages entrepreneurship in Lapindo by offering incentives and business-friendly	Provides entrepreneurship training to enhance tourism-related business skills	Innovates in business models, improves service quality and strengthens	Develops training programs to enhance local entrepreneurial skills	Provides public communication training to improve business promotion

Indicator	Government	Private Sector	Local Community	Academia	Media
	policies		human resource capacity.		and customer interaction
<b>Service Quality &amp; Standardization</b>	Develops Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and fosters collaboration between the government, private sector, and community to ensure excellent service	Implements SOPs for high-quality tourism services and ensures synergy with the public and government	Works alongside government and private sector to adhere to tourism management standards and provide high-quality visitor experiences	Provides training in service quality management and hospitality standards	Promotes service excellence in tourism through media coverage and storytelling
<b>Promotion &amp; Marketing</b>	Collaborates with the private sector and community to ensure wide-reaching tourism promotion	Implements marketing campaigns through travel agencies, tourism websites, and promotional networks	Creates unique souvenirs made from Lapindo mud, such as keychains and handicrafts, to enhance visitor engagement	Design evidence-based tourism promotion models for sustainable branding	Leads mass media promotional efforts, including online campaigns, TV features, and travel documentaries

Source: Research Analysis

Based on data analysis, it can be clearly seen that the role of regional leaders is very dominant in generating innovation and collaborating with stakeholders, namely local government, community, private sector, academics and media. They play a role according to their duties and functions in managing Lapindo mudflow tourism as a tourist destination. Together, they formulate a development policy that is needed, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. According to researchers, this has not been emphasized in Gunn and Varr's theory, so researchers recommend a model that can reconstruct the Gunn & Varr development model to maximize tourism development further as follows:



**Figure 3. Development Model of Mud Tourism in Sidoarjo**

Source: (Gunn & Var, 2002) and Researcher Analysis

According to the picture above, the researcher illustrates that the main thing that must be done in running a Gunn & Var tourism system model is the Policy factor by involving five stakeholders, namely the Government, Community, and Private Sector, academics, and the media. Stakeholders synergize in compiling, implementing and evaluating all parties feel ownership and responsibility. The model that the author has compiled provides implications for the theory used and practical implications in society. Regarding the theory used, namely the Gunn & Var, the researcher's model provides a recommendation for improvement or alternatives that, in using the Gunn & Var theory, will be more effective if elements in the aspect which exist mapped in accordance with the duties of the caretaker interests and synergize five stakeholders in making policies so that they can be implemented more effectively and functionally.

This research needs to be continued by further researchers by emphasizing the advocacy model for the development of Dark Tourism Areas in Indonesia.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, this study concludes that several external factors remain inadequate in supporting the development of Lapindo Mud Tourism. Key challenges include competition, weak government policies, leadership gaps, and insufficient financial support. Additionally, the lack of essential tourism infrastructure, such as parking areas, visitor platforms, restrooms, food and beverage outlets, and souvenir stalls, further hinders development. The absence of a structured government policy has contributed to

these challenges, highlighting the need for a bottom-up, stakeholder-driven approach in policymaking.

To address these issues, this study strengthens Gunn & Var's tourism development model by emphasizing the critical role of stakeholder collaboration. The proposed model integrates five key stakeholder groups—government, private sector, local communities, academia, and media—with the regional head serving as the coordinating authority. Through collaborative governance, this approach ensures that the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of tourism policies are more effective, efficient, and aligned with community needs.

Based on the findings of this study, two key recommendations are proposed. First, regional authorities should actively engage stakeholders, particularly the private sector, in Lapindo tourism development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding. Private investment can support infrastructure improvements, enhance visitor experiences, and ensure long-term sustainability. Second, tourism policies must be developed through a bottom-up, collaborative, and evidence-based approach. Involving local communities, private investors, and tourism experts in policy formulation will ensure that regulations and development initiatives align with real-world challenges and opportunities. By implementing these recommendations, Lapindo Mud Tourism can transition into a well-managed, sustainable dark tourism destination, benefiting both the local economy and the broader tourism industry.

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The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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