Women in transition: Gendered hosts in Karimunjawa Island tourism, Indonesia

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Abstract. Karimunjawa Island is one of the many attractive tourist destinations in Indonesia. The central government has designated it as a National Strategic Tourism Area (KSPN), following the positive trend of tourist arrivals and the plan to integrate the area with other tourism destinations. Meanwhile, transformations are also happening in the local community, including changes in sources of livelihood. The most prevalent of this is the increase in women's participation in the tourism industry, especially how they take on important jobs that lead to increased income at the household level. This study explores the relationship between tourism development and the increase in participation of women in the productive age, the variations amongst different villages on the same island, and the influential factors in this phenomenon. By using statistical data, a quantitative analysis was conducted to uncover the connection between differences in women’s productivity and improvements in village prosperity. The results were then further analyzed qualitatively to uncover the reasons behind the relationship. Interviews with relevant stakeholders unearthed information regarding the reasons for the changes and the underlying motivations that caused it. The study revealed that although the involvement of women in tourism may positively impact household prosperity, the issues of gender inequality in terms of tourism employment persists.

1. Introduction
Indonesia has become one of the major destinations for international tourism. The World Economic Forum [1] has ranked Indonesia in the 42nd place among 136 countries in its Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index. In the following year, the World Travel & Tourism Council [2] ranked Indonesia ninth overall in the Power & Performance Report- the only country in Southeast Asia to be in the top ten. Indeed, the trend in tourist arrivals shows remarked improvements, with an increase of 12.58% of international visitors from 2017 to 2018.

Indonesia offers many natural and cultural attractions with its selection of tropical beaches as one of the country’s prime destinations. Located north of Java, Karimunjawa has grown into a favorable option for national and international tourists. Compared to Bali, Karimunjawa is relatively more difficult to access but this also gives Karimunjawa feeling of serenity and a more “natural” environment. The Indonesian Government Regulation Number 50/2011 concerning the Master Plan of...
Various studies have shown that tourism can help develop local and regional economies. At the local scale, “tourism offers the rural world a second chance” [3], by providing benefits such as job creation, diversifying business forms, and sparking innovation as well as creativity. Tourism also can boost cooperation and partnership between local areas through activities and attractions clustering [4]. Furthermore, at the regional scale, tourism activities can positively impact earnings and employment levels [5].

Amidst the plethora of studies surrounding the economic impact of tourism, there are also other aspects that must be considered, such as environmental and societal costs. As an island with coastal areas, Karimunjawa Island may suffer from natural deterioration due to rapid tourism development and urbanization, such as salinization of coastal aquifers and loss of agricultural land [6]. Host societies may also perceive tourism as socially detrimental, mostly because tourism can also bring negative effects to society, e.g., alcohol abuse, drugs, and crimes [7].

Other impacts may not seem as obvious as mentioned above, one of these is related to gender roles and relations. Although there have been studies about tourism and gender since 1985, the last decade, such studies have been scarce [8]. Gibson [9] mentioned that, so far, there are three categories in research on gender and tourism: gendered tourists, gendered hosts, and gendered construction of tourism. The impact of tourism on local conditions is best observed through the second type of study, which shows clear gender segregation of local hosts by tourism through the division of labor [10]. Many women in the tourism industry work in lower-paying jobs, with less job security, and in positions of less power compared to men. This situation is often further exacerbated by their “responsibilities” to also care for their family and domestic matters.

Two studies specifically focus on the connection between gender and tourism in Indonesia: Wilkinson and Pratiwi [11] who studied the impact of tourism development on gender roles and relations in Pangandaran. The second study is by Cukier et al [12] about the involvement of women in tourism development in Bali. The first study discovered that women are mostly self-employed in informal trading. Meanwhile, the second study concluded that to be involved in the formal sector, women need to fulfill high requirements and are often paid less than men in the same position. Wilkinson and Pratiwi [11] concluded that using a quantitative approach is difficult due to the lack of data. However, they strongly recommend the use of a qualitative approach as it is more suitable to the local conditions.

Although the tourism industry in Karimunjawa has improved the local economy in terms of livelihoods, it is also important to look at the gender dynamics behind that phenomenon. This serves not only to reveal the advantages for the local economy of having productive women but also to investigate the shift in gender roles of local communities. In order to do so, first, a quantitative analysis is conducted to gain insight into the relationship between changes in male-female working ages to household prosperity. Then a qualitative analysis is performed to offer explanations and details of the impact uncovered in the previous analysis and to address the assumptions and factors surrounding the issue.

2. Tourism Development in Karimunjawa
Karimunjawa is an archipelago made up of 27 islands located north of Java with a total land area of 78 km². The largest island of the archipelago is Karimunjawa Island followed by Kemojan. As a kecamatan (sub-district), Karimunjawa consists of four villages: Karimunjawa, Kemojan, Parang, and Nyamuk. The latest data from 2017 shows that Karimunjawa has 9,514 inhabitants spread over the villages, with an equal share of men and women. Although most people live in Karimunjawa village, Nyamuk has the highest population density, followed by Parang, Kemojan, and Karimunjawa as the least dense. Most inhabitants in Karimunjawa are Moslems, with only 46 Christians living in the archipelago.
Figure 1. Karimunjawa Strategic Tourism Area.

Nyamuk is the only village with no available tourist lodging. Meanwhile, Karimunjawa has 84 lodgings, 11 of which are hotels. Kemojan has eight lodgings and Parang only has one. A 2017 data shows that between 2012-2015, there has been an increase in the number of hotels and other types of lodging. However, the record shows that no additional lodgings were built between 2015 and 2016. In terms of international tourist arrivals, Jepara Regency Tourism Agency noted a significant increase between 2013-2016. However, from 2016 to 2017, there was a decrease in international tourist arrivals. Since 2012, the local livelihood of most inhabitants in Karimunjawa was no longer in the agriculture and fishery sector, but in industry, trading, and service.

Figure 2. Tourists arrivals in Karimunjawa from 2008 to 2018.
Based on Government Regulation No. 50/2011 concerning the National Tourism Master Plan of 2010-2025, Karimunjawa Tourism Strategic Area is designed to have an important impact on economic, social, and cultural growth; natural resources cultivation; environmental carrying capacity; defense and security. Moreover, according to the Central Java Provincial Spatial Plan, Karimunjawa Island is part of the Karimunjawa National Conservation Area. It was initially a Marine Natural Reserve in 1986, then changed to a National Conservation Area in 1999. In the Jepara Regency Spatial Plan, Karimunjawa is planned as Regional Activity Center.

The attractions in Karimunjawa can be grouped into three categories: land, water, and cultural attractions [13]. Land attractions include tracking and camping, sunbathing, bird watching, and caving. Water attractions include swimming, snorkeling, diving, and fishing. For cultural attractions, tourists can choose between visiting heritage sites, folk arts, and traditional events. Compared to other islands in the archipelago, Karimunjawa and Kemujan offer a complete package for tourists wanting to enjoy all types of attractions.

3. Methods
This research utilizes a mixed-method approach which includes R-Pearson correlation testing and qualitative analysis. The correlation analysis is used to check the relevance between the differences in women's productivity with family prosperity improvements in Karimunjawa. Furthermore, it is also used to observe how field observation results relate to theories. The correlation analysis uses variables of household prosperity level and men-women productive ages data.

R-Pearson correlation method is a model used to see the relations between interval-ratio variables [14]. The value of R-Pearson is in the range of 0.00 to ±1.00, with 0.00 meaning that there is no relation, whereas +1.00 indicates a perfect positive correlation and -1.00 indicates a perfect negative relation. In this research, the correlation coefficient is calculated through SPSS statistical analysis software with the following formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum XY - (\sum X \sum Y)}{\sqrt{[\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

For the qualitative approach, in-depth interviews were carried out with 29 local respondents. These were selected proportionately in terms of gender. Field observations of the surrounding environment were carried out in a week focusing on the key features of the tourism development in Karimunjawa Island and its impact on the local society and the daily lives of the people of Karimunjawa.

4. Analysis
4.1. Correlation between household prosperity and women in the productive age
Household prosperity in Karimunjawa can be measured through indicators of the ability to fulfill the needs of the members of the family in achieving a good quality of life quality, both in economic and non-economic aspects. These indicators can also reflect how the environment affects the family, and the role of the family in the surrounding environment [15]. The 2017 data (see Figure 3) shows that there are differences in household prosperity, as well as differences between Karimunjawa as an area with a tourism-based economy and Kemujan with its agriculture-based economy.

According to the National Population and Family Planning Agency (abbreviated as BKKBN in Indonesian), the household prosperity of 27.59% of households in Kemujan is in the category of pre-prosperous (pra-sejahtera), meaning they have not been able to meet their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, health, and education). Meanwhile, Karimunjawa has fewer pre-prosperous households than Kemujan (19.37%). For all other categories, the share of prosperous households in Karimunjawa is 8% higher than in Kemujan. This may indicate that the tourism development in Karimunjawa provides a bigger stimulus for increasing household prosperity, in comparison to Kemujan village with its
agricultural economic base. This is despite the location of both areas adjacent to each other on the same island.

![Figure 3. Household prosperity in Karimunjawa and Kemujan](image)

R-Pearson analysis shows a correlation between household prosperity and the productive age of both men and women in Kemujan and Karimunjawa. In general, the main pattern that emerges in the analysis shows that men and women of productive age differently affect household prosperity improvements. In Figure 4, we can see that productive-aged women in Karimunjawa have a higher correlation with pre-prosperous households’ reduction and prosperous households’ improvement, compared to women in Kemujan village. This is valid in the case of Karimunjawa village, where women have more impact on prosperity improvements than men, especially in improving the household prosperity from prosperous-2 category to prosperous-3-plus.

![Figure 4. Correlations between household prosperity and men and women of productive ages in Karimunjawa and Kemujan](image)

4.2. The shift in tourism employment
The first major change in the transition of Karimunjawa as a tourism area in terms of gender dynamics is in the type of occupation. Before tourism activities started, women in Karimunjawa were already engaged in non-domestic activities, for example, those whose spouses worked as fishermen usually helped in culling fish catch. Another group followed their husbands to paddy fields, participating in
almost all activities related to the farming process. However, now, almost all women participate in the tourism industry.

The demand for food requires spending more time in the kitchen, whether in lodgings or people’s own houses. A mother of three children who operates a warung nasi (a food stall selling rice and condiments), stated during the interview that she used to prepare food solely for her family members but now she must also serve foreigners. Most lodgings offer breakfast buffets in their package. The growing number of restaurants offers tourists options to try out local and international cuisines.

Most of the women who work in the food industry, whether owning (or just cooking in) a restaurant or helping in catering for lodgings are about 30 years and older, and married, and already have children. For those who manage, cook, and serve at the same time, the industry seems beneficial for domestic needs, as they also need to prepare food for their family members. Another mother said that selling food to foreigners is a good business because many tourists seek local and unique cuisines. There are some occasions where international vegetarian tourists come to the stall to deliberately look for vegetables and non-meat condiments, which are only available in this type of business.

Another type of work related to this industry is cleaning service, which is mostly done in hotels, resorts, and even small lodgings. Most of these cleaners are women on informal contracts, especially those who work in homestay types of lodging. At peak season when there are many tourists, some women even take on multiple jobs—aside from cooking and selling food, they also work as cleaners. As Levy and Lerch [16] mentioned in their study in Barbados, the type of work women do in the tourism industry resembles their roles in the household. In the context of cooking and opening food kiosks, it can be seen that their effort to gain more income to support their family is an extension of their former routines before the tourism industry came, i.e., buying supplies and preparing food for their family.

Those types of work are mostly dominated by informal agreements between the employer and the employee. Wilkinson and Pratiwi [11] in their study at Pangandaran also noticed that there is a high increase in informal economic activities at peak season, and many who are involved in these activities are women. Aside from working as kitchen staff and cleaners, in Karimunjawa, there are also women who sell merchandise and various kinds of food at night time in the alun-alun (sub-district center).

Another prominent occupation for women in the area is working as a receptionist in the lodgings, including resorts and big hotels. Most women working in this position are aged between 20 to 30 years old. As a receptionist, they are responsible for receiving reservations and taking care of daily businesses in the lodging. During the interviews, one receptionist stated that for most young women who have finished high school, being a receptionist is the best option. Unlike other jobs, this occupation offers more chances to interact with tourists. Through this interaction, they can engage in some form of cultural exchange, where they can learn about other cultures. Moreover, the occupation also offers more income than others.

The most notable job among all in the industry is being a tour guide. During the interview sessions, no female tour guide could be interviewed. However, a male tour guide stated that there is a female tour guide who is active in organizing various capacity building activities for local tour guides, such as English speaking workshops and tour-guiding lessons. There is clear segregation in this context because the job seems to be considered as giving more privileges and requiring skills which most women in the area lack. An interview with another woman managing and cooking in a food stall showed that there is a preconceived notion surrounding the options in the tourism industry. This is especially prevalent in women over thirty, who mostly stated that “bisanya cuma ini doang” or roughly translated to “this is all that we are capable of”-meaning that they can only cook and clean. These women face difficulties in learning how to interact with tourists, mostly because they were “not permitted” to do that in the patriarchal culture in the area. Meanwhile, like almost all other places in Indonesia, women in Karimunjawa are still responsible for domestic matters. They still need to do the childbearing, cooking and food preparation for the family, and ngurus suami (take care of their husbands).
Younger women (born on the 1990s to 2000s) have begun to realize the importance of education. Especially with the existence of a tourism vocational school on the island (called SMK in Indonesia), these women have greater opportunities to study. Most interviewed students stated that they dream of working in the tourism industry: this ranges from being a receptionist to owning their own lodgings. As Wilkinson and Pratiwi [11] pointed out, the changes in gender roles and relations may signal the empowerment of women in controlling their own lives and in the family’s survival.

5. **Conclusion**

This study found that the increase in the participation of productive-age women in the workforce in two villages in Karimunjawa tends to improve the households’ prosperity. This is further supported by the findings of the qualitative analysis that women are increasingly considering to work in the tourism industry, which is seen as the most attractive option to earn a higher income. For the older generation women who have worked in the tourism industry for years, this work provides the opportunity to contribute to the family’s survival. It also gives them more control over the family’s financial decisions as they do not solely depend on their husband’s income. Their work can also help them improve the quality of life in their household, such as for saving up for their children’s education. Meanwhile, for the younger generation, tourism offers a brighter future. Since tourism continues to develop, the opportunities that come with it become more diverse.

However, as Kinnaird and Hall [10] mentioned, indeed in Karimunjawa there are also some issues in the gendered nature of tourism employment, i.e., differences in the quality of work and the availability of some types of work; differences in the access of women to employment opportunities; seasonal fluctuations (which result in sudden growth of informal activities); and a new gendered division of labor. Being a tour guide is perceived as being more “prestigious” than other jobs in the industry, however, men dominate this job. As pointed out by Levy and Lerch [16], men also tend to be more unionized, which can be seen in how they go around in groups and how they are involved in guide association.

Limitations to women’s ability to be involved in the tourism industry, and to a certain extent, to provide and contribute more to the prosperity of their households, still put some pressure on them. Most of their occupations resemble their domestic roles and reflect local values that limit their choices and mobility. Moreover, although there are plans to make the area more accessible, Karimunjawa and Kemujan as island communities, still face problems of a lack of supporting infrastructures and public services which in return affect people’s options. Although the younger women have become more aware of the importance of education for their future, the high demand jobs in the tourism industry which is embedded in daily social lives and familial relations may push them in this direction. Thus, it is important to rethink the tourism development in the area and to set some agendas for gender-awareness in the tourism industry.

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