

The Role of the Community in the Development of Rice Fields as Tourist Attractions in Lempake Village, North Samarinda

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Impact;
Agricultural Land; Tourist
Attractions

Received: August 11, 2024

Accepted: December 7, 2024

Published: December 18,
2024

ABSTRACT

Tourism is a sector that has a large role in national development. One example of the development of the tourism sector in the city of Samarinda is the addition of agricultural land. This research aims to determine the role and impact of rice field tourist attractions. This research was carried out in Lempake Village, North Samarinda. Research data was collected using observation, interviews and documentation and using qualitative descriptive methods. The results of this research show that the role of the community fully supports the existence of the Sawah Pandang tourist attraction moving in the agricultural sector, which is carried out by the tourist attraction manager and the surrounding community. This tourist attraction collaborates with the community who act as initiators, implementers, providing opinions, and as evaluation monitors in the development of the tourist attraction. The impact on the community around the tourist attraction with this tourism is that in this case it includes environmental conditions where the local community already feels that the environment is the main attraction of tourist activities which positively influences the lives of the surrounding community, opening up many opportunities.

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Introduction

Tourism is a strategic sector in national development, serving as a significant source of income, foreign exchange, and a driver of foreign investment. It is also closely linked to fostering international business collaborations, as demonstrated by the diverse range of tourists visiting Indonesia, many of whom engage in economic partnerships (Prasetya, 2014). With over 74,000 villages spread across the country, Indonesia possesses abundant natural wealth that holds great potential for tourism development, particularly in rural and underutilized areas.

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In recent years, tourism in Indonesia has evolved into an independent industry, becoming a critical driver of economic growth. However, effective management and strategic planning are essential to maximize its potential. This requires in-depth research and field observations to identify opportunities for sustainable development, particularly in emerging tourism destinations (Baiquni et al., 2013). Such initiatives are particularly relevant for regions like East Kalimantan, a province with significant natural resource diversity that includes untapped potential in the tourism sector.

East Kalimantan has been increasingly utilizing its natural resources to support economic development. One of the government's priorities is the establishment of superior tourism areas (ODTW) at both national and international levels, which aim to boost regional income and promote sustainable economic growth (Ramadhania, 2019). However, the sustainability of these initiatives often hinges on consistent development efforts. This research was inspired by the observation that many tourism projects in East Kalimantan have faced challenges in longevity and effectiveness, highlighting the need for deeper analysis and innovative strategies.

Samarinda, the capital city of East Kalimantan, exemplifies these challenges and opportunities. As a city that has leveraged tourism to enhance local revenue, it offers various attractions, ranging from natural to artificial sites. Among these is the transformation of agricultural land into a tourist attraction in Lempake Village, North Samarinda. This site integrates agricultural landscapes with recreational facilities to draw visitors, including picturesque views of rice fields and curated photo spots. Local festivals, such as the Mahakam Festival, also play a role in promoting tourism and enhancing visitor experiences (Nala, 2019).

The rice field tourism in Lempake Village represents an innovative response to declining agricultural productivity. Once underproductive land has been transformed into a profitable tourist destination through the initiative of local residents. For example, a community member, referred to as ADS, collaborated with landowners to repurpose rice fields into a tourism site, sharing profits and creating an economic lifeline for the area. This case demonstrates the potential for integrating economic, social, and environmental goals in tourism development.

This research investigates the socio-economic impact of this transformation, focusing on the role of the local community in fostering and sustaining the development of rice field tourism in Lempake Village. It also explores how such initiatives can contribute to broader discussions on sustainable tourism practices and rural development.

Literature Review

Tourism is defined as the movement of individuals or groups from one place to another for a planned period, with the primary purpose of recreation, entertainment, or other personal satisfaction (Restu, 2018). The World Tourism Organization further characterizes tourism as activities involving travel and temporary stays outside one's usual environment, typically for less than a year, encompassing vacations, business, and other objectives. Sinaga (2010) describes tourism as a structured activity aimed at obtaining pleasure or fulfillment through travel, whether conducted individually or in groups.

From a regulatory perspective, Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism defines tourism as a series of activities supported by facilities, infrastructure, and services provided by the government, private sector, and local communities. It highlights tourism as a multi-dimensional sector encompassing attractions, travel, and the tourism industry (Devy, 2017). Components such as tourist attractions, infrastructure, and community engagement are integral to creating a comprehensive tourism experience.

Research on tourism has increasingly emphasized community-based tourism (CBT) and the importance of local involvement in tourism management. Baiquni et al. (2013) argue that successful tourism development often relies on active participation from local communities, both as stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, sustainable tourism frameworks suggest that effective tourism management requires balancing economic growth with environmental conservation and cultural preservation.

In the context of agricultural tourism, the transformation of farmlands into tourist attractions offers an innovative approach to diversifying rural economies. Studies have highlighted how such initiatives can improve local income, preserve agricultural heritage, and attract urban visitors seeking authentic experiences. However, critical assessments of these transformations reveal potential challenges, including environmental impacts and the risk of over-commercialization. Therefore, understanding the socio-economic dynamics of such projects, particularly the role of local communities, is crucial for ensuring their sustainability.

This study builds on these theoretical frameworks to examine the specific case of rice field tourism in Lempake Village. It aims to contribute to the literature on sustainable tourism by highlighting the interplay between community involvement, economic outcomes, and environmental considerations in rural tourism development.

Methodology

This study was conducted in Lempake Village, North Samarinda, selected due to its status as an emerging tourism area frequently visited by tourists. The location was chosen because of its distinctive characteristics, such as the transformation of agricultural land into a tourism destination, which aligns with the research objectives. The research was conducted over a six-month period, from December 2023 to May 2024. This duration allowed sufficient time to comprehensively collect and analyze data through various stages, including observations, interviews, and documentation, ensuring the reliability and depth of the findings.

Research Design and Approach

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which is particularly suitable for exploring the complex socio-economic dynamics of community-based tourism in Lempake Village. A qualitative approach was chosen because it facilitates an in-depth understanding of human experiences, behaviors, and interactions within their real-life context. A descriptive design is appropriate for this study as it aims to provide a detailed account of how local communities participate in the development of rice field tourism and its associated impacts. This approach aligns with the research objective of understanding the nuanced roles of stakeholders in tourism development.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprises all individuals involved in activities at the rice field tourism site in Lempake Village, including managers, local traders, and visitors. The purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 20 participants, including tourism managers, traders, and tourists aged between 18 and 55 years. These participants were chosen based on specific inclusion criteria:

1. Managers: Individuals responsible for overseeing and managing the rice field tourism site.
2. Traders: Local business owners or operators whose livelihoods are directly linked to tourism activities in the area.
3. Tourists: Visitors who have experienced the tourism services and facilities provided at the site.

The sample size of 20 participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, where no new insights are likely to emerge beyond a certain number of interviews.

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This number is considered adequate for capturing diverse perspectives while maintaining manageability within the qualitative framework.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection process involved three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation, complemented by the use of secondary data.

1. Observation: Direct observations were conducted at the rice field tourism site to capture real-time interactions, behaviors, and activities of visitors, managers, and traders. Observations focused on:
 - a. The utilization of facilities and services by tourists.
 - b. Community interactions and participation in tourism activities.
 - c. Environmental and infrastructural changes resulting from tourism development.
2. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected participants. The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and contributions to tourism development. Sample questions included:
 - a. For managers: "What challenges have you faced in managing the tourism site?"
 - b. For traders: "How has tourism impacted your business revenue and operations?"
 - c. For tourists: "What aspects of the tourism site do you find most appealing or in need of improvement?"
3. Documentation: Relevant documents, such as reports on tourism development, records of visitor numbers, and local government policies, were analyzed. This data provided a contextual background and supplemented primary data.
4. Secondary Data: Literature studies were conducted to support the research framework, drawing on academic journals, government reports, and case studies related to rural and community-based tourism. Specific sources included studies on sustainable tourism development and examples of similar initiatives in Indonesia and globally.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model as outlined in Sugiyono (2015). This model involves four key stages:

1. Data Collection. Data was gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation. Each method generated distinct but complementary data sets, which were systematically organized and prepared for analysis.

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2. Data Reduction. The collected data was condensed by selecting relevant information and discarding unrelated content. For instance:
 - a. Key themes from interviews, such as economic impacts or community involvement, were categorized.
 - b. Observational notes were summarized to highlight significant patterns or behaviors.This step ensured a focus on the most critical data for addressing the research objectives.
3. Data Presentation. The reduced data was organized into matrices, charts, and descriptive narratives. For example:
 - a. A matrix comparing perspectives of managers, traders, and tourists was created to identify similarities and differences.
 - b. Descriptive narratives were used to present case studies or notable observations.
4. Drawing Conclusions and Verification. Conclusions were derived by identifying recurring themes and relationships across the data sets. For example, an increase in local income and community creativity was verified through cross-referencing interview findings with observational and documented evidence. Triangulation was employed to validate the results by comparing insights from multiple data sources.

Result

The Viewpoint Rice Field Tourist Attraction, located on Jalan Giri Rejo, RT 024, Lempake Village, North Samarinda, has emerged as a significant tourism destination. The site capitalizes on its natural beauty, offering expansive views of rice fields that are especially stunning from the surrounding hills. This unique vantage point is complemented by designated photo spots, making it a popular destination for visitors seeking picturesque and recreational experiences.

Figure 1. Viewpoint Tourist Object Profile, 2024



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The location was previously a rice field owned by a local farmer, Karno, whose primary livelihood was agriculture. However, due to declining agricultural productivity and increasing interest in tourism, the site was transformed into a tourist attraction starting in August 2023. Despite being a relatively new establishment, the destination has successfully attracted a wide range of visitors, including both local residents and tourists from outside Samarinda.

The transformation of the rice fields into a tourist attraction highlights the role of community participation in tourism development. The active involvement of local residents has been instrumental in fostering the growth of the site. Beyond economic benefits, this initiative has empowered the community by creating opportunities for employment and skill development. However, the success of such initiatives also poses challenges, particularly in ensuring the availability of skilled and professional human resources for sustainable management.

The Viewpoint Rice Field operates daily from 1:00 PM to 9:00 PM WITA, attracting visitors throughout the afternoon and evening. Table 1 below provides data on the number of visitors recorded over a six-month period, from August 2023 to January 2024:

Table 1. Number of visitors to the Rice View Point tourist attraction, 2024

<i>No.</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Number of Visitors</i>
1.	<i>August</i>	<i>6.537 People</i>
2.	<i>September</i>	<i>5.253 People</i>
3.	<i>October</i>	<i>2.790 People</i>
4.	<i>November</i>	<i>3.526 People</i>
5.	<i>December</i>	<i>3.357 People</i>
6.	<i>January</i>	<i>4.572 People</i>

Source: Research Results, 2024

The data reveals a noticeable fluctuation in visitor numbers, with a peak in August and subsequent declines in October and November. This trend suggests potential seasonal or situational factors influencing visitor behavior, such as weather conditions, holiday periods, or promotional efforts. The rebound in December and January indicates a renewed interest, possibly linked to year-end festivities and improved marketing.

The management of the Viewpoint Rice Field tourist attraction is led by the local community, emphasizing community-driven tourism development. As the site has gained

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popularity, it has created increasing employment opportunities for local residents. Table 2 presents data on the number of employees at the site from August 2023 to January 2024:

Table 2. Number of Tourist Attraction Employees, 2024

<i>No.</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Employee</i>
1.	August	10
2.	September	13
3.	October	15
4.	November	17
5.	December	20
6.	January	20

Source: Research Results, 2024

The steady increase in the number of employees reflects the growing role of the community in managing and supporting the site. This trend indicates not only the economic viability of the attraction but also the willingness of the local community to engage in tourism-related activities. However, further efforts are needed to ensure that employees receive adequate training and professional development to sustain the site's success.

The Viewpoint Rice Field tourist attraction offers a range of facilities to enhance visitor experiences, including scenic photo spots, ample parking, and essential amenities such as restrooms. These features have been designed to meet the needs of diverse visitors while ensuring comfort and accessibility. The management continues to explore opportunities for improving the site, such as adding more attractions and upgrading infrastructure.

While these developments are positive, ensuring the environmental sustainability of the site remains a challenge. Proper waste management systems, eco-friendly practices, and sustainable infrastructure should be prioritized to minimize the ecological footprint of tourism activities.

Discussion

The development of tourism and the increase in tourist visits have brought both positive and negative impacts to the community, particularly in terms of the environment, economy, and social aspects. Positive impacts include the benefits of tourism development, such as creating economic opportunities and improving the standard of living for communities near tourist areas. On the other hand, negative impacts highlight the challenges and losses that can arise from tourism activities.

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In the economic sector, the development of tourist attractions such as the Sawah Sudut Pandang has brought significant benefits. Tourism can generate foreign exchange income, create jobs, and provide business opportunities for local communities. For instance, Rahman (2014) explains that the creation of jobs reduces unemployment and allows locals to improve their income and living standards. However, the tourism economy also faces challenges. Limited infrastructure costs to meet international standards place a financial burden on governments and tourism managers, often resulting in increased operational expenses. Additionally, inflation caused by rising demand for goods and services can negatively affect local residents, as their earnings may not keep up with the inflated prices. Over-dependence on the tourism sector can further weaken economic resilience, as reliance on a single sector exposes the economy to significant risks (Nala, 2019).

Tourism also contributes to government revenue through taxes levied on workers in the tourism sector. By creating employment and business opportunities in industries such as accommodation and restaurants, tourism fosters infrastructure development. This development not only benefits tourists but also improves local community facilities. A positive environmental impact of tourism can also be observed through the preservation and maintenance of natural areas. For example, the Sawah Sudut Pandang tourist attraction has implemented administrative and organizational practices to ensure the area is well-maintained and attracts both local and foreign visitors (Nala, 2019). However, more evidence from the field is needed to demonstrate how these initiatives effectively promote sustainability.

Negative environmental impacts, however, remain a concern. Instances of littering by tourists, damage to plants in tourist attractions, and inadequate facilities during peak seasons have been observed. For example, at Sawah Sudut Pandang, some tourists have reportedly picked plants out of curiosity, causing harm to the area's natural appeal. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure to manage seasonal tourist influxes has resulted in pollution and congestion. Concrete strategies such as educating tourists and implementing stricter environmental management policies should be prioritized to mitigate these issues.

The development of tourist attractions inevitably impacts society, especially in terms of environmental awareness and job creation. Pitana (2009) emphasizes that tourism fosters connections within the broader community, positively influencing economic levels and dependency. For instance, local residents have become more aware of environmental issues and have begun to engage in tourism-related activities. As Mr. AD, the manager of the tourist attraction, explained:

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"With the tourist attraction that I manage, I've seen a significant impact on the surrounding environment. Many previously unemployed locals are now working at the tourist attraction, which has helped reduce the unemployment rate in Indonesia."

Similarly, Mr. A, a local resident, shared:

"I'm happy because the tourist area allows my child to work close to home. He's no longer unemployed."

The involvement of the local community in developing rice fields into a tourist attraction has provided direct benefits, especially in terms of income. This is evidenced by the steady increase in visitors each year. Businesses such as waste management services, photo spots, and tourism management positions (e.g., parking attendants and security staff) have flourished, contributing to the community's economic development.

According to Spilane (1987), the rapid development of tourism creates opportunities for local communities near tourist locations. This aligns with observations at Sawah Sudut Pandang, where job creation and tourism-related businesses like cafes and accommodations have emerged. However, not all community members participate actively. Many benefit indirectly, such as by leasing land for business purposes, but do not contribute ideas, energy, or creativity to the development process. This highlights the need for greater involvement from local communities to ensure sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

As Mr. MD, the manager, stated:

"Since the tourist attraction opened, the community has shown great enthusiasm in entrusting their products to be sold at the site."

Likewise, Mrs. A, a local resident, commented:

"Thank God, this rice field attraction has given me additional income by selling food at the cafe to help my husband."

To enhance the active participation of local communities, training programs on tourism management and collaborative efforts with local governments or private sectors are recommended. These initiatives can empower residents to become not just beneficiaries but also contributors to tourism development, fostering a more sustainable and inclusive approach.

Conclusion

The Sawah Pandang tourist attraction has brought both positive and negative impacts to the local community. On the positive side, the attraction has opened up various job opportunities in roles such as security, parking attendants, ticket counters, cleaners, and staff in supporting businesses like cafés and souvenir shops. This has significantly improved the livelihood of residents in Lempake Village, who previously relied on farming. Additionally, the economic benefits have been evident in the creation of new businesses and increased local incomes.

However, the development has also led to challenges, particularly in environmental pollution and damage to facilities. These issues stem from the lack of public awareness and irresponsible tourist behavior, such as littering and vandalizing facilities at the attraction.

To maximize the positive impacts and mitigate the negatives, it is recommended to:

1. Conduct regular environmental awareness campaigns targeting both tourists and locals.
2. Implement stricter regulations and penalties for littering and facility damage.
3. Enhance waste management infrastructure to accommodate the increasing number of visitors.
4. Encourage greater participation from the local community in tourism management through training and collaboration with stakeholders.

Overall, the Sawah Pandang tourist attraction has proven to be a valuable driver of economic growth for the local community, but addressing its environmental challenges will be essential to ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector.

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