

Conference Paper

The Role of Ecotourism in the Social and Economic Field

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is an alternative to tourism development that plays a role in the economic field and has a role in the social field through the concept of nature conservation and education. This study aims to analyze the positive impact of the concept of ecotourism in the social and economic fields on the local community. The research method used is field research with a descriptive qualitative approach in Pasar Slumpring, Cempaka Village, Bumijawa District, Tegal Regency. The data was used as primary data in interviews with related groups such as local village heads, heads of tourism awareness groups, ecotourism managers and the local community who participated. The study results show that the application of ecotourism is able to produce a positive impact in the social field, such as encouraging nature conservation, so that it is maintained while providing education on cultural values. Ecotourism also strengthens community social relations through cooperation in implementing and maintaining ecotourism. In addition, ecotourism has a positive impact on the economy, where ecotourism is able to increase the income of the area and the local community through tourist fees and community productivity that act as traders and become a means of absorbing labour to reduce unemployment. Therefore, there is a need for sustainability in maintaining the sustainability of ecotourism, considering that the resulting impact provides benefits for many people.

Keywords: Role, ecotourism, social, economic

Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world that can provide a multiplier effect in the socio-economic field on local communities (Dayananda, 2014). However, ecotourism can also have adverse effects, such as pollution from excessive waste and damaging the environment and local culture due to a large number of mobility of tourists worldwide (Gopal, 2014). Therefore, many expert researchers are trying to create an innovation in sustainable tourism that aims to overcome the problems of mass tourism (Salman et al., 2020). Sustainable tourism also has the primary goal of preserving the environment and culture for future generations so that its effects are felt in the long term (Bhuiyan et al., 2012).

One form of innovation from sustainable tourism is ecotourism, whose potential can be felt as an effective tool in sustainable development (Kiper, 2013). In recent years there has been significant growth in ecotourism in various places formed by local communities and public institutions and creating a debate among extremists who support nature exploitation with activists for sustainable nature conservation (Rezaeinejad & Khaniwadekar, 2021). Based on environmental problems and natural damage that may not be repaired, activists and nature protection organizations are formed to minimize these negative impacts (Seifi & Ghobadi, 2017). The concept of ecotourism may be the result of dramatic innovation in criticism of the limitations and negative impacts of mass tourism (Cobbinah, 2015) because ecotourism can reduce problems caused by mass tourism, such as environmental damage due to exploitation and degradation of local culture as a result of assimilation of foreign cultures (Salman et al., 2020).

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Ecotourism is a responsible trip to the surrounding nature through nature conservation, can provide welfare for local communities, and involve educational aspects to improve managers and tourists who visit (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015). The purpose of ecotourism is to preserve available natural resources, maintain existing biodiversity, develop strategies for using resources effectively and efficiently and provide economic benefits to the surrounding community (Hunt et al., 2015). Therefore, it can be concluded that ecotourism is an alternative in tourism development that not only plays a role in the economic field but also has a role in the social sector through the concept of nature conservation and environmental education to remain sustainable, so efforts are needed to be able to implement this concept and being an important step in maximizing the available natural potential.

The application of ecotourism has been widely carried out and has proven positive impacts, such as in the East Coast Economic Region of Malaysia. Through ecotourism, there is an increase in income, the creation of jobs that can reduce poverty levels, improve the regional economy and also find benefits from environmental conservation through improving the quality of natural conditions as well as social benefits in the form of positive attitude of the local community (Bhuiyan et al., 2012). Likewise, what happened in Lapa Rios, Costa Rica and Miankaleh were the results of the sustainability of ecotourism with its positive impacts on the environment, society and economy (Zambrano et al., 2010; Seifi & Ghobadi, 2017). Tegal Regency itself is an area that has much natural potential, one of which is in Cempaka Village, which is famous for its natural attractions, starting from the awareness of Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), who discovered the potential of local wisdom which finally succeeded in being used as an ecotourism object in the form of Pasar Slumpring which has survived to this day. Therefore, this study aims to determine and analyze the role that is obtained from the Pasar Slumpring ecotourism object from the social and economic side of the surrounding community.

Material and Methods

Type

The research method used is a field research method by visiting the research object that has been determined directly to make observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Object

The object in this research is Pasar Slumpring tourism located in Cempaka Village, Bumijawa District, Tegal Regency, where this tourism object is a form of ecotourism innovation that has been successfully created still running today.

Data & source

The data used in the form of primary data is obtained directly through interviews with related parties such as local government officials and also the community as managers and local community participants of ecotourism programs with a semi-structured approach where respondents are allowed to answer freely by expressing their respective opinions (Neuman, 2013). The numbers of respondents in this study were ten people. According to Guest et al. (2006), the minimum limit of interviews in qualitative research is based on data saturation. Some experts in dominant qualitative research avoid discussing the minimum number in interviews, while in some articles and books, it is suggested that 5-50 respondents are appropriate (Dworkin, 2012). In addition to primary data, this study uses secondary data obtained through reports, journals, and related articles to support the research results obtained.

Results and Discussion

Concept and implementation of local ecotourism

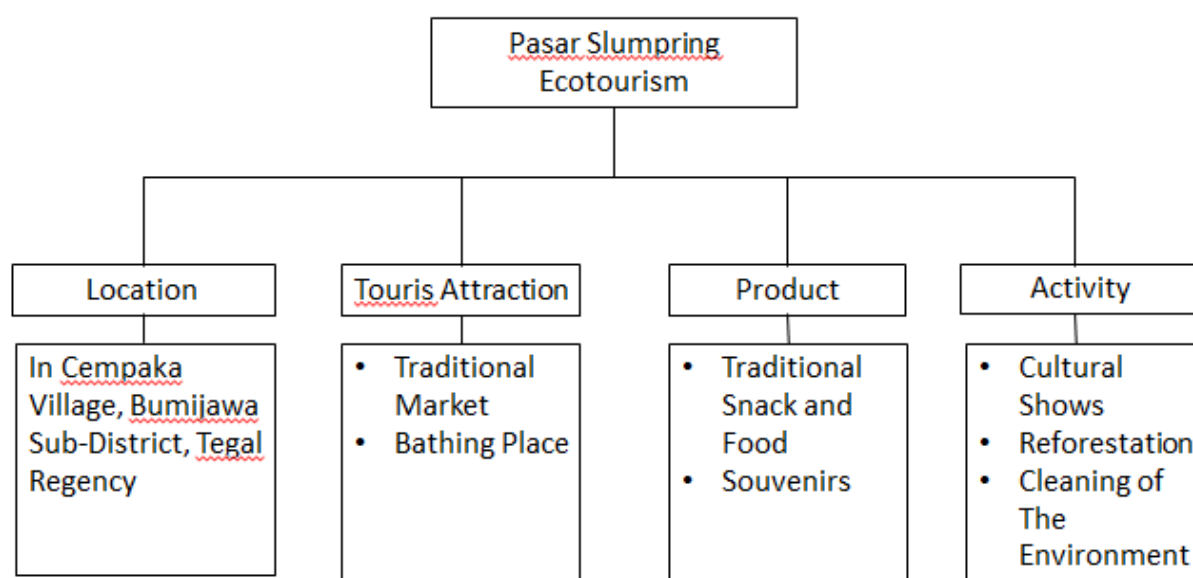
There are several differences between the ecotourism concept formed in each region. It refers to the advantages of wealth possessed to cause a comparative advantage effect that will have more

beneficial impacts on the area. The concept of ecotourism has developed rapidly and is in demand by several policymakers because tourists have begun to become aware of activities that can protect nature by the time, such as ecotourism which includes elements of education and conservation to protect the culture and the surrounding nature, which will benefit both the present and future generations (Kiper, 2013).

Indonesia itself has begun to put forward the concept of sustainable tourism and does not focus on the number of visitors so that it will continue to be beneficial in the long term for the environment, society, culture, and economy for all aspects ranging from the surrounding community to visitors. There are at least four focuses applied by the ministry of tourism and creative economy to provide added value to attract tourists, including Tourism Business, Socio-Economic, Sustainable Culture, and Environment Sustainability (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, 2021).

Pasar Slumpring ecotourism concept

The Pasar Slumpring is a form of tourism innovation that combines natural principles and local wisdom in the form of snacks and food as well as traditional art performances. The Pasar Slumpring is located in Cempaka Village, Bumijawa District, Tegal Regency, and operates from morning to noon. There are two tourist attractions in Pasar Slumpring, namely a traditional market and a bath called Tuk Mudal where visitors can swim in the bath where the water is obtained directly from mountain springs. The products sold are in the form of snacks and traditional foods and souvenirs typical of the Regency. At the same time, the activities are in the form of endel dance performances and music art called amoeba or bamboo music because all the musical instruments used are from bamboo trees. There are also reforestation and cleaning of the environment programs to preserve the surrounding nature.



Source: Interview Output

Figure 1. The concept of Pasar Slumpring Ecotourism

Interview result

Tabel.1 Result of interviews

Field	Indicator	Result
Social Field	Conservation	<p>Ecotourism can preserve the existing nature because the central concept is the preservation of the surrounding nature so that it is maintained through reforestation programs and cleaning the surrounding environment to keep it beautiful and prevent drought in the dry season and attract tourists.</p>
	Education	<p>Ecotourism provides an educational effect on local culture to the younger generation from among visitors and the local community. It still exists and cannot be replaced by modernization by presenting traditional specialties and art performances performed by local youth. On the other hand, the concept of education is carried out through training programs to improve the professionalism of managers.</p>
	Socio Culture Improvement	<p>Ecotourism cannot be separated from the dominant role of local communities so that the concept of ecotourism is created in an area; with this role, it can increase the social norms of the surrounding community to always work together in building and maintaining existing ecotourism and motivate each other both from managers and tourists to apply these ecotourism norms.</p>
Economic Field	<p>Income Added:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Government income Wage 	<p>a. ecotourism can increase village income through user fees from tourists. It has quite a role in regional development, especially in conducting community empowerment programs so that its benefits will continue to grow.</p> <p>b. ecotourism has a positive impact in the form of additional income for the surrounding community who participates, where the income is quite large and essential in meeting the community's needs.</p>

To be continued...

Job Opportunity	Ecotourism can create job opportunities for the community to reduce the unemployment rate and generate a workforce that participates in ecotourism, such as managers, traders, and artists who perform art as entertainment.
Productivity Growth	Ecotourism can increase the level of productivity of the surrounding community, both in producing goods and services for tourists who come.

Source: Interviews output

The role of ecotourism in social field discussion

Conservation is the primary indicator of the sustainability of ecotourism and is an advantage over other tourism concepts (Zambrano et al., 2010; Sangpikul, 2017). Many policymakers are aware of the significant impacts of maintaining and conserving ecotourism, such as ecosystem sustainability and biological diversity (Bhuiyan et al., 2012). So, they try to maintain and follow this principle which at the same time also acts as a facilitator in sustainable environmental development (Salman et al., 2020). The impact of ecotourism on conservation is not only limited to the participation of the community, including visitors in recreational activities but has more impacts on the environment (Seifi & Ghobadi, 2017):

- Can improve the quality of the surrounding environment because tourists are interested in visiting exciting places clean from pollution.
- Help raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment for the community because many tourists are interested in protecting nature. The actions of these tourists can make people aware of the importance of protecting the environment and its surroundings.
- Reduction of environmental pollution caused by improper waste disposal processes, both in terms of disposal methods and unsupported facilities.
- Reduce the risk and increase in environmental problems resulting from the use of land that is not by the planning and construction activities in the construction of facilities.

Based on the results of interviews obtained regarding conservation programs, ecotourism can have a positive impact on the surrounding environment through reforestation programs and environmental clean-ups so that the preservation of the surrounding nature is still maintained; on the other hand, it will also help prevent drought in the dry season. Due to the function of plants that can store water levels in the rainy season, water circulation in the dry season will be maintained.

Another case study also states that ecotourism can minimize the negative impact of environmental damage because it supports the creation of green sustainable development, which is needed. After all, exploitation can reduce levels of environmental quality (Ashok et al., 2017; Salman et al., 2020). as shown occurs in Costa Rica, of course, the reforestation program always prioritizes ecotourism areas. In contrast, in areas far from ecotourism, there is deforestation resulting from land clearing that can damage the environment (Zambrano et al., 2010). However, the environment is an essential factor in influencing tourists to visit (Gopal, 2014).

In addition, ecotourism also puts forward educational indicators, which are often interpreted as a process to gain knowledge from one person to another where this knowledge can be obtained through different sources, which is important in ecotourism, especially for managers in conveying their knowledge to tourists (Fennell, 2015). Education is not just about the information aspect but includes a comprehensive explanation for easy understanding, a stimulation aspect to encourage public awareness, and an individual understanding aspect that can play a role in creating an attractive and enjoyable ecotourism environment (Urias & Russo, 2009). According to Mondino

and Beery (2019), education needs to be applied to the younger generation to continue, especially regarding the cultural aspect. Indigenous culture can be used to attract tourists so that everyone can realize how valuable their cultural heritage they have (Ashok et al., 2017). On the other hand, it can positively encourage the development of ecotourism more quickly; Therefore, awareness of cultural values, including history, must be assessed as an asset for the sustainability of ecotourism (Rezaeinejad & Khaniwadekar, 2021).

Based on the interviews, it was found that the social role in education was more emphasized on the preservation of local culture. The implementation has proven to be effective in maintaining sustainability from cultural degradation by modernization; the main focus of this education is for the younger generation to be sustainable in the future. On the other hand, tourists' interest in local cultural heritage is also able to increase their enthusiasm always to try and innovate to create breakthroughs that can increase the interest of tourists to come to visit. Of course, the management's efforts in the field of education must be accompanied by training programs that can hone their soft skills in related fields in ecotourism to increase their professionalism in providing education to tourists.

In principle, education has an essential role in creating sustainable ecotourism because it can provide knowledge for tourists on how to effectively conserve the environment and culture, which can raise awareness of tourists always to support the conservation movement in increasing initiatives. In creating new innovative designs (Mondino & Beery, 2019). According to Osland and Mackoy (2012), there are at least four goals and roles of ecotourism, including:

- The cognitive impact that can create awareness and understanding of surrounding conditions such as nature and local culture to be maintained.
- Emotional impact in appreciation and affection for nature and culture to be preserved.
- Ethical impact consists of values and norms in dealing with nature and local culture that is good and right
- Volitional or the ability to determine positive actions in ecotourism, such as reducing the negative impact of overproduction.

The last indicator is a socio-culture improvement, where ecotourism can create a behavior of cooperation because it consists of social interactions either from fellow managers or managers interacting with visitors, so there needs to be cooperation from these organizations so that ecotourism can run well (Fennell, 2015). In addition, the habit of cooperation is also created by the integrity of education in ecotourism; in this case, it will raise awareness of the local community about several aspects such as knowledge, attitude, experience, and motivation to create a solution both in terms of innovation and prevention of the negative impacts produced (Safitri et al., 2018). In line with the results of interviews obtained by Pasar Slumpring ecotourism, it can increase the moral value of the surrounding community; this is because the implementation of ecotourism itself cannot be separated from the role of the surrounding community. So there needs to be a positive relationship in cooperation in sustainable development.

The role of ecotourism in economic field discussion

Many organizations consider that tourism is a key to regional development. There is recognition of the economic contribution of a stagnant economy that can support many parties and make it a community unit engaged in tourism (Fennell, 2015). Ecotourism can be used as an additional source of income for local governments to overcome the problem of low income (Rezaeinejad & Khaniwadekar, 2021). The study results (Mustofa, 2021) stated that the existence of ecotourism was able to significantly impact the economy, primarily regional economic growth because it was able to increase regional income by 10%. In line with the results of interviews that state that ecotourism in local government revenues has an essential role in assisting community empowerment programs. Ecotourism development that focuses on economic growth needs to be accompanied by careful planning managerially (Seifi & Ghobadi, 2017) because the

implementation of ecotourism that is not carried out correctly will result in inefficiency of the impacts obtained from ecotourism (Salman et al., 2020).

In addition to local governments, the local community also feels the impact of additional income. The interview results found that ecotourism can be a source of additional income for people who participate in ecotourism activities, where these needs are quite essential to meet their daily needs because ecotourism can provide opportunities for positive changes, such as changing consumers to producers, workers becoming business owners (Seifi & Ghobadi, 2017). As with the East Coast Economic Region ecotourism concept, Malaysia states that regional ecotourism development can increase people's per capita income; on the other hand, the income can maintain a balance of income over income inequality in each region in Malaysia (Bhuiyan et al., 2012).

The role of income added per capita for the surrounding community cannot be separated from the other role of ecotourism in the form of employment. Ecotourism can lift the economy through the opening of job vacancies related to tourism activities such as service providers ranging from travel, lodging, and tour guides, accessories sellers, and artists (Bhuiyan et al., 2012; Sangpikul, 2017). In line with the results of interviews that get the results that ecotourism can open job vacancies for the surrounding community so it can reduce the unemployment rate. There are qualifications for workers who participate in Pasar Slumpring ecotourism activities. All workers who participate must be native Cempaka villagers, aiming to prioritize the village economy to compete with other villages. At the same time, the type of work is relevant to ecotourism, such as managers, traders, and artists.

In another case study, it is explained that the role of tourism in the economy of developing countries is significant, especially for countries that have a lot of tourism potential, because they can become a significant contributor to national income through visits from many tourists, both local and foreign. In addition, it is also able to increase job opportunities for the workforce who have skills or who do not have skills directly or indirectly (Dayananda, 2014). In this case, direct work can be interpreted as work that helps and actively participates directly in tourism activities such as travel services, guides, and hotels. In contrast, indirect work helps indirectly in tourism activities such as building construction, suppliers of goods, and others (Aynalem et al., 2016).

The last discussion is about productivity where ecotourism cannot be separated from it. This productivity covers all aspects of goods and services related to tourism. According to Brien et al. (2022), tourism can significantly increase productivity levels, so there needs to be careful consideration in its implementation to be realized in a more advanced manner. Meanwhile, it is also expected to increase productivity not only in the form of the production process but also in the design of optimal business strategies so that tourists get the best experience therefore, there is a need for cooperation from the government and tourism managers to create sustainability that can increase productivity and income in the tourism sector (Pham, 2019).

Based on the interview results, it was found that ecotourism can increase the level of community productivity in the form of goods and services. After all, the ecotourism concept that was built is intended as an additional income sector, meaning that people do not make Pasar Slumpring ecotourism their primary source of income because it only operates on holidays. So, it can be concluded that the productivity of the surrounding community increases with the Pasar Slumpring ecotourism, where they make their days off a productive time. The increase in productivity in ecotourism is also influenced by many requests from tourists who come. In other words, the more requests from tourists, the higher the productivity level because high productivity, which is not accompanied by a balanced level of demand, will make the production process negative (Stauvermann & Kumar, 2017).

Conclusion

Ecotourism is a tourism innovation that prioritizes education and conservation aspects, intending to preserve nature. Nowadays, ecotourism is in great demand by many parties,

especially policymakers, because they are already aware of the importance of tourism that preserves nature so that its benefits can still be felt in the long term. Each region has its concept according to its comparative advantage as a selling point for tourists interested in visiting. Cempaka Village itself has a concept in the form of a shady traditional market with lots of bamboo trees with traditional food commodities and performing arts. Besides that, some baths come from springs. This is inseparable from the characteristics of Tegal Regency, which is rich in culinary and traditional arts.

There are many benefits resulting from Pasar Slumpring ecotourism ranging from the social side to the economic side for many organizations. On the social side, we find that ecotourism has a role in nature conservation, as evidenced by reforestation and environmental clean-up programs that can prevent negative effects such as pollution and natural disasters resulting from overexploitation. Likewise, the role in the field of education is emphasized on the younger generation in maintaining culture so that it remains sustainable and avoids extinction. Besides that, culture is one factor that makes tourists interested in visiting. The last role on the social side is to increase the moral value of the surrounding community because ecotourism is created through social interaction, so there needs to be cooperation in building and maintaining ecotourism to keep it running.

Ecotourism also provides economic benefits such as added income for local governments and communities involved in their activities. Ecotourism can be used as a source of income for regions with low regional incomes and fulfill related organizations' primary and secondary needs. Likewise, the role of employment in the tourism sector, directly and indirectly, can reduce the unemployment rate and improve the economy of the ecotourism area. The last role on the economic side is to increase the productivity of goods and services, as a result of this accompanied by the number of tourist requests. The higher the level of demand, the higher the level of productivity. Based on these conclusions, we can observe that ecotourism has many roles for the surrounding community. Therefore it is necessary for the continuity of the local government and local communities to work together to build an ideal ecotourism concept that can preserve nature and local culture. On the other hand, it is necessary to encourage investment to create the latest innovations to increase the interest of tourists to come to visit.

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