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Mangrove Ecotourism Development Strategy: Identification of Supporting Factors, Barriers, and the Role of Stakeholders in Kubu Raya Regency

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Abstract

Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism in Sungai Kupah Village, Sungai Kakap District, Kubu Raya Regency, is one of the environment-based tourist destinations that has the potential to improve the welfare of local communities. This study aims to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors of ecotourism development and the role of actors involved in its management. The research method used is a qualitative approach with observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The results showed that the main supporting factors in the development of ecotourism include the uniqueness of natural attractions, government support in the form of infrastructure development and promotion, and active community involvement in tourism management. Several initiatives, such as the construction of bridges and roads to tourist areas and the holding of the Kubu Raya Traveler-Tourism Vlog Festival (KRTV Fest), helped increase the number of tourist visits, but there are various inhibiting factors in the development of this ecotourism, such as limited supporting infrastructure, lack of facilities such as lodging and clean water, lack of access to public transportation, and limited internet signals. In addition, limited promotion is still a challenge in attracting more tourists. The role of actors, including the government, local communities, academics and non-governmental organisations, is crucial in ensuring sustainable ecotourism management. This research confirms that synergy from various actors as well as infrastructure improvements and more effective promotional strategies are needed to optimise the potential of Telok Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism as a sustainable community-based tourism destination.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Mangrove, Tourism Development, Kubu Raya, Sustainability

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INTRODUCTION

Mangrove ecotourism has become one of the main strategies in environmental conservation efforts while improving the welfare of coastal communities (Pynanjung, 2018). In West Kalimantan, mangrove forests have an important role in maintaining the balance of coastal ecosystems, preventing abrasion, and providing habitat for various types of flora and fauna (Joandani et al., 2019). However, the utilisation of mangrove areas as ecotourism destinations still faces various challenges that require further study. The phenomenon of mangrove ecotourism development in West Kalimantan shows complex dynamics. Some areas such as Kubu Raya Regency and North Kayong Regency have started to develop mangrove-based ecotourism, but the results have not been optimal (Anyim et al., 2023). One of the main causes is the lack of local community involvement in management and the lack of adequate tourism infrastructure support (Ramadesta et al., 2022). This creates a gap between the potential and realisation of ecotourism development in the area.

This research is important because mangrove ecotourism not only serves as a means of recreation, but also has significant social and economic impacts on the surrounding community. Through proper management, ecotourism can increase environmental awareness, create new employment opportunities, and strengthen local economic resilience (Jabbar et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the factors that support and hinder its development is a strategic step in an effort to accelerate sustainable development. Several previous studies have examined aspects of mangrove ecotourism, but most still focus on its ecological and economic aspects (Mukhlisi, 2018).

Studies on the role of relevant actors in ecotourism development, including the government, community and private sector, are still limited. In fact, the synergy between these actors is crucial in determining the success of ecotourism based on local community empowerment. In addition, there are still gaps in research related to the obstacles faced in the development of mangrove ecotourism. Some studies highlight policy and regulatory aspects, but have not specifically identified the social and cultural constraints faced by local communities in adopting the concept of ecotourism (Wirata et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring the factors that support and hinder the development of mangrove ecotourism in West Kalimantan, especially Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism in Sungai Kupah Village, Sungai Kakap District, Kubu Raya Regency.

This research offers an interdisciplinary perspective by combining ecological, social, and economic approaches in analysing mangrove ecotourism development. The focus of this research on the roles of relevant actors also provides a new contribution in understanding the dynamics of collaboration between the government, community, and private sector in managing mangrove ecotourism sustainably (Ramadesta et al., 2022), by understanding the

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factors that support and hinder its development, this research can assist stakeholders in designing more effective strategies to accelerate the growth of the mangrove ecotourism sector in West Kalimantan.

The purpose of this study is to provide academic and practical contributions in understanding the dynamics of mangrove ecotourism development. By exploring the factors that support and hinder as well as the roles of related actors, this research can provide more comprehensive insights for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners in the fields of ecotourism and community empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method in Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism, Sungai Kupah Village, Sungai Kakap District, Kubu Raya Regency, West Kalimantan. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. The analysis technique used was thematic analysis with triangulation of sources and methods to ensure data validity. This research takes into account ethical aspects, including informant consent and data confidentiality.

RESEARCH AND RESULTS

PROFILE

Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism is located in Sungai Kupah Village, Sungai Kakap District, Kubu Raya Regency, West Kalimantan. This destination has developed into one of the community-based ecotourism that attracts both domestic and foreign tourists. This location has a rich mangrove ecosystem and a view directly facing the sea, making it one of the best photo spots for tourists who come.

As a form of recognition for its environmental conservation efforts and sustainable ecotourism management, the area was once awarded the Kalpataru Award, a prestigious award in the field of environment in Indonesia. This award is proof of the commitment of the community and managers in maintaining the sustainability of the mangrove ecosystem and utilising natural resources wisely. In addition, the area has also been visited by the Minister of Tourism, which shows the government's attention to the development of the ecotourism sector in this area. The visit also had a positive impact with further support from various parties in improving facilities and promoting this area.

Government support for the development of ecotourism in Teluk Berdiri has become more evident with the construction of roads and bridges that connect the area to the surrounding areas. Improved infrastructure has significantly increased the number of

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visitors, facilitated accessibility, and improved the economy of local communities that depend on the tourism sector.

The excellence of Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism is further strengthened by the inclusion of this area in the nomination of the 300 Best Tourism Villages in Indonesia (Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia - ADWI). This recognition further enhances the image and attractiveness of this location as an environmentally-based tourist destination that has the potential to continue to grow. Apart from being an educational and ecotourism destination, this place is also known as a very interesting photography spot. Many tourists come to capture moments with the background of lush mangrove forests and vast sea views. Various photo spots have been provided to support a more enjoyable tourist experience.

The natural beauty of Teluk Berdiri is further complemented by the charm of sunrise and sunset that can be enjoyed directly from the mangrove area. This makes this place one of the favourite locations for tourists who want to enjoy the beauty of nature while relaxing. In addition to nature tourism, the surrounding community also plays a role in the management of this area by providing various facilities such as food stalls, boat rentals, and educational tour packages about mangrove ecosystems. The existence of these small businesses further adds to the attractiveness of the area while improving the welfare of the local community.

The success of ecotourism management is inseparable from cooperation between various parties, including local governments, local communities, and environmental organisations that actively support mangrove conservation and sustainable tourism-based economic development. However, despite having various advantages, the management of this ecotourism still faces several challenges, such as the need to increase the capacity of human resources in tourism management, as well as strengthening marketing strategies in order to attract more tourists. With all the potential and achievements that have been made, Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism is expected to continue to develop as a leading destination that not only provides economic benefits to the community, but also becomes an example in the sustainable preservation of mangrove ecosystems.

Supporting Factors For Ecotourism Development

The development of Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism is inseparable from various supporting factors that have accelerated its growth and attractiveness as an environmentally-based tourist destination. One of the main factors is the support of the local government which actively encourages tourism promotion through various innovative programmes. One of the most influential programmes is the Kubu Raya Traveler-Tourism Vlog Festival (KRTV Fest). The festival aims to introduce Kubu Raya's natural and cultural beauty, including

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Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism, to the wider community through digital platforms. By involving vloggers and content creators, ecotourism promotion becomes more effective and can reach a wider audience (Wahyuni Purbohastuti, 2017).

In addition, the development of facilities and infrastructure carried out by the government is also an important factor in increasing tourist comfort. The infrastructure built includes gazebos, hawker centres, bridges to ecotourism, parking lots, roads within the area, as well as changing rooms and toilets. The existence of these facilities not only increases visitor comfort but also provides opportunities for local communities to develop small businesses around tourist areas.

The natural beauty offered by Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism is also a major attraction for tourists. The existence of lush mangrove forests provides a unique tourist experience, where visitors can walk on a wooden bridge that divides the mangrove area while enjoying fresh air and natural scenery. In addition, visitors can also enjoy the view of large ships passing around the waters, as well as the Tanjung Intan lighthouse tower which is one of the icons of this area. The combination of these elements creates a tourist atmosphere unlike any other.

One of the most sought-after experiences for tourists in Teluk Berdiri is watching the sunset over the northern Natuna Sea. This moment is the main attraction as travellers can enjoy the panoramic view of the sun slowly sinking over the horizon against the backdrop of the vast sea. This beauty is further complemented by the fresh air away from the hustle and bustle of the city, making this place an ideal location for relaxation.

Not only that, the existence of local communities who are active in the management of tourist areas is also a major factor in supporting the development of this ecotourism. The community not only plays a role in providing tourist services, but also in preserving the surrounding environment. Education about the importance of mangrove ecosystems is also provided to tourists through educational tour packages organised by local communities. This educational tour provides direct experience to tourists about the importance of maintaining mangrove ecosystems and their impact on the lives of coastal communities.

Marketing strategies applied in ecotourism development also continue to experience innovation. Currently, digital-based promotion is growing with the collaboration between the local government and tourism influencers and vloggers. By utilising social media and video sharing platforms, Teluk Berdiri is increasingly widely known and attracts tourists from various regions. With these various supporting factors, Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism has great potential to continue to grow as a sustainable tourist destination, not only depending on its natural beauty but also on the cooperation between the government, the

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community, and various related parties in maintaining the ecosystem and improving the quality of tourism services.

Factors Inhibiting Ecotourism Development

Lack of Public Awareness Although, many people are involved in the management of this ecotourism, there are still some who do not understand the importance of protecting the environment. Some tourists and local people sometimes still litter, which can damage the mangrove ecosystem. This low awareness risks reducing the attractiveness of tourism and creating environmental problems that are difficult to overcome. In addition, the lack of understanding of the concept of ecotourism also causes some people to utilise resources unsustainably, such as cutting mangroves for personal gain. This threatens environmental sustainability and can adversely affect the tourism sector in the long run. Local community awareness of the importance of environmental conservation is often a challenge in the development of ecotourism. Research by Hijriati & Mardiana (2015) shows that active community participation in preserving the environment is still low, which has a negative impact on the sustainability of ecotourism.

The limited management budget is also one of the obstacles because limited financial support from the government and the private sector makes the construction of additional facilities and infrastructure maintenance often constrained by these budget limitations. The cost of maintaining tourist trails, wooden bridges, and other facilities requires a sustainable source of funding so that ecotourism remains comfortable for visitors. The lack of budget also results in a lack of training programmes for local communities. With more funds, managers can increase the capacity of human resources in tourism services, environmental conservation, and more effective promotion. Limited funds are one of the main obstacles in the development of ecotourism. The lack of budget hinders the development of adequate infrastructure and supporting facilities (Winarno et al., 2023). In addition, the lack of funds also affects the ability to effectively promote ecotourism destinations. Budget limitations also impact the lack of training for local communities in managing ecotourism professionally (Konitat et al., 2020).

The threat of climate change leading to rising sea levels and increasing global temperatures has the potential to damage mangrove ecosystems in the long term. This could impact the sustainability of the area as well as its tourist attractions. Increased storms and high waves can also damage the infrastructure that has been built. In addition, extreme climate change can affect the biodiversity of the area, reducing populations of certain species and altering the ecosystems that have become a tourist attraction. Global climate change is having a significant impact on mangrove ecosystems. Sea level rise and changes in weather

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patterns can damage mangrove habitats, which in turn reduces tourist attractiveness (Kaharuddin et al., 2020). In addition, climate change also affects the biodiversity of the area, which is one of the main attractions of mangrove ecotourism.

The lack of trained human resources, the lack of labour that has special skills in ecotourism management is a challenge in itself. More intensive training is needed for local communities in order to improve the service and quality of tourism offered. The lack of tour guides who are knowledgeable about mangrove ecosystems is also an obstacle in providing quality education to visitors. The lack of professional management in managing tourism also causes the management of this area to be not optimal. With better training, local communities can manage this destination more sustainably. The quality of human resources in ecotourism management determines the success of destination development (Nisa et al., 2019). The lack of training and education for local communities results in the low quality of services provided to tourists. This can reduce visitor satisfaction and destination image (Rachman & Mardiana, 2018), also emphasising the importance of community capacity building through training and education to support effective ecotourism management.

There is competition with other tourist destinations because currently with the development of tourist destinations in West Kalimantan, especially Kubu Raya Regency, Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism must compete with other tourist attractions. Therefore, a more aggressive marketing strategy is needed in order to continue to attract tourists. Promotion that is still limited causes this area not to be widely known because without a good marketing strategy, this ecotourism can lose competition with other destinations that offer more complete facilities and experiences. Therefore, promotion through social media, partnerships with tour agents, and publications on various tourism platforms need to be improved.

Another obstacle is inadequate infrastructure facilities, although the construction of several facilities has been carried out, there are still various infrastructure limitations that are the main obstacle in the development of this ecotourism. One of the main obstacles is the absence of lodging around the ecotourism area. Tourists who want to enjoy the night atmosphere in this ecotourism must return to the nearest city, thus reducing the duration of their visit. In addition, the lack of clean water availability is also a serious obstacle. The absence of adequate clean water sources causes tourists to experience difficulties in fulfilling their basic needs while visiting. This also has an impact on the lack of adequate sanitation facilities, such as clean and comfortable toilets. The lack of houses of worship in the area is also an obstacle for tourists who want to worship while visiting this ecotourism. Tourists who come from outside the area often have difficulty finding a proper place of worship, thus reducing their comfort while travelling. Another obstacle is the absence of an adequate

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internet signal which is also an obstacle for tourists who want to share their experiences directly through social media. In today's digital era, internet connection is one of the important factors in the tourism experience, both for communication purposes and promotion of tourist destinations through online platforms.

Another significant problem is the absence of public transport that specifically serves routes to this ecotourism area. Tourists who do not have private vehicles find it difficult to reach the location, so the number of tourist visits is limited. If adequate public transport is available, tourist visits can increase significantly. Lastly, the lack of effective promotion means that many people are unaware of the existence and great potential of this ecotourism. Although it has been nominated as one of the 300 best tourism villages in Indonesia, this area still needs a more targeted promotion strategy in order to reach more tourists. Promotional efforts through social media, cooperation with travel agents, and digital marketing need to be further strengthened to increase tourist attractiveness. Adequate infrastructure facilities are an important factor in supporting ecotourism development. Another study found that poor road conditions to ecotourism sites were one of the main complaints of tourists (Hepy Maharani & Effendi, 2022). In addition, the lack of supporting facilities such as lodging, clean water, houses of worship, internet signals, and public transportation are also obstacles in attracting tourists (Kabes et al., 2022).

These inhibiting factors must be addressed immediately so that Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism can develop better and provide maximum benefits for local communities and the environment.

The Role Of Actors In Ecotourism Development

a. Local Government

The local government, especially the Kubu Raya Regency Government, has an important role in the development of Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism. One form of support provided is the organisation of the Kubu Raya Traveler-Tourism Vlog Festival (KRTV Fest), which aims to increase regional tourism exposure. In addition, the government has also allocated a budget for infrastructure development such as roads, bridges, hawker centres, and other facilities to improve tourist convenience. The government also plays a role in providing regulations related to environmental conservation and ecotourism so that the sustainability of this area is maintained. This policy support includes rules on waste management, prohibitions on mangrove cutting, and environmental education programmes for local communities

Local governments have a strategic role in ecotourism development through the provision of regulations, infrastructure, and promotion. Local government support in the

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form of supportive regulations and basic infrastructure development is essential to create a conducive environment for ecotourism development (Ilham Junaid & Muh. Arfin M. Salim, 2019). Local governments also play a role in facilitating cooperation between various stakeholders to ensure sustainable ecotourism management (Hariatama et al., 2024).

b. Local Community

Local communities have a major role in maintaining and developing this ecotourism. Most of the management of the area is carried out by local communities consisting of fishermen, traders, and tour guides. They play a role in maintaining the cleanliness of the area, providing tourism services such as mangrove tour boats, as well as selling local handicrafts and food, because the community's involvement in training programmes facilitated by the government and non-governmental organisations is an important factor in increasing their capacity in tourism management. With better skills, they can provide better quality services for tourists. Active participation of local communities is the key to the success of community-based ecotourism development (Mukasyaf et al., 2024). Community involvement in the planning, implementation and management of ecotourism can increase the sense of ownership and responsibility for environmental sustainability and community participation also contributes to improving economic welfare through the creation of business opportunities and employment in the tourism sector (Ramadesta et al., 2022).

c. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Academics

NGOs and academics have contributed to the research and development of sustainability-based ecotourism. NGOs have assisted in environmental education and policy advocacy in favour of sustainable ecotourism management. They also play a role in providing training to communities on mangrove conservation and responsible ecotourism practices. Meanwhile, academics from universities in Pontianak, participated in conducting research related to the impact of ecotourism on the local economy, ecology, and socio-cultural aspects of the community. Recommendations from the results of this research become the basis for the government and ecotourism managers in making strategic policies.

NGOs and academics play a role in providing assistance, research and education to communities and other stakeholders (Harefa et al., 2024). Other research suggests that NGOs can assist in community capacity building through training and technical assistance, while academics contribute through research that provides a scientific basis for ecotourism development (Mukhlisi, 2018). Collaboration between NGOs,

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academics and local communities can result in sustainable ecotourism programmes based on local wisdom.

d. Travellers

Tourists are not only consumers of tourism services, but also have a role in supporting the sustainability of ecotourism. Tourists who are aware of the importance of ecotourism tend to respect the rules applied in the area, such as not littering and following conservation rules. Tourists can also play a role in destination promotion through social media and reviews on various travel platforms. With the promotion carried out by tourists, this ecotourism area can be more widely known and attract more visitors. Tourists have an important role in supporting ecotourism sustainability through responsible behaviour and participation in conservation activities, and emphasise that education to tourists about the importance of preserving the environment and culture (Muchammad Satrio Wibowo & Belia, 2023).

e. Private

The private sector and investors have great potential in supporting ecotourism development, especially in terms of funding and infrastructure investment. Private parties (companies) have invested in supporting activities that the government does in Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism such as Festival activities. The company also took part in greeting the development of mangrove tourism and this became one of the factors in the development of this Ecotourism. The synergy between these various actors is the main key in the successful development of Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism. Optimal support from all parties can ensure that this area develops sustainably and provides benefits to the surrounding community and environment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the main supporting factors in the development of ecotourism include unique natural attractions, government support in the form of infrastructure development and promotion, and active community involvement in tourism management. Programs such as the Kubu Raya Traveler-Tourism Vlog Festival (KRTV Fest), construction of tourist facilities, and promotion through social media also contribute to increasing the number of tourist visits. In addition, the synergy between the community, government, academics and non-governmental organisations is an important factor in the sustainability of this ecotourism. However, the development of ecotourism still faces various challenges, such as limited supporting infrastructure, lack of facilities such as lodging and clean water, lack of public transport, and limited internet access. In addition, limited promotion is also an obstacle in attracting more tourists. To overcome

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these obstacles, more intensive collaboration between various parties is needed to increase the competitiveness of this ecotourism at the national and international levels. The role of actors in the development of ecotourism is very significant, ranging from the government that plays a role in policy and funding, local communities as the main managers, to academics and non-governmental organisations that provide assistance and education. The synergy of these various actors is key in ensuring that ecotourism can run sustainably without compromising environmental sustainability. The results of this study confirm that Teluk Berdiri Mangrove Ecotourism can be a successful community-based ecotourism model if supported by the right policies, adequate infrastructure, and active community participation. In the future, further in-depth research is needed regarding the optimal strategy for sustainable ecotourism management and its impact on the environment and local economy.

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