

Analysis of Factors Influencing Visitor Arrivals at the Widuri Beach Tourist Attraction, Pemalang Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing tourist visits to the Widuri Beach tourist attraction in Pemalang Regency. The research approach used is quantitative, with a survey method conducted on tourists visiting Widuri Beach. The research variables include components of tourist attraction, including attractions, facilities, accessibility, activities, supporting services, and tourist perceptions. The data obtained are analyzed using statistical methods to determine the influence of each variable on the level of tourist visits. This study also refers to the theory of tourism demand and consumer behavior to strengthen the analytical framework in the context of marine tourism in the northern coastal area of Central Java. The results of this study are expected to provide an empirical overview of the dominant factors influencing tourist visits to Widuri Beach and explain the causes of fluctuations in visitor numbers. The findings of this study are expected to provide academic contributions to the development of tourism studies, particularly those related to tourism demand in coastal destinations.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourist visits, Tourist attractions, Widuri Beach, Pemalang Regency

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector plays a strategic role in driving regional economic growth by increasing tourist visits, creating jobs, and strengthening local economic activity. In the context of regional

565

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development, tourism is viewed as a multidimensional sector encompassing economic, social, and cultural aspects (Spillane, 2004). Tourism development aims to improve community welfare, expand employment opportunities, and optimize the utilization of national tourism potential, as stipulated in Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism. Natural beauty, cultural diversity, and the richness of local resources are key assets that can be developed as sustainable tourism attractions (Isnaeni, 2005).

Central Java Province is one of the regions showing significant growth in the tourism sector, particularly in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Its strategic geographic location, diverse destinations, and improved infrastructure have driven a year-on-year increase in tourist visits (Sabon et al., 2018). Data shows that tourist numbers in Central Java experienced a sharp decline during the pandemic, but rebounded significantly in 2022–2024. This indicates a strong recovery potential for the tourism sector, particularly in coastal destinations, which are a mainstay of regional tourism in the northern coastal region of Central Java.

Pemalang Regency, as part of the Pantura region of Central Java, has diverse tourism potential, including natural, man-made, and cultural attractions. One of the leading destinations is the Widuri Beach tourist attraction, which boasts a strategic location, high accessibility, relatively complete facilities, and affordable ticket prices. Widuri Beach also represents the characteristics of marine tourism on the north coast of Central Java, which is developing as a mass recreation and family tourism destination (Pemalang Regency Culture and Tourism Office, 2015). However, tourist visit data shows a fluctuating pattern and a downward trend in recent years, especially when compared to similar destinations such as Alam Indah Beach in Tegal Regency. This phenomenon indicates a gap between the potential tourist attractions owned and the actual number of tourist visits.

From the perspective of tourism demand theory, tourists' decisions to visit are influenced by the interaction between individual characteristics and destination attributes. Tourism activities create demand for goods and services, both directly through tourist consumption and indirectly through investment in supporting sectors, such as transportation, accommodation, and other tourism services (Spillane, 2004). Therefore, the quality of tourist attractions, the availability of facilities, ease of access, the diversity of activities, and supporting services are important factors in shaping tourist perceptions and interest in visiting. If these factors are not optimally managed, the potential of the destination will not be fully reflected in sustainable levels of tourist visits.

Several previous studies have shown that tourist socioeconomic characteristics, such as age, income, and education level, significantly influence tourist visit decisions and frequency (Leh



et al., 2020; Rizal et al., 2022). However, approaches that solely focus on tourist characteristics have not fully explained the fluctuations in visits to certain destinations, particularly coastal tourism in the northern coastal areas of Java. Widuri Beach, with its advantageous location very close to the city center and on the main Pantura (North Coast) route, should be highly competitive compared to similar destinations. The discrepancy between this potential and fluctuating visitation trends underscores the urgency of conducting an empirical study to analyze the factors influencing tourist visits to the Widuri Beach tourist attraction in Pemalang Regency as a basis for formulating more effective and sustainable regional tourism management and development strategies.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Tourist

Tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon involving human travel to a destination outside their place of residence for a temporary period and not for the purpose of permanent residence or direct income generation. Hunziker and Krapf in Muljadi (2012) define tourism as the totality of relationships and phenomena arising from the travel and stay of foreigners in a place, as long as they do not intend to settle permanently and do not engage in activities that are intended to earn a living. This definition emphasizes that tourism is oriented towards fulfilling the needs for recreation, experience, and non-economic satisfaction for individuals who travel.

Tourism is also understood as a system comprising various activities and supporting services, such as accommodation, transportation, public facilities, and tourist attractions, which are integrated to enhance the tourist experience. Sigiya (2011) states that tourism encompasses a range of temporary, voluntary travel activities that are not related to productive income-generating activities. Therefore, the existence of the tourism sector cannot be separated from the role of business actors, local communities, and the government in providing adequate services and infrastructure.

Wahab divides tourism into three main elements: people, space, and time. The human element refers to tourists as the primary subject of tourism activities, space refers to the area or destination, and time refers to the duration of the trip and the number of visits. These three elements are interconnected and form a unified system, so tourism management must consider the balance between tourist needs, the carrying capacity of the destination, and environmental and social sustainability.

In the context of regional development, tourism plays a strategic role as a driver of



economic growth, job creation, and a means of cultural and environmental preservation. Therefore, tourism development must be carried out in a planned and sustainable manner to provide optimal benefits to local communities while maintaining the quality of tourist destinations.

Tourism Attractions

Tourist attractions are a fundamental element that determines tourists' interest and decisions in choosing a destination. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism defines tourist attractions as anything that has uniqueness, beauty, and value, whether in the form of natural resources, culture, or human creations that are targeted by tourists. This definition emphasizes that tourist attractions function as a differentiator between destinations and are a major factor in generating tourism demand.

Yoeti (2008) states that tourist attractions act as pull factors that encourage tourists to travel from their home region to a destination. The higher the level of uniqueness, quality, and value of the experience offered by a destination, the greater the tendency for tourists to visit and allocate their resources.

Buhalis in Chaerunissa (2020) states that the components of tourist destination appeal and development can be analyzed through six main elements known as the 6A concept: Attraction, Amenity, Accessibility, Activity, Ancillary Services, and Available Packages. Attractions encompass the main attractions in the form of natural beauty, culture, and tourism events. Amenities include supporting facilities such as toilets, restaurants, places of worship, and rest areas that support tourist comfort. Accessibility relates to the ease with which tourists can reach a destination through adequate transportation networks. Activities refer to various activities that tourists can engage in at the destination, such as recreation, sports, or interaction with the local community. Ancillary services include the availability of information, security services, and destination management institutions. Meanwhile, available packages are a form of integrated services that make it easier for tourists to enjoy all components of the destination in an integrated manner.

Hofifah (2023) added that tourist attractions can also be viewed from three main aspects: what to see, what to do, and what to buy. What to see relates to the visual uniqueness and attractions that tourists can enjoy, what to do reflects the variety of activities available, and what to buy relates to the availability of products or souvenirs as part of the tourist experience. These three aspects are important indicators in assessing the quality of a destination's attractiveness and its influence on tourist visitation rates.



METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze the factors influencing tourist visits to the Widuri Beach tourist attraction in Pemalang Regency. This quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to empirically test the influence of several variables on tourist visitation levels through statistical analysis.

The research object was Widuri Beach, located in Pemalang Regency, Central Java. The population in this study was all tourists visiting Widuri Beach. The research sample was determined using an accidental sampling technique, involving tourists who happened to be encountered at the research location and agreed to become respondents. The number of respondents was adjusted to the needs of the statistical analysis and the limitations of the field research.

The dependent variable in this study is the level of tourist visits, while the independent variables include tourism attractiveness components based on the 6A concept: attraction, amenity, accessibility, activity, ancillary services, and available packages. Each variable is operationalized into several indicators measured using a Likert scale.

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through questionnaires distributed to tourists visiting Widuri Beach, while secondary data was obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Pemalang Regency Tourism Office, and various relevant literature.

Data collection methods included field observations, questionnaire distribution, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to determine the effect of each independent variable on tourist visitation rates. Data processing was performed using statistical software.

To enhance the validity of the research results, supporting qualitative approaches were used, such as visual observation and field documentation, as well as data triangulation to strengthen the interpretation of the quantitative results. With these methods, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing tourists' decisions to visit Widuri Beach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ATLAS.ti Triangulation

Data triangulation using ATLAS.ti shows that the level of tourist visits to Widuri Beach is influenced by a combination of factors such as attractiveness, amenities, accessibility, and the quality of tourism management. In terms of attractiveness, Widuri Beach boasts natural beauty, a



relatively calm atmosphere, panoramic sunsets, and a safe beach for family tourism. These factors are the main reasons tourists choose Widuri Beach as a recreation destination.

However, the results of the ATLAS.ti conceptual network analysis also show that visitor complaints and criticism outweigh appreciation for the facilities. Frequently raised issues relate to the condition of amenities and ancillary services, such as poorly maintained restrooms, suboptimal beach cleanliness, poor waste management, limited clean water, and damaged supporting facilities. This situation indicates a gap between the potential natural attractions of the area and the quality of tourism management.

This triangulation shows that although Widuri Beach possesses strong natural attractions, weak management and facilities have the potential to reduce tourist satisfaction. In the context of sustainable tourism, the quality of amenities and ancillary services is a crucial factor in maintaining long-term visitor interest. Therefore, these findings emphasize that increasing tourist visits cannot simply rely on natural attractions; they must be balanced with professional and sustainable area management.

Mapping

Mapping results indicate that Widuri Beach enjoys a highly strategic geographical position, being located on the main route of Java's North Coast (Pantura) and adjacent to the center of Pemalang City. This location makes Widuri Beach easily accessible to both local tourists and those using intercity routes. Furthermore, the beach's gently sloping slopes and relatively calm waters support family tourism and leisurely recreation, giving Widuri Beach significant potential as a leading regional tourist destination.

However, when analyzed using the 6A concept of tourism, Widuri Beach still shows disparities between elements. Attraction and accessibility are strong, but amenities, ancillary services, available packages, and activities are relatively weak. The limited variety of tourist activities and suboptimal tour packages make the visiting experience monotonous and offer less added value than other destinations with similar characteristics.

This mapping shows that the spatial and geographical advantages of Widuri Beach have not been fully utilized optimally. Mapping serves not only as a location visualization tool but also as an analytical instrument for identifying regional development needs. Therefore, strengthening supporting tourism elements is key to translating Widuri Beach's geographical potential into increased tourist numbers and quality.



Photovoice

The results of the photovoice study provide a visual depiction that reinforces previous findings regarding the actual condition of Widuri Beach. The resulting photographs show the relatively quiet tourist area at certain times and highlight various aspects of visitor complaints, such as the condition of facilities, environmental cleanliness, and area layout. Several images also illustrate visitors' perceptions of entrance ticket prices, parking, and food prices, which they consider disproportionate to the quality of the facilities provided.

In addition to uncovering issues, photovoice also captured the aspirations and hopes of visitors and management. Visitors wanted improved cleanliness, improved public facilities, parking area reorganization, reduced activities that disrupt comfort, and the reorganization of food stalls in the coastal area. Meanwhile, management hoped for government support in developing cultural activities and promoting sustainable tourism.

Photovoice shows that negative perceptions of facilities and prices have a strong influence on tourist satisfaction and visiting decisions. This method confirms that tourists' visual and emotional experiences are crucial aspects in assessing destination quality. Thus, photovoice serves not only as a documentation tool but also as a reflective medium for understanding tourists' real needs and formulating a more responsive and visitor-oriented management strategy for Widuri Beach.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing visitor arrivals at the Widuri Beach tourist attraction in Pemalang Regency. The results indicate that Widuri Beach has significant tourism potential, considering its strategic location, easy access, and relatively comprehensive tourism facilities. However, this potential has not been fully reflected in the stability of tourist visits, which have fluctuated and even tended to decline in recent years. This situation indicates a gap between the destination's potential and its actual tourism performance.

Empirically, the analysis results show that travel costs and tourist facilities are factors that significantly influence the number of tourist visits to Widuri Beach. Travel costs have a negative influence, meaning that the greater the costs incurred by tourists, the lower the tendency to visit. Conversely, the quality and completeness of tourist facilities have a positive influence on the decision to visit, confirming the importance of facilities in increasing tourist comfort and satisfaction. Meanwhile, the variables of travel distance and visiting group were not proven to have a significant influence, indicating that ease of access and visitor characteristics are not the



main limiting factors in the decision to visit Widuri Beach.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that efforts to increase tourist visits to Widuri Beach need to focus on more efficient tourism cost management and improving the quality and innovation of supporting facilities. Optimizing destination management, developing sustainable tourist attractions, and improving visitor services are important strategic steps to strengthen Widuri Beach's competitiveness as a leading tourist destination in Pemalang Regency. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for local governments and tourism managers in formulating empirically-based tourism development policies and strategies.

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