

The Effect of Tourist Attractions, Destination Branding and Tourism Education on the Sustainability of Mangrove Ecotourism

Sustainability of
Mangrove
Ecotourism

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that emphasizes sustainability principles, aiming to protect the environment and enhance the welfare of surrounding communities. This concept has become increasingly important with the growing awareness of ecosystem security, particularly the mangrove ecosystem. The development of mangrove ecotourism in Lembung Village, which is rich in resources and has significant potential to be established as a sustainable ecotourism destination, underscores this importance. This study aims to determine whether tourist attractions, destination branding, and tourism education affect the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism in Lembung Pamekasan. A quantitative methodology was used in this research. The study population consisted of residents of Lembung Village and visitors to the mangrove area in Lembung Pamekasan. The research sampled 90 respondents selected through a purposive non-probability sampling method. Data exploration was conducted using SPSS 26. The results indicate that the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism in Lembung Pamekasan is positively and significantly influenced by the three independent variables. Collectively, these independent factors have a simultaneous impact on the long-term sustainability of mangrove ecotourism.

Keywords: Tourist Attraction, Destination Branding, Tourism Education, Ecotourism Sustainability.

ABSTRAK

Ekowisata adalah suatu bentuk pariwisata yang mengedepankan prinsip keberlanjutan, dengan tujuan untuk melindungi lingkungan dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat sekitar. Konsep ini menjadi semakin penting seiring dengan menyadari pentingnya keamanan ekosistem, khususnya ekosistem mangrove. Dengan adanya pengembangan ekowisata mangrove di Desa Lembung yang kaya dan berpotensi besar untuk dikembangkan sebagai destinasi ekowisata berkelanjutan. Mengetahui apakah objek wisata, pencitraan destinasi, dan edukasi pariwisata berdampak pada keberlanjutan ekowisata mangrove Lembung Pamekasan merupakan tujuan penelitian ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif. Populasi penelitian terdiri dari masyarakat Desa Lembung dan pengunjung mangrove Lembung Pamekasan. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa 90 orang dipilih menggunakan metode pengambilan sampel purposif non-probabilitas. Eksplorasi data menggunakan SPSS 26. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberlanjutan ekowisata mangrove di Lembung Pamekasan dipengaruhi secara positif dan signifikan oleh ketiga variabel independen. Secara bersamaan, ketiga faktor independen ini memiliki dampak silmutan terhadap keberlanjutan ekowisata dalam jangka panjang.

Kata kunci: Daya Tarik Wisata, Destination Branding, Edukasi Wisata, Keberlanjutan Ekowisata.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as an archipelagic country, has great tourism potential with diverse natural wealth, culture, and traditions. The tourism sector in Indonesia not only drives economic growth but also plays a role in environmental conservation and empowering local communities. Ecotourism, which focuses on environmental conservation and sustainable development, is important in this context, especially to maintain natural ecosystems and encourage sustainable local development (Valencia & Ardiansyah, 2024; Yang et al., 2023). Sustainable ecotourism focuses on nature conservation, such as mangrove ecosystems that play an important role in maintaining ecological balance. Mangroves not only protect coastlines from abrasion but also provide habitat for various species and function as carbon sinks, which help mitigate climate change (Alexander, 2023). The mangrove ecosystem in Indonesia is very large, with a total area of mangrove forests reaching 3,364,080 hectares, around 25% of the world's mangrove area, which contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) such as poverty reduction, decent work, and marine ecosystem conservation (Utomo & Pulungan, 2023).

However, mangrove ecosystems are threatened by various human activities such as deforestation and land conversion for agriculture. Therefore, the development of sustainable mangrove ecotourism is very important. Lembung Pamekasan, which is managed by the Tourism Office and the Madura Forestry Management Unit, shows great potential as an ecotourism destination that supports mangrove conservation. Since its opening in 2019, this area has become an educational tourism object that prioritizes the preservation of the mangrove ecosystem. The success of ecotourism development in Lembung Pamekasan depends on several key factors, including tourist attractions, destination branding, and educational programs. Strong tourist attractions, which are based on the natural beauty, biodiversity, and unique experiences offered by the mangrove ecosystem, are essential to attract visitors. Popular tourist attractions can increase the number of tourists and have a positive impact on the local economy (Valencia & Ardiansyah, 2024).

In addition, destination branding plays a major role in attracting tourists. By building a strong and consistent image, a destination can differentiate itself from other destinations and increase visitor loyalty (Saputra et al., 2024; Syah et al., 2024). Therefore, developing a branding strategy that emphasizes mangrove ecotourism's sustainability and unique characteristics will greatly help attract more tourists. Educational programs are also important in educating the community and tourists about the benefits of mangrove ecosystems. Effective education can encourage environmentally friendly behavior and support the sustainability of ecotourism. Alfiandri et al. (2024) and Chatterjee (2024) show that good education can increase awareness and concern for environmental conservation. Good educational programs will help local communities and tourists understand the importance of mangrove ecosystem conservation and the impact of human activities on the environment.

The basic principles of sustainable development with the preservation of natural and cultural resources, which underlie the concept of sustainable ecotourism, include the development of attractions, accessibility, and amenities (Islam & Lutfia, 2023). The sustainability of ecotourism in Lembung Pamekasan is highly dependent on resources that consider ecological and economic values. However, challenges in developing ecotourism in this area need to be identified and addressed, such as lack of support from stakeholders, limited resources, and lack of understanding of ecotourism. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of tourist attractions, destination branding, and education on mangrove ecotourism in Lembung Pamekasan. The results of this study are expected to provide a benchmark for mangrove ecotourism research in other locations and become a driver for the tourism industry in Lembung Pamekasan. In addition, this study aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of ecotourism by

improving mangrove ecology through education, destination branding, and tourist attractions. These findings are expected to help preserve the environment and improve the lives of local people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Article 14 paragraph (1) of Law Number 10 of 2009 of the Republic of Indonesia defines tourist attractions as business entities engaged in the management of natural, cultural, and artificial tourist attractions (Akbar, 2020). Tourist attractions, also known as tourist attractions, are something that invites people to visit an area. This is an important factor that motivates visitors to travel and influences their choice of travel destinations. Because of its uniqueness and differences from other places, this area has the potential to become a popular tourist destination. In addition, celebrations and events can also attract tourists. The presence of attractions is an important consideration for tourists in determining destinations because the uniqueness and appeal of a tourist attraction determine the popularity of the place (Valencia & Ardiansyah, 2024). According to Boniface et al. (2016), before introducing and selling a destination, four main elements must be considered: attractions, accessibility, amenities, and supporting facilities.

The term destination branding refers to any visual representation of a name, symbol, logo, wordmark, etc. that serves to identify and distinguish a particular location, with the aim of making the trip there more memorable and attractive to tourists. In other words, destination branding is generally a development strategy, but also a series of evaluations that allow determining the effectiveness of a destination's branding (Ombeng et al., 2022; Mayangsari & Firdaus, 2023; Gumilang et al., 2024; Noor & Mulyana, 2024). Destination branding will make a destination different from other tourist destinations around it so that it can create interest in the minds of tourists who will make it one of their favorite destinations. According to Riyanto et al. (2019), there are seven indicators of destination branding implementation, namely: image, recognition, differentiation, brand messages, consistency, emotional response, and expectation.

The combination of education and vacation forms the term Eduvacation, which is an abbreviation of educational tourism which means vacation and education. Together, these two words form the term edu. Therefore, edutourism can be defined as a type of vacation that also includes educational activities (Utami, 2019). Basically, educational tourism is about learning about mangroves. You will learn about various types of mangroves, mangrove forest biota, the benefits of mangroves, how to plant mangroves theoretically and practically, how to reduce disasters and provide first aid, and everything about mangrove waters. The purpose of educational tourism is to provide participants with direct learning opportunities while exploring popular tourist destinations. According to Sari et al., (2022); Safitri et al. (2023), Attractions, human resources, tour organizers, and tour operators are the four pillars that can build educational tourism.

Sustainable ecotourism is the growth of the tourism industry that regulates efforts to oversee the development, management, maintenance, and utilization of existing resources that can make tourism economically, culturally, and environmentally viable for the community (Dewi et al., 2023). Sustainable tourism is growing rapidly with increased accommodation capacity, involving local communities and the environment, and ensuring that new development and investment in the sector does not have negative impacts (Islam & Lutfia, 2023; Mayangsari & Firdaus, 2023). However, by taking steps to reduce negative impacts and increase beneficial impacts, it is possible to integrate with the environment. Sustainable ecotourism aims to protect biodiversity and natural ecosystems, respect and preserve local cultures, and build equitable and sustainable economic capacity. Decree of the Minister of Environment No. 201 of 2004 identifies the following aspects of mangrove ecotourism sustainability: economic, socio-cultural, infrastructure, and technology.

H1: Tourist attractions have a positive and significant influence on the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism.

H2: Destination branding has a positive and significant influence on the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism.

H3: Tourism education has a positive and significant impact on the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism.

H4: Tourist attractions, destination branding, and tourism education together have a positive and significant influence on the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative methodology to examine the relationship between variables X (tourist attraction, destination branding, and tourism education) and Y (sustainable ecotourism). The research focuses on the population of the Lembung village community and the mangrove tourists of Lembung Pamekasan. According to Hair et al. (2019), when the population size is unknown, the sample size should be five to ten times the number of variables or indicators in the questionnaire. In this study, there are 18 indicators in the questionnaire, which resulted in a sample size of 90 respondents. Data collection used non-probability sampling through purposive sampling, which selects participants based on specific criteria (Sugiyono, 2019). Participants were required to be at least 17 years old and familiar with the Lembung Pamekasan Mangrove Ecotourism. Primary data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and Likert scale questionnaires, while secondary data were sourced from books, journals, and relevant articles. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS 26 software. This approach allowed for an in-depth analysis of the relationships between the studied variables and provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the sustainability of ecotourism in the region.

RESULT

The results of the validity test aim to ensure the reliability of the data used in the study. Data validity is tested at a significance level of 5% to determine the extent to which the measuring instrument can produce data that is in accordance with the research objectives. Data is considered valid if the correlation value obtained (r-count) is greater than the critical value in the r distribution table (r-table) for a certain number of samples. If the r-count exceeds the r-table, then the items in the questionnaire or research instrument are considered valid and suitable for use. Conversely, if the r-count value is smaller, then the data is invalid. This test is important to ensure the quality of data in supporting research results.

Table 1. Validity Test

Variables	Indicator	r-count	r-table	Information
Tourist Attractions (X1)	DTW1.1	0.731	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.2	0.877	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.3	0.694	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.4	0.799	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.5	0.791	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.6	0.834	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.7	0.753	0.2072	Valid
	DTW1.8	0.670	0.2072	Valid
Destination Branding (X2)	BD2.1	0.526	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.2	0.728	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.3	0.479	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.4	0.564	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.5	0.710	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.6	0.796	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.7	0.731	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.8	0.739	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.9	0.604	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.10	0.768	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.11	0.671	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.12	0.833	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.13	0.665	0.2072	Valid
	BD2.14	0.757	0.2072	Valid
Tourism Education (X3)	EW3.1	0.717	0.2072	Valid
	EW3.2	0.801	0.2072	Valid
	EW3.3	0.794	0.2072	Valid
	EW3.4	0.603	0.2072	Valid
Ecotourism Sustainability (Y)	KE1	0.746	0.2072	Valid
	KE2	0.792	0.2072	Valid
	KE3	0.739	0.2072	Valid
	KE4	0.667	0.2072	Valid
	KE5	0.645	0.2072	Valid
	KE6	0.641	0.2072	Valid
	KE7	0.741	0.2072	Valid
	KE8	0.707	0.2072	Valid
	KE9	0.772	0.2072	Valid

The results of the variable validity test, it can be seen that all variables have a calculated r-value greater than the r-table value, and all statement indicators in this study are more than 0.2072. So, all statement items in this study are declared valid.

Then reliability testing is carried out to determine the reliability of the data used. To calculate the reliability coefficient of this study, the Cronbach's Alpha formula is used. If the Cronbach's Alpha value is > 0.60 , it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items	Information
Tourist Attractions (X1)	0.902	8	Reliable
Destination Branding (X2)	0.911	14	Reliable
Tourism Education (X3)	0.711	4	Reliable
Ecotourism Sustainability (Y)	0.880	9	Reliable

The results of the reliability test show that the research instrument has high reliability, indicated by the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.60. The Tourist Attraction variable (X1) obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.902 with 8 items, which confirms its reliability. Likewise, Destination Branding (X2) shows strong reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.911 on 14 items. Tourism Education (X3) also meets the reliability criteria with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.711 for 4 items. Finally, the dependent variable, Ecotourism Sustainability (Y), shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.880 for 9 items. These results ensure that the instrument is consistent and suitable for further analysis.

The purpose of the normality test is to determine whether the data is normal using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Normality is achieved when the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value exceeds 0.05.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

		Unstandardized Residual
N		90
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.000000
	Std. Deviation	2.4417557
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.087
	Positive	.087
	Negative	-.077
Test Statistic		.087
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.086 ^c
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction		

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the results of the normality test. The Asymp Sig (2-tailed) value is 0.086, which is greater than alpha 0.05. Thus, the results of the study follow a normal distribution. To predict the impact of changes in one variable on another variable, researchers used multiple regression analysis. In this study, partial testing (T-test) was used to examine whether the hypothesized factors had a significant impact on the ecotourism sustainability variable (Y), where these variables include tourist attraction (X1), destination image (X2), and tourism education (X3).

Table 4. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Test and T-Test

Model	Un-std. Coef. B	Un-std. Coef. Std. Error	Std. Coef. Betrta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.642	2.599		2.171	0.033
Tourist Attractions (X1)	0.356	0.099	0.347	3.569	0.001
Destination Branding (X2)	0.221	0.071	0.344	3.116	0.002
Tourism Education (X3)	0.456	0.170	0.230	2.732	0.008

The regression equation $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$, with the result Ecotourism Sustainability = 5.642 + 0.356X1 + 0.221X2 + 0.465X3 + e. The constant value of 5.642 indicates that if tourist attractions, destination branding, and tourism education are zero, ecotourism sustainability will reach 5.642. The regression coefficient of tourist attractions of 0.356 indicates that ecotourism sustainability increases by 0.356 for every one unit increase in tourist attractions. The destination branding coefficient of 0.221 indicates an increase in ecotourism sustainability of 0.221 for every one unit increase in destination branding. Meanwhile, the tourism education coefficient of 0.465 indicates an increase in ecotourism sustainability of 0.465 if tourism education increases by one unit. The results of the t-test show that tourist attractions have a positive and significant influence on the sustainability of Lembung Pamekasan ecotourism, with a t-value of 3.596 greater than the t table of 1.987, and a significance value of 0.001 which is smaller than 0.05, so that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. Destination branding is also significant with a t-value of 3.116 greater than the t table, and a significance value of 0.002 smaller than 0.05. Likewise, tourism education has a significant effect, with a t-value of 2.732 greater than the t table and a significance value of 0.008 smaller than 0.05. Overall results show that the three variables make a positive contribution to the sustainability of ecotourism. Examining the extent to which the independent variable can explain the dependent variable is the essence of the coefficient of determination.

Table 5. Determination Coefficient Test (R²)

R	R-Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error
0.813	0.660	0.648	2.484

The data in Table 5, a determination coefficient of 0.660 was found. As a result, the long-term sustainability of ecotourism is 66% influenced by things like tourist attraction, destination image, and tourism education. The other 34% is caused by factors not discussed here. To find out how ecotourism attractions, destination branding, and tourism education all play a role in the long-term sustainability of the industry, we conducted an F-test. The dependent variable is considered to be influenced by three independent factors if the F-count value exceeds the F-table or Sig is lower than 0.05.

Table 6. Simultaneous Test Results

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1031.156	3	343.719	55.707	.000 ^b
Residual	530.633	86	6.170		
Total	1561.789	89			

a. Dependent Variable: Ecotourism Sustainability (Y)
b. Predictors: (Constant), Tourism Education (X3), Tourism Attraction (X1), Destination Branding (X2)

The results of Table 6, the F test shows that the calculated F value of 55.707 is higher than the F table value of 3.103, and the significance level is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. Thus, the three factors affect the sustainability of ecotourism in the long term.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that tourist attractions have a positive and significant impact on the sustainability of Lembung Pamekasan mangrove ecotourism, at least in part. The findings of this study are in line with the research of Erfayana et al. (2024) entitled Innovation of Bale Mangrove Ecotourism Tour Program as a Sustainable Tourism Attraction in Jerowaru Tourism Village, East Lombok Regency. The results of the latest study found that tourist attractions have a significant impact on tourism sustainability, and that Bale Mangrove Ecotourism with its various attractions can become a sustainable industry in the future. The tourist attractions of Lembung mangrove ecotourism have a significant impact on the sustainability of environmental destinations, and continue to maintain the mangrove ecosystem. On the other hand, without good management, this tourist attraction can actually be a threat to the sustainability of mangrove forests. By implementing the right strategy, it can minimize negative impacts and optimize its positive benefits (Turisno et al., 2021). The right management strategy, collaboration with various parties and visitor education are the keys to maintaining the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism development in Lembung Pamekasan.

Available data show that destination branding does contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Lembung Pamekasan mangrove ecotourism project. Elda et al. (2024) showed that branding significantly affects tourism sustainability, and that well-executed branding can improve the image and attractiveness of Geosite, which is consistent with the findings of this study. Destination branding plays an important role in supporting the sustainable development of Lembung mangrove ecotourism in Pamekasan. Branding that emphasizes ecological, educational, and conservation values provides another attraction while creating awareness of mangrove sustainability. With the right branding strategy and local community participation, Lembung mangrove ecotourism can develop into a destination that is not only attractive, but also able to survive sustainably, providing benefits and maintaining the balance of the mangrove ecosystem (Swangiang & Kornpiphat, 2021).

The findings of this study indicate that tourism education has a positive and significant impact on the long-term sustainability of ecotourism in the Lembung Pamekasan mangrove forest. The findings of this study strengthen the findings of Prasetyo & Nararais (2023), that educational tourism has a significant impact on sustainable tourism. This shows that educational tourism can realize sustainable tourism by highlighting the importance of learning, educational experiences, encouraging activities, and environmentally friendly products. Tourism education has an important

role in supporting the sustainability of mangrove ecotourism in Lembung. Through education, tourists can understand the importance of the mangrove ecosystem and are encouraged to maintain its sustainability. Education also helps reduce the negative impacts of tourism activities and involves local communities in conservation efforts. With the right development strategy, tourism education can be a key element that strengthens the sustainability of Lembung mangrove ecotourism, while providing benefits to the environment and the economy of the surrounding community (Salman et al., 2020).

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it states that the existence of tourist attractions, destination branding, and tourism education simultaneously influence the sustainability of Lembung Pamekasan mangrove ecotourism. Mangrove ecotourism in Lembung Pamekasan Regency has high potential to be developed into an attractive and sustainable tourist destination. The three main factors that influence the sustainability of ecotourism are tourist attractions, destination branding, and tourism education. These three elements synergize to create ecotourism that is not only economically valuable, but also supports the protection of mangrove ecosystems and empowerment of local communities (Ely et al., 2021). Overall, wisely managed tourist attractions will support the local economy while protecting the ecosystem. Destination branding improves the image of the destination and attracts support for sustainable development. Meanwhile, tourism education forms ecological awareness and responsibility for tourists and local communities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that have been conducted, several conclusions can be drawn, first, the variables of tourist attraction, destination branding, and tourism education partially have a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of Lembung Pamekasan mangrove ecotourism. Second, the variables of tourist attraction, destination branding, and tourism education simultaneously affect the sustainability of Lembung Pamekasan mangrove ecotourism. Thus, these three factors, if applied synergistically and sustainably, will help maintain Lembung mangrove ecotourism as an environmentally friendly, attractive tourist destination, and support economic welfare and environmental sustainability. The author also provides recommendations for further researchers. Further research can further explore tourist attraction, destination branding, tourism education, and other variables that have not been studied in this study to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Subsequent researchers can also make comparisons related to the development of a phenomenon, changes in trends that occur, or comparisons between populations that will be used, so that the results of future research are expected to be more complete than this study.

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