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Manis Beach Padang

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# Public Awareness of Eco-Tourism Conservation in Air Manis Beach Padang

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## Abstract

This research aims to explore public awareness of ecotourism conservation including: (1) artificial environment, (2) natural environment, and (3) socio-cultural environment. Public awareness of maintaining tourism environment is a must, for instance, the orderliness, cleanness, and beauty for a sustainable environment. This research was conducted in Air Manis Beach Padang. This research is qualitative with a case study approach. Several procedures carried out in this research: (1) Formulation of the problem of the research, (2) Needs analysis, (3) Data collection and analysis of empirical findings, and (4) Report of the findings. The technique of data collection was implemented by interviews with the subjects and informants of the research. To complete the data, the observation was conducted to the local community. Data validation was examined through triangulation using the researcher's participation if a lack of data. Triangulation of sources was conducted to the parties that understand the community participation for the sustainable environment in Air Manis Beach. Subjects and informants who participated in this research were determined in purposive sampling, involving tourism officers, environment agents, education experts, and urban village chief. The findings of the research showed: (a) public awareness of the artificial environment is low, (b) public awareness of the natural environment is adequate, and (c) public awareness of the cultural environment is low.

## Keywords

Public awareness, Environmental conservation

## 1 Introduction

West Sumatra is one of the regions with attractive natural beauty, as its regencies and cities own various tourist attractions. If managed well, they will contribute to foreign exchange gain and boost local economy. Muslim Aziz 2016 argues that if tourist attraction managed well, it will improve the local income of the region. Therefore, good management is a must following the vision of Padang city, as stipulated in Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of 2019-2024 that is Padang as the educational city, trading and prosperous tourism, religious and cultural.

One of the popular tourist sites in West Sumatra is Air Manis Beach renowned for its legend of Malin Kundang. This becomes one of the reasons why people need to raise awareness of environmental conservation. Earlier research on tourism was conducted by Aini and Hayatunnufus (2019) about the low awareness of souvenir sellers in Bukittingggi. Souvenir vendors have yet to show commitment to improving regional tourism. The issue is indicated by the poor service they provide for the local foreign tourists. A few problems can be seen such as offering merchandise at a high price and unable to keep orderliness, cleanliness, and beauty (K3) at the location by (Violina & Suryawan, 2016). Further research was conducted by developing tourism awareness module for souvenir sellers and after the examination and implementation, the tourism awareness was improved.

Observation on July 25, 2019, found several environmental issues at Air Manis Beach, such as trash fills along the coastline, culinary and souvenir places are disorganized and the absence of beauty along the hill descent or garden to attract tourists. Thus, the aforementioned problems become the basis to investigate public awareness of eco-tourism conservation in Air Manis Beach Padang. This research aims to describe the public awareness of eco-tourism conservation, including: (a) public awareness of the artificial environment, (b) public awareness of the natural environment, and (c) socio-cultural environment.

This research becomes important for improving and developing Indonesia tourism in general and West Sumatra in particular. Detailed urgencies are described as follows: a) suggestion for regional government in advancing the industry of tourism, (b) improving the role of community in eco-tourism conservation, (c) enhancing people's understanding about advantages of environmental conservation development for regional development and avoiding disadvantages of procurement of tourism facility by protecting the environment.

Tourism is one of the industries affecting the social, financial and environmental side of a country. Many countries are engaged in tourism as one of the infrastructural sectors, especially in developing country including Indonesia. As one of the biggest industries in the world, tourism is expected to improve the country's economic growth and raising the local welfare of the regional destination (Evita, Sirtha, & Sunarta, 2012).

West Sumatra is targeted as one of Indonesia's main tourist attractions. The province has vast potential to be developed as a tourist site, for both natural and cultural tourist attractions (Alfonso, 2012). West Sumatra as a tourist destination is still afflicted by environmental issues. For instance, trash scattered around the site, culinary and souvenir vendors have their goods disorganized, and less attention on the environment.

We need to protect the environment at the tourist sites, not only limited to permanent tourist objects but also all areas of the site including the road we take to the destination. The tourist site needs to be clean, organized, beautiful and equipped with an adequate facility. To ensure the hygiene and beauty of the environment of the tourist site, locals should be attentive to their environment. Public awareness of ecotourism conservation is needed to attract more tourists. Regional tourism office or Dinas Pariwisata (2004) developed seven enchantments (Sapta Pesona): safe, orderly, clean, cool, beautiful, friendly and memorable. First, safe means a condition when tourists are in the sense of peace, protected and free from fear, threat, thievery, fraud and other things that make tourists uncomfortable. Safe also means to be free from disturbance like counterfeit goods from street vendors and ignorant and irresponsible acts.

Second, orderly reflects a condition of discipline in various aspects. It could be in terms of transportation, organized and swift public transportation. Another example is queue, standing in line when entering ATM room. Thus, every service is operated orderly, swiftly and professionally.

Third, clean means a waste-free environment. When trash scattered around the area, it covers the scenic view and causes disease. Such problems can decrease tourist visits to the destination. The cleaner environment will attract more tourists, make them be more comfortable and stay longer. The clean environment should involve all areas of the destination, be it in the hotels, prayer rooms, and restaurants.

Fourth, cool means a state of peaceful atmosphere, indicated by a lovely environment, green view and cool air. Green environment can be implemented by planting flowers to adorn the area. Ornamental plants can be placed at each house and trees can be planted along the road. This way, tourists will find beautiful landscapes and be attracted to visit.

Fifth, beautiful is a state that radiates attraction in the eyes. In this context, beauty means the space decoration of hotels with colorful layout, organized shops and orderly parking lot. When space is organized and cleaned, it shows the beauty of the place which attracts tourists. Sixth, friendly socio-cultural environment. It means a friendly culture such as welcoming the tourist with pleasantness and familiarity, helping the visitors with the information they need. Providing information also includes some explanation about traditional regulations, what things should be respected and what not. For example, dress code, traditional Minangkabau outfit for women is *Baju Kurung* and Muslim women wear attire that covers their body parts. Friendliness is the culture that adhered to most Indonesian's personalities and needs to be maintained by (Hidayat & Arkhi, 2015).

And the last seventh, memorable means a good impression that visitors receive during the visit and the experience lasts long in their memory. Memories can be good or bad. The memories expected after tourist visits are the good ones and pleasant reminiscence at the heart. Several elements to generate the good impression of tourist attractions are: (a) traditional performing arts such as traditional dance, traditional vocal performance and traditional ceremony, (b) pleasant accommodations such as clean environment, satisfactory and professional service, as well as friendly welcome for visitors (c) regional special culinary with appetizing looks (d) numerous unique merchandises with good quality, portability and affordable price.

The seven enchantments (Sapta Pesona) 2004 explained above are implemented to attract tourists in tourist destinations. People of the region need to raise awareness of the seven enchantments to increase tourist visits in the region. Tourism involves an activity like traveling to find the pleasure of a place. Tourism gives significant influence on the destination that contributes to the growth of local income. As stated by Fitriana (2017) that creative economy development in 2025 will be placed in the quality of government,

education and tourism awareness of the agent of tourism development in Indonesia. In the future, the tourism industry will provide a positive impact on national economic growth. People in the community can sell and introduce the local culture to the tourists. For instance, Padang with its natural beauty has many attractions for tourists to visit. If beaches in Padang are managed effectively, local income will raise from selling culinary, accessories and local souvenirs.

Public awareness of environmental conservation is explained further. According to the Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (1996), awareness derived from the word conscious which means realize, feel, know and understand. In other words, awareness means a state of realizing and understanding. Public awareness means people understand or perceive the ecotourism of Air Manis Padang Beach in pursuit of preserving the environment. Thus, people must protect the environment to be sustainable, orderly, clean, and beautiful.

The tourism environment as stated by Sunaryo (2013) consists of the physical environment and social environment. The physical environment includes natural environment and artificial environment. Natural environment is the natural condition of plants, animals, plants living around the area, while the artificial environment is maintaining K3 (cleanness, orderliness, and beauty). The social environment means interaction among humans around the area, including the traditional culture. In terms of socio-culture, it involves hospitality which is how the local community welcoming tourists, introducing traditional culture such as local culinary and traditional performing arts. Public awareness is essential in the implementation of sustainable development, especially in environmental conservation.

The development of ecotourism must involve community participation. Therefore, improving community participation in the management of tourism should be implemented and not simply taking profits of tourism potentials in West Sumatera. Several things executed through the act of community-based economy are, commercializing local products and culture to the visitors and providing environmental education for the community through guidance from the regional tourism office, and Department of Environment (DLH). Society is expected to own knowledge of preserving the tourism environment and maintain a sustainable environment.

People need to be aware of the significance of advance tourists. Community participation is important in improving awareness of tourism conservation. For example, people who build lodging facilities or hotels need to ensure that the area is free from waste. This way, the area will attract more domestic and foreign visitors. Waste is not only a major hazard to water resources for daily use and also a threat to marine waters and coastal areas. For those in the community who build lodgings or houses in the plateau region must not cut down trees to avoid landslide and flood.

Public awareness will arise from the direct benefits of the tourist area. To gain more benefits, the environment needs to be maintained. It is a reciprocal relationship of tourism activity from the management and environmental benefits. If we protect nature, we can gain benefits from sustainability. Similarly, if we protect the tourist site effectively, the local community will benefit economically (Mahdayani, 2009). We need to maintain a sustainable environment. Department of Education and Culture attempts efforts to attract more visitors (tourists) by implementing the seven enchantments (Sapta Pesona); safe, orderly, clean, cool, beautiful, friendly, and memorable.

To foster public awareness of the sustainability of the tourism environment, the community needs to be empowered. Community empowerment of the destination area through tourism business is one of the development models that has been gaining a lot of attention from various parties and will be an important agenda in the process of future tourism development. Community Empowerment as stated by Adimihardja in Sunaryo (2013) is defined as a process that includes not only building the economy of the community, but also seeks to improve the dignity, respect, confidence and self-esteem, and cultural value of the region.

According to Woodley in Nelson, Butler, and Wall (1993), local people participation is a prerequisite for sustainable tourism. The concept of empowerment is described to improve community participation in tourism activities and maintaining a sustainable environment. Three components need to be implemented: (1) enabling setting; strengthening the situation of destination area by accommodating infrastructure to encourage the community creativity, (2) empowering local community; improving knowledge and local community skills through education, training, and other forms of development, and (3) socio-political support; social and political support, as well as networking from local government, tourism agencies and other elements.

## 2 Methods

The method used for this research was qualitative, intended to deeply investigate: (a) public awareness of natural environment conservation (b) public awareness of artificial environment conservation (c) public awareness of the socio-cultural environment. The research was conducted in Air Manis Beach Padang. Information obtained from those who capable of the issue. Informants who participated in this research are : (a) Regional tourism office, (b) Environment agent, local government and urban village chief of the (c) people who provide tourist facilities and the local people. The technique of data collection was conducted through interviews to explore public awareness of environmental conservation in Air Manis Beach. Interviews were carried out to regional government, tourism officer and environment agent as participation in protecting the environment. Observation was conducted for the people who provide the facility. Data validation was examined through triangulation using the researcher's participation if a lack of data. Triangulation of sources was conducted to the parties that understand the community participation for a sustainable environment in Air Manis Beach. Procedures used in the qualitative method according to Miles and Huberman in Moleong 1996 are (a) data reduction by collecting the data and sorting the data from the observation; (b) data is displayed based on the focus of the research, (c) conclusion and verification.

## 3 Results and Discussion

The findings of the research were associated with public awareness of ecotourism. This means to see whether the community understands the importance of environmental conservation of the tourist destination. Further explanation is presented as follows:

### 3.1 Public Awareness of Physical Environment Conservation

Public awareness of physical environmental conservation falls into two aspects. First, the preservation of the artificial physical environment involving orderliness, cleanliness, and beauty (K3). Orderliness is an effort to a system of regulation in the tourism environment. Orderliness can be seen from the culinary space of the area, like selling foods, beverages, clothes, accessories, and souvenirs. In this case, the researcher failed to find the orderliness of the vendors in the location (Aini, Hayatunnufus, & Ismaniar, 2019). The research also found the absence of the arrangement of the visitor parking lot. Despite parking lot becomes one of the factors for visitor attraction; there was no available space for the visitors to park their vehicles in the location. Less orderliness of the parking lot will damage the beauty of the beach

Furthermore, the issue in regard to a comfortable and beautiful environment is the garbage problem. From the observation, garbage scattered around the beach in the tourist sites. People have low awareness to dispose of garbage in the available disposal site. The location has no available trash cans provided by local government or culinary merchants. Local people took parts of citizen's land as the landfill to pile up garbage and final waste disposal. Some culinary vendors even burnt the garbage (materials that have been wasted and no longer needed). Burning waste is an action that can damage the sustainability of nature, causing air pollution, and the infection of the lung.

In association with public awareness to preserve the beauty of Air Manis Beach environment, the research found low awareness of the community to make the trading location more eye-pleasant. The place where people sell foods, beverages and accessories was not arranged neatly and orderly. Information obtained from the informant is that certain location is prohibited for business but people still place their merchandise there. Moreover, the location lacked flower gardens that could actually make the site more beautiful. Neither flower garden nor potted flowers planted in the location to make the view more eye-catching. Along the Bridge of Siti Nurbaya Bridge would feel arid because of the absence of trees shade as no trees or plants planted along the way to the location (Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Sumatera Barat, 2004).

Second, research findings related to public awareness on the preservation of the natural physical environment. Based on the research, the groundwater that utilized for wudu place for muslim is adequate. The water source is streamed naturally from Padang Mountain. The public awareness in preserving the natural environment of flora and fauna is also maintained (Sunaryo in Palimbunga, 2017). Flora grows in Padang Mountain remains preserved. Sustainability of the natural environment in the area needs to be saved and avoided from irresponsible hands.

Concerning air pollution, the observation found that Air Manis Beach is free from air pollution because the area is located behind Padang Mountain, which is far from factory, busy road and city noise. The location is natural and comfortable to visit. Air Manis Beach natural sources such as sea and its habitats like fish and reefs are safe and preserved (Pitana & Diarta, 2009). The beach is also utilized by traditional fishermen to catch fish that fulfill the needs of the local community.

Flora and fauna reside in Padang Mountain are still protected. The community conserves the forest, animals, and plants. The information obtained from the locals said that they realize living near the coastline which is prone to the possibility of high waves and tsunamis. For this reason, they always protect nature, and the mountain area is a safe and strategic place for evacuation location of the tidal wave and tsunami threat.

### 3.2 Public Awareness of Cultural Environment Conservation

Findings on public awareness of conserving the cultural environment, in terms of the cultural value of the community hospitality, people welcome visitors friendly and politely. Meanwhile, on the preservation of cultural value, the community is still lacking in socializing the local culinary and local products of Minangkabau. Findings showed that the introduction of cultural values in the form of traditional dance, music or play to entertain visitors is unavailable. There has no cultural value socialization about what things should visitors do and what not. There are no specific rules to enter the tourist site of Malin Kundang stone. The general regulation available is only for Air Manis Beach. Every individual pays IDR 5,000; parking lot for a four-wheeled vehicle is IDR. 10,000 and the two-wheel vehicle is IDR. 5,000.

Theoretically, as stated by Sunaryo (2013), public awareness of ecotourism conservation includes preservation of the natural physical environment, preservation of artificial physical environment and preservation of the cultural environment. Further, in a set of target development, the focused sectors in tourism as written in the Millennium Development Goals/MDGs, which is declared internationally by the member countries of the United Nations, aim to: (a) eradicate poverty and hunger through tourism, (b) promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in tourism, (c) ensuring environmental sustainability in tourism, and (d) building global partnerships for development in tourism.

## 4 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research, the public awareness of ecotourism conservation is categorized as low. It shows that people are not aware of their environment in maintaining orderliness, cleanness, and beauty (K3). Trash is still scattered around the site. The culinary and souvenirs places are disorganized, and the parking lot is not in order. Meanwhile, Public awareness of conserving the natural environment is categorized as adequate, as the community can preserve the flora and fauna around the site. The public awareness of the cultural environment is categorized as low because the merchants around the site did not sell the local product of Minangkabau and most of them only sell fast foods. It proves from the low awareness of the community in protecting the environment. If the tourist area of Air Manis Beach is managed effectively, it will contribute to the local income. However, the location is managed inefficiently and that Malin Kundang stone has slowly damaged.

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