

STUDY OF ATTRACTIVENESS AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SUMBERNADI VILLAGE MANGROVE CONSERVATION AREA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Renita Agustin Suryaman^{*1}, Aulia Khania Allaseh², Asiska Bila Syahrani³

^{*1,2,3} Informatics and Business Institute Darmajaya

Email: renitaas.2313040006@mail.darmajaya.ac.id

Abstract

Mangrove Conservation Areas are rich in ecological value and environmental preservation. These areas can also be utilized to develop nature-based tourist destinations that contribute to sustainable tourism. This study aims to examine the attractiveness and accessibility attributes of the Mangrove Conservation Area as a tourist destination in Sumbernadi Village, Ketapang District, South Lampung Regency. This study is a qualitative case study. Data collection techniques were carried out through passive participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed by reducing the data, presenting the data, and drawing conclusions. The results of the data analysis were then tested for validity using data credibility tests, *transferability* or external validity tests, *dependability* or reliability tests, and *confirmability* or objectivity tests to ensure that the research results were accountable.

Keywords: Attractions, Accessibility, Ecotourism, Tourism Destination.

A. INTRODUCTION

Mangrove ecosystems are a coastal resource that not only has high ecological value but is also rich in social and economic value. This can be seen from the function of mangroves as a barrier against coastal erosion, a carbon sink, a refuge for marine life, and a breakwater to prevent large waves from endangering life in offshore areas. In terms of economic value, Nurhayati & Yuliana (2021) argue that mangrove conservation areas have great potential as ecotourism destinations because they can increase environmental awareness and preservation among the community, while also providing opportunities for economic improvement through sustainable tourism.

The mangrove conservation area located on Pure Segara, Mekar Jaya II, Lintas Timur Street, Sumbernadi Village, Ketapang District, South Lampung Regency, is a preservation area that offers considerable ecotourism potential. This area offers a unique natural panorama with a tree trekking trail stretching through 2,200 meters of mangrove trees. In addition, this conservation area is also a natural habitat for crabs, which the local community calls "yuyu ghong". With such potential, this conservation area has not yet been fully utilized. Based on initial observations, researchers found that accessibility to the conservation area is still hampered by uneven and unpaved roads, as well as the lack of other accessibility supports such as information signs and bridge barriers.



Figure 1. Entrance Sign of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area
source: researcher, 2025

Research by Rini *et al.*, (2022) shows that the success of developing mangrove ecotourism as a tourist destination is highly dependent on ease of access and the availability of basic facilities. This is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Sukendar *et al.*, (2020), which found that accessibility is a major factor in tourists' decision to choose a destination, especially a nature-based destination. In addition to accessibility, tourist attractions also play a crucial role in shaping tourists' positive perceptions. According to Pramono & Widiyastuti (2023), the main attraction of mangrove ecotourism lies in the combination of natural beauty, ecosystem diversity, and educational value that it can offer. On the other hand, international research by Silva *et al.*, (2021), confirms that the sustainability of ecotourism destinations depends on the balance between tourism activities and environmental conservation efforts. In the framework of sustainable tourism development, two main aspects that need to be examined are attractiveness and accessibility. Attractiveness includes everything that can attract tourists to visit, such as natural beauty, tourist activities, and educational value, while accessibility includes the ease with which tourists can reach the destination and the condition of supporting facilities and infrastructure (UNWTO, 2022).

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Types of research

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach. Denzin & Lincoln in Creswell (2018), define qualitative research as a process of data representation aims to study the subject and object of research in their natural order, interpret the research results rationally, and translate or transpose the patterns of findings into tangible forms as contributions to literature or calls for change. In this study, the researcher used the case study research model. The case study was chosen based on the fact that the decision-making process in the development of mangrove ecotourism destinations in Sumbernadi Village, Ketapang District, is still ongoing.

Data Sources

Data sources were selected to represent information acquisition. In qualitative research, Spradley in Sugiyono (2022) explains that there are three elements of social situations that can be used as sources of qualitative research data, including the place where a social situation occurs, the actors involved in a social situation, and social activities where the previous two elements are synergistic. The data sources in this study were coming from prospective informants and policy

makers for destination development in Sumbernadi Village, Ketapang District, South Lampung Regency. There were three types of informant in this study; The Head of Sumbernadi Village, Head of the Village Services Section, and local residents who are currently studying tourism.

Data Collection Techniques & Data Analysis

The primary datas in this study were provided by informants through passive participatory observation. The next primary data collection technique is through semi-structured interviews. Then, the collected data would be analysed by reducing the data, The data were analyzed by reducing the data, presenting the data, and drawing conclusions. The results of the data analysis were then tested for validity using data credibility tests, *transferability* or external validity tests, *dependability* or reliability tests, and *confirmability* or objectivity tests to ensure that the research results were accountable (Sugiyono, 2022).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Observation results

The observation conducted in this study is categorized as passive participatory observation because the researcher came to observe the ongoing development activities without being involved in the development process of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Ecotourism Area. Based on initial observations, the researcher found several problems, namely:

1. The tourist attraction in this destination is still limited to viewing the mangrove forest.
2. There are many potholes and unpaved roads when tourists want to go to the destination. This is dangerous for tourists who visit using large vehicles such as tourist buses.
3. Inside the destination, the tree trekking trails do not yet have bridge barriers to ensure the safety of visiting tourists.
4. There are no signboards or *signage* explaining the layout of the destination.
5. Public toilets are not evenly distributed, and the buildings are still limited to cubicles without doors.

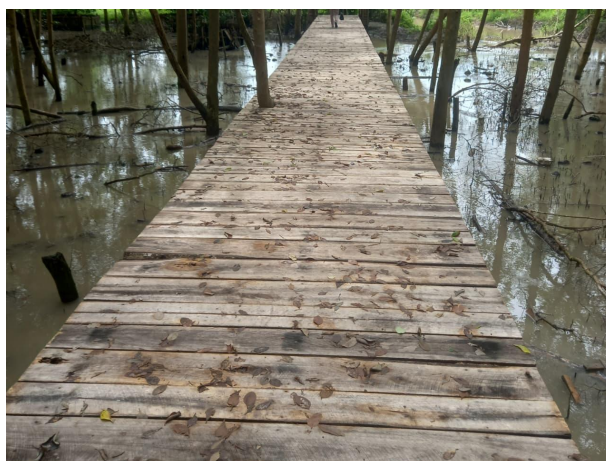


Figure 2. Tree Trekking inside the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area
source: researcher, 2025

Those findings show problems in the development of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area as a tourist destination in terms of attractiveness and accessibility. Destination is the integration or union of tourism attractions and amenities that encourage the creation of a complete visitor experience of a destination (Setiawan et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Leiper in Setiawan *et al.*, (2023) states that a tourist destination can be understood as a place where

someone travels and stays temporarily to enjoy and experience specific tourist attractions. A tourist destination is not merely a physical location or administrative area, but a complex entity that integrates various elements such as attractions, facilities, accessibility, and social interaction.

Attractiveness are everything in a place that is unique, beautiful, accessible, and has value in terms of natural diversity or cultural products that are interesting for tourists to visit and see. In other words, tourist attractions are the main magnet that gives tourists a reason to visit. Therefore, tourist attractions are considered an important element in tourism development. Setyawan (2015) even states that the existence of tourist attractions is one of the main drivers of progress in the tourism industry.

Accessibility in the context of tourism can be interpreted as the ease of reaching a tourist destination, the availability and diversity of transportation options, the quality of travel modes to tourist destinations, road networks, the distance and time required, and the costs incurred to reach the destination (Susumaningsih et al., 2020). This means that the scope of accessibility can be expanded to include safety, security, and comfort, as well as the ease and smoothness of the visitor's journey from the planning process, during the trip, through transit, upon arrival at the destination, and back from the destination. Handari (2018) also states that accessibility can be interpreted as the level of ease that a person obtains in relation to an object, service, or environment. Accessibility is useful for creating an inclusive environment that is minimally to completely barrier-free, safe, and independent. In addition, the provision of accessibility is also necessary to minimize or eliminate barriers that limit access, movement, and freedom of communication.

Interview results

During an interview with the Head of Sumbernadi Village, Mr. I Ketut Sinda Atmita, researchers obtained the following information.

1. The naming of the tree trekking trail is based on the raw material used to build the bridge.
2. The existing trekking trail in the conservation area is currently 2,200 meters long, but the trail is still disconnected for 500 meters to the coast.
3. The Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area has become a natural habitat for a type of crab known locally as "yuyu ghong".
4. Sumbernadi Village won first place in the Forest and Environment Rehabilitation (RHL) competition held by the South Lampung Regency Government in 2020.
5. The Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area is the first of its kind, so it has no competitors from similar areas.
6. The development of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area is constrained by financial support from the South Lampung Regency Government, even though this destination is accessible from various entry points to Lampung Province.

As a follow-up to the interview, the researcher interviewed the Head of the Sumbernadi Village Service Section, Zener, and obtained the following information.

1. The development of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area as a tourist destination is not only planned as a recreational area but also as a means of coastal environmental ecology education.
2. Ecologically, the development of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area is an effort to preserve the environment and prevent abrasion.
3. Economically, this conservation area was built as an effort to reduce unemployment and provide a new source of livelihood for the people of Sumbernadi Village.

Local residents of Sumbernadi Village who are currently pursuing further studies in tourism, added that the local community's awareness of tourism is still low. Therefore, intervention from academics and local government is needed to help develop this destination area so that it has a positive holistic impact on the village community. This means that the development of the Mangrove Conservation Area in Sumbernadi Village as a tourism destination does not only have an impact on one line, but also provides benefits to various lines as a whole and can be implemented using the principles of sustainable tourism.

D. CONCLUSION

The initial results detailed in this study are only a starting point that still needs to be developed further. This is because the study is still in the proposal stage, and the research process has not yet been completed. Therefore, there are several recommendations that can be implemented based on these findings, including the following.

1. The results of initial observations and interviews can be used as a reference in determining further development plans.
2. Future research can use this research proposal as a reference in developing the research to be conducted.
3. Subsequent research should expand on the topics and details not covered in this research proposal.
4. The local government should recognize the potential of the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area as a tourist destination as a first step in optimizing destination development.
5. The local government and regional government collaborate in realizing the Sumbernadi Village Mangrove Conservation Area as a globally competitive tourist destination.

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