

BALANCING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN BELITONG'S UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK SITE GUNONG LUMUT, LIMBONGAN.

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ABSTRACT

The designation of Gunong Lumut on Belitong Island as a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2016 has sparked renewed interest in its distinctive geological features and the potential for sustainable tourism development. This study examines the complex challenge of balancing conservation goals with socio-economic development through tourism. Specifically, it explores the conflicts that arise with the growth of tourism in geoparks, particularly those related to land use, resource access, the equitable distribution of tourism benefits, and the preservation of cultural heritage. The research considers the perspectives of various stakeholders, including government agencies, tourism operators, environmental organizations, and local communities whose livelihoods and cultural practices are intrinsically linked to the land. Using a combination of semi-structured interviews and a review of relevant literature, the study identifies key issues surrounding the development of tourism in this geopark. The findings underscore the importance of community engagement in tourism planning, advocating for mechanisms that ensure the local population benefits directly from tourism activities. Additionally, the research highlights the need for tourism practices that are both culturally sensitive and environmentally sustainable, in order to mitigate negative impacts on local traditions and the ecosystem. In conclusion, this study contributes to the broader discourse on conflict resolution in UNESCO Global Geoparks, offering insights into how socio-economic development and conservation efforts can be effectively balanced. The recommendations are intended to guide policymakers, tourism professionals, NGOs, and community leaders in navigating the challenges of sustainable development in ecologically and culturally significant areas, such as Gunong Lumut on Belitong Island.

Keywords: Conflict Management; Geopark; Sustainable Tourism; Local Communities.

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the proud owner of 10 UNESCO Global Geoparks, one of which is the Belitong Geopark which was recognized on April 23, 2019, having previously been named a National Geopark in 2016 (Salsabil et al., 2023). Within the Belitong Geopark area, there is the Gunong Lumut Geosite, Limbongan, which is famous for its 3 hectares of thick moss at an altitude of 168 meters above sea level. The beauty of the Gunong Lumut Geosite landscape is combined with tourist activities such as trekking, diverse local culinary, and cultural treats such as traditional musical instruments and art performances known as 'Opera Lanun' (Ananda & Huseini, 2024). Since Gunong Lumut Geopark Site became a tourist area, the region has faced challenges in balancing conservation and sustainable development (Kusumah et al., 2023). The dynamics between environmental conservation, tourism activities and community life often trigger conflicts. One of the conflicts is the activity of selling satam stones by a number of communities. Satam stones, as the result of a unique and rare geological process, are economically lucrative, but their uncontrolled collection can threaten the preservation of nature. Conflicts also arise in conservation issues, such as the lack of

attention to the preservation of 'hatchlings' (sea turtle hatchlings) around the Geopark area. However, the existence of this fauna is an integral part of the Geopark ecosystem. On the other hand, the lack of adequate infrastructure, such as street lights, toilets, and information centers hinders the tourism development potential of Gunong Lumut Geopark Site. Difficult accessibility, difficult communication signals, and minimal tourism promotion further add to the complexity of the problem, this conflict requires an integrative solution so that Geopark Site Gunong Lumut can develop sustainably without sacrificing its natural preservation.

Referring to these challenges, this qualitative research seeks to examine in depth the dynamics between conservation and sustainable development and how the conflict management of the Gunong Lumut Geopark Site manager. The problem formulations that are the focus of this research are: (1) What conflicts arise between conservation and development interests at Geopark Site Gunong Lumut? (2) What are the perspectives of tourism actors in addressing and contributing to conflict management at Geopark Site Gunong Lumut? (3) What is the ideal management model of Geopark Site Gunong Lumut in realizing the balance between conservation and sustainability development interests? Through conflict mapping, understanding perspectives, and identifying the right management model, this research is expected to provide an overview and suggestions in an effort to realize Gunong Lumut Geopark as a sustainable tourist destination that successfully balances conservation and development. The purpose of this research is to find out the conflicts that occur at Geopark Site Gunong Lumut, find out about how the perspectives and solutions of the managers know and find the right management model for balancing conservation and sustainability development at Geopark Site Gunong Lumut.

This research takes topics based on *Research Gap* from several previous studies which will be displayed in the following table:

Table 1. Research Gap

Author	Title	Findings
(Salsabil et al., 2023)	Analysis of Conflict Control in The Development of Unesco Global Geopark as Sustainable Tourism in Belitung Regency.	This research found 13 conflicts that occurred in Belitung Geopark including land disputes, miss communication between pokdarwis and tour managers, boundaries between practitioners and academics, illegal tin mining and lack

		of knowledge of human resources on sustainability development. The solutions offered are People Aspects (improving human resources), Planet Aspects (providing an understanding of environmental concerns and sustainability development), Prosperity Aspects (making provisions through institutions and legality for any obstacles that are still biased in status).
(Walas et al., 2024)	Minimizing Conflicts Between Residents and Local Tourism Stakeholders as a Way To Achieve Sustainable Tourism In Prague, Krakow and Braga.	This research took 3 tourist city objects with the same conflict, namely Tourism Industry vs Residents vs Government. Conflicts that occur include water, air and waste pollution, excessive use of water resources, traffic congestion and inadequate infrastructure. The solutions include initiating discussions on sustainability development issues and building mutual agreements for all stakeholders, conducting campaigns for tourists to be more aware of local norms and culture, forming special institutions to manage tourism and limiting short-term lodging rentals for tourists.
(Krisnwansyah et al., 2024)	The Collaborative Governance of the Development of the Apar Tourism Village in Pariaman City, West Sumatra Province.	This research discusses how the government contributes to building and developing the Apar tourism village in Pariaman city. The problem faced is that there are different stakeholder backgrounds that cause different perspectives in building the Apar tourist village. Therefore, the government becomes the mediator and decision maker according to regional policies and national policies. the government also contributes in preparing the Disaster Preparedness Cadets/Taruna Siaga Bencana (TaGaNa) program, Dubalang and Barakai (village security and cleanliness guards), and art activists in tourist villages.
(Marques et al., 2022)	Tourism development discourse dynamics in a context of conflicts between mining and nature conservation in the Brazilian Cerrado Hotspot.	The conflict that occurs in this research is the exploitation of nature by mining activities that are detrimental to conservation activities and hamper sustainability development. Mining activities around the conservation area cause water pollution, siltation of the river, and increased risk of accidents due

to large trucks around the area. Because complaints from local communities have not been heard, the discourse on tourism sustainable development has not been implemented and this conflict has not found a solution.

From the research gaps above, the researcher raises research that focuses on how to resolve conflicts at the Gunong Lumut Geopark Site and still paying attention to the balance of conservation and sustainability development activities, researcher hopes that this research can explain how the conflict can be resolved and can continue conservation activities and sustainable tourism development through the literature study method in a qualitative approach

Literature Review

1. UNESCO Geopark Global

UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGps) are not merely geological sites or landscapes of aesthetic or scientific interest. As noted by Pérez-Romero et al. (2023), UGGps are "living areas" where a wide range of stakeholders collaborate to foster sustainable development. UNESCO defines a Global Geopark as "a single and integrated geographic area where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic approach that combines protection, education, and sustainable development" (Walas et al., 2024). Thus, a UNESCO Global Geopark represents a geographical area of significant geological and cultural heritage, which is both identifiable and documented within the specific geological and cultural context of the region. Amaro et al. (2023) state that establishing and maintaining a UGGp involves a comprehensive, long-term strategy, requiring not only a strong management structure and international visibility but also the integration of local communities, scientific experts, territorial stakeholders, and policymakers. Each of these groups contributes their unique cultural identities, traditions, and intangible heritage to the geopark's framework. The overarching objective of UGGps is to effectively communicate the value of both geoheritage and cultural heritage within the region (Salsabil et al., 2023). This is achieved through the collaboration of a professional, multidisciplinary team. UGGps aim to protect and conserve these important sites while simultaneously supporting local communities by promoting education, sustainable tourism, and the preservation of cultural practices.

The concept of UNESCO Global Geoparks was formally outlined in the document "UNESCO Geoparks Programme – A New Initiative to Promote a Global Network of Geoparks that Safeguard and Develop Certain Areas with Important Geological Features" (Kusumah et al., 2023). According to this document, geoparks are defined as areas that encompass geological features of particular significance, rarity, or aesthetic value. These features are expected to reflect the geological history of the region, including the events and processes that have shaped its current landscape. Agus et al., (2021) said to guide the implementation of the program, three key objectives were established: To utilize geological sites for the broader public education on geological sciences, environmental issues, and sustainable practices, to promote the potential of these sites as instruments for fostering sustainable development, and to ensure the conservation of geological heritage for the benefit of future generations.

"The feasibility study conducted by UNESCO concluded that an integrated, "holistic" approach—one that links geological, biological, cultural, and economic dimensions—would not only be consistent with the principles of effective conservation, but would also lead to a more impactful and sustainable program. The study further recommended that geopark initiatives should not be pursued as isolated, standalone programs but should instead be implemented as interconnected, multidisciplinary projects to maximize their overall effectiveness" (Kochieva, 2022).

This study highlights Gunong Lumut as one of the designated UNESCO Global Geoparks, owing to its distinctive features, including an extensive expanse of moss and rich natural resources, such as

Batu Satam, turtle hatchlings, and mining resources. The site's unique geological and ecological characteristics make it a compelling attraction for visitors. However, despite these natural assets, the development and management of tourism at the site face a range of ongoing challenges. These issues must be addressed to ensure sustainable tourism practices and the long-term preservation of the geopark's resources.

2. Tourism Conflict

In the context of Latin America, tourism has been compared to extractivism, an industry that often involves the state-regulated exploitation of natural resources (Walas et al., 2024). Marques et al., (2022) stated this model of tourism development typically leads to the depletion of local resources, resulting in land dispossession, closures of access to communal territories, and widespread environmental degradation. Moreover, it creates ecological insecurity for indigenous populations, who are often displaced or marginalized in the process (Marques et al., 2022). The concept of socio-environmental conflict refers to situations where one social group exploits a natural resource, reaping direct economic benefits from its exploitation, while another group—often the local or indigenous community—is directly affected by the negative environmental impacts but does not receive any of the benefits (Salsabil et al., 2023). This dynamic reflects the inherent inequities in tourism development, where the costs of environmental degradation are disproportionately borne by those who have limited or no access to the economic benefits generated by tourism.

The concept of "conflict" in the context of tourism is often framed in various ways, including as "social conflict" (Zmysłony et al., 2020), "socio-cultural conflict" (Arifin et al., 2024), "intergroup conflict" (Marques et al., 2022), "land-use conflict" (Almeida-García et al., 2021a), and "urban tourism conflict" (Porfido et al., 2023). Social or socio-cultural conflicts are frequently a consequence of excessive tourism, where tensions arise between residents and tourists, often referred to as "host-guest conflicts" (Cheung & Li, 2019). Land-use conflicts, particularly in coastal tourism development, often stem from mismatches between economic and environmental priorities (Almeida-García et al., 2021b). These conflicts typically arise due to the differing interests of various stakeholders involved in tourism development. Krisnawansyah et al. (2024) identifies six potential areas of conflict: tourism industry – residents, tourism industry – local authorities, tourism industry – tourism industry, tourism industry – visitors, residents – visitors, and residents – local authorities. These areas of conflict reflect the complexity of tourism development, where competing priorities and interests often create tensions among the different groups involved. The literature on overtourism frequently highlights a range of manifestations and impacts that lead to conflict, including those identified by Salsabil et al. (2023). These impacts include: the excessive concentration of tourists in certain areas, increased demand on public transportation systems, parking congestion, rising cleaning costs, greater consumption of energy and water, environmental degradation (both cultural and natural), antisocial behavior among tourists, and the negative consequences of the so-called "night economy," which is often linked to the rapid growth of "middle-class party" tourism. In response to these challenges, (Kochieva, 2022) developed a framework for understanding the sources of conflict in the context of tourism development. Their framework emphasizes the importance of institutional trust in effectively mediating and resolving these conflicts, highlighting that strong, transparent institutional frameworks are crucial for managing the tensions that arise between the tourism sector, local communities, and the environment.

The Gunong Lumut Geopark continues to face several significant challenges, many of which are common in areas balancing conservation and development. These include unresolved land tenure issues, a shortage of skilled human resources, insufficient awareness regarding the sustainable use of natural resources, and the unregulated commercialization of rare commodities, such as unique stones. Given these issues, this study seeks to contribute to the academic literature by examining potential strategies to address these challenges, with a focus on promoting effective governance, sustainable tourism practices, and the preservation of the geopark's natural and cultural heritage.

3. Environmental Development and Conservation

The overarching goal is to balance economic development with environmental conservation. This concept of balance lies at the heart of sustainable development, which has become a central environmental discourse in global politics. The World Commission on Environment and Development Kusumah et al. (2023) defines sustainable development as a process that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development involves balancing "needs" and "constraints," taking into account the resources available for both current and future generations. In tourism studies and practice, this balance is often referred to as the "sustainability of tourism" (AlHaddad et al., 2023).

Despite widespread political support for sustainable development, some scholars argue that the concept remains vague and imprecise Zmysłony et al. (2020), and that it has been co-opted by the dominant economic growth paradigm, which undermines its potential for transformative change (Sharpley, 2020). Critics also contend that sustainable tourism, while broadly accepted, is often criticized for being unachievable or operationally ineffective (Sharpley, 2020). Furthermore, it has been argued that it fosters an unsustainable dependence on continuous growth (Almeida-García et al., 2021a), while placing too much emphasis on the needs of future generations and neglecting the urgency of addressing environmental and social challenges in the present (Duxbury et al., 2020). In this context, sustainable tourism has been critiqued as a discourse that legitimizes a conservative political agenda, often supported by groups more interested in economic expansion than in addressing social inequality or protecting the environment. Critics argue that the discourse of sustainable tourism, in this sense, serves to obscure more pressing concerns by presenting itself as an alternative framework for development, while failing to challenge the underlying drivers of environmental degradation and social injustice (Sharpley, 2020).

The primary role of tourism in human development extends beyond the mere expansion of income and wealth, as advocated by the dominant neoliberal paradigm of modernization (de Almeida et al., 2019). Instead, tourism plays a crucial role in fostering "awareness" (Salsabil et al., 2023), promoting learning, and providing education on environmental conservation and cultural heritage. It facilitates cultural exchanges and builds peaceful relationships, emphasizing social and environmental benefits rather than purely economic gains. This approach requires a more active role for the host community in managing and regulating tourism development in their region (Marques et al., 2022). In nature-based destinations, tourism can also enhance the value of ecotourism by minimizing negative environmental impacts, raising environmental awareness, and generating financial resources for conservation efforts. Furthermore, tourism in these contexts can contribute to the empowerment of local communities, respect for local cultures, and the promotion of human rights and democratic principles (Bortolotto, 2021). Numerous studies have highlighted the mutually beneficial relationship between biodiversity conservation, community livelihood improvement, and tourism development (Sharpley, 2020).

In the context of Gunong Lumut, the development of tourism must be pursued with a strong emphasis on nature conservation to ensure that tourism remains sustainable and does not result in environmental degradation. Various stakeholders, including local communities, government bodies, and conservation groups, have collaborated to promote Gunong Lumut as a designated UNESCO Global Geopark. These ongoing efforts aim to balance tourism development with environmental protection, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the region.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study use systematic literature review (SLR) to understand the complex dynamics of conservation, conflict management and development at the Gunong Lumut Geopark Site, Limbongan, Belitung. The systematic literature review (SLR) was chosen to find, compile, and evaluate earlier research using a review method that displays findings in a more rational and organized way. The type of literature used is electronic media and journals that discuss conflict management, conservation, development and the object of Geopark Site Gunong Lumut, Limbongan. The steps taken in collecting data through systematic literature review are determining the topic discussed, searching and

identifying references from electronic media and articles, selecting and grouping suitable references to become data sources, compiling a research synthesis matrix, writing a literature review and making conclusions from the data found. All stages of analysis are carried out systematically to ensure the validity and depth of data interpretation in this research (Rosalina et al., 2021).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Gunong Lumut Geopark, also known as the "Prima Donna" of the Limbongan Village in Belitung, offers a captivating landscape characterized by expansive moss-covered terrain and rolling hills, all set in a humid climate (Kochieva, 2022). Despite its natural beauty, the geopark is not without its challenges, including conflicts of interest and environmental concerns. These issues have been the subject of ongoing dispute resolution efforts for some time; however, they remain unresolved and continue to affect the park's management and development. The local government, in collaboration with community stakeholders, has made continuous efforts to address these challenges through the formulation and implementation of various policies. Recently, the management team at Gunong Lumut has introduced a range of solutions aimed at resolving these persistent issues. While progress has been made, the management system remains a work in progress, with ongoing improvements to address the remaining challenges and ensure the sustainable development of the geopark.

I. Conflict between Conservation and Development

Environmental problems and conflicts are common, especially in tourist areas. These issues often happen due to disagreements between local communities, policymakers, or because of the environmental damage caused by tourism development (Marques et al., 2022). In this study, the researcher looks at several problems at the Gunong Lumut Geopark, both within the local community and involving policymakers. Based on the literature reviewed, the problems are categorized from moderate to severe. A major issue is the overuse of natural resources around the Gunong Lumut Geopark, particularly the Satam Stone, a rare type of rock found in the area. While the local community sees these natural resources as freely available, some people sell pieces of the Satam Stone, which is valued for its unique shape, color, and cultural importance. Although this stone should be preserved to avoid its extinction, it is often sold in its natural form or made into souvenirs like rings, earrings, and necklaces. This practice threatens the preservation of the Satam Stone. In addition to its natural resources, the Gunong Lumut Geopark is also recognized for the presence of turtle hatchlings that emerge from their eggs in the area (Salsabil et al., 2023). However, the local community remains largely unaware of the potential value of cultivating and preserving these hatchlings. As a result, the care and management of these hatchlings are often neglected, leading to their deterioration or death. This situation is regrettable, as the establishment of a dedicated hatchling conservation program could provide a unique tourist attraction. A specialized tour allowing visitors to observe and participate in the care of hatchlings could not only offer a novel experience but also complement existing tour packages, potentially drawing additional visitors. The Gunong Lumut Geopark is endowed with significant natural resources that, if managed effectively, could contribute to the region's socio-economic development. These constraints hinder the site's ability to effectively promote itself as a key tourist destination, limiting its growth and development.

II. Perspective and Strategies of Tourism Actors in Conflict Management at the Gunong Lumut Geopark Site

In response to the challenges facing the Gunong Lumut Geopark, the Acting Regent of Belitung has implemented several strategic initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts and promoting sustainable tourism. Recognizing the critical need to preserve the natural environment, the Acting Regent has emphasized the importance of adopting effective management practices that ensure the long-term viability of the geopark as a sustainable tourism destination. One notable initiative is the "Geopark Reborn" Movement, which was introduced to revitalize both the local community and the management team. This movement seeks to reinvigorate enthusiasm for the geopark's management and foster greater community involvement in the stewardship of the site. To address the issue of insufficient governmental support, the Acting Regent proposed the development of key public infrastructure to support tourism activities at the Gunong Lumut Geopark. Among the proposed

projects are the construction of essential amenities such as public toilets, entrance gates, and information centers, which are intended to improve both the visitor experience and the operational capacity of the geopark. Another significant challenge identified was the limited understanding among local communities regarding the value and significance of the geopark. In response, the Acting Regent established a Working Group within the Regency, restructured the governance of the geopark management body, and formed the "Beauty Beginde" Pokdarwis (Community-Based Tourism Group). These measures have led to tangible progress in strengthening local engagement and enhancing the management framework of the geopark. The local government has continued to collaborate with various stakeholders, including local communities, tourism operators, and environmental organizations, to ensure that development efforts are aligned with conservation objectives. These ongoing initiatives reflect a commitment to balancing the promotion of sustainable tourism with the preservation of the region's natural and cultural heritage.

III. Gunong Lumur Geopark Site Management Model

The management system at Gunong Lumut Geopark is unique but not widely known, as there is limited information available. Research has identified a few management models focused on sustainable tourism and raising awareness among local communities about the importance of protecting the environment. One key program is 'Geo Education', which invites children to learn about tourism and nature conservation. The goal is to introduce young people to environmental protection early on, encouraging them to care for the environment from a young age. Another important initiative is 'Save Our Ocean', which invites visitors to participate in activities like cleaning up beaches, camping, and releasing baby turtles into the ocean. This program allows visitors to directly engage with the environment, offering a hands-on experience that helps them feel connected to conservation efforts and make a tangible impact. Lastly, 'the APGN Geopark Development Forum' is a platform that helps the Belitong Geopark team learn about development and sustainability practices. This forum addresses local challenges and provides solutions to improve the geopark's management. Despite some challenges, the local government has shown flexibility in addressing these issues. In summary, the management model at Gunong Lumut Geopark includes programs aimed at educating the public, promoting sustainable tourism, and involving the local community in conservation efforts. These initiatives help protect the environment while supporting sustainable development in the region.

D. CONCLUSION

This study investigates conflict management strategies in the context of the conservation and development of the Gunong Lumut Geopark. By conducting a thematic analysis of the conflicts that have emerged, the research explores how these issues are addressed in relation to both environmental preservation and sustainable development. The findings highlight the collaborative efforts of the Acting Regent, the park's management team, and the local community in formulating solutions that balance environmental protection with the development of tourism infrastructure. The research emphasizes the crucial role of community involvement in tourism development, advocating for an equitable distribution of benefits to ensure that local populations directly gain from tourism activities. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of culturally sensitive tourism practices that respect local traditions while minimizing environmental degradation. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on conflict resolution within UNESCO Global Geoparks, aiming to harmonize the socio-economic development goals of local communities with conservation objectives. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, tourism professionals, NGOs, and community leaders as they navigate the complex process of balancing development and conservation in ecologically and culturally significant areas like Gunong Lumut Belitong.

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