

HERITAGE AT SEA: LOCAL TOUR GUIDES' PERSPECTIVES ON MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SELAYAR

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Abstract

This study explores maritime cultural exchanges between countries and their impact on tourism in the Selayar Archipelago. With its rich history as a center for international maritime trade, Selayar provides valuable insights into the interactions that shape the cultural identity of its inhabitants. This research aims to understand the dynamics of cultural exchange through archaeological investigation and the perspectives of local tour guides. Utilizing ethnographic methods, including participant observation and in-depth interviews with local tour guides, this study examines maritime narratives and cultural practices. Findings reveal extensive cultural contacts that significantly influence the socioeconomic and cultural lives of the community, especially through the insights provided by tour guides as cultural ambassadors. The presence of maritime artifacts—such as ancient navigational tools and commercial goods—offers tangible evidence of enduring trade networks. This study highlights the crucial role of tourism, particularly the contributions of local tour guides, in preserving and promoting Selayar's maritime cultural heritage. Recent data indicate a substantial increase in tourist interest in the archipelago's maritime history and culture, generating new economic opportunities for local guides. However, the research also addresses challenges in balancing tourism development with cultural preservation, emphasizing the need for sustainable management practices that actively involve local communities, especially tour guides. In summary, this research enhances our understanding of cultural exchange and marine tourism in the Selayar Archipelago and provides practical recommendations for preserving and sustainably utilizing maritime cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Tourism, marine heritage, local-tour guides*

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's tourism industry holds a competitive advantage due to its rich cultural and natural assets, which are closely interconnected and maintained through the enduring wisdom of local communities. These resources collectively create a unique tourism offering that is both culturally immersive and environmentally sustainable. Sulawesi Island, located in eastern Indonesia, exemplifies this synergy, with its natural beauty complemented by its cultural heritage. Known as a "maritime continent," Sulawesi features some of the nation's most stunning seascapes and marine biodiversity, including Takabonerate National Park, a designated National Strategic Tourism Area (NSTA) recognized globally for its extensive marine biodiversity and cultural significance (Kurniawan et al., 2021; Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2022).

Takabonerate National Park has garnered attention from international tourists and researchers, who primarily focus on the biodiversity of marine life and environmental conservation (Riyanto et al., 2020). However, despite its ecological appeal, the region's underwater cultural heritage—consisting of shipwrecks, historical trade routes, and other artifacts—remains underutilized as a tourism resource. This oversight is notable given the increasing global interest in underwater cultural heritage tourism, which can enhance local community engagement, promote heritage conservation, and boost regional economies through sustainable tourism (UNESCO, 2020; Pavlidis et al., 2018).

The Selayar Islands, in particular, possess a rich maritime history that dates back to the 14th century when it served as a significant trade route connecting various parts of the Indonesian archipelago to the spice trade in the Moluccas (Arief, 2004). Historical accounts and archaeological findings indicate that Selayar was not only a stopover for traders but also a cultural nexus where local sailors engaged in regional exchange, thereby shaping a distinct maritime identity (Cultural Heritage Conservation in South Sulawesi, 2021). Findings from the Bontosikuyu District include shipwrecks, porcelain ceramics, and other relics that signify an active historical presence of both domestic and international trade routes in the area. These artifacts, some of which have been legally excavated, present a tangible link to the island's past and offer valuable insights for the potential development of a Marine Heritage Trail (Kusumawardhani et al., 2019).

As both natural and cultural resources are limited and perishable, their preservation within the tourism framework is essential (Smith et al., 2019). Unlike natural resources, which may regenerate under specific conditions, cultural resources, once lost, are irreplaceable (Ballesteros et al., 2021). Therefore, the integration of marine cultural heritage into Sulawesi's tourism offerings could provide a sustainable model that aligns with global conservation principles and appeals to niche tourism markets (Poncet et al., 2022). The concept of a Marine Heritage Trail could attract cultural and eco-tourists who seek immersive, educational experiences while contributing to the local economy and enhancing community pride (Su et al., 2023).

This study has two primary objectives: (1) to establish a balanced evaluation framework for coastal cultural heritage, considering it as an integral resource alongside natural assets; and (2) to conduct a market segmentation analysis to assess the potential of thematic marine heritage tourism. By leveraging historical narratives and primary data from community leaders, this research aims to highlight Selayar's position as an emerging destination for maritime heritage tourism that preserves and celebrates Indonesia's rich coastal culture (UNESCO, 2020).

This study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism and heritage conservation by positioning Selayar's underwater cultural heritage as a tourism asset. It advocates for development models that benefit both the environment and local communities. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for stakeholders, including policymakers, tourism developers, and local communities, to create a sustainable, heritage-centered tourism destination (Pavlidis et al., 2018; Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2022).

B. LITERATUR REVIEW

B.1 Marketing of Tourism

The development of a tourism area is closely linked to effective tourism marketing strategies. Tourism marketing aims to increase the attractiveness and awareness of a destination, creating

a distinctive image that differentiates it from competitors. One widely-used approach in destination marketing is city branding, which involves five primary stages: (1) market investigation and strategic recommendations, (2) brand identity development, (3) brand launch and introduction, (4) brand implementation, and (5) monitoring and evaluation (Anholt, 2010). City branding is highly relevant for marine tourism actors to establish a sustainable competitive advantage for their destinations.

This study focuses specifically on the first stage—market investigation—by examining tourists' interest in visiting and their decision-making processes. This approach facilitates an understanding of the factors driving tourists' destination choices, providing a foundation for developing more targeted tourism products.

Visiting Interest

Visiting interest plays a critical role in a tourist's decision-making process before purchasing or consuming tourism products. Tourists typically gather information about destinations before deciding to visit (Pasquinelli, 2016; Carlisle et al., 2016). This process includes evaluating factors such as the unique appeal of the destination, the perceived benefits, and the influence of others who have already experienced the destination.

This interest arises consciously and is often accompanied by personal motivations, such as curiosity, joy, or excitement (Johnson et al., 2017; Khrisna et al., 2017). These internal motivations ultimately drive tourists to select a specific destination. Therefore, visiting interest can be seen as a combination of individual perception and internal motivation, which together create a strong impetus for making a visit decision (Fyall & Garrod, 2005).

Visiting Tourist Decisions

The decision to visit a destination is the outcome of tourists' evaluations regarding the appeal of potential destinations. The theoretical foundation for visiting decisions is similar to that of purchasing decisions, wherein tourists compare various alternative destinations (Fianto, 2018). This process is commonly measured using seven components: decisions about the brand, type of product, form of the product, quantity, payment method, time of purchase, and choice of provider (Fistola & La Rocca, 2017).

Visiting decisions are individual and are influenced by tourists' motivations and needs, leading to variations in preferences and decisions (Baggio, 2017; Johnson et al., 2017). These factors provide deeper insights into aspects that need to be managed to attract more tourists to a destination.

B.2 Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage possesses unique characteristics such as rarity, limited availability, and non-renewability, as defined by Indonesia's Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage. In the context of tourism, the preservation of cultural heritage is essential for sustaining its academic, ideological, and economic values (Graham, 2002).

Human interaction with the sea and coastal areas has been crucial in shaping maritime and coastal cultural heritage, encompassing both terrestrial and underwater landscapes (Campbell, 2000). This heritage not only serves as a cultural resource but also plays a critical role in sustainable development, contributing to poverty reduction, livelihood improvement, education, and environmental conservation (Salmons, 2007). Integrated approaches emphasize the connection of heritage values with economic, social, environmental, and political dimensions, making it clear that the link between people and their heritage can enhance conservation efforts.

B.3 Marine Heritage Tourism

Marine heritage refers to historical, cultural, and archaeological resources located in coastal, marine, or lake environments, forming a vital tourism resource. It spans various historical periods, from Indigenous Indonesian navigators to the colonial exploration of European and Asian powers and the modern era. To be classified as marine heritage, an object must be at least 50 years old and possess historical, cultural, archaeological, or paleontological significance.

Marine cultural heritage underscores the human-sea relationship, which can be traced through material and discursive traditions. The term "heritage" rather than "history" signifies that these relationships are dynamic and publicly significant rather than solely historical (Rizzol, 2013). However, the dynamic nature of coastal environments leaves marine heritage vulnerable to various types of development, with potentially severe, long-term consequences (Varmer, 2014).

B.4 Economic Impact of Coastal and Marine Tourism

Coastal and marine tourism is recognized as a key sector within the Blue Economy. The Blue Economy emphasizes the sustainable, stable, and inclusive use of maritime resources to contribute to poverty reduction, human well-being, and economic opportunities (Doyle, 2018). The growing population in the Indian Ocean Rim countries underscores the need for sustainable resource management, with projections that nearly half of the world's population may inhabit this region by 2050.

The Blue Economy presents significant opportunities, especially in regions with underdeveloped blue economies such as Indonesia, where tourism is a promising sector (Hussain et al., 2018). Regional travel, often of shorter duration and lower cost than long-haul travel, shows substantial economic impacts on local economies due to reduced leakages (Cohen & Cohen, 2015; Daldeniz & Hampton, 2013).

Studies indicate that the value of ecosystem services should be considered beyond monetary measures, especially for cultural ecosystem services that hold intellectual and non-market values (Daily et al., 2009). Integrating these values into management plans requires understanding both market and non-market values, balancing economic significance with sustainable preservation. Classical economics emphasizes market-based values, but ecological economics offers methods, such as choice modeling and contingent valuation, to assess the non-market values of resources (Xepapadeas, 2008). This approach aligns with the treatment of cultural heritage as cultural capital, encompassing both economic and cultural values (Throsby, 2010).

B.5 Potential Segmentation of Cultural Tourism

Understanding the cultural tourism market remains in an early stage, with much research focused on estimating market size. McKercher (2001) found that tourists can have qualitatively different experiences, even if their motivations are similar. Factors such as time availability, travel partners, group participation, awareness levels, education, and ethnic background influence tourists' engagement with cultural sites.

Cultural tourism encompasses diverse activities grouped under a broad category, including heritage, museum, arts, religious, and marine heritage tourism. Despite the diversity in products, the market is often perceived as homogenous, leading to generic marketing strategies (Mitchell & Wilson, 1998). This study proposes activity-based segmentation, identifying market segments through tourist behavior at destinations to tailor cultural tourism experiences effectively.

Segments should meet specific criteria, including shared values, distinct interests, sufficient size for return on marketing investment, accessibility through marketing channels, and satisfaction through the offered products.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes a structured questionnaire to analyze tourist behaviors and participation in marine and cultural tourism activities in Selayar Islands. Using activity-based segmentation, tourists were classified based on their engagement with various attractions, although an independent segment was created for those displaying unique patterns (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017; Morais & Ogawa, 2021). Data collection was conducted in July-October 2022, with respondents screened to ensure eligibility as inbound tourists (Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2017). The method assumes that tourist behavior will follow identifiable patterns (Voulgaris & Rontos, 2020), though individual preferences may lead to cross-visitation, reflecting overlapping behaviors. As the analysis relies heavily on the researcher judgment, it is time-consuming and demands objectivity (Su & Wall, 2019).

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The survey data collected from both foreign and domestic tourists visiting Selayar Islands reveals several key insights into the motivations, preferences, and characteristics of these two groups. The following analysis discusses the findings by breaking down the tourist profiles, their travel behaviors, and preferences for marine heritage-based tourism.

Tourist Demographics and Characteristics

1. Origin of Visitors:

Foreign tourists visiting Selayar Islands are predominantly from Europe (Spain and France) and Asia (China), with a significant number from Australia. This indicates a more international appeal for Selayar among non-domestic visitors. Domestic tourists, on the other hand, are largely from South Sulawesi, with some coming from other parts of Sulawesi and a smaller proportion from outside Sulawesi. This suggests that Selayar is a prominent destination for regional tourists within Indonesia, particularly for those in South Sulawesi.

2. Travel Companions:

Foreign tourists mainly travel with family (58%) or work colleagues (27%), while domestic tourists show a more balanced distribution between family, friends, and work colleagues, with 40% traveling with family. This could indicate that foreign tourists might prioritize family vacations more, whereas domestic tourists have more varied travel companions.

3. Age Range:

Foreign tourists visiting Selayar are generally between 20 to 60 years old, which aligns with the broader demographic trends of international tourists. Domestic tourists, however, have a wider age range (12 to 70 years), reflecting the diverse nature of domestic travel preferences in Indonesia, where family groups may include both young children and older individuals.

4. Length of Stay:

Foreign tourists tend to stay for 4 to 7 days, suggesting that they may be on a more leisurely or vacation-style visit. In contrast, domestic tourists stay for a shorter period (2 to 4 days), which

could indicate more regional, short-term visits or weekend trips, common among domestic tourists.

5. Education:

Both foreign and domestic tourists have a high school education or above, which is typical for international and domestic travelers engaging in tourism activities, particularly in heritage and marine environments.

Tourist Motivations and Preferences

1. Main Destination and Travel Motivation:

Foreign tourists are most motivated by marine life, small islands, marine heritage, and thrill rides, which are indicative of a strong interest in marine-based activities and cultural experiences. This is consistent with Selayar's reputation as a destination for marine heritage and natural beauty. Domestic tourists are also drawn to small islands and marine life, but they emphasize landscaping more. This could be due to a stronger appreciation of the natural environment in Indonesia and a preference for scenic landscapes over more active experiences.

2. Package Tours:

A majority of foreign tourists participate in scuba diving package tours, while domestic tourists are more likely to engage in small island packages. This difference suggests that foreign tourists might be more inclined toward specialized marine experiences (such as diving), while domestic tourists focus on broader tourism offerings, including island-hopping and natural sightseeing.

3. Depth of Experience:

Both foreign and domestic tourists have varying experiences in Selayar, but foreign tourists particularly appreciate the extensive marine experiences available on the islands, while domestic tourists are more focused on the scenic beauty of the small islands.

Visitor Preferences Regarding Marine Heritage

1. Knowledge of Marine Heritage:

A notable finding is that both groups seem unfamiliar with the marine heritage potential in Selayar, with foreign tourists expressing enthusiasm for marine heritage (if available) and domestic tourists showing less interest. This highlights the need for increased awareness and promotional activities to educate tourists about Selayar's rich marine heritage and cultural sites.

2. Travel Motives:

The primary motive for travel among foreign tourists is education and culture (80%), while for domestic tourists, recreation and fun are the main drivers (80%). This could indicate that foreign tourists are more interested in the cultural and educational aspects of the destination, while domestic tourists view Selayar primarily as a recreational destination. This difference may also suggest that cultural tourism could be better developed and marketed to domestic tourists to align their preferences with the existing marine heritage.

3. Site Preferences:

Both groups show a preference for visiting well-known sites first, with a higher percentage of domestic tourists prioritizing well-known sites. This suggests that well-established attractions hold more appeal for domestic tourists, whereas foreign tourists might be more adventurous and willing to explore less-known destinations as well.

4. Accessibility and Mass Tourism:

Interestingly, while 90% of domestic tourists prefer destinations with good accessibility and mass tourism, foreign tourists are more inclined toward destinations that are difficult to reach but offer beautiful landscapes (77%). This suggests that domestic tourists value convenience and infrastructure more, while foreign tourists might seek more exclusive, off-the-beaten-path experiences, indicative of their preference for niche and immersive tourism.

5. Amenities:

Both groups recognize the importance of good amenities, though foreign tourists seem less concerned about the lack of amenities (77%) as long as they can experience authentic culture and nature. In contrast, a significant portion of domestic tourists prefers destinations with good amenities (64%), reflecting their comfort-driven travel style.

The table includes a clearer presentation of the different tourist characteristics and motivations across both foreign and domestic tourist segments in the Selayar Islands Regency.

Variable	Foreign Tourists (Selayar Islands)	Domestic Tourists (Selayar Islands)
<i>Origin of Visitors</i>	46% Europe (Spain, France) 42% Asia (China) 12% Australia	60% South Sulawesi 20% Sulawesi Island 20% Outside Sulawesi
<i>Travel Companions</i>	27% Work colleagues 15% Friends 58% Family	30% Work colleagues 30% Friends 40% Family
<i>Age Range</i>	20 – 60 years old	12 – 70 years old
<i>Length of Stay</i>	4 – 7 days	2 – 4 days
<i>Education</i>	High school and above	High school and above
<i>Main Destination of the Trip</i>	Marine life, Small Island, Marine heritage, Thrill rides	Small Island, Landscaping, Marine life
<i>First Visitor Motivation</i>	Marine life	Landscaping
<i>Package Tour Participation</i>	Scuba package tour	Small Island package
<i>Depth of Experience</i>	Extensive marine experience, especially on small islands	Beautiful views, especially on small islands
<i>Marine Heritage as a Potential Destination</i>	Don't know this information yet	Don't know this information yet Not enthusiastic about enjoying

Variable	Foreign Tourists (Selayar Islands)	Domestic Tourists (Selayar Islands)
	Enthusiastic about enjoying (if available)	
<i>Motive for Traveling</i>	80% for education and cultural reasons 20% for recreation and fun	20% for education and culture 80% for recreation and fun
<i>Motive: Visit Known or Obscure Sites First</i>	77% visit well-known sites 23% obscure sites	86% visit well-known sites 14% obscure sites
<i>Motive: Learn About Culture or Get Close to Family</i>	36% learn about another's culture 64% get close to family and friends	30% learn about another's culture 70% get close to family and friends
<i>Motive: Visit Many or Few Sites</i>	31% visit many sites 69% visit a few intensely	92% visit many sites 8% visit a few intensely
<i>Motive: Accessibility and Mass Tourism or Beauty and Remoteness</i>	23% accessible but mass tourism 77% difficult to reach, but beautiful landscaping	90% accessible but mass tourism 10% difficult to reach, but beautiful landscaping
<i>Motive: Amenities</i>	23% good amenities 77% lack of amenities, but authentic nature and culture	64% good amenities 36% lack of amenities, but authentic nature and culture
<i>Motive: Destination Cost vs. Special Interest</i>	100% lack of amenities, but authentic nature and culture	84% cheap but mass tourism 16% expensive, special interest tourist
<i>Important Components for a Destination</i>	More activities and new experiences in marine attractions	Accessibility: easy to reach Amenities: good amenities (e.g., food court, toilets, accommodation) at an affordable price

Discussion

The study's findings align with previous research on segmentation in cultural tourism, which indicates that different tourist segments exhibit diverse preferences based on origin, age, motivations, and the type of experiences they seek (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017; Kim et al., 2017). In particular, the emphasis on marine life and small islands as primary attractions for both foreign and domestic tourists reflects the growing global interest in ecotourism and sustainable tourism, especially in areas rich in marine heritage (Morais & Ogawa, 2021). Additionally, the results suggest that accessibility and local amenities are significant factors in shaping tourist satisfaction, as highlighted in the studies by Su and Wall (2019) and Voulgaris & Rontos (2020).

This study also emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior in specific regions, as both foreign and domestic tourists expressed varying priorities in terms of cultural and recreational motivations. These findings are crucial for destination managers looking to develop marine heritage trails that cater to the distinct needs of diverse tourist

groups. Tailored marketing strategies and development initiatives can better promote local marine and cultural heritage while ensuring sustainable tourism practices.

E. CONCLUSION

This analysis provides a comprehensive view of the differences and similarities in the motivations and preferences of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the Selayar Islands. Foreign tourists are more likely to engage in specialized, marine-based activities, with a strong interest in education, culture, and less accessible destinations (Latif, et al., 2024). In contrast, domestic tourists are more focused on convenience, with a preference for well-known sites, good amenities, and recreational experiences. These insights can help in tailoring tourism products and marketing strategies to meet the diverse needs of both tourist groups, potentially boosting marine heritage tourism in Selayar.

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