

Tourist Perceptions of the Bambar Natural Pool Tourist Attraction in Waibu District, Jayapura Regency

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ABSTRACT

Local economic development is closely tied to the potential resources available within a region. In Jayapura Regency, the natural tourism sector plays a strategic role in promoting regional growth and improving community welfare. One such potential is the Bambar Natural Pool, a nature-based tourist attraction that requires continuous development to enhance visitor experiences. Understanding tourists' perceptions is crucial in increasing the site's competitiveness and attractiveness. This study aims to assess tourists' perceptions of the Bambar Natural Pool based on three key variables: the condition of the tourist site, accessibility, and supporting facilities. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods. The findings reveal that tourists' overall perception of the Bambar Natural Pool is categorized as poor. Specifically, the site condition is rated as good (77.00%), while accessibility (66.67%) and facilities (61.40%) are rated as poor. These results highlight the need for creative development efforts that align with tourist expectations. Enhancing infrastructure and visitor support services is essential to elevate the appeal and competitiveness of this natural attraction. Aligning development strategies with tourists' perceptions can help ensure that improvements meet visitor needs and encourage more sustainable tourism growth in the region.

Keywords: Bambar Natural Pool, Tourism Development, Tourist Perceptions, Natural Tourism, Jayapura Regency

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of Indonesia's key economic sectors with significant potential for growth and development, particularly in regions rich in natural and cultural resources. The country is home to diverse landscapes, ranging from pristine beaches and lush rainforests to cultural heritage sites, making it an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists. The growth of tourism is expected to drive economic development by creating job opportunities, stimulating local businesses, and fostering infrastructure improvements. Every region in Indonesia is eager to tap into its tourism potential, with efforts focused on developing unique attractions and improving services to meet the growing demand. Jayapura Regency, located in Papua, is a prime example of a region with abundant natural tourism potential, particularly in the realm of eco-tourism, with its stunning landscapes, waterways, and cultural richness.

Jayapura Regency's natural attractions, including waterfalls, forests, and rivers, offer immense opportunities for tourism development. One such notable destination is the Kolam Alam Bambar, located in Bambar Village, Waibu District. This natural water pool, formed by a river that crosses the village, offers a peaceful and picturesque environment that has the potential to attract both local and international visitors. However, despite its natural beauty, the Kolam Alam Bambar remains a simple and underdeveloped site, lacking the infrastructure and amenities that could enhance its appeal and make it more competitive within the tourism market. To truly capitalize on the site's tourism potential, it is essential to understand how tourists perceive the site, its accessibility, and the existing facilities. Such insights are crucial for developing strategies that will improve the site's attractiveness and increase its visitation rates.

The development of local economies through tourism is particularly important in regions like Jayapura, where the natural environment provides the foundation for potential tourism-based growth. Tourism not only contributes to the national economy but also serves as a catalyst for regional development by generating income, creating employment, and fostering social and cultural exchange. In this regard, the tourism sector in Jayapura Regency can contribute to sustainable economic growth, improve the livelihoods of local communities, and reduce poverty. However, in order to realize the full potential of Kolam Alam Bambar and other natural sites, it is crucial to understand tourists' perceptions, preferences, and expectations. This will allow for the creation of targeted strategies that address both the development of infrastructure and the enhancement of visitor experiences.

Indonesia's tourism sector is governed by Law No. 10 of 2009, which defines tourism as a multifaceted activity that involves the movement of people for leisure, business, or recreational purposes. The goal of tourism, according to this law, is to improve the economy of local communities and reduce poverty. Tourism is an industry that thrives on the interactions between tourists, local communities, governments, and businesses. It creates a framework for economic activity, fostering jobs, investments, and the exchange of culture. The purpose of tourism is not only economic but also social, promoting sustainable practices and contributing to the preservation of local culture and natural environments. By leveraging these principles, the development of the Kolam Alam Bambar can align with broader national and regional goals, ensuring that it becomes an integral part of Jayapura Regency's economic development strategy.

This research aims to analyze the perceptions of tourists regarding the Kolam Alam Bambar, with a focus on the conditions, accessibility, and facilities of the site. By examining these factors, the study will provide valuable insights for improving and

enhancing the overall tourist experience at this site, ensuring its long-term sustainability and competitiveness in the tourism market. Furthermore, the findings of this study will offer recommendations for the development of Kolam Alam Bambar, ensuring that it meets the needs and expectations of visitors while contributing to the economic and social well-being of the local community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism as an industry plays a significant role in local economic development, particularly in regions rich in natural tourism potential. According to Law No. 10 of 2009, tourism is defined as all activities related to travel undertaken on a recurring basis for leisure or satisfaction. The development of tourism not only focuses on increasing the number of visitors but also on enhancing the quality of experiences offered to tourists. This shift toward quality tourism emphasizes that visitors seek more than just scenic destinations; they are looking for a holistic experience that includes comfort, services, and local culture. Tourist perceptions, therefore, become a crucial factor influencing their decision to visit and revisit a destination. Perception can be shaped by a variety of factors, including the infrastructure, service quality, environmental sustainability, and the overall hospitality of the community.

Previous studies show that tourist perceptions are influenced by various factors, including the condition of tourist attractions, accessibility, and available facilities. Syadzwin et al. (2021) found that tourists' perceptions of swimming pool tourism objects in South Kalimantan were positive overall, but certain aspects such as facilities and maintenance required improvements to enhance the overall experience. Similarly, Indah Sulistiowati's research (2022) on Jungwok Beach in Yogyakarta highlighted that the quality of facilities and infrastructure was considered poor by tourists, which detracted from their experience. Inadequate facilities and poor maintenance can reduce tourist satisfaction and, in the long run, affect the destination's reputation negatively, leading to lower repeat visitation.

Furthermore, the importance of sustainable tourism management is emphasized in many studies. Tourism managers must understand the expectations and needs of tourists to create an experience that is both satisfying and sustainable. In the case of natural tourism attractions like Bambar Natural Pool, the challenge is balancing development with environmental sustainability. While development may drive economic growth, it should not come at the expense of the environmental integrity that attracts tourists in the first place. As noted by Richards (2020), sustainable tourism is about integrating conservation into tourism development, ensuring that both the environment and local communities benefit from tourism.

Research by Putra et al. (2020) highlights the importance of stakeholder involvement in the development of tourist destinations, particularly in rural or underdeveloped areas. Local communities must be empowered to actively participate in managing and benefiting from tourism activities. This local empowerment fosters community ownership of tourism assets and helps ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism projects. Furthermore, Nugroho and Wiranatha (2019) underline that accessibility plays a crucial role in shaping tourist impressions. Good road conditions, clear signage, and accessible transportation options enhance tourist satisfaction, whereas poor access can discourage repeat visits. Even a naturally beautiful destination may fail to attract repeat visitors if it is difficult to reach or lacks adequate infrastructure. Therefore, to build a strong tourism brand and encourage sustainable development, perceptions of quality in every aspect of the tourist experience—ranging from the physical environment to services, access, and

community involvement—must be prioritized. By understanding tourists' perceptions, tourism development policies can be more targeted and beneficial to local communities, ensuring that growth is both economically and environmentally sustainable.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method in this study uses a quantitative approach to analyze tourist perceptions of the Bambar Natural Pool tourist attraction in Waibu District, Jayapura Regency. The data used in this study comes from primary data obtained through filling out questionnaires by respondents who are tourists visiting the location. The questionnaire was designed to measure tourist perceptions based on several main variables, namely the condition of tourist attractions, available facilities, and accessibility to tourist attractions. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to determine the sample, where respondents were selected intentionally based on certain criteria, namely those who were visiting the Bambar Natural Pool. The number of samples determined in this study was 60 tourists. The sampling method used is accidental sampling, which is choosing respondents who happen to meet at the research location. This is done to ensure that the data obtained is representative and relevant to current conditions.

After the data was collected, the analysis was done descriptively quantitatively. Respondents were asked to rate each statement in the questionnaire using a Likert scale consisting of five levels, ranging from "Very Poor" to "Very Good". The data obtained was then analyzed to produce an average score on each variable, which was then interpreted to provide an overview of the general perception of tourists towards Bambar Nature Pond. Using descriptive statistical analysis, this study aims to provide an in-depth insight into the factors that influence tourists' experience and to identify areas for improvement in the management of the attraction.

RESULTS

The results of this study reveal that tourists' perceptions of the Bambar Natural Pool tourism attraction are relatively poor, with an overall perception score of 67.09%. This indicates that there are several areas for improvement, particularly in accessibility and facilities. The findings are divided into three main categories: the condition of the tourist attraction, accessibility, and facilities, each of which provides detailed insights into the factors influencing tourists' experiences.

In terms of the condition of the Bambar Natural Pool tourist attraction, perceptions are relatively positive, with a score of 77.00%. Among the indicators evaluated, tourists found the environmental comfort to be very good, scoring 82.33%. The cleanliness of the environment was also rated positively, with a score of 78.67%, indicating that the area is generally well-maintained. However, the perception of safety was slightly lower, with a score of 70%, suggesting that while the area is considered safe, there may be concerns regarding safety measures or infrastructure that need to be addressed.

Accessibility of the attraction, however, received a less favorable assessment, with a score of 66.67%. One of the key strengths was the road quality, which was rated highly at 83%, indicating that the roads leading to the site are in good condition. However, there were significant concerns about the affordability of public transportation, which scored only 38.33%. This suggests that access to the site via public transport is not only limited but also expensive, creating a barrier for some tourists. Additionally, while the ease of

finding the attraction was rated positively (78.67%), this may not be sufficient if other accessibility factors are lacking.

The facilities at the Bambar Natural Pool were also perceived unfavorably, with an overall score of 61.40%. While the condition of the parking lot was rated very well at 89.33%, there were major concerns about other key amenities. The condition of toilets and clean water facilities was rated moderately at 68%, indicating that while functional, these amenities may require improvements in terms of cleanliness and maintenance. More troubling were the perceptions of the rinse rooms and changing areas, which received a low score of 44.33%. These facilities are critical for the comfort and convenience of visitors, and their poor condition reflects negatively on the overall experience. Furthermore, the lack of adequate health facilities was a major concern, with a very unfavorable perception score of 32%. This indicates a significant gap in essential services that could affect the safety and satisfaction of tourists. The condition of dining facilities, including the canteen, was better rated at 73.33%, but still highlights that there is room for improvement.

Given these findings, several efforts must be made to enhance the overall experience at the Bambar Natural Pool. First, improving the image of the tourist attraction should be a priority. This can be achieved through better branding, improved signage, and a stronger online presence to increase awareness and attract more visitors. Additionally, maintaining and preserving the natural beauty of the site is crucial, as it is the primary draw for tourists. Regular environmental monitoring, waste management initiatives, and community involvement in preservation efforts will ensure that the site remains attractive and sustainable.

Improving the management of the Bambar Natural Pool is essential for addressing the challenges identified in this study. This could involve better coordination between local authorities, tourism operators, and the community to enhance the overall visitor experience. A more structured approach to managing visitor flow, providing services, and ensuring safety will be necessary to boost satisfaction and encourage repeat visits.

Finally, increasing promotion efforts will be key to attracting more tourists to the site. Highlighting the unique aspects of the Bambar Natural Pool, such as its natural beauty and peaceful environment, through digital marketing, tourism fairs, and collaboration with travel agencies can help improve visibility. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders can enhance the tourism infrastructure, making the destination more accessible and appealing to a wider audience.

In conclusion, while the Bambar Natural Pool has significant potential as a tourist destination, addressing the concerns raised in the study is crucial for improving visitor satisfaction and ensuring sustainable tourism growth. Through targeted efforts in facility upgrades, better accessibility, and enhanced promotion, Bambar Natural Pool can evolve into a more competitive and attractive destination for both local and international tourists.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study on the perceptions of tourists towards the Bambar Natural Pool highlight several critical areas of concern and opportunity for enhancing the overall tourist experience. The research reveals that while the natural beauty and condition of the site received a moderately positive perception, significant deficiencies exist in accessibility and facilities, which detract from the overall appeal of the destination.

Firstly, the positive perception of the natural conditions, reflected by a score of 77.00%, indicates that visitors appreciate the scenic beauty and the natural environment of Kolam Alam Bambar. This suggests a strong foundation upon which to build further development. However, the relatively high score also implies that there is potential for improvement through the enhancement of the site's aesthetic and recreational offerings. Efforts could include the introduction of guided tours, educational signage about the local ecology, and initiatives to preserve the natural environment. Conversely, the lower scores for accessibility (66.67%) and facilities (61.40%) indicate that these are critical pain points for visitors. Accessibility issues may arise from inadequate transportation options or poorly maintained roads leading to the site. Investing in infrastructure improvements, such as better road conditions and clear signage, could significantly enhance visitor access and satisfaction. Additionally, establishing partnerships with local transportation providers to offer shuttle services could alleviate some of these issues.

The facilities aspect is particularly troubling, as a score of 61.40% suggests that basic amenities such as restrooms, seating areas, and food services are lacking. This is a vital area for improvement as facilities greatly influence tourists' overall experiences and their likelihood of recommending the site to others. Upgrading existing facilities or introducing new ones could not only improve visitor comfort but also promote longer stays and increased spending in the area.

Moreover, these findings consistently align with previous studies in the field, which emphasize the importance of both access and amenities in influencing tourist satisfaction and perceptions. For instance, past research has shown that well-maintained facilities can enhance the overall enjoyment of a destination, leading to positive word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat visits. In light of these findings, it is essential for local stakeholders, including government agencies and tourism boards, to prioritize the enhancement of accessibility and facilities at Kolam Alam Bambar. Engaging with the community to gather feedback on tourist needs and preferences can also foster a more tailored approach to development. Furthermore, marketing efforts should highlight the unique natural features of the site while also addressing the improvements being made to accessibility and facilities, thus providing a comprehensive view of what visitors can expect.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the importance of understanding visitor feedback to enhance the tourism experience. The findings indicate that while the natural beauty of the site is appreciated, significant challenges remain in terms of accessibility and facilities, which adversely affect overall visitor satisfaction. The positive perception of the site's natural conditions suggests a strong foundation for further development. However, to realize the full potential of Kolam Alam Bambar as a tourist destination, it is crucial to address the identified shortcomings. Improving accessibility through better infrastructure and transportation options will facilitate easier access for visitors. Additionally, upgrading facilities such as restrooms, seating areas, and food services is essential to meet the expectations of modern tourists.

By prioritizing these enhancements, local stakeholders can create a more attractive and welcoming environment for visitors. This, in turn, will not only improve the tourist experience but also foster positive word-of-mouth recommendations, encouraging repeat visits and contributing to local economic growth. In summary, the study highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to tourism development at Kolam Alam Bambar.

By leveraging its natural assets and addressing the critical areas of accessibility and facilities, the destination can enhance its competitiveness in the tourism market, ultimately benefiting both visitors and the local community. Future research could explore the long-term impacts of these improvements on tourist behavior and satisfaction, providing further insights for sustainable tourism development in the region.

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