

SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE COASTAL AREA OF GUNUNG SEWU GLOBAL GEOPARK IN GUNUNGKIDUL REGENCY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the leading sectors in Indonesia and projected to contribute 15% of Gross Domestic Product, in 2019.¹⁾ On the one hand, the economic contribution expected to revitalize the local economy conditions. On the other hand, tourism also leads to shared problems such as environmental degradation, economic dependence and social problems.²⁾

Meanwhile the development of sustainable tourism has become a worldwide concern in recent years. Many studies of sustainable tourism have been carried out, however, examining the perceptions of local residents at the destination level on tourism development to identify the most influential predictors of sustainable tourism development is still rare.

This paper analyzed coastal tourism development in Gunungkidul Regency, through examining the perceptions of local residents towards tourism development from a broader perspective, sustainable development, to reveal the actual condition of sustainability in the region.

2. STUDY SETTINGS

Gunungkidul Regency as shown in Figure 1, located in the southern part of Special Region of Yogyakarta, is one of the main tourist destinations that are growing rapidly. According to a report issued by the Department of Tourism and Culture of D.I. Yogyakarta, the number of tourists visiting Gunungkidul Regency reached 3,246,996 in 2017 and 86.95% of the total number of tourists visited the coastal areas.³⁾ It is predicted that the visitation number will continue to increase in the following years. Most of its territory is a conservation area known as Gunung Sewu which is a very large classic tropical karst landscape on the island of Java as shown in Figure 2. In 2015, UNESCO established Gunung Sewu as one of the global geological conservation zones under the auspices of the Global Geopark Network.

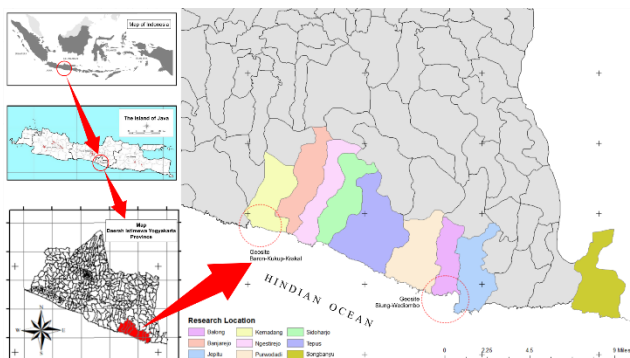


Figure 1. Gunungkidul Regency and research location

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Quantitative questionnaire-based research applied to obtain required primary data. Questionnaire was divided

into two sections. The first section was used to obtain demographic data of respondents and the second part contained 35 questions measured by a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).⁴⁾ Q1-Q8 appraised economic aspects, Q9-Q17 social aspects, Q18-Q24 environmental aspects, and Q25-Q32 institutional aspects.⁴⁾ Meanwhile, Q33 was about overall sustainability perception in accordance with the current condition of tourism development.⁴⁾ Then, Q34 about the benefits perceived by the community from the status of Gunung Sewu as a member of the UNESCO Global Geopark. Finally, Q35 concerning the state of inequality in receiving benefits from coastal tourism development in the region.



Figure 2. Coastal area of Gunungkidul Regency

The total population in the research location consisting of local residents aged between 20 and 64 years was 31,907 who lived in 9 villages in the coastal area of Gunungkidul that are directly adjacent to the coastline and become coastal tourism destinations in the region as shown in Figure 1. The number of samples ($n = 210$) was determined based on the "Tables for Statistics".⁵⁾ The selection of respondents was done by proportional random sampling method.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

All surveys were administered on-site from August until September, 2018 and the response rate was 90% ($n=189$).

a. Demographic Profile

Sixty-four percent of all respondents were male ($n = 121$) and the rest were female ($n = 68$). The age of respondents ranged from 20 to 63 with an average age of 37 years old; 58.7% ($n = 111$) were 23–42 years old. Then for education level, 87.8% ($n = 166$) respondents had high school education or less. Only 4.2% of respondents had a Bachelor level of education.

The majority of the respondents have been living at the study site for around 33 years and 52.4% ($n = 99$) settled in a region relatively close to the coastline. Moreover, a total of 49.2% ($n = 93$) of respondents stated that their livelihoods were related to tourism.

b. Sustainability Evaluation

An evaluation of the mean score of Q33 (Table 1) informed that the overall coastal tourism development of Gunung Sewu Global Geopark in Gunungkidul Regency deemed as relatively positive and sustainable in accordance with the current condition in the region (Mean = 3.76). The findings were in line with the data frequency analysis on Q33 (see Figure 3): 69.8% of the local population stated their point of view that coastal tourism development in the study site was positive and sustainable, while 7.4% was in opposition, and the remaining of 22.8% expressed neutral opinions.

c. Disparity of Tourism Benefits

The heterogeneity of opinion among coastal residents regarding the issue of tourism benefits disparity was indicated by a larger standard deviation value of Q35 (Std.Dev = 1.099). The average score of Q35 was 2.99 informed that the issue was considered slightly negative by local residents (Table 2).

The frequency analysis of benefits disparity as shown in Figure 4 indicated polarization among the local population. This was evidenced by the number of local inhabitants who confirmed the circumstance of benefits inequality by 33.8% that had only differences of 1.5% with the contradictory opinion. Meantime, 33.9% of respondents chose not to express their opinions.

Table 1. Mean score for overall sustainability

	Question	Mean	Std.Dev
Q33	At present, overall development of tourism in this area is positive and sustainable.	3.76	.959

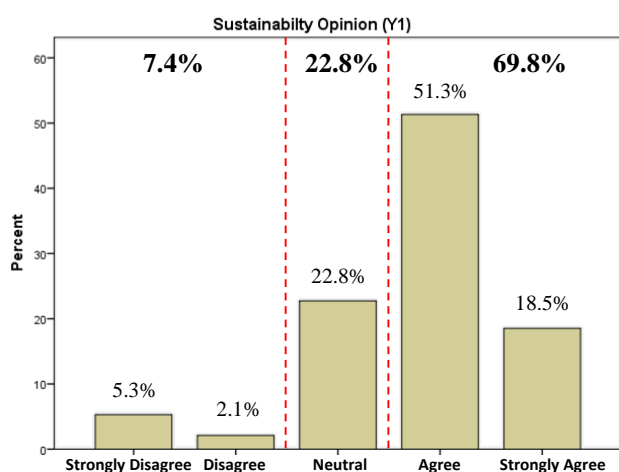


Figure 3. Frequency of overall sustainability opinion

Table 2. Mean score for overall sustainability

	Question	Mean	Std.Dev
Q35	The benefits of tourism development only perceived by some community groups.*	2.99	1.099

*Item recoded from negative to positive direction.

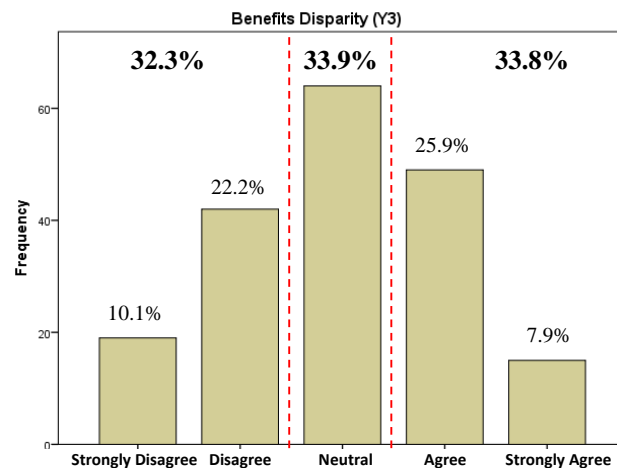


Figure 4. Frequency of disparity on tourism benefits

5. CONCLUSIONS

A positive response of 69.8% to the overall level of sustainability of coastal tourism development dropped dramatically to 33.8% when the questions were focused on the equality in receiving benefits of coastal tourism development in the study site. Conversely, negative responses experienced a significant increase from 7.4% to 32.3% in the same case. It implied that the actual tourism development in the coastal area of Gunung Sewu Global Geopark in Gunungkidul Regency was only partially sustainable.

Inaccuracy in dealing with touristy problems that occur in coastal areas will inevitably lead to complex situations that are contrary to the fundamental principles of sustainable tourism development and might even exacerbate the present conditions.

Therefore, the subsequent study would identify the key predictors of sustainable coastal tourism development in this specific region due to its fundamental importance as the initial step that must be systematically taken by the local government before the formulation as well as the implementation of regional development policies. In addition, the future study covers the specific identification of prominent factors that assuredly have a significant influence on each key dimension of sustainability, namely the economic, social, environmental and institutional.

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