

Opportunities and Challenges in Development Community-Based Marine Ecotourism on Samalona Island, Makassar City

Yudha Prakasa^{1*}, Michael Rudolfus Sawu, Muhammad Farid Ulinuha

^{1,2}Program Studi Magister
Pariwisata, Fakultas
Pariwisata, Universitas
Udayana

Abstract

This study aims to assess the potential of developing community-based marine ecotourism on Samalona Island. The research seeks to analyze the policies concerning marine ecotourism development, the level of community engagement in this process, and the social consequences of implementing community-based marine ecotourism on Samalona Island, Makassar City. The study employs a verification approach within qualitative research, where the researchers act as instruments in data collection through various methods such as observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. The findings of this study reveal several significant points. Firstly, the inadequacy of the community-based ecotourism development policy targeting Samalona Island is evident, partly attributed to the lack of a comprehensive Makassar City tourism development master plan. Additionally, the level of community participation in the planning and development of the tourism sector is limited, primarily confined to endorsing policies without actively contributing to decision-making processes. Despite its ability to boost the local economy, the positive environmental impact of community-based marine ecotourism on Samalona Island remains minimal. However, the study recognizes that this article contributes to a better understanding of the potential for marine ecotourism development on Samalona Island.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Community-Based Marine Ecotourism, The Impact Of Ecotourism, Community Participation

INTRODUCTION

Marine ecotourism emerges as a new panacea in sustainable tourism development, focusing on conserving coastal and marine areas. Its role is considered capable of implementing the principles of sustainable tourism towards the "sustainable development goals" (life underwater: conserve coastal and marine areas) to create conservation efforts for the ecosystems in those regions and provide benefits to local communities. Marine ecotourism can be described as a responsible tourism activity in natural areas, supporting the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems, providing welfare to the surrounding local communities, and creating educational experiences for tourists. Prior studies have reported comparable results (Casimiro et al., 2023). The significance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) was underscored during the United Nations Ocean Conference, where it was determined that such areas are vital not only for the health of the planet but also for the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (life below-water: conserve coastal and marine areas) and the UN Ocean's Decade challenges.

The development of marine ecotourism must prioritize the involvement of the local community as both subjects and objects to achieve its vision. The local community plays a crucial role in the development process. Developing ecotourism without emphasizing community participation is a misconception in development planning. Ecotourism cannot thrive without the support of the local community. Therefore, the involvement of the local community needs to be

Correspondence address:

Yudha Prakasa

Email : yudhaprakasaaa@gmail.com

Address : Program Studi Magister Pariwisata, Fakultas Pariwisata, Universitas Udayana

established from the early stages. Through group decision-making, local communities identify opportunities and manage the delivery of specific benefits (Dushani et al., 2021; Zabhini et al., 2020). This certainly requires a targeted and appropriate policy in tourism development. The key to success in developing tourism destinations currently is to produce policy products that are pro-local communities and adapt to the goals of sustainable development. Samalona Island is located in the Spermonde archipelago and is rich in tourism potential.

Moreover, its existence has become one of the tourism destinations contributing to the tourism sector in Makassar City. Based on its uniqueness and beauty, the local community utilizes it as a tourist destination. The local community is involved and acts as a service provider and supporting facility for tourism on Samalona Island. This has naturally grown alongside the emergence of tourist interest. The current community expectation relies solely on the tourism sector. This is because the marine sector, which was previously thriving, has been destroyed due to bombing activities in search of fish. However, marine ecotourism development has not been carried out effectively and efficiently, thus requiring significant improvements.

The problem in developing community-based marine ecotourism on Samalona Island is the low capacity of human capital. This affects the level of participation of the local community in the development of marine ecotourism. In addition, the tourism policies produced are not pro-local communities and do not adapt to global sustainable development goals. The tourism development policies implemented by the regional government have not played a significant role in sustainable marine ecotourism development. The absence of policies regarding marine ecotourism development is a hindrance, with the government playing a minimal role as a regulator amidst environmental degradation issues.

In contrast, environmental issues, such as coastal and marine ecosystem damage, remain a significant concern for the community. As a result, the local community loses jobs and becomes dependent on tourism. Based on these issues, the researcher can formulate the following research problems.

1. What are the policies regarding marine ecotourism development in Samalona Island, Makassar City?
2. How is the participation of the local community in the development of marine ecotourism on Samalona Island?
3. What is the social impact of community-based ecotourism development on Samalona Island, Makassar City?

Based on the explanation above, the researcher considers it essential to study the "Prospects for marine ecotourism development on Samalona Island, Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province." The aim is to analyze development policies, local communities' participation, and marine ecotourism's social impacts on the local community. The researcher wants to examine the development of marine ecotourism and its connection to the global sustainable development goals of 2030. The researcher hopes that the development of marine ecotourism could be a panacea in advancing underdevelopment towards a more socially and ecologically just future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marine Ecotourism

Marine ecotourism consists of various special interest tours and marine ecotourism, which consists of both above- and below-water activities associated with the marine environment (Yulius et al., 2018). As a broad concept, marine ecotourism encompasses three primary regions: submerged, coastal, and elevated. Ecotourism centred on the nautical allure of regions or spaces dominated by water or the sea is called marine ecotourism. Environmental preservation, community involvement, sustainable education and experience, and effective management for the benefit of society are the guiding principles of maritime ecotourism development. It is anticipated that the approach taken to advance sustainable marine ecotourism will safeguard the environment and economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Asimanti (2017) states the following. The objective of marine ecotourism development extends beyond generating foreign cash for local governments; it is also anticipated to contribute to the sustainable preservation of natural resources (Nurhayati et al., 2019). Local economies benefit from marine ecotourism because it rehabilitates traditional economic sectors. Additionally, it promotes a sustainable worldview and generates revenue while producing substantial environmental benefits and contributing to fund-raising efforts (Sakellariadou, 2014).

Community-based Ecotourism

Community-based ecotourism has garnered significant attention from researchers due to its potential to harness the ocean's resources by empowering local communities as owners. A comprehension of the concept of ecotourism yields keywords associated with sustainability, including the enhancement of the local

community's economy as an environmental sustainability measure, the conservation or maintenance of natural resources as an ecological sustainability measure, and the safeguarding of the social fabric of the community (Wijaya, 2021; Phelan et al., 2020). Participation consciousness, the spirit of local community awareness, must be consistently expanded and nurtured in a large, methodical, and deliberate manner (Regmi & Walter, 2016). In order to qualify as prerequisites for participation, the will, opportunity, and capability must autonomously and sustainably develop and progress. Without the preconditions, the initiator's initial endeavour is to bring that consciousness to the forefront (Kim, Xie, & Cirella, 2019).

Community Participation

Motivation, opportunities, and abilities influence community participation in tourism development. Community involvement can help maximize the socio-economic benefits of tourism (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Regarding management, local engagement is of the utmost importance. Because the local community will immediately experience the advantages and consequences. The formation of community organizations with distinct objectives and passions exemplifies local participation. Active community participation in continuing tourism initiatives within a developing tourist area constitutes participation. Its objective is to ensure the well-being of the nearby community.

Regarding management, local engagement is of the utmost importance. Because the local community will immediately experience the advantages and consequences. The formation of community organizations with distinct objectives and passions exemplifies local participation. Active community participation in continuing tourism initiatives within a developing tourist area constitutes participation. Its objective is to ensure the well-being of the nearby community. Tosun (Adikampana, 2017: 6) explains community participation in the tourism development process into three levels, namely: 1) pseudo-community participation, non-participation; 2) passive community participation; the community only acts as a ratification of decisions made for the community; and 3) spontaneous community participation; direct participation, active participation, and authentic participation.

The Impact of Marine Ecotourism Development

Numerous individuals are concerned about the harmful effects of tourism even though tourism development targets the local population and anticipates few adverse effects. Tourism's sound and harmful effects may be categorized as economic, environmental, and social (UNWTO, 2013). These tourism-generating factors, especially culture and nature, might be preserved by implementing the ecotourism idea. There are worries over the environmental implications of tourism on marine ecosystems and the sustainable development of coastal areas because an area's appeal directly correlates with the number of tourists it attracts, potentially compromising the overall quality of the experience (Queiroz et al., 2014; Kurniawan et al., 2022).

Ecotourism expresses the economy, culture, environment, and local community. In addition to addressing the challenges of sustainable economic, social, and environmental development, it actively fosters the preservation of natural and cultural variety (Osman et al., 2018). The growth of marine ecotourism ensures the long-term viability of economic, social, and environmental factors that impact the surrounding communities. Marine ecotourism is a critical component in advancing sustainable tourism since it prioritizes environmental conservation through the mitigation of ecological footprints and the engagement and participation of local populations (Spenceley, 2017; Wiltshire et al., 2022).

METHODS

This research was conducted in Samalona Island, Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province, and this study focuses on examining the tourism policies of Makassar City, community participation, and the impact of the community-based marine ecotourism development. This study utilizes a qualitative, supervised approach to examine the phenomenon of community-based marine ecotourism on Samalona Island, Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. The researcher acts as the instrument for data collection. The techniques used are observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative thematic analysis. Throughout the data collection process, the researcher continuously theorizes and attempts to understand the data. In other words, the data analysis process involves the merging, reduction, and interpretation of data through the informants' words, as well as the observation and listening of the researcher to construct meaning (Creswell, 2018).

RESULT

Tourism Marine Ecotourism Development Policies in Samalona Island, Makassar City

The Tourism policies embody the goals and strategies adopted by the government regarding tourism, economic development, employment, and political relations, or a combination of these and other areas. The policies provide guidelines for tourism development. Tourism policies cover a broad spectrum. Regional tourism development always refers to the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan, which serves as a guideline for tourism development.

Related to tourism development in Makassar City, the current tourism development in Makassar City only refers to the "Long Term Strategic Plan" of the Mayor of Makassar City; there is no "Regional Tourism Development Master Plan" of Makassar City, it is still on discussion process and has not been ratified. The absence of legal protection as a guideline for tourism development policies can trigger programs and policies that are not on target. It is known that the growth of tourism development in Makassar City was dominated by the MICE industry, such as festivals, conferences, exhibitions, etc., as stated by the Tourism Office of Makassar City that according to the "Long Term Strategic Plan" of the Mayor of Makassar City that the tourism development policy focuses on MICE (meeting, incentive, convention, and exhibition), where Makassar International Eight Festival and Forum is a priority.

Regarding ecotourism development in Samalona, the community is positioned as the implementer of the policies and programs of the Makassar City Tourism Office. This can be seen through implementing activities like tourism awareness campaigns and the importance of environmental conservation in a tourist destination. Additionally, some erosion mitigation programs are being carried out, such as building wave barriers and renovating the docks on Samalona Island. Through the Tourism Awareness Group, it is hoped that the programs will be targeted effectively. However, the on-ground reality shows the absence of comprehensive government policies and programs that align with ecotourism principles.

Participation of The Local Community in The Development of Marine Ecotourism on Samalona Island, Makassar City

Participation of the local community is an essential aspect of marine ecotourism development; as the vocal issues in tourism development, the participation of the community aims for the sustainability of social, environmental, and economic aspects. The participation is influenced by the motivation, opportunities, and abilities of the community that receives the direct impacts of marine ecotourism development, relating to the benefits obtained by the community and assistance that emphasizes the participation of local communities and other groups interested in tourism development, and management that is controlled by the local community with a more significant portion in order to realize the welfare of the local community.

Samalona Island is a tourism resource that needs to be developed so that people directly impact the sustainability of tourism development, which has become the primary sector driving the community's economy. The Samalona Island community, in its role of acting as the owner and manager of Samalona Island as a marine tourism attraction, active participation of this community then responded by forming a management institution through a tourism awareness group on March 9, 2020. This tourism awareness group was formed through the Makassar City Tourism Office and directly fostered by the Mariso District Government.

Based on the data found through interviews, it can be said that the community is only the executor of various decisions or policies from the authorities made for the community, where in determining or making decisions on the development plan through representatives of the tourism awareness group that has been formed, it will then be conveyed to the community so that it is carried out. Thus, the typology of community participation in Samalona Island is at the level of functional participation; external parties initiate community involvement by forming groups to set common goals and be involved in decision-making.

In practice, each member of the community actively acts as a provider of facilities supporting tourism activities such as jet skis gazebos, providers of snorkelling equipment rental services, transportation services, providers of accommodation services in the form of lodging and homestays, and acts as the owner of a tavern or food stall that provides seafood processing services. Apart from providing community facilities, some act as local guides for tourists who want to use guide services.

The participation of the community in tourism through the provision of tourist facilities is based on the condition of the society, which no longer considers fishing as the primary livelihood due to the uncertain catch in the surrounding waters of Samalona. Additionally, tourists are easily accessible as a market, offering services to fulfil their needs and wants, allowing the community to obtain economic benefits. Therefore, the participation of the Samalona Island community in tourism is motivated by economic interests, which is evident from their dependency on the tourism sector by establishing tourism businesses on Samalona Island.

With the provision of increased public understanding and awareness about the benefits of ecological sustainability of the waters themselves, as well as other economic benefits that arise from this sustainability, in this case, tourism is a sector capable of driving the economy of the people of Samalona Island. So, tourism as an economic driving force for the people of Samalona Island must be developed by considering environmental sustainability so that the sustainability of the economy can also be achieved.

DISCUSSION

The Social Impact of Community-based Ecotourism Development on Samalona Island, Makassar City

The impact of tourism describes the condition after the development of tourism activities in a destination (see Osman et al., 2018; Queiroz et al., 2014; Kurniawan et al., 2022). Ecotourism, as one of the concepts in alternative tourism, ensures that positive impacts of tourism development can be maximized with the community's involvement, which is a strategic issue in tourism development (Spenceley, 2017; Wiltshire et al., 2022). Therefore, it is essential to examine the impacts of ecotourism on social-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects.

Community-based marine ecotourism is vital to promoting sustainable tourism in small islands. Samalona Island, one of the prominent attractions in Makassar City, can lead the regional tourism industry towards sustainability. In order to achieve this goal, it is crucial to ensure that the local community experiences maximum positive effects while minimizing any potential negative impacts that may arise from tourism activities. This section will elaborate on the implications of implementing community-based marine ecotourism on Samalona Island.

The presence of the tourism sector has significantly transformed life for the people of Samalona Island. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the community's livelihood depended on fishing, even though tourists had started to visit. However, various illegal fishing practices, such as poisons and improvised explosive devices, damaged the marine environment, and the catch in the waters around Samalona Island was no longer sufficient to meet the community's needs. This situation led the community to shift its priorities to the tourism sector, even though it was still unfamiliar. As a result, the community became involved in tourism development as service providers to fulfil the desires and needs of tourists.

This condition directly impacted the community's efforts to enhance the capacity to raise collective awareness of the importance of environmental preservation, which appeals to tourists. In addition to the community's drive to rely on the tourism economy, this encouraged economic opportunities for the community. The income generated from tourism supported the education of the people of Samalona Island. With the improved quality of human resources, Samalona Island was developed by the community. The increased capacity and awareness of the community led to initiatives for conservation through coral reef rehabilitation activities and efforts to mitigate damage by educating visiting tourists.

However, Samalona Island is facing distinct environmental challenges. The ongoing climate crisis has caused significant damage to the coral reefs, resulting in substantial erosion eroding the island's coastlines. Although attempts have been made to construct wave breakers using mangrove plants, they have proven unsuccessful as the waves wash away the planted seedlings. As a short-term measure, the community has built basic wave-breakers to combat coastal erosion, but a proper wave breaker is essential to utilize mangrove plantations effectively. Moreover, waste management remains a pressing concern, including waste from neighbouring islands and tourism activities. Unfortunately, an appropriate solution for waste management has not been found yet. The high operational costs of waste removal from the island present a significant challenge for the community, leading to waste being either burned or dumped.

The community's livelihood relies on tourists visiting Samalona Island, making economic growth the priority. The abundance of waste indicates the economic turnover of the tourism sector on Samalona Island. Thus, this raises an issue as the tourism industry is susceptible to crises. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has restricted tourism activities, has made the people of Samalona Island 'incapacitated' and dependent on social assistance from various organizations.

The development of the concept of community-based marine ecotourism remains suboptimal. While it has had a significant economic impact on community empowerment, it has not produced significant results in environmental empowerment on Samalona Island. The connection between tourism and conservation plays a crucial role in advancing ecotourism as a product, market, and development strategy (Arida, 2017:17), considering the relationship between humans and nature has a strong relevance in this context. The benefits gained from the community's involvement extend beyond economic aspects and positively contribute to environmental sustainability (Stronza et al., 2019; Das & Chatterjee, 2015), thus serving as a vital link for the

tourism sector. Efforts are required to enhance the quality of life within the community (Chin & Hampton, 2020).

Related to Samalona Island, it is evident that community-based marine ecotourism has not effectively redirected its marketing emphasis toward environmental and community advantages. According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2008), the real potential of the ecotourism concept lies in its ability to educate and transform tourists' and host communities' perspectives of the local environment and potentially nature as a whole. Ecotourism, in this specific context, can potentially promote environmental consciousness by fulfilling its educational role.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the policy of developing community-based marine ecotourism in Samalona Island requires careful planning involving the local community in its entirety. The findings revealed that the community-based marine ecotourism development policy on Samalona Island did not fully meet its objectives. One significant obstacle to achieving sustainable tourism development on the island is the absence of the Makassar City Tourism Development Master Plan, which is currently in the planning stage. This lack of a comprehensive plan hinders progress. Furthermore, a noticeable lack of community involvement is in the development planning process. The Tourism Awareness Group, which represents only a minority of the community, is the primary entity responsible for ratifying policies produced by the local government for Samalona Island's tourism. This limited representation results in a lack of diverse perspectives and inputs in decision-making.

In practice, the local communities on Samalona Island engage as service providers and through small and medium enterprises to cater to the needs and preferences of tourists. Economic factors drive community participation, as the data shows that most of the community's activities are linked to tourism. However, when it comes to advancing community-based marine ecotourism, there is still limited direct involvement from the Samalona Island community in the planning and development processes. As a result, the level of community participation in Samalona Island's community-based ecotourism development can be described as passive. Their involvement mainly revolves around endorsing the resulting policies rather than actively contributing to the planning and decision-making.

The social impact of community-based ecotourism development enhances the economic benefits for local communities. However, the development of the concept of community-based marine ecotourism remains suboptimal. While it has had a significant economic impact on community empowerment, it has not produced significant results in environmental empowerment on Samalona Island. Researchers argue that the prevailing belief in society is that economic growth remains the dominant paradigm. The existence of several unresolved environmental issues poses a potential challenge in the future, particularly if the reliance on the tourism sector, which is susceptible to crises, continues.

REFERENCES

- Adikampana, I.M. (2017). *Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat*. Denpasar: CAKRA PRESS.
- Arida, I.N. (2017). *Ekowisata (Pengembangan Partisipasi Lokal Dan Tantangan Ekowisata)*. Bali: Caraka Press
- Casimiro, D., Ventura, M. A., Botelho, A. Z., & Guerreiro, J. (2023). Ecotourism in Marine Protected Areas as a tool to valuate natural capital and enhance good marine governance: A review. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 9, 1002677.
- Chin, W. L., & Hampton, M. P. (2020). The relationship between destination competitiveness and residents' quality of life: Lessons from Bali. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 26(2), 311–336. <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.26.2.3>.
- Das, M., & Chatterjee, B. (2015). Ecotourism: A Panacea or a predicament?. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 14, pp. 3-16.
- Dushani, S. N., Aanesen, M., & Vondolia, G. K. (2021). Balancing conservation goals and ecotourism development in coastal wetland management in Sri Lanka: A choice experiment. *Ocean and Coastal Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2021.105659>.

- Freya Higgins-Desbiolles (2008) Justice Tourism and Alternative Globalisation, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16:3, 345-364
- Kim, M., Xie, Y., & Cirella, G. T. (2019). Sustainable transformative economy: Community-based ecotourism. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11(18), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11184977>.
- Kurniawan, F., Adrianto, L., Bengen, D. G., and Prasetyo, L. B. (2022). Hypothetical effects assessment of tourism on coastal water quality in the marine tourism park of the gili matra islands, Indonesia. *Environ. Dev. Sustain.* Doi: 10.1007/s10668-022-02382-8.
- Ni Ketut Arismayanti. 2017. Development strategy of ecotourism marine sustainable in indonesia. *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 15, pp. 118 – 138. <https://journals.itb.ac.id/index.php/ajht/article/view/5689>.
- Nurhayati, Atikah, Isah Aisah, and Asep K. Supriatna. 2019. "Model Development of A Synergistic Sustainable Marine Ecotourism—A Case Study in Pangandaran Region, West Java Province, Indonesia" *Sustainability* 11, no. 12: 3418. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123418>.
- Phelan, A., Ruhanen, L., & Mair, J. (2020). Ecosystem services approach for communitybased ecotourism: towards an equitable and sustainable blue economy. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(10), 1665–1685. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1747475>.
- Queiroz, R. E., Guerreiro, J., and Ventura, M. A. (2014). Demand of the tourists visiting protected areas in small oceanic islands: the Azores case-study. *Environ. Dev. Sustain.* 16, 1119–1135. Doi: 10.1007/s10668-014-9516-y.
- Regmi, K. D., & Walter, P. G. (2016). Conceptualizing host learning in community-based ecotourism homestays. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 15(1), 51–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2015.1118108>.
- Sakellariadou, Sakellariadou. 2014. "The Concept of Marine Ecotourism: A Case Study in a Mediterranean Island." *The International Journal of Climate Change: Impacts and Responses* 6 (1): 33-39. doi:10.18848/1835-7156/CGP/v06i01/37218.
- Spenceley, A. (2017). Tourism and protected areas: Comparing the 2003 and 2014 IUCN world parks congress. *Tour. Hosp. Res.* 17, 8–23. Doi: 10.1177/1467358415612515.
- Stronza, Amanda L., Carter A. Hunt & Lee A. Fitzgerald. (2019). Ecotourism for Conservation? *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 44:229-253
- Telfer, D. J., & Sharpley, R. (2008). *Tourism and development in the developing world*. London: Routledge.
- UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable development of tourism. From: <http://sdt.unwto.org/en/content/about-us-5>.
- Wijaya, Kadek. (2021). Implementation of Community-based Ecotourism Concept in Paksebbi Tourism Village, Bali Indonesia. *Solid State Technology*, 63(5).
- Wiltshier, P., Basil, J., and Iv, R. (2022). Tourism transformations in protected area gateway communities. Available at: <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/10.1079/9781789249033.0000>.
- Yulius, Y. Ramdhan, Rahmania, R.R. Khairunnisa, T. 2018. *Buku Panduan Ekowisata Bahari*. PT. IPB Press. Bogor.
- Zabihi, H., Alizadeh, M., Wolf, I. D., Karami, M., Ahmad, A., & Salamian, H. (2020). A GIS-based fuzzy-analytic hierarchy process (F-AHP) for ecotourism suitability decision making: A case study of Babol in Iran. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100726>.