
Harmonizing Ecotourism In Indonesia: Balancing The Green Economy, Cultural Heritage, And Biodiversity

Eko Baroto Waluyo

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata Indonesia, Semarang, Indonesia

Bambang Guritno

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata Indonesia, Semarang, Indonesia

Corresponding email: bguritno18@gmail.com

Abstract. *The literature review is intended to explore the dynamics of sustainable ecotourism in Indonesia by considering the balance between the green economy, socio-cultural dimensions and biodiversity conservation. We examine how ecotourism functions as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth while assessing its impact on local communities, cultural heritage, and the natural environment. This study underscores the importance of conserving and maintaining biodiversity in the context of ecotourism to maintain the balance of our ecosystem. Substantial analysis is carried out through an exploratory and observational approach to systematically and comprehensively evaluate various types of data sources from various sources from all over the world, including books, journals, research reports, and many other sources that are related to the field of tourism and especially ecotourism in Indonesia. It is hoped that the results can be used as a lens in evaluating the evolution, achievements and obstacles faced in sustainable ecotourism practices, including providing in-depth insight into the potential of ecotourism as a sustainable solution for economic prosperity, cultural preservation and biodiversity protection.*

Keywords .*Ecotourism, Indonesia, Green economy, Cultural heritage, Biodiversity conservation*

INTRODUCTION

The representation of a unified natural mosaic including the socio-economic and cultural environment is a very interesting picture both in tourism and ecotourism reviews. This issue provides an opportunity for all parties, including countries in the world, to explore it, especially regarding the complexity of the relationship between various elements related to humans, nature and the environment. This form of sustainable tourism covers a broad spectrum of activities, all of which aim to harmonize the diversity of natural landscapes (ecosystems) along with the richness and diversity of life, including the preservation and appreciation of these ecosystems (WTO, 2010).

In ecotourism theory, it is recognized that there is a deep relationship between humans and the environment, which is basically their home, residence or life support system. Despite the existing “fashion”, the origins of ecotourism are firmly rooted in the philosophical heritage espoused by environmentalists and conservationists (Ziffer, 1989). Thus the aim is not only to provide a memorable and educational experience for tourists, but also seeks to foster a deeper understanding of the intrinsic value of our natural world. The relationship between humans and nature is not one-way but rather dynamic interdependence (Diamantis, D. 1999). That is why the dynamics of ecotourism shows a complicated balance. On the one

hand, it offers economic opportunities for local communities living in or near natural tourist attractions, thereby potentially encouraging economic growth and improving livelihoods. At the same time, a deeper look is needed into the dynamics of tourist entry and exit, whether it can burden local resources, disrupt the ecosystem and change cultural dynamics. Therefore, it requires a careful approach to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs.

Sustainability has become an increasingly important concept in the modern world, as the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation become increasingly apparent. One area that prioritizes sustainability is ecotourism, a sector that seeks to align economic activities with the preservation of the natural environment and local communities. Ecotourism is not only a moral imperative, but also a practical choice that supports the long-term success of this industry and the welfare of the earth which according to Weaver, D. B., & Lawton, L. J. (2014) is a form of sustainable tourism, with a focus on minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on environment and at the same time maximize benefits for local communities and ecosystems.

A holistic approach that includes a set of principles and practices rooted in the green economy is essential in building sustainable ecotourism (Premović, J. et al, 2016). These principles emphasize the importance of environmental protection, justice. The representation of the unity of the natural mosaic including the socio-economic and cultural environment is a very interesting picture both in tourism and ecotourism reviews. These principles emphasize the importance of environmental protection, social justice, and economic viability. Especially when applied to ecotourism, these principles serve as key guides in the development, management and promotion of environmentally friendly travel experiences.

In the last few decades, ecotourism has increased public awareness throughout the world to continue to develop. As society becomes more environmentally conscious, demand for eco-friendly travel experiences increases. This dynamic drives the growth of ecotourism, but also places greater responsibility on destinations to manage tourism sustainably, preserve biodiversity, and uphold the cultural integrity of communities. Based on this understanding, it becomes clear that ecotourism is a strong representation of the complex network of relationships between humans and nature. That is also the basis for why we need to respect, preserve and strive for coexistence with the environment. It should therefore serve as a reminder of the need for responsible management, education and collaboration to ensure that these complex relationships remain harmonious for future generations (WTO, 2010).

Scientifically, the phenomenon and dynamics of ecotourism is a promising approach in efforts to combine economic growth with environmental sustainability, socio-cultural

aspects and biodiversity conservation. The green economy, which promotes sustainable growth by minimizing negative impacts on the environment, has a central role in working on the ecotourism sector which according to UNEP (2005) has complex challenges, including integrating socio-cultural aspects and maintaining biodiversity, taking an important role in determining success sustainable ecotourism.

In this paper, we will focus on exploring the progress and challenges of sustainable ecotourism from a green economy perspective to socio-cultural dimensions and biodiversity conservation. We will discuss how ecotourism can be a driver of sustainable economic growth while considering its impact on local communities, culture and the natural environment. In addition, we will highlight how important it is to maintain and preserve biodiversity in the context of ecotourism to ensure a sustainable ecosystem balance. By understanding the role of each of these dimensions, we can describe the challenges and opportunities faced in developing truly sustainable ecotourism from all these perspectives.

In order to understand the progress and challenges of sustainable ecotourism from a green economy perspective to socio-cultural and biodiversity dimensions, we will conduct an exploration that is very relevant to the situation in Indonesia. We will take this approach through a review based on various related literature and involving case studies of ecotourism in Indonesia.

Through literature reviews and case studies, we will be able to detail the developments, achievements and obstacles faced by sustainable ecotourism in Indonesia, reflecting the challenges and potential that exist in various countries around the world. With this approach, we hope to provide deeper insight into how ecotourism can be a sustainable solution for economic growth, cultural preservation and biodiversity.

RESEARCH METHODS

Within the framework of the literature review, it is intended to evaluate developments, achievements and obstacles in sustainable ecotourism practices, including those specifically related to the Indonesian context. Specifically, the aim is to provide in-depth insight into the potential of ecotourism as a sustainable solution for economic growth, cultural preservation and biodiversity. This analysis will reflect challenges and opportunities that have global relevance.

The choice of an integrative literature review method was carried out following the guidelines suggested by Torraco (2005), namely to present descriptive arguments regarding the current status of ecotourism, by referring to works such as those compiled by Cabral &

Dhar (2019), Otowicz, Macedo, & Biz (2022) , and Zopiatis, Pericleous, & Theofanous (2021) .

Through this approach, content analysis is carried out through an observational approach which is used to systematically evaluate various types of resources. Several leading researchers, such as Chandel and Mishra (2016), Das and Chatterjee (2015), Camprubí and Coromina (2016), Cabral and Dhar (2019), Hasana, U, et.al (2021), Wondirad (2019), and Puri , Karanth, and Thapa (2019), have utilized this approach in their literature review. Additionally, Berg (2009), also conducts substance analysis through methods that involve careful, detailed, and systematic examination and interpretation of a particular collection of materials to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings. Thus, this kind of approach is used and utilized to analyze and compare the transformation of information and communication relevant to the topic of sustainable ecotourism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General principles of ecotourism

Ecotourism, a niche within the broader field of tourism, is not only a means to enjoy the world's natural wonders but also a driver of sustainable economic growth. This unique form of tourism prioritizes environmental conservation, cultural preservation and community well-being while offering visitors the opportunity to connect with nature and local traditions. In recent years, the concept of ecotourism has gained significant traction as both tourists and tourist destinations realize its potential to stimulate economic development while preserving the ecological and cultural diversity of our planet. This thinking is carried out by exploring how ecotourism can be used as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth, highlighting its many benefits for local communities, the environment and the global economy. From conserving biodiversity to providing new livelihood opportunities, ecotourism offers a holistic approach to socio-economic development that is in harmony with nature and culture.

Ecotourism has gained momentum in biodiversity hotspots due to its potential to improve rural livelihoods and environmental conservation. It has the ability to alleviate poverty, which is deeply entrenched in several areas of society (Ferraro & Hanauer, 2014 ; Makindi, 2016 ; Sirivongs & Tsuchiya, 2012). According to MacLaren (2002) the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as ethical travel to natural areas that helps the welfare of local communities and preserves the environment. Furthermore, it is also stated that the essence of ecotourism mainly consists of (i) nature-based solutions; (ii) dimensions of sustainability from a conservation perspective; (iii) sustainable human factors

taking into account local community participation and benefits; (iv) learning, education, and awareness; and (v) ethical marketing and business management of domestic products. Apart from that, forests also function as a “human shield” by preventing negative externalities such as mining, deforestation, and illegal hunting (Ouboter, Kadosoe, & Ouboter, 2021)

The views of sustainable ecotourism experts, such as Kruger (2005) written in the article "The Role of Ecotourism in Conservation: Panacea or Pandora's Box?" provides an example that through in-depth analysis of 251 case studies originating from various literary sources underlines important views as expressed by Wearing and Neil (1999). According to him, the concept of ecotourism which focuses on nature has great potential to provide a significant positive impact on socio-economic aspects and environmental conservation. The concept of ecotourism based on scientific knowledge only received strong support in the 1990s and continues to be strengthened by research results and scientific views of experts. Globally, the nature-based tourism sector has become one of the fastest growing sectors in the global tourism industry. Many countries, including Indonesia, have facilitated ecotourism as part of their efforts to support sustainable tourism.

To maintain balance in ecotourism practices, support from various parties is needed to be involved. Through good planning, ecotourism has the potential to provide substantial economic benefits to local residents, as long as it follows the five main criteria set out at the 2002 World Ecotourism Summit. The five criteria relate to nature-based products, minimal impact management, environmental education, contribution to preservation, and support for local communities (Sheridan & Halpenny, 2010). A comprehensive ecotourism approach needs to include sustainable aspects that support environmental improvement, have global scope, and include social, cultural and ecological dimensions. Ecotourism is often considered as part of the tourism industry's efforts to encourage sustainable tourism, which is considered an indicator of the success of the tourism industry throughout the world, including in Indonesia.

2. Ecotourism in Indonesia

Indonesia, often referred to as the “Emerald of the Equator,” is an extraordinary testament to the wonders of our planet. Data from the Geospatial Information Agency underlines that Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world and has unmatched geographic diversity. In accordance with Government Regulation (PP) Number 2 of 2021 concerning the Implementation of Geospatial Names, the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) is given the task of organizing geographical names throughout Indonesia.

Based on these duties and responsibilities, the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) launched the Gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia (GRI) Edition I (2022), which states that a total of 17,024 island names in Indonesia have been cataloged. With this constellation of islands, Indonesia spans a land area of 1.9 million square kilometers, a coastline of 80,791 kilometers, and a maritime area of 3.1 million square kilometers. This data firmly confirms that Indonesia is a vast collection of islands and archipelagos, which depict a stunning tapestry of land and waters.

It is for this reason that Indonesia presents an extraordinary vision to the world, combining enchanting, unique and iconic landscapes that provide an irresistible attraction for travelers. From serene lowlands to towering plateaus, from active to dormant volcanoes, and even snow-capped ones, as well as a complex network of rivers and lakes, this topographic mosaic gives rise to a multitude of natural habitats. These areas serve as sanctuaries for a wide variety of plant and animal life, including microscopic wonders, all of which have significant relevance to Indonesia's tourism excellence.

This strength is a valuable asset for ecology and ecotourism in Indonesia, allowing tourists to explore the extraordinary natural beauty and biodiversity, including the richness and diversity of its cultures and ethnic groups. Each island and region has a different culture, language and traditions, which makes Indonesia an attractive cultural tourism destination and at the same time provides a deeper understanding of Indonesia's geographical riches, allowing the country to promote its natural riches and attract tourists from all over the world. (Indonesian Biodiversity Updates, 2014). In the midst of this extraordinary natural splendor there is a richness of Indonesian culture that is no less charming than its natural landscape. Representing a cultural treasure trove, Indonesia is home to hundreds of different ethnic and linguistic groups. This mosaic offers a myriad of traditions, artistic expressions and culinary delights, each of which has a unique and iconic character.

In a world that is increasingly committed to environmental sustainability, Indonesia recognizes that Indonesia's ecological and cultural diversity, coupled with a firm commitment to sustainability and environmental preservation, places the country as a world-class ecotourism destination. The unrivaled natural beauty and intricate ecosystems provide tourists with a unique and rich experience while contributing to the preservation of this precious and fragile environment. Indonesia is indeed a world treasure, displaying natural and cultural wonders, which are waiting to be explored responsibly and sustainably.

The Indonesian government has taken official steps to renew the country's economy with a focus on the tourism sector as one of its main pillars (Tourism Law No.10/Th.2009;

Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Regulation No. 12/Th.2020). This is based on the belief that Indonesia has extraordinary potential to develop a world-class tourism industry. With a specifically focused program, efforts are made to increase visits from foreign tourists, domestic tourists, foreign exchange earnings, job creation and tourism competitiveness. This program is monitored by the National Tourism Coordination Team.

In the 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, Indonesia's new position reached 14th out of 136 countries due to its abundant natural resource wealth, and 23rd in terms of cultural resources and business travel, which are important factors influencing trends journey. However, Indonesia's achievements are faced with challenges in various fields such as environmental preservation, health and cleanliness. As a result, the overall ranking of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index is ranked 42nd, lagging behind countries such as Thailand (34th), Malaysia (26th), and Singapore (13th). However, entering 2022, Indonesia has experienced an extraordinary surge in tourism rankings. For the first time, Indonesia, which is part of the 117 countries included in the 2021 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), rose to 32nd position. This achievement places Indonesia ahead of Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam in the ranking (TTCI, 2017 ; TTCI, 2022).

Indonesia, with its abundant natural wealth and cultural diversity, is one of the countries that has actively developed ecotourism as an effort to achieve sustainable economic growth and environmental conservation. We will use this case study as a concrete illustration of (1) how green economy principles are applied in ecotourism practices in this country. In addition, we will see (2) how socio-cultural factors such as local community participation and preservation of traditional culture play an important role in the success of ecotourism in Indonesia. Apart from that, (3) the extraordinary biodiversity in Indonesia is also the main highlight. We will explore how sustainable ecotourism in Indonesia contributes to the conservation of unique species and fragile ecosystems.

3. Embracing Sustainability through Green Economic Principles in Ecotourism

The onset of the 21st century has opened a new global focus on sustainable development and environmental conservation. At the heart of this paradigm shift lies the concept of the "green economy", a holistic approach to economic growth that aims to improve human well-being and social justice while significantly reducing the environmental and ecological risks associated with traditional economic activities. This transformative approach is a glimmer of hope for our planet, addressing the urgent need to protect fragile ecosystems and natural resources while promoting economic prosperity.

The green economy finds one of its most promising applications in the field of ecotourism, a sector that combines the magic of travel with the responsibility of environmental management. As tourists seek meaningful and authentic experiences, demand for eco-friendly and sustainable tourism practices is increasing. Ecotourism, which emphasizes responsible travel to natural areas, provides not only economic opportunities for local communities but also a means to preserve pristine environments.

The foundation of green economic principles in ecotourism rests on the understanding that the rich biodiversity, landscapes and cultural heritage of our planet are invaluable assets. Green economic principles in ecotourism aim to utilize these assets without depleting them, thereby ensuring that the beauty and biodiversity of our world is preserved for future generations. This approach recognizes that the relationship between economic growth, environmental protection and societal well-being is not a zero-sum game. This aims to show that ecological preservation and financial prosperity can coexist in harmony.

In this exploration, we will study the core principles of green economics in ecotourism. We will discuss the important role of governments in implementing sustainable policies, the use of market-based instruments such as carbon taxes and emissions trading, and the important involvement of local communities and various stakeholders in organizing environmentally conscious tourism experiences. Through a multidimensional lens, successful integration of these principles can promote inclusive growth, social resilience and environmental vitality. Tourists and ecotourists interact with local communities and can learn and appreciate local culture, traditions and heritage (Sinha, 2012).

This journey through green economy principles in ecotourism is a testament to humanity's enduring potential to realize a sustainable future, protect natural wonders, and enrich our lives through responsible travel. This is a journey that begins with an exploration of green economic principles in the context of ecotourism, a realm where the beauty of the earth is in harmony with the well-being of its inhabitants.

Tourism and ecotourism are two concepts that have a lot to do with the field of travel and recreation in a broad sense. Although both tourism and ecotourism involve traveling to destinations far from one's usual place of residence for relaxation, recreation or exploration. From an economic implications point of view, tourism in general can make a significant contribution to the economy of a destination through expenditure on accommodation, food, transportation and various tourist activities. Meanwhile, ecotourism can also generate economic benefits, especially in areas rich in natural and cultural attractions. Likewise, from a

cultural exchange perspective, both forms of travel provide opportunities for cultural exchange.

A green economy is essentially a development approach that aims to improve human well-being and social justice while significantly reducing risks to the environment and ecological resources. This concept was introduced by UNEP (2011) with the aim of achieving a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation, where the trade-off between the two is considered an opportunity rather than a constraint. This is often associated with the concept of sustainable development which emphasizes the importance of meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Pearce et al., 1989).

In Indonesia, green economic growth is expected to produce five main results that form the Green Growth Framework (GGF, 2016). These five outcomes include sustainable economic growth, inclusive and equitable growth, social, economic and environmental resilience, healthy and productive ecosystems that provide environmental services, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, governments on a national scale play a key role in green economic reform with the aim of achieving various goals, including poverty alleviation, climate resilience and sustainable economic growth. To achieve this goal, a variety of instruments are used, including government regulations and controls to reduce environmental impacts, as well as market instruments such as carbon taxes or emissions trading systems to encourage environmentally friendly behavior.

In this context, Bappenas (2019) then prepared a guidebook on Low Carbon Development Strategies with the aim of creating new jobs and sources of income while protecting the environment and minimizing negative impacts on ecology through a green economy approach.

Furthermore, the green economy concept is also implemented in the tourism sector through optimizing the role of Business, Government, Community, Academic and Media (BGCAM). The aim is to create orchestration in ensuring the quality of activities, facilities, services, and creating tourism experiences and value benefits in order to provide advantages and benefits to society and the environment (Soemaryani, 2016).

In another perspective, for example from the Maqashid Sharia point of view, Muslim scholars have introduced the concept of Green Economy, aligning it with the principles of Maqashid al-Shariah. Maqashid Syariah is centered on benefits, human welfare, social justice, and environmental risk mitigation. Yusuf Qardhawi even believes that protecting the environment is the same as upholding the five fundamental goals of Islam, which emphasizes

the importance of the environment in Maqashid al-Syariah. The development of maqasid sharia-based macroeconomic indicators was initiated by Chapra, M. Umer, 1983; Chapra, M. Umer and Habib Ahmed. 2008) which was then developed by various other Islamic economic thinkers. In fact, sharia economics, which includes Maqashid Syariah values, shows substantial conformity with the Green Economy. Maqashid al-Syariah directs its focus to the benefit and preservation of al-dharuriyyat, which includes five fundamental goals: protecting religion, soul, reason, lineage and property.

The principles of a Green Economy, including low carbon emissions, resource efficiency and social inclusiveness, are in line with the preservation of life, mind, offspring and property as stated in the Maqashid Syariah concept. The aspiration is that Sharia Economics can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to improve the welfare of the Indonesian people. Sharia economics adheres to the principles of Islamic law, including the prohibition of usury, and places great emphasis on the halal concept in economic endeavors. (Iskandar, A and Khairul Aqbar, 2019). Meanwhile, according to Bambang Guritno et al (2023), the Green Economy concept in the Indonesian context through the lens of Maqashid al-Syariah underlines the need for an environmentally friendly economic model that is in harmony with the characteristics of Indonesian society. Green Economy principles are in line with the ideals of Pancasila and Islamic ecological ethics, thereby creating a harmonious relationship with Indonesian culture and society. Furthermore, the principles of the Green Economy, especially low carbon emissions, resource efficiency and social inclusiveness, are in harmony with the preservation of life, mind, descendants and property as described in the Maqashid Syariah concept, which has the potential to facilitate the realization of sustainable development goals while still upholding ethics. Islam.

In practice, the concept of a green economy, according to Sjaifuddin S (2020) who conducted research on system dynamics modeling that integrates various factors in biophysical, social and economic dimensions. The aim is to obtain the best alternative in managing ecotourism destinations in the Plains Swamp Forest Area in Lake Air Tawar-Serang, Banten. Management alternatives are designed in three scenarios: (i) deep ecotourism with a very strong sustainability orientation; (ii) shallow ecotourism which is oriented towards weak sustainability; and (iii) mass tourism which is very weakly oriented towards sustainability.

The research results show that deep ecotourism is the best choice for sustainable management of Rawa Danau as an ecotourism destination in Indonesia. Through this

scenario, various control efforts were successfully carried out during the 10 year simulation, including:

- Control the growth in the number of tourists so as not to put excessive pressure on the environment. The growth in the number of tourists only increased by 38.4%, from 12,584 people in 2020 to 17,411 people in 2030. This growth is considered quite reasonable and does not damage the environment.
- Reforestation of almost all forest land previously converted, reaching 97.2% of the total land (from 8.57 hectares in 2020 to 0.24 hectares in 2030). This shows the successful restoration of forest functions.
- Increase local community income by 28.6%, from IDR 3,500,000 in 2020 to IDR 4,500,522 in 2030. This indicates that local communities receive adequate economic benefits from ecotourism activities.
- Increase environmental investment by 2.745%, from 0.2% in 2020 to 5.69% in 2030. This shows that stakeholders receive integrated economic, ecological and social benefits.
- Maintain biodiversity with a relatively small reduction of 0.33% (from 95.0% in 2020 to 94.69% in 2030).
- Maintain swamp water reserves with a relatively small reduction of 0.0001% (from 500 million m³ in 2020 to 499.9 million m³ in 2030).
- Reduce waste volume significantly by 99.9% (from 62,986 kilograms in 2020 to 0.08 kilograms in 2030). This shows that this scenario is successful in controlling the increase in waste volume and reducing the environmental burden.

The example above provides an indication that with the negative impacts of mass tourism, deep ecotourism is a promising alternative for achieving sustainable management, especially in ecotourism destinations such as Rawa Danau on the island of Java. In this context, management that focuses on environmental, social and economic aspects is a top priority.

4. Socio-cultural factors in ecotourism practices

In an era of globalization that is increasingly accelerating the pace of change, cultural and natural heritage are becoming increasingly important in the context of sustainable development. The concept of heritage has evolved into an innovative and sustainable approach, emphasizing the role of human and natural heritage as a counter-hegemony to the often homogeneous currents of globalization. Through a deep understanding of cultural differences, diverse societies can find opportunities to contribute to creating a more sustainable world.

As stated by UNESCO in 2008, cultural heritage is not limited to oral traditions and cultural expressions through language alone. It includes ethnic performances in art, social practices, rituals, festivals, indigenous knowledge of nature, and arts and crafts (Schmitt, 2008). Maintaining and revitalizing these traditions is not only important for preserving cultural diversity and creativity, but also for guiding the important role of tourism on a global scale. In this view, this article will explore how diverse cultural and natural heritage acts as a counter-hegemonic force in facing the challenges of globalization, as well as how the appreciation and preservation of this heritage forms the basis for sustainable development.

Indonesia, a beautiful and charming archipelagic country located in the heart of our planet, is a country of diversity, both in terms of its people and its natural riches. As the country with the fourth largest population in the world, Indonesia is home to diverse cultures, traditions and languages, which makes it a gathering place for humanity. Amidst this natural wealth, the country has embarked on a journey towards prosperity, balancing economic development with the preservation of its stunning natural beauty. At the forefront of this endeavor is the emerging concept of ecotourism, a harmonious blend of environmental conservation and tourism, which offers the promise of sustainable growth and a brighter future for Indonesia and its people (Salas, A. 2013).

With its infinite rich cultural heritage, as well as qualified and creative human resources, it has bequeathed an invaluable treasure to the world. As a country blessed with extraordinary diversity of culture, arts, traditions and nature, Indonesia has great potential to develop the cultural industry as one of the pillars of the national economy. In the era of globalization, the cultural industry is not only a symbol of national identity, but also an economic engine that plays a central role in sustainable development (Sani, M.Y. et al. 2018). This kind of industry turns out to be a very important tourism infrastructure that helps and has the potential to invite tourists from various parts of the world to explore the rich culture of Indonesia. The existence of art, music, dance, culinary delights, handicrafts and traditional celebrations are the main tourism attractions that make Indonesia a unique, iconic and alluring destination. Therefore, optimal and sustainable management is needed through promotion and the main driving force of economic development.

It is common knowledge that Indonesia, which is in the East Asia and Pacific economic constellation, has experienced significant economic growth in recent years. As a nation blessed with natural beauty and abundant cultural diversity, this nation has a golden opportunity to exploit the enormous potential of the tourism sector (Smith, J. R. 2023). As exemplified by Wiwin, I.W. (2018) The island of Bali, Indonesia's famous island paradise,

has long captivated tourists from all over the world with its stunning natural landscapes, rich culture and warm hospitality. Although the island is renowned for its stunning natural beauty and vibrant traditions, what makes it truly unique is the innovative approach it takes in managing tourist attractions. Many iconic destinations in Bali, such as Pandawa Beach and Kedonganan Beach in Badung Regency, Tanah Lot in Tabanan Regency, Ubud Monkey Forest and Ceking Rice Terrace in Gianyar Regency, as well as Penglipuran Village in Bangli Regency, have embraced the concept of community-based tourism. This ecotourism model has not only transformed these sites into thriving cultural and adventure centers but has also proven to be a powerful driver of economic growth for local communities. By integrating local residents into the planning and management of these tourist attractions, Bali has exploited the potential of community-based tourism to improve the economy while preserving its natural and cultural heritage (Widana, I.P.K.A.). This example illustrates how Bali is becoming a model of ecotourism and community-based tourism that is changing the way we experience travel. This shows what an extraordinary role tourism plays in improving the livelihoods of local communities while caring for the island's invaluable natural resources. Another example presented by Zunaidi, A (2022) is related to the cultural tourism of Kampung Naga. Based on the results of his research, the development of cultural tourism in Kampung Naga has had a significant impact on the local community, especially on the economic aspect. In this perspective, the ecotourism lens in Indonesia has utilized its stunning natural landscapes, rich cultural traditions, and innovative community-based tourism models to invite tourists from all over the world to explore its uniqueness. The island of Bali is a shining example where community-based tourism not only transforms tourist destinations into thriving cultural centers but also significantly improves the economic welfare of local communities, while preserving the island's natural beauty.

This model shows how Indonesia is shaping the future of tourism, demonstrating the extraordinary impact of tourism on local communities and the conservation of invaluable natural and cultural resources. As this country continues to experience significant economic growth, the tourism sector is a golden opportunity to further improve prosperity while protecting the wealth that makes Indonesia a global gem. The journey towards sustainable development in Indonesia, supported by ecotourism, is not only proof of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage, but also a hope for a brighter and more environmentally friendly future.

5. Biodiversity in ecotourism practice

In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled “The Future

We Want”, the General Assembly emphasized that the interactive process, cross-sectoral nature of the tourism sector allows it to create relations with other sectors and provide significant contributions to three aspects of sustainable development, namely economic, environmental and socio-cultural, thus placing tourism as a top priority in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (UN Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012).

Since the Agenda was established, there have been various major international agreements and frameworks that provide guidance for sustainable tourism development. This guide covers vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as habitats that are critical for biodiversity and protected areas. The main goal is to promote responsible tourism and preserve fragile ecosystems. This is done in an effort to achieve a balance between economic growth through tourism and conservation of biodiversity and natural resources. Some of these agreements include, for example:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992): The CBD, an international treaty adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, emphasizes the importance of conserving biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. This encourages the development of sustainable tourism in protected areas and the promotion of community-based tourism that benefits local communities.
- Ramsar Convention (IUCN, 1989) on Wetlands: The Ramsar Convention, adopted in 1971, is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. This recognizes the importance of wetlands, which often play a critical role in coastal ecosystems and can be impacted by tourism. The convention provides guidelines regarding sustainable tourism in and around wetlands.
- World Heritage Convention (WHC-UNESCO, 1972): UNESCO's World Heritage Convention identifies and protects cultural and natural heritage sites of exceptional value. This encourages the conservation of these sites and prevents any development that could compromise the integrity of these sites, including tourism-related activities. This convention provides guidance on preserving World Heritage Sites.
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2018): The SDGs, especially Goal 14 (Life Below Water) and Goal 15 (Life on Land), call for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and terrestrial ecosystems. They indirectly influence tourism activities in the region by supporting responsible and sustainable practices.
- Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC, 2010): GSTC provides global criteria for sustainable tourism and offers guidance to tourism businesses and destinations on sustainable practices. These guidelines include principles for minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources.

To achieve sustainable and competitive ecotourism goals, a fundamental understanding of biological principles is required. In countries in the tropics, such as Indonesia, this understanding often needs to be improved (Hakim, L. 2017). It is likely that this is due to the broad scope of the concept of biodiversity which consists of various ecological aspects, including genetics, individuals, populations, species, communities, ecosystems and biomes (Wilson, E.O., 1992). Ecosystems themselves vary in scale and complexity, including plants, animals, and the entire web of life.

Biodiversity is not only limited to the ecological scope, but is also closely connected to cultural diversity, as recognized in the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). This includes biodiversity and cultural diversity being key factors in creating attractive and sustainable tourism destinations. They provide the basis for the unique and authentic experiences that travelers seek. That is why, in relation to tourism development, biodiversity, whether directly or indirectly, has a positive impact on local economic growth by creating job opportunities in sectors such as hotels, tour guides, transportation and handicrafts. Regions blessed with rich biodiversity and cultural heritage often experience increases in employment opportunities, poverty reduction and improved livelihoods.

In another context, biodiversity and cultural diversity also function as a medium for education by providing valuable lessons to tourists about the importance of conservation and cultural preservation. This encourages support for preservation and conservation efforts in a broader sense.

It cannot be ignored that the symbiotic relationship between a society's culture, biodiversity, ecosystem function, and certain ecosystem services has a significant impact. Ecosystems are the core of life, providing services that support life, providing resources and energy, and managing waste (Daily, 1997). Biodiversity is deeply connected to ecosystems, making the preservation of natural diversity very important. Unfortunately, human activities have led to an alarming increase in species extinction rates, requiring urgent protective measures (Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 1981 ; Lawton and May, 1995). Meanwhile, on the other hand, in the case of cultural services related to biodiversity, for example, these are services that include aesthetic, spiritual, psychological and other benefits obtained from human interaction with ecosystems (Balmford et al, 2008).

Indonesia has high ecotourism potential, which includes various natural ecosystems, biodiversity and traditional values that exist in various regions in Indonesia. This potential includes natural attractions, biodiversity and cultural heritage that are attractive to tourists looking for ecotourism experiences (Kawuryan et al, 2022; Subekti, 2020). It is recognized

that biodiversity has an important role in developing tourism destinations in Indonesia. Therefore, the richness of biodiversity and ecosystems along with rich cultural heritage needs to be used as the basis for creating a strong attraction for tourists. That is why the development of tourism destinations needs to be directed at providing local economic benefits and supporting education about conservation. The aim is none other than to create a positive relationship between nature, culture and sustainable development in the context of ecotourism. In other words, tourism acts as a factor that triggers or accelerates economic growth in a region. This means that tourism helps create economic opportunities, increase income, and create jobs which in turn can trigger economic growth in the area.

Two of the seven strategic directions and policies set by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Baparekraf 2020-2024 (Renstra 2020-2024) are "Development of tourism destinations and creative economic products with added value and competitiveness" and "Encouraging research, innovation, technology adoption and tourism policy and a quality creative economy," are very important in the development of sustainable tourism. There are several basic reasons for both, which include:

- **Increased Competitiveness:** By developing value-added and competitive tourism destinations, a country can attract more tourists and investment. This contributes to sustainable economic growth and creates jobs.
- **Utilization of Local Resources:** The development of creative economy products allows countries to utilize local and cultural resources to create unique products and experiences for tourists. This not only advances the creative economy sector, but also preserves cultural heritage.
- **Innovation and Technology:** Research, innovation and the adoption of technology play an important role in improving the quality of tourism experiences, better managing natural resources and increasing operational efficiency. This helps reduce negative impacts on the environment and supports sustainability.
- **Better Management:** Quality tourism policies help to properly organize and monitor tourism development. This involves developing regulations, standards and strict monitoring to ensure ecosystem sustainability and prevent excessive negative impacts.
- **Increasing Education and Capacity:** Focusing on research, innovation and technology also opens up opportunities to increase education and capacity in the tourism sector and creative economy. This supports the development of a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, which is essential for sustainability.

The hope is that by integrating these policies into tourism development, the country can achieve sustainable economic growth while protecting the environment, preserving cultural heritage, and providing long-term benefits to society. We recognize that in general, regions

blessed with biodiversity and culturally dynamic communities often have enormous opportunities for increased employment opportunities, poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods. Meanwhile, biodiversity and cultural diversity also act as educational channels, providing valuable lessons to tourists about the importance of conservation and cultural preservation. This enlightenment encourages support for conservation efforts and fights for cultural preservation.

Finally, from the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, titled "The Future We Want," the General Assembly highlighted the pivotal role of tourism in sustainable development. Tourism can make significant contributions to economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects, making it a top priority in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals. Then for several international agreements and frameworks have guided sustainable tourism development. These agreements encompass vulnerable ecosystems, including terrestrial, marine, coastal, and protected areas. Their primary objective is to promote responsible tourism, striking a balance between economic growth and biodiversity conservation. Examples of such agreements include the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, World Heritage Convention, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

We understand that understanding biodiversity principles is crucial for achieving sustainable and competitive ecotourism, especially in tropical countries like Indonesia. Biodiversity encompasses various ecological aspects, genetics, populations, species, communities, ecosystems, and biomes. It's also closely tied to cultural diversity, forming the foundation of attractive and sustainable tourism destinations. Biodiversity indirectly fuels local economic growth by generating job opportunities in various sectors. Biodiversity with cultural diversity serve as educational tools, imparting essential lessons about conservation and cultural preservation to tourists. This support fosters broader efforts in these areas. The symbiotic relationship between culture, biodiversity, ecosystem function, and ecosystem services is significant. Ecosystems are essential for life, providing resources, energy, and waste management. Biodiversity is intricately connected to ecosystems, emphasizing the need for preserving natural diversity.

Indonesia boasts a wealth of ecotourism potential, including natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. Leveraging this potential for sustainable tourism development can create economic opportunities, increase income, and trigger regional economic growth. Two of the seven strategic directions and policies outlined in the Ministry

of Tourism and Creative Economy/Baparekraf 2020-2024 (Renstra 2020-2024) are pivotal for sustainable tourism. "Development of tourism destinations and creative economic products with added value and competitiveness" and "Encouraging research, innovation, technology adoption, and quality tourism policy and creative economy" are essential because they enhance competitiveness, utilize local resources, promote innovation and technology adoption, and improve policy management.

These policies aim to foster sustainable economic growth, protect the environment, preserve cultural heritage, and provide long-term benefits to society. Regions rich in biodiversity and cultural diversity offer vast employment opportunities, poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and educational value for tourists, promoting conservation and cultural preservation.

CONCLUSION

Based on a comprehensive review of 68 sources, including books, documents, reports, research journals, and relevant materials on tourism, with a special focus on ecotourism in Indonesia, it provides valuable insights into the dynamics of sustainable ecotourism in this diverse and culturally rich country. nation.

We have explored how ecotourism serves as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth while assessing its impact on local communities, cultural heritage and the natural environment. The importance of conserving biodiversity to maintain ecosystem balance has been highlighted. These findings offer a lens for evaluating the evolution, achievements, and challenges in sustainable ecotourism practices, highlighting the potential of ecotourism as a solution for economic prosperity, cultural preservation, and biodiversity protection.

Ecotourism, as a niche within the wider tourism industry, not only allows us to appreciate the wonders of nature but also drives sustainable economic growth. It prioritizes environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and community well-being, offering visitors the opportunity to connect with nature and local traditions. Indonesia, with its unique characteristics, rich biological resources and cultural diversity, is very suitable for developing sustainable tourism destinations.

By implementing sustainability through green economy principles in ecotourism, Indonesia aims to achieve inclusive and equitable growth, social, economic and environmental resilience, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is possible through coordinated efforts involving Business, Government, Community, Academic and Media (BGCAM), to ensure the quality of activities, facilities, services and create tourism

experiences that benefit society and the environment. These principles are in line with the ideals of the Indonesian nation based on Pancasila, including Islamic ecological ethics, and can be trusted as a basis for fostering a harmonious relationship between the green economy, biodiversity including ethnic diversity and the cultural system of society.

Indonesia's large population, diverse culture and natural beauty make it a global meeting point for humanity, with the potential for prosperous economic development while preserving the environment and cultural heritage. The harmonious integration of nature, culture and tourism presents a sustainable pathway for Indonesia's growth and prosperity.

In a world increasingly committed to biodiversity and environmental conservation, Indonesia's ecological diversity and cultural landscape make it a world-class ecotourism destination. Its unrivaled natural beauty and complex ecosystem provide a unique experience for tourists while contributing to environmental conservation. Indonesia is indeed a global treasure waiting to be explored responsibly and sustainably. The Indonesian government recognizes the importance of the tourism sector and is taking strategic steps to renew the country's economy, focusing on this sector as the main pillar of development.

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