

INSTITUTIONAL FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIMARJARUNJUNG ECOTOURISM

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Abstrak

The tourism industry sector is one sector that contributes to economic income that can provide welfare to the community. One of the sectors of the tourism industry is ecotourism; ecological principles and the theory of sustainable development will provide benefits by taking into account the factors that influence it; good management is needed to maintain, continue development, and develop sustainable tourism. This study analyses the development and institutional feasibility of managing the Simarjarunjung ecotourism area. This research is a qualitative descriptive analysis research, in which data interpretation and analysis are carried out by collecting data through documentation techniques, interviews, and observations and combining relevant information that can answer ecotourism problems and drawing conclusions as answers to the problems studied. The results of the feasibility assessment for the potential development of the Simarjarunjung Ecotourism Area show that the category is feasible for development and has a feasibility level with an index value of 75.74%. The community plays a direct role in ecotourism management for the sustainable and sustainable development of Simarjarunjung ecotourism. The institutional form of ecotourism management consists of the Association of Farmers Groups (GAPOKTAN) and the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS). The Simarjarunjung ecotourism management is managed privately, and the Setya Tani Forest Farmers Group manages the Pinus Hills Forest Nature Tourism. The strategies used in developing Simarjarunjung ecotourism are planning, implementation and utilization. The norms used are internal norms that prioritize local communities and minimize outside participation in the development of Simarjarunjung ecotourism.

Keywords: Tourism, Ecotourism, Feasibility, Institutional, Simarjarunjung

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the world tourism industry in Indonesia continues to experience a rapid increase. The increase in the tourism sector has impacted on the economy and created new jobs for the community around the tourism object. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency for 2022, the number of visits by Indonesian tourists in July 2022 increased by 6,396.46% compared to July 2021. According to (Rijal et al., 2020), increasing tourists will provide a sizable foreign exchange contribution to the country and other benefits for the tourism community.

(Tanaya, 2014) The tourism industry is now becoming one of the promising

industrial sectors for regional development globally, including in Indonesia. Developments in the tourism industry make tourism into various types to be developed. According to (Ridlwani et al., 2017), tourists prefer natural tourism that combines the role of society, environmental conditions, culture, and social, or is often referred to as ecotourism. (Purwoko et al., 2022) Ecotourism is a form of tourism oriented and inspired by the natural history and native culture of the local environment. Ecotourism is a tourism model that was born as a form of public protest against the mass tourism development model with an emphasis on environmental conservation, cultural preservation, community

participation, economic benefits, and group empowerment (Cobbinah, 2015). The development of the ecotourism model tourism will have a very important impact on the community's economic development and have a major influence on the surrounding environment. (Sidiq & Resnawaty, 2017) Argued that good tourism management and development is when the tourism sector has a positive impact that the whole community can feel. This impact can be seen in the rise of small businesses in the community involved in the tourism industry. (Wang & Tong, 2009) stated that ecotourism aims to conserve natural resources, especially biodiversity, to maintain and sustainably use natural resources and provide economic benefits to the community.

According to (Kaharuddin et al., 2020), ecotourism development consists of three concepts: tourist objects and attractions that are easily accepted and organized by the community, participation, and ownership for the community, and the benefits of tourism management enjoyed by the community as the manager. A good basis for ecotourism provides economic income, guarantees ecological safety and sustainable development, and maintains the natural properties of the environment.

(Seifi & Ghobadi 2017) Argues that, in essence, ecotourism development must be led by the local government and become part of the vision and mission of development. At the same time, community involvement is needed as a partner for planning, development, and provision of facilities so that a sustainable institution will be formed and as an effort to avoid conflict between the government and the community. (Kanom, 2015) In tourism development, tourist objects must have components such as objects/attractions, transportation, infrastructure, accommodation, restaurants, and other supporting services. However, in the development of ecotourism, the main attraction is natural conditions which geographically provide an attraction and

direct tourists to destinations. In contrast, the services and facilities provided by the manager added value to support ecotourism (Yilma et al., 2016).

Ecotourism development occurs in all regions of Indonesia, including North Sumatra. One area that has ecotourism potential is Simalungun Regency. The potential for ecotourism in Simalungun Regency is a natural panorama that contains cultural, spiritual, and handicraft values. The ecotourism object that is superior in Simalungun Regency is the Simarjarunjung hill area. According to (Damanik, 2018), simarjarunjung hill has been designated as one of Indonesia's ten National Strategic Areas of Tourism. The Simarjarunjung hill area has an area of 2 hectares with an altitude of 1,336 meters above sea level (Hasibuan et al., 2021).

The Bukit Simarjarunjung ecotourism area requires sustainable management to preserve nature and benefit the tourism community. The development of tourism areas is a part of economic activity that does not only focus on the ultimate goal, namely in the form of increasing the economy, maintaining social and cultural conditions, and ensuring the safety of tourists, so that they will provide benefits to each other (Fretes et al., 2013). According to (Susanty et al., 2015), a good and open management system is needed to maintain and continue tourism development to influence the community's economic growth.

This study aims to analyze the feasibility of ecotourism based on visitors' assessment of ecotourism development and community institutions in developing and managing the Bukit Simarjarunjung ecotourism area in Simalungun Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

The population of this study was all visitors who came to visit Simarjarunjung Ecotourism. The research sample is part of the population taken as a data source and can represent the entire population. The sample collection method used was purposive sampling, which takes

respondents intentionally based on the research objectives for determining the number of samples of this study using the slovin formula (Karsudi et al., 2010). The error tolerance limit is 10% because if the number is greater than 100 people, it is taken between 10-15% or 20-25%. Based on the results of interviews at the time of site inspection, the average number of visitors in a week was 200, so according to this formula, the number of respondents was 66.7 or 67.

Data analysis is used to process research results to obtain conclusions. The data analysis used in this study is a qualitative descriptive analysis because this study aims to analyze the existing tourism potential in the area. Interpretation and analysis of data are carried out in the following steps.

- a. Data collection through documentation techniques to obtain secondary data and interviews and observations for primary data.
- b. Combining some of the relevant information obtained so that it becomes an explanation that can answer the existing problems.
- c. Drawing conclusions from data analysis is the answer to the formulated problems.

The variables analyzed in this study refer to the Guidelines for Analysis of Operational Areas for Natural Tourism Objects and Attractions (ADO-ODTWA) of the Director General of PHKA in 2003. The description of the variables in this study can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Feasibility Data Collection Matrix for Simarjarunjung Nature Tourism

Variable	Indicator
Feasibility of Simarjarunjung Hill Natural Tourism	1. attractiveness
	2. accessibility
	3. social and environmental conditions
	4. accommodation

5. facilities and infrastructure
6. availability of clean water

Source: ADO-ODTWA Assessment of the Director General of PHKA (2004).

Calculating each indicator uses tabulation, where the numbers are obtained from the results of assessment and research. The weighting is based on the 2003 ADO-ODTWA assessment by the Director General of PHKA. The amount for one assessment indicator can be calculated using the following formula.

$$S = N \times B$$

Information:

S = Score/value of a criterion

N = the number of element values on the criteria

B = Value Weight

The score obtained from each indicator is then compared with the total score of an indicator. The score obtained from each variable will be found for its feasibility level using the following equation.

$$\text{Feasibility Index Value of a Tourism Object} = \frac{A}{(B)} \times 100\%$$

Information:

A = Criteria Score

B = Criteria Total Score

After a comparison is made, a feasibility index in percentage will be obtained. The feasibility index criteria for an ecotourism area are as follows.

- a. The feasibility level > 66.6% indicates that an ecotourism area is feasible to develop. This is supported by high potential, facilities, and infrastructure based on predetermined parameters and adequate accessibility.
- b. The 33.3% - 66.6% feasibility indicates that an ecotourism area is not yet feasible

- to develop. This is supported by the potential, facilities, and infrastructure that are based on predetermined parameters and are supported by adequate accessibility.
- c. The feasibility level < 33.3% indicates that an ecotourism area is impossible to develop. This is due to the low potential of facilities and infrastructure based on predetermined parameters and inadequate accessibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research conducted, the level of feasibility of Simarjarunjung Hill ecotourism development was obtained from the attractiveness of the location, smooth accessibility, various types of accommodation available, the conditions of

the socio-economic environment of the community, the existence of supporting facilities and infrastructure, and the availability of clean water. The results of the assessment can be seen in Table 2.

The management must develop the potential of tourist objects to maintain the attractiveness of visitors and maintain the sustainability of the ecotourism area. (Yuniarti et al., 2018) States that efforts to improve and develop tourist objects are important things to note. The existence of objects and attractions is an important option in carrying out a tourism activity. Development is carried out by maintaining the preservation of tourist attraction objects and maintaining cleanliness in the Simarjarunjung Hill Ecotourism area.

Table 2. Results of the Assessment of the Feasibility Level for the Development of Simarjarunjung Ecotourism According to the ADO-ODTWA Guidelines

Criteria	Weight	Mark	Score	Score Max	Indeks	Description
Attractiveness	6	125	750	1080	69,44	Worthy
Accessibility	5	85	425	600	70,83	Worthy
Socio-economic and environmental conditions	5	85	425	600	70,83	Worthy
Accommodation	3	40	120	180	66,67	Worthy
Infrastructure	3	90	270	300	90	Worthy
Availability of clean water	6	130	780	900	86,67	Worthy
Eligibility level					75,74	Worthy

Accommodation is one of the important criteria to consider in carrying out ecotourism activities, especially when visiting a location quite far away. Ecotourism must have accommodations that can encourage visitors to have environmental and cultural awareness, so the community and managers need socialization to improve the quality of ecotourism. According to (Achmadi et al., 2020), the accommodation has an important role in ecotourism activities. Nature conservation must be maintained, so the public needs the education to improve the quality of the ecotourism program. Accommodation is prepared to meet a need,

such as temporary lodging for people on a visit. This accommodation is also a consideration for tourists to visit tourist sites.

Ecotourism development requires support accompanied by good management and the availability of adequate supporting facilities and infrastructure because this support makes it easier for tourists to carry out ecotourism activities. (Ghani, 2017) stated that facilities and infrastructure are important elements that complement and function to facilitate the process of ecotourism activities so that they can run well. Ecotourism managers who provide facilities at ecotourism locations will increase tourists' interest in visiting and

staying at these destinations. (Abdulhaji & Yusuf, 2016) Stated that accessibility is an important requirement for tourist attractions because it provides convenience, comfort, and security for visitors to reach tourist sites.

The opening of nature as a tourist attraction and the presence of tourists in a destination will provide added value to the local community. Tourism can also have a negative impact when viewed from the perspective of nature conservation, the sustainability of a tourist attraction (sustainability), the balance of economic use, and other aspects that lead to the issue of sustainable development. The impact of damage to the environment caused by tourism activities is still relatively small in several destinations in the world; tourism expansion and development cannot be avoided causing damage to the destination's physical environment and social environment in a tourist attraction or destination (Theobald, 2005).

The type of infrastructure is an important component in carrying out ecotourism activities. Infrastructure is natural and human resources that are absolute and needed by visitors when traveling to tourist sites such as roads, electricity, telecommunications, and terminals (Badarab et al., 2017).

Visitor Assessment of Simarjarunjung Ecotourism

1. Travel Satisfaction

A factor that needs to be considered and majorly influences ecotourism activities is visitor satisfaction when traveling. Visitor satisfaction is also an evaluation material in developing ecotourism. Social media dominated the percentage gain at 47.8%, information obtained from friends/relatives at 44.8%, and other information by 7.4%. This is because the current technological developments are very influential on tourism development.

Visitor satisfaction when doing tours in Simarjarunjung is very influential on the development of ecotourism because it will

affect future tourism sustainability. As for the results of the data obtained from visitors related to satisfaction when doing tours, namely for the dissatisfied category of 4.5%, the satisfied category of 86.6%, and the very satisfied of 8.9%. The highest result for the travel satisfaction category is the satisfied category. The reasons for visitors giving opinions in the dissatisfied category are due to the lack of food choices available at tourist attractions and the prices given are too high.

2. Services and Conditions of Ecotourism Infrastructure

The service and condition of the infrastructure owned by Simarjarunjung ecotourism will be used as evaluation material for managers and the community to update and increase tourism potential to make it more comfortable for visitors. Services will give an impression to visitors when doing tours. The evaluation includes tourist ticket services, parking, homestay/lodging, bathrooms, eating and drinking facilities, souvenir shops, and photo spots.

The Photo Spot service earns 17 points in the dissatisfied category. Visitors conveyed this when obtaining data because the prices offered seemed expensive, and the use of photo spots seemed irregular, so it needed to be improved. Visitors recommend providing personal photo equipment so you can more freely capture moments while enjoying the tour. The highest point in the satisfied category is in the parking service of 67. The results of the data obtained from visitors are that parking attendants provide clear directions for parking positions so that vehicles enter regularly, and visitors feel comfortable.

Institutions in Simarjarunjung Ecotourism Development

1. Community Role and Participation in Simarjarunjung Ecotourism Development

In general, the community has a big role and participation in the development of Simarjarunjung Ecotourism, where the community is responsible for overcoming environmental problems around ecotourism, such as maintaining cleanliness so that it remains safe and comfortable for visitors. According to (Maryudi et al., 2012), involving the community directly is very influential in overcoming poverty by empowering forests directly. This approach is very supportive of maintaining environmental conditions around the forest. This condition indicates that the community is aware of how important it is to maintain the natural tourism environment.

2. Establishment of Simarjarunjung

Ecotourism Management Institution

The role of the community is very large in the development of Simarjarunjung Ecotourism; in the management of Simarjarunjung ecotourism, a management team is formed from the agricultural community, which has the same business field and is chaired by a person from the farming community, namely General Tarigan. The management of the Simarjarunjung ecotourism is carried out by the Association of Farmers Groups (Gapoktan). Gapoktan is a forum for farmers to exchange information and its existence is the main capital as a large human resource in increasing the strength of the farming community. Gapoktan was formed with a sense of openness and transparency to provide support and training needed in managing and promoting activities so that people understand conservation and the importance of the environment- and community-based ecotourism. (Ngurah & Utama, 2018) States that social capital, tourism potential, and local community empowerment are positive influences in tourism activities because the better the quality of community empowerment, social capital, and tourism potential, the better the tourism increases.

Ecotourism Development Strategy

1. Planning

Ecotourism development planning includes support for tourism development ideas, preparation of design plans, and socialization of plans. The idea of tourism development arose when there was a discussion between the community, community leaders, and village officials. Village officials, community leaders, and managers directed socialization to the community. Socialization is aimed at how this development can be carried out, and the environment is maintained. Ecotourism development requires various roles in its implementation, such as the community and the government. Ecotourism development that focuses on environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and economic benefits will hugely impact the survival of local communities around ecotourism areas (Cobbinah, 2015).

2. Implementation

The implementation of the design made at the planning stage, including the process of procuring funds and implementing ecotourism development. Forms of participation in socialization can be in the form of labor, money, and materials. The form of procuring funds is still being carried out in the disbursement stage from farmer group cash for the development of ecotourism. (Fikri & Septiawan, 2020) States that each activity requires funds to guarantee the planned activities' implementation. The funds made are used following their designation and can be accounted for. Communities around the ecotourism area are also involved in physical development in the form of building existing facilities in the ecotourism area, such as seats, information boards, parks, huts, security posts, and so on.

3. Utilization

The utilization stage is how the local community gets results in managing ecotourism through job opportunities and doing business. The use of ecotourism by

the community is in the form of making businesses such as stalls and homestays, and so on. Communities who take advantage of business opportunities in ecotourism areas are members of the community who are more capable of capitalizing on their businesses. In carrying out a business, the business manager is the main source of funds for creating his own business (Setiawan et al., 2017). (Purwoko et al., 2021) states that the popularity of a tour will make the tour the main destination for visitors. This can be seen from the increasing number of visitors supported by infrastructure and encouragement from the management and local government.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the feasibility analysis and institutional development of ecotourism in the Simarjarunjung area, Dolok Pardamean District, Simalungun Regency, is feasible to develop, and the value of the feasibility level with an index of 75.74%. Visitor satisfaction when doing tours in Simarjarunjung is very influential, with a percentage of 58.87%, and satisfaction with ecotourism servers and infrastructure is at a value of 67, namely parking service. The community is directly involved in ecotourism management for developing Simarjarunjung ecotourism. The institutional forms of ecotourism management are the Association of Farmers Groups (GAPOKTAN) and the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS). The management of Bukit Indah Simarjarunjung ecotourism is managed privately, and the Setya Tani Forest Farmers Group manages the Pinus Hills Forest Nature Tourism. The strategies used in developing Simarjarunjung ecotourism are planning, implementation and utilization. The norms used are internal norms that prioritize local communities and minimize outside participation in developing the Simarjarunjung hill ecotourism.

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