

**Research Article**

# The Development of Sustainable Tourism in Kendari City, Indonesia, During the COVID-19 Pandemic Based on the Local Wisdom Approach

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**Abstract.**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the tourism sector all over the world. The direction of Kendari’s local wisdom approach to tourism development is still unclear, making Kendari City an unpleasant tourist destination. The pandemic must be seen as a baseline to rebuild the tourism sector. This paper analysed the local wisdom approach to developing sustainable tourism in Kendari City using a literature study. The study provides recommendations that can be implemented in developing the tourism sector.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Sustainable Tourism, Local Wisdom, White Leg Shrimp Business

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism plays an important role in national development. Tourism has contributed significantly to the foreign exchange over decades. Indonesia’s natural wealth both on land and at sea becomes a capital in tourism development. Natural attractions, culture, religion, and special interest tourism are widely available across regions in Indonesia. In addition, the tourism sector contributes to the imposition of taxes, reduces the unemployment, and maintain the environmental sustainability.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world, the tourism sector became the mainstay of all countries, especially for countries that do not have natural wealth<sup>1</sup>. Some countries do live off the tourism sector due to its natural beauty, for example, the Maldives archipelago. In the past, people only recognize Bali and Jakarta as the main tourist destinations in Indonesia. But today, through vociferous promotion, foreign tourists also recognize other tourism destinations from Jogjakarta, Solo, Surabaya, Lombok, Medan, Makassar, Manado, to Raja Ampat Islands in West Papua province.

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In Southeast Sulawesi, the most prominent tourist destination is Wakatobi National Park (WNP). The WNP offers a very famous marine tourism attraction that is coral reefs as part of the world's coral triangle. The WNP has also been designated as one of Indonesia's leading tourist destinations as stated in Government Regulation (PP) No. 50 of 2011 about the Master Plan for National Tourism Development (Ripparnas) the year of 2010-2025<sup>2</sup>. However, Southeast Sulawesi also has many excellent tourist destinations besides the WNP. Kendari City is one of the tourist destinations that have potential to be developed.

In the tourism development master plan (Ripparda) of the Kendari City, year of 2018-2028, stated that Kendari City is expected to be one of the leading tourist destinations both at the national and international level. To achieve this goal, the city government is obliged to manage natural and cultural resources as part of the tourist attraction, encourage the availability of tourism supporting facilities and infrastructure and maintain and preserve cultural values for tourism purposes. Therefore, sustainable tourism as referred to in Ripparda needs to be implemented and not just a slogan<sup>3</sup>.

In recent years, the development of tourism in Kendari City is still not encouraging. This is marked by the low number of foreign tourist visits in Kendari City even more so after the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although, there is no official data on the decrease the number of tourists entering Southeast Sulawesi or Kendari, but at least from the tourism marketing development office of Wakatobi Regency. Noting a decrease in the number of visitors reaching more than 50 percent shows such indications. In 2019 before Covid-19, visitors reached 28,857 people. This condition is an indication of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that caused the tourism sector to almost collapse<sup>4</sup>.

The issuance of Kendari City Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2018 on Ripparda does not make tourism conditions in Kendari better, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, where all tourism sectors very hard hit. The implementation of Ripparda Kendari is also still not going well and has not shown results in the last three years. The mission of achieving the tourism sector as stated in the Ripparda is to strengthen the potential of urban nature, community culture, and creative industries as regional tourism identity. Therefore, the values of local wisdom need to be a concern in the development of Kendari City tourism in the future.

This Covid-19 pandemic moment needs to be a starting point for the development of a tourism system based on local wisdom values because many local wisdom values can ward off the spread of Covid-19<sup>5,6</sup>. Collaboration between the community, government and the business world also need to continue in restoring the current tourism sector<sup>7</sup>.

This paper will discuss about the public policy taken by the Kendari government during the Covid-19 pandemic to develop a tourism sector based on local wisdom values.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in Kendari City, the capital of Southeast Sulawesi Province. The methods used in this study are qualitative descriptive based on secondary data and literature studies of several relevant references, namely:

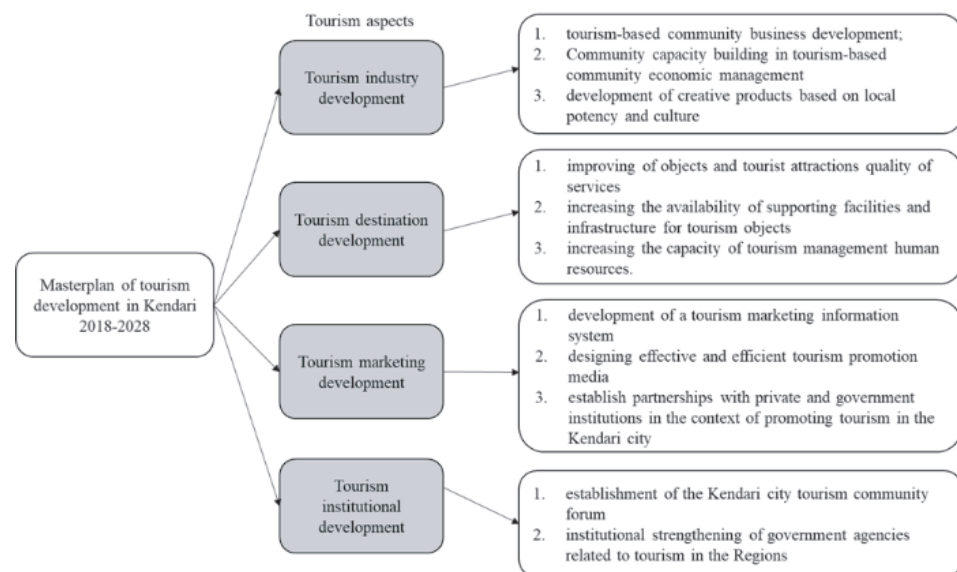
1. Indonesia tourism act No. 10 year of 2009<sup>2</sup>
2. Government regulation No. 50 year of 2011 on National Tourism Development Master Plan 2010-2025<sup>8</sup>.
3. Kendari City Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2019 on The Master Plan for Tourism Development of Kendari City Region in 2018-2028<sup>9</sup>.
4. Strategic Plan of Kendari City Cultural and Tourism Agency
5. Statistical data from the Kendari Statistics Agency
6. Other relevant supporting data

This paper was compiled systematically into three parts. First, discussing the general policy of the tourism sector of Kendari City, especially in the implementation of Rip-parda 2018-2028. Second, discussing the condition of Kendari's tourism policy during the Covid-19 pandemic, and third, discussing the example of the implementation of public tourism sector policy in Kendari that prioritizes values of local wisdom in the development of new tourist destinations. analyzed descriptively.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The tourism sector has been the backbone of the national economy, regional development, and improvement of community welfare for decades. It also has been able to bring in foreign exchange for the country, contributing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and job creation. In addition, it also contributes to social, cultural, and environmental roles in the framework of the preservation of natural resources and culture, as well as in improving the sense of love of the homeland and the glue of national unity<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the development of tourist attractions to become tourist destinations is very important to be done in a sustainable manner.

Based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009, Tourist Attraction is explained as everything that has uniqueness, convenience, and value in the form of diversity of natural wealth, culture, and man-made products that are targeted or visited by tourists. The development of tourist attraction as a major component in the tourism sector is a simultaneous effort of four aspects of development, namely aspects of the tourism industry, tourist destinations, marketing, and institutional. The four components are listed on all public policy products under tourism law, namely the national and regional tourism masterplan. These four aspects have also been described in the Ripparda which has been adapted to the characteristics of tourism problems in Kendari City as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Scheme of the Kendari tourism development plan from Ripparda of Kendari 2018-2028.

The development of tourist destinations in Kendari City is based on the uniqueness and values of local wisdom. A place is said to have a tourist attraction if the place has unique characteristics, has authenticity, has something rare and has something that can foster a passion for exploration. While conditions to become a tourist destination, namely:

1. What to see. In this place there must be objects and tourist attractions that are different from other regions. In other words, the area must have special attractions and cultural attractions that can be used as "entertainment" for tourists. What to see includes natural scenery, activities, arts, and tourist attractions. It's something interesting to see.

2. What to do. In this place in addition to many that can be seen and witnessed, there must be provided recreational facilities that can make tourists feel at home for a long time in that place. It's something that can be done in that place.
3. What to buy. Tourist destinations should be available facilities for shopping, especially souvenirs and folk crafts as souvenirs to be brought home.
4. What to arrive. It includes accessibility, how we visit the tourist attraction, vehicles visiting the tourist attraction, what vehicles will be used and how long to arrive at the tourist destination.
5. What to stay. How the tourist will stay for a while during his vacation. Lodgings are needed, either star hotels or non-star hotels and so on.

According to Indonesia Tourism Minister Sandiaga Uno, in January to September 2020, the achievement of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia was only 3.56 million or down 70.57 percent compared to the same period in 2019 which achieved 12.1 million tourists. The impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector makes the Ministry of Tourism adjust the projection of tourist visits in 2021 by 4 to 7 million foreign tourists. Meanwhile, to achieve the initial 2020 target of 18 million, it is projected to be realized in 2025<sup>11</sup>.

The strategy is to encourage investment in the tourism sector and strengthen tourism promotion by utilizing digital technology optimally. The Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy will implement three strategies in speeding up tourism recovery. The first strategy is innovation, using technologies such as big data and current approaches to map, both in terms of potential and strengthening, and ensure tourism sector players and the creative economy can survive.

Second, adaptation strategies, including in the current pandemic, by implementing CHSE-based health protocols (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environment) in every tourism destination and the creative economy line for the sake of accelerate the recovery of tourist confidence in tourism during the current pandemic. And the third strategy, collaborating with all parties, including ministries/institutions, local governments, academics, universities, as well as the community and the business world in advancing tourism and the creative economy in the country.

These three strategies are very relevant to do in Kendari City. Although the tourism sector still has not shown positive signs, the policies taken by the central government need to be exemplified and began to be applied in the area as a baseline. It is right to start rebuilding the tourism sector. These three strategies need to be adopted in the planning and development of the tourism sector, especially in the implementation

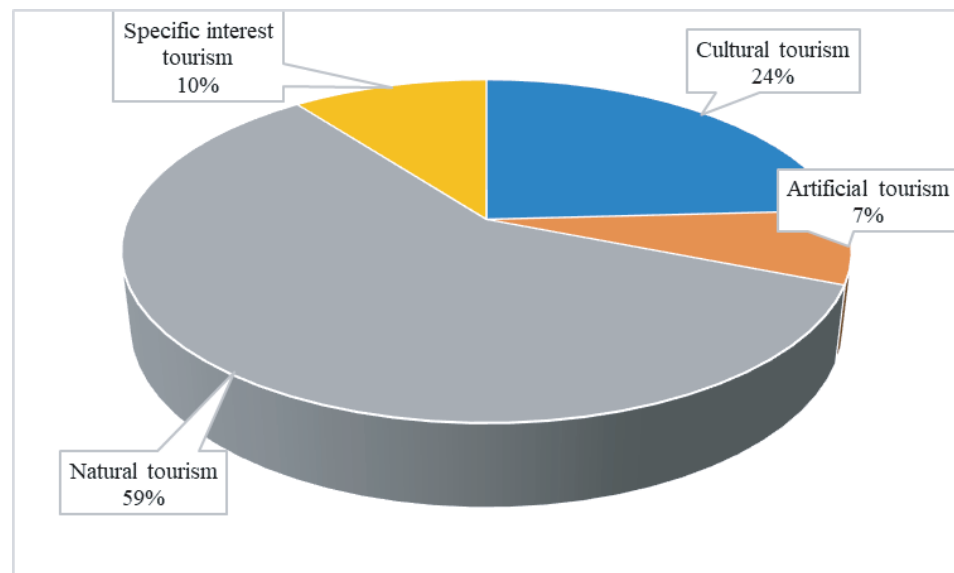
of Ripparda of Kendari 2018-2028. This is because, the Covid-19 pandemic period has changed the behavior of people including the government and the business world in carrying out activities and become different from before the pandemic. How to limit the number of people and community activities also needs to be considered in rebuilding the tourism sector.

In the development of tourist destinations as mentioned in Ripparda, there are three things that need to be done, namely improving of the quality-of-service objects and tourist attractions, increasing the availability of facilities and infrastructure supporting tourist attractions and increasing the human resource capacity of tourism managers. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the quality of services, the availability of facilities, and the quality of human resources need to accommodate the pandemic conditions. Services and the accessibility of infrastructure provided need to pay attention to aspects of preventing the spread of Covid-19 such as social physical distancing, the availability of representative hand washing facilities and warnings the use of masks. Similarly, human resources involved in tourism are paying attention to efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Thus, it is necessary that aspects of health protocols be incorporated into government regulatory clauses in the field of tourism such as in Ripparda and technical instructions for its implementation through the regulations of regents as well as governors and mayors.

Kendari city has an area of 295 km<sup>2</sup> located on the eastern coast of Southeast Sulawesi. Based on its unique geographical location, the development of tourist destinations is directed to increase the value of local attractions of the existing coastal areas dominated by natural and marine tourism. In addition to several marine tourism destinations, there are also cultural attraction, the special interest attraction and so on. Figure 2 shows the types of tourist attraction in Kendari City.

At least there are 29 tourist attractions with their own peculiarities, which 59% is natural tourism includes the beach tourism and natural attractions such as Kendari Bay, Nambo Beach and Kendari Botanical Garden, then 24% of the types is cultural tourism such as Kendari state museum, the tomb of kings, customs of the Tolaki tribe and so on. Furthermore, 10% of them consist of specific interest tourism such as tours of woven and silver craft places, while the remaining 7% is artificial tourism such as MTQ monument and Al-Alam Mosque in Kendari Bay.

The local wisdom is a differentiator between one tourist destination and another. Most tourists will first ask what is unique in the tourist destination. Tourist destinations that maintain the value of local wisdom will benefit a lot from tourism activities. Noviyanti et al, 2021 shows that the value of local wisdom plays a role in sustainable tourism<sup>12</sup>. Local



**Figure 2:** Tourism attraction types in Kendari City.

wisdom can thus be viewed as an intrinsic value maintained by the local community to protect and preserve the natural conditions of a place.

The government of Kendari City through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, especially in the field of destination development and tourism industry, has a duty in the formulation and implementation of operational policies in the field of Destinations and Tourism Industry. The tasks carried out by the destination field and tourism industry are:

1. A policy in the field of destinations, strategic areas of tourism and the tourism industry.
2. The establishing of the standardization of tourism business in the development of destinations and strategic areas of tourism.
3. Collecting materials and preparing operational technical plans in the field of tourism industry destinations.
4. Carry out technical guidance on destination development and tourism industry
5. Provide recommendations for the list of tourism businesses
6. Monitoring and evaluating the development of destinations and the tourism industry.

As mentioned above, the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years has decreased the performance of the tourism sector around the world. The Kendari city also experienced

the impact of a decrease in tourist visits during the pandemic. Furthermore, the tourism sector was completely stopped because of a lock down by the city government to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The Mayor of Kendari issued a Letter of Instruction No. 443.1/1233/2020 on 8 April 2020, concerning three days lockdown starting on April 10 to 12, 2020. The policy of tightening community activities continues through PPKM (or Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement or CARE) with various levels depending on the extent of the Covid-19 spread in the area.



**Figure 3:** (left) Kalosara Park design in front of the Kendari mayor's office [13], and (right) the Kalosara formation consisting of Kalo, the white scarf, and Siwole [14].

One of the strategies pursued by the Kendari City Government in the development of the tourism sector based on the local wisdom value is to maintain local wisdom and authenticity, organize and establish that each tourist attraction has its own peculiarities. This strategy was implemented, one of them, in the Kalosara park development plan in front of the Office of the Mayor of Kendari. Kalosara Park was built as a unifying symbol of the compound Kendari City community. Kalosara Park was developed to become an informal place for social, sports, and even economic activities.

The Kalosara park development plan was agreed in 2020 ago. Then continued with discussions by indigenous leaders of Tolaki, the city government, and the community through Focus Group Discussion in early August 2021. The city government does need to find a breakthrough to attract tourists to visit Kendari City, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that the park with the concept of local wisdom can transform tourism perspective into sustainability by enhance the cooperation with the local entrepreneurs such as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It has been proven that the SMEs is the most survive sectors during the economic crisis<sup>15</sup>.

Based on some literacy states that Kalosara is a set of objects that become the symbol of social class of the indigenous Tolaki people in Southeast Sulawesi. Kalosara is also becoming a symbol of unity and peace that is very sacred in the life of the Tolaki Tribe<sup>16</sup>. Physically, the Kalosara is formed with a circle-shaped rattan that both ends are



collected and placed on a sheet of square-shaped cloth webbing. This tradition that remains sustainable is commonly held in resolving a dispute or death in the life of the Tolaki people who are currently scattered in the Konawe Regency Area, South Konawe Regency and Kendari City. Kalo or Kalosara is a circular object made of three rattan threads that are then wrapped to the left opposite to the clockwise direction. The end of the winding is then knotted or, where the two ends of the rattan are hidden in the knot, while the other end of the rattan is left out.

For the Tolaki people, known philosophy *Inae konasara ieto pinesara, Inae liasara ieto pinekasara* which means *Whoever appreciates customs then he will be glorified but whoever does not appreciate customs then he will not be appreciated*. Kalosara is considered as all sources of customs, including a legal system in the Tolaki society. The rattan circle has a square-shaped white scarf welder in which the bottom layer is woven (from the leaves of the forest palm).

In the custom of the Tolaki people, Kalosara is used as a means of customary marriage ceremonies, king inauguration, important guest welcome, peace ceremonies over a dispute, a tool for several figures to convey something/opinion to the office, and as a tool for conveying family party invitations. Kalosara is in its utilization equipped with a woven container of the palm leaf stalks, white scarf as a base<sup>16</sup>. Kalosara has a deep meaning, where through the Kalosara media, knowledge, values, and socio-cultural skills Tolaki can grow and develop during society as a positive character development<sup>14</sup>.

## 4. Conclusions

Tourism sector recovery efforts meet severe challenges in the current Covid-19 pandemic. However, various efforts are made by the government to improve these conditions. This paper has presented how the approach of local wisdom values is incorporated into Kendari city tourism development policy. One example presented is the construction of the Kalosara park in front of the Office of Mayor Kendari. Tourism object is expected to be in great demand by tourists if the values of local wisdom contained in cultural preservation can be raised. These values will be in great demand by tourists both domestically and abroad. Government policy and cooperation among all stakeholders to increase interest in the tourism sector that decreased due to the Covid-19 pandemic is needed.

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