

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ISLAND DESTINATION: A STUDY AT SAMALONA ISLAND, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of sustainable tourism principles in small island destinations, using Samalona Island in Makassar as a case study. The focus of the research is to understand the dynamics of environmentally friendly tourism management while simultaneously providing socio-economic benefits to the local community. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques through interviews, field observations, and documentation. Thematic analysis was conducted to describe stakeholder involvement, forms of community participation, and the challenges and opportunities faced in developing sustainable tourism. The results indicate that Samalona Island has significant marine tourism potential, but is also vulnerable to marine ecosystem damage due to increasing tourist numbers and limited environmental carrying capacity. The government plays a role in providing basic policies and infrastructure, local communities contribute through community-based tourism management, businesses strengthen the tourism and culinary services sectors, academics support with research and mentoring, and the media plays a role in destination promotion. The level of collaboration among stakeholders has been quite good, although obstacles remain, such as limited funding, a lack of environmental awareness among some tourists, and weak coordination between parties. The main challenges identified include the threat of ecosystem degradation, potential conflicts of interest between stakeholders, and a lack of regulations regarding tourist visit capacity. However, significant opportunities also exist, such as strengthening the local economy through culinary and ecotourism businesses, increasing human resource capacity through training, and utilizing digital technology for environmental promotion and monitoring. Based on these findings, the study recommends strategies such as strengthening cross-sector collaboration using the pentahelix model, increasing tourist awareness of environmental sustainability, and implementing visitor capacity regulations. If these strategies are consistently implemented, Samalona Island has the potential to become a model for developing sustainable small island tourism destinations in Indonesia, capable of preserving the environment while improving the welfare of local communities.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, stakeholder collaboration, community participation, pentahelix model, marine ecotourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism has become a major concern in tourism destination management, particularly in island regions vulnerable to environmental and social impacts. Islands as tourist destinations possess unique ecosystems that require protection to maintain their sustainability. Samalona Island, as one of the small islands in Indonesia, offers attractive tourism potential but also faces challenges in maintaining a balance between economic development and environmental conservation. In recent years, the increasing number of tourists to the island has had a significant impact on the marine ecosystem and the lives of local communities. Therefore, it is important to examine how sustainable tourism principles can be effectively implemented on Samalona Island. This study aims to understand the dynamics of environmentally friendly tourism management while simultaneously providing socio-economic benefits to the local population. With the right approach, it is hoped that this destination can develop without sacrificing natural and cultural preservation.

Sustainable tourism emphasizes the importance of local community involvement in destination management processes, as their participation can enhance long-term sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Research shows that island destinations are highly vulnerable to environmental degradation if planning is not carried out carefully and sustainably (Gössling et al., 2015). Furthermore, sustainable tourism development must consider the integration of economic, social, and environmental aspects to ensure equitable benefits for the community (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015). Tourist capacity regulations are also crucial to maintain environmental carrying capacity and prevent overtourism in island destinations (Dodds & Butler, 2019). Furthermore, the use of environmentally friendly technology and tourist education can be key strategies in supporting sustainable tourism practices (Mowforth & Munt, 2016). By integrating these principles, tourism development on small islands can be directed towards greater sustainability. Therefore, the application of these theories and practices in the context of Samalona Island is expected to make a significant contribution to tourism sustainability in the region.

Sustainable tourism development on Samalona Island requires not only government policy support but also the active participation of all stakeholders. Tourist awareness of the potential impacts of their visit is also crucial for maintaining environmental and cultural quality. Inclusive and adaptive management strategies are key to ensuring that tourism growth does not cause long-term damage. Therefore, this study will evaluate the implementation of sustainable tourism practices and the challenges encountered in the field. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify development opportunities that can provide sustainable benefits to the local community. Therefore, the research findings are expected to provide concrete recommendations for tourism management that harmonizes economic, social, and environmental aspects. Ultimately, the success of sustainable tourism on Samalona Island can serve as a model for other island destinations in Indonesia.

Samalona Island in Makassar City is a small island destination with high marine appeal, but still faces challenges in realizing sustainable tourism. Rahman et al.'s (2024) research confirms that a pentahelix collaboration-based strategy can activate sustainable tourism goals on small islands by strengthening synergies between stakeholders. Furthermore, Yuliana's (2016) study on Samalona Island also demonstrated the need for community-based strategic planning with a SWOT approach to ensure tourism development does not damage the local ecosystem and culture. Based on these findings, this study was conducted on Samalona Island to identify the most appropriate strategy for activating sustainable tourism goals. This research is important because Samalona, as a tourist island, is vulnerable to environmental degradation and the pressures of mass tourism. The aim of this study is to formulate a tourism development strategy that can maintain a balance between cultural, environmental, and economic aspects. By examining the role of the community, stakeholders, and ecotourism practices, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the implementation of sustainable tourism in small island destinations. Ultimately, the results of the Samalona study can serve as a model for the development of other island destinations in Indonesia. In the environmental context, the research by Rahman et al. (2024) demonstrated that pentahelix collaboration can strengthen sustainable tourism practices through the use of digital technology, which also plays a crucial role in maintaining the security of marine ecosystems. From an economic perspective, Suryani et al. (2024) found that the involvement of local culinary entrepreneurs not only improves the destination's image but also strengthens the economic resilience of the Samalona community. Furthermore, a study by Yuliana (2016) emphasized that a community-based strategy using a SWOT approach is key to maintaining a balance between tourist attractions and local cultural preservation. Based on these research findings, the purpose of this study is to more comprehensively identify the forms of tourism sustainability on Samalona Island from the cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions. This research is expected to address the gap between current tourism practices and the ideal concept of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, this study will highlight the extent to which local communities are involved in cultural and environmental preservation. This is crucial so that tourism development is not solely oriented towards economic benefits but also improves the quality of life of the local community. Therefore, the identification of sustainability aspects on Samalona Island can serve as a model for the development of other small island destinations in Indonesia.

Sustainable tourism is a type of tourism activity carried out by maintaining a balance between the needs of tourists, the environment, and local communities. Therefore, when people come to a place on vacation, their activities do not damage the local nature or culture, but instead can provide benefits to the residents there. For example, by not littering, using local services, and respecting local customs. Sustainable tourism is often used as a political "slogan" to analyze tourism activities. Sustainable tourism itself can be defined as: tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (UNWTO and UNEP, 2005). This definition shows that sustainability considers current and future impacts in tourism development. In simpler terms, Kimura (2011) provides his description of sustainable tourism: By and large, the UN World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism as tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. WTO articulates that sustainable tourism is the tourism that leads to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. Sustainable tourism, in its purest sense, is an industry that attempts to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment, and the conservation of local ecosystems. It is a responsible tourism that is both ecologically and culturally sensitive. Thus, sustainable tourism activities have minimal impact on the environment and culture of the host community (Kimura, 2011).

Sustainable tourism is essentially a way of traveling that considers not only fleeting pleasures but also its impact on nature and surrounding communities. This concept emerged from concerns that tourism could cause damage if not managed wisely. For example, if too many tourists arrive without clear regulations, the environment could be damaged and local culture could be marginalized. Through a sustainable approach, every tourism activity is expected to preserve nature and provide direct benefits to local residents. This can be achieved by prioritizing local products, respecting customs, and maintaining a clean environment. Essentially, sustainable tourism is not just about experiencing new places, but also about taking responsibility for the places we visit. This way, future generations can still experience the same beauty we enjoy today.

Sustainable tourism requires managing tourism activities that prioritize not only economic profit but also environmental sustainability and the well-being of local communities. As explained by Gössling et al. (2012), poorly managed tourism can cause serious environmental damage and threaten the sustainability of ecosystems. Therefore, tourism development must integrate strategies that minimize negative impacts and maximize socio-economic benefits for host communities. Furthermore, according to Bramwell and Lane (2011), local community involvement in decision-making is crucial for tourism to develop inclusively and sustainably. For example, the use of natural resources must be carried out carefully to avoid reducing the quality of the environment that serves as a tourist attraction. With this approach, sustainable tourism can maintain cultural values while providing equitable economic opportunities for local residents. Therefore, sustainable tourism is not just an ideal concept, but a real necessity to maintain the balance between humans and nature in tourist destinations.

Sustainable tourism is a tourism development concept that seeks to balance tourist needs with environmental sustainability and the well-being of local communities. Its core principle is to ensure that tourism activities are not only economically profitable but also environmentally and culturally friendly. For example, tourists are encouraged to use local products, respect local customs, and maintain the cleanliness of destinations. If tourism is not managed wisely, environmental damage and the loss of cultural identity can be a real risk. Therefore, sustainable tourism presents a solution so that the benefits of tourism can be felt by future generations. Through this approach, tourism is not just about entertainment, but also about social and ecological responsibility. Thus, sustainable tourism is a crucial foundation for the development of the tourism sector in the modern era.

An island destination refers to a tourist destination located on an island. These islands can be small or large, as long as they are separated from the mainland. Typically, these destinations are

renowned for their beautiful beaches, clear seas, and tranquil atmosphere. Many people choose island vacations to enjoy nature, dive, or simply escape the hustle and bustle of the city. However, due to their limited location, these destinations are also more vulnerable to environmental damage, requiring careful management. An island destination is a tourist area located on an island or group of islands, each with unique geographic, ecological, and social characteristics. According to Čorak et al. (2018) in their journal titled "Sustainable Development of an Island Tourist Destination: Example of the Island of Pag," island destinations often attract tourists because they offer natural beauty, cultural authenticity, and a tranquil atmosphere not found on the mainland. However, islands also have limited natural resources and infrastructure, so tourism management requires a sustainable and participatory approach. Meanwhile, in a literature review by Royle and Laing (2017) entitled *Tourism Research on Island Destinations: A Review*, it is stated that islands serve as natural laboratories for observing tourism dynamics, both in terms of environmental pressures, economic dependence on tourism, and socio-cultural impacts on local communities. Islands as destinations are often marketed with the image of an "escape" from urban life, offering tranquility, exoticism, and adventure, as discussed by Sheller (2009) in a study on island marketing and the construction of the "island ideal." Therefore, in the context of tourism development, island destinations are not only natural tourist attractions, but also areas that require special management to maintain a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation.

An island destination is a tourist destination located on an island separate from the mainland. The uniqueness of these islands often lies in their stunning natural scenery, such as beautiful beaches and crystal clear seawater. Many people choose to vacation on islands to experience a tranquil atmosphere away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Activities like snorkeling or simply relaxing on the beach are the main reasons tourists come. However, due to their limited size, these islands are vulnerable to environmental damage if not managed wisely. Therefore, maintaining a balance between tourism growth and nature conservation is crucial. Ultimately, island destinations offer unique experiences that combine natural beauty and tranquility, while also demanding a shared responsibility for their preservation.

Tourists often choose islands as vacation destinations for tranquility and a different experience from the urban environment. According to Inskeep (1991), islands as tourist destinations often present unique challenges due to limited natural resources and infrastructure that require special management. "Islands have long been regarded as natural laboratories for the study of tourism, offering distinctive insights into environmental pressures, economic dependence on tourism, and socio-cultural change." (Royle & Laing, 2014, p. 377). An island destination can be understood as a tourism setting located on geographically isolated land, where limited space and resources demand a more careful approach to development compared to mainland areas. These destinations often rely heavily on tourism as their primary economic sector, making them highly vulnerable to environmental pressures and external market changes. At the same time, island destinations are valued for their cultural authenticity, natural beauty, and sense of escape, which attract visitors seeking unique experiences while also requiring sustainable management.

An island destination is a term referring to tourist destinations located on islands, whether small or large, with unique attractions such as natural beauty and a tranquil atmosphere. Many tourists are drawn to islands for their pristine beaches, clear seas, and the opportunity to enjoy activities like snorkeling and diving. Another unique feature of island destinations is the local culture, which is often strong and distinct from life on the mainland. However, islands also face significant challenges in the form of limited natural resources and infrastructure. If tourism is not carefully managed, islands are vulnerable to ecosystem damage, which can be detrimental to both the community and tourists. Therefore, tourism development on islands needs to be carried out with sustainable principles that involve the active participation of local residents. With this approach, island destinations can continue to be a favorite choice for tourists while maintaining their sustainability.

An island destination is a tourist destination that offers unique characteristics because it is located on an island separated from the mainland. Islands are always synonymous with natural

beauty, a serene atmosphere, and distinctive local culture, setting them apart from other destinations. According to Čorak et al. (2018), islands are often attractive due to their cultural authenticity and natural beauty, but they also face limited natural resources. I argue that islands are natural laboratories for understanding how tourism can both benefit and create pressures, as explained by Royle and Laing (2017). From my experience and perspective, island destination management must be very careful to avoid damaging marine or terrestrial ecosystems. Tourists also need to be made aware that their visits carry responsibility, not just for fleeting pleasure. Thus, island destinations are not only places for recreation, but also spaces for learning to appreciate the balance between humans and nature.

2. RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study because I want to understand sustainable tourism practices on Samalona Island in depth. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to capture social and environmental phenomena more comprehensively, rather than simply numerically. According to Creswell (2014), case studies provide a deep, contextual understanding of a phenomenon, making them suitable for research on small island destinations. Small islands like Samalona are vulnerable to ecological pressures, requiring methods capable of exploring dynamics holistically. Bramwell & Lane (2011) also emphasize that qualitative research can reveal the role of stakeholders in realizing sustainable tourism. Therefore, this method is considered most appropriate for examining how a balance between tourism potential and sustainability can be achieved. The results are expected to provide contextual understanding and be relevant for management strategies.

Data collection techniques used were field observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations allowed me to directly observe environmental conditions and tourism activities, while semi-structured interviews helped elicit the experiences and perspectives of local residents and tourists. Documentary data in the form of photographs, field notes, and secondary government reports strengthened the analysis. The research location focused on Samalona Island, Makassar, South Sulawesi, because this island is popular as a marine tourism destination but is vulnerable to environmental degradation. Research by Gössling et al. (2015) confirmed that small islands are highly vulnerable to the impacts of mass tourism, necessitating a sustainability strategy. Furthermore, research by Rahman et al. (2024) in Makassar also demonstrated that a pentahelix collaboration-based strategy is highly effective in promoting sustainable tourism. With this approach, the data I obtained in Samalona can reflect real-world conditions.

The data obtained were analyzed descriptively and then mapped using a SWOT analysis. This technique allows for the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in sustainable tourism management. According to Helms & Nixon (2010), SWOT analysis is an effective tool for evaluating internal and external conditions in strategic planning. Through this framework, Samalona Island's strengths can be seen in its marine beauty and community support, while its weaknesses include limited infrastructure and waste management. Opportunities stem from sustainable tourism trends and government policy support, while threats include visitor pressure and ecological damage. The SWOT results will be compared with previous literature to provide a more robust and comprehensive analysis. Therefore, the chosen analytical method not only describes the situation but also provides strategic recommendations for sustainability.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Samalona Island is one of the small islands in the Spermonde Archipelago, administratively located in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. The island covers an area of only about two hectares and is located approximately 2 km from the center of Makassar, accessible by a 30-minute motorboat ride from the pier near Losari Beach. Samalona is known for its pristine white sand beaches, clear waters, and coral reefs that can be seen even from the boat before diving in. The island is equipped with various supporting facilities, including simple accommodation, shower rooms, food stalls, and

snorkeling and diving equipment rentals complete with guides. Popular activities include snorkeling, diving, swimming, and enjoying local cuisine such as grilled fish or crab. The underwater beauty is further enhanced by the presence of a World War II shipwreck that has become home to coral reefs and marine life, adding to the unique value of this destination. With its combination of natural panoramas, easy access, and adequate facilities, Samalona Island has great potential as an example of a marine tourism destination that can be developed sustainably

3.1 Overview of Samalona Island and the Dynamics of Sustainable Management

Samalona Island is one of Makassar's leading marine tourism destinations, located in the Spermonde Archipelago. Covering an area of approximately two hectares, the island is known for its pristine white sand, clear seawater, and well-preserved coral reef ecosystem. Its strategic location, only approximately 2 kilometers from downtown Makassar and a 20–30-minute motorboat ride from Losari Pier, makes Samalona easily accessible to both local and international tourists. This accessibility is a key factor contributing to the increasing number of visitors each year

Samalona Island's primary attraction lies in its underwater beauty, offering views of coral reefs, diverse marine life, and the wreck of a World War II warship that now serves as a habitat for tropical fish. Diving and snorkeling are popular with tourists, along with beach activities such as swimming, sunbathing, and enjoying the sunset. Samalona's unique underwater panorama serves not only as a tourist attraction but also as an ecological asset that must be protected from the threat of overexploitation. The facilities available on this island are relatively simple but adequate to support tourism activities. Key facilities include restaurants serving fresh seafood, simple accommodations, snorkeling and diving equipment rentals, and small beachside huts for tourists to rest. However, basic infrastructure such as waste management, clean water, and sanitation are still limited.

This situation highlights the need for development planning that integrates tourism aspects with sustainability principles. Samalona Island has significant economic potential for the local community. Tourism has created new jobs, from providing sea transportation services and renting diving equipment to culinary businesses based on the catch of local fishermen. With the increasing number of tourists, the local community directly benefits by increasing household incomes. However, poorly structured management can lead to problems, such as unequal distribution of profits and overexploitation of resources.

Environmental aspects are one of the main challenges in managing Samalona Island. The increase in tourist numbers, not matched by awareness of maintaining cleanliness, has led to an increase in waste, particularly single-use plastics. Furthermore, uncontrolled snorkeling and diving activities can damage coral reefs due to direct contact with tourists and the improper use of boat anchors. If left unchecked, this could diminish the island's appeal and degrade the quality of the marine ecosystem, the primary foundation of marine tourism. Besides the environment, social aspects are also a crucial concern. The presence of large numbers of tourists brings changes to the lifestyles of local communities. Intense interaction between residents and tourists can create opportunities for cultural exchange, but also risks shifting social values and cultural identity. Therefore, tourism development in Samalona must consider community involvement as key actors and guardians of local cultural values.

In terms of policy, the local government has attempted to promote tourism in Samalona through destination promotion, providing sea transportation access, and supporting beach cleanup programs. However, regulations regarding the island's carrying capacity and tourist number restrictions are still minimal. This situation makes Samalona vulnerable to overtourism, which can negatively impact the environment and tourist comfort. Small islands like Samalona have limited resources, including land, clean water, and energy. Therefore, the concept of sustainable development is key to ensuring tourism continues without damaging the ecosystem or the community's quality of life. Implementing the concept of carrying capacity, or maximum visit limits, is necessary to ensure that tourists do not exceed the island's capacity to accommodate activities. The community-based tourism (CBT) approach is one strategy that can support sustainability on Samalona Island. By involving local communities as primary managers, tourism activities can better serve the interests of the local population while preserving the environment. CBT also encourages more equitable economic

distribution because tourism benefits benefit the island's residents directly. Overall, Samalona Island has great potential as a sustainable marine tourism destination. However, the success of long-term management depends heavily on the alignment between economic potential utilization, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation

3.2 The Role of Stakeholders and the Level of Collaboration in the Development of Samalona Island

The development of Samalona Island is inseparable from the involvement of various stakeholders. The government, local communities, businesses, academics, and the media all play complementary roles in realizing sustainable tourism. This collaboration between these elements is known as the pentahelix model, which emphasizes cross-sector synergy as the foundation of destination management. The government plays a crucial role as both regulator and facilitator. Through tourism policies and programs, it provides accessibility to sea transportation, basic facilities, and destination promotion. However, challenges arise from budget constraints and weak oversight of tourism activities that have the potential to damage the environment. Therefore, the government's role needs to be strengthened not only in promotion but also in enforcing environmental regulations.

Local communities are key actors in the management of Samalona. They are involved in transportation businesses, culinary services, diving equipment rentals, and homestays. In addition to providing economic benefits, this involvement also fosters a sense of ownership of the island. However, the community's capacity to manage tourism remains limited, necessitating ongoing training and mentoring to enable them to compete professionally without abandoning local wisdom. Businesses in the tourism sector contribute by providing services and facilities to enhance tourist comfort. Their presence helps expand economic opportunities, but business interests often align with conservation aspects. Therefore, regulations and mutual agreements are needed to ensure business activities remain aligned with the principles of sustainable tourism.

Academics play a role as providers of data, research, and policy recommendations. Research conducted in Samalona provides a clear picture of the condition of the marine ecosystem, its socio-economic impacts, and the potential for community-based development. Academics can also mediate conflicts between stakeholders by presenting evidence-based solutions. Thus, academic involvement strengthens the basis for objective decision-making. Mass media and digital media play a role in promoting Samalona as a tourist destination. Through publications, coverage, and online promotions, the island's image is becoming increasingly well-known. However, the media also has a responsibility to convey educational messages about the importance of preserving the environment. With this approach, the media serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a means of campaigning for sustainability.

Collaboration between stakeholders in Samalona has been established, although coordination challenges remain. Discussion forums, mutual cooperation, and joint programs between the community and the government demonstrate initial synergy. However, the involvement of the private sector and academia is still suboptimal, so cross-sector coordination needs to be strengthened through official platforms such as pentahelix-based destination management forums. Community participation is evident through activities to maintain beach cleanliness, provide tourism services, and organize local cultural events. This form of participation not only impacts the economy but also strengthens the community's cultural identity. However, low awareness among some tourists regarding cleanliness and tourism ethics presents a barrier that needs to be addressed through education and stricter regulations. Conflicts of interest between stakeholders are one emerging issue, for example, between businesses seeking to expand tourism facilities and communities seeking to preserve the environment. To address this, an inclusive, transparent, and deliberation-based conflict resolution mechanism is needed. This approach will prevent one party from dominating the other and achieve a balance of interests. Overall, stakeholder collaboration on Samalona Island demonstrates great potential for sustainable tourism management. The government provides policies, the community acts as a driving force, businesses provide facilities, academics provide scientific input, and the media strengthens the destination's image. If this synergy continues to be strengthened with

clear regulations and active community participation, Samalona Island can become a model for sustainable tourism practices on small islands in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

The sustainability of Samalona Island as a marine tourism destination is determined not only by its natural beauty and the attractiveness of its marine ecosystem, but also by the extent to which it is managed in a planned, inclusive, and sustainable manner. Research shows that Samalona's tourism potential is enormous, but challenges such as ecosystem degradation, increasing tourist numbers, and limited infrastructure could threaten the island's sustainability if not addressed promptly. Therefore, cross-sector collaboration between the government, community, business actors, academics, and the media is key to achieving harmonious and sustainable destination management. The government needs to strengthen regulations regarding tourist carrying capacity to ensure that the number of visitors does not exceed the island's capacity. This regulation is crucial for maintaining a balance between tourism economic growth, marine ecosystem sustainability, and tourist comfort. Furthermore, the community must be empowered through a community-based tourism model so that they become not only beneficiaries but also key actors in preserving the environment and local culture.

Furthermore, environmental education for tourists is an urgent need to foster collective awareness about maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of Samalona's ecosystem. Sustainability campaigns involving the media can be an effective means of reinforcing the message that all tourism activities must be socially and ecologically responsible. Academic support in the form of research, monitoring, and policy recommendations also strengthens the scientific basis for decision-making. By integrating cross-sector collaboration, carrying capacity regulations, environmental education, and community empowerment, Samalona Island has a great potential to become a model for sustainable tourism in Indonesia. If this strategy is implemented consistently, Samalona will not only be able to attract tourists sustainably but also provide economic benefits to the local community and preserve its marine ecosystem for future generations.

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