

MANAGING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AS A PART OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AT AMARTA RETREAT & RECREATION

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ABSTRAK

Purpose: The number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Bali decreased significantly during COVID-19. Amarta Retreat & Recreation in Tabanan, Bali, tends to reduce the number of tourists and the occupancy rate of bamboo villas in 2020 and 2021. Business management needs to be analyzed according to sustainable tourism indicators, primarily economic aspects, because of the impact of the pandemic. This research aims to determine how to manage economic sustainability and develop a management model to improve financial sustainability according to sustainable tourism indicators.

Methods: This study uses a qualitative approach, with data collection techniques of interviews, observations, document studies, and focus group discussions (FGD). It is based on interactive model data analysis activities with the NVivo 12 Plus tool.

Implication: There are several aspects of the indicators that must be improved, namely the development of a system for managing comments and feedback from tourists, developing travel routes within the resort by developing tour package products, improving website performance as a marketing tool, optimizing strategies for the rebranding process, and considering brand protection as intellectual property.

Keywords: tourist attraction, resort, sustainable tourism, economic sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of sustainability in all aspects is a problem for many business companies spread across various countries with high productivity levels in different industrial sectors, including the tourism industry. Sustainability is closely related to the triple bottom line, a general concept of meeting current needs without compromising future needs. This approach balances economic activity with environmental responsibility and social progress (Nurany et al., 2021). This aligns with Widana and Utama (2020) that sustainable tourism is expected to meet environmental or ecological protection. By referring to the triple bottom line concept, the company will pay attention to the areas or responsibilities of the company's performance, especially on environmental and social impacts, not only the economy as a company goal (Wirananta & Sarja, 2020).

The rapid development of the tourism business has become a dynamic social and economic phenomenon and impacts society (Johari et al., 2021). Before the COVID-19 pandemic hurt the tourism sector, implementing business in the tourism sector itself, in principle, could also negatively influence several aspects of human life.

The results of research conducted by Zhao & Li (2018) regarding the negative impact of tourism in China, especially the development of tourist objects, affect the geological landscape and the land where tourist attractions are developed. When tourists travel to tourist spots, it affects the air, animals, and plants. The number of tourists in tourist attractions that exceeds capacity, artificial tourist attractions, urbanization, and Commercialization in natural scenic areas is a serious problem—not only happening in various parts of other countries but also in Bali.

The local community's perception of the development of accommodation in Seminyak has significantly impacted the Seminyak area's environmental aspects, including the issue of conversion and land ownership. The issue of land conversion can affect local people's livelihoods, physical changes (structure and portions), pollution in rice fields and rivers, and the availability of clean water (Arcana, 2016). Meanwhile, similar findings were put forward by (Sutawa, 2012); in general, the development of Bali as a tourist destination impacts land conversion very quickly along with the development of tourism and rapid population migration growth.

Various ideas and solutions were put forward for massive tourism prevention, one of which was about the concept of sustainable tourism. The definition of sustainability can lead to increasing well-being or quality of life. The concept of sustainability will explain the importance of various capital in the tourism business; financial and natural resource capital is also significant (Moscardo & Murphy, 2014). Based on the World Commission on Environmental and Development, as quoted in Benevene & Buonomo (2020), sustainability can be interpreted as a development that meets current needs without destroying resources, which can affect the ability to meet future needs. The concept of sustainable development refers to sustainable management in the tourism sector. As one of the fields developed in sustainable development, the tourism sector has requirements, including realizing economic, ecological, and socio-cultural sustainability (Ridho et al., 2021). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Durovic & Lovrentjev (2014) defines sustainable tourism as tourism that entirely considers current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts. In applying the concept of sustainable tourism, various indicators can be used as a measuring tool to determine whether a tourism business has been said to meet the concept of sustainability. One of them is an indicator that is regulated internationally by UNWTO (Guidebook, 2004), adopted by Sulistyadi et al. (2019) and adapted to the tourism situation in Indonesia in a book entitled "Indicators of Sustainable Tourism Development Planning" 2019. Inside, the book also describes various indicators that can be used as guidelines in designing sustainable tourism development regarding economic, social, and environmental aspects. This applied research, which focuses on managing the sustainability of the economic aspect, uses the indicators contained in the book as a guide.

Amarta Retreat & Recreation, from now on referred to as Amarta, is one of the tourist destinations in Bali that have a resort concept. Amarta is categorized as an attraction because it has tourist facilities and exciting tourist attractions supported by beautiful views of rice fields and mountains (Prideaux, 2009). The phenomenon in the tourism business process in Amarta is that the number of tourist arrivals tends to decrease from 2020 to 2021. Apart from the result of the pandemic situation and government regulations regarding restrictions on community activities, according to the results of interviews with the owner and one of the consultants who helped develop the Amarta Retreat & Destination.

This recreation, other factors that cause the level of tourist visits to decline, such as the absence of a strong and targeted marketing strategy. This is contrary to the results of research from Natasha (2021) regarding marketing strategies at the Bali Paragon Hotel to increase income during the COVID-19 pandemic. Natasha's research found that marketing strategy is an essential thing that tourism business owners must be able to modify. Various marketing strategies can be applied to increase hotel revenue, including the stay-cation package at Hotel Bali Paragon. In addition to managing marketing strategies, Amarta owners have not maximized and planned rebranding activities correctly. The rebranding process is a risky action that the business owner decides. If the rebranding process is not carried out optimally, it can risk business continuity. If the rebranding process is not optimal, consumers who have trusted and know the old product will not easily believe in the new brand. The research supports the results from Susilo et al. (2021) about the importance of branding in supporting marketing activities in Mina Giri's business. The results of research by Susilo et al. (2021) show that the marketing department's role is needed to stimulate the marketing process and to increase brand awareness of the products owned by the company.

Suppose the problems and obstacles faced by the Amarta Retreat & Recreation managers can be appropriately handled. In that case, the Amarta Retreat & Recreation business management can be stable, increase tourist visits, and impact economic sustainability – several references from the success of tourism management evidence this. One of the positive impacts of tourism development is explained by Widari (2020). The study on sustainable tourism development policies shows that tourist arrivals to Jatiluwih Village bring economic benefits, such as increasing income profits for business owners. The success of tourism management is also felt by tourism business people in Nusa Lembongan. The results of research from Mahaggangaa (2018) regarding the development of tourism on the condition of the people of Nusa Lembongan Island showed that the most significant impact tourism business owners feel is the economic aspect of increasing business income. On the other hand, tourism activities in Keboireng Village, which are well-managed thanks to the cooperation of various parties, can have a positive impact on the development of the tourism business in the form of increasing the income of business actors from the aspect of increasing profits up to Rp. 1.000.000/month (Dananjaya, 2019).

Based on the background described, this study aims to develop a sustainable tourism model, especially in the economic aspect, to achieve the concept of sustainable tourism. The sustainable tourism economic sustainability model results from various phenomena obtained in the field, which are abstracted with various theories, so it is expected to provide the latest concept on the management of sustainable tourism economic sustainability in Amarta.

METHODS

This research was conducted at Amarta Retreat & Recreation in Munduk Juwet Village, Pesagi, Penebel District, Tabanan Regency, Bali Province. Amarta Retreat & Recreation can be accessed within approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes from Denpasar, the capital city of Bali Province. The research will be carried out from September 17, 2021, to February 6, 2022, but on an ongoing basis. If there is important information that can support the research results and is by the topic of this research, then changes or additions to critical information will continue so that it will produce research with the latest information and actual.

The data collection methods were interviews, observation, document studies, and focus group discussions (FGD). This study uses semi-structured interviews, which are included in the in-depth interview category. Interviews were conducted with the owners of Amarta Retreat & Recreation, staff, tourists, and marketing agencies. As an applied research, the observation data collection technique is participant observation. In the observation of active participation, the researcher came to the place being observed and participated in what the informant was doing. For the documentation method, the author uses the scientific paper search method on the Google Scholar search engine, open library, or through the Indonesian National Library website.

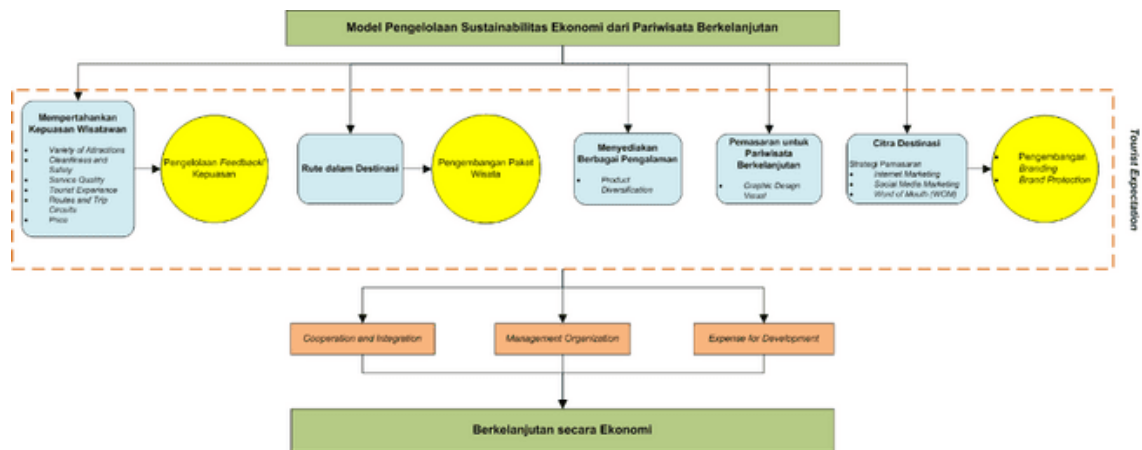


Figure 2. Economic Sustainability Management Model in Sustainable Tourism based on to Focus Group Results

(Source: Palguna, 2022)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the tourist satisfaction management indicator, some aspects must be improved, namely the mechanism for managing tourist comments/feedback; the accessibility aspect requires the government's role in improving road access, while the service quality aspect gets a positive response from tourists. In the circuit indicators and travel routes, it is necessary to develop and align several tourist attractions so that they can form a tour package within the resort. In terms of providing various experiences, the management of Amarta is desirable, with a variety of tourist attractions owned by a consistent concept of blending activities with nature.

Tourist satisfaction is the main factor determining whether or not the tourists will return. If tourists are satisfied, it will increase the chances of returning, and vice versa. Several aspects can affect tourist satisfaction: the variety of attractions, cleanliness and safety, service quality, tourist experiences, routes, trip circuits, and price (Guidebook, 2004). Based on the research results by Devi (2021), improving service quality, for example, by training employees, is one of the WT (weakness- threat) strategies for companies to overcome weaknesses. Devi's research is also supported by Kalebos's (2016) results, which show that the quality of service has a significant and positive effect on tourist satisfaction. Some of these aspects are also the leading indicators that support sustainable tourism economically. A variety of attractions that align with the third indicator, namely providing various experiences, will affect tourist experiences.

Another aspect related to other core indicators, namely routes and trip circuits, is aligned with the second indicator, routes within destinations. Routes are related to accessibility; to increase tourist satisfaction, it is necessary to develop route infrastructure in the village of Munduk Juwet. Infrastructure development is significant in increasing accessibility, ultimately improving the quality of tourist destinations (Valeriani et al., 2020). The next factor that influences tourist satisfaction is price. Based on the research results of Sulistiyana et al. (2015), price has a significantly positive effect on tourist satisfaction and is the most dominant factor in tourist satisfaction. When the consumer's perceived value is more excellent or higher for the product or service, the consumer will feel that the product or service has provided satisfaction.



Figure 3 Eco-friendly equipment at Amarta soy sauce bowl
(Source: Palguna, 2022)



Figure 4. Eco-friendly equipment at Amarta Trash can
(Source: Palguna, 2022)

The route within the destination is the second sustainable tourism indicator that can affect economic sustainability. Route planning for each tourist attraction in a destination needs to be done to provide a better tourist experience. Routes within a destination can be translated as a tour package within a destination. The route will integrate one tourist attraction with other relevant and suitable attractions. It can be done by developing tour packages to optimize destination route indicators. Utilizing tour packages that are pretty diverse and attractive can increase tourist interest (Sari, 2016).



Figure 5. Tourist Attractions Tracking (top left) to Pematang Sawah, Cycling (top right), and Cooking Class (bottom)

(Source: Palguna, 2022)

The third indicator is providing various experiences or a variety of attractions. Tourism business managers are expected to provide various experiences to improve economic sustainability. A variety of attractions can be realized through product diversification. The more varied a product is, the more choices there are for tourists, increasing the chances of buying a tourism product. Diversification strategies can also be carried out through service diversification, not only in terms of products. Hence, tourism business managers must determine which part of the diversification they want to do to achieve effectiveness (Vumbunu et al., 2021). The results of Pramono et al. (2020) research on product diversification for the development of tourist villages in Adrejo show the diversification of local food products produced by the community from the red guava yields into various products that have a high selling value in demand by tourists so that they can increase the income of the local community.

The next indicator is marketing for sustainable tourism. More broadly described in the Guidebook (2004), marketing for sustainable tourism is not only how tourism business managers can implement strategies to communicate to a broad audience that their tourist destinations have adopted the concept of sustainable tourism. Deeper than this, this indicator also emphasizes products and experiences that emphasize sustainability, market penetration, measuring tourist responses, and measuring the effectiveness of marketing strategies. Suppose the tourism business manager already has a plan for these things. In that case, one of the most essential things in a marketing strategy for sustainable tourism is graphic design as a visual communication tool to communicate messages optimally to a broad audience.

The fifth indicator that can affect the aspect of economic sustainability is the image of the destination. In the initial concept that economic sustainability is determined by tourist satisfaction, based on the results of research by Sitepu & Rismawati (2021), destination image can significantly affect tourist satisfaction in a broader explanation that the image of a destination can be determined by several factors, namely branding, vision, and marketing strategy.

Marketing efforts towards tourist destinations will coincide with the formation of the image of the destination, so tourism business managers must be able to conceptualize appropriate marketing strategies (internet marketing, social media marketing, or word of mouth) to be able to build a good destination image (Guidebook, 2004). In particular, word of mouth plays a vital role in shaping the destination's image; this is supported by the research results of Prayogo (2021), which found that the higher the word of mouth, the higher the destination's image is hoped that a positive image. In destination image indicators, marketing strategies can be expressed as brand activities, namely, activities carried out to explain brands to consumers (Isdarmanto, 2020).

If all indicators of sustainable tourism can be appropriately implemented, overall tourist satisfaction is expected to be achieved. An appropriate measurement of the impact of tourist satisfaction is the percentage of return visitors to a destination (Guidebook, 2004). The more tourists who visit again and again, the more likely it is that the visitor is satisfied with the tourist destinations that have been visited. This will affect the income of tourist destinations and increase profitability for tourism business managers.

CONCLUSION

The marketing indicators for sustainable tourism have been implemented well by Amarta managers, one of which is using environmentally friendly supporting equipment, thus showing that Amarta is indeed focused on sustainability. The content displayed on social media as a marketing tool has also been conceptualized to give a suitable visual impression to a broad audience. However, regarding the effectiveness of the marketing strategy with the website, it is necessary to improve the website's performance so that the marketing process is more optimal. The last indicator for the management of Amarta in the criteria of sustainable tourism economic sustainability is the protection of the destination's image. Creating a good destination image is carried out in line with marketing activities. The applied marketing strategy has shown a good image of the destination, especially on social media marketing. The aspect that needs to be improved is brand protection for long-term sustainability when the tourism business is getting bigger.

Developing the tourism business to achieve economic sustainability requires the cooperation and integration of various parties. The role of internal parties in the organization requires good management and management. One is implementing POAC management functions (planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling). Evaluation and development of various aspects of organizational management are necessary to ensure that every management function is carried out efficiently and effectively. Management organizations must be emphasized for sustainable tourism indicators' successful implementation and effectiveness (Rifa'i & Wijaya, 2016). This is also supported by Sitepu et al. (2019) in their research results, which state that management aspects directly affect the implementation of sustainable tourism. In addition to the company's internal parties, the role of external parties such as the government and the media is also needed to develop the tourism business. In every tourism business development effort, costs are needed to maximize the desired development effort; the manager's role in financial planning is needed at this phase. When tourist expectations can be met, tourists can become satisfied and increase the chances of returning tourists. This condition is expected to increase profitability and ensure economic sustainability.

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