

Analysis of Public Interest in Sport Tourism of Serapung in the District of Empat Lawang

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the public's interest in recreational sports in Empat Lawang Regency. Serapungan tourism sport is one of the unique local recreational and tourism activities in the area. However, the scientific literature that discusses public interest in floating tourism is still limited. Therefore, this study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive research methods to describe the actual situation. Data was collected through document review, such as records of the number of participants taking part in Serapungan tourism sports activities from 2019 to 2023 sourced from the records of the Empat Lawang Regency Tourism Office. This study identified three types of floats in the sport of floats, namely fast floats, ornamental floats, and casual floats. Fast absorption involves participants swimming by floating on two bamboos with the aim of reaching the finish line as soon as possible. Decorative floats involve boats decorated with various shapes and boarded by several people. Relaxing drift involves a sightseeing trip using the inner tube of the car as a boat and following the river flow to the finish point. This research concludes that the local people are interested in sport tourism in Empat Lawang Regency. However, public interest in free sports still needs further research. With a deeper understanding of people's interest in mass sports, this research can provide a basis for local governments, sports institutions and local communities to formulate effective development strategies. In addition, this research also contributes to the understanding of how traditional sports can remain relevant and attractive amidst the developing trends of modern sports.

Keywords: Absorption, Interest, Sports Tourism

A. Introduction

Sport is a physical or mental activity that is carried out regularly with the aim of maintaining or improving physical fitness, health and skills for the perpetrator. When we do sports, the physical and mental must be aligned so that the goal of getting health and skills can be achieved. Sports usually involve structured, regular and planned physical movements, exercises and competitions to maintain life, improve the quality of life and achieve a level of physical ability that is in accordance with goals (Sinaga,

2016). In addition, sports also have an important role in building character, discipline, and values contained in sports such as hard work, cooperation, fair play, and fighting spirit. Sports activities can be carried out individually or in groups such as running, swimming, soccer, badminton, tennis, yoga, and many other types of sports. Sport has become part of the life of Indonesian people in this era, especially in urban environments. In an urban environment, sport is one of the ways that people can do to maintain health and fitness (Indrawan, & Riyoko, 2020), even more than that, people in big cities in Indonesia make sport a trend and lifestyle combined with tourism.

Sandi (2019) explains that there are various kinds of sports according to needs such as educational sports carried out in schools, achievement sports whose goal is to get achievements, health sports that can improve fitness and rehabilitation sports as a cure for a disease. Sports education is usually carried out in the educational process in educational units or in schools. Achievement sports are usually carried out when someone is involved in or participates in sports activities in one branch whose goal is to get an achievement. Health sports when a person does sports activities that are carried out regularly whose goal is only to get fitness or health, such as participating in aerobics. Rehabilitation sports whose goal is to cure a disease such as swimming can cure or reduce someone who has asthma. Finally, recreational sports are sports that are carried out in nature such as outbound, river sports, mountain climbing sports and so on. From the explanation of these types of sports, at the moment what is currently having rapid development is recreational sports. Recreational sports are sports (physical) motion activities that are able to create the effect of spiritual happiness (Warti, 2022). In recreational sports, a person immediately gets two benefits at once, namely physical health and spiritual health. Recreational sports or tourism have developed very quickly and become an integral part of many aspects of life such as economic, industrial and educational aspects and so on (Hanrdiansyah, 2017). It is clear that when an area has recreational sports or tourism sports it can improve the economy, industry and education.

Furthermore, sport tourism is a sports activity carried out in order to visit tourist attractions and enjoy the natural beauty or cultural uniqueness in the area. According to Handayani, et. al., (2021), recreational sports are activities that involve the large muscles of the human body which have the aim of improving the quality of life in the form of good physical fitness. Sports tourism is usually carried out in an open natural environment, such as mountains, beaches, forests and rivers. Many regions in Indonesia have developed and managed their potential areas to become tourist sports venues and one of them is in Empat Lawang Regency which has river tourism potential which is unique enough to be used as a tourist attraction as well as exercise.

Empat Lawang Regency officially separated from Lahat Regency on April 20, 2007, as one of the regencies in South Sumatra Province and has natural potential which includes rivers that cross its territory. The natural potential in the form of a river is an opportunity to develop tourism sports as an alternative for tourism sports activities for the community. Talking about sports tourism in Empat Lawang cannot be separated from the so-called Serapungan. Serapungan is an iconic traditional sport that is often performed by residents of Empat Lawang Regency in South Sumatra. Serapungan tourism sports only exist in Empat Lawang, because it has become part of the ordinary community activities on the Musi River, Serapungan is indeed a part of local people's lives. "Serapungan means swimming by floating. Serapungan has long been a means of transportation used to cross rivers and transport plantation products. This kind of floating tourism only exists in Empat Lawang Regency," said the Head of the Empat Lawang Culture and Tourism Office.

Now, sports that used to be a means of transportation have also become part of the race to welcoming the anniversary of Empat Lawang Regency, Head of the Empat Lawang Regency Tourism Office, Mgs Nawawi said the Serapungan Festival has become an icon of the Empat Lawang community. This event is held every year from 1980 until now in 2023. As part of efforts to preserve local cultural heritage.

The float tourism sports which are contested every year consist of 3 types of floats, namely fast floats, decorative floats and relaxed floats. Fast absorption uses 2 pieces of bamboo tied to a bamboo length of about 2 meters and is ridden by participants with their bodies sleeping on the bamboo while swimming. This type of floating sport is assessed for speed to the finish line that has been determined, for which participant is the fastest towards the finish line, come out as the winner, while the decorative floats are made of boats decorated with various shapes according to the theme and are ridden in 1 boat consisting of 5-6 people. the judges who have been appointed, then the last is a relaxed float which is usually followed by the community as a tourist trip by using the car's inner tube as a boat and just following the river flow to the finish point.

The serapungan tourism sport in Empat Lawang Regency has always been in great demand by many people. However, until now, scientific literature discussing public interest in serapungan tourism sports in Empat Lawang Regency is still limited. Previous studies have focused more on cultural and historical aspects, while aspects of community interest as participants in sport tourism have rarely been studied in detail. In this context, this study aims to analyze people's interest in floating sports in Empat Lawang Regency. Through this research, it is hoped that it will be revealed to what extent the level of public interest in floating tourism sports from year to year as part of local recreation and tourism activities. With a deeper understanding of people's interest in mass sports, the results of this research can become a basis for local

governments, sports institutions and local communities to formulate effective development strategies. In addition, this research can also contribute to our understanding of how traditional sports can continue to be relevant and attractive in the midst of changing trends in modern sports.

B. Methods

This research is descriptive qualitative research, namely research that includes the ability to explore and gain new insights, gain a deep understanding of the social context, and understand individual experiences holistically and based on facts that occurred in the field during the research. Qualitative research means research conducted to find out real and actual events as a whole about things experienced by the subject, and with descriptions through words and language, by utilizing all scientific methods in a special natural context (Maharani, et. al., 2019). Descriptive research, namely research exposure in the form of reports that describe the actual situation using existing data (Romadhon, & Rustiadi, 2016). Qualitative research collects non-numeric data, such as words, pictures, symbols, and social interactions, using various data collection techniques such as interviews, participatory observation, document analysis, and visual monitoring (Romadhon, & Rustiadi, 2016). This study will use a qualitative approach with data collection techniques using document review in the form of records of the number of participants who took part in Serapungan tourism sports activities in Empat Lawang Regency from 2019 to 2023 sourced from the records of the Empat Lawang Regency Tourism Office. In general, the research method is defined as scientific way to obtain data with specific purposes and uses (Romadhon, & Rustiadi, 2016).

According to Astuti, (2019) Stated that research variables are anything that can be used by researchers to obtain more detailed information to study so as to obtain complete information according to the wishes of researchers so that conclusions can be drawn. The variables in this study are independent variables: Analysis of Community Interest in Serapungan Tourism Sports in Empat Lawang Regency.

Approach This research uses a qualitative approach, where the data obtained is descriptive in nature and emphasizes explanation in a particular context. According to Zain, et. al., 2020), Descriptive research is research that is intended to investigate circumstances, conditions or other things that have been mentioned, the results of which are presented in the form of a research report. In this study the authors wanted to know the interest of the people of Empat Lawang Regency in participating in the Serapungan tourism sport. The research design used was a survey, with research informants being the Head of the Tourism Office through the Head of the Tourism Division of Empat Lawang Regency.

Data collection techniques are methods used by researchers to obtain data in the field. Susanto, & Purnomo, (2016) three basic techniques commonly used in qualitative research as primary data, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. Data collection techniques in this study, namely direct interviews to obtain data from informants, interviews were conducted to obtain data in this field study, the authors conducted in-depth interviews to obtain clear and detailed information. The informant referred to is the Head of the Tourism Office through the Head of the Marketing Division of Empat Lawang Regency, namely Ms. Murni Sari, SE, MM, and documentation when conducting research. Susanto, & Purnomo, (2016) explained that data are facts and figures obtained when conducting research as material for compiling information. Primary and secondary data are needed in this study, in order to facilitate the research process. The primary data in question are facts, opinions, and the words of the informant. While secondary data is a source of written data, photographs, and other supporting documents. According to Susanto, & Purnomo, (2016) data sources are data obtained from research subjects. Sources of research data are informants and supporting documents.

Data analysis techniques according to Susanto, & Purnomo, (2016) data analysis techniques are the process of compiling data obtained from the field, both data from interviews, observation results, and documentation results, by describing them into general conclusions that are easy to understand researchers and readers. Data analysis was carried out, namely descriptive analysis of the results of interviews obtained from informants, namely the Head of the Tourism Office through the Head of Marketing for the Empat Lawang Regency, namely Mrs. Murni Sari, SE, MM, and documentation carried out at the Empat Lawang Regency Tourism Office.

C. Results and Discussion

This research was conducted to find out how much public interest is in the Serapungan sport in Empat Lawang Regency by taking existing data at the Empat Lawang Regency Tourism Office, then comparing and analyzing the number of participants from 2019 to 2023. From the data the researchers obtained in the field by visiting the Tourism Office of Empat Lawang Regency and obtaining data from the Head of the Marketing Division of the Empat Lawang Regency Tourism Office, the results showed that the level of community participation in serapungan tourism sports in Empat Lawang Regency was quite high, with random participants consisting of local people and tourists who are interested in trying the experience of participating in floating tourism sports. This can be proven from the table below where every year the number of participants in the Serapungan tourism sport in Empat Lawang Regency always experiences an increase in number from year to year.

Table 1. Participants in the Serapungan

No	Year	Number of Participants	Information
1	2019	835	
2	2020	-	Not implemented covid_19
3	2021	-	Not implemented covid_19
4	2022	842	
5	2023	925	

Some of the reasons that encourage people's interest in participating in these sports are for recreational and adventure activities, the beauty of the natural surroundings, and the opportunity to test their courage and skills, apart from the prizes and door prizes given by the Regency Government which are quite interesting for the participants. In addition, serapungan tourism sports activities can also provide positive benefits, such as improving physical health, reducing stress, and increasing togetherness with family and friends (Okilanda, 2017).

D. Conclusion

That the public's interest in sports tourism is quite high in Empat Lawang Regency. The high participation rate indicates the potential for further development in the area's tourism sector. However, several factors such as safety concerns and lack of information are still obstacles that need to be overcome. In developing absorption in this area, it is necessary to carry out more intensive promotional efforts and increase public understanding of this sport. In addition, the need for good management must also be emphasized to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding environment.

Based on the research above, there are several suggestions that can be given and are constructive for the implementation of floating tourism sports in the future Empat Lawang Regency, including 1) paying attention to personal safety by understanding the risks associated with floating sports and complying with all safety instructions given by float officials/committees; 2) pay attention to physical condition and health and ensure adequate physical fitness to face physical challenges during floating activities; 3) respect the environment by maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability, and not damaging plants or the natural ecosystem around the place where flotation takes place; 4) respect local culture and society as well as prevailing customs by maintaining a polite attitude and not disturbing the existence of the local community; 5) support the local economy by choosing services and products provided by the local community, such as lodging, restaurants and regional souvenirs; 6) bring equipment and personal needs for implementation during the free exercise.

Increasing promotion and information by conducting a more intensive and effective promotional campaign about serapungan tourism sports in Empat Lawang Regency. This can be done through various communication channels, such as social media, brochures, bulletin boards, and tourism and communication and information websites. Increase the information available to the public regarding the benefits, procedures and requirements of Serapungan. This can help dispel any misunderstandings and concerns that may exist in society. Increasing security and safety by collaborating with Serapungan sports service providers to improve security and safety standards. Organize education and training programs for the public and pool float participants regarding safety measures that must be followed during float activities. This will help increase awareness of the importance of safety and minimize the risk of accidents. Sustainable environmental management by taking into account the environmental impact of floating sports in Empat Lawang Regency. Good management is needed to ensure that floating sports activities do not damage the local ecosystem, such as monitoring water quality, handling waste, and restoring nature if necessary. Develop clear guidelines and regulations for the sustainable management of casual sports. This can include capacity limits, usage schedules, and ecosystem restoration protocols set by governments. Development of adequate supporting infrastructure by providing easy access to free sports locations and building facilities such as parking areas, bathrooms and rest areas. Establishing cooperation with the private sector, such as establishing partnerships with non-governmental serapungan sports service providers to improve the management, promotion and development of serapungan tourism sports in Empat Lawang Regency.

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