



Malino Highland Tea Plantation as a Tourist Destination in Gowa

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Abstract

This study aims to determine: (1) The socio-cultural impacts that occur in the Malino Highland tourist area (2) Public perception of the existence of Malino Highland tourism (3) Marketing strategies carried out by the management of the Malino Highland tea plantation. In this study, a qualitative research type was used which was analyzed and written descriptively. Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, interview, and documentation methods involving 10 (ten) informants. Based on the results of the study, it shows that: (1) The intensity and actors of interaction influence the differences in these impacts, from those leading to changes in people's views on foreign cultures, changes in social values in local communities to learning about local culture by tourists. This triggers the emergence of both positive and negative impacts on both parties. (2) Local communities have an equally important position as one of the stakeholders in tourism development, in addition to the government and private industry. (3) The marketing strategy carried out by the management is by forming a marketing team specifically for marketing. By disseminating information about the development of tourism objects that occur in Malino Highland.

Kata Kunci: Malino, Tea Plantation, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country which has potential in terms of tourism development. Many regions in Indonesia are tourist destinations. Indonesia's rich natural resources and pristine attractions make it known for its many beautiful destinations, attracting tourists (Pita & Gayatri, 2005). Tourism itself is a full journey, meaning departing from one place, going to and stopping at one or more places, and returning to the point of origin. Today, tourism is a crucial sector for a country's existence. A country's diverse potential and unique characteristics can attract both international tourists and local residents (Ahmad, 2022). This is evidenced by the numerous contributions received from tourism development within a country, as it is now an industrial sector capable of contributing significantly to state revenue. As its development progresses, tourism aims to generate profits for both tourists and the surrounding community (Nawawi, 2013).

The primary goal of a country developing its tourism industry is to generate foreign exchange from the spending of visiting tourists. While export revenue is derived from the sale of goods abroad, tourism revenue is derived from the spending of tourists visiting a country (Rakib, 2017). Tourism development is generally directed as a key sector to drive economic growth, increase regional income, empower the local economy, expand employment and business opportunities, and enhance product recognition and marketing to improve community well-being. Tourism development must be comprehensively planned to maximize community benefits (Remi, 2024).

Tourism, besides generating profits for the community, also serves to promote Indonesia's natural resources. This potential comes in the form of attractive destinations and attractions. This attracts tourists to these beautiful destinations. The arrival of tourists increases local income. The Island of the Gods, Bali, is a particularly successful example of a highly developed tourism sector, demonstrating the role of local communities in tourism development. However, tourism in Indonesia extends beyond Bali (Picard, 2006). Many other destinations are just as beautiful. South Sulawesi is one province with significant tourism potential.

South Sulawesi Province can be a popular tourist destination. In Makassar, the provincial capital, tourists can enjoy the beauty of Losari Beach, one of Makassar's icons. Besides Makassar, Gowa Regency also boasts significant tourism potential. It borders Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi Province (Fauzan Hidayatullah & Afifah, 2022). However, the local government has been unable to fully realize this potential due to a lack of promotion, resulting in a lack of local and international tourist interest in Gowa Regency. Despite this, Gowa Regency boasts several attractive tourist attractions (Tatundu et al., 2025).

One of the tourist destinations in Gowa Regency is the Malino tourist attraction. Malino has long been known as a tourist destination. Due to its cool, mountainous location, Malino's rich diversity of tourist attractions has boosted both local and government revenues. Therefore, the Malino tourist area is a tourism asset that needs to be developed and maintained properly. The development of tourism potential in Gowa Regency, where the local government plays a crucial role in attracting local and international tourists to its various attractions, must be supported. Both the

community and the government must contribute to the development of tourism in Gowa Regency, particularly in Malino. Known as the City of Flowers, Malino must be developed and maintained as a tourist attraction. As the City of Flowers, Malino has tremendous tourism potential. This is due to its natural beauty and the abundance of natural attractions (Goeltom et al., 2021).

The role of the Gowa Regency Tourism Office itself can be seen in the existence of a flagship program called Beautiful Malino in this program can be seen in how promotions are carried out by the government in collaboration with the Gowa Regency Tourism Office. Of course, in this case the government spends a considerable budget in implementing this flagship program from the Gowa Regency government. However, the government certainly has a target in implementing this event. Malino itself has one of the tourist attractions named Malino Highland. Malino Highland itself is a tea plantation agrotourism which is certainly a paradise for nature tourism lovers. Malino Highland is a tea plantation located in Gowa Regency, which has various tourist attractions contained within it and one of the tourist attractions favored by visitors. Malino Highlands is located at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level with a garden area of 200 hectares, stretching green and lush tea plantations that make it a favorite place for visitors who enjoy photography or those who like to enjoy the beauty of nature from a height. The reason the researcher chose the Malino Highland tourist attraction in Gowa Regency as the research location was because of seeing several conditions in the field during the initial observation. And this tourist attraction has quite complete recreational facilities compared to other tourist attractions in Gowa district, therefore, there are several things that need to be considered by the management and the local community or local tourists.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative research, analyzed and written descriptively. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation (Rahman & Dkk, 2022). The informants included residents of the Malino Highlands tourist area, several workers, and the Malino Highlands management.

The theoretical basis used in this research is an approach that views local communities not as objects but as actors in tourism. Local communities are part of the planning, implementation, and participation in activities, benefiting from tourism development. This approach, developed by the World Bank, is called the ethno-ecotourism approach, which positions indigenous communities as partners in tourism development activities.

Theoretically, the study of ethno-ecotourism comes from the word "ethno," meaning ethnicity, and "ecotourism," meaning ecological tourism. This approach involves tourism that relies on the potential of the community and the natural environment. Ethnoecotourism stems from ethnoscience and ethnoecology. Ethno (ethno) means nation, while science means knowledge. The word "ethnoscience" was first described as a paradigm by Oswald Werner in 1972, when he wrote an article about Ethnoscience in the Annual Review of Anthropology. Anthropologists interested in this paradigm initially focused on semantic aspects. Therefore, ethnoscience is sometimes referred to as Semantic Anthropology or Semantic Ethnography by Werner (Marzali, 2012). This stems from his explanation of semantics, which uses diagrams. Werner explains that ethnoscience is an approach based on the understanding or knowledge of informants or the community being studied. Quoting Goodenough, Werner argues that ethnography must begin with an understanding of the community being studied or the knowledge possessed by the community being studied. Werner also refers to this understanding of the community being studied as cultural knowledge.



Figure 1. Malino tea plantation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General description

Gowa Regency is located at 119.3773° West Longitude and 120.0317° East Longitude, 5.0829342862° North Latitude and 5.577305437° South Latitude. The regency located in the southern region of South Sulawesi is an autonomous region, in the north it borders Makassar City and Maros Regency. In the east it borders Sinjai, Bulukumba and Bantaeng Regencies. In the south it borders Takalar and Jenepono Regencies while in the west it borders Makassar City and Takalar. Administratively, Gowa Regency consists of 18 sub-districts and 167 villages/sub-districts with an area of approximately 1,883.33 square kilometers or equal to 3.01 percent of the area of South Sulawesi Province. The area of Gowa Regency is mostly highlands, namely around 72.26 percent. There are nine districts that are highlands, namely Parangloe, Manuju, Tinggimoncong, Tombolo Pao, Parigi, Bungaya, Bontolempangan, Tompobulu, and Biringbulu. Of the total area of Gowa Regency, 35.30 percent has a land slope above 40 degrees, namely in the districts of Parangloe, Tinggimoncong, Bungaya, and Tompobulu. Gowa Regency is traversed by many fairly large rivers, namely 15 rivers. The river with the largest drainage area is the Jeneberang River, which is 881 km² wide and 90 km long.

Makassar is a major city in Eastern Indonesia and a popular tourist destination. Famous for Losari Beach, the city is surrounded by numerous attractions ranging from beaches, marine parks, and historical sites to beautiful highland locations one of which is Malino Highlands, situated not far from the city itself. Malino Highlands is located in the Tinggimoncong District of Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province, approximately 80 kilometers south of Makassar's city center. Its location is considered strategic, as it is easily accessible by various types of vehicles.

To enter the Malino Highlands area, there is an admission fee of IDR 50,000 for adults and IDR 25,000 for children. This ticket grants you access to the charms of lush green tea plantations filled with the cool, fresh air and the scent of thriving tea leaves as well as the opportunity to visit a waterfall and a mini-zoo. Situated at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level and spanning 200 hectares, the area features vast, verdant tea plantations that make it a favorite spot for photography enthusiasts and those who enjoy taking in natural scenery from a height. The lush green mountain panorama and rolling hills serve as a unique attraction for visitors.

Before being renamed Malino Highlands, this site was a 900-hectare tea plantation situated 1,200 meters above sea level. Recognizing its potential as a tourist destination, the area was transformed into a beautiful, comfortable attraction suitable for visitors of all kinds. On the journey to Malino Highlands, you are treated to views of pine forests stretching across the hills and valleys. A variety of tropical plants thrive here, creating a stunning, lush green landscape. During the rainy season, temperatures drop significantly sometimes reaching as low as 10 degrees Celsius and the area is frequently shrouded in mist.

As you stroll through the tea plantation and reach its highest point, you will find a café featuring Japanese-style architecture that serves the finest teas nature has to offer. The facilities are exclusive and Japanese-inspired, with staff even dressed in traditional Japanese attire. Beyond enjoying a warm cup of tea, visitors are captivated by the sweeping views of the rolling green tea fields. The café known as Green Cafe Pekoe serves signature, health-promoting tea beverages that are unique to Malino Highlands and cannot be found anywhere else.

The teas served both green and black varieties are harvested and processed right on the premises. The tea leaves are also incorporated into salads and sandwiches. The café offers a wide range of meals, snacks, and tea varieties, with Malino Green Tea standing out as a signature offering. Malino Highlands also provides various outdoor activities for visitors to enjoy, such as paragliding, horseback riding, bungee jumping, trampolining, cross-country running, cycling, kite festivals, and much more.

Not far from Malino Highlands, you can visit two waterfalls. To reach them, visitors need only walk about 600 to 800 meters. Along the path, you are once again treated to stunning, lush green scenery. One of these is Takapala Waterfall, which cascades powerfully amidst the hills and dense forest. It stands 100 meters tall, with a mist that constantly envelops the falls at the 20-meter mark. If you are lucky, you might even spot a rainbow. You can refresh yourself by playing in the water, which collects in a small pool dotted with large volcanic rocks. There is also a cave at the base of the waterfall a fun spot to enjoy the water.

Beyond its cool climate, Malino offers a wide array of other attractions from waterfalls with their bracingly cold waters to markets brimming with diverse fruits and vegetables. The Malino market is renowned for the fresh produce brought in by local residents, ranging from tomatoes, mustard greens, and cabbage to a variety of other vegetables. Furthermore, visitors can find various local delicacies that make for perfect souvenirs.

Hundreds of lodging options are scattered throughout Malino, ranging from high-end establishments costing millions of rupiah per night to modest, locally-owned guesthouses priced in the hundreds of thousands. Tourism entrepreneurs have actively developed infrastructure in the town to cater to the influx of visitors. A recently popular attraction in Malino is the tea plantation managed by a private company. Visitors can get up close to the ready-to-harvest tea plants or simply enjoy the stunning natural scenery, framed by rolling hills and lush greenery.

Although numerous new tourist attractions have emerged and gained popularity in Makassar and its surrounding areas, Malino's charm remains unrivaled. There is a unique feeling to visiting this town, which holds a wealth of colonial history. A trip to Malino is like visiting a cool, refreshing retreat steeped in historical significance.

Socio-Cultural Impact of Malino Highland Tourism in Gowa Regency

The Malino Highlands tourist attraction, located in Pattappang Village, Malino Regency, is a relatively new development. However, before becoming the tourist attraction it is today, according to local residents, it was previously a typical agricultural or tea plantation before being transferred to another party. However, the Malino Highlands tourist attraction has undoubtedly had an impact, which is inseparable from the social and cultural issues of the surrounding community. Social impacts refer to changes in people and society resulting from development activities. Social impacts arise when activities such as projects, programs, or policies are implemented within a community. This form of intervention affects the balance of a social system. These influences can be positive or negative.

Based on the field data obtained by the researcher, since working there, he rarely gets a day off, especially around the turn of the month or the end of the month, when many tourists come. This sometimes makes him less likely to gather with neighbors or those living around his house, resulting in less social interaction between him and the surrounding community. Furthermore, as the end of the month approaches, visitors increasingly flock to the Malino Highlands area. For example, during Eid al-Fitr, when the general public, especially in Indonesia, often visits neighbors after Eid prayers, this is not the case for him, who must return to work due to the large number of visitors. This has changed his socio-cultural life, which is a socio-cultural impact on some informants that can be said to be negative. However, if we talk about the economic impact, it is certainly not negative but positive because he earns a fairly adequate income like a typical worker, rather than choosing to be a farmer as he was before becoming an employee at the Malino Highlands tourist attraction.

The interactions that ensue vary, from those related to tourism in the Malino area to relationships between individuals or groups drawn from different cultural backgrounds. These interactions take various forms, from conversations between tourists and pedicab drivers about the location of a hotel, between tourists and local guides or travel agency employees regarding tour packages, and even between tourists and visitors at Malino Highlands. These varying interactions have varying impacts on both tourists and the local community. The intensity and actors of these interactions influence these differences, ranging from changing the public's perception of foreign cultures, changing social values within the local community, to tourists learning about local culture. This triggers both positive and negative impacts on both parties.

The impacts of tourism according to anthropologists include the following: Until recently, people still considered tourism a non-polluting industry. However, the nature of tourism and its impact on the people involved—those in the tourist areas, those who host them, and the tourists who are their temporary guests—have essentially not been studied in depth. "...an anthropologist has observed the growing impact of tourism throughout the world but buries their data in field notes and only occasionally published peripheral articles, as tourism was not a scientific or scholarly subject." (...anthropologists have noticed the growing impact of tourism throughout the world, but buried their data in field notes. Only occasionally did they write articles that were not very in-depth, as if tourism were not a scientific/academic subject.) Furthermore, it is said that tourism is a local phenomenon, and always tends to be concentrated in certain places with limited area and local impact (local impact of tourism). The threshold/saturation point is determined by several factors, namely the number of workers, infrastructure, traffic, land for hotel buildings, etc. If it is not balanced, it will cause a very large direct impact on the community.

A community's livelihoods or economic activities are an important focus of study in ethnography. Ethnographic research on livelihood systems examines how a community group, or their economic system, meets its needs. Currently, only a few communities' livelihood or economic systems are based on agriculture. However, over time, these livelihood systems have undergone changes due to the flow of modernization.

Community involvement is expected to have a positive impact that will flow back to the community itself and stimulate a desire to participate more actively in tourism development. Community participation around tourist attractions can take the form of trade or service businesses.

Public Perception of Malino Highland Tourism in Gowa Regency.

Development will undoubtedly elicit various responses and perceptions from the community itself. This discussion summarizes the results of interviews conducted by researchers with informants in the field and with residents living around Pattappang Village. Public participation in government, as a form of mass and individual action, demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the government and its citizens. It is undeniable that any policy issued by a government institution will not be implemented optimally without public participation and support. The optimal role of a country's government is inevitably related to the level of participation and support from its citizens.

Various perspectives exist within the community, especially in the Pattappang sub-district area itself. After observing the conditions within the community and the management, the researcher refers to the theory applied or used in this study, namely that local communities have the ability to develop tourism and are considered partners for experts and policymakers. Currently, this research is influenced by ethno-ecotourism. The concept of ethno-ecotourism is a concept that has long been introduced in the world of tourism. Tourism development has grown very rapidly in today's world, so that ecological or environmental tourism is also one of the favorite tourist attractions in the world. Moreover, the differences in the natural environment between one place and another are one of the important commodities to be 'sold'. The natural environment is one of the attractive tourist destinations. Often the natural environment is created and engineered in such a way to attract tourists, but without considering its sustainability and marginalizing the surrounding

local communities. Therefore, the ethno-ecotourism approach then developed into an ethnoecotourism approach, namely an approach that involves the participation of local and indigenous communities in tourism development.

Following the explanation above, the researcher also cites the definition of values, where values are beliefs that lead someone to act based on their choices. Values occur in a psychological area called beliefs. Beliefs are positioned as a higher psychological area than other areas such as desires, motives, attitudes, desires, and needs. Values are references and beliefs in making choices. This definition is a conclusion from several definitions of values above, intended as a measure of humans as whole individuals or values related to the concepts of right and wrong adopted by certain groups or communities. Human values are values regarding human dignity and worth.

The local community holds positive values, as before the area became a tourist destination, it was simply a regular tea plantation. The tea plantation existed during the Japanese era. However, an investor eventually sold it to a Singaporean shareholder. He then invited several local residents to participate directly in the management of the area. This was seen as a positive step by the local community. The community understands that investors are parties who transfer the company and transform it into a better place.

With community participation, development planning is attempted to be more focused, meaning that the development plan or program that is prepared is in accordance with what is needed by the community, meaning that in the preparation of the development plan/program, priority determination is carried out (order based on the level of importance), thus the implementation of the development program will also be carried out effectively and efficiently. The community is an active actor in tourism activities that aim to improve the welfare of the community itself and tourism is the actualization of the people's economic system which is the activity of all levels of Indonesian society as a source of creative economy for the community. Local community participation is involved from the beginning of planning, preparation of the plan itself, project implementation, management and distribution of the results is an absolute thing that must be emphasized in the draft plan. Damanik & Weber stated that participation must empower the community to become one of the determinants of the stages of the project, but at the same time also teach them to have responsibility and commitment and the results and risks that may be achieved through the project. The participation process starts from making the community independent so that they can improve their standard of living, use and access local resources as best as possible, both natural resources and human resources.

Based on the data researchers found in the field, the marketing strategy used by the Malino Highlands management itself is to create attractive brochures and distribute them to every visitor. In addition, social media is also a method used in the marketing strategy. From several interviews with informants above, the results of these interviews can be linked to several explanations regarding the study of ethno-ecotourism, derived from the word "ethno," meaning ethnic, and "ecotourism," meaning ecological tourism. This approach means tourism that involves local communities and relies on the potential of the community and the potential of the natural environment. Ethnoecotourism comes from ethnoscience and ethnoecology. In this case, in accordance with the existing natural conditions and the circumstances of the surrounding community, the community and management together build and develop the natural tourism potential of Malino Highlands.

CONCLUSION

The socio-cultural impact of the Malino Highlands tourism development in Gowa Regency has received a positive response from the surrounding community. The local community has also benefited from the positive impacts of securing decent jobs that can provide for their daily needs. However, there are also negative impacts on workers in the tourism area, such as a lack of socialization within the surrounding community, similar to what existed before the tourism area's establishment.

As for the Marketing Strategy Carried Out by the Management of the Malino Highland Tea Plantation, the management of Malino Highland itself has a marketing team, whose task is to always update the latest conditions of Malino Highland, later this marketing team must always create creative and innovative marketing strategies. He also explained, so far the marketing target has been achieved by creating attractive brochures by displaying every best side of Malino Highland, then the brochure will be given to every visitor who enters when buying an entrance ticket, in addition the brochure is also distributed on the streets around Malino City. He also stated that later the marketing team will make a new breakthrough in marketing targets, namely by holding socialization to every school and university throughout Indonesia, so that Malino Highland Tourism will later become a tourist target for both local and foreign tourists. There are several inns along the road to the Malino Highlands area. They range from budget to high-class. Some of these high-class inns are not owned by locals, but by residents from outside the Tinggimoncong sub-district.

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