



Tourism Management Strategies in Egon Mountain

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Abstract. Egon mountain possesses significant potential as an ecotourism destination due to its breathtaking landscapes, unique geological formations, and rich biodiversity. This study examines key aspects influencing its tourism development, including accessibility, facilities, and attractions. Findings indicate that while Egon mountain offers a remarkable adventure experience, challenges such as limited infrastructure, inadequate sanitation, and minimal safety measures hinder its growth as a sustainable tourist site. Visitors often rely on self-preparation and local guides to navigate the trails safely. However, the presence of an active volcanic crater, natural hot springs, diverse flora and fauna, and cultural significance make it an attractive destination. To enhance its tourism appeal, strategic management efforts focusing on infrastructure improvements, environmental sustainability, and local community engagement are essential. By addressing these challenges, Egon mountain can develop into a sustainable ecotourism site that balances conservation with enriching visitor experiences.

Keywords: Egon Mountain, Management Strategies, Tourism

Abstrak. Gunung Egon memiliki potensi yang signifikan sebagai destinasi ekowisata berkat pemandangan yang menakjubkan, formasi geologi yang unik, dan keanekaragaman hayati yang kaya. Penelitian ini mengkaji aspek-aspek kunci yang mempengaruhi pengembangan pariwisata di daerah tersebut, termasuk aksesibilitas, fasilitas, dan daya tarik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun gunung Egon menawarkan pengalaman petualangan yang luar biasa, tantangan seperti infrastruktur yang terbatas, sanitasi yang tidak memadai, dan langkah-langkah keselamatan yang minim menghambat pertumbuhannya sebagai situs wisata yang berkelanjutan. Para pengunjung sering kali bergantung pada persiapan mandiri dan pemandu lokal untuk menjelajahi jalur dengan aman. Namun, keberadaan kawah vulkanik aktif, mata air panas alami, flora dan fauna yang beragam, serta nilai budaya menjadikannya sebagai destinasi yang menarik. Untuk meningkatkan daya tarik pariwisata, upaya manajemen strategis yang berfokus pada perbaikan infrastruktur, keberlanjutan lingkungan, dan keterlibatan masyarakat lokal sangat penting. Dengan mengatasi tantangan ini, gunung Egon dapat berkembang menjadi situs ekowisata yang berkelanjutan yang menyeimbangkan konservasi dengan pengalaman pengunjung yang memperkaya.

Kata kunci: Gunung Egon, Manajemen Strategis, Pariwisata

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia possesses immense tourism potential, as evidenced by the rapid growth of its tourism sector. The tourism sector is essential to the economic framework of Indonesia, functioning as a significant source of regional income and providing additional foreign currency for the nation (Wijaya & Aksari, 2025). Over the last few decades, the tourism sector has shown remarkable growth, contributing positively to global development, alleviating poverty, and fostering increased prosperity (Fadli et al., 2022). This development is reflected not only in the increasing number of domestic and international tourists but also in the numerous accolades that Indonesia has received on the global stage. For instance, several

Indonesian tourist destinations, such as Bali, Raja Ampat, and Borobudur, have been recognized as some of the best in the world. Furthermore, the unique cultural heritage and natural beauty of Indonesia serve as major attractions that are hard to find in other countries. Natural wonders like Lake Toba, Mount Rinjani, and Komodo National Park provide visitors with unforgettable experiences.

In the realm of tourism management, several critical factors must be considered, with tourism management itself playing a vital role in ensuring the sustainability and appeal of a destination. This encompasses strategic planning, resource management, infrastructure enhancement, and the development of programs that foster high-quality tourist experiences. Furthermore, sustainability is a primary concern, where the preservation of the environment, engagement with local communities, and the utilization of technology in promotion and tourism services significantly contribute to the growth of this sector. Effective management enables tourist destinations not only to attract a greater number of visitors but also to provide economic benefits to the surrounding communities while preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the area. (Leask, 2010) pointed out that the successful management of tourist attractions plays a critical role in the achievement of a travel destination's goals and the overall performance of a country's tourism industry.

The management of tourism in Indonesia is currently hindered by several significant shortcomings, particularly the inadequate coordination and integration among the central government, regional authorities, and local stakeholders. An illustration of the issues present in the Rancabali region includes the inadequate management of tourism attractions, suboptimal utilization of human resources for governance, the existence of stakeholders operating independently, and insufficient coordination and involvement among stakeholders (Maldini et al., 2023). This disunity frequently results in policy implementation inconsistencies, where different governmental tiers may pursue divergent objectives or fail to harmonize their actions, ultimately impeding the overall advancement of the tourism sector. The promotion of sustainable tourism in Indonesia requires a strong commitment from the government, a well-structured framework, and closely monitored phases to ensure that all elements of tourism development are aligned with both national and regional aspirations (Lemy et al., 2019). Without a cohesive and organized approach, challenges such as policy duplication, ineffective resource allocation, and poor execution of tourism initiatives are likely to emerge, limiting the country's ability to fully exploit its considerable tourism potential.

Additionally, strategic planning often lacks the backing of precise and comprehensive data, leading to poorly targeted policies. The insufficient active involvement of local communities in the tourism planning and development process is another significant issue, resulting in limited economic advantages for the local communities. As stated by (Kilipiris, 2005), the involvement of local communities in tourism development enhances the quality of the tourism experience and ensures sustainable growth that addresses local needs while preserving their natural and cultural environments. Moreover, inadequate infrastructure, including subpar transportation access and insufficient supporting facilities, obstructs the growth of tourism destinations. Inadequate infrastructure can produce adverse effects that threaten the sustainability of travel destinations (Wani, 2022). Consequently, the improvement of infrastructure must be regarded as a priority to bolster tourism (Adhuze et al., 2023). Another obstacle is the absence of effective and ongoing promotional efforts, which leaves many of Indonesia's tourism opportunities untapped. To remedy these shortcomings, a more comprehensive, inclusive, and data-oriented approach is essential in the strategic management of tourism in Indonesia.

Indonesia, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, provides an unparalleled mountain tourism experience. Mountains are considered sites of significant biodiversity, admired for their awe-inspiring views and distinguished by their unique topographical characteristics (Dax & Tamme, 2023). From the highest peak on Java, Mount Semeru, to the stunning Mount Rinjani in Lombok, famous for its Segara Anak Lake, each mountain offers a unique and challenging natural allure. Visitors are treated not only to spectacular views but also to a rich diversity of endemic flora and fauna inhabiting these regions. Furthermore, mountain climbing in Indonesia is often intertwined with cultural and spiritual values, exemplified by the traditional rituals performed by local communities. For instance, in the village of Gunungpayung, the kenduri ceremony reflects Javanese culture, emphasizing gratitude and community solidarity. This event allows climbers to engage with local customs, thereby enhancing their understanding of the region's heritage (Effendi & Soeprapto, 2024).

Egon mountain, located on Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara, stands out as a remarkable destination for nature enthusiasts and hikers, offering a distinctive experience for adventurers. While it may not enjoy the same level of fame as Rinjani or Semeru, Egon mountain captivates visitors with its stunning natural beauty, particularly its impressive active crater. The summit of this mountain presents breathtaking views, including vistas of the Sawu Sea and the lush landscapes of Flores. Additionally, Egon mountain is renowned for its hot

springs and natural sulfur pools in the surrounding area, which attract tourists seeking a serene and rejuvenating experience in nature.

Despite its significant potential, Egon mountain is still relatively undeveloped and less recognized when compared to other prominent mountain destinations in Indonesia, such as Rinjani and Bromo. Current research on tourism management in Indonesia has predominantly concentrated on these well-established sites, resulting in a notable absence of studies focused on lesser-known yet equally promising locations like Egon mountain. Additionally, although there is an increasing global interest in sustainable tourism practices, there is a scarcity of research on the effective implementation of these practices in emerging destinations such as Egon mountain. The insufficient exploration of community engagement, infrastructure enhancement, and strategic marketing for Egon mountain underscores a critical void in the existing literature. This study seeks to fill this void by investigating tourism management strategies of Egon mountain as a sustainable and competitive tourism destination, while also prioritizing the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage. In doing so, this research will contribute to the wider conversation on sustainable tourism management in underdeveloped areas.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted in this study utilizes a qualitative approach with a case study framework to examine the strategic management of tourism at Egon mountain. The population for this research includes various tourism stakeholders, such as local government representatives, destination managers, business operators, and tourists, with informants selected through purposive sampling. Data collection methods encompass in-depth interviews and participatory observation to ensure a thorough understanding of the subject matter. The research tools consist of a semi-structured interview guide and an observation checklist. The collected data are analyzed through thematic analysis, which includes stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion formulation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The framework for managing and developing tourist attractions is essential in steering the overall growth of tourism, ensuring that it remains sustainable and beneficial in the long run for both the destination and its stakeholders. This policy lays down the foundational philosophy that guides tourism development, influencing strategic planning and decision-making to elevate the quality and competitiveness of a destination. An effective strategy for

tourism management addresses critical elements namely accessibility, infrastructure, facilities, and attractions. By concentrating on these factors, stakeholders in tourism can create a cohesive system that enhances convenience for travelers, increases the allure of attractions, and ensures that visitors have a positive and memorable experience, ultimately supporting the sustainable growth of the tourism sector.

Accessibility

Accessibility is an essential component of contemporary tourism, as it facilitates the creation of products, services, and environments that are inclusive and advantageous for all visitors. It significantly influences the development of tourism infrastructure, affecting how easily tourists can access and enjoy various destinations. In the case of Egon mountain, accessibility poses a challenge due to its rural location. While visitors can reach the site by motorcycle or car without facing severely damaged roads, the highway leading to the mountain is relatively narrow and winding, necessitating extra caution during travel. The government has undertaken initiatives to enhance accessibility by installing directional signs and information portals to aid tourists. Nevertheless, the journey to Egon mountain can still be arduous, as travelers must navigate winding roads and cover a distance of 35.8 kilometers from Maumere. Furthermore, the ascent to the summit, which rises to an altitude of 1,703 meters above sea level, requires approximately two to three hours. Despite these obstacles, Egon Mountain continues to attract visitors due to its stunning vistas and tranquil natural environment, making it an ideal destination for outdoor activities and holiday retreats.

Facilities

The findings from observations and interviews reveal that the facilities along the hiking path of Egon mountain remain insufficient. Based on the insights of climbers and the local community, the amenities provided on this trail are relatively sparse compared to other well-known mountains in Indonesia. At the trailhead, there is a basic information sign that outlines the general route. Nevertheless, the presence of a detailed trail map appears to be limited, which often necessitates hikers to depend on guidance from local experts. Moreover, official hiking posts or checkpoints are not always present, with their existence largely reliant on local community management. Additionally, there are currently no designated shelters for resting, prompting hikers to carry tents and protective gear against severe weather.

The availability of sanitation facilities at Egon mountain is notably limited. It is highly likely that there are no public toilets, thus requiring climbers to carry their own hygiene products and practice *Leave No Trace* principles to mitigate environmental impact. Moreover, the absence of trash bins means that climbers must take their waste back with them to maintain the integrity of the natural environment. While there some clean water sources at various locations, it is prudent to bring adequate water supplies and to assess the safety of any water sourced from the wilderness prior to consumption.

Ensuring safety and effective navigation on the hiking paths of Egon mountain remains a considerable challenge. The absence of adequate trail markers and warning signs means that hikers must either have proficient navigation abilities or hire a local guide to avoid the danger of becoming lost. Additionally, emergency resources, including first aid kits and communication tools, are not readily available, compelling hikers to bring their own safety gear. The communication infrastructure along the trails is also restricted, with mobile phone signals often being unreliable or nonexistent in various locations. Consequently, it is essential to notify appropriate authorities prior to the hike and to carry emergency communication devices if feasible.

Additional amenities, including official camping sites, environmental oversight, and the availability of rangers or security personnel, are still quite limited. It is essential for hikers to choose secure camping spots while considering the principles of nature conservation. Moreover, the evacuation infrastructure on Egon mountain is insufficient, which means that hikers should have a contingency plan and essential evacuation supplies to address any potential emergencies. In summary, the hiking routes on Egon mountain do not offer the extensive facilities that are characteristic of other well-known mountains in Indonesia. Consequently, it is advisable to engage in thorough preparation, utilize independent equipment, and seek the assistance of local guides to ensure a safe and pleasant hiking experience. Additionally, fostering awareness and concern for environmental sustainability is vital to preserving Egon mountain as an attractive and enduring natural tourist destination for future hikers.

Attractions

One of the primary attractions of Egon mountain is its active volcanic crater. This crater emits sulfurous smoke, creating a unique landscape and offering an intriguing geological exploration experience for hikers. From the rim of the crater, visitors can enjoy breathtaking views, including the surrounding hills and the expansive Sawu Sea in the distance.

Additionally, there are natural hot springs located at the base of the mountain, believed to contain minerals with therapeutic benefits, making it an ideal location for relaxation after a hike. Immersing oneself in a hot spring is a cost-effective, entirely natural remedy devoid of any detrimental consequences (Gebretsadik, 2023).

Egon mountain boasts a wealth of diverse flora and fauna. The tropical forests encircling it provide a habitat for a variety of rare plant species and numerous bird species, rendering it a prime spot for birdwatching and environmental lovers. (Elsanti, 2023) elaborates that on Egon mountain, there are several types of trees whose fruits are consumable by humans, animals, and plants. The tree species with edible fruits include *schleichera oleosa*, *dimocarpus longan*, and *averrhoa bilimbi*. Additionally, the tree used for medicinal purposes is *canarium indicum*, which, when its bark is cut, exudes a resinous sap that initially appears white and sticky, later transforming into a pale yellow wax-like substance. (Vindiana et al., 2020) emphasize that the natural resources of the mountain, including its crater and forest must be preserved with great care, as these elements contribute significantly to the satisfaction of tourists visiting the mountainous region.

Apart from its stunning natural features, Egon mountain is also rich in cultural heritage. The local population inhabiting the area around the mountain boasts a diverse array of traditions and indigenous wisdom, which presents an opportunity for travelers to explore the intricacies of local life. In the Manusela mountainous region, the local inhabitants rely on supernatural beliefs and customary laws, such as sasi, to ensure the preservation of their forests and ecological environment (Silaya & Siahaya, 2018). Moreover, the mountain is regarded as spiritually significant by the nearby communities, transforming a visit into more than just a physical journey; it becomes a cultural encounter that enhances one's knowledge and appreciation of the region.

The beauty of Egon mountain is significantly complemented by the existence of a small waterfall and nearby rivers, which enhance its natural charm for climbers. Furthermore, the vicinity of the mountain features camping areas that enable guests to enjoy the peacefulness of the night and a starry sky. The striking volcanic scenery, along with the lush green forests and the barren rocky formations, creates a remarkable visual tableau, establishing Egon mountain as a haven for nature photographers. A study in Swedish mountain communities reveals that a strong emotional bond with preferred mountain locations significantly boosts well-being when individuals visit these areas (Knez & Eliasson, 2017). In summary, Egon mountain is a destination that offers an ideal combination of challenge, beauty, and tranquility. With its untouched hiking paths and distinctive landscape, this mountain serves as an excellent option

for those eager to discover Indonesia's concealed natural beauty. For those adventurers in search of a genuine and profound hiking experience, Egon mountain is an essential destination.

4. CONCLUSION

Egon mountain, renowned for its stunning landscapes, distinctive geological characteristics, and abundant biodiversity, presents considerable opportunities as a tourist attraction, especially for adventurers and nature lovers. Nevertheless, its allure is compromised by obstacles such as limited accessibility due to narrow, winding roads and insufficient basic amenities, including sanitation, shelters, and navigation tools. Visitors frequently depend on self-preparation and local guides, underscoring the necessity for enhanced infrastructure and responsible tourism practices. In spite of these challenges, the mountain's active volcanic crater, hot springs, and cultural importance provide a distinctive and immersive experience. To realize its full potential, a thorough tourism management strategy is crucial, emphasizing infrastructure improvement, environmental protection, and community involvement. By tackling these issues, Egon mountain can transform into a sustainable eco-tourism destination in East Nusa Tenggara, harmonizing conservation with improved visitor experiences.

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