Competitiveness of Local Competency-Based Tourism Destinations: Evidence from Indonesia

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ABSTRACT
This research article describes the trend of developing integrated tourist destinations in terms of their competitiveness based on indicators of the number of visits, length of stay, and the amount of tourist spending. This type of research is descriptive-qualitative. Data, information, and knowledge about the trend of competitiveness of tourism destinations in Toraja Utara Regency, Indonesia were obtained using observation, interviews, questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion, and documentation. The analysis technique follows the stages of an interactive model, namely: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, verification/concluding. The results show that the components of developing an integrated tourism destination based on local competence in Toraja Utara Regency, Indonesia include attractions, accommodation, accessibility, amenities, and amenities, abbreviated as 5A, with fluctuating trends. Three aspects characterize the trend of achievement of this integrated tourism destination development program, namely the number of foreign tourist visits to Toraja Utara fluctuating with an increasing trend during the initial few years studied, but the last two years in the Covid-19 pandemic conditions showed a declining trend. The characteristics of this data are followed by trends in length of visit and the amount of money spent by tourists. The key factor in the success of developing integrated tourism destinations is the positive image of tourists about Toraja as a window to the world because it develops very attractive tourism destinations or tourist attraction objects (TAO), known and remembered by domestic and foreign tourists who have visited the area.

Keywords: Competitive advantage, tourism destinations, local competence, tourist visits, length of visit, money spent.

INTRODUCTION
Indonesia is an area that has a strategic area that can attract the attention of potential tourists from all over the world to visit and enjoy the attractiveness of tourism destinations or tourist attractions (TAO) which are very amazing. Indonesian tourism has developed into one of the highest priority sectors in the industrial sector and job creation (Virola et al., 2011), as well as a basis for sustainable competitive advantage in the New Normal Local Economy (NENOLE) era, or post the era of the COVID-19 pandemic.
The tourism sector is a leading sector of development that can move the regional economy to be more advanced and developed. The tourism sector can support various aspects and development activities, including the availability of productive labor which is expected to reduce unemployment nationally, regionally, and locally. Therefore, creative, industrial, travel, and tourism economic activities are expected to increase by up to 4 percent per year in the period between 2009 and 2019. This is supported by the availability of 296 million jobs or around 9.2 percent of all employment and 10.5 percent of global Gross Domestic Product/GDP (Aramberri, 2009; Tian et al., 2013; Vellas, 2011).

Economists underlined that the tourism sector during the last two decades was classified as an industry that does not emit smoke (the smokeless industry) and can create jobs through the communication, transportation, and accommodation sectors because its existence plays an active role in efforts to improve the welfare and standard of living of the community. The importance and attractiveness of developing local competency-based tourism destinations are stated by Yoeti (2013, 2016) that there are three reasons why the tourism industry is developed as a source of regional competitiveness in a sustainable manner. First, whether locally, regionally, or nationally, the tourism industry is closely related to regional economic development. The second reason is that tourism development is mostly non-economic. The motivation of tourists who come to visit a tourist destination is to witness and see the beauty of nature and the environment. The third reason is to eliminate short-sighted thinking, reduce misunderstandings and so that the behavior of other people who come to visit can be known, especially for residents of the community where tourism projects are built.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The concept of competitiveness is a central theme in the development discourse of every nation or country. The concept of competitiveness is understood as the ability of an institution (organization), city, region, region, or country to maintain or increase its advantages (comparative and competitive) in a sustainable manner (Camagni, 2003; Denicolai et al., 2010; Fathurahman & Huseini, 2018; Ferreira & Estevao, 2009; Hafeez et al., 2002; Kolmakov et al., 2019; Porter, 2000). The concept of competitiveness is also understood as the ability to produce goods and services according to the needs of the international (global) market accompanied by the ability to maintain a high level of income sustainably, or the ability of the region to create income and employment opportunities, as well as the ability to improve the standard of living for all involved in it (European Commission, 1999 p. 4, in Gardiner et al., 2004; Huggins et al., 2019).

Local competence can be understood as a form of unique regional advantage, such as human resource skills (HR), natural resources (NR), environment, culture, and market prospects, both for primary and processed products. Primary products concern: a) people, natural resources, environment, market prospects, and culture. Meanwhile, processed products involve: a) product aspects, b) ecotourism, c) technology, d) infrastructure, and e) markets (Fathurahman & Huseini, 2018). Local competencies are managed and utilized efficiently, effectively, and economically in various aspects of development, including development in the field or economic sector for the welfare of the community. A competency
can be called a core competency only when it meets certain conditions (Akib et al., 2019; Denicolai et al., 2010; Hafeez et al., 2002; Prahalad & Hamel, 2000).

Conceptually, tourist attraction (TA) is another word for tourism objects, but according to the government regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, the word tourist attraction is no longer relevant to mention a tourist destination, so the word "Tourism Attraction" is used. To find out the meaning and significance of TA, the following is the definition in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 that TA is one of the areas that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of the diversity of natural wealth, culture, man-made products that are targeted or visited traveler.

According to experts (Yoeti, 2013, 2016) that tourist attraction is a term that is more often used, namely everything that is an attraction for people to visit a certain area. The terms of a TA hereinafter referred to as a tourist attraction object (TAO) or a good tourism destination, must be able to bring in as many tourists as possible, hold them at the attraction for a long time and give satisfaction to tourists who come to visit. To meet the expected results, several conditions must be met, namely: Tourism areas and tourism business development. A tourist area is an area with a certain area that is built or provided to meet tourism needs. Meanwhile, tourism business is an activity aimed at providing tourism services, providing objects and attractions, tourism facilities businesses, and other related businesses.

It is understood that tourism development is the development of sectors and components that are directly and indirectly related to the 5A component (attractions, accommodation, accessibility, amenities, ancillary or additional services (Chahal & Devi, 2015; Cudai Nur et al., 2019; Kuninggar et al., 2021; Nur et al., 2019; Rajesh, 2013; Setiawan & Wiweka, 2018; Tukamushaba et al., 2016). Meanwhile, according to Setiawan & Wiweka (2018) that, the tourism component consists of transportation facilities, accommodation facilities, eating and drinking facilities, tourist attractions, attractions, tourism facilities businesses, and tour guides. In tourism development must be accompanied by a development in other fields because tourism is seen as a system where one aspect of and others have dependencies, including aspects of tourism information and communication technology (ICT) that make it easy for anyone interested in visiting a particular tourism destination or TAO.

To measure the competitiveness of the tourism industry, competitiveness variables can be used using eight indicators, namely Human Tourism Indicator (HTI), Price Competitiveness Indicator (PCI), Infrastructure Development Indicator (IDI), Environment Indicator (EI), Technology Advancement Indicator (TAI), Human Resources Indicator (HRI), Openness Indicator (OI) and Social Development Indicator/SDI (Booyens, 2016; Hall, 2007; Huggins et al., 2019; Pessoa, 2008; Teixeira & Ferreira, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used is descriptive-qualitative (Moleong, 2001; Patton, 2005; Saebani & Ahmad, 2009; Silverman, 2020) with a phenomenological approach to explaining 5A (attractions, accessibility, accommodation, amenities, ancillary) as the focus of the study.
on the development of tourism components. based on the re-actualization of the Sapta Pesona program which has an impact on increasing the competitiveness of tourism destinations or tourist attraction objects (TAO) in Toraja Utara Indonesia. The research is focused on the trend of developing tourism destinations or TAO in a sustainable manner seen from their competitiveness based on out up performance indicators and their impact on the number of visits, the average length of stay, and the amount of money spent (expenditures) by tourists.

Data, information, and knowledge about tourism performance were obtained through observation and interview techniques (Jamshed, 2014) with informants representing tourists (domestic, foreign), informants representing regional apparatus organizations (RAO), informants representing managers and owners of certain TAO, informants representing community members domiciled around a certain TAO. In addition, data, information, and knowledge are also obtained from the results of focus group discussions (FGD) and through documentation techniques that reveal the components of developing a tourism destination or ODTW based on 5A in Toraja. The data were analyzed descriptively-qualitatively using an interactive model (Miles et al., 2018) which included data condensation, data presentation, verification/concluding.

**RESEARCH RESULT**

The results show that the direction of developing local competency-based tourism destinations is the basis for creating added value for domestic and foreign tourists. Local competencies that support the development of the tourism sector include the 5A components (attractions, accessibility, accommodation, amenities, ancillary) of tourism. The development of the 5A component is based on the effectiveness of the actualization of the Sapta Pesona tourism program (safe, orderly, clean, cool, beautiful, friendly, memorable).

An overview of the development of the 5A-based tourism component in Toraja Utara Regency shows an increase in the quality and quantity of the management of the system elements, both seen from the re-actualization of the Sapta Pesona tourism program as a precondition as well as the replication and strengthening of tourism marketing strategies based on the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place, abbreviated 4Ps). This achievement is supported by improving the quality of attractions and providing accommodation and facilities (additional services) that provide easy access and amenities for tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists.

The number of hotels and other accommodation facilities in Toraja Utara Regency in 2020 reached 52 accommodations. There are two (2) four-star hotels, namely Hotel Misliana and Hotel Toraja Heritage, which are located in the heart of Rantepao. The number of other accommodations such as guesthouses is forty (40) accommodations. Furthermore, the hotel room occupancy rate is the percentage of the number of room nights occupied to the number of available room nights. While the average length of stay of guests is the number of bed nights used (guest nights) with the number of guests staying at hotels or other accommodations. Data on the average length of stay of tourists during the four years studied were 2.00 for foreign tourists, 3.00 (2018), 3.42 (2019), and 2.50 (2020), while for domestic...
The results of data processing in the diagram (figure 1) show the number of foreign tourist visits to Toraja Utara Regency for several years. It can be seen that in general there was an increase in the total number of foreign tourist visits during the first three years of 2015 to 2017 but decreased in 2018 and 2019, even according to information obtained from informants (Interview: TN, NT, YP, 6, 22, 23, February 2021) that the total number of tourist visits continued to decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, until this research report was compiled, early 2021 (Bare, 2021). The following presents data on the continents and countries of origin of foreign tourists which are divided into three categories of continental origin, from the most number of tourists visiting Toraja Utara for several years, namely from the continents of Asia, Europe, and America.

Source: Processed research data, 2020-2021.

**Figure 1.**
Number of Foreign Tourist Visits by Month, 2015-2019
Foreign tourists who come from countries on the Asian continent include the main ones from Japan, China, Malaysia, Singapore, and from other countries in the Asian region. It can be seen that the countries of origin of most Asian tourists who visited Toraja Utara Regency during the five years studied were from groups of other Asian countries, then Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and China. According to the informant, the origin of tourists from Asian countries who come to Toraja Utara also includes tourists from countries in the Middle East including the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Furthermore, data on tourists from European countries are described, some of whom were met and interviewed by the researchers accompanied by enumerators-tour guides (German: SP; French: JM; English: ET, BT, NP’, YS, HP, NP; Netherlands: KP, YT, HP, SDJ; Spain: YK, JR; January 12, 2021, in Bare (2021).
Source: Processed secondary data from research results, 2020-2021.

**Figure 3**

Number of Foreign Tourist Visits from Countries on the European continent

Foreign tourists who come from countries on the European continent including the main ones are the Netherlands, Belgium, England, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as from other European countries. It can be seen that the country of origin of the three most European tourists who visited Toraja Utara Regency during the five years studied was from France, the Netherlands, and Spain. Based on the data above, it is also seen that tourists visiting Toraja Utara come from countries in Europe that are not mentioned above. Furthermore, data on tourists who come from countries in the United States is described.
Figure 4
Number of Visits of Foreign Tourists from Continents and Countries
(America, Canada, Australia New Zealand)

Foreign tourists originating from countries in the Americas, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand include the most from the United States and the least from New Zealand. It can be seen that the number of tourist visits from each of the above countries has fluctuated with a tendency or trend that all of them decreased. According to the informant, this decline was caused by various external factors, such as issues of national and global security as well as the issue of "bombing" around certain tourism destinations or TAO which triggered the governments of several foreign countries to restrict and even ban their citizens from visiting Indonesia, including of course to Toraja Utara Regency (Interview: JP, JA, YPT, YM, 4, 5, 6, 19 February 2020). Based on the data above, it is also seen that tourists visiting Toraja Utara come from countries in the Americas and Canada, as well as Australia and New Zealand, but the data is not presented in the image above (Bare, 2021).
The results of the data processing above show that there are three favorite tourism destinations or TAO visited in Toraja Utara Regency, namely Ke'te Kesu, Londa, and To'Tombi. The accuracy of the data was confirmed by TAO managers and local government officials that indeed these three TAO are very well known to tourists, where when new tourists arrive in Rantepao most of them are asked to mention the three, including others, for example at this time, Negere di Atas Awan (To' tombi).

Based on the results of the research above, it can be stated that the number of foreign tourist visits to Toraja Utara has fluctuated with an increasing trend during the initial few years studied, but the last two years showed a declining trend. The characteristics of this data are followed by trends in length of visit and the amount of money spent by tourists. These three aspects are indicators of the level of achievement of the integrated tourism destination development program in the Toraja Utara Regency (Bare, 2021).

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis, information, and knowledge about the creation of sustainable tourism destination competitiveness based on local competencies in Toraja Utara Regency, as presented above, it can be stated that any efforts made by tourism stakeholders in developing 5A components (attractions, accommodation, accessibility, amenity, ancillary) based on the re-actualization of the Sapta Pesona program (safe, orderly, clean, cool, beautiful, friendly, memorable), all of which lead to the achievement of performance indicators in the form of number visits, length of visit and the amount of money spent (expenses) by tourists. The competitiveness of the tourism industry can also be explained by
using a competitiveness variable based on one or more of the following eight indicators (Booyens, 2016; Hall, 2007, 2019; Huggins et al., 2019; Pessoa, 2008; Teixeira & Ferreira, 2018), namely Human Tourism Indicator (HTI), Price Competitiveness Indicator (PCI), Infrastructure Development Indicator (IDI), Environment Indicator (EI), Technology Advancement Indicator (TAI), Human Resources Indicator (HRI), Openness Indicator (OI) and Social Development Indicator (SDI).

According to the expert (Booyens, 2016; Hall, 2007; Huggins et al., 2019; Pessoa, 2008; Peteraf & Bergen, 2003; Teixeira & Ferreira, 2018) that the performance of the business results of stakeholders in tourism development in an area is determined from tourists entering the area. The more tourists who come to an area of course provide added value or benefits for developing regions. Vice versa, the fewer tourists who visit tourism destinations or ODTW in an area, it becomes a warning for stakeholders to organize and develop tourism components (5A) and elements of the Sapta Pesona program.

Toraja Utara Regency is a window to the world (Bare, 2021; Bare et al., 2020) because of the uniqueness of TAO or tourist destinations that it has when compared to other regions in Indonesia so that it becomes a source of sustainable competitive advantage. The measurement of the competitiveness of tourist areas is interesting to study so far because it is a crucial factor for the success of the tourism industry (Cranmer et al., 2020; Liu & Chou, 2016; Mutis, 2011; Rakib, 2017; Sabon et al., 2018; Smith, 1994; Trisnawati et al., 2008). Regional competitiveness is a complex reality and consists of several elements, both observed and unobserved. The results of studies conducted by researchers (Kozak and Remington, 1999, Haathi and Yavas, 1983) used survey data on tourist perceptions and opinions of the region/country visited to measure tourism competitiveness. The competitiveness studied in the 5A aspects of tourism is the quality of tourist destinations or TAO, the friendliness of the population, shopping facilities, and so on.

The results of other studies that also support the competitiveness of local competency-based tourism destinations were carried out by Dwyer et al., (2000) regarding the measurement of the competitiveness of tourism destinations or TAO by comparing 19 destinations. The study conducted by Dwyer uses the Price Competitiveness Indicator (PCI) to measure the competitiveness of tourist destinations. This study distinguishes two price categories, namely travel costs and ground costs. Travel costs are related to the costs incurred to and from a destination and ground costs are related to the cost of commodities at a destination. The data analyzed is ex-post facto regarding publications issued by each tourism destination or TAO. The technique used is Competitiveness Monitor (CM) analysis as introduced in 2001 as a measuring tool for determining tourism competitiveness. The CM was renewed in 2002 as a result of a collaboration between WWTC and the Christel DeHaan Tourism and Travel Research Institute (TTRI), University of Nottingham. This CM was developed in different research areas such as the results from the World Bank Global Competitiveness report, UK Regional Competitiveness Indicators, and the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook. The CM analysis uses eight indicators as stated above.

The strengthening of research results regarding the development of local competency-based tourism destinations in global and national contexts has long been conveyed by experts
and researchers. Studies conducted by experts (Gooroochurn & Sugiyarto, 2005; Hassan, 2000; Mihalić, 2000; Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2009) state that Quality Environment is an important indicator in measuring competitiveness. This study is also consistent with studies conducted by Ritchie & Crouch (2010) which include environmental factors as an indicator of tourism competitiveness. In this article, environmental factors include elements of the Sapta Pesona tourism program (safe, orderly, clean, cool, beautiful, friendly, memorable) as the basis for developing tourism destinations or TAO based on 5A (attractions, accommodation, accessibility, amenities, ancillary).

Ritchie & Crouch (2010) stated that other research results that corroborate these findings are based on the comparative advantage theory that ownership and use of resources owned by an area (tourism destinations or ODTW) result in these destinations being competitively superior compared to other destinations. His research includes a broader category of indicators, namely human resources, knowledge resources, physical resources, infrastructure, and cultural resources.

Based on the results of the analysis of the competitiveness indicators of local competency-based tourism destinations at the locus of this research, it can be stated that in the early years of research until entering the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, it tends to increase. The results of the analysis of the position of tourism competitiveness of Toraja Utara Regency are still better when compared to other regions that have the same tourism destination or TAO. The superior tourism competitiveness index, especially on several indicators that determine competitiveness, namely Infrastructure Development Indicator (IDI), Environment Indicator (EI), Technology Advancement Indicator (TAI), Human Resources Indicator (HRI) so that it can be said that the competitiveness of tourism destinations is competency-based. local at the research locus is high.

**CONCLUSION**

The competitiveness of local competency-based tourism destinations in Toraja Utara Regency is based on the achievement of performance indicators for the development of the 5A tourism components (attraction, accommodation, accessibility, amenities, ancillary) which are increasing. This increasing fluctuating trend is seen in three aspects, namely, the number of tourist visits (domestic, foreign) with an increasing trend during the initial few years studied, except in the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic conditions so that the number of tourist arrivals decreased somewhat. The characteristics of this data are followed by an increasing trend in terms of length of visit and the amount of money spent by tourists. There is a key factor in the success of developing an integrated tourism destination based on 5A, namely the positive image of tourists about Toraja as a window to the world because several tourism destinations or tourist attractions object (TAO) have developed which are very attractive and well-known at home and abroad to provide memories for domestic and foreign tourists who have visited the area.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


