



Sustainable Tourism Management for Enhanced Tourism Product Quality in the Cultural Village of Dokan

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ABSTRACT

The research on "Sustainable Tourism Management in Improving the Quality of Tourism Products in Dokan Cultural Village" is a comprehensive exploration with diverse objectives. Initially, it seeks to unveil Dokan Cultural Village's tourism potential, examining its cultural richness, natural attractions, and distinctive elements that attract tourists. The study delves into the impact of tourism practices on the village's environment, scrutinizing ecological sustainability, waste management, and natural resource conservation. The focal point extends to destination management, evaluating the implementation of policies and practices for ensuring the sustainability, safety, and comfort of tourists. Additionally, community participation in tourism management is explored, assessing decision-making involvement, economic empowerment, and addressing local communities' needs. Identifying economic empowerment opportunities for local communities is pivotal, involving an analysis of local business potential and the role of community engagement in enhancing the value of tourism products. Central to the research is the evaluation and enhancement of tourism product quality, encompassing service quality, diverse experiences, and alignment with traveler expectations. Furthermore, the study aims to support sustainable tourism principles by identifying management practices that promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Ultimately, it seeks to provide recommendations for improving sustainable tourism management in Dokan Cultural Village, potentially including policy enhancements, the development of training programs, or innovative destination management strategies. In conclusion, while Dokan Cultural Village showcases commendable commitment to sustainable tourism, further optimization of local stakeholder involvement is necessary. The establishment of a robust strategy for destination management is crucial, and continuous monitoring and reporting on the impact of tourism activities are essential for environmental and social concerns. By addressing these aspects, Dokan Cultural Village can continue to excel as a sustainable tourism destination and serve as a model for other cultural villages.

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INTRODUCTION

Dokan Tourism Village, located in Brand District, Karo Regency, North Sumatra, has a strategic position of approximately 20 KM from Kabanjahe and 95 KM from Medan City, between Berastagi and Lake Toba. The special features of Dokan Village include a very nice and cool atmosphere, with refreshing air, providing a comfortable experience for tourists who want to enjoy the natural beauty of Karo. Before entering the village, visitors will pass a famous intersection with local fruit traders. This unique experience allows tourists to taste and purchase fresh fruit from the local area.

Dokan Cultural Village, a cultural tourism destination in Karo Regency, highlights its cultural heritage with traditional Karo houses, which are still preserved and inhabited today. This traditional house symbolizes the village's founding and is passed down from generation to generation. The history of the founding of Dokan Village involves its founding by Senina, Beru's son, Kalimbubu. The arrival of a new resident, known as "the Kuta mantel," brings Senia, Anak Beru, and Kalimbubu, inheriting the traditions and culture of Dokan Village. Apart from Dokan Village, the surrounding area also offers interesting villages such as Lingga Village and Peceran Village, providing a variety of tourist destinations in Karo Regency. These villages add to the diversity of experiences for tourists visiting this area (Lubis et al., 2023).

Sustainable Tourism, as defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), entails a holistic approach to tourism development that takes into account its economic, social, and environmental impacts both in the present and the future. The key objective is to balance the interests of tourists, the tourism industry, the environment, and local communities. The principles of sustainable tourism encompass several crucial aspects. Firstly, it involves optimizing the benefits derived from natural resources by maintaining essential ecological processes and safeguarding nature and biodiversity. Secondly, sustainable tourism strives to respect the socio-cultural authenticity of local communities by preserving their cultural heritage and traditional values, contributing to intercultural understanding, and fostering tolerance. Lastly, the concept emphasizes ensuring the long-term economic viability of businesses within the tourism sector. This includes providing equitable socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, such as employment opportunities, sustainable income, social services for local communities, and initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation. By embracing these principles, sustainable tourism aims to create a harmonious balance between economic development, social well-being, and environmental preservation.

One implementation of sustainable tourism development is by developing tourist villages (Ira & Muhamad, 2020). A practical application of sustainable tourism development involves the creation of tourist villages, as suggested by Ira and Muhamad (2020). These tourist villages offer a comprehensive tourism experience with three primary components. Firstly, tourism attractions play a crucial role, encompassing the appeal of both natural and artificial features that provide satisfaction, comfort, and enjoyment to visitors. These attractions are meant to be utilized and enjoyed by tourists. Secondly, the provision of facilities and amenities plays a pivotal role in enhancing the overall tourism experience. This includes the presence of hotels, restaurants, and other essential services that contribute to the completeness of the tourist destination. Lastly, ensuring accessibility is essential for the success of sustainable tourism. Adequate transportation and infrastructure are integral to facilitating the reach of tourists to these destinations, thereby contributing to a holistic and sustainable tourism model.

The existence of good transportation to tourist locations will increase tourist interest and attract the attention of investors or private parties to develop these locations. Tourist destinations that are difficult to reach and have poor infrastructure may need help developing and attracting tourist interest. Apart from that, intangible products are also very important in tourism destinations. The experiences and memories tourists gain at a destination are included in products that cannot be felt. Human service, especially regarding friendliness and service, plays a major role in determining positive or negative impressions about a tourist attraction (Juliana & Sitorus, 2022).

Tourism products within a tourist village play a pivotal role in unlocking and harnessing the local tourism potential. The significance of these products stems from various reasons. Firstly, the economic revenue generated through the sale of tourism products, including services, experiences, and goods, becomes a vital source of income for local communities. This income not only enhances living standards but also contributes to poverty reduction. Secondly, developing tourism products empowers local communities by providing direct economic benefits and involving them in decision-making processes related to tourism development. Thirdly, tourism products often reflect and preserve local cultural heritage and traditions, fostering a sense of cultural continuity. Additionally, the income derived from these products can be utilized to improve local infrastructure, including road access, clean water, and sanitation, to meet the needs of tourists. Moreover, tourism presents an opportunity for economic diversification within villages, offering various goods, experiences, and services to create diverse income sources and enhance resilience to economic fluctuations. The process of managing tourism products involves the active participation of local communities, fostering the development of skills and knowledge in areas such as handicrafts, culinary arts, and services, thereby enhancing the capacity of local human resources. Furthermore, tourism products serve as key attractions in promotional and marketing campaigns for tourist villages, increasing competitiveness as tourist destinations. Ultimately, the additional income generated from tourism can be strategically utilized to improve the overall quality of life for local communities, including investments in education, health, and basic services. Through optimizing the development of tourism products, a tourist village can achieve sustainable economic growth, cultural preservation, and comprehensive community empowerment.

Conducting research on sustainable tourism management for the enhancement of tourism products in Dokan Cultural Village is imperative for several compelling reasons. Firstly, the village boasts a rich cultural and environmental heritage, and the research aims to identify optimal management strategies to preserve and safeguard the authenticity of the local culture and natural environment. Secondly, the improvement of tourism products in Dokan Village is rooted in the empowerment of the local community, and the research can pinpoint management approaches that actively involve residents in tourism activities, ensuring they reap economic and social benefits. Thirdly, understanding how sustainable tourism management can elevate the quality of tourism products enables the design of more memorable experiences for visitors, incorporating activities, services, and facilities aligned with both tourist expectations and sustainability principles. Additionally, research on sustainable tourism management contributes to creating economically sustainable business models, establishing tourism as a stable income source for local communities, thereby reducing the risk of economic instability and poverty. Furthermore, the results of the research provide insights into developing tourism infrastructure and facilities, enhancing visitor comfort and safety through improved accessibility, waste management, and other public amenities. Lastly, the research aids Dokan Cultural Village in building a positive image and reputation as a sustainable tourist destination, potentially attracting more environmentally conscious tourists. Overall, the

research serves as a crucial tool for fostering cultural preservation, economic resilience, improved visitor experiences, and sustainable development in Dokan Cultural Village.

Digging deeper through research into sustainable tourism management in the Dokan Cultural Village can provide valuable guidance for improving the quality of tourism products, providing benefits to local communities and ensuring that cultural and environmental sustainability is maintained.

The research on "Sustainable Tourism Management in Improving the Quality of Tourism Products in Dokan Cultural Village" addresses a multitude of significant objectives. First and foremost, it aims to identify the tourism potential of Dokan Cultural Village, scrutinizing its cultural richness, natural attractions, and distinctive elements that captivate tourists. The research delves into the environmental impact of tourism practices within the village, conducting analyses on ecological sustainability, waste management, and the conservation of natural resources. Another key objective involves the identification and evaluation of destination management in Dokan Cultural Village, exploring the implementation of tourism management policies and practices to ensure sustainability, safety, and comfort for tourists. Community participation is a crucial focus, with the research assessing the extent of local involvement in tourism management, encompassing decision-making processes, economic empowerment, and the consideration of local community needs and desires in tourism policies. Additionally, the research endeavors to identify economic empowerment opportunities for local communities through the development of tourism products, examining local business potential and the role of community engagement in enhancing the value of these products. Evaluating and enhancing the quality of tourism products in Dokan Cultural Village is a central objective, considering factors such as service quality, diversity of experiences, and the products' alignment with traveler expectations. The research aligns with sustainable tourism principles by identifying management practices and strategies that foster economic, social, and environmental sustainability in Dokan Cultural Village. Ultimately, the research provides concrete recommendations for improving sustainable tourism management in the village, which may encompass policy enhancements, the development of training programs, and the implementation of innovative approaches in destination management. These objectives collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding and enhancement of sustainable tourism in Dokan Cultural Village. Through achieving these goals, this research will provide an in-depth view of how Dokan Cultural Village can exploit its potential as a sustainable tourism destination by improving the quality of its products.

METHODS

Qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach were used in this research. Researchers use qualitative research methods because qualitative research solves the problem of an issue or complex picture being studied according to the complexity of the object being studied. This qualitative research will require data sources and researchers to act as key informants to collect data in the field (Irene & Sitorus, n.d.). The data collection techniques used in this research were direct observation, in-depth interviews, literature study, and documentation. The informants in this research were tourism village managers and the community.

The technique for determining key informants in this research is to select informants who master the research topic. The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive analysis, namely describing actual events based on facts and data found at the research's location. The author also uses categorization data analysis techniques, namely compiling categories from a set of data

findings arranged based on thoughts, institutions, or opinions from certain criteria. Processing and analyzing qualitative descriptive data will produce analysis in the form of sentences, images, and subject behavior without using numerical or nominal data. The analysis method for this research will be carried out using a data triangulation process (Juliana et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dokan, located in the heart of Karo Regency, is a captivating cultural village proudly showcasing the rich heritage and traditions of the Karo community. Known for its exquisite ikat woven fabrics and beautiful traditional Karo houses, Dokan is a place where local culture and wisdom are carefully preserved and interwoven. The village is characterized by its unique architecture, with traditional Karo houses adorned with intricate carvings and bright colors, reflecting deep cultural significance. The residents of Dokan actively engage in traditional agricultural practices, cultivating fertile lands surrounding the village and maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature. Surrounded by beautiful green landscapes and mesmerizing mountain views, the village offers visitors a peaceful atmosphere and stunning scenery to immerse themselves in the local culture.

Dokan is highly regarded for its traditional ceremonies and festivals, serving as strong evidence of the tight-knit community bonds and enduring spirit of the Karo people. Visitors have the opportunity to witness traditional ceremonies, such as the Dokan Cultural Festival, a celebration featuring traditional dances, music, and unique local dishes. The village's commitment to sustainable tourism is reflected in their efforts to balance cultural preservation with responsible tourism practices. Local artisans in Dokan are experts in their crafts, producing beautiful handwoven textiles, intricate wood carvings, and traditional musical instruments. Visitors can explore the village's handicraft markets to acquire authentic souvenirs that carry the essence of Karo craftsmanship. The culinary scene in Dokan is a culinary adventure, featuring local delicacies such as "amplang," a traditional fish snack, and the iconic "arsik" dish, a delicious fish preparation infused with local spices. As a cultural hub, Dokan offers immersive experiences, including guided tours, cultural workshops, and homestays that allow visitors to interact with the local community and gain a deeper understanding of Karo way of life. The village's commitment to sustainable tourism practices ensures that Dokan's cultural heritage remains vibrant for generations to come, inviting visitors to embark on an enriching journey through the captivating traditions of the Karo community.

Dokan Village offers an enchanting tourist experience by presenting its unique cultural and natural riches. One of the main attractions of this village is the diversity of traditional traditions, typical dances, and local ceremonies that visitors can enjoy, including large events such as the Dokan Traditional Festival, which is a stage for traditional Karo arts. Apart from cultural activities, Dokan Village also offers the unique architectural charm of traditional Karo houses decorated with fine carvings and bright colors. Green gardens and stunning mountain views also add to the special features, creating an atmosphere of peace and natural beauty, which is a special attraction for visitors who want to soak up the unique local culture. Furthermore, the diversity of amenities in Dokan Village also adds to the tourist experience. Visitors can enjoy traditional accommodation that creates an authentic stay atmosphere, providing a feeling of closeness to local culture. Restaurants in this village also offer typical Karo dishes, introducing tourists to the unique and delicious culinary tastes. A number of handicraft shops in the village make ideal shopping destinations, allowing visitors to take home unique souvenirs that reflect the beauty and skill of local crafts.

Lastly, Dokan Village shows a commitment to tourism accessibility and sustainability. With good road access, this village can be easily reached by visitors from the center of Karo Regency and the surrounding area. Efforts to preserve the environment and an emphasis on responsible tourism practices are also visible, making Dokan Village a tourist destination that not only offers natural and cultural beauty, but also respects and preserves this heritage for future generations. Dokan Village has great potential as an attractive tourist destination with its cultural and natural riches. The main attraction focuses on the diversity of traditional traditions, typical dances and local ceremonies, such as the Dokan Traditional Festival, which is the pinnacle of Karo traditional arts. However, there are conditions at the attraction that have not been fully managed. Despite having great potential, these attractions may not have received sufficient attention or have not been integrated into more comprehensive tourism packages.

The lack of coordination and management of homestays in Dokan Village creates serious challenges in the development of the local accommodation sector. Uncertainty regarding bookings, maintenance and quality standards can have a negative impact on the homestay's image and the satisfaction of visiting tourists. In addition, the lack of clear homestay package offers and effective promotions reduces the attractiveness of homestays as an accommodation option due to a lack of adequate information. The need for further training and support for local communities hosting homestays is a critical factor in improving service quality. In contrast, unclear rules and regulations regarding homestay management can create operational obstacles and undesirable legal risks. Urgent action is needed to improve coordination, promotion, training and clearer regulations to improve homestay management and support the growth of the local tourism sector.

Although the general accessibility of Dokan Village makes things easier for visitors, unfortunately, lack of management, especially regarding infrastructure, can be an obstacle. One aspect that needs attention is the need for signage or clear directions along the route to the village. The unavailability of these signs can make it difficult for tourists to find the correct route, reduce the level of travel comfort, and create uncertainty. Parking lots that need to be managed properly are also a problem that needs attention. Even though there are adequate parking facilities, lack of management and arrangement can result in inconvenience for visitors. The absence of clear signs for parking instructions, as well as a lack of parking lot maintenance, can disrupt the visitor experience and create the impression of a lack of order. Therefore, while the accessibility of Dokan Village has provided convenience for tourist travel, further efforts are needed to manage the infrastructure better. Improvements in the provision of clear signage and routine maintenance of parking facilities can improve the visitor experience, making the trip to Dokan Village smoother and more positive overall.

Dokan Village is not only an attractive tourist destination but also provides serious attention to supporting services that complement visitors' tourism experience. Local guides who are knowledgeable about local history and culture are the main support in providing valuable information to tourists. They not only direct visitors to the main attractions but also provide in-depth stories about the life and uniqueness of Dokan Village, creating a bond between visitors and the local cultural heritage. Dokan Village also hosts handicraft workshops, cultural tours, and various other activities that provide an in-depth experience of the lifestyle and traditional skills of the Karo people. Through workshops, visitors can be directly involved in the creative process of making handicrafts, understanding the values and techniques contained in each product. Cultural tours open the door for visitors to see the daily lives of local people, providing a deeper perspective on the uniqueness and diversity of Dokan Village's culture. Apart from cultural aspects, the welfare and safety of visitors are top priorities in Dokan Village. Available health services ensure prompt medical assistance if needed,

while strict security policies provide a sense of security and comfort for tourists. With special attention to these supporting services, Dokan Village is not only a destination that offers natural and cultural beauty but is also committed to providing a comprehensive and satisfying tourism experience.

Dokan Cultural Village shows a strong commitment to the principles of sustainable tourism, with a focus on the responsibility of good destination management. They have taken positive steps in preserving cultural and natural heritage, reflecting adequate attention to sustainability. However, to improve the sustainability further, further review needs to be carried out regarding optimizing the role of local stakeholders in destination management. The existence of a strategy and action plan for destination management in Dokan Village is crucial in pursuing sustainable tourism. There needs to be further clarification regarding the extent to which implementation is carried out clearly to ensure destination development is directed and effective, taking into account sustainability aspects as a basis.

The importance of monitoring and reporting on the impact of tourism activities in Dokan Village reflects awareness of environmental and social aspects. Regular evaluation in this process is key to assessing impacts and providing a basis for improvements needed to achieve sustainability in tourism. Dokan Village's efforts to strengthen the involvement of business entities and integrate sustainability standards in destination operations demonstrate attention to sustainable economic impacts. However, it must be ensured that the economic activities involved are truly sustainable and have a positive impact on the environment and local communities. Evaluation of the involvement and feedback from residents is key in assessing the extent to which social sustainability and local participation are achieved. Understanding the extent to which visitors are involved in local activities and the impact of their feedback is important in the context of sustainable development.

Increasing positive interactions with visitors through communication strategies and participation programs is a positive step toward achieving social and cultural sustainability. Evaluation of the effectiveness of promotional strategies and information distribution needs to be improved to more efficiently convey the charm of the village to potential visitors by promoting the unique culture and nature of the village. Managing the number and activities of visitors is a positive focus in achieving destination sustainability. Tourist control and distribution efforts help maintain destination sustainability and protect natural resources and cultural heritage. Climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies demonstrate strong foresight in achieving environmental sustainability. Regular planning and updating of risk and crisis management plans is an important step in ensuring readiness for unexpected situations, such as natural disasters or global crises, in order to maintain destination sustainability. In this way, Dokan Village can continue to optimize its tourism potential with a sustainable approach.

Dokan Village shows positive potential in contributing to the tourism economy, especially through the presence of cultural heritage and natural attractions, which are driving the growth of the tourism sector. However, further evaluation is needed to quantitatively measure economic impacts and ensure fair distribution of benefits among local communities. Tourism in Dokan Village provides job and career opportunities that can improve the welfare of local communities, but monitoring is needed regarding the sustainability of employment opportunities. Support for local entrepreneurship and fair trade has been demonstrated through the promotion of local products. However, business models that support the economic welfare of local communities need to continue to be strengthened. The importance of involvement and support for local communities in decision-making related to tourism needs to be increased, as well as the need to protect community rights to prevent exploitation and discrimination. Dokan Village needs to maintain ownership rights and use natural resources and

cultural heritage fairly and wisely to maintain the sustainability of the destination. The safety and security of visitors and local communities is a priority, and improving infrastructure to ensure accessibility for all levels of society, including those with special needs, needs to continue to be considered in efforts to maintain the sustainability of Dokan Village tourism.

Dokan Cultural Village shows a good commitment to the protection of cultural assets, especially through the management of cultural artifacts and intangible heritage. Steps to engage traditional access are also evident, supporting the preservation of local traditions and communities. It is important to ensure the protection of intellectual property rights related to local culture so that people's innovation and creativity can be valued and protected. Visitor management at cultural sites is an important focus to prevent damage or disturbance to cultural heritage. Dokan Village needs to consider policies and best practices in managing the number and activities of visitors in order to preserve cultural sites effectively. Site interpretation is also an aspect that needs to be considered, providing accurate and educational information to visitors to increase their understanding of the cultural and historical value of each site. By paying attention to all these indicators, Dokan Cultural Village can continue to improve strategies and policy implementation in the preservation and promotion of their cultural riches, creating positive experiences for visitors while ensuring the sustainability and authenticity of their cultural heritage.

Dokan Cultural Village shows significant attention to the protection of sensitive environments by implementing efforts in visitor management at natural sites. Even though there have been positive steps, strategies and interactions with wildlife need to continue to be improved by considering concrete steps to involve the community in environmental conservation. Dokan Village needs to focus more on preserving biodiversity and animal welfare to maintain the balance of the local ecosystem. Strengthening energy conservation efforts, water management and improving water quality are essential in maintaining the sustainability of natural resources. Waste management, including wastewater and solid waste, requires special attention and the implementation of a more efficient and environmentally friendly waste management system. Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and mitigating climate change must be integrated into environmental management plans to maintain the sustainability of Dokan Village. A focus on low-impact transportation and light and noise pollution management policies are key in maintaining the integrity of the village environment. Continuous evaluation and improvement of waste transportation and handling systems are necessary to minimize their negative impact on the environment. By paying attention to these indicators, Dokan Cultural Village can continue to be a pioneer in sustainable initiatives, inspiring other cultural villages to protect and preserve their natural environment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Dokan Cultural Village exhibits a commendable commitment to sustainable tourism practices, particularly in the responsible management of both cultural and natural assets. The village's initiatives in preserving cultural heritage and engaging with environmental aspects reflect a strong focus on sustainability. However, to enhance sustainability further, there is a need for a comprehensive review to optimize the involvement of local stakeholders in destination management. The establishment and clear implementation of a robust strategy and action plan for destination management are crucial steps in fostering sustainable tourism. Monitoring and reporting on the impact of tourism activities indicate a conscientious approach to environmental and social concerns, with regular evaluations providing a foundation for necessary improvements. While efforts to involve business entities and incorporate sustainability standards in operations underscore attention to

economic sustainability, it's essential to ensure that economic activities genuinely benefit the environment and local communities. Evaluating the engagement and feedback of residents is pivotal in gauging social sustainability and local participation, while positive interactions with visitors and strategic communication contribute positively to social and cultural sustainability. By addressing these aspects, Dokan Cultural Village can continue to optimize its tourism potential with a strong commitment to sustainability, serving as an exemplary model for other cultural villages.

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