

Sustainable Friendly Destination: Infrastructure and Governance Perspectives of Rural Destination, Indonesia

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Abstract

Tourism is expanding rapidly and is a pivotal industry in enhancing the worldwide economy. However, the main challenge tourism destinations face, particularly in rural areas, is providing adequate, visitor-friendly infrastructure. This study aims to highlight the governance and the physical infrastructure services in rural destinations, focusing on the case of Sunrise Land Lombok. The research utilised secondary data on annual tourist visits in 2023 to assess infrastructure requirements, evaluated from a demographic perspective encompassing age, gender, and tourist origin. Simultaneously, governance data incorporating sustainability principles is supplemented by participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. The study indicates that the physical infrastructure at Sunrise Land Lombok generally meets tourist needs; however, it is necessary to incorporate additional specific amenities, such as facilities for the elderly and accommodations for children's particular requirements. Moreover, the notion of sustainability regarding human resources, community engagement, and environmental conservation has long been practised as a pillar of destination governance. In the future, Sunrise Land Lombok must incorporate public amenities, such as suitable places of worship, children's play areas, and facilities catering to teenagers, who constitute the majority of visitors.

Keywords: Friendly infrastructure, Rural destination, Sustainability

Introduction

Tourism has become a rapidly growing economic sector globally (Robinson et al., 2019) making a significant contribution to economic growth (Amrullah et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2020) job creation (Khan et al., 2020) and strengthening intercultural ties (Agung, 2023). In the last decade, the number of international tourists has continued to increase, driven by technological advances, transportation, and information. However, this development also poses serious challenges to the sustainability of tourist destinations, particularly in providing infrastructure to accommodate visitors' needs. Physical and non-physical infrastructure in a destination supports the smooth running of tourism activities (Pauzi et al., 2023) and is also an important indicator of overall tourist satisfaction and experience.

In the context of sustainable tourism, a visitor-friendly infrastructure is a key element that should not be overlooked (Devi et al., 2021; Mamirkulova et al., 2020). The concept of sustainable tourism emphasises destination management that considers the preservation of the local environment, economy, and socio-culture (Palacios et al., 2021; Šteti & Br, 2024). This demands that every aspect of a tourist destination, including infrastructure, be designed to balance the needs of visitors and the preservation of local resources. Therefore, the provision of visitor-friendly infrastructure that is not only convenient and safe but also accessible to all demographic groups is an important prerequisite for the sustainable development of tourist destinations.

However, many tourist destinations, especially in rural areas, still face significant challenges in providing infrastructure that meets visitors' needs (Chiang et al., 2022; Lane et al., 2022). Inadequate infrastructure can reduce the attractiveness of destinations (Odeku, 2020),

reduce tourist satisfaction, and negatively impact local economic sustainability (Zeng, 2021). Infrastructure unpreparedness is closely related to weak destination governance. Ineffective governance, which includes planning, resource management, and stakeholder participation, can lead to inequality between the ever-increasing number of tourists and the readiness of existing infrastructure. In many cases, planning and infrastructure development is still reactive (Ouariti & Jebrane, 2020; Risandewi, 2017), responding only to an increase in the number of tourists without regard to the long-term needs and sustainability of the destination.

In addition, there are more specific problems related to the lack of infrastructure that supports the needs of particular demographic groups, such as teenagers or tourists with special needs. For example, the availability of public facilities such as toilets (I Gusti Ayu Wita Kusumawati & Ida Bagus Agung Yogeswara, 2023; Khoiron et al., 2023), places of worship, and accessibility facilities for people with disabilities are still minimal (Kamyabi, 2022), especially in rural tourist destinations. This inequality reveals a gap between visitors' diverse needs and the infrastructure provided. Not only that, the lack of involvement of local communities in the destination planning and management process is an inhibiting factor in achieving sustainable governance (Bærenholdt & Meged, 2023; Spadaro et al., 2023; Talib & Usu, 2019). Therefore, it is important to evaluate how good governance can support the development of visitor-friendly infrastructure, as well as how destination management can create a balance between visitor comfort (Mihalič et al., 2016) and environmental and socio-cultural sustainability (Sharma & Sarkar, 2024; Uslu et al., 2020).

Although many studies on sustainable tourism have been conducted, those that specifically highlight visitor-friendly infrastructure and the governance of rural tourist destinations remain very limited. Most previous research has focused more on the environmental and economic impacts of tourism (Amrullah et al., 2024; Baloch et al., 2023; Croes et al., 2021; Tian et al., 2020) without paying close attention to how infrastructure governance can contribute to the sustainability of rural destinations. In addition, the lack of research using demographic analysis in infrastructure evaluation is a gap that must be filled. Given the importance of understanding visitors' needs based on age, gender, and traveller origin, this approach provides deeper insights into service improvement efforts in rural destinations.

Against this background, this research aims to fill the gap by analysing tourists' infrastructure needs from a demographic perspective and uncovering how destination governance can support the principles of sustainable tourism. This study examines the case of Sunrise Land, a rural tourist destination in Lombok, one of the areas with increasing visitation. The 2023 tourist visit data served as the basis for the analysis, focusing on the demographic distribution of tourists, including age, gender, and origin. This research will evaluate how the destination's existing infrastructure accommodates the needs of various tourist groups and identify shortcomings that need to be corrected to improve comfort and accessibility.

In addition, this research will explore how destination governance plays a role in implementing tourism development that benefits all groups. The principles of sustainable tourism serve as a framework for assessing whether existing governance supports the sustainability of destinations. This research is expected to contribute to the sustainable tourism literature, especially regarding infrastructure development that supports visitor comfort and good governance in rural tourist destinations. In addition, this study's results are expected to provide policy recommendations for local governments and other stakeholders to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of tourist destinations.

Methods

1. Design

This study uses a case study approach with a focus on the tourist destinations of Sunrise Land Lombok¹. This approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of the destination's infrastructure and governance. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. The selection of Sunrise Land Lombok as a case study is based on its reputation as a well-known, rapidly growing tourist destination in East Lombok Regency. The positive image and increase in tourist visits to this destination make it representative of the research objectives. In addition, this destination is considered to have infrastructure and governance characteristics relevant to the research topic, enabling it to provide data that meets analysis needs.

2. Data Source

This study utilises two types of data sources: secondary and primary. The secondary data comes from the records of tourists' annual visits to the Sunrise Land Lombok destination in 2023. This data includes visitor demographic information, including the visitor's age, gender, and origin, which is then analysed to understand infrastructure needs based on these criteria. In addition, primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and participatory observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several key informants, including the manager of Sunrise Land Lombok, as well as leaders and vendors in the tourist area. This interview is designed to explore information on destination governance and their perspectives on the availability and effectiveness of infrastructure aligned with sustainability principles. The use of semi-structured interviews allows for flexibility in gathering relevant, in-depth information from various sources. Furthermore, participatory observations are conducted to gain a direct understanding of field conditions, particularly regarding the availability and quality of infrastructure at the destination. Researchers conduct observations during the visit, which enable a hands-on assessment of interactions between visitors and existing facilities, as well as of how the infrastructure supports visitors' needs.

3. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study is divided into two main parts: demographic analysis and governance analysis. A demographic analysis was conducted to assess the infrastructure needs of destinations based on visitor characteristics, namely age, gender, and origin. This demographic data is presented in a table to facilitate understanding and interpretation. Subsequently, the data are described in detail based on the findings from the participatory observation. This approach allows researchers to identify the specific patterns and needs of each visitor group regarding the destination's infrastructure. The governance analysis focuses more on the results of interviews with managers and local communities around the destination. The interview approach was chosen because destination governance requires a deep understanding that cannot be explained quantitatively. The results of this interview are then described and compared with information from other sources to provide a more holistic perspective on governance and its role in developing a visitor-friendly infrastructure.

Findings

1. Distribution of visits

Sunrise Land Lombok is a tour that attracts visitors of all ages. Based on 2023 tourist visit data, the researcher classified tourists' origins into 26 sub-districts: 19 in the East Lombok Regency, eight outside East Lombok, and the remaining from outside the island of Lombok. The most tourists recorded by data came from Selong District, with 1118, followed by Suralaga District

¹ Sunrise Land Lombok is a rural destination offering a variety of tourism packages.

with 769, Masbagik with 375, and Labuhan Haji with 275. In addition, other districts, such as Central Lombok and West Lombok, are not the main destinations for visitors.

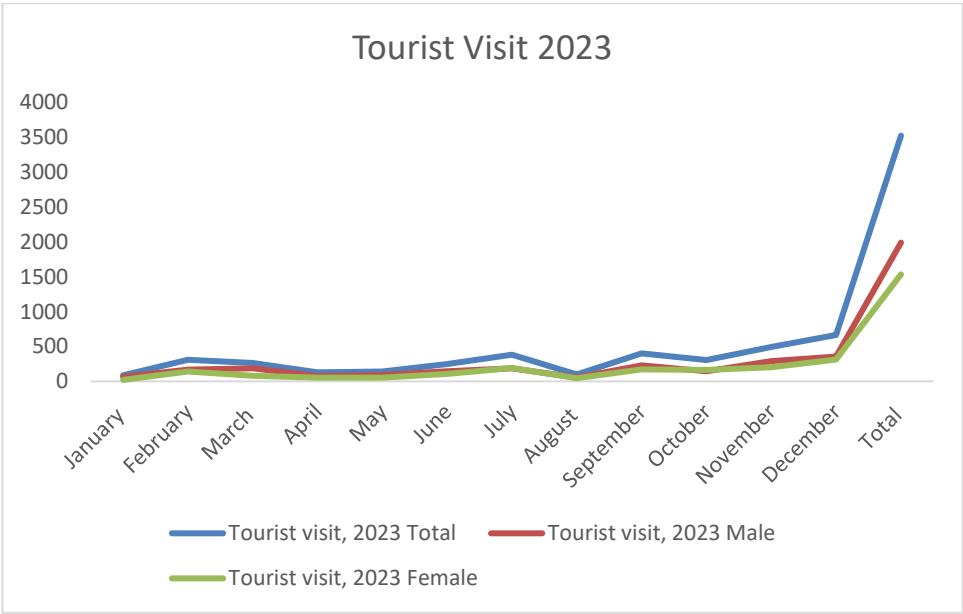


Figure 1: Tourist visit Sunrise Land Lombok 2023

Female and male tourist visits exhibit similar levels of stability, although men make more visits. The most-visited month for male tourists was December, with 355, whereas August had only 55. In addition to male tourists, Sunrise Land Lombok also attracts female tourists. In December, the rate of female tourist visits reached 311; in January, it was the lowest, at 21.

2. Infrastructure analysis by demographics

The infrastructure in Sunrise Land, Lombok, has been developed to meet tourist needs, although the proportions of female and male worshippers are unequal. Female tourists need more specialised facilities to provide a comfortable visit. According to the 2023 visit data, the number of female tourists was 1533. This should be a special concern for managers to identify which facilities are women-friendly. Several public facilities already exist in Sunrise Land Lombok, as well as those recommended.

Table 1: Amenities in Sunrise Land Lombok

Availability
Public bathroom
Rest area
Seating
Aesthetic photo booth
Playground
Swing
Information Center
Turtle education
Reading Corner
Camping equipment rental
Rubish Bin
Boardwalk
Culinary stalls/food vendors
Directions in the tourist area
Clean water

Judging from the visit data, which reached 3,521 tourists, there needs to be a separate specification for facilities for male tourists, alongside those for female tourists. The needs of male and female tourists differ; therefore, it is essential to ensure satisfaction and comfort for all tourists. Male tourists, who account for the majority of total visits, require improved facilities in both quality and quantity. The need for a total of 166 tourists per month necessitates increasing the number of facilities provided, particularly during peak seasons such as December, when 666 visits are recorded.

Similarly, female tourists recorded 1533 visits, averaging 127 per month. The facilities offered must be improved, as the number of visits can increase at any time, as in December, when 311 tourists visited. Generally, female tourists can use public facilities for three times as long as male tourists.

3. Amenities by age

Sunrise Land Lombok data records for the 12 months of visits are dominated by the 16-25 age group, with 1802, followed by the adult category in the 26-25 years age range, with 1652. The lowest number was recorded among visitors under 15 (4 visits), followed by visitors aged 36 years and above (65 visits). Here are the existing destination facilities and their development recommendations.

Table 2: Age-based infrastructure needs

No.	Age Range	Necessity		Recommendations
		Exist	None	
1	<15 Years	Playground Children-only swing	Children's reading garden. Guard from the manager at the children's playground	There needs to be supervision from the manager who guards the children's play area.
2	16-25 Years	Turtle education, Reading literacy, Hall Dressing room, Bathroom/toilet, Culinary stalls, Aesthetic photo booth, Information center, Youth lodging, Mains/wifi area	Dedicated dressing room Cigarette only place for male visitors	It is necessary to add a special dressing room for men and women. Bathrooms need to be improved in quality such as cleanliness. It is necessary to provide a special smoking area to maintain the comfort of other visitors who are disturbed by cigarette smoke. It is necessary to arrange a neat point of sale so that it can enhance the scenery at the destination.
3	26-35 Years	Gazebo Culinary stalls, Directions on the tour, Bathroom	Souvenir kiosk.	Directions should be made clear at several points. Discussion room for <i>small meetings/discuss</i> The bathroom must be adequate

4	>36 Years	Information Center	Senior-specific files	Elderly facilities such as wheelchairs/wheelchair access
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Tourists are predominantly teenagers (16-25 years; 51%) and adults (26-35 years; 47%). The lowest age range of tourists was children (< 15 years) with 0.11% and >36 years old with 1.79%. Based on data on tourist visits in 2023. Teenagers have a higher level of motivation to travel than other ages. The infrastructure and accommodation provided in Sunrise Land Lombok can impact visitors. Facilities based on age range are essential because different age groups will be required. Adolescents, who have the highest rate of tourist visits, must be prioritised by managers to meet their needs in tourist attractions. Amenities required for teenagers. Existing facilities need to be considered for quality and quantity by focusing effort here (facilities that do not yet exist) and/or maintenance performance (existing facilities that need to be improved and increased in number).

For children aged <15 years, it is also necessary to provide amenities such as children's playgrounds and specialised swings. As for the age range of 26-36 years, the facilities needed are not much different from tourists aged 16-25, so the infrastructure must be maximized for tourists of productive age. The provision of facilities can be an important factor in adult travellers' motivation, as most adult travellers will recommend a place based on the availability of facilities. As for the infrastructure needs of tourists aged >37 years plus special space facilities as the majority of them bring children. A dedicated room is used for *family activities*, such as gatherings. The provision of infrastructure is urgently needed to support innovation and the level of comfort of tourists who visit. The classification of infrastructure types (quality and quantity) is urgently needed to increase the motivation of tourists to return to visit so that tourism in Sunrise Land Lombok can be sustainable.

4. Destination governance carries the principle of sustainability

Overall, the implementation of the *Triple Bottom Line* concept in Sunrise Land Lombok has covered social, economic, and environmental aspects well. The active involvement of the community in management, equitable distribution of economic benefits, and commitment to environmental conservation are significant steps that support the sustainability of this tourist destination.

In the people dimension, Sunrise Land Lombok's management shows strong attention to human resources. One of the measures implemented is the deployment of security personnel to ensure visitors' comfort. In addition, the active involvement of local communities in destination management is an important factor supporting the continuity of tourism operations. Structured SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) have been implemented to ensure that the management of tourist destinations is conducted in accordance with procedures that involve human factors. Destination managers have experience in the world of tourism and some of them have undergone certifications and training at the national level, which strengthens their capabilities in managing tourism well. In addition, managers' proficiency in foreign languages, particularly English, is a valuable asset for improving services for foreign tourists.

In the profit dimension, the sustainability of the destination economy is reflected in various activities carried out to support the local economy. The availability of business space for local communities, particularly for MSMEs, enables them to benefit from tourism activities. In addition, the distribution of profits from the management of tourist tickets to related parties ensures a sustainable revenue stream. Procuring events and tourist attractions is also a significant source of profit for destinations, as it not only increases direct revenue but also attracts more visitors. Another benefit is the rental of land for local community trading activities, which also supports the destination's economic activity.

The planetary or environmental dimension focuses on efforts to preserve the environment of tourist destinations. Sunrise Land Lombok has implemented various initiatives to raise awareness and maintain the cleanliness of tourist areas. Appeal boards for disposing of garbage in place have been installed at different strategic points, along with garbage cans in several locations to make it easier for visitors. In addition, gotong royong, or beach-cleaning activities, are conducted on a regular schedule as part of efforts to maintain the destination's cleanliness. The manager also collaborates with the East Lombok Regency Environmental Agency to regularly transport waste, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining the destination's cleanliness. Education through social media about the importance of maintaining cleanliness and spreading the tagline about cleanliness is also an effective public campaign to encourage positive behaviour from visitors.

Discussion

This study provides in-depth insights into tourist visit patterns in Sunrise Land Lombok, in 2023 by showing significant variations in visitor demographics and gender-based infrastructure needs. Overall, visitors to this tourist destination come from 26 sub-districts, of which 19 are in East Lombok Regency, while the rest come from outside the district or the island of Lombok. The most visitors were recorded from Selong District with 1,118 tourists, followed by Suralaga (769 tourists), Masbagik (375 tourists), and Labuhan Haji (275 tourists). This shows that Sunrise Land Lombok is still dominated by local tourists from nearby areas, especially from East Lombok. Meanwhile, tourist visits outside the district, including Central Lombok and West Lombok, are relatively low, so there is still significant opportunity to market development to tourists from outside the region.

Demographically, male tourists dominated visits, although overall visit rates for both male and female tourists remained stable. Male tourists reached their peak in December, with 355, while the lowest figure was in August, with only 55. Female tourists also show a similar trend, with the peak in December (311 tourists) and the lowest in January (21 tourists). These data indicate certain seasons when visitation rates fluctuate considerably, requiring adaptive destination management strategies (Hartman, 2020), especially in setting up adequate facilities during high seasons such as December. The infrastructure needs in Sunrise Land, Lombok, need to be carefully considered, especially given the differences in needs between male and female tourists. Female tourists, who totalled 1,533 in 2023, have special needs when it comes to comfort during visits. Some public facilities in these destinations are currently sufficient, but managers should consider providing more women-friendly facilities, such as more toilets, adequate changing areas, and other amenities that enhance women's comfort (Pradesh, 2023; Shahrin & Omar, 2022). In addition, the existing infrastructure needs to be optimised to meet the needs of male tourists, who account for the majority of total visits, averaging 166 per month. During peak seasons such as December, the number of visits even jumps to 666, underscoring the need to increase the number of facilities to maintain visitor satisfaction.

Another interesting finding concerns the age of tourists. Data shows that 51% of tourists visiting Sunrise Land Lombok are aged 16-25, while the other 47% are adult tourists aged 26-35. The age groups of children under 15 and elderly tourists over 36 had much lower visit rates, just 0.11% and 1.79%, respectively. Thus, most visitors are teenagers and young adults who need facilities tailored to their needs. Entertainment facilities, social areas, and comfortable and affordable accommodations are important for this age group, so managers should consider improving the quality and quantity of existing facilities (Mandić & Kennell, 2021), including making repairs to damaged facilities (Ilkhanizadeh et al., 2020; Lapatty et al., 2021; Odeku, 2020). The provision of inclusive facilities that address differences in the needs of male and female travellers can be an important factor in increasing tourist satisfaction levels (Akbara, 2022; Febriyana et al., 2020; Kurniasari et al., 2024; Mikulić et al., 2024). In addition, the importance of

providing facilities that can support the motivation of teenage tourists is a major highlight, showing that the right amenities can increase comfort and satisfaction in the visiting experience of this age group (Buleleng, 2022). The emphasis on the need for appropriate facilities for adolescent tourists is a key factor in increasing the attractiveness and sustainability of tourist destinations (Buhalis et al., 2020; Raimkulov et al., 2021). Adolescents tend to seek destinations with facilities that support social interaction and exciting experiences (Fermani et al., 2020; Poruțiu et al., 2021). With a sizable number of teenage tourists in Sunrise Land Lombok, this destination can become more attractive if the existing facilities are optimized according to the preferences of that age group.

However, some limitations in this study must be acknowledged. First, the data used in this study covered only one year, so they are insufficient to provide a stable picture of the long-term pattern of visits. Economic conditions, changes in tourism trends, and various other external factors may affect the pattern of tourist visits in the coming years. Second, this study has not delved deeper into tourists' motivations and preferences through a qualitative approach, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving tourist visits. Finally, this study is limited to one location, Sunrise Land Lombok, so the results cannot be generalised to all tourist destinations in Lombok or other regions. This research continues to make a significant contribution to the understanding of tourist behaviour in Sunrise Land, Lombok, and to the implications of managing the facilities needed to improve service quality in this destination. An inclusive facility improvement strategy aligned with tourists' demographic needs can be an essential step toward supporting the sustainability of destinations, both in terms of tourist satisfaction and in maintaining their economic and social sustainability.

Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth understanding of the pattern of tourist visits in Sunrise Land, Lombok, in 2023, focusing on variations in visitor demographics and gender-based infrastructure needs. Most tourists come from East Lombok Regency, especially from Selong District, with a few visits from outside the district and the island. This shows that local tourists still dominate the destination, while the potential for market development for tourists from other regions remains wide open. A more aggressive and targeted marketing strategy is needed to attract tourists outside the area and expand the tourism market. Demographically, male tourists dominate visits, but female tourists also show a significant trend in visits. In December, the number of tourist visits peaked for both male and female tourists, emphasising the importance of destination management that is adaptive to the high seasons. This requires special attention to infrastructure, especially women-friendly facilities such as sanitation and rest areas. Destination managers should consider developing gender-specific facilities to enhance tourists' comfort and satisfaction. In terms of age, most visitors are teenagers and young adults, who tend to seek out tourist experiences that support social and entertainment activities. Amenities such as social areas and affordable accommodation are essential to meet the needs of this group. Optimising existing facilities and providing infrastructure aligned with young travellers' preferences can increase destination appeal and encourage repeat visits.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be given. First, it is necessary to develop more women-friendly facilities, such as increasing the number of toilets and adequate rest areas. Second, a marketing strategy that focuses more on the target market outside East Lombok must be implemented to expand the reach of tourists. Third, providing entertainment and social facilities that meet the needs of adolescent and young adult tourists is essential to maintaining the destination's attractiveness to this age group. Thus, responsive management of these demographic needs will support the sustainability of tourism in Sunrise Land, Lombok.

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