

The Role of the Government and Tourists' Perceptions of Sports Tourism at Belanting River Tubing, Ogan Komering Ulu

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Abstract: This study investigates the critical roles of government actions and tourists' perceptions in shaping the development and sustainability of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu, South Sumatra, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative research methodology, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and field observations, revealing several significant issues. The findings underscore considerable infrastructural deficiencies, including poor road conditions and inadequate facilities hindering the overall tourist experience. Despite various government initiatives promoting the destination, there remains a noticeable gap between planning and practical implementation, causing frustration among local stakeholders. Safety concerns, such as the absence of adequately trained guides and insufficient emergency protocols, further detract from the destination's attractiveness. The current promotional strategies need to be improved, with many tourists only learning about the site through word-of-mouth rather than practical marketing efforts. At the same time, visitors' express appreciation for the natural beauty and adventurous opportunities that the challenges above overshadow. Balancing River Tubing offers these positive aspects. The study highlights the necessity of increased community involvement for sustainable tourism development, noting that residents require more training and support. It concludes with recommendations to enhance infrastructure, improve safety measures, strengthen promotional activities, and foster community engagement to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing.

Keywords: Government Role, Sports Tourism, Tourists' Perceptions

A. Introduction

Sports tourism refers to travelling to a different destination for the primary purpose of watching or participating in a sporting event (Ito & Higham, 2020). This unique form of tourism has gained popularity recently as sports fans seek out new and exciting experiences beyond their local teams and venues. The thrill of witnessing a live game in a new stadium or participating in a sports event in a foreign country

adds excitement and adventure to the typical travel experience. Sports tourism can also provide economic benefits to the host destination, as fans and participants spend money on accommodations, food, transportation, and souvenirs during their visit (Nyikana et al., 2021). Sports tourism has gained significant attention worldwide as a rapidly growing tourism industry sector. Sports tourism includes visiting museums, stadiums, or other sports-related attractions (Mesci et al., 2021). This unique form of tourism allows individuals to combine their love for sports with their passion for travel, creating memorable experiences and opportunities to explore new destinations. Combining the thrill of adventure with the beauty of natural landscapes, sports tourism offers unique experiences that attract diverse tourists (Ponte et al., 2021). One emerging destination is Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu, a South Sumatra, Indonesia regency. The region, rich in natural resources and cultural heritage, presents a perfect backdrop for river tubing activities, appealing to domestic and international tourists. However, the development and sustainability of such a niche tourism sector depend significantly on the government's role and the tourists' perceptions (Cantika, 2022).

Sports tourism refers to the travel individuals or groups undertake to participate in or view sporting events. This type of tourism has gained significant popularity in recent years as people seek out unique and exciting experiences that combine their love for sports with their passion for travel (Peixoto & Sousa, 2021). Sports tourism allows individuals to engage in physical activity and competition in new and exciting locations and provides economic benefits to the host destination through increased tourism revenue. This paper will explore the various aspects of sports tourism and discuss its importance in the tourism industry. From large-scale events like the Olympics to smaller, niche competitions, sports tourism offers a wide range of opportunities for individuals to immerse themselves in the world of sports (Newland & Yoo, 2021). Whether attending a soccer match in a foreign country or participating in a marathon in a picturesque location, sports tourism allows individuals to experience the thrill of competition in a new and unique way. Additionally, the economic benefits of sports tourism cannot be overstated, as it can help boost local economies, create jobs, and attract investment to the host destination (Sant et al., 2019). Sports tourism is a dynamic and growing sector within the tourism industry that offers something for everyone, from casual fans to dedicated athletes (Ennis, 2020).

The government plays a crucial role in the development of sports tourism. Their involvement can range from providing infrastructure, ensuring safety regulations, and promoting the destination to fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors (Javani & Ghasemi, 2022). In the case of Belanting River Tubing, the local government's initiatives can significantly influence the growth of this tourism segment. Investments in infrastructure such as access roads, signage, and facilities can enhance the overall tourist experience (Kanwal et al., 2020). Additionally,

implementing safety measures and standards is essential to ensure the activity remains safe for participants, thereby boosting tourists' confidence. One of the critical factors in the success of sports tourism is the government's level of support and involvement (Boonsiritomachai & Phonthanukitithaworn, 2019; Chang et al., 2020). The government plays a crucial role in attracting visitors and boosting the local economy by providing funding, infrastructure, and promotion for sporting events (Custódio et al., 2018; Richelieu, 2018). It significantly boosts local economies by attracting visitors, generating revenue for businesses, and creating employment opportunities. Sports tourism promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyles and helps showcase a destination's unique culture and attractions (Mataruna-Dos-Santos et al., 2022)

In this paragraph, we will explore how government support can impact the development of sports tourism. Government support can come in the form of financial assistance to help cover the costs of organizing and hosting sporting events. This funding can be used to improve facilities, upgrade infrastructure, and promote the events to a broader audience. Additionally, the government can play a role in securing sponsorships, partnerships, and media coverage to increase the visibility and success of sports tourism initiatives (Hassim & Susetio, 2023). Sports tourism has become increasingly popular as people seek out unique and exciting experiences while enjoying their favourite sports.

One key aspect of sports tourism is attracting visitors worldwide, bringing in valuable revenue for host cities and regions (Mhanna et al., 2019). The influx of tourists for sporting events can also lead to increased hotel bookings, restaurant patronage, and shopping expenditures, all of which contribute to the area's economic growth. Additionally, sports tourism can promote a positive image of a destination, attracting future visitors who may not have otherwise considered travelling to that location. Overall, sports tourism plays a crucial role in supporting local economies and showcasing the unique offerings of a region to a global audience. By hosting major sporting events, cities can showcase their culture, landmarks, and hospitality to a diverse group of spectators and participants. This exposure can lead to increased interest in the destination for sports enthusiasts and those looking to experience new and exciting travel experiences. As a result, sports tourism can have a lasting impact on the local economy, driving continued growth and development in the region (Doni Pranata et al., 2023). In essence, sports tourism is about the thrill of competition and the lasting benefits it can bring to a destination and its community.

From attending major sporting events like the Olympics or the Super Bowl to participating in adventure sports like skiing or surfing, sports tourism offers travellers a wide range of opportunities to combine their love of sports with their passion for exploring new destinations. (Gibson et al., 2020) Government

involvement in sports tourism not only helps to attract visitors and boost local economies, but it also promotes healthy lifestyles and fosters a sense of community pride (Harahap & Kartika, 2020; Schulenkorf et al., 2019). By investing in sports facilities, promoting events, and providing financial support, the government can help create a thriving sports tourism industry that benefits residents and tourists alike. Additionally, government involvement can help ensure the sustainability and long-term success of sports tourism initiatives, ultimately leading to continued growth and development in the industry. Furthermore, government support can also lead to developing sports programs and initiatives that cater to a wide range of demographics, including youth, seniors, and individuals with disabilities (Hammond et al., 2022).

Effective government promotion and marketing strategies are crucial in positioning Belanting River Tubing as a leading sports tourism destination. By creating compelling marketing campaigns that showcase the unique aspects of the destination, leveraging social media platforms, and collaborating with travel influencers, the government can significantly boost the visibility of Belanting River Tubing. Additionally, engaging with travel agencies and participating in tourism fairs further enhances its appeal to potential visitors. Such proactive initiatives help businesses expand into new markets, grow their customer base, and level the playing field for small enterprises, allowing them to compete more effectively with more giant corporations. These strategies build trust in local industries, attract foreign investment, and contribute to job creation, ultimately fostering economic prosperity. In essence, the government's efforts in promoting and marketing local products and services benefit businesses and consumers, leading to a thriving and competitive market economy.

Tourists' perceptions are equally vital in shaping the future of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. Positive experiences and word-of-mouth recommendations can drive more visitors to the area. Therefore, understanding tourists' expectations and experiences is crucial for continuously improving tourism offerings. Factors such as the quality of service, the natural beauty of the area, the thrill of the tubing experience, and the hospitality of the local community contribute to the overall perception of the destination. Research indicates that several factors, including accessibility, affordability, safety, and the uniqueness of the experience, influence tourists' perceptions. For Belanting River Tubing to thrive, it is essential to address these aspects adequately. Accessibility involves not only physical access to the site but also the availability of information regarding the destination. It is fundamental to ensure that tourists can easily find information about Belanting River Tubing, book their trips, and navigate the area. Affordability is another critical factor, as competitive pricing can attract a broader audience without compromising on the quality of the experience.

Safety concerns are paramount in sports tourism. Ensuring that all safety measures are in place, providing clear instructions, and having emergency protocols can significantly enhance tourists' perceptions of the activity. Tourists need to feel secure and confident that their safety is a priority. This includes regular maintenance of equipment, training for guides, and having medical facilities readily available. By ensuring proper safety measures are in place, participants can enjoy their sporting activities without risking injury or harm. Sports tourism offers a unique opportunity to explore new places, meet like-minded individuals, and experience the adrenaline rush of competing in various sports. The possibilities are endless, from skiing in the Swiss Alps to surfing in Hawaii. Therefore, organizers and participants must prioritize safety at all times to ensure a fun and memorable experience for everyone involved. By following guidelines, using proper equipment, and being aware of potential risks, sports tourism can be a safe and fulfilling way to enjoy travel and sports.

The uniqueness of the experience is what sets Belanting River Tubing apart from other destinations. Highlighting the natural beauty of Ogan Komering Ulu, the adventure of river tubing, and the cultural interactions with the local community can create a memorable experience for tourists. Engaging tourists in cultural activities, local traditions, and festivals can enrich their experience, making their visit to Belanting River Tubing more than just a sports activity but a holistic cultural immersion. The interplay between the government's role and tourists' perceptions creates a dynamic environment for the growth of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. A collaborative approach involving the government, local community, and private sector can create a sustainable tourism model that benefits all stakeholders (Roxas et al., 2020). The local community's involvement is significant as they can offer authentic experiences and contribute to preserving the area's cultural and natural heritage.

The development of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing hinges on the influential role of the government in providing infrastructure, ensuring safety, and promoting the destination. Simultaneously, understanding and enhancing tourists' perceptions through quality service, safety, affordability, and unique experiences are essential. By addressing these aspects, Belanting River Tubing can establish itself as a prominent sports tourism destination, contributing to the local economy and promoting the cultural and natural beauty of Ogan Komering Ulu. The success of this initiative depends on a coordinated effort among all stakeholders, ensuring that the destination continues to attract and delight tourists from around the world. Despite the potential of Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu as a prime destination for sports tourism, several challenges impede its development and sustainability. The region's inadequate infrastructure limits accessibility and deters potential tourists. Safety concerns due to insufficient regulatory standards and emergency protocols further hinder the destination's attractiveness.

Additionally, the need for effective promotional strategies leaves Belanting River Tubing underrepresented in the competitive tourism market. These issues are compounded by a limited understanding of tourists' perceptions and expectations, which is critical for enhancing their experience and ensuring repeat visits. Addressing these problems requires a comprehensive analysis of the government's role in infrastructure development, safety assurance, and destination promotion, as well as an in-depth exploration of tourists' perceptions to identify areas for improvement. By tackling these challenges, the potential for Belanting River Tubing to become a sustainable and popular sports tourism destination remains to be fulfilled. The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of the government and tourists' perceptions in the development and sustainability of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu.

Several specific objectives have been identified to achieve this overarching aim, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing sports tourism in this region.

Assess the Current Infrastructure and Its Impact on Tourism Development

The first objective is to evaluate the existing infrastructure supporting Belanting River Tubing and how it impacts the tourism experience. This includes assessing the quality of roads, signage, facilities, and accessibility to the site. By understanding the current state of infrastructure, we can identify gaps and areas that require improvement. The objective is to determine how much infrastructure influences tourists' decisions to visit and their overall satisfaction with the experience.

Analyze Government Initiatives and Policies Supporting Sports Tourism

The second objective focuses on analysing the initiatives and policies implemented by the local government to promote and support sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. This includes examining government investments in infrastructure, safety regulations, promotional campaigns, and partnerships with private sectors. The goal is to understand the effectiveness of these initiatives in attracting tourists and fostering sustainable tourism development. Additionally, this objective seeks to identify any bureaucratic challenges or policy gaps that may hinder the growth of sports tourism in the area.

Evaluate Safety Measures and Their Effectiveness

Safety is a critical concern in sports tourism (Weed, 2020). This objective aims to evaluate the existing safety measures at Belanting River Tubing, including equipment maintenance, guide training, and emergency protocols. The study will assess whether these measures meet industry standards and how they impact

tourists' perceptions of safety. By identifying weaknesses in safety protocols, the objective is to recommend improvements that can enhance the safety and confidence of tourists participating in river tubing activities (Sumiati, 2017).

Investigate Tourists' Perceptions and Expectations

Understanding tourists' perceptions and expectations is vital for enhancing their experience and ensuring repeat visits. This objective involves conducting surveys and interviews with tourists to gather insights into their views on various aspects of the Belanting River Tubing. These aspects include the quality of service, natural beauty, the thrill of the activity, accessibility, affordability, and overall hospitality of the local community. By analyzing tourists' feedback, the study aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current tourism offerings and recommend strategies for improvement.

Examine the Promotional Strategies and Their Effectiveness

Effective promotion is essential for putting Belanting River Tubing on the map as a premier sports tourism destination. This objective examines the promotional strategies employed by the government and private sector, including marketing campaigns, social media presence, collaborations with travel agencies, and participation in tourism fairs. The goal is to assess the reach and impact of these promotional efforts and identify opportunities for enhancing the visibility of Belanting River Tubing. The objective also recommends innovative marketing strategies that can attract a broader audience.

Explore the Role of the Local Community in Tourism Development

The local community plays a significant role in the development and sustainability of tourism. This objective explores how the local community is involved in sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing, including their participation in providing services, cultural activities, and maintaining the natural environment. The study aims to understand the community's perspective on tourism development and identify ways to foster their active involvement. Empowering the local community aims to promote authentic and sustainable tourism practices that benefit both tourists and residents.

Assess the Economic Impact of Sports Tourism on the Local Economy

Tourism can have a significant economic impact on local communities. This objective assesses the economic benefits of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing, including job creation, income generation, and residents' business opportunities. The study aims to quantify tourism's economic contributions and identify areas where further

development can enhance these benefits. By understanding the economic impact, the objective is to advocate for policies and initiatives that support the local economy while ensuring sustainable tourism practices.

Identify Best Practices and Recommend Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development

Drawing from the findings of the previous objectives, this final objective aims to identify best practices and recommend strategies for sustainable tourism development at Belanting River Tubing. This includes recommendations for improving infrastructure, enhancing safety measures, effective promotional strategies, community involvement, and policies that support sustainable growth. The goal is to provide a comprehensive set of recommendations that can guide stakeholders in developing a sustainable and thriving sports tourism destination.

Foster Collaboration among Stakeholders

Successful tourism development requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including the government, private sector, local community, and tourists. This objective aims to foster collaboration by identifying common goals and encouraging partnerships. The study will explore ways to facilitate stakeholder communication and cooperation to ensure that tourism development is inclusive and benefits all parties involved. Promoting a collaborative approach aims to create a supportive environment for the sustainable growth of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing (Verheijen & Putra, 2020).

Monitor and Evaluate the Implementation of Recommendations

The final objective is to establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the study's recommendations. This involves setting up mechanisms to track progress, assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies, and make necessary adjustments. The goal is to ensure that the recommendations lead to tangible improvements in the tourism experience and contribute to the long-term sustainability of Belanting River Tubing as a sports tourism destination.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to thoroughly explore the role of the government and tourists' perceptions in the development and sustainability of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu. By focusing on qualitative methods, the research aims to gain in-depth insights into various stakeholders' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes in this tourism sector. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders, including government

officials, local community leaders, tourism operators, and tourists, to gather detailed and nuanced data. These interviews are designed to be flexible, allowing for exploring various topics while ensuring consistency across interviews. The questions focus on stakeholders' views on the current infrastructure, government initiatives, safety measures, promotional strategies, and their overall perceptions of Belanting River Tubing as a sports tourism destination. Each interview is recorded with the participant's consent and transcribed for detailed analysis.

In addition to individual interviews, focus groups are conducted to facilitate in-depth discussions among tourists and local community members. Each focus group consists of 6-8 participants and is moderated using a structured discussion guide. These sessions aim to capture collective insights and suggestions related to developing and enhancing sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. The interactive nature of focus groups allows participants to build on each other's ideas, providing a richer understanding of their shared experiences and perspectives.

Field observations are also employed as a qualitative method to assess the current state of infrastructure, safety measures, and tourist interactions at Belanting River Tubing. The research team conducts these observations using a systematic checklist to ensure comprehensive and consistent data collection. Observations help validate the information gathered from interviews and focus groups and provide additional context to the stakeholders' experiences and perceptions.

The qualitative data collected from interviews, focus groups, and observations are analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns, which are then categorized and interpreted to provide insights into the various aspects of sports tourism development at Belanting River Tubing. Using NVivo software aids in managing and analyzing the qualitative data, ensuring a systematic and thorough approach.

Ethical considerations are paramount in this study. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, ensuring they know the study's purpose and rights. Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained throughout the research process, and ethical approval is sought from a relevant institutional review board. By employing these qualitative methods, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of the government and tourists' perceptions in the development of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. The insights gained will inform recommendations for improving infrastructure, safety measures, promotional strategies, and community involvement, ultimately contributing to the sustainable growth of this tourism sector.

C. Results and Discussion

The study's qualitative approach provided comprehensive insights into the role of the government and tourists' perceptions in the development and sustainability of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu. The results are categorized into several key themes: infrastructure, government initiatives, safety measures, promotional strategies, tourists' perceptions, and community involvement.

1. Government and Tourists' Perceptions in the Development and Sustainability of Sports Tourism

Infrastructure

One of the most significant findings pertained to the inadequacy of the existing infrastructure supporting Belanting River Tubing. Interviews and field observations revealed that while the site's natural beauty and adventure potential are undeniable, the supporting infrastructure could be much better. Tourists and local stakeholders frequently cited poor road conditions leading to the site, which made access difficult, particularly during the rainy season. Additionally, inadequate signage posed challenges for first-time visitors trying to locate the tubing area. The facilities at the site, such as restrooms and changing areas, were found to need to be more and better maintained. This lack of basic infrastructure detracted from the overall tourist experience and posed significant barriers to accessibility and convenience.

Government Initiatives

The role of government initiatives in promoting sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing emerged as a central theme. Government officials highlighted various plans and programs designed to boost regional tourism, including infrastructure development projects and promotional campaigns. However, there needed to be more connection between these initiatives and their implementation. Local community leaders and tourism operators expressed frustration over the delays in infrastructure projects and the perceived lack of tangible support from the government. While officials spoke of budgets and strategic plans, these often translated into something other than on-ground improvements. This gap between planning and execution was seen as a significant obstacle to the region's tourism growth, with stakeholders calling for more effective and timelier implementation of government initiatives.

Safety Measures

Safety emerged as a critical concern among both tourists and local operators. While some tourists appreciated the essential safety measures, such as the availability of life vests and initial safety briefings, others pointed out significant shortcomings. Many tourists expressed concerns about the lack of trained guides and inadequate emergency protocols. Instances of equipment in poor condition were also reported, which raised questions about the maintenance standards. Local tourism operators acknowledged these issues and stressed the need for comprehensive safety training and better equipment maintenance. They also highlighted the importance of having well-defined emergency response plans to handle any accidents or injuries during tubing activities.

Promotional Strategies

The effectiveness of promotional strategies for Belanting River Tubing was another critical area of investigation. Government officials described various marketing efforts, including social media campaigns and collaborations with travel agencies. However, the impact of these promotions seemed limited. Tourists often learned about Belanting River Tubing through word-of-mouth rather than official channels. This indicated a need for more robust and widespread promotional activities to increase the destination's visibility. Local tourism operators suggested leveraging digital marketing more effectively and engaging with travel influencers who could attract a broader audience. They also emphasized the importance of consistent branding and messaging to highlight the unique aspects of the tubing experience.

Tourists' Perceptions

Understanding tourists' perceptions and experiences was a vital objective of this study. The tourist feedback was mixed, with positive comments often focusing on the natural beauty and the thrill of the tubing activity itself. Many tourists appreciated the scenic landscapes and the adrenaline rush of navigating the river's currents. However, negative feedback frequently centred on the issues of poor infrastructure and inadequate safety measures. Tourists also mentioned the need for more information and guides available at the site, which sometimes led to confusion and reduced the enjoyment of their visit. The overall sentiment was that while the activity had great potential, significant improvements were needed to fully meet tourists' expectations (Suarsiningsih, 2023).

Community Involvement

The involvement of the local community in the tourism sector was another significant theme. Residents were generally supportive of tourism development as it

provided economic opportunities and helped showcase their culture and natural environment. However, there was a sense that their involvement could have been more fully optimized. Community members desired more training and support to engage in tourism-related activities effectively. They also highlighted the importance of preserving the natural environment and cultural heritage amidst tourism development. Encouragingly, there were examples of community-driven initiatives, such as local guides offering cultural tours and villagers participating in conservation efforts. These efforts demonstrated the potential for more integrated and sustainable tourism practices that could benefit both tourists and the local community (Annisa et al., 2023).

Economic Impact

The economic impact of sports tourism on the local economy was evident in several ways. Tourism at Belanting River Tubing created jobs and income opportunities for residents, from guiding services to food stalls and accommodation providers. However, stakeholders noted that better infrastructure and promotional efforts could significantly enhance the economic benefits. The current underdevelopment limited the number of tourists and, consequently, the economic gains for the community. Local business owners and operators emphasized the need for continued investment and support from the government to realize the full economic potential of sports tourism in the region.

The results of this study illuminate several critical aspects that influence the development and sustainability of sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing in Ogan Komering Ulu. By examining the role of the government, tourists' perceptions, and community involvement, we can identify both opportunities and challenges that shape this unique tourism sector.

2. Several Critical Aspects that Influence the Development and Sustainability of Sports Tourism

Infrastructure Development

One of the most pressing issues identified is the need for more infrastructure. The poor condition of access roads, lack of signage, and insufficient facilities such as restrooms and changing areas significantly hinder the tourist experience. Infrastructure development is fundamental to attracting and retaining tourists. The findings suggest an urgent need for substantial investment in improving the basic infrastructure. This is not only essential for enhancing accessibility but also for ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable experience for visitors. The government's role in this regard is crucial, as public sector investment and strategic planning are necessary to address these infrastructural gaps.

Government Initiatives and Implementation

The study highlights a significant disconnect between government initiatives and their implementation. While plans and budgets are allocated for tourism development, the execution of these initiatives is lagging. This discrepancy points to potential bureaucratic inefficiencies and a need for more effective project management and communication strategies. For Belanting River Tubing to realize its full potential, it is imperative that the government not only formulates strategic plans but also ensures their timely and effective implementation. Enhancing coordination between different government departments and involving local stakeholders in the planning process can help bridge this gap.

Safety Measures

Safety is a critical concern in sports tourism, and the findings reveal mixed perceptions among tourists regarding the safety protocols at Belanting River Tubing. While some basic safety measures are in place, there are notable areas for improvement in the training of guides, maintenance of equipment, and emergency response protocols. Ensuring high safety standards is essential for building tourists' confidence and fostering a positive reputation for the destination. Regular training programs for guides, stringent maintenance routines for equipment, and well-defined emergency procedures are necessary steps to enhance safety. The government and tourism operators must collaborate closely to establish and maintain these safety standards.

Promotional Strategies

Effective promotion is vital for increasing the visibility of Belanting River Tubing and attracting a broader audience. The study indicates that current promotional efforts need to be revised and reach a wider audience. Many tourists learn about the destination through word-of-mouth rather than official marketing channels. This suggests a need for more robust and innovative promotional strategies. Leveraging digital marketing, engaging with travel influencers, and creating compelling content that highlights the unique aspects of Belanting River Tubing can significantly boost its profile. Additionally, consistent branding and messaging are crucial for establishing a solid identity for the destination.

Tourists' Perceptions and Expectations

Understanding and meeting tourists' perceptions and expectations are crucial to enhancing their experience and ensuring repeat visits. The mixed feedback from tourists points to areas that need improvement, particularly regarding infrastructure and safety. However, the site's natural beauty and adventure potential are highly

appreciated, indicating a solid foundation upon which to build. By addressing the identified weaknesses and continuously seeking feedback from tourists, stakeholders can make informed decisions to improve the overall tourist experience. Regular surveys and feedback mechanisms can help monitor tourist satisfaction and identify emerging trends and preferences.

Community Involvement

The involvement of the local community is a cornerstone of sustainable tourism development. The findings show that while the local community generally supports tourism, their involvement could be more fully optimized. Empowering the community through training and support can enhance their participation in tourism-related activities. This provides economic benefits and ensures that tourism development is culturally sensitive and environmentally sustainable. Community-driven initiatives, such as local guiding services and conservation efforts, should be encouraged and supported. Integrating community input into tourism planning and decision-making can lead to more inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

Economic Impact

The economic benefits of sports tourism for the local community are evident, but they could be significantly enhanced with better infrastructure and more effective promotional efforts. Tourism creates jobs and generates income for residents, contributing to the region's overall economic development. By addressing the infrastructural and promotional challenges, the economic impact of tourism can be maximized. This requires a coordinated effort from the government, private sector, and local community to ensure the economic benefits are widely distributed and contribute to the region's long-term development.

D. Conclusions

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. Addressing the challenges related to the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing sports tourism at Belanting River Tubing. By addressing the challenges related to infrastructure, safety, promotion, and community involvement, stakeholders can work towards realizing the full potential of this unique tourism destination. Implementing the recommended strategies can pave the way for a more sustainable and thriving tourism sector in Ogan Komering Ulu, benefiting both tourists and the local community. The findings underscore the importance of a coordinated and inclusive approach to tourism development, ensuring that Belanting River Tubing continues to attract and delight visitors worldwide.

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