

# Analysis of Hexa Helix Actors in the Development of the Lejja Hot Springs Natural Tourism Park, South Sulawesi Province

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#### Abstract

This research aims to analyze the role of Hexa Helix actors in the development of sustainable tourism at the Lejja Hot Springs Natural Tourism Park destination, South Sulawesi Province. Tourism development pays attention to the basics of sustainable tourism. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study research design. The informants used consisted of key informants and main informants, each of whom was taken from the Hexa Helix actor. Determining informants used a purposive sampling model. Data collection methods use in-depth interviews, documentation and field observations. Data analysis used Nvivo 14 software. The research results showed that the Hexa Helix actors played a significant role in the development of natural tourism in Leija. The government plays a role in the realm of development and empowerment policies and programs. Academics as catalysts for innovation based on research results, business units as economic facilitators, the community as actors who feel the impact of tourism development directly while carrying out monitoring functions, the media as actors who play a role in disseminating information and promotion, and visitors as actors who carry out the function of evaluating facilities and tourist destination services based on experience. In this research, cooperation between actors does not fulfill the concept of collaboration. Good cooperation between actors will speed up the tourism development process, especially in the Lejja Hot Springs Natural Tourism Park, South Sulawesi Province.

**Keywords:** sustainable tourism, hexa helix model, tourism development, collaboration, lejja nature hot spring.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The growth of the tourism industry in Indonesia after the pandemic continues to show positive developments. Improved tourism development will provide benefits to the national economy, have an economic impact, increase the production of goods and services, and expand employment opportunities.

The government is implementing various policy innovations and programs that can increase tourism potential in Indonesia. The programs implemented include improving the quality of resources, increasing transportation accessibility, improving infrastructure, tourism promotion and branding as well as attracting content creators to create creative promotions.

The ease of access offered by tourist destinations makes tourist behavior more active in traveling. Various tourism trends that are developing and emerging on social media have resulted in tourists' interest and curiosity about going on tour. One of the trends is Wellness experience. Post-pandemic trauma has resulted in people paying more attention to health and spirituality, so tourists will choose tourist attractions that benefit their mental and spiritual health. Tourists can add to their travel experience by enjoying the nuances of natural beauty that are still very natural and the strong local cultures. Soppeng Regency is one of the areas with natural tourism that is still very well maintained and beautiful, various local community cultures and cultural rituals are an attraction for local and foreign tourists.

Soppeng Regency is located to the north of Makassar City, the distance is approximately 150 km and can be reached in 3-5 hours. One of the most popular destinations visited by both local and foreign tourists is the Lejja Hot Springs Nature Tourism Park (TWA). TWA Lejja is a natural hot spring located in a conservation forest area, apart from that, tourists can also enjoy the natural beauty, culinary and culture of the local community, as well as the diversity of flora and fauna.

The number of visitors at TWA Lejja increases every year, in 2021 the number of visitors reached 119,823 visitors, while in 2022 there were 119,914 visitors. Based on the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) analysis according to Richard Butler, there are six phases in categorizing tourist destinations, namely, exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and rejuvenation and stagnation phases.

Based on the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) analysis, TWA Lejja can be categorized into the involvement phase. This phase can be characterized by an increase in the number of visitors, interaction between tourists and visitors, and the opening of new job opportunities. The number of visitors at TWA Lejja continues to grow every year as previously described, there is intense interaction between the community and tourists, such as the exchange of goods and services.

The increasing growth of tourists will have an impact on various aspects. The aspects most significantly affected include the environment, social culture and economy, as well as community life. However, the facts on the ground also show the negative impacts resulting from tourism growth, such as the available jobs not entirely absorbing local workers, massive and uncontrolled hotel construction resulting in land degradation, heavy motor vehicle traffic increasing pollution and air pollution.

This also happened at TWA Lejja, the increase in the number of visitors was inversely proportional to the absorption capacity of the tourist destination. The availability of accommodation in tourist areas is not yet able to meet the number of tourists each year, especially during holiday times, resulting in the management having to build new accommodation, build restaurants and parking lots. Development carried out without strict supervision will result in degradation of conservation forest areas and damage the habitat of protected flora and fauna, considering that the Lejja TWA is located in a conservation forest area.

Waste production at TWA Lejja cannot be avoided, trash used by visitors can easily be found in tourist areas. This is caused by waste management in tourist destinations which is not optimal due to limited resources, which is then exacerbated by the behavior of tourists and the public who do not understand the importance of maintaining and preserving the environment, especially in the TWA Lejja tourist area. Tourism development in TWA Lejja is also still carried out exclusively by the government, in this case Perusda. Stakeholders have not been actively involved in creating sustainable tourism at TWA Lejja.

Assessing this problem, it is quite a dilemma, on the one hand the management is trying to improve the quality of the destination by continuing to develop infrastructure, but on the other hand they must continue to maintain the preservation of conservation forests. One way that management can apply in developing TWA Lejja as a responsible destination is to apply the concept of sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism is a tourism concept that pays attention to economic, social and environmental impacts. Sustainable tourism development can improve the community's economy, alleviate poverty and increase public awareness about environmental conservation, especially in tourist areas.

Sustainable development emphasizes how to create a better life for all parties in good ways. To achieve this, the participation of stakeholders is needed to make TWA Lejja a responsible tourist destination. Successful development of sustainable tourism can be achieved with the concept of collaboration between stakeholders.

Several studies have shown positive results related to stakeholder collaboration in developing tourism potential. The actors referred to are government, academics, business, community and media or known as pentahelix actors. Tourism potential in Pekanbaru can develop quickly when the pentahelix actors can work together well. Furthermore, Sumarto et al., (2020)[8]explained that the role of pentahelix can increase tourist attraction and optimize the management of tourist villages in the city of Yogyakarta

In line with the development of science, the pentahelix concept began to change to Hexa Helix, there is a sixth actor who completes the pentahelix concept. Sumarto et al., (2023) concluded that the pentahelix concept was not ideal enough to use for tourism studies, so they proposed the Hexa Helix concept by adding the role of the environment as a sixth actor.

A different opinion was expressed by Angelita & Yulianti, (2023)[10]Regarding the composition of Hexa Helix actors, he included visitors as the sixth actor in his research. The results of his research show that visitors in the tourism industry have a substantive role, visitors are actors who directly experience tourism products so they can provide assessments and suggestions for responsible tourism development, especially tourism development at the regional level.

TWA Lejja tourism management needs to create innovation in managing tourist destinations so that it can increase tourism potential without causing an impact on the environment and social conditions of the community. The government's limitations in developing and managing tourism in TWA Lejja can be anticipated by collaborating between Hexa Helix actors in Soppeng district. Professional, effective and efficient tourism management can increase the attractiveness of destinations, create jobs, open up investment opportunities and business opportunities for the surrounding community.

Based on observations made by researchers, the main problems faced by TWA Lejja are, firstly, the use of digital technology in running tourism is not optimal. Second, considering that TWA Lejja is a tourism industry located in a range conservation forest



area, it will result in environmental damage and land degradation if wise management is not carried out. third, the limited management capacity of TWA Lejja management in developing sustainable tourism, and fourth is the role of TWA Lejja in improving the welfare of the surrounding community.

# METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. A qualitative approach was used to explore in-depth information on phenomena and interactions between stakeholders that are directly related to TWA Lejja. The research design in this research is a case study. Case studies are used to focus research attention on one particular unit of various phenomena within TWA Lejja so that the information obtained is accurate and in accordance with the research targets.

# **Data Collection**

The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation. In this research, the observation used was participatory observation. Participatory observation is the involvement of researchers in the activities of the research object or target research data source, meaning that the researcher comes and makes observations of the research object but is not involved in the activities carried out by the research object.

Generally, the population and sample in qualitative research are called informants, informants are a source of information for researchers. Determining informants was used using purposive sampling techniques. The informants in this research were each Hexa Helix actor.

The data obtained were analyzed using Nvivo 14. This was intended to avoid researcher subjectivity. First, the data obtained is carried out by determining the theme, after which a manual coding process is carried out to find information related to the research theme.

First, the Soppeng Regency Government. Second, academics from Lamappapoleonro University. Third, community. The community in question is a local community group that is directly related to TWA Lejja. The four Business Units, in this case are hotels and accommodation managed by private parties in the TWA Lejja area, namely the Hakata Lejja Hotel and Restaurant. Fifth, media. The media in the research are online media or electronic media which were selected based on the intensity of publications related to TWA Lejja. And the sixth is visitors or tourists from TWA Lejja.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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The data used in this research has undergone a codification process to assess the level of validity by triangulating the sources. Researchers matched the various information obtained with all available informants. The following are the results of codification using Nvivo 14 software:





Figure 1. World Query

The use of the word query model is to determine the data theme. Themes are topics that are generally discussed in the data. The themes obtained will be specified in code form. The themes in this research can be seen in Figure 1, while the code can be seen in Figure 2 which is also the result of triangulation.

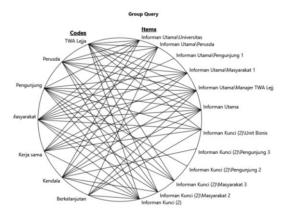


Figure 2. Source Triangulation Results

The concept of qualitative data validity using Nvivo 14 is intersection. The more intersections that occur, the more valid the data used is. Intersection shows that there are similarities or similarities in the information conveyed between informants.

# Management of the Lejja Hot Springs Natural Tourism Park (TWA).

Perusda as the manager of TWA Lejja is guided by the Natural Tourism Control Plan (RPPA) which has been reviewed and assessed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The RPPA derivative is then used as a short-term development plan for one year. The draft describes the targets that must be achieved within a certain time period so that target objectivity and program evaluation can be carried out in a structured and systematic manner.

The first step taken by Perusda in managing TWA Lejja was to improve tourism support facilities and facilities such as bathing pools, lodging, security and cleanliness facilities. As stated by Oka (2008), facilities and services in tourist areas are aspects that need to be paid attention to by management. TWA Lejja issued a policy for employees to carry out community service three times a week. This is a form of Perusda's commitment to improving cleanliness in tourist areas.

Despite this, visitors still complain about several things. Especially the problem of waste in tourist areas. During the holiday season, the number of visitors increases quite significantly compared to normal days. This results in uncontrolled accumulation of waste considering the limited number of employees TWA Lejja has. Then it is made worse by the behavior of visitors who throw rubbish out of place.

Therefore, TWA Lejja issued regulations in the form of fines for visitors who throw rubbish out of place. This rule is intended to anticipate and as a means of socializing visitors regarding the behavior of littering. The enforcement of the rules carried out by TWA Lejja is also persuasive and friendly. So, the orientation of these rules is to provide education to visitors.

Oka (2008) further emphasized the importance of disseminating information and promotion in the tourism industry. Perusda, managing TWA Lejja, carries out minimal promotions. Based on TWA Lejja's social media analysis data on Instagram, it shows that the account has not been active for the last few years. This can be caused by the ability of human resources to not understand and follow technological developments.

However, the promotion that runs at TWA Lejja is word of mouth (WOM) carried out by visitors. They share every activity during their trip to TWA Lejja on various social media such as Facebook, Tiktok and Instagram. Interaction and feedback often occur in the comment's column of their posts. Indirectly, the promotion process and conveying information about TWA Lejja to the general public.

# Lejja Hot Springs TWA tourism development strategy

Perusda's strategy in running TWA Lejja is to create the branding "Lejja Hot Spring Healing Resort". Perusda is trying to take advantage of the natural conditions of the Lejja TWA area, which is a conservation forest area, natural hot springs, a diversity of endemic flora and fauna, as well as the culture of the local community.

The management of TWA Lejja cannot be separated from the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Agency Regulation no. 9 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations. There are three main points carried out by Perusda in developing TWA Lejja as sustainable tourism.

First, Perusda preserves the culture of the local community in the form of the traditional "pattaungeng" ceremony which is held routinely every year in the TWA Lejja tourist area. Perusda makes this community activity part of a cultural attraction. Apart from maintaining and preserving, Perusda also promotes this culture to the general public.

Cultural preservation is carried out as a form of Perusda's responsibility to ensure that the traditional "Pattaungeng" ceremony can still be enjoyed by future generations. The concept of sustainable tourism basically includes community culture that can be enjoyed by future generations. Second, the existence of tourist destinations in range conservation forest areas results in environmental damage. Anticipating this, Perusda has strictly implemented policies regarding land clearing and reforestation. Tourism management at TWA Lejja is also directly supervised by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Basically, sustainable tourism planning can run well if the environment is protected from degradation and its impact on the social values of society.

Third, waste management in the TWA Lejja tourist area is carried out independently and efficiently. The shredded plastic waste is made into paving blocks which will be used for construction in the TWA area. Apart from being used personally, the product will also be marketed so that it can provide economic benefits, while the organic waste is used as fertilizer for plants in the forest area.

TWA Lejja's tourism development strategy can be maximized by conducting an EFAS-IFAS analysis. This analysis can provide an objective picture of the strategies and steps that need to be taken to increase tourist destination opportunities. The following are the results of the EFAS-IFAS TWA Lejja analysis:

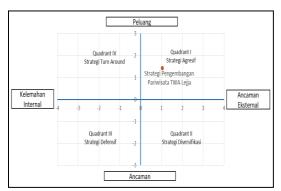


Figure 3. EFAS-IFAS TWA Lejja analysis

Figure 3 shows the policy position that Perusda should take to develop TWA Lejja. Based on Figure 3, its location is in quadrant I. Quadrant I shows an aggressive strategy. In this quadrant, organizations can maximize their strengths and opportunities to use as the main strategy in increasing competitiveness. The use of quantitative methods in determining strategies can increase the accuracy and objectivity of strategies, so that the measurement and evaluation process can be easily implemented.

### Increasing the welfare of the community around the tourist area

The appeal of TWA Lejja among the people of South Sulawesi is quite high. Although TWA Lejja is not the only natural hot spring in South Sulawesi Province. The natural landscape that is still preserved, natural hot springs, and the culture of the local community are the main attractions for tourists traveling to TWA Lejja.

The concept of natural tourism and community culture can provide an increase in community welfare. Perusda's commitment to developing the TWA Lejja tourist destination has produced special results for the surrounding community. During holiday seasons, the number of visitors to TWA Lejja increases to twice the usual level. The local community uses this to market various creative products such as handicrafts and services.

Generally, the income of the people of Bulue Village is from agricultural products, so the presence of the tourism industry in the area can increase their income and welfare. This is in accordance with the opinion expressed by experts that the impact of tourism on the community's economy is higher than agriculture.

# The role of the Hexa Helix actor in the development of Lejja Hot Springs TWA tourism

The Hexa Helix concept is basically a development of previous concepts, starting from the Triple Helix, Quadrupel Helix, Quantupel Helix or Pentahelix[14]. Pentahelix is a collection of actors consisting of Government, Academics, Business Units, Community and Media. The dynamic conditions of the tourism industry make handling it increasingly complex and require the role of different actors depending on the situation and conditions faced.

The Hexa Helix concept itself has different actors. One of the studies conducted in West Java was about Hexa Helix as an actor that supports sustainable regional development. In this concept there is a role for law and regulation as actors who play a role in Pentahelix interactions. Another research conducted in Yogyakarta on the development of tourist villages used the Hexa Helix model by including the environment as one of the actors that plays a role. Further research was carried out in Pelabuhan Ratu regarding tourism development using the Hexa Helix model. In this research, the sixth actor that completes Pentahelix is the role of the visitor.

Based on several previous Hexa Helix concepts, this research tends to use the Hexa Helix concept based on research conducted by Angelita & Yulianti (2023). The actors referred to in Hexa Helix are the Government, Business Units, Academics, Community/Society, Media and Visitors. Visitors were chosen as the sixth actor because they were considered the most suitable to the field conditions when conducting research.

Based on this concept, researchers found that Perusda as the manager of TWA Lejja collaborated with the central government and regional governments. TWA Lejja development funds are funds provided by the central government through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Meanwhile, the regional government in this case supports various development programs with policies and regulations, as well as TWA Lejja empowerment and promotion programs. The government's role is more directed towards tourism development policies.

The business unit in this case is the Hakata Lejja Hotel. The presence of the Hotel provides new economic opportunities and opens up employment opportunities. Furthermore, Hotel Hakata is the only star hotel in the TWA Lejja tourist area, so visitors have other options besides staying in the tourist area. The role of promoting tourist destinations can also be carried out by business units. Researchers found many hashtags on Instagram that compared Hotel Hakata with TWA Lejja. This shows that indirectly hotel

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guests will travel to TWA Lejja. The hotel provides special transportation for use by hotel guests who want to visit TWA Lejja.

Academics in this case are educational institutions in Soppeng Regency, namely Lamappapoleonro University. The university acts as a pioneer of innovation based on research results. Many studies are carried out by Lamappapoleonro University in TWA Lejja. This is a form of university responsibility in carrying out the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. The university also routinely conveys various research results they have conducted to be used by Perusda in developing TWA Lejja tourism. The most prominent role of educational institutions is the implementation of education, research and community service.

The community has a role as actors who are directly affected by tourism activities. Tourism activities that have a direct impact on society will increase public attention to tourism development. They will be more sensitive to development policies, so that people will be more aware of various policies that will have a negative impact on their survival. The monitoring process from actors who have a direct impact will increase Perusda's attention in running tourist destinations.

The community also plays a role as a provider of goods and services to meet visitor needs. Communities around tourist areas have several creative businesses, especially during holiday seasons where the number of tourist visitors will increase drastically compared to normal days. The public's enthusiasm for tourism programs shows the public's attention to the benefits of the industry for them.

Media as an actor that disseminates information and promotes tourism. Researchers found that TWA Lejja does not have special media for promotion, so the media in question are mainstream media and digital media which provide coverage for publication purposes. Given the popularity of TWA Lejja in South Sulawesi Province, many media have covered TWA Lejja. There are 15 media that published articles on the internet about TWA Lejja throughout 2022-2024. The presence of this media helped promote TWA Lejja indirectly.

Visitors or tourists act as parties who assess the quality, service and facilities received while traveling to certain destinations. The preferences of each visitor are of course different from one another so that the management can receive various suggestions and input for better tourism development. Considering suggestions from visitors will also increase the feeling that visitors are cared for by the manager or tourist destination. This will maintain loyalty and relationships between visitors and tourist destinations.

# CONCLUSION

The management of TWA Lejja has so far met sustainable tourism standards by paying attention to the facilities and infrastructure supporting tourist destinations. Perusda in carrying out the Lejja TWA development strategy pays attention to the culture of the local community. The implementation of ancestral rituals is carried out as a form of preserving the community's culture.

The development of TWA Lejja tourism also continues to pay attention to the environment, considering that TWA Lejja is a tourist destination located in a conservation

forest area. Environmentally friendly program policies are Perusda's main priority in developing TWA Lejja. TWA Lejja's waste management is carried out independently and creatively. The results of processed waste can be used into valuable products. The presence of TWA Lejja for the surrounding community can increase income and the economy. The creativity and tourism awareness of the Bulue Village community has also increased thanks to various empowerment programs initiated by Perusda.

The Soppeng district government plays a role in the policy area for implementing tourism programs and empowering communities around tourist areas. Lamappapoleonro University as a catalyst for innovation based on study and research results. Business units play a role in creating new economic opportunities around tourist areas. The community is an actor who feels the direct impact of tourism development as well as an actor who carries out supervisory functions. The media, as the spearhead of promotion, disseminates information and promotional media for destinations and is a link between other actors, as well as visitors, carrying out an evaluation function by providing feedback and assessing the facilities, infrastructure and services in tourist areas based on experiences during tourist trips.

The role of the Hexa Helix actor in the development of TWA Lejja tourism so far is in accordance with the duties and abilities of each actor. However, researchers have not found cooperation as a unity of these actors. The concept of collaboration has not yet been implemented; each actor is still focused on their own corridor. If cooperation or collaboration between actors can run well, then tourism development will be accelerated.

The limitation of this research is that there are few informants, this means that the research results may not apply to other tourist destinations that have more complex actors. It is hoped that future research will use the Hexa Helix concept in accordance with the conditions of the tourist destination being faced, as well as increasing the quantity of informants to further sharpen the results of the analysis of phenomena in the field.

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