

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF STORYTELLING OBJECT

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.A. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that pays full attention to its present and future economic, social and environmental impacts, as well as takes into account the visitors' needs, the industry, the environment, and the local communities (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005, as cited in UNWTO, 2013). In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations (2015), there are several sustainable development goal (SDG) targets that mention the importance of sustainable tourism, such as:

1. SDG target 8.9 that aims for policies, to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and encourages local products and cultures, are made and implemented by 2030.
2. SDG target 12.b that aims for the development and implementation of tools to monitor the impacts of sustainable development for sustainable tourism.
3. SDG target 14.7 that aims for increasing the economic benefits on small and least developed countries by 2030 through sustainable resources, including tourism.

2.1.B. Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a sub-component of sustainable tourism, that can be an effective tool for sustainable development (Kiper, 2013). In UNWTO's publication—The British Ecotourism Market—in 2002 (as cited in UNWTO, n.d.), the characteristics of ecotourism are:

1. All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
2. It contains educational and interpretation features.
3. It is generally, but not exclusively organized by specialized tour operators for small groups. Service provider partners at the destinations tend to be small, locally owned businesses.

4. It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
5. It supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:
 - Generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes;
 - Providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities;
 - Increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists. (para. 1)

Based on the characteristics above, ecotourism involves the conservation of natural areas, local communities, and interpretation and education (TIES, 2015).

2.2. Main Activity

As an ecotourism site, Bunaken National Park is renowned as one of the best diving areas in the world—with more than 20 diving spots available (Kompas Klasika, 2017). While diving, divers can witness many species of sea creatures and feed them cookies. Yet, coral reefs tend to be the main attraction of the marine park. Other than that, tourists may snorkel on some of the diving spots as an option to experience the underwater beauty of Bunaken National Park. The local residents provide diving and snorkeling equipment rentals, as well as boats and instructors to guide the tourists. Moreover, dolphins can be seen swimming around the marine park in the morning when the water temperature is still low.

Besides sea attractions, accommodation is also available for tourists on Bunaken Island. There are homestays owned by the locals, with meals provided three times a day. By staying with them, tourists are invited to engage in their daily activities, such as fishing, farming, and interacting with the local community. The experience of being directly involved with the community can be an educational tool for tourists to learn and appreciate the local cultures.

2.3. Location

Bunaken National Park is located in North Sulawesi. The topography of the park varies from sloping, flat, to steep—making it a habitat for diverse marine ecosystems (Larasati, n.d.). The area consists of 97% seawater and the rest are islands of Bunaken, Manado Tua, Mantehage, Nain, Siladen, and other small islands. Although most of the ecotourism activities are centered on Bunaken Island, the natural environment is still preserved as there are no cars on the island.

Additionally, Bunaken Island is accessible by sea. Tourists can depart by boat from several ports in Manado. Nonetheless, the most inexpensive option is to take a taxi boat from Kuala Jengki Pier provided by the locals at a negotiable price. Upon arriving on the island, tourists have to pay an entrance fee—of IDR 5,000 for domestic tourists and IDR 150,000 for international tourists.

Furthermore, there are three villages on Bunaken Island that consist of Alungbanua village, Tanjung Parigi village, and Bunaken village. Most of the tourist attractions are centered in Tanjung Parigi—including the tourist entrance. However, most homestays are located in Bunaken village, while Alungbanua village focuses on agriculture. Below is the map of Bunaken Island (Christie, 2005):



Figure 1. Map of Bunaken Island

2.4. Object Uniqueness

In 2020, Bunaken Tangkoko Minahasa Biosphere Reserve was added to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves under UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program (Iswara, 2020). As a part of the reserve, Bunaken National Park has its own unique traits. Located in the Coral Triangle area, nearly 70% of the world's marine species are found in the park (Larasati, n.d.). It is home to 390 species of coral reefs, 28 species of mangroves, 9 species of seagrass beds, around 2,000 species of reef fish, around 200 species of mollusks, and 8 species of mammals including dolphins, dugongs, and sea turtles, as well as some ancient fish (KLHK, 2018).

Furthermore, another highlight of Bunaken National Park is its underwater great walls. Also called hanging walls, the underwater great walls are vertical giant coral walls that reach 50 meters high. The walls serve as a food source and habitat for fish in the marine park. Tourists that dive by the walls will be able to see fish swimming around colorful coral reefs.

In addition to the underwater beauty, what makes Bunaken Island unique is the local community, who is very welcoming toward tourists. The community is a coastal community that generally has strong and open characteristics (Fama, 2016). Moreover, the culinary on the island is fresh sea catch—usually grilled reef fish—that is served with young coconut water. Thus, apart from being a conservation center, it is also wise to consider Bunaken Island as a world-class ecotourism destination.