

# The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Tourist Attractions (A Study in Kupang Regency)

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**Abstract**—This research aims to assess the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist attractions in Kupang Regency of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Province of Indonesia. We limit the study sample to seven tourist attractions that are officially managed by the Kupang Regency Government. The type of research used is that of descriptive by employing qualitative methods. Accordingly, primary and secondary data are used, with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, documentation and literature study. The results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a decrease in the number of tourist visits, which resulted in a decrease in tourist attraction income which also had implications for the decrease in local revenue levies for the Kupang Regency Government from the tourism sector. This decrease in the number of tourist visits also has an impact on the decline in income received by business actors who depend their livelihoods at the tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency government. Meanwhile, the socio-cultural and environmental impacts bring changes to the community because with the implementation of health, safety, and hygiene protocols. Therefore, people are more concerned about personal hygiene and health, and the environment of tourist attractions is getting cleaner and better maintained.

**Keywords**—COVID-19, Tourist Attraction, Kupang Regency

## I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak was announced for the first time that it officially entered Indonesia on March 2, 2020, and is increasingly spreading and rapidly eroding not only public health, but almost all aspects of Indonesian people's lives [1]. One of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic is the tourism sector. This is because the key to the development of the tourism sector is the tourists or visitors who come to visit tourist attractions in Indonesia [2]. It is undeniable that the tourism sector has played an important role in

economic development. The tourism sector that has been developed can properly contribute to increasing national income and potential regional income [3].

The pressure on the tourism industry can be seen in the large decline in foreign tourist arrivals with the massive cancellation of international flights to Indonesia. The decline also occurred due to the slowdown in domestic travel, mainly due to the reluctance of the Indonesian people to travel due to concerns about the impact of COVID-19. The decline in tourism and travel businesses had an impact on micro, small and medium enterprises, and disrupted employment. Whereas so far tourism is a labor-intensive sector that absorbs more than 13 million workers. This figure does not include the derivative impact or the multiplier effect that follows, including the derivative industry formed under it [4].

Kupang Regency is one of the regencies in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Province that has begun to focus its attention on the development of the tourism sector. Kupang Regency is one of the districts of NTT Province that has begun to concentrate its attention on the growth of the tourism sector. There is a great deal of tourism potential in Kupang Regency, in the form of biodiversity, beautiful landscapes, charming beaches, historical heritage, the beauty and authenticity of traditional culture that can be optimally used for the well-being of the community [5]. Currently, there are seven tourist attractions that have been officially managed by the Kupang Regency Government and are a priority for development, namely Baumata Pond, Oenesu Waterfall, Tablolong Beach, Manikin Beach, Fatuleu Mountain, Tesbatan Waterfall, and Lifubatu Horse Racing Arena. Kupang Regency, whose tourism sector has been developed

in recent years, evident by the high competitiveness it is pointed to have relative to other regencies in NTT [6], has also experienced the impact of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This particular impact is what the researchers want to study in more depth, which entails other chain impacts caused by the pandemic.

Assessing the impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency government is imperative to be conducted. This study is expected to be of informational input for the Kupang Regency Government, in this case the Kupang Regency Tourism and Creative Economy Office as a basis for planning and formulating policies and strategies in developing tourist attractions so for increasing the number of tourist visits to Kupang Regency once the pandemic is over.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is a variety of activities supported by facilities and services provided by the community, businessmen, and the government [7]. The tourism sector currently plays a crucial role as a driving force in supporting the development and improvement of the economy of a region or country if it is managed and developed properly. Tourism is a very strategic asset to improve and advance development in certain areas that have the potential for attractive tourism objects and are ready to be developed [8]. The tourism sector, if properly developed, can contribute to an increase in national income and potential regional income [3]. The tourism sector is expected to be the leading support for regional economic growth by making it one of the priorities in development and becoming one of the main performance indicators of local governments [9].

One of the important components in tourism is the existence of tourist attractions. Tourist attractions and tourists are like two sides of a coin; they cannot be separated from each other, interrelated and intertwined. A tourist attraction is anything that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of a diversity of natural, cultural, and man-made wealth that is the target or purpose of tourist visits [10]. A beautiful, unique and interesting tourist attraction can be a magnet that is ready to attract as many tourists as possible to come for a tour of a tourist spot [11]. Every local government is obliged to explore and develop its own tourist attraction so that it can become a potential source of income in order to realize an increase in people's welfare.

Tourists who come to visit a tourist attraction will carry out consumption activities and spend large amounts of money ranging from transportation expenditures to buying products/services in the area where the tourist attraction is located, such as accommodation, food and beverages, souvenirs, and recreational activities[12]. Fulfillment of the needs and desires of tourists who carry out tourism activities is a prerequisite so that tourists feel satisfied with the experiences and enjoy while visiting a tourist attraction, hence triggers tourists to stay longer in that place and engage in revisits [13]. Consumption activities carried out by tourists can contribute to the improvement of the tourism industry and business activities run by the community, increase community income, employment and reduce unemployment, as well as income for the government from the tax sector.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic however, it seems that tourists have experienced a decrease in passion and motivation to carry out tourism activities, apart from the policy of restricting public movement issued by the government, also due to the fear of tourists from contracting the COVID-19 virus when conducting tourism activities. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from mild to severe symptoms. There are at least two types of coronaviruses that are known to cause diseases with severe symptoms such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new type of disease that has never been previously identified in humans [14].

The corona virus belongs to the biota superdomain, the virus kingdom. Corona viruses are the largest group of viruses in the order Nidovirales. All viruses in the order Nidovirales are nonsegmented positive-sense RNA viruses. Corona virus belongs to the Coronaviridae family, Coronavirinae subfamily, Betacoronavirus genus, Sarbecovirus subgenus [15]. COVID-19 can be transmitted from human to human through close contact and droplets, not through the air. People who are most at risk of contracting this disease are people who are in close contact with COVID-19 patients.

As a result of the growing number of cases that continues to expand and even the increase in cases is quite rapid and high, the World Health Organization (WHO) finally declared that COVID-19 is a global pandemic. Meanwhile in Indonesia, the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, stated that the spread of the corona virus was a national disaster (non-natural disaster) related to the

extension of a certain emergency status due to a disease outbreak [16]. Of course, with the designation of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, it is a sign that the government and society must not take this lightly. There will be many factors that affect the condition of the community and the need for many government policies to overcome this pandemic.

Tourism is one of the sectors that is heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because the key to the development and management of the tourism sector is the tourists or visitors who come to visit tourist attractions. With the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak, people (tourists) are increasingly afraid to travel to visit tourist attractions and interact with other tourists. In addition, government policies that limit the movement of people also trigger for the silence or decrease in the number of tourist visits.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study limits the sample of observation to seven tourist attractions that are officially managed by the Kupang Regency government, so that researchers will get a more in-depth understanding regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on management and development along with other chain impacts caused by this outbreak on the community.

The type of research used is that of descriptive research using qualitative methods, namely that which is based on the philosophy of postpositivism used to examine the condition of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument with purposive and snowball sampling of data sources [17]. The data collected are in the form of oral and in written information, obtained using the method of observation, in-depth interviews, documentation and library data.

The informants in this study were parties directly related to the seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government, namely the Head of the Kupang Regency Tourism and Creative Economy Office, the manager or administrator of the seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government, business actors and residents around the tourist attraction as well as tourists visiting the seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government. The source of data in this study is primary data obtained through direct interviews with informants and in-depth observations at the research site. Secondary data in this study was obtained from the Kupang Regency Tourism and Creative Economy Office, as well as other literature

related to research issues such as from books, scientific works, and journals regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist attractions.

The data collected in this study were then analyzed to obtain an accurate picture of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative data analysis is an effort made by working with data, organizing data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesizing it, looking for and finding patterns, discovering what is important and what is learned, and deciding what to tell others. [18]. Data analysis in this study uses data analysis techniques which include: Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing/Verification [17]. After the data is analyzed, then the data is interpreted and presented in the research discussion, which concluded along with suggestions.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some of the impacts caused after the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government, among others are:

#### 4.1 Impact on the number of tourist visits on the seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government.

The COVID-19 pandemic that has spread in the community has halted tourism activities in Kupang Regency. The termination of this tourist activity occurred at seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government which were closed from March to June 2020. Even the tourist attractions of Tesbatan Waterfall and Lifubatu Horse Race Arena are still closed until now by the local village government after going through coordination with the Kupang Regency Tourism and Creative Economy Office. After being closed for four months, these seven tourist attractions have been reopened to the public, with the management of tourist attractions that have implemented strict health protocols that are in accordance with the handling of COVID-19. The number of tourist visits in 2019 (before the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus) and in 2020 (after the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus) are shown in the Table below.

Table I. Tourist Visits and Tourist Attractions in Kupang Regency

Tourist Attraction	Tourist Visits	
	2019	2020
Baumata Pond	11.880	11.600
Oenesu Falls	4.000	1.400

Tablolong Beach	10.750	14.400
Manikin Beach	3.700	4.600
Mount Fatuleu	11.900	3.400
Tesbatan Water fall	900	0
LifubatuHorse Racetrack	1000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>44.130</b>	<b>35.400</b>

Based on the data in table 1, it can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the decreasing of the number of tourists visiting tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government. There was a decrease in the number of tourist visits to the tourist attractions of Baumata Pond, Oenesu Waterfall and Fatuleu Mountain. At the tourist attraction of Tesbatan Waterfall and the Lifubatu Racecourse, there is no number of tourist visits at all because these two tourist attractions are still closed by the local village government for an undetermined time after coordinating with the Kupang Regency Tourism and Creative Economy Office. The decrease in the number of tourists visiting tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government is due to the concerns and fears of tourists about the transmission of COVID-19. This concern affects the perception and motivation of tourists to carry out tourism activities. Health risks that are considered very vulnerable due to the transmission of COVID-19 have caused tourists to be reluctant or delay their plans to carry out tourism activities and prefer to reduce outdoor activities and prefer to stay at home as recommended by the government to implement social and physical distancing.

The results of the research that have been carried out are in line with the results of research [19] that the COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on reducing the number of tourists visiting the tourist attraction of Santen Island because there are concerns and fears of tourists about the transmission of COVID-19 which ultimately shape the perceptions and attitudes of tourists in discouraged his intention to travel to Santen Island. Further, the results of the research that have been carried out are in line with the results of research [20] which stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a very significant impact on tourism objects in Probolinggo Regency, especially on the tourist attraction of Bentar Beach. This can be seen from the number of visitors which has decreased drastically considering the last 3 years the tourist attraction of Bentar Beach has

always shown a positive trend with an increase in the number of tourist visits, namely in 2017 tourist visits amounted to 74,236 and then increased in the following year with the number of tourist visits as much as 77,197 and again increasing. in 2019 with 94,146 tourist visits, but experienced a very drastic decline in 2020 with only 33,182 tourists visiting.

In the tourist attractions of Tablolong Beach and Manikin Beach, the COVID-19 pandemic did not have much impact on the number of tourist visits, and there was an increase in the number of tourist visits to these two tourist attractions. The increase in the number of tourist visits to these two tourist attractions is allegedly a form of escape from the frustration experienced by the community, people want to release fatigue by returning to nature, one of which is visiting and relaxing on the beach. The results of this study are also in line with the results of research [21] that the COVID-19 pandemic has no effect on tourist interest in visiting the Bukit Kasih Kanonang tourist attraction. Even though it is being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still many tourists who visit the Bukit Kasih Kanonang tourist attraction for recreation and relieve tourist fatigue.

#### 4.2 The economic impact for the managers of tourist attractions and business actors in the seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government.

The decrease in the number of tourist visits has an impact on the income of the Kupang Regency Government. There was a decrease in ticket sales and parking receipts which caused the revenue earned at the tourist attractions. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the lodging, food and beverage and transportation services sectors, which are also a potentsource of revenue for the Kupang Regency Government's local revenue from the tourism sector. The results of the regional levy for the Kupang Regency Government from the tourism sector have significantly decreased as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is only IDR 106,998,000 much smaller than the set target of IDR 500,000,000.

The results of this are in line with that of [19] which stated that the COVID-19 pandemic ruled a decrease in the number of tourist visits visiting the tourist attraction of Santen Island. Accordingly, sales of entrance tickets and parking on Santen Island also experienced a

decline which caused the revenue earned by the manager to also experience a significant decline. Moreover, results are also in line with that in [20] which stated that the outbreak of COVID-19 also affected the decrease in the number of tourist visits to Bentar Beach. This decrease in the number of tourist visits resulted in a significant decrease in the income of Bentar Island tourist destinations, namely in 2019 with a total income of IDR 706,095,000, which decreased in 2020 by IDR 248,865,000. With a very significant decrease, this will have an impact on the contribution of the Pantai Bentar tourist destination to local revenue, because the amount of income will be in line with the contribution made, where if the income of the Pantai Bentar tourist destination increases, its contribution will also increase, but on the contrary if tourism income decreases the amount of contributions given will also decrease.

This decline in income was also experienced by business actors at seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency government as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Tablolong Beach tourist attraction, there was a decrease in income experienced by three hawker stall businesses at this tourist attraction. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, these hawker stall businesses could earn an income from their business of IDR 250,000 to IDR 300,000 per week. However, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, their income decreased drastically to just under IDR 50,000 per week. Although there is an increase in the number of tourist visits to the Tablolong Beach tourist attraction, people prefer to bring their own food that has been prepared from home. COVID-19 also had an impact on the decline in income for these four lopo and homestay rental businesses on Tablolong Beach. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, these lopo and homestay rental business actors could earn an income from their business of IDR 500,000 to IDR 700,000 per week. However, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, their income decreased to IDR 250,000 to IDR 300,000 per week.

At Onesu Waterfall, there is a decrease in income experienced by business actors at this tourist attraction. There are two hawker stall businesses and one young coconut kiosk business actor in this tourist attraction. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, these hawker stall businesses could earn IDR 250,000 to IDR 300,000 for young coconut kiosks and

young coconut kiosks could earn IDR 100,000 to IDR 150,000 every week. However, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, their income decreased drastically to just under IDR 50,000 per week. In addition, the lopo and hall rental business prepared by the manager also does not contribute to revenue for the manager, because the lopo and hall that have been prepared are not rented by tourists.

At the Manikin Beach tourist attraction, there is a decrease in income experienced by business actors. In this tourist attraction, there is one hawker stall business actor and one young coconut kiosk business actor. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, business people in this Manikin Beach tourist attraction could earn income from their business of IDR 100,000 to IDR 200,000 per week. However, after the COVID-19 outbreak, their income has decreased and is uncertain, only around IDR 50,000 per week.

At Mount Fatuleu there is also a decrease in income experienced by business actors at this tourist attraction. Before COVID-19 outbreak, there were seven hawker stall businesses at this tourist attraction and could earn income from their businesses of IDR 400,000 to IDR 450,000 per week. However, after the outbreak, only two hawker stall businesses still survive on the tourist attraction of Mount Fatuleu with their income dropping drastically to only around IDR 100,000 per week.

At the Baumata Pond tourist attraction, there is a decrease in income experienced by one hawker stall business actor and one inner tube rental business actor at this tourist attraction. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, these hawker stall businesses could earn IDR 150,000 up to IDR 200,000 and for the inner tube rental business, they could earn IDR 100,000 to IDR 250,000 per week. However, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, their income decreased drastically to just under IDR 50,000 per week. Meanwhile, around the Baumata Pool tourist attraction, there are ten business actors of stalls for sweet potato chips, fried corn and various other snacks, which before the COVID-19 outbreak occurred, these business actors could get income from their business of IDR 100,000 up to IDR 200,000 every week. However, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak, their income has decreased and is erratic, only around IDR 50,000 per week.

The results above agree with [19] which states similarly upon the small industry players who peddle goods and services around Santen Island complaining of a decrease in their income due to the decline in the purchasing power of tourists as a result of the decline in the number of visitors on the island. Santen as a result of the outbreak.

For Tesbatan Waterfall and the Horse Racing Arena, there are no business actors during the pandemic and post- COVID-19 pandemic, because these two tourist attractions are starting from March 2020 until now and for an undetermined time limit, are still closed by the local village government, through coordination and permission from the Kupang Regency tourism and Creative Economy office.

#### 4.3 Socio-cultural impact after the COVID-19 pandemic on the seven tourist attractions.

The tourists who visit the seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government after the COVID-19 outbreak have implemented health, safety and hygiene protocols. The implementation of health, safety and hygiene protocols also has a socio-cultural impact for visitors; the culture of implementing health protocols to protect themselves from exposure to this corona virus and also to obey the rules that have been set in the tourist destinations visited, will directly affect behavior. The tourists are required to always take good care of themselves by always wearing masks, washing hands, maintaining cleanliness, and also keeping a distance from other visitors. This will form a new habit for tourists that was never done before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Various facilities to support health, safety and hygiene protocols in tourist areas have been provided and implemented properly by the tourist attraction manager. The tourists who will enter the tourist area must comply with the health protocol rules that have been set by the manager, including tourists are required to wear masks, check body temperature, wash hands in the places provided, and also maintain a mandatory distance from other visitors. In addition, all visitors are also required to maintain the cleanliness of the tourist attraction by throwing garbage in the trash cans that have been provided around the tourist area. With the various efforts that have been made by the manager, it is hoped that it can increase the comfort and sense of security for visitors who travel and attract more tourists to visit again.

The results of this study are also in line with [22] which states that the management of the

Sirah Kencong Tea Plantation Agrotourism also pays attention to and implements health protocols such as visitors must wear masks, wash their hands when entering tourist areas, and maintain a distance between visitors. Before entering the tourist area, the body temperature of the visitors is checked using a thermo gun. As a result, tourists eventually become accustomed to always living healthy and following health protocols in their daily activities. The results also agree with [19] which states that tourists visiting Santen Island after the COVID-19 pandemic are bound to new norms in Santen Island, which have implemented health, safety and hygiene protocols for employees and also tourists who come. Facilities to support health, safety and hygiene protocols in tourist areas have been provided and implemented properly by the Santen Island manager. Visitors who will enter the tourist area must comply with the health protocol rules that have been set by the Santen Island manager, including visitors who are required to wear masks, wash their hands in a place that has provided an area for washing hands for visitors, and also keep their distance from other visitors. Tourists also embrace such habit like this not only when traveling on Santen Island, but also in their daily lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4.4 Impact on the environment in seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on the environment in seven tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a decrease in the number of visits, also had an impact on reducing the volume of waste and maintaining the cleanliness of the area in a tourist attraction. The results of this study are also in line with [19] which stated that the post- COVID-19 pandemic also had an impact on the environment around Santen Island. One of the most visible impacts is the reduced volume of waste around the tourist area. Usually when the number of tourists increases, the volume of waste, both around the tourist area and around the mangroves, accumulates as well. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, because the number of tourist visits has decreased, the volume of waste generated has also decreased.

The Kupang Regency Government in this case through the Kupang Regency Tourism and Creative

Economy Office can implement the following strategic steps; implementing strict health protocols in tourist attraction areas both for managers and visiting tourists to always wear masks, wash hands before entering tourist attractions, carry out body temperature checks, keep a distance from other tourists, and also participate in maintaining the cleanliness of the attraction area. tourist attraction, as well as improving health, safety and hygiene facilities in tourist areas. Signboards for tourists containing appeals and prohibitions to always apply health protocols in tourist attraction areas must also be installed properly. Moreover, to provide financial assistance to business actors in tourist attractions affected by COVID-19 by providing cash assistance, liquidity injection, credit relaxation and tax relief from the government and financial institutions for these actors. Improvement in management, comfort, security and image as well as promotion of tourist attractions is also essential to revive tourism activities in Kupang Regency.

## V. CONCLUSION

The results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the development of tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a decrease in the number of tourist visits, which resulted in a decrease in tourist attraction income which also had implications for the decline in local revenue levies for the Kupang Regency Government from the tourism sector. In addition, the decline in the number of tourist visits also has an impact on the decline in income received by business actors who depend on their lives by trying to attract tourist attractions managed by the Kupang Regency Government. Meanwhile, the socio-cultural and environmental impacts bring changes to the community because with the implementation of health, safety, and hygiene protocols, people are more concerned about personal hygiene and health and the environment of tourist attractions is getting cleaner and maintained.

The results of the research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist attractions are also expected to be a reference for further researchers who can conduct research with the same theme but with a more in-depth study, by adding research variables, adding research indicators, increasing the research period and comparing tourist attraction analyzed in this study with other tourist attractions with the number of respondents who can also be added in order to get more reliable results.

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