



Dynamic Governance In Efforts To Increase Tourism Visits During The Covid-19 Pandemic

Duddy Agus Rosadi Sinaga¹, Roni Ekha Putera², Aidinil Zetra³, Ria Ariany⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: duddysinaga2@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted various aspects of human life. The Indonesian government has implemented a policy of social distancing to overcome the spread of Covid-19 that applies to all levels of society. This policy affects almost all community activities, including tourism activities. Activity restrictions impact the decline in tourism activities, including tourist visits to the Mentawai Islands. This study shows how government policies to overcome the decline in tourist arrivals are seen from the perspective of dynamic governance as the application of dynamic governance during the pandemic in the Mentawai Islands Regency. This research is descriptive research using a qualitative approach. The study results show that the application of dynamic governance principles in overcoming the decline of tourist visits has yet to go well because there are still coordination problems with related agencies in responding to policies carried out by the Mentawai Islands Regency Government.

Keywords: *Dynamic Governance, Tourist Visits, Covid-19, Coordination, Mentawai Islands*

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted various aspects of human life. The Indonesian government has implemented a social distancing policy to overcome the spread of Covid-19, which applies to all levels of society. Social distancing during a pandemic is described by school closures, travel restrictions, and bans on public gatherings to restrain the spread of the virus [1], and this policy has a broad impact on all community activities. In the tourism sector, activity restrictions have caused tourist visits to Indonesia, especially foreign tourists, to decline during the pandemic [2]. Based on the Central Statistics Agency's data (BPS), there is a decline in foreign tourists by 72.35% in 2020 (January-October 2020 period) and 64.37% in 2021 (January-October 2021 period) [3];[4]. The decline in the number of foreign tourists in Indonesia was due to national and international travel restriction policies such as air travel, sea travel, and lodging businesses [5] which led to many tourism businesses' closure. The Indonesian government implemented activity restrictions if the number of transmissions of the Covid-19 virus increases and revokes the policy if the number of spreads of the COVID-19 virus decreases [1]. Several studies have tried to propose strategies and approaches to overcoming the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism. Hartman (2020) proposes a tourism adaptation system to help tourism areas adapt during times of change. Neupane [7] presents a tourism governance approach as a government effort to coordinate tourism development in unexpected conditions due to Covid-19. Vargas [8] proposed the concept of tourism recovery due to the Covid-19 crisis. he proposed the type of tourism

management according to the requirements of this new era. Collins-Kreiner & Ram [9] explained the strategy and implementation of tourism policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yang et al. [10] evaluated to understand the effects of the coronavirus on tourism. Hale et al. [1] present data on policies carried out by the government regarding closures and detentions and health and economic policies of several countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most of these researches focus on tourism governance approaches and adaptation models dealing with the Covid-19 crisis. It is still rare for explanations or information to be obtained about how an area or local area has responded to the COVID-19 crisis in the tourism sector. Policies are generally still being researched at the country level. They could be more detailed in explaining that a country's policies are going according to plan when implemented at the regional level. In Indonesia, where regional conditions still accommodate decisions or instructions from the central government, it is necessary to know how to implement these policies at the regional level. Coupled with different regional conditions, there has yet to be much explanation about the policies taken by the regions in overcoming tourism problems during the pandemic, especially in areas consisting of many islands, such as the Mentawai archipelago district.

Based on the description above, the authors formulate research questions: 1) Have the local government policies related to the pandemic impacted tourism conditions? 2) How do the relevant agencies follow up on the local government policies related to the pandemic? Furthermore, this study aims to describe how the

Mentawai Islands Regency's policies related to the Covid-19 pandemic impact tourism recovery from Dynamic Governance's perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Dynamic Governance*

Neo & Chen [11] argue that dynamic governance is "how these chosen paths, policies, institutions, and structures adapt to an uncertain and fast-changing environment so that they remain relevant and effective in achieving the long-term desired outcomes of society."

Implementing policy, there must be an adaptive movement with the size of the uncertainty in the future of the global environment. The change results from a combination of two elements: the cultural element (government organizational culture) and the capability element (government organization). These elements must be supported by able people and agile processes and influenced by future uncertainties and external practice. Able people are defined as people's ability to see the future and have authority. While Agile processes are defined as the correct way, mechanism, or procedure for thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across. In the concept of Dynamic Governance, a leader must think quickly and tactically and have ideas in the administration of government organizations.

For this reason, leaders must think ahead, think again, and think across. Thinking ahead is the ability of government institutions to assess and review ongoing policies and strategies, update targets and objectives, and develop new policy concepts that are prepared for the future. Thinking Again (review) is the ability to review things that have already happened, including the use of data, new information, predetermined standards/standards, legacy problems from a policy or program, and feedback received. Thinking Across (learning from the experience of other countries/organizations) is an attitude of being willing to learn from the experiences and thoughts of others in managing a country or government; ideas will be obtained in innovating to improve policies and strategies, and programs.

2.2. *Coordination*

Malone and Crowston [12] state that coordination is how to manage dependencies between activities. Coordination is seen as the process of managing dependencies between activities. Processes analyzed include processes for managing shared resources, producer/consumer relationships, simultaneous constraints or concurrent constraints, and task dependencies. Achieving the goals of an organization requires unity of the work units of the organization to carry out the task so that the goals can be achieved. In

many activities, coordination is needed, and it is carried out because of the high communication needs in carrying out these tasks. Completing tasks in the face of unpredictable changes makes interdependence high [13].

Bouckaert et al. [14] focus on coordination as a process and government strategy to coordinate organizations or programs in the public sector. Coordination is a mechanism to increase efforts to harmonize organizational tasks in the public sector. Bouckaert et al. [14] distinguish coordination into two concepts: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal coordination refers to coordination between organizations at the same hierarchical level in government, for example, between agencies or bureaus.

3. METHODS

This study is descriptive research that uses a qualitative approach. The research aims to describe how the Mentawai Islands Regency government's policies related to the Covid-19 pandemic impact tourism recovery from the perspective of Dynamic Governance. Data collection was held through interviews to get primary data. Secondary data was obtained from the agencies involved. This study conducted interviews with parties with authority to make tourism-related policies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. *Strategy to Save Tourism During the Covid-19 Pandemic*

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Tourism and Creative Economy Agency (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf), carries out efforts or strategies to save Indonesian tourism through three phases, namely: 1) the emergency response phase, which focuses on health with social protection programs and coordinates critical tourism, and recovery preparations; 2) the recovery phase, namely gradually opening tourist attractions with the application of the CHSE (Cleanliness, Healthy, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) protocol in tourist attractions and supporting MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition) activities; and 3) the normalization phase, that preparing tourist destinations with the CHSE protocol and increasing market interest [15].

Therefore, the Governor of West Sumatra emphasized that the provincial government of West Sumatra also adopted these three phases of saving tourism because tourism is a contributor to local revenue and a driving force for the community's economy. The West Sumatra provincial government is trying to realize that the West Sumatra area has entered the normalization phase in 2022 by implementing the

CHSE protocol [16]. The Mentawai Islands Regency, as part of the province of West Sumatra, needs to save tourism because one of the sources of regional income comes from the tourism sector. Restrictions on social activities impact decreasing tourism activities, including tourist visits to the Mentawai Islands. The decline in tourist visits impacts the marine tourism business in the Mentawai Islands because tourism activities in the Mentawai Islands are highly dependent on tourist visits. The reduced tourist arrivals or almost no tourist visits impact the decline in regional income from the tourism sector. This can be seen from realizing regional income in the tourism sector (Mentawai Islands Regional Development Planning Agency, 2021), which is Rp. 7,905,400,000 in 2019, and Rp. 1,226,800,000 in 2020. Realization of regional income decreased due to reduced tourist arrivals, especially foreign tourists because the source of income in the tourism sector came from the levy tax on surfing or surfing, hotels, and restaurants. Based on data from the Department of Tourism, Youth and Sports, Mentawai Islands Regency, there was a decline in the number of tourist visits, especially foreign tourists, by 85% in 2020 compared to the previous year.

Analyzing the data obtained from the relevant agencies and the results of interviews with related agencies, the discussion will focus on the three phases of saving tourism in Indonesia using dynamic governance theory.

4.1.1. Emergency Response Phase

Like other regions in Indonesia, the Mentawai Islands Regency must also adapt in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. All sectors that are heavily affected, such as the tourism sector, are expected to be able to take policies that can answer the challenges being faced. Boon and Geradine, in their formulation of dynamic governance, stated how the various policies, institutions, and structures that have been chosen work so that they can adapt to the uncertainty and rapid environmental change so that these policies, institutions, and structures remain relevant and effective in achieving the long-term desires of the community. In the context of fast change due to the Covid -19 pandemic, it warns us that change is not predictable, so adaptation to uncertainty is a must.

A form of adaptation in the tourism sector carried out by the Mentawai district government is implementing three phases of saving tourism in Indonesia. The first phase is the emergency response phase. In the emergency response phase, the first step taken by the Mentawai Islands Regency government related to tourism in Mentawai was to implement Regent Circular (SE) number 443.2/59/BUP dated March 21, 2020, regarding the temporary closure of tourist attractions. And restrictions on crowds in the Mentawai Islands Regency. To respond to the circular letter (SE), the tourism office prohibited tourists still in

the Mentawai archipelago from leaving and forbade tourists who wanted to visit. The Tourism Office immediately followed up on this circular by conducting surveillance. According to informant X2, The implementation of the Regent's circular must be supervised by assigning several employees to oversee the tourist attraction so that it is closed and no tourists are leaving and entering the Mentawai Islands area. Furthermore, Informant X1 explained that this surveillance is carried out because some tourists are trapped and cannot get out of the Mentawai Islands and must be ensured not to leave their location.

This step was taken by the government of the Mentawai Islands Regency. From the dynamic governance theory, it can be said that the regional government has taken proper action in accordance with the demands of fast changes. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, closure was the best choice to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission. However, from the results of interviews conducted with resource persons from the tourism office, it was found that apart from implementing the circular letter (SE), there were no activities or programs carried out to anticipate the decline in the number of tourists visiting the Mentawai region. When there are no tourist visits, the tourism office does not plan other activities to maintain and save regional income from the tourism sector.

By using dynamic governance theory, it can be seen that the changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in the tourism sector in 2020 cannot be anticipated by the tourism office. This can be seen from the absence of activities carried out by the Mentawai district government to fill or replace canceled activities due to restrictions on community activities. Judging from the dynamic governance theory, this can happen because it needs to be supported by able people who think and implement agile processes. Furthermore, in dynamic governance theory, it is stated that able people who have authority can think about agile processes based on the principles of thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across.

The ability of able people who are accompanied by authority can realize creative ideas to solve problems. For example, the tourism trend born during the Covid-19 pandemic is the result of the thoughts of people who can think and act quickly and precisely. One that can be used as an example is the activities carried out by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in the form of a Virtual Travel Fair from August-September 2020. Virtual Travel Fair is designed to explore tourist attractions without leaving home. This is intended to keep travelers enjoying traveling while the travel ban is being enforced. This is one of the solutions offered by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to continue reviving tourism activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the context of the Mentawai Islands district, with very limited capacity and facilities, it requires creativity

to build coordination with parties who can help. Coordination needs to be built because the dependence on the Mentawai's regional income from the tourism sector is very high, as stated by informant X2, which said that income comes from surfing fees, hotel tax, and restaurant tax.

In the theory of coordination, disclosed by Malone and Crowston [12], it is stated that coordination is a dependence, meaning that in completing a task, one must have a relationship with one another. Coordination is built not only in small units but also in broader ones, both vertical and horizontal. The results of interviews with informants found that the form of coordination carried out during the emergency response was still the form of horizontal coordination.

What is needed in responding to the emergency response situation is horizontal coordination within the Mentawai islands and vertical coordination with the provincial and central governments. This is needed so that the Mentawai local government can think about data and agile processes. Agile processes which are based on the principles of thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across will produce an activity that is in accordance with the conditions in Mentawai to undergo the recovery phase. The tourism rescue strategy in the national emergency response phase also emphasizes the critical coordination of tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this coordination did not appear to be carried out by the Mentawai Islands government.

4.1.2. Recovery Phase

In the recovery phase, the Mentawai Islands district government re-issued the Mentawai Islands Regent Regulation Number 30 Tahun 2020 concerning the Implementation of the New Productive and Safe Normal Order for Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19), which regulates the procedures for implementing the protocol for preventing and handling Covid-19 in the regions including in it the regulation on the application of health protocols in the tourism sector. In regulating this new regular order, there are already regulations for community activities that are more flexible, although with strict health protocols.

The tourism office responded to this Regent's Regulation (Perbup) by holding discussions with resort business managers in the Mentawai Islands in the context of implementing a new productive regular order, and the Regent of the Mentawai Islands asked resort managers or tourism actors to implement health protocols. This was done because, during the new average period, tourism actors were able to receive guests again [17].

Local government was also trying to encourage activities to be held in the Mentawai Islands through optimizing MICE activity, such as coordination meetings for the tourism offices throughout West

Sumatra in 2021. This activity encouraged an increase in local tourist visits to the Mentawai Islands. Several informants justified visiting activities for meetings or gatherings as a solution to increase tourist visits. According to Informants X2 and X4, Implementation of MICE is the right strategy to be implemented in Mentawai for now because this meeting or meetings held by government agencies throughout West Sumatra can encourage the rise of the hotel or lodging business which was paralyzed.

Based on the discussion above, in this recovery phase, it is apparent that government policies and activities have been done to encourage tourism visits even though it is within the scope of local tourists. Government meetings have begun to be held in the Mentawai Islands to encourage economic recovery, especially in the accommodation sector. This is one of the actions in the process of adopting the activities of the central government, which shows that the Mentawai Islands Regency government started thinking across the principle.

The Tourism Office, in this phase, is trying to organize and beautify existing destinations and tourist objects in order to attract people to visit the Mentawai Islands. The arrangement of the existing facilities is also intended to increase the Mentawai income, which has fallen due to the Covid-19 pandemic [16].

4.2. Dynamic Governance Perspective

4.2.1. Thinking ahead

The Covid-19 pandemic has taught us a lesson. The new thing that should make us learn is the importance of technological advances. Technological advances supported by reliable human resources can make us able to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in many sectors, including the tourism sector, as has been shown by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Through virtual tourism programs and other programs that rely on technology and the internet, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is still able to continue to revive tourism activities when the pandemic is hitting Indonesia and even the World. The steps taken by the central government, in this case, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, show that ability to think ahead in dealing with problems. On the other hand, this is less evident in the actions taken by the Mentawai local government.

In the recovery phase, the Mentawai local government should be able to take particular steps in the tourism sector and not only implement policies issued by the central government related to travel in and out of the region but also produce long-term value policies. This was revealed by the informant, who said there were no tourism activities, even for tourism promotion.

The interview results also illustrate a compulsion to stop promotional activities from reducing expenses. At the same time, promotional activities can also be carried out by utilizing technology, for example, through the internet. When travel restrictions are no longer enforced, local governments should be able to think ahead by utilizing online tourism marketing, which is much cheaper; for example, by creating an official Mentawai tourism website so that tourism information can be accessed from anywhere by anyone. Of course, with the existence of this official website, local governments can provide fast and accurate information for future travelers, especially after the pandemic.

As stated earlier, technological progress cannot be dammed because it has become necessary. Therefore it cannot be denied that one day travel will change. The question that arises is how the Mentawai local government can respond to this change. Neo & Chen stated that to be able to respond to rapid change, policymakers must be able to think far ahead. Every decision or policy must see whether it can answer a very unpredictable tomorrow, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, where no one ever expected this incident to occur and when it would end.

4.2.2. *Thinking again*

Every policy taken requires evaluation. Policies need to be evaluated to see if they are still relevant or no longer relevant. Reviewing a policy can be done by analyzing available data and information. The local government has yet to implement the principle of policy review in the tourism sector in this study. This can be seen from the interview revealed by informant X4 that local government activities still focus on health supervision and intervention. There have yet to be any efforts to achieve economic recovery, including in the tourism sector. The activities carried out are limited to social protection by providing social assistance in the form of money or direct cash assistance to the community.

In the interview above, the Mentawai regional government needs to review the policy focus to achieve economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic. According to dynamic governance theory reviewing a policy can be done by learning from the success of other regions (thinking across).

4.2.3. *Thinking across*

The impasse or inability of the Mentawai Islands district government during the Covid-19 pandemic in the tourism sector is evident in the interview with informant X2. According to informant X2, in 2020, the tourism condition of the Mentawai Islands was horrible. However, policies still need to be implemented to encourage the rise of tourism activities.

On the other hand, although tourism sector activities have experienced a very significant decline, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy continues to make breakthroughs so that tourism does not die. By utilizing technology and the internet, tourism activities are offered in a virtual form and provide other attractive offers. What has been done by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy should be an example that the Mentawai local government can imitate. Learning from the success of other people or areas (thinking across) is a principle that can break deadlocks to produce innovative ideas to improve people's welfare. The local government has yet to be able to apply the principles of thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across maximally, causing the Mentawai local government not to be able to enter the normalization phase.

5. CONCLUSION

The strategy implemented by the central government through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in three phases of tourism rescue, namely the emergency response phase, the recovery phase, and the normalization phase, can be used as a reference in overcoming tourism problems, especially the decline in tourist visits. However, the Mentawai Islands district government needs full help to adopt this strategy. They only focus on health supervision and intervention during the Covid-19 pandemic and do not carry out innovative activities, so economic recovery is not a priority. Coordination of tourism at a critical period has yet to be carried out with the provincial and central governments. The coordination is limited to obtaining information on Covid-19 data for tourism actors and tourists. Likewise, the Tourism Office as the executor of the task in the tourism sector, does not try to plan activities that can be a solution to reducing tourist visits to the Mentawai. From a dynamic governance perspective, it can be seen that the Mentawai local government has yet to be able to implement agile processes in responding to tourism conditions during the pandemic in the Mentawai Islands, which is not visible in the policies made.

The decline in regional income from the tourism sector illustrates that the Mentawai regional government still needs to be able to apply the principle of thinking ahead. This can be seen from the decline in revenue from the tourism sector in 2020 which should have been anticipated beforehand. In addition, the Mentawai local government in the tourism sector still needs to review (thinking again) the policies implemented so far to optimally carry out their duties. The Mentawai regional government should also be able to apply the principle of thinking by learning from the experiences of other regions that could withstand the Covid-19 pandemic.

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