
WHALE SHARK TOURISM AND WELL-BEING: A CASE STUDY OF LABUAN JAMBU

by

Putrawan Habibi¹⁾, Muhammad Azizurrohman²⁾ & Dova Novita³⁾^{1,2,3}**Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Mataram****Jl. Panji Tilar Negara No.99, Kekalik Jaya, Kec. Sekarbela, Kota Mataram, NTB.****83115, (0370) 633393****Email: ¹habibiputrawan@gmail.com, ²m.azizur96@gmail.com &****³Ardovanovita@gmail.com****Abstract**

As one of the largest whale shark attractions in Indonesia, Labuan Jambu Village still lacks the attention of academics and government in terms of research and development. As a result, it's worth taking a closer look at the people of Labuan Jambu Village's well-being before and after the Whale Shark tourism activities. The authors found that the economic benefits of tourism activities have not had a significant and unequal effect on the villagers. Before the tourism industry existed, the villagers of Labuan Jambu understood the importance of education. Aside from that, the most important problem that Labuan Jambu Village has yet to resolve is waste management. In order to create sustainable tourism in Labuan Jambu Village, various stakeholders must collaborate.

Keywords: Whale Shark, Well-being & Labuan Jambu**INTRODUCTION**

Whale sharks are one of the marine species that are often found in TNC waters (Stewart 2011). The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), the world's largest fish, has a slow growth and sexual maturity process, produces a limited number of chicks, and lives a long time. Because of these characteristics, whale shark faces scarcity and, in the worst-case scenario, extinction if exploitation is not managed (Direktorat KKKJ, 2015). The whale shark population has declined globally, and the species is now listed as endangered by the IUCN Red List¹.

By Decree of the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries No. 18 of 2013, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia created the conservation status of whale sharks in Indonesia. In Indonesia, Whale Sharks can be found in almost all territorial waters, such as in Sabang, Padang, Ujung Kulon, the Seribu Islands, Probolinggo, East Kalimantan, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Gorontalo, Central Sulawesi, Maluku and Papua. Except in Kwatisore, Cenderawasih Bay, and Saleh Bay, Whale Sharks

appear in Indonesia on a seasonal basis. Whale Sharks can be found in these waters at any time of year (Tania et al., 2014). Whale sharks are more abundant in Labuan Jambu, Sumbawa, than in other regions².

Figure 1. Labuan Jambu on Google Maps

Source: Google Maps

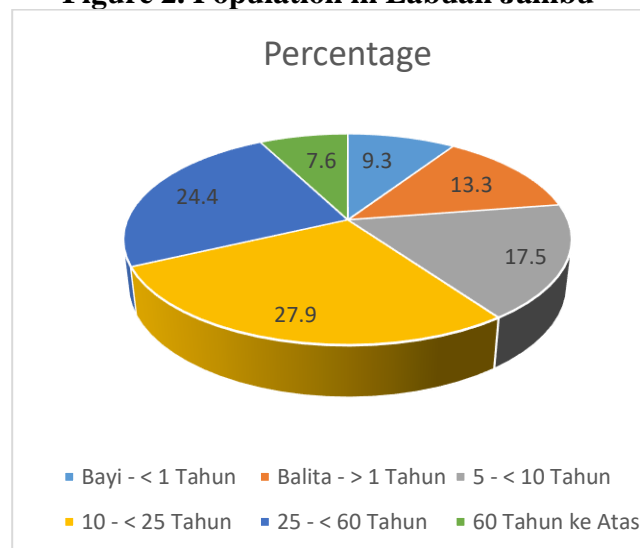
The village of Labuan Jambu is located in Tarano District, Sumbawa Regency. This village is made up of five hamlets ruled by the Bugis tribe, with fishermen and farmers as their main sources of income. The coastal village is bypassed by national roads, making it very strategic and

¹ Red Lis IUCN. www.iucnredlist.org² Secretary of Labuhan Jambu Village. Interview Results. 2021



easy to reach by land transportation, either public transportation or private vehicle, taking about two hours from Sumbawa City. Labuhan Jambu Village, in addition to whale shark tourism, is one of the villages with potential for coastal, marine, and island tourism. Ketapang Beach, Rakit Island, Dewa Island, and Bako Island are assets that can help Labuhan Jambu Village develop a tourism environment. Labuhan Jambu Village covers 32.33 square kilometers and is home to 953 households with a total population of 3,329 people until 2020³.

Figure 2. Population in Labuan Jambu



Source: Labuan Jambu Profile

Residents aged 10 to 25 years old account for 27.9% of the population in Labuan Jambu. Meanwhile, with a ratio of 24.4, the population aged 25-60 years is below it. Elderly people over the age of 60 made up the smallest number, accounting for 7.6% of the total.

The distance between Labuhan Jambu Village and the District Capital (Tarano District) is only about 4 kilometers, while the distance to the Regency Capital requires 2-3 hours of driving. This can be one of the factors limiting the efficacy of community services, especially those related to the ease and pace at which they are delivered. Labuhan Jambu Village is situated in the eastern coastal region of Saleh Bay, which is now being prioritized by the local government of Sumbawa Regency as one of SAMOTA's tourist

destinations (Saleh Bay, Moyo Island, and Mount Tambora). This role is extremely advantageous for the community in terms of maximizing the potential of marine and fisheries resources, which, aside from agricultural, plantation, and livestock products, have become a source of community income. The leading commodity is marine / fisheries, followed by corn and rice in the agricultural sector and sheep, buffalo, and horses in the livestock sector, which are the main commodities in each sector.⁴

Labuhan Jambu Village also has a variety of natural and cultural attractions, one of which is the Labuhan Jambu Village Museum (Purnadi, 2019). In addition, Labuan Jambu Village is known for its specialties such as lawar and pumpkin. Other areas of expertise are fishing and processing of catches including salted fish and shrimp paste. Purnadi (2019) went on to say that Labuhan Jambu Village also has underwater natural beauty that tourists can enjoy, as well as Pulau Harapan, snorkelling, and outbound activities that have recently been introduced to boost tourist attraction.

With the passage of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning villages, every village now has the opportunity to grow its capacity independently according to its own needs in order to achieve community welfare. The village government aims to promote village community projects aimed at developing village potential and assets for the common good, as well as advancing the village economy and bridging national development gaps.

The tourism industry on Sumbawa's island, especially in the village of Labuan Jambu, is currently not very active. Apart from a lack of promotion, the tourism industry in the local area is also sluggish due to a lack of empowerment in community engagement and a lack of facilities and infrastructure in Labuan Jambu Village's tourist area. The number of people qualified to manage the tourism industry is still small. The government also faces a difficult task in enhancing the efficiency of human resources in order to provide excellent tourist service. Apart

³ Labuan Jambu Village Profile. 2021

⁴ Ibid

from trying to patch a tourism governance system that isn't quite right, this is something that needs to be done. Sanawiyah et al. (2020) conducted a study in Labuan Jambu Village that explored the opportunities and challenges of whale shark tourism in the village. Meanwhile, in this paper, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including village government and tourism actors, as part of this report. The main goal of this research was to collect the information from villagers about tourism activities on the economy, education, and environment in Labuan Jambu Village.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Few people have done research in Labuan Jambu Village so far, particularly those who are discussing tourism development strategies. Djunaidi et al. (2019) attempted to investigate the relationship between Whale Sharks and the growth of tourism. According to the findings of their study, local governments play a critical role in the development of tourism, especially in terms of preparing community competencies through training and education, as nearly 30% of respondents noted.

Purnadi (2019) also investigated the tourism growth in Labuan Jambu Village which focused on community-based tourism (CBT). However, Labuan Jambu Village continues to face challenges in developing tourism activities due to the poor quality of its human resources.

Juliah and Awaliah (2020) in Labuan Jambu Village did the same thing. They want to see if the Labuan Jambu village population is ready to participate in tourism activities. The findings revealed that the Labuhan Jambu village group was prepared in terms of services, infrastructure, and expertise in a variety of areas. However, the Labuhan Jambu community's skills are still missing, necessitating the holding of training to develop community skills.

Sanawiyah et al. (2020) performed a study of the Whale Shark Tourism Object in Labuan Jambu Village's opportunities and challenges. They discovered that tourism activities could boost revenue, create jobs, support small businesses, and empower women. Nepotism, non-

agreed fees, overtime leases, and difficulties handling tour operators are among the problems.

According to Iijina and Scrdiene (2004), successful tourism needs a good geographical location, a place that has never been visited, has high historical and cultural value, as well as safety and comfort, all of which can increase the number of tourists in Latvia.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

This study is focused on qualitative data gathered from Labuan Jambu village stakeholders through semi-structured in-depth interviews. Our informants were four peasants and one village head. This study was limited to Labuan Jambu Village because it has become the primary destination for tourists looking to see whale sharks in the region.

Since the aim of sampling is to generate the maximum data depth that addresses the research objectives, the researcher believes the five samples are sufficient. Furthermore, whale shark tourism operations include a small number of stakeholders. Before beginning the interview, the researcher obtained the respondent's permission to perform the interview or record the conversation. If the data is saturated, researchers will stop looking for respondents.

We have used FGDs with the local village council, which is one of the triangulation processes. By combining several data sources, processes, or techniques, we can conduct comparisons and cross-checks of outcomes while reducing the risk of systemic bias (Maxwell, 2009).

Instruments

We constructed a semi-structured qualitative interview with respondents using open-ended questions, similar to the approach used by Hartarto et al. (2020). Due to time constraints and to ensure optimum data generation for the analysis, we used the semi-structured interview approach for data collection. Five people were interviewed in detail about the economic, educational, and environmental effects of whale shark tourism in their village. The respondent receives a letter from the interviewer approving the nature of the study. The interviewer



told a prospective respondent about the research goals and key questions before they agree to participate in the study.

Respondents were informed that the information they provided was private and that their full names would not be revealed. Respondents were informed that they could end the interview at any time. This research only included adults who had given their permission. The interviews took place in Indonesian. To ensure the highest level of reliability, feedback is captured as audio. The conversation with each respondent lasts about twenty-five minutes and takes place in the middle of the meeting.

The interview questions covered a variety of topics, including: (i) the respondent's demographic details and socioeconomic context, (ii) the respondents' economic conditions before and after tourism operations, (iii) general knowledge about children's education, (iv) and the environment situation in Labuan Jambu Village before and after tourism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Economy

The people of Labuan Jambu claimed that there has been no significant change in their village as a result of tourism activities, especially in terms of economics. Only a few people have benefited from the tourism activities so far.

The economy of the people has grown by up to 20% in the last few years.¹

There are around 80 to 90 people who have fish ponds (Bagang) in the middle of the sea, but not all of them are affected by tourism because whale sharks do not pass through all of the fish ponds.⁴

Tourists will use fishing boats to fish ponds (Bagang) in the middle of the sea from the beach. Tourists who want to see whale sharks must pay a fee to the fishpond owners because whale sharks like to hang out near fishponds.

Figure 3. Fishpond or Bagang



Source: Researchers' Camera

The community's position in tourism activities is as a provider of services such as homestays, whale shark transportation, and the owner of a fishpond.¹

As a result, only a small number of people would be affected by Whale Shark tours.

Education

The Labuan Jambu citizens have a high level of education. A large number of young people who receive education attest to this.

Before the existence of tourism activities, some children of the fishermen took the initiative to continue their education to universities in Makassar, Diponegoro University (UNDIP), and some in University of Udayana Bali to major in marine and fisheries.⁵

Parents with a higher education experience are more likely to allow their children to graduate or pursue a master's degree.

If the child comes from a well-educated family, he or she would be well-educated as well. I don't want my child to stop at a bachelor's degree; I want him to pursue a master's degree as well.³

People in Labuan Jambu tend to encourage their children to go to school in the fields their parents are engaged in.

Parents in Labuan Jambu are competing in sending their children to higher education. In

comparison to previous years, community education in Labuan Jambu Village has increased.

Currently, the citizens of Labuan Jambu place a high value on education. When compared to 10 or 20 years ago, their desire to pursue their education is very strong.¹

In addition, the educational facilities in Labuan Jambu are excellent.

The village's educational services are comprehensive and excellent.¹

In Labuan Jambu, elementary to high school are available. Apart from that, there are good supporting facilities.¹

Therefore, it can be seen that the majority of the residents of Labuan Jambu Village were aware of the value of education long before the Whale Shark tourist attraction was founded.

Environment

The key environmental problem, according to the respondents, is waste. The people of Labuan Jambu Village continue to use the sea as a natural garbage disposal system. The lack of waste collection facilities contributes to the community's bad habits. As a result, the villagers had no other choice.

There has been no community initiative to preserve the ecosystem so far.⁵

There is currently no landfill in Labuan Jambu. The village government of Labuan Jambu has funds set aside for the construction of a landfill, but it has yet to be built.¹

However, after Labuan Jambu Village and international conservation organizations collaborated to create tourist object with the idea of environmental conservation, the community has gradually become more conscious of the value of environmental protection.

Since it is difficult to collect the population, international conservation organization assist the community in

protecting the environment by performing door-to-door socialization.⁵

Garbage was strewn about everywhere before the whale shark tourism object was developed.³

Moreover, international conservation organizations give responsibility to village enterprises to manage waste in Labuan Jambu.

The Conservation International Institute gives responsibility to bumdes to establish a waste bank.²

The indigenous people of Labuan Jambu are not the only ones to blame for the village's environmental problems. The nearby village community and the immigrant community, on the other hand, were to blame.

Our people have never harmed coral reefs; it is other villages' fishermen who do so when they fish with bombs. As a result, the population of fish in Labuan Jambu is dwindling.³

Local people and immigrants such as the Bima people turn the forests into corn fields, causing flooding.⁴

The waste issue in Labuan Jambu is caused not only by the local population, but also by residents of Empang village, who often throw garbage on the beach in Labuan Jambu.⁴

Environmental issues started to diminish as tourism activities grew in popularity. Starting with the issue of waste, coral destruction, and the slaughter of whale sharks, the list goes on and on.

Whale sharks were considered a nuisance by the population prior to the discovery, but after socialization by international conservation groups, the community recognized that these whale sharks were protected and endangered. Whale sharks are sometimes speared by fishermen for damaging their nets before being used as traction.⁴



However, what the community said before and after the Whale Shark tourism contradicts the statement of the Labuan Jambu village head.

After the existence of tourism activities, the community is still the same or does not have the awareness to make waste in its place.¹

The people of Labuan Jambu village have begun to understand the value of environmental preservation. They learn from visitors and students in Labuan Jambu who engage in social responsibility.

Several corals have been destroyed in the sea around Labuan Jambu. However, there are currently transplant activities taking place around Mangun Island. Sumbawa University of Technology students participated in this activity.⁴

Tourists are very conscious of environmental cleanliness. Tourists also chastise the crew for littering.⁴

Tourists who visit and the Conservation International Institute serve as a model for the community in terms of environmental protection.⁵

Since 2015, several universities have assigned social responsibility projects to their students. The Village Government would benefit from the presence of these students in terms of growth, training, and other areas.¹

Labuan Jambu Village is the kind of society that learns from what it sees. They would follow suit if they see other people guarding their garbage.¹

CONCLUSION

If well handled by the community and local government, tourism activities can have a positive effect on a variety of factors. Labuan Jambu Village, as one of Indonesia's largest whale shark tourism destinations, is a fascinating place to learn more about the village's wellbeing and tourism activities. The author wants to see from the economic, educational, and environmental aspects of the Labuan Jambu Village community

activities by conducting in-depth interviews with the community and village government.

According to our findings, the economic benefits of tourism activities in Labuan Jambu Village have not had an important and unequal effect to the villagers. In terms of education, the community of Labuan Jambu village recognized the value of education even before the tourism industry existed. Aside from that, waste management is the most pressing issue that Labuan Jambu Village has yet to address.

To handle and resolve existing problems, it is important to have good cooperation between all elements, including the society, village government, district / city government, and even the central government, based on these findings.

Notes

1. Respondent, FGD, Head of Labuan Jambu Village.
2. Respondent, FGD, Head of Village Business Entity.
3. Respondent, FGD, Fisherman
4. Respondent, FGD, The owner of the fish pond or *Bagang*
5. Respondent, FGD, Homestay owner.

REFERENCES

- [1] Direktorat KKJI. (2015). Pedoman Umum Monitoring Hiu Paus di Indonesia. Jakarta: Direktorat KKJI, Ditjen KP3K, KKP RI.
- [2] Djunaidi, A., Jompa, J., Nadiarti., Bahar, A., Sianipar., A. Hasan, A.W., Alaydrus, I.S. and Erdmann, M. (2019). Potential tourism development for whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) watching in eastern Indonesia. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 253. DOI:[10.1088/1755-1315/253/1/012043](https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/253/1/012043)
- [3] Iijina, Marina., Linda, S. (2004). Analysis of the Current Situation Inbound Conference Tourism in Latvia and its Future Development Possibilities.
- [4] Juliah, Awaliah. (2020). *Kesiapan Masyarakat Desa Labuhan Jambu Menuju Desa Wisata Hiu Paus (Whale Shark)*. Universitas Mataram. <http://eprints.unram.ac.id/19857/>

- [5] Hartarto, R.B., Wardani, D.T.K., Azizurrohman, M. (2021). A Qualitative Study of Conditional Cash Transfer and Education Aspiration: Evidence from Yogyakarta. *Journal of Social Service Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2021.1918314>
- [6] Maxwell, J. (2009). Designing a qualitative study. In *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods* (L. Bickman & D. Rog, Eds.). SAGE.
- [7] Purnadi. (2019). Strategi Pemerintah Desa Dalam Pengembangan Obyek Wisata Berbasis Masyarakat (Community Based Tourism) Study Wisata Hiu Paus Desa Labuhan Jambu Kecamatan Tarano Kabupaten Sumbawa Tahun 2018. Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram.
<http://repository.ummat.ac.id/539/>
- [8] Sanawiyah., Rosida, L., Hani, M.S., Canisthya, E., Fadliansyah, M. (2020). Wisata Hiu Paus Berbasis Masyarakat: Peluang dan Tantangan. The Second Sustainable Tourism. *National Seminar Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Mataram*.
- [9] Stewart, B. (2011). Workshop and Monitoring Training for Whale Sharks in Cendrawasih Bay National Park, West Papua.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Workshop-and-Monitoring-Training-for-Whale-Sharks-Stewart/291adadf11a5279b7c50bd09b4b5c68de31c7246#citing-papers>
- [10] Tania, C. (2014). Pemantauan dan Studi Hiu Paus di Taman Nasional Teluk Cendrawasih-Laporan Pemantauan Tahun 2013-2014. Wasior: TNTC & WWF Indonesia.
http://awsassets.wwf.or.id/downloads/bmp_hiu_paus_pdf_e_document.pdf

HALAMAN INI SENGAJA DIKOSONGKAN