

Bureaucratic Challenges in Realizing Sustainable Tourism in Tomohon City

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the bureaucratic challenges in realizing sustainable tourism in Tomohon City, with four main sub-focuses: inter-agency coordination, government apparatus competence, budget availability, and digitalization. The research method used is a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and literature study. Furthermore, this study applies qualitative data analysis covering data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and conclusion verification. The findings indicate that several bureaucratic challenges in realizing sustainable tourism in Tomohon City can be seen from four main aspects. First, inter-agency coordination remains weak, as shown by the lack of synchronization between tourism development policies and spatial planning or environmental management. Second, the competence of government apparatus is still inadequate, particularly in understanding sustainable tourism and digital skills, making it difficult for the bureaucracy to adapt to the demands of smart tourism. Third, budget availability is limited and inconsistent, with most allocations directed to major events such as the Tomohon International Flower Festival, while destination maintenance, environmental conservation, and long-term promotion receive less attention. Fourth, digitalization within the bureaucracy has not been implemented optimally due to limited infrastructure, low digital capacity of officials, fragmented systems between agencies, and the digital gap among local tourism stakeholders.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Challenges; Sustainable Tourism; Tomohon City

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the strategic sectors in regional development, including in North Sulawesi. This province is known for its diverse tourism potential, ranging from natural beauty, culture, to religious tourism. Tomohon City, which is often referred to as the City of Flowers, has an increasingly important position in the tourism map of North Sulawesi. International events such as the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) have made the city an icon of culture- and nature-based tourism. However, behind these great opportunities, there are serious challenges in realizing sustainable tourism, especially in terms of bureaucracy and governance.

Bureaucracy as the main instrument of government administration plays a vital role in determining the policy direction and implementation of tourism development. However, reality shows that bureaucracies often face classic problems such as weak inter-agency coordination, regulatory overlap, limited capacity of apparatus resources, and low integration with non-government actors. In the context of Tomohon City, this bureaucratic challenge is even more evident when ambitious tourism policies have to deal with local political dynamics, budget constraints, and the interests of various stakeholders, ranging from the government, business actors, to the community.

In addition, the global demand for sustainable tourism practices that emphasize ecological, economic, and socio-cultural aspects demands bureaucracies to be more adaptive and responsive.

Tourism that is only oriented towards increasing the number of tourist visits without paying attention to environmental sustainability and the welfare of local communities has the potential to create new problems. For example, the increase in the development of tourism facilities in Tomohon can put pressure on urban spatial planning, waste, and natural ecosystems if it is not properly regulated through strict regulations and effective bureaucracy.

Furthermore, the bureaucracy is also faced with the challenge of digitalization. The transformation towards smart tourism, which is currently being driven by many cities in Indonesia, requires a modern, transparent, and data-based public administration system. However, the bureaucracy at the regional level, including in Tomohon, still faces limitations in information technology infrastructure and the readiness of apparatus in managing digital innovation. This makes bureaucracy one of the crucial factors that can accelerate and hinder the realization of sustainable tourism.

Thus, understanding the bureaucratic challenges in realizing sustainable tourism in Tomohon City is important, not only as an academic study but also as a practical input for regional policy formulation. This article will outline the various bureaucratic obstacles faced and offer a perspective on solutions so that tourism in Tomohon can develop sustainably and provide long-term benefits to the community.

METHODS

The research approach used in this article is a qualitative approach. Moleong views that "Qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomena of what the research subject experiences e.g. behavior, perception, motivation, actions and others holistically and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods". The purpose of this qualitative research can explain in depth the situation or problems that occur, and to obtain information about the situation that occurs in the field.

The location of the research is in Tomohon City. Meanwhile, the focus of the research is Bureaucratic Challenges in Realizing Sustainable Tourism in Tomohon City. The sub focuses in this article are as follows:

- 1) Coordination between Government Agencies
- 2) Competence of Government Apparatus
- 3) Budget Availability
- 4) Digitization

Data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and literature studies. Then this study uses qualitative data analysis from the views of Miles and Huberman in the book Sugiyono (2017), which includes data reduction procedures, data presentation, drawing conclusions or verifying conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Coordination between Government Agencies

Coordination between government agencies is the main key to effective bureaucratic governance, especially in the development of sustainable tourism that is cross-sectoral. In the context of Tomohon

City, the weakness of coordination between the Tourism Office and other agencies shows that there is bureaucratic fragmentation that can hinder the synchronization of development programs.

The data obtained is that the weakness of inter-agency coordination in Tomohon City often hinders program synchronization. For example, the construction of tourist facilities is not always in line with spatial planning policies or environmental management. This condition shows that the bureaucracy is not fully able to implement cross-sector governance. In addition, bureaucracy that is too rigid and bound by rules can hinder creativity and quick response from government agencies in Tomohon City. Meanwhile, in the view of contemporary bureaucracy, it emphasizes the need for a more flexible structure to suit changes and public needs.

There is a mismatch between the development of tourist facilities and spatial planning policies and environmental management, which ultimately hinders the development of sustainable tourism. Meanwhile, according to Max Weber, the ideal bureaucracy is a rational and hierarchical administrative system with a clear division of tasks and strict formal procedures. However, Kettl explained that traditional bureaucracies often experience a silo mentality, where each unit or agency works separately without adequate coordination. Instead the new views of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh emphasize the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration involving a wide range of stakeholders to address the complexity of public issues.

So, the current bureaucratic condition in Tomohon, especially related to coordination between government agencies, can be said to show two main problems, namely first, lack of flexibility means that it is still too bound by rules, so it is difficult to respond quickly to the dynamics of tourism needs. Second, lack of coordination means that inter-agencies have not worked in an integrated manner, so policies often run individually.

There are several things that can be done by bureaucrats or government agencies, in order to realize sustainable tourism, namely bureaucratic reform that prioritizes cross-sector coordination and flexibility, and even improving the quality of tourism destinations including aspects of infrastructure, public facilities, cleanliness, comfort, security, and cultural and natural attractions that are managed sustainably, because of this It is very important to increase the effectiveness of tourism management in Tomohon.

3.2 Competence of Government Apparatus

Government Apparatus Competence refers to the collection of abilities, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors possessed by government employees or officials (such as Civil Servants/ Civil Servants or state civil servants in Indonesia) to carry out duties and functions in a professional, efficient, effective, and accountable manner. This competence is the basis for the apparatus to provide quality public services, support the achievement of government organizational goals, and adjust to the demands of environmental change, such as the digital era or sustainable policies. In the context of Indonesian public administration, the competence of the apparatus is regulated in Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), which emphasizes that competence includes technical aspects (specific knowledge and skills), managerial (ability to lead and manage), and socio-cultural (attitude and work ethics). The goal is to ensure that the apparatus is able to run a bureaucracy that is rational, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the community.

The results of the data obtained in the subfocus of the competence of government apparatus, namely government apparatus in Tomohon, still face limited capacity, both in terms of sustainable tourism knowledge and digital skills. In fact, the success of smart tourism requires a bureaucracy that is adaptive to technology, transparent, and responsive to the needs of tourists and local communities. So that this problem becomes one of the bureaucratic challenges.

The competence of government apparatus is the main prerequisite in the ideal rational-legal bureaucracy in Weber's view. Apparatus must have technical expertise, professionalism, and the ability to carry out duties effectively. However, data shows that officials in Tomohon still face limitations in sustainable tourism knowledge and digital skills, which are obstacles in the implementation of smart tourism.

Boyatzis explained that competence consists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that individuals must have in order to play an optimal role. In the digital era, digital literacy is an important part of the competence of the apparatus (Eshet-Alkalai, 2004). These limitations show that there is a gap between the ideals of rational-legal bureaucracy and the bureaucratic reality on the ground.

In addition, bureaucracies tend to be resistant to change due to rigid structures and conservative organizational cultures (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). This hinders the adaptation to technology and innovation needed in smart tourism (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Therefore, increasing the capacity of the apparatus must be carried out in a sustainable manner through technical training and the development of organizational culture that supports innovation and learning, all in order to support the realization of sustainable tourism in Tomohon City.

3.3 Budget Availability

Budget availability can be understood as the government's ability to provide sufficient, timely, and sustainable funds to support the implementation of public programs and policies, including tourism development. In the context of bureaucracy, the budget is not just a financial instrument, but also a representation of policy priorities, political commitments, and measures of governance capacity. Without adequate budget availability, tourism programs will only stop at the plan level without real implementation.

In Tomohon City, budget limitations are one of the main obstacles in realizing sustainable tourism. The tourism budget is relatively small compared to needs, while this sector requires considerable financing, for example for the maintenance of tourist facilities such as roads to tourist sites, public toilets, parking areas, and open spaces. Then the promotion of international tourism so that Tomohon remains known as a leading destination. Even increasing the capacity of tourism human resources includes training for tour guides, homestay managers, and official officials. The development of ecotourism and environmental conservation that requires long-term costs is rarely considered a priority.

Most of the funds are often absorbed in the organization of large events such as the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF), while other aspects such as the maintenance of tourist destinations, long-term promotion, and environmental conservation receive a small portion. This condition creates inequality in the development of sustainable tourism.

Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) is an annual event that has indeed become an icon of Tomohon tourism, attracting thousands of domestic and foreign tourists. However, its implementation

costs a lot from the APBD. As a result, budgets for small, community-based destinations, such as agro-tourism or tourism villages, are often reduced or even not running. In addition, the cost for post-festival waste management is also not well explained, causing environmental problems.

Furthermore, there are Bukit Doa, Cartens Hills Wawo, Puncak Kai Santi, Lake Linow, Puncak Rurukan and so on which are leading destinations in Tomohon. However, budget limitations cause supporting facilities such as narrow access roads, vehicle parking, and the arrangement of tourist areas to be poorly maintained. In fact, these destinations have great potential to attract international tourists if they are better promoted. The lack of international promotional funds makes the destination still less known than other destinations in North Sulawesi such as Bunaken.

This budget constraint is often exacerbated by political dynamics. Wilson explained related to the political bureaucracy which emphasizes that budget allocation is influenced by the interests of political elites and leadership changes. This is clear in Tomohon: every time there is a change of mayor or head of office, there is also a change in policy priorities that have an impact on the uncertainty of the allocation of the tourism budget. As a result, long-term programs such as community-based destination development are not consistently implemented.

Hall (2008) stated that funding consistency is a determining factor for the success of tourism programs. Without stable funding, the tourism development agenda often stops halfway. Meanwhile, Kaufmann et al. (2009) emphasized the importance of administrative stability, bureaucratic professionalism, and transparent budget governance so that government programs can be sustainable and accountable.

The limited availability of the budget has caused several real impacts on the field, including first, many tourist facilities are built but are poorly maintained because there are no regular funds for maintenance. Second, tourism promotion is still limited to the local and regional levels, making it difficult to attract foreign tourists. Third, large events such as the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) often consume a large portion of the budget, while small community-based destinations receive less attention.

To overcome this problem, there are several strategic steps that can be taken, such as the implementation of a special tourism fund mechanism, such as tourism levies or contributions from major events that are reallocated for facility improvement and environmental conservation. In fact, accountability and transparency can build a clear budget reporting mechanism so that the public and stakeholders have trust in the government. Furthermore, the consistency of long-term planning is by ensuring that despite the change of leadership, tourism strategic programs must continue for the sake of bureaucratic continuity and for the sake of realizing sustainable tourism in Tomohon City.

3.4 Digitization

Digitalization is not only the use of technological tools, but also the transformation of the way the bureaucracy works to be more transparent, fast, efficient, and data-based. Tourism digitalization includes several aspects, ranging from online licensing systems, digital platform-based promotions, tourist data management, to the implementation of the concept of smart tourism. Digitalization is part of the bureaucratic transformation towards e-government and smart governance (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

In the context of public administration and bureaucracy in Indonesia, digitalization is regulated in Government Regulation Number 95 of 2018 concerning Electronic-Based Government Systems (SPBE), which aims to realize e-government. Digitalization allows governments to provide public services online, reduce rigid bureaucracy, and increase public participation. For example, in the tourism sector, digitalization can be in the form of online tour booking platforms or destination environmental monitoring applications.

Information and communication technology can increase transparency, efficiency, and public participation in tourism management. However, the implementation of digitalization in Tomohon still faces various challenges, such as limited technological infrastructure, inadequate human resources, limited budgets, and bureaucratic cultural resistance to change.

The limitations of technological infrastructure such as the internet network in some tourist areas are still weak, making it difficult to implement the digital system optimally. Even the official Tomohon tourism website has not been well integrated, even destination information is often not updated.

Limited Apparatus Capacity, like many bureaucratic apparatus, does not have adequate digital capabilities. Furthermore, there is still resistance from employees who are used to manual work patterns and procedural bureaucracy.

Inter-Agency System Fragmentation is that the existing digital system is not yet connected across agencies, for example, data from the Tourism Office is not integrated with other Agencies or Agencies. This condition causes duplication of data and slow decision-making processes.

The Digital Gap with Local Communities is that some small business actors in the tourism sector (homestay, culinary, local transportation) are not familiar with digital platforms. This makes public participation in the smart tourism ecosystem still low.

According to Rogers (2003) in the theory of innovation diffusion, the adoption of new technologies in the bureaucracy requires organizational and individual readiness, as well as a continuous mentoring process so that innovation can be accepted and integrated effectively. Hood (1991) also highlighted that traditional bureaucracies tend to be conservative and resistant to change, so digital transformation must be accompanied by changes in organizational culture.

Therefore, the digitalization strategy in Tomohon must be carried out in stages with apparatus training, technological infrastructure development, and assistance from local communities. A transformation of bureaucratic culture that supports innovation and openness is essential for digitalization to run effectively and support the development of sustainable tourism.

Digitalization can also strengthen transparency and community participation in tourism governance, which is an important aspect of good governance. Thus, digitalization is not only a promotional tool, but also an instrument to improve bureaucratic governance and improve the quality of public services.

Digitalization has great potential to support sustainable tourism through online promotion, rapid public services, and governance transparency. However, in practice, digitalization is also a challenge due to limited infrastructure, human resources, budgets, and bureaucratic cultural resistance. Therefore, a gradual strategy is needed by paying attention to technological readiness, apparatus training, and assistance from local communities so that digitalization truly supports sustainable tourism in Tomohon.

Mergel (2016) added that bureaucratic digital transformation requires a dedicated team and management support to accelerate technology adoption. This approach can help overcome resistance and improve the ability of the apparatus to utilize digital technology for public services and tourism promotion.

The Strategic Recommendation that can be suggested is that there must be a strengthening of technological infrastructure by expanding the internet network in all tourist destinations and improving official tourism portals. Even Apparatus Training & Digital Literacy is to increase the capacity of bureaucratic human resources to be able to manage digital systems professionally. Collaboration with the Private Sector & Startup in order to collaborate with digital tourism platforms such as Traveloka, Tiket.com, or TripAdvisor to strengthen global promotion.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions that have been described earlier, it can be concluded that there are several bureaucratic challenges in realizing sustainable tourism in Tomohon City can be seen from four main aspects. First, coordination between agencies is still weak, characterized by a lack of synchronization of tourism development policies with spatial planning and environmental management. Second, the competence of government apparatus is inadequate, especially in understanding sustainable tourism and digital skills, making it difficult for the bureaucracy to adapt to the demands of smart tourism. Third, budget availability is still limited and inconsistent, with most of it allocated to major events such as the Tomohon International Flower Festival, while destination maintenance, environmental conservation, and long-term promotion receive less attention. Fourth, bureaucratic digitalization has not run optimally due to limited infrastructure, low apparatus capabilities, inter-agency system fragmentation, and digital disparities among the tourism community.

Overall, Tomohon's tourism bureaucracy still faces obstacles in terms of coordination, apparatus capacity, budget, and digitalization. Therefore, bureaucratic reform is needed that emphasizes cross-sector collaboration, strengthening human resource capacity, transparent and sustainable budget allocation, and implementing integrated digitalization so that sustainable tourism in Tomohon City can be realized properly and really.

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