

The Potential of Natural Resources in Advanced the Tourism Sector in the Global Economic Era in Indonesia

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Natural resource potential plays a crucial role in supporting the development of the tourism sector in the global economic era. Natural resources such as beaches, mountains, forests, lakes, and biodiversity are key attractions that drive both domestic and international tourist visits. This article aims to analyze the potential of natural resources in advancing the tourism sector and their impact on community economic growth. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a literature study approach, collecting data from relevant journals, books, and other scientific sources. The study's findings indicate that optimal natural resource management can enhance the competitiveness of tourist destinations, create jobs, increase community income, and encourage regional development. However, challenges such as environmental damage, lack of infrastructure, and low public awareness of the importance of nature conservation remain obstacles to the development of sustainable tourism. Therefore, synergy between the government, communities, and the private sector is needed to manage natural resource potential sustainably so that the tourism sector can develop optimally amidst global economic competition.

Keywords: Natural Resources, Tourism, Global economy, Regional Development, Sustainable Tourism.

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1. Introduction

Global economic development in the modern era is characterized by increasing competition between regions in attracting investment, increasing economic growth, and strengthening regional identity (Gato et al., 2022). In this context, each region is required to optimize its local potential to achieve a competitive advantage. One sector considered to have a significant contribution to increasing regional competitiveness is tourism, particularly creative tourism. Creative tourism exists as a form of tourism development that is not solely oriented towards tourist visits but also emphasizes experience, creativity, local culture, innovation, and community participation in creating added economic value. This concept developed in response to changing global tourist preferences, which are shifting from conventional tourism to experience-based tourism and local cultural interactions (Aji et al., 2023). Creative tourism has become a crucial instrument in regional development because it integrates elements of culture, the creative economy, technology, and human resources into a sustainable tourist attraction. Unlike mass tourism, which is more oriented towards the exploitation of natural resources, creative tourism emphasizes the utilization of local community creativity as a destination's main selling point. Through this approach, regions not only gain economic benefits but also are able to maintain their cultural identity and strengthen their competitive position amidst global competition. Research on the development of creative economy tourism shows that the integration between the tourism and creative economy sectors has great potential in increasing regional competitiveness through optimizing culture, local wisdom, and regional potential (Octivaningsih et al., 2025).

In the context of economic globalization, regional competitiveness is no longer solely determined by natural resources or physical infrastructure, but also by the region's ability to generate innovation and creativity. The concept of regional competitiveness refers to a region's ability to create a productive economic environment, improve community welfare, and maintain sustainable economic growth. The creative tourism sector is an important indicator in increasing this competitiveness because it can encourage job creation, increase community income, strengthen regional identity, and increase investment (Trisnawati & Priyono, 2019). Studies on tourism competitiveness show that this sector has a direct contribution to improving the regional economy through increasing local revenue (PAD), business activity, and the growth of other supporting sectors such as transportation, hospitality, culinary, and the creative industry (Subhan Purwadinata, Tuti Handayani, M. Jumaedi, Budiman, 2024).

Indonesia, a country with diverse cultures, traditions, and natural resources, offers significant opportunities for developing creative tourism. This diversity is a key asset in creating unique tourism products that are competitive in the international market. Various regions have begun developing creative economy-based tourism concepts through the utilization of arts, culture, culinary arts, crafts, and even tourist villages. An example is the development of local wisdom-based tourism in Solo, which has successfully integrated local culture with the creative economy, thereby increasing tourism competitiveness at the global level. Synergy between the government, businesses, and the community is a key factor in the success of this development (Aji et al., 2023).

Besides Solo, various regions in Indonesia have also shown significant development in creative tourism. For example, rural tourism development in Bali is carried out through the integration of local potential, community culture, and the creative economy as a strategy to strengthen regional competitiveness. This development model not only increases tourist visits but also creates new economic opportunities for rural communities. Community involvement in tourism management is crucial because it can create equitable distribution of economic benefits while maintaining the sustainability of local culture (Wesnawa, 2022).

On the other hand, the development of digital technology has significantly influenced the growth of creative tourism. The global economic era is marked by increasing digitalization in various sectors, including tourism. The use of social media, digital platforms, technology-based marketing, and tourism product innovation have become new strategies for increasing the attractiveness of destinations. This digital transformation enables regions to promote their tourism potential more broadly, thereby reaching international markets. Research on tourism clusters in Banyuwangi Regency shows that the application of technology and innovation based on Industry 4.0 can encourage community creativity in producing superior regional products and increase local economic competitiveness (Satria & Wibowo, 2021).

Despite its significant potential, creative tourism development in Indonesia still faces various challenges. Some frequently encountered issues include limited infrastructure, low quality human resources, minimal tourism product innovation, suboptimal digital promotion, and a lack of integration of policies across sectors. Furthermore, tourism competitiveness in several regions remains low due to weak indicators of technology, human resources, and regional openness. Research on tourism competitiveness in Bangka Regency shows that several indicators, such as infrastructure, technology, and openness, remain

obstacles to improving the competitiveness of regional tourist destinations (Adzanah Firyal Nabilah, Devi Valeriani, 2024).

These issues demonstrate that developing creative tourism requires a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy. Local governments need to strengthen collaboration with communities, businesses, academics, and the private sector to create tourism innovations based on local potential. Furthermore, increasing human resource capacity through training, strengthening the creative economy, and utilizing digital technology are also crucial aspects in enhancing regional competitiveness. This approach aligns with the concept of sustainable development, which places communities as the primary actors in tourism destination development (Lubis, 2025).

Creative tourism also has significant social and cultural impacts. In addition to increasing community income, this sector strengthens local identity, maintains cultural sustainability, and encourages community participation in regional development. The development of local culture-based tourism products, such as crafts, art performances, cultural festivals, and educational tours, is a concrete example of creative tourism implementation. Thus, tourism is no longer viewed solely as an economic sector, but also as a means of cultural preservation and strengthening regional identity.

Based on this description, it is clear that creative tourism plays a strategic role in enhancing regional competitiveness in the global economic era. The integration of creativity, local culture, technology, and community participation is a crucial foundation for creating competitive and sustainable tourist destinations. Therefore, this research is crucial to further analyze the impact of creative tourism on increasing regional competitiveness and how its development strategies can support economic growth and sustainable regional development amidst the dynamics of globalization.

2. Literature Review and Problem Statement

Creative tourism is a form of tourism development that emphasizes the integration of local potential, community creativity, culture, innovation, and authentic tourism experiences. In the context of the global economy, tourism is no longer viewed solely as a tourist activity, but as a strategic instrument for increasing regional competitiveness through the creation of added economic value, strengthening regional identity, and empowering local communities. Gato et al. (2022) explain that marketing communications and local destination management play a crucial role in strengthening the attractiveness of creative tourism. Similarly, Aji et al. (2023) demonstrate that tourism development based on the creative economy and local wisdom can increase a region's global competitiveness by strengthening culture, creative products, and community participation. Trisnawati and Priyono (2019) also emphasize that tourism competitiveness contributes to regional economic growth through the growth of supporting sectors, increased community income, and expanded business opportunities. Thus, creative tourism can be understood as a regional development model that relies not only on natural beauty but also on the region's ability to manage creativity, culture, and innovation as sources of competitive advantage.

Although various studies have shown that creative tourism makes a significant contribution to increasing regional competitiveness, several limitations remain in previous studies. Some studies have focused on tourism potential, local culture, or economic contribution separately, while studies that comprehensively link creative tourism, natural resources, digitalization, community participation, and regional competitiveness in the global economic era are still limited. Satria and Wibowo (2021) found that

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Industry 4.0-based tourism clusters can boost the creative economy, but they have not fully explained how integrating technology with local potential can shape sustainable regional competitiveness. Priambodo (2025) emphasized the importance of tourism and information technology in increasing regional competitiveness, but has not elaborated extensively on the role of community creativity as a link between tourism potential and regional economic growth. Meanwhile, Wijayanto et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of dynamic capabilities, market research, and social capital in supporting the sustainability of the creative tourism economy. Given these gaps, this research is crucial to analyze how natural resource potential and creative tourism can be strategically managed to increase regional competitiveness in the global economic era.

Based on the literature review and research gaps, the research problem formulation is: how do natural resource potential and creative tourism play a role in increasing regional competitiveness in the global economic era in Indonesia? This research problem formulation is aimed at answering three main questions, namely: first, how can natural resource potential become the basis for developing economically valuable tourism; second, how can community creativity, local culture, and digitalization strengthen the competitiveness of tourist destinations; and third, what strategies can be implemented to realize sustainable and competitive creative tourism. Thus, this research is expected to provide conceptual contributions in the development of creative tourism studies as well as practical contributions for local governments, business actors, and communities in formulating tourism development strategies based on local potential.

The Problem Statement is the core part of this point. Based on the research gap, the author formulates the research problem clearly and specifically, either in the form of a research question or a problem statement. For quantitative research, this section can be followed by hypotheses to be tested. The entire Literature Review & Problem Statement section must be academic in nature, supporting the logic of the research from theory to problem formulation.

3. Method

This research employed a library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach. The data used were secondary data obtained from various sources, such as scientific journals, books, articles, and previous research relevant to the theme of creative tourism and regional competitiveness. Data collection techniques were conducted through searching, identifying, and selecting literature relevant to the research topic. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques to examine and explain the impact of creative tourism on increasing regional competitiveness in the global economic era.

4. Results and Discussion

Natural resources play a strategic role in supporting the development of the tourism sector in the global economic era. Natural panoramas such as beaches, mountains, forests, lakes, waterfalls, and conservation areas are key attractions attracting both domestic and international tourists. This potential not only provides aesthetic value but also creates economic opportunities for local communities through various tourism activities (Yuniar et al., 2026).

In the global economic era, creative tourism has become a crucial instrument because it integrates culture, technology, and innovation within a single development ecosystem (Adrial, Sri Utami, 2026).

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Regions that optimally manage the cultural and creative potential of their communities tend to have a greater competitive advantage than those that rely solely on natural resources. A strong creative economy ecosystem also influences the formation of regional competitive advantage.

The Role of Tourism in Improving the Regional Economy

The tourism sector contributes significantly to increasing local and regional incomes. Tourism activities create a multiplier effect on other sectors such as transportation, trade, culinary arts, hospitality, and the creative industry. The more the tourism sector develops, the greater the business opportunities that local communities can capitalize on (Priambodo, 2025).

In the global economy, competition between regions to attract tourists is increasingly fierce. Therefore, the utilization of natural resources must be supported by innovation and effective marketing strategies. Tourist destinations that combine natural beauty with local culture, excellent service, and digital technology tend to be more attractive to tourists.

In addition to increasing local revenue, developing natural resource-based tourism also plays a role in reducing unemployment. Local communities can be involved as entrepreneurs, tour guides, homestay managers, and artisans of local products. Thus, the tourism sector can serve as an instrument for community economic empowerment.

Creative Tourism as a Strategy to Increase Regional Competitiveness

Regional competitiveness in the global economic era is no longer solely determined by physical infrastructure, but also by the ability to generate innovation, creativity, and regional identity. Creative tourism is a crucial strategy because it can build regional branding based on local culture. Destinations with strong identities tend to be more likely to attract tourists, investment, and expand the creative economy market. A study of the city of Solo shows that the development of culture-based tourism and the creative economy has successfully strengthened the region's position in global competition (Aji et al., 2023).

If a tourist attraction offers attractive features such as supporting facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and friendly locals, as well as primary, supporting, and complementary facilities, this will increase the likelihood of tourists visiting Kerinci Regency's tourist villages. (Susianto et al., 2022).

Furthermore, tourism competitiveness is also influenced by interregional connectivity. Tourist destinations do not exist in isolation but influence each other through spillover effects, allowing the strengthening of one region to impact surrounding areas. This situation demonstrates that developing creative tourism requires cross-regional collaboration to create sustainable competitiveness (Alomaym et al., 2026).

The Role of Digitalization and Technology in Creative Tourism Development

Digital transformation is a crucial factor in enhancing the competitiveness of creative tourism. Advances in information technology enable broader destination promotion through social media, digital platforms, and technology-based marketing. Digitalization not only expands access to information but also improves the quality of services and the tourist experience. Research on regional development in Indonesia shows that the development of tourism and information technology (ICT) positively impacts regional competitiveness (Priambodo, 2025).

The implementation of technology also encourages community innovation in producing creative tourism-based products. An example is the development of a tourism cluster in Banyuwangi, which utilizes Industry 4.0 technology to enhance community creativity and develop superior regional products (Satria & Wibowo, 2021).

In addition, the use of digital technology in rural tourism areas has also been proven to increase the competitiveness of destinations by improving access to information, promotion, and tourist interaction with local products (Indah & Risty, 2024).

Table 1. Table Identification of Natural Resource Potential for Tourism

No	Natural resource potential	Type	Tourist Attractions	Information
1	Waterfall	Water resources	Nature tourism, photography	Has high aesthetic value
2	River	Water resources	River cruise, recreation	Suitable for adventure tourism
3	Forest	Biological resources	Ecotourism, education	Supporting nature-based tourism
4	Hill	landscape	Tracking, camping	Attractive for special interest tourism

Source: Results of the author's processing based on literature and field observations

Challenges of Creative Tourism Development in the Era of Globalization

Despite its enormous potential, creative tourism development still faces various challenges. Among these are limited human resources and low community innovation capacity in developing tourism products. In some regions, destination management remains conventional, thus failing to adapt to the increasingly dynamic needs of global tourists. (Sri et al., 2022).

Research on rural tourism competitiveness shows that quality management and innovation are key determinants of destination competitiveness. Another challenge stems from weak synergy between stakeholders. Developing creative tourism requires collaboration between the government, communities, academics, businesses, and the private sector. (Wijayanto et al., 2024).

Multi-stakeholder engagement is crucial for maintaining the productivity and competitiveness of tourism-based creative industries. Furthermore, marketing sustainability and adaptability to market changes are also significant challenges. Research on the creative economy and tourism sector in Indonesia shows that dynamic capabilities, social capital, and market research strongly influence the sustainability and competitiveness of the creative tourism sector.

Sustainable Creative Tourism Strengthening Strategy

Strengthening sustainable creative tourism is a strategic step in increasing regional competitiveness in the global economic era. This development is not only oriented towards increasing tourist visits but also aims to create a balance between economic growth, cultural preservation, community empowerment, and environmental sustainability. (Mulang et al., 2024).

In this context, creative tourism is seen as a regional development instrument capable of creating added value through leveraging local cultural potential, community creativity, and innovation based on local wisdom. Appropriate strengthening strategies will determine a region's ability to maintain its

destination's existence and competitiveness amid increasingly dynamic global competition. Studies on the development of local wisdom-based tourism policies show that integrating local culture into destination development has a significant impact on tourism sustainability and improving the local economy.

One key strategy is to optimize the potential of local culture as a destination identity. Each region possesses distinctive cultural characteristics, traditions, arts, and local wisdom that can serve as competitive advantages. This identity differentiates regions and increases the appeal of tourists seeking authentic experiences. Strengthening cultural identity serves not only as a means of tourism promotion but also as an effort to preserve cultural heritage amidst globalization. Research on a tourism competitiveness model based on local wisdom shows that local and cultural indicators can be used as an alternative to strengthening destination competitiveness, rather than relying solely on global indicators.(Lohjiwa et al., 2025).

Furthermore, strengthening the role of the community and the community-based creative economy is also a crucial aspect in developing sustainable creative tourism. Community involvement in destination management will create equitable economic benefits and enhance a sense of ownership of the tourist attraction. Community participation can be realized through the development of MSMEs, local crafts, cultural performances, traditional culinary arts, and regional festivals. Developing local culture-based tourism communication demonstrates that community empowerment through the creative economy can improve the sustainability of the tourism sector while preserving the existence of regional culture.(Sari et al., 2023).

Strategies for leveraging innovation and digital transformation in tourism destination development. The global economic era is marked by the increasing use of information technology in various sectors, including tourism. Digitalization enables broader destination promotion through social media, digital platforms, online marketing, and the development of tourism information systems. The use of technology also helps regions build their destination image and expand their reach in the international tourism market. Furthermore, digital transformation supports more adaptive, efficient, and sustainable destination management, thereby strengthening regions' competitive positions in the global market. The development of creative tourism integrated with innovation and the local economy has been proven to contribute to increasing regional competitiveness.(Malinda, 2026).

Therefore, strengthening sustainable creative tourism requires synergy between the government, communities, businesses, academics, and the private sector. This collaboration is necessary to create an innovative, adaptive, and locally-based tourism ecosystem. Through cultural strengthening, community empowerment, and technology utilization, creative tourism can be an effective strategy for increasing regional competitiveness and supporting sustainable economic development in the era of globalization.

5. Conclusion

Creative tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing regional competitiveness in the global economic era by leveraging local culture, community creativity, and innovation based on regional potential. Creative tourism development positively impacts economic growth, increases community income, creates jobs, and strengthens regional identity and image. Furthermore, the use of technology and collaboration between various parties are crucial factors in supporting the sustainability and competitiveness of creative tourism.

Therefore, strengthening creative tourism needs to be continuously pursued as a strategy for sustainable and globally competitive regional development.

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