

Analysis of The Development Strategy of The Ijen Crater Tourist Attraction, Banyuwangi District

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Abstract

Ijen Crater, located in Banyuwangi and Bondowoso regencies, is a unique and attractive natural tourist destination, famous for natural phenomena such as the deep blue crater lake and rare blue fire. This article discusses the development potential of Ijen Crater as a sustainable tourist destination, focusing on aspects of attractions, facilities and accessibility. Its uses qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data collection includes primary data dan secondary data. This research employed SWOT analysis to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats when implementing a tourism development strategy in the Ijen Crater. The results show that attraction aspects include natural beauty and local culture, such as sunrise views, sulfur miners, and folklore. Existing facilities, although covering basic needs, still need to be improved to support the increasing number of tourists, especially in terms of accommodation, climbing equipment, and educational facilities. Accessibility to Ijen crater, while good, could be improved through the development of alternative hiking trails and public transportation. These additions and improvements are expected to enhance the tourist experience and ensure the sustainability of the environment around Ijen Crater.

Keywords: Ijen Crater, Tourism Potential, Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Ijen Crater is one of the tourist attractions with an altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level in the Mount Ijen area. Ijen Crater is administratively located between Banyuwangi Regency and Bondowoso Regency. Ijen Crater is the deepest crater in the world with an area of up to 200 m deep. Explosive eruption events have occurred on Mount Ijen, forming a crater with a large hole that is filled by rainwater to form a kind of lake. (Wahyuningtiyas & Iskandar, 2023). Ijen Crater as one of the most amazing geological sites in Indonesia, in addition to offering stunning scenery, there are also fascinating geochemical dynamics, one of which is the enchanting blue fire phenomenon. There are only two blue fire natural phenomena in the world, one of which is in the Ijen Crater. In addition to blue fire, Ijen Crater Natural

Tourism Park also holds a lot of potential for flora, fauna and mineral resources in the form of sulfur (Wahyuningtiyas & Iskandar, 2023). The tourism potential of Mount Ijen is not only limited to its exotic natural scenery, but also to challenging adventure activities such as hiking and trekking on the rocky path to the top of the mountain. In addition, tourists can witness first-hand the traditional sulfur mining process carried out by local miners, which will add an authentic experience and deepen appreciation for tourists' courage. A tourist attraction is anything that exists in a tourist destination that is an attraction so that people want to visit the

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place. Objects and tourist attractions according to Law No. 10 concerning tourism, namely, tourist attractions are everything that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of diversity of natural wealth, culture, and man-made products that are the target or destination of tourist visits. Based on the above definition, a tourist attraction is a place visited with various beauties obtained, a place to carry out tourism activities, a place to have fun for a long time in order to get satisfaction, good service, and beautiful memories at tourist attractions (Selano & Nadjamuddin, 2021).

Tourism as a sector that has taken an important role in development. The tourism sector can open up new jobs for the surrounding community and also make a direct contribution in the form of road repair businesses that can benefit the surrounding community and tourists. (Buditiawan & Harmono, 2020). Tourism attraction objects are the main drivers in the tourism sector. For this reason, cooperation from all stakeholders is needed in its management (Hidayati et al., 2023). The government is a facilitator who has the role and function to create and determine the direction of tourism development policies. The main factor that makes visitors or tourists to visit a tourist destination is the potential and attractiveness of tourism. The purpose of this paper is to determine the tourism potential and development strategy of the Ijen Crater tourist attraction, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java Province.

2. METHOD

This research examines the potential of the Ijen Crater Tourism Object with its development strategy in Banyuwangi Regency, East Java. Its uses qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The descriptive approach is an approach by describing the phenomena that occur and analyzing in depth by paying attention to theories that develop based on facts in the field. Data collection techniques are divided into primary data collection techniques and secondary data collection techniques. Primary data is collected through interview, observation and documentation. The secondary data collection techniques used were literature reviews of the Ijen Crater tourism development strategy. This research employed SWOT analysis to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats when implementing a tourism development strategy in the Ijen Crater.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ijen Crater is one of the interesting and unique natural tourist destinations located in Banyuwangi Regency and Bondowoso Regency. Exotic and amazing scenery, such as a watery crater with a deep blue color due to sulfur content, as well as the phenomenon of blue fire that only occurs in a few places in the world, makes Ijen Crater a unique and rare natural tourist destination. In addition to the potential for attractive attractions, the availability of facilities and accessibility is also an important factor in the development of the Ijen Crater as a sustainable tourist destination. The potential attractions of Ijen Crater are as follows:

Attraction Aspect

Tourist attraction is the attraction of a tourist attraction in a certain area that can attract tourists to visit the tourist spot (Noho et al., 2020). Tourist attractions are closely related to encouraging tourists to travel because this will provide satisfaction, where tourists tend to

choose tours that have never been visited, because it will provide new knowledge (Bustamante et al., 2019). The Attraction aspect in Ijen Crater is a very rare natural phenomenon of blue fire with a blue crater lake, as well as views of the surrounding coffee plantations. The toska green crater lake is also a special attraction for tourists in addition to the typical natural panorama of the mountains which are also owned by this tourist destination (Sanjaya et al., 2019). The blue fire phenomenon occurs at night, where blue flames begin to emanate from the crater cracks, creating a magical and mystical sight. The blue fire phenomenon in Ijen Crater itself is different from the blue fire phenomenon in other countries that can only be seen after a volcanic eruption or after a fire (Caudron et al., 2015). There are interesting activities that tourists can do at Ijen Crater, including: 1) watching sulfur miners working in the crater, 2) visiting the top of the crater to enjoy the panoramic sunrise, and 3) exploring around the crater to enjoy the beauty of nature. Climbing to Ijen Crater provides an interesting adventure and challenge for climbers, because it provides stunning natural scenery along the way, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the geological and ecological aspects of Ijen Crater. In addition, the activities of sulfur miners in this destination as a form of cultural attraction also determine the decision of tourists to visit (Ichsani, 2014; Fitroh, et al 2017). Ijen Crater is rich in local cultural stories that can add to the attractiveness as a tourist attraction, for example the legend about the crater princess who became the goddess of the crater guardian, as well as stories about the lives of local people who live side by side with the amazing crater (Suhud & Allan, 2025). The folklore can be an additional attraction for tourists who are interested in aspects of local culture and mythology.

Facility Aspect

According to Indonesian Government Regulations (Peraturan Pemerintah, No. 50 of 2011), tourist facilities are all forms of facilities that specifically aim to support the creation of a sense of comfort, convenience, and safety of tourists when doing tourism activities in a tourist spot. According to Bahar et al. (2020), tourist facilities will quantitatively refer to the number of facilities provided and qualitatively have an impact on the quality of service so that it leads to tourist satisfaction. Tourist facilities are built to support existing attractions both naturally and artificially to support tourism activities at the tourist attraction (Nugraha & Fallo, 2021). The Ijen Crater area also has public facilities, but the availability of public facilities is still quite limited. Available facilities such as public toilets and rest areas, but their condition is poorly maintained and inadequate. Parking lots available at Ijen Crater are quite limited so that during the holiday season or peak tourist visits there is often congestion due to the limited parking spaces available. Along with the increasing number of tourists visiting, the addition of accommodation facilities around Ijen Crater is very important. This can accommodate the need for comfortable and safe lodging for tourists, as well as reduce the negative impact on the environment due to over-tourism.

The availability of climbing equipment rental facilities around Ijen Crater is still limited and not as many as expected, especially during the holiday season when tourist visits increase. The addition of climbing equipment rental facilities will have an impact on improving the tourist experience and ensuring the safety of tourists during the climb. The availability of educational facilities such as infographics related to ecological and geological conditions in Ijen Crater is still limited and spread only in certain areas. There is a need for additional educational facilities that help increase tourists' knowledge regarding the environmental

importance conservation of and preserving tourist areas. Infographics can provide information that is easy to understand and interesting for visitors, thus increasing their appreciation of the beauty and uniqueness of the Ijen Crater. The condition of food and beverage facilities in Ijen Crater varies, but is still limited around the rural area. Some simple food stalls are available in the area, but menu choices are limited. The development of food and beverage facilities could be improved with more variety and quality to enhance the tourist experience at Ijen Crater.

Along with its development, activities in maintaining environmental resilience in the face of changes in land function and land use are needed, several management programs are implemented to maintain ecosystem resilience, closing the Ijen Crater TWA for one full day at the beginning of each month on Friday of the first week, planting new seeds at several conservation points and prohibiting hunting and cutting or taking endemic flora (Rahmatin, 2021).

Accessibility Aspect

Accessibility is the ease of moving from one area to another. If an area has tourism potential, it must be equipped with adequate accessibility so that the area is easily understood. (Anwani, 2021). Accessibility is a concept that combines a geographic land use arrangement system with a transportation network system that connects it. Accessibility is the ease or difficulty with which the location is reached through the transportation network system (Chang, 2003). Variables that include accessibility include: alternative roads, road conditions, travel distance, travel time, means of transportation, and the cost of tourist visits (Prasetya et al., 2023).

The main hiking trails are accessible with relative ease, although some sections may be challenging especially when approaching the crater. Rainy weather conditions can be an obstacle in the accessibility of tourist visits to Kawah Ijen, especially if heavy rainfall results in slippery and muddy roads. This can increase the risk of accidents and make travel more difficult. In addition, rain can also affect the availability of scenery and the experience of tourists during their visit.

In general, the safety of getting to Ijen Crater can be considered quite good, especially if travelers follow the established trail instructions and adhere to safety regulations. However, tourists need to be especially careful when approaching steep and rocky craters. In addition, given the sulfur activity around the crater, visitors also need to pay attention to wearing masks to protect themselves from harmful sulfur fumes. There is a possibility of expanding accessibility through the development of alternative hiking trails or improving public transportation facilities. The development of alternative hiking trails can provide more diverse options for visitors, as well as help reduce pressure on the main trails. While improving public transportation facilities such as buses or shuttles can facilitate access for tourists who do not use private vehicles.

The experience with a local guide at Kawah Ijen is invaluable in helping visitors explore the crater area. Local guides usually have in-depth knowledge of climbing routes, weather conditions and safety in the area. They can also provide additional information about the history, culture and ecology of Kawah Ijen, making the traveler's experience more meaningful and memorable.

Swot Analysis

The use of SWOT analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential and challenges faced by the manager of the Ijen Crater Tourism Object as one of the efforts that can be made in the development of the Ijen crater tourist attraction. SWOT analysis can be applied by analyzing and sorting out various things that affect the four factors, then applying them in a SWOT matrix image (Budiman, 2018; Murtini et al., 2018). SWOT analysis of the potential of the Ijen Crater tourist attraction can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1. SWOT Matrix of Potential Tourism Objects of Ijen Crater

Matrix SWOT	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	(S-O)	(S-T)
Weaknesses	(W-O)	(W-T)

Source: (Analysis, 2024)

SWOT Matrix Description:

1. Opportunities

Increased tourist interest in adventure at Ijen Crater demands better management. Development of alternative hiking trails, improved access to public transport, and collaboration with local guides can reduce crowding and improve the quality of visits. The potential for ecotourism and environmental education also needs to be explored to provide a meaningful experience for tourists while preserving the nature of Ijen Crater.

2. Threats

Ijen Crater faces various threats. Extreme weather, the risk of accidents, and the danger of toxic gases threaten the safety of visitors. In addition, the increasing number of tourists and lack of awareness of environmental conservation are also damaging the natural beauty and balance of ecosystems in the area.

3. Strength

Ijen Crater offers a unique and diverse natural charm. Rare natural phenomena such as blue fire and deep blue crater lakes are the main attractions. In addition, the beauty of the natural panorama of the crater and surrounding coffee plantations as well as the challenging climbing experience also attracts tourists. Not only that, Ijen Crater is also rich in local culture and legends, and has great potential as a natural laboratory for studying geological and ecological processes.

4. Weaknesses

Facilities at Kawah Ijen still need to be improved. The limited number of toilets, rest areas, and parking areas is an obstacle to visitor comfort. Minimal lodging accommodation and lack of hiking equipment for rent are also a challenge. In addition, educational facilities such as infographics on ecology and geology are urgently needed to enhance visitors' knowledge. Lastly, limited food and beverage options around the area also reduce tourist convenience.

SWOT Matrix Analysis Results:

1. Strengths-Opportunities (S-O)

Ijen Crater has great potential to develop as a leading tourist destination by capitalising on its unique natural phenomena through intensive promotion, improving public facilities and

accommodation to improve visitor experience, and integrating educational and ecotourism aspects in its management. This strategy will not only increase tourist attraction, but also help preserve the environment and provide added value for visitors through an educational experience.

2. *Strengths-Threats (S-T)*

The development of Ijen Crater as a leading tourist destination can be achieved through a comprehensive strategy that includes global promotion to attract tourists and researchers, infrastructure improvements for safety and comfort, development of attractive educational programmes, and involvement of local communities in management and conservation. This approach will not only increase tourist attraction, but also ensure environmental sustainability and provide economic benefits to local communities, creating a balanced and responsible ecotourism model.

3. *Weaknesses- Opportunities (W-O)*

The development of Ijen Crater can be optimised through an integrated strategy that includes improving facilities to increase visitor attraction and comfort, promotion that highlights its unique nature accompanied by the provision of educational materials, and the development of ecotourism concepts. This approach will create a tourism experience that is not only interesting and informative, but also sustainable, maintaining a balance between the utilisation of tourism potential and the preservation of the unique natural environment of Ijen Crater.

4. *Weaknesses- Threats (W-T)*

The development of Ijen Crater as a sustainable tourism destination requires a holistic approach that includes improving infrastructure, integrating education and safety into the tourism experience, implementing an effective visitor management system, and actively engaging local communities. This strategy will not only improve the quality of the tourist experience, but also ensure a balance between tourism growth and environmental conservation, while empowering local communities in the sustainable development of ecotourism in this unique region.

4. CONCLUSION

Ijen Crater, located in Banyuwangi and Bondowoso regencies, is an attractive natural tourist destination due to its uniqueness. Its main attractions include the view of the crater with deep blue water due to the sulfur content and the rare blue fire phenomenon. Tourists can enjoy various activities, such as watching sulfur miners, enjoying the sunrise panorama, and exploring the nature around the crater. In addition, local cultural stories such as the legend of the crater princess add to the appeal of Ijen Crater tourism.

However, the development of Ijen Crater as a sustainable tourist destination requires attention to facilities and accessibility. Public facilities such as toilets and rest areas are still inadequate and require maintenance. Limited parking lots and climbing equipment rentals are also an obstacle, especially during the holiday season. Additional accommodation and food facilities are also important to enhance the tourist experience.

Accessibility to Kawah Ijen is relatively easy, although weather conditions such as rain can affect travel. Development of alternative hiking trails and improved public transportation can

help address accessibility issues. The use of local guides is highly recommended for safety and additional knowledge of Ijen Crater. Overall, the development of Ijen Crater as a tourist destination requires improved facilities and accessibility to ensure the comfort and safety of tourists, as well as preserving the environment.

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