BAWAH RESERVE: EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF SUSTAINABLE LUXURY TOURISM ON ANAMBAS ISLAND

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Abstract
This article publication aims to examine the Bawah Reserve’s efforts towards sustainability, a luxury resort located on remote and marine conservation area Anambas Island, Indonesia. Its appeal is based on luxury, but it also offers insights into the small island's nature and community development. By analyzing the content based on the grounded theory approach, this study sheds light on the opportunities that arise when striving for both opulence and environmental responsibility in the context of tourism. The paper attempts to address how eco-luxury is projected by management and perceived by customers and community. A qualitative study was adopted, and the findings identify four themes: Sustainable Management, Sustainable Socioeconomic Benefits, Cultural Heritage and Reduced Cultural Impacts, and Environmental Protection and Conservation. The findings of sustainable tourism practices in Bawah Reserve, such as tourism packages based on natural conservation and community empowerment as well as eco-friendly infrastructure and operations add to the literature review and case studies in the field of sustainable luxury tourism, the majority of which focus on Bali or Maldives. This study offers insights for achieving a harmonious balance between luxury tourism and sustainability on a remote island within the Indonesian context.

Keywords: sustainability; eco-luxury; tourism; remote island; conservation

1. INTRODUCTION
With 17,000 Indonesian islands scattered between the Asian mainland and Australia, the archipelago has many cultural, social, and biodiversity wonders (Ali & Sulistiyono Tri, 2020; Rakhman, 2023). Coastal areas such as Bali, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo, and Bangka Belitung are quite popular (Indraswari, 2023): turquoise water and white sandy beaches, indigenous ethnic groups, untouched landscapes, and some of the most exclusive and unique dishes and accommodation the country has to offer. Indonesia's remote destinations are a perfect getaway for those who seek a tropical private retreat (Uno, 2024).

LeGrand (2020) said that numerous luxury resorts have emerged in recent years promoting global travel with its mixed impacts on the environment, the economy, and communities. While tourism can bring many economic advantages to small islands, there are many examples of rapid and unplanned tourism development that have led to cultural, social, and biodiversity degradation and excessive concentration at the lower quality end of...
the mass tourism market (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2007; Rakhman, 2023). Luxury is often defined as an increase in quality and quantity, but excess may not qualify as luxury, particularly in a world increasingly debating sustainability (Heyes, 2021). When talking about luxury and sustainability, these two terms seem contradictory. However, from a tourism perspective, sustainable luxury can be an interesting paradigm to study further. Therefore, sustainable luxury tourism has often been seen to provide both innovative commercial growth opportunities and environmental sustainability in areas of natural and cultural heritage (Nordensvärd & Poelina, 2022).

Located remotely in Anambas archipelago of Riau province in Indonesia, Bawah Reserve offers 6 islands, 13 beaches and 3 lagoons across 300 hectares, consists of 35 suites - tented safari suites and bungalows, and is accessible via private seaplane (Bawah Reserve, 2023). Functioning as a marine conservation area, Bawah Reserve provides opulent accommodation featuring turquoise and preserved sea, lush tropical forest as well as world-class services and facilities. Bawah Reserve offers stay packages in various types of suites, meals and transportation ranging from 2,120-10,880US$/night for a minimum 3-night stay (Bawah Reserve, 2023). As cited in Heyes (2021), while no official definition of a luxury hotel exists (Slattery & Games, 2010), the two concepts have joined together particularly in terms of the tangible and intangible natures of what they offer, such as exclusivity (Chandon et al., 2016), price/expensiveness (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012) and quality (Frank, 1999; Thomas, 2007; Hoffmann & Coste-Marnière, 2012). Sustainability is at the core of Bawah Reserve’s values, as evidenced by their 5-star certification under the Singing Blue WWF program in 2019 (Kelly, 2019). Referring to claims regarding exclusivity, price/expensiveness, quality and achievements by Bawah Reserve, this research categorizes it as luxury accommodation.

This study aims to fill the above-noted research gaps and contribute to the literature by supplementing the work on luxury sustainable tourism within the Indonesian context, in Bawah Reserve. As the current studies are relatively sparse and focuses on Bali (Darnall & Milstein, 2015; Binder & Varga, 2015) or cases outside Indonesia, such as the Maldives, Dubai, Martuwarra (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014; De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2007; Ryan & Stewart, 2009; Nordensvärd and Poelina, 2022). Considering Bawah Reserve study case, is luxury tourism in remote destinations compatible with sustainable development? This type of research question continues to be debated in various case studies (Darnall & Milstein, 2015; Binder & Varga, 2015; De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014; De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2007; Ryan & Stewart, 2009; Nordensvärd and Poelina, 2022), so this exploratory study seeks to investigate the sustainable luxury tourism on Anambas island and provide guidance into future research and industry practices, especially in the context of remote island, conservation area and hotel management.
2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a case study approach to Bawah Reserve. A qualitative method was adopted by investigating study case’s materials that were purposely selected. This study is exploratory and qualitative in nature and focused on content analysis based on the grounded theory approach.

Primary data obtained in the form of economic data, environmental data, and social data from Anambas Foundation annual report 2022 and in-depth interview with Debrina P. Winarko, Sustainability Manager of Bawah Reserve. The selection of the main resource was based on her position as the leader of the sustainability implementation project at Bawah Reserve who could provide a comprehensive perspective on sustainable luxury tourism practices at Bawah Reserve. To obtain reliable and valid data, the interviewer tries to reduce resource biases by asking open-ended and probing questions based on public data.

The secondary data is in the form of records or documents related to the profile of the Bawah Reserve, such as websites, interview with Paul Robinson as Chief Operating Officer of Bawah Reserve and Jerry Winanta as Chairman of Anambas Foundation, and media publications. The author collects and analyzes data in cycles and groups them into codes, then the codes will generate concepts and categories, and the final step creates themes (Qureshi & Ünlü, 2020). By using the four-step coding instrument, this research identifies the implementations of sustainability at Bawah Reserve as a first step in understanding sustainable luxury tourism on Anambas Island.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Sustainable Management of Bawah Reserve

While striving to provide environmentally friendly accommodation, Bawah Reserve demonstrates its capacity for long-term sustainable management. The theme of sustainable management of Bawah Reserve is explained through 3 categories: stakeholder, operational, and infrastructure. As an eco-friendly luxury tourism destination, Bawah Reserve implements sustainable management practices by adopting a sustainable stakeholder tourism framework, a sustainable staff engagement, also by using sustainable building materials.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, and World Trade Organization (WTO) (2005) there are several stakeholders who may impact directly or indirectly on tourism planning and development. The evaluation and analysis of stakeholders has contributed significantly to an enhanced understanding of sustainable tourism (Waligo et al., 2013). In Bawah Reserve’s case, there are three key sustainability stakeholders, namely Bawah Reserve as the business owner, Non-Governmental Organization Anambas Foundation, as well as government (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). These three main stakeholders play various roles to achieve the objectives of Bawah Reserve, namely, to protect and enhance the environmental value of the islands and surrounding marine environment, empowering and enabling the development of local communities on neighboring islands (Bawah Reserve, 2023). This stakeholder framework is in accordance with sustainable management of destinations that requires the collaboration between businesses, local authority and other organizations as

![Figure 2. The Four-Step Coding Instrument for Grounded Theory](Source: Qureshi & Ünlü, 2020)
well as a holistic and integrated participation toward the greater goal of the destination (Conaghan et. al, 2015). Bawah Reserve's stakeholders framework represents the active participation in sustainable management planning.

Operationally, Bawah Reserve also implements sustainable management through staff engagement. The importance of employee involvement in the process for the accomplishment of environmental goals is implemented through the staff training, standard operating procedure and performance indicator of each department, and internal audit on sustainability (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). Bawah Reserve offers practical insights such as green training, empowerment, teamwork and rewards to help tourism professionals achieve and improve sustainability awareness (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024; Karatepe et al., 2022). In this case, staff engagement is the key to fulfilling Bawah Reserve’s responsibilities in sustainability by making employees role models among guests and influence public attitudes and quality of life (Ones & Dilchert, 2013; Karatepe et al., 2022). Bawah Reserve offers practical insights to help tourism professionals achieve and improve sustainability practices.

In terms of infrastructure, Bawah Reserve was handcrafted for 5 years with no heavy machinery using locally acceptable materials, preserving the landscape and fostering the local community (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024; CNN Indonesia, 2023). “By carrying out the eco-tourism concept, Bawah Reserve strives for minimum footprints to prevent natural damage to flora and fauna on the island and its surroundings, Anambas Island”, said Debrina P. Winarko (personal communication, January 23, 2024). This is in line with the statement that green infrastructure is an effective method to coordinate environmental, social, and economic development that has become one of the important strategies to achieve sustainable development (Ying et al., 2022). Thus, their eco-friendly design and infrastructure emphasizes the theme of sustainable management.

3.2 Sustainable Socioeconomic Benefits of Bawah Reserve

The district of Anambas consists of more than 255 islands across ten sub-districts and of 45,000 people (Bawah Reserve, 2023). The presence of Bawah Reserve in the middle of the Anambas archipelago must have a socioeconomic impact (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). The sustainable socioeconomic benefits of Bawah Reserve theme is explained through 3 categories: the community development, local entrepreneurs support, and local job opportunities.

One of the community development efforts carried out by Bawah Reserve and the Anambas Foundation is the empowerment and education of the women of the Anambas Islands. This program supports and strengthens their home business that sells traditional snacks, teaches organic home farming, and trains them to upcycle waste into products that have economic value (Anambas Foundation, 2022). These local products are sold to the guests of Bawah Reserve in various variants, such as processed banana chips for souvenirs, and local vegetables, fruits, and food for basic ingredients at the Bawah Reserve’s fine dining restaurant (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024).

Bawah Reserve collaborates with the Anambas Foundation to improve community welfare by providing alternative livelihoods outside their dependence on the sea. According to Swastiwi (2018), more than 65% of Anambas people work as fishermen, 8% as farmers, 4-5% as traders, and the rest are civil servants and workers at oil and gas companies operating in the Anambas ocean. Through capacity building for the community through vocational skill improvement and integrated solid waste management, Bawah Reserve and Anambas Foundation provide an experience package for Bawah Reserve’s guests to participate in the work of the Foundation and community, for example, being directly involved in marine or turtle conservation, waste management, or other local community activities (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024).
The existence of Bawah Reserve as a luxury resort opens up job opportunities for local residents, especially in the hospitality sector such as guest relations, cook, community development, and facilitator. According to Debrina P. Winarko (personal communication, January 23, 2024), 98% of workers at Bawah Reserve are Indonesian: 40% are local residents of the Anambas Islands and the rest are residents of Batam, Bintan, and other parts of Indonesia. Since Bawah Reserve prioritizes local human resources, this could be a new opportunity for local residents to work in their hometown instead of migrating (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024); CNN Indonesia, 2023).

3.3 Cultural Heritage and Reduced Cultural Impacts

The relevance of cultural heritage for sustainable development has been widely recognized by international organizations, such as UNESCO and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) (Nocca, 2017). According to Rypkema (2005), the role of heritage is to connect the different dimensions of sustainable development: environmental sustainability, cultural sustainability and economic sustainability. The cultural heritage and reduced cultural impacts by Bawah Reserve theme is explained through 2 categories: preserving cultural heritage and respecting local cultures.

Bawah Reserve always tries to offer guests the authenticity and a sense of belonging to Indonesia (CNN Indonesia, 2023). In implementing the vision, Bawah Reserve designs experiences for guests to engage with local and national culture, such as requiring all staff to wear Batik, presenting Malay dance and music performances at cultural night events, serving themed traditional food and drinks to the guests, providing traditional spa packages, and sells souvenirs typical of regions in Indonesia, especially from the Anambas Island (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). Cultural diplomacy by Bawah Reserve minimizes cultural impacts, promotes Indonesian cultural diversity, and supports the value of cultural sustainability in tourism.

3.4 Environmental Protection and Conservation

When discussing sustainable luxury tourism in remote island, one of the highlighted issues is how the existence of luxury tourism should not damage the surrounding or should have a positive impact on the environment. This fact is supported by previous researches emphasize the impact of environmental protection and restoration-based practices undertaken by luxury accommodation on remote islands such as Maldives to achieve sustainable luxury tourism (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014; De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2007; Legrand, 2020). Previous literatures reveal luxury sustainable tourism practices such as waste management, water and energy management, flora and fauna regeneration, and land and ocean conservation by luxury destination (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014; De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2007; Ryan & Stewart, 2009; Nordensvärd and Poelina, 2022). This section will describe possible practices towards sustainable luxury tourism with various methods and technologies implemented by Bawah Reserve, as a reference regarding the development of sustainable luxury tourism.

The environmental protection and conservation theme is the highlight of Bawah Reserve’s observation, since there are many initiatives to improve the ecosystem in the Anambas, both underwater and on land. The fact that these initiatives not only involve the internal team (Bawah Reserve and Anambas Foundation), but also guests and the community, shows Bawah Reserve's commitment to sustainable tourism. The following points describe the categories of environmental conservation and energy saving by Bawah Reserve:

1) The Marine Conservation programme started on Bawah Island in 2018, focusing on reef health monitoring, coral transplantation, artificial reefs, turtle conservation, and education (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). In 2022, the main activities of marine conservation are: reef restoration and
rehabilitation with 44 bottle reefs and 55 hexadomes, 4 times reef health monitoring, mangrove conservation by planting 80 mangrove seeds, and research and cleaning up 290kg of marine debris (Anambas Foundation, 2022). In addition, according to data from Bawah Reserve (2023), 253 sea turtles were hatched with the help of marine biologists (Bawah Reserve and Anambas Foundation team) and guests.

2) Solid Waste Management initiated by Bawah Reserve and Anambas Foundation in 2018, with the addition of waste upcycling, was later incorporated into Integrated Waste Management (IWM) initiative (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). The main priorities of IWM are educating local communities on waste issues and how to manage waste responsibly, running the waste bank initiative and waste management facilities, also providing upcycling training (Anambas Foundation, 2022). In 2023, Bawah Reserve had 34 on-site waste management centers and officially launched the Kuala Maras waste bank, managed to collect 73,616 kg of plastic, paper, residue and mixed waste in a year (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024; Anambas Foundation, 2022).

3) In terms of energy saving, Bawah Reserve also operates sustainable water and electricity systems. In October 2022, the solar power project was completed and became the main source of electricity for resort operations while the generator was used only as a backup (Anambas Foundation, 2022; CNN Indonesia, 2023; Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). For water resources, Bawah Reserve distills seawater and rainwater by collecting it in a large tank using a pump, distilling the water using a reverse osmosis and microfiltration system, then naturally (without pump) entering the bottling plant system to filter and add minerals (CNN Indonesia, 2023; Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). “This initiative has succeeded in eliminating the use of plastic mineral bottles at the resort by approximately 1000 bottles/month”, said Debrina P. Winarko (personal communication, January 23, 2024). Also, Bawah Reserve filtered and naturally treated greywater at the resort to flush toilets and water plants (Debrina P. Winarko, personal communication, January 23, 2024). Thus, no use of groundwater threatens the island’s biodiversity.

When compared with previous literature studies, Bawah Reserve shows practices towards sustainable luxury tourism by using the latest methods and technology to protect the environment. This shows that development and innovation towards sustainable luxury tourism can continue to evolve with various approaches and applications. The environmental protection efforts carried out by Bawah Reserve can have an impact on industry practitioners who are interested in sustainable luxury tourism, by examining the model and its implications.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, this research reveals the possibilities of sustainable luxury tourism on Anambas Island which are explained through four themes: Sustainable Management, Sustainable Socioeconomic Benefits, Cultural Heritage and Reduced Cultural Impacts, and Environmental Protection and Conservation by Bawah Reserve. These findings implicitly suggest that Bawah Reserve could adequately address many of the concerns that may arise due to the development of luxury accommodation, such as the destruction of the natural landscape and economic, cultural, and social disparities in communities. The relationship between Bawah Reserve and Anambas Foundation is co-dependent in implementing the Triple Bottom Line of Sustainability: People, Planet, Profit (Elkington, 1998) through protecting the environmental value of the islands and surrounding marine environment, also by empowering the development of local
communities on Anambas island. Indeed, the collaboration between the resort and its non-profit ventures is key in realizing sustainable luxury tourism. This participation can be studied further so that it has further implications for future industry practitioners who pay attention to two paradigms: sustainability and luxury.

The concept of luxury sustainable tourism is evolving and would require further research from other specific perspectives, such as business owners, operations, guests, or communities. Additionally, future research could explore each of these themes to obtain a more comprehensive overview of luxury sustainable tourism in Bawah Reserve, or other potential luxury remote destinations such as in other luxury accommodation or geographic contexts. A study of the influence of phenomena surrounding sustainable luxury tourism, such as climate change, pandemics, consumer and employee behavior, or luxury tourism trends, on the themes raised in this research could also open new insights. This discussion of regenerative luxury tourism can be supported by other approaches such as quantitative methods or mixed methods.

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