

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Of Study

The COVID-19 pandemic is a worldwide coronavirus epidemic produced by the virus associated with severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). In December 2019, the first cases of new coronavirus (nCoV) were discovered in China, and the virus quickly spread to other countries all over the world. After that, on 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and the outbreak was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. According to studies, 10-20% of patients infected with SARS-CoV-2 may develop symptoms classified as protracted COVID-19 (World Health Organization, 2020).

Tourism is one of the leading sectors supporting the country's economy. Tourism can potentially create changes in various aspects, such as economic, social, and cultural aspects. Especially in the economic field, tourism is expected to increase various multiple activities such as creating significant employment opportunities, increasing the country's foreign exchange, and increasing regional original income figures. Currently, the tourism literature related to COVID-19 focuses on the positive and negative impacts of the pandemic.

West Sumatra is one of the tourist destination provinces as an option for recreation and tourism in Indonesia. West Sumatra has many choices of tourist objects, both natural and artificial attractions. Such as Nagari Pariangan, which

Travel magazine Budget named the most beautiful village in the world At present, West Sumatra tourism is experiencing rapid development. Not only tourism be promoted in Sumatera Barat, but traditional foods such as rendang promoted as the the best food in the world by CNN International in 2011.

The pandemic has created a crisis for Indonesia, including West Sumatra as one of many province in Indonesia. Supported by statistics from the West Sumatra Province's Central Statistical Agency (BPS), which shows the number of international visitors that visited West Sumatra.

Table 1.1
Number of International Tourists Visiting West Sumatra

Year	Number of Visits (person)
2018	54.369
2019	61.131
2020	10.875
2021	0
2022	4.144

Source : BPS of West Sumatera Province

Before the COVID-19 epidemic began, namely 61,131 travelers in 2019. Then a decrease in the number of international tourist visitors in 2020 occurred because the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia in March 2020, which required several countries in the world to temporarily stop the entry gates for foreign visitors, including Indonesian country. Until 2021, Indonesia will still close the entry gates for international visits so that there will be no tourists visiting West Sumatra. Until September 2022, the entrance and exit gates for the West Sumatra international

airport began to reopen, and there was another increase in the number of international visitors to West Sumatra. Based on the latest data, in 2022, foreign tourist visits to West Sumatera through the Minangkabau International Airport (BIM) entrance only touched 4.144 visits.

The following is data is number of visit by domestic tourists to West Sumatra Province in the last five years:

Table 1.2
Number of Visits by domestic tourists in West Sumatra Province

Year	Number of Visits (person)
2017	7.783.876
2018	8.073.070
2019	8.169.147
2020	8.041.868
2021	4.785.886

Source : BPS of West Sumatera Province

Based on these data, the visits of domestic tourists to West Sumatra Province in 2020 from 8,041,868 people, then in 2021, there was a drastic decrease due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to 4,785,886 people. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the governments of Indonesia and West Sumatra to implement a lockdown system on the community which led to the temporary closure of tourist attractions in West Sumatra, causing a decrease in visitors to West Sumatra tourist attractions.

Many efforts by governments have been made in the development of Indonesian tourism, including those in remote areas of Indonesia with hidden

potential, including the development of tourist villages. One of the sustainable tourism development programs is the management of tourist villages. The program has been initiated to boost tourism and national economic growth in 2020-2024 (Kemenparekraf, 2021).

Tourist villages or rural tourism, provide a newer and unique sensation because they have unique characteristics based on individual areas/villages. Tourism in rural regions is regarded as an industry that can help to solve rural problems due to the close connections between tourism and rural life (Garrod et al., 2006). Through rural tourism, we can advance local prosperity by creating opportunities for effort and jobs. Furthermore, tourist villages can preserve and protect wildlife, cultural mores, and regional characteristics.

Table 1.3
Number of Tourism Villages by Tourism Village Category

Tourism Village Category	Total
Stub	2482
Develop	956
Advanced	283
Indipendent	12

Source : Jadesta Kemenparekraf (2022)

According to the data available on the Jadesta website, tourism villages with advanced categories are at 283, and independent tourism villages have only touched 12. One of the government's efforts to develop tourist villages in Indonesia is through the Anugrah Desa Wisata Indonesia (ADWI) launched by the Ministry of Tourism and Sandiaga Uno's Creative Economy. Indonesia has around 1,200 villages that have the potential to become tourist villages. This event was created

to spur the development of tourist villages and give awards to rural tourism that excel with several predetermined assessment criteria. The government managed the direct tourist collage and targeted 244 tourist villages clarified as independent tourist villages, in 2024 (Kemenparekraf, 2021).

Participating in the Anugrah Desa Wisata Indonesia (ADWI) event is one of the positive steps taken by the province of West Sumatra in order to promote and increase tourism visits. In ADWI 2021, nine tourist villages in West Sumatra are ranked in the top 100. Four villages, namely Sarugo Village, Minang Nagari Sumpu Village, Apar Tourism Village, and Nagari Sungai Batang, are included in the top 50 rankings. Then in ADWI 2022, West Sumatra, five West Sumatra tourist villages are back on the top 100 list. The three villages include the GTP Ulakan Padang Pariaman Tourism Village, the Silokek Sijunjung Tourism Village, and the Parianan Tourism Village Tanah Datar. To compete in ADWI 2023, the West Sumatra provincial government is targeting and preparing around 300 tourist villages (Kompas, 2023).

Lubuk Alung Crusader Village, also known as the Nyarai Tourism Village in Nagari Salibutan Lubuk Alung, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra. The Nyarai tourism village is also among the top 75 ADWI 2023 nominations, and is still in the process of the next selection stage. The Nyarai Waterfall, with its natural pool or waterfall, is the main attraction in the Nyarai Gamaran Forest Ecotourism. The main activity, "Trekking" activities tracing or walking to Nyarai Waterfall in the Gamaran Forest, are included in the category of adventure tourism. Up to 5.5 kilometers can be covered during a trek. Besides

Lubuk Nyarai, Nyarai Tourism Village has Natural Tourism Attractions such as Belek Waterfall, Lubuak Napa, and Lubuak Larangan.

Before COVID-19, there was an increase in visitors, during COVID-19 there were no visitors for three months since the establishment of COVID-19 in March, April, and May 2020. After that, it was recommended by the local government to reopen because the location of the tourist village is considered safe because it is in nature and rarely happens interaction with individuals. After reopening, there was an increase of 20% in the first month. Over time, visitors started to increase but not as much as before COVID-19. Communities around the Nyarai tourism village were also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic because the economy of the majority of the surrounding community was obtained because of the Nyarai tourism village. There are 40% of the local community works as tour guides at the Nyarai tourist attraction. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic hitting they unemployed and returning to the forest to look for wood as a livelihood. After the COVID-19 pandemic, they gradually returned to duty at the Nyarai tourist attraction. The entrance fee for the Nyarai tourist attraction has also increased from Rp 20,000 before COVID-19 to Rp 30,000 after COVID-19 (Kurniawan, 2023).

Apar tourism village, which is part of an advanced tourism village and won 3rd place in ADWI 2021, a tourist village in Pariaman, West Sumatra, with the concept of natural culture and local wisdom. Apar Village has variety destinations, including a mangrove forest with mangrove tracking, a clean stretch of beach, and a beautiful sunset. At the "Beruk College of Science," there is a turtle conservation area and a monkey-picking coconut activity.

Significant changes in Apar developed when COVID-19 occurred, namely mid-2020, especially changes in Apar development and facilities. For example, there are toilets, mangrove forest tracking is cleaner and tidier, and there are more trash bins. The cost for the development of the Apar Tourism Village was started with the independent costs of the surrounding community and was assisted by the village government. Before the facility's development in 2019, tourist visits were only around 200-300 tourists per month. Since the significant changes in 2020, tourist visits have also increased but are still unstable. Starting from 2021, the increase in tourist arrivals has dramatically increased. However, the most significant in tourist visits only occurred on major holidays, such as during the Eid al-Fitr 2023 holiday. Visits reached more than 20,000 visitors, with ticket sales of IDR 3,000. On regular days, the number of return visits is not stable monthly. The surrounding community was also affected by the Apar rural tourism, where at first the community only sold seven shops in the Apar Tourism village, now it has increased to 27 shops. The significant changes makes the community more concerned about the environment of the Tourism Village because it has a very positive impact on them (Muhammad, 2023).

There is a reasonably strong emotional connection between tourists and tourist destinations that tourists do trigger tourists to take tourist trips. Place attachment is an emotional bond between a person and a particular location. Generally, it measures "emotional relationships that people create with various places" (Lewicka, 2011). External target groups, such as visitors, may develop a stronger connection to a location as they get more involved (Gross & Brown, 2006).

Within the tourism literature, attachment are regarded as central to the success of visitor attractions in a competitive tourism market (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015). Place attachment holds a central relevance in tourism research and practice (G. Brown et al., 2016). So it can be concluded that Place Attachment can provide insight into how to develop tourists' emotional bonds with tourist attractions and how this can affect tourists' satisfaction and actual behavior in visiting tourism so as to increase visitor numbers.

Frequent interactions between a customer and a business that boost a customer's emotional, psychological, or physical investment in the brand and the company called to as customer engagement (Phang et al., 2013). Customer Engagement is the psychological condition a consumer experiences when interacting with a company or product (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). According to Taheri et al. (2014) and Bryce et al. (2015), a deeper understanding of engagement can help management better forecast visitor behavior and improve the visitor experience. Tourist Engagement can contribute to building a strong relationship between tourists and tourist attractions. This can increase tourist interaction with the tourist attraction environment which can increase tourist actual behavior which allows increasing the number of tourist visits.

The primary component of the tourism business is thought is travelers. Many studies have not examined how people's actual behavior compares to how they perceive themselves to behave (Asfeldt et al., 2017). The accessibility of a sense of place can influence behavior, which explains some of the inconsistencies in current empirical studies on the subject of sense of place and behavior (Bugden

& Stedman, (2019). Findings in some recent tourism studies also suggest that changes in traveler perceptions during the pandemic may affect their travel behaviors in the post-pandemic era (Hang et al., 2020). Yuzhanin & Fisher, (2016) argued that further research needs to focus on analyzing actual travel behaviors since most studies investigated attitude and behavioral intentions. Although intention is a strong predictor of behaviors, analyzing actual behaviors is the ultimate goal of behavioral research.

Therefore, by linking the impact of Place Attachment and Tourist Engagement on tourist Actual Behaviour, the researcher intends to find out and contribute to the tourist Actual Behaviour contribution to the three rural tourism in West Sumatera, Apar rural tourism and Nyarai waterfall Lubuk Alung rural tourism, in the post COVID-19 stage.

In this study, the research to be answered is how the effect of Place Attachment and Tourist Engagement on Tourist Actual Behaviour in Apar Pariaman rural tourism and Nyarai Lubuk Alung rural tourism in the post COVID-19 stage.

So the authors are interested in conducting research with the titled “*The Influence of Place Attachment and Tourist Engagement on Tourist Actual Behaviour Study on Rural Tourism in West Sumatera in the post COVID-19 stage*”.

1.2.Problem Statement

Based on the description of the background described above, The issue might be stated as follows:

1. How does place attachment affect tourist actual behaviour in the post COVID-19 pandemic stage on Apar rural tourism and Nyarai rural tourism?
2. How does tourist engagement affect tourist actual behaviour in the post COVID-19 pandemic stage on Apar rural tourism and Nyarai rural tourism?

1.3. Research Purposes

Determined by the formulation of the problem statement above, several research objectives to be achieved in this research are :

1. To find out and analyze the influence of place attachment on tourist actual behavior in the post COVID-19 pandemic stage on Apar rural tourism and Nyarai rural tourism.
2. To investigate and asses the influence of tourist engagement on tourist actual behavior in the post COVID-19 pandemic stage on Apar rural tourism and Nyarai rural tourism.

1.4. Research Benefits

1.4.1. Theoretical Benefits

1. The results of this study are intended and expected to be able to add and expand knowledge and insight regarding place attachment, tourist engagement, and tourist actual behaviour in the post COVID-19

pandemic stage, along with the variables that will be important in future tourism research.

2. This research can be the basis for study material for further research in more in-depth matters regarding problems in tourism studies.

1.4.2. Practical Benefits

1. Company

The study is expected to be used by companies especially Apar rural tourism and Nyarai rural tourism as a consideration to manage and improve marketing strategies in dealing with increasing visitor especially tourist actual behavior through place attachment and tourism engagement.

2. Visitors

Through this research, the authors hope that visitors can find reference solutions in determining decisions to do actual behaviour to the tourist attraction, hope this research can facilitate tourists with several references to make decisions by implementing place attachment and tourist engagement.

1.5. Scope of Research

The research will be focused on tourists in Indonesia, especially those visiting Apar rural tourism and Nyarai waterfall Lubuk Alung rural tourism in the post COVID-19 stage. The theoretical aspects of this study consists of three variables, place attachment, tourist engagement, and tourist actual behaviour.

1.6.Outline of Research

To help analyze the problem stated above, this research consist of 5 chapters as follows :

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

Chapter one clarifies the background issues of the study, problem formulation, research objectives, research benefits, scope of research and outline of research.

CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW

This section offers a literature review that discusses in detail the concepts and theories regarding place attachment, tourist emotions, tourist engagement, and loyalty. Also, this section discusses some of the previous study or research, the construction of hypotheses, and conceptual framework models that are used to guide the data processing stage.

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODS

In the research methodology section, the researcher discusses research design, population and samples, sampling techniques, data and data sources, analytical methods used and hypothesis testing, data collection methods, operationalization definitions and variable measurements, research instruments, and data analysis techniques..

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on the study result, respondent characteristics, descriptive analysis, and structural measurement of the influence of place attachment and tourist engagement on tourist actual behavior.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes is the analysis and research conducted previously, identifying the limitations and benefits in the application of the study and making about conclusion regarding the effect of e-service quality, online experience, and lifestyle on customer loyalty. This chapter will also provide some recommendations for future research.

