

# Driving and Inhibiting Factors to Tourist Interest in Visiting Lamalera

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to identify and examine the drivers that increase tourist interest in visiting Lamalera village as well as the inhibiting factors that discourage tourist interest in visiting Lamalera village.

**Methodology:** The data collection procedures used in this study include observation and interview of local and foreign visitors who came to see the whaling tradition (Kotekelema) in the fishing village of Lamalera, Wulandoni sub-district.

**Result:** This study concluded that the drivers of visitors' interest in Lamalera are the allure of whaling culture, the availability of transportation to tourist sites, and the amenities such as houses of worship and health care facilities. The inhibiting factors to the interest of visiting tourists in Lamalera are the unavailability of additional tourist attractions in addition to whaling culture in this place, the accessibility issue concerns very long travel routes, bad road conditions, poor network conditions, and access to insufficient information regarding Lamalera cultural tourist objects, the absence of prayer rooms, restaurants, public restrooms, souvenir stores, diving equipment, and the hospitality component of tourist services, which is deemed inadequate.

**Keywords:** *Driving Factors, Inhibiting Factors, Tourist Interest, Lamalera*

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism has emerged as one of the most dependable areas for boosting the economy, generating national income, and creating jobs (Dai Batafor & Sunarta, 2017). The tourist industry has become inextricably linked to the Indonesian economy (Al Mani & Trimo, 2021; A. E. Nyoko & Fanggidae, 2021; Utami & Kafabih, 2021). Indonesia's diverse natural and cultural features make it one of the alternative tourism locations in high demand by travelers (Rahma, 2020). Several tourist destinations in Indonesia, such as Lake Kelimutu and Komodo Island, as well as other natural and cultural attractions such as Whaling Culture or "Kotekelema" in Lembata Regency, draw both domestic and foreign tourists (Nugraha, 2022). The Whaling Tradition in Lamalera Fishing Village is a living tradition for the Lamalera people that demonstrates the Lamalera people's interaction with the sea (Nay, 2018). Kotekelema hunting is typically done with bamboo and tempuling, or a sort of steel spear.

Aside from the peculiarity of Fisherman Village as a main tourist destination in Lembata Regency, there are still occurrences that might impede tourism in Lamalera (Taum, 2022). These issues are connected to accessibility, namely the very bad condition of the road leading to Lamalera Fishing Village, which makes many visitors hesitant to visit (Bataona, 2023; Nyoko et al., 2022). Furthermore, amenities in Lamalera Village are very limited, such as the lack of diving equipment for tourists who wish to explore the underwater beauty in Lamalera Village, as well as other tourism support services that are currently unavailable (Ama, 2020). Tourism in Lamalera requires specific government attention to numerous variables that support cultural tourism as an appealing tourist destination. The reduction in the quality of a tourist attraction in a tourist location will affect tourist visits because tourist attraction is a

component that influences tourist interest or incentive to come (Bulan et al., 2021; Miarsih, 2018; Sayangbatti & Baiquni, 2013). Tourist attractions, amenities, accessibility, and hospitality all have an impact on the number of visitors (Abdulahji & Yusuf, 2017; E. R. Aprilia et al., 2017; Handayani et al., 2019).

According to Wiradiputra & Brahmento (2016), the lower the quality of attractiveness of tourist locations, the lower the interest of visitors to visit tourist sites. Furthermore, Yelly, (2011) discovered that there are elements that impact the variability of visits, such as amenities or supporting facilities and services. Tourists' interest in visiting whaling cultural attractions in Lamalera is inextricably linked to these characteristics in terms of attractions, accessibility, amenities, and hospitality (Handayani et al., 2019). Paying attention to these aspects at all times will have a good influence on the number of tourist visits. If these variables are overlooked, it will impede tourists' desire to visit. Based on the problems highlighted, it is vital to determine what variables are driving and impeding the interest of visiting visitors in Lamalera Village. This study aims to identify and examine the elements that increase tourist interest in visiting Lamalera village as well as those that discourage tourist interest in visiting Lamalera village. The findings of this study may be utilized as a reference for local governments in making decisions to improve the number of tourist visits, as well as an example for tourists who desire to visit Lamalera.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Driving and Inhibiting Factors to Tourist Interest***

Attraction, amenities, accessibility, and hospitality are the driving and inhibiting elements that impact tourist interest explored in this study (Ningtiyas et al., 2021; Wandirah, 2021).

#### ***2.1.1 Attractions***

Tourist attractions are factors inherent in the destination and its environment that play an essential role in inspiring visitors to visit the place (Nyoko & Fanggidae, 2015; Supriono, 2017). According to Ramadhani et al., (2021), tourist attractions are vital in attracting tourist visits. Every visitor wants to witness something new and distinct, such as culture, history, and unique customs. There are three sorts of tourist attractions mentioned by Widyatmaja & Ngurah (2017), 1) natural tourism attractions; tourist attractions developed more based on nature's gift of beauty and uniqueness; 2) cultural tourism attractions; tourist attractions developed more based on human works and creations, both in the form of cultural relics (sites/heritage) and cultural values that are still alive (the living culture) in the life of a community, and the attraction of special interest tourism, 3) special interest; tourist attractions that are designed to meet unique tourist demands, such as seeing certain animals, fishing, shopping, health, and body refreshment.

#### ***2.1.2 Amenities***

Amenities or facilities are supporting equipment provided at a tourist location to suit the demands of tourists while they are there (Nasution et al., 2020). Tourists in destinations require overnight accommodation as well as restaurants or kiosks to eat and drink (Isdarmanto, 2017). The existence of adequate tourist amenities in tourist regions may have a favorable influence on the growth of a tourism destination because it creates a sense of attraction for visitors to visit (Wulandari, 2019). The arrangement of tourism facilities, including the procurement of new facilities, accommodation, shopping places, entertainment facilities, and the arrangement of traffic access to the region, has a significant impact on the success of tourism destination development (Saman & Gaffar, 2012; Situmeang & Siburian, 2022; Trigantiarsyah & Mulyadi, 2012). In tourism, amenities are significantly required (Pertiwi, 2013). Tourists will not feel at ease visiting a location if it lacks adequate amenities (Gumilar, 2016). Tourism facilities or facilities are features of a place that allow visitors staying in the destination to enjoy or participate in the attractions offered (Habaora et al., 2021; Hermawan, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Sopiyan, (2020), facilities are geared toward attractiveness in a place since facilities must be positioned close to the market. Tourists need to sleep, eat, and drink when visiting tourist attractions, hence hotel facilities are important items (Khasani & Arianti, 2014). Furthermore, support sectors such as souvenir stores, laundry shops, guides, festival areas, and recreational facilities are required (Kurnia, 2022).

### *2.1.3 Accessibility*

Accessibility considerations in tourism development include trip planning, giving information about routes and destinations, and the availability of transportation, lodging, and other amenities to reach locations (Rossadi & Widayati, 2018). Tourists will feel more secure and comfortable when they go to tourist locations (Hapsara & Ahmadi, 2022). According to Isdarmanto (2017), accessibility is a means and infrastructure, as well as other characteristics such as information and communication, that may help travelers find their way to tourist destinations. This aspect should not be overlooked because it has a significant influence on visitor satisfaction. Tourists will be pleased if the tourist location has easy access since it makes it easier for them to get there. Visit demand is heavily influenced by accessibility. There will be no visitors visiting a place if it lacks accessibility, such as airports, ports, and highways (Rijal et al., 2020). With so many visitors visiting a tourist attraction, it is believed that tourism object managers would be able to build more suitable infrastructural amenities (Trisoko, 2015).

### *2.1.4 Hospitality*

Hospitality refers to the availability of an organization or individuals who take care of the destination. This is significant because, even if the location already has strong attractions, accessibility, and facilities, if no one manages and maintains it, it will be abandoned in the future (Dalimunthe, 2021). Hospitality also includes interactions between visitors and local populations in the establishment of positive connections in a tourist destination (Arifin, 2018). A positive interaction process between the local population and visitors will provide a notion of conduct that makes visitors feel at ease in a tourism region (Evelyna, 2022). It may also achieve a high degree of satisfaction, which increases the curiosity of visiting visitors. Tourist pleasure stems not only from attractive places but also from interactions with local populations and tourist service providers (Latupapua & Salam, 2022). Hospitality characteristics that include the community must be appropriately implemented to enhance the number of tourist visits to the region (Pristiwasa & Augustinus, 2017).

## **2.2 Tourist Interest**

According to Aprilia (2015), research undertaken by Albarq (2014:14) contends that "interest in visiting tourists is the same as interest in consumer purchases." According to Kotler & Armstrong (2018), consumer decision-making comprises three stages: 1) the stage before purchase; 2) the purchase stage; and 3) the post-purchase activity stage. Consumers will perform the following before making a purchase: a) introduce their needs; b) retrieve information; and c) evaluate alternatives. In the sphere of tourism, attraction elements, facility accessibility, and hospitality all have a significant impact on the interest of visitors visiting a tourist destination (Ningtiyas et al., 2021; Wandirah, 2021). Tourist attractiveness, convenience, and comfort are the primary sources of difficulties in the tourism industry, thus it is vital to diverge from current issues while developing tourist locations.

## **3. Research Method**

The purpose of this research is to get an in-depth overview and comprehension of the components of tourism and their effect on the interest of visiting visitors in Lamalera. To accomplish this purpose, qualitative research methods are utilized to seek data or information in the field. This study approach is supposed to show all occurrences about attractions, accessibility, amenities, and hospitality in Lamalera attractions that stimulate and obstruct visitors' or tourists' interest in seeing the traditions and culture in Lamalera. The subjects of this study were local and foreign visitors who came to observe the whaling tradition (Kotekelema) in the fishing village of Lamalera, Wulandoni sub-district. The object of this research is to identify the tourism elements that impact tourist interest in Lamalera fishing village, such as attractions, accessibility, facilities, and hospitality. The data collection procedures used in this study include the observation that involves methodically monitoring and documenting symptoms or occurrences that exist in the research item (Hasanah, 2017), and an interview is a way of gathering data that is done methodically and based on study objectives (Pujaastawa, 2016). The data analysis technique used in this study followed the steps proposed by Bungin, (2015): 1) data collection is an integral part of data analysis activities, 2) data reduction is the selection process, focuses on simplifying and transforming rough data that arise from written records in the field, 3) data display is a description of a

set of arranged information that allows for conclusion drawing and action, and finally 4) conclusion drawing and verification.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Driving factors

The driving factors for tourists to visit Lamalera related to tourist attractions, amenities, accessibility, and hospitality are discussed in this section.

#### 4.1.1 Tourist attractions

##### a) Cultural attractions

Lamalera's cultural attractions are distinctive because they differ from the cultures of other places or regions. This is a classic whaling cultural attraction. This whaling tradition has thrived in Lamalera for hundreds of years and continues to make Lamalera one of the top tourist destinations. According to Fransisko, a visitor from West Sumba, *"....the tradition of whaling, which is the rarest phenomenon in Flores. This whaling history is highly epic since whaling simply employs simple instruments such as tempuling and peledang."* Furthermore, Mr. Romanus stated that *"...what drew me to Lamalera was the whaling tradition, and the second was that the customs in Lamalera were very different from other regions."* Based on the informant's comment, it can be assumed that the main reason people visit Lamalera is to view the cultural attractions of traditional whaling and the traditional process carried out before whaling. A cultural ritual is a usual practice in the issue.

##### b) Natural Attractions

Lamalera environment is well-known for its beauty, in addition to the cultural attractions of whale capturing. The beach is tastefully ornamented with several traditional buildings, specifically "peledang houses" with roofs made of woven palm leaves, giving this beach a natural appearance. Dive activities are also possible in this location due to the clean seawater conditions and the beauty of the well-maintained coral reefs. This natural attraction encourages visitors to spend more time in Lamalera village. In addition, the area surrounding Lamalera has a magnificent natural appeal that travelers can enjoy while in Lamalera. Whale Rock in Lamalera, White Sand Beach in Mingar, Nubi Beach in Tirer-Tanah Lot, and Wai Lei Beach in Tewaowutun Village are among the natural attractions. These beaches are accessible by sea using a motorboat from Lamalera.

#### 4.1.2 Accessibility

Accessibility is a critical aspect of promoting tourism in a given location. A visitor will be more likely to visit a tourist destination if it is easy and quick to get to. Mode of transportation, road, journey length of time, and price are all discussed in this study. Tourists may travel to and from Lamalera by air from the capital city of East Nusa Tenggara Province, Kupang City, utilizing Trans Nusa or Susi Air aircraft from El Tari airport to Wuno Pito Lewoleba airport, Lembata. Tourists may continue their journey to Waikomo Terminal by using public transportation "Bemo" or "Ojek" from the airport. There is already a passenger bus stationed at this terminal, ready to transport people to Lamalera Village. Passengers may go to Lamalera using two buses and one truck for a reasonable price of Rp. 35,000 per passenger. By sea, travelers can board ASDP ships (ferries) from Bolok Port Kupang or Peln ships (Lambelu, Siguntang, and Umsini) from Tenau Port Kupang. It takes roughly 8 to 10 hours to go reach the harbor of Lewoleba. Tourists that arrive at Lewoleba Port can take public transit directly to Waikomo Terminal. Tourists from mainland Flores may explore Lamalera sights near the sea. Tourists can take a ship from Lantuka port to Lewoleba seaport from East Flores, Lantuka City. The trip lasts 5 hours.

#### 4.1.3 Facilities

The facilities offered at a tourist site are aspects that impact the attention of visiting visitors. When visiting a tourist destination, a visitor would evaluate everything relevant to his or her comfort. As a result, suitable facilities should be considered in the building of tourist sites. The facilities refer to homestays, houses of worship, health facilities, lopo-lopo, and museums. Based on observations and interviews from several informants, the tourism facilities in Lamalera tourist attractions include:

##### a) Homestays

There are several homestays in the village, including Ben Homestay, Asep Homestay, Abel Beding Homestay, Benyamin Homestay, and Pandai Home Stay. In terms of hygiene, several of these

homestays are pretty good. This is evident in the cleanliness of the room as well as the cleanliness of the bathroom/toilet. Furthermore, in terms of comfort, these homestays give comfort services and facilities such as television and a space to rest for staying visitors.

b) House of Worship

Because practically almost all people in Lamalera village is Catholic, there is a place of worship that includes one church, the Church of St. Peter and Paul, and one chapel, the Chapel of the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady.

c) Health Facilities

There is a Puskesmas (health center) at this tourist spot with medicines and medical equipment that is comprehensive enough to allow tourists to seek care if they become ill. In addition, there is a health facility in Wulandoni, which is not far from tourist sites.

d) Lopo-lopo (traditional shelters)

There are three lopo-lopo carefully placed in this tourist attraction. These lopo-lopo are elevated above the beach and face the sea. Tourists may also enjoy the lovely dawn from the top of these lopo-lopo

e) Museum

There is also one museum in this tourist attraction which also provides lodging for tourists.

#### *4.1.4 Hospitality*

a) Management of Lamalera tourism objects

The Village Government has partnered with the Regional Government, in this case, the Lembata Regency Tourist Office, in managing tourist items in Lamalera by convening a discussion session attended by all village authorities. Village officials can voice their opinions and ideas for the development of Lamalera tourism objects in this discussion forum. Meanwhile, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) will operate Lamalera Tourism's supporting enterprises such as culinary, souvenirs, and other tourist amenities. These BUMDes will be handled according to commercial principles to give advantages that will aid in the advancement of village development.

b) Hospitality of local people

Lamalera residents respect and appreciate visitors, making them feel more at ease in the town. People from Lamalera get along nicely with guests. This encourages travelers to seek out information on whaling cultural attractions.

#### **4.2 Inhibiting factors of tourist interest**

The inhibiting factors for tourists visiting Lamalera are related to tourist attractions, amenities, accessibility, and hospitality.

##### *4.2.1 Tourist attractions*

The cultural features of whaling in Lamalera are particularly appealing to tourists. However, the natural features surrounding Lamalera have not been well maintained, as seen by the limited amenities and limited access to white sand beaches in Mingar, Nubi Beach in Tirer-Tanah Lot, and Wai Lei Beach in Tewaowutun Village. Tourists may be discouraged from visiting Lamalera since there are no other attractions than whaling attractions.

##### *4.2.2 Accessibility*

a) Transportation

The biggest issue with the mode of transportation is that the journey takes too long. Foreign travelers who wish to visit Lamalera must endure a long journey. Before arriving in Lembata, the airplane must pass through Kupang City. This might affect their trip plans. Another barrier to mobility is the lack of special transit, which makes visitors unhappy. In addition, buses only run once a day to Lamalera.

b) Road condition

The condition of the roads also affects the safety and comfort of travelers. Tourists will be hesitant to visit Lamalera because of the poor road conditions. Due to terrible road conditions, the trip to Lamalera village takes 4 to 5 hours. This is consistent with the comment of a Lamalera visitor, Mr.

Agung, who indicated that *"....the road conditions to Lamalera are very severe, so it is necessary to be careful on the way, because the road is muddy and rocky, it is quite slick. Lamalera tourism is already well-known on a national and international scale, thus the government must upgrade the current infrastructure."* Meanwhile, Mr. Romanus, an Adonara visitor, confirmed that *"....the road access to Lamalera is not very good, the road is potholed and narrow if the rainy season is like this, the road is very muddy"*. He also urged that local governments pay more attention to roads and restore them as soon as possible because Lamalera is a tourist attraction.

c) Promotion

One of the reasons impeding tourism growth is poor promotion, which causes tourist sites to become unknown, much alone able to entice visitors to travel (Kasim et al., 2017). The marketing of this cultural tourist product is critical since the potential it possesses is enormous. Because the promotion of whaling cultural tourist assets is deemed inadequate, it will need imagination and ingenuity to expose its tourism potential. The government should organize events and festivals to promote whaling cultural tourism assets in Lamalera. Furthermore, coordination with travel brokers both within and outside NTT is required to promote this tourism destination.

d) Communication network

The communication network in Lamalera is also a major impediment, and many tourists complain about it. Tourists and the general public have restricted access to information. This network restriction is also an impediment to tourism promotion. Every visitor that arrives has the urge to share images of tourist sites in Lamalera on social media, thus communication networks are expected to improve.

#### 4.2.3 Facilities

a) Houses of worship

Visitors to Lamalera tourism attractions are quite diversified in terms of culture, education level, and faith adhered to, although Lamalera solely has buildings of worship for Catholics. As a result, more worship facilities, such as prayer rooms for Muslim travelers, are required. This is one way the Lamalera community, which is virtually exclusively Catholic, respects the religious beliefs of visitors to their region.

b) Public toilets

Toilets are not currently accessible at this attraction. Tourists are only permitted to use bathrooms in private residences. This impediment may limit visitor interest in visiting Lamalera since it affects their comfort when visiting tourist attractions.

c) Restaurant

According to observations, the restaurant at the Lamalera tourist attraction does not yet exist. To make this tourist site more appealing to visitors, a restaurant serving traditional Lamalera cuisine must be built so that visitors can dine not only at their inns but also at nearby eateries.

d) Lodging

Lodging in the Lamalera tourist attraction is limited to a few homestays with an average of 5 rooms. Furthermore, because management in the allocation of accommodation in people's houses has not been divided equitably, only certain individuals suffer the impact of this tourism.

e) Souvenir shops

There are no businesses in Lamalera that offer various handicrafts that tourists may use as souvenirs, therefore travelers must hunt for residences that sell them. This is consistent with Mr. Donatus' informant's assertion that *"...there is no souvenirs shop, but there are limited sales of Lamalera's souvenirs in the inns."*

f) Diving equipment

Tourists come to experience the underwater beauty as well as cultural sites. Diving equipment for visitors is not yet available, therefore tourists who wish to dive must borrow from locals.

#### 4.2.4 Hospitality

a) Management of tourism objects

Because the entire community has not been involved in the administration of Lamalera tourism sites, suggestions concerning the development of tourism items from the community cannot be expressed. Furthermore, a lack of human resources is impeding the growth of community-based tourism in

Lamalera. Some beaches and other attractions around Lamalera, such as the development of lopo-lopo and other tourist amenities, have also been poorly handled.

b) Services at Homestay

The lack of public understanding of tourism and knowledge of hospitality ideals are two issues that may deter visitors from visiting Lamalera. This is relevant to services at Lamalera homestays, which are less inventive in delivering kinds of service. With this lack of innovation, it will be a problem that will deter people from visiting Lamalera. Tourists want not only nice and polite treatment, but innovative and varied types of service may also make tourists more comfortable in Lamalera, so understanding the tourists that stay is essential.

## 5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the findings and discussions, the following conclusions are driving visitors' interest in Lamalera village: The allure of whaling culture Lamalera village tourism gives a very distinct culture, beautiful landscape, and the lives of people who are extremely upholding their customs, therefore tourists are quite happy with the existence of this tourist attraction. The availability of transportation to tourist sites indicates that access to tourist sites is pretty good. To attract travelers, the administration of tourist sites in Lamalera has endeavored to provide amenities such as homestays, museums, and lopo-lopo. This tourist attraction includes amenities that are important to tourists, such as houses of worship and healthcare facilities. The services offered at Lamalera tourism items are fairly decent, however, they might be improved further with more quality concepts. Furthermore, the kindness of locals toward guests makes tourists feel more at ease in Lamalera. The inhibiting factor to the interest of visiting tourists in Lamalera is the unavailability of additional tourist attractions in addition to whaling culture in this place. The accessibility issue concerns very long travel routes, bad road conditions, poor network conditions, and access to insufficient information regarding Lamalera cultural tourist objects. The absence of prayer rooms, restaurants, public restrooms, souvenir stores, diving equipment, as well as housing amenities, is a facility issue. The hospitality component is the administration of tourist services, which is deemed inadequate. The study's findings suggest that local governments should invest in developing the potential of natural and cultural tourism destinations, particularly whaling cultural tourism in Lamalera, by improving the road infrastructure, communication networks, health facilities, and the quality of services in existing homestays, to make these attractions more appealing to tourists. To enhance the number of tourist visits, the Tourism Office of Lembata Regency must collaborate with various parties that may aid in the development of whaling culture tourism. The village administration, as the manager of tourist objects in Lamalera, is required to enhance existing facilities by increasing the number of lopo-lopo and accommodations, as well as the acquisition of new facilities to boost tourism in Lamalera. The village government must thoroughly involve the local community in coming up with new ideas for the development of cultural tourism objects in Lamalera, carrying out the program that has been planned for tourist facilities, and opening new business branches for the Lamalera community through BUMDes. It is recommended that further studies investigate eco-tourism potential as well as community and government collaboration in ecotourism development.

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