

**Wae Bobok Tourism Potential:
Mapping a Destination in West Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara**

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ABSTRACT

West Manggarai is one of the districts in East Nusa Tenggara that has been visited by tourists, unfortunately, the purpose of the visit is dominant to the city of Labuan Bajo. Many tourism potentials in West Manggarai have been known, widely praised, and researched but Wae Bobok and its potential have not yet been published. Wae Bobok is a forest area located in the Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village area. The need for identification and mapping of potential is very essential to be better known by the wider community so that can achieve an equal visit and income. Mapping is carried out with a spatial analysis, which is an approach in geography to analyze and describe the geographical distribution of tourism data. The study's purpose is to identify (1) the tourism potential of Wae Bobok as a tourist destination, (2) the mapping of Wae Bobok as a tourist destination (3) the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Wae Bobok. Data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. This research resulted: in (1) the tourism potential of Wae Bobok as a tourist destination, (2) Wae Bobok has been mapped into natural, cultural, and adventure tourism attractions based on its natural potential and resources. (3) SWOT analysis of Wae Bobok includes strengths; natural, cultural, and artificial attractions, strategic location and accessibility, available supporting facilities, and local products, managed by pokdarwis. Weaknesses; human resources quality, cleanliness, local guides, tour packages, and internet network. Opportunities: position, special segment, local support, but the existence of competitors and Prone to natural disasters and flooding is a threat to Wae Bobok.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as the activity of people travelling to a place and staying outside their place of residence for not more than one year for leisure, business, and other purposes (UNWTO, 2010), is the largest and most diverse industry developed throughout the world. It is said to be the largest industry because it creates various employment opportunities and business opportunities for many countries, and almost all countries have managed their resources and attractions for the tourism sector.

Damanik and Weber (2006) emphasize the importance of authenticity in determining the quality of tourist attractions, both in terms of originality and potentiality. The World Tourism Organization defines tourism activity as human activities that travel "out of their home environment" for more than one year on vacation, trade, or other business. UNWTO (2020) defines travel as an activity or movement between two different locations, usually for various purposes but generally for leisure (Hall & Page, 2012).

As proclaimed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, there are five important pillars in realizing sustainable tourism: economic growth (poverty reduction), community empowerment, nature protection, and climate change, as well as safety and comfort (UNWTO, 2018).

In the tourism sector, identifying potential is very important to develop on target, effectively, and efficiently according to the objectives of tourism development. Ridwan (2012) states that tourism potential is an ability in an area that may be used for development, such as nature, humans, and the results of human creativity itself. According to Pitana (2005, tourism potential is an attraction contained in an area to be developed into an attractive tourist attraction so that it can attract tourist visits to the area and is usually not managed properly. Cooper (in Sunaryo, 2013) describes five important components in developing potential into a tourist attraction, among others: 1) Attraction, which includes uniqueness and attractiveness based on nature, culture, and artificiality 2). Accessibility, which includes ease of transportation facilities and systems, 3). Amenities, which include supporting and supporting tourist facilities. 4). Ancillary services that support tourism activities; and 5) institutions.

West Manggarai is one of the regencies in East Nusa Tenggara with topographic conditions of slope and altitude from sea level, but in general, the area of West Manggarai Regency has a hilly to mountainous topography and has many forests that have the potential to be developed as a tourist attraction or ecotourism. The geographical and topographical conditions that are owned and potential become the basic capital in developing natural potential into a nature-based tourist attraction. Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village is a project that the West Manggarai Regency government has undertaken in the area of tourism development, and it has gained more and more recognition from the larger community. The following is data on tourist visits to West Manggarai Regency and Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village.

Number of Visit	Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Foreign	91.870	168.814	18.350	3.234	60.770	55.053
Domestic	69.343	85.898	26.072	57205	109.307	64.406
Local	1.841	1.897	83	-	277	3.900
Total	163.054	256.609	44.505	60.439	170.354	123.359

Table 1: Number of Tourists to West Manggarai 2018-2023
 Tourism and Culture Office of West Manggarai Regency, 2024 [source]

Table 1 shows that tourist arrivals increased from 2018–2019 by 83.7 per cent but decreased by 338 per cent in 2020–2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, visits began to show an increase in the number of visits of 181.8%, but in 2023 it decreased by 38 per cent. This data shows that West Manggarai is in great demand by both domestic and foreign tourists despite fluctuations over the past five years.

Number of visits	Year	
	2022	2023
Foreign	3.990	2.583
Domestic	13.371	5.586
Total	17.361	8.169

Table 2: Tourist visits to Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village from 2022 to June 2023
 Tourism and Culture Office of West Manggarai Regency, 2023 [source]

Table 2 shows that tourist visits to Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village are only approximately 10 per cent (which amounted to 17,361 out of 170,354 people) of the total tourists who come to West Manggarai in 2022 indicating that there is still a lack of interest in visiting Tanjung Boleng. Commitment from managers and the government in marketing the tourism potential in addition to the quality of human resources still needs to be improved (Interview Pius Baut, September 7, 2023).

The lack of studies on Tanjung Boleng and Wae Bobok makes this research important to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the aspects of attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services that Wae Bobok has so that it is feasible to develop into a tourist destination. Studies on mapping tourism potential are also used. Mapping the potential of the

Munti Gunung tourism village was able to change its previous image as a village of sponges and vagrants into a tourist village (Citra & Sarmita, 2019). For this reason, community involvement in the development of tourist villages is very important to have a significant economic impact on community welfare (Salakory, 2016). Many tourism potentials in West Manggarai that have been known so far and other small islands have been widely praised and known by tourists. Other tourism objects in West Nusa Tenggara have been widely praised and researched but Wae Bobok and its potential have not yet been published. Wae Bobok is an area in the village of Tanjung Boleng, located on a strategic route that connects Labuan Bajo with Ruteng. The position and location make Wae Bobok the perfect stopover for those travelling to Labuan Bajo or from Labuan Bajo to Ruteng. An average of 50–100 people per day make a stopover at Wae Bobok to rest, unwind, eat, and drink before continuing the journey to the main destination. With a fairly high number of visitors every day, the manager and local community are targeting Wae Bobok not only as a stopover but as the main destination for travellers or tourist destinations.

Natural wealth and the many tourism potentials owned by the village are constrained and not well identified because tourism potential mapping has never been carried out (interview Wawan, September 7, 2023), on the other hand, the importance of village maps is in line with the demands of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning villages; the availability of valid and reliable village maps is the forerunner of determining regional boundaries at the upper level and is a fundamental database in realizing national development goals (Citra, 2019).

Here's why mapping Mapping at the village scale is important so that the potential of the village can be known and identified. through mapping tourism potential and identifying tourist attractions owned so that strategic steps can be taken in its development, which ultimately increases the income and welfare of the community. Potential maps illustrate the potential of the area, but the availability of complete and accurate village maps is the main problem faced by Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village, so tourism potential has not been properly identified. This study aims to identify (1) the tourism potential of Wae Bobok to become a tourist destination in Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village, West Manggarai; (2) mapping the tourism potential of Wae Bobok to become a tourist destination in Tanjung Boleng Tourism Village, West Manggarai; and (3) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the development of Wae Bobok as a tourist destination.

METHODS

This research is qualitative research, which is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviours that can be observed (Arikunto, 2010). Data were collected through observation techniques, a literature review, and in-depth interviews with informants, and were analysed using qualitative analysis techniques. Feld data were compiled, summarized, and then described by the research problems in a systematic and clear writing form to serve as a guide for researchers to formulate conclusions as a result of the research conducted (Sugiono, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a safety, tourist destinations will not be able to alternative tourism village management concepts that compete in the tourism market (Adom et al, 2017). Considered a pro for the welfare of local communities because management is fully within the third aspect is often a complaint of power of the local community itself (Inayatullah, 1995) The problem that often occurs in the field is that the majority of tourist villages are still even though tourist facilities are one of the factors managed by people who are less competent. determinants of satisfaction (Soebiyantoro, 2009). thus, the tourism products produced by supporters provided by tourist village managers are less satisfying. Analysis of the tourism potential of Wae Bobok to become a tourist destination if analysed using the four components of tourism attraction from Cooper in Sunaryo (2013) as in Table 3.

No	Tourism Potential Aspects	Type of objects	Description
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1	Attraction	<i>Jurang Mau</i> (Bottomless Pit) Lookout Point	a resting place in the Wae Bobok area with a height of 20 meters above the cliff to enjoy the Instagramable view.
		Wae Bobok Tourist Forest	a conservation forest area with approximately 2000 trees that are conserved for educational purposes.
2	Accessibility	<i>Cunca</i> (waterfall) <i>Pengantin</i>	a pool resembling a waterfall with a diameter of two meters believed to have myths to be used as a story-telling attraction
		Easily accessible from Labuan Bajo City	It takes only 45 minutes from Labuan Bajo City, making Wae Bobok very easy to reach.
		Convenient road conditions	wide and paved road
3	Amenities	a clear entrance and signage	signboard in front of the rest area, making Wae Bobok look beautiful and easy to recognize
		Food and drink stalls	provision of food and drinks for visitors including Wae Bobok's specialty.
		Toilets and bathrooms	5 units of toilet with and bathroom are available
		Seating area to relax forest	for visitors who want to stay longer, to enjoy the forest's atmosphere
4	Ancillary	Outbound Facilities	a hammock, rocking ladder, and camping tent are available
		Great support from the government	the forestry department supplies the facilities.
		Support from the local community	<p>Pokdarwis (kelompok sadar wisata or tourism awareness group) promote Waebobok on media social (Instagram and Facebook)</p> <p>Private parties and educational institutions have assisted in the form of local community empowerment</p>

Table 3: Wae Bobok's Aspects of Tourism Potential Matrix

Tourism Attraction

Wae Bobok has a variety of natural resources, including a) Natural tourism potential consists of viewpoints "Bottomless Pit" is a ravine tourist attraction with beautiful sea views. b) Wae Bobok Tourist Forest is a conservation forest area with approximately 2000 trees that are conserved and have been named for educational purposes. c) *Cunca* (waterfall) *Pengantin* is a pool resembling a waterfall with a diameter of 1.5 meters believed to have myths and interesting stories to be used as a story-telling tour attraction.



Picture 1: Jurang Maut Lookout Point
 author[source]



Picture 2: Pengantin Waterfall
 author[source]

Accessibility is a facility that makes it easy for tourists to reach a destination or related tourist destination. Sofyan & Noor (2016) explain that accessibility can be said to be the facilities for tourists to reach tourist destinations in the form of vehicles, transportation systems, terminals, and road facilities. The condition of the road to Wae Bobok is very good with wide and paved roads and is only 45 minutes from Labuan Bajo City, making Wae Bobok very possible to reach with various two-wheeled and four-wheeled vehicles. There is already a signboard in front of the rest area, making Wae Bobok look beautiful.



Picture 3: Food and Beverage Stalls
 author [source]

Ancillary Service

Ancillary Services, namely tourism organizations needed for tourist services, such as Destination Marketing Management Organizations, and conventional, and Visitor Bureaus. such as Destination Marketing Management Organizations, and conventional, and Visitor Bureaus. Services This additional service must be provided by the local government of a tourist destination both for tourists and for tourism actors (Safitri, 2021). Government support through the Department of Forestry is quite high in the development of Wae Bobok by providing outbound facilities such as tents, rocking ladders, and hammocks subsidized by the Department of Forestry.

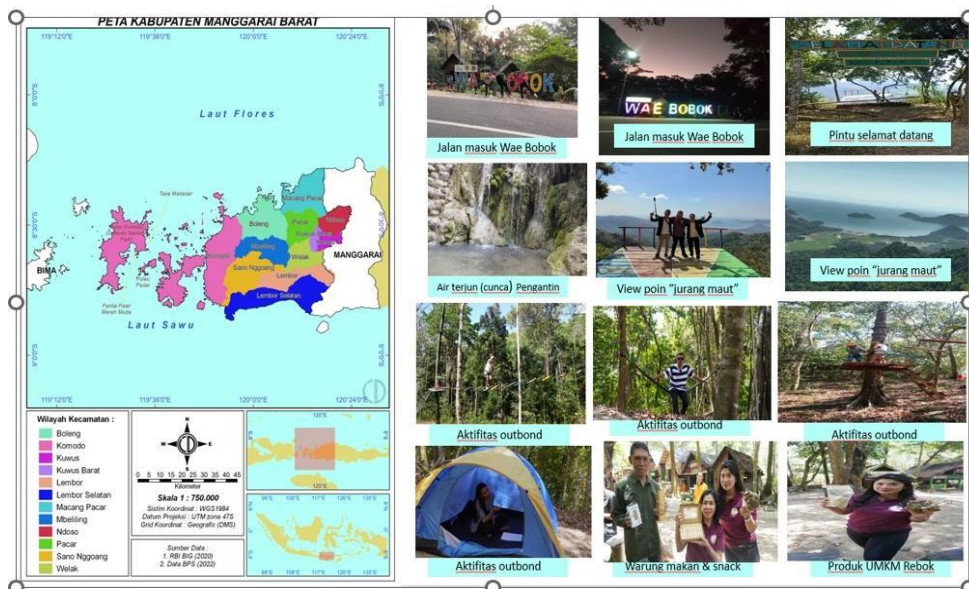
So, from the identification of the components of the development of tourist attractions, amenities, and ancillary services, we still need to get much greater attention to support the attraction component of tourism owned by Wae Bobok Village to be able to develop.

Mapping Wae Bobok's Tourism Potential in Tanjung Boleng

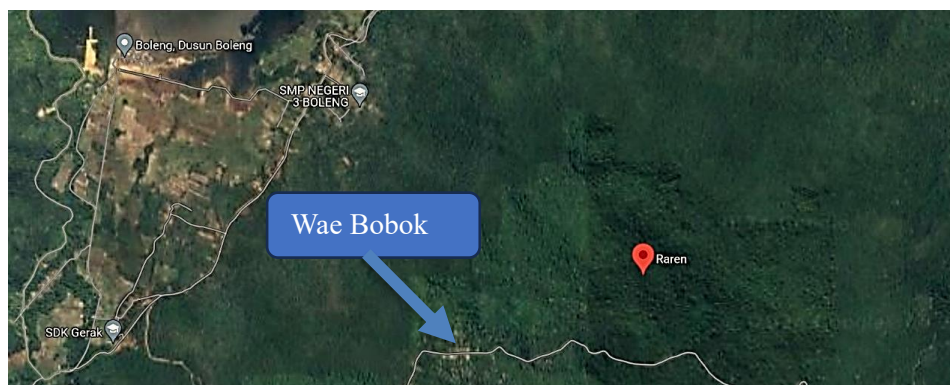
From the analysis of the four tourism components, it can be made possible to map the tourism potential of Wae Bobok Village into into three types of tourism destination, namely Nature Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and Adventure Tourism as in Table 4.

Nature Tourism		
Attraction	Location	Type
Jurang Maut Lookout Point	Tanjung Boleng Village	Nature
<i>Pengantin</i> Waterfall	Tanjung Boleng Village	<i>Waterfall</i>
Wae Bobok Tourist Forest	Tanjung Boleng Village	Ecotourism
Cultural Tourism		
Attraction	Location	Type
Local food specialities	Tanjung Boleng village	Culinary
Local souvenir	Tanjung Boleng Village	Culinary
Adventure Tourism		
Attraction	Location	Type
Camping	Wae Bobok	Adventure
Outbound	Wae Bobok	Adventure

Table 4: Wae Bobok's Tourism Potential



Picture 3: Mapping Wae Bobok’s Tourism Attractions



Picture 4: Wae Bobok’s Location

This map makes Wae Bobok a destination that has a sub-theme based on nature in addition to adventure tours such as trekking and volcanology, and ecosystems such as coffee tours and conservation tours, cultural-based sub-themes, which uses a variety of cultural attractions with a wide range of tourist activities including historical and cultural heritage tours of human civilization, textile, and indigenous village tour, as well as religious and gastronomic tours. (Ismayanti & Djamhur, 2021).

No	Strength	Description
1	Variety of natural attractions	Strength
2	Strategic location	Strength
3	Human resources	Weakness
4	Cleanliness	Weakness
5	No tour package	Weakness
6	No tour guide	Weakness
7	No internet networks	Weakness
8	Strategic position	Opportunities
9	Special segment	Opportunities
10	Community support	Opportunities
11	<i>Mbeliling</i> Forest as a competitor	Threat
12	Natural disaster-prone	Threat

Table 5: SWOT Analysis of Wae Bobok as a Tourist Destination

The identification of strengths of Wae Bobok consists of a) a variety of natural attractions; b) a tourist forest with an area of 2000 hectares that has the potential as an educational tour studying various types of plants and their benefits to become a means of education for visitors while instilling a love for nature and forest conservation. (2) A very beautiful viewpoint, which is a big attraction for visitors because they can see the forest area, beautiful rice fields, and the overall landscape of West Manggarai from the height of the viewpoint cliff. (3) *Cunca Pengantin*, a waterfall that is not too high with a pool of only 2 meters in diameter, is a natural potential tourist attraction because of its strong myth and an interesting philosophical story to be learned and told from generation to generation. b) Strategic location. Wae Bobok is located on the route that connects Labuan Bajo City and Ruteng. It makes Wae Bobok a strategic place as a stopover and rest area. As long as it is a stopover and resting place, an average of fifty people come to Wae Bobok per day to just rest, eat, and drink at the stalls available at Wae Bobok.

The identification of Wae Bobok's weaknesses consists of a) the quality of human resources. The lack of awareness of the Wae Bobok community to develop tourism is characterized by a lack of understanding of tourism awareness and *Sapta Pesona*, so they do not yet know how and what the benefits of developing their tourism potential area are. b) The lack of cleanliness. The food stalls and toilets are poorly maintained and dirty, has no adequate trash bins, so there is still garbage piling up c) no local guides to serve tourists who come and want to get information about Wae Bobok. *Pokdarwis* (tourism awareness group) have not been maximized in providing accurate information about Wae Bobok, especially in English. d) No tour package. There is no package tour for visitors who want to buy facilities and tourist attractions in one package. e) No internet networks. The unavailability of the internet network is one of the biggest barriers to promoting the existence of Wae Bobok among the wider community.

The identification of opportunities owned by Wae Bobok is a) strategic position. Wae Bobok is located on a strategic route connecting Labuan Bajo and Ruteng as a centre of tourism and business activities. The busy traffic flow makes Wae Bobok more quickly recognized. b) A special segment of students and college students. The characteristics of Wae Bobok, with its forest and potential for outbound activities, are very appropriate for educational activities for students and college students. The outbound facilities available accommodate the needs of young tourists who want challenges. c) local community support. Community participation and involvement are very important to encourage the realization of tourism development goals and increase the economic level of the community itself. The Wae Bobok local community has an awareness of the need to be involved in the development, so they enthusiastically participate in various assistance programs carried out so far, both by academics, the government, and the private sector.

The competitor is identified as a threat to Wae Bobok. The existence of the nearest tourist forest, namely the Mbeliling forest, is a competitor that was known before Wae Bobok. The Mbeliling Forest is only 25 kilometres away from Labuan Bajo and is famous not only for being the largest forest in Flores but also according to BirdLife International research.

By Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the right and most needed strategies can be taken in the development stage of Wae Bobok by the internal and external conditions that are owned by Wae Bobok.

CONCLUSION

Wae Bobok has considerable tourism potential to become a tourist destination in the aspect of attraction; (a) natural tourism consists of *Jurang Mau* (bottomless pit) Lookout Point, which is a tourist attraction in the form of a valley with a beautiful view of the sea. (b) tourism forest is a conservation forest area with approximately 2000 trees that are conserved and have been named for educational purposes. (c) *Cunca* (waterfall) *Pengantin* is a pool resembling a waterfall with a diameter of two meters believed to have myths to be used as a story-telling tour attraction. In terms of accessibility, Wae Bobok is easily accessible because of its route connecting the city of Labuan Bajo with Ruteng with very good road conditions. In terms of amenities, Wae Bobok has the facilities needed for tourists in the form of food and beverage stalls, toilets, and bathrooms. In terms of institutions, a group of young people known as *pokdarwis* (tourism awareness group) founded and oversaw Wae Bobok. With its various attractions, Wae Bobok is mapped into natural, cultural, and adventure tourism attractions. Its nature, culture, adventure attraction, strategic location, and amenities for tourists are identified as a strength of Wae Bobok, however, there is a lack of awareness to maintain cleanliness, capacity, and availability of local guides, and package tours, internet network is a note that must be paid attention to. Nevertheless, the local community and the government are optimistic and enthusiastic about their

opportunities; many schools are increasingly choosing Wae Bobok for their intra-school activities besides local community support.

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