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UTILIZATION OF KAMBANG IWAK RECREATIONAL PARK FACILITIES AS A COMMUNITY TOURISM SPORT IN PALEMBANG CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the use of the Kambang Iwak Recreational Park as a means and infrastructure for community tourism sports in Palembang City. Kambang Iwak is one of the city parks that has an important role as a green open space as well as a place for recreation and physical activity. This research is motivated by increasing public awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the need for public spaces that can support these activities. The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a field approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through direct observation, interviews with informants, documentation, and the distribution of questionnaires to randomly selected park visitors. The results of the study show that most people use Kambang Iwak Park for sports activities such as jogging, cycling, morning gymnastics, and other leisure activities. Park facilities such as jogging tracks, night lighting, children's play areas, and a beautiful natural atmosphere are the main supporting factors that make people feel comfortable and safe when doing activities. Respondents also stated that the park made a positive contribution to their physical and mental health. However, there are several suggestions related to improving facilities, managing cleanliness, and providing space for sports community activities

Keywords: *City Park, Kambang Iwak, Sports Tourism, Public Spaces, Healthy Lifestyle*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sector that is one of the backbones of the economy in many countries in the world, as well as in Indonesia. The tourism sector in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth and has become one of the main sources of foreign exchange for the country (Rusdi, 2019). This development is supported by the great tourism potential that Indonesia has, ranging from stunning natural beauty, the nation's cultural and historical richness, to the diversity of unique traditional festivals and ceremonies. In addition, paintings, handicrafts, and various interesting destinations in each region are also strong attractions for foreign tourists to explore the charm of the archipelago (Aryanata et al., 2020) (Andrasmoro, 2018). Tourist visits will stimulate social interaction with the residents around tourist attractions and stimulate the response of the surrounding community according to their ability to adapt both in the economic, social and cultural fields (Soebagyo, 2012) (Utami & Kafabih, 2021).

Sports tourism has grown and even become the industry it is currently in. mainstay of various countries in the world. The foreign exchange income obtained from the tourism sector, especially sports tourism, is quite large, currently Indonesia continues to strive to

develop ¹ the tourism sector. The government's seriousness in developing tourism is implemented in Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning tourism (Palembang, 2024).

⁶ Tourism is a variety of tourism activities supported by a variety of facilities and services carried out by the community, business actors, the central government, and local governments. In its development, tourism urgently needs active support from local governments, both in the form of policies, infrastructure, promotion, and preservation of local culture so that it can grow sustainably and provide benefits to the local community (Pratiwi, 2018)

In tourism activities, there are two important elements that are interrelated, namely the subject of tourism and the tourist object. The subject of tourism refers to individuals or groups who travel on tourist trips, whether for recreational, educational, cultural, or spiritual purposes. Meanwhile, tourist attractions are everything that is the main attraction or destination for tourists to visit, such as natural beauty, historical sites, cultural heritage, amusement parks, to regional culinary specialties. The interaction between the subject and the tourist object is what shapes the dynamics of tourism activities and encourages regional economic growth. (Nyayu Uly Auliana et al., 2023).

Tourism has now become part of the demands of people's lives in the modern era. A dynamic lifestyle, the need for entertainment, relaxation, and the desire to explore new places make tourism activities no longer considered a tertiary need, but an important part of life balance (Aziz, 2022). The demand of people to travel continues to increase year by year, not only in various countries in the world, but also domestically. ³ Indonesia, with ⁴ its stunning natural wealth and unique diversity of cultural arts, is a strong attraction for domestic and foreign tourists to continue exploring the various tourist destinations available (Firdaus & Purnomo, 2015).

³ Tourism is defined as a series of travel activities carried out by individuals or groups to a specific place outside their neighborhood, for recreational, educational, cultural, spiritual, or business purposes (Nopianto et al., 2020). This tourism activity cannot run alone, but must be supported by various adequate facilities and services, such as transportation, accommodation, culinary, tour guides, and other supporting infrastructure. The support is provided collaboratively by the community, business actors in the tourism sector, the central government, and local governments, each of which has an important role in creating quality, safe, and sustainable tourism experiences (Fitriantono et al.,

2018).

One of the specialties of Indonesian Tourism destinations is located in the city of Palembang. The potential for tourism wealth in Palembang City has complete potential, because Palembang City has tourist attractions in various aspects such as historical tourism of the Sriwijaya Kingdom, natural tourism such as the Musi River which has beauty from upstream to downstream, to tourism potential in the field of sports, and religion, one of which is Kambang Iwak Park in Palembang City (Hermawanto & Nurlia, 2021) (Arthen & Anggraini, 2019).

The facilities available in this area are very diverse and designed to meet the needs of visitors from various walks of life, including safe and educational children's playgrounds, comfortable seating spread across various corners of the park, clean and hygienic direct drinking water taps, to free internet hotspot facilities that allow visitors to stay connected to the digital world while relaxing (Okilanda et al., 2018). Surrounded by shady trees, cool air, and a calm and beautiful atmosphere, this area is not only a recreational space, but also a place to unwind from the hustle and bustle of the city. Therefore, it is very appropriate that this area is nicknamed the Lung of Palembang City, because of its vital role in providing green space and improving the quality of the environment in the midst of rapid urban development (Anggraeni, 2018).

METHOD

This research is a quantitative descriptive research that aims to obtain an accurate picture of tourists' preferences for the tourist attraction of Kambang Iwak Park (KI) as one of the public spaces in Palembang City. The main focus of this study is to find out the extent to which this city park is used by the community as a public green open space that functions as a means of social communication, recreation, and interaction between citizens.

The method used in this study is the survey method, which is an approach carried out by taking samples from the park visitor population to obtain factual information directly. Primary data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires to tourists who were visiting Taman Kambang Iwak. In addition, field observations were also carried out to support the results of the questionnaire data and provide context to the pattern of space use by the community.

The specific objectives of this study include: (1) identifying the function of public space utilization in Kambang Iwak Park, (2) identifying the characteristics of visitors in

utilizing the public space, and (3) analyzing the factors that affect the use of public space in the city park. The data that has been collected is then analyzed using descriptive analysis to see the general trend of park utilization, as well as **multiple linear regression analysis** to determine the relationship and influence between several variables on the level of public space utilization in Kambang Iwak Park.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the majority of visitors to Taman Kambang Iwak came from the young age group (17-25 years) with a predominance of male respondents. The main activities carried out include running, cycling, walking, and gymnastics, with a fairly high level of visits, namely 1-2 times a week. Facilities such as jogging tracks, playgrounds, gazebos, drinking water taps, and free Wi-Fi are considered adequate and support physical and social activities. However, some visitors conveyed the need for additional public toilets and prayer rooms as supporting facilities. The park is also used as a place for community interaction and social activities, ranging from joint gymnastics to bazaars. The cleanliness of the garden is considered quite good, although it is still Behavior of littering was found.

Table 1. Data

Aspects	Category	Frek. (Org)	(%)
Respondent Age	17-25 years old	7	70%
	>25 years old	3	30%
Gender	Man	7	70%
	Woman	3	30%
Activities in the Park	Run	4	40%
	Cycling	3	30%
	Walk	2	20%
	Gymnastics	1	10%
Frequency of Visits	1-2 times/week	4	40%
	Almost every day	3	30%
	Once a month	3	30%
Utilization of Facilities	Jogging track, playground, gazebo	10	100%
Drinking Water & Wi-Fi	Adequate	9	90%
	Inadequate	1	10%
Additional Needs	Toilets & prayer rooms are needed	7	70%
	Not very important	3	30%
Social Activities	Engage the community	8	80%
	Not involved	2	20%
Garden Cleanliness	Pretty clean	8	80%
	Less clean (there is garbage)	2	20%

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Based on the results of a survey of 10 respondents, the majority of visitors to Taman Kambang Iwak are 17-25 years old (70%) and dominated by men (70%). The main activities carried out in the park include running (40%), cycling (30%), walking (20%), and gymnastics (10%). Most respondents regularly visit the park 1–2 times per week (40%). All respondents (100%) took advantage of facilities such as jogging tracks, playgrounds, and gazebos. Most rated the drinking water and Wi-Fi facilities adequate (90%). However, 70% of respondents stated the need for additional public toilets and prayer rooms. Socially, the park is also used for community activities (80%), although there are still hygiene problems due to the behavior of some visitors (20%). In general, data shows that Kambang Iwak Park plays an important role as a public space that supports the physical, social, and recreational activities of the community

Discussion

The results of the study show that Taman Kambang Iwak (KI) has a strategic role in supporting the community's needs for multifunctional green open space. From a demographic aspect, the majority of visitors come from the productive age group, namely 17-25 years old, with the dominant proportion being men (70%). These findings indicate that the younger generation has a high interest in physical and social activities in open spaces. This is in line with the trend of a healthy lifestyle that is starting to develop among urban circles. In terms of activities, most respondents use the park for light sports activities, such as running, cycling, and walking. This activity reflects that the function of the city park is not only as an aesthetic element of the environment, but also as an active recreational facility that is affordable and easily accessible to the public. In addition, some visitors use the park for joint gymnastics, which shows the use of public spaces for group and community activities.

The relatively high frequency of visits (40% of respondents come 1–2 times per week and 30% almost every day) indicates that Taman Kambang Iwak has become an important part of the community's routine. This shows that the existence of well-managed city parks can encourage a healthy lifestyle and improve the quality of social interaction between residents. Regarding facilities and infrastructure, respondents assessed the available facilities such as jogging tracks, children's playgrounds, gazebos, as well as access to drinking water and free Wi-Fi as important components that add to the attractiveness of the park. However, the majority of respondents (70%) stated the need to add public toilet facilities and prayer rooms, which are currently still considered

inadequate, especially during crowded visits. This is an important note for park managers and local governments to improve basic facilities for the convenience of visitors.

In the social context, this park is also used as a community gathering place such as morning gymnastics groups, music arts communities, skateboarding, and weekly bazaars. This function suggests that urban parks can also be spaces for interaction across social groups, which strengthens social cohesion between citizens. Activities like this support the idea that public open spaces function not only ecologically, but also as cultural and social spaces. However, even though the cleanliness of the park in general is considered quite good, the problem of visitor discipline in maintaining cleanliness is still a problem. It was found that the behavior of littering was carried out by a small number of visitors. This shows **the importance of community participation** and continuous education **in maintaining the sustainability of the function of city parks.**

Kambang Iwak Park has shown a dual function as a means of sports, recreation, and social interaction for the people of Palembang City. The existence of this park is also an important indicator in supporting the quality of urban life, both from health, psychological, and social aspects.

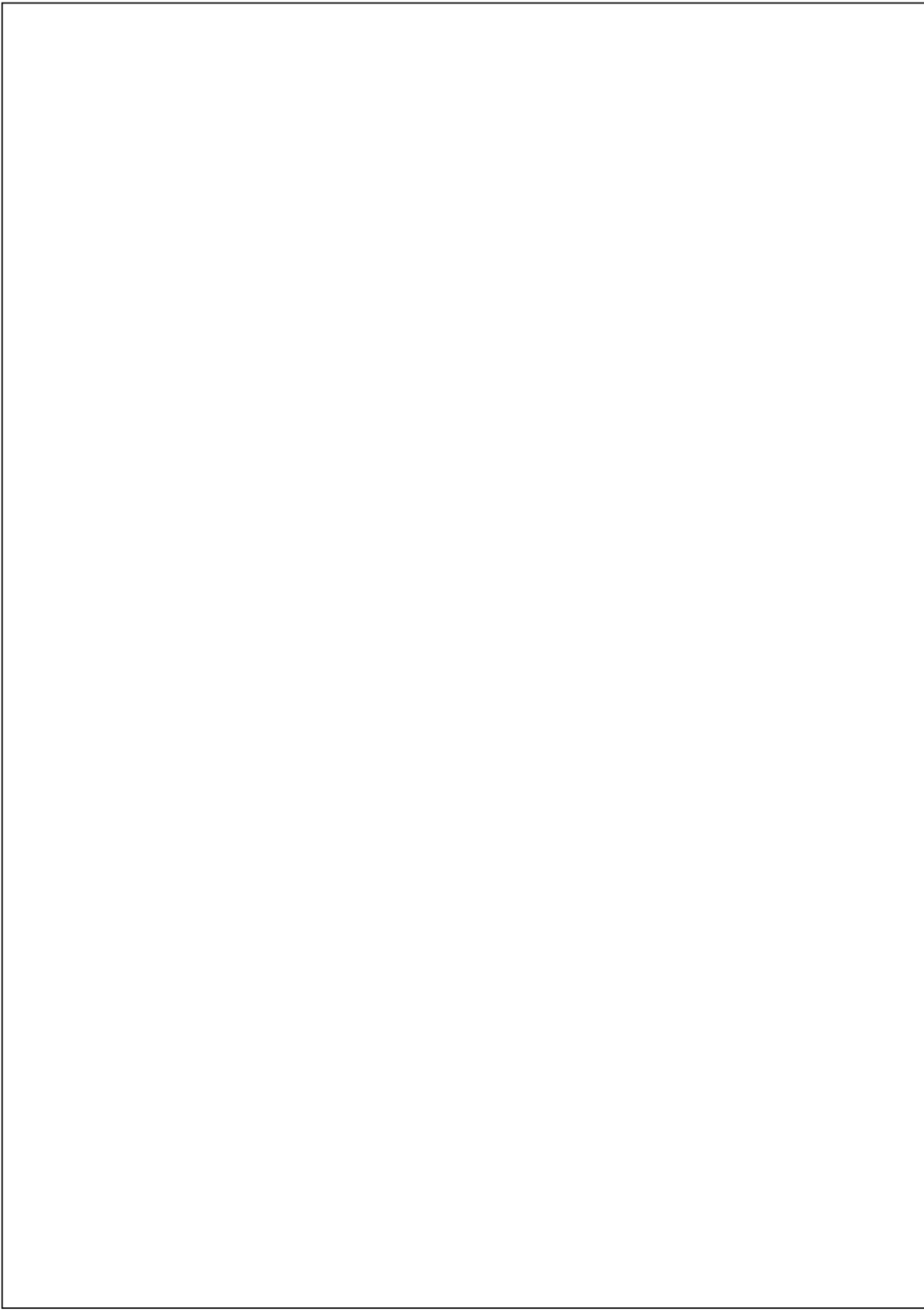
CONCLUSION

This study shows that Kambang Iwak Park is optimally utilized by the community, especially 17-25 years old, as a means of sports, recreation, and social interaction. The park facilities are considered adequate, although the addition of public toilets and prayer rooms is still needed. The park plays an important role as a public space that supports healthy lifestyles, community activities, and comfort for city dwellers in a sustainable manner

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