



# Jurnal of Sport Recreation and Leisure Management

Journal homepage: <https://journal.uny.ac.id/publications/jsrlm/index>

e-ISSN: 3109-6921



## JSRLM

Jurnal of Sport Recreation and Leisure Management

### ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL OF WATER SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ATTRACTION POWER IN SURABAYAN ARGOMULYO SEDAYU VILLAGE

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*Received: 16 Mei 2025; Revised: 1 Juni 2025; Accepted: 1 Juli 2025*

#### **Abstract:**

*This study aimed to: (1) explore the potential of natural resources that support water sports activities in Karst Tubing; (2) identify key challenges in developing water sports as a sustainable tourism attraction in Karst Tubing; and (3) develop effective marketing strategies to enhance the appeal of water-based tourism in Karst Tubing. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects comprised six groups: stakeholders, tourism business actors, guides, tourists, local vendors, and community members. Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and comprehensive conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques. The findings from the four main indicators indicated that Karst Tubing held significant potential to be developed as a sustainable water-based recreational tourism destination. The presence of a supportive natural environment, community involvement, and positive visitor responses emerged as key strengths. However, challenges like seasonal changes, limited infrastructure, human resource competency gaps, and a lack of promotional innovation required immediate attention. Therefore, a strategic, collaborative, and sustainable management approach is essential to transform Karst Tubing into a leading tourism icon capable of adapting to current tourism dynamics.*

**Keywords:** *tourism potential, water sports, Karst Tubing*

**How to Quote:** Yulianingrum, D. R. & Septiyanto, A. (2025) Analysis Of The Development Potential Of Water Sports As A Sustainable Tourism Attraction In Surobayan Village, Argomulyo, Sedayu. (Case Study: Karst Tubing). Recreation and Sports Leisure Time Management, 1(2), pp. 11-16

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most developed sectors in the world and contributes significantly to the country's economy. According to Pakpahan & Sentosa (2020), tourism can provide a lot of income for regions that are aware and optimize their tourism potential. According to Prastika &

Sunarta (2018) define tourism as an activity that touches the community and provides changes for the local community. Tourism is not only seen from an economic perspective, but as an important means to fulfill human needs for entertainment and recreation. Tourism is a phenomenon that arises due to travel activities as a form of human activity to fulfill desires (curiosity), both recreational and exploratory in nature (Sukmaratri, 2021). The human need for entertainment and recreation is a crucial component in achieving well-being. Recreational activities as a means to help reduce stress, improve mood, and contribute positively to mental health (Siby & Kasingku, 2024). Tourism is an activity that aims to have fun, recreation, or visit interesting places to be a tourist destination (Syarifah & Rochani, 2022). As technology develops and living standards improve, more and more people see tourism as a way to fulfill these needs.

Entertainment is not just about exploration and fun, but also contributes to emotional well-being. With a variety of options available, each person can determine the type of entertainment that suits his or her interests. Tourism provides a wide selection of destinations and activities to fulfill human needs for entertainment, ranging from enjoying natural beauty, cultural tourism, to adrenaline-pumping adventure activities. The increasing human interest in traveling has made tourism one of the promising economic sectors for the community (Shantika & Mahagangga, 2018). The Special Region of Yogyakarta is the most famous tourism destination in Indonesia that offers a unique combination of cultural heritage, history and natural beauty. The city is known for its historical temples such as Borobudur and Prambanan which are a magnet for domestic and international tourists. The city's artistic traditions also attract tourists with various traditional art performances such as shadow puppetry, classical dance, and gamelan music that reflect the richness of local culture.

Yogyakarta is not only famous as a cultural center, but also a city that offers enchanting natural beauty. Starting from the beautiful beaches in Gunungkidul, the majestic panorama of Mount Merapi, the green panorama of Pine Forest, and adventure tourism in Pindul Cave. This diversity of nature provides opportunities for tourists to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities. The variety of destinations and cultural experiences make the city an ideal destination for travelers. In addition to the diversity of activities available, such as trekking, hiking, cycling, and enjoying local cuisine, will further enrich the tourism experience in Yogyakarta, making it a place that is hard to forget for every traveler. Just a few kilometers away from Yogyakarta, Bantul Regency holds natural beauty that makes it one of the areas with great tourism potential. In addition to its beautiful beaches, such as Parangtritis Beach and Depok Beach, there are also interesting adventure tours in Argomulyo Village. This tour is excellent for tourists who are looking for challenges and adrenaline activities through river tubing at Karst Tubing. The unspoiled natural conditions, coupled with the distinctive karst rocks, are the reasons for choosing Karst Tubing as the object of this research. Based on observations during Guided Industrial Practice, the author found that although Karst Tubing has great potential, there are several problems that hinder the development of these tours.

Despite its attractive natural potential, Karst Tubing faces a major challenge in maintaining the number of visitors. The decline in the number of tourists is mainly due to seasonal changes, where during the dry season low water discharge results in tubing activities not being carried out. In addition, the limited variety of tour packages offered and the unoptimized promotional strategy also affect visitor interest. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the potential for water sports development as a sustainable tourist attraction, as well as to design an effective promotional strategy to increase the number of tourist visits.

## **METHODS**

### **TYPE OF RESEARCH**

This research is a descriptive qualitative research whose main data collection is done using interviews, and the data obtained will be analyzed using data triangulation techniques. This research uses a type of Case Study research, which is research that analyzes data in depth on a particular object. In this study, the main data collection tool is interviews, the results of the questionnaire will be analyzed using triangulation techniques to ensure that the information obtained from various sources has high suitability and accuracy, so that the data obtained is more objective.

## TIME AND PLACE

This research was conducted at Karst Tubing located at Jalan Wates Km. 9, Surobayan, Argomulyo, Sedayu, Bantul, Yogyakarta Special Region. The research was conducted from November 15, 2024 - January 15, 2025, which included preparation, observation, data collection and data analysis.

## RESEARCH SUBJECT

Amin et al., (2017) Defining research subjects as all elements involved in research includes objects and subjects that have specific characteristics and characteristics. The determination of subjects in this study is all those involved in the development of the Karst Tubing Tourism Object. The number of research subjects involved in this study consisted of six main groups, namely stakeholders, tourism actors, guides, tourists, local merchants, and local communities. The selection of research subjects was chosen with the consideration that each group has a different but complementary role and perspective in the context of the tourism development under study.

## RESEARCH CONCEPT

Water Sports Development Potential and Sustainable Tourism Attraction as research concepts. The following are the definitions of the two main concepts of this research:

### 1. Water Sports Development Potential

The concept of water sports development refers to the capabilities and opportunities available to develop various water activities. This variable includes factors such as the presence of natural resources (rivers, lakes, beaches), available infrastructure, tourists' interests and preferences, and support from local communities and tourism managers. This potential will determine how effectively and attractively a destination can develop and promote water sports activities.

### 2. Customer Satisfaction

The concept includes elements such as unique and authentic tourism experiences, preservation of culture and environment, and participation of local communities in tourism management. These attractions ensure that tourism not only provides short-term benefits, but also supports long-term resource sustainability and community well-being.

## DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

The data collection techniques in this study involved the use of the following research instruments:

1. Observation: Comprehensive observations were used to collect field notes on the general conditions surrounding the research object, while focused observations were made to observe in detail those related to water sports.
2. Interview: Interviews were conducted to explore in-depth information related to tourism development in Karst Tubing. This technique was chosen because it is able to provide a more contextual, reflective, and comprehensive understanding from the direct perspective and experience of the interviewees.
3. Documentation: Documentation serves to complement observation and interview data. Documentation can also be used to see the development of a research object over time, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of changes and potential.

## DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Data analysis used in this research is:

1. Data Reduction: simplification of rough data into data that is easy to describe. . Data obtained from the field were analyzed through a data reduction process, where information was summarized, important things were selected and identified, and irrelevant or unnecessary data were set aside.
2. Data Presentation: the process of organizing information from the results of data reduction to facilitate drawing conclusions and making subsequent decisions.
3. Drawing Conclusions: After the data is presented, the researcher will draw conclusions by re-examining the data reduction and presentation process. This is done to ensure that the conclusions made are in accordance with the data that has been analyzed, so that they do not deviate from the research results.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH RESULTS

#### 1. Overview of Karst Tubing Tourism Object

Karst Tubing is a natural attraction located in Surobayan Village, Argomulyo, Sedayu District, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region. The beauty of the river surrounded by karst rock formations provides distinctive characteristics and is the main attraction of Karst Tubing. Therefore, Karst Tubing offers water recreation sport attractions that are excellent for tourists, namely river tubing. By using an inner tube, tourists are invited to go down the river surrounded by karst rocks and guided by a guide.

Not only offering tubing activities, Karst Tubing also provides various other interesting activities, such as archery, paintball, gamelan, and outbound making it an ideal place to have fun with family or friends. Supported by quite complete facilities, Karst Tubing ensures the comfort of visitors by providing a large parking area, public toilets, changing rooms, public toilets, as well as food stalls serving traditional food to enjoy after tubing activities.

Through its uniqueness and natural potential, Karst Tubing is not only a tourist destination that offers exciting experiences, but also a tangible manifestation of community efforts in managing local resources to support sustainable tourism. Through management that involves the local community, Karst Tubing has succeeded in creating a destination that not only attracts tourists, but also provides a positive economic impact for local residents.

#### 2. Potential for Water Recreation Sports Development to Become the Main Attraction of Karst Tubing

In its management, various parties play a role in preserving and developing this tourism potential. Based on the results of interviews with all samples, the potential for water sports development in Karst Tubing is strongly influenced by favorable natural conditions. The beauty of the environment, the presence of cliffs and karst rocks, and the varied tubing trails provide a different sensation of experience. These factors indicate that Karst Tubing has a distinctive appeal and is worth developing as a water sports-based tourism. However, notes were also found related to the queuing system that still needs to be addressed to improve the quality of tourism services. This shows that tourism development is not only dependent on natural potential, but also on managing the overall visitor experience..

#### 3. The Impact of Seasonal Changes on Tubing Activities at Karst Tubing

Seasonal changes have a considerable impact on the sustainability of tubing activities at Karst Tubing. The alternation between the rainy and dry seasons causes variations in river water discharge, which directly affects the safety and comfort of tourists. Based on the results of interviews with all samples, seasonal changes have a considerable impact on the sustainability of tubing activities at Karst Tubing.

The alternation between the rainy and dry seasons causes variations in river water discharge, which directly affects the safety and comfort of tourists. Tubing activities are often not possible and visitors experience disappointment. As a response, the manager prepares a variety of alternative tours such as outbound, archery, and paintball to maintain visitor satisfaction and maintain the operational sustainability of the destination..

#### 4. Development of Karst Tubing Tourism Objects in Improving the Economy of Local Communities in Surobayan Village

One important aspect of tourism development is its impact on the local economy. Karst Tubing not only offers an adventure-based tourism experience, but also contributes to opening up economic opportunities for local residents. Based on the results of interviews with the entire sample, the existence of Karst Tubing has a significant economic impact on the surrounding community. The majority of residents respond positively because of the increase in the number of tourists which directly encourages local economic activities, such as the increase in small businesses and residents' stalls that are visited.

In addition, new job opportunities have also opened up, especially as tour guides and other support personnel. Although there are a handful of residents who disagree, in general Karst Tubing is considered capable of moving the wheels of the village economy more dynamically.

#### 5. Promotion Strategy to Increase Tourist Visits to Karst Tubing

In order to increase the number of tourist visits, it is important for Karst Tubing to continuously develop and adjust its promotional strategy to reach more visitors. In this effort, each party involved provided their views on the best way to introduce this destination. Based on the results of interviews with all samples, Karst Tubing's promotional strategy has been running through various efforts, however, offline promotion is still not maximized and is an important concern, especially to reach segments of society that are less connected to technology. Synergy and collaboration across sectors are needed so that Karst Tubing can be more widely recognized.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research results of the four indicators, it can be concluded that the potential for water sports development in Karst Tubing Surobayan Argomulyo Sedayu Village is very large and promising to be developed as a water recreation sports-based tourist destination that is able to develop sustainably. From the indicators of development potential, it can be seen that this area has a strong ecological and social carrying capacity, especially with the support of local communities and active participation in tourism management. However, the development of Karst Tubing as a water sports-based tourist destination cannot be separated from a number of challenges. One of the main obstacles is the factor of seasonal changes, especially during the dry season, which causes water discharge to decrease so that tubing activities cannot run in order to maintain visitor safety. This condition makes tourism operations unstable and has an impact on the consistency of visits. In addition to limited innovation in the preparation of tour packages, the promotional strategy has not been optimal, considering that the utilization of social media and offline promotions is still minimal, unable to reach a wider tourist market. Nevertheless, local community participation remains an important foundation in maintaining the sustainability of this destination.

Overall, Karst Tubing has great potential to continue to develop as a sustainable tourist attraction, which is in accordance with previous research that recognizes the great potential of Karst Tubing as a tourist destination that supports economic growth and the welfare of the surrounding community

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that Karst Tubing has enormous potential to be developed as a water sports-based tourist destination. However, there are obstacles during seasonal changes, so tubing activities cannot be carried out for safety reasons. Therefore, efforts to provide alternative tours such as archery, paintball, outbound, and playing gamelan are strategic steps taken by the manager to maintain the attractiveness of the destination throughout the year. As part of the development effort, the addition of tour packages that utilize the natural potential of the river can be an attractive alternative. This package can include various activities such as water games, or group activities on the river, which not only provide an exciting experience for tourists, but also enrich the appeal of Karst Tubing. Thus, by optimally utilizing nature, it is hoped that this package can enhance the tourist experience and expand the tourist attraction in Surobayan Village.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank all those who played an important role in this research, for their advice, guidance and support. In particular, the author is grateful to the owner, manager, field coordinator of Karst Tubing, guides, tourists, traders and the community who have helped become sources or informants for researchers to obtain information. In addition, to the Argomulyo Village Government who helped the implementation of this research..

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