

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Do traditional houses as tourist attractions play an important role in community well-being? The case of Nias Island, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

In Nias Island, Indonesia, traditional houses are a popular tourist destination with a lovely appeal. This study's primary goal was to determine how traditional houses serving as tourist attractions impact the local population's well-being. A questionnaire was explicitly created to gather the required data for this purpose. We applied the multiple regression method to analyze the research data. The population in this study was based on service providers around the traditional house, totaling 30 respondents, and the entire population was used as a research sample using the saturated sampling method. Techniques for gathering data using questionnaires and documentation. The findings demonstrated how historic homes serving as tourist destinations improved locals' quality of life by bringing in more money. These findings imply that traditional house attractions can improve local culture, living circumstances, and positive behavior, all contributing to the community's well-being.

KEYWORDS

Community well-being; traditional house; tourism; tourist attraction

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1. Introduction

In Indonesia, the tourism sector has shown positive development, with various tourist destinations in each region continuing to grow (Mardhani et al., 2024). The growth of tourism can influence both social and economic aspects, particularly through activities within the tourism sector that significantly contribute to improving community welfare and creating employment opportunities. The economic benefits of tourism include the generation of foreign exchange from international tourist visits and the added value to national output (Mardhani et al., 2021).

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The Nias Islands, located to the west of Sumatra Island, Indonesia, are home to the Nias ethnic group. The tourism sector in Nias has considerable potential, particularly in its marine and natural attractions. In addition, Nias Regency is rich in cultural elements that are unique and diverse, including traditional arts, customary laws, languages, festivals, and architectural styles of traditional houses. One of the most famous cultural attractions in Nias is stone jumping (*lompat batu*), a well-known tradition that continues to be preserved. Other cultural sites that attract many international tourists include the traditional Nias houses.

One of the most well-known tourist destinations in Nias is the traditional Nias house located in Tumori Village, West Gunungsitoli District, Gunungsitoli, North Sumatra (Figure 1). The village currently has ten traditional houses, down from an original twenty-one. The decline is due to natural disasters such as the 2005 earthquake and the conversion of some houses into ordinary residences. Despite their age—ranging from 50 to 120 years—the traditional houses remain structurally sound and visually impressive. Tourism centered around these traditional houses in Tumori Village has had a significant positive impact on the local community, particularly in the economic sector.

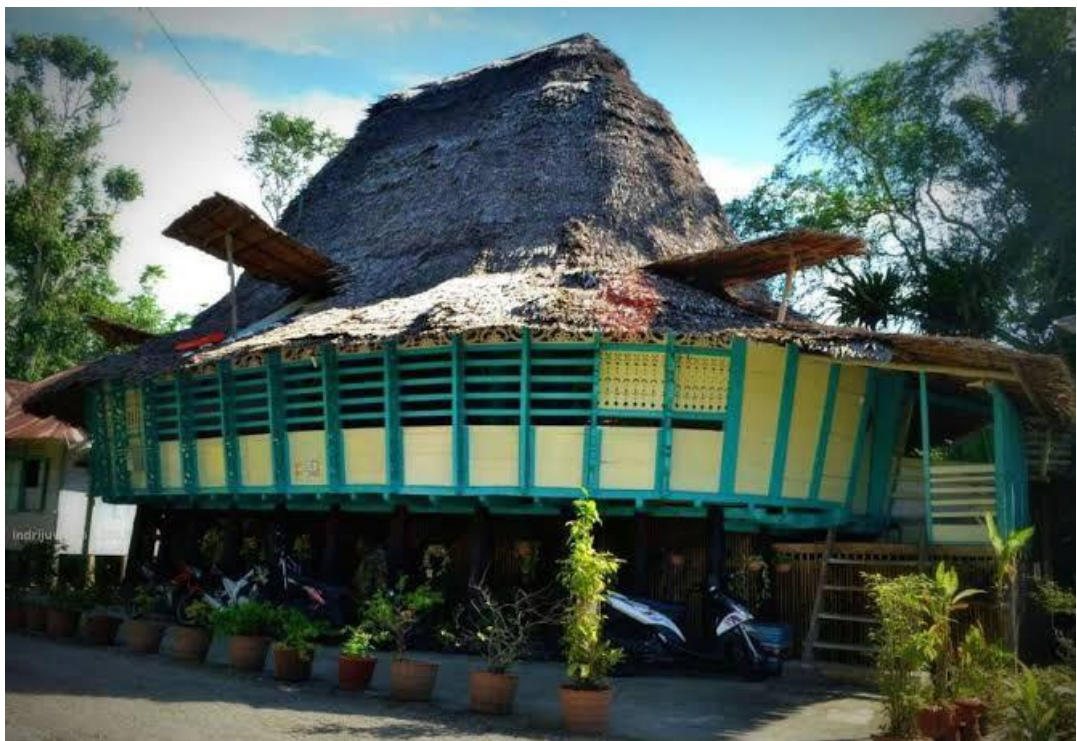


Figure 1. Traditional house in Tumori Village, Gunungsitoli City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Source: <https://tindaktandukarsitek.com/2013/10/26/omo-niha-di-keramahan-desa-tumori-yaahowu-nias-2/>

The location of the Nias traditional house in Tumori Village is not far from Gunungsitoli City, about 7 km to the north, there is a large gate with the words "Welcome to the Nias Traditional House Tourism Village," which is located approximately 200 meters before Tumori Village. Then, not far from the gate, approximately 300 meters away, you will see Nias traditional houses lined up with the beauty of their neatly arranged buildings. This easy access is one of the factors that attracts tourists to see Nias traditional houses directly, the history that was born from the traditional houses of Tumori Village with people who still preserve the customs and culture that exist in Tumori Village, creating village tourism that continues to grow.

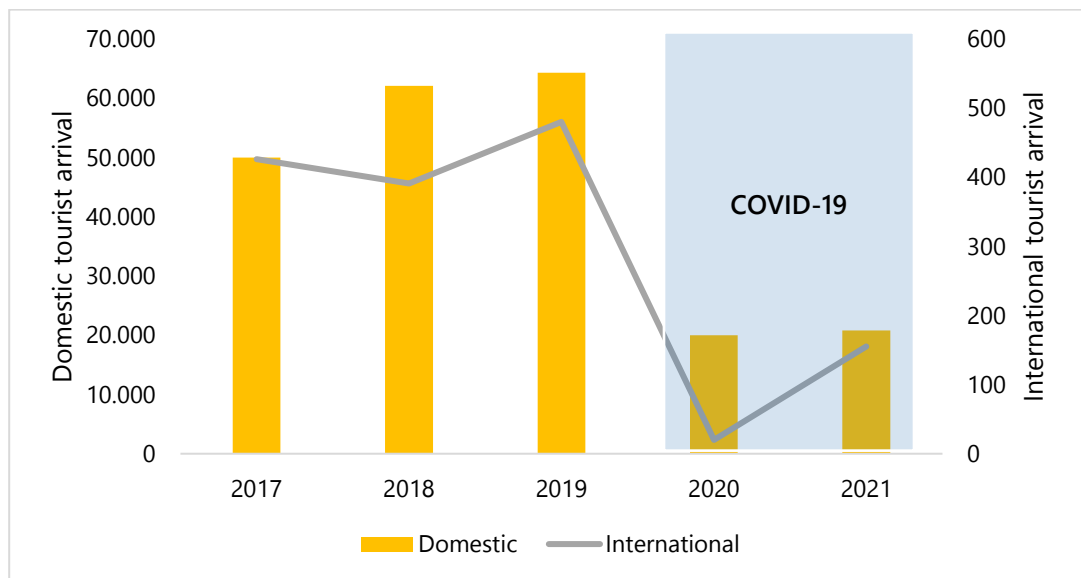


Figure 2. Domestic and International Tourist Arrivals, Nias Island, North Sumatra, 2017-2021

Source: BPS-Statistics Indonesia

Figure 2 illustrates the number of tourist arrivals from 2017-2021. Tourist arrivals experienced rapid growth, but there was a decline during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had an impact on the tourism sector, especially on the number of tourist arrivals. There are policies from the government to break the chain of spreading COVID-19, one of which is limiting mobility and closing tourist attractions, so it is estimated that this is one of the factors for the decline in tourist visits.

Throughout 2020, only 19,797 tourists were visiting Gunungsitoli City, in contrast to the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic from 2017 to 2019, which continued

to increase. Likewise, in 2021, which is still a pandemic period, only 10,487 tourists are visiting. Throughout 2019, the number of tourist visits has increased with a total of 64,767 tourist visits consisting of domestic and foreign tourists, with 64,287 and 480 people, respectively. One of the factors is the promotion in the form of the Sail Nias event held in 2019 so that domestic and foreign tourists are increasingly familiar with and interested in seeing cultural and maritime tourism in Nias, especially in Gunungsitoli City. It can be concluded that tourist visits play a considerable role in the regional and national economy.

2. Literature review

Traditional homes are valuable cultural and historical assets and often serve as tourist attractions. Their status as tourist attractions may significantly influence community welfare, affecting economic, social, and cultural elements. This synthesis investigates the link between traditional homes as tourist attractions and community well-being, building on findings from other research studies.

Traditional houses, when used for tourism, may significantly increase local incomes and enhance community welfare by creating commercial possibilities and supporting local companies (Putra et al., 2021; Putra & Giri, 2019; Rema & Maryani, 2022; Tokang et al., 2023). The conversion of traditional houses for tourist reasons often results in increased economic activity, such as selling local goods and services, which boosts community welfare (Setiadi & Baiquni, 2022).

Local communities must actively participate in tourist activities to ensure the long-term growth of tourism destinations. This engagement helps link tourist growth with community interests while preserving traditional values. (Amatillah & Lestari, 2022; Putra et al., 2021). Empowering local communities to manage and promote tourism may result in better results for both economic advantages and cultural preservation (Putra et al., 2021; Amatillah & Lestari, 2022).

Traditional homes as tourist attractions have a dual purpose in community welfare. They bring significant economic advantages and possibilities to local communities, improving general well-being. However, this often comes at the expense of cultural shifts and the difficulty of upholding traditional beliefs. In order to ensure that tourism growth benefits both the community and its legacy, active community participation and careful management must strike a balance between economic development and cultural preservation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and sample

Respondent characteristics were analyzed to determine the diversity of the participants based on gender, age, education, and occupation. These characteristics provide an overview of their background and relevance to the research problem and objectives. Table 1 presents the characteristics of thirty respondents living around traditional houses in Tumori Village.

Table 1. The characteristics of respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	43.3
Female	17	56.7
Age		
21-25	2	6.7
26-30	2	6.7
31-35	4	13.3
36-40	4	13.3
40 and over	18	60.0
Education		
Elementary school	8	26.0
Junior high school	3	10.0
High school	15	50.0
Diploma	1	3.3
Bachelor	2	6.7
Master	1	3.3
Occupation		
Civil servant	1	3.3
Self-employed	19	63.4
Others	10	33.3

Of the thirty respondents, thirteen were male (43.3%) and seventeen were female (56.7%). In terms of age, the majority—eighteen respondents (60%)—were over 40 years old. Two respondents (6.7%) were aged 21–25, two (6.7%) were aged 26–30, four (13.3%) were aged 31–35, and another four (13.3%) were aged 36–40.

Regarding educational background, eight respondents (26.7%) had completed elementary school, three (10%) had junior high school education, fifteen (50%) had completed high school or vocational high school, one (3.3%) held a diploma, two

(6.7%) held a bachelor's degree, and one (3.3%) had a master's degree. Thus, the majority of respondents had completed high school or vocational high school.

In terms of occupation, nineteen respondents (63.4%) were small-business owners or self-employed. One respondent (3.3%) was a civil servant, and ten (33.3%) were engaged in other types of work. Therefore, it can be concluded that most respondents work in micro-enterprises.

3.2. *Research design and data analysis*

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. The questionnaire was designed based on the conceptual framework for tourist attraction and community well-being. The questionnaire consisted of two variables: tourist attraction as the independent variable and community well-being as the dependent variable. Both variables consist of ten statements each. The respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of the influence of traditional houses as a tourist attraction on community well-being in the area where they live using a five-point Likert-type scale questionnaire with 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. Furthermore, the data that has been collected is analyzed using a simple statistical formula based on a five-point Likert scale and simple linear regression.

4. Results

4.1. *Descriptive statistics*

Respondents' responses to the tourist attraction and community well-being variables can be seen in [Table 2](#). There are ten statements regarding respondents' perceptions of tourist attractions. In the statement, "The location of the traditional house as a tourist attraction is easily accessible by tourists.", it can be illustrated that 27 respondents (90%) answered strongly agree, and three respondents (10%) answered they agree.

The statement "Around the traditional house tourist attraction, there is also a market for creative products from the local community" it can be described that 18 respondents (60%) answered strongly agree, three respondents (10%) answered they agree, four respondents (13.3%) answered neutrally, five respondents (16.7%) answered that they disagreed. The statement "The traditional house as a tourist attraction has great potential to be developed" can be described that 21

respondents (70%) answered strongly agree, six respondents (20%) answered agree, and three respondents (10%) answered disagree. The statement, "The existence of the traditional house as a tourist attraction does not interfere with the community's activities to earn a living from their main job," it can be described that 24 respondents (80%) answered strongly agree, five respondents (16.7%) answered agree, and one person (3.3%) answered neutral.

Furthermore, regarding the statement, "The transformation of the traditional house as a tourist attraction is acceptable to the local community," 25 respondents (83.3%) strongly agreed, and five respondents (16.7%) agreed. In the statement "The weather and climate influence traditional houses as tourist attractions," it can be described that eight respondents (26.7%) answered strongly agree, seven respondents (23.3%) answered they agree, seven respondents (23.3%) answered neutral, six respondents (20%) answered they disagree, and two respondents (6.7%) answered strongly disagree. The statement, "With the traditional house as a tourist attraction, the local community can get more attention from the local government," it can be described that 23 respondents (76.7%) answered strongly agree, and seven respondents (23.3%) answered agree. In the statement "Traditional houses are in good condition and worth visiting as tourist attractions," 26 respondents (86.7%) answered strongly agree, and four respondents (13.3%) answered agree.

The following statement also states that "Traditional houses as tourist attractions positively impact the community's economy" it can be described that fifteen respondents (50%) answered strongly agree, ten respondents (33.3%) answered they agree, and five respondents (16.7%) answered neutral. The statement "Traditional houses are also a tourist attraction and have adequate tourist rest areas" can be described that fourteen respondents (46.7%) answered strongly agree, eight respondents (26.7%) answered agree, three respondents (10%) answered neutral, and five respondents (16.7%) answered disagree.

Respondents' perceptions of community well-being also include ten statements. The statement "With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the surrounding community no longer has difficulty making a living" it can be described that seven respondents (23.3%) answered strongly agree, nine respondents (30%) answered they agree, and 14 respondents (46.7%) answered neutral. The statement, "With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the community's income has increased," it can be described that three respondents (10%) answered strongly agree, ten

respondents (33.3%) answered they agree, and 17 respondents (56.7%) answered neutral.

The following statement is "With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the community can fulfill their daily needs," it can be described that four respondents (13.3%) answered strongly agree, 12 respondents (40%) answered they agree, and 14 respondents (46.7%) answered neutrally. In the statement "With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the local community has a permanent job," it can be described that two respondents (6.7%) answered strongly agree, nine respondents (30%) answered they agree, 16 respondents (53.3%) answered neutral, and three respondents (10%) answered disagree. In the statement, "With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, they can send their family members to a higher level," it can be described that six respondents (20%) answered agree, 16 respondents (53.3%) answered neutral, and eight respondents (26.7%) answered disagree. The statement "The existence of traditional house tourist attractions can improve community skills related to tourism activities" it can be described that 14 respondents (46.7%) answered strongly agree, 12 respondents (40%) answered agree, three respondents (19%) answered neutral, one person (3.3%).

Also, the statement, "With the existence of traditional house tourist attractions, income has increased during certain seasons, such as the holiday season," can be described that eight respondents (26.7%) answered strongly agree, 11 respondents (36.7%) answered agree, ten respondents (33.3%) answered neutral, and one person (3.3%) answered disagree. Also, the statement, "The traditional house tourist attraction allows the community to open a small business in the service sector, such as a tour guide," can be illustrated that 11 respondents (36.7%) answered strongly agree, 15 respondents (50%) answered they agree, three respondents (10%) answered neutral, and one person (3.3%) answered disagree.

Finally, the statement, "The traditional house's tourist attractions can attract visitors to increase their buying and selling," it can be seen that 11 respondents (36.7%) answered strongly agree. The statement "The traditional house's tourist attractions can attract visitors to increase their buying and selling" can describe that eight respondents (26.7%) answered strongly agree, 19 respondents (63.3%) answered agree, and three respondents (10%) answered neutrally.

Table 2. Results of respondents' responses to tourist attractions and community well-being

Dimension	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Tourist attraction	The location of the traditional house as a tourist attraction is easily accessible by tourists.	27 90%	3 10%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
	Around the traditional house tourist attraction, there is also a market for creative products from the local community.	18 60%	3 10%	4 13%	5 17%	0 0%
	The traditional house as a tourist attraction has great potential to be developed.	21 70%	6 20%	0 0%	3 10%	0 0%
	The existence of the traditional house as a tourist attraction does not interfere with the community's activities to earn a living from their main job.	24 80%	5 17%	1 3%	0 0%	0 0%
	The transformation of the traditional house as a tourist attraction is acceptable to the local community.	25 83%	5 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
	The weather and climate influence traditional houses as tourist attractions.	8 27%	7 23%	7 23%	6 20%	2 7%
	With the traditional house as a tourist attraction, the local community can get more attention from the local government.	23 77%	7 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
	Traditional houses are in good condition and worth visiting as tourist attractions.	26 87%	4 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
	Traditional houses as tourist attractions positively impact the community's economy.	15 50%	10 33%	5 17%	0 0%	0 0%
	Traditional houses are also a tourist attraction and have adequate tourist rest areas.	14 47%	8 27%	3 10%	5 17%	0 0%

Table 2. *(Continued)*

Community well-being	With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the surrounding community no longer has difficulty making a living.	7 23%	9 30%	14 47%	0 0%	0 0%
	With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the community's income has increased.	3 10%	10 33%	17 57%	0 0%	0 0%
	With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the community can fulfill their daily needs.	4 13%	12 40%	14 47%	0 0%	0 0%
	With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, the local community has a permanent job.	2 7%	9 30%	16 53%	3 10%	0 0%
	With the tourist attraction of the traditional house, they can send their family members to a higher level.	0 0%	6 20%	16 53%	8 27%	0 0%
	The existence of traditional house tourist attractions can improve community skills related to tourism activities.	14 47%	12 40%	3 10%	1 3%	0 0%
	With the existence of traditional house tourist attractions, income has increased during certain seasons, such as the holiday season.	8 27%	11 37%	10 33%	1 3%	0 0%
	The traditional house tourist attraction allows the community to open a small business in the service sector, such as a tour guide.	11 37%	15 50%	3 10%	1 3%	0 0%
	The traditional house's tourist attractions can attract visitors to increase their buying and selling.	8 27%	19 63%	3 10%	0 0%	0 0%
	The existence of traditional house tourist attractions can increase local revenue through local taxes.	1 3%	5 17%	14 47%	10 33%	0 0%

Source: Author's calculations

Table 3. Results of the regression analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. error	t-statistic	Probability
Tourist attraction	3.400	0.263	1.952	0.000
Constant	0.252	0.059	3.795	0.005
Adjusted R-squared	0.598			
Observations	30			

Note: Community well-being is the dependent variable.

Source: Author's calculations

Finally, the statement "The existence of traditional house tourist attractions can increase local revenue through local taxes" can be described as one person (3.3%) answered strongly agree, 14 respondents (46.7%) answered they agree, five respondents (16.7%) answered neutral, and ten respondents (33.3%) answered disagree.

In [Table 3](#), the estimated coefficient of the tourist attraction variable is 0.252 and significant at $\alpha=0.05$. This means that the traditional house tourism object variable positively and significantly affects community income in Tumori Village. If there is an increase in tourist objects by 1 unit, the income in Tumori Village will increase significantly by 0.252 units. Conversely, if there is a decrease in tourist attractions by 1 unit, then community income in Tumori Village will decrease significantly by 0.252 units in one year. The tourist attraction variable has a t-count of 3.795 with a significance value of 0.005, because the significance value <0.05 , the hypothesis is accepted, which means that tourist attractions have a positive and significant effect on community well-being.

5. Discussion

The effect of traditional homes as tourist attractions on community well-being is a multifaceted problem. Jo & Oh (2014) highlights the importance of traditional homes in representing local traditions and cultures, arguing that their succession and reinterpretation may boost the local region's growth and revenue. However, Zhang (2006) cautions that exploiting historic residences for tourists might result in a loss of authenticity, especially in culturally significant towns. Sudheer (2021) offers a more optimistic viewpoint, emphasizing the economic and social advantages of village tourism, which may enhance the well-being of residents.

Furthermore, Seenapatabendige (2024) investigates the possibility of adaptive reuse of ancient properties, such as transforming them into boutique hotels, to

protect architectural history while increasing tourist attractiveness. Azman (2022) investigates the cultural influences on the design and construction of traditional houses, emphasizing the need to conserve and develop these cultural values. Sofiana (2020) investigates the behavioral changes when traditional houses are converted into tourist facilities, emphasizing the potential for beneficial contributions to their design.

These studies together imply that when traditional houses are incorporated into heritage tourism, they may improve community well-being; nevertheless, further study is required to understand and capitalize on this potential appropriately.

6. Conclusion

The existence of the Nias Traditional House as a tourist attraction has significantly affected community welfare through increased family income. The findings were obtained from the responses of participants around the Nias traditional house in Tumori Village. They can benefit from the tourist attraction through increased community income obtained from the arrival of domestic and foreign tourists.

In order to further increase community income, we suggest that the community around the Nias traditional house in Tumori Village should be able to take advantage of the tourist attraction by creating businesses that can attract tourists, such as culinary businesses or regional souvenirs, for the managers of traditional houses to develop the existence of traditional houses further and continue to maintain culture and customs so that they do not become extinct with the times. For the Gunungsitoli Municipal Government to pay attention to the existence of traditional house tourism objects, such as helping the community to improve governance and or participate in maintaining and preserving culture, especially traditional houses so that they can be properly maintained as cultural assets.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding this publication.

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