

Analysis of Community Learning to Support Tangkas Lake Ecotourism Development, Muaro Jambi Regency

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Abstract: *Tangkas Lake is a riparian lake, a relatively new tourist destination in Muaro Jambi Regency. The increasing number of tourists visiting this natural destination is expected to cause various problems, especially social problems among fellow citizens. For this reason, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the local community regarding ecotourism. This study aims to analyze the sociocultural characteristics of the local community related to learning that can sustainably support Tangkas Lake ecotourism. The research was conducted with a qualitative approach. Data were collected employing a participatory manner through focused discussions. In addition, data were also collected through in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews using a questionnaire. In general, the knowledge of local people regarding ecotourism is in a low category. In terms of perceptions and attitudes, the people have good perceptions and attitudes regarding Tangkas Lake tourism activities. Men tend to have a more positive attitude than women. In contrast, women tend to have better perceptions regarding Tangkas Lake tourism. For this reason, efforts to strengthen (increase) public understanding are needed to improve local people's awareness of the importance of educational content in tourism activity. In addition, the community also needs to be facilitated to increase their understanding of ecotourism and seven tourism charming (sapta pesona).*

Keywords: *Tourism Village; Knowledge, Perception*

1. INTRODUCTION

Jambi Province has high biocultural diversity, which has excellent potential to be developed into a tourist destination. The beauty of Jambi's natural panorama stretches from the coast (East Coast of Sumatra) to the mountainous areas and its customs and culture. One of the areas that have the potential to be developed for its natural beauty as an ecotourism destination is Danau Tangkas which is located in the village of Tanjung Lanjut, Sekernan District, Muaro Jambi Regency.

Tangkas Lake is a flooded lake that receives water from the surrounding rivers. The area of the lake is about 403 ha. During the rainy season, this lake serves as a flood barrier by accepting the increased volume of river water in the vicinity. Economically, this lake has recently become a new tourist destination in Muaro Jambi Regency. Its location, which is just a short distance from the center of the district capital (Sengeti) and Jambi City (about an hour's drive), adds to the attractiveness of this lake as a tourist destination.

The Government of Tanjung Lanjut Village, through a Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDES) together with residents, has opened a tourist destination by utilizing the lake's natural beauty around and water tourism activities. Thousands of putat trees (*Barringtonia acutangula*) grow wildly in the middle of the lake. Their falling red pendant-shaped flowers turn the color of some parts of the lake surface into red, creating another unique and exciting view.

Ecotourism is a form of utilization of economically viable, environmentally benign, technically feasible, and socially acceptable environmental services (Karsudi *et al.*, 2010). Ecotourism can be explained well with five criteria: nature conservation, low environmental impact, sustainability, meaningful community involvement, and environmental education. Furthermore, according to the concept of sustainable development, tourism can be sustainable if tourism development can meet the current needs of tourists and residents while protecting its existence in the future.

Nature tourism is a means of implementing a sustainable economy (Supriatna, 2014). Communities, organizers, and government have the opportunity to improve the local economy through nature tourism that is non-extractive and non-consumptive. Tourism can be used as a powerful tool for economic development at both the local and national levels. The focus of ecotourism (ecologically sustainable tourism) is on natural area experiences that encourage understanding and appreciation of the natural environment and socio-culture of local people.

In ecotourism, tourists enjoy the natural beauty and culture of the areas visited and try to study and preserve the objects seen. Kete (2016) adds that ecotourism is a form of a tourist trip to a location that is still natural while supporting conservation and local community-based efforts to create sustainable development. Recently ecotourism is becoming a trend in the world of tourism. Tourist interests are shifting from visiting mass tourist spots to quiet and natural tourist destinations (Hendriwo, 2007).

The local government and the people of Tanjung Lanjut Village are aware of the potential of Tangkas Lake as a tourist attraction. Efforts to

utilize Tangkas Lake as a natural tourist attraction began in 2015. However, it was only in 2018 that Tangkas Lake was officially designated as a natural tourism destination. Various facilities and infrastructure to support nature tourism activities have been provided, including duck boats, boats, banana boats, tree houses, toilets, and camping grounds on the Tepus island in the middle of the lake. Social and online media promotion has successfully attracted local tourists to Tangkas Lake. Based on data from the [Statistics Agency for Muaro Jambi Regency \(2020\)](#), the number of tourists visiting Tangkas Lake reached 13,246. The Lake Tangkas tourist attraction manager continues to work on developing tourist attractions to increase tourists' visits to the area.

The increasing number of tourist visits has strengthened the program to develop Lake Tangkas as a natural tourist attraction in Tanjung Lanjut Village. However, several problems have also arisen regarding the increasing number of visiting tourists. These problems include waste management that is still not good, aspects of environmental sustainability that are still not paid enough attention to, the growing conflicts between villager community groups, lack of facilities and infrastructure to support natural tourism, and low community support and anticipation of ecotourism development. The problems happen due to a need for more understanding of the local community regarding ecotourism principles.

If these problems are not addressed immediately, the growing tourism activities are expected to threaten the sustainability of the Danau Tangkas tourist attraction and induce social conflicts within the local society. Therefore, a study was carried out to analyze the socio-cultural characteristics of the people of Tanjung Lanjut Village regarding ecotourism. This study's results will contribute to designing human resource development programs related to ecotourism-based tourism development in the Tanjung Lanjut Village.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research team researched Tanjung Lanjut village, Sekernan sub-district, Muaro Jambi district. The research subjects were all

residents of the village community. This qualitative descriptive research is used to obtain in-depth data on natural objects and contains a meaning (Sugiyono, 2013). Field facts based on observations, in-depth interviews, and surveys were analyzed and contracted to form theories. In addition to primary data, the team also collected secondary data from documents containing information about Tangkas Lake, Tanjung Lanjut Village, and the management of lake ecotourism in the village.

The data in this study is qualitative (narrative data), which explains a phenomenon based on things that generally cannot be counted. Because quality generally cannot be described in numbers and statistics, we presented the qualitative data using descriptive explanations. This study collected qualitative data through discussions and interviews with informants.

The population in this study were all residents of the Tanjung Lanjut, totaling 1243 people consisting of 592 men and 651 women (Central Bureau of Statistics for Muaro Jambi Regency, 2020). The team took samples purposively representing community leaders, youth leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, Tangkas Lake ecotourism managers, communities involved in the Tangkas Lake ecotourism activities (managers of tour attractions, stalls, and inns), and members of the public in general.

The team collected primary data using several techniques, including observation, interviews, focus group discussions (focus discussion groups), in-depth interviews, respondent surveys, and documentation. The researchers performed observation by carrying out activities on a process or object to feel and understand the knowledge of a phenomenon based on previously known expertise and ideas. In this case, the team observed various aspects of the life of the people of Tanjung Lanjut Village and the natural tourism object of Tangkas Lake and the surrounding area.

The team also collected community knowledge data through interviews conducted directly with respondents using a prepared questionnaire. Researchers communicate directly with respondents to get respondents' responses

according to their knowledge. Community perceptions were measured using a questionnaire based on four criteria: one strongly did not agree, two did not agree, three agreed, and four strongly agreed. For negative statements (questions), scoring is done oppositely.

The qualitative data obtained from the research results were inputted and processed into tables arranged according to the needs and objectives of this research, then analyzed descriptively following Miles & Huberman (1994) to obtain a general picture of the community profile in the Tanjung Lanjut Village. In addition to primary data, this research got community profiles and Tangkas Lake ecotourism objects from secondary data in the form of documents containing information on this matter, such as statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) as well as from Muaro Jambi District and Sekernan District (Muaro Jambi in Figures, District Sekernan in Figures).

Quantitative data from semi-structured interviews with respondents were calculated using a percentage formula. This calculation produced quantitative data on the percentage level of public knowledge related to Tangkas Lake ecotourism. The scoring used to describe the understanding of the Tanjung Lanjut Village Community about Tangkas Lake ecotourism using a score of 3 (for a correct answer and can explain), 2 (for a correct answer but unable to explain), and 1 (for an incorrect answer or do not know).

The percentage of the level of knowledge of the people of Tanjung Advanced Village towards ecotourism is calculated using the formula proposed by Sugiyono (2010) as follows:

$$P = \frac{X}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of knowledge

X = Total Score

N = Maximum Total Score

This research grouped the level of knowledge of local people regarding ecotourism on a qualitative scale, namely high, medium, and low (Arikunto, 2006). A high rank means the percentage of people who answered the question

items in the questionnaire correctly was between 76% - 100%; a medium level implies the rate of correct answers was between 56% - 75%; and a low rank means the percentage of correct answers was less than 56%.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tangkas Lake is a natural tourist attraction located in Tanjung Lanjut Village, Sekernan District, Muaro Jambi Regency. Administratively, the water area of Tangkas Lake includes two villages, namely Tanjung Lanjut Village and Kaos Village. The lake's position inspired the name Tangkas which stands for Tanjung and Kaos. Reaching Tangkas Lake from Jambi City using two- or four-wheeled vehicles takes about two hours of travel. From the capital city of Muaro Jambi district, namely Sengeti, it takes about 40 minutes.

Before being inaugurated as a natural tourist destination, Tangkas Lake was an abandoned lake often used by the local community to carry out passenger and cargo between villages. The primary purpose of people traveling outside the village is to go to the market to buy basic needs such as rice, vegetables, and clothes. At that time, the river, including the waters in the Tangkas Lake area, became the transportation backbone among villages because roads had not yet been built. The Kaos Market and the Suak Putat Market were the closest markets people often visit to shop for their daily needs. Apart from these two markets, the community also occasionally went to the Sengeti market, which was quite far from the village; it took about three hours by boat. Sengeti Market offers a broader range of goods with better quality. The vehicle used to carry out crossing activities was a wooden boat (ketek), about eight meters long, carrying around 40-50 passengers. Aside from being a crossing route, the local community often catches edible aquatic animals such as snakehead fish, toman, saluang, lambak, lais, baung, coax, and shrimp.

Around the 1970s, land transportation routes began to develop. The Tangkas Lake and the rivers around the lake are no longer employed for transporting passengers or goods to and from the nearby villages. Since then, Tangkas Lake has started to be abandoned. The putat (*Barringtonia*

acutangula) has grown wildly until today. This plant is also known as a pendant flower because the shape of the flower resembles a pendant. The presence of the conspicuous reddish pendant flowers is one of the charms that attract tourists to Tangkas Lake.

Tangkas Lake Tourism in Tanjung Lanjut Village

Since its inauguration in 2018, the Tangkas Lake ecotourism has changed the social life of Tanjung Lanjut people. The change most felt by the community was in the feel and atmosphere of the village, which was initially quiet and had little activity, to become bustling and full of action. According to [Rohani & Purwoko \(2020\)](#), the existence of tourism activities in a village will influence changes in behavior (positive or negative) in the community. Local people described that before the presence of Tangkas Lake ecotourism, there was no reason for people to visit Tanjung Lanjut Village. Some local people even thought that their village was a scary site. Another change was the improved road access to the village. Previously, the existing road was only a muddy footpath; now, the road has been widened and constructed with asphalt concrete.

The development of Lake Tangkas tourism activities raised several problems in the village community. One of them is the fading values of togetherness (*gotong royong*). For example, people start to expect compensation in the form of money for every work done. Some people are also reluctant to give (lend) some of their lands for public needs, such as visitor vehicle parking. Some other people are unaware and do not participate in efforts to develop a tourism village. For example, people who own fish cages on the lake do not want to move their cages, disturbing the beauty (comfort) of tourism activities on the lake.

Within the community members, there needed to be more support to control visitor parking spaces. Several other arising problems took work to overcome. The same thing also happened to several ecotourism areas experiencing rapid development, such as the Riam Pangar ecotourism area (West Kalimantan)

and Mampang Village (Yogyakarta). Since the development of ecotourism activities in the two villages, the community has become more individualistic and materialist (Pynanjung & Rianti, 2018; Rohani & Purwoko, 2020). The Tanjung Lanjut Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDES), as the management of the Tangkas Lake ecotourism, together with local village officials and community leaders, continues to strive to find the best solution to address the growing problems. Several steps have been taken to overcome the issues by holding deliberations, negotiations, and socialization in stages, especially for community groups that have not cooperated. The management has implemented this approach in the hope that the existence of Tangkas Lake tourism would provide benefits for the whole community.

Activities in nature tourism will become more meaningful if they implement ecotourism values and *sapta pesona* (the seven tourism charming). Both aspects will also determine the quality of tourist attractions. The people of Tanjung Lanjut Village have several obstacles in implementing ecotourism values and the seven tourism principles. For example, they still need more confidence in serving (dealing with) visitors, using their local Indonesian accent, which is slank and not fluent. They also need to gain knowledge about the Tangkas Lake ecotourism itself. According to Soeswoyo *et al.* (2022), several factors become obstacles to implementing ecotourism values and the seven tourism principles in society, mainly punctuality, confidence, trust, and lack of supporting facilities.

Community Profile of Tanjung Lanjut Village

In general, the people of Tanjung Lanjut Village work as farmers, especially oil palm farmers. The others work as employees, especially at PT Brahma Bina Bhakti Company which has an oil palm plantation area around Tanjung Lanjut. Working as an oil palm farmer is more profitable than other jobs. By farming oil palm, they can fulfill various needs such as clothing and food needs, buying private vehicles (motorcycles and cars), and sending their children to college until they get a bachelor's degree. Women generally work as housewives. Other

jobs these women occupy are farmers, traders, and a small number work as employees in private companies (palm oil companies). The results of the census conducted by the Statistics Office of Muaro Jambi Regency (2020) also explain that the main commodity produced by the village of Tanjung Lanjut to support the people's lives is oil palm.

The education level of Tanjung Lanjut people is generally in the low category. Most of them only have education up to junior high school; only a few continue their education until either senior high school or college. The poor road access and the limited educational facilities in Tanjung Lanjut have caused the community to go outside the village to continue their education to a higher level. The educational facilities and infrastructure in Tanjung Lanjut Village are still one step behind the surrounding villages, such as Suak Putat Village and Suko Awin Jaya Village (Muaro Jambi Regency Statistics Office, 2020). There are only two schools in Tanjung Lanjut: elementary schools located at RT 01 (Dusun Tanjung) and RT 03 (Dusun Sribulan).

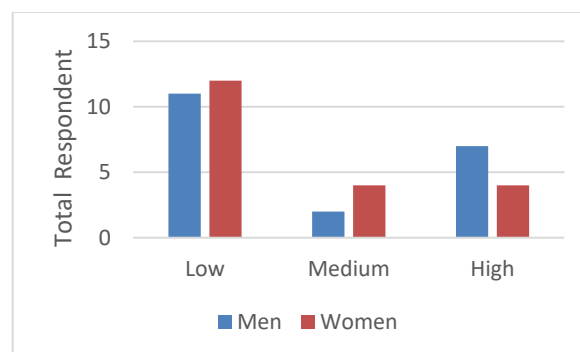


Figure 1. Respondent's knowledge of ecotourism

Residents in this study ranged in age from 21 to 62 years. The number of male and female respondents was balanced in the age group 30-39 years and 40-49 years. However, in the age range of 20-29 years, the number of female respondents is higher than that of male respondents. But for the age class >49 years, male respondents were more dominant than female respondents.

People Knowledge and Perceptions about ecotourism

On average, the knowledge of Tanjung Lanjut people regarding ecotourism activities is in a low category; only a few respondents, especially men, with good ecotourism knowledge (Figure 1). There is a difference in knowledge level between men and women, one of which is caused by the level of education of men, which is better than that of women. According to [\(Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014\)](#), the level of education influences the skills, knowledge, and quality of human resources in an area, including natural tourism areas.

The local people's perceptions of ecotourism include elements of sustainable tourism, community empowerment, and education. Communities provide positive responses to aspects of sustainable tourism; the community still considers aspects of environmental sustainability when carrying out tourism activities on Tangkas Lake. Most people disagreed with wildlife, such as birds being caught and sold to tourists, and trees, such as putat trees being cut down to enlarge the tourism area. The development of Tangkas Lake tourism activities encourages people to be more aware and concerned about the surrounding environment. Before the development of Tangkas Lake tourism, people tended to be indifferent and ignorant. Such conditions have also been reported in the ecotourism area of Kampung Batusuhan, Sukabumi. People in that area have become more concerned and more actively involved in efforts to conserve the environment since the presence of community-based ecotourism in that village [\(Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014\)](#).

So far, the Tangkas Lake tourism management has tried to involve the community in developing Tangkas Lake tourism. Through periodic communication and approaches, the management invites the community to participate in several activities associated with Tangkas Lake tourism. Based on their research conducted in the Bondosari Ecotourism Village (Malang, Est Java), [Damayanti et al., \(2014\)](#) conclude three factors that support ecotourism development i.e., the characteristics of ecotourism (natural resources), local community participation, and the role of village government. In a relatively short

time (about five years), the people who routinely carry out ecotourism activities at Tangkas Lake stated that they had gained benefits not only in terms of economics but also in their life. However, the empowerment carried out by the management still needs to be optimal because a small number of people still have yet to be fully involved. For example, people skilled in sewing, weaving, and cooking traditional cakes have yet to have a role in Tangkas Lake tourism activities. Moreover, the Tangkas Lake tourism workers are still dominated only by villagers from Dusun Tanjung hamlet.

Nature tourism activities commonly offer only beauty and pleasure. This tourism type is different from ecotourism activities which also provide educational or learning activities in their implementation. [Kristiana & Liana \(2019\)](#) explained that educating tourists who come to a tourist destination is essential to increase the attractiveness and interest of tourists, for example, by highlighting the uniqueness of local culture so that tourism activities do not rely only on natural beauty. Interviews with the community of Tanjung Lanjut Village reveal that the educational aspect still needs to be considered an essential point because they think that tourists come to their villages only for vacations in natural places and to see the natural beauty of Tangkas Lake. The lack of public understanding regarding the educational side of tourism activities means that tourism activities still need to be optimally developed. This finding is valuable input for tourism management further to promote the importance of education in tourism activities.

Villagers Knowledge and Perceptions of Sapta Pesona

Sapta Pesona is seven charming tourism principles of tourism awareness promoted by the Indonesian tourism Ministry. The Sapta Pesona is a crucial aspect that needs to be presented in tourism activities. According to [Engriani \(2016\)](#), sapta pesona is a condition that must be fulfilled to attract tourists to a destination. The knowledge of the people of Tanjung Lanjut Village regarding the sapta pesona is considered in the low category, both for men and women (Figure 2). Most people still feel uncommon to the term sapta pesona.

However, a few people stated that they had seen the word in other tourist spots and heard it on television but needed to learn the meaning of the term.

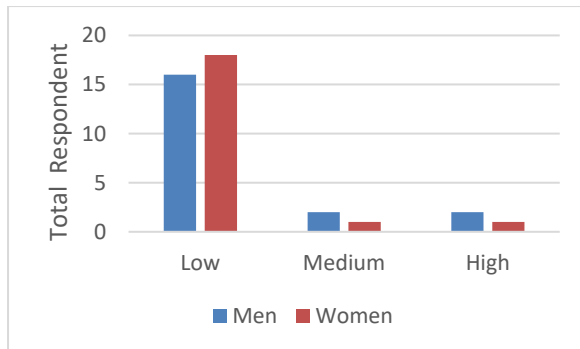


Figure 2. Villagers' Knowledge of Sapta Pesona

Even though most people of Tanjung Lanjut Village are not familiar with the term "Sapta Pesona," they can recognize and understand the importance of the components of the Sapta Pesona. The public's perception of Sapta Pesona in this study includes seven essential elements: security, orderly, cleanliness, coolness, beauty, friendliness, and memories. Regarding public security, Tangkas Lake ecotourism has a good level of protection. The absence of crime, violence, threats, extortion, pickpocketing, and fraud against tourists confirms this. When tourists lose valuables such as wallets, helmets, or vehicle keys, the management or the public who find them will guard these items, announce them on social media such as Instagram or WhatsApp, and then return them to the owner. The conducive security atmosphere at Tangkas Lake Tourism is supported by a unique security system initiated by the management by involving young people, parents, and local community leaders to secure the tourist area. [Mu'tashim & Indahsari \(2021\)](#) explained that security is the main supporting factor in tourism activities. Suppose a tourist destination is insecure or dangerous. In that case, it can reduce the interest of tourists to return to visit the tourist destination.

The order aspect of the Tangkas Lake environment is good enough. The existence of regulations issued by the management and outlined in warning boards makes tourists always

maintain their attitude and behavior when carrying out tourism activities on Tangkas Lake. In addition, the management, which is usually carried out by the elderly and community leaders, also often interacts with tourists to remind them of any things that can and cannot be done in Tangkas Lake. Tourists can only park their vehicles in a place; the parking officer will direct them to the parking area provided by the management, including around the residents' yards. Moreover, traders, mainly food vendors selling their products on Tangkas Lake, must also obey the existing rule. Using a floating stall system, they only allow selling their food in provided places around the lake's edge. This arrangement makes the Tangkas Lake ecotourism area look neater and more comfortable. Orderliness is an element that must be put forward because it gives the first impression to tourists when they come to tourist areas ([Hadi & Widyaningsih, 2020](#)).

The local community sees Tangkas Lake as good enough for environmental cleanliness. The availability of trash cans, one of which is made from used plastic gallons, and a special division empowered to handle the cleanliness of Lake Tangkas Tourism every weekend (the majority are women) makes the area clean. Public facilities such as toilets or bathrooms are also relatively clean and well-maintained. However, the number needs to be increased. The community also underlined that the cleanliness of the Tangkas Lake area was not only the management's responsibility but the entire village community. According to [Hadi & Widyaningsih \(2020\)](#), environmental cleanliness, such as toilets and culinary stalls, prayer rooms, photo spots, and roads to tourist attractions, greatly determines tourist satisfaction.

Coolness is one of the advantages possessed by Tangkas Lake ecotourism. Even though the lake is located in the lowlands, which is quite hot, the presence of various lush trees around the area and in Tangkas Lake creates a relaxed atmosphere. [Nugraha & Siti \(2020\)](#) confirm that a calm atmosphere will make tourists more comfortable staying longer and be a unique attraction and potential for an ecotourism area. Some villagers add that the peaceful atmosphere

offered by Tangkas Lake, for example, when visitors explore the putat forest by boat, they enjoy calm nuance, which can relieve stress and relax the body.

Regarding beauty, Tangkas Lake tourism consists of natural and artificial objects. [Sugiarto et al. \(2022\)](#) explained that beauty is synonymous with quality, giving pleasure when seen, heard, and felt. The natural beauty of Tangkas Lake lies in its natural landscape, especially the putat tree, which produces beautiful pendant-shaped flowers (bright red in color). One of the artificial beauties is Tepus Island which was "created" by the management in the middle of the lake. Tepus Island, which is separated from the existing mainland, provides a unique attraction. To reach the island, tourists must take a boat or speed boat across the lake, which often provides sensations and exciting memories.

Regarding friendliness, the people of Tanjung Lanjut have shown closeness and a good attitude toward tourists who come to Tangkas Lake. The community is comfortable interacting with new people who come to their village. Polite speech and light jokes are often inserted when interacting with tourists. This attitude makes the relationship between the village community and tourists closely intertwined. According to [Nasution et al. \(2020\)](#), hospitality will reflect an intimate and open tourist atmosphere. Sometimes, tourists who want to come to Tangkas Lake get lost. Villagers who meet these tourists will usually voluntarily guide and show them how to reach the Tangkas Lake area.

Good memories are generally embedded in tourists visiting Tangkas Lake. The people of Tanjung Lanjut confirm that tourists who had come to the tangkas Tangkas would return. Tourist management often meets the same tourists who arrive at different times. This phenomenon shows that the sensation of taking a vacation to a natural place and away from the urban atmosphere, such as Tangkas Lake, creates memorable memories. According to [Hadi & Widyaningsih \(2021\)](#), good memories will provide distinct benefits for this tourist area because tourists who have visited will make the place a recommendation for themselves and others in the future. However, the community

regrets that Tangkas Lake Tourism does not have unique souvenirs yet that can be used as a reminder that someone has visited Tangkas Lake.

Community Attitudes Regarding Tangkas Lake Tourism

In general, the community has a positive attitude towards Tangkas Lake Tourism. They convince their willingness to advance and maintain Tangkas Lake to make it a better natural tourism destination in the future. [Rochmaniah \(2017\)](#) explains that an attitude is a basic form of a feeling, belief, and tendency towards an idea or object. The community shows this positive attitude by helping visitors who get lost when they want to visit Lake Tangkas. Even in some cases, some villagers are willing to deliver the lost tourist to the destination. Some community members also often reprimand or remind visitors to follow existing regulations, for example, not to litter.

4. CONCLUSION

The knowledge of the people of Tanjung Lanjut Village regarding ecotourism is considered in the low category. In the case of tourism Sapta Pesona, some people have realized the importance of the Sapta Pesona. For this reason, efforts to strengthen (increase) the quality of community resources are needed to increase their understanding of ecotourism and the sapta pesona.

In contrast to knowledge, in terms of perceptions and attitudes, the people of Tanjung Lanjut have good perceptions and attitudes regarding Tangkas Lake tourism activities. But the educational aspect of a tourist visit still needs to be further encouraged. Hence, people are more aware of the importance of educational content in tourism activities.

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