

Research Article

# The Influence of the Mekongga Traditional House on the Development of Sustainable Tourism in the Regency of Kolaka

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## ABSTRACT

Based on a study conducted in Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, this research explores the potential of the Mekongga Traditional House as a driver of sustainable tourism development. The study employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of visitor perceptions and stakeholder perspectives. Quantitative data were collected through surveys administered to 44 respondents, while qualitative insights were obtained through interviews with government officials and local tourism actors involved in the management and promotion of the site. The findings reveal that visitors to the Mekongga Traditional House are predominantly female (72.7%) and under the age of 20 (63.6%), indicating a strong appeal among younger demographics. A majority of respondents (63.6%) reported satisfaction with the existing facilities, suggesting that the site has met basic visitor expectations. Social media emerged as the primary source of information about the destination (45.5%), highlighting its importance as a promotional tool. In terms of impact, the social dimension of the traditional house was perceived positively by most respondents (54.5%), reflecting its role in preserving cultural identity and fostering social interaction. However, perceptions of environmental impact were more varied, with a considerable proportion of respondents expressing neutral views (38.6%), indicating the need for improved environmental management. Overall, the Mekongga Traditional House represents a valuable cultural asset with strong potential to support sustainable tourism development. To maximize this potential, the study recommends increasing environmental cleanliness awareness, enhancing tourism facilities, strengthening social media-based promotion, and encouraging active community participation in tourism management.

**Keywords:** Mekongga Traditional House; Tourist Sustainable; Development Tour; Regency Of Kolaka; Local Culture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism development in Indonesia continues to evolve as one of the major drivers of regional economic growth and cultural preservation. The growth of tourism centres across various regions reflects the country's effort to balance modernization with the protection of local identity. One such emerging area is Kolaka Regency, located in Southeast Sulawesi, which possesses significant potential for sustainable tourism development supported by rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. Among its cultural landmarks, the Mekongga Traditional House stands out as both a historical monument and a living symbol of community values. It embodies the philosophical and architectural expressions of the Mekongga people, reflecting social harmony, environmental awareness, and traditional wisdom in spatial design (Gössling, 2020).

The Mekongga Traditional House serves not merely as a static relic of the past but as a dynamic space that integrates culture, environment, and economy. This integration aligns with Indonesia's national agenda for sustainable tourism development, emphasizing the importance of balancing social, economic, and ecological dimensions. According to Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism, sustainability is defined through five key elements: continuity, participation, equality, unity, and sustainability itself. These principles correspond with the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) guidelines, which stress that tourism must "meet the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future" (Oktawirani, 2023). Therefore, the management of cultural heritage sites such as the Mekongga Traditional House should not only focus on economic gains but also on fostering social cohesion and environmental stewardship.

Geographically, Kolaka Regency is situated in the western part of Southeast Sulawesi, stretching from north to south, bordered by North Kolaka to the north, Konawe and East Kolaka to the east, Bombana to the south, and Bone Bay to the west (Tendrita et al., 2024). This strategic location enhances its accessibility to both domestic and international tourists, particularly those seeking authentic cultural experiences. The region's cultural landscape and traditional architecture

particularly the Mekongga Traditional House offer a potential foundation for community-based sustainable tourism, where local participation plays a crucial role in preserving intangible cultural values while generating inclusive economic benefits (Sukran, 2025).

The importance of integrating local culture into sustainable tourism has been widely acknowledged in academic discourse. Svetlačić (2021) emphasized that cultural assets can act as catalysts for family entrepreneurship and local economic resilience when appropriately managed. Similarly, Bepaly (2022) discussed the interdependence between environmental management systems and sustainable tourism, suggesting that cultural heritage sites can promote eco-conscious visitor behavior when embedded within local sustainability narratives. These findings reinforce the relevance of studying the Mekongga Traditional House as both a cultural artifact and a sustainability driver.

Previous research in the Indonesian context has shown that traditional architecture often plays a multidimensional role in tourism development. For instance, studies on traditional houses in Toraja and Minangkabau have demonstrated that cultural preservation can enhance regional branding, attract educational tourism, and strengthen local pride (Helmy & Cooper, 2002; Prathama et al., 2020). However, limited research has examined how Southeast Sulawesi's traditional heritage, particularly that of the Mekongga people, contributes to sustainable tourism models. This gap highlights the need to investigate not only the aesthetic and cultural values of the Mekongga Traditional House but also its social and environmental implications.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of the Mekongga Traditional House on sustainable tourism development in Kolaka Regency. It employs a mixed-methods approach—combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to capture both measurable visitor perceptions and in-depth stakeholder insights. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (1) measure the level of satisfaction among tourists and residents with local facilities and infrastructure surrounding the Mekongga Traditional House;
- (2) identify the primary sources of information influencing public awareness of the site;
- (3) analyze the social and environmental impacts of the Mekongga Traditional House on the local community; and
- (4) identify key management challenges and propose strategic recommendations for sustainable tourism enhancement in Kolaka Regency.

By addressing these objectives, this research not only contributes to local policy and tourism management practices but also enriches the broader academic discourse on the relationship between cultural heritage and sustainability in Southeast Asian tourism contexts. It is expected that the findings will strengthen the understanding of how traditional cultural assets can serve as pillars of community-based sustainable tourism—ensuring that both cultural preservation and development progress harmoniously.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis.

### 2.1 Quantitative Survey

A quantitative survey was conducted to collect measurable data from a broader audience. A questionnaire was distributed via social media, gathering responses from 44 participants, including both tourists and residents. The survey contained questions related to visitor experiences, local community perspectives, and overall satisfaction with the Mekongga Traditional House tour (Ramdhan, 2021). The goal was to obtain statistical data to understand the site's role and gather suggestions for sustainable tourism development in Kolaka.

### 2.2 Qualitative Interviews

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of individual experiences, views, and perspectives. Researchers conducted direct interviews with key stakeholders, including local communities, tourists, and officials from the Kolaka Regency Tourism Office (Sukran, 2025). The interview questions focused on the role of the Mekongga Traditional House in tourism sustainability and its impacts, aiming to collect detailed, context-specific information.

### 2.3 Participatory Observation

Participatory observation was also performed to observe the research location directly. Researchers visited the site of the Mekongga Traditional House and its surrounding areas to gain firsthand insight into the conditions and activities relevant to the study (Jailani, 2023).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study. This was implemented in the District Latambaga Regency, Kolaka, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The research approach used is both quantitative and qualitative. Deep data collection techniques study. This encompasses surveys, interviews, qualitative research, observation, participatory research, documentation, and the study of literature. A quantitative survey was conducted to gather extensive information, but it did not yield profound insights into the customs of the House of Mekongga (García, Herrero, & Morillas-Jurado, 2024; Mouw & Nanuru, 2018; Videira et al., 2006). An interview was conducted to collect information about The Influence of the Mekongga Traditional House on the Development of Sustainable Tourism in Kolaka Regency. The interview was intended to disclose facts about the influence of House customs Mekongga. Every source person or informant is asked a question about the influence of House customs Mekongga in both general and specific ways.

The community in the district of Kolaka is a group society that possesses a treasure trove of diverse local wisdom. Local wisdom has maintained its existence in various aspects of life, society, culture, and diverse fields, including language, traditions, tools, and buildings. One of them, House Customs Mekongga Kolaka, located directly on the beach in Mandra Kolaka, Latambaga District, Kolaka Regency, is an example of local wisdom that still exists and is preserved to this day, and has even been developed into a regional tourist attraction in the district of Kolaka. This research will discuss how House customs in the Mekongga area play an essential role in the development of sustainable tourism in the Kolaka district.



**Figure 1.** Mekongga Traditional House, Jl. Ferry Port Pier, Latambaga Subdistrict, Latambaga District, Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi



**Figure 2.** The Mekongga Kolaka Traditional House Tourism Area is located right on the edge of Mandra Beach, Jl. Ferry Port Pier, Latambaga Subdistrict, Latambaga District, Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi.

Based on the **Figure 1**, Observation, participatory or appointment to the location, House customs Mekongga, Kolaka, for observing the area, House customs Mekongga, as the main object of the research, which is one of the local wisdom that is maintained until now. **Figure 2** Front area House customs Mekongga, which is the centre for visitors and local communities, observe House customs Mekongga while snacking on the beach, enjoying the view, and inheriting Mekongga folk culture (Shen, Liang, Hsu, Chien, & Lin, 2020).

After do activity observation participatory Then to be continued with activity survey quantitative, purposeful For measure the views of tourists and the public local about How influence House customs mekongga to development tourist sustainable in the district Kolaka, in matter This questionnaire is the tools used later spread in the media social, with target respondents potential tourists often visit House customs Mekongga and residents local involved direct in sector tourism, and forms questions created try answer question level satisfaction, knowledge about House customs mekongga, impact social and environmental. The following results from questionnaire data are presented in pie chart form.

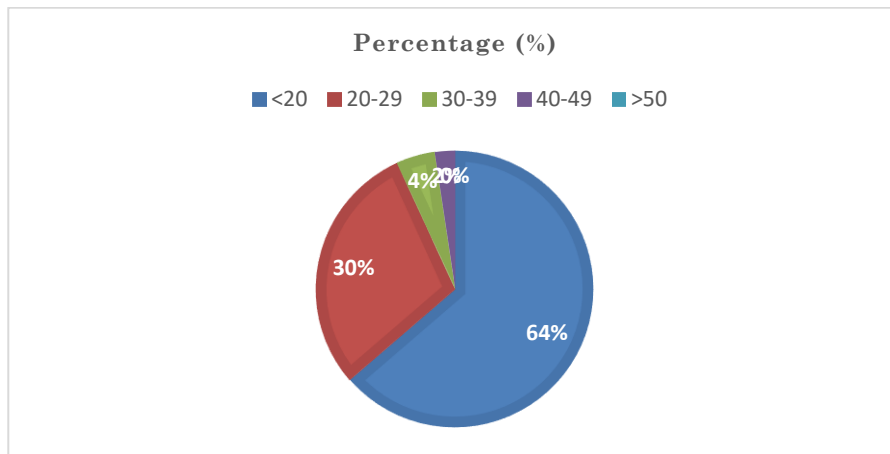


Figure 3. Pie chart of age data from 44 respondents.

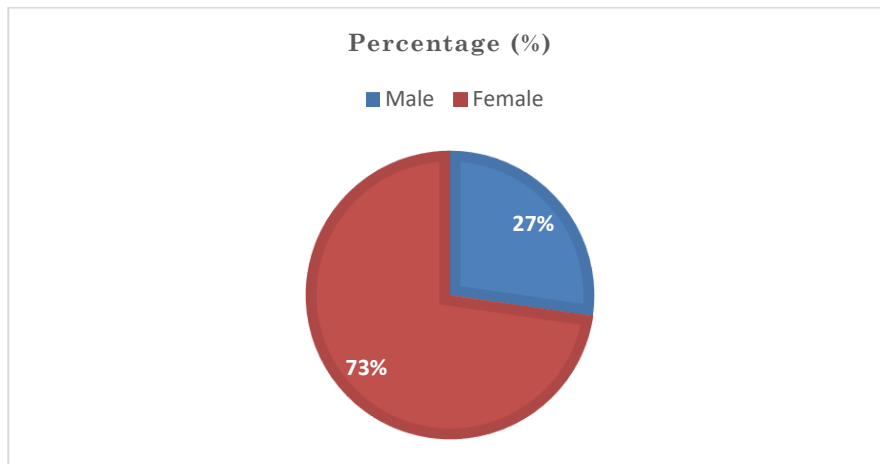


Figure 4. Pie chart of gender data from 44 respondents.

Based on the questionnaire created and obtained (Figure 3), the respondents' age data were collected. Among others, 28 respondents ( 63.6%) were aged <20 years, 13 respondents (29.5%) were aged 20-29 years, two respondents (4.5%) were aged 30-39 years, and one respondent (2.3%) was aged 40-49 years. The questionnaire data were dominated by women, namely 32 respondents (72.7%) and 12 male respondents (27.3%) (Figure 4) (Rais, Sitorus, & Pranata, 2025). Based on the results of activity visits to the tour House, the dominant age group was young, comprising 63.6% of the participants, and the majority were women, at 72.7%. In terms of tourists, of course, most of the many interesting things for children and young people, especially women, who are the most frequent visitors, are the most interesting things to immortalize (Cucari & Mugova, 2017; “Statement of Retraction: Influence of the Social and Economic Characteristics of Saudi Women on Their Attitudes toward Empowering Them in Online Labor Market (Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment, (2023), 13, 1, (1-15), 10.1080/20430795.2021.187421,” 2023). This House Mekongga custom (Figure 1).

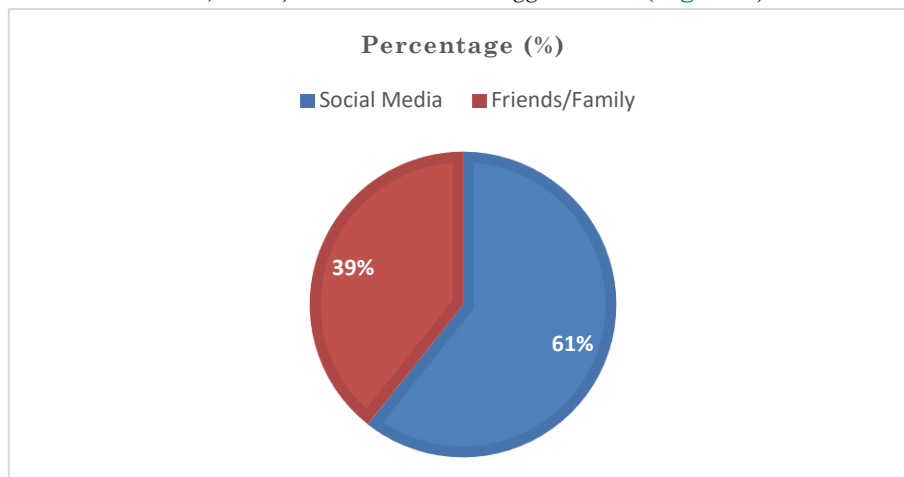
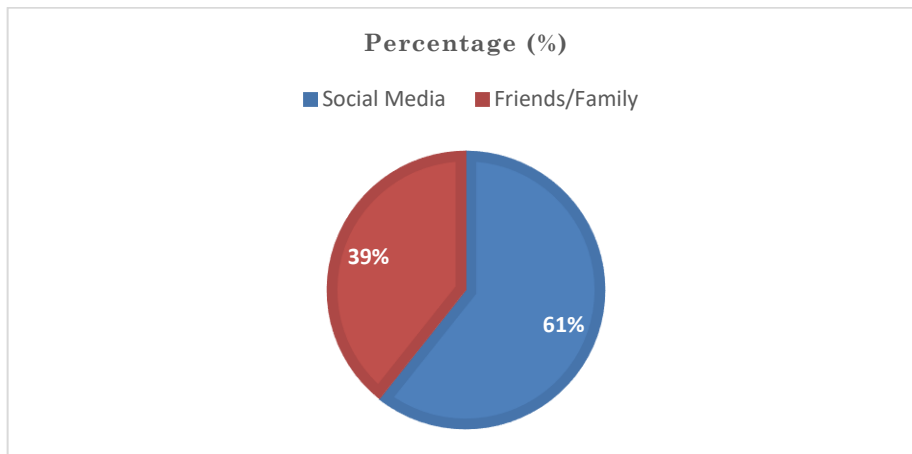
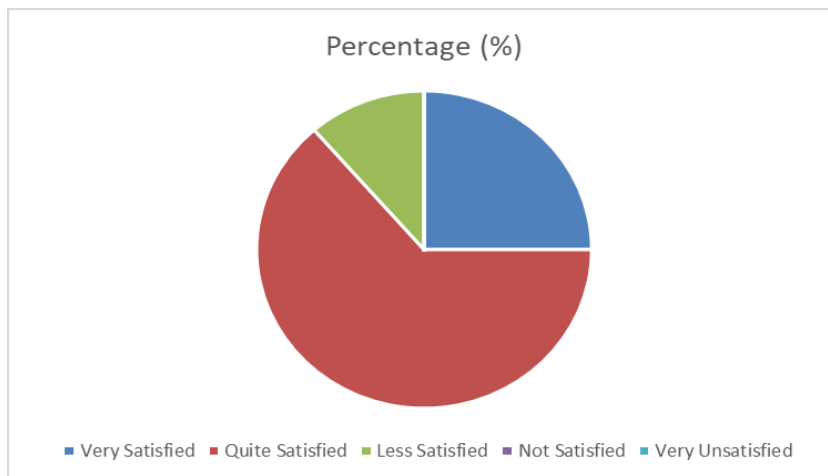


Figure 5. Pie chart of status data from 44 respondents.

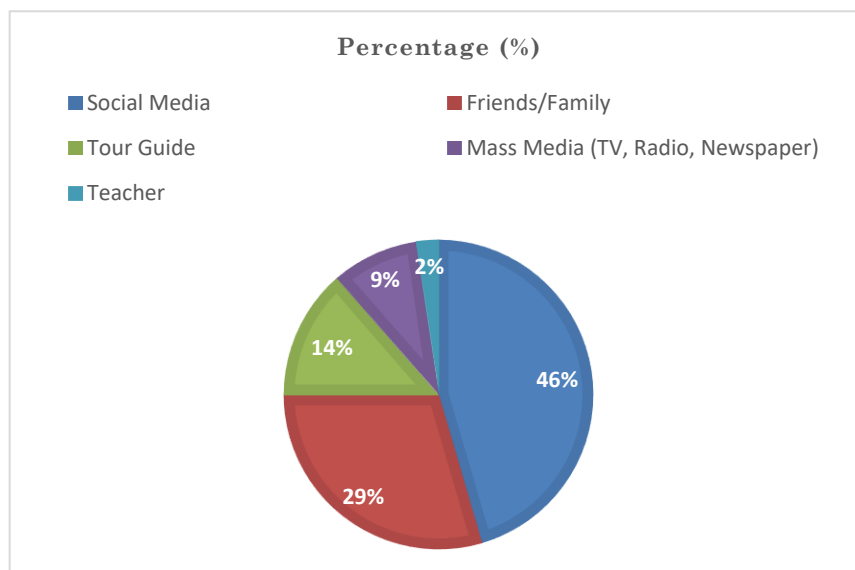


**Figure 6.** Pie chart of local population involvement data related to the tourism sector, based on 44 respondents.

Based on the questionnaire created and obtained (**Figure 5**), the status data indicate that there are 15 respondents (34.1%) who are tourists and 29 respondents (65.9%) who are residents. (**Figure 6**) Of the 44 respondents, 27 (61.4%) were not involved in sector tourism, and 17 (38.6%) were engaged in sector tourism and are part of local communities (Nashruddin, Herman, Nashruddin, Ismail, & Ling, 2024; Suno Wu, Barbrook-Johnson, & Font, 2021; Tsetse, Mahmoud, Ocloo, & Agbesi, 2023).



**Figure 7.** Pie chart of satisfaction level data from 44 respondents.



**Figure 8.** Pie chart of satisfaction level data from 44 respondents.

Based on questionnaire created obtained (Figure 7) level data satisfaction related How facilities and infrastructure in the surrounding area House customs Mekongga, The following data results: very satisfied 11 respondents (25%), quite happy 28 respondents (63.3%) satisfied, five respondents (11.4%) less satisfied, then social media again, again become an information medium (Figure 8) its very rapid spread Because based on knowledge about House customs obtained on social media namely 20 respondents (45.5%), friends/family 13 respondents (29.5%), guide tourism six respondents (13.6%), mass media (TV, Radio, Newspaper) 4 respondents (9.1%), from teachers one respondent (2.3%).

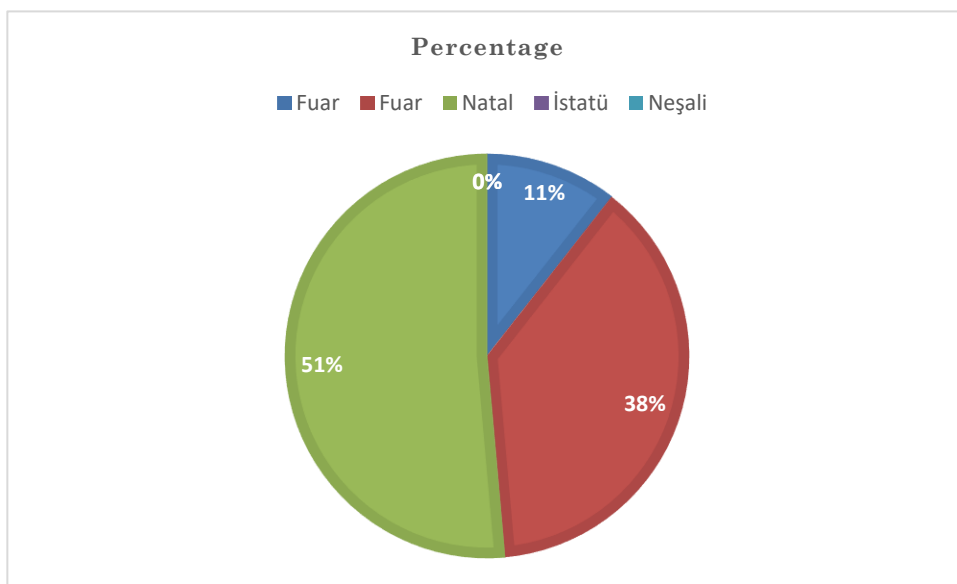


Figure 9. Pie chart of social impact data from 44 respondents.

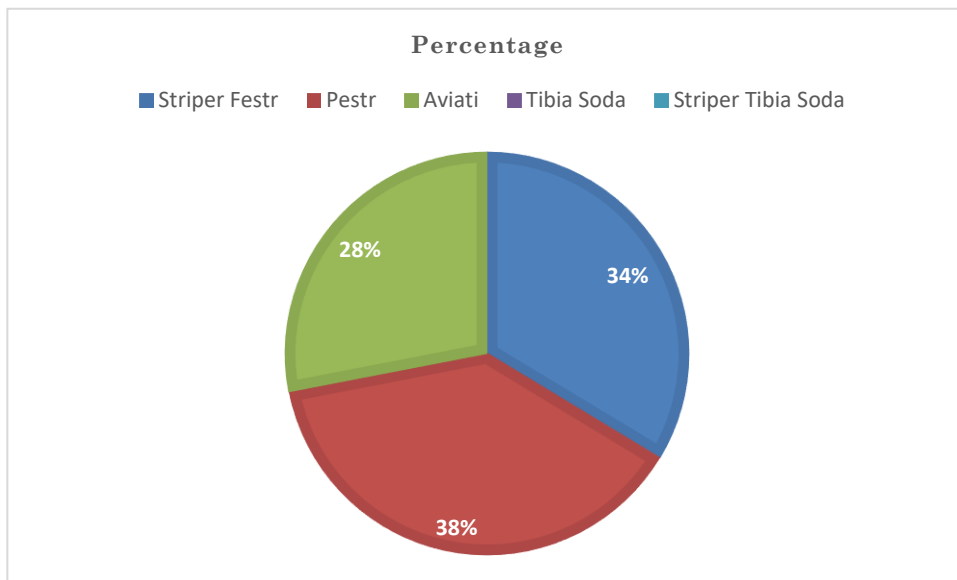


Figure 10. Pie chart of social impact data from 44 respondents.

Based on the questionnaire obtained (Figure 9), the impact of social-related data on the existence of House customs Mekongga on life in public locally, the following data results: very optimistic, 12 respondents (27.3%), optimistic, 24 respondents (54.5%), neutral, eight respondents (18.2%). And based on the impact of House customs Mekongga Kolaka on the environment, especially on ecotourism sustainability (Figure 10), the following data results: very positive, 11 respondents (25%), optimistic (Pranata, 2024), 15 respondents (34.1%), neutral, 17 respondents (38.6%), very pessimistic, one respondent (2.3%). The traditional House, Mekongga Kolaka, has the opportunity to contribute to sustainable tourism participation in the Lamtambaga district, especially in the regency of Kolaka (Erwin, 2022; Fahmy, Bachtiar, & Rahman, 2024; Graham, Hall, Sulph, James, & Vassell, 2021).

After the survey data were obtained using a quantitative tool, a questionnaire was used to measure the perceptions of tourists and the local community about the influence of House customs Mekongga on tourist sustainability. Then to be continued with activity interview deep, purposeful For get outlook deep from stakeholders interests that will become

important thing, in matter This guide semi- structured interviews used later asked to stakeholders interests, with target respondents government area ( service tourism ), management House customs mekongga Kolaka, perpetrator industry tourist local, and figures customs and society local, form questions created about role House customs in tourism, perceived impacts, and development strategies sustainable tourism.



**Figure 11.** Direct interview with one of the local traders in the Mekongga traditional house area. The interview was conducted by Alvina Dwi Damayanti, a student in the Civics Study Program, Class of 023. It was documented by Ribbil Il Fitri, also a student in the Civics Study Program, Class of 023. On Friday, June 28, 2024, at 14.09 WITA.

**Figure 11** An interview was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the intended knowledge in the context of how House customs Mekongga influence (Figure 1) the field of tourism, particularly its impact on sustainable tourism in the Kolaka district. The following are the results of the interview with one of the local traders: (1) How far is the House of Customs Mekongga interesting to tourists? What do you think? You become the main attraction? "Because of the atmosphere moment sun sunk, mostly children young That like create stories and likes look for a calm atmosphere, well at home customs mekongga This they get all That added Lots trader food For place they snacking while enjoy beauty around House customs mekongga which is in the vicinity edge beach mandra Kolaka, so that that's what it is Power the attraction.", (2) What are the main challenges faced in management House customs mekongga For tourist sustainable ?, " The problem is That cleanliness yeah, sometimes surroundings House customs mekongga That still often dirty Because lack of awareness related garbage, so that damage mark aesthetics when seen especially for tourists outside, then facility That still rather not enough be noticed, for example There is repair related facility around House customs the process is long". From the results of the interviews conducted (**Figure 11**), House Customs Mekongga will, of course, be one of the local wisdom contributors to the development of sustainable tourism. However, it also has a lack, so that the contribution of House customs Mekongga to tourists is increasingly minimal, and issues that need to be addressed are those related to the local government or directly to the field of tourism (Borseková, Vitálišová, & Bitušíková, 2023; Simpson, 2009).



**Figure 12.** Direct interview with one of the office secretary staff A.n. Mrs Emil, the regional government tourism office at the Kolaka Regency. On Friday, June 28, 2024. Alibin Rahmat interviewed the Civics study program.

Following results interview short (Figure 13) with one of the staff secretary's office, An Emil's mother : (1) how far is the House from the customs Mekongga interesting to tourists? What do you think? You become Power pull the main thing ?" first That Because House customs mekongga is one of the tour culture, so that matter that which becomes Power pull main from House customs mekongga alone, both position House strategic customs on the edge beach so that traveller No just served beauty House customs but also beauty sun rise in the afternoon. Finally, there are also lots of snacks around House customs also become points additional ", (2) What are the challenges main issues faced in management House customs mekongga For tourist sustainable ?, " problem the main thing we often encounter in the field that's one of them lack of visitors ' awareness about will cleanliness, so that matter which resulted in other problems arise like smell No delicious and destructive mark kidahan around House customs, and things that is also what causes another new tourist become No like when visit ". From the results interviews conducted on (Figure 13 ) that House customs mekongga is one of the tour culture so that matter that's what it is Power pull for tourists and the community local especially the Latambaga Village Community, then strategic position on the edge of Mandra Beach Kolaka so that traveler can enjoy sun sunk in the afternoon day and trader local that is around House customs ready mekongga serving tourists while see sun set. Then, no one can deny. There are several challenges, including a lack of awareness, that travellers will be concerned about regarding cleanliness, particularly in relation to waste that smells. No matter how delicious it is, that's also what disturbs travellers.

### 3.1 Contribution of the Mekongga Traditional House Kolaka to Sustainable Tourism in the Regency of Kolaka.

Tourist sustainability is defined as development tourism that can fulfil the requests of tourists and host communities while preserving and improving opportunities for future development. As a response to and reflection of the damage tourists bring to the environment, tourism sustainability raises attention from all stakeholders interested in tourism (Prathama et al., 2020). Custom home Mekongga Kolaka play a significant role in the development of sustainable tourism in the Regency of Kolaka. Based on research results, home customs not only offer a strong cultural mark, but also become a centre of activity for significant social and economic aspects. (Figure 8) The majority of respondents express satisfaction with the existing facilities and infrastructure, although there is a need for improvement. With 63.3% of respondents feeling sufficiently satisfied and 25% very satisfied, it is obvious that House customs are capable of interesting tourists and providing a satisfying experience (Helmy & Cooper, 2002; Partanen, 2024; Zaragoza-Sáez, Claver-Cortés, Marco-Lajara, & Úbeda-García, 2023). (Figure 9) Apart from that, the house customs of Mekongga have also become a source of information and education for travellers about the local culture, some of which are well-known through social media. This shows that House customs Mekongga succeed in utilising digital technology to increase visibility and attract more visitors. (Figure 10) Impact on society from the existence of House customs. This is also positive, with 81.8% of respondents evaluating the impact as very optimistic or optimistic, indicating that House customs contribute to the improvement of quality of life in the local community.

### 3.2 Challenge in Management of the Mekongga Traditional House For Tourist Sustainability.

Although the contribution of House customs Mekongga to tourist sustainability is significant, several challenges need to be overcome. Law Number 23 of 1997 concerning the Management of the Environment states that pollution of the environment is the entry of substances, energy, or other components into the environment through human activities or natural processes. This leads to a decline in quality, which in turn affects the proper functioning of environmental life. In tourism, pollution is generally caused by the activities undertaken for tourism development (Prathama et al., 2020). The main challenge faced is the lack of awareness among visitors about the importance of guarding and maintaining a clean environment (Bristow, Yang, & Lu, 2011; García-Meseguer, Sánchez-Planelles, Peiró-Signes, & Segarra-Oña, 2024; Herremans, 2013). This often causes the surrounding area, House customs Mekongga Kolaka, to become dirty, reducing the aesthetic and comfort for tourists, especially those who are new and visiting for the first time. Additionally, the lack of attention to existing facilities has also become a problem. The repair process is slow, and a lack of facilities for routine maintenance causes discomfort for tourists. Interviews with traders, local officials, and government representatives lend further support to the findings. They highlight that the lack of adequate cleanliness and facilities is the primary issue that needs to be addressed promptly to support the development of sustainable tourism.

## 4. CONCLUSION

A study shows that House Customs Mekongga has potential for significant development in sustainable tourism in the Regency of Kolaka. (Figure 8) The majority of respondents are satisfied with existing facilities, although there is a need for improvement. (Figure 9) Knowledge about House customs Mekongga was primarily obtained from social media, which shows the importance of a digital marketing strategy. (Figure 10) The social impact rating is very positive; however, the implementation principles of the tour need improvement. The primary challenges in management are issues with cleanliness and a shortage of adequate facilities. Therefore, recommendations for developing more, including improving awareness, will help ensure a sound and sustainable tourism experience.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, some suggestions can be offered to government officials and tourists to enhance management and the experience of home tour customs in Mekongga.

- a. Government areas need to increase efforts in education and campaign awareness for visitors. This can be achieved through socialisation programs, the installation of informational boards, and the provision of adequate facilities and cleanliness in the tourist area.
- b. There is an improvement in the maintenance and repair facility to ensure the comfort and safety of visitors. The government can also collaborate with private parties to expedite the repair process of damaged facilities.

For tourists, it is essential to raise awareness and take responsibility for maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of the environment during their visit to the House of Customs Mekongga. Tourists are expected to dispose of their trash properly and follow existing rules to maintain the beauty and comfort of the place, thereby benefiting the tourism industry. With collaboration between the government, society, local and tourists, home customs Mekongga Kolaka can continue to develop and become a sustainable tourist destination that supports the preservation of culture and the environment.

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## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript from the start.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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