



Sustainable Infrastructure Investment for Enhancing MICE Tourism Competitiveness in Jeneponto Regency

Syafuddin¹, Masri Ridwan¹

¹Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author, Email: syaf.admah@gmail.com

Abstract

Tourism development in Jeneponto regency, Indonesia, plays a crucial role in realizing the region's vision of becoming an advanced and dignified area with a religious spirit, as outlined in its long-term development plan. Positioned strategically along the route connecting Makassar city with several regencies, Jeneponto regency is designated as a regional tourism strategic area (KSPD), encompassing diverse attractions such as water tourism, cultural sites, and nature reserves. This study explores the potential of Jeneponto as a Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) destination. The MICE industry, recognized globally for its economic contributions, particularly through infrastructure investments and local industrialization, holds promise for Jeneponto. The region recorded substantial investment in 2018, largely attributed to projects like wind and steam power plants. Additionally, the development of salt industrialization as a techno park further enhances its appeal. Using Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis, this research maps and assesses existing conditions and potential inhibiting factors for MICE tourism in Jeneponto. It provides insights for stakeholders and local authorities to enhance MICE destination competitiveness nationally and internationally. The findings underscore the importance of infrastructure development, local industry integration, and community-based tourism initiatives in maximizing Jeneponto's tourism potential. Strategic collaborations with educational institutions and certification of tourism personnel are recommended to elevate service quality and visitor satisfaction. This study offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and developing MICE tourism in smaller, coastal regions, contributing to sustainable economic growth and local prosperity.

Keywords: Destination Competitiveness, Event Management, MICE Tourism, Tourism Development.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development in Jeneponto Regency is a manifestation of the region's vision and mission. The regency's vision, as outlined in its Long-Term Development Plan for 2006-2026, is "An Advanced, Resilient, and Dignified Jeneponto with a Religious Spirit". This vision is supported by six key missions, ranging from good governance to sustainable economic growth and optimal natural resource management. The strategic position of Jeneponto Regency makes it a potential area for tourism industry development. Located on the route connecting Makassar City with several other regencies, Jeneponto is part of the Regional Tourism Development Unit (SKPP) of Makassar and its surroundings. This area is designated as a Regional Tourism Strategic Area (KSPD), which includes various types of tourist attractions such as water tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, and agro-tourism.

The tourism sector has become increasingly important for Indonesia's economy. In 2016, it became the second-largest contributor to foreign exchange earnings after palm oil, generating USD 13.5 million.

Tourism visitors can be categorized into leisure visitors and business visitors, with the latter including the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry. Recent studies have highlighted the growing importance of MICE tourism in regional development (Marques & Santos, 2016; Smagina, 2017). Jeneponto has the potential to be developed into a competitive MICE destination. The MICE industry is recognized by the World Tourism Organization as a significant contributor to a country's Gross Domestic Product and can serve as branding for a destination (UNWTO, 2014). To realize this potential, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism issued Regulation No. 5 of 2017 on Guidelines for MICE Destination Development. This aligns with global trends in MICE tourism development as discussed by Rogerson (2015) and Hussain et al. (2014).

The potential of Jeneponto as a MICE destination is supported by high investment figures. In the first semester of 2018, Jeneponto recorded an investment realization of Rp1.7 trillion, accounting for 31.4% of the total investment in South Sulawesi province. Major projects such as the Tolo 1 and 2 Wind Power Plants



and the Jeneponto Steam Power Plant have contributed to this investment surge. This infrastructure development is crucial for MICE tourism, as emphasized by Whitfield et al. (2014) and Buathong & Lai (2017). Additionally, the development of salt industrialization in Bangkala District, which began in 2017, has been recommended by the Ministry of Research and Technology to be developed as a Techno Park for salt development in Indonesia. Such unique local features can enhance the attractiveness of MICE destinations, as noted by Mair (2014) and Terzi et al. (2013). Given these considerations, it is crucial to conduct research on mapping the existing conditions of MICE destination potential in Jeneponto Regency, as well as identifying inhibiting and supporting factors. This research aims to provide insights to the government, local authorities, and other stakeholders to realize a MICE destination in Jeneponto that meets all criteria and indicators of a nationally and internationally competitive MICE destination. The importance of such stakeholder collaboration in MICE tourism development has been highlighted by Locke (2019) and Monge & Brandimarte (2016).

This study will develop an information medium to identify locations and information about destination potential in Jeneponto Regency using Geographic Information System analysis, a method that has proven effective in tourism planning and management (Supak et al., 2015; Jovanovic & Njeguš, 2013). The research is titled Mapping of MICE Destination Potential in Jeneponto Regency Based on Geographic Information. The study proposes to consider various factors including infrastructure investments, local industries, and regional planning policies in assessing MICE potential, offering a more comprehensive approach than typically seen in MICE tourism studies. This research could provide novel insights into how smaller, coastal regions can develop competitive MICE tourism offerings, diversifying from the usual focus on large urban centers. This study appears to be the first to systematically map and analyze the MICE tourism potential of Jeneponto using GIS.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative approach was used to gain an in-depth understanding of sensitive issues related to economic and tourism

potential in Tamanroya Village, Jeneponto. The qualitative descriptive method was used to describe the conditions and potential utilized to build the community's economy. Jeneponto District, located in South Sulawesi, became the focus of the research due to its strategic potential in maritime tourism development. The district has a varied topography, from highlands to lowlands, with administrative boundaries adjacent to several other districts. Data Collection Techniques using Questionnaires, interviews, and documentation were used to collect primary and secondary data from various trusted sources and Field surveys were conducted to measure the existing conditions of the distribution of the tourism industry, such as the location of hotels, festivals, and events in Jeneponto Regency. Data types and sources consisted of primary (such as accessibility, local support, and accommodation facilities) and secondary (literature studies, tourism policies, and business industry data). These data were analyzed to understand the current conditions and potential for tourism development. Data analysis was conducted using zoning and spatial analysis methods. Zoning was used to divide the city environment into zones that allow for different space utilization controls. Spatial analysis was conducted by overlaying maps to identify spatial relationships and create a mapping of potential MICE destinations in Jeneponto Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tourist attraction of Jeneponto Regency consists of a beach, cave, sea, island, panorama, agro, history, traditional community culture, and events (tourism events). The potential tourist attraction of Jeneponto Regency is seen from the historical aspect, socio-cultural aspects of the community, and other related sectors. Jeneponto Regency has great potential to be developed as a competitive tourist destination in Indonesia, by utilizing its natural, cultural, and historical wealth. The development of spatial strategies and the determination of SKPP are key to increasing the flow of tourist visits and contributing to the local economy and community welfare. This discussion provides clear direction for relevant parties in planning sustainable and environmentally sound tourism development in Jeneponto District, South Sulawesi.

The discussion is conducted concerning the concept of tourism potential as a resource for regional



development. Factors that determine a tourist destination, especially as a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) destination, include accessibility, local support, additional activity

opportunities, accommodation and meeting facilities, and information about the reputation and experience of the destination.

Attraction

Table 1. The attractions/events approved and deemed eligible by the Jeneponto Regency government

No	Event	Location	Schedule
1.	A'jarang Festival	Kalimporo Village, Bangkala Sub-District, Jeneponto	April 01/31 Mei
2.	Beroanging Harvest Party	Kalimporo Village, Bangkala Sub-District, Jeneponto	01 to 31 July
3.	Jeune-Je'ne Sappara Traditional Feast	Balangloe Tarawang Village	01 to/29 October
4.	Maudu Lompoa	Lentu Village, Bontoramba Sub-district	Lentu Village, Bontoramba Sub-district

Source: Jeneponto District Tourism Office, 2023

The region of Jeneponto is set to host several exciting events throughout the year. The A'jarang Festival is scheduled to take place in Kalimporo Village, Bangkala Sub-District, but the exact date is unclear, as it falls from April 1 to May 31. The Beroanging Harvest Party will be held in Kalimporo Village, Bangkala Sub-District, from July 1 to July 31, celebrating the harvest season.

In October, the Je'ne-Je'ne Sappara Traditional Feast will be held in Balangloe Tarawang Village,

offering a unique cultural experience. The Maudu Lompoa event will take place in Lentu Village, Bontoramba Sub-district, but the exact date is not specified. These events promise to bring together the local community and visitors alike, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region. The following is the distribution of events in Jeneponto District, visualized through Arcgis 10.5 mapping overlaid with activity locations and village administrative boundaries.

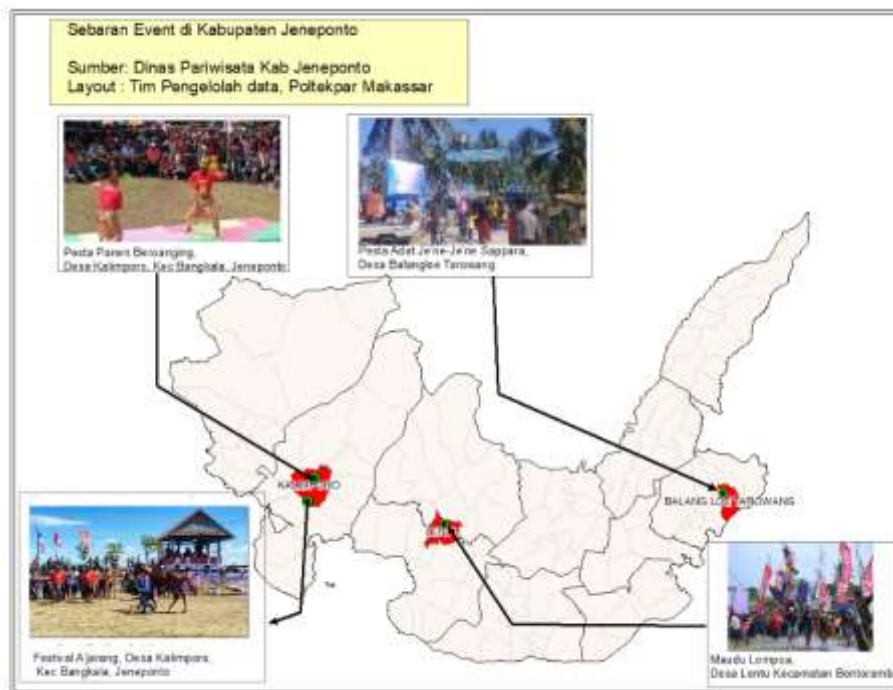


Figure1. Mapping of Jeneponto Regency event locations

Source: Researcher, 2023



Amenity

Amenities or amenities are all facilities and infrastructure that support tourists in a tourist attraction. Facilities and infrastructure in question such as lodging, restaurants, transportation, and travel agents. By using suitable infrastructure, tourism facilities such as hotels, tourist attractions, marinas, performance halls, and so on are built. The infrastructure that is much needed for the construction of tourism facilities includes roads, water supply, electric power, landfills, airports, ports, telephones, and others. Given the relationship between facilities and infrastructure, it is clear that the development of infrastructure in general must precede the facilities. There are times when infrastructure is built together in

the framework of the development of tourist facilities. A place or area can develop as a tourist destination if accessibility is good. There is a reciprocal relationship between facilities and infrastructure. Infrastructure is a requirement for facilities, and vice versa facilities can cause infrastructure improvements (Setiawan, 2015). The facilities that can visit MICE tourism in Jeneponto Regency based on the results of the Survey of Accommodation Service Companies/Businesses in 2018, Jeneponto Regency has 14 other accommodations. Still in 2018, the average stay of foreign guests was 0 and domestic guests was 1,010 If you look at the presentation of the room occupancy rate in the highest hotel occurred in December with a room occupancy rate of 9.01%.

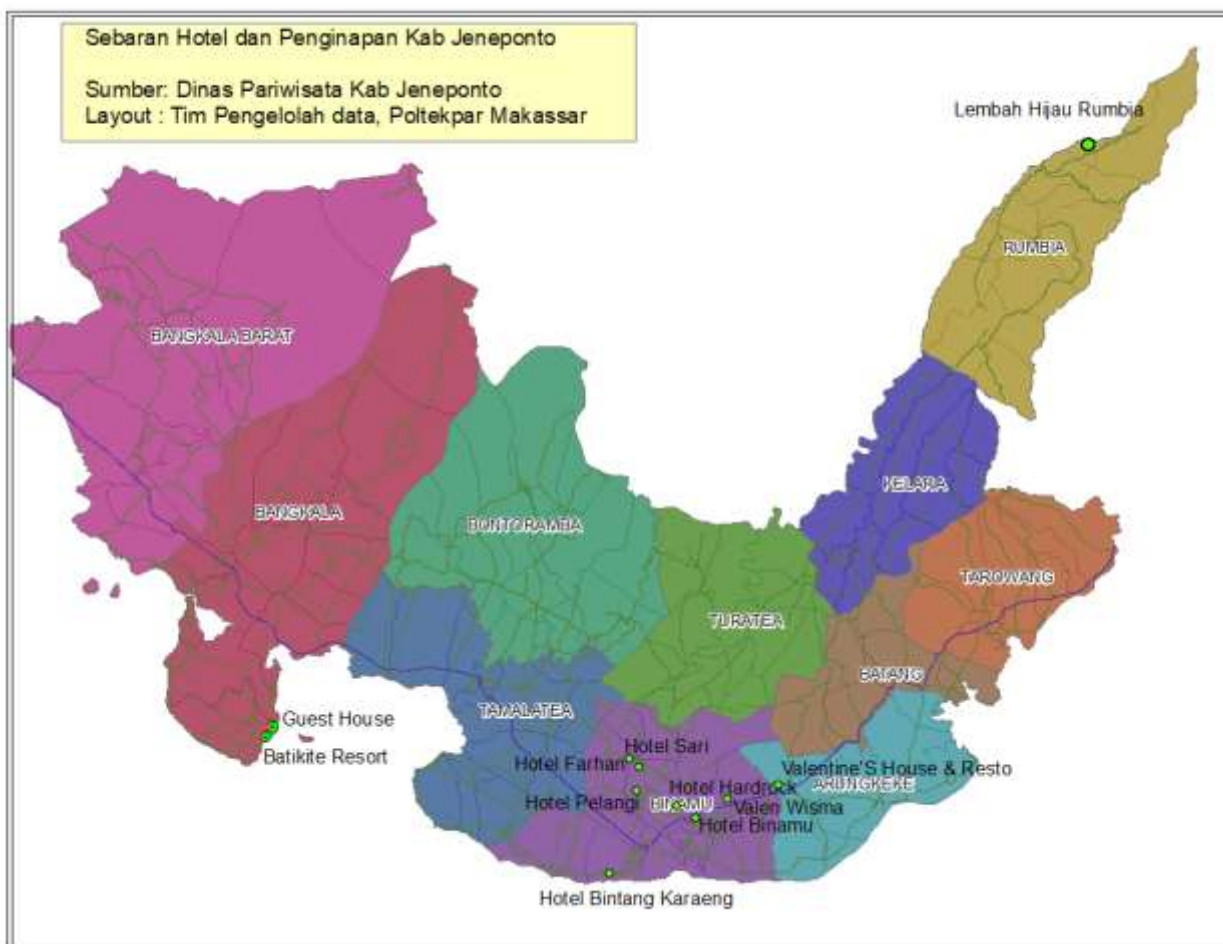


Figure 1. Distribution Mapping of Accommodation Facilities in Jeneponto District
Source: Researcher, 2023

Based on Figure 2, the distribution of hotels and inns is centered in the Binumu, Arungkeke, Bangkale, and Rumbia sub-districts. The capital center located in Kecamatan Binamu causes the agglomeration of

facilities to be centered in the area. While in some sub-districts it is very limited. Thus, the presence of facilities such as hotels, restaurants, and restaurants



needs to be developed at several potential points in Jeneponto Regency. Accessibility

Accessibility is a very important component of tourism. Accessibility is the ease of reaching a destination, which involves comfort, safety, and travel time. This is important to note because the higher the accessibility, the easier it is to reach and the higher the level of comfort for tourists to come to visit (Nabila, 2018). The following is the state of the road as a supporting component of tourism activities in Jeneponto Regency. Accessibility conditions in Jeneponto Regency include Arterial Roads, Local Roads, and Other Roads. Roads are important land transportation infrastructure to facilitate economic activities. The increasing development efforts will demand an increase in road construction to facilitate population mobility and the traffic of goods from one area to another. The length of roads in Jeneponto district in 2018 reached 1,073.30 kilometers. In that year, 734.10 kilometers of roads were paved (BPS Kab Jeneponto, 2019).

Table 2. Length of Roads by Administrative Status of Jeneponto Regency in 2019

No	Road Condition	Length	
		2017	2018
1.	National Road	60,80	60,80
2.	Provincial Road	40,90	40,90
3.	District Road	389,29	389,29
4.	District Road	374,14	374,14
5.	Village Road	91,74	91,74

Source: Jeneponto District Settlement and Infrastructure Office, 2021

The data on the length of roads in Jeneponto Regency in 2019 shows a comprehensive breakdown of the road conditions by administrative status. The total length of national roads remains constant at 60.80 kilometers from 2017 to 2018. Similarly, provincial roads also maintain a consistent length of 40.90 kilometers. District roads, which include both primary and secondary roads, have a combined length of 763.43 kilometers, with a slight increase from 2017 to 2018. Village roads, which are the local roads connecting villages, have a total length of 91.74 kilometers. This data provides valuable insights into the infrastructure development in Jeneponto Regency, highlighting the importance of maintaining and expanding road networks to support economic growth and community connectivity.

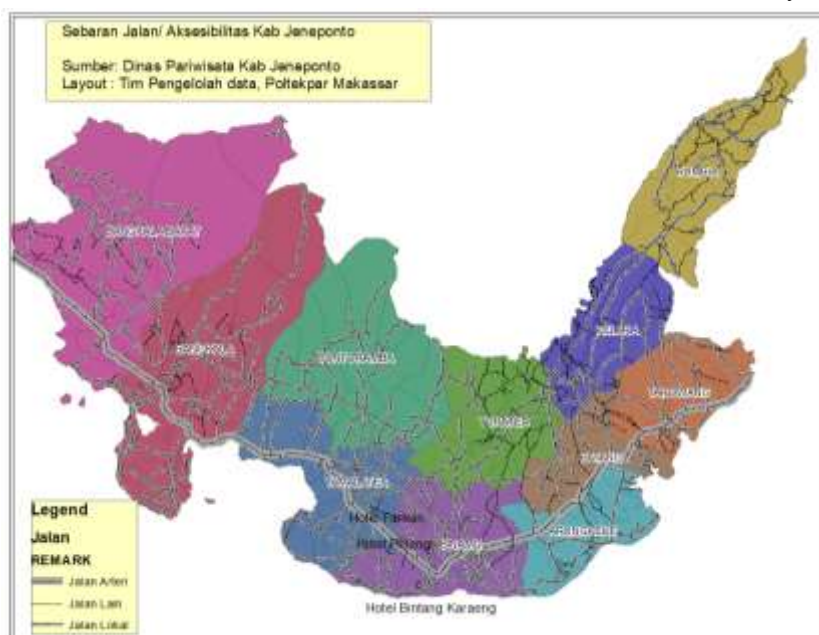


Figure 3. Accessibility Map of Jeneponto Regency

Source: Researcher, 2023



Accessibility conditions to Jeneponto Regency can be reached from Makassar City via the Makassar-

Jeneponto Line 90 Km with a travel time of 2-3 hours using four-wheeled and two-wheeled vehicles.



Road Condition of Beton Village to Rumbia Tourist Attraction

Condition of Village Road to Harapan Island,

Figure 4 Accessibility conditions in Jeneponto District (Doc: Field survey, 2023)

The condition of village roads leading to tourist attractions is generally suitable for two-wheeled and four-wheeled vehicles. All tourist attractions in Jeneponto Regency can be reached with adequate infrastructure support. However, some points need special attention from the local government, for example, the condition of the village road to Harapan Island, Bangkala District. Improvements in road infrastructure at the village level can support tourism activities and MICE activities in the Jeneponto district.

Ancillary

A tourist destination must be supported by ancillary services, one of which is the existence of a tourist management institution. According to Setiawan (2015), additional services must be provided by the local government of a tourist destination both for tourists and for tourism actors. Services provided include marketing, physical development (highways, railways, drinking water, electricity, telephones, etc.), and coordinating all kinds of activities with all laws and regulations both on the highway and at tourist attractions. Ancillaries are also things that support tourism, such as management institutions, Tourist Information, Travel agents, and stakeholders who play a role in tourism.

The form of additional services in Jeneponto Regency for MICE activities is described in the following interview with the Head of the Jeneponto Regency Tourism Office: “The government has done

its best for the development of tourism in Jeneponto Regency, starting from the preparation of the RIPPARDA (Jeneponto Regency Tourism Development Master Plan) in 2018, in addition to partnerships with PHRI associations, ASITA, GENPI, South Sulawesi Regional Tourism Promotion Agency and Universities”. (Interview with Mrs. EIA, 10:00-12:00 pm, September 24, 2023)

The development of the Tourism Sector in Jeneponto Regency is influenced by the Quality of Human Resources. The importance of human resources in the tourism sector is a very important resource in most organizations. Especially in service-based organizations, HR acts as a key factor in realizing performance success (Evans, Campbell, & Stonehouse, 2003). The human quality factor is a key success factor and plays an important role in the achievement of an industry. This also affects the tourism industry, because this industry has a direct relationship that is intangible with consumers who depend on the quality of human resources of employees to create pleasure interest, and comfort for consumers. “In the Event Organizer business, the ability or skill of employees is very influential on the level of customer satisfaction. It can be said that the business we do is related to public service. So the way we serve and facilitate consumer requests affects our income as a company”. (Interview with Mrs. EIA, 10:00-12:00 WITA, September 24, 2023)



Based on the results of the interview, the interviewee explained the important role of human resources owned by his Event Organizer greatly influences the level of customer satisfaction. So EOs who work in the field of service provision are very dependent on the services provided by their employees. It is also stated by Nandi (2008) that the tourism industry product is a service, therefore the emphasis must be on the aspect of service tailored to the needs of tourists. In the tourism industry, service quality is the main indicator that shows its professional level. Research by Kim et al. (2022) reveals that investment in HR development has a significant impact on the performance and competitiveness of MICE destinations. This study found a positive correlation between comprehensive HR training programs and increased customer satisfaction and loyalty to MICE destinations. Jeneponto Regency needs to encourage innovation in the management and organization of MICE events, by utilizing the creativity of local human resources, as suggested by Marques and Borba (2023). Marques and Borba (2023) found that innovation driven by high-quality human resources plays a key role in differentiating MICE destinations and attracting more international events. The Tourism Industry, especially the MICE sector, requires the existence of a professional Event Organizer. This is because MICE is an activity that involves various industrial sectors such as recreation, accommodation, transportation, travel, food and beverage, information technology, trade, venue, and finance sectors. Therefore, MICE can be called a multiplier effect industry. Thus, the development of qualified and professional human resources is a key factor in improving the competitiveness of Jeneponto Regency as a MICE destination. Investments in training, innovation, and improved service quality will have a significant impact on customer satisfaction and the growth of the MICE sector in the area.

Considering the MICE activities that have been carried out by the government and local communities in Jeneponto, it is appropriate that the development and economic development of creative tourism in Jeneponto should be carried out. The government, in this case, the Jeneponto District Development Planning Agency and the Jeneponto District Culture and Tourism Office, already have a 2019 tourism masterplan. Tourism activities are then packaged and

directed to the MICE business by selling the potential of the village. To manage this, it takes the creativity of the local community to make it something interesting. Some villages in Binamu and Bangkala sub-districts have tried to collaborate with MSMEs, in this case, the home industry, for example as a center for footwear crafts (sandals and shoes). But that doesn't mean directly selling sandals and shoes. The local community sells more of a process, after buying an entrance ticket the tourists begin to learn directly how to make sandals or shoes, how to make basic footwear by directly measuring their own feet, up to the stage of making and gluing sandals or shoes. Once completed, they can then take their work home. There are also activities from tourism villages that are packaged with gardening packages, farming packages, or cattle packages. Therefore, it is tried to manage creative tourism while developing CBT (Community-Based Tourism). Until now, the government, in this case the Jeneponto District Culture and Tourism Office, has tried to provide facilities in the form of training in setting up the tourism industry, including homestay management, traditional culinary packaging, making tour packages, and becoming a tour guide.

This includes providing facilities by finding assistants from universities. Even gradually there are already certified human resources such as in the field of accommodation, hotel employees, restaurants, and guides. Even for the next five years, Bappeda and the Jeneponto government are looking at the Turatea Mini Stadium and Forest City Park to build a Front City that integrates business, tourism, and property. This plan is expected to go smoothly since Jeneponto district does not yet have a special icon, except for Tamarunang Beach. Thus, the Pabiringa Kel. Binamu sub-district will become a small but integrated city. Thus, it can be mapped that most of the villages in Jeneponto Regency spread in almost all sub-districts already have the potential for MICE activities. For this reason, local communities assisted by the government can manage, package, and develop the potential of each village. Among other things, meetings or meetings are usually held in Rumbia, West Bangkala, Bangkala, Bontoramba, Tamalate, Turatea, Binamu, Batang, Arungkeke, Tarawang and Kelara sub-districts. Meanwhile, the incentive trips are more to Binamu and Tamalate sub-districts. As for the activities with exhibition nuances, until now they are still involved



outside Jeneponto Regency, such as introducing the potential of Jeneponto Regency by participating in exhibition activities held in Makassar.

As a service-based industry, tourism is highly dependent on the quality of service provided by human resources. Research cited (Evans, Campbell, & Stonehouse, 2003) shows that the quality of human resources is a key factor in the successful performance of service-based organizations. The role of HR in MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions): The MICE industry in Jeneponto requires professional EOs (Event Organizers) to organize events such as meetings, gatherings, exhibitions, and incentive trips. Well-trained and qualified EOs can increase customer satisfaction and the success of these events.

Innovation is needed in Creative Tourism and CBT (Community Based Tourism). In line with Campbell, D., & Stonehouse, G. (2003) which discusses the importance of strategic management in the tourism industry, including the role of HR quality in improving performance. The local government has directed to development of creative tourism by involving local communities. A concrete example is the development of home industries such as footwear crafts and gardening, farming, and cattle activities that can attract tourists with hands-on experience. This shows innovation in tourism management that not only sells products but also experiences and processes.

Infrastructure Development and Tourism Masterplan: Jeneponto District has a tourism masterplan that involves infrastructure development such as the Turatea Mini Stadium and Forest City Park. This is a strategic move to integrate business, tourism, and property to support the overall growth of the tourism sector. Collaboration with Universities and HR Certification: The government's efforts in providing assistance from universities and certifying human resources in various tourism fields (accommodation, restaurants, guides) are the right steps to improve the professionalism and quality of tourism services. Thus, this discussion can be linked to previous research that emphasizes the importance of human resources in the service industry, including the tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of the quality of human resources (HR) in the development of the tourism sector in Jeneponto Regency. The quality

of human resources plays a crucial role in improving service quality and tourist experience. This is evident from previous studies that show a positive relationship between HR quality and customer satisfaction and loyalty in the tourism industry. Jeneponto Regency has great potential to develop creative tourism, especially through combining MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) with local wisdom and traditional crafts. This can increase the attractiveness of the destination as well as provide direct economic benefits to local communities. The involvement of local governments, educational institutions, and communities in providing training and certification for tourism human resources is crucial. This supports competency improvement and ensures the sustainability of the tourism industry in the future. Despite the huge potential, there are challenges such as infrastructure that still needs to be improved and better management of tourism destinations. However, with the right approach and sustainable management strategies, the potential for tourism growth in Jeneponto is huge.

Based on the above conclusions, several suggestions can be proposed for the development of the tourism sector in Jeneponto Regency, namely the local government can increase investment in training and certification of tourism human resources, especially in the fields of accommodation, tour guides, and destination management. This will increase the professionalism and quality of services offered. Focus on developing adequate tourism infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and other supporting facilities. This will help in improving accessibility and convenience for tourists. Continuous Promotion and Marketing: Conduct ongoing promotions to attract more tourists and build a positive image of the destination. Collaboration with travel agents, social media, and digital platforms will be an effective strategy for reaching potential markets.

REFERENCES

- Buathong, K., & Lai, P. C. (2017). Perceived attributes of event sustainability in the MICE industry in Thailand: A viewpoint from governmental, academic, venue and practitioner. *Sustainability*, 9(7), 1151.



- Evans, N., Campbell, D., & Stonehouse, G. (2003). *Strategic management for travel and tourism*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Hussain, K., Raghavan, N. A., Kumar, J., & Navi, R. M. (2014). Micro-aspects of monetary and fiscal policies on outbound tourism demand. *Asian Social Science*, 10(19), 141.
- Jovanović, V., & Njeguš, A. (2013). The application of GIS and its components in tourism. *Yugoslav Journal of Operations Research*, 18(2).
- Kim, S., Park, S., & Lee, J. (2022). The impact of human resource development on MICE destination competitiveness: An empirical study. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 102, 103161.
- Locke, M. (2019). A framework for examining the strategic leverage points in the MICE industry. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 20(1), 1-23.
- Mair, J. (2014). *Conferences and conventions: A research perspective*. Routledge.
- Marques, J., & Borba, C. (2023). Innovation as a key factor for MICE destination competitiveness: A stakeholder perspective. *Tourism Management*, 94, 104617.
- Marques, J., & Santos, N. (2016). Developing business tourism beyond major urban centers: the perspectives of local stakeholders. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 22(1), 1-15.
- Monge, F., & Brandimarte, P. (2016). Mice tourism in Piedmont: Economic perspective and quantitative analysis of customer satisfaction. *Tourism Economics*, 22(3), 619-639.
- Nandi, A. K. (2008). *Tourism and hospitality management*. Anmol Publications Pvt Ltd.
- Rogerson, C. M. (2015). The uneven geography of business tourism in South Africa. *South African Geographical Journal*, 97(2), 183-202.
- Smagina, N. (2017). The internationalization of the Meetings-, Incentives-, Conventions and Exhibitions-(MICE) industry: Its influences on the actors in the tourism business activity. *Journal of Economics and Management*, 27, 96-113.
- Supak, S., Brothers, G., Bohnenstiehl, D., & Devine, H. (2015). Geospatial analytics for federally managed tourism destinations and their demand markets. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 4(3), 173-186.
- Terzi, M. C., Sakas, D. P., & Seimenis, I. (2013). International events: the impact of the conference location. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 73, 363-372.
- UNWTO. (2014). *Global Report on the Meetings Industry*. Madrid: UNWTO.
- Whitfield, J., Dioko, L. D. A., Webber, D., & Zhang, L. (2014). Attracting convention and exhibition attendance to complex MICE venues: Emerging data from Macao. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 16(2), 169-179.