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Toward a framework for an undergraduate academic tourism curriculum in Indonesian Universities: Some perspectives from stakeholders



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A B S T R A C T

We analyse policy documents as well opinions of stakeholders contributing to the development of the undergraduate academic tourism curriculum, namely: The Government which develops the general framework for curriculum development in Indonesian universities; non-governmental tourism associations which assist universities with opinions and guidance; tourism academics who develop and implement the curriculum in the classroom; and tourism trade associations. Two issues characterize the development of the tourism curriculum namely: determining the appropriate balance between vocational and academic frameworks, and an aspiration to move from inter- to mono-disciplinary instruction.

1. Introduction

Given its vast diversity of cultures, built heritage, landscapes, and natural resources which offer numerous attractions for visitors, Indonesia's tourism industries have been growing rapidly. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has identified significant potential areas of growth for Indonesian tourism in both natural attractions (14th in the world) and cultural resources (23rd). According to the Passengers Exit Survey, approximately twelve million foreign tourists visited Indonesia in 2016 (BPS, 2016). This number represents a significant increase from eight million in 2012, which is in line with the increase in foreign exchange income from the tourism sector from US\$9.1 billion in 2012 to US\$12.44 billion in 2016. A similar increase also can be seen in the number of domestic tourists. A recent report estimated 248 million domestic tourists in 2016 from within Indonesia, an increase of over 25% from 2011 (Tantowi et al., 2016).

The growth of the tourism industry has positively impacted Indonesian economics. According to the Ministry of Tourism Affairs, there had been a significant increase of the direct economic transaction of tourism activities from 501 billion in 2014–562.89 billion US\$ in 2015. As shown in Table 1, currently, the national income from tourism in Indonesia comprises 3.3% of the total GDP, making it the fourth largest export commodity of the country after oil and gas, coal, and rubber (BPS, 2016). Moreover, the same report also indicates that tourism-related industries employ more than ten million Indonesians. These factors have led the Indonesian government to increasingly focus on the development of the tourism sector.

The government's serious efforts to develop tourism can be seen in the Master Plan for National Tourism Development 2010–2025 which focuses on the development of 50 National Tourism Destinations, located in 33 of Indonesia's 34 provinces, as well as 88

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Table 1

Indonesian Main Exports Commodities, Year 2013 – 2015.

Source: BPS (Statistical Central Bureau), 2016

Rank	2013		2014		2015	
	Types of Commodity	(Million USD)	Types of Commodity	(Million USD)	Types of Commodity	(Million USD)
1	Oil & gas	32,633.20	Oil & gas	30,318.80	Oil & gas	18,552.10
2	Coal	24,501.40	Coal	20,819.30	Coal	15,943.00
3	Palm Oil	15,839.10	Palm Oil	17,464.90	Palm Oil	15,385.20
4	Tourism	10,054.15	Tourism	11,166.13	Tourism	12,225.89
5	Processed rubber	9316.60	Apparel	7450.90	Apparel	7371.90
6	Apparel	7501.00	Processed rubber	7021.70	Processed foods	6456.30
7	Electric appliances	6418.60	Processed foods	6486.80	Processed rubber	5842.00
8	Processed foods	5434.80	Electric appliances	6259.10	Electric appliances	5644.80
9	Textiles	5293.60	Textiles	5379.70	Textiles	4996.00
10	Paper and paper Products	3802.20	Wood Processed	3914.10	Wood Processed	3815.80
11	Wood Processed	3514.50	Chemical materials	3853.70	Paper and paper Products	3605.50
12	Chemical materials	3501.60	Paper and paper Products	3780.00	Chemical materials	2807.60

National Tourism Strategic Areas. The National Statistics Bureau reports that, in 2015, the government has spent more than 8 billion US\$ on tourism development, of which 27.29% was used for tourism development planning and coordination; 23.60% for research and development; and 20.55% for tourism promotion.

In addition, in order to support the growing tourism activities and to fulfil the increasing needs for human resources in the tourism industry, a number of schools have been established at both the secondary and tertiary/higher education levels, by both the State and private sectors, especially as vocational programs. Following the recognition of tourism as a formal discipline or field of study by the Indonesian Ministry of National Education in 2008, several universities have also opened undergraduate and graduate programs in tourism (*Sarjana Pariwisata*), accelerating the growth of tourism education. Although such bachelor's degree programs in tourism are intended to offer academic degrees, many of them remain mostly based on the vocational purpose.

As in many other countries, tourism studies in Indonesia has its roots in vocational training in order to handle and deal with tourism business (Ernawati, 2003). While there is an increased attention towards such issues as sustainability, equality, and politics as well as the socio-cultural impacts on tourism in tourism research and education (Tribe, 2000), little attention is still paid to these issues in the academic tourism programs in many universities in Indonesia. Ernawati (2003) has found that the focus of the curricula in tourism programs in Indonesian universities remains on marketing, statistical measurement, and financial management.

In order to take into consideration the increasingly complex and dynamic nature of the tourism phenomenon, it is essential to have a general common understanding among stakeholders in Indonesian tourism education to develop a tourism curriculum at Indonesian universities. Clearly, research on how to develop a tourism curriculum in universities is very important for Indonesia, not only because tourism is a new and dynamic discipline which continuously needs to be further developed, but also because of the importance of tourism for the Indonesian economy. Furthermore, given the fact that the different stakeholders involved in the tourism industry might have different perceptions and goals, it is imperative to consider their rationales and opinions as a basis for building some consensus on the tourism body of knowledge that can be translated into curriculum, especially at the university level, acceptable to both academics and industry.

The objective of this study is, therefore, to investigate the key issues in the development of tourism curricula, especially for undergraduate programs in Indonesian universities, by examining the perspectives of stakeholders on curriculum development. In doing so, this paper is structured as follows. Section two provides the theoretical framework of this study by discussing the debates on the purpose of tourism studies, the division between academic and vocational studies in tourism education, and the curriculum framework in tourism study. Section three will present a general description and explanation of the development of tourism studies in Indonesian higher education, followed by section four, which contains a discussion on tourism curriculum development. Section five suggests methods of data gathering and analysis and explains the validity of findings accessed. Afterwards, the roles and perspectives of stakeholders in the tourism curriculum development process in Indonesia are analysed and explained in section six. Finally, section seven provides the conclusion of this study.

2. Theoretical framework

This section aims to discuss the framework for curriculum development in tourism study by reference to a number of previous studies. Many scholars and professionals have offered different definitions for the term *curriculum*, but in general, it can be understood as a full plan to reach certain purposes in the education process (Kelly, 2009; Wiles, 2008). Given this understanding, in the context of tourism, it is therefore important to first discuss the purpose of tourism education.

2.1. The purpose of tourism studies

Although tourism as a field of study can be said to have already come of age (Airey, 2005; Tribe & Liburd, 2016), there is still no

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