

CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLANDS TOURISM IN INDONESIA: STUDY ON FOUR INDONESIA'S ISLAND DESTINATIONS

Sri Bramantoro Abdinagoro and Mohammad Hamsal

BINUS Business School, Bina Nusantara University

Email: sabdinagoro@binus.edu

Abstract. The Indonesian government places the tourism sector as one of the five priority development sectors. It has proven by the foreign exchange earnings of this sector. If in 2015 this sector is ranked fourth under the oil & gas, coal, and crude palm oil with a value of approximately 11 USD billion, then from 2018 to 2019 was ranked first with the foreign exchange value of around 20 USD billion. Indonesia consists of 17,000 large and small islands, located at coordinates 6° N - 11° 08' LS and from 95° ' BT - 141 ° 45' BT. With these conditions, the choice of small islands tourism development is very critical. Provinces that have sea and islands mostly make their islands to be tourist destinations. This study aims to determine consumer perceptions and assessments of tourism objects, as well as from stakeholders, and provide strategic recommendations for the development of these islands' tourism. The research method used is a qualitative and descriptive method, through focus group discussions, interview, and in-depth discussions with various stakeholders as well as distributed questionnaires to respondents who visited and stayed at the tourist destination. Four of the island's tourist sites studied were the Anambas Islands in Kepulauan Riau Province, Ora Beach in Maluku Province, Wakatobi Island in Southeast Sulawesi Province, and the Banyuwangi's Red Island in East Java Province. The selection of these four destinations because the locations have a far-reaching or remote character and highlight the island as the main object. Based on the analysis, the factors that become challenges in island tourism are the accessibility to tourist areas, supporting infrastructure such as telecommunications facilities, packaging of unique tourist destinations to be able to show differences and advantages in each tourist destination. Government support plays a critical role in building tourism destinations, both through policies and rules, as well as infrastructure fulfillment.

Keywords: small island tourism, tourist destination, strategic marketing, eco-tourism

INTRODUCTION

Nowaday is a decade of tourism that has grown into a leading sector in driving the economy both locally and internationally. The growth of tourism since World War Two has been so significant that in a relatively short period, tourism has become one of the largest economic sectors in the world (Hall & Page 2014). The United Nations World Tourism (UNWTO) noted that in 2019, the tourism sector produced 10.4% of the gross domestic product of the world average. Besides, the UNWTO also noted that international travel in 2018 grew by 6%, with total international tourists that travel to the Asia Pacific growing by 7%. This phenomenon will have a positive impact on countries in the Asia Pacific, as well as Indonesia, which encourages the tourism sector as one of the main drivers of economic growth.

Indonesia has around 17,000 large and small islands, about 6,000 of which are uninhabited (www.nationalgeographic.co.id). These islands spread in the equator with a tropical climate. By seeing this condition, Indonesia has enormous tourism potential, ranging from natural scenery in the form of beaches, mountains, lakes, rivers, caves, and forests; history; culture; traditional village; to culinary (Wresti, 2013).

As a maritime country, world-class achievements have included the Indonesian tourism industry. Travel and Leisure Magazine (2015) declared Bali as the second-best tourist island in the world after the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador. In the Asian region, Bali Island is number one in Asia, surpassing the Maldives, Indian Ocean, and Phuket, Thailand (Gero, 2016). This achievement achieved because Bali has natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, and hospitality of the population.

With the position mentioned above, Indonesia has the potential to develop its tourism industry sector. Various parties believe that tourism sub-sector will continue to increase and support national economic growth. The Indonesian government places the tourism sector as one of the five priority development sectors. It has proven by the foreign exchange earnings of this sector. If in 2015 this sector is ranked fourth under the oil & gas, coal, and crude palm oil with a value of approximately 11 USD billion, then from 2018 to 2019 was ranked first with a foreign exchange value of around 20 USD billion. Island or marine tourism considered strategic because it can become the backbone of tourism, contribute to foreign exchange, increase employment, and reduce poverty.

Based on the amount of potential currently possessed, island tourism in Indonesia is still lagging. Poor infrastructure, lack of promotion, and low service quality are the main obstacles to the development of marine tourism (Firmansyah, 2014). Integrated island tourism is the overall management of a resort and island, ranging from the regional arrangement, ecological and biological protection, to the availability of modes of transportation and easy access to islands, ports, cruise ships, hotels, and restaurants. Also, it needs to be supported by attractive tour packages with competitive prices and high service levels.

This study aims to determine consumer perceptions and assessments of tourism objects, as well as from stakeholders, and provide strategic recommendations for the development of these islands' tourism. Four of the island's tourist sites studied were the Anambas Islands in Kepulauan Riau Province, Ora Beach in Maluku Province, Wakatobi Island in Southeast Sulawesi Province, and the Banyuwangi's Red Island in East Java Province. The selection of these four destinations because the locations have a remote character and highlight the island as the main object.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In tourism, the general formula "3A" known for the development of tourist destinations (Kastarlak and Barber, 2014). Access to the first "A" includes airport/port infrastructure, frequency of flights/shipping, and roads to tourist sites. Good access will drive the progress of tourist destinations. Referring to Jackman (2014), infrastructure and various uniqueness of famous tourist destinations to be developed, because it is the key to tourism development in the area. The ease of accessing tourist destinations will affect satisfaction and intention to come back. Herstanti et al. (2014) found that tour quality, perceived value, and image destination had a direct impact on tourist satisfaction.

The second "A" is Attraction. It is the beauty offered by tourist destinations, both natural, cultural, and human-made or a combination of them. Indonesia is a country with diverse tourist attractions, with many islands, ethnic groups, and cultures, the attractiveness of this country is very high. Therefore, inventorying, classifying, evaluating, and ranking attractions is one of the critical things in increasing tourist/visitor attractiveness (Allahar, 2015).

The last one is Amenities, in the form of complete tourist support facilities and infrastructure. Amenities can determine how crowded and thriving the tourist destination. The critical thing is destination management, how a tourism object is well managed to get benefits for the surrounding area, not only the marketing aspect also environment aspect. Destination management according to Magaš (2010) is "the tourism activity which engages local interests within meaningful business cooperation with the offer holders, in order to form the destination product" (p. 1046). Magaš also argued that a tourism destination is a complex system and destination management comprises many sub-systems that are generally "decentralized and fragmented" and thus require "coordinated activity" (p. 1043). The government must not only be involved in participating in developing tourism but also consider the economic aspects of the surrounding community, especially in the case of small islands. d'Hautesserre (2016) argues that the population of small islands in the Pacific is linked to the global tourism market to diversify the economy and increase income to fight for immigration. These small islands are different cultures and are a challenge to maintain their attractiveness in the market. Therefore, there must be political will from the local government even if only from small tourism companies.

One crucial factor that supports this is the existence of brand image objectives. Ann Suwaree Ashton (2014), shows that all involved in brand development must understand how holistic, functional, and general psychological attributes are unique in developing the image of the destination brand. Therefore, tourist destination managers must better understand how to apply brand image because it will increase marketing effectiveness that maximally benefits all stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, and non-profit organizations.

Tourist attractions of small islands and beaches in Indonesia are also inseparable from the local government because most of the land and location are in the area of government. The critical role of government is one of the keys to the success of tourist destinations. The government not only plays a policymaker in issuing rules that support tourist destinations, but it is also involved in environmental aspects in order to become sustainable tourism. The importance of policymakers and tourism managers understand the influence of the potential of climate change on the island's tourism industry. Both parties, especially the government, must jointly increase public awareness and conduct policy interventions that get input from tourism managers (Belle and Bramwell, 2005). Without significant contributions to climate change mitigation, achieving eco-island status causes costs to increase without increasing income, raises more pressing social and environmental problems, and communities carry out unsustainable practices (Grیدهholj and Kelman, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

The research method used is qualitative and descriptive. Referring to Lune and Berg (2017), the research method used is qualitative research through focus group discussions (FGD), direct interviews, and direct observation. For study in Anambas Islands and Wakatobi Island use qualitative methods through FGDs and interviews with stakeholders as tourism authority sources and tourism operators, such as hotel/resort and diving providers, with the tourism association (ASITA), and direct observation of the main islands in four islands of the tourist destination. There are 10-15 respondents involved in one location, so the total number of respondents for this is 30 respondents. The use of this method is due to limited time and still a small amount and frequency of visiting people who come there. The results of the interview analysis will be used to identify the number of problems that occurred and then analyzed based on the literature and previous research. Furthermore, there are critical steps in order to increase tourism interest and development in the islands to proposed as recommendations for tourism stakeholders.

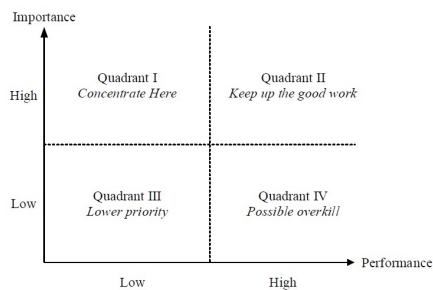


Figure 1. Importance-Performance Matrix

Source: Martilla & James (1977)

While a study in the Red Island and Ora Beach use quantitative methods by distributing questionnaires to visitors (consumers), the Importance-Performance Matrix which contains 36 attributes (Sheng et. Al., 2004) was used to analyze the questionnaire results. The number of respondents in Red Island is 155 people, and on the Ora Beach reached 15 people. The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is used to diagnose fundamental shortcomings and set priorities in tourism development. This tool can also analyze the allocation of more efficient limited resources to increase tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness. Science can describe the relationship between satisfaction and perceived performance. According to Martilla and James (1977), the results of Importance-Performance Analysis can be displayed graphically in a two-dimensional grid that easily interpreted, as shown in Figure 1. To get weaknesses in managing tourism, Quadrant I (concentrate here) is a significant concern for concessions.

FINDINGS AND ARGUMENT

Base on results of FGD, interviews, and field trips, as well as benchmarks with the same islands tourism characteristics, researcher divided tourism problems of four islands in groups of (1) Attraction, (2) Accessibility, (3) Facilities, (4) Government Support, and (5) Environment.

(1) Attraction

Generally, four islands tourism does have several attractions that can be an attraction for tourists, both domestic and foreign. Some of the attractions include fishing, diving, snorkeling, and other marine tourism. Besides that, culinary tourism with cultural tourism can combine well. What needs more attention is the monitoring program of these activities, whether the useful marketing patterns that have been carried out so far, with many activities while access to reach the small islands is still uncertain. The thematic tourism not yet has overtaken, this can be a thematic choice for tourists.

(2) Accessibility,

Accessibility to the small islands is a common problem faced by the Regional Government to make tourism the primary source of revenue for the local government. Sea transportation is sometimes dependent on the weather. Also, small boats between islands exist, but safety factors have not received enough attention, such as the availability of life jackets

(3) Facility,

Several islands, only not more than two hotels is relatively good, but it is still equivalent to the lowest class. Accommodation is still not sufficiently built to support tourism. There are no other supporters who also attract tourists, such as souvenirs that are

souvenirs of the Anambas Islands.

(4) Government Support,

The Local Government through the Tourism Office has sought to attract tourists through tourism activities held in the Regency, as well as installing billboards and promotions in the capital of the Province. Some who still need improvement as the recording of tourist data is also still not perfect, with the number of entrances that are now available and the main entrance has not been determined, making recording ambiguous. Though tourist data is essential not only for the interests of the Local Government but also for the interests of the tourism business. The role of the community is necessary for the development of tourism in the small islands, a strategy to avoid conflicts and overlapping interests between the community, tourism operators, and tourists themselves need to make. The community involvement making souvenirs through UKMK, for example, needs to be encouraged, besides that the community is also involved in the preservation and cleanliness of the island environment, such as from plastic waste. The encouragement of local governments to develop human resources can also do by encouraging the existence of tourism schools, by preparing reliable human resources with foreign languages that are good for interests.

(5) Environment.

In general, the geographical location of the four small islands on the remote area can be an obstacle but also can be an exotic value of the tourist area itself. In addition to geography, other environmental aspects that affect the tourism of the small islands are the weather, which may be in certain seasons (the rainy season) will be challenging to achieve. Another thing that is a challenge in the future is garbage, especially plastic waste. Local governments must be aware of this waste because eco-tourism is very concerned about things like this.

CONCLUSIONS

Generally, some critical points in developing four islands tourism destination as a sustainable small islands destination with high competitiveness are (1) accessibility with its transport infrastructure is an important thing that is the key to developing tourism, and integration of transportation modes. (2) The uniqueness of each Islands tourism products still needs to be formulated again, and the package and tour packages have not well organized, and brand destinations have not yet formed. Likewise, with the Marketing Strategy, marketing elements such as tourist profiles and their needs have not been well mapped, the monitoring aspects of existing promotional programs have not yet fully organized. (3) The community is still not too much involved in tourism development. It seems that there are not many economic-value community products such as souvenirs and supporting activities, for example, being an operator or tour guide, as well as involvement in maintaining a clean tourist environment.

This research also made several suggestions; there are (1) It is necessary to reformulate the comprehensive small islands tourism marketing strategy. Mapping the profile and needs of tourists, developing products or tour packages, as well as the right promotion strategies by utilizing the latest information technology and systems. (2) The involvement of the community and other stakeholders is essential, considering that the primary economic resources of this region's income will come from the tourism sector. The establishment of a kind of small islands tourism communication forum that routinely meets is the right choice for future tourism development. (3) Small islands tourism Development Roadmap needs to be made, involving all relevant government agencies, such as Bappeda, Transportation Agency, Environment Agency, and others; also, stakeholders, especially in the tourism sector, such as hotel/resort/ restaurant entrepreneurs, and UKMK.

This research provides a strengthening and more in-depth understanding of the importance of marketing management, environmental management, and the central role of the government in the management of tourist destinations. There are open opportunities for future research to reduce the limitation of this research, such as improving methodologies and other tourist destination with similar characteristics.

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