

THE CHALLENGES FOR KALIMANTAN-BORNEO IN THE GLOBAL ECOTOURISM MAP

Abstract

Ecotourism as a way to deliver sustainable tourism has contributed 20% of international travel and has a growth of around 5% per year. Ecotourism destinations which generally characterized by a natural environment with an abundant of biodiversity, culture, geology and meteorology are the main attractions that can be found in Kalimantan, Indonesia which covers 73% of the island of Borneo. However, Kalimantan and its ecotourism destinations did not become a prominent part of the global ecotourism map. This study identifies the background of these problems and offers solutions to increase awareness of the existence of ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan-Borneo in the world ecotourism map. The qualitative method through literature study supported by observations shows that there are six main problems in ecotourism in Kalimantan, namely partnership, general management, accommodation, language, interpretation and uniqueness of products. Therefore it is necessary to do stakeholder mapping, collaborative planning, service improvement, layout optimisation, improvement in quantity and quality of human resources, improvement of access, implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM), use of Ecotourist Needs Assessment (ETNA), revitalisation of traditional houses as buildings heritage, English language training, historical information, flora fauna and unique identity development (branding).

Keyword: Kalimantan-Borneo, Ecotourism, partnership, accommodation, language, interpretation, unique product

Introduction

The uncontrolled growth of the tourism industry raises a variety of environmental problems that question the sustainability framework of conventional tourism (Hwang & Lee, 2018), therefore, many academics and practitioners have been trying to solve the problem and deliver a discourse of ecotourism as a sustainable tourism solution. Ecotourism has been shown to be able to minimize the environmental impacts that tourism can provide (Blanco-cerradelo, Gueimonde-canto, Fraiz-Brea & Dieguez-Castrillon, 2018). In line with this, ecotourism is becoming increasingly used as a tourism framework in the world. It is estimated that at present, ecotourism composes around 20% of total international travel and has a growth of around 5% per year (Abdullah, Weng, Afif & Fatah, 2018).

Generally, the natural environment with the charm of biodiversity, culture, geology and meteorology is the main attraction that commonly characterizes ecotourism destinations. Kalimantan as Indonesia's territory of the island of Borneo is a destination that is rich in such attractiveness. As part of Sundaland, Kalimantan has 5% of plants and 2.6% of vertebrates are endemic to the world. Although it doesn't look big, this value indicates that the Sundaland region is the second most abundant region in the world to contain endemic and fifth vertebrate in the world (Myers, Mittermeier, Mittermeier, Fonseca & Kent, 2000).

One of the uniqueness of Kalimantan is the home of the orangutan and proboscis monkey, two megafaunas which are endangered and endemic on this island. Orangutans, in particular, have important significance because they have a high resemblance in intelligence and behaviour with humans, compared to another

megafauna in the world, except chimpanzees. Many places in Kalimantan are used to conserve these animals. In fact, 72% of the remaining forest in the Kalimantan and Sundaland regions has generally been given conservation status (Myers *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, Kalimantan has 45 sub-tribes with a unique and irreplaceable indigenous culture in the world (Dengen, Budiman, Widiars, Wati, Hairah & Ugiarto, 2018).

In fact, by covering 73% of the island area of Borneo, Kalimantan has a number of ecotourism destinations, for example, Kalimantan has eight national parks: Betung Kerihun, Danau Sentarum, Bukit Baka Bukit Raya, Sebangau, Tanjung Puting, Gunung Palung, Kutai and Kayan Mentarang. In addition, there are various conservation areas managed by the local government and NGOs, such as, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) that manages eight non-national park areas which are Lebian Leboyan Animal Corridor, Paloh, Mount Lumut, Muller Schwanner Landscape, Tarakan, Derawan Islands, West Kutai, and Heart of Borneo Program (WWF, 2018).

Unfortunately, Kalimantan and its ecotourism destinations have never been a prominent part of the world ecotourism map. A review of several popular ranking sites (Table 1) shows that none of the Kalimantan ecotourism destinations is included in the recommended destinations.

Table 1 Notable Ecotourism Destination in the World

Website	Places
Trips to Discover, Asia only	Koh Kong (Cambodia), Ladakh (India), Luang Namtha (Laos), Bhutan, Taman Negara National Park (Malaysia), Sagarmatha National Park (Nepal), Savaii (Samoa), Donsol and Peleliu (Philippines), Sariska Tiger Reserve (India), Way Kambas National Park (Sumatra, Indonesia)
MSN (MSN, 2018)	Sabah (Malaysian Borneo), Moremi Game Reserve (Botswana), Galapagos Islands (Ecuador), Palau, Glacier National Park (US), Amazon Rainforest (Brazil), Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park (Brazil), Twilight Bay (Australia), Himalaya, Atacama Desert (Chile), Kerala (India), Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), Seychelles, Maldives, Blue Mountain (Australia), Grand Canyon (US), Phuket (Thailand), Drakensberg National Park (South Africa), Showa Memorial Park (Japan), Manuel Antonio National Park (Costa Rica), Patagonia (Chile-Argentina), Belize, Hula Valley (Israel), Kirkjufellsfoss (Iceland), Azores (Portugal), Sochi National Park (Russia), Saint John (US), Machu Picchu (Peru), Iguacu Falls (Brazil-Argentina), Dubai (UAE),
Mother Nature Network	Gorongosa National Park (Mozambique), East Timor, Uzbekistan, Bazaruto Island (Mozambique), Iceland, Ethiopia, Georgia, Solomon Islands, Laos, Rwanda, Chile
Eternal Arrival	Costa Rica, Akaroa (New Zealand), Cardamom Mountains (Cambodia), Uganda, South Tyrol (Italy), Yala National Park (Sri Lanka), Pulau Tioman (Malaysia), Bonito (Brazil), Nagaland (India), New Zealand

	Rainforest, Thailand, Chiapas (Mexico), South Africa, Great Barrier Reef, Trinidad and Tobago, England, Portugal, Christmas Island (Australia), Bardia National Park (Nepal), Daintree (Australia), Port of Lincoln (Australia), Kyrgyzstan, Bulgaria, Saloum Delta (Senegal), Apo Island (Philippines), Ulu Temburong National Park (Brunei), Mai Chau (Vietnam), Himachal Pradesh (India), Galapagos
Tripping	Costa Rica, Norway, Kenya, Palau, Galapagos Islands, Antarctica, Iceland, Amazon Rainforest
Every Step	Rwanda, Sabah (Malaysian Borneo), New Zealand, Costa Rica, Galapagos Islands, Gunung Leuser National Park (Indonesia), Jamaica, Bocas del Toro (Panama), Sorsogon (Philippines), Nicaragua, Raja Ampat (Indonesia), USA's National Parks, Iceland, Finland, Ecuador, Gardens by the Bay (Singapore), Galicia (Spain), Mai Chau (Vietnam), Portugal, Apo Island (Philippines), Jordan, St John (US), Torres del Paine National Park (Chile), Auroville (India)

Source: Eternal Arrival, 2018; Guglielmi, 2018; Lew, 2018; Ochs, 2017; MSN, 2018; Sayyah, 2018

The lack of interest in ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan (as part of Borneo Island) is clearly not caused by its location or uniqueness. As evidence, there are several ecotourism destinations in Malaysia (another country in Borneo Island) such as Sukau Rainforest Lodge or in Brunei (another country in Borneo Island) such as Ulu Temburong National Park, both of the countries are included in the recommended destination (see table 1 above). Therefore, it is necessary to look further for the cause why the ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan are less recognized internationally and recommend a number of improvements. The purpose of this article is to identify these various problems and offer several solutions to improve the competitiveness of ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan so it can exist on the global ecotourism map.

Literature Review

Several previous studies have revealed various key factors in the success of implementing ecotourism in various locations in the world. For example, Lucchetti & Font (2013) identified factors such as linkages with the private sector, proxies in the tourism market, the creation of attractive and competitive products, consideration of profitability, people's desire to be involved in tourism, and implementation of the monitoring and evaluation process. Another study from Boyer, Creech, & Paas (2008) also identified the development factor of synergy with existing services, collaboration with other businesses, targeting, the quality of personal frontline employees, and personal networks. Meanwhile, Lee, San and Hsu (2011) identified key factors including infrastructure and management, product and technical development, human resources, service systems and cultivation of tourist understanding and behaviour, marketing activities and local resources. In addition, Engelbrecht, Kruger and Saayman (2014) identified several factors in the success of ecotourism such as general management, wildlife experience, facilities, green management, leisure facilities, interpretation, diversity of activities, accommodation facilities and luxury.

However, there are not many works of literature about ecotourism development in Kalimantan. For example, the previous study from King (2016) identified the development of tourism, not specifically on Kalimantan Island but on the island of Borneo as a whole. However, his study proposed a number of factors that caused problems of slow ecotourism development in Borneo. One of them is an Indonesian historical factor in which the policies under the New Order regime considered traditional culture in Kalimantan a symbol of backwardness, rather than ecotourism assets. As a result, there are only a small number of longhouses (traditional Dayak Tribe House) that can be enjoyed and if any, located deep in the rural area. Another factor is the lack of cooperation between sectors and between regions, including between Indonesia and Malaysia which borders directly on the island. Traditional factors were also stated, including insufficient infrastructure, especially transportation, facilities, accommodation and promotion. Language constraints were also found because the people of Kalimantan were not familiar with English, unlike Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, which were once British colonies. In addition, another problem raised is the disruption of forest fires and smog. King (2016) also concluded that if all three regions were compared, (i) Malaysia (Sarawak and Sabah) had ambition and resources; (ii) Brunei had no ambition but had resources, while (iii) Kalimantan had ambitions but no resources. Another study from Šamšulová (2016) added that there are two important factors that must be considered to improve ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan Island based on his case studies in Balikpapan Bay, East Kalimantan, namely policies and human resources. These two factors are not possessed by the Balikpapan Bay region so that the readiness of this area (specifically) or Kalimantan (widely) to become an ecotourism destination is still questionable.

Several domestic pieces of research also delivered various obstacles faced in order to develop ecotourism in Kalimantan. Purwanto, Syaufina and Gunawan (2014) identified various problems such as unclear status and managers, absence of planning documents, the absence of overall regional potential data, no management blocks, limited human resource management, no partnership in management, limited funds and budget, forest fires, illegal logging, rock mining and hunting, local people's dependence on the region's natural resources, potential conflicts over space utilisation, and waste as well as vandalism. Another study from Yuniarti, Soekmadi, Arifin and Noorachmat (2018) identified issues such as the attraction of tourism objects, the level of relations / accessibility, the condition of the surrounding communities, management and services, accommodation, supporting facilities and infrastructure, the availability of clean water, relations with tourism objects, and security. Meanwhile, the Wardah Study (2014) found the importance of sustainable funding, assistance to local governments in developing the area, green business networks, and increasing HR capacity as several factors that challenge the development of ecotourism in Kalimantan Island.

The results of the above previous studies reveal the very complex problems and efforts to raise the competitiveness of an ecotourism destination because many of those factors are clearly related to each other. Therefore, this study will complement the literature on a number of factors that significantly inhibit the competitiveness of ecotourism destinations, especially in Kalimantan and propose a number of recommendations in overcoming existing problems.

Discussion

Based on the literature discussed above and the researcher's observation, there are six main issues in ecotourism in Kalimantan which are (1) partnership issues (Purwanto *et al.*, 2014; King, 2016); (2) management in general (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2014; Purwanto *et al.*, 2014); (3) Accommodation (Yuniarti *et al.*, 2018); (4) language (King, 2016), interpretation (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2014); and (5) attractive and competitive products (Lucchetti & Font, 2013). These six issues will be discussed in more depth in the following sections.

1. Partnership

The issue of a partnership is a common issue faced in managing ecotourism. There are many interested parties in ecotourism, in fact, the more parties involved, the greater the partnership problem. The most common forms of partnership problems are coordination difficulties, followed by conflicting strategies, lack of sustainability, different levels of development between partners and lack of quality partners (Murray, 2002).

Partnerships in ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan have complex problems. For example, Roslinda, Darusman, Suharjito and Nurrochmat (2012) identified 18 stakeholders in the management of Lake Sentarum National Park, consisting of five government institutions, five community groups, including four Dayak sub-tribes, six NGOs, and two research institutions, which each has its own interests over the destination. Another previous research conducted by Rhama (2017) in Sebangau National Park showed that each stakeholder has individual interests stem from different life values, therefore there are strong cultural roots that are vulnerable to create coordination and miscommunication is often happen. Another study from Falah (2013) in ecotourism management of Kutai National Park also found that several stakeholders such as the ministry of energy and mineral resources, Kutai district government, local communities and mining investors were counterproductive in existing partnerships, whereas, in some locations, partnerships have even just been developed (Falah, 2007).

The difference in stakeholders' interests in an ecotourism destination in Indonesia can be easily identified because the Government of Indonesia separates conservation and tourism matters. Conservation affairs are in the coordination of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry while tourism affairs are under the management of the Ministry of Tourism. Furthermore, the policy or interests differentiation from both ministries also continues at the provincial and district / city levels agency, in fact, ecotourism conceptually needs to be in one holistic management because it balances between conservation and tourism efforts. As a result, it is very important that the two parties work together to be able to realize professional ecotourism. Problems become more complex when involving local communities, NGOs, and the private sector. Local communities, for example, are often asked for assistance in management based on the principle of participation but are not adequately trained to carry out ecotourism activities, thus leaving a bad impression on tourists.

Therefore, a good partnership to manage ecotourism destination is certainly a transformative partnership while balancing the needs of all stakeholders (Mohamad, Kesavan, Razzaq, Hamzah, & Khalifah, 2012). For this reason, it is necessary to create a stakeholders map and a careful as well as collaborative planning among all stakeholders (Kenawy, 2015). This includes identifying the participation of each party, benefits are obtained and shared, resources are shared and accounted for, where the sources are, what forms of support each stakeholder

needs to provide and other issues that appear in the joint communication forum (Karacaoglu & Birdir, 2017).

2. Management

Management issues generally include high-quality service issues, easy layout, the speed of service, the efficiency of service, friendly and helpful staff, effective booking through websites, professional appearance, information and maps, accessibility and a sufficient number of human resources (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2014). However, the issue of quantity and quality of human resources, as well as the quality of services and information, are the most emphasised issues in the management context.

The challenge of management is commonly faced in ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan. For example, product and service complaints and weak customer relations, as well as the implementation of main activities carried out with poor quality, are common problems such as in Gunung Palung National Park (Gunawan, Basuni & Arief, 2013). Another example is the amount of garbage scattered and visitor vandalism is also felt by tourists visiting the mangrove and bekantan at ecotourism areas in Tarakan (Sawitri, Bismark & Karlina, 2013). Meanwhile, in Sebangau National Park, tourists are faced with a lack of information and maps of the area (Rhama, 2017).

A way out to the problems of ecotourism management in Kalimantan can be focusing on improving the various indicators proposed by Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) as discussed above. In addition, quality improvement mechanisms such as Total Quality Management (TQM) can also be applied to encourage improved service quality in ecotourism destinations (Munanura *et al.*, 2017). As an alternative, managers can use the Ecotourist Needs Assessment (ETNA) to get priority to improve service quality (Masberg, 1992).

3. Accommodation

Accommodation in an ecotourism perspective cannot be compared to the quality of urban accommodation like a hotel because it has a different characteristic. Quality ecotourism accommodation is characterised by maximisation of natural amenities and interfaces, emphasis on communal aspects of life rather than individuals and using local types of housing has a low impact on the environment (Gardner, 2001).

The availability of accommodation in Kalimantan has actually been sufficient in numbers. Large hotels remain in urban areas, far from ecotourism destinations. Meanwhile, ecotourism destinations are filled with homestays provided by the surrounding community to serve tourists (Yuniarti *et al.*, 2018). However, there is a different perception of good quality of ecotourism accommodation from the local people. The local people argue that the traditional aspects of their homes signify poverty, conversely, the atmosphere of traditional life is what ecotourists want to get. As a result, when residents have enough capital, they try to develop their homestays to be similar to modern hotels that underpin the privacy of tourists. The aspect of family and involvement in local life becomes abandoned and tourists increasingly dissolve in personal life, rather than feeling the culture and attachment to nature.

Therefore, the establishment of new homestays mostly prioritises modernisation rather than traditionalism. For example, wooden buildings are actually replaced with cement and the house painting that does not seem natural.

Thus, homestay in Kalimantan ultimately competes with modern hotels and does not provide quality accommodation in accordance with the concept of ecotourism. This problem, as identified by King (2016), has its roots in the New Order era, when the traditional occupation of the local Kalimantan community was considered a symbol of backwardness. Only a few homestays that really are a traditional house of Kalimantan (House of Dayak Tribe).

In addition, there are no regulations to regulate the appropriate standards of accommodation for an ecotourism destination. Indeed, there have been efforts to revitalise traditional houses (traditional '*lamin*' / Betang House) to be used as accommodation facilities for visitors in several destinations (Pramova, Locatelli, Mench, Marbyanto & Prihatmaja, 2013) and WWF has sought to train the local people on how to manage good homestay (Wardah, 2014).

Although many accommodations have been developed in the direction of individual needs or tourists' privacy, the destination must provide a public space that can bring together the local community and tourists in a place, for example, a traditional restaurant. However, the existing restaurant offers a wider menu of food than the local menu, so the characteristics of the local food are not strong enough. Furthermore, a more universal menu also causes problems because the resources obtained will come from a distant place, even though the environmental impact will be greater if the food source comes from the local area.

Therefore, the answer to the challenges of accommodation in Kalimantan is not by increasing the number of accommodations, although this is certainly very important as tourists visit. The more important efforts are to increase public awareness regarding how good quality accommodation that is in accordance with ecotourism concepts. In addition, policies that regulate destination accommodation standards according to the ecotourism concept need to be established, accompanied by periodic monitoring and evaluation activities. Managers also need to strive to revitalise the traditional buildings of local people so that they are more in line with the spirit of ecotourism.

4. Language

The difference in English language capability between the northern Borneo and southern Borneo according to King (2016) are important factors that distinguish the development between ecotourism in Sarawak-Brunei-Sabah (North) and Kalimantan (South). As a former of the British colony, people in northern Borneo are familiar with English and can interact fairly easily with foreign tourists. On the contrary, Indonesia is an ex-Dutch colony and strongly emphasises the use of 'Bahasa' as a formal language in any activities. Many local people in Indonesia communicate using a variety of local languages and some people even still learn to speak Bahasa.

As a result, the lack of English communication in Kalimantan, specifically for an ecotourism destination does not support an increase of foreign tourist visits. Formally, English has been adequately represented on maps and instructions, but sometimes the lack of maps and instructions has forced tourists to rely on officers. Nevertheless, the number of staffs are minimal, and sometimes when they are available, they cannot speak English well, resulting in tourists' inconvenience in ecotourism destinations.

The staff for an ecotourism destination with good English competencies can be provided easily from the capital city, however, the cost for local people are not expensive and more in line with participatory perspectives, thus, local people

with low language skills are empowered. Managers and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are currently trying to provide English language training for local guides to serve tourists. But this is not easy, because English has grammars that are very different from Bahasa and the local language of Kalimantan. Therefore, broader and more intensive training is needed to improve the English language competence of local people, accompanied by friendly interactions and family friendly homestays.

5. Interpretation

According to the National Association for Interpretation (NAI), interpretation is defined as "a mission-based communication process that encourages emotional and intellectual connections between audience interest and inherent meaning in resources" (Hara, 2012). The issue of interpretation according to Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) include issues of historical information, educational activities, flora and fauna information, information centres, tree identification, auditoriums, specialist discussions and information sessions, and geological performances. Interpretation serves to increase visitor awareness and understanding, increase community support, change visitor behaviour, and become a management and marketing tool (Ogunjinmi, Ojo, Onadeko & Oguntoke, 2009).

As discussed earlier, ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan have problems in the density of available information. As a nation that still relies on oral culture, there are very limited written instructions, especially in English, which can be an instrument of interpretation. The interpretation still relies on the knowledge that is owned by the guides who are relatively limited and only have competence in one field.

In addition, it can also be understood that some forms of interpretation will require significant costs. For example, the auditorium and three-dimensional replicas require a large budget that requires support from the private sector. However, in order to create an impression for tourists, the interpretation must be developed in various ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan.

6. Product Quality

Product quality (in the context of competitiveness and attractiveness) is important to attract ecotourism tourists that have the same importance with the interpretations that aim to extend the length of stay of tourists. Product quality can be evaluated using the Resource Based Theory (RBT) approach whose indicators emphasise the uniqueness, ineptitude, and assessment of destinations to achieve competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The two states of Malaysia in North Borneo namely Sarawak and Sabah have realised this situation where Sarawak focuses on tropical destinations and Sabah focuses on coastal and coastal destinations (King, 2016).

Several ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan, Indonesia actually also have the uniqueness to be offered as a quality product. For example, Sebangau National Park has a black water ecosystem, Tanjung Puting National Park has orangutans, Lake Sentarum has a panoramic view of the lake and Tarakan has bekantan as a unique product. However, many other ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan do not have a unique characteristic other than Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam already have and are considered as brands from other destinations.

Therefore, other ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan must immediately create a unique identity to enhance competitiveness in the global ecotourism map.

Conclusion

This recent study has aims to identify the obstacles faced by ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan, Indonesia as part of Borneo Island and propose a number of ways to compete in the world ecotourism map. Based on the results of the literature review and researcher's observations, ecotourism destinations in Kalimantan have challenges in terms of partnerships, management, accommodation, language, interpretation and product uniqueness. Therefore, several recommendations were proposed such as stakeholder mapping, collaborative planning, improving quality, speed and service efficiency, layout optimisation, increasing quantity and quality of human resources, increasing access, implementing TQM, using Ecotourist Needs Assessment (ETNA), homestay regulation, revitalising traditional houses, homestay supervision and evaluation, homestay manager awareness, tourist-community socialisation centre, English and Chinese language training, historical information, flora and fauna, information centres and auditoriums, information sessions, educational activities, and the development of identities that later become a destination brand.

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