

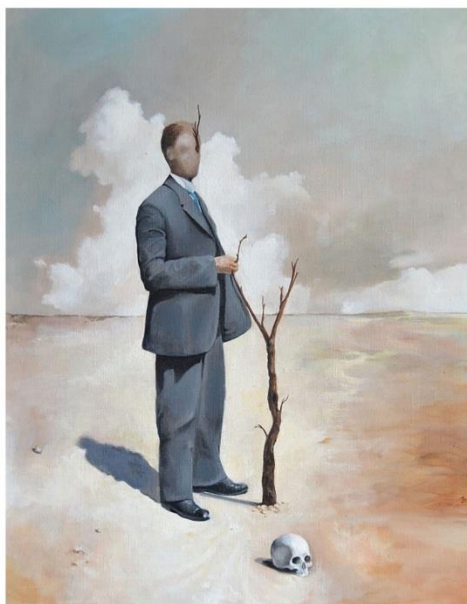
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# Geotour guide competency in the context of safety management

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## Abstract

This study wanted to determine the level of geotour guide competency in the context of safety management in Batur Geopark, Bali, Indonesia via a purposive method through interviews. The researcher collected the data by interviewing 1 person from a travel agency, 1 headman, 2 tour guides and 2 people from the tourism agency. The result shows that several institutions focus on emergency situations, such as search and rescue institutions. In conclusion, the geotour guide standards of competency in Batur Geopark need to be created because of the different capabilities involved.

**Keywords:** Geotourism, Safety, Management, Tourism, Sustainability.

# Competencia de guía Geotour en el contexto de la gestión de seguridad

## Resumen

Este estudio quería determinar el nivel de competencia de la guía de geotour en el contexto de la gestión de seguridad en el Geoparque Batur, Bali, Indonesia a través de un método intencional a través de entrevistas. El investigador recopiló los datos entrevistando a 1 persona de una agencia de viajes, 1 jefe, 2 guías turísticos y 2 personas de la agencia de turismo. El resultado muestra que varias instituciones se centran en situaciones de emergencia, como las instituciones de búsqueda y rescate. En conclusión, los estándares de competencia de la guía de geotour en Batur Geopark deben crearse debido a las diferentes capacidades involucradas.

**Palabras clave:** geoturismo, seguridad, gestión, turismo, sostenibilidad.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government, since 2014, has focused on maritime tourism as one of the maritime strategy commitments under the presidency of Joko Widodo, who aims to promote the Indonesian marine sectors that have long been neglected (ABUBAKAR, 2006). Moreover, the policy is also expected to create a unique and distinct trend in global tourism. This tends to be oriented to urban tourism, which emphasizes place identity and imagery. Therefore, in order to support the policy of maritime tourism and especially to facilitate the

access of tourists, the Indonesia Government added 38 ports and 3 entry immigration gates in eastern Indonesia.

In general, the choice to focus on nature-based tourist development is the right option in order to compete in the sector of global tourism. This is because Indonesia is a developing country that has no urban tourism, particularly city tourism, to allow it to compete with other major cities in the world such as London, Paris, San Francisco and Sydney. However, the government needs to realize that nature-based tourism has drawbacks concerning the concept of place identity/imagery that is owned by urban tourism.

The elements of place identity/ imagery, like unique monuments or typical buildings such as the Eiffel Tower, the Pisa Tower, Big Ben or Times Square, which are emphasized by urban tourism, are growing rapidly due to the support of technology. This is particularly through social media, which allows tourists to share their experiences with others and to show the places that they visited, even in real-time. In contrast, nature-based tourism lacks place identity/imagery because they often have similarities to one another, such as beach attractions, waterfalls and geological landscapes. Only travelers who have a special interest are able to identify the individual characteristics of natural tourist destinations. In addition, accessibility is also a challenge and needs to be considered in order to enjoy nature-based tourism because there can often be a significant amount of time needed, as well as a big effort to reach some of the locations that are sometimes far from population centers (NIKKU, & RAFIQUE, 2019).

Nevertheless, nature-based tourism has an advantage when it comes to competing with urban tourism. It provides an element of escapism that is sought by a modern society that is exhausted by everyday life (ALMAGOR, 1985). Nature-based tourism also subjectively allows individuals to have a unique and different experience that cannot be provided by urban tourism, where the tourists' interpretations and imagination involve a lot of similarities (CHERIFI, SMITH, MAITLAND & STEVENSON, 2014).

Unfortunately, the nature-based tourism development policy in Indonesia, which is focused on maritime tourism, also leaves the question unanswered of the development of emerging alternative land-based tourism such as geotourism. Geotourism is defined as a special interest nature-based tourism focused on the rocks or geological landscapes, which are also a powerful tool for sustainable development. In fact, Indonesia has 40 geoheritage sites, and 4 of them have become national geoparks managed by the local government and the Ministry of Forestry, which are Kaldera Danau Toba, Merangin, Ciletuh and Rinjani. In addition, there are 2 other geoparks that have been recognized by UNESCO, which are Batur and Gunung Sewu. The Global Geoparks Network is also growing rapidly and has become the focus of the attention of the international community because it prioritizes community participation through geotourism (Shabbir, Abbas, Aman, & Ali, 2019).

The development of geoparks as a tourist destination requires thorough planning and attention. Mistakes in the planning chosen to attract tourists, such as using an urban tourism approach, can have a

negative impact. For example, the Geopark Cliffs of Moher's visitor centers in Ireland, that promote a unique architecture and high technology multimedia application, was disappointing visitors because the modernization presented did not fit in with their expectations (BRANDTH, HAUGEN & KROKEN, 2011; MAHMOOD, ARSHAD, AHMED, AKHTAR, & KHAN, 2018). The aspects of modernization presented in nature-based tourism would mean that a subjective interpretation cannot be achieved because of the overload of commercialization and information influences.

In addition, the management of ecotourism, in particular in the geopark context, also cannot use the urban tourism management approach because the risks that may be experienced by the tourists in a geopark are larger than in other mass tourist destinations (BENTLEY, CATER & PAGE, 2010; CATER, 2006). Thus, the development of nature-based tourism, especially geotourism in Indonesia, must be done thoroughly and carefully, even when land-based tourism is not the priority of the government, by considering the tourist's subjective interpretation, security and aspects.

Batur Geopark in Bali has been proclaimed a Centre of Excellence Geopark by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. It seeks to implement the best practices of the collective geopark programs involving school children and the local communities. Even so, the recent attention is more focused on the spatial location context than tourism. Therefore, to support the development of geoparks becoming a tourist destination, the human resources of tourism,

especially geotour guides who have special competence safety knowledge, need to be prepared beforehand.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study used a purposive method through the medium of interviews. The researcher collected the data by interviewing 1 person from a travel agency, 1 headman, 2 tour guides and 2 people from the tourism agency.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The high demand for tour guides in Bali has been shown in a study conducted by CHEUNG (2015), which showed that 32% of tourists, mainly from France, need tour guide services. However, not all tour guides have a standard competency or guide certification even though they have a standard minimum fee between Rp. 162.000-762.750 per package tour, determined by the number of participants, the duration of the tour and the difficulties of the tour location. In addition, the tour guide also gets a 30% commission on any sales from the associated souvenir shops.

However, the tour guides still feel that the service fees are not enough to increase their welfare and have proposed an increase in their service fees. Nevertheless, from the tourists' perspective, they feel that

the tour guides sometimes do not work in a professional manner. For example, when the tour guide wants to finish the service as soon as possible, which means that the service given does not satisfy the tourists. This example is quite common, and happens when a tour package is led by a tour guide who works at a tour operator because of their tight schedule. This is supported by CHEUNG's (2015) study which showed that the behavior of the tour guide sometimes has a negative impression on the tourists due to a lack of competence and professionalism.

In general, 88% of geotourists use tour guides to enjoy geopark. In Batur Geopark, a tour guide is hired specially to accompany tourists who do hiking and trekking activities in the area, which has an altitude that is 1,717 meters above sea level with a number of attractions such as lakes, mountains, geological landscapes, traditional villages and farming areas/estates. However, the tour guide is more often asked to accompany the tourists to enjoy the natural scenery such as lakes and mountains than to teach them about the geological landscape (CHEUNG, 2015; USAK, KUBIATKO, SHABBIR, DUDNIK, JERMSITTIPARSERT, & RAJABION, 2019).

This is in line with the Bali Tourism Office statistics which showed that 39% of Batur Geopark visitors came for regular tourism, 20% for sports purposes and 19% for learning. In total, Batur's geotourism activities contributed on average 5-6% of tourist arrivals to Bali from 2010-2014 as shown in Figure 1 below.



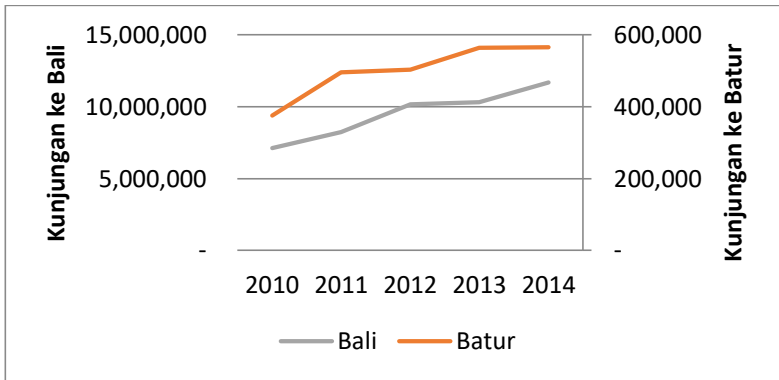


Figure 1: Tourist arrivals in Bali and Batur Geopark

Source: Bali Tourism Office

The low level of geotourism activities in Batur has also been shown by CHEUNG’s (2015) study based on the Batur Geopark carrying capacity perspective, which is only 24% used. Thus, it can be interpreted that geotourism has a low negative impact on the environment. However, the impact of tourism in the Batur Geopark area has already been seen clearly, such as by increasing the number of holiday houses on the slopes, roads being damaged due to traffic, changes in the availability of agricultural labor in the tourism industry, an excessive reliance on tourism and a lack of tourist facilities. Indirectly, it also affects the level of returning tourists to Batur Geopark, which was 33% according to CHEUNG’s (2015) study.

Nevertheless, CHEUNG’s (2015) study showed that 70% of Batur Geopark’s tourists considered the tour guide service to be quite good, although their availability was insufficient compared to the number of visitors (AGUSTAN, KAUSAR & KRISWATI, 2016).

Unfortunately, the geotour guide services assessed in her study were underpinned by information competence, which is the knowledge of the geological and natural environment, and limited in relation to the other competencies such as security, leadership and social relationships. The adventurous nature of Geotourism, such as visiting an active volcano in Batur Geopark, certainly demands a special competence that needs to be added to the general tour guide competences mentioned in CHEUNG's (2015) study. The several accidents that killed tourists in Geopark Batur demand the geotourguide not only has the knowledge of volcanology but also has the competence of risk management, particularly safety management in order to take appropriate steps for the tourists' safety or to take appropriate action when a problem occurs. A senior guide also said: "The Batur geopark site are far from hospitals so guides need to have the skill to provide initial assistance in the event of an accident that involving their" (CHEUNG, 2015: 20).

Several training programs have been delivered to the local tour guides in order to emphasize the principle of community participation, especially in the traditional villages in Batur Geopark. This was also conveyed directly by a head village in Batur: "We have received training on how to deliver good services to tourists even though it is not done regularly" (CATER, 2006: 10). However, this tour guide training should be reconsidered in order to generate integrative geotourism guidance for all of the Batur area, which does not only concern the aspect of service and the knowledge of volcanology, but also safety management. As an alternative, volcanology stakeholders

from both the government and scholars such as instructors, experts related to disaster management or experts from scholarly communication forums can be involved. The potential of geotourism stakeholders in Batur Geoparks related to safety management has been shown in Table 1. Moreover, it also shows their strength as a geotour guide based on their background, which supports the existence of comprehensive guidance in the geopark.

Table 1: The competence of geotour guide in Batur Geopark, Bali

Competencies	Experience Background		
	Government	Local Community	Private industry
Leadership	High: the representative of the authority	Moderate: fully equipped with local knowledge	Low: does not have any authority and is less confident compared to local communities
Mediatory	Low: formal relationship and communication	Low: lack of experience in interactions and communications with visitors	High: can deliver good communication and interactions
Natural Resources	High: underpinned	Low: geotourism area	Low: emphasizes the

<p>Manager</p>	<p>sustainability development principal, particularly from the perspective of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources</p>	<p>is inherited from generations so there is a possibility of the natural unconsciousness exploitation of nature for the sake of the economy</p>	<p>economy aspect</p>
<p>Safety Management</p>	<p>High: can collaborate with other agencies such as the Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management (NBDM) and the Local Agency for Disaster Management (LADM)</p>	<p>Moderate: traditional management based on local wisdom</p>	<p>Low: safety management is seen of other stakeholder’s responsibilities and tourists are covered by travel insurance</p>

Based on the table above, several institutions focus on emergency situations such as search and rescue institutions. NBDM and LADM should be involved to provide training and the certification of safety management competencies (e.g. Incident Standard Operating Procedures, safety routes/locations, safety culture) in order to deliver comprehensive geotourism guidance. In addition, the training and certification are believed to be a powerful tool that the tour guides can use to reach the expected standards and competencies (BLACK & CRABTREE 2007; BLACK & WEILER, 2015). Thus, the possession of the safety management competency certification at least delivers a sense of security to tourists as well as to the professional services in accordance with the principles of ecotourism so then the tourists can fully enjoy their visit to the geopark.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Even though the maritime tourism has become the Indonesian government's focus recently, land-based tourism development still requires the government's attention, especially narrowed down to the new eco-tourism potential of geotourism, which is globally growing rapidly and in line with the principle of sustainable development. As part of its principles, especially in relation to community participation, the community can be involved as geotour guides. However, the geotour guide standards of competency in Batur Geopark need to be created because of the different capabilities involved. Increasing their

competencies can be done through training and collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, thus creating a comprehensive guide that is not only in line with the principles of sustainable development, but who can also be providing a valuable experience for tourists. Therefore, the guide's training should be conducted by a dedicated agency that integrates all of the institutions that do not only emphasize the service competencies and scientific knowledge but also skills for use in safety-related situations, especially in geoparks that are accident-prone locations.

The geopark tourist guiding framework proposed by CHEUNG's (2015) can be expanded by including safety and the associated competency. This can be applied not only to specific geotourism objects such as volcanoes, but also to other geotourism objects such as valleys, former quarries, caves, karsts and plateaus with their various safety and risk potentials such as the risk of landslides, a tourist getting lost and falls that require urgent assistance during the tourists' visit.

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