

Perception of Foreign Tourists towards Gorontalo Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study for the purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of transit tourists about Gorontalo Tourism Destinations through tour guides and recommendations from efforts to develop Gorontalo Tourism Destinations. This type of research is qualitative with four data collection techniques, namely observation, questionnaires, interviews and documentation. The results of the study indicate that tourist perceptions are positive because Gorontalo Tourism Destinations are used as the main destinations in their visits. Destinations are developed and attractions are created to be served to tourists. Another thing to note is the provision of information boards for tourists who go to places far from the city, such as the Hungayono Forest. The information board is related to directions to the nearest hospital or health center along with telephone numbers that can be contacted and the nearest police station along with telephone numbers that can be contacted. This is needed so that if something happens, tourists know what to do, where to go and know the phone number to contact the needed party. Of course, this gives tourists a sense of security to visit faraway places without any doubts even if they are accompanied by a tour guide. Not only the environment, but cultural preservation also needs to be maintained and maintained in an effort to achieve the creation of sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Tourism, Guides, foreign tourists

Introduction

Currently, travel activities are a necessity for the community because holidays, excursions or picnics are believed to be able to relax someone who has been busy with long activities during the working day. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of tourist visits every year. The increase in the number of visits every year does not just happen, there are many things that are being sought, especially increasing the role of the community in it. On the other hand, the tourism sector also helps the community in terms of reducing the number of unemployed and increasing community welfare (Putra, 2018).

The above motivates Gorontalo to develop its tourism sector. Many efforts have been made in order to advance Gorontalo Tourism Destinations, one of which is by opening various kinds of tourist attractions. Besides that, Gorontalo has a lot of potential where its geographical location is close to a beautiful island. One of them is Togeian Island, Central Sulawesi which attracts many

tourists, especially foreign tourists. The foreign tourists in this study are referred to as transit tourists. Transit tourists enter Gorontalo Province by land or air transportation, then they continue their journey to Togean Island by ferry. On their way to Togean Island, tourists use the services of a tour guide or tour guide. Most of them use the services of a tour guide in Gorontalo and often the guides are invited to Togean Island so that most of the Gorontalo tour guides do over land assignments to the Central Sulawesi region.

Tourists transiting in Gorontalo spend about three days waiting for the scheduled departure of the ship to Togean Island. During that time, they stayed at several hotels and small inns which were located close to the port. The number of transit tourists based on manifests at the Port, annually reaches approximately 700 foreign tourists. During their stay in Gorontalo, they were accompanied by tour guides. There are also tourists who use the services of a tour guide when they want to go to Togean Island. While the vacant time while waiting for the scheduled departure of the Ferry, they spent independently without the help of the services of tour guides.

According to Tuohino & Konu (2014) stated that the notion of a destination is a geographical area as a location that can attract tourists to stay temporarily consisting of various tourism products, thus requiring various prerequisites to realize it. Meanwhile, according to Kim & Brown (2012) tourism products themselves consist of a group of attractions, facilities and services to tourists. Tourism destinations are tourist destinations that have many potential tourist attractions, and can attract the attention of tourists to visit, besides that each tourist attraction has four components, namely attraction, amenities, accessibility, ancillary (Arcana & Wiweka, 2016; Nuraini, 2020). ; Chen & Huang, 2021).

Consumer perceptions in this case good and satisfying tourists will increase loyalty, this means that the better the tourist perceptions, the chances of increasing visits are relatively large. The relatively large number of visits consisted of old tourists who wanted to visit again because they had loyalty and new tourists who were interested in getting experiences based on the positive information they got.

The facts above are an opportunity that cannot be wasted, for that it is necessary to conduct a study on "Perceptions of Transit Tourist Guides to Gorontalo Tourist Destinations". The perception of transit tourists is very important because these transit tourists are the target market for Gorontalo tourism, which should not only transit but also visit various tourist attractions in Gorontalo. Perceptions of tourists can be known through tour guides who are very accustomed to handling and interacting with tourists. The activities of the tour guides seem to almost go a day without interacting with the tourists, making them very understanding of the character of the tourists, even the character based on the country of origin of foreign tourists. In addition to character, they also know the tastes of tourists about what they like and don't like, the food and drinks they can consume and these tour guides also often invite tourists to discuss when they have the time that is considered appropriate to discuss. The discussion is none other than related to the development of the Gorontalo Tourism Destination. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of transit tourists regarding Gorontalo Tourism Destinations through tour guides and efforts to develop Gorontalo Tourism Destinations based on the perceptions of transit tourists through tour guides.

Methods

The location of this research is in Gorontalo Tourism Destinations where foreign tourists are scattered in Gorontalo Tourism Destinations. The tour guides are members of the Association of Indonesian Tour Guides and Gorontalo Tour Guides.

The research design on the Perception of Transit Tourist Guides Regarding Gorontalo Tourism Destinations has two problem formulations, namely; How are the perceptions of transit tourists regarding Gorontalo Tourism Destinations through transit tourist guides and how are the efforts to develop Gorontalo Tourism Destinations. This type of research is qualitative with four data collection techniques, namely observation, questionnaires, interviews and documentation. The technique is carried out simultaneously to obtain facts in order to answer the existing problem formulation. Data analysis in this study used a qualitative descriptive technique and a Likert scale. This study aims to determine the perception of transit tourists regarding Gorontalo Tourism Destinations through transit tourist guides and to find out the efforts to develop Gorontalo Tourism Destinations.

The data collection technique in this study used the Incidental Sampling method. Respondents in this study were 30 foreign tourists by distributing 30 questionnaires.

The technique used in this study is the Likert scale which can measure the perceptions and attitudes of respondents with the following formulation:

Interval = $\frac{R}{K}$

K

Description: R = Highest Score

K= Number of Scales Penilaian

Results and Discussion

Persepsi the transit tourists about Gorontalo Tourist Destinations through the tour guides

To find out the views or perceptions of foreign tourists regarding Gorontalo as a destination, it can be done indirectly by distributing questionnaires to foreign tourists while interviewing them. Making foreign tourists as respondents to find out the perception of foreign tourists towards Gorontalo tourism destinations in general.

Table 1. Data from the distribution of questionnaires to 30 foreign tourists

Perception of Foreign Tourists	Number of Foreign Tourists				
	Value Weight 5	Weight value 4	Value Weight 3	Weight value 2	Weight value 1
Accessibility of Gorontalo Tourist Destinations	8	19	3	0	0
Attractions in Gorontalo Tourist Destinations	0	6	14	10	0
Amenities of attraction – tourist attraction in	0	2	13	15	0

Gorontalo					
Gorontalo Natural Resources	25	5	0	0	0
Human Resources in Gorontalo	0	2	20	8	0
The uniqueness of Gorontalo culture	30	0	0	0	0
Potential Gorontalo as a top destination	30	0	0	0	0

All informants who have been interviewed are foreign and domestic tour guides. However, during the interview, the questions asked only focused on foreign tourists. Most of the foreign guests guided by the informants were tourists who were going to Togean Island or had just returned from Togean Island. Even so, there are two informants who have guided foreign tourists to the main destination of Gorontalo and did not visit Togean Island. This is very proud because Gorontalo Tourism Destinations are used as the main destinations in their visit.

The average tourist stays in Gorontalo for one to two days for transit tourists. Meanwhile, for a small number of tourists who are not in transit or tourists who do visit Gorontalo without visiting Togean Island, they spend between seven to ten days. They live in Gorontalo for several reasons and the most common reasons are waiting for the ship to Togean Island or waiting for the plane to leave Gorontalo.

In addition, some tourists choose to stay one or two more days in Gorontalo because they want to take advantage of their presence in the city where they are transiting to explore Gorontalo. They tried to visit tourist attractions around Gorontalo City, Gorontalo Regency, Bone Bolango Regency and North Gorontalo Regency. Meanwhile, two informants who have experience guiding tourists with Gorontalo Tourism Destinations as the main destination, explained that the reasons tourists come to Gorontalo are to enjoy the natural beauty that is still maintained its authenticity, enjoy natural treats in the form of endemic animals such as tarsiers, migratory birds, Maleo birds, whale sharks and many more. In addition, tourists are also interested in watching traditional events such as weddings, circumcisions, beating and haircuts for babies in Gorontalo.

The answers that are most often given by tour guides are to go to Botu Barani Beach to see whale sharks, to the Hungayono Forest, Panua Nature Reserve, Otanaha Fort, Old Town with Dutch buildings, Pulau Lampu, Pulau Saronde, Lake Limboto, City Tour , diving spots are Biluhu Beach and Botutonuo Beach.

Suggestions from foreign tourists vary according to their experience, namely the creation of a tourism information center or Tourist Information Center, making signage or special markers for tourists, providing facilities for the disabled, nature and the environment must be maintained and not damaged, Gorontalo promotion is further enhanced and management of tourist attraction is also improved.

According to the tour guides, tourist complaints are actually rare and if there is a shortage the tourists understand because Gorontalo Tourism is still in the development stage. However, some complaints include the cleanliness of the toilets and the availability of clean water. In addition,

there needs to be some kind of information board for tourists who go to places far from the city, such as the Hungayono Forest. The information is related to directions to the nearest hospital or health center along with telephone numbers that can be contacted, the nearest police station and telephone numbers that can be contacted. This is needed so that if something happens, tourists know what to do and it gives tourists a sense of security.

In general, it was explained by informants that tourists were very impressed with the presence of whale sharks that could be seen not far from the coast, tourists were also impressed by the type of underwater plant known as *Salvador Dali* and very rare to find. In addition, endemic animals are very interesting to meet and take pictures of. These uniquenesses are very interesting for tourists, especially when they witness the traditional ceremony in Gorontalo which happened to take place when they were in Gorontalo. There was even a foreign tourist who covered the process of the traditional wedding ceremony in Gorontalo and one of the informants became the guide and explained the meaning of every thing in the traditional ceremony.

Their expectations are related to the answers to the two previous questions, namely the points of shortage of Gorontalo and tourist complaints while in Gorontalo so that they can be considered and responded to such as providing information boards, signage or road markers, besides that they are also expected to be able to create a tourism information center so that tourists can easily accessing information about tourist attractions in Gorontalo Tourism Destinations, preserving local culture and being able to preserve the environment.

Three informants expressed satisfaction and seven informants stated that it was normal because Gorontalo was not their main destination and they only used their time to travel while waiting for the ship or plane to depart. Some are interested, some are normal, some are not. Because most of what tourists enjoy while in Gorontalo is almost the same as what they enjoy in the destinations they visited before. On the other hand, three informants stated that the tourists they guide were interested in Gorontalo because according to them, the tourists spent more time exploring Gorontalo and were more informed to remote areas of the destination. Meanwhile, according to them, if there are tourists who are not satisfied with the tourist attraction in Gorontalo, it is because they do not explore Gorontalo further and just enjoy time around Gorontalo City. Where the urban situation is more inclined to urban tourism, while Gorontalo Province is classified as a relatively young province and its urban tourism has not been able to compare with urban tourism in other areas that have been more developed and have been formed as a province longer.

According to the informants, some of the tourist attractions are interesting, but many are not yet attractive because the concept is not in accordance with the tastes of foreign tourists. If you look at the natural resources in Gorontalo, tourists are actually amazed, especially the diverse and unique culture of Gorontalo which adds to the allure of Gorontalo itself. However, its management, which is considered to be still lacking, has made Gorontalo Tourism not yet developed and is still a transit point for most foreign tourists who come. Therefore, it is still very necessary to improve which can be started from increasing human resources.

Informants or tour guides said that they had never encountered significant obstacles because so far, if there were obstacles they encountered, they could still be overcome easily. One example

of an obstacle that is often encountered is when bringing foreign tourists to Botu Barani Beach to see whale sharks but the whale sharks at that time did not appear so tourists were a little disappointed. Then the tour guides can offer other tourist attractions to treat the disappointment of the tourists.

According to informants, the management of tourist attractions in Gorontalo is still lacking and pentahelix cooperation also needs to be done to develop Gorontalo tourism, besides that what is considered urgent is the quality of human resources that is still lacking, namely a friendly attitude or hospitality when serving customers or someone who has not maximum. The next thing is that promotions are still lacking and need to be boosted.

The hope for the future by foreign tourists is that Gorontalo tourism can be built sustainably, of course, it is built with the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders or in a pentahelix manner so that Gorontalo can be more global. To realize Gorontalo tourism worldwide, careful planning is needed as stated by Ridwan and Aini (2009) that planning is an attempt to change the situation for the better with various methods and techniques that have been prepared in order to achieve maximum results in accordance with the targets that have been set. determined and agreed upon.[15] and the quality of human resources can be increased in order to be able to manage natural resources properly and optimally.

Recommendations for Gorontalo Tourism Destination Development as a Destination Development Effort

Based on the results of questionnaires and information from informants through in-depth interviews, it can be concluded that the direction of developing Gorontalo Tourism Destinations is by paying attention to and increasing the attractions offered at tourist attractions. Attractions must be entertaining and unique to be different from attractions in other areas so that when tourists want to enjoy these attractions, they will only visit Gorontalo. Next up are amenities. There needs to be full attention to the provision of amenities and also their maintenance. In addition, the fulfillment of clean water must be fulfilled in every tourist attraction. Another thing that is no less important is improving the quality of human resources in the field of tourism, namely by urging prospective vocational students to choose a tourism major or related and prospective students to choose a tourism major or related. Then for workers who are struggling in the tourism industry are expected to be active in increasing their knowledge and skills by participating in various kinds of training and tourism seminars. This will greatly impact on the maximum management of tourist attractions and tourist destinations. In addition, improving the quality of human resources will also be a solution for the presence of a new tourist attraction but cannot maintain its existence any longer because of an error in the concept of the tourist attraction. The concept of tourism development planning to tourism development should be prepared by human resources who are experts in the field of tourism. That way, Gorontalo Tourism Destinations, which are still considered a transit point for tourists who visit or have visited Togean Island, will be able to glance at Gorontalo and make Gorontalo also their destination and not just a transit point.

Gorontalo tourism is currently growing with the opening of various new tourist attractions. So there is a need for a Gorontalo Tourism Information Center. Although currently tourists have

been facilitated by the sophistication of technology, in fact tourists still hope for a Gorontalo Tourism information center so that tourists can also communicate directly with the officers at the Gorontalo Tourism information center, especially if tourists have many questions regarding references and recommendations. tourist attraction in Gorontalo. Then the government needs to make signage or direction markers for tourists related to the direction of the road to a tourist attraction and also the direction markers in the tourist attraction. Furthermore, it is still related to the provision of public facilities, especially for tourists who have special needs or the disabled.

Another thing to note is the provision of information boards for tourists who go to places far from the city, such as the Hungayono Forest. The information board is related to directions to the nearest hospital or health center along with telephone numbers that can be contacted and the nearest police station along with telephone numbers that can be contacted. This is needed so that if something happens, tourists know what to do, where to go and know the phone number to contact the needed party. Of course this gives tourists a sense of security to visit faraway places without any doubts even though they are accompanied by Tour guide.

Gorontalo tourism, which relies on natural wealth and beauty as its attraction, needs to be managed sustainably while taking into account the balance of ecosystems and the environment in every tourism activity that is carried out. Not only the environment, but cultural preservation also needs to be maintained and maintained in an effort to achieve the creation of sustainable tourism development. This of course cannot be done by one party alone, but requires pentahelix cooperation for every stakeholder, especially the government, academia, the community and business actors in the tourism industry. After the improvement from the description above is carried out, the last step is the implementation of the promotion of Gorontalo Tourism Destinations which is also carried out jointly by tourism stakeholders.

The above things are very important to be implemented in the efforts to develop Gorontalo Tourist Destinations and make Gorontalo as one of the tourist destinations for foreign tourists and not just a transit place to visit and after visiting TogianIsland.

Conclusion

The rapid development of tourism is motivated by the level of human needs in tourism activities. The more people who are aware of the need to travel, the tourism industry will grow rapidly. Tourists who are the target market in the tourism industry are the most important elements in the tourism marketing system. So that in the development of a tourist attraction or tourist destination, it is very important to know their views on tourism itself. In addition, knowing the tastes of tourists will be very helpful in planning tourism development. Because destinations are developed and attractions are created to be served to tourists. In an effort to find out the perceptions of these tourists, they can be asked directly or through tour guides who always accompany tourists while in tourist destinations and tourist attractions.

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