

Volunteer Tourism Experience in Friends of The National Parks Foundation

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Abstract—The aim of this study is to identify the implementation of volunteer tourism experience on the volunteer program in Friends of The National Parks Foundation (FNPF). This research use the quantitative approach, with the number of samples are 88 respondents. The method used in this study is descriptive analysis. Implementation of volunteer tourism experience in FNPF is in the high category. Personal development and growth dimension has the highest score (335.33), it means FNPF succeeded in creating the participants' experience that gained from the program which can improve their personality and help them to developing themselves.

Keywords—volunteer tourism; experience; volunteer tourism program

I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of volunteer desire impacted several global or international programs which has led to develop various voluntary programs, such as international volunteers, volunteer abroad, volunteer tourism and episodic volunteer [1]. Organization that provide volunteer programs have interest in tourism, different travel experiences and character building experiences are valuable and differentiating in the marketing of several organizations [2], [3]. Also volunteer trip to countries where they conducted to volunteer program that are closer to the tourism activities [4]. People involved in volunteer tourism program is paying to travel to the location where they can engage in meaningful experiences, which generally involve activities to help local communities by providing the resource needed and helping the community, restoring and preserving the environment, or supporting field research related to environmental protection or endangered species [5].

The development of volunteer tourism is quite rapid, it can be seen on the number of organizations who provide volunteer tourism program, especially in Indonesia which is the top 10th countries that have most volunteer programs with total 13 programs [6]. Volunteer tourism industry has grown very rapidly and considered importance since 1970 [7]. Both volunteer and/or tourism international sector experienced significant growth during the end of the 20th centuries [6]. In the tourism business, organizations need to maintain their

existence, in this case the organization who provides volunteer tourism programs [8], presents a different experiences as the essence of volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism projects consist activities such as volunteer and reflection activities, cultural exchanges, and learning about problems in the site. [9].

There are several experiences gained by tourist during the volunteer tourism program, according to [10] volunteer tourism experiences consist of personal development and growth dimension, social dimension, cultural dimension and feeling dimension. Whilst previous studies have considered the experience of volunteer tourism explicitly, there are evidences of a growing interest being shown by researchers. This interest was about the meaningful experience gained by volunteer tourist [7]. In [11] study shows that volunteer tourism experience is as cathartic experience which enjoyable and challenging and reported to have left a deep and lasting impression [12]. Based on tourist motivation and perception, one of the tourist volunteer's motivations is to experience something different and something new, and volunteer tourists' perception of best experience were related to self interest and altruism, whereas worst experiences were linked and highlighted in the themes of poverty, crime and violence [13]. The analysis for all kinds of alternative tourism, which one of them is volunteering tourism, was identified by the fundamental emergent themes, process, nature, and interaction/exchange, as forming an inter relational complex that intermeshes with the environmental factors of the site i.e nature, community members and other volunteers [14]. Additionally, Otoo research [15] says that volunteer tourist experiences are most tied to social, cultural and tourism attributes of the destination, and the experiences that gained by them may be positive or negative.

More broadly, literature does highlight some problematic elements of volunteer tourism generally, this research based on previous study conducted by [10] where this research examined motivations and on-site experiences of volunteer tourists who participate in volunteer tourism at the Home and Life Orphanage in Phang Nga Province, Thailand. This study does not aim to examine motivation and experience of

volunteer tourist in FNPF, rather the purpose of this study is to identify the volunteer tourism experiences that consist of personal development and growth dimension, social dimension, cultural dimension and feeling dimension that implemented in FNPF especially on the volunteer program in Bali and Kalimantan.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Volunteer Tourism

Volunteering is a basic element of human spirit, this is the reason of communities has united to help each other in achieving goals [16]. Volunteers see their efforts to contribute on international development as part of their holiday, this makes volunteer activities develop into the activities to help communities outside their country [4]. They travel to others country which they consider that the community need voluntary assistances. In addition to helping others, the volunteers have another purpose, namely to discover new things about themselves and to learn how they see themselves more clearly [17].

Volunteer tourism is rooted to volunteerism, which develops into one of alternative tourism whose the activities are organized and carried out by several people who has purpose to holiday and get opportunities to dedicate part of their vacation time to volunteering in community, environment, and culture of the tourism destination and other opportunities to develop themselves. With the belief that the experience gained from volunteer tourism has longer impact than other types of tourism [1], [3], [6], [17], [18]. This concept originates from a tourist' desire for a result of development even though focuses on a small scale such as focusing on the community to encourage the preservation and welfare of the community [3].

Wearing established volunteer tourism as a form of alternative tourism, which offer alternative destinations which can fulfill the travel desire with helping the community as their purpose [14]. As an alternative tourism volunteer tourism are an extension of several type of tourism i.e responsible tourism, ecotourism, social tourism, charity tourism, cultural tourism, moral tourism and serious leisure, because volunteer tourist work on local projects with local groups [17]. Two dimensions of volunteer tourism, namely the center of the definition is the fact that tourist voluntarily give their time work on projects established to improve the environment or the local community and the second focuses on developing participants through intrinsic rewards contributing to these projects [1].

B. Volunteer Tourism Experience

Volunteer tourism is a type of tourist experience, where tour operators/organizations offer tourists the opportunity to participate in optional holidays that have volunteer components, as well as cultural exchanges with local communities [13]. The development of volunteer tourism, there are components such as destination, duration,

experience, skill/qualifications, active and passive participation, and local contributions are needed.

Destination is an important element in the tourist decision making.. Duration in the program is an another important element in the development of volunteer tourism, there are three group of duration i.e. short-term (less than 4 weeks), medium-term(less than 6 months) and long-term (6 months). Experience is also an important element, because the concept of volunteer tourism offers the experience to participants, this experience comes from the motivation of participants both self-interest motive and altruistic motives. Skills/qualifications are needed in the volunteer program, so each program needs to have orientation and training and data collection on volunteers. Active and passive participation, the participation of both active and passive programs will influence the development of volunteer tourism. Local contribution is the involvement of local communities in volunteer tourism [6].

Volunteer tourism experience is the experience that gained by tourist from their contribution in volunteer activities at tourism destination, so this experience can be positive assessment for themselves and can change their thought about themselves and the environment that will contribute to sustain the destination [5], [19], [7], [12]. There are four dimension in volunteer tourism, i.e personal development and growth dimension, social dimension, cultural dimension and feeling dimension [10].

III. METHOD

This research use descriptive quantitative approach. Data was collecting by spreading questionnaires through google form. The questionnaires were distributed to 88 respondent through their email based on sampling frame. The analysis unit in this research are the foreign tourist who joined the FNPF volunteer tourism program, there are five volunteer tourism programs that were held in Bali and/or Kalimantan, two program in Bali i.e Nusa Penida Sanctuary Bird program and Bali Wildlife Rescue Center, and for Kalimantan it was held especially at Tanjung Puting National Park i.e. Jerumbun Volunteer Center, Beguruh and Padang Sembilan.

The study of literature in this study were obtained from various sources such as journal and book that printed or electronic media. The other secondary data are collected from FNPF management such as the organization profile, and sampling frame (number of participants, name, origins, and email). The data obtained then analyzed by using SPSS 20.0.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Profiling the respondents, majority of them were females (63.6%), this is consistent with several studies that state women's have strong participate orientation to become volunteer [1], [20], [21]. Volunteer tourist between age of 18 – 25 dominated the age category (38.6%), in [6] said volunteers were dominated by young people, usually from the age 18-24 years. Regarding their marital status, an overwhelming majority of them were unmarried (80.7%), which goes in line with the possibility that unmarried tourists have more time

they have to take part in volunteer programs is one of the main reasons [12], [20], [22].

Americans and Australians contributed 15,9% for each. Volunteer tourists who had bachelor degree dominated education category (36.4%). The result of this study show that 45.5% of respondents are following Nusa Penida Sanctuary Bird. Most respondent (78.4%) have joined the FNPF program once/first-timer and the rest (21.6%) have joined the FNPF program more than twice/repeater. Half of respondents' average expenditure (51.1%) are USD 301 – 400.

The results indicated that approximately 38.6% of the respondents had more than once volunteer trip, while 36.4% of them had no previous volunteer trip, this is consistent with previous research which states volunteer tourism is dominated by tourist who have been volunteers before, because they have strong orientation to participate in volunteer activities [10], [15]. Table I presents the profile of respondent.

TABLE I. RECAPITULATION OF RESPONDENT PROFILE

	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	32	36.4%
	Female	56	63.6%
Marital Status	Married	17	19.3%
	Unmarried	71	80.7%
Level of Education	High School	9	10.2%
	Diploma	22	25.0%
	Bachelor Degree	32	36.4%
	Master Degree	11	12.5%
	Post Graduate	14	15.9%
Place of Origin	USA	14	15.9%
	Australia	14	15.9%
	United Kingdom	13	14.8%
	Netherland	10	11.4%
	China	10	11.4%
	Italy	6	6.8%
	Others	21	23.8%
Frequency	Once	69	78.4%
	More than Once	19	21.6%
Program	Bali Wildlife Rescue Center	12	13.6%
	Nusa Penida Sanctuary Bird	40	45.5%
	Jerumbun Volunteer Center	30	34.1%
	Beguruh	3	3.4%
	Padang Sembilan	3	3.4%
Expenditure	USD 200 – 300	36	40.9%
	USD 301 – 400	45	51.1%
	USD 401 – 500	7	8.0%
Past Volunteer Tour	Once	22	25.0%
	More than Once	34	38.6%
	None	32	36.4%

A. Volunteer Tourism Experience in FNPF

Four main dimensions of the volunteer tourism experience were identified, i.e personal development and growth, social, cultural and feeling. On the whole, 81,8% of the volunteer tourists mentioned that they had some sort positive experience in the volunteer program. The result indicates that more volunteer tourist had personal development and growth (41,9%), social (17.8%), cultural (8.7%) and feeling (31.6%). Specifically, four dimensions of volunteer tourism experience were identified in Table II.

TABLE II. RECAPITULATION OF VOLUNTEER TOURISM EXPERIENCE RESPONSE

No.	Dimension	Total Questions	Total Score	Average Score	Percentage %
1	Personal Development and Growth	9	3018	335.55	41.9%
2	Social	4	1282	520.50	17.8%
3	Cultural	2	623	311.50	8.7%
4.	Feeling	7	2275	325	31.6%
Total		22	7198	327.18	100%
Whole Percentage					81.9%

Recapitulation of the tourists' response to the Friends of the National Park Foundation program on the description of volunteer tourism experience can be seen in the overall continuum review, in Fig. 1

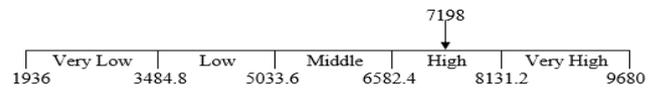


Fig. 1. Volunteer Tourism Experience Continuum Line in Friends of The National Park Foundation

Based on the continuum line in Fig.1, it showed position of volunteer tourism experience' value is in the high category (7,198). It means an assessment of the performance of volunteer tourism experience in FNPF is high.

B. Personal Development and Growth

According to Table I, personal development and growth gets the highest assessment, namely on the average personal development and growth dimension score of 335.33 (41.9%) consist of nine statement/question items with five indicator i.e 'Soft skill', 'Reflect on and evaluation', 'Future careers', 'Global perspective' and 'Global citizenship' [10], because as an organization who provide volunteer program, FNPF allows participants to contribute directly with the community, so it can be improving and developing tourists' personally and the programs held in the FNPF can improve global perspective and global citizenship because one of locations program are including the world's tropical rainforest, Kalimantan, besides that the conservative program held is to conserve endangered and protected species such as Orang Utan and Bali Starling Bird along with its habitat.

Indicator with the highest score in personal development and growth dimensions is reflect on and evaluation in question “Self-reflection on potential” 356 (11.8%) and the score of the others indicator, presented in Table III below this paragraph. It is due to the activities held at each volunteer tourism at FNPF allows tourists to get new experiences such as in conservation activities, participants can learn functions, benefits and all about flora and fauna also endemic species and its’ habitats, in addition there are other activities that allows tourist to become a speaker in a counseling and training, teaching for both the community and staff, as well as other potential within the scope of social works. In [10] study, tourists reported that they had discovered a potential which they never realized before.

TABLE III. TOURISTS’ RESPONSE ON PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH DIMENSION

No.	Indicator	Questions	Total Score	Percentage %
1	Soft-skill	Confidence	341	11.30%
		Adaptable	324	10.74%
		Interpersonal skill	323	10.70%
		Patience	326	10.80%
		Activeness	344	11.40%
2	Reflect on and evaluation	Self reflection on potential	356	11.80%
3	Future Careers	Impact of the experience on future careers	319	10.57%
4	Global Perspective	Sense of global perspective	345	11.43%
5	Global Citizenship	Sense of global citizenship	340	11.27%

‘Future careers’ is an indicator which has the lowest score (10.57%). This is because some of works experience on the program are not relevant to the job requirements. Overall based on the tourists’ responses regarding the implementation of ‘Personal development and growth’ have a good response. In [10] explained volunteers have a desire to develop themselves and the desire to gain new experiences.

C. Social

Whereas social dimensions get an average score of 320.5 (17.8%) from four items of statement/question, it means FNPF had succeeded in making the participants to interact with other such as communities, others participants, and staffs and can make friends more closer in every activities on the volunteer program. Social dimension has three indicators i.e. ‘Local community’, ‘Staff member’, ‘Other participants’ and ‘Friends’ [10]. The ‘local community’ indicator has he highest score among other social dimension (25.66%). Conservation, reforestation, and teaching are activities that carried out with community, by community and for community, so every activities requires tourists to interact with the community. The result of Proyrungroj study stated that volunteer tourists have established a bond with locals in the destination [10]. And the score for the resr indicator, i.e. ‘Staff member’ (25.58%), ‘Others participants’ (24.96%) and ‘Friends’ (23.79%). ‘Friends’ is the lowest score (23.79%), the desire to meet and

make friends with new people is one of the volunteer motivations [10], so the low score of ‘Friends’ indicators indicates that volunteer has known each other with their friends and/or relative who joined the program before.

D. Feelings

Feeling dimension to get an average score of 325 (36.9%) from seven statement/question items, this dimension consist of seven indicators i.e. ‘Organization performance’, ‘Communities’ performance’, ‘Accommodation’, ‘Big family’, ‘Altruistic practices’, ‘Benefit’ and ‘Cost’ [10]. This score indicated that FNPF had satisfied the participants for all services provided, including accommodation, meals and than feel satisfied materially, physically and psychologically.

The highest score in Feeling dimension is ‘Big family’ indicator (15.20%), and score of the rest presented in Table IV below this paragraph. ‘Big family’ gets the highest score, it is consistent with [10] study result that stated a volunteer greatest desire is to help others, so to realize this is necessary with the reciprocity of the community. While the ‘Organization’ performance’ is the lowest score, same like [10] explained about the desire to help others more precisely the local community, so all the activities that held were carried out more by participants and community with staff as a coordinator. Volunteers do not often have direct contact with staff but more direct with the local communities.

TABLE IV. TOURIST’ RESPONSE ON FEELINGS DIMENSION

No.	Indicator	Total Score	Percentage %
1	Organization’ Performance	296	13.01%
2	Communities’ Performance	341	14.98%
3	Accommodation	333	14.63%
4	Big Family	346	15.20%
5	Altruistic Practices	330	14.50%
6	Benefit	317	13.93%
7	Cost	312	13.71

E. Cultural

Cultural dimension gets the lowest score with an average score of 311.50 (8.7%) from two statement items and two indicators (‘local culture’ and ‘difference culture’) [10], this was due to FNPF’s main program is nature conservation, so programs such as preserving local culture such as arts, crafts, dances, languages and cuisine (secondary dishes) are secondary activities and some of these activities are additional activities (learning to cook) so that tourists are free to choose. The score of indicator ‘Local Culture’ (51.85%) and ‘Difference culture’ (48.15%) is quite close. Language, lifestyle and culinary are the main attraction, and the majority of tourists from developed countries indicate tourists are happy to learn new cultures and learn about cultural differences, because one of the volunteer tourist motive is to learn and/or deepen the local culture where the program was held [10].

V. CONCLUSION

This study set out to identify the implementation of volunteer tourism experience in FNPF. The study of four domain dimension notably personal development and growth, social, cultural and feeling. The research supports the growing body of literature which concludes that volunteer tourism has impact positive experience and/or negative experience. Then this research presented some conclusions from volunteer tourists on volunteer tourism experience which consists of personal development and growth dimensions, social dimensions, cultural dimensions and feeling dimensions are in a fairly high category. Cultural dimension gets the lowest response, this happens because the activities held in the FNPF program were indirectly engaged in the cultural field, with only a few additional activities.

While personal development and growth dimension gets the highest rating, an assessment of experience that is able to help develop themselves is very important, because the desire of volunteer to develop themselves and gain new experiences, the high assessment is due to the value of experience gained from the FNPF program, fulfill perceived of participants to develop themselves and experience a contribution to global issues. Overall volunteer tourism experience at the FNPF has gone quite well.

Understanding volunteer tourist experiences along the four dimensions explored will enable marketers and planners to better design marketing and promotional strategies. In the face of increasing competition, destination marketers are under greater pressure to understand the experiences of travel patrons.

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