

Improving Students' Understanding of Tourism Attractions in Bangka Belitung: A Case Study of SMK Negeri 3 Pangkalpinang

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the types of tourist attractions in Bangka Belitung is essential for tourism personnel, especially for tourism vocational high school students. This article describes a community service initiative by the International Citra Institute aimed at enhancing tourism knowledge among vocational high school students in Bangka Belitung. The methods used to deliver the material include lectures and group discussions in the classroom. Student capacity-building activities show results as expected. SMKN 3 Pangkalpinang students finally understood the types of tourist attractions owned by Bangka Belitung. They can distinguish and categorise tourist attractions into natural, cultural, and man-made categories. This shows an increase in basic tourism knowledge among students. This activity is expected to foster the development of competent tourism human resources, enabling them to make a positive contribution to addressing the shortage of tourism resources in Bangka Belitung.

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INTRODUCTION

Bangka Belitung boasts abundant tourism potential, ranging from its natural beauty and rich mining history to historical and religious buildings, traditional ceremonies, and culinary delights. This wealth has led to its designation as one of the 10 Priority Tourism Destinations in Indonesia by the Indonesian government (Kemenparekraf/Barekraf, 2020). The local government welcomes this designation, as it recognises the potential of the tourism sector to generate new sources of economic income. Bangka Belitung is currently aiming to gradually transform its economy from mining to tourism (Agustika, 2024). However, this ambition is not reflected in the fluctuations and decline in tourist visits to Bangka Belitung. While the number of tourists visiting Bangka Belitung increased from 184,570 in 2021 to 301,906 in 2022, it decreased slightly to 301,870 in 2023 (Marcelina et al., 2024). The latest data shows a 21.55% decrease in tourist visits to starred hotels in Bangka Belitung in February 2025 compared to the previous month, with an even more drastic 32.11% decrease in international tourists (Juhari, 2025). This significant discrepancy between the wealth of tourism potential and the decline in visitor numbers highlights the challenges the destination faces in attracting and catering to tourists.

Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2024, concerning the Master Plan for the National Tourism Destination of Bangka Belitung for the years 2023–2044, highlights the issue of insufficient human resources and competent community organisations to manage the tourism destination as one of the challenges in developing Bangka Belitung as a national tourism destination. Despite strong tourism potential, Bangka Belitung lacks adequately trained human resources to manage and promote it. This indicates an urgent need for skilled labour in the tourism sector that meets industry standards. Effective management of Bangka Belitung's tourism potential requires skilled human resource management. Therefore, investment is necessary to develop HR capacity and strengthen community organisations involved in tourism management in Bangka Belitung. Long-term investment can be achieved through educational institutions; vocational high schools (SMK) play a vital role in preparing skilled workers for the tourism industry. The SMK curriculum generally includes important subjects that strengthen students' skills, enabling them to enter the tourism industry immediately upon graduation (Loker, 2025; Sihite et al., 2021). However, SMK students often lack Knowledge of the potential diversity of tourist attractions and the opportunities that can be developed from such potential (Haryanto et al., 2024; Jemorang et al., 2021). This limited Knowledge of tourism human resources poses a challenge, indicating a lack of mental preparedness to enter the workforce (Khotimah & Wiyono, 2022).

The human resource challenges faced by Bangka Belitung require the attention of all parties, notably higher education institutions. As one of the leading private universities in Bangka Belitung, the International Citra Institute (ICI) has offered a Tourism Study Programme since 2023. The ICI is dedicated to educating and enhancing the tourism workforce in Bangka Belitung. This commitment is demonstrated through initiatives such as the Community Service Programme (CSP). This programme aims to improve the quality of tourism professionals in Bangka Belitung, particularly those from vocational high schools specialising in tourism. Students at these schools require information about the wealth of tourism potential in Bangka Belitung, which encompasses natural, cultural and man-made attractions. This potential has not yet been optimally managed and requires proper management by qualified tourism professionals. Therefore, one of the CSP programme's objectives is to enhance students' understanding of this potential. Based on this, the focus of this article is to describe one CSP activity: Strengthening Knowledge about the Tourism Potential of Bangka Belitung. It is hoped that, through this training, the competencies of SMKN 3 Pangkalpinang students will improve holistically, particularly in local tourism Knowledge. Additionally, the CSP programme benefits the regional government by helping to prepare qualified tourism professionals for the sustainable development of tourism in Bangka Belitung.

METHOD

Participants

The Community Service Programme (CSP) of the Tourism Studies Programme at the International Citra Institute took place at SMKN 3 Pangkalpinang, located on Jalan Girimaya in the Bukit Besar district of Pangkalpinang City, Bangka Belitung Islands, 33684. This CSP activity targeted the students of SMK Negeri 3 Pangkalpinang. A total of 33 students from Years 11 and 12 at SMKN 3 Pangkalpinang participated in the programme. Participants were selected from both classes because students in these years are nearing graduation and will either continue their studies at a higher level or enter the workforce directly. Therefore, it was essential to provide them with information about the abundant job opportunities available in the tourism industry. For a full day, the vocational high school students received training to enhance their knowledge of tourism in Bangka Belitung.

Procedures

Trisagia Mokodongan, S. Par., M. Par., presented the topic of local tourism Knowledge with a presentation titled 'Local Tourism Potential'. The presentation was held on 21 May 2025 and took half a day. The material was delivered through a combination of lectures and group discussions in the classroom. According to Mondy & Martocchio (2015), this method involves the instructor standing up and delivering the material directly to the participants. In addition to lectures, interactive presentations, images, and case studies can provide supplementary information to reinforce the topic being discussed. Ramdansyah & Shavab (2022) noted that presentations with engaging visuals can strengthen the content and facilitate participant comprehension. In addition to lectures, discussion methods were employed to involve all training participants in exploring the material and deepening their understanding of the subject matter. The discussion topics raised by the presenter provided participants with new perspectives on the types of tourist attractions in Bangka Belitung. This method of discussion is an essential component because it enables participants to absorb the material more effectively. According to Suyatman (2018), this method achieves an absorption rate of over 70% of the entire training programme.

Materials

This activity's material is a PowerPoint presentation that offers information about different types of tourist attractions. It addresses both theoretical concepts and case studies while categorizing various attractions in Bangka Belitung into their respective types. This approach enhances theoretical understanding, as the tourist attractions highlighted are relevant to the participants' daily lives. The presentation also includes photos and videos showcasing the conditions of tourist attractions in Bangka Belitung. This visual content reinforces the topics discussed, making it easier for participants to grasp the material. Utilizing various media and technology in training can lead to optimal results in capacity building (Masjhoer et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Community service on the topic of local tourism knowledge has been carried out well and smoothly. The activity runs according to the plan prepared by the ICI service team. This training was developed in response to the limited availability of quality tourism resources, particularly regarding knowledge of Bangka Belitung's tourism potential. Trisagia Mokodongan, S. Par., M. Par.'s presentation of the material 'Local Tourism Potential' aimed to narrow the knowledge gap for those attending the training (see FIGURE 1). There were 33 participants in the training, all of whom were in years 11 and 12 and aged 16–17, with

the majority being female (see **FIGURE 2**). The presentation started with the presenter asking questions to the participants. Individuals were randomly selected to assess their understanding of the topic that participants would discuss. The questions included: "Do you know that tourist attractions are diverse?" and "Are theme parks considered tourist attractions?" Not many participants answered correctly, while some provided answers that were close to the truth in theory. After the pre-test quiz concluded, the presenter began the presentation with an overview of Bangka Belitung. They then explained the definition of tourist attractions, which are categorized into three types: natural attractions, cultural attractions, and human-made attractions. This classification follows Law No. 10 of 2009, which defines tourist attractions as falling into three categories: natural, cultural, or human-made.



FIGURE 1. The speaker delivers a presentation to vocational students

Natural Attractions

Nature tourism focuses on nature, biodiversity and ecosystems. It utilises pristine natural conditions and offers a variety of facilities to provide tourists with a memorable travel experience. According to Goodwin (1995), nature tourism encompasses all forms of tourism that utilise wild or undeveloped natural resources, including species, habitats, landscapes, scenery and marine and freshwater environments. In Bangka Belitung, one such attraction is Kaolin Lake. This former mining site has created a unique landscape divided into two lakes with contrasting colours: blue and green. The uniqueness of the colours has earned Kaolin Lake the title of 'Most Popular Unique Destination' at the 2019 Indonesia's Charm Awards (Wahyono, 2023). The existence of the lake demonstrates that former mining sites can be transformed into new economic sources for communities with the touch of tourism. However, the lake cannot be developed for water-based tourist activities as the water contains harmful heavy metals (Saputra et al., 2023).

Other natural attractions in Bangka Belitung include Lengkuas Island and Tanjung Kelayang. Both locations boast excellent snorkelling conditions with spectacular underwater views. Tanjung Kelayang Beach is home to a rock formation known as Kelayang Rock, which was chosen as the mascot for Sail Wakatobi-Belitung 2011 (Bhudiharty et al., 2019). Tanjung Kelayang gained further popularity when the film Laskar Pelangi was filmed there. There is also a natural attraction showcasing the mangrove ecosystem known as Munjang Mangrove Forest. It is one of the best mangrove ecosystems in Bangka Belitung because there are no mining activities in the surrounding area. The area is home to 60 species of mangrove (Babelhits, 2019). Furthermore, tourists can engage in educational activities while observing wildlife and enjoying the pristine beauty of the natural mangrove forest from small boats.

Cultural Attractions

In addition to its beautiful natural scenery, Bangka Belitung is also rich in cultural diversity, which could be promoted as a tourist attraction. Cultural tourism is an activity in which visitors are primarily motivated to learn about, discover, experience and consume both tangible and intangible cultural products at a tourist destination (Richards, 2018). Richards (2018) further explains that cultural tourism attractions are highly diverse, encompassing material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features unique to a society. These include art and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and living culture, as reflected in lifestyle, value systems, beliefs and traditions. Bangka Belitung has a rich history and religious culture, as evidenced by the Indonesian Tin Museum, the Bintang Samudra Prayer Park, the Dewi Kwan Im Temple, and traditional houses such as the Panggung (Malay), the Rakit (Chinese) and the Limas (South Sumatra) houses. In addition to architecture, there are dances and celebration traditions such as the Campak dance, which symbolises joy, and the Rebo Kasan ritual, which is practised by the coastal Malay community. This tradition is rooted in the legends and myths of the Bangka people's ancestors and incorporates their religious values. Another cultural aspect of Bangka is its musical heritage, featuring instruments such as the dambus and gendang. Handicrafts include cual fabric, a traditional woven fabric from Bangka Belitung with unique plant and animal motifs in vibrant colours. Moreover, Bangka-Belitung's distinctive cuisine offers tourists an exceptional culinary experience. Almost all of the dishes are based on fish, including Mie Koba, which is famous for its fish broth, as well as Lempah Kuning, Otak-Otak and Rusip, a fermented fish dish.

Man-made Attractions

Man-made tourism is tourism created by humans. The Bangka-Belitung Zero Kilometre Monument is an example of this. Created to reflect the history and culture of Bangka-Belitung, the monument also symbolises hope for the progress of Bangka Island. Another example is the Dr (HC) Ir. Soekarno Regional General Hospital, which serves not only as a medical facility but also as a Health Tourism destination focused on medical tourism. The government has introduced the concept of health tourism by developing modern medical facilities at affordable prices. Through this programme, the Bangka-Belitung government is demonstrating its readiness to compete with neighbouring countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Lastly, the Pasir Padi Bay Waterpark offers a variety of affordable water attractions, making it a popular choice for family holidays.



FIGURE 2. Knowledge sharing Atmosphere for vocational students

Discussion

During the question-and-answer session, various questions arose, such as, 'Why isn't Bangka Belitung like Bali?' This was asked by several students, along with how Bangka Belitung could also become like Bali with its existing potential. Despite the abundance of potential, collaboration among various parties is essential to advance tourism in Bangka Belitung. In addition to natural potential, other potentials such as man-made and cultural-based tourism can also become tourist attractions if managed properly and wisely by suitable human resources. However, the main issue with this potential is the lack of competent human resources, resulting in some destinations not being managed appropriately. The mindset of the community also needs to be developed to align with the goal of jointly developing tourism potential in these locations. These two factors are the answer to the question of why Bangka cannot compete with Bali. Regardless, if we look at Bali, the indigenous communities there have already aligned their perceptions to accept foreign cultures and tourism activities in their areas. Additionally, the human resources available there already meet the standards set by the government, such as having guiding certifications and so on. This not only shows that Bali is ready to accept foreign cultures but also demonstrates their readiness to provide maximum service when receiving tourists visiting the tourist destinations.



FIGURE 3. The atmosphere of discussion and Q&A

From the discussion, it was found that the students already had an understanding of tourism, but the problem was that they used Bali as a lens for the advancement of destinations, but did not know how to

apply this to Bangka Belitung (see **FIGURE 3**). The students were aware of the potential of other cities, but not of the potential of their region. However, from the explanation of the material, it was found that the students had gained new knowledge related to the classification of tourism, especially in their region. To assess their understanding of the material presented, the presenter administered a random quiz to the students, asking them to classify the existing tourism potential by posing questions outside the scope of the material: what type of tourism is associated with Old Town Muntok; Menumbing Hill; and Bangka Botanical Garden? The results concluded that the students were able to categorise these destinations by grouping them according to their types: natural, historical, and man-made tourism. On the other hand, the issue of insufficient human resources also emerged as an additional concern, as nearly all students studying tourism at the vocational high school level do not continue in the same field when entering university. This indicates that there will always be a shortage of human resources in Bangka-Belitung.

CONCLUSION

The challenges posed by limited human resources and the absence of competent tourism organisations to manage destinations in Bangka Belitung require the attention of all stakeholders, notably higher education institutions. The International Citra Institute (ICI) is committed to educating and developing the tourism workforce in Bangka Belitung. This commitment is demonstrated through the ICI's Community Service Programme (CSP), which aims to improve the quality of vocational high school students specialising in tourism in Bangka Belitung. Capacity-building efforts have revealed that students at SMKN 3 Pangkalpinang are unaware of the tourist attractions available in Bangka Belitung. This programme demonstrates that strategic educational initiatives can improve students' awareness of local tourism assets, which is essential for building a sustainable tourism workforce in Bangka Belitung. The information provided has broadened the students' knowledge of the local tourist attractions. Their knowledge of local tourism has generally improved, as evidenced by their ability to answer the speaker's questions. It is hoped that SMK students' enhanced capacity in the tourism field will contribute to the development of Bangka Belitung's tourism industry by providing it with competent human resources.

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