

Encouraging Responsible Tourists: Strategies for Sustainable Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This community service activity aims to socialize the concept of responsible tourism to Generation Z travelers in support of sustainable tourism. The method employed involves inviting 20 Vocational School of Tourism students to participate in a city tour using Bandros HPI in Bandung and delivering the concept interactively and enjoyably. Understanding that acting as responsible tourists is the most practical and easily understood approach for Generation Z, serving as the operationalization of sustainable tourism concept, the results of this activity indicate an increased awareness among the Vocational School of Tourism students regarding the importance of behaving as responsible tourists. Therefore, it can be concluded that socialization activities like this should be conducted more widely among Generation Z to enhance awareness of responsible tourism as the embodiment of sustainable tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism has an important role in protecting and promoting the environment, natural resources, cultural values, and the integrity of local communities (Angelkova et al., 2012). By minimizing environmental and cultural impacts, sustainable tourism also contributes to overall development and creates jobs for local communities in the future (Kostić & Jovanović Tončev, 2014).

Several previous studies show that sustainable tourism has a positive impact on the environment and culture, as well as encouraging sustainable development and creating jobs (Butler, 1991). However, Generation Z shows attitudes that tend to be 'modest' in their travel experiences and in prioritizing sustainable tourism as a key concept in their travel experiences (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). A lack of understanding of the complex nature of tourism and its links to the environment can result in development that is not environmentally or culturally friendly to the host area and its communities (Butler, 1991). In comparison, Gen Z in Portugal shows interest in sustainable development goals but lacks pro-environmental habits and concern for maintaining sustainable tourism destinations (Pinho & Gomes, 2023).

In the context of sustainable tourism, the concept of responsible tourism becomes increasingly relevant and important to implement. A number of previous studies highlight the importance of considering responsible tourism as an effective approach in maintaining the sustainability of tourism destinations (Mihalič, 2016; Mohamadi et al., 2022). Without awareness and responsible actions from tourists and tourism industry players, efforts to achieve sustainable tourism will be difficult to realize. Therefore, integrating the concept of responsible tourism in tourism strategies is the key to maintaining environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability.

In response to sustainability challenges (reflecting the context of the COVID-19 pandemic) the role of tourists in behaving responsibly is increasingly emphasized. Eichelberger and his colleagues found that tourists tend to be sensitive to sustainability issues and prefer destinations that support the principles of responsible tourism (Eichelberger et al., 2021). This is not only beneficial in the local environmental and cultural context, but also in rebuilding tourist confidence and generating positive economic impacts.

Thus, it is important to understand that the concept of responsible tourist is not just an addition, but an integral part of a tourism sustainability strategy. From the results of previous research, it can be seen that understanding and implementing responsible tourism effectively can have a positive impact on the perception of destination sustainability and the quality of life of local communities involved in the tourism industry (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017). Sustainable tourism will depend heavily on the implementation of the concept of responsible tourism by the tourists themselves, so that cooperation and awareness from all parties is the key to achieving the overall goal of sustainable tourism.

Community Service Concerns

In this context, the presence of Gen Z, with immense potential in the tourism sector but limited awareness of sustainable tourism, underscores the necessity for innovative educational and outreach strategies. Enhancing awareness and engagement among Gen Z is crucial for promoting eco-friendly and sustainable tourism practices.

In light of the background and literature review, the observed challenge is the limited awareness and engagement of Generation Z in advocating for sustainable tourism. Consequently, the proposed strategy aims to utilize innovative methods for introducing and promoting the concept of responsible tourism to Generation Z, with the objective of enhancing their awareness and active involvement in supporting sustainable tourism practices.

The goal of this community service project is to develop and implement an innovative outreach approach in conveying the concept of responsible tourist to Generation Z. This initiative aims to increase their awareness and participation in supporting sustainable tourism.

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION



FIGURE 1. Flowchart of the Method of Implementation.

This activity uses an educational outreach approach as the main means of conveying material about responsible tourism to generation Z. Extension itself means a systematic effort to provide information, motivate and guide people so that they have the knowledge, desire and ability to change their behavior (Subejo, 2016). A total of 20 Telkom Tourism Vocational School students were designated as the target audience. The activity was carried out in Bandung City, using the Bandros bus (Bandung Tour On The Bus) as the location for the city tour, on Friday, October 20th, 2023.

The outreach process began with an interactive and interesting presentation of material about responsible tourists on the Bandros bus during the city tour. Outreach material includes important concepts regarding tourist responsibilities in supporting sustainable tourism. After the presentation is complete, it continues with a question-and-answer session and quiz to evaluate participants' understanding of the material that has been presented.

Apart from that, this activity also includes guided tours around the city of Bandung after the counseling session is complete. This aims to provide participants with direct experience regarding the concepts they have learned during the activity. In this way, it is hoped that participants can better understand and apply the principles of sustainable tourism in a practical context through responsible tourist practices.

This outreach aims to stimulate changes in participants' behavior in supporting sustainable tourism, so that they can become responsible tourists and make positive contributions to the environment and local communities.

Materials for Responsible Tourist Socialization



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 2. (a) Display of banners for organizing activities to socialize the concept of responsible tourist, (b) The Bandros bus used for the outreach program.

The materials presented to the students are as follows:

'Responsible tourist' refers to individuals who travel by considering their impact on the environment, culture and local society. A responsible tourist will try to reduce the negative impact of their trip and contribute positively to the tourist destination they visit.

Being a responsible tourist helps maintain the sustainability of tourist destinations, protects the natural and cultural environment, and provides positive benefits to local communities. By behaving responsibly, tourists can ensure that the destinations they visit remain beautiful and authentic for future generations to enjoy.

The following are some real practices in being a responsible tourist:

- **Reduce your carbon footprint:** Choose environmentally friendly transportation methods, such as walking, cycling, using public transportation, or sharing a vehicle with fellow travelers. Avoid using private vehicles which produce high carbon emissions.
- **Conserving Energy and Water:** Maintain conscientious energy and water usage during your stay at accommodations. Turn off lights and electronic devices when not in use, and entrust the accommodation to wash towels and linens only when necessary.
- **Reducing Waste:** Avoid the use of disposable items such as plastic bottles, straws, and plastic bags. Bring your own reusable water bottle and use cloth shopping bags. Dispose of waste properly, and if feasible, recycle. It is even better if we can carry back the waste we generate. Sometimes, the destinations we visit are not equipped to handle additional waste from tourists.
- **Respecting Culture and Tradition:** Conduct research before visiting a place to understand the customs, norms, and local regulations. Respect the local culture, beliefs, and traditions. Avoid disturbing or damaging historical sites, cultural heritage, or protected flora and fauna.
Exercise Caution on Social Media. When sharing travel experiences on social media, pause to consider their impact. Refrain from posting photos or content that violate privacy or cultural sensitivities of the local community.
- **Supporting the Local Economy:** Purchase from local shops, restaurants, and markets to bolster the local economy. Opt for accommodations owned by locals or those operating sustainably. Utilize the services of local tour guides who can provide in-depth insights about the visited areas.
- **Behaving Environmentally Friendly:** Maintain cleanliness at visited locations by refraining from littering. If necessary, carry back the waste we bring. Avoid damaging or taking species of protected plants or animals. Adhere to fishing regulations and engage in sustainable outdoor activities.
- **Supporting Nature Conservation:** Whenever feasible, support nature conservation sites such as national parks or biosphere reserves by vacationing there. Back conservation projects and non-governmental organizations working to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems.
- **Educate yourself and others:** Continue learning about environmental issues in the places you visit. Share your knowledge with others to promote awareness about the importance of environmental conservation. Always seek learning opportunities during your travels. Gain a deeper understanding of the culture, environment, and social issues present in the destinations visited.

Every small action taken by tourists can have a positive impact on environmental preservation. By being responsible tourists, we can ensure the sustainability of natural and cultural environments for future generations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this community engagement endeavor demonstrate a significant impact on the understanding and awareness of SMK Pariwisata Telkom students regarding the concept of responsible

tourism. Through observational data collected during the activities, it can be concluded that 20 participating students underwent a transformation in their perspectives towards tourism. They expressed that prior to this engagement, most of them indulged in travel solely for selfie-centric purposes. However, after being exposed to information throughout the journey about the importance of acting as responsible tourists, these students began to realize that every tourist action can have an impact and benefit the destinations they visit. Furthermore, by adopting the role of responsible tourists, valuable learning experiences were gained by the students during their visits to various destinations (Agoes & Agustiani, 2021).

These outcomes reflect a close correlation between findings and previous studies concerning the behavior of Generation Z tourists in the context of sustainable tourism. The obtained data indicates that, despite Generation Z's potential for concern regarding sustainable tourism concepts, their understanding and awareness still require enhancement. Additionally, they lack practical insights into implementing sustainable tourism concepts. The socialization of the responsible tourist concept, as conducted in this engagement, serves as a crucial initial step in providing a clearer and deeper understanding to the younger generation about their roles and responsibilities in supporting the sustainability of the visited tourist destinations. Thus, this engagement contributes positively to creating awareness and real actions from the younger generation in upholding the principles of sustainable tourism.

As it might previously be acknowledged that sustainable tourism refers to tourism practices that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically viable in the long term (Herianto et al., 2024). It involves meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. Sustainable tourism encompasses various aspects, including environmental conservation, community empowerment, and economic development.

One of the key aspects of sustainable tourism is raising awareness among tourists, particularly the younger generation like Generation Z, about the significance of responsible tourism. This involves educating tourists about minimizing environmental impact, respecting local cultures and traditions, supporting the local economy, and promoting conservation efforts. By fostering an understanding of responsible tourist behavior, tourists can actively contribute to the sustainability of tourist destinations, as highlighted in one study on the empowerment of youth in community tourism management (Zid et al., 2022).

Furthermore, various methods of socialization and education can be employed to promote responsible tourism among students and tourists. Training programs, information distribution, campaigns, collaborations with authorities, and community workshops are some effective strategies, as reported in previous community service studies (Sumarta et al., 2024). Additionally, motivating students to engage in cultural heritage preservation through digital promotion, creating websites, providing cultural education, and forming culture-based communities, can significantly contribute to sustainable tourism practices (Rohaendi & Salamah, 2023).

In contrast, the community service initiative we undertook utilized a unique method, employing a city bus tour to provide more encouragement and hands-on experience to the students. This approach aimed to immerse the students in real-world scenarios and showcase the practical application of responsible tourism principles, contrasting with traditional methods such as training programs or workshops.

Moreover, one critical aspect of responsible tourism is waste management, particularly in fragile ecosystems like mangrove forests. Improper waste disposal can lead to environmental deterioration and contamination, underscoring the urgent need for community education and action in waste management (Dayera et al., 2023). By integrating waste management education and practical solutions into responsible tourism initiatives, we can address environmental challenges and contribute to the sustainability of tourist destinations.

Integrating responsible tourism principles, sustainable tourism practices, and community engagement strategies can pave the way for a more sustainable and impactful tourism industry, benefiting both tourists and local communities while preserving natural and cultural heritage for future generations. Overall, the results and discussions from this community engagement activity underscore the importance of educational outreach and socialization of the responsible tourist concept among the younger generation, particularly Generation Z tourists. These efforts not only foster a better understanding of the significance of being responsible tourists but also inspire and motivate them to actively engage in supporting sustainable tourism for the preservation of tourist destinations in the future.

CONCLUSION

Through this community engagement initiative, it can be concluded that Generation Z shows significant interest in the concept of sustainable tourism, although they still require a deeper understanding of the concrete steps to be taken. By grasping the essence of being a responsible tourist, Generation Z students are beginning to realize that achieving sustainable tourism can be done practically by embodying responsible tourist behaviors. This aligns with the hypothesis that an innovative approach in socializing the concept of responsible tourism can enhance the awareness and participation of Generation Z in supporting sustainable tourism.

Meanwhile, the objective of imparting a better understanding of the concept of responsible tourism to Generation Z has been effectively achieved through this initiative. Findings from the community engagement activities indicate that SMK Pariwisata Telkom students responded positively to the conveyed materials and began to alter their attitudes as tourists. Therefore, such socialization activities need to be further developed for a wider audience, including Generation Z at large, to enhance their awareness and participation in supporting sustainable tourism. Consequently, these efforts are expected to make a significant contribution to preserving the sustainability of tourist destinations in the future.

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APPENDIX



FIGURE 3. Tourism agenda



FIGURE 4. Responsible tourism program