

WILDLIFE TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN WAY KAMBAS NATIONAL PARK, INDONESIA

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Abstract - One of the biggest challenges in the industrial management, particularly service industry is giving and maintaining customer satisfaction identified as the ultimate key of competitive advantage. In tourism industry, customer satisfaction is such a crucial factor playing an important role in marketing tourism attractions successfully. In Indonesia, one of the biggest issues faced by the Center of Elephant Conservation at Way Kambas National Park (PKG TNWK) is the decrease of customer satisfaction. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of wildlife tourism experience towards customer satisfaction on the Center of Elephant Conservation at Way Kambas National Park (PKG TNWK). The independent variable (X) in this study is wildlife tourism experience consisting of such two dimensions as wildlife interpretation and wildlife interaction and the dependent variable in customer satisfaction. This study employs a quantitative approach and the analysis unit of the study consists of 110 tourists at PKG TNWK. To analyze the data collected, this study administers multiple regression analysis. The results of the study show that wildlife tourism experience gives a significant impact towards tourist satisfaction at PKG TNWK.

Keywords - Wildlife Tourism Experience, Tourist Satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

One big challenge faced by the service industry as a part of industrial management is giving and maintaining customer satisfaction which is an identification of an ultimate key of competitive advantage (Ivanka, Suzana, & Sanja, 2009). Researchers have identified that the index of customer satisfaction is able to predict company market value to further determine advanced marketing strategies (Ardiansyah, Yuniawati, & Ridwanudin, 2019). It is believed that understanding customer satisfaction is one of the essential objectives in business activities, including in tourism industry which mostly sells experiences and services (Chan, Hsu, & Baum, 2015). In tourism, customer satisfaction is crucial issue (Kim, Park, Kim, & Park, 2016) which play an important role in marketing the touristic attractions successfully (Battour, Ismail, Battor, & Awais, 2014). Thus, in this industry, tourist satisfaction is such a relevant contributing factor (Corte, Sciarelli, Cascella, & Gaudio, 2015). Satisfaction plays an important role in understanding and predicting one's responses after consuming a certain product or service (Martín, Herrero, & García, 2018). Understanding tourist satisfaction gives positive feedbacks as it is a predictor of company profitability (Ladeira, Santini, Araujo, & Sampaio, 2016). Moreover, either the success or the failure of a certain product or service of a company can be valued based on the level of their customer satisfaction (Rebull, Rudchenko, & Martín, 2018). In the context of tourism, measuring tourist satisfaction helps managers to enhance the travel experiences and develop effective marketing strategies (Sangpikul, 2017). Tourists with good satisfaction will trigger the attractions of a certain tourism destination and lead to

more sustainable profit (Saayman, Li, Uysal, & Song, 2018). One of the distinctive and natural tourism attractions in Lampung Timur, Indonesia, is Way Kambas National Park (Taman Nasional Way Kambas, TNWK). TNWK which used to focus merely on flora and fauna conservation has shifted into a tourism attraction. The national park is currently well-known for its big five mammals containing tapir, honey bears, Sumatran tigers, Sumatran rhinos, and Sumatran elephants. The change done aims to provide more natural tourism concepts which do not break the principles of conservation. This phenomenon is called wildlife tourism (Ngonidzashe et al., 2017; Apps, Dimmock, & Huveneers, 2018). In tourism industry, offering wildlife tourism experiences is a not new business (Cong, Wu, Morrison, Shu, & Wang, 2014). Wildlife tourism experience is considered an important reason to visit national parks (Ngonidzashe, Vengesayi, Chikuta, & Muboko, 2017). The phenomenon has triggered the managers and organizers of world national parks to enhance customer satisfaction through wildlife tourism experience ((Cong et al., 2014; Ngonidzashe et al., 2017). Wildlife experience is considered an extremely important reason to visit the national parks and is mainly enhanced through activities like wildlife interpretation and interaction with wild animals in their natural habitats (Ngonidzashe et al., 2017). This study aims at acquiring findings on the description of wildlife tourism experience as well as the level of satisfaction of tourists at the Center of Elephant Conservation, Way Kambas National Park (Pusat Konservasi Gajah Taman Nasional Way Kambas, later to be referred as PKG TNWK), and investigating the impact of wildlife tourism experience towards the tourist satisfaction at the PKG TNWK.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted by analyzing the impact of wildlife tourism experience towards tourist satisfaction at the PKG TNWK.

The research method employed in this study were descriptive and verificative methods. A descriptive study was a conclusive study with an ultimate purpose to describe a phenomenon; commonly related to characteristics and functions. This study specifically described wildlife tourism experience consisting of wildlife interpretation and wildlife interaction (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). On the other hand, a verificative study basically tested a hypothesis based on data collected on the field (Sugiyono, 2012). In the meantime, the analysis technique used in this study was multiple regression. To act as samples in this study were as many as 110 respondents out of 32,534 tourists acquired through a formula (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Wildlife Tourism Experience and Tourist Satisfaction

No	Sub Variable	Total Score	Total Item	Mean Score	%
1	Wildlife Interpretation	1653	4	413.25	48.70
2	Wildlife Interaction	1741	4	435.25	51.30
Total		8	8	848.5	100

Table 1: Recapitulation of Tourists' Responses towards wildlife tourism experience at the PKG TNWK

Based on Table 1, it was found that the sub-variable of wildlife tourism experience with the highest score was wildlife interaction (435.25 out of 1741 from four statements). Meanwhile, the other sub-variable's, wildlife interpretation, mean score was 413.25 out of 1653 from four statements as well. The fact that wildlife interaction had the highest score was due to the distinctive and natural situations of the PKG TNWK so that tourists have such a good interaction with the elephants on site. In the meantime, the other sub-variable, wildlife interpretation seemed to be neglected since it was the second most important factor in comparison with wildlife interaction. This is in line with a previous study by Ngonidzashé et al., (2017). Based on the data analysis, it was found that the total score of the tourists' responses towards the wildlife tourism experience at the PKG TNWK was 3394 with the total of eight statements and mean average at 848.5.

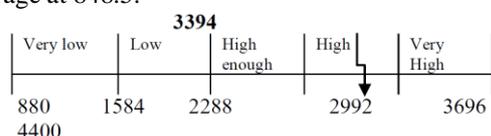


Fig 1. Wildlife Tourism Experience at the PKG TNWK on the continuum line

Figure 1 showed the wildlife tourism experience at the PKG TNWK on the continuum line. From the data, it can be inferred that the wildlife tourism experience was on high category indicated by its score which was as much as 3394. This means that wildlife tourism experience at the site was good enough and in need of enhancement.

No	Sub Variable	Total Score	Number of statements	Mean Score
1	Tourist Satisfaction	874	2	437

Table 2: Recapitulation of Tourists' Responses at the PKG TNWK towards satisfaction

Table 2 showed that the mean score of tourists' satisfaction was 437 out of 874. This means that within the continuum line range as shown in Figure 2, the score was quite high indicating that tourist satisfaction was categorized good and in accordance with their expectations.

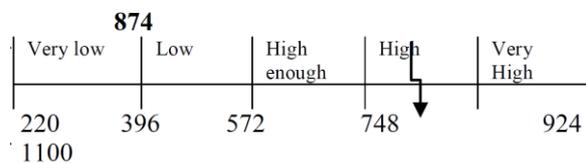


Fig.2. Tourist Satisfaction at the PKG TNWK on the continuum line

3.2. Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)

Customer Satisfaction Index is a method used to measure customers' satisfaction on a certain product. Each respondent valued the importance of the chosen criteria and gave the level of satisfaction based on the Likert scale available (ranging from 1 to 5). The formula of CSI as follows.

$$CSI = \left(\frac{T}{5Y} \right) \times 100\%$$

Where:

T = total score of satisfaction

5 = maximum score of the measurement scale

Y = total score of the perception column

Based on this formula, it was obtained that

$$CSI = \frac{122.74}{5(30.85)} \times 100\% = 79.57\%$$

It was found that the wildlife tourism experience based on the CSI formula was as much as 79.5% indicating good satisfaction of the tourists.

3.3. The impact of wildlife tourism experience towards tourists' satisfaction at the PKG TNWK

A multiple regression technique was used to find out the impact of wildlife tourism experience towards customer satisfaction by investigating its significant value. To be able to state that the independent variable is impactful towards the dependent variable, the significance value should be smaller than 0.05. Table 3 discussed the correlation of the dimensions of

wildlife tourism experience and the tourist satisfaction and found that the correlation value (r) was 0.751. This indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between the two factors. The data on Table 3 also showed that the determinant coefficient value was 0.612 meaning that the concepts of wildlife tourism experiences contributed as much as 61.2% towards the customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the rest of 38.8% derived from other contributing factors excluded in the discussion and scope of this study.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.751 ^a	.612	.678	2.187

Table 3: The output of wildlife tourism experience impact towards customer satisfaction at the PKG TNWK

Table 4 presented the impact of each dimension of wildlife tourism experience towards tourist satisfaction. It was shown that wildlife interpretation and wildlife interaction had significance level score or 0.0001 and 0.000 in order meaning that both dimensions had an impact toward tourists' satisfaction. Whether wildlife tourism experience has a high or a low impact towards customer satisfaction depends on their experiences on interacting with the wild animals (Cong et al., 2014; Ngonidzashe et al., 2017; Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001). The results of this study are actually in line with that by Moscardo, Woods and Saltzer, (2004) stating that wildlife interpretation is influential towards tourists' satisfaction.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	4,907	1,547	3,171	,000	
	Wildlife Interpretation	,130	,081	,172	1,802	,001
	Wildlife Interaction	,233	,106	,236	2,191	,000

Table 4: The Results of Significance Test

Based on the results of the test, it was found that the equation for multiple regression of wildlife interpretation and wildlife interaction towards tourists' satisfaction is as follows.

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2$$

$$Y = 4,097 + 0,120X_1 + 0,233X_2$$

Where

Y = Tourists' satisfaction

X₁ = Wildlife Interpretation

X₂ = Wildlife Interaction

The results showed that the constant score was 4.907 indicating that if X₁ and X₂ are omitted, the score was then 4.907. In the meantime, the coefficient score of wildlife interpretation (X₁) was 0.120 meaning that

every increasing point of it is decreasing the score of tourists' satisfaction by 0.120. The score of wildlife interaction (X₂), on the other hand, was 0.233 indicating that every increasing point of it is an increase of customer satisfaction point by 0.233.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study by distributing questionnaires to the tourists at the PKG TNWK and the calculation of multiple regression analysis to find out the impact of wildlife tourism experience towards tourists' satisfaction at the PKG TNWK, it can be concluded that

1. The feedbacks of respondents at the PKG TNWK on wildlife tourism experience divided into such two dimensions as wildlife interaction and wildlife interpretation. Wildlife interaction was categorized high. This means that the wildlife tourism experience at the research site was considered good and in accordance with their expectations.
2. Out of the two dimensions of wildlife tourism experiences, wildlife interaction outperformed wildlife interpretation due to the fact that the tourists felt satisfying when they interact with the wild animals, particularly elephants, at the PKG TNWK.
3. The data analysis of this study indicated that wildlife tourism experiences consisting of wildlife interaction and wildlife interpretation had a significant impact towards tourist satisfaction at the PKG TNWK.

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