



RESEARCH PAPER

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## Perception and aspiration of visitors to the development of ekowisata meranti putih (EMP) in Sebelimbingan Village Subdistrict Pulau Laut Utara Kotabaru District Province South Kalimantan

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Article published on July 30, 2018

**Key words:** Strategy, Development, Ecotourism.

### Abstract

Ecotourism Meranti Putih (EMP) is one of ecotourism areas located in South Kalimantan, precisely in Kecamatan Pulau Laut Utara Kabupaten Kotabaru. Kotabaru regency government is currently developing the EMP area located in Sebelimbingan Village North Sea Island Subdistrict with the concept of ecotourism tourism in the form of Meranti forest area of ± 8w,5ha located on the slopes of Mount Sebatung with an altitude of 200-700mdpl and the conservation of fauna in the form of breeding animals of deer timor and deer totol. The objective of this research is to analyze the potential of EMP. The method used in this research is with observation techniques, interviews with the visitors who visit the EMP. With ecotourism activities they acknowledge the formation of a sustainable environment. As many as 7 people (87.5%) people believe that ecotourism is a step that can preserve the environment. The result of this study is that the perception of ecotourism is a step to preserve the environment, they would strongly disagree if there is someone or a visitor coming to EMP to do an action that could damage the environment or tourist attraction. With the EMP was a positive impact for the people around the EMP area. They argue that the EMP area can increase their income by selling. With the EMP, can increase the village crowd.

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## Introduction

According to Wahab (2003) cited by Fitria (2014), basically the scope of tourism consists of three elements: man as a human thing used for activity, place as physical objects covered by activity itself and time as an element of time which is inhabited on the journey itself and as long as it is in a tourist spot. Nature tourism is determined by the nature and object of objects and natural attraction. Nature, mountains, lakes, rivers, lakes, valleys, caves and forests have the conditions, attitudes and behaviors that must be considered in the planning of the development of natural attractions (ODTWA).

According Choy (Fandeli 2002, quoted Fitria 2014) said that there are five main aspects for the development of ecotourism are: (i) the existence of natural and cultural environment; (ii) courage and support from the community; (iii) education and experience; (iv) sustainability of tourism potential; and (v) measure travel management. Pratiwi (2008) argues that there are factors influencing the adequacy of activities and activities as ecotourism. The five factors are: (i) management objectives; (ii) Active publication of local communities; (iii) influence on local economic development; (iv) tourism products; and (v) minimal impact on the environment. Dalem (2001) cited by (LPPM UIB, 2005) added that the main pre-requisite for successful ecotourism is preciseness in determining the target market.

The market segmentation for ecotourism consists of (Sudarto, 1999 cited by LPPM UIB, 2005):

- a. The older generation (silent), ie tourists aged 54-64 years. This group of travelers is quite wealthy, usually highly educated and has no dependents, and can travel within 4 weeks;
- b. Young executive generation (baby boom), ie tourists who are successful young executives aged between 35-54 years. Tourists of this group love to travel with their families and children (spend 2-3 weeks). Traveling according to the group is aimed at reducing stress;
- c. Generation "X", the tourists aged 18-29 years and very like ecotourism activities as like backpackers.

Usually this group of tourists are students who can travel for 3-12 months with monthly expenses ranging from US \$ 300-500.

Development of ecotourism services is required to have professional management, including (Nugroho, 2012):

1. Marketing specific to destination. Marketing strategy occupies an important position to reach and attract visitors worldwide. They are expected to be a source of information for other visitors to help conserve the environment and develop local communities;
2. Skills and services to visitors intensively. Ecotourism services are the experience and education of the new environment or region. Visitor satisfaction will be achieved through a variety of patient and effective services;
3. Involvement of local residents in guiding and translating tourist objects. The local population will have an incentive for environmental conservation if it is involved in ecotourism services, providing information and obtaining appropriate benefits;
4. Government policy within the framework of protecting environmental and cultural assets. Spatial planning, community empowerment or in combination with economic instruments, will prevent market mechanisms operating in ecotourism destinations;
5. Capacity building of local people. The local population and its surroundings are a unified whole ecotourism area. They need to develop their potential and participation to gain benefits to create incentives and motivation to participate in conserving their environment.

Ecotourism in its ideal practice is generally accepted: the concept of ecotourism activities that utilize a natural environment, and based on the active participation of the community with the objectives of protection, education and local economic development (Pratiwi, 2008). Local people, especially indigenous people who live in tourist areas, become one of the key players in tourism, because in fact they will provide most of the attractions as well as determine the quality of tourism products. In addition, local people are 'owners' directly visited tourist attractions as well as consumed tourists.

Water, land, forests and landscapes that are tourism resources and consumed by tourists and other tourism actors are in their hands. Art that became one tourist attraction is also almost entirely theirs. Therefore, the changes that occur in the tourist area will be in direct contact with their interests (Damanik and Weber, 2006 quoted by Fitria, 2014).

The arrival of tourists to recreation places in tropical countries, according to Mackinnon *et al.* (1993) cited by Ariyanto (2010) is none other than to want to see something different, something new, something spectacular, something to do for photography, want to travel comfortably, with little effort and want to combine "adventure" with leisure time activities. In relation to these matters, the most successful tour package is a number of these interests.

MacKinnon *et al.* (1993) cited by Ariyanto (2010) mentions the factors that make a forest area to be interesting to visit for visitors are:

1. It is close, close enough or far from the international airport or tourist center;
2. Travel to the area is easy and convenient, it needs a little effort, difficult or dangerous;
3. The area has a prominent attraction such as wildlife that is interesting or distinctive for a particular place;
4. Ease to see the attractions or animals are guaranteed;
5. Have several different features;
6. Have an interesting culture;
7. Unique in appearance;
8. Have recreational objects of beaches, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, swimming pools or other recreation;
9. Close enough to other locations that attract tourists to become part of the activities of other travelers;
10. Around the area has beautiful scenery;
11. Food situation and accommodation available.

There are three principles to consider in selecting recreational development sites, namely (i) the main purpose of a recreational development is user satisfaction; (ii) the convenience of the user shall be the main reason for the selection of a place; and

(iii) create a situation where existing resources can satisfy the visitor's taste (Douglass, 1982 quoted by Ariyanto, 2010). Ariyanto (2010) explains that the three principles are a unity that can not be separated between one principle with another principle. Natural ecosystem is a natural recreation object that must be preserved because visitor satisfaction will be achieved if the object can be enjoyed. Provision of infrastructure facilities can support the convenience of recreational activities and avoid damage to existing resources due to recreational activities.

Sunaryo (2002) quoted by Wijayanti (2015) gives several definitions about the perception he quoted from several experts as follows:

- a. Understanding perception according to Bimo Walgito. Perception is the process of organizing, interpreting the stimuli received by the organism or the individual so it is something that is meaningful and is an integrated activity within the individual.
- b. Understanding perceptions according to Maramis. Perception is the power to know the goods, the quality or the relationships, and the difference between this through the process of observing, knowing, or interpreting after the senses got stimulated.
- c. Understanding perception by Desirato. Perception is the experience of objects, events, or relationships obtained by inferring information and interpreting messages. Messages can be regarded as giving meaning to sensory stimuli (sensory stimuli).
- d. Understanding perceptions according to Joseph A. Devito. Perception is the process of becoming aware of the many stimuli that affect our senses.

Luthans (2006) cited by Mawaddah (2015) states that perception is a unique interpretation of a situation, not a recording of a situation. In short perception is a complex cognitive process that produces a unique world picture, which may be somewhat different from reality, or perception is considered a filter.

The development of a tourist object perception of visitors and the community around the object cannot be abandoned. Latupapua (2011) explains that the condition and perception of local people (the society around the object of tourism) in responding to the

potential of resources owned also have an effect to support the development of tourist attraction area around them. Public perceptions of the existence of potential objects actually reflect people's opinions, wishes, expectations, and responses to development activities in their region.

**Materials and methods**

*Materials*

Equipment used during the study included cameras for documentation, stationeries, and computers.

*Methods*

This research will be conducted for three months, ie May - July 2016. This research activity consists of literature study, proposal making, data retrieval, data analysis and preparation of research results. Research location in Ecotourism area Meranti Putih (EMP) Sebelimbingan Village, North Sea Island Subdistrict, Kotabaru Regency of South Kalimantan Province. The reason for the EMP was made as a research site because it is being developed by the Government of Kotabaru Regency with the issuance of Decree No. Kepabaru Regent. 188.45 / 607 / KUM / 2013 on the Designation of Ecotourism Area of Kotabaru Regency in 2013. Public and tourist perceptions (visitors) are obtained by providing questionnaires and interviews. Taking the data is done by accidental sampling, that is the respondent's capture to anyone who happened to meet by filling questioner and interview. The questionnaires used in this study are semi-structured. Semi-structured questionnaire is a form of question in which respondents have provided certain answers so that when given their answers have been directed, in addition there are also forms of questions that they can freely give answers to questions given. Determination of respondents in the exploration of this tourist perception using the formula Sloven (Wijayanti, 2015):

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Information:

n = number of respondents

N = large number of visitors taken from the average of visits

e = 0.15 (error factor).

**Results and discussion**

*Characteristics of Respondents Research*

Respondents in this study based on gender consisted of 18 males and 7 females. Respondents aged between 12-52 years, on average mostly aged 20-30 years. Indeed in terms of this age the respondents still have the power and ability in carrying out activities of travel. In addition, age like this, an age that is filled with busy daily activities eg. because of busy work world or school world or lectures. So with activities such as doing the tour, will be able to help regfreshing the brain and tired muscles loaded with daily activities.

Visitors in terms of work mostly work as private and the rest work as housewives, students and students, the full profession of the research respondents presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Employment of research respondents.

No.	Profession	Total	Percentage
1	Private/self-employed	17	68
2	Student	3	12
3	Housewife	1	4
4	Civil servants (PNS)	2	8
5	Not working	2	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

The level of education of research respondents are mostly educational background of high school, university and junior high school level. The level of education of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Educational level of research respondents.

No.	Education Level	Total	Percentage
1	Junior High School (SLTP)	1	4
2	Senior High School (SLTA)	16	64
3	College (University)	6	24
4	No Answer	2	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

The level of education will affect the mindset of respondents related to ecotourism activities undertaken. Higher education will affect the level of knowledge of respondents related to ecotourism activities. Those who have higher education have higher science related to ecotourism than those who have low education level.

Incomes of respondents who come to visit to travel to the EMP mostly have an average income between IDR. 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Income of research respondents.

No.	Earnings (months)	Total	Percentage
1	IDR. 1.000.000 – 2.000.000	1	4
2	IDR. 2.000.000 – 3.000.000	16	64
3	> IDR. 4.000.000	6	24
4	No Answer	2	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

Most respondents who come to visit the EMP are those who have an average income of between IDR. 2 million and up. This is because they are workers who have busy work, so it takes time refreshing (relax) off fatigue.

*Visitor Motivation and Preferences*

Visitors mostly get information regarding the existence of EMP from their friends or family. All visitors (25 people) who were made as respondents claimed to get information related to EMP came from friends or family who know or have been to EMP.

Visitors who visited the EMP were mostly in recreation (92%), and partly for research/education purposes (4%) and coincided with other activities that happened to be close to EMP (4%). EMP can be used as a place of recreation because in this region can be used as a place to calm the mind with a cool natural shades under the canopy of white meranti tree or can also enjoy the view from the peak of Meranti and feed the animals that are in captivity such as deer and other animals. For places of education/research, EMP provides so many objects that can be used as a source of visitors to learn and add insights related to the world of flora and fauna, especially related to Meranti Putih which existence is rare. Visiting the EMP can be done alone or group. The location of the EMP around the village will certainly provide a sense of security for everyone who wants to visit this location either alone or group. Most visitors who come here in groups, with family, friends or spouses. Interviews showed that most visitors came with groups of 5-10 people (40%), 2 - 4 people (32%) and > 10 people (28%).

Visiting EMP does not cost much. The cost spent for one visit is approximately IDR. 50,000 used to pay entry area, parking vehicles, and other costs such as buying consumption in the form of food and beverages. The results of interviews on the visitors who made as visitors, as many as 10 people (40%) spent below IDR. 50,000 in one visit, 9 people (36%) claimed to spend between 50,000 - 10,000 and the remaining 6 people cost more than 100,000, -. Visitors who spend less than 50,000, - are estimated to come from Kotabaru or around EMP, which does not cost much in terms of transport costs or they bring home consumption, so when they arrive at the EMP they simply pay the entrance fee and park the vehicle. While for visitors who spend more than 50,000, - or 100,000, - are expected to be visitors from outside the region such as Batulicin, Banjarbaru or Banjarmasin, so they need a high cost of transportation (travel) and also they are expected to buy consumption in the EMP area.

The average visitor who comes to the EMP is the first time. The interview result shows that the first admitted visitor to EMP is 17 people (68%), 2 times as many as 3 people (12%), three times as much (8%) and more than three times as many as 3 people (12%). The number of visitors arriving at the EMP varies, some claim to come to EMP once a week, once a month and once a year. Related to the preferred object when visiting the EMP, most respondents liked the white meranti scene that was there. Related objects favored by the respondents are presented in Table 4. Meranti scenery became the object of the most preferred because the visitors feel the coolness when in the meranti area. Indeed a forest area will give a sense of cool because under the canopy of the tree is formed a microclimate that can provide comfort and cool when under it.

**Table 4.** Object preferred by the research respondents.

No.	Preferred object	Total	Percentage
1	View of Meranti	19	76
2	Deer breeding	2	8
3	Bird breeding	2	8
4	Panorama at Puncak Meranti	1	4
5	Etc	1	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

Not only the coolness that makes the scenery meranti become the object most preferred by the pengunjung, but because of a visitor attraction to the plant species meranti which indeed for elsewhere cannot be found. Visiting the EMP, most respondents enjoyed the beauty of meranti forest compared to other activities that could be done by EMP. The types of activities undertaken by respondents when visiting the EMP are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Type of activity preferred by the research respondents.

No.	Type of activity	Total	Percentage
1	Flying Ground	6	24
2	Feeding the animals in captivity	2	8
3	Enjoy the beauty of meranti forest	16	64
4	No Answer	1	4
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

The beauty of meranti forest is the main icon in EMP, so it is only natural that most visitors prefer to enjoy its beauty. Visitors who come to EMP mostly like recreational tours. Related forms of tourism that many preferred by the visitors are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Preferred natural tourist form.

No.	Form of Nature Tour	Total	Percentage
1	Special interest tours	2	8
2	Recreational tourism	17	68
3	Educational Tour	5	20
4	No Answer	1	4
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

The recreational tours conducted by the visitors aim to refreshing. With the microclimate conditions formed by meranti forest, a refreshing coolness will be created for visitors coming to EMP.

EMP can also be used as educational tourism related meranti white plants whose existence has started rare. In addition to studying the world of plant meranti, in this EMP visitors can also learn some types of animals that exist in captivity such as deer, bird species, and other animals that can provide education to the pengunjung who come.

Related to the availability of existing facilities in EMP. Most of the visitors think that the existing facilities in EMP are quite complete, related to the respondents' responses about the availability of facilities in EMP are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Response of respondents regarding availability of facilities in the EMP.

No.	Response	Total	Percentage
1	Very complete	0	0
2	Quite complete	14	56
3	Complete	8	32
4	Incomplete	2	8
5	No Answer	1	4
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data Processing 2017.

Visitors who come to EMP mostly want the facilities in the modern EMP with aluan nuance or simple/natural facilities. Related facilities desired by the visitors are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Tourism facilities desired by respondents.

No.	Tourism facilities	Total	Percentage
1	No facilities	0	0
2	Simple/natural facilities	9	36
3	Modern facilities with a natural feel	10	40
4	Complete and modern facilities	5	20
5	No Answer	1	4
Total		25	100

Source: Primary data processing 2017.

Respondents were mostly satisfied with the services provided by the EMP. As many as 60% of respondents give a sense of satisfaction in terms of service by the EMP because they feel because the services provided by the manager seem friendly and good, the service when the entry is fast and the place is clean and good facilities. The details related to the impression given by visitors after visiting the EMP are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Impression on EMP services.

No.	Respondents' impression	Total	Percentage
1	Very satisfactory	0	0
2	Satisfactory	9	36
3	Good enough	15	60
4	No Answer	1	4
Total		25	100

Source: Primary data processing 2017.

### Visitor Perception

Visitors who come to EMP have mostly heard about conservation activities. As many as 15 people (60%) gave an answer that they have heard related conservation activities that are on television, internet, friends, books, schools and news. For respondents who stated that they had never heard about conservation related as many as 8 people (32%). Related to nature tourism almost all respondents (92%) claimed to have heard of nature tourism activities, the rest as much as 1 person (4%) gave an answer that they never heard related to nature tourism and the rest 1 person (4%) did not give answer. A total of 22 respondents (88%) to support ecotourism activities is an activity that can preserve the environment. They claim ecotourism activities are activities that can preserve the environment. With activities like this can teach tourists to get to know about nature and how to preserve (maintain) the nature. Respondents also gave an opinion, if ecotourism activities are done well then it can be a buffer of nature preservation around it.

### 4. Aspirations of the Related Visitors of EMP

Visitors expect the development of the EMP area to be a modern style but has a natural feel. Regarding the management they expect the management to be carried out professionally so that it can provide more benefits.

The equipment and equipment used for the maintenance activities of the EMP area are also expected by visitors to achieve professional EMP area management, and accordingly they need to improve the existing facilities within the EMP area and expand the existing deer enclosures.

### Conclusion

From the results of research that has been done in the field and the results of data processing concluded that the presence of EMP was to give a positive impact for the people around the EMP area. They argue that the EMP area can increase their income by selling. With the EMP, it can increase the village crowd.

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