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Local People's Practices in the Tourism Region of Indonesia: Issues, Threats and Solutions

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Abstract:

Quality of experience is the tourists' dream when visiting the beach, island or the coastal area. However, unsustainable practices potentially constrain tourists in obtaining good service from the local people. As a consequence, the tourists' satisfaction may not be achieved and the local people cannot gain sustainable economic advantages. This paper discusses unsustainable practices that occur in a tourism region called Tanjung Bira Beach, Indonesia. A qualitative study, which was conducted in 2016-2018, provides relevant information about the current practices by the local people, why they behave in such ways and what are their expectations to optimize the positive impacts of tourism. The study reveals that the way local people serve the guests and practice daily activities potentially degrade the quality of the environment. Issues of how boat providers use anchor in managing their boats and serving the guests, the souvenir making process, and water issue need to be tackled by making people aware about their tourism resources and their utilization for their own sustainable benefits. It is argued that three stakeholders (local people, local government and local tourism industries) have the opportunity to improve the quality of service and to protect the tourism resources. This paper offers three approaches that the stakeholders can do to optimize the positive impacts of beach tourism while reducing the unsustainable practices by the local people.

Keywords: Indonesia; sustainability practices; sustainable tourism; Tanjung Bira beach; push and pull factors.

JEL Classification: Q01; Z32.

Introduction

Beach often becomes the option for most residents of a destination for their holidays as well as by tourists who visit the destination. Activities offered by the beach (swimming, snorkeling, diving, sun bathing and enjoyment, fishing, surfboarding, etc.) are the reasons why visitors choose it as their destination. For Preston-Whyte (2004), beach offers the opportunity for tourists to enjoy it as a leisure space because of the physical environment and possibly, the integration of social and cultural values that visitors can experience. Many destinations in the world promote beach as a tourism attraction and create it as a tourism region. Indonesia, for example, has a long coastal area (about 99,093 kms) that provides the opportunity for many provinces and regencies to promote their beach as tourism attraction. Often, the popularity of a destination is because of the existence of the beach and hence, it is not surprising if most areas in the world sell the beach as superior tourism attraction including Indonesia.

The increasing numbers of visitors to nature-based tourism attraction potentially degrade the quality of the environment (Choi and Sirakaya 2006, Junaid and D'Hautesserre 2017). Yet, the economic advantages of tourism

for the local residents are the reasons why nature particularly the beach is promoted as an attraction (Ardahaey 2011; Dixon, Oh and Draper 2012, Khan 2017, Lew, Hall and Timothy 2008). Hall (2011) provides an example of how beach tourism affects the economy of Maldives with approximately 70% of the visitors choose beach as their holiday destinations. Although beach provides positive advantages, negative impacts exist and thus, the negative impacts should be minimized in order to support the environmental conservation and community empowerment through tourism (Hastuti and Yuliaty 2018; Mason 2003; Mitchell 2008; Sharpley 2009). To achieve the goals, three requirements are considerably important for sustainable beach tourism including first, the quality of visitor experience rather than short enjoyment; second, sustainable economic benefits for the local residents rather than short profits; and third, conservation of natural resources.

Tourists' dream is to obtain the quality of experience when visiting the beach or the coastal area. Such dream is reflected when tourists travel to an island destination for a particular experience (such as diving and snorkeling) and it is essential for a destination to provide such experience. The quality of tourists' experience depends on how a destination is managed based on the principle of optimizing the positive impacts (Dixon, Oh and Draper 2012, Tan 2017). Most local people seek economic advantages through tourists' visit. For this reason, different efforts are done by the local people as the response for obtaining potential economic advantages such as providing alternative forms of accommodation, offering services to visitors and selling souvenirs. However, the local people tend to implement unsustainable practices to achieve their goals. Arising issues has prompted the researchers to scrutinize the actual conditions of Tanjung Bira Beach, Indonesia, a tourism area that has been utilized by the tourism industries, the local residents and the local government to attract domestic and international tourists.

This paper aims to explore issues related to the local people's practices and daily activities that may affect the conduct of tourism in Tanjung Bira Beach, Indonesia. Sustainable and/or unsustainable practices by the local people can affect the development of tourism. Research on such issues can provide information about the current practices by the local community, why they behave in such ways and what are their expectations for the sustainable use of beach or islands as tourism attractions. This paper was based on a qualitative study in Bulukumba regency of South Sulawesi, Indonesia during the period of 2016-2018 by conducting fieldwork and updating relevant information concerning issues being investigated.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Push and Pull factors as Determinants for Beach Tourism

Tourists' travel to a destination is affected by push and pull factors. Pesonen (2012, 71) states that "push and pull factors are central concepts in tourist motivation literature". Tourists expect to experience something different and unique during their travel (Mohammad and Mat Som 2010). Visiting islands and beaches is often recognized as marine-based tourism that provides expectation for tourists to enjoy marine-based experience. Heitmann (2011) argues that travelling and the seeking of experience by tourists are related and hence, they are integrated as tourism motivation. Thanyasunthornsakun (2016, 96) states that "it is necessary to classify and analyse the product and service requirements that influence visitor satisfaction". Visitor satisfaction depends on the positive experience during the visit to a destination.

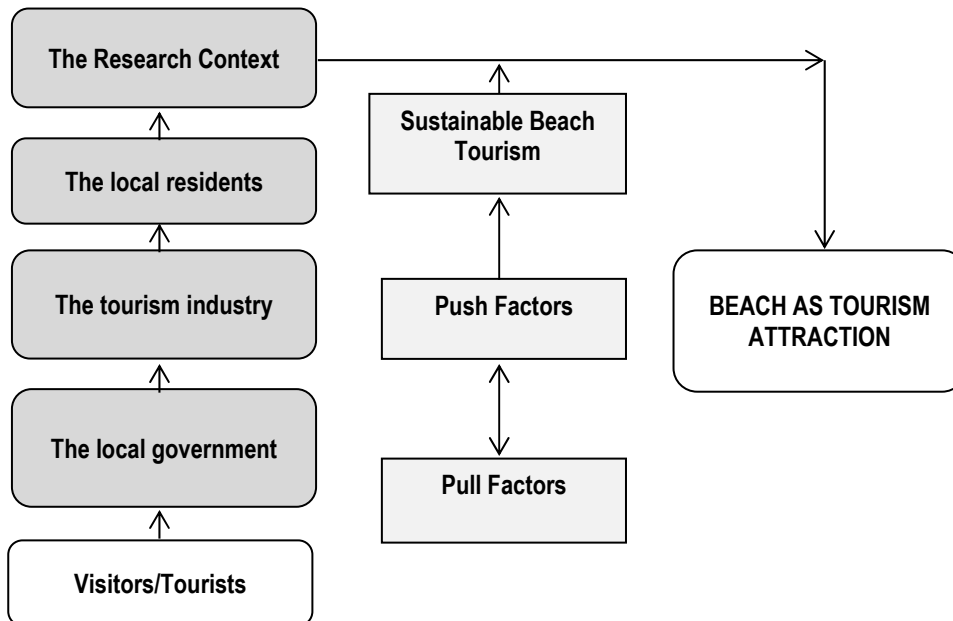
Push refers to the internal motivation by tourists to travel to a destination (Heitmann 2011). Pull factors, in particular, refer to attributes or attractiveness that a destination has that the tourists decide to travel. If a destination has beaches to explore, there is possibility to promote the area through marine-based tourism. Internal motivation by tourists to explore the beach or to enjoy marine activities refers to push factors while pull factors are something that a destination offers. Many destinations in the world realize that the existence of beaches in their area provides the opportunity for developing tourism.

If people want to travel, they will seek information about a destination. Moscardo, Pearce, Green and O'Leary (2001) propose three types of tourists related to beach tourism including eco-coastal tourists, active beach and passive beach tourists. Eco-coastal tourists are essential because they tend to enjoy the natural environment and love the conservation efforts. This paper argues that it is important to protect the environment through active role of the local people and the awareness to meet the tourists' demand on marine-based experience. Active and passive beach tourists also require natural conservation although they focus on enjoying the attractiveness of the beach.

This paper utilizes push and pull factors and the importance of promoting sustainable beach tourism (see figure 1). This paper links the two concepts based on three reasons. First, there is limited tourism literature that dicusses about beach tourism under the framework of push and pull factors and sustainable beach tourism. Second, the focus of this paper is to hear the local people's voice and experience about how they interact with

tourists through providing services. Third, beach and/or island tourism requires the local stakeholders to minimize the negative impacts. It is the role of the researcher to identify issues related to the environmental protection and the local community and to propose practical solutions.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research



Source: Authors, 2018

1.2 The Role of the Local Community in Sustainable Beach Tourism

Much tourism literature discuss the environmental protection and participation (which includes empowerment) of the local community in the tourism development (Cole 2006; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Jovicic 2013; Nejati, Mohamed, and Omar 2014; Page and Connell 2008). Negative consequences of tourism to the environment and the community often become the reasons for most destinations to implement sustainable beach tourism (Saarinen 2006). For this reason, there is high demand that a destination should provide activities for tourists with lower negative impacts to the environment (Sharpley 2009). In other words, the destruction of the environment should be avoided if tourism becomes the option of destinations.

The local community (also referred to as local people) is one of the main actors in tourism development. To achieve the goals of tourism development of a destination, the local community should have the opportunity to control over their resources and to implement efforts that help them achieve sustainable economic advantages (Conaghan, Hanrahan and McLoughlin 2015; Harrison, Jayawerdana and Clayton 2003; Lim and Cooper 2009). The local community should understand their tourism resources and thus, they will implement efforts or strategies to optimize the positive impacts of tourism. "As a service industry, tourism is highly dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of host communities" (Cole 2006, 630). If an island, beach or coastal area has attractiveness, sustainability issues must be the priority (Dede and Ayten 2012; Junaid 2017).

2. Methodology

Data was generated from participant observation and interviews with local people and governments' employees. In 2016, 7 people were interviewed who were 4 government employees who worked at the local tourism board and in-depth interviews with 3 members of tourism associations. The authors participated in a group discussion attended by approximately 35 local people in a program called 'tourism socialisation'. In this visit, the authors successfully interviewed 5 local people (1 government employee and 4 local people). The fieldwork in 2016 was done after obtaining research permission from The Center of Research and Community Service (*Pusat Penelitian dan Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat*), Makassar Tourism Polytechnic through approved/decision letter KP.001/42/04/Poltekpar/2016 dated 11 April 2016.

The authors explained the research goals to the participants before conducting the interviews as part of research ethics. The research was then continued in 2018 with 4 in-depth interviews (2 accommodation employees and 2 boat service providers). The interviews in 2018 lasted between 30-45 minutes focusing on their

experience in serving tourists and discussing issues concerning Tanjung Bira Beach. Participant observation enabled the authors to explore the research area and took notes related to the research topics. The fieldwork in 2018 was based on the approved letter of KP.105/151/19/Poltekpar-2018 dated on 3rd of April 2018. During the interviews, the authors ensured that the participants understand the goals of the research. The descriptive data of this research was summarized on table 1.

Table 1. Summary of descriptive data

| Thematic linformation | Issues from thematic data |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Boat service provider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Price of service is based on negotiation ▪ Potential conflict among the local people resulted from the uncontrolled price of service. ▪ The use of anchors in managing the motor boats ▪ The use of anchors as irresponsible practice ▪ Low quality of service because of the irresponsible behavior ▪ Struggling to find passengers ▪ Complaint from the guests from the perspective of boat providers |
| Souvenirs and issues around them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The sources for making souvenirs ▪ Coral reefs and the making of souvenirs ▪ Selling souvenirs as alternative forms of income generation ▪ The role of fishermen to take coral reefs ▪ Coral reefs are taken because they are die |
| Water and its preservation efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soil condition makes it difficult to find water ▪ Selling water as a business ▪ Problem of water and tourists' complaint ▪ The role of the tourism industries to promote water safety ▪ Water problem from the political perspective rather than unsustainable practices |

Source: Authors, 2019

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 An Overview of Tanjung Bira Beach, Indonesia

Tanjung Bira Beach is promoted as a tourism attraction in South Sulawesi Province of Indonesia. Internet is chosen as the media to promote the existence of Tanjung Bira (e.g. go.celebes.com, blog.traveloka.com, piknikasik.com, jejakpiklinik.com., etc.). They sell and promote tour packages, the beauty of white sand, facilities and accommodation for tourists and other information about the beach. Most of information provided on the internet are something positive - the purpose is to ensure that tourists choose Tanjung Bira as a location for their holidays or leisure time.

Tanjung Bira Beach is located in Bulukumba regency, Dictrict of Bonto Bahari, approximately 200 kilometres from Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi. Most tourists visit Tanjung Bira Beach to enjoy marine-based activities such as swimming, snorkeling, diving, enjoying sunset, etc. To access the beach from Makassar city, visitors need to travel about 5 hours by car, passing four regencies including Gowa, Takalar, Jeneponto and Bantaeng. Visitors pay an entrance fee of IDR 15,000 (US\$ 1.07) for adults, IDR 40,000 (US\$ 2.85) for international tourists, and IDR 5000 (US\$ 0.35) for children. The types of accommodation include hotels, inns, homestays, *wisma* (forms of accommodation that provides rooms for visitors), etc. The head of tourism board of Bulukumba regency mentioned that compared to 2016, the number of visitors to Tanjung Bira increased to 7,000 in 2017 (TribunBulukumba.com). Most visitors prefer to visit Tanjung Bira on Saturday, Sunday or holiday period.

Many local residents offer their services to visitors, such as transport service to two islands: Liukang and Kambing (Goat) Islands. For many tourists, their travel to Bulukumba regency is mostly motivated by snorkeling and diving on this two islands. Local visitors choose Bira Beach because of the natural environment and to enjoy the white sand. In short, the tourists' visit has encouraged the local residents to provide different types of services.

Figure 2. Maps showing Tanjung Bira, Indonesia



Source: Indonesia map (Max Oulton, 2013), Tanjung Bira map (<http://annisaasanti.blogspot.com/2015/08/pesona-tanjung-bira-dan-bulukumba.html>)

3.2 Local Practices: Issues and Threats

Tanjung Bira is recognized as a tourism region and is often considered as one of tourism icons in South Sulawesi province, Indonesia. Having informal talks with the local people and data generated from observation, the current condition of Bira Beach was found to be quite different, as compared to ten or twenty years ago. Visit on weekends indicated decreasing number of visitors. Many accommodation, restaurants and café businesses do not serve guests and they tend to close their businesses. There are two possible reasons: first, many budget accommodation providers and other facilities are open and they have to compete with each other. Second, almost all regencies or cities in South Sulawesi (including in Indonesia) promote beaches and other tourism resources. In the eastern part of Indonesia, the promotion of Morotai and Wakatobi Islands as ten best priority destinations and marine-based tourism destinations may have an impact on to the number of tourists to Tanjung Bira Beach.

Unsustainable practices by the local people may contribute to the conduct of tourism in Tanjung Bira. Tourists expect to see the beauty of underwater coral reefs in the diving spots around the area of Liukang and Kambing Islands. The local people approach the visitors if they want to explore the islands for different activities through boat services. The price is about IDR 250,000 (US\$ 17.85) to 400,000 (US\$ 28.5) depending on the ability of the tourists to negotiate with the boat providers. Initially, the researcher was offered IDR 350,000 (US\$ 25) by the local people. Many boat providers offered their service to the researchers with the same fare. The fare was lowered (IDR 200,000 or US\$ 14.28) and they negotiated with tourists in order to get passengers.

Boat providers try to obtain more customers by reducing the price of the service, while others maintain normal price. An informant affirms, "I think conflict can happen because the boat providers offer their service at any price" (interview, May 2018). If the local people work without standard regulation, visitors will be at risk. One informant argues that the standard price for the boat service is IDR 350,000 (US\$ 25). He opines that all boat providers who work with travel agents and hotels should offer the standard price. Unhealthy competition among boat providers seems to become a socio-cultural issue in Tanjung Bira, which may affect the tourists' perception about the destination. Scholars have proved that tourists' experience at a destination affects the formation of destination image (Kim, Hallab and Kim 2012; Tan 2017). In other words, tourists should be provided with accurate information, agreed price and types of services they are promised during their visit in order to get positive images.

When passengers arrive on Liukang and Kambing Islands, many problems arose. The boat providers utilized their anchors to disembark their motor boats. There are two options for the boat providers, first, they can tie up their boat to the 'mooring or mooring buoy' around the two islands. My informant argues that there are

about 70 boats or boat providers in Tanjung Bira who offer services to visitors. In fact, there are limited number of mooring (about 2 or 3 moorings) that can be utilized by the boat providers. Second, they have to use anchors and throw them into the sea ground. The second option is the most preferred choice by the local people. When the anchors are thrown into the sea ground, coral reefs are under threat. The more boat providers utilize their anchors, the more threats or problems occur.

Our informant indicated that he was very disappointed with the boat providers. He stated “I often handle ‘*bule*’ (a local term for Western tourists), they came to dive. But, the *bule* was angry at me when he saw me throwing my anchor into the sea ground” (interview, April 2018). For him, western tourists came to Tanjung Bira to dive and snorkel. Tourists complained the way the boat providers threw their anchors. He did not have the option except utilizing their anchors and throwing them into the sea ground. He understood why the tourists were angry, they came to see coral reefs but we (boat providers) broke them. He added that he was embarrassed because his passengers (tourists) took rubbish from the sea ground. Since then, he realized not to use anchors to stop or to balance the motor boat.

Most boat providers used anchors in their daily service. Most boat providers do not care about their irresponsible practices. They understand that tourists’ motivation is to experience natural beauty through diving and snorkeling. Unfortunately, unsustainable practices by the local people threaten the environment. In other words, the tourists’ demand may not be met due to irresponsible behavior of the local residents. It can be argued that island, beach and/or coastal tourism potentially threaten the sustainability of the environment (Dede and Aytan 2012). Orams (2002) argues that the prime attraction of beach or marine tourism is the conservation of natural resources and hence, ecotourism helps succeed tourism development of an area. However, the increasing dependency on the coastal resources by the local people through tourism contributes to the degradation of the environmental quality (Lazarow, Raybould and Anning 2013).

Local people obtain more economic benefits through selling souvenirs. During an observation in 2018, the researchers noted many souvenirs in various forms were made from coral reefs. Interviews with the souvenir sellers indicated that fishermen who resided at Liukang Island and Tanjung Bira took the coral reefs, and traders turned them into souvenirs. In one incident in August, informants added “the sea current was very strong and the coral reefs were drifted ashore. It was better to take them and convert into souvenirs, rather than them being drifted” (interview, March 2018). Others argued that the fishermen dived into the sea, took and sold them to the souvenir producers. The researchers noted that some souvenirs made from coral reefs were in their original forms, and were painted to appear more beautiful.

Local people realized that coral reefs require one year to grow about one centimetre. If more visitors are interested to buy the coral reef souvenirs, traders will demand the fishermen to get more coral reefs, which practice is deemed to be unsustainable. Although tourism brings economic advantages through retail, the environment is under threat especially if local people think about short-term profit rather than long-term conservation of the environment. This paper emphasizes that such practices should be avoided by making alternative forms of souvenirs.

The findings also reveal that water becomes an essential issue in Tanjung Bira. Most accommodation businesses have to buy water to meet the guests’ water needs. To buy water, accommodation providers need to spend about IDR 25,000 (US\$ 1.78) – IDR 30,000 (US\$ 2.14) per cubic. The environmental condition of Bira Beach (rocky area) makes it difficult to dig soil to get clean water. A government officer questioned why issue pertaining to water could not be solved. He noted that “in 2014, he attended a meeting with the head of water supplier authority (*perusahaan dagang air minum* or *PDAM*). The head committed to overcome the water crisis in three months, but has not been resolved until present” (interview, November 2017).

Water crisis persists and accommodation providers realize this issue. They do not mind buying water to support the local economy. One prepares and sells water for the hotels while others buy water when they need it. The researchers noted that the accommodation providers did not promote water conservation – no sign of conserving water in rooms. The water issue is perceived more as a political matter rather than unsustainable practices. It creates threat if there is no effort from related stakeholders to conserve the environment and water .

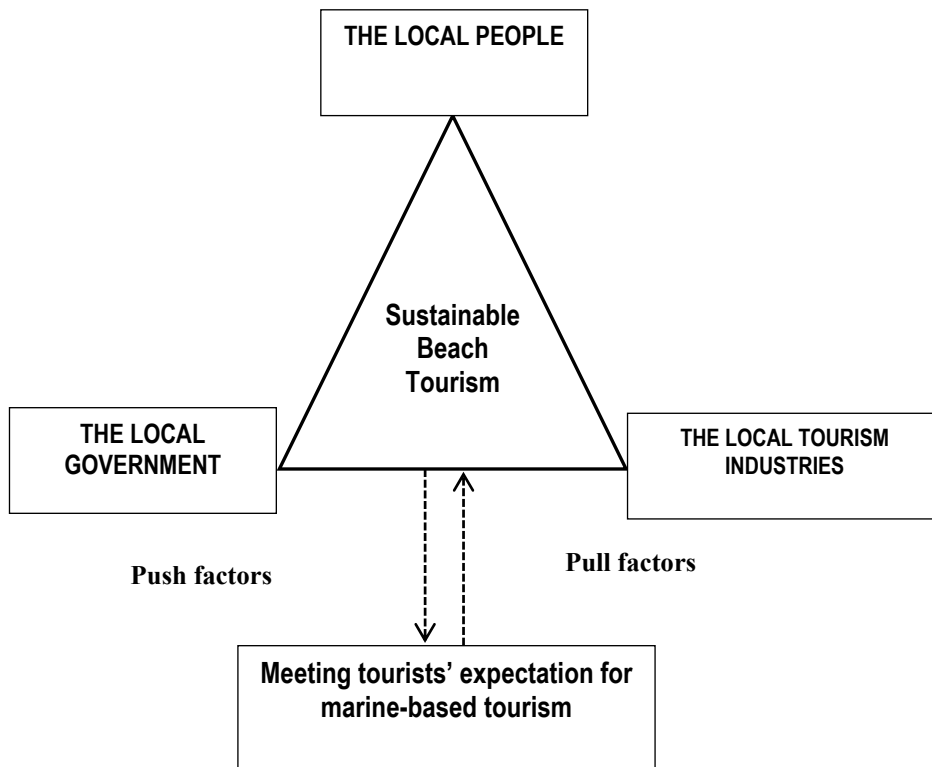
3.3 Solutions for Sustainable Tourism

This paper recommends three approaches to minimize the negative impacts of tourism (see figure 3), which are the involvement of local people, local government and the local tourism industry. Tanjung Bira is attractiveness to most visitors. Snorkeling and diving activities require support from the local people to get positive experience. Below are several efforts for local community to uphold sustainable tourism practices:

1. Limited knowledge and lack of awareness about sustainability issues or environmental protection often becomes problems in many developing countries. It is essential for the local community to create *kelompok sadar wisata* or *Pokdarwis* (community awareness group) or community-based tourism (CBT). This paper proposes the importance of Pokdarwis or CBT that is responsible for managing tourism resources and monitoring local people. The role of the CBT is to facilitate the local people to improve their professional service to visitors.

2. The local people should be equipped with the ability to promote natural and cultural resources. Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) affirm that today's beach tourism has started to promote culture heritage or cultural resources as a strategy to expand destination's market. In this sense, it is important to develop alternative forms of tourism. The local people have the potential to promote their culture while selling their nature. Offering tour packages for tourists that combine exploration of culture and nature is the option for a destination.

Figure 3. Solutions for sustainable beach tourism



Source: Authors, 2018

The local government is the main actor for policy making and its implementation. Dwyer and Edwards (2010, 36) propose five roles for the local government including “promoting cooperation and coordination, enacting legislation, policy setting, education and training, and monitoring”. The local people agreed working together with other groups of community is the key for sustainable beach tourism. One person cannot make successful effort in Tanjung Bira. The local people do not have the power to integrate all local people. Hence, it is the role of the local government to facilitate the local people in developing tourism in Tanjung Bira.

This paper recommends the implementation of coastal zone management as the first strategy for Tanjung Bira as tourism attraction. The local authority (the local board of tourism and marine authority) has the responsibility to make coastal management based on the concept of tourism and environmental conservation. Coastal zone management may consist of tourism or leisure zone and conservation area. Coastal zone management helps the protection of the environment and how the local people should act based on the principles of quality standards and responsible behavior. The understanding of zone management by the local people should be strengthened through education, training and monitoring by the local authority.

To optimize the positive impacts of tourism and to protect the environment, the role of the tourism industries should be reflected in two ways. First, they should promote sustainable efforts. The research reveals that the tourism industries do not make efforts for sustainable beach tourism. It can be argued that the tourism industries have the role to guide and help visitors in practicing sustainable efforts such as saving water, and helping the local people to act and work responsibly.

The local tourism industries have the responsibilities to implement strategies or approaches to help community. This paper proposes five tasks including product, plan, process, people, and programmes (Elliott 2001; Presbury and Edwards 2010). The five tasks are related to each other. Product of tourism should be designed with correct process and output (plan) for the purpose of sustainable beach tourism. The tourism products involve responsible act of the industries' workers, whereas programmes are designed based on the principles of the local people's hospitality and goodwill to provide better service for the visitors.

Conclusion

This paper argues that sustainable efforts and practices are required to conserve the environment and to help local people obtain sustainable economic advantages. There are two reasons for the efforts first, the local people utilize the attractiveness of beach and islands for gaining income. The more tourists visit Tanjung Bira Beach, the more opportunity for the local people to improve their economic welfare. Second, tourists have internal motivation (push factor) that enables them to travel to a destination. This paper found that the local people realized their unsustainable practices. The practices may lead to complaint by tourists especially those who love the environmental protection.

This paper provides insight about the local people's practices and how their practices potentially affect the conduct of tourism in their region. Three main issues discussed in this paper are based on the local people's experience about tourism in their region. If the local people continue their unsustainable practices, the quality of the environment can be degraded and tourism cannot generate sustainable economic gain. Stakeholders agree that the positive impacts should be optimized through the role of the local government, local people and the tourism industries. This paper recommends strategies that may be useful to solve the issues such as creating tourism awareness group, coastal zone management and promoting sustainable efforts.

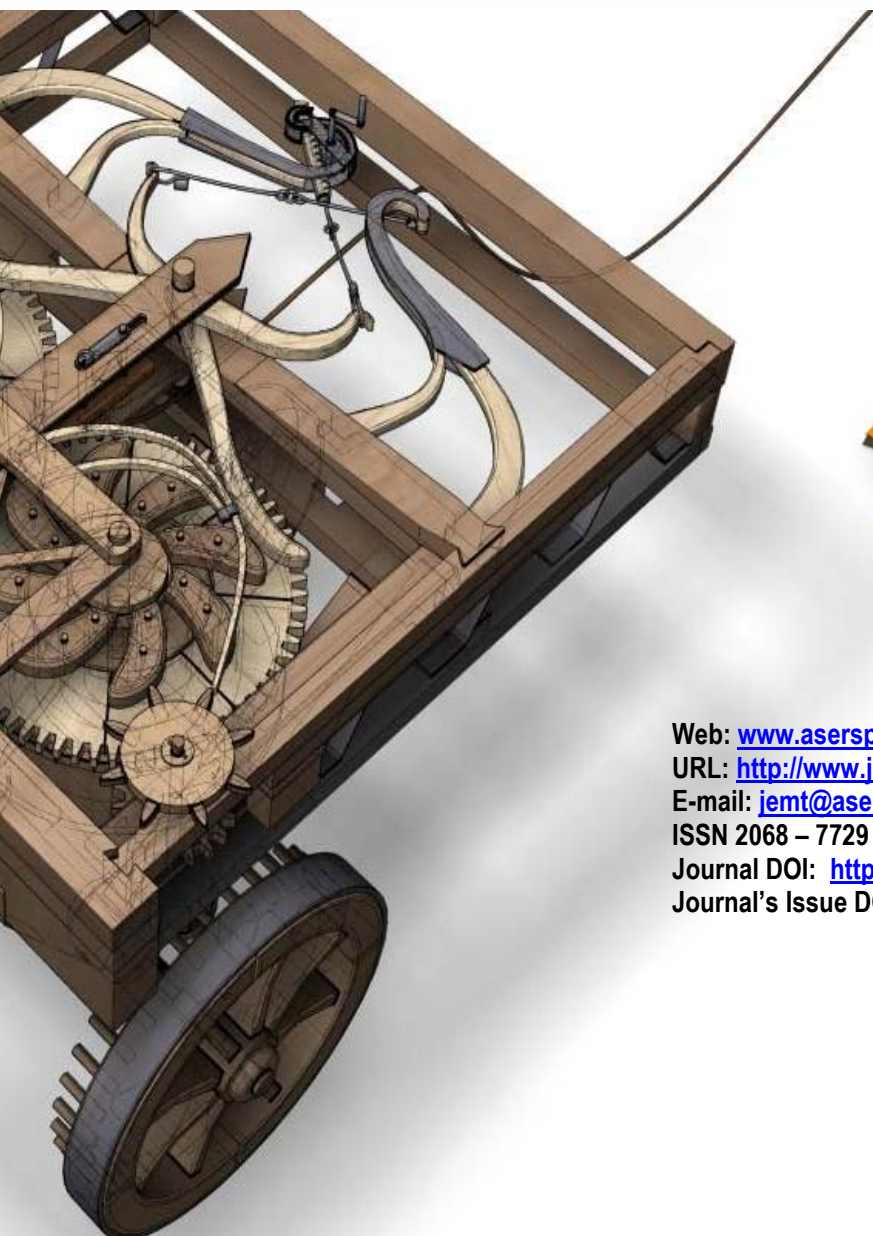
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