

## **“IMPROVING STUDENT COMPETENCY ON TOURISM MARKETING MANAGEMENT STUDY PROGRAM THROUGH LOCAL CONTENT DEVELOPMENT”**

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### **Abstract**

To accelerate the enhancement of fulfilling the needs of qualified Indonesian tourism HR, the government encourages to develop tourism science study programs in the higher education level. Indonesia University of Education (UPI) has also contributed to develop tourism science in establishing Tourism Marketing Study Program. The Study Program is quite different from the former tourism schools that have been developed in Indonesia. The former emphasized more in vocational skills, where as the later offers a graduate program at bachelor degree to fulfill the needs of managerial skills at the tourism industry.

However, to achieve this objective, the study program’s learning method is not only expected to enhance the students’ academic skills on understanding the concept and theory of hospitality and tourism. It also attempts to develop social-culture skills that would help the students to understand the local culture and strengthen their local identity. This is important because though tourism products embrace international standard, but the local content is important to shape the destination attractiveness for tourists to visit. So, if the students knew about the local culture and condition well, they would have strengthened their competence to work in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially in giving insight and information for tourists about the attractiveness of the local culture. By understanding the local culture, the students are also expected to have ideas on preservation and conservation on the local culture to promote the sustainable development in the tourism sectors. This competence could become a different value that will lead to competitive advantage for tourism HR in Indonesia.

To achieve those competence, the study program has developed local content in the curriculum. There are two subjects in the curriculum that have been developed to strengthen the local content. The first one is Art Education and the second one is Tourism Destination Management.

This paper will examine how the two subjects are developed and implemented to students so that they would have a greater understanding on local culture and improve their competence on hospitality and tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Local Content, Local Culture, Competence on Hospitality and Tourism

## Introduction

Tourism has played as a main trigger for economic development in most countries in the world. Not only that it could give great contribution to the countries' national income, but also it could foster the social welfare to the country. As a service industry, tourism is also called as a people industry because it depends a lot on its human resources who give services to tourists. Therefore, tourism HR plays as an important thing to leverage a country's competitive advantage in developing tourism.

To accelerate the enhancement of fulfilling the needs of qualified Indonesian tourism HR, many higher education institutions have developed tourism science study programs. Indonesia University of Education (UPI) also has contribution to develop tourism science in opening Tourism Marketing Study Program. The Study Program is quite different from the former tourism schools that have been developed in Indonesia. The objective of the former one emphasized more in vocational skills, where as the later offers a graduate program with bachelor degree to fulfill the needs of managerial skills at the tourism industry.

Hence, to achieve this objective, the study program's learning method is not only expected to enhance the students' academic competence on the concept and theory of hospitality and tourism. It also attempts to develop vocational and social-culture competence that contains aspects, such as knowledge, attitude, and skills that are required by the hospitality and tourism industry.

Hence, there are three competences that are developed in the study program: 1) *Core Competence* - the major competence for students and graduates to have strong marketing skills, adaptive, professional, and have a good attitude in tourism industry; 2) *Supporting Competence* - the soft skills competence that makes students and graduates having better interpersonal skills as well as intrapersonal skills; 3) *Other Related Competence* – the competence of specific *hard skills* that required by the hospitality and tourism industry, such as hotel occupation competences, food and beverage occupation competence, and destination occupations competence.

The ability or skills to understand the local culture can be classified into the other related competence because the skills of understanding the local culture has direct influence to some hospitality and tourism job requirement. Though tourism products and jobs embrace international standard, but the local aspect is important to shape the destination attractiveness for tourists to visit. So, if the students knew about the local culture, they would have strengthened their competence to work in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially in giving insight for tourists about the attractiveness of the local culture. This competence could become a different value that will lead to competitive advantage for tourism HR in Indonesia.

Hence, the study program has developed local content subjects in the curriculum. There are two subjects in the curriculum that have been developed to strengthen the local content. The first one is Art Education and the second one is Tourism Destination Management. Both subjects have emphasized on the understanding of local culture condition. The first subject has emphasized on Indonesian art and culture, and the second one on the deep understanding on local destination.

This paper examined how the two subjects were developed and implemented to students so that they would have a greater understanding on local culture and improve their competence on hospitality and tourism industry.

## Literature Background

In a 2004 study conducted by Dopson and Tas entitled *A practical approach to curriculum development: A case study* noted “that in developing curriculum, educators must consider three major components of hospitality education: substantive knowledge, skills and values” (Gursoy & Swanger, 2005, p. 46). The questions concerning to kind of competencies that were required by hospitality and tourism industry have attracted many researchers to study. Christou (2002) suggested the tourism and hospitality curriculum should equip students with important management knowledge and skills. Christou (2002) carried out a study to find competencies in hospitality industry by asking hotel managers and tourism graduates in Greece to rank 36 competencies for management trainees. The results shows that the top three competencies of hospitality and tourism are managing guest problems with understanding and sensitivity, demonstrating professional appearance and poise, and developing positive relations.

This finding was confirmed by Annaraud (2006) who studied skills necessary for successful careers for American and Russian hospitality graduates. Her findings indicated that customer relations were listed by students and faculty in both countries as one of the top three skills. In a 2002 study Dopson and Nelson found the most important skills and abilities for hospitality related positions were leadership, cost control, positive customer relations, identifying and solving managerial problems, crisis management, and solving customer problems.

Additionally, Gursoy and Swanger (2005) investigated what course content areas are perceived as required by hospitality professionals. They collected 328 surveyed completed by professionals working in various segments of the hospitality industry. The results show that the five highest ranked course content areas are oral communication skills, leadership skills, a clear understanding of profit and loss statement, good work habits, and customer service skills.

Gursoy and Swanger (2005) found that industry professionals do not expect a curriculum that teaches students specific applications because of the varying segments in the industry, company cultures, and operational procedures. Therefore, a curriculum should focus on developing higher-order concepts so that students will be wellrounded graduates. Thus, they proposed that content areas such as communication skills, customer service skills, and work ethics need to be embedded in the majority of courses in a curriculum to allow students develop those skills continuously throughout their college education.

Based on studies that compiled by Cecil, Fu, and Jones (2010), it could be perceived that the competencies of hospitality and tourism emphasized on how students and graduates would be able to build relationship and having interaction with people. Thus, there are challenges facing the tourism higher education to develop skills that could make the graduate able to interact with people from various background. Maurer (2009), stated that the challenges could be seen as the followed diagrams:

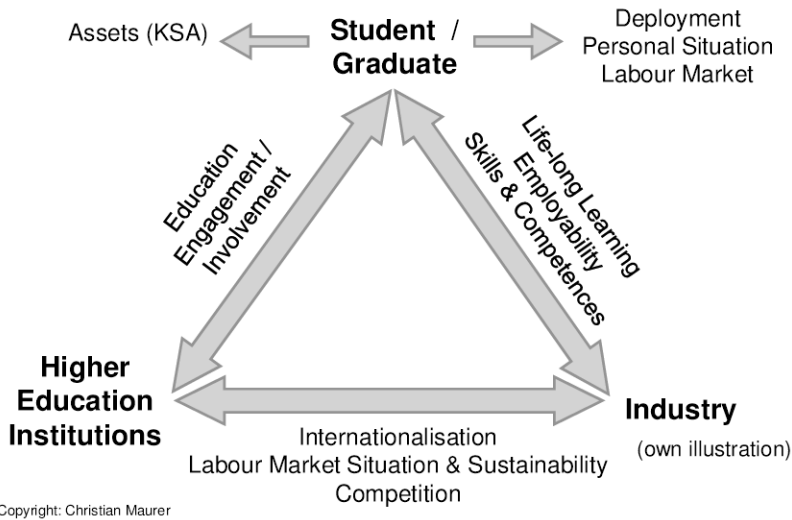


Diagram 1  
Challenges for tourism education

During the last few years there has been a growing recognition of the need to generate local content and make it available through new and traditional media in order to empower communities and lead them to an inclusive knowledge society. Local content is the expression and communication of a community's locally owned and adapted knowledge and experience that is relevant to the community's situation. The process of creating and disseminating local content provides opportunities for members of the community to interact and communicate with each other, expressing their own ideas, knowledge and culture in their own language. (www.unesco.org)

### 3 Research Method

The research method is qualitative and descriptive survey. The data were gathered by observing the learning method on the two subjects that contain local content. Those subjects are described and analyzed to evaluate how far the local content could be used in order to strengthen the local identity.

### 4 Research Result

#### Tourism Marketing Management Study Program Profile

The Tourism Marketing Management Study Program (MPP) of Faculty of Social Sciences Education, Indonesia University of Education (UPI) is one of non-pedagogical programs in UPI conducted in response to global competition in tourism industry and volatile demanding environment. MPP Program offers various professional skills focused on tourism marketing and management that will enable the students to be totally involved in those areas.

The valuable learning and education approaches, which combine practical experiences with theoretical approach, help the students expand their potential, develop professional competencies, skills, abilities and techniques. Those are sources of excellence offered by the program.

## **Vision**

Center of excellence in the development of Tourism Marketing Management science to provide competent graduates in tourism field in order to response the environmental changes and competition through the establishment of valuable relationship with stakeholders

## **Mission**

1. To administer academic activities in producing professionals who are competent in the related field and are able to compete globally.
2. To held various researches that is valuable for the development of tourism science.
3. To establish networking and partnership with other parties, nationally and internationally in order to develop tourism marketing management study program

## **Career Prospect**

As competent Tourism Marketing Management experts or practitioners who think and act strategically, have high level of adaptability, and are capable of building and developing network for his/her professional duties.

## **Learning Approach**

In order to give added value, we provide students with various learning approaches such as lecturing, discussion, case study, guest lecturer, on the job training, and field visit.

## **Teaching Staff**

Since our study program combines theoretical and practitioner approach, therefore our teaching staffs consist of education expertise and competent practitioner in Tourism Marketing Management.

## **Structure of Curriculum**

The curriculum of MP2 Program consists of 144 credit hours distributed in:

### **A. Program Expertise Course**

Computer Application, English for Tourism, Mandarin for Tourism, Japanese for Tourism, Introduction to Economics, Tourism Product and Structure, Ecology, Computer Application, Geography for Tourism, Sociology and Anthropology for Tourism, Consumer Product and Behavior, Tourism Human Resource Management, Finance Management, Tourism Business Ethics and Law, Statistics for Tourism, Research Methodology for Tourism, Management Information System for Tourism, Integrated Marketing Communication, Public Relation, Service Marketing Management, Event Management, Brand Management, International Tourism, Relationship Marketing and Networking, Global Tourism Marketing Management, Theses.

### **B. Expansion Course**

Hotel Management, Food and Beverage Management, *Tourism Destination Management*, Sport Tourism Management, Hotel Marketing Management, Food and Beverage Marketing Management, *Tourism Destination Marketing Management*, Sport Tourism Marketing Management.

C. **Additional Skill Course**

*Art Education*, Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Management, Introduction to Business.

D. **Basic Academic Course**

Tourism Management, Tourism Marketing Management.

E. **Academic Skill Course**

Tourism Marketing Research, Tourism Marketing Strategy, Tourism Strategic Management, Tourism Marketing Seminar.

F. **Academic Practice Course**

Academic Practice Program (On The Job Training)

There are actually two subjects that contains local content, the art education and marketing tourism destination.

1. Art education, generally classified into the general program. It means that not every study program has to impose this subject to its curriculum. However, as a hospitality and tourism study program, art is a part of tourism products that should be developed. So that, the subject is imposed in the curriculum. The art education focus on developing students to have a good appreciation on Indonesian art and culture that can be seen in the painting, sculpture, music, folksong, traditional dances, drama and traditional play, etc. Moreover, they are also expected to be able to give the interpretation about the Indonesian art and culture. This knowledge is very useful to give the students understanding of traditional norms, wisdom and values.
2. Tourism Destination Marketing Management, after following this course students are expected to understand the tourism destination marketing concept and practices that is based on the understanding of the concept of marketing places, travel industry marketing, and tourists' attractions marketing. This course discusses the definition and development of basic concept of destinations and the supporting industry within the tourists destinations, mainly travel industry and tourists's attractions; marketing places strategy; the role of stakeholders in organizing destination marketing; marketing strategy and its best practices in travel business and tourist's attraction business. The students should understand and able to identify components of destination which comprises of attractions, amenities, activities, accessibility, ancillary services, and available packages. They are also expected to communicate or to market the destination to public. They need to have deep understanding on the destination, especially destination in the surrounding area and able to promote the destinations to public. The students in this class have to learn guiding technique. To be a guide, students do not only have to be able to communicate well to tourists, they need to have ability to look for information of detail information of places that they visit. Tourists seek detail information about places, so they need a tourists guide that really understand the places that they visit.

Besides lectures at the class they students are also taken to a field trip. On the first phase, the students had a field trip at the Bandung and its surrounding. The trip emphasized on the Bandung old city, the heritage area. This was intended to

give students knowledge about the history of Bandung city and how the common things actually have historical and unique value. So, if they met visitors who come to Bandung, they could give information about the history and the present condition of the city. The second phase, students' field trip is enlarged to greater area in West Java, such as Tasikmalaya, Garut, Sukabumi, or Pangandaran. The third phase, the field trip is implemented to other province such as central Java or Jogjakarta, and the final phase the field trip is done outside Java island, such as Bali. By visiting places those places, students are expected to understand the culture, attractions, tourist activities, accessibility, amenities, available packages, and ancillary services. The understanding of these factors will also strengthen the local content because students will understand information about the region comprehensively.

## Conclusion

Imposing local content in higher education curriculum is not only useful for giving the students ability to know the local cultures. In hospitality and tourism school, the local content also have influence to increase student's competence. By learning local content subjects, students are expected to understand the culture, local attractions, tourist activities, accessibility, amenities, available packages, and ancillary services. The understanding of these factors will also strengthen the local identity for students because they will understand their own region comprehensively and be able to communicate these things to tourists.

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