A BIG PUSH TO
WORLD-CLASS TOURISM:
Strategic Analysis & Opportunities

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An Analysis of Tourist Destination In Ambon

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyse the development of the tourism industry in Maluku, focusing on tourist destinations in the city of Ambon. In general, Maluku province is blessed with natural charm, especially the beautiful beaches that make Maluku is famous with maritime tourist attraction. With the spread of many beautiful beach destinations, it should have made tourism industry in Ambon, the capital of Maluku blossom, but on the contrary, this sector is still not developed optimally. The researcher conducts this conceptual research to analyse the factors that influence the development of the tourism sector. Data obtained from secondary references along with personal experiences of the researcher are used to make the analysis. The results is tourism sector in Ambon will be more developed when local government able to develop and implement a comprehensive tourism strategy with the involvement of local residents.

Keywords: Tourism, Industry, Strategy, Maluku.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Maluku is one of the provinces in Indonesia which is the province that has archipelago characteristic, often called as a thousand islands province. Maluku mainland amounted to only 7.6% of the total extent, so that means more than 90% consists of sea. In total, Maluku has 1,340 islands. One of the advantages of the region that has plenty of coastal and seaside are having many beaches. With so many beaches, this region has a huge potential in becoming a tourist destination and of course a good management for tourism development is also needed (budiharsono, 2005).

The beauty of the beach is indeed one of the attractions for tourists in visiting these places, both domestic and foreign. Many activities can be done on the beach, for example swimming, boating, snorkelling, extreme beach sports or just relaxing and enjoying the beauty of nature. All these things are supposed to be able to make Maluku as one of the famous beach resort icons, not only in Indonesia but also in the eyes of the world. It is known that the number of
tourists visiting Maluku increased from year to year (especially after the periods of conflict a few years ago). However, when compared with other regions in Indonesia, the number of tourists is still very small. For the combined region of Maluku and some provinces that are located in the eastern part, the number of foreign tourists visiting is only 0.25%. This figure is certainly very small and quite surprising considering the amount of potential it has (Siamiloy, et al, 2015).

For the local tourist visit, although the difference is not as big as the number of foreign visit, it still shows quite a big gap. Quoted from the statement of Myra P. Gunawan as tourism analysts and founder of the Institute for Tourism Studies ITB, majority of domestic tourist visits are targeting Java and Sumatra as their destination. From her research, local tourists in Indonesia reached 255 million people and 70% of them visit Java Island (Antaranews, 2015). This is because of the natural resources potential is not complemented with qualified human resources to manage it. Differences in general development and human resources as well as facilities and infrastructures between cities in Java and other areas in Indonesia are still unbalanced. This is the reason that may cause the tourist destination choices are still focused on Java Island.

Ambon as the capital of Maluku province has the beauty of natural resources and certainly wants to clean up to tackle this problem. The potential itself coming from the natural beauty dominated with beaches, and can certainly can become a tourism icon to promote the tourism industry in Ambon. For these reasons, Ambon Mayor Richard Louhanapessy launched "Mangente Ambon" program (Visiting Ambon) in 2015. The purpose of this program is to introduce Maluku especially Ambon as a leading tourist destination in Indonesia. In this program, many activities are prepared by the government and supported by the tourism department from local, national and international scale. Indeed, to make Ambon as a tourist destination is not easy, it takes the action from all relevant stakeholders as well as good facilities. Of course lots of preparation must be done in order to achieve this purpose. This was said by the Head of Ambon Tourism and Culture, Henry Sopacua (Bisniswisata, 2015).

One of the methods that can be used by the governments to gain revenues is by developing the tourism sector. This is supported by the government regulations of autonomy, which is how the region can independently develop strategies that fit their own potential. So the implementation of regional autonomy by Ambon government is to develop the tourism
sector, especially the marine tourism. By making marine tourism as a tourism icon, Ambon city government can also improve the economic level of the local community. Good tourism can also impact well on employment and the increasing of people's income in general.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of tourism has been suggested by many experts and can be traced from long time ago. One of tourism definitions by Mathieson and Wall (1982) is a temporary movement by humans from the origin area of their home or work to a new place for a particular purpose. Types of tourism, according to Soekadijo (2000), are divided into several types. Each type can be identified based on its origin, which are domestic and international; its size, which are large and small; its characteristic, which are individual and group; as well as the transportation used. Moreover, the tourist destination can be divided into nature tourism, culture tourism, ecotourism, and nautical tourism.

The tourist destination should have a good image in the mind of consumers. Destination image is a perception that is associated with a specific place (Day et al, 2012). Destination image is also associated with the image that was deliberately constructed and introduced to be known in the society (Pike, 2009). For prospective tourists, image of a place, in this case the tourist destination can be obtained from several different sources. Naturally, the archipelago region has the image of beautiful beaches, different from the image of the mountain side. It can be associated with the geography and the information obtained from the mass media or any other sources including personal experiences from visiting the place or stories told directly by others.

In marketing a tourist destination, marketers, in this case the local government can choose the suitable approaches to improve the natural image of place itself. Appropriate marketing strategy through media channels and suitable promotion tool can create a certain perception in the mind of the tourists. This perception is difficult to create because basically it is hard to change the mindset of men. The easiest thing to do is to strengthen the positive image of what already existed before compared to change what already have been a negative image in the mind of tourists (Ries and Trout, 1982 at Kong, W. H., et al, 2015). After a positive image has been formed and tourists have visited the place and were satisfied, then automatically a positive impression from the image will be strengthened. Strengthening the image can have
an impact on the repetition of the same activities which is re-visiting these places again and sharing the positive information to others.

In the technology era like now, when the use of the internet has drastically changed how the information being shared all over the world, marketers can use the internet to advertise the tourist destination (Hudson and Ritchie, 2009). One of the media that can be used is websites (Moura et al, 2015). Information obtained at the time of potential tourists accessed the websites can help them to visualize objects that are being displayed. Other than photos and locations, the information provided can also be in the form of easy reservation and available facilities. In addition, with the rapid changes, the trend can be shifted in a matter of years or months so that marketers should also be quick in adapting to it, such as trends in the tourism sector including the cultural tourism, health, and housing (Smith, 2007).

Other than trend, one of the factors that determine the number of tourists is the characteristic of the tourist itself. Therefore, marketers should look into the character of the current consumer. Here are some things that must be considered by marketers related to the character of tourist: (1) looking for something authentic, real experience, (2) more flexible and demand better quality and are willing to spend more money, (3) interested to participate in the local culture, (4) want to experience a variety of cultural objects, not just focusing on one particular type, (5) demographic changes in tourists’ age and should be able to serve all different age levels, (6) easily stressed, so looking for tourist destination which offer relief and comfort, (7) using technology in searching for information and reservation, and (8) take into account health and safety aspects (Pirnar and Icoz, 2010).

In making a tourism development plan, not only just relying on the government as the party who made it but it requires the support and participation of all relevant parties or the so-called stakeholders. According to Bryson and Crosby (1992), stakeholders are all parties whether individuals, groups or organizations having interests in a particular issue. In the context of tourism as discussed in this research, stakeholders are the local governments, competitors, employees, residents close by, tourists, and any interested group organizations (Freeman, 1984). The success of a tourist destination is the result of good and mutually benefited cooperation from all relevant parties, in this case, the stakeholders. Therefore, a good planning to market a tourist destination should include looking closely the interests of each
party so that each party can fully contribute and do not harm each other (Byrd et al, 2009). It is also in line with the statement of Kemp et al (2011), that a proper marketing strategy of a city or region needs the cooperation from all relevant stakeholders, namely: the government, local businesses and the surrounding communities. All these components must work together so that a good strategy can be made and implemented.

Related to the tourism development plan, the proper planning of a tourist destination is absolutely necessary that will require the participation of all relevant stakeholders (Gunn and Var, 2002). With a solid, comprehensive, long term orientated and detail plan, then all the elements concerned will have the same vision and understand each of their duties and responsibilities in order to achieve the desired goals together. In making a proper and integrated tourism industry planning, many things need to be considered, one of which is the current conditions and general economic state. With proper consideration, the tourism sector can make a positive contribution to the economy and increase the GDP (Ali and Mohsin, 2008).

A good marketing strategy should take into account the willingness of target consumers. So, marketers should need to know first with certainty the taste and desire of consumers before making an appropriate plan. In this case, the execution or implementation of marketing strategies in the tourism sector can use a variety of methods and techniques that can be combined (Popadopolous, 1989). In addition, a good marketing strategy should also be flexible, not rigid. This is to allow changes to be made to adjust to the current conditions. If the plans did not allow for adaptation, then there is a possibility of missed opportunity because the dynamic aspects of society are not considered. Formulating the right goals is also absolutely necessary to create a focused and guided marketing strategy. Few things that must be considered in formulating goals are (1) must determine the rate of sales growth in a particular period, (2) must determine the increasing percentage of profits at a particular period, (3) must reach the amount of a certain market share in a period, and (4) must prepare the business risk by diversifying products (Holloway and Robinson, 1995).

**DISCUSSION**

**Tourism Condition in Ambon**
As has been described in the background, tourists who spend their vacation in Ambon or other eastern region of Indonesia are not coming from abroad or from a far area. The majority of tourists are tourists who come from the area close by. The cause of this can be seen from several factors. The first is the geographic location. Ambon is located in the eastern part of Indonesia which means that there is not much transport crossing happening there. Ambon is not the center of government or trade in Indonesia, so considering distance to other important city in Indonesia or abroad, the choices of transportation and frequency to go there are very limited. The most suitable transport selection as the choice for tourists to visit Ambon is by plane. However, the frequency of flights as well as the selection of the city (airport) connected directly to the Pattimura airport is still limited. Until today, the city connected directly to Ambon is just Jakarta, Surabaya and Makassar. This is certainly making tourists who want to visit Ambon must spend quite a lot of time and expense. It often happens, the costs to fly overseas, for example to Singapore, is cheaper than flying to Ambon. As for foreign tourists, the route to be traversed to get to Ambon will be even further. This is certainly one factor that makes tourists reluctant to go to Ambon.

Archipelago areas are blessed with natural beauty of lovely beach, including at Ambon. The majority of this fact was known by the general public, but the image of Ambon as a city that has a variety of beautiful beaches as tourist destinations is not well communicated. From small survey conducted by the researcher to the 20 respondents on beach which is known in Indonesia, the majority of respondents answered Kuta beach in Bali and several answered Losari beach in Makassar. When asked about the nautical tourism in Ambon, none of the respondents could give an answer. This proves that the image and awareness of the existence of tourist destination in Ambon is still very low. Tourism promotion that has been done so far may be less optimal that the Ambon image as a city that has a variety of beautiful marine tourism is not delivered.

In addition, a few years ago Maluku had a big conflict, a lot of people died, as well as many disadvantages that made this region slumped, both in economy, politics and security. Although currently Ambon condition has improved and returned to normal, but the common view from people to their security is still questionable. This is from the author's own personal experience. On several occasions talking with relatives, knowing that the author comes from
Ambon, they asked about the riots that took place almost two decades ago. This proves the negative image of the security in Ambon still strongly embedded in society.

The tourism industry is a labor-intensive based sector. Beauty of the tourist destination is not the only thing to make it famous. It requires the cooperation of human resources who interact with tourists. Skills and abilities of personnel who operate and interact directly with tourists are still lacking, for example regarding the foreign language skills. Not a lot of tourist destination’s personnel or even Ambon citizens can speak foreign languages well so it will be difficult for the foreign tourists visiting there.

Other things related to the facilities available at the resorts. For example, the availability of parking, restroom, locker room, trash bin, restaurant and shop at some of the tourist destinations are still inadequate. The number of personnel on duty as well is still not enough to conduct surveillance and hygiene. Of course, the cleanliness of the tourist destination is not only the responsibility of the cleaning personnel on the resort but visitors as well as the surrounding community. The last thing that the authors think is quite important is in terms of mobile phone communication network. Undeniably, mobile phones have become vital objects and primary needs of man today. The need to connect with others and cyberspace has become something that must be provided. But in some tourist destinations, good network is not available, though there are several network providers for mobile phones but the network signal is not well in some areas.

To make Ambon as a tourist destination not only in Indonesia but also abroad, the local government has launched “Mangente Ambon” program, or visiting Ambon. The program is a movement from the government and the people of Ambon to collect all the potential inside and outside Ambon (Maluku) to establish and restore the image of Ambon as a city that is safe, comfortable, beautiful and harmonious. In general, this movement is also developing Ambon city tourism through various tourist events, arts and culture in local, national and even international scale. Various activities undertaken can impact on the development of tourism, culinary and industry that could increase local revenue. From the data of the Department of Ambon Tourism per September 2015, the number of tourists visiting is still dominated by Indonesian tourists which is 8,000 people, while the foreign tourists as many as 3,000 people. But with so many programs that are still to be done, it can be predicted that the amount of visitors will increase.
"Mangente Ambon" program is not only focusing on Indonesian territory, but also targeting overseas like Australia, United States and the Netherlands which are the foreign tourists who often visiting Ambon. During this time, quite a lot of foreign tourists visit Ambon via cruise ship stopover such as Albatros cruise ship with Germany flag carrying 830 tourists in 2015. During the visit, the foreign tourists who came from various countries were invited to visit some tourist attractions such as clove plantation in Suli, the sago (Maluku traditional food) burning process, the process of refining sopi (traditional drink), the Australia World War II commonwealth garden, Hunimua beach, Waiselaka fish pond, Liang beach, Natsepa beach and Christina Tiahahu statue located on top of a hill to see the view of Ambon bay.

Ambon vision as tourist destination 2016 has been declared by the local tourism department. To achieve this vision, there are three missions that must be achieved: (1) Ambon city as potential tourist destination for tourism development, (2) developing and promoting tourism with environmental, cultural, historical and natural charm, and (3) developing society participation and good and integrated planning. While the majority of attractions in Ambon is marine tourism, but in accordance with the mission launched, eco-tourism, cultural and historical tourism should also be considered. Here are some tourist destinations in Ambon referenced by the local tourism department to be developed.

1. Amahusu Beach.
   This beach is located in Nusaniwe district. Access to the beach is easy because it is close to the downtown and has good quality land transportation. The appeal of this beach is the view of Leihitu bay and the availability of hotel and restaurant facilities that are sufficient. Every year this beach becomes the end point of the Darwin-Ambon regatta.

2. Batu Capeu Beach
   Located in Ahamusu, close to Siwa Lima museum. The appeal of this beach is it is located on the Portuguese reversed hat-shaped (Capeu) stone and the panoramic sunset view of Alang sea.

3. Felawatu Beach
   This beach has quiet, relaxed atmosphere, away from the noise and loudness of the city, it has the coolness because it merges with the hills. The beach is often used as a place of meetings, seminar, and discussions. In this beach, visitors can swim and also fishing.
4. Leilesa Beach, Namalatu Beach, and Santai Beach
The trio represents the unity of the nearby beaches in Latuhalat. These beaches are suitable for swimming, sunbathing and water sports. The advantage of these beaches is white sand and rocks that are rarely found in Ambon. In Santai Beach, the tourists can also rent snorkelling equipment to enjoy the underwater life.

5. Lawena Beach
Located in Hutumuri. This beach is sandy and rocky and there are lots of starfish and little shells. When the sea receded, tourists can collect shells. At this location, at the month of March to December, black tattoo hard skin fish called "akaru" often appeared. This fish appeared in large quantities and fishermen caught it using grated coconut bait.

6. Waseirisa Beach
This attraction is located in Leahari. The beach is rich with mangrove forest. Visitors can relax in the afternoon or evening while swimming and fishing.

7. Natsepa Beach
It is the most famous beach in Ambon. What makes this object is visited often are the vast stretches of white sand and the shallow and not quite wavy sea made it suitable for swimming. In addition, it also sold fruit salad (rujak) which is the typical food that is always available at beach resort.

8. Goa Liang Ekang
This nature tourist destination is located in Urimesing. Ekang is a cave formed in areas of corals and during World War II, the cave was used by the Japanese army for the military activities.

9. Siwa Lima Museum
This museum has a collection of historical heritage objects, for example traditional houses and traditional clothing of Maluku. Visitors can gain knowledge about the lives of the people of Maluku in the past.

10. Doland Monument and the Tomb of Australia.
Both places are the location of the battle and funeral of Australian soldiers during the war against Japan. Every year in April, the world war veterans and families from Australia came to visit these places.

11. Statue of Christina Marta Tiahahu
This monument tells a story of a young girl who fought against the Dutch with his father in 1817. She led the Nusalaut people together with Pattimura to liberate Ambon
from the pressures of colonialism. Here, tourists can enjoy the view of Ambon bay, especially at dusk.

12. Pattimura Park and World Peace Gong

Located in downtown Ambon. This monument was built to commemorate the service of Pattimura struggle who is a national hero. This place is the site of exercising and hosting art festivals in national and international level. World Peace Gong is in the same location as Pattimura Park, was inaugurated at November 25th 2009 by the President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to commemorate the world peace day.

Development of Tourism Industry in Ambon

As has been described previously, an integrated planning of tourism is an important element in tourism marketing strategy. Therefore, after planning, the next step is the application in the marketing and promotion of tourism. A good strategy is a strategy that can adapt to environmental changes. In this case, the development of the strategy is divided into two, short-term and long-term. The short term regarding the parties directly impacted the existence of tourist destination, such as hotels, travel agencies, tourism department and local communities. As for the long term, it is regarding the investment and capital flows in the future for the development of existing tourist destination or the discovery of new tourist destination. Funds must be prepared by the government for the infrastructure construction and the availability of services related to the tourism industry. Both these things are equally important to consider for the survival of the tourism industry in a sustainable manner.

The next step is to offer a complete tourism package for the tourist destination. While the majority of attractions in Ambon are marine tourism, the elements of culture, history and sport can be included in the object. For example, when a certain big day like the celebration of national holiday or custom happens, the beach as an attraction place can hold a week of art with cultural performance with traditional dances, traditional culinary fair or sports competitions. It has indeed been done, but only sporadic, in small-scale, not well-thought and less socialized to people, especially to the overseas tourists. Thus, the tourists visiting the beach will get a different fully experience in enjoying nature and culture in Ambon. To accomplish this, the master plan for tourism development should be made by local authorities and cooperate with travel agencies to market and promote Ambon.
One important element in the development of tourist destination is cooperation with the local community. The government should consistently give directions to local residents, the benefit to be received by the society when the tourism industry in Ambon improved. It also relates to the economic side of people’s revenue and the increase in GDP. Therefore, Ambon hospitality should be shown to tourists, for local, national or foreign tourists. Communities around the tourist destination should welcome the tourists with open arms and treat them with kindness and respect. In addition, contributions are also needed to maintain cleanliness and the safety in the tourist destination. Do not let the cleanliness of the place to be the responsibility of the personnel working at the tourist destination. The local community also should feel the shared ownership and take care of the place. Thus, tourist visits will be more meaningful when they can enjoy the beauty of Ambon tourism in peace and comfort.

Targeted marketing strategy is absolutely necessary to introduce Ambon as a famous marine tourism icon in Indonesia. Not only to introduce, it is also to show that the condition in Ambon has been conducive and safe to visit. Undeniably, the effects conflict in Ambon in 1999 still has bitter memories, not only for people of Ambon that has been affected, but also for other people who have heard of it. Until now, the tourists visiting Ambon in particular and Maluku in general have not been able to match the number of visits before the conflict. This means the public view outside Ambon has not fully recovered and they are not quite believe that the condition in Ambon has returned to normal and safe to visit. Therefore, the governments and local communities still have homework to show that Ambon is ready to be a visiting place that offers security and comfort. Ambon Mangente program that recommended by the government is very good to solve this problem. Similar programs should be continually made to obtain the expected results. The scale of the program should also be added and extended and by following international tourism fair to attract foreign tourists.

Introducing Ambon culture does not only take place when the tourists visit and enjoy the place. Other than just memories, it would be better if tourists bring back souvenirs or gifs to their home country. This will spread the information of Ambon to a broader scale. Indeed, there is now a few souvenir shops in downtown Ambon that sells food and Ambon souvenirs such as eucalyptus oil, smoked fish and t-shirts emblazoned with writing or tourist destination picture, but this information is not well-thought and still sporadic. It would be better if at the time of entering Ambon or even before the tourists have been to Ambon, they have been
informed about this. Also, the souvenir shops centre is located in the downtown, it would be better if in the tourist destination, it is also provided with souvenirs shops which is made by the government in collaboration with the local community small enterprises that will benefit all

Convenience provided by the internet is also felt in the tourism sector. Currently, information about tourist destination can be obtained with very easy way, anywhere, anytime, in a matter of seconds. Before, if the tourists wanted to know about the place, then they must use the help of a travel agent to get it, but not anymore, they can get more information than just from a brochure which is a method that is not currently effective and efficient. Now, through the Internet, tourists can find tourist attraction, location, photos, facilities, comments, reservations, ticket purchases, hotels and other facilities that can be easily done. Therefore, the author strongly recommends governments and local tourism department to provide a website about tourism in Ambon city that is more interesting, attractive and update from that what currently exists. Actually, tourism website benchmarking can easily be done according to a study done by Mura (2015), that Indonesia's tourism website is excellent, providing important and detailed information, clear location, and interesting photo. Indonesia’s website is even more superior compared to the other Asean countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam. Therefore, if the local government and tourism department related could improve the existing website then that is one step forward in the promotion of Ambon tourism.

Admittedly, the government and local department have limitations both in capital and human resources. Therefore, as has been presented by the writer previously, a careful and integrated planning involving many parties must be done. To overcome these limitations, it would be better for private parties to be engaged to manage the tourist area. Of course, the selection of the private partner should be through good judgment and a clear commitment to cooperation agreements and mutual benefit in order to prevent problems that might occur. This cooperation will enable the government and relevant department to focus on the more important task that cannot be left to the private sector, while the management of tourist areas could be given to another party who is more qualified to undertake these duties.

In addition to the management of tourist areas, the government can also seek the participation of experts and consultants in the tourism field, for example a particular university help to test
certain projects. If the tests carried out successfully fine, then it can be continued by the
government to be developed or asked the private sector to run it. This could reduce the
burden of the government and using the suitable human resources to perform testing
activities.

Documenting the detail is also required in a good strategy. This is related to the target and the
results obtained for evaluation and planning of the next revision. Therefore, at each tourist
destination, the personnel in charge must perform good and complete administrative tasks.
This may seem trivial, but it has an important role.

CONCLUSION

Integrated tourism master plan that involves all relevant stakeholders is absolutely necessary
to introduce Ambon as tourist destination icon that is worth visiting. Local government and
relevant department have done their best through marketing strategies and promotions to
restore the prestige of Ambon as a safe place to visit but the process carried out should not be
stopped and must be continued to sustain. Excellent program by combining beach resort with
cultural element can be done to offer a unique and full experience for the tourists by not
forgetting the hallmark of Ambon. Residents and local communities should also be involved
to maintain order, cleanliness and security of the tourist area. The hospitality of the people of
Ambon in welcoming tourists who visit must be shown because the presence of tourists will
also bring economical benefit for Ambon and the people there. Improvement and
development of the infrastructure as well as adequate facilities should also be provided. This
aims to provide an enjoyable experience for the tourists who come. In addition, the use of the
internet can be used to promote Ambon to a broader scale by making the tourism website
more attractive and up to date. In addition, cooperation with the private sector could also be
considered by the government to help managing and testing the tourism development. If the
proposal given can be implemented and applied properly, the authors believe the potential of
tourism in Ambon can make it as a famous tourist destination icon not only in Indonesia but
also internationally.

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