

The role of tour manager in assessing and planning travel opportunities in Covid-19 new normal era for the locals

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**Journal of Tourism,
Culinary, and
Entrepreneurship**

e-ISSN:
2776-0928

Publisher:
School of Tourism,
Universitas Ciputra Surabaya,
Indonesia

Keywords:
*Tour Manager
Tourism Strategic Plan
Tourism Opportunities
Local Community*

ABSTRACT

Excellent and quality resources are the key to tourism success. The strategic tourism plan was built to maintain Indonesian tourism, especially in travel amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study is to see how Tour Managers develop new travel strategic plans by taking advantage of potential opportunities for local communities as their partners. This qualitative research uses a descriptive approach in describing the research problems above and answers three research questions: (1) How significant is the role of the Tour Manager in planning a trip? (2) What are the steps in planning a tourist trip? (3) What potential opportunities are the benefits that can be developed. The study results explain the work of the Tour Manager with standard operational procedures according to their role. The tour manager develops special interest tour packages to involve local communities as hosts and bring in domestic tourists in the current new normal era through the followed work steps. The implemented strategic plan engages the community in promoting regional tourism and getting benefits from tourism activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The utilization of tourism for local communities is a strategic direction of the government. That is why all tourism activities are expected to be sustainable, one of which is the field of travel which plays an essential role in the economy (Holland & Leslie, 2018). The ideal condition for tourism in Indonesia is that responsible tourists through responsible tour operators will produce sustainable tourism and environmental products and services (Hartono, 2018; Pantelescu et al., 2019) before the Covid-19 pandemic. The use of tourism by the private sector can provide positive economic and social benefits for local communities in improving their living standards (Hasan & Siddique, 2016).

In previous research, Bunghez (2020) explained that a strategy was needed to increase sales of tourism products in tourist destinations. With support from the government and local tourist destinations, the popularity of the goal due to promotion is formed (Holland & Leslie, 2018). And this is an opportunity that becomes a potential for tourism development. Tour operators bring in tourists and need a tactical sales strategy to increase tourist arrivals. The Tour Manager is assigned with planning potential opportunities for the local community. With the competencies possessed, namely creating sustainable and competitive tourism products and services, Tour Managers can contribute his or her competencies to leverage Indonesian tourism, especially in this new normal era, tourism products with innovation and creativity are needed to accelerate and improve production to survive in the current new normal era.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a new challenge with all the limitations and travel rules in Indonesia (Mitasari et al., 2022). However, the economy must continue to move forward to meet demand. The most important thing at this time is the need for a strategic plan in the suitable tour from a Tour Manager to build tourism products, develop destinations to generate economic benefits for their business, and at the same time empower local communities. This is where the competence of a Tour Manager is needed, how to overcome problems that arise without causing new problems. The benefit of this research is to get the tour manager's strategic plan work steps in developing tourism products.

From the problems above, the research questions are as follows: (1) How significant is the role of the Tour Manager in planning a tour? (2) What are the steps in planning a tourist trip? (3) What potential opportunities are the benefits that can be developed. The goal is that later the Tour Manager as a competent human resource will be able to assess the opportunities and strategic potential of tourism travel and the general benefits of tourism development for local communities. This is intended for the community itself and decides which of their potential can be involved in tourism activities.

The role of the community in tourism development is one of the factors supporting the smooth development of a tourist destination. If private sectors target tourist destinations, then

the opportunities and potential for tourism can be targeted as long as the community can accept and want to cooperate. Therefore, appropriate planning strategies are needed so that people can experience the sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits of tourism.

Tour Operation

Tour Manager at level VI in the field of tour operation is an upgrade from the position of Senior Tour Guide; Tour Leaders; Marketing Manager; and others who are responsible for ensuring travel arrangements for groups of vacationers smooth and enjoyable. The Tour Manager accompanies passengers throughout their tour, providing them with detailed information such as arrival and departure times and places of interest (SS-OKUPASI-PAR-OPTR, 2015). Concerning their work in the field, ensuring the task of tour guides as sources of information, ambassadors, and interpreters of cultural knowledge are increasingly playing an essential role in creating tourist experiences. (Latkova et al., 2017). Through tour guides, Tour Managers know visiting tourists' needs, interests, and motivations based on their nationality, culture, and personal characteristics.

Competence is an attribute to attach a quality and superior Tour Manager (Sudarmanto, 2005), a combination of abilities, knowledge, and work attitudes used as a guide in carrying out job responsibilities carried out by employees in a company at work. For Tour Operators, tourist mobility is a critical concentration, and tourism services accompany the way to make it happen. Therefore, a strategic plan is needed in developing tourists' travel activities. Strategies are required in order to organize tourism products and services be of high quality and attractively packaged. So it is an important process strategy for tour operators, Tour Managers are the right workforce to make it happen. Every plan must follow the vision and mission of the community and policies to realize the vision and mission (Beeton, 2006).

2. METHODOLOGY

Research with a qualitative approach was carried out to understand the role of the Tour Manager in the field of tour operations in developing travel opportunities for local people in tourist destinations. Given the complexity and novelty of this field, this methodology is based on the analysis of a series of case studies, which will include: what is the role of the Tour Manager in the strategic planning of tourist trips; What are the steps like; What opportunities and potential are the benefits that can be developed. The first part of this research is primarily based on literature research, secondary data analysis, review of available online materials, related information, and surveys on selected tourist attractions (Graf & Popescu, 2016). In the second part, collecting data and describing the work steps to become an SOP as a strategic travel plan, we also include various qualitative techniques such as online observation methods interviews with the relevant Tour Managers. The descriptive method is used to explore and describe the results of the first and second parts of the study (Gaffar et al., 2011).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tour Manager Profile

The results of this study used two Tour Managers as respondents located in the city of Bandung to answer research questions. According to their background, they have the same profession, namely a BNSP Certified Tour Leader from ITLA who has more than ten years of experience. They are Mr. Egar Anugrah from the Bandung Good Guide and Mr. Alexandrie (Alecs) from Bansel 4WD Cross Country & Fun Off-road in South Bandung. Because primary competence is in leading tourist trips and other skills that have been carried on good mixing hobby, they are able to channel skills or transfer skills to become a Tour Manager in a tour operator so that they are able to survive this pandemic period.

Tabel 1. Tour Manager Profile

Description	Bandung Good Guide	BANSEL 4WD
Background Education	Tourism	Psychology
Previous Professions	Tour Leader Tour Operator	Tour Leader Lectured, Tour Operator Coffee Farmer
Current Profession	Tour Operator Event Organizer	Lecturer, ASPPI Organization Tour Operator
Hobbies	Cycling sports	Offroad - 4WD
Development motivation	Improving the quality of life Preserving local cultural heritage	Environmental conservation and improving the quality of life
Tourist's scope	Domestic and Inbound	Domestic and Inbound
Targets	WFH People, Corporation, students	Corporation, youth
Products	Virtual Tour, Cycling Tour, Walking Tour Taxi Tour	Offroad Tour Coffee

The first question is answered through an online interview; armed with education and work competence, a Tour Manager plays a significant role in tourism planning. Positions at level VI in the field of tour operations are the highest positions in position qualification. The Tour Manager is responsible for ensuring that travel arrangements for groups of holiday participants run smoothly and pleasantly. In addition, the responsibility towards the company is also enormous cause a Tour Manager will ensure that the company will develop or not; it all depends on the effort and willingness to develop and advance it.

The Role of Tour Manager

In this new normal era, many restrictions on crowd activities and the implementation of health procedures should be considered. Thus, firstly, it is necessary to know the various possibilities and impacts associated with tourism development in local communities. In terms of being a potential opportunity planner for the local community, the Tour Manager needs to recognize this ability because this can be an independent assessment. Secondly, the ability to identify and analyze the effects of tourism development proposals from local communities. These two things need to be considered, and their abilities honed so that they can be sustainable when developing tourism for the community.

To answer the second question, the steps for competency-based work in the Tourism

Sector SKKNI for the Travel Agency sub-sector Number 238 of 2004, which the Tour Manager prepared in helping to develop tourism for local communities, are as follows:

a. Seeking information about potential opportunities in the tourism sector

The first thing to do is seek information related to tourism potential. After involving the community to plan tourism opportunities, data must be obtained to strengthen the strategic plan. The information referred to is the source, types of relevant details information received from the public. Types of information include community organizations, visitor profiles, population attitudes, vision and mission, product inventory, marketing, analysis and scope of strategic plans, impacts, and conditions after tourism activities (Beeton, 2006). With accurate information, the Tour Manager and his team can determine which ones have the potential to become tourism opportunities so that they can be followed up by making strategic plans.

Starting from a cycling hobby, BGG often helps in handling tours for foreign or inbound tourists for cultural heritage in the city of Bandung also during the pandemic where the increase in bicycle activity increased by thirty percent. Hence, they began to develop products from gathering clients by forming a research team. For them, conducting research requires a great effort and is not easy, even in their area. However, it has resulted in the formation of attractive and selling routes. There are two types of routes developed, namely routes that represent the city of Bandung as a whole (thematic: Dutch Era 1920s, contemporary and exceptional tailor-made route) which are made according to the needs of tourists.

BGG's main product is to have more meaningful, valuable, and sustainable products. Therefore, the packaging of tourism products and services in the form of tour packages was created in the form of walking tours, cycling tours, and Virtual Tours. Everything is packed with a focus on adventure and experience. Six pillars need to be emphasized in packaging BGG-style tourism products, namely: Community based tourism, local community support, SMEs support, cultural and culinary values, zero waste management. Historical adventure. The availability of information and the power of interpretation in storytelling are strengths to convey information and provide experiences for tourists. Storytelling is used to build a virtual

as a Tour Leader, the owner developed a tourism product, namely an off-road tour in the coffee plantation area. Armed with sixteen cars and twenty-one crew units, the tour package product was made and is already running through four conditioned villages. Off-road routes are limited by prioritizing safety and environmental conservation aspects.

This has been done since I was a coffee farmer, but looking for information has not become a top priority. That also happened when developing off-road routes. Armed with his hobbies and knowledge of off-roading, eighteen have been developed, and currently, there are six routes out of a total of eighteen ways of their main products. For him, this route is the safest if you want to go on a tourist trip that drains your adrenaline. And tourism products and services that are packaged in off-road tour packages in south Bandung already have their market with various benefits that have the community has felt the results of interviews with the two; it can be concluded that initial information is very imported essential truth; in addition to being information for the development of storytelling interpretations, it is also a consideration when determining potential opportunities for local communities. The information in question is a clear source of information, particular types of particularization, and information from the public to make decisions. Tourist travel plays an important role the vital development (Holland & Leslie, 2018), namely developing tourism products and services in the form of adventure thematic tour packages. Potential opportunities can be created into strategic plans that can be followed up with the community, and everything will be done by the community active so that it can be helpful for them.

b. Analyze helpful relevant to tourism in the community

Not always, when making a strategic plan for a tourist trip will run perfectly. These potential opportunities may have challenges and obstacles even from unexpected co-workers. Potential challenges or relevant issues may include expectations of tourists and industry regarding the tourism products and services provided, social and economic impacts on local communities, training needs, and potential conflicts during the course of the tour. The results

of the analysis of possible matches that matches the community in the context of tourism activities that were met by the same resource person between the two resource persons are as follows: first, the openness of the community when receiving tourists; second, misunderstanding of information during tour preparation; third, the location of the tourist route is not a tourist area.

Another problem that arises is the lack of community hospitality learning when first receiving tourists, so the team needs to take the time to carry out socialization and education to hospitality training to shape behavior to local communities so that they can be more open and accept tourists in a friendly and polite manner. This is necessary in order to know the gaps that occur when carrying out tourism activities so as to reduce the negative impacts that arise.

c. Communicate and coordinate with related parties

Strategic plans can be implemented properly if there correctly two-way coordination and communication. In this case, the form of coordination and communication is one way to stay in touch to build and maintain with interested parties. First, building and maintaining relationships with parties other than the community; what is meant here is communicating with the district and other tourism operators who can help strategically plan opportunities for tourism products and services to be made. For the Bandung Good Guide, it is the actual rate with the Bandung City Government to improve infrastructure in the area traversed by tourist routes or for Bansel 4WD when going off-road, first coordinating with local village stakeholders. This needs to be done so that other parties can contribute in terms of policies, ideas, and suggestions to personnel if required.

Further required, after the above coordination, is formed, then inform the tourists and co-workers concerned regarding the planned tourism products and services that will be implemented. In this case, tourists need to get information regarding travel plans and other preparations. The same goes for co-workers, whether they will handle guests on the trip or serve other tour components. Likewise, conducting route surveys with the team, community,

and other relevant stakeholders. Good coordination with co-workers can help avoid conflicts that will arise so that the plan can run safely and comfortably.

The coordination and communication that is built can aim to get assistance from outside parties or organizations that are needed when making the strategic plan. For example, 4WD will design the construction of public toilets and tourist villages by involving professional organizations, the expected framework and implementation will be formed. Using a network of professional organizations and others such as ASPPI West Java and ASIDEWI West Java to help implement community needs.

Other things that are done with the community when coordinating and communicating are as follows:

- Create a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to validate the location, information, resource persons, and so on according to the route taken.
- Create means of communication via WhatsApp groups for coordination and communication between business actors, the community, and the related tourism industry.
- Deliberations are held with village stakeholders to make a decision.

d. Consultation with community

Ideally, the principle of this strategic tourism plan emphasizes community development by the community and for the community starting from the planning, development, management, and development stages to monitoring and evaluation, which must involve the community actively. Local communities as hosts in terms of planning and maintaining tourism development (Beeton, 2006). In order for the strategic plan to be carried out properly according to the program, the project is necessary to have safe and comfortable consultations between various parties so that the results will reach a consensus.

When conducting consultations with the community, it should be noted that the potential opportunities are adequately discussed, their goals, and benefits. The consultation method carried out by BGG is the same as when conducting coordination, armed with

predictions of tourism travel opportunities and their economic benefits, product inventory, and information so that people can be open and accept plans to go on tours. Provide relevant, up-to-date, and accurate information to the public in order to facilitate the discussion and make decisions.

Want the initial consultation with village stakeholders and local government, the community usually has agreed on the strategic plans to be carried out. Of course, each of these plans will involve the community actively. This will then be continued by involving outside organizations to assist with consultation and appropriate decision-making. That's what the two speakers above did when they were going to carry out tourism products and services in the form of tour packages.

e. Make a decision related to tourism opportunities

From the results of interviews with the two resource persons, the results of consultations with the community will usually be followed by making a written MOU or cooperation bond with the community to bind cooperation when they are going on a tour. Thus, it has been seen that the follow-up plan tour is carried out, the community will be involved in the process of providing services by utilizing other tour components. Usually, the a specific particular in the MOU or the cooperation agreement; of course, both parties have carried out an analysis in advance according to the information and needs of tourists related to the tour to be carried out.

The results above have answered the second research question. Namely, there are five work steps that need to be carried out by a Tour Manager and his team to make a strategic plan of travel for local communities. The two Tour Managers are Tour Leaders of the ITLA organization who have been certified by the BNSP so that they are able to apply the adaptability skills or called as transfer skills that every workforce must possess (Moeheriono, 2009). By consistently working as travel agents, it means that they have succeeded in applying competence both at home and abroad; in other words, the competency certificate can be accounted for.



Figure 2. BGG Activities with the Community as a Host
Sources: BGG (2021)

To answer the third research question, namely, what are the potential opportunities that can be developed. In addition to making a cooperation agreement for the implementation of the tour, several strategic plans were also carried out that benefit the local community.

For the Bandung Good Guide, by making a strategic plan for a tourist trip from the potential opportunities to be developed to support the tour, including 1) Education for Sapta Pesona in the local community; 2) Development of local culinary on the route traversed; 3) Development of storytelling and tourist activities at each stopping point; 4) Zero waste management movement for the community, tourists and tourism managers. For the Bandung Good Guide, the concept of preserving cultural heritage and helping to improve the quality of life of the community is a priority.

The difference is that Bansel 4WD is focused on preserving the environment and helping to increase economic benefits. Therefore, by empowering local communities to 1) provide food and beverage services, 2) prepare attractions safely and comfortably, 3) educate the public and tourists to protect the environment through the provision of trash bins and proper waste disposal, 4) train customer behavior in tourist areas traversed by the 4WD route, 5) carrying out forest conservation activities by planting trees regularly, 6) Long-term strategic plan: making MCK and Tourism Village Design in 2022 to achieve development results carried out in the community (Sinuhaji et al., 2019).

From the results above, in addition to the steps above, the researchers also developed these work steps into Standard Operational Procedures that can be used as guidelines or work instructions when making strategic plans for potential opportunities for local communities that can be implemented by companies in the new normal era. The recommendations are as follows:

Tabel 2. SOP Strategic Concept for the Tour Manager

Name of Company:	Document No: Effective Date: Date of revision: Page:	
SOP TITLE	Assessing and Planning Opportunities in Tourism for the Locals	
OBJECTIVE	To conduct SOP based on competence in assessing and planning opportunities in the tourism sector for locals.	
SCOPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are related to the knowledge, skills, and attitude required to assess the costs and benefits of tourism development for locals. Implemented by a travel agency and tour operator intended for the community itself and decides which potential should be involved in tourism activities. 	
THE MAIN STEPS OF THE PROCESS	WORKING INSTRUCTION	VARIABLE LIMITATIONS
1. Looking for information on potential opportunities in the tourism sector	1.1 Communicate and explore for possible engagement with the local community and agree on tourism opportunities. 1.2 Identify common information on sources appropriately tourism. 1.3 Collect and use specific information relevant to the local community to make decisions in tourism. 1.4 Obtain and use information from other communities to make decisions about tourism.	1. The current opportunities and potential of tourism which covers the development of tourism that is: 1.1 Retail/unit tourism operations. 1.2 Tour operator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of accommodation facilities A visit to the local area by inviting an outside travel agency Community involvement in human resources supply Community involvement in providing training for tourism the industry. 2.1 The sources of information include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local, regional, provincial, and national tourism organizations Other relevant government departments. Research bodies Reports in the tourism sector Privately owned tourism business. National Park Community Other communities. Locals.
2. Analyze relevant issues to tourism in the community	2.1 Communicate customer and industry expectations about tourism products and services with industry members.	3.1 Tourism products and services, not limited only to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tour Package Tour activities

	<p>2.2 Identify and analyse the possible social and economic impact on locals</p> <p>2.3 Identify and analyse the level of expertise available and the needs of training or experts.</p> <p>2.4 Identify and analyse potential conflicts between tourism activities and other social values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist attraction • Culinary • Accommodation/transit area • Transportation • etc <p>Potential conflicts and issues that should arise that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community openness when welcoming tourists • A misconceptions tour information during the preparation. • The travel route is not in the tourism area.
3. Coordinating and communicating with relevant elements.	<p>3.1 Build and maintain relationships with related elements outside the community.</p> <p>3.2 Develop a host.</p> <p>3.3 Search assistance from individuals or outside organizations is needed.</p>	<p>Tourism enthusiasts or providers yet not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider communities • Local companies • Local, regional, provincial, and national tourism organizations. • Departments and other government agencies. • Private tourism companies. • Training organizers • Non-governmental organizations (NGO)
4. Consult with the community.	<p>4.1 Discuss opportunities of potential tourist sector with the community.</p> <p>4.2 Provide relevant, up-to-date, and accurate information to the public to facilitate discussion and decision-making.</p> <p>4.3 Invite outside or individual organizations to speak to the public if necessary.</p>	<p>How to consult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face Focus Group Discussion • WhatsApp Group • etc.
5. Make decisions related to tourism opportunities	<p>5.1 Make decisions about opportunities in tourism with a certain grace period and pay attention to all information that has been collected and analysed.</p> <p>5.2 Make decisions that reflect the needs of the community</p> <p>5.3 Collect and combine information for future planning when the decision to seek opportunities in the field of tourism has been established.</p>	<p>The decisions referred to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour execution, activities, and other plans. • Development of tourism village • Training for locals Human Resources • etc.
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourism knowledge in general, the tourism industry in particular. 2. Sources of information and networks contained in the tourism industry. 3. Influence/impacts of tourism activities 4. Expertise in conducting research and analysis. 	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	Critical / Important Aspects for assessment	<p>Recognize:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of various possibilities and impacts related to tourism development in the local community. 2. Ability to identify and analyse the various impacts of proposed tourism development from local communities.
	Related to other SOPs:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing, implementing and monitoring tourism planning at the local and regional levels 2. A combination of training/assessment may be required.

This Standard Operating Procedure is an update of the results of the competency unit, which is expected to be implemented by the tour operator in the future. With clear SOPs, work can be measured and traced to what has been and has not been done. This needs to be done to minimize problems or conflicts that arise. And this is the result of the work of researchers in helping to contribute to actors in the travel industry who are involved with local communities.

Various plans have been made to benefit local communities. In relation to community part essential in strategic instructions, great strides have been made in reducing poverty in the region. It is hoped that Indonesian tourism will become a quality tourist destination that offers unique and diverse experiences and will be committed to the development of responsible, sustainable, inclusive, and competitive tourism so that it can make a significant contribution to the socio-economic welfare of the community

4. CONCLUSION

The strategic direction of Indonesian tourism refers to tourism for local communities. This is a reference for tourism actors, especially in the field of travel, to keep moving dynamically and beneficially for the local community. One of them is for tour operators such as Bandung Good Guide and Bansel 4WD, who have worked to bring in tourists by mobilizing various energies, thoughts, and time to make strategic plans from the opportunities that exist in the community. This was done in addition to being a Tour Manager who is an ITLA Tour Leader with the competence to survive during this Covid-19 pandemic. With social responsibility and environmental conservation issues to ensure the health and safety of tourists in tourist destinations, this is where a joint contribution from the local community is needed so that a series of tourist trips that have been designed and run correctly place properly.

The results of this qualitative research resulted in three answers to the research questions. First, the role of the Tour Manager is vitally important critical strategic planning of tourist trips. This position at level VI in the field of tour operations is responsible to the company

to ensure that travel arrangements for groups of holiday participants run safely, smoothly, and pleasantly. In addition, in developing sustainable products and services, it is necessary to ensure that the environment is also sustainable. Therefore, in developing tourism products and services, a mature and accountable strategic plan is needed.

Secondly, there are five work steps carried out by the Tour Manager, namely: seeking up-to-date and accurate information on potential opportunities, analyzing relevant challenges and conflicts, coordinating and communicating with various parties, conducting consultations, and making decisions so that all strategic plans in product development and tourism services can be carried out safely and comfortably. This work step becomes a flow for assessing and planning the general benefits of tourism development for local communities.

Thirdly, the potential opportunities that can be developed aim to empower local communities. There are three strategic plans: the development of tourist destinations and their components, the development of human resources, and the development of travel plans to bring in tourists. As a result, these three are needed by both tour operators because the local community is still weak in education and understanding how to conduct hospitality to tourists who come correctly. But the critical point is the development of tourism resources for the local community because they will be the mirror and tangible evidence that tourism activities have been carried out well, to be able to make tourists return to travel with the same tour operator.

The limitation of this research is the Tour Manager in the city of Bandung, who has just started to move into the new normal era. And this is what becomes further research as suggestion for each stakeholder who will later develop research like this, conduct research related to marketing and sales strategies that are carried out to complement this research and make this research even more collaborative.

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