



Perceptions of tourism destination and implications for environmental education: Findings from a student field study on protected area, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

University students have an essential role in developing ecotourism services and supporting environmental education. The research aims to explore students' perceptions of the object of tourism, group behavior in travel and problems in tourist destinations. Surveys and interviews were conducted on students who conducted a field study in Coban Tengah tourism destination, Indonesia. Students of Undergraduate (S1) and Master's (S2) programs were interviewed regarding tourism objects, group interactions, and problems found in the tourism site. Descriptive analysis and chi-square statistics were carried out to meet research objectives. The results revealed that students show a positive and significant perception of the beauty of Coban Tengah waterfall. S1 students indicated the halo effect phenomenon in perceiving tourism objects regarding beauty, educational element, and trekking paths. Grouping in tourist travel provides benefits to protect or keep safety and serves as a place to discuss environmental conservation. S2 students are less interested in forming groups because they have more experience and independence in travel than S1 student. Groups build cooperation and empathy, and these can provide innovation for quality provision of tourism services.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism services and their supporting activities creates a new phenomenon. The tourism sector produces economic growth, and democratization of tourist experiences (Monaco, 2018). In Indonesia, nowadays many new tourist locations are found, successfully driving the tourism economy, and increasing social activities promoting tourism. The mainstream and social media provide

tourists' news and the excitement of its visitors (Nugroho et al., 2018).

This condition is different from the foregoing era. In the past, travel was restricted to the upper classes. Today with the development of low-cost travel and collaborations for ease of service, the possibility of tourism is extending to all society groups. In this context, the younger generations are exploiting the products offered by new digital technology and communication, using them to promote, build and

translate certain meanings. The emergence of the information society is a crucial development affecting the demand for tourist services, orienting it to the direction of mobility and individualism. This is a phenomenon that is very important for the social aspects of tourism, which will become more important in the future (Monaco, 2018).

The young generation can show a positive contribution to developing ecotourism activities. They have the opportunity and potential to explore recognizing environmental and cultural services at an ecotourism destination (UNWTO, 2017). They show their intensities in exploration, experience, patterns of consumption, and mobility. Their understanding of tourism objects is an incentive for efforts to promote ecotourism and education regarding environmental and cultural conservation (Lee & Jan, 2018b; Su & Wall, 2018). They are able to take "a locus of responsibility" to send messages of environmental conservation comprehensively. Further, students are expected to be able to develop a destination image positively and make a real contribution to tourism development (Peake et al., 2009).

The role of the younger generation in tourism activities is related to improving education levels. Higher education can play a crucial role in sustainable development. As environmental sustainability is an increasingly important issue for the world, the role of higher educational institutions in relation to environmental sustainability is more prevalent (Peake et al., 2009). Higher education system provides environmental education through its curricular design, research and collaborative efforts with other parties, and uses their infrastructure and expertise in a positive way to achieve sustainable development. Higher education institutions can help spread the level of society and put pressure on stakeholders. Higher education can play a crucial role in sustainable development (Jadhav et al., 2014).

The young and well-educated constitutes an unknown but substantial proportion of future ecotourism consumers. Thus, their perceptions can provide valuable inputs into the understanding of future ecotourism demand. The importance of education was exemplified in the intention to learn about and appreciate natural and cultural assets, raising environmental awareness for tourists and residents, environmentally-friendly behavior and education programs to promote ecotourism (Günay &

Akinci, 2017; Huang et al., 2014; Su & Wall, 2018; Tauro et al., 2021).

Intensifying tourists' perceived behavioral control can increase their ecotourism behavioral intention and ecotourism behavior (Fang et al., 2018; Lee & Jan, 2018b). Tourist's satisfaction and perception have a positive and significant impact on the intention of purchasing the local product. There is also a significant relationship between tourist's satisfaction and perceived quality toward the tourist's perception. Moreover, a significant relationship exists between the tourist's intentions and the tourist's purchase behavior (Nugroho, Hanafie, Rahayu, et al., 2021). Tourists who obtain unique and impressive experiences about a destination will be willing to revisit it, make positive word-of-mouth, and suggest it to other people (Zhang & Walsh, 2021). Policymakers use the research to assess tourists' perceptions in promoting the nation's culture to other parts of the world (Mohd Shariff & Zainol Abidin, 2020; Rahman et al., 2018).

Travel also reveals the opportunity for pedagogical discourse and learning methods. Learning at the field can provide a significant uptake to learners, through interaction and teamwork in travel. This can be useful for building togetherness, as well as learning and interpreting matters regarding culture, flora and fauna, and security and protection needs during travel (UNWTO, 2017). The power of learning and study support groups should not be underestimated. Using mind maps in this context, students can easily see the connections and pathways to the answers. Incremental learning and engaging with students help to break down the tasks and assignments. In summary, this approach to learning gives students structure through a learning journey approach (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2018).

The younger generation actively travels to various regions, discovering local socio-cultural and environmental values and experiences. Their perception of tourism objects, tourism services and developing problems can be explored. Their experiences provide important things for developing a deeper understanding of their relationship to the local environment (Cheng et al., 2017; Marin-Pantelescu et al., 2022). Positive perceptions of students can support ecotourism development efforts (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015). Students are always motivated by self-transcending values and seek travel experiences as an opportunity to learn and understand other people's culture in order to create a better world

for themselves and others. Student interaction in groups during tourist trips is open to a sustainable tourism offer and represents an opportunity for the tourism industry to grow its own future (Cavagnaro et al., 2018).

Prior studies described a broad perspective around the economy of ecotourism, the role of the younger generation in promoting tourism, the meaning of conservation education, and perceptions and behavior in viewing tourism objects. This is expected to build a comprehensive framework for the development of ecotourism and its contribution to sustainable development. The problem is that a lot of dispersed empirical evidence has not been identified and constructed along with the development of ecotourism in Indonesia. Indonesia's young generation is also actively identifying, exploring and promoting new ecotourism destinations. As a result, a number of important questions remain largely unanswered, including how they perceive tourism objects? What is their behavior and response to seeing problems at tourist destinations? The research aims to explore students' perceptions of the object of tourism, group behavior in travel and problems in tourist destinations of Coban Tengah, Malang Regency, Indonesia. This research also tries to answer how different levels of university education affect the perceptions and responses of students.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted at the Coban Tengah tourist site, which is in the authority area of the Pujon district, Malang regency, East Java province, Indonesia. Coban Tengah is a natural tourist destination for waterfalls, approximately 20 km distance from the Malang city,

The research used a survey approach, by conducting observations and interviews through questionnaires. The respondents were students who took part in the field study in the Coban Tengah. In a day-long field study, students took a trekking trip to see natural and cultural conditions. They interacted with each other in groups to understand tourism and environmental conservation. Each group amounted to 4 or 5 people, in line with Mohd Shariff & Zainol Abidin (2020).

The field study was attended by two student groups based on the level of education. First, there were 20 students from the University of Brawijaya's

environmental science master's program. The field study was conducted in May 2017. They were studying in the second semester, from the four-semester program of their study. They had insight on ecology and the environment. Secondly, there were 41 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agriculture, Widyagama University, Malang. The field study was conducted in April 2018. They were studying in the second or fourth semester, from eight semesters of the undergraduate program. They had a relatively limited understanding of ecological and environmental knowledge.

After the field study, students were interviewed to answer the questionnaire. This study wants to explore students' perceptions of the condition of tourism objects, including variables (i) introduction of tourism objects, (ii) student interaction in group, and (iii) problems of tourism objects in social, economic and environmental aspects in the destination site. Student perceptions were expressed through answers to ordinal (Likert), nominal, or answer descriptions.

Some questions provided five answer choices including strongly agree, agree, normal, disagree, and strongly disagree. Respondents chose one answer as desired. Other perceptual responses asked students to compose answers in the form of ranking 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the four available answers where number 4 means the most important, and number 1 is not important. There were also questions where students composed a ranking of up to 10 points.

Nonparametric statistical analysis methods were used to process data. SPSS 14 software was used to measure respondents' responses in the form of means and variance through the chi-square (χ^2) test. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to measure the character of ranking data. The results of statistical analysis were used to describe students' perceptions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tourist Destination of Coban Tengah

The potential of natural resource assets in Malang Regency area is very abundant. This is a source for various natural tourism activities, which spread throughout the mountainous region. In general, the Malang Regency is on the upstream area for small rivers, which then flow collectively as one into Brantas River. The upstream small rivers flowing to adjust the condition of their physiography, forming many unique, exotic and beautiful waterfalls. One of the waterfalls is

Coban Tengah, which is located in Pandesari Village, Pujon District, Malang Regency. The geography of the waterfall of Coban Tengah is located at coordinates - 7.891653, 112.475420, in the area of Coban Rondo tourism that has long been famously known.

Tourist destination of Coban Tengah and Coban Rondo are under the management authority of Perhutani. Perhutani is a state-owned enterprise tasked with managing forest resources based on social, economic and environmental vision through the principles of good corporate governance. Tourism services are one of the economic ventures in order to utilize environmental services to attract visitors at the same time within the framework of conservation and environmental education.

The natural waterfall of Coban Tengah is very beautiful and popular among tourists who enjoy the challenges of nature. Coban Tengah has not been promoted as widely as Coban Rondo, so there are less tourists visiting Coban Tengah. Tourists have to go through rough terrain, passing the dirt road that is

slippery and dusty. Toward the waterfall site, they walk 500 m along a small river with hilly physiography. In general, trekking conditions are still natural, requiring tourists' readiness to anticipate safety during trips. Research or literature studies on the potential of Coban Tengah have not been conducted.

Respondent Characteristics

The number of student respondents involved in the study was 61 people, consisting of 41 Undergraduate (S1) and 20 Master's (S2) students respectively. The proportion of female students of S1 and S2 students was 46 and 60 percent respectively. The results of the chi-square (χ^2) test on gender variable showed no significant difference ($p=0.32$). While on the age variable, 6 S1 students were over 22 years old, while all S2 students were over 22 years old. The age difference between S1 and S2 students was very significant ($p < 0.05$). The differences between the levels of education provided an important perspective in this study.



Figure 1. Coban Tengah Waterfall Map (googlemap)

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondent

Variable	Unit	Undergraduate Student, S1, n=41	Master's Student, S2, n=20	Significant Level ^a
Gender	% female	46	60	0.320
Age	years	21.01	27.48	0.000
Less than <18 years	people	1	0	
18-22 years	people	34	0	
Over 22 years	people	6	20	

^a Chi-square of two sample test

Table 2. Students' Perception of Tourist Objects and Group Behavior in the Coban Tengah

No	Items and Variables	Mean (Undergraduate Student, S1, n=41) ^a	Mean (Master's Student, S2, n=20) ^a	Significance level ^b
Tourist attraction				
1	I've heard about the beauty of this tourism site	3.73	3.30	0.059
2	The tourism destination is very beautiful	4.39	3.75	0.001
3	Tourism sites contain the educational element	3.10	2.45	0.027
4	Trekking paths are relatively hard and risky.	4.22	0.60	0.005
5	Even though exhausted, I gained experience of natural beauty	4.61	4.35	0.075
6	I am very eager to come back to the location	2.02	3.90	0.000
7	I recommend friends or relatives to come to the location	2.05	3.55	0.000
Group behavior				
8	Travel is more comfortable in groups than go alone	4.85	4.75	0.327
9	Grouping ensures traveling more comfortable and safe	4.66	4.55	0.440
10	Grouping is useful for discussing environmental conservation	4.29	3.70	0.006
11	Leaders significantly play role in guiding travel.	3.93	3.80	0.754

^a Mean category: 1.00 – 1.80 very low, 1.81 – 2.60 low, 2.61 – 3.40 moderate, 3.41 – 4.20 high, 4.21 – 5.00 very high

^b Chi-square (χ^2) of two sample test

In comparison with S1 students, in general, S2 students indicated a more mature age with broader experience. The S2 students presented such characteristics as many of them already working and having adequate knowledge concerning the environment, environmental management, and ecotourism. The background of their education was dominated by science in fisheries, agriculture, biology, and forestry. Also, many S2 students were already married, had visited Coban Tengah before, and often traveled to other natural tourist sites.

According to Goh (2011), activities during a field study provide benefits and students' perception of enhancement of understanding of course materials. The purpose of field study for early semester students is in enhancing their education pathway. Meanwhile, the 2-year students view field study as a form of experience to enhance their future career pathway. Therefore, certain field study methods are needed in order to provide optimal experience and outcomes.

Perception of a Tourist Destination

Table 2 shows students' perceptions of Coban Tengah tourism objects. Of the eleven variables studied, six variables showed significant perceptual differences (p -value <0.05) by S1 compared to S2 students that were found in the variable of 2, 3, 4, 8, 10 and 11. Other variables did not show significant differences in perception by the student

In general, students presented high to very high scores on the variable of beauty (1 and 2) with scores above 3.40. The score shows a significantly higher number by S1 students than S2. Also, S1 students also

perceived higher educational element than S2 students, each with a score of 3.10 and 2.45 respectively. These findings indicate that S1 students provide a more beautiful perception and higher educational elements than S2 students.

Table 3 presents a significant Kruskal-Wallis test results which explain that the answers in the questionnaire given by students can be expressed in ranking order. Table 3 also shows that there were no significant differences between S1 and S2 students in providing responses regarding the choice of tourism activities and services.

Waterfalls and streams were the most interesting tourism objects, followed by the lower rank of trekking paths and flora/fauna objects. Students made use of their time to enjoy waterfalls, discuss environmental conservation, and do other activities such as taking pictures or group activities. The impressive tourist service was a resting gazebo and ticketing. These services gave the impression of being able to cheer them up from fatigue and provided relaxation after taking a hard trekking path. Ticket service was considered noteworthy. The entrance ticket was very affordable because students received a special discount by Coban Rondo management.

The results of the above study reveal that the experience factors shown by S2 students provided a more positive perception than that of S1 students. Experience reflects familiarity with tourism objects and this can build a positive image of Coban Tengah tourism. The destination image is defined as the composite sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person or group has about a destination. This is a

complex and subjective concept consisting of cognitive (perceptions of individual attributes, such as hotel quality, friendliness, weather) and affective components (holistic impressions, such as the atmosphere of the destination) (Peake et al., 2009).

Experience also shapes the potential of a tourist's perception and influences the attitude towards the destination image. This explains the differences between attitude and behavior of newcomers and repeaters towards destination image (Hahm & Severt, 2018), as shown by S1 and S2 students. Positive behavior of S2 students was indicated by the desire to revisit to tourist sites or recommend friends or relatives to come to Coban Tengah.

What happens with perceptions by S1 students is the halo effect phenomenon. The halo effect is the result of a general assessment or generalization of something specific or smaller attributes (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). S1 students subjectively evaluated on the basis of their perception of tourism objects, as if what happened was true. This response was observed in the variables of beauty, the educational element, or

trekking conditions. Indeed, the evaluation of S1 students tend to be biased compared to S2 students. This is a common phenomenon in the world of tourism, often perceived by visitors, or a response to new innovations in tourism activities (Fang et al., 2016).

Group Behavior in Traveling

Group behavior in traveling is an effort or response of someone to the phenomenon found in tourist sites. The response was based on a person's motivation, intentions, knowledge, experience, hopes or character.

In terms of group behavior perceptions, students showed positive perceptions regarding group benefits, with scores in the high to very high categories. In general, scores of S1 students did not differ significantly compared to S2 students (Table 2). The group benefits for learning were significantly higher in S1 compared to S2 students. Other benefits of group behavior included safety keeping and friends to discuss and to take pictures (Table 3).

Table 3. Students' Perception during Field Study Activities in the Coban Tengah

Items and answer choice	Mean/Rank (Undergraduate Student, S1, n=41)	Mean/Rank (Master Student, S2, n=20)	Significant level ^a
Interesting tourist attraction	$\bar{x}=29.93^b$; $p=0.000$	$\bar{x}=12.16$; $p=0.007$	
a. A challenging trekking path	2.73(2) ^c	2.80(2)	0.924
b. Flora and fauna	2.37(3)	2.00(4)	0.048
c. Beautiful waterfalls and cool stream	3.15(1)	3.10(1)	0.974
d. Artificial tourist rides	1.83(4)	2.20(3)	0.208
Students are interested in activities	$\bar{x}=34.86$; $p=0.000$	$\bar{x}=7.86$; $p=0.049$	
a. Enjoying waterfalls	3.37(1)	3.05(1)	0.204
b. Taking photos	1.98(4)	2.45(2)	0.097
c. Developing interaction in groups	2.32(3)	2.10(4)	0.402
d. Discussing nature conservation	2.39(2)	2.35(3)	0.893
An impressive type of tourism service	$\bar{x}=17.60$; $p=0.001$	$\bar{x}=14.01$; $p=0.003$	
a. Ticket service or homestay	2.46(2)	2.85(2)	0.210
b. Food and drink	2.24(3)	2.30(3)	0.866
c. Gazebo and rest area	3.12(1)	3.05(1)	0.798
d. Bathroom / toilet / clean water	2.22(4)	1.85(4)	0.218
Benefits of group	$\bar{x}=39.45$; $p=0.000$	$\bar{x}=5.79$; $p=0.122$	
a. Protect or keep safety	3.44(1)	2.95(-)	0.065
b. There is a friend to talk to	2.41(2)	2.15(-)	0.212
c. Discuss about nature conservation	2.39(3)	2.60(-)	0.368
d. Take pictures together	2.00(4)	2.35(-)	0.198
Negative impacts of group	$\bar{x}=10.34$; $p=0.016$	$\bar{x}=3.67$; $p=0.300$	
a. Not free to do activities	2.41(3)	2.80(-)	0.205
b. It feels uncomfortable	2.10(4)	2.65(-)	0.103
c. Not obtaining knowledge of nature conservation	2.71(2)	2.20(-)	0.087
d. Adjust behavior to friends	2.83(1)	2.35(-)	0.101

^a Chi-square (\bar{x}) of two sample test

^b Chi-square (\bar{x}) of four sample test (Kruskal-Wallis test)

^c a number in the parenthesis is the rank of variable

Group behavior in traveling was perceived less important for S2 students compared to S1 students. This is indicated by lower scores on S2 students than S1 students (Table 2), and non-significant answer choices for S2 students (Table 3). This is because S2 students have broader knowledge and field psychomotor skills that are better in the understanding of nature tourism. This creates independence in behaving understanding or responding to events around tourist sites. On the contrary, S1 students demonstrate the halo effect phenomenon as they perceive tourism objects.

The approach to learning through field study in particular in group formation provides real learning benefits. This effort and approach greatly help students actively participate in the learning and teaching process. Thus, this can be a solution to the obstacles and difficulties faced by students or teachers, which may cause learning objectives not to be achieved.

Field study can help students to search, define and negotiate their own understanding of the problem. Thus, the teacher holds the role of a facilitator rather than the traditional teaching role. In summary, students are given appropriate preparation and frameworks so that they can solve the problems, build the mind maps, develop illustration, or compile problem-solving planning scenarios.

According to Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie (2018), the power of learning groups is not a small thing. In groups, students interact with each other to develop potential and explore mind maps. As a result, students can easily see connections and paths of things that are identified to lead to alternative answers. With incremental learning and active participation of students, they will be trained to break down complicated tasks and assignments. This learning approach gives students a structural framework through a learning journey approach. Managing tourism travel in groups can facilitate services and the process of transferring knowledge to conservation education (Mohd Shariff & Zainol Abidin, 2020). It further enables to transform the perceptions of tourists or students to better appreciate local biological and cultural diversity (Tauro et al., 2021). In small groups, ecotourism activities can work in a quality

manner, can create more intensive services and interpretation of tourists, and generate economic value in the local area (Nugroho et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the concept of group management in travel is a motivation for quality service improvement and innovation development in tourism products. A group of young people does not necessarily have the same interests. To satisfy those millennial tourists, tourism organizations must consider the different values they uphold and the different meanings they give to travel. Young people are very motivated by values that transcend themselves and view travel experiences as opportunities to learn and understand others. Their community culture is to create a better world for themselves and others (Cavagnaro et al., 2018).

Whereas, a tourist group of the older generation require more specific services. This requires tourism managers to produce an introduction to new products, services, and attractions that have not been developed. The implication is the need to create and develop new products to meet the needs of elderly tourists (Portales, 2015).

Problems in the Tourist Site

Coban Tengah tourist location is in the upstream area of the Konto watershed in the Panderman mountains and is located in a protected area. This location is under the management of Perhutani, which is a state-owned enterprise in charge of managing forest products, environmental services, and environmental conservation. These management efforts are always faced with the threat of environmental conservation, including the consequences of tourism services and their supporting sectors.

This study identified 10 variable problems around the location of Coban Tengah, which were then grouped into social, economic and environmental aspects. Table 4 presents non-significant difference (p value > 0.05) between S1 and S2 students in perceiving problems among 10 variables and 3 variable groups. This result shows that they had a relatively similar perception of the problems around tourist sites.

Table 4. Students' Perception of Problems Found in the Coban Tengah

Variables/Group of variable		Undergraduate Student, S1 (n=41)	Master Student, S2 (n=20)	Significant level ^a
Variables		$\chi^2=28.12^b$; $p=0.001$	$\chi^2=19.78^b$; $p=0.019$	
1	Crowded visitor	5.17(8) ^d	5.45(5)	0.774
2	Amenity/facility not sufficient	5.44(7)	6.15(2)	0.330
3	Local people compete for tourists	4.24(9)	3.70(10)	0.471
4	Traffic congestion	4.20(10)	5.20(8)	0.227
5	Hunting for endangered species/illegal logging	5.80(4)	5.35(6)	0.351
6	Crime in the tourism area	6.12(3)	5.30(7)	0.276
7	Litter accumulation	6.51(1)	7.45(1)	0.064
8	Natural springs degradation	5.49(6)	5.85(3)	0.648
9	Floods, erosion and landslides	6.37(2)	5.65(4)	0.262
10	Biodiversity is disturbed	5.63(5)	4.80(9)	0.373
Group of variables		$\chi^2=9.68^c$; $p=0.008$	$\chi^2=3.32^c$; $p=0.190$	
a	Economic aspect (1,2,3)	4.95(3)	5.10(-)	0.450
b	Social aspect (4,5,6)	5.37(2)	5.28(-)	0.932
c	Environmental aspect (7,8,9,10)	6.00(1)	5.94(-)	0.764

^a Chi-square (χ^2) of two sample test

^b Chi-square (χ^2) of ten sample test (Kruskal-Wallis test)

^c Chi-square (χ^2) of three sample test (Kruskal-Wallis test)

^d a number in the parenthesis is the rank of variable

S1 and S2 students saw the similar circumstances that litter accumulation was the most crucial problem (first rank). The next ranking of problem variable shows the difference between the levels of student education. Undergraduate students determined the five problem potentials concerning landslides, crime, hunting of endangered species, biodiversity, and natural spring water sources. The S2 students stated such problems as facilities/amenity, natural springs, landslide, tourist crowds and hunting for endangered animals.

In term of the variable group, S1 students saw environmental aspects as the most important problem, followed by social and economic aspects, each with scores of 6.00, 5.37 and 4.95, respectively (Table 4). In contrast, S2 students stated a not significant perceptions ($\chi^2=3.32$; $p=0.190$) among groups. Thus, S2 students saw no significant difference in looking at these three groups of problems. They might consider that three aspects of the problem were interrelated, inseparable from one another.

Table 4 describes that problems in environmental aspects were more exposed than social and economic aspects. These results confirm the findings of previous studies (Muresan et al., 2016; Parmawati et al., 2012; Peake et al., 2009; Stefănică & Butnaru, 2015). Issues related to environmental conservation are easily raised to become a leading topic. Muresan et al. (2016) identified the main problem in environmental aspects such as litter accumulation, traffic congestion, overcrowded problems for residents, recreational

facilities, water pollution, natural environment, landscape damage, and too much water use by tourists. These environmental problems should be managed through compensation efforts obtained from socio-economic benefits throughout the tourism area.

Research Implication

The findings in term of students' perception in Coban Tengah tourist destinations have important implications for the benefits of learning outside the classroom. The phenomenon of halo influences perceived by undergraduate students also provides a fundamental matter regarding the perception of tourist destinations.

Field study should require comprehensive management through targeted programs, planned before, during and after field trips. The program is implemented to manage students' expectations with clear objectives before the field study and ensure that these objectives are met during the field study with appropriate activities to allow reflection during the post field study (Goh, 2011). In summary, the field study diversifies learning strategies and methods to be associated with achieving environmental conservation education goals.

Education on tour travel will have benefits and experiences more than just tourist travel as usual. These experiences include identifying tourism products and services, understanding skilled human resources needs, and preparing for the learning process. This results in collaboration, social capital,

and positive relationships among the people involved to develop ecotourism (Nugroho, Hanafie, Negara, et al., 2021). Such a positive experience perceived by tourists can increase the intention of ecotourism behavior and their ecotourism behavior (Fang et al., 2016; Fang et al., 2018; Lee & Jan, 2018a). Because of this, the educational element on tour travel has great potential to offer meaningful learning experiences for visitor and practitioners (Günay & Akinci, 2017; Pitman et al., 2010)

Group arrangement in travel management has a broad perspective. Collaboration in groups, interacting and participating among members produce learning benefits. Each member receives new knowledge and experience from tourism activities, including new values received by tourism service providers. This will build a sense of empathy and care, including to protect travel safety and increase awareness to look forward to the sustainability of tourism management. Ding & Wu (2022) revealed that high safety perceptions lead to a more positive and affective evaluation and promotion of destination attributes with higher satisfaction and stronger willingness to revisit and recommend. Furthermore, the perception of tourism safety has a significant effect on cognitive image, affective image, and conative image of the destination.

Management of visitors in groups is the basis for developing tourism service innovation. This effort is to meet tourist satisfaction for young, old, or those with special needs. New products and services are developed, such pieces of information are available for all necessities, tourist facilities are equipped, hospitality is created to produce quality service. This empathy and hospitality become the source of tourism service sustainability, including generating economic added value for all parties (Cheng et al., 2017; Portales, 2015). Furthermore, grouping leads to more experiences to enjoy interesting life in a tourist location (Mohd Shariff & Zainol Abidin, 2020). As a result, visitors interact for a longer period of time and on a deeper level with the host community. Thus, they share experiences and local living conditions with an open attitude and friendliness of local life (Marin-Pantelescu et al., 2022).

Environmental problems in managing tourist destinations have always been a big issue. It is necessary to find an answer by identifying other benefits from social and economic aspects and

compensating them for solving environmental problems.

Muresan et al. (2016) identified the benefits of tourism development in rural areas. Social benefits in tourism activity mainly are getting to know other cultures and interactions with visitors, respecting local culture, and improving infrastructure. In addition, the tourism destination contributes the economic benefits such as economic growth, fiscal strengthening, and increasing quality of life for villagers.

The social and economic benefits are implemented through a mechanism of local cooperation and agreement, compensated and utilized to solve environmental problems. The finishing point of the priority issues of Coban Tengah tourist area is to improve management and facilities for litter, landslide prevention efforts, river basin conservation, and environmental education.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

S1 and S2 students show positive perceptions related to the beauty of Coban Tengah attractions. Waterfalls and streams are the most interesting tourist attractions, followed by trekking path and flora/fauna. S1 students demonstrate the halo effect phenomenon, which indicates bias perception than S2 students, mainly on the variable of the beauty, the educational element or conditions of the Coban Tengah waterfall trekking. Students' field study needs to be carefully planned so that implementation meets the objectives of learning education and creates a positive perception for tourism development.

S1 and S2 students show positive perceptions of group behavior on tour travel. The benefits of being grouped by tourists include cooperation in keeping safety, and to develop discussions about environmental conservation. In contrast to undergraduate students, S2 students are less interested in forming tour groups. This is because they show independence, maturity, knowledge, and experience in travel. The interaction in group travel produces collaboration and empathy to develop more quality tourism service innovations.

Problems found in the Coban Tengah tourist area come from environmental aspects, followed by social and economic aspects. Crucial problems mainly come from litter accumulation, potential landslides, natural spring degradation and criminals in tourist attractions. The social and economic benefits of tourism activities

are managed through local cooperation and agreement mechanisms, to be compensated to answer environmental problems.

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