

THE IMPACT OF THE FREE TOUR GUIDE PROGRAM ON STAKEHOLDERS IN KOTA TUA JAKARTA TOURISM

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the impact of the Free Tour Guide program organized by the Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency on stakeholders in the Kota Tua tourist area of Jakarta. This program provides free professional tour guides as a form of public service based on historical and cultural education. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and field documentation. The research informants consisted of two tourists, one souvenir seller, and one parking attendant selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and method triangulation. The results of the study indicate that the Free Tour Guide program has a positive impact on various stakeholders. For tourists, this program increases tourist satisfaction and understanding of the history of the Kota Tua area. For souvenir sellers and parking attendants, the increase in tourist visits has an economic impact through increased transaction activity and service usage. In addition, this program also strengthens the image of Kota Tua as an educational and interactive cultural tourism destination. Based on the theories of tour guides, tourism stakeholders, and the experience economy, this program successfully creates a more meaningful tourist experience while encouraging social and economic benefits for the environment around the destination.

Keyword: Tour Guide; Kota Tua Jakarta; Tourism Stakeholder

INTRODUCTION

As the nation's capital and center of government and economy, Jakarta boasts a diverse array of tourist attractions, making it one of Indonesia's premier urban destinations. The city boasts not only the splendor of skyscrapers and modern shopping malls, but also a rich history and culture worth exploring. Jakarta's Old Town (Kota Tua Jakarta) is the name given to a collection of cultural heritage buildings preserved to commemorate Jakarta's early history (Nugraha and Hardika, 2023).

Located in North Jakarta, the Old Town area boasts a strong historical feel through rows of Dutch colonial buildings, themed museums, and various cultural attractions that offer both educational and recreational tourism experiences. Its unique architecture, rich historical value, and distinctive atmosphere make the Old Town a public space with a unique appeal amidst the hustle and bustle of the capital. Not only is it a popular tourist attraction, but it also plays a key role in preserving cultural heritage and developing Jakarta's creative economy.

In managing cultural tourism attractions, education plays a key role in strengthening the added value and differentiation of the area. Since its launch by the Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, the Free Tour Guide program in the Old Town has been a public service offering historical interpretations through licensed and professional guides. This service not only enhances tourist understanding but also strengthens Kota Tua's position as a leading heritage-based tourist attraction. Furthermore, tour guides not only provide information about the attractions they visit but also play a role in educating international tourists visiting Indonesia (Rusmiati et al., 2022).

The Free Tour Guide program certainly offers various benefits, particularly in enhancing tourists' knowledge and understanding of the history, culture, and local values inherent in every corner of Kota Tua. However, the positive impact of this program is not limited to tourists. Stakeholders involved in Kota Tua's tourism ecosystem also benefit. For example, the increase in the number of tourists taking tours often directly impacts economic transactions for street vendors (PKL), micro-businesses in the surrounding area, local transportation providers, and museum and gallery managers. The guiding activities that guide tourists to explore various points in the area contribute to a more equitable economic cycle.

Furthermore, this program also has the potential to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders, such as the Tourism Office, local communities, MSMEs, and regional managers, in creating more sustainable and inclusive destination governance. Therefore, it is important to further examine how this free tour guide program functions not only as an educational tool for tourists but also as an instrument to strengthen the local economy and empower communities in urban tourist destinations like Jakarta's Old Town. However, there is limited research examining how these programs simultaneously impact various stakeholders, including tour guides,

MSMEs, and destination managers, particularly in the context of urban cultural heritage tourism.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing the multi-stakeholder impacts of the Free Tour Guide program in Jakarta's Old Town, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the program's effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Tour Guide

Tour guides play a crucial role in the tourism industry, serving as a liaison between tourists and the attractions they visit. Tour guides are not only information providers but also cultural mediators, creating immersive experiences for tourists (Rachman and Hutagalung, 2024). A tour guide is someone tasked with guiding and leading tourists on a tour (Hayati and Drihartati, 2021). Generally, a tour guide is a tourism professional responsible for guiding tourists and providing guidance and direction (Lestari et al., 2022). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that a tour guide is someone responsible for leading a group of tourists and providing information and direction about the attractions they visit, providing the best possible service to create a memorable experience for tourists.

2. Stakeholders in Tourism

Stakeholders are power holders who have significant influence on an organization or group (Holis et al., 2023). Stakeholders are individuals involved in a system (Izzati and Najwa, 2018). Meanwhile, according to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, tourism is defined as all activities related to tourism, which are multidimensional and multidisciplinary in nature, arising from the needs of each individual and the state, as well as interactions between tourists and local communities, fellow tourists, the government, regional governments, and entrepreneurs. According to Rizaldi et al. (2025), the following stakeholders have a pentahelix collaborative role in tourism:

a) Government

The government plays a crucial role in developing tourism, primarily through providing infrastructure, expanding various facilities, and coordinating activities between government agencies.

b) Community

The community is one of the elements that can support the achievement of optimal results in tourism development. The community also plays a crucial role in developing the tourism sector, such as by involving itself in the management of tourist destinations.

c) Academics

Academics are individuals with theoretical knowledge and the ability to conduct tourism-related studies. For example, they can provide materials to managers at tourist destinations.

d) Business Actors

Business Actors are individuals or groups of individuals who conduct business activities, such as businesses that provide goods and services to meet the needs of tourists and organize tourism.

e) Media

The media are those who have creative ideas or concepts for making a tourist destination famous. For example, promoting a tourist attraction in an area. Without media, the tourist attraction that has been prepared will not be known to tourists.

3. Experience Economy

In the experience economy, customers themselves are the product. Consumers demand experiences that can transform consumer behavior, consumer health, and even consumers' lives. It is now increasingly clear that companies are offering experiences (Tonapa and Kurniawati, 2022). The experience economy is a form of socialization by socialization agents, which play a crucial role in determining economic behavior (Faidah et al., 2018). The experience economy is an economic approach that emphasizes creating engaging and memorable experiences for consumers as the primary value of a product or service. The following are the characteristics of the Experience Economy:

a) Focuses on customer experience

b) Involves emotions and interaction

c) Provides a memorable impression

d) Prioritizes uniqueness and personalization

e) Consumers become part of the activity or experience

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena occurring in the field, particularly regarding the implementation of the Free Tour Guide program in Kota Tua Jakarta and its impact on stakeholders. Qualitative methods allow researchers to collect rich and diverse data through techniques such

as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Nurrisa and Hermina, 2025).

Data collection was conducted through direct observation, interviews, and field documentation. Observations were conducted by directly participating in Free Tour Guide activities to observe interactions between tour guides, tourists, and other stakeholders in Jakarta's Old Town area. Researchers also recorded dynamics during the tours, such as guide communication patterns, tourist responses, and economic activity around the points of interest.

In addition to observation, this study utilized semi-structured interviews to obtain more in-depth data. Interviews were conducted flexibly but adhered to a predetermined questionnaire designed to reflect the research focus. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on their involvement and relevance to the Free Tour Guide program. The informants in this study included:

- a) two tourists who participated in or were aware of the Free Tour Guide program,
- b) one souvenir seller in the Old Town area,
- c) one parking attendant operating around the tourist site.

The four informants were selected because they were considered to have direct experience and were able to provide information regarding the program's impact on tourism and economic activities in Jakarta's Old Town area.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants, such as tourists, vendors, and informal workers in the tourist area. Meanwhile, method triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results with field observations and documentation obtained during the study.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process involved several stages: data reduction, grouping themes, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The main themes analyzed included the program's impact on tourists, the economic impact on local businesses, and the program's influence on the tourist experience in Jakarta's Old Town. Through this approach, the study identified the relationship between the role of tour guides, tourist experiences, and the impacts perceived by stakeholders in Jakarta's Old Town tourist area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations and interviews with two tourists, one souvenir seller, and one parking attendant in Jakarta's Old Town area, the Free Tour Guide program has an impact not only on tourists but also on other stakeholders within the tourist destination environment. The following analysis is based on theories of tour guides, tourism stakeholders, and the experience economy.

1. Tour Guide

According to Agustiani et al. (2025), local guides demonstrate a mutually beneficial relationship in providing a tourist experience. Guides involved in the Free Tour Guide program generally have experience in guiding and interpreting history, enabling them to convey information professionally, informatively, and engagingly to tourists. According to Rachman and Hutagalung (2024), improving the competence of tour guides is crucial for enhancing tourist satisfaction. The program also serves as a platform for guides to continuously hone their communication skills, mastery of historical material, and storytelling skills while guiding tourists from diverse backgrounds.

Interviews with tourists indicate that the presence of a tour guide makes the tourist experience more meaningful than simply walking alone without explanation. Tourists report a better understanding of the history of colonial buildings, the function of museums, and the development of Old Town over time. This demonstrates that tour guides function as interpreters, connecting tourists with the historical and cultural values of a destination.

Furthermore, tour guides also create a more lively interaction between tourists and their surroundings. Communicative explanations encourage tourists to explore museums, take photos at iconic spots, and even purchase local products in the area. Thus, tour guides serve not only as information providers but also as drivers of overall tourism activity.

2. Stakeholders in Tourism

In this study, the impact of the Free Tour Guide program was seen on the following stakeholders:

a. Tourists

Tourists benefited from a more educational and focused tourism experience. They felt more satisfied because they received direct historical information from professional guides. Furthermore, tourists felt more comfortable because the tour guide helped direct their itinerary during the tour.

b. Souvenir Vendors

The role of the community in the tourism industry is manifested in the form of micro, small, and medium enterprises that support tourism, such as souvenir, food, and beverage businesses (Amalia and Hanifah, 2023). The Free Tour Guide program resulted in souvenir vendors experiencing increased interaction with tourists after the tour group was added. Tourists on the tour tended to stop at several points to purchase souvenirs or simply browse local products. This demonstrates that the tour guide program has created an indirect economic impact for small businesses in the Kota Tua area.

c. Parking Attendants

Parking attendants also experience a positive impact through the increased number of tourist vehicles, especially on weekends and during tour groups. The more tourists visit, the greater the potential income from parking services. This demonstrates that the benefits of tourism are also felt by informal workers around the destination.

d. Local Government

For the local government, this program strengthens Kota Tua's image as a culturally based, educational tourism destination. The Free Tour Guide program is an innovative form of public service that can improve the quality of the tourist experience without burdening tourists with additional costs.

3. Experience Economy

In the Free Tour Guide program, the tourist experience is built through:

- 1) historical stories told interactively,
- 2) the atmosphere of heritage areas,
- 3) direct interaction with the cultural environment,
- 4) and tourist involvement during the tour.

Tourists not only "see" ancient buildings but also experience the historical atmosphere through the tour guide's narrative. This experience creates emotional value that makes the visit more memorable. In fact, some tourists expressed a desire to return or recommend Kota Tua to others.

From an experience economy perspective, this program successfully transforms ordinary tourism into an educational and recreational experience. This experience then generates a subsequent economic impact for other stakeholders, such as souvenir vendors and informal workers in the tourist area.

CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis, the Free Tour Guide program organized by the Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency has had a positive impact on various stakeholders in the Jakarta Old Town tourist area. This program not only functions as a free tour guide service but also serves as a means of historical and cultural education that enhances the quality of the tourist experience.

From the tourist perspective, the presence of a professional tour guide adds value to their visit to the Old Town. Tourists not only enjoy the visual atmosphere of the area and historic buildings but also gain a deeper understanding of the history, culture, and development of Jakarta Old Town through communicative and interactive storytelling methods. This demonstrates the crucial role of tour guides in creating a more meaningful and memorable tourist experience. Based on the concept of the experience economy, the experience tourists gain is not only recreational but also educational and emotional, thus increasing tourist satisfaction and encouraging a desire to return or recommend the destination to others.

From the perspective of local stakeholders, the Free Tour Guide program also has an economic impact on the community whose activities depend on the Old Town tourist area. Souvenir vendors experienced increased interactions and transactions with tourists participating in tours, while parking attendants benefited from the increased number of tourist vehicles visiting the area, particularly on weekends and during the holiday season. These findings suggest that education-based tourism programs can create indirect economic impacts for micro-businesses and informal workers around tourist destinations.

In addition to impacting tourists and local communities, this program also benefits the local government and destination managers. The Free Tour Guide program is an innovative form of public service that strengthens the image of Jakarta's Old Town as an educational, inclusive, and tourist-friendly cultural tourism destination. The presence of professional tour guides who can convey information in an engaging manner also helps strengthen the area's branding as a center for historical tourism in Jakarta. Therefore, this program can be a strategy for developing sustainable urban tourism through a combination of cultural preservation, improving the quality of tourist experiences, and empowering the local economy.

Overall, the Free Tour Guide program in Jakarta's Old Town demonstrates that education- and experience-based tourism services can create mutually beneficial relationships between tourists, local communities,

businesses, and the local government. This program can be used as an example of urban cultural tourism development that is not only oriented towards the number of tourist visits, but also on the quality of experience and positive impact on stakeholders around the tourist destination.

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