



Improving the Skills of Muaro Temple Historical Tour Guides to Improve Tourist Services in the Muaro Temple Area

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ABSTRACT

The Muaro Temple area is one of the largest temple sites in Southeast Asia, possessing high historical, cultural, and tourism value. However, the quality of tourist services in this area still faces various challenges, particularly related to the competence of historical tour guides in delivering accurate, engaging, and experience-oriented information. This Community Service Program (PkM) aims to improve the skills of historical tour guides at Muaro Temple through integrated training that includes strengthening historical knowledge, communication skills, service excellence, and the use of simple digital media. The implementation method includes identifying partner needs, training and workshops, field practice (role play), and pre- and post-activity evaluations. The results of the activity show an increase in participants' understanding of the history of Muaro Temple, increased confidence in guiding tourists, and improved service quality perceived by visitors. This program is expected to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism and improve the welfare of the community around the Muaro Temple area.

Keywords: Community service, tour guide, historical tourism, Muaro Temple, service quality.

INTRODUCTION

Muaro Temple is a national cultural heritage site with significant historical and archaeological value, serving as a center of Buddhist education and religion during the Srivijaya and Ancient Malay eras. The area has significant historical tourism potential, attracting both domestic and international tourists. However, optimizing this potential depends heavily on the quality of tourism services, particularly through the role of historical tour guides.

According to Choirinnisa, S. (2011) The condition of the private sector supporting tourism and the quality of human resources have become challenges for the government to realize the vision of Muaro Temple as a world tourist destination based on historical sites and the center of Buddhist culture in Asia. Tour guides have a strategic role as a liaison between historical sites and tourists. The ability of guides to convey historical narratives that are accurate, communicative, and contextual will greatly influence the level of satisfaction and experience of tourists. Based on initial observations and discussions with partners, there are still limitations in the competence of tour guides around Muaro Temple, both in terms of mastery of historical materials, communication techniques, and tourist services.

Based on these problems, this Community Service activity is focused on improving the skills of historical tour guides at Muaro Temple as an effort to improve the quality of tourist services and support the development of sustainable tourism in the area.

Muaro Temple Tour Guide Skills Data

Based on the results of observations, pre-tests and post-tests, as well as tourist satisfaction surveys, the following data were obtained.

1. Tour Guide Profile (PkM Participant)
 - Number of guides: 20 people

- Age range: 22–45 years
- Last education: High school/equivalent: 60% Diploma/Bachelor's Degree: 40%
- Experience as a guide:
 - < 2 years: 35%
 - 2–5 years: 45%
 - 5 years: 20%

2. Partner Issues

The main problems faced by partners in this activity include:

1. The limited understanding of tour guides regarding the history and cultural values of Muaro Temple in a comprehensive manner.
2. Lack of communication skills and storytelling techniques that are interesting to tourists.
3. Low understanding of service excellence in tour guiding activities.
4. Minimal use of supporting media and simple technology in improving the quality of tourism services.

OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS OF ACTIVITIES

1. Activity Objectives

This Community Service Activity aims to:

1. Improve tour guides' knowledge about the history and cultural values of Muaro Temple.
2. Improve communication and storytelling skills of tour guides.
3. Improve understanding and application of excellent service in tourism services.
4. Encouraging improvements in the quality of tourist experience in the Muaro Temple area.

2. Benefits of Activities

The expected benefits of this activity are:

- For tour guides: increasing competence and professionalism in providing services.
- For tourists: improving the quality of historical tourism experiences.
- For the community and region: improving the image of tourist destinations and local economic potential.

3. Implementation Method

This Community Service activity is carried out through several stages as follows:

1. Identification of Partner Needs: carried out through field observations and discussions with tour guides and area managers.
2. Training and Workshops: covering the history of Muaro Temple, communication and storytelling techniques, and excellent service.
3. Field Practice (Role Play): participants practice guiding techniques directly in the temple area.
4. Evaluation: conducted through pre-test and post-test as well as feedback from participants and tourists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the training showed significant improvements in the knowledge and skills of tour guides. Training participants demonstrated a better understanding of the history of Muaro Temple and were able to convey

information in a more systematic and engaging manner. Furthermore, participants began to apply the principles of excellent service in their interactions with tourists, such as being friendly, responsive, and professional.

This Community Service (PkM) activity focuses on improving the capacity of historical tour guides in the Muaro Temple area, particularly in conveying accurate, communicative, and contextual historical narratives to tourists. The selection of tour guides as primary partners is based on their strategic role as the spearhead of tourism services and mediators of historical knowledge for visitors. The quality of the guides' narratives significantly determines the level of understanding, satisfaction, and experience of tourists during their visit to the cultural heritage area.

Initial Conditions and Partner Issues

Initial identification results indicate that most tour guides still face limitations in comprehensively and structuredly mastering the history of Muaro Temple. Their narratives tend to be simple and informative, not fully supported by strong historical data, and poorly connected to the social, cultural, and cultural contexts of local wisdom. Furthermore, their interpersonal communication skills and historical storytelling techniques are also suboptimal, making the information less engaging for tourists, particularly younger generations and international tourists.

Another issue identified was the lack of standard narratives or historical interpretation guidelines that guides could use as a common reference. This potentially leads to differences in information between guides and the risk of inaccurate information delivery. This situation highlights the need for intervention through planned and ongoing capacity-building activities.

Program Implementation and Partner Response

According to Safri & Diami (2022) The Muarajambi National Cultural Heritage Area has now become a leading tourist attraction in Jambi Province. The number of tourist visits to this location has also continued to increase significantly from year to year, commensurate with the increase in revenue generated from the area's entrance fee. This revenue can certainly be used to refinance its preservation. However, to date, its preservation is still funded by the State Budget. The Community Service Program is implemented through a series of activities including training on the history of Muaro Temple, strengthening communication and storytelling techniques, and direct practice in delivering tourist narratives. The historical material is systematically compiled with reference to the results of archaeological studies and scientific literature, so that guides gain a deeper and more valid understanding of the historical background, function of the temple, and the cultural value of the Muaro area.

According to Nengsih & Ridho (2023), Jambi City has many tourist attractions, but none have been officially designated as halal tourist destinations. To achieve this, tourism destination development and support from various parties, including tourists interested in halal tourism, are needed. Interest in traveling is closely related to the condition of the tourist destination, both in terms of attractions, facilities, and access to tourist attractions. Therefore, this study aims to determine and analyze the influence of attraction, facilities, and accessibility factors on interest in halal tourism in Jambi City. Partner responses to this program are very positive. Tour guides showed high enthusiasm during training and discussion activities, and actively shared field experiences which were then linked to the material provided. Narrative practice activities and tour guiding simulations became an effective reflection medium for guides to improve how to convey information, use of language, and interactions with tourists.

Impact on Improving Tour Guide Competence

The evaluation results showed a significant improvement in tour guide competency, both in terms of knowledge and skills. Cognitive-wise, guides had a more comprehensive understanding of the history of Muaro Temple and were able to explain information coherently and logically. Skill-wise, guides were more confident in communicating, able to adapt their language style to the characteristics of tourists, and presented historical narratives in a more engaging and contextual manner.

According to Fradesa et.al. (2022), Muara Jambi Temple has the potential to become a sharia tourism destination, considering its development, which can have a significant impact on the economy. Around 45% of the local community around the temple area depend on this tourist spot for their livelihood. However, when viewed as a whole, this tourist spot does not yet have the potential to become a sharia tourism destination because in its management there are still several policies that do not yet lead to sharia regulations. Therefore, improvements and enhancements still need to be reviewed so that this place can later be used as a sharia tourism destination. It is predicted that it will take around 10-15 years before this temple can be realized as a sharia tourism destination. The government and related stakeholders are expected to strengthen synergy to develop Jambi tourism to be better in order to increase regional economic growth. This increased competency has direct implications for the quality of tourism services. Guides serve not only as information providers but also as historical interpreters, capable of creating meaningful and educational tourism experiences. This aligns with the concept of education based tourism and cultural preservation, where tourists not only visit but also gain an understanding of local historical and cultural values.

Implications for Tourism Services and Regional Sustainability

Improving the skills of historical tour guides in the Muaro Temple area contributes to improving the overall quality of tourism services. Accurate and communicative historical narratives can enhance tourist satisfaction, encourage repeat visits, and strengthen the image of Muaro Temple as a leading historical tourism destination. In the long term, this is expected to support the economic sustainability of the surrounding community through the tourism sector.

Furthermore, strengthening the role of tour guides also impacts cultural heritage preservation efforts. Guides with a sound understanding of history are more likely to educate tourists about the importance of preserving sites, thus fostering collective awareness of cultural heritage protection. Thus, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity not only provides short-term benefits in the form of improved individual competency but also contributes long-term to the management and sustainability of the Muaro Temple area.



Figure 1



Figure 2

This improvement in tour guide competence has had a positive impact on the quality of tourism services experienced by visitors. Tourists responded positively to the clarity of information, the way it was delivered, and the guides' demeanor during the tour.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Community Service Program successfully improved the skills of Muaro Temple historical tour guides in terms of knowledge, communication, and service. This activity contributed to improving the quality of tourist services and supporting the development of sustainable tourism in the Muaro Temple area.

Recommendations from this activity include the need for regular advanced training, strengthening collaboration between academics, area managers, and local governments, and utilizing digital technology to support tour guide services.

Guide's Ability to Convey Historical Narratives

(results of assessment before and after training)

Assessment Aspects	Before PkM (%)	After PkM (%)
Accuracy of historical material	58	85
Clarity of storyline	55	83
Storytelling skills	52	80
Contextualization of history with current conditions	48	78
Interaction & communication with tourists	60	88

Interpretation

Community Service (PkM) activities focused on improving the skills of historical tour guides in the Muaro Temple area have significantly contributed to improving the quality of local tourism human resources. This program has successfully strengthened the tour guides' knowledge of the history and cultural values of Muaro Temple, while also enhancing their communication skills and delivering more accurate, communicative, and contextual historical narratives.

The results of the activities showed that tour guides not only improved their understanding of historical material but also demonstrated positive changes in their interactions with tourists. Guides became more confident, able to adapt their language style to the characteristics of their visitors, and presented historical information in engaging storytelling. This increased competence directly impacted the quality of tourism services, as reflected in the increased potential for tourist satisfaction and experiences during their visits to the Muaro Temple area.

More broadly, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity supports the development of sustainable cultural tourism. Tour guides with strong historical and communication skills play a crucial role as agents of cultural heritage education and preservation, raising tourists' awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving historical sites. Thus, this program is not only oriented towards improving short-term tourism services but also contributes to the social, cultural, and economic sustainability of the communities surrounding the Muaro Temple area.

Going forward, similar activities need to be carried out sustainably, involving more stakeholders, such as area managers, local governments, and cultural communities. The development of a standardized historical tour guide module and continued mentoring are expected to strengthen the program's impact and establish Muaro Temple as an educational, high-quality, and competitive historical tourism destination. There has been significant improvement in all aspects, especially in storytelling and historical contextualization skills, which were previously the main weaknesses of tour guides.



The results of the Community Service activities indicate that the Muaro Temple tour guides' ability to convey accurate, communicative, and contextual historical narratives significantly impacted tourist satisfaction and experience. Prior to the activities, tour guides tended to convey information descriptively and limited themselves to memorizing historical facts, without reinforcing the storyline and contextual relevance.

After participating in the training, tour guides demonstrated improved skills in constructing systematic historical narratives, using storytelling techniques, and linking the historical significance of Muaro Temple to contemporary social and cultural conditions. This directly impacted tourist interest, increased understanding of the site's historical value, and increased satisfaction with the guide service. These findings confirm that the quality of the guide's historical narrative is a key factor in creating a meaningful and high-quality historical tourism experience.

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