

MEREM.MY.ID: AN OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR BLIND TOURISM

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Abstract

This paper presents the research and development of merem.my.id, an open educational resources (OER) for blind tourism. The OER is targeted for non-blind people as a source of knowledge and reference on tourism for tourist with visual impairment, specifically blind tourist. The initial process of development of this OER is an exploratory qualitative study on 5 blind tourist. The OER than developed using Wordpress CMS and WP-OER plugin. The OER targeting non-blind people to give them understanding and knowledge about blind tourism.

Keywords: Blind tourism, Inclusive tourism, OER

1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism should be accessible for all people, inclusively. Hence, blind people are marginalized on tourism development especially because the tourism destination, attraction, and facilities tends to be very visual. In the other hand, Poria et.al (2011) found that flight and hotel experience of blind tourist need improvement. For example, the staff of airline need to know the needs for blind tourist and the hotel need a more inclusive design to make blind tourist move in the hotel more easily.

Blind tourist cannot consume tourism on visual basis. They use the other sensor on their body (auditory, touch, etc) to enjoy travel and tourism. The understanding on of the needs of blind tourist, based on my previous research, are lacking. The government and the general public need more education about the condition of blind tourist.

Open Educational Resources (OER) providing open license teaching and learning materials that can be used, downloaded, and shared to disseminate knowledge about a subject (UNSECO, 2015). Merem.my.id, is a website that aim to be the OER specifically for Blind Tourism. The material mostly in Indonesian language because the target is Indonesian citizen. As far as the researcher knows, no OER specifically dedicated for blind tourism or tourist with visual impairment. Merem is a javanese word meaning “closing our eyes”.

2 METHODOLOGY

The development of *merem.my.id*, started with initial study that carried on 5 blind tourist (informant) from Yogyakarta, Indonesia. 5 informant interviewed to gather the information about current situation on their tourism behavior and their hopes and needs in the future. 2 of 5 informant was taken on short trip to be observed and interviewed after the experience. The initial study found that blind tourist, on some point, can access tourism destination/attraction/facilities with the same way with non-blind tourist. But some of the needs need to be understand by non-blind people, especially the stakeholder on tourism industry.

Then the OER developed using Wordpress Content Management System (CMS). The OER serve as a portal for teaching and learning material on the subject of Blind Tourism. The OER will also contain news, information, and academic references of blind tourism that can be a source for education for non-blind people.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The initial research gave us information that to make tourism more accessible for blind tourist, the stakeholder of tourism need to understand more deeper about blind tourism. For example, the informant had gone to a zoo before. They walk around the zoo, without any auditory explanation about what in front of them. Another example, the informant told us that his friend get angry when the airline staff gave them a wheelchair to go to the boarding gate on an airport. The blind tourist can walk, but they need assistance (people or auditory or paving block) to go to a place. From the initial study, we found that there's need to disseminate more about the process, the need, the characteristic of blind tourism for general public and especially tourism stakeholder. So in the future, the development of tourism including the blind tourist's perspective.

Based on that research finding, we make an OER specifically for blind tourism topic. The OER serve as a portal for knowledge and update in the field of blind tourism. The target is not the blind tourist itself, but for the non-blind tourist. The name of the OER is Merem (*merem.my.id*). The OER use Indonesian language for it was developed for Indonesian citizen.

Wordpress CMS and WP-OER plugin, developed by Navigation North, are used to develop the OER. The OER then need updating regularly and promotion to be succesful in the goal of dissemination of blind tourism topics for non-blind people or tourism stakeholders.

4 CONCLUSION

Blind tourists are in need to be inclusively included in tourism development. The OER serve as a source of knowledge and information for the tourism stakeholders for that understanding.

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