



## The youth rationality of working in the tourism in Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the rational choice of working and owning a business in the tourism sector for youth on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo. This article uses James S. Coleman's theory of rational choice as a tool to analyze the phenomenon under study. The study uses a qualitative research method (descriptive approach) with youth research on Derawan Island in triangulating analysis. They work or own a business in the tourism sector. The technique of selecting informants in this study was purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and observation techniques. The results are that young people on Derawan Island choose to work and have a business in the tourism sector because of several rational reasons: 1.) Seeing the potential of the region; 2.) According to their passion; 3.) Having an income. The same or even more significant than those who work in the formal sector; and 4.) Have more free time.



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### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest archipelago country in the world which has an area of 1,904,596 square kilometers. Total Area of Indonesia is 1,919,440 sq km (Land Area: 1,826,440 sq km; Water Area: 93,000 sq km). Based on this, Indonesia is known to have abundant natural wealth, one of which is its oceans' beauty. As an archipelagic country, Indonesia has beaches and seas that can become marine tourism objects. Tourism potential has the potential in human life (Garg, 2015). Tourism potential is important in developing the tourism market and industry (Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009). The tourism industry develops along with creativity in managing tourism potential (Turnšek et al., 2020). Tourism management can be considered by looking at tourist trends (Wong, Cheung, & Wan, 2013). One of the current tourist trends in culture (Ulum & Suharno, 2019). Furthermore, the tourism sector is an industrial sector whose development is so fast. Tourism is one of the

promising sectors (Indraningsih, 2019; Pitana & Diarta, 2009; Primadany, 2013; Seguí-Amortegui, Clemente-Almendros, Medina, & Grueso Gala, 2019; Setiawan, 2015; Sofronov, 2018).

The meaning of the word promise is to promise to be used as land for economic income for a country, especially for Indonesia, a wealth of tourism types. Even globally, the world of tourism is experiencing rapid growth and is one of the largest contributors to the world economy. The world economy will develop as tourism is well managed (Akan, Işık, & Arslan, 2007). The tourism sector contributes to economic growth (Tabash, 2017). A country's per capita income will increase if it can manage tourism potential. Governments need to make strategies in managing tourism potential (Bal, Akça, & Bayraktar, 2016). Based on the above statement, today's reality is that many people depend on their livelihoods or choose to work as tourism actors. This condition also occurred in the place where this research was conducted. This research was conducted in the marine tourism object of Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo.

Berau Regency is a district located in East Borneo Province. Berau Regency has much potential, which can be used as a business opportunity. The part is marine tourism objects such as Derawan Island, Sangalaki Island, Kakaban Island, Maratua Island, Biduk-biduk, and many more. Derawan Island is one of the leading marine tourism destinations in Berau Regency, East Borneo Province. Derawan Islands marine tourism is becoming famous in Indonesia and foreign tourists due to the XVII National Sports Week in 2008 in East Borneo. Derawan Islands (Derawan Island, Sangalaki Island, Kakaban Island, Maratua Island, etc.) are areas where several sports are held. Based on this, Berau Regency marine tourism's beauty began to be covered by the media and all Indonesians. Before implementing the XVII National Sports Week in 2008, the beauty of the Berau Regency marine tourism object was only known by residents of East Borneo and only a few people who came from outside the region who knew about Derawan Island and other islands.

Maritime tourism objects in Berau Regency officially use as tourist objects. It starts with the East Borneo Provincial Regulation No. 14 of 2008 concerning the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for East Borneo Province to develop tourism areas in the area. The Perda refers to Law no. 9 of 1990 concerning Tourism (which has now been revised into Law No. 10 of 2009). Based on this regional regulation, the Berau Regency Government provides full support for companies wishing to invest in all business fields, one of which is the tourism sector's focus. Especially for the tourism sector, Berau Regency has many tourist objects with potential and attractiveness that are still not managed optimally but have market prospects on a national and international scale. The output of the Perda implicitly causes Berau Regency to be active in developing the potential of the Derawan Island tourist attraction to become a tourist destination to attract visiting tourists.

Since the growing popularity of marine tourism on Derawan Island, most Derawan Island people have switched jobs from fishers. However, now the majority are tourism actors, including the youths there. It is one of the effects of the advancement of the marine tourism industry on Derawan Island. Several previous studies on youth and informal employment have been published. Nugroho, Waluyati, and Jamhari (2018) explained that the current reality is a shift in young people's work patterns in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Who does not want to work in the agricultural sector? Again for several reasons.

Furthermore, the second study that discusses rational choices is an article written by Wulantami (2018) that explains how women with Bachelor's graduates choose rationally to become housewives. Amid the incessant phenomenon of Indonesian women becoming career women and choosing not to take domestic roles in the household (Wulantami, 2018). The third study examines the reasons for youth working in the informal sector. Görmüş (2017) explains that the reasons for youth in Turkey to work in the informal sector are significantly influenced by the characteristics of the workplace, their flexible work Görmüş (2017). Madya (2020) explains that many young people in Indonesia choose to work as backpackers in this contemporary era. The job is a hobby that is turned into work. They made an endorsement trip to collaborate with entrepreneurs in the travel sector (Madya, 2020). Penguasha can build people's interest in traveling (Destriana, Nurhadi, & Pranawa, 2020). Based on some of the previous studies above, today's youth in Indonesia tend to seek anti-mainstream jobs. Many of the youth choose to work in the informal sector for their reasons. Youth made rational choices to make their own decisions. This article's novelty from previous studies

is that this article analyzes the rational choices made by a child on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, to work and own a business in the tourism sector.

James S. Coleman explained that rational choice is a person's reasonable action to follow the goal (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008). This theory pays attention to the rational choices made by individuals or actors where the individual is a human who has goals and objectives. Based on this explanation, individuals or actors take action to achieve what they expect. This theory is a micro-level theory but is used to explain macro phenomena. This theory is one part of the purposive action models that are common to social science. Social actors can be purposive if they intend to produce certain results in their actions. The theory's basic argument is a metatheoretical assumption rather than an empirical generalization. The point is that society acts rationally. This element of rationality is very characteristic of optimistic ideas. When acting rationally, individuals tend to take optimistic actions by maximizing profits or determining what to spend (expenses) when choosing a series of actions they will take (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 2010).

Individuals or actors will be more likely to choose actions that give the best results according to their perceptions or considerations. So that in particular, these actors will try to control matters related to their interests. This theory's main purpose is to describe how individuals' or actors' behavior in social systems, both from a small scope and a large scope. This approach believes that social systems can be formed simply to collect rational actions by individuals or actors. The main elements of this theory are actors and resources. Actors are individuals who make rational choices. At the same time, resources are something that attracts attention and can control by actors. Coleman tries to explain how the interaction between actors and resources reaches the level of the social system. Coleman states that the minimal basis for the social plan of action is two actors. Each was controlling a resource that attracts the other's attention to the resources that other people pay attention to. Both of them to be involved in mutual need actions. To be involved in the action system, always actors who have goals, each of which aims to maximize the embodiment of interests that give an interdependent character or a systemic characteristic to their actions (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008).

Based on the explanation above, that rationalization comes from two categories, namely actors and resources. Coleman tries to explain that in a social system, two verses mention resources. These resources use as a tie that connects the two actors (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008). The human resources skills can be developed with the creativity managers (Merga, 2019). Creativity is seen from the carrying capacity of managed human resources (Asmelash, 2015). Discussing different Rational Choice theories, White and Klein (2007) tried to elaborate on this theory by defining reward as something an individual receives in his rational choice as an advantage. Meanwhile, the cost is the opposite of the reward. Negative rewards the opportunities for tips that might miss or foregone that are associated with any specific choice (White & Klein, 2007).

This expression explains rational choice theory by proposing Comparison Level (CL) and Comparison Alternative (CL +). Comparison level is a form of comparison of what the individual (actor) gets with other individuals who have the same position as him and their condition compared to others. Furthermore, the alternative comparison is a form of comparison between an individual (actor) and another individual whose position is different. Based on this explanation, this article tries to analyze how youths on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo. They choose their way of life to become workers and entrepreneurs in the marine tourism sector. These youths on Derawan Island certainly have their reasons for selecting the world of tourism in the end.

## **METHOD**

This article uses descriptive qualitative research methods. This method is used so that it can be used to identify social phenomena and try to interpret the meanings described by the community (Creswell, 2011). Therefore, this research was conducted on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo, to identify and interpret the rational choices of youth there to work in the marine tourism industry sector. This research was conducted in December 2020. The research subjects in this article are youths on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo, with the category of those who choose to work or open businesses in the tourism sector (informal sector). The data sources in this study were primary data sources obtained from interviews with informants and observations made by

directly visiting Derawan Island and witnessing how youths on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo work in marine tourism industry sector. Interview and observation are also data collection techniques in this study. Teknik pemilihan informan pada penelitian ini menggunakan teknik purposive sampling dan snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is used in this study because the informants in this study already have predetermined criteria so that the informants in this study must match the required informant criteria. Furthermore, snowball sampling can obtain several informants' recommendations from the informants in this study, so the researcher only had to contact the informants who the first informant had recommended.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Description of Derawan Island

Derawan Island is located in Derawan Island District, Berau Regency, East Borneo. Derawan Island District has the potential for marine tourism, especially Derawan Island, Sangalaki Island, with its beautiful marine park. Therefore, the researchers chose Derawan Island as the research location. Derawan Island is a geographical location in the east of Borneo Island and south of the Makassar Strait, where the strait is directly connected to Sulawesi and Java's waters. The area of Derawan Island is 44.60 ha, with the area mainly covering the sand. Derawan Island is a village that has an archipelago topography so that the people of Derawan Island make more use of the stretch of the area for fisheries and tourism. Derawan Island has a population of 1,560 people (400 families) in 2020. On Derawan Island is administratively divided into 4 Neighborhoods, Rukun Tetangga 1 is Mr. Kusdinar, Rukun Tetangga 2 is Mr. Harianto, Rukun Tetangga 3 is Mrs. Neni Triani and Rukun Neighbor 4 is Mr Herwansyah. Derawan Island map can be seen in Figure 1.

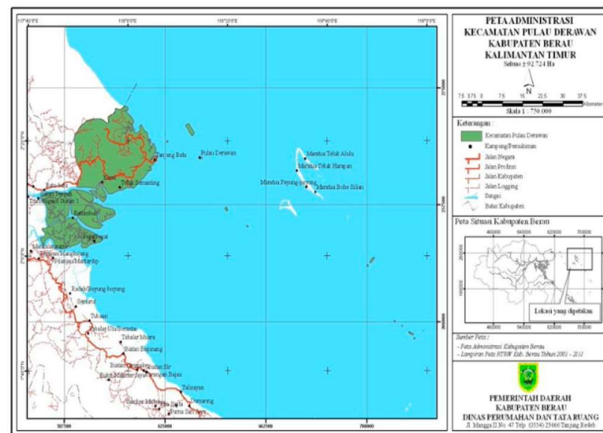


Figure 1. Derawan Island District Map

(Source: Pemkab Berau, 2018)

Since the enactment of the East Borneo Provincial Regulation No. 14/2008 concerning the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for East Borneo Province, Derawan Island has been programmed to become a tourism development area. Derawan Island has an advantage as a marine tourism object. Its because Derawan Island is a Marine Park Area and is part of the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea Ekpregion, which crosses Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. This ecoregion is an area located in the world coral triangle area (Coral Triangle). This area is only found in six countries globally, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, East Leste, and Papua New Guinea (Mujiono, 2018). Continuing the explanation above, Derawan Island has an average hard coral reef cover distribution of 17.41% and a live coral spread cover of 27.78%. The next potential that Derawan Island has is as a native habitat for several species of rare (endangered) turtles such as green and hawksbill turtles. It is because Derawan Island is an area rich in white sand (Mujiono,

2018). Based on the explanation above, Derawan Island is an area that has good potential to become an industrial tourism area. The beauty of the Derawan Islands is covered almost every month by national private TV stations. Several Indonesian and world vloggers have often visited Derawan Island. It is the reason why almost all Derawan Island residents (including youth) have switched to the tourism sector.

### **Derawan Island Youth Rational Choices in Tourism**

The youth group certainly can see the potential that exists in itself and the potential that exists around it. As explained above, Derawan Island has such beautiful potential that it deserves to use as a marine tourism industrial area. After being used as a marine tourism industrial area, most people on Derawan Island changed direction to become workers and tourism, business actors. It makes Derawan Island youths also plunge into the world of tourism. Being a worker or entrepreneur in the tourism sector can be a rational choice for youth on Derawan Island. Only by utilizing the potential in their place of residence can they earn more or the same as those who work in the formal sector. It can be seen from the following interview excerpt:

*"Actually, I used to work in the gold fishery sector. It's just because after the 2008 National Sports Week in East Borneo, the people here had an open mind that here have other potentials besides fisheries. So we and I have moved to the tourism sector in droves" (HG, Interview, 17 December 2020).*

Based on the interview excerpt above, it can be concluded that the main reason why people (including youth) on Derawan Island have started to switch to the tourism sector is due to the potential in the area where they live. Since the National Sports Week sport implementation in 2008 in the Derawan Islands area, many tourists have visited and finally learned about the beauty of marine tourism there. The popularity of Derawan Island is also supported by the current development of social media technology. So that due to the increasing number of tourists visiting Derawan Island, the youth and the community there decided to switch the tourism sector. HG is a native youth born in Derawan Island. Before he decided to make a living in the tourism industry, HG was a fish export entrepreneur. Some fishermen stopped working because access to fish exports became increasingly complex. In the end, HG decided to stop fishing. Around 2011, HG tried to change direction to become an entrepreneur in the tourism sector. He did this because HG had always had a passion there. HG also stated that he had seen the potential for tourism in his homeland after Derawan Island began to be visited by tourists after the East Borneo National Sports Week's holding in 2008.

So it was very rational for him to change professions to become an entrepreneur in the tourism sector because he had a passion there and saw the island's potential. Derawan will be more developed in the next few years. In the beginning, HG decided to engage in tourism. HG started his career by building a two-door (two bedrooms) inn on the land owned by his parents. The HG dared to enlarge his cottages the more the year until finally, HG has a very large cottage today. HG is also expanding its network with travel agent entrepreneurs in Indonesia. Apart from local tourists, the cottages are always filled with tourists from outside the Berau Regency and overseas. Based on the HG informant's reasons why he finally decided to jump in and depend on his life to become an entrepreneur in the tourism sector, this decision was related to his preference. He had a rational reason to switch to the tourism industry sector because his previous job could no longer be relied on. He also had a passion for that field, so he dared to make this decision. HG has also reasoned because HG has seen potential in the future regarding this decision. HG's actions are in line with Coleman's statement that rational choice is a choice of individuals who are motivated by the actions of actors who are seen as having preferences and goals (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008).

HEN is a young man who was born in Derawan Island. He is the homestay manager on Derawan Island, and he's a graduate of a State University in Borneo. After he graduated from the lecture, He was forced to work in the same work as his mother, a civil servant teacher. However, he refused the order. He wanted to work in another field that was different from his mother. Incidentally, one of his family in Tanjung Redeb will set up a homestay on Derawan Island. His family offered HEN to become the manager of the homestay. Because HEN also has a passion for tourism, I immediately accepted the offer. Finally, HEN carried out the work happily without any burden. HEN

remains in this job because HEN feels that his passion is there, and HEN also compares his income to be the same and sometimes more than his peers who work in the formal sector. HEN also stated that HEN has more free time than friends his age who work in the legal sector. That's why HEN decided to stay in the job until now.

*"So, when I recently graduated from college, my mother told me to take a government employee test, but I wanted to. I told my mom that I wanted to do formal work like her. Incidentally, my family wants to open a homestay here, so I was offered to be the manager. I said that yesterday. So, after a long time, because I feel fit, the work is relaxed, but the salary is the same as my companions, sometimes even when my income is more than that of the man here during high season. "*

Based on the informant's explanation, the rational choice why HEN decided to work in the tourism sector was because he felt that this was indeed his passion. He also said that even though he did not work in the formal sector, he could still earn the same and even more than his peers who worked in the formal sector. The decision was to refuse his parents' request to become a government employee. His choosing to become a worker at one of the homestays on Derawan Island was a form of rational action taken for him. White and Klein (2007) follow this condition that an individual sometimes makes his rational choice based on comparison level for alternatives (CL +). As a worker in the tourism sector, HEN compares his income and workload with his peers who work in the formal sector. After comparing it, he can get the same income or even more than his friends who work in the formal sector and even have more free time. This study's results certainly confirm the findings of Nilsson and Shehu (2014) that informal work is currently a standard or common job for youth in developing countries (Nilsson & Shehu, 2014). This condition also occurs in Derawan Island, where traditional thinking about a young man's level of success is measured based on his job. These jobs have to be government employees, and other formal sectors have begun to disappear because their income from being workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector can be relied on to live the standard of the people of Derawan Island.

Furthermore, it discusses the rational choice made by SAM. SAM is a young man from Derawan Island. SAM is a tour guide in one of the travel agents in Berau Regency. SAM also has a snorkeling and bicycle rental business on Derawa Island. SAM said that before he struggled in that world, SAM was a fisherman. However, after the marine tourism object on Derawan Island became crowded, he decided to switch jobs to the tourism sector. The reason is that SAM considers the job to be more respected, and the income is also higher.

*"My job was a fisherman. The average person here used to be a fisherman. So right after yesterday's NATIONAL SPORTS WEEK, the tour here became crowded. We, the residents here, see this potential to make it our source of life. So I tried to join the travel agent here, right. They told me to handle guests, well, there I started to decide to work as a tour guide. Thank God for several years, I have had capital while opening a rental here, so tourists who come here can rent a bicycle or snorkeling equipment at my place. Not lousy income from the rental. The point is that the payment, thank God, is much better than when I was a fisherman". (SAM, Interview, 18 December 2020)*

Based on the information, the rational choice to become workers in the tourism sector is their homeland's potential to use as a source of income for their livelihoods. When SAM tried to be a tour guide, he earned an income that could be much greater than when he was a fisherman. Even after several years, SAM raised capital to open a bicycle and snorkeling equipment rental business. The SAM does follow Coleman's opinion that systems and norms influence individual choices. That arises from many people's rational actions or the absence of other people who regulate behavior (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008). SAM saw people flocking to the tourism sector after the 2008' National Sports Week implement in East Borneo. Also, Derawan Island's people realized a potential economic source that the Derawan Islands community could exploit besides being a fisherman.

## CONCLUSION

Working and owning a business in the tourism sector is common for youth on Derawan Island, Berau Regency, East Borneo. The reason why it is common to them is because of the potential of their homeland. Derawan Island tourism object has become famous and has been visited by many tourists because Derawan Island was once used as a venue for National Sports Week, Kaltim, in 2008. Based on this, the people and youth of Derawan Island have flocked to switch to the tourism industry sector. The youth's rational choices on Derawan Island to work and own a business in the tourism sector are based on several things: 1.) Because they realize the potential of tourist objects in their homeland; 2.) They work happily because tourism is their passion; 3.) They get the same income which can even be more significant than their colleagues who work in the formal sector; and 4.) They have more free time when working in the tourism sector.

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