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Evaluation Of The Tri Hita Karana Tourism Awards And Accreditations Programs On Sustainable Hotel Certification

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ABSTRACT

This article is written with an objective to evaluate the Tri Hita Karana (THK) Awards and Accreditation programs especially for hotel sectors so that recommendation for improvement to the program can be provided. This article is written based on the output of participative observation of the author who acted as the lead auditor on that program between 2000-2019. Results of this research showed that there are some points still need to be improved on the THK Awards and Accreditations programs, including: (1) updating the issues from which the indicators and measure of assessment audit taken, (2) control of marking system, (3) punishment for participants faced a significant or big issue against sustainability; (4) assessment of the quality of auditors; (5) pre-audit internship for the auditor candidates prior to do auditing independently, etc.

Key words: audit, Bali, certification, local wisdom, measurement, sustainability

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tri Hita Karana (THK) Awards and Accreditations Programs have been launched in Bali, Indonesia since 2000. This program is expected to improve achievement of stakeholders in Bali in sustainability based on the Balinese life philosophy of the Tri Hita Karana (THK) (Agung *et al.*, 2003). Until 2010, this program was focused on giving awards for participants whom won the competition in implementing THK, while since 2011 it started focused on accreditations schemes rather than competition.

The program was started to be implemented in tourism sectors such as on accommodation (hotels, villas and homestays or on star-rated accommodations and non-star rated accommodations) (Dalem, 2011; Sari and Dalem, 2012), tourist attractions before expanded on other sectors. Up to 2019, it has been also implemented in schools, universities, destinations/tourist resort, and government offices. This program involved auditors or assessors who were taken voluntarily from NGO, mass media, universities, religious institutions, etc. who were representing experts from three major aspects or elements of THK, ie. *parhyangan* (culture), *pawongan* (community) and *palemahan* (environment). They who came from various back ground then being trained before involved in the duty to conduct the assessment audit. Each team of auditors consists of three persons, representing three elements or aspects of THK, and one of the three is appointed as the lead auditor or known as "ketuatum".

The tools for conducting sustainability audit were developed by the THK team from output of an international seminar and workshop on THK in September 9, 2000. There were 30 urgent issues, 10 issues for each aspect or element of THK were used as the base for developments of indicators and measure on the certification audit on the THK Awards and Accreditations. The seminar and workshop was conducted in Denpasar by Pusaka (Pusat Kajian) Bali Foundation, and then adopted in certification of THK Awards and Accreditations by Bali Travel News (BTN) between 2000 - 2010 before continued by THK Bali Foundation afterward until now (2022).

THK Awards and Accreditations has been undoubtedly very useful for Bali, since it will help any participants to identify their weaknesses in achieving sustainability from the perspective of Balinese life philosophy of the THK. After knowing this, they can then improve their performance in achieving sustainability as well as providing the best product that is good for the people, good for the planet and good for the environment. In addition, it is also giving a reasonable price.

Many people said that THK Awards and Accreditations programs are quite good. They are, however, not perfect. This article is written in order to identify the weaknesses of this program that needs to be improved for a better quality of certification programs in the future. Recommendation will be provided to overcome such weaknesses.

II LITERATUR REVIEW

Issues on sustainable development have been popular since Rio Summit in 1992. In tourism, the use of term of green tourism, ecotourism, sustainable tourism has been popular after that (eg. Adnyani, 2012; Okech, 2016; Dalem *et al*, 2021). Some institutions are supporting such visions, by taking sustainable development certification. Then certification such as Green Globe, Tri Hita Karana Tourism Awards and Accreditations (Dalem, 2011), EarthCheck, Green Hotel (Lestari *et al*, 2020), etc were emerging and had been chosen by participants. Participants have expected the best scheme with reasonable cost for that.

Most certifications have tried to confirm their competitiveness if being chosen. This can be achieved by continual improvements towards best practices in sustainable development certification. This involves a process of achieving best recognition that were related to credibility, simple and easy accessibility, affordable cost, and instantly recognized by public (eg. Chester *et al.*, 2002; Dalem, 2004; Green Globe, *undated*; EarthCheck, 2022; NEAP, 2000). Credibility may include credibility in the certification processes, competences of the auditor team, accreditation of the scheme, etc. Accessibility involves such as how easy to understand the process, how easy to join the certification scheme, whether participants were trained or not, on line training materials were provided or not, etc. Affordable must be dealing with the cost spent by participants in taking the certification scheme. It may include registration or subscription costs, training cost, auditor payments, renew of certification cost (where needed), new equipment installment cost, etc. Instantly recognizable means that the name of certification schemes must be easy to remember by tourists or any targeted costumers, as well as easy to mention it.

By providing credible certification, it may cause the client, in this case for example the hotel, lodge, airport, caravan management, etc. were willing to pay much more expensive than that of the non-credible certification (please check Green Globe certification scheme, EarthCheck, Tri Hita Karana Awards and Accreditations, etc. as comparison). This may be related to credibility or a better recognition by participants.

THK Awards and Accreditation which has also been offering certification for at least 20 years, has tried hard to be competitive across the schemes available. This scheme has tried hard to improve its performance and at the end its competitiveness and its recognition. It is interesting to find out what needs to be improved by the THK Awards and Accreditations' institution, and get recommendation for improvements where considered necessary.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This article was written based on participative observation (Sugiyono, 2007: 66) from the writers between 2000-2019. Participative observation is a method in which the researcher involved in daily activity of persons whom being observed or those being used as sources of research data. There are four forms of this, namely: active participation, moderate participation, active participation and complete participation. Active participation was applied in this research.

The main authors have taken part in the auditing of sustainable tourism for hotel in the Tri Hita Karana Awards and Accreditation scheme as the lead auditor as well as auditor on the environment (palemahan) aspects since the beginning of the program launched, while the second author has been an auditor for community aspects (pawongan) for other team auditors for some years. In the process of auditing, the lead auditor was also accompanied by two other auditors, the auditors of whom have a different expertise background from the lead auditors to complete the three aspects of auditing on the THK Awards and Accreditations programs, ie. culture (parhyangan), community (pawongan) and environment (palemahan) (Dalem, 2011). In addition, the main author of this paper has also appointed as the vice chairperson of the program since the program was initiated.

From the direct observation on site and from the meeting processes undertaken, he can take records of things that need to be improved for a better management of certification scheme. The data processing was descriptive qualitative.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results of this research showed that there are some points that can be improved on the THK Awards and Accreditations programs, as follows: (1) updating the urgent issues behind the indicators and measures on the audit, (2) assessment of the quality of auditors; (3) pre-audit internship for the new appointed auditors prior to be allowed to conduct auditing (4) Control of marking system, (5) control of performance of participants, (6) punishment for participants encounter a major and/or significant issue to perform sustainability,

Updating the issues behind indicators and measures of audit. Indicators for assessment were spelled out from 30 issues as the output of the THK international seminars and workshops in year 2000 (Agung at al, 2003). After that, they have just been reviewed internally within the THK team, and have not been revised by taking input openly involving all stakeholders, such as in a workshop conducted in getting 30 issues of sustainable development in 2000. This may cause a problem in that most urgent 30 issues based on which the indicators for assessment audit formulated, may have changed since the first seminar and workshop for getting appropriate issues of sustainable development based on THK has been run in more than 20 years.

Assessment of the quality of the auditor. The auditors for the THK Awards just have been given a kind of short awareness training within about less than eight hours only. In addition, he/she does not take any evaluation exam. The auditor actually needs a deeper or a longer training on the aspect they are specialise on, either on culture (parhyangan), community (pawongan), or environment (palemahan). It does not matter the candidate of auditor already hold a recognition as a professor, hold a doctor (Ph.D.) degree, or a certain specialist. The training taken by an auditor candidate must cover a sufficient level of knowledge, skill and attitude in order to achieve a certain level of competence. The training for the candidate of auditors has to be more than an awareness training, the training of which may take about 30-40 hours, such as in ErthCheck auditor training, GSTC auditor training, etc. The trainee must be examined in order to know whether they can pass the baseline to be assessors or auditors or not. The one who pass the exam only can become the competent auditor, otherwise he/she cannot be appointed as an auditor.

Pre-audit internship for the new appointed auditors prior to be allowed to conduct audit. New appointed THK Awards auditor in general does not take internship or a on the job training. To conduct a good audit, the auditor needs a special skill that can only be achieved through a practical experience. The one who has passed the exam on the training needs to take at least twice audit training internships as an auditor member before to be formally can conduct the audit independently. In addition, the ability to write down an audit report will be also checked and assessed by the trainer after taking an internship. The one who has been an auditor member for some times (such as at least for 10 times) can be act as the lead auditor on the certification audit. Thus, for process of a appointment of a new auditor must experience such internship processes, besides passing the training exam.

Control of marking system. The THK Awards auditors must sign a fair and a non-bias audit request. The output of the audit was not checked for an appropriateness or for the correct marks given. Besides signing the ethic forms, the THK Awards and Accreditation auditor must be controlled to be able to conduct the audit in a professional manner. This involves a mechanism to control the process of auditing, so that the output will not bias, but valid. The auditor must not also be working or have a business relationship with the auditee, at least within 3 years. The auditor must not accept any gift, present, or a kind of privilege so that it might bring impacts to the output of the audit. If the audit is based on sampling, this must involve a representative sampling mechanism. To keep in pace with the development of situation, the auditor must take a refresher training at least every 3-5 years.

Punishment to participants of which facing a big and/or significant issue against sustainability. On the observation of THK Awards not all year THK certificate recipients sign form that indicate agreement of their THK certificates will be withdrawn by the THK organizing committee when they face a big issues against sustainable development. They, who have a big negative issues on their operation against sustainability principles, must be given punishment to be withdrawn their THK certificates when face such bad conditions. Thus, the management of a certification must consistently implement signing and a withdrawing certificate of sustainable tourism certification for participants whom facing a big and/or significant issue on sustainability. Before this process has been implemented for some years but has not always been conducted regularly annually.

V. CONCLUSIONS

For a better management of the THK Awards and Accreditations programs, there are some points that still need to be improved, including: (1) updating the issues as the base of indicators and measure of audit, (2) assessment of the quality of auditors; (3) pre-audit internship prior to do the auditing independently. (4) control of marking system, and (5) punishment for participants facing a big and/or significant issues on sustainability.

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