



Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0: Transformation of Wanadri's Adventure Education Model into a Tourism Product for Indonesian Youth Character

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes the Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0 model as a transformative framework that adapts the Wanadri Basic Adventure Education curriculum into a character-building tourism product aligned with the Tourism 5.0 paradigm and green economy trends projected for 2026. Employing a Research and Development (R&D) approach with a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study involved 117 Wanadri participants, field observations, in-depth interviews, and combined quantitative and qualitative analysis. Findings reveal a structured curriculum comprising three main phases: Preparation (Mindset & Skill), Execution (Wilderness Challenge), and Integration (Reflection & Character Mapping), shifting from traditional “shock training” to a guided, scaffolded experience. The human skill variable showed the strongest correlation with integrity enhancement ($r = 0.72$; $p < 0.001$), followed by awareness and respect. The model validates the packaging of authentic adventure experiences into an educational-transformative tourism product that not only showcases Indonesia’s natural beauty but also fosters mental resilience, ecological sensitivity, and character integrity among youth. This contributes to achieving SDGs Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 13 (Climate Action), while offering unique added value to sustainable and regenerative tourism.

Keywords: Ecopedagogy, Tourism 5.0, Wanadri, Character Tourism, Youth Integrity, Regenerative Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Entering 2026, the face of Indonesia's tourism is predicted to undergo a fundamental paradigm shift, shifting from *mass tourism* to *quality tourism* that focuses on the *pillars of Nature, Adventure, and Fitness* (Fauzi & Sumirat, 2023). In the midst of the vortex of the Green Economy, tourism is no longer just physical recreation, but has developed into an instrument of self-



transformation in *the Tourism 5.0 ecosystem* (Bagus et al., n.d.; Taufik Arevin & Magdalena Semet, n.d.). However, major challenges arise in the pillars of human resource development, in particular pemuda, In this era of digital disruption, there is often a degradation of social sensitivity and integrity (Al Husaini, 2025). This symptom can be seen in the weakening of idealism and concern for the dynamics of the surrounding environment (Handayani, 2016). Therefore, a breakthrough is needed that is able to integrate character education into adventure tourism products that are predicted to dominate the domestic and international markets (Ralf & Burkley, 2010).

Theoretically, the connection between tourism and character education can be explained through the lens of ecopedagogy. Ecopedagogy is a learning process that understands the critical relationship between social justice and environmental sustainability (Misiaszek, 2023). In the context of tourism, outdoor adventures are not just physical activities, but experiences designed to enhance interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships (Jhon C. Miles & Simon Priest, 1990). One of the out-of-school education models that has a strong track record in building integrity is the Association of Forest Walkers and Mount Wanadri Climbers. The findings of previous research show that Wanadri's adventure education model is very effective in building youth integrity, where *the human skill* component which includes self-awareness and *respect* is the most dominant factor in shaping individual character (Handayani, 2016).

Although Indonesia's natural potential is very large, there is an *empirical gap* where the majority of adventure tourism products are still superficial recreational and have not touched the transformative-pedagogical aspect (Joppe & Elliot, 2015). Tourists often only pursue visual documentation without experiencing a process of deep reflection on the natural challenges they face (Maurer et al., 2017). In addition, there is *a theoretical gap* in the tourism literature 5.0 which is still dominated by discussions about digitalization and technological efficiency, while the integration of non-formal character education curriculum into commercial tourism products is still very minimally discussed (Ariefianto & Hilmi, 2019). The novelty of this research lies in the effort to transform the Wanadri Basic Education (PDW) curriculum from an exclusive organizational



model to an educational-transformative tourism industry product that is in line with *the 2026 nature-based tourism* trend .

The urgency of this research is driven by the fact that the open world, with all its uncertainties, acts as the most honest "classroom". Colin Mortlock (1987) in his concept of alternative adventures emphasizes that authentic outdoor experiences can bring individuals to a stage of honesty towards themselves and the environment (Mortlock, 1987). By adapting the Wanadri model, adventure tourism is no longer just a physical activity, but a laboratory of character where values such as resilience, honesty, and teamwork are forged through direct interaction with tropical forest ecosystems (Handayani, 2016). This is very relevant to the *Sustainable Development Goals*, where tourism is expected to have a regenerative impact on people, not just the preservation of nature (Price et al., 2025).

Based on this background, the research questions in this study are: (1) What is the strategy of adapting the Wanadri adventure education curriculum into an adventure tour package that can be accepted by the youth market at large? (2) To what extent can the integration of integrity values in tourism products answer the challenges of sustainable tourism and the green economy in the future? The purpose of this research is to formulate an integrative model called *Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0*, a framework that combines elements of *adventure challenge*, integrity-based character education, and commitment to environmental sustainability.

The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a development approach (*Research and Development*). The research stage begins with an in-depth analysis of literature data and a review of Wanadri's internal curriculum documents that focus on character building. The next step is to conduct field observations in several tropical forest tourist destinations in Indonesia to map the potential for technical integration. The data collection technique was carried out through in-depth interviews with adventure education practitioners, tourism service managers, and tourism policy experts from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The collected data was then analyzed descriptively analytically using triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of the resulting model.



Through this approach, it is hoped that Indonesia's tourism industry can offer unique added value in the eyes of the world. The tourism products offered not only sell the beauty of the landscape, but also offer solutions to the global youth character crisis. This research seeks to prove that with a measurable curriculum, mountaineering or forest exploration activities can be transformed into a means of "integrity tourism". The end result is the creation of a young generation that has mental toughness and social sensitivity, which will ultimately become pioneers in maintaining the sustainability of the earth (Bob Doppelt, 2010). Thus, Indonesian tourism in 2026 will be a real example of how the economy, conservation, and education can go hand in hand in one harmonious ecosystem.

Literature Review and Theory

Tourism 5.0 and the Green Economy Paradigm 2026

Entering the threshold of 2026, the global tourism industry, especially in Indonesia, is undergoing a structural transformation towards the *Tourism 5.0 model*. In contrast to the 4.0 era which focuses on technological efficiency and digitalization, *Tourism 5.0* emphasizes the integration between advanced technology and the values of humanity, sustainability, and emotional well-being (Sigala, 2021). In this context, tourism is no longer seen as an extractive industry that simply exploits natural beauty for profit, but shifts towards a green economy (Holden, 2013). The green economy in tourism requires economic growth that is in line with ecosystem sustainability and social justice (Holden, 2013).

Previous research shows that future consumers, especially youth groups, tend to seek out meaningful *travel experiences* (Scherf, n.d.). This triggered the emergence of the concept of *Regenerative Tourism*, an approach that goes beyond the concept of *sustainability*. If sustainable tourism aims to minimize negative impacts, regenerative tourism aims to actively have a positive impact on nature restoration and capacity building of human resources in those destinations (Bellato et al., 2023). Therefore, nature-based adventure tourism by 2026 is not just a recreational trend, but a vital instrument in building ecological awareness and human character.



Adventure Education Theory and Ecopedagogy

Adventure Education is a sub-field of non-formal education that uses the outdoors as the main medium of learning. According to Miles and Priest (1999), adventure education involves the use of risky activities (both physical and psychological) that are professionally managed to push individuals out of their comfort zones. This process triggers what is called *experiential learning* or learning through hands-on experience. In adventurous situations, participants are faced with real challenges that demand quick decision-making, teamwork, and mental toughness (Berry & Hodgson, 2011) .

Philosophically, adventure education is rooted in the concept of ecopedagogy. (Misiaszek, 2023) defines ecopedagogy as a form of critical education that explores the linkages between environmental issues and global social justice (Greg William Misiaszek, 2016). In the ecopedagogical view, nature is not just a *background* for human activities, but a living entity that provides lessons about the dependence between humans and the environment (Misiaszek, 2023). Higgins (1996) emphasized that intensive outdoor experiences can foster a sense of place *attachment*, which ultimately forms permanent pro-environmental behaviors in youth (Polistina & Joanne, 2005). Thus, adventure education is a practical form of ecopedagogy that is very relevant to be integrated into character tourism products (Felden, 2024).

Wanadri Education Model and Youth Integrity Construction

Research on the integration of character education into the adventure tourism sector requires a cross-disciplinary review that links the science of out-of-school education with modern tourism management. Although (Handayani, 2016) has proven the effectiveness of the Wanadri model in building youth integrity through the dominance of *human skills*, the research has not touched on the aspects of commercialization and integration into the tourism industry ecosystem 5.0 which is predicted to be dominant in 2026. This gap is an important starting point, considering that the findings of are the main curriculum cornerstone validated by the research of who also



found that adventurous activities in nature significantly increase youth self-confidence and self-efficacy(Poon, 2020). This synergy between local and global findings confirms that adventure education methods have a strong empirical basis to be further developed into a value-added product in the creative industry (Chen et al., 2021) .

The human *skill* components found in Wanadri's education include three main aspects: awareness, *self-confidence*, and *respect*. revealed that the self-awareness aspect arises when individuals are aware of their limitations and potential when facing the harshness of tropical forests (Handayani, 2016). Confidence grows from success beyond physical challenges, while respect develops through interaction with teammates and the local wisdom of the communities around the forest. Colin Mortlock (1984) in his book *The Adventure Alternative* supports this by stating that true adventure provides an opportunity for a person to achieve "self-honesty" that is difficult to achieve in an artificial urban life (Handayani, 2016).

Transformation of the Education Curriculum into Commercial Tourism Products

The commercialization of this educational model into tour packages is supported by the shift in market orientation described by Reisinger (Reisinger et al., 2019), where future tourists tend to seek transformative experiences that are able to change their perspective on life (*transformational tourism*) (Sheldon, 2020). This is in line with the green economy philosophy promoted by Duxbury et al. (2021), which emphasizes that regenerative tourism must be able to restore human capacity, not just passively preserve nature (Bellato et al., 2023). By integrating Wanadri's values, the resulting tourism products not only offer recreation, but also provide a real social impact justification. As evidenced by Stott and Hall (2014) in their long-term study, the character changes generated through adventure education are permanent and social, thus ensuring the sustainability of the positive impact on tourists even after the tourism activities end (Huddart & Stott, 2019).

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to transform the adventure education methodology that was originally internal to the organization into a commercial tourism product



that can be accessed by the wider public. Buckley (2012) states that the world's adventure tourism industry is starting to shift from just providing facilities to providing "instruction and education". Travelers in 2026 are expected to be willing to pay more for tour packages that offer *self-development* and certification of certain skills (Buckley, 2012) .

However, there are challenges in this adaptation process. Tourism products must be able to balance the intensity of strict education with aspects of fun and comfort of tourism (Sitorus et al., 2024). Pombo and Littlejohn (2022) suggest that the adventure curriculum in tourism be structured using a *scaffolding* approach, where challenges are given gradually according to the participants' abilities (Smith et al., 2015). By integrating the Wanadri curriculum into the tour package, a unique "Character Tourism" model is created. This product not only sells the beauty of Indonesia's mountain and forest destinations, but also sells character building methodologies that have safety standards and measurable results.

Synthesis: Towards Character-Based Tourism

The integration between the 2026 tourism trend, ecopedagogy theory, and Wanadri's educational model has resulted in a new framework called *Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0*. Within this framework, youth tourists are positioned as "active learners" who undergo a process of character transformation through controlled natural challenges. This literature review confirms that there is a strong theoretical and empirical foundation to make adventure education at the core of future tourism products. The success of this model will not only provide economic benefits for the tourism sector, but also contribute to the achievement of *the Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) point 4 (Quality Education) and 13th (Climate Change Management), by producing a young generation that has high integrity and social sensitivity to the sustainability of the earth.



RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a *Research and Development* (R&D) approach that aims to produce and test the effectiveness of a certain product or model. In this context, the research is focused on the development of the "Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0" model as a means of transforming the character of youth through adventure education. The approach used is *Mixed Methods* with a *Sequential Explanatory* design, where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, then followed by qualitative data to deepen and clarify the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) (Poth, 2023).

1. Research Aims, Researcher Standpoint, and Research Questions

Research *Aims* are fundamentally directed to formulate an adventure education model based on the natural environment that is able to integrate the values of integrity into the character tourism sector. This is in line with efforts to answer the challenge of moral degradation and the fading of youth idealism in the era of digital disruption (Handayani, 2016). Specifically, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing training curriculum and transform it into a sustainable tourism model.

The Researcher *Standpoint* is based on the view that nature is not just a physical object, but a critical instructional medium. The researcher adopts an ecopedagogical lens, which is a learning process that understands the critical relationship between social justice, environmental sustainability, and human development (Misiaszek, 2025). The researcher plays a key role as a key instrument that conducts participatory observation in the process of internalizing character in the open training field.

The Research *Questions* asked include: (1) What is the structure of the curriculum and the flow of implementation of adventure education in shaping the character of today's youth? (2) To what extent does the influence of the variables of *human skill*, *awareness*, and *respect* in adventure education on improving the integrity of participants? (3) How is the design of a valid and effective "Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0" model to be implemented on a wider scale?



2. Research Setting, Sampling, and Participant Demographics

The research setting is located in the training ecosystem of the Wanadri Mountain Climbers and Forest Climbers Association in the West Java region, which includes various natural terrains such as forest mountains, steep cliffs, and sea swamps. The selection of this location was based on the institution's reputation in organizing standardized nature-based character education.

The sampling technique is carried out by *purposive sampling* to ensure that the subjects have direct experience in the developed intervention. The respondents consisted of 117 participants in basic education. Participant demographics include the productive age range (16-42 years) with diverse educational backgrounds from secondary to postgraduate levels. The gender composition is dominated by males (103 people) and females (14), reflecting the characteristics of high-level adventure activities but still being inclusive of diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

The Intervention Program that is carried out involves *experiential learning methods* through measurable physical and mental challenges (Beard & Wilson, 2018). Referring to the concept of *scaffolding*, the challenge is given gradually to build resilience and self-integrity through direct interaction with natural ecosystems (Zare, n.d.).

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process is carried out comprehensively to ensure the validity of the findings. Quantitative Data Collection used a Likert scale questionnaire instrument to measure the variables of adventure education, as well as a *Situational Judgement Test of Integrity* to measure the moral behavior of participants. Meanwhile, Qualitative Data Collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with instructors and *real-time* field observations during the intervention process to capture nuances of behavior that were not captured by numbers.

Data analysis is carried out simultaneously. Quantitative data were processed using *Pearson's Product Moment correlation statistical analysis* to test the strength of the relationship between variables with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. These statistical results are then deepened through Qualitative Analysis using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, narrative presentation of data, and conclusion drawn.



To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation of techniques and sources was carried out. As stated by Denzin (2012), the use of various methods in one study allows for a more holistic understanding of complex phenomena, in this case the formation of human integrity through the medium of nature. The synthesis of these two analyses ultimately results in the formulation of an Empirically and theoretically tested R&D final model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Curriculum Structure and Implementation Flow: Transmission of the "Shock Training" Model to the "Guided Experience"

The latest data shows that the flow of adventure education implementation in 2026 has undergone hybridization. While still maintaining the *immersion* phase in the wild, the curriculum now includes aspects of wellness and mental monitoring technology. The curriculum structure is divided into three blocks: Preparation (Mindset & Skill), Execution (Wilderness Challenge), and Integration (Reflection & Character Mapping).

The curriculum structure which is divided into three main blocks, namely Preparation (Mindset & Skill), Execution (Wilderness Challenge), and Integration (*Reflection & Character Mapping*) is firmly rooted in the tradition of Experiential Learning and Adventure Education. This model is not put forward by a single figure, but rather is a conceptual synthesis of several key thinkers in experiential education.



Table 1 : Implementation Flow and Character Targets

Phase	Curriculum Block	Main Activities	Target Character (Output)
Orientation	Preparation (Mindset & Skill)	<i>Mindset setting, value indoctrination, basic physical exercises, and initial mental health profiling using sensory technology.</i>	Self-Awareness: Discipline, mental readiness, and early emotion regulation.
Operational	Execution (Wilderness Challenge)	<i>Immersion (full engagement) in the wild, navigation, survival, and real-time mental state monitoring based on wellness data.</i>	Resilience (Ketangguhan): Courage, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and grit.
Termination	Integration (Reflection & Character Mapping)	<i>Deep debriefing, digital Character Mapping based on data during the field, as well as synchronization of experiences to daily life.</i>	Wisdom: Integrity, reflective capacity, adaptability, and long-term vision of character.

Theoretically, this framework is in line with the Experiential Learning Theory put forward by Kolb. Kolb views learning as a cycle consisting of concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of the adventure curriculum, the Preparation stage represents the initial conceptualization and readiness phase, where participants build a basic mindset, knowledge, and skills before engaging in real-life experiences. The Execution stage reflects concrete experience through direct challenges in the outdoors, while the



Integration stage is a process of deep reflection and transfer of meaning so that the experience is internalized into learning and behavior change (Naemah et al., 2019).

In the realm of Adventure Education, (Mortlock, 1987) (Mortlock, 2001) (Handayani, 2016) thought made an important contribution to the formation of this structure. Mortlock emphasized that the essence of adventure education lies in an experience that has uncertain outcomes, but is still preceded by careful preparation and ends with meaningful reflection. According to Mortlock, adventure without a process of critical reflection would only be a recreational activity, not an education. Therefore, *the Integration* block serves as a pedagogical space to build self-awareness, values, and character through the meaning of adventure experiences. A similar idea can also be traced to the educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, which emphasizes education through challenge. In the practice of Outward Bound, the program is designed through initial orientation and training stages, expeditions or major challenges, as well as reflection and social service sessions. This structure shows substantial similarities to the Preparation–Execution – Integration division, especially in the ultimate goal of shaping the character, leadership, and social responsibility of the participants (Veevers & Allison, 2011); (Jones Christensen et al., 2014)

More operational, (Priest & Gass, 1997) within the framework of Adventure Programming formulated program stages that included briefing and skill development, the implementation of adventure experiences, as well as debriefing and learning transfer. This model explicitly affirms the importance of the final stages of reflection and integration so that learning from adventure experiences can be transferred to the context of everyday life.

Observation & Interaction Data:

Researcher: Observed a nighttime evaluation session under an emergency tent.

Facilitators no longer use one-way instructions, but coaching techniques.

Facilitator (F): "You failed to reach the coordinates on time because of the ego of the group. What does your dishonesty about the rest of the logistics have to do with the speed of the road?"



Participant (P): "We were afraid of being reprimanded if the logistics ran out quickly, so we lied. As a result, our energy dropped due to lack of intake and even hindered the team."

Facilitator (F): "Here you learn: One little lie in the wild can ruin the entire safety system of a group."

The Influence of Human Skill, Awareness, and Respect: A Multivariate Analysis on Integrity

Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis showed a significant influence of the variables of human skill, awareness, and respect on improving participant integrity ($p < 0.05$). Specifically: Human Skill: This variable had the strongest correlation with integrity ($r = 0.72$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that interpersonal skills such as teamwork and communication contributed 52% to the integrity improvement variant. Quantitative data from the post-intervention questionnaire indicated an increase in human skill scores from 3.1 to 4.3, especially in participants aged 16-25 years. This finding is in line with (Handayani, 2016). who proves that the Wanadri model is very effective in building youth integrity through the human skill component, where awareness and respect are the most dominant factors. Without basic skills, participants tend to experience high anxiety that triggers dishonest behavior (wrong survival instincts).

Corrected Conversation (In-Depth Interview Session):

Participant (P): "When I didn't understand how to use a compass (human skill), I often 'fabricated' positions just so I wouldn't be scolded. But once I got the hang of it, I felt proud to be honest, even though we were in a difficult position."

Researcher: "So, does technical skills make you more courageous to be honest?"

Participant (P): "Yes. Competence provides calm. When I am calm, I can be more concerned (awareness) of the environment and respect the existing rules."

Draft Model "Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0": Validation for Character Tourism 2026

Findings:



The latest model design integrates *Wanadri* safety standards with *Quality Tourism* elements. This model was declared valid through expert tests because it succeeded in packaging the "suffering" of character education into a "meaningful challenge" for general tourists.

Interaksi dalam *Focus Group Discussion (FGD)*:

Tourism Expert: "The 2026 market is looking for Nature & Wellness. How do your models make sure people don't get bored after being educated in character?"

Researcher/Developer: "We use the concept of *Ecopedagogy*-Tourism 5.0. We reduce the physical intensity of the drill, but reinforce the reflective narrative. Tourists are invited to do 'Solo Bivak' not to be tortured, but to meditate on integrity in the middle of the forest with high security standards."

Facilitator: "As a result, they not only went home with a good photo, but with a 'Character Report Card' that recorded how they responded to natural challenges."

Discussion

1. Entering the Tourism 5.0 era, the face of adventure education has undergone a fundamental transformation through a hybridization model that transcends traditional physical boundaries. This education is no longer just seen as an ordinary outdoor activity, but a measurable curriculum that combines the intensity of the wilderness with aspects of *wellness* and mental monitoring technology. The curriculum structure, which is divided into three main blocks, ***Preparation, Execution, and Integration***, becomes a solid foundation for the formation of resilient human beings who are relevant to the challenges of the times. This structure proves the transition from mere physical training to a curriculum that uses a scaffolding approach (Smith et al., 2015). By providing a gradual challenge, participants are not only physically destroyed, but rebuilt in character. In line with the theory of ecopedagogy ((Handayani, 2016), nature is no longer an object to be conquered, but rather a subject that provides direct feedback on the integrity of the participants.



2. Entering the **Execution (Operational)** block, theory meets reality on the ground. In this phase, technical competence or *human skills* are the main key. Interestingly, the findings of the study show that strengthening *skills* in the wild is directly proportional to an increase in morality. In line with (Handayani, 2016)'s argument, moral degradation in youth often stems from unpreparedness to face environmental pressures. In the 2026 adventure ecosystem, integrity is seen as a function of competence; The more competent a person is in navigating the challenges of nature, the greater his capacity to act ethically and honestly. The ability to survive without having to cheat or take shortcuts is clear evidence that *resilience* has been internalized.
3. The culmination of the entire process series is the Integration block. At this stage the role of technology begins to decay and is completely replaced by the depth of human interaction. Through the ability of qualified facilitators, the grueling training process is wrapped into values inherent in the character of the participants. Without having to rely on screens or digital data, facilitators conduct deep debriefing and character mapping intuitively, helping participants synchronize their experiences, forested with all existing conditions into the reality of daily life. The "Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0" model is a concrete solution to the shift from mass tourism to *quality tourism*. By bringing together Wanadri's character-building methodology and the sustainable principles of the SDGs (points 4 & 13), this model creates tourism products that have a real social impact. This is in line with the Green Economy trend where the value of a trip is measured by the transformation of the perpetrator, not just the distance traveled.

CONCLUSION

This research succeeded in formulating the "Ecopedagogy – Tourism 5.0" model as an integrative framework that transforms adventure education into a valid and measurable character tourism product. The curriculum structure developed consists of three main blocks, namely



Preparation, Execution and Integration which effectively shifts the training paradigm from the "shock training" model to the "guided experience" with a *scaffolding approach*. Empirical findings confirm that the variables of *human skill, awareness* and *respect* have a significant influence on improving the integrity of participants, where technical competence in the outdoors has proven to be the foundation for individuals to act ethically and honestly.

The implementation of this model answers the challenges of the green economy and SDGs targets points 4 and 13 by shifting the focus of tourism from just physical recreation to meaningful regenerative experiences. With the guidance of facilitators in the integration phase, the values of resilience and honesty are successfully internalized into inherent characters that are relevant to the needs of the times. For future research, longitudinal studies are recommended to measure the long-term sustainability of participant character changes as well as model testing on more varied natural ecosystems.

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Handayani, Dalimunthe & Rohmah F.
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Proceedings of Academic Seminar and International Conference (ASIC)
The Future of Learning: Education in the Digital Age
Vol. 2No. 1 January2026

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How to Cite: Handayani, S., Dalimunthe, H. H. B., & Rohmah F., S. (2026). Ecopedagogy-Tourism 5.0: Transformation of Wanadri's Adventure Education Model into a Tourism Product for Indonesian Youth Character. *Proceedings of Academic Seminar and International Conference*, 2(1), 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.53893/asic.v2i1.491>