

The Impact of Pandemic on Bancakan Salak Cultural Tourism

Praja Firdaus^{1*}, Herlina Suksmawati², Renitha Hapsari¹, Ade Kusuma²

¹International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia

²Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia

Abstract

This second-term research examined the dynamics of Bancakan Salak cultural tourism after being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowing how the tourism strategy was implemented in the times of pandemic and what were the tips to be able to survive in this limited condition were two interesting things this article studied. Like many other tourist attractions, Bancakan Salak cultural tourism was also affected by the pandemic. Yet, as previous research has concluded, Galengdowo's local society had three essential traditional values reflected in Bancakan Salak cultural tourism that helped them to get through this situation. These three values were collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving. These three values also created further key concepts in responding to the pandemic, the importance of resilience, and innovation. Using qualitative method (in-depth interview) combined with the observation participatory method, and also ABCD (asset-based community development), this article highlighted the crucial role of human basic needs resilience and socio-cultural resilience. Because in the era of globalization nowadays, connectivity had proven could be substituted by collectivism, gratitude, almsgiving, and other traditional values that hold tight the element of togetherness. This article also highlighted the role played by cultural assets and personal assets to build villages' capacity. In the end, Bancakan Salak and its tourism industry in Galengdowo was hit by the pandemic and Galengdowo's local society responded with resilience and innovation.

Keywords: Bancakan Salak, cultural tourism, community, pandemic, globalization.

INTRODUCTION

Developments in the aspects of technology, telecommunications, and also transportation have influenced globalization. The global era opens the boundaries of time and space. Globalization facilitates cultural interaction and supports the development of the cultural tourism industry. Cultural tourism can play a key role in the development of new forms of tourism and offers new opportunities for urban destinations in particular [1]. If in the past, luxury tourism was identified with services (hotels, complete facilities, and artificial beauty), then this tourism prioritized tourists' preferences to enjoy unspoiled and reliable natural scenery with local people [2,3,4].

Galengdowo Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency is one of the areas that can be developed as cultural tourism. Previous research results explain that the Bancakan Salak Festival, which has been held since 2016, is a form of cultural tourism. Bancakan Salak, as a form of cultural tourism, was held by the Galengdowo community reflects three values that are believed and practiced by the community, i.e. the spirit of collectivism, gratitude, and charity. All three values are found in the daily practice of

Bancakan using *tumpeng* (cone-shaped rice dish, with vegetables and meat as side dishes) that was practiced by the community since the beginning.

The preparatory process shows a spirit of collectivism, in which common interests come before individuals. The word *bancakan* socially means thank you to its *supreme maker* (God). Moreover, the form of *tumpeng* implies the spirit of community alms. Regarding these values, Bancakan Salak brings back the collective memory of the Galengdowo community about how the traditional values of Bancakan must be practiced to stay safe from harm [5].

The successful implementation of the Bancakan Salak Festival has only lasted three years since it was first held in 2016. It is due to the general elections held simultaneously throughout Indonesia. In 2020, the Bancakan Salak Festival cannot be held again. Since the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has occurred throughout the world. In Indonesia alone, cases of COVID-19 began to be discovered in March 2020. The pandemic causes serious health issues that impact the community and raises social, economic, and political problems that occur in Indonesia. To stop the coronavirus spread, the government is also encouraging restrictions on activities that involve large numbers of people. This condition is not beneficial for the cultural tourism industry, which

*Correspondence address:

Praja Firdaus

Email : firdaus.praja@gmail.com

Address : Sapphire Residence 6i-51, Prasung, Buduran,

Sidoarjo 61252

sells cultural interactions between local people and tourists who come to visit.

Galengdowo Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency itself is an area that is included in the white zone, which means there is no infection and spread of COVID-19 there. However, the pandemic turned out to have a significant impact on tourist visits to the Wonosalam area, which experienced a drastic decline and impacted the local economy. As it is shown by Statistic Center (BPS) Jombang, the number of tourists in May 2020 had been drowned to 99.92% compared to the previous year. In June 2020, the number still showed a significant drop with 99.57% compared to the same period in 2019 [6].

The village government chose not to hold the Bancakan Salak festival, which was one of their village's proud events because it avoided the large crowds that would probably occur in the village. On the other hand, there was a political dynamic, administrative position vacancy, namely the Secretary of Galengdowo Village, had been assigned to another administrative area. These conditions are attributed to the discouragement of local tourism in Galengdowo. Trends within the tourism and experiential mobility, socio-cultural factors, or psychographics, specifically those related to the lifestyle concept, were generally thought to be more influential in shaping the demand for tourism than socio-economic indicators [7].

Considering the last conclusion of the previous year's assessment, Bancakan Salak reflects three local values inherited in the society. The three local values are named collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving. These three local values were drawn into challenges because of the pandemic situation. However, the previous cultural tourism was then challenged by the health protocol and the new normal. Henceforth, this research aims to see the implementation of a local value-based tourism development strategy in the Galengdowo Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency. Besides, researchers will also examine how a local value-based tourism strategy can be done during a pandemic.

In the context of globalization, rural society, in general, had faced two major problems. The first is brain drain, and the second is access to networks outside the hamlet or village. This study has two points of urgency. The first is to empower the people of Galengdowo Village to be more economically empowered to the point

where welfare is no longer the main problem in the village. The second is as an entry point to formulate and implement a tourism strategy based on local values so that there is no brain drain on a larger scale from rural to urban.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This research is the second year term of the previous research with the same research objects. In this second term, the research follows up the dynamics of Bancakan Salak cultural tourism in Galengdowo Village, Jombang. As it is well known that tourism in Indonesia was hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bancakan Salak cultural tourism is having no differences from the others. Thereby, examining the local-based tourism strategy in the time of pandemic would be a preventive yet academic response in order to serve a better future.

This second term has similar methods of research. The research is still using a qualitative methodology that has emphasized participatory engagement. The method was also emphasized in the active participation of the researcher in regular basis activities of the local community [8]. The research was also using the participatory observation method. These methods were chosen to get comprehensive, contextual, and systemic explanations of the Bancakan Salak cultural tourism phenomenon, especially understanding how the community practice the typical shared value under times of pandemic [9].

Furthermore, the participatory observation method provides flexibility to adjust the dynamics of the research objects [10]. The observation was not conducted only by seeing but also by using the other senses and also human interaction [11]. Sugiyono also explained that the observation participatory method has been reclassified into four classifications. They are 1) active participatory, 2) passive participatory, 3) moderate participatory, and 4) comprehensive participatory. This classification would be adjusted according to the condition that the research object faces. Thus, using the participatory observation method would best fit to examine the dynamics of Bancakan Salak cultural tourism and the current condition in Galengdowo local society.

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method is relevant to these key concepts. The ABCD method is oriented towards how individuals and the whole community contribute to their own development by exploring and mobilizing village capacity and assets, modifying

and improving existing structures, articulating and visualizing the *dream* of change. The ABCD method is carried out by exploring past success stories, present success stories, and bright opportunities in the future. The three elements are used simultaneously to generate positive energy and inspiration for the community [12].

In addition, in this method, available asset mapping is carried out, focuses on the analysis of current strengths and assets, sets shared goals and inspirational visions, creates transformative and open change designs, creates competency for all community members, and empowers all community members [13]. ABCD rests on what already exists in the community. The ABCD method emphasizes creative and imaginative thinking to achieve new opportunities from within the community [13]. This orientation can turn what seems now to be a problem into possibilities with bright prospects for the future [14]. From many of the assets postulated by the ABCD method, two of them are very crucial in terms of the Bancakan Salak cultural tourism examination. They are cultural assets and personal assets.

This research also brings up the ABCD approach toward tourism issues in Galengdowo, Jombang. The ABCD (asset-based community development) was developed by Jody Kretzmann and John McKnight to empower society from the inside. ABCD requires researchers to understand the assets of society.

Data Collection and Analysis

In terms of data collection, this second-year research applies to both primary data and secondary data. The data had been gathered through an in-depth interview (with some village stakeholders) and secondary data gathering through literature studies. The informants for in-depth interviews were the representations of stakeholders and the youths of Galengdowo village, Bancakan Salak festival committee and local governments, and representatives of local community conservancy. On another side of the data collection, the texts that were used in literature reviews consists of online and offline media publications, previous research, and books that were written on the related topic.

To summarize, the qualitative analysis method was conducted to construct some explanations from data, phenomenon, and the articulation between those two. The literature data gained from texts and media had been cross-checked with interviews and direct

statements from the informants. All of the steps are necessary to capture the comprehensive explanations of the Bancakan Salak festival in the time of the pandemic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Packaging of Cultural Tourism and The Success of Bancakan Salak

The Bancakan Salak Festival, held annually in Galengdowo Village, is a form of gratitude for the extensive salak fruit plantation assets with abundant harvests. Since 2016, the Bancakan Salak festival has emerged as a means of tourism that tries to attract many people to Galengdowo Village. Bancakan Salak itself is included in tourism of socio-culture or cultural tourism that is far from excessive infrastructure development. By carrying out the local population's culture collectively, Bancakan Salak has succeeded in attracting the attention of both national and foreign tourists. In this tourism, visitors are allowed to pick salak fruit directly from the garden and attend the salak picking festival held by many people.

At the Bancakan Salak festival, we will also feel how local people interact with tourists at the festival. It makes tourists feel that they live side by side with the people of Galengdowo Village. Tourism in Galengdowo Village is not only centered on the Bancakan Salak festival, but there are also several others, such as an educational tour of dairy cows and the Tretes waterfall area. So, long-distance tourists who come to Galengdowo Village will certainly not leave the village in just a matter of hours. In Galengdowo Village, tourism has once again proven that the new tourism paradigm that began in the 1980s seems to be more *friendly* to the environment and local communities without losing the goods.

The Cultural Asset and Personal Asset

The key conceptual framework of village development is to prepare the village's social and physical infrastructure. Physical infrastructure has a short-term orientation with the construction of physical facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, social infrastructure development has a long-term orientation. Social infrastructure includes the use of potential village assets and the active involvement of the community in maximizing the potential of the village. Cooperation between the government, village officials, and village communities enables sustainable development. In this case, the village community acts as a development subject, no

longer as an object of development as in the previous period. The community is also involved in monitoring the village development program. The village's wealth, competitiveness, sustainable development, and environmental harmony are the latest goals of the village development [15].

One of the examination results from the previous research was the strength of cultural assets and personal assets of Galengdowo village. As it was explained, traditional communities in Galengdowo still deeply hold the value of collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving. These three core values had been practiced daily. On some special occasions, these values are leveraged into a greater scale.

These values were then passed down from the elders to the youth villagers. It was not easy for the elders to pass those values to the youths, yet Bancakan Salak made it possible and even easier for the society to grasp and hold the values until nowadays. In fact, Bancakan Salak was then the precise reflection of what society had been doing with these three values. These cultural assets are the strongest collective social capital that resides in Galengdowo society. Bancakan Salak festival made it stronger for the society to keep their belief in their traditional values. The local government had seen this as a high potential value, not only for social cohesion but also for tourism attraction.

The act of local government to the society's potential showed that they had been serious in developing village's capacity. They knew that the Wonosalam area in Jombang had been very popular with tourism, either tourism attraction or tourism destination. They believe that Galengdowo village, which is located in the Wonosalam area, should have been had the same potential in tourism. This belief encouraged the local government to rapidly drive local innovation and media exposure. Alongside the agreement from the society, the local government then held the Bancakan Salak festival and made it into an annual cultural festival.

There are two significant roles in the local government. The first is the head of the local government, while the second is the secretary of local government. They provide administrative services to support the village and society's vision and accommodate aspirations. The combination of these two personal assets has been proved supportive to the village's capacity development, especially in tourism. Bancakan Salak festival is just one of the concrete examples.

The Power of Local Intellectual/Genius

As Dureau [13] stated in reformulating the ABCD method, the most important consideration in developing rural society, or village, is giving bigger and wider space for local people to reconstruct their ecosystem of living. This postulate was based on the consideration of the origin of habitat, the trajectory of the society, and the wisdom, or cultural sense, the people that arise from their experience living in one society day by day. Hence these experiences create local genius with wisdom, vision, genius, and knowledge. By giving bigger and broader space to local society, the development of community would be profound and mostly adaptive with the society values. This situation makes it more feasible for parties that contribute to the development for implementing the consented ideas of community development.

Bancakan Salak festival is a form of cultural tourism because it reflects the values of local society. As it was concluded in the previous term of the research, they are collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving [5]. Regarding the pandemic situation, it was very interesting that Galengdowo society had a high rate of adherence to government health protocols. Compared to urban society in Indonesia, it was reported that rural society had stricter protocols and limitations than urban society in responding to the coronavirus. Based on the interview with the Head of the Village Mr. W, Galengdowo society had a quick response and made a speedy swift in cultural ceremonies. They closed down the gates to enter the village so that they felt safer. The local government also provided quarantine houses for outsiders whose home's were originally located in Galengdowo. These strict administrative and physical limitations gradually proven to be effective in combating the spread of the COVID-19.

The *local wisdom* of Galengdowo society on strict limitations has been resulting in zero COVID-19 cases in Galengdowo village. Galengdowo has been stated as a *white zone* in terms of the pandemic situation. White zone means Galengdowo village has no record on COVID-19 infections and spread. Although no direct or positive correlation, how Galengdowo local people responded to the pandemic shows us that local wisdom could be the best way a society lives their life and make something from their ecosystem.

Despite the effective response from Galengdowo local people on COVID-19, the

pandemic still hit Galengdowo's tourism the most. With the tourism restrictions, all of the tourist attractions and even the Bancakan Salak festival were shut down by the local government. The pandemic shock and the matter of connectivity still become problems for Galengdowo's tourism in times of pandemic. With the absence of the Bancakan Salak festival this year (2020), the amount of cash flow from and to Galengdowo village significantly decreased. The situation surely created socio-economic contraction, especially to the businesses that connected to the urban areas.

In 2020, the problem for the Bancakan Salak festival was getting more complicated. This complex situation was initiated by an administrative move by the Secretary of Galengdowo Village, Mr. A, for temporarily become the head of another village. The move made by Mr. A finally revealed a weakness in Galengdowo's current administration. Even when the problem is successfully handled, Galengdowo society, and especially its local government, need to admit that there is still lack of leadership in their society. Only some of the people in the society have the skills of leadership.

Alternative Strategy to Contain Catastrophic Situation

Globalization provides great potential for the growth of local culture-based tourism, which also supports national development. On the other hand, local culture becomes a unique new value to be developed globally. Culture and local wisdom become one of the choices of cultural strategies to minimize the impact of globalization and even become a counter-culture of the domination of mass culture controlled by developed countries and have a significant influence on the mindset and *culture* of people in developing countries [16].

Galengdowo society and rural areas society had taught us the importance of being resilient. The resilience of food, health, economy and socio-cultural are very effective in times of pandemic. The culture of collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving most of the time are seen as traditional yet outdated cultures. But in times of pandemic, these values showed that societal wisdom is worth preserving. In Galengdowo traditional society, food supplies and stocks are abundant. The traditional rural societies still have so many lands to farm and create a food security system in the end. The culture of collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving should be taken into

account also. With these cultures, society shares every asset in times of pandemics. This collectivist way of living finally proven could minimize the risk of being socio-economically collapsed.

The resilience is not only about the food supplies and stocks, but also in cultural terms. From the interview with the stakeholders, including the head of the village, the local society are very aware of the danger of the pandemic. Thus they decide to eliminate cultural events that gather many people in one place. Yet, they agreed to continue and even revitalize cultural ceremonies that don't gather many people around. This socio-cultural dynamic was responded to by local geniuses miraculously maintaining the three traditional values they hold and reflect in the Bancakan Salak festival. They are collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving.

One crucial point learned from Galengdowo society in terms of responding the pandemic is their resilience. This resilience is not comparable with ignorance to the COVID-19 or coronavirus. Albeit ignorance of the society also means breaking the health protocols established by the government, rural society's resilience means not breaking the protocols while living slowed down temporarily, which rural local people are used to living the way. On one hand, ignorance is sometimes triggered by basic human needs. Therefore people are trying to get their activities back by making them less careful. On the other hand, resilience showed by Galengdowo society could be implemented because their basic human needs were secure and guaranteed by their socio-cultural inheritance. These differences imply that tourism should reconsider its resilience. Tourism activists should be more strategic in organizing cultural events, such as the Bancakan Salak festival.

Either way, the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), which is currently sweeping the world and cannot be predicted when it will end, has made the tourism industry uncertain of its sustainability. The government and the surrounding community have to innovate to continue the sustainability of cultural tourism.

The efforts are needed to continue communicating and promoting the festival's existence in Galengdowo Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency for the Bancakan Salak festival, not to be forgotten. Local culture-based tourism communication is an effort to introduce and promote local wisdom and ecosystems. The concept of marketing communication with the 7P

marketing mix approach can be used in the tourism industry. Kotler and Keller [17] develop the 7P concept in product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence. The village government and the Galengdowo village community must re-identify what products will be offered on cultural tourism in the village during the pandemic.

Tourism is an industry that can develop rapidly in the digital era. The new media era requires conventional mass media to adapt and converge to survive when social media is gaining popularity in society. Websites and social media are sources of reference information for potential tourists regarding the tourist destinations' descriptions to be visited. Fernandez-Cavia and Castro [18] explained that websites play a basic role in tourism communication, so it is essential always to improve the quality of official tourism websites regularly and rely on innovative systems.

Meanwhile, social media's potential to promote community-based tourism is carried out by the community itself [19]. Social media has unique characteristics that only social media has, one of which is to understand how it is used as a social medium in the virtual world. The characteristics of social media include network, information, archives, interaction (interactivity), social simulation (simulation of society), user-generated content, and sharing [20].

Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are part of popular social media today, and it can be used to introduce and promote cultural tourism at the Bancakan Salak Festival, which was once held by the Galengdowo Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency. Excellent and exciting management of social media content will attract opportunities for people and tourists who have visited before to take an active role in participating in introducing and re-popularizing tourist destinations and local culture to attract the attention of local people, including globally.

CONCLUSION

This research is a follow up to the previous research in 2019 with the same research object, the Bancakan Salak festival in Galengdowo Village. The first term of the research concluded that Bancakan Salak had been formed by three essential traditional values, they are collectivism, gratitude, and almsgiving. These values had been embedded in the Bancakan Salak festival. Hence the festival could play as a social and cultural cohesion for the local society in Galengdowo and

for the tourists outside the village. This second term research concluded that in times of pandemic, the Bancakan Salak festival as a form of cultural tourism was also hit by the pandemic. The event was canceled and the number of tourists who came to Galengdowo was drastically decreased.

Despite the hit to local tourism, local society in Galengdowo remains safe and secure. The village itself is miraculously claimed to be classified as a *white zone*, which means no infectious cases of COVID-19. The key concept for the current condition in Galengdowo is resilience. Given the information from the interviews and observations made by the researchers, the resilience in Galengdowo, and perhaps in many rural/local societies, are high. This resilience likely plays an important and crucial role in determining the current situation. Galengdowo village thus poses an alternative strategy to preserve tourism in times of pandemic. The strategy is to build resilience starting from basic human needs (food, water) and to socio-cultural resilience (collectivism, discipline, obedience).

In order to restore the tourism situation, Galengdowo local society needs to get prepared as soon as possible. It is widely acknowledged that social media could boost the promotion of a commodity, even when the situation is very limited, like in times of pandemics. Galengdowo village should explore the benefit of social media exposure to boost and restore Galengdowo's tourism. Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are just examples of effective social media that are commonly used to promote tourism. It is also interesting to learn how local traditional values in Galengdowo could be integrated with modern media marketing, such as Facebook, YouTube, and other social media. By making tourism a bit more virtual, tourism could leave a digital trace that hopefully someday will help local tourism to flourish even in times of pandemics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to give our appreciation to local people of Galengdowo Village. We also would like to thank you to LPPM Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur for supporting the research in two year terms.

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