

Begagan Sub-village's Community Readiness to Develop a Tourism Village

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ABSTRACT

This paper figures out whether the communities in Begagan sub-village as a part of Begaganlimo village in Mojokerto, East Java, are ready to develop a tourism village. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data are collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data are then analyzed using readiness criteria to find out the communities' readiness and the reasons why they are ready or otherwise. The results show that the communities are ready to develop a tourism village. They have high motivation, related to having better income and preserving their local culture. The communities are also ready for any change socially due to the development of the tourism village. They have healthy relationships with others and have high awareness towards keeping the environment intact. They are aware that their areas have attractions in the form of scenery, culture, and products and are quite eager to develop their sub-village, and thus village, to become a tourism village. However, they have problems in funding and better training to develop a marketable tourism village.

Keywords: community; tourism; readiness; attraction; village

I. INTRODUCTION

Located in Gondang District, Mojokerto County, Begaganlimo village is one of the many villages which have tourism potentials in East Java. Mojokerto, as the name may suggest, is the area where the biggest kingdom in Indonesia was located: Majapahit. The village is divided into 2 sub-villages; Begagan and Troliman. There are archeological sites related to Majapahit in the forest near Begaganlimo, but as a village it only dated back to the time of prince Diponegoro (1785 – 1855). According to Basuki at. al. (2020), the name Begaganlimo comes from the word “Begawan Limo,” referring to the five warriors who served prince Diponegoro, known to be a rebel by the Dutch colonial government and a hero by the locals. “Begawan” is their title while “limo” is the Javanese equivalent of five. These warriors are believed to have escaped from the Dutch colonial government's army's pursuit and settled in the area that is now named Begaganlimo.

In the village there are several potential tourism spots. Some of the more well-known ones include: *pohon akar seribu* (a thousand root tree) and *bukit pelangi* (rainbow hill). There are also various ancient ruins from the kingdoms before and after the Majapahit era. On top of that, the residents are still actively able to present traditional entertainments, games, and ceremonies, which add to the commerciality of the area. The research, however, is limited to the Begagan sub-village since *akar seribu* and *bukit pelangi* are located in this sub-village. The research seeks to find out more about the Begagan communities' readiness to develop the potentials of the sub-village. The communities include the youth organization (called Karang Taruna), gamelan group, children dance community, and the sub-village's society as a whole including the farmers and the local

merchants. Tourism operated by communities is also called community based tourism (CBT). CBT focuses on diversifying attraction, increasing the community's prosperity, conserving art and culture, and being environmentally friendly (Putra & Pitana, 2010). A tourism village is a prime example of the theory in action.

To ensure sustainable development, certain aspects can be used to scale how ready the community is. According to Darsiharjo & Nuraziah (2014). The readiness is influenced by the community's values and attitudes, work environment, local government support, each member's willingness to change or accept change, and sufficient organization. These are going to be the factors analyzed in the research. Analyzing these aspects is essential to understand what the community needs to improve or grow. According to the 4A theorized by Cooper (2016), to be able to build and sustain, you need attraction, accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary Services. This study will focus on 2 aspects which are attraction and ancillary services.

II. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study was done on a sample of 12 people who are in the productive or working age, starting from 15-64 (OECD, 2022), representing the communities. The data are collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews with the following results:

1. Motivation

The respondents strongly agree with 4 out of 5 motivations mentioned, namely question number 1,4,5,6. The highest number which means the biggest motivation seems to be the hope to cultivate local cultures (4,58) such as dances, music, etc. This is also mentioned in some of the interviews. It is important to note in relation to question number 1 that shows how the community strongly agree that they want tourism to be their main income, question number 2 explains how as of now it is not possible. The respondents unanimously agree that the income is not enough yet to fulfill their daily needs (1.75, strongly disagree), all 12 gave answers ranging from disagree to strongly disagree. However, for the first criteria which is motivation the community definitely does not lack any.

2. Readiness to Develop

The results of the questionnaires and interviews show the readiness of the communities to develop tourism villages. The first question shows that all the respondents agree that Begagan has potentials for tourism (4.42, strongly agree). Most of the respondents also have adequate knowledge about those potentials that will be discussed further below. The second and third question relates to conservation and sustainability which is essential for a tourism village to thrive. The response from question 2 (4.83, strongly agree) shows that the community has a high awareness towards protecting the environment. There have been efforts to keep the local area clean by providing trash cans, and doing *Kerja Bakti* (working together for the community) where they clean the area together. Other than that, since the sub-village is surrounded by a forest that is utilized for both tourism and everyday life, the head of the sub-village (respondent 12) does his part to keep it healthy. He provides seedlings to do reforestation together with the villagers. Response from question 3 (4.92, strongly Agree) shows high interest for the community to conserve their culture. Respondent 7 in particular is highly involved in *Campursari*, which is one of east java's traditional arts. A lot of the women in the community are also involved in traditional dances such as *Tari Bondan* (Bondan Dance). All show concerns in the youngsters' interest towards this art.

Tourism is expected to show these to the outside world as another means to pique interest from the youngsters. So far, all they are able to do is to have performances witnessed by local people.

Next, the fourth to sixth question correlates to how the sub-village has operated so far in their tourism. Question 4 (3.5, Agree) shows that there have been promotion attempts but not maximum. This is crucial since without promotion, not many people will know the sub-village. It is also interesting how there are mixed responses from the respondents. Some, like respondent 5 mentions that there has been no form of promotion while some others, like respondent 8, states that there has been several. It seems that the knowledge of how the promotion is conducted is not communicated or understood by everyone. There is also a discrepancy in which several respondents state that the *Karang Taruna* (a group of young people) is doing efforts to promote through social media. However, the two representatives from *Karang Taruna* state otherwise. The promotion in social media is usually done by volunteers from outside such as students doing *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (a university's program which facilitates students to work voluntarily for a community). In fact, most of the media promotions are done by outside parties, while the locals rely on mouth to mouth promotions. The next point is the government's support in the form of trainings (3.2, average). This research shows that although there have been some trainings, they are still not enough. There are also discrepancies in this point. It seems that the training only involves certain groups while others are oblivious. For example, about training regarding the management of tourism, only few of the respondents are aware. Some even state that they do not know any. Lastly, as the development so far is handled purely by the community, naturally question 6, about the communities' involvement, is answered unanimously (5, strongly agree). All that were interviewed stated that the societies are involved in any development and whatever they build are mostly done by the locals together. Even though there is occasionally help from outside parties, the sub-village as a community always has a hand in the process. So, in this regard there is still a lot of room to improve.

Question 7 shows their willingness to provide additional services (4.92, strongly agree). Since Begagan is still in the early stage of development into a tourism village, a lot needs to be done. As of now, there are no lodgings, there is only a small number of proper bathrooms, there are only a number of (simple) food stalls, etc. The respondents show a positive attitude towards the possibility of providing these necessities. However, some have also mentioned concerns that as of now, they lack funding to realize these needs. Question number 8, about local products, is related to number 1, and the response shows that there are actually potential local products (4.5, strongly agree). This is also an important point since unique products are a big part of branding a tourism site. Begagan have many local agricultural products from the fertile soil. These are their signature products. They process them into snacks, too, yet they still need to learn about how to market them.

3. Social Readiness

Questions number 1 and 6 to 9 talk about the relation between the community and tourists or outsiders. The response to number one is overwhelmingly positive (4.83, strongly agree). Most of them also mention that many of them have developed a friendly or family-like bond to the tourists, none mention any conflicts that have happened so far. Question number 6 receives a unanimous answer (1, strongly disagree). All of them think that the culture in Begagan is not affected by new comers/tourists. Their familial and close bond stay the same and some believe the influence happens the other way around. The community in Begagan is the one who influences the tourists. In this way, as shown in response in number 7 (4.3, strongly agree), the teenagers/young adults face little to no hardship in adapting to the tourism culture. A similar response can be seen in

number 8, about whether or not they can maintain their local culture (4.5, strongly agree). As they are able to adapt there is little to no problem for them to keep the bad influence out. Question number 9, about the possibility of exploitation by outsiders, also got a unanimous answer (1, strongly disagree). None of the respondents has experienced any kind of exploitation from any parties. In fact, many of them state that people from outside even usually help them.

Question number 2 shows how during the process the community has learned new things regarding tourism. Question 3 expresses their interest in developing the local culture (4.75, strongly agree). Relating to motivation, it is already found that conserving culture is a big motivation. So, this aligns with the response that they are very willing to find a way to present their culture in an interesting way. In question 4, we also find that they are open to change (5, strongly agree). The responses suggest that they are ready to develop their existing culture and accept changes if needed to make it more appealing to the tourists. It also means that they are ready to provide services whenever it is possible.

The responses to number 5, about conflicts and competitions, is unanimous (5, strongly agree), supporting the response to number 1. As mentioned before, the community often forms close relationships with visitors. As we can see in question number 5, the competition is very healthy. They see one another as family or relatives and believe that everyone has their share. They state that it leads to a harmonious relationship.

As for question number 10, about whether or not the tourism activities negatively affect their everyday lives, the answer is strongly leaning towards one side (1.17, strongly disagree). The majority of the people say that the current activity in tourism does not mess with their daily lives. This is also for the fact that they are in the early stages of development which means that there is no constant flow of visitors yet. The head of the sub-village does mention that a disturbance did happen when *Akar Seribu* conflict between the villagers and forestry government officials blew up back in 2019. However, this only happened for a short while and after that period there has been no disturbance.

4. Attraction

a. Place

Begagan is surrounded by a forest. It means that there are many natural spots that can be considered a destination with a little development. Some 'attractions' that the respondents have mentioned are:

1. *Akar seribu*, literally translated, means a thousand roots. It is a big tree with beautiful protruding roots. It is located on the side of the river that goes through the area. It was once developed with pools formed by moving rocks from the river. However, recently there was a big flood and most of the buildings that were built on the river by the community were destroyed. Even now the place is still beautiful but definitely needs fixing. Since after the flood many big rocks tumbled down the community is having difficulties because all is done by them. There are no investors or help from others after the flood.
2. *Lembah harapan*, directly translated into 'hope valley.' The same as *Akar Seribu*, it is also located along a river. It is however slightly more developed. There are more buildings and places to sit and enjoy. Its main attraction is the nature that it offers.

3. *Watu piring*, directly translated into plate rock, are naturally formed rocks that are shaped like a plate, hence the name. The rocks are so neatly stacked that the site was thought to be an ancient temple. Experts have confirmed the site was formed naturally over the course of 2-5 million years.

b. Culture

The community in Begagan is still highly involved in traditional arts, especially those originating from east java. They have performances and have something like a carnival every independence day. Some of the notable ones include:

1. *Karawitan*

Karawitan involves a set of gamelan which is a traditional music set. The art is rekindled again when a new set of gamelan was given form Petra Christian University.

2. *Campursari*

Campursari is a music genre that is made from mixing several Indonesian contemporary music. In Begagan it is mainly enjoyed by the older folks. This is also a great attraction especially for those who are older. Since Campursari is not found as often anymore.

3. Traditional dances

The most performed dances are *Tari Bondan* and *Tari Ujung*. *Tari bondan* is danced by women and *Tari Ujung* the opposite. *Tari Ujung* is generally performed during the independence day celebrations.

c. Products

As Begagan is surrounded by forest, the soil in the area is very fertile. Hence, the local products are really fresh.

1. Durian

Durian or also known as the king of fruit is a delicacy. Many people are willing to travel just to find it. Begagan is quite famous for their local durian. Many tourists actually come there just to buy them.

2. Crips/Snacks from local produce

Since there are countless plants that grow in the area many are produced. These wide varieties of food produce are then processed to become crisps. They have ones that are uncommon such as *Keripik Talas*, *Keripik Gadung*, and *Keripik Pare*.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research shows that the communities in the Begagan sub-village are ready to develop a tourism village. The community showed high and proper motivation to become a tourism village. The result shows that they strongly agree to 4 out of the 5 motivations mentioned. The motivations are for main income, secondary income, preserving culture, and to be known. Secondly, the research finds that the community has sufficient readiness to develop. The community is very open to change and is willing to provide necessities. To add to the willingness, the community has high awareness towards preserving culture and environment. As for social readiness, the community is well above average. Every member of the sub-village has a very healthy relationship with each

other. In terms of attraction, Begagan has a lot of raw potentials that have a big room for development, be it from the place, products, and culture.

However, with those mentioned, it does not mean that the community is perfect. Although they have a huge potential, there is also the problem of support. First is higher competition in managing a tourism village. The government or any other institutions has barely given these training sessions. Although they are able to operate with their healthy social relationship, it is not ideal for further development. Even though they can still succeed, proper training will make it more efficient. The second problem is funding. Since the tourism spots are in nature, they require quite a lot of money to develop. For example, in *Akar Seribu* they want to revamp the place and arrange the rocks in the river so they can use it as a natural pool. However, the rocks are so big and heavy that they need heavy tools. This is also added by the fact that the place is quite remote and hard to reach for big equipment. Hence the budget needed to develop the places is large. If sufficient support is provided, Begagan is definitely ready to develop and become a tourism village.

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