

THE ROLE OF LOCAL CHAMPIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN PONGGOK VILLAGE, KLATEN

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Submitted: June 28th 2023

Revised: July 08th 2023

Accepted: July 12th 2023

ABSTRACT: Ponggok Village located in Klaten-Central Java is one of the villages that has been named the Best National Tourism Village in 2017 in the category of Community Empowerment from the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, besides being named one of the richest villages in Indonesia with revenues reaching 14.5 billion in 2019 (goodnewsindonesia.com) of course, this achievement cannot be separated from the role of the local champion of Ponggok Village, Thanks to the initiation of the local champion of Ponggok village to be very successful and prosper its community, ponggok village also applies Community based tourism, local people are not only spectators, but as tourism actors and enjoy the impact directly, this article discusses the role of local champions seen from the concept of TALC butler (1980), analyzes each phase of the development of Ponggok village tourism and the involvement of local champions in it, In addition, it divides the role of local champions into 3 categories, namely facilitators, mediators and mobilizers

Keywords: Local Champion, Community Based Tourism, TALC

INTRODUCTION

In the process of community empowerment, community leaders or local champions are very important. In Umbul Ponggok Tourism Village, which implements the idea of community-based tourism development, community leaders have a similar role. This location is in Ponggok Village, Polanharjo District, Klaten Regency, Central Java. If you travel from Yogyakarta, it takes about one and a half hours. The head of Ponggok Village took the initiative to start the construction of this tourist village. He saw the potential of Ponggok village abundant with water, which never receded, and he seized the opportunity and turned it into a very attractive tourist attraction. Umbul Ponggok is the main attraction in this village.

A water park named Umbul Ponggok is located in Dukuh Ponggok, which is part of Ponggok Village. In Klaten, this natural pool has been transformed into a famous snorkeling spot. This natural pool measuring 50 by 25 meters with a depth of 1.5 to 2.6 meters and fed by clear and fresh springs has existed since Dutch times. The base of Umbul Ponggok is still very natural, unlike a swimming pool with tiled floors, with stretches of sand, pebbles, and millions of colorful fish, giving the impression that you are really under the sea. Activities that can be done here include snorkeling, diving, walking tours, pre-wedding photos under the sea, and underwater photography with varied characteristics.

There is also a restaurant and small business stalls.

This village is still growing and presents new tourist attractions including water activities (umbul). Communication and action methods that are important to understand in an effort to understand the process of interaction and relationships between stakeholders are the involvement of communities, village governments, and stakeholders. As a liaison facilitated by *local champions*, there must be a facilitator or mediator.

Given the lack of community knowledge and scarcity of facilities in rural areas, the role of local champions in community empowerment may be an important topic to research (Xu, Zhang & Tian, 2017) To at least operate as mediators, facilitators, and mobilizers, local champions must be able to maintain the relationship between leaders and followers (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2012). For example, in Umbul Ponggok, the local champion who started was the head of Ponggok Village. Explained from this study local leaders play a role in the management of tourism villages, these tourist villages not only offer snorkeling water tours and selfies in the water but they also have other attractions as well such as umbul sigedang, kapilaler and besuki, each umbul has its own uniqueness so that tourists who come are not saturated with the activities offered in Umbul Ponggok

In its development, Umbul Ponggok involves the surrounding community in management, besides

that they also work as guides and have other jobs, such as farming. Currently, Umbul Ponggok is managed by BUMDES Ponggok Village, so that its management can be projected properly. This is a form of community-based tourism where the community is involved and feels the benefits of tourism in their village. Rural tourism has a broad role in rural environments, such as: job creation, diversification of agriculture, promoting local food and drink, destination resource management, and community cohesion

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Theoretical Studies

Rural tourism development and local economic development must work together to reduce poverty (Houghton, 2015). As with rural tourism development, local communities play an important role in energizing the neighborhood, developing a shared vision, and setting goals. The local

community can be seen as a local champion, that is, someone who takes the initiative to change social and institutional processes. Davies (2011, p. 61) argues that in rural communities, local leadership is 'key to organizational effectiveness and successful endogenous development activities', suggesting that local leadership can be transactional or transformational. While transactional leadership describes the interaction between the leader and his followers in achieving a common goal. Community-based tourism (CBT) is one of the approach models used to improve the economic viability of rural communities (Manyara & Jones, 2007). Rural tourism development and local economic development must work together to reduce poverty (Houghton, 2015).

These locals can be called champions or *local champions*. A *local champion* is someone who takes the initiative to improve a community or institution, according to local economic development literature, where this term is more commonly encountered (Ecoplan International, 2005). Although the two jobs are similar, the local champion is sometimes not a leader. This applies to certain rural community health extension initiatives (Kirchner et al., 2010). Literature on the contribution of local leaders to the growth of rural tourism is still hard to find. New research sheds light on how *local leaders* influence rural tourism. To maintain sustainable tourism, communities must participate in tourism management. The

citizen engagement ladder is commonly used in research on community engagement, identified by Okazaki (2008) as an important component in effective CBT implementation.

In the development of tourism in Ponggok Village, Local champions become actors who contribute a lot to the development of tourism in Ponggok Village, this article will discuss the role of local champions associated with the concept of Butler, 1980 (TALC) Tourism Area Life Cycle. In accordance with the stages in a tourist destination and the characteristics that exist at each stage, this theory categorizes local champions into three categories: facilitators, mediators, and mobilizers (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2012).

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative descriptive approach was used in this study. The mapping of stakeholders or community leaders who play a role is based on information obtained through interviews about community involvement in tourism village management. A snowballing approach was used to identify informants in these studies, and literature studies were also conducted to provide supporting information. Starting from the village head, which is then followed by important individuals who are directly responsible for the operation of the tourism village. We identified five key informants from local champions who acted as community leaders, namely the village heads of Ponggok, BUMDES, Pokdarwis, homestays, and PKK. Primary data and secondary data were used in this study. Interviews with

village government members, community organizations, and tourism-related companies were conducted for primary data, while observations of tourist attractions were conducted for secondary data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ponggok Village is located in Polanharjo District, Klaten, Central Java. Administratively, the village is located 15km from the district capital. Ponggok Village consists of 6 hamlets, 6 RWs, and 12 RTs. The number and composition of the population in Ponggok Village is 1047 male residents and 1056 female residents with a population density of 2731 inhabitants / km². Below are the administrative boundaries of Ponggok Village:

North : Tulung District

South : Nganjat Village

East : Kauman Village

West : Karanganom District

Geographically, Ponggok Village is located east of Mount Merapi, which causes the area to have abundant water sources and will later become a tourism potential that began to be developed since 2009. In 2020 Ponggok Village was officially designated as a tourist village and then this tourist village was managed under the auspices of BUMDES Tirta Mandiri.

Tourism potential owned by Ponggok Village includes Umbul Ponggok, Umbul Besuki, Umbul Sigedhang-Kapilaler, and Ponggok Ciblon. Umbul Ponggok is located in

Dukuh Ponggok and has the main attraction of clear water, underwater exploration activities, and photo spots with property, besides that it also provides space for entertainment activities. Umbul Besuki is located in the middle of the forest and is a place for various activities such as wedding footage, camping, family gathering, and swimming pool. Umbul Sigedhang-Kapilaler is a source of mineral water in the AQUA brand packaging, this tour is connected to Umbul Kapilaler which is filled with banyan trees with roots displaying upwards and hundreds of years old. While Ponggok Ciblon is a tour that does not have water discharge because it is used as a swimming training place for athletes.

Tourism development in Ponggok Village is followed by the fulfillment of tourism facilities for visitors such as ATMs, conference rooms, restaurants, trekking through the forest, public toilets, souvenir shops, food, prayer rooms, departure areas, selfie areas, photo locations, and internet areas.

1. The contribution of local leaders to the growth of Ponggok Village. The Village Head, Junaedi Mulyono who succeeded in bringing Ponggok Village to a higher level was the main initiator of Ponggok Village, which was originally famous as a poor village to become one of the richest villages and had an income of 13

billion in 2019. The Head of Ponggok Village as a local champion has the role of facilitator, mediator, and mobilizer. The Village Head looks for tourism potential and attractions in Ponggok Village and then develops it into a tourist attraction, then various collaborations and programs are carried out that support tourism development. Through a number of programs, the Head of Ponggok Village uses BUMDes, a village consisting of 11 business units, to improve the quality of its human resources. The existence of infrastructure improvement and addition programs is proof of commitment to tourism development in Ponggok Village. The development of Ponggok Tourism Village is grouped based on phases in the theory of Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) by Buttler (1978). The exploration and involvement phase occurred during 2007-2010, the development phase occurred during 2011-2013, the consolidation phase occurred during 2014-2019, while the stagnation-decline phase occurred during 2017-2018. An explanation of the programs carried out in each phase as in (Aji & Kusumawanto, 2020) can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Phase of Tourism Development of Ponggok Village Based on Buttler's TALC Theory (1978)

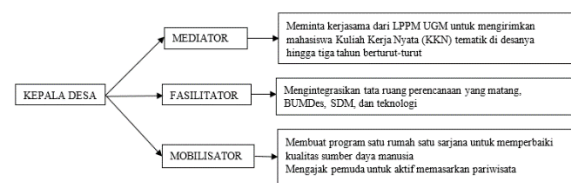
Fase	Exploration and involvement	Development	Consolidation	Stagnation-decline
Year	(2007-2010)	(2011-2013)	(2014-2016)	(2017-2018)
Role <i>Local Champion</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify tourism potential 2. Formed RPJMDes 2007-2013 3. Establish an infrastructure improvement program 4. Forming and managing BUMDes 5. Collaborate with the diving unit of Jogja diving center 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renovating superior ponggok 2. Establish an irrigation improvement program 3. Build joglos and trenches 4. Conducting training for SMEs, PKK, and RWs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assisting RPJMDes 2014-2019 2. Create websites and social media accounts for marketing 3. Initiating renovation of signage, gateways, hamlet roads, and umbul ponggok area 4. Reacquisition and renovation of ponggok ciblon 5. Conduct capacity training 6. Create a fare increase policy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holding a trash can, inaugurating pokdarwis wanuwa tirta 2. Initiating empowerment programs 3. Create village community and women's empowerment programs.

Source: Analysis Results, 2022

1. Referring to the statements of Haven-Tang and Jones (2012) and Xu, et al. (2017) who divide the role of local champions into 3, namely mobilizers, facilitators and mediators. The development of Ponggok Tourism Village is influenced by the role of the Village Head as a local champion who has functions as a mediator, facilitator, and mobilizer. The function of the mediator is to open interaction and help communication between stakeholders involved in the development of tourism villages. Head

The village became a mediator in a collaborative effort between Ponggok Village and LPPM UGM to conduct research and special thematic KKN in the village for three consecutive years with a focus on tourism development. The function of the facilitator is to help cooperation between stakeholders so that the programs implemented can be integrated. The Village Head integrates careful spatial planning, BUMDes, human resources, and the application of technology. All these elements are arranged so that they have good cooperation for the development of Ponggok Village tourism. While the mobilizer function is the driving force or initiator of programs pursued in the development of tourism villages. The Village Head created several programs aimed at supporting tourism development in Ponggok Village such as the 1 house 1 undergraduate program to improve the quality of human

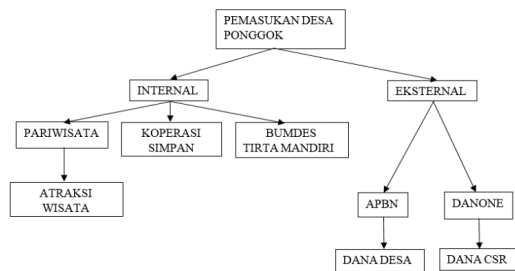
resources and invite youth to actively market tourism through social media. Both programs have their own budgets to support the success and implementation of the program. The leadership factor has an important role in the success of tourism development in rural areas, however, the Village Head as a local champion requires the role of other stakeholders to create integrated programs from various sectors so that the needs of village tourism development can be met. The source of funds obtained is also channeled to programs to support tourism development in Ponggok Village. The role of the head of Ponggok Village as a mediator, facilitator, and mobilizer of tourism village development can be seen in the following chart:



Graph 1 Chart of the Village Head's Role as Local Champion

Source: Analysis Results 2022

3. Tourism development in Ponggok Village provides additional income which can be categorized into internal and external. Internal revenue comes from tourism, savings and loan cooperatives, and BUMDes. Meanwhile, external income comes from village funds and CSR funds. More details can be seen in the chart below:



Graph 2 Income Chart of Ponggok Village

Source: Analysis Results, 2022

CONCLUSIONS

The development of tourism in Ponggok Village based on the theory of Tourist Area Life Cycle includes exploration and involvement phase in 2007-2010, development phase in 2011-2013, consolidation phase in 2014-2016, and stagnation-decline phase in 2017-2018. Tourism development in Ponggok Village cannot be separated from the influence of local champions, in this case it is known that the local champion in Ponggok Village is the Head of Ponggok Village. The Head of Ponggok Village as a local champion of village tourism developers has functions as a mediator, facilitator, and mobilizer. Programs carried out for tourism development are woven by involving the participation of the community, government, and academics.

The Head of Ponggok Village integrates elements of spatial planning, technology, human resource utilization, and BUMDes management. Village income is obtained from the tourism sector, savings and loan cooperatives,

BUMDes, village funds, and CSR funds. The revenue is also channeled directly to the community through programs such as infrastructure improvements, education funding, and funds for training.

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