

ENTREPRENEURIAL FIGURE OF MOUNT AGUNG TREKKING GUIDES

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ABSTRACT

Mount Agung with an altitude of 3,142 meters from sea level stood at the coordinates of 8020'27 "S 115030'12" E, circled along 105 kilometers (65 miles), and classified as a volcanic type monoconic strato. The highest mountain in Bali Province was located in Selat District, Karangasem Regency. It got a last major eruption in 1963 and since then began to be climbed by climbers/tourists. Because in 1970s and 1980s some climbers/tourists very often got lost and accidents to death, since the 1990s a number of the local community members took initiative to serve the climbers/tourists who want to explore the mountain known as holy and sacred one. This study was conducted in order to understand and describe the pioneering aspects of entrepreneurial figure of the related trekking guides. It was a qualitative study with a qualitative data analysis.

The results of this study showed that because Mount Agung was not an ordinary mountain but full of myths and stories that were supernatural, so the entrepreneurial practices of the Selat Village community appeared not only to serve the climbers/trekkers as usual but also to preserve the environment and ensure their safety as there were so many taboos in the climbing/trekking. All these facts can be seen from the depiction of the stories and experiences of the local climbing/trekking guides who had been doing their work for years. As entrepreneurs, they looked for income but, above all, environmental sustainability and the spirituality of the mountain werw not neglected.

Keywords: entrepreneurial figure, trekking guide, climbers/trekkers, Gunung Agung.

BACKGROUND

Mount Agung is one of the most sacred mountains in the world. This is seen for example in some studies, such as Stuart-Fox (2010) and *Media Hindu*, 159th Edition, May 2017. In Bali, the mountain is highly respected by the Hindu community which are the major population. In the middle of this mountain there is Pasar Agung Temple and at its feet stands Besakih Temple as the biggest temple in Bali. Even in

the peak of the mountain there is a small temple called Puser Tasik (*puser* means “centre”; *tasik* means “salt” as this place is believed to penetrate a sea) so that religious ritual are very often run in this place.

Mount Agung (or Gunung Agung in Indonesian and Balinese Language) is a beautiful, exotic mountain. It is a volcanic mountain, classified an active one, and in its history has erupted several times. After its last major eruption in 1963, only a small number of international and domestic adventurers and/or tourists, climbed the mountain. In the beginning, climbers/tourists generally did not use any guides, so that among them were missing, lost, crashed, and even died. Since the 1990s, as the number of international and domestic trekkers/tourists grew, and in the same time the Balinese tourism industry began to reach its peak, there was awareness among members of the community in Selat Village, to take initiatives to provide guidance services in climbing the mountain.

This paper aims to discuss the pioneering stories of some entrepreneurial figures in guiding Mount Agung climbing/trekking activities run by the community of Selat Village. In general, this study is in some ways to encourage as well as to grow tourism practices in the community, so that it is expected to have an economic impact on the subject of the study (i.e. the community). This study is in line with the study of Zhao and Ritchie (2007), which became the basis for the development of tourism paradigm called pro poor tourism (tourism that supports the weak).

The practical goal of this paper is to participate in the development of tourism entrepreneurship in the area of mountain climbing/trekking in rural areas. So this study is expected to generate human resources of entrepreneurship in the local people who are smart, resilient, and successful in responding to the market interests (domestic and foreign climbers/tourists) to enjoy the beauty and exoticism of the mountain. Of course, the development of entrepreneurship is relevant to the ideals of nature preservation and efforts to maintain the holiness and sacredness of the mountain because the Mount Agung itself is considered sacred by the Balinese in general.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in the achievement of the purpose of this study is qualitative. In this case through the qualitative method it is expected to be able to explain the complexity and depth of the existing problem of the entrepreneurial figures, especially

the experienced Mount Agung's climbing/trekking guides. The data obtained were analyzed by qualitative data analysis, through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion, as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1992: 15-19).

The informants include climbing/trekking guides in Selat Village, especially some of the main characters, who are pioneers in such an entrepreneurship. Of the dozens, four are selected because they are the most experienced guides in providing climbing/trekking services of Gunung Agung, whose route or track is through the Selat Village and Pasar Agung. In terms of this research, the informants' experience is important to note. Sudikan (2001) for example explains that the three basic aspects of human experience that need to be considered, is what they do, what they know, and what objects they make and use in their activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are several guide figures who deserve to be called initiators and pioneers of the entrepreneurship of the climbing/trekking in Selat Village. They are I Wayan Sukra (46 years), I Nengah Kari (45 years), Gung Bawa or Anak Agung Ngurah Wibawa (43 years), and I Wayan Tegteg (63 years). Sukra and Kari who started his guiding since the early 1990s are natives of the local village. Gung Bawa was born and grew in Selat Village but since a decade ago decided to stay in Denpasar because his wife works as a bank employee in this city. Tegteg is not a native one (like Sukra, Kari, and Gung Bawa) but has been a permanent resident of the village.

I Wayan Sukra from Dusun/Banjar Selat Kelod was originally a trader in his village. When the climbing/trekking business of Mount Agung began to grow, beside trading, he will certainly give priority to guide the climbing/trekking. So he actually gets a double job (two different jobs) but with unequal priorities. To him, guiding to the mountain is much more profitable than his trading activities. He earns at least Rp. 400,000 from his delivery. That is why, he is ready to leave his trading job for some hours if there are tourists/climbers ordering him through social media in his smart phone. He still does trading till now since climbing/trekking activities can only be done when the season is good to do that. The climbing/trekking to Mount Agung is usually done between April and October otherwise it is so dangerous.

I Nengah Kari from Dusun/Banjar Selat Kaja is a formal leader in his *dusun/banjar* (hamlet). As a person who needs extra income for living, he also works as a climbing/trekking guide outside his time as the head of the *dusun/banjar*. His work as a guide does not disturb his busy time in leading the *dusun/banjar*. Moreover, the climbing/trekking always begins in the evening or night and in the morning (before noon) arrive home. Like Sukra, he uses social media, like Facebook, and is able to communicate with foreign climbers/trekkers in English though not so fluent.

Another local guide is Gung Bawa who his full name is Anak Agung Ngurah Wibawa. Graduated from Diploma 1 of tourism in Dalung, Badung, Gung Bawa who was an experienced guide. During his career, he has done hundred times of climbing/trekking and understand much about the level of difficulty in climbing Mount Agung. Hearing experiences and abilities and seeing generally the appearance of the climbers/tourists, he can wisely advise them on which tops to reach and which route to take.

Like Sukra and Kari, Gung Bawa is very aware of the supernatural uniqueness of Mount Agung. Of course the initial goal of the three (Sukra, Kari, and Gung Bawa) as climbing/trekking guides is looking for income but the important thing is that they feel deeper and deeper feeling regarding the greatness of God in this mountain everytime they do guiding. So Sukra and Kari are, Gung Bawa is also very obedient to all written and unwritten provisions (what climbers/tourists can do and cannot do) in climbing. For example, climbers/tourists should not speak haphazardly and are not allowed to bring food sourced from beef because cows are holy/sacred animals in Hinduism. In addition, if on the way of climbing/trekking they found a spring, which is a holy water, they should pray first before taking it or, if they are not Hindu, they can ask the guide to help to take the water.

Like Sukra and Kari, Gung Bawa caters to climbing/trekking tourists with his "cultural capital" (according to Bourdieu, 1990), that is a knowledge system about Mount Agung he knows, feels, and experiences, which is filled with stories of omnipotence of the one God. Gung Bawa said that Mount Agung is not just a matter of joy of climbing, a kind of satisfaction of conquering the mountain peak, or the beauty of the sunrise from the top of the mountain but, above all, about the greatness of God the Creator of Mount Agung and the signs of spirituality-religiosity the climbers/tourists get while climbing, which are very often unbelievable and out of logic.

As an experienced guide, Gung Bawa in many cases handles the same climber/tourists for years. It seems that they like Mount Agung very much. He very often gets praises from all over the world for his guiding intelligence and style of service he gives. The praises are not only given orally but also digitally, through internet. To support his professionalism in the field of climbing/trekking, he has social media such as facebook and blogspot. "Much more than just trekking (or "jauh lebih dari sekadar mendaki" in Indonesian language)" is his slogan.

Since 2000s another guide named I Wayan Tegteg appeared. He used to be an elementary school teacher around the villages and finally decided to supplement his income by becoming a climbing/trekking guide since he was retired from his job. Although Tegteg is not a native in the village, he can show his existence as a reliable and preferred guide. His age is no longer young because he is now 63 years old but his passion to escort climbers/tourists to Mount Agung is admirable.

Tegteg was born in Dawan Village, Klungkung, in 1954 and graduated from SPG (Sekolah Pendidikan Guru or School of Teacher Education) in Klungkung. He has been domiciled in Selat Village since 1977. Tegteg occupies a plot of land that is strategically located in Selat Village, near the Selat Health Center (Puskesma), where he establishes a fairly crowded food stall on the side of the road near Tukad (River) Kalangidi. Beside a stall he manages a fish pond whose commodities he sells directly and some are cooked and sold in his stall which is waited by his wife. After he retired from being a teacher, he concentrated on escorting the climbers/tourists. His profile, activities, and accomplishments are clearly displayed on the social media he uses, such as Facebook, Instagram, and blogs. What is interesting about Tegteg is his view in entrepreneurship associated with Mount Agung. For him, serving climbers/trekkers to this mountain is to make a living as well as to communicate with new people from around the world so that he can refresh his life. As retired teachers of elementary school, his income per month is not good enough to live with his wife. Therefore he tried to pit his fortune on the climb/trek.

Tegteg used to be a teacher of natural science and mathematic subjects. He honestly admits that he practices spirituality-religiosity in his own way. He does the spirituality in a simpler way: he only puts a *canang* (small offerings) and never forget to sing sincere prayings from the heart which substance is to ask for salvation and protection for himself and for the climbers/tourists he escorts.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Behind its existence as an agricultural area from the most phenomenal volcanic eruption in Bali, Selat Village was later known to produce a number of entrepreneurs in the form of Mount Agung climbing/trekking guides. This signifies the ability of a certain number of members in the local community to respond to the great interest of the Balinese tourism market. In the context of Bourdieu's theorization (1990; see also Takwin, 2009), they do a "practice" in which those people (the subjects) actively "create their own culture". In fact, quite a lot of tourists want to try out climbing Mount Agung with the guides from the village. Nevertheless, there are still many things that must be done to develop this village as the most significant central point of Mount Agung trekking which also gives positive (economic) effects for the members of the community involved.

In general, entrepreneurship climbing/trekking guides in Selat Village take inspiration from the developments that exist in some places that have been "tourist village or village tourism/*desa wisata*" in Bali such as Ubud in Gianyar Regency or Jasri in Karangasem regency. The two villages have a pattern of community-based tourism (CBT) or *pariwisata berbasis masyarakat* that plays local wisdom (local knowledge) an important role in it. In practice, Ubud adopt the local wisdom which is later embodied in the community-based tourism (SANJAYA, I Wayan Kiki; MUDANA, I Gede. COMPASSIONATE CAPITALISM IN HOTEL INDUSTRY IN UBUD, BALI. **E-Journal of Cultural Studies**, [S.l.], may 2017. ISSN 2338-2449. Available at: <<https://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/ecs/article/view/32131>>. Date accessed: 25 aug. 2017). Like in Ubud, village tourism is well run in Jasri so that this village get "the Indonesian tourism villages of the year 2013" (as the first champion) as written by AMERTA, I Made Suniastha; MUDANA, I Gede. THE MEANINGS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM AT JASRI VILLAGE, SUBAGAN SUB-DISTRICT, KARANGASEM. **E-Journal of Cultural Studies**, [S.l.], feb. 2017. ISSN 2338-2449. Available at: <<https://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/ecs/article/view/32124>>. Date accessed: 25 aug. 2017).

Tourism is essentially an economic business that involves the tourism industry (private pillar) based on natural resources and/or local culture with the support of the political role of the government (state as political pillar) and of course the participation

of the local people (civil society pillar). Seeing all this, stakeholders, especially the government and the tourism industry, should be more active than what they have done. The entrepreneurial pioneering done by the climbing/trekking guides of Gunung Agung in Selat Village must be followed up, developed, transmitted to other community members, and made more profitable for the guides concerned. Many things are suggested to be done by the guides which must be helped by the government and the tourism industry, they are: real economic capital, more professional management/organization, better marketing, and wider networking, including the creation of an integrated website.

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