

# JOMBLANG CAVE'S CONTEXTUAL DIVERSITY IN SUPPORTING ADVENTURE EXPERIENCE TOURISM AS A SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Diah Natarina<sup>1</sup>, Agus Sachari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Faculty of Arts and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology

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## ABSTRACT

The world tourism industry, which has been hit hard by the prolonged pandemic, has yet to show its revival. It has become a concern of the government, organizations communities and other private parties. The current situation did not allow people to have mobility. Some organizations considered that its time to evaluate and make recovery strategies to implement when the pandemic ends. It is Ollivaud and Haxton from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development providing advice on recovery steps. They say that the creative economy can help offer new products and services for new target groups away from conventional models of environmental or heritage-based cultural tourism: that can be through unconventional media advertisements, art creation in a specific building, and sound-and-light shows. Increasingly visitors are looking for experience-based, instead of destination-based, tourism. Jomblang Cave located in Semanu Village, Gunung Kidul, since 2011 has widely been well known as experience-based tourism, a form of the creative economy, which is currently experiencing a lack of visitors. This writing aims to optimize the contextual diversity of Jomblang Cave to upgrade itself to be ready to accept adventure tourists when the pandemic is gradually over. The research method used is the descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques by conducting interviews with managers, literature studies and site reviews. The data will be processed by the analytical method. The result is to prioritize the contextual diversity that owned, a form of the creative economy in the field of adventure tourism Jomblang Cave will remain sustainable.

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## Corresponding Author:

Diah Natarina1

Faculty of Arts and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology

Email: [diah.natarina@students.itb.ac.id](mailto:diah.natarina@students.itb.ac.id)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indian Ocean ground that was lifted to the surface millions of years ago was the beginning of the Gunung Sewu karst mountain range. Karst or limestone which is then weathered by weather forms thousands of conical hills. In Javanese, the word sewu means a thousand. That is why this karst landscape is called Gunung Sewu. In terms of geography, cultural development map, especially in Central Java, Gunung Sewu has a wider area than the Mataram and Surakarta kingdoms resulting in the local community having an open, sociable character and likes to work together. This fact opens the contextual direction of the discussion of the Gunung Sewu Karst mountains to be diverse. Such as geological contextual, conservation contextual, experiential tourism contextual, historical contextual, socio-cultural contextual to visual communication design contextual.

Contextual geology will be the basis for the discussion of this paper. Explaining the karst mountains mentioned earlier, the Gunung Sewu karst is divided into two, namely exo-karst and endo-karst. The Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano in the western part of Gunungkidul district and the conical hills in the southern part of Gunung Sewu are examples of exo-karst. The caves found in three districts in Gunung Sewu are examples of endo-karst as said by Samodra (Rahmadi et al., 2018). An interesting natural phenomenon is the bottom of the karst mountains of Gunung Sewu by local people calling it an underground river. For example, the river that flows in Kalisuci is connected to an underground river in Grubug Cave and also connected to an underground lake in Ngingrong Cave and finally, this underground river empties into Indian Ocean southern sea of the island of Java. In addition to geological uniqueness, there is also a biological uniqueness in the form of plants and animals that are not found elsewhere.



Figure 1: Illustration of exokarst and endokarst landscapes (Source: Rahmadi et al., 2018)

This cave is also a witness to the military atrocities in eradicating followers of the PKI ideology in 1966 in Central Java. Until one day the local community restored the Jomblang Cave and Grubug Cave areas. The restoration efforts were successful, especially when this place was managed officially and professionally and was appointed as the setting for making commercial product advertisements whose broadcasts went overseas. This can be classified as a creative economy because there is a mutualism between the manager and the local community. There has been a sharp decline in visits since the outbreak of the pandemic and restrictions have been put in place on adventures.

In 2015 Gunung Sewu officially became a member of the UNESCO Global Geopark where Jomblang Cave and Grubug Cave were one of the thirty-three geosites. Visual Communication Design plays a role here as the science base for making visualization of the nomenclature that written in the dossier application of countries that want to become the membership and member countries that must revalidate they membership.

With a contextual diversity discussions about Gunung Sewu, especially Jomblang Cave, it can be used as preparation for reviving the creative economy in line with maintaining environmental balance in this adventure experience tourism destination.

## 2. DATA AND METHOD

The primary data collection technique is by conducting site observations, in-depth interviews with Jomblang Cave Managers and residents around the cave held on June 2021. Complementary data took from literature studies and journals. This research uses the descriptive-analytical method.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To have acceleration tourism recovery during this pandemic, various seminars have been held. What is said by Ollivaud and Haxton from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development providing advice on recovery steps. They say that the creative economy can help offer new products and services for new target groups away from conventional models of environmental or heritage-based cultural tourism: that can be through unconventional media advertisements, art creation in a specific building, and sound-and-light shows. Increasingly visitors are looking for experience-based, instead of destination-based, tourism is part of containing the contribution of the seminar's suggestions. Continuing this advice, this paper describes the correlation with what has been done by the manager of this cave adventure (Richards, 2020).

Jomblang Cave is always interesting to discuss and has several contextual angles. By taking some part of the existing contextual diversity, the creative economic activity of adventure tourism was born. For clarity, this contextual diversity will discuss one by one as the following.:

### Geological Contextual

Compared to the caves in Gunung Sewu, the most famous endo-kars charm to foreign countries is Jomblang Cave, which is connected by one passage to Grubug Cave. The ancient cave which has a vertical hole with a depth of more than 80 meters presents a dazzling beauty when sunlight enters the cave at a certain time. Adventurers know it as the light of heaven

Even more amazing is at Grubug Cave bottom of flows an underground river. Sound of rushing flow echoes in the chamber of the cave



Figure 2: Ray of Heaven in Grubug Cave (Source: Authors, 2021)

To enjoy the ray of heaven, the adventurer must be at Grubug Cave bottom around 11.00 noon. When clear weather, sunlight will slowly come in along of 90 meters height. The peak of the beauty of light will appear around noon when sunlight enters perpendicular to the earth surface. After that time, the space in the cave slowly dimmed again.

#### Historical Contextual



Figure 3: Illustration of PKI suspected mass killings  
 (Source: <https://19651966perpustakaanonline.wordpress.com/>)

The natural beauty of Gunungkidul has been recorded through a picture made by Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn in 1850. He is a descendant of German-Dutch who works as a botanist and geologist. He paint what he saw that Gunungkidul is an area with various species of fauna living in it. (Rahmadi et al., 2018, page 7)

Behind the beauty and uniqueness of the cave, it has a very dark history. It is said that this cave was used as a location for mass killings of PKI members. It is estimated that hundreds of PKI members met their end in Jomblang Cave. According to the story, they were grouped at the edge of the cave with their hands tied to each other. When one is shot down into the cave, the other members will fall too.

This story had frightened the local community after haunted stories about the cave. It was also told that there were explorers who disappeared after exploring this unspoiled cave. In the 1990s the community around the cave held a prayer together in this place. Since then, there have been no more stories or incidents of cave explorers being swallowed by Jomblang Cave, Gunungkidul as said by Sulistio.

#### Experiential Tourism Contextual

The cave, which is located in the village of Semanu Gunungkidul, is gradually becoming known to the wider community. Artistic scenes and adrenaline-pumping commercial TV display has captured the attention of a foreign television program. The snowball law applies, through certified management since 2010. With a fee of IDR 500,000 per person, tourists who come to this place consistently range from 30 people to 80 people per day.





Figure 4: Sliding down into Jomblang Cave (Source: Authors, 2021)

Those who dare to go down into the cave and are willing to pay that much for the ticket are certainly categorized as adventurers that go to special interest. Thus it can be distinguished groups of tourists in general with special interest tourists.

#### **Conservation Contextual**

Jomblang Cave has a variety of vegetation. What is on the surface of the cave entrance is different from the vegetation at the bottom of the cave. Likewise with animals such as bat species, which thousands of bats live communally in caves. Also found certain types of reptiles and animals such as soil crabs



Figure 5: Ancient vegetation grow on the bottom of Jomblang Cave (Source: Authors, 2021)

If ever there was a fact that the karst of Gunung Sewu together with a long underground river became the habitat of various species of flora and fauna. Typical cave species ranging from microbial groups to bat vertebrate fauna are found in cave karst ecosystems both on the surface and below the surface. 11500-year-old child skull in Song Gupuh. Other fauna species have been found to prove that Gunungsewu is an ideal habitat for various fauna species to live in. Environmental change from tropical forest to non-forest, many species are disappearing only a few are left. Human activities utilizing the area such as mining and fauna capture cause changes in environmental conditions. However, the occurrence of a pandemic that exposed the Gunung Sewu area turned out to be beneficial. With reduced tourist visits, there will also be less waste that usually piles up. The sky of Gunungkidul is cleaner than usual, the river water is clearer than usual and many birds are flying and chirping. Some plants grow back. It is as if the pandemic has given room for Gunung Sewu to be able to have a refreshment. As Martono said.

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#### **Socio-cultural Contextual**

The adventurer who comes to Jomblang Cave certainly has an advanced plan. Upon their arrival in Yogyakarta, either by train or plane, they are picked up by a rental car that will take them directly. Jomblang Cave managers regularly share appreciation in the form of a certain amount of money as per person rental car drivers brought. So this system can be relied on for most drivers to earn a fix income. Jomblang Cave managers gives liberty for the drivers to develop ways to promote.



Figure 6: Farmers freelancer on Jomblang Cave neighbourhood  
(Source: Authors, 2021)

Not just a rental car driver, this caving activity also involves farmers who live around the cave. Since weather anomalies occur in recent years, farmers are a bit indistinct in calculating the planting time for several types of crop cultivation to produce maximum yields. To get additional income, farmers are sensitive enough to see the opportunity. When they see rental vehicles entering the Jomblang Cave area they will organize themselves to hold the rope to help lower adventurer into the cave. Past noontime to pull the ropes to lift adventurer out of the cave. Just like the drivers, these farmers also get appreciation in the form of money. After taking a job as a rope puller they will return to the field to take care of their farmer's crops.

This kind of mutual assistance phenomenon is common in Gunungkidul because basically, the Gunungkidul community is a mutual cooperation community. It's just that farmers currently seem to be getting two unlucky ones, which are the uncertain planting time and the lack of adventurers due to restrictions on foreign tourists entering Indonesia.

#### Visual Communication Design Contextual

Gunung Sewu which has become a member of UNESCO Global Geoparks in 2015 is obliged to comply with the requirements. The relation of this writing to the context of Visual Communication Design is to become a basic science in realizing the visibility points of these requirements. It is stated in the visibility item that a Geopark must-have information and learning media by making museum tourist information panels, information gates, brochures, websites and social media applications. For the purpose of special interest in Jomblang Cave, there should be markers that give direction. In order to maintain the authenticity of the briefing environment, especially those containing fairly long information content, interpret it with the QR Code system. There is a time for updating or rejuvenating Goa Jomblang's social media sites to reorganize



Figure 7: Visual Communication Design has role on social media promotion of Jomblang Cave  
(Source: Authors, 2021)

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The pandemic period is no reason to remain silent. From the contextual diversity of Jomblang Cave as an adventure experiential tourism geosite. There are three main contextual in preparing to welcome adventurers when the pandemic is over. Nature of Gunungkidul where Jomblang Cave is lo-cated has provided a certain period to rest so that it will re-turn the nature into good health condition and refresh according to the context of conservation. Indigenous people who like to work together can be involved in making physical and infrastructure improvements as mentioned in the historical context. Contextual Visual Communication Design can be optimized by updating visual content both image and audio video on social media with new visuals to promote Jomblang Cave and other geosites in Gunungkidul to show to the world that the creative economy at this place remains sustainable.



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