

Enhancing Tourists' Experience Through Community-Based Home Stay

The Case of Kampung Cireundeu, Indonesia

Rosita Rosita and Sri Marhanah

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jl. Dr. Setiabudi No. 229, Bandung, Indonesia
{rosita1019, srimarhanah}@upi.edu

Keywords: Tourist Experience, Homestay, Rural Tourism, Narrative Analysis.

Abstract: This study aims to explore the possibility of homestay in rural area enhances its tourists' experience. The study take place at Kampung Cireundeu, a tourism village located in West Java, Indonesia. Data are collected from stories of homestay experience told and written by participants. Narrative analysis is employed to analyse participants' narratives. The Sundanese '*someah hade ka semah*' culture, belief, and preserved traditions are three topics that are considered as culture experience obtained by participants during their stay. This suggests that homestay is able to enhance rural tourists' experience especially on their understanding of culture and local values.

1 INTRODUCTION

Kampung Cireundeu located in Cimahi, West Java, Indonesia is one of Indonesian traditional village which became a cultural tourist destination since 2004. Its tourists are typical of rural tourists who expect authentic experience of local culture and natural village life. This village has traditional culture as its main attraction. They still held traditional ceremonies such as marriage, birth, death, and celebration of Sundanese New year in traditional way. Staple food in the form of cassava rice called 'rasi' which is an abbreviation from Indonesian *beras* (rice) and *singkong* (cassava) is also became what Kampung Cireundeu is all about since this village is awarded for its food security by the government in 1964. Kampung Cireundeu also has natural attractions such as landscaping of cassava garden, rocks, and protected forests that prohibited to be entered except accompanied by indigenous villagers.

This village is like other Indonesian village in general, the houses are not the traditional ones, except a hall that was deliberately built for cultural ceremony. If tourists come to visit this village and hope to get different experiences like being in a traditional ancient village, then they will

undoubtedly be disappointed. Especially if the time of visit does not coincide with the holding of cultural events, then there is not much that can be enjoyed beside having conversation with local people and buying various processed cassava cookies. Unless they have enough time and energy, they can walk for an hour to get to the rock and see the view of Bandung city from height. If this is the case, Kampung Cireundeu may only be interesting to be visited at any given moment.

Sukriah and Rosita (2013) revealed that there was a gap between expectations and reality on the local cultural aspects encountered by the tourists in Kampung Cireundeu. This gap can only be fulfilled if the tourists stay longer and interact with the local community, especially on the days of traditional ceremonies were held. In this case they suggested community based homestay to cover the gap. Purpose of this homestay is as tourist accommodation as well as to extend the length of stay of the tourist and helps them find the local culture values and the real life of the villagers. This study aims to explore further these possibilities by knowing the experience of tourists who stay at homestay Kampung Cireundeu. This topic is selected because research on home stay in Indonesia

is very few in number, even less about home stay experience in tourist village. While rural tourism in Indonesia itself is now being encouraged to develop.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has now become one of the ways for rural areas to build and develop their cultural potentials since they can provide space for recreation, interaction with nature and culture, and experience of being in a distinct environment which able to make tourists feel like return to the origins and the authentic (Kastenholz, 2012). Rural as a tourist destination is the object as well as the subject of tourism. As the object means that rural life is what the tourists' purpose to visit while as the subject means that its local community are the organizer of various tourism activities provided and the recipient of the outcome (Hadiwijoyo, 2012) Beside enhancing community development, conservation, and poverty alleviation, rural tourism is also designed for tourist that needs authentic experiences.

Authenticity itself has become a topic that draw attention of tourism scholars (Mura, 2015). Beginning with discussing on which one is authentic and which one is not (MacCannell, 1976), then continue on finding meanings of what tourists ask for authenticity (Cohen, 1979) and questioning on how it is represented now (Wang, 2007), authenticity is debatable. However, it is often associated with a certain nostalgia for the 'good old days' (Kastenholz, 2012). That is why homestay as accommodation types that allows tourists not only to stay with the locals but also experience their culture (Lynch, 2005) become tourists' choice of getting what is called authentic experience. Indeed, homestay can provide 'customized authenticity' which combines three things at the same times, the 'exotic other', existential state of being and 'sense of home' (Wang, 2007). However, one thing that need to take as an account is that rural tourist experience must be understood as overall experience consists of diversity of resources, attractions, services, people and environments offered by the destination (Kastenholz, 2012). Social, emotional, and symbolic experience associated with rural become important determinant of tourist satisfaction (Kastenholz, 2012).

3 METHODS

Data used in this study were collected through interview and stories written by participants. Four

participants were asked to stay for one night in two different homestay. This was done because during the time of data retrieval in September 2017, it was not certain whether there would be guests staying at any homestay or not. Each participant was given an empty notebook to write down their activities since arrival until their return, any event they experienced, and their views on the experience. The interview was conducted one week after their return to ask a thorough impression of the homestay experience they obtained and confirm several things related to the story they wrote. Here are the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1: Participant's characteristics.

Sex	Age	Ethnic
Female	21	Sundanese
Female	20	Sundanese
Female	39	Javanese
Female	36	Javanese

The collected data was analyzed using narrative analysis techniques. This technique was considered suitable with the purpose of this study to analyze the story written by participants during their stay at homestay to explore whether homestay can provide memorable cultural experience or not. Analyzing data in the form of written story is divided into two phases: the description phase and the interpretation phase (Smith, 2008). The description phase is the whole reading activity of the story, reducing and coding, organizing and sorting the story chronologically. While the phase of interpretation is an activity to explain meaning and give interpretation (Arifin, 2014).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 'Someah Hade Ka Semah' Culture

'Someah Hade Ka Semah' is local wisdom of the Sundanese society which means that the Sundanese must be friendly to their guests. Being friendly is also entertains, guards, nurtures, and seeks to please their guests. This culture is depicted in the story of the participants as they first arrive and meet the host of the homestay.

The host is very friendly ... served us local cookies and drinks ... served bananas as a welcome to her house (P1)

We were guests, but I felt like coming home ... there were banana, traditional cakes, warm tea served for us (P2)

In contrast to hotels that we need to pay for a drink, here we were treated to various snacks (P3)

The treats given by the host to the participants in the form of food (bananas and local cookies) and drinks (warm tea) are the topic of the story about the first arrival experience at homestay. Beside the food, the hosts also welcomed them with friendly faces, polite language, and welcomed them openly by guiding them the entire part of the houses.

We were greeted kindly by the host. The owner of the house guided us to every room and home facilities (P1)

The host greeted us with a smile and a greeting in a fine Sundanese language (P2)

Sundanese philosophy 'someah hade ka semah' has some markers of good intention to respect and appreciate the existence of others in the environment, attitude and body language that is open in accepting the presence of guests, and expressions of joy and happiness. Those three markers were felt by the participants who were present as guests in the homestay host environment. This became the opening story of participants' homestay experiences.

4.2 Belief

During the stay at the homestay house the participants performed several activities performed with the host, among others, following the host attending the 7 month pregnancy rituals, tracking the forest ban, following the daily activities of the host, talking with the host, and discussing. Two participants wrote stories about the beliefs of the people in Kampung Cireundeu related to their experiences when they both visited a house and said 'Assalamualaikum', Muslim's greetings in Indonesia when visiting or entering other people's house.

When visiting someone's house, as usual we unconsciously say 'assalamualaikum', then our homestay host admonished and informed us that people here in Cireundeu were not Muslims and they do not say 'assalamualaikum' (P1)

The people of Kampung Cireundeu embrace the beliefs of Old Sunda. Although they already mingled with the surrounding Muslim community, they remain firmly in their belief. They consider Islam to be a new religion, whereas their ancestral religion already exists long time before. Therefore the greeting "assalamualaikum" does not apply here (P2)

Neighboring villagers are already Muslims. There is a mosque that call for prayer and its sound is heard. But the Cireundeu's people do not pray five times a day, their belief is the belief of their ancestors (P3)

7 month pregnancy rituals are also done by many Muslims in Indonesia. And this is a debate ... it means that Muslims also still maintain the tradition of their ancestors, the same beliefs as people here in Kampung Cireundeu (P4)

People of Kampung Cireundeu still hold firmly their tradition and belief of their ancestor which is called *Sunda Wiwitan*. This belief is known as the ancient tradition of Sundanese people. They believe in God and maintain their tradition as identity.

4.3 Preserved Tradition

People of Kampung Cireundeu uphold the principle of life that is '*Teu nyawah asal boga pare, teu boga pare asal boga beas, teu boga beas asal bias nyangu, teu nyangu asal dahar, teu dahar asal kuat*' which means does not matter for not having rice field as long as having rice, does not matter for not having rice as long as able to cook, does not matter for not being able to cook as long as able to eat, does not matter for not being able to eat as long as able to withstand hunger. The meaning of this principle of life is that human beings should not depend on only one thing, they should find other alternatives for achieving the same purpose. This principle describes the existence of '*rasi*' or cassava rice to this day. Related to the topic of '*rasi*' as staple food that is believed to be the ancestral food of the Sundanese, participants told their experience as follows,

They also eat rice beside '*rasi*', but '*rasi*' is what they store as food supplies. Not eating '*rasi*' means that they no longer respect the ancestors (P1)

Unfortunately I could not see how cassava was processed into flour, but I can see how 'rasi' was cooked that was not too much different from cooking rice in tradition way. It can be said that 'rasi' is almost rice like if eaten with side dishes. The tradition of eating 'rasi' is very special because it is unusual (P2)

I think 'rasi' is like porridge, but it turns out to be similar to rice. It just tastes more bland. If only there was no belief in the ancestors, they probably switch to eat rice like other (P4)

The features of 'rasi' are plainly told by the participants as part of a tradition that has been continuously maintained for generations.

Eating other foods such as rice is okay, but eating 'rasi' is an obligation for the indigenous people of Kampung Cireundeu. Obligations arising from awareness of preserving the ancestral heritage (P3)

Those three above are the topics of local culture and wisdom that researchers found in the story written by the participants. In the interview section they were asked about their impression and understanding of life from the homestay experience they have obtained. The four participants responded by their own language and thought. Nevertheless, it can be drawn into themes of impression on hospitality, traditional culture and beliefs, and a sense of being pride to be part of a nation with diversity but high in tolerance.

Friendly as typical of Indonesian that makes guests comfortable. Chat without hesitation, various treats. Stories of ancestors show that Kampung Cireundeu is not like any other village, it has history and it is passed on to the next generation. Indonesia is extraordinarily diverse cultures (P3)

Know a lot about traditions that are strongly held by the people. Although originally in the beginning of arrival I have not been able to find something unique from this village, but now I know why it is so hailed and get a lot of attention especially from the government (P1)

Like coming home. The hospitality of the host, the people around, even though they are different in religion, their beliefs are free to be maintained.

As part of the nation with many different cultures, we must have high tolerance of other religions and beliefs (P4)

Eating staple foods other than rice is possible. As a Sundanese I am proud for knowing that Sundanese people have local wisdom that is still preserved until now (P2)

It was written and told by participants from their experience of seeing, listening, talking and discussing directly with the homestay host and the people living in the neighbourhood during their stay. The hospitality, beliefs and traditions that exist in Kampung Cireundeu may be seen or known by the tourists when visiting Kampung Cireundeu, but they probably will bring not a meaningful experience unless they stay longer and interact with locals.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Culture is the main attraction of Kampung Cireundeu, but the local wisdoms contained in it are the attraction that not able yet to be obtained as an experience in a few hours of visit. Findings in this study showed that tourists visiting Kampung Cireundeu are able to explore its local wisdom and values when they stay longer by spend overnight at the homestay. However, Homestay without any guest-host-community interaction will not provide such experience that gives understanding of local culture and wisdom. This study is only a small part of the homestay development research in rural tourism that still in progress. Therefore, it is realized that there are still many limitations especially in term of data and interpretation.

REFERENCES

- Arifin, Z., 2014. *Penelitian Pendidikan, Metode dan Paradigma Baru*, PT Remaja Rosdakarya Offset. Bandung
- Cohen, E., 1979. Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 15(3).
- Hadiwijoyo, 2012. *Perencanaan Pariwisata Pedesaan Berbasis Masyarakat (Sebuah Pendekatan Konsep)*, Yogyakarta.
- Kastenholz, E., 2012. Understanding and Managing the Rural Tourism Experience –The Case of a Historical Village in Portugal. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. Vol. 4.

- Lynch, P. A., 2005. Sociological Impressionism in a Hospitality Context. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 32(3).
- MacCannel, D., 1976. *The tourist: A New Theory of The Leisure Class*, Mac Millan Press Ltd. London.
- Mura, P., 2015. Perceptions of Authenticity in a Malaysian Homestay –A Narrative Analysis-. *Tourism Management*. 51.
- Smith, J. A., 2008. *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, SAGE Publication Ltd., London, 2nd edition.
- Sukriah, E., Rosita, 2013. *Pengembangan Kearifan dan Budaya Lokal Sebagai Daya Tarik Wisata Kampung Cireundeu Kota Cimahi*. Unpublish research report.
- Wang, Y. 2007. Customized Authenticity Begins at Home. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 26(2).

