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# LEADERSHIP IN RURAL TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF WANGUN LESTARI VILLAGE, BANDUNG, WEST JAVA, INDONESIA

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The role of village headman has been the important factor for the development of rural tourism. A village headman will face several challenges in developing the village, both as a leader in the institution and a community leader in the rural tourism area. This study aims to describe the role of leadership based on the concept of Performance Excellence of Baldrige. In addition, this research aims to determine the leadership style applied by the village headman in developing the potentials of rural tourism. This research used the qualitative method with a case study in Wangun Lestari Village. The data collecting technique used is an in-depth interview with rural apparatuses, communities related to rural development, and the villagers. The results showed that as a leader in a rural institutional organization, the headman performs an effective communication and focuses on action in the Performance Excellence. The research also revealed that the transformational leadership style applied by headman is a community-based leadership.

# **INTRODUCTION**

In the last six decades, the tourism industry has been the leading and fastest growing industry in almost all over the world (Alizadeh & Isa, 2015). The development of the tourism sector encourages each country to continue developing the potential tourism with the theme of local wisdom. The potential development relates to the innovation of tourist attraction so

the tourists will want to repeat their visit to the area (Kamil, 2017). Indonesia is a country which is eager to develop tourism potential. The tourism development in Indonesia creates a great potential that carries the concept of tourism (Asdhiana, 2016). According to BPS (The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016), Indonesia has 81.284 villages spread across the country. Indonesia has the potential to develop the rural tourism concept based on tourism village development data from 2009-2015 (Setiawan, Rijanta, & Baiquni, 2017). This rural tourism was projected keep growing until 2017.

The potential of applicable rural tourism in Indonesia is very diverse (Yunus, Luke, Wahyuningtyas, Mahestu and Ayu, 2018). In accordance with the concept of rural tourism, the rural tourism consists of cultural-historical tourism (Paresishvili, Kvaratskhelia, & Mirzaeva, 2017), agricultural tourism (Boysa, Whiteb, & Grooverb, 2017), nature tourism, adventure tourism (Raj, 2017) and ecotourism (Mendoza-Ramos & Prideaux, 2017). With the unique and local wisdom of Indonesia, the development of rural tourism can contribute to increasing the economic benefit of the village and provide an opportunity to improve the welfare of the community (Aytuğ & Mikaeili, 2017).

The development of rural tourism in Indonesia is contained in the Guidelines of Rural Tourism Destination Development and Government Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 the Year 2009 on tourism. In that Government Law, there are four pillars forming the basis of rural tourism development, namely, destination, industry, marketing, and institution (Kementerian Pariwisata Republik Indonesia, 2015). In the development of rural tourism sector, the institutional role has become the key success factor. The institution in rural tourism is led by a village headman (or just headman). In the development of rural tourism, the role of headman relates to how he or she directs all village potentials to improve the economic and social sectors of the communities (Pechlaner, Kozak, & Volgger, 2014).

The leadership role of a headman is an important component in the institutional arrangement and development of rural tourism. The local leadership of rural tourism is important to improve the community's capacity (Blackman, 2008), especially in terms of the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the village. Therefore, as a village leader, the headman is required to understand the dynamics of the social-economic development of the communities in developing rural tourism (Beer, 2014). As an administrator, the village headman should also become the source of innovation in generating ideas and strategies supporting the renewal and development (Kapita, Kaawoan, & Lengkong, 2017). As a village apparatus, the leadership role of a headman can be analyzed using the criteria for Performance Excellence of The Baldrige Excellence Framework (NIST, 2013), especially on the leadership criteria.

Based on the criteria for Performance Excellence of The Baldrige Excellence Framework, the leadership role is the first stage in exposure to the vision and mission of the organization and communicates the long-term strategic challenges, values and strategic planning (Pröbstl-Haider, Melzer, & Jiricka, 2014). The implementation of a leadership role in village tourism is strongly influenced by the communication patterns and leadership style

of a village headman (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015). Additionally, the success of a headman depends on his/her ability to communicate and collaborate through his/her leadership style in increasing the potential development of a village needed as a village for tourism purpose (Răducana & Răducanb, 2014).

The headman appointed as a research object in this study is the headman of Wangun Lestari Village, located in Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Wangun Lestari Village has been a rural tourism destination since 2015 and continues to expand its potential. As a rural tourism destination, Wangun Lestari Village has some potentials, i.e. agricultural tourism, nature tourism, and adventure tourism. In the development of Wangun Lestari Village, the role of headman is the key factor for the successful rural tourism.

Therefore, the aims of this research are first to describe the manifestation of Communication and Organizational Performance concept based on the Criteria for Performance of the Baldrige Excellence Framework of the headman of Wangun Lestari Village. Secondly, this research aims to describe the leadership style applied by the headman of Wangun Lestari Village in developing the potential of rural tourism.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Leadership in Rural Tourism**

The development of rural tourism destination assigns the leadership aspect as the key to the success of tourism object along with internal communication, shared vision, and comprehensive planning. These have been declared important in collaboration (Åberg, 2014). As a local leader figure, the headman is someone who can influence opinions (Blichfeldt, Hird, & Kvistgaard, 2014), policy, and community action based on his/her role and position in the society. The local leader plays an important role in the development of tourism and acts as one of the key factors in building the community (Xu, Zhang, & Tian, 2017). Local government institutions also greatly influence the role of leadership in rural tourism destinations (Pechlaner et al., 2014). This is related to the potential development to improve the competitive position of the destinations. The development of tourism destinations assigns the leadership aspect as the key to the success of tourism object (Åberg, 2014).

Based on previous research, Goeppinger stated that leadership in rural tourism relates to the interaction between the headman and his/her communities to achieve the goals (Northouse, 2015). Leadership in rural communities relates to the organizational effectiveness and village development activities that can contribute to the local economic and social development (Davies, 2011). In rural tourism, leadership role has the goal of promoting the development of rural communities and the Local Government has a supporting role in tourism policy (Li, Ryan, & Cave, 2016). There have been several previous studies focusing on the role of community leadership in tourism (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2012). A local leader in rural tourism destination should have business knowledge, good communication skills, strong networks, and a strong vision and mission in developing the village (Moscardo, 2014).

# **Leadership and Performance Excellence**

In a rural tourism, the institutional role is a primary support for village development. The institution is led by the headman serving as the local government and local leader. As a leader of a rural tourism institution, the headman can be analyzed using the concept of performance excellence by Malcolm Baldrige, especially in the leadership criteria (NIST, 2013). This concept is widely used as a standard approach to identify the role of the organizational model to evaluate improvement and disseminate the best practices. "The term 'performance excellence' refers to the delivery of everimproving values to customers and stakeholders which contribute to organizational sustainability, improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities, and organizational and personal learning" (Simamora, 2013). Research to date has strongly supported the proposition that leadership drives the other categories and is of primary importance since it influences results both directly and indirectly through the other categories (Fry, Latham, Clinebell, & Krahnke, 2016).

According to this concept, there is a section of "Communication and Organizational Performance" relating to the communication and creation of a focus on an action that will achieve the organization's objectives (NIST, 2013). This assessment relates to how a senior leader leads in an organization consisting of Communication and Focus on Action. In this section, Communication is measured by what communication medium is used and how engagement is done by the senior leaders to the followers. 'Focus on Action' is measured by the focus of the senior leaders on considering the strategy, workforce, work systems, and assets. This includes taking intelligent risks and implementing innovations. The communication role of a senior leader in an organization relates to the role of a leader in outlining the vision, mission, and coordination with all village units and villagers.

# **Leadership Style in Rural Tourism**

Leadership can be defined as the position, function, and ability to lead other people to a greater success. Meanwhile, when discussing the relations between leadership and organization, leadership is defined as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organization (Ayub, Manaf, & Hamzah, 2014). The existing types of leadership styles essentially refer to the conditions of reality contained in the community. The success of a tourist destination depends heavily on the effectiveness of leadership style (Poskas & Messer, 2015). Understanding different leadership styles can modify leader relationships with followers for the common good (Trudeau, Messer, Hornvedt, & Vitcenda, 2012). There are two types of leadership, namely, transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership relates to the focus and targets for the realization of certain goals, viewed as a 'top-down' process with a particular management orientation (Beer, 2014). While the transformational leadership style is characterized by bringing change and effective communication proven to have a positive effect on employees' commitment. The style of transformational leadership does not only bring

change, but also encourages subordinates to become more collective (Caesar, 2016).

The process of transformational leadership focuses on the power and engagement of leaders with stakeholders on the development of the capacity of villagers at a tourist destination (Kozak, Volgger, & Pechlaner, 2014). There are three categories of transformational leadership, namely, shared/community-based leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership (McGehee, Knollenberg, & Komorowski, Shared/community-based leadership attempts to expand upon transformational leadership's charisma and intellectual stimulation attributes by focusing on leaders' vision and empowerment capabilities. Communitybased leadership proposes the use of a collective vision while acknowledging the diverse backgrounds of the community. This is an integrated approach and achieved through the learning process (Kirk & Shutte, 2004). The leaders applying the approach of community-based leadership empower the individuals to develop mutual understanding through discussion and problem solving (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Webe, 2009).

Servant leadership represents another permutation of transformational leadership which addresses empowerment and development of trust and adds humility and stewardship as leadership tools. As with communitybased leadership, servant leadership has been criticized for lack of the research supporting its effectiveness, as well as for the multiple interpretations of Greenleaf's initial work and the variations of measurement tools used to define servant leadership (van Dierendonck, leadership is approach 2011). Authentic an which transformational leadership qualities of group engagement empowerment with trust and the notion of ethical and moral authenticity (Avolio et al., 2009). "Authentic leaders understand their own values and behave toward others based on their values" (Northouse, 2012). In the development of authentic leadership, the ethical/moral component has an important place as all the leadership types (Müceldili, Turan, & Erdil, 2013).

Figure 1 is a framework of this research on the leadership style applied by the village headman of Wangun Lestari and the leadership process by adopting Malcolm Baldrige's Communication and Organizational Performance in Rural Tourism.



Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method by applying a case study. In order to assure the quality of case study design, the standard approaches assuring trustworthiness, credibility, conformability, and dependability were utilized (Yin, 2009). Data collection techniques used were in-depth-interview and non-participant observation with informants. The information was collected via data and method triangulation, including participant observation, and interviews. The selection of informants was done by using purposive and simple random method. The informants in this research are village apparatuses, communities related to village development and the villagers. Table 1 shows the distribution of informants interviewed. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded. Data analysis techniques used include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Table 1. Participant profile of interviews

No.	Informant	Role
1.	Mr. R S	The Headman of Wangun Lestari Village
2.	Mr. H A	Coordinator of Wangun Lestari Village
3.	Mr. M S	Head of RT 1
4.	Mr. S U	Head of RT 2
5.	Mr. A	Head of RW 1
6.	Mr. T D	Village Secretary
7.	Mr. W	Head of Development Program Coordinator
8.	Mr. E	Coffee Farmer, Chairman of Puntang Community
		Association
9.	Mr. F	Farmers and Coffee Entrepreneurs
10.	Mr. S	Chairman of Tourism Activator Community
11.	Mr. P	Coordinator of Sunda Arts Community
12.	Mr. R J	Villager
13.	Mrs. I	Villager
14.	Mr. N R	Villager
15.	Mrs. E	Villager

In this study, the literature review used as the research dimension is the leadership concept which refers to the Criteria for Performance Excellence according to Baldrige (NIST, 2013) using questions on the concept of "Communication and Focus in Action". Meanwhile, to determine and describe the leadership style performed by the village headman, we adopted previous research conducted by McGehee et al. (2015). In this study, we determined fifteen informants consisting of six village apparatuses, four people representing village development community and four villagers. In addition, the headman is positioned as an informant for data crosscheck.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the interview results with the informants, this study explains some points concerning the roles of village headman of Wangun Lestari as the leader of the village institution and community leader. The interviews with informants are categorized based on the concept of leadership performance excellence and transformational leadership style applied in a rural tourism in Indonesia.

#### **Communication and Focus on Action in Rural Tourism**

Based on the results of the research, it is found that the headman communicates key decisions directly to villagers by using face-to-face communication or through morning discussion forum. In addition, the headman is also able to be a mediator between the local communities, village apparatus and tourism government. The headman together with the heads of neighborhood groups (RT) and community groups (RW) in Wangun Lestari Village mobilizes his subordinates and invites the villagers to always maintain the values of life and work ethic in order to be better from day to day. Every week, the heads of RT and RW are asked to provide reports regarding the village development situation. The weekly report is conducted to anticipate the things that may have negative impacts, such as the monopoly of coffee prices from distributors, uneven distribution of coffee seeds to farmers, and the provision of fertilizer assistance needed by the farmers. In addition, the reports from heads of RT and RW are linked to the village development program being implemented according to the main needs of the village. The headman shares his mobile phone number to all villagers as a means of communication and he always interacts with the people.

The headman encourages an honest two-way communication (Strzelecka, 2015), including effective use of social media. In the development of rural tourism, the use of social media and ICT is needed to encourage a strong collaboration among relevant institutions, stakeholders, communities, and local communities (Vučetić, 2017). The headman utilizes WhatsApp messenger to connect with villagers and village apparatuses. The headman communicates and involves the entire village apparatuses and key customers by approaching the people directly. As a local leader of Wangun Lestari Village, the headman has a business knowledge, good communication skills, and a strong vision and mission for the development of rural tourism (Moscardo, 2014).

The headman also opens the opportunities for businesses to accelerate the development of Wangun Lestari Village as a rural tourism destination. Coffee is the flagship product of this village and it once won a medal in an international coffee event in Atlanta (Susanti, 2016). The headman takes an active role in motivating the workforce and in participating in award and recognition programs for strengthening the performance and focusing on customers and businesses. Nonetheless, the headman and village apparatuses only have limited funds to develop Wangun Lestari Village to be a rural tourism destination. The village headman is required to conduct sustainable governance to continue to develop the future of Wangun Lestari Village (McGehee et al., 2015). The implementation of leadership roles in a rural tourism is strongly influenced by the communication patterns and leadership style of a village headman (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015).

The headman of Wangun Lestari Village has a strong focus on the development that will be achieved in accordance with RPJMD (Midterm Regional Development Plan). It certainly affects the implementation and strategy for improving the development of Wangun Lestari Village. One of the strategies chosen is to expand the network with stakeholders. Improving the development of Wangun Lestari Village is expected to give a positive effect on the local economic sector, the development of the social sector as a tourist destination, and also an image of the village as rural tourism (Polo & Frías, 2010).

The headman collaborated with local communities to deal with various issues occurred in Wangun Lestari Village. So, both citizens and the headman can improve and develop the potential of Wangun Lestari Village as a rural tourism (Xu et al., 2017). The headman has a strong focus on creating and balancing the values for customers and other stakeholders by providing coaching to the youths to improve their skills (Davies, 2011). The headman also prepared uniforms for the heads of RT and RW so they can be easily recognized as village apparatuses who are always ready to serve the people during the operational hours. The headman actively conducts guidance for senior high school students in technology adoption and activities that enhance the independence of the villagers, especially in the economic sector (Li et al., 2016).

The headman provides an access for the villagers to communicate directly such giving as a complaint. Through this, the headman also opens coordination with the heads RT and RW. This has a very positive impact on the sustainability of Wangun Lestari Village. If something wrong happens in the village, the headman immediately takes action based on the report received. This pattern of communication makes other village apparatuses more responsive to respond to a bad situation. The development of the rural tourism destinations, shared vision, and comprehensive planning are the important aspects in the collaboration (Åberg, 2014).

# Transformational Leadership Style in Rural Tourism

Based on the results of this research, the headman of Wangun Lestari Village is a leader who supports every progress of the village and develops the skills of the villagers. As a leader of a rural tourism destination, he fully understands that developing the village means keep increasing the potential of the village. One of the potentials of Wangun Lestari Village is coffee. Therefore, the headman continues to increase the independence of the farmers in managing coffee. The headman also provided assistance such as

coffee seeds and fertilizers to increase the production of local coffee. In addition to coffee, there are also several potential SMEs which may contribute to the development of the economic sector of Wangun Lestari Village (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2012). Based on these conditions, it is shown that the headman performs an active role in empowering the communities of Wangun Lestari Village. The headman's concern can also be seen from the creation of new communities and the availability of funds to support community development activities. The success of a headman relates to his ability to communicate and collaborate to enhance the potentials of the village as a rural tourism destination. In addition, it's about his leadership style (Răducana & Răducanb, 2014).

Based on the data analysis and data crosscheck, it is known that the leadership style possessed by the headman of Wangun Lestari Village is a transformational leadership style. The establishment of this leadership style is based on the analysis that a headman is a person who prioritizes community development and can apply the vision and missions based on village development needs. The leadership of the headman of Wangun Lestari Village is specifically identified as the leadership style of community-based leadership. The headman applies the approach of community-based leadership in empowering the individuals to develop mutual understanding through discussion and problem solving (Avolio et al., 2009).

Based on this approach, the headman proposes the use of a collective vision while acknowledging the diverse backgrounds of the community through a process of learning (Kirk & Shutte, 2004). The headman realizes that his role as a facilitator requires him to integrate inputs from village apparatus, village communities, villagers, and stakeholders for supporting the successful and sustainable development of Wangun Lestari Village as a rural tourism destination (McGehee et al., 2015). Personally, the headman has several advantages in approaching the villagers and communities. The headman places himself as a leader who is able to facilitate the creativity of the villagers (Ayub et al., 2014) and he also has an interactive communication pattern. Thus, he can encourage the villagers to increase the socioeconomic potential and maintain the values of local wisdom as a Sundanese society (Willert, 2012).



Figure 2. The Conclusion of Leadership in Wangun Lestari Village a Rural Tourism

#### CONCLUSIONS

As the head of the organization, the headman has an effective communication function. In the focus on action, the headman is in accordance with the vision and missions that have been set. All activities and village development programs refer to RPJMD. Therefore, it can be concluded that the headman of Wangun Lestari Village has performed a good leadership function on Performance Excellence in a village organization. Based on the result of this research, it is concluded that the leadership style used by the headman of Wangun Lestari Village is a transformational leadership style. In this leadership type, the headman specifically implements the community-based leadership type. It is based on the fact that he empowers individuals to develop mutual understanding through discussion and problem-solving. The conclusion is shown in Figure 2. The results of this research are expected to be the foundation of scholarship on the role of leadership, especially the role of a village headman in carrying out his function both as head of village organization and as leader of the village community. This study also has provided a new explanation of the type of leadership style applied in a rural tourism destination.

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