

## Leadership Patterns and Social Capital in Rural Tourism: Lessons from Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Popi Irawan

Tourism Study Program, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: popi.irawan@ugm.ac.id*

### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to trace and uncover the roles and pattern of leaders and leadership in managing rural tourism attractions, which, in practice, are in forms of villages purposefully designed as destinations for tourists. Using social capital approach as a theoretical framework, this research attempts to place rural tourism leadership withing broader and complex social dynamics of rural society. Social capital is considered a useful framework to understand the complexity of rural society's interaction and dynamics, including when rural tourism is introduced. The findings reveal that rural tourism leadership plays a pivotal role in advancing and maintaining the daily operationalization of tourism service provisions by communities. A leader of a so-called tourism village usually has to hold distinct social, educational, and cultural characteristics distinguishing her/him from the rest of the village communities. Due to this nature, local leadership exhibits elitism, where healthy community development process is at risk. Paradoxically, the concept of developing rural community-based tourism does not automatically result in shared/community-based leadership. Furthermore, to support leadership in the rural tourism setting, this study concurs with the literature suggesting that social capital is pivotal in maintaining and supporting the sustained practice of rural tourism. Therefore, managing a peculiar rural tourism attraction depends, to some extent, upon social capital.

**Keywords:** Rural Tourism; Leadership; Capacity; Cultural Values; Social Capital

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### INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism has frequently been championed as one of development strategies of rural regions based on the assumption that tourism has direct benefits to local residents as well as local businesses (Moscardo, 2014). These benefits come in many forms, such as income, infrastructure, enhanced destination image, and cultural preservation, which, to some extent, lead to the improvement of quality of life (Moscardo & Murphy, 2014). However, tourism does not always directly enhance the well-being of local communities in rural areas (Moscardo, 2008), indicating that economic benefits sometimes are not equally distributed among stakeholders and community members. Unless a rural area has a very significant and well-managed major attraction, the tourism developed in peripheral areas yields only ample economic impacts for the region (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000). In many other cases, especially in developing countries, the benefits of rural tourism circulate mostly in few

groups of people associated with the elite individuals in the management of rural tourism.

Tourism in the rural peripheries is not designed as a mass attraction, resulting in significant impacts to the economy, where the entire village can solely depend on tourism to thrive. In most cases, rural tourism is an alternative for existing economic resources in villages, typically characterized by agriculture as their major economic generator (Sharpley & Roberts, 2004). Within this framework, rural tourism is intended not to attract as many visitors as possible. Rather, it seeks for visitation by small number of visitors but with high spending in exchange for high quality experience in rural settings, the visits that are expected to protect rural environment from degradation due to heavy tourist visitation. Therefore, developing rural tourism involves what tourism practitioners and scholars imagine as the most ideal practice of tourism: sustainable tourism (Hwang & Stewart, 2017).

While rural tourism constitutes a variety of elements in shaping its dynamic development, the human aspect is undoubtedly one of the most crucial elements for its success. Understanding the complexities of how rural human resource management in the tourism context determines the overall management of rural tourism destinations (Kokkranikal & Baum, 2002), including in its leadership. In many developing countries, characterized by tight communal society with strong cultural bonds, local leadership is often closely associated with the possession of certain capacities that are absent from the majority of community members. Local leaders are individuals with distinct capacities and characteristics, indicated by the level education, welfare, capital possession, or, in some cases, hereditary. In those cases, local leaders can sometimes be associated with local entrepreneur, considering the possession of capital and access to resources (Moscardo, 2014).

Despite the transformation of an ordinary rural region into a tourist attraction, the social dynamic of community members in rural settings ensures the continuity of rural tourism management in the future. Within the social ecological systems (SES) framework, for example, rural tourism leadership displays a unique position constituting power across multiple organizations and groups of communities (Anderies et al., 2004). Leadership can determine how rural community organizations navigate the dynamic use of resources and even how they adapt to challenges and perturbations through adaptive governance (Folke et al., 2005; Olsson et al., 2006).

While local leadership finds its significance in the overall management of rural tourism as suggested by an extensive scholarly affirmation, a critical gap persists to understand how leadership facilitates the transform of rural tourism organizations. While prevailing theories suggest that the bottom-up approach to community-based

tourism, commonly practiced in the rural settings, is the golden standard of development of tourism in the rural regions, there is a scarcity of documented evidence and best practices of how genuine the bottom-up approach is genuinely implemented. In addition to the leadership roles, it remains unclear how community social capital is mobilized in the management of rural tourism and whether local leadership makes use of the social capital in a community-driven development in rural areas.

Although social capital framework has been useful in better describing social dynamics of rural areas in the contexts such as disaster recovery, crisis, and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, its application in rural tourism where key leadership is vital remains scarcely investigated. Social capital, a concept viewing that there is a value within social interaction that can be useful in achieving communal or individual interests (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998), has a benefit in explaining not only community-level of social dynamics but also individual level of capacity, such as in investigating local leaders and their leaderships. Putting this in the rural tourism context, this present study emphasizes that social capital works not only on rural tourism community level but also shapes the leadership of rural tourism destination, especially in the observed case study sites in Indonesia.

This study investigates the leadership roles and patterns in tourism villages, a unique form of rural tourism practiced across cities and districts in Yogyakarta Special Province in Indonesia. The special province, a unique combination of a Sultanate monarchy with a provincial administration under the ruling Sultan, has been a well-known tourist destination in Indonesia, especially for domestic travelers and international tourists as well. In 2024, for instance, Yogyakarta attracts 236,463 international tourists and 7.8 million domestic travelers (Yogyakarta Office of Tourism, 2025)<sup>1</sup>. For a considerable period, tourism villages—combining natural, agricultural, and cultural attractions—have become an inseparable part of Yogyakarta's uniqueness as a tourist destination.

In Yogyakarta, rural tourism is a major part of main attractions for both domestic and international travelers. In many, but not all, tourism villages in this region, rural tourism development begins from the community's willingness and awareness to leverage their village's natural and cultural assets as attractions. For some, this can be considered as a bottom-up development pattern, which is initialized by villagers' awareness towards tourism potential resources of the village. However, the government involvement in initiating tourism villages has led to a top-down model

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<sup>1</sup> Retrived from <https://visitingjogja.jogjaprov.go.id/webdinas/download-category/statistik-pariwisata/> on December 19, 2025.

of rural tourism development. As a consequence, community-based rural tourism applies only to a handful of villages with strong community engagement in tourism. Overall, tourism villages in Yogyakarta have turned into an alternative of developing tourism in rural areas, which, to some extent, significantly accommodate the villagers' enterprises.

With regards to the management of rural tourism attractions in Yogyakarta, the present study aims to achieve three objectives. First, it is intended to identify leadership patterns within tourism villages in Yogyakarta. Second, it aims to investigate roles played by leaders of tourism villages in developing tourism village as an alternative income source for local communities, especially those involved directly in the rural tourism businesses. Finally, this research attempts to explore the role of social capital in the management of rural tourism destinations and how it influences the leadership of these villages as tourist attractions to sustain these community-based tourist destinations.

The present study applies case study method by delving deeply into three case study sites, all of which are Yogyakarta's major rural tourism destinations called tourism villages. These locations are Pentingsari village, which is situated adjacent to the slope of Mount Merapi, Indonesia's most active volcano, Brayut village, located in Sleman Regency with rich agricultural and farming attractions, and Ngalnggeran village in Gunungkidul Regency, a village uniquely situated in the proximity to ancient remnants of volcano now functioned as its primary attraction.

## Literature Review

### 1. Rurality and Tourism

The nexus between rural tourism destinations and sustainability have receive a significant attention from tourism scholars at least since the 1990s (Rosalina et al., 2021). An extensive number of scholarly works has emerged, examining the dynamics of rural tourism development across diverse global contexts and adopting wide-ranging perspectives across disciplines (Sharpley & Roberts, 2004). However, the best rural tourism practices are hard to define due to its complexities involving various factors with diverse and unique social, cultural, and political settings unique to each country and region. There is an interplay among various elements shaping tourism in various places including in rural areas, such as social and political dynamics, cultural settings, bio-physical environment, built environment, and built infrastructure (Cochrane, 2010; Nyaupane et al., 2018).

Rural tourism management is frequently associated with small-scale management practices, covering only a handful of individuals in relatively simple organization. Rural destinations in many developing countries are usually managed by few people

working together under one key person that serves not only as a top manager or an entrepreneur, but as a local leader as well (McGehee et al., 2018; Moscardo, 2014). Every key person in a small-scale management organization in rural areas holds her/his position with a strong support from her/his cultural and social status backgrounds. There is no doubt that in terms of management practices, this has exposed organizations to challenges related to how organizations face threats and maintain their robust structure.

According to Moscardo (2014), local leaders in rural tourism organizations—sometimes referred to as entrepreneurs—play crucial roles in maintaining and developing rural tourism destinations. She argues that there is no significant difference between outsider and local entrepreneur when it comes to managing rural attractions. The roles of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs, and local leaders shape the overall well-being of the whole community in the rural tourism settings.

Rural tourism is a distinct category of tourism, especially in terms of visitation and types of attractions. Rural tourism relies heavily on natural or environmental and cultural assets available in the rural areas that are usually the primary source of living for the residents. Rural tourism is a showcase of the rurality of local communities, displaying their unique cultural and natural environment (Pröbstl-Haider et al., 2014). Tourism in villages asserts an additional option to gain additional benefits to the existing resource, assuming direct benefits to local communities (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000; Fleischer & Pizam, 1997; Park et al., 2015). However, rural tourism is also prone to practices ranging from cultural commodification to poor accommodation management, resulting in degradation of rurality in general (Kordel, 2016).

While rural tourism has long been the subject of study for many scholars across disciplines, the dynamic of local leaders and their leadership have receive little attention (Rosalina et al., 2021). The fact that rural tourism and businesses associated with it are vulnerable to disturbance, such as disaster, crises, or disease outbreak, signify the importance of investigating the role of leadership, especially in the context of developing countries. McGehee et al. (2018) attest that in the context of small-scale, vulnerable businesses such in rural tourism, leadership plays its role in reassuring local businesses to thrive and withstand the crisis. In their study, McGehee et al. (2018) apply social capital framework, which was considered a novel approach during their period of study, to further assess the roles of local leadership in rural tourism. This scheme is replicated in the present study using different cases, emphasizing the unique approach as local leadership also constitutes indigenous cultural values.

## 2. Social Capital and Tourism

The discourse on social capital theory has emerged in response to limitations in analyzing the dynamics of people's lives and their interactions. It is often thought as an alternative approach to studying the broader concept of welfare of communities, their development, and their capability to determine their welfare, as social capital is believed to bring positive consequences in socio-economic lives despite its nature as a non-monetary capital (Portes, 1998). From a business perspective, corporations have long been reminded to not solely pursue economic returns while neglecting their community roles (Ansari, Munir, & Gregg, 2002). In the tourism sector, a unique economic and socio-cultural phenomenon, social capital has also gained attention, particularly in understanding the dynamic interplay among tourism management and the local communities. Within the core concept of social capital is that within the social interactions among members of communities, people can find and define values they can further capitalized as a means of achieving their purposes (Putnam, 2000). As a form of capital, like in the concept of financial or production capital, social capital can be stored or exchange to achieve certain objectives (Flora, 2016).

Probably the most important proponent of social capital theory, Putnam (2000) contends that within social networks are values that can be turned into capital. Further, he illustrates that "... Just a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups" (p. 19). The basic concept of social capital pays attention to what contains within the interactions of people. In this case, the theory of social capital implies that human beings are always in the state of communicating and interacting to each other in their whole lives.

Social capital theory is based on the assumption that it is the nature of human beings to interact with each other and that within these interactions contain potentials that benefit them, either as an individual or as a community. In other words, the theory of social capital can be traced into the theory of rational action postulating that actors retain control over certain resources, either physical or non-physical interests (Coleman, 1988). The term social capital, therefore, implies certain kind of resources available to people as the actors. This assumption serves as the basis of the social capital theory.

When social capital functions as a multifaceted resource of public good, it directly or indirectly benefits the whole community members. As a private good, on the other hand, the utility of social capital can also impact particular individuals. These benefits that social capital brings to the communities as a whole or to their individual members may come from its two distinct dimensions: bridging (or inclusive) social capital and

bonding (or exclusive) social capital (Putnam, 2000). These two dimensions of social capital have been applied in diverse aspects, including in tourism (see Jones, 2016; Zahra & McGehee, 2013, 2013). As a form of capital, just like financial or monetary capital, social capital has its capacity to expand, be used, or stored, leveraging the capacity of communities in fulfilling their needs (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Emery & Flora, 2006).

Despite criticism to social capital, the application of the concept in various environment is being performed, including in tourism-related community studies (Jones, 2016; Moscardo et al., 2017; Zahra & McGehee, 2013; Zhao et al., 2011). Applying social capital perspective into tourism studies has been conducted by many researchers. In modern-world development, including tourism, social capital is a critical element that is often missing as an important factor for the success of the development (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Zahra & McGehee, 2013).

Empirical evidence on the application of social capital theory within the context of the tourism studies is rich since tourism is commonly viewed as a multidisciplinary field of study. For example, Jones, (2016), in a study of community-based ecotourism practice in an eco-camp in the Gambia, suggests that despite the robust properties of social capital within the communities, tourism has eroded and jeopardized the environment because of managerial practice issues. Social capital, while it is useful in analyzing community's involvement in running tourism activities in their own areas, is a "slippery" concept particularly because, in the context of her study, norms and social pressure play more significant factors in forcing actions rather than trust (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In a study in South Korea, it was shown that government policies have also contributed to increasing social capital and managing community conflict through involvement in tourism-related businesses (Park, Lee, Choi, & Yoon, 2012). This involvement, however, differs from the possession or operation of business. In the context of rural tourism, principles of sustainable tourism development shaped local people's resilience. However, to some extent they could function in strengthening local people's pride as citizens (Amir, Gaphar, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2015).

## METHOD

In accordance with the nature of exploratory inquiry, this study applies case study method as preferred research design by looking deeply into three tourism villages located in the Yogyakarta Province. These villages are Pentingsari village, located in the Merapi mountain slope, Brayut village in Sleman Regency, and Nglanggeran village, a rural tourism destination adjacent to ancient, inactive volcanic mountain in Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta. Case studies allow investigators to dig deeply

into the dynamics of every day's operationalizations as well as local leadership patterns that might be hard to notice through surveys (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Simons, 2020).

The primary data in this study were collected by using semi-structured interviews complemented by non-participant observations. The data collection was conducted in a fieldwork in March until December 2018 in the chosen study sites. Semi-structured interview is preferred in this study due to its effectiveness to collect data in an exploratory inquiry (Bernard, 2013; Bernard et al., 2016). In addition to in-depth interview, non-participant observation is applied to triangulate the data obtained throughout the interviews. Doing observations enables investigators to witness and note any observable activities or behavior that are vital to the subject matter of the present study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Crotty, 2020).

Research participants in this study were selected by establishing criteria that aligned with the research objectives. The selection technique, therefore, is part of purposeful sampling method in determining research participants. By doing this, the investigator expected that participants were selected to express genuine meanings of realities being investigated. Research participants of this study should: (a) be a member of the board of management of the tourism village; (b) be directly involved in managerial activities of the tourism village; (c) understand the basic tasks and functions of the tourism village management and operational teams; and (d) have comprehensive knowledge about the history of the establishment of the tourism village. Additionally, members of communities in the village also became the research participants with certain criteria, such as: (a) indirectly involved in the management of tourism village; and (b) understand about the tourism village management practices.

There primary data of this study were derived from 20 semi-structured interviews conducted to research participants based on the predetermined criteria. Informed consent was administered verbally during each interview to satisfy ethical consideration during the fieldwork period of this study. Non-participant observations were conducted across three locations of rural tourism sites (the *desa wisata*) in Yogyakarta. Of all research participants, three were heads of tourism villages, three were heads of *pedukuhan* (hamlets), and the rest were ordinary member of local communities to holistically capture the perspectives from both leadership and grassroots levels. Upon the completion of each interview, the recordings were transcribed verbatim in the original language of the interviewees. Translation was not necessary as the investigator is a fluent speaker of the languages spoken by research participants, assuming linguistic accuracy of the transcribed data. Similarly, observation notes recorded on the logbook, which, together with the interview

transcription, compiled a thorough qualitative dataset. All interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language with a variety of Javanese language as the common mother tongue of communities in Yogyakarta.

The grounded theory framework is applied in this study, where data analysis occurs not only upon the completion of data collection, but also during the data collection phase. The iteration process of data analysis ensures the researcher to better understand the realities being investigated. This also allows the investigator to come back to the data and to research participant, when possible, to clarify a certain information (Bernard, 2013; Bernard et al., 2016; Miles et al., 2014). The data analysis involved five coding phases, as suggested by Bingham (2023). These are organizing, sorting, understanding, interpreting, and explaining the data that have been collected through research instruments. The next phase was the coding process that followed coding cycles that correspond to the five stages of data analysis outlined previously. These coding phases are: (1) Attribute Coding, (2) Topic Coding, aligning with the research questions, (3) Open or Initial Coding to identify emerging ideas from the data, and (4) Pattern or Thematic Coding, to identify patterns and develop themes, where theoretical framework is applied to explain and interpret the research findings.

In addition to rigorous data collection and data analysis, this study also applies constant comparison method and member checking technique to ensure the credibility of the research data. When doing constant comparison method, the researcher constantly compared data points obtained from both research instruments, in-depth interview, and non-participant observations. In doing constant comparison method for validity of the data, the researcher applied theoretical memorizing that was useful for data analysis and for establishing the data credibility. Meanwhile, the member checking technique was used to clarify codes derived from the data by returning to research participants and clarify the codes. For the reliability of the instrument, this study adopts reflexivity technique by acknowledging the researcher's own bias, perspectives, and potential influence on the data.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Rural tourism destinations in Yogyakarta, in the form of villages, have become one of core components of tourist attractions offered to both foreign and domestic tourists. Its primary aim is to leverage villages' potential as an additional economic generator. The term "tourism village" is a familiar term in the Indonesian tourism context, especially these past two decades, to refer to some form rural tourism, particularly in Yogyakarta. The dynamics and importance of tourism villages are emphasized by all research participants and observation data as well. For example, in all case study locations, economic contribution of rural tourism is among the most sought impacts

of tourism. Based on observation, facilities, signposts, and new built infrastructure are clearly intended to shape a good image of village as a destination. Tourism village, therefore, is a spatial and socio-economic entity that is purposefully managed as a tourist attraction by involving local communities, leveraging their potential and village's resources as tourism assets. In a tourism village, the attraction is managed independently by the society. Within this type of development approach, tourism is seen not only as a source of economic activities, but as one of many tools for community development (Dangi & Jamal, 2016).

The primary main elements of a tourist destination comprise of the existence of tourist attraction, accessibility to tourist destination, the supporting tourism infrastructure, and the management of tourism resources. In the context of rural tourism in this study, those aspects are entirely organized and managed by local communities. This principle distinguishes the concept of tourism village with that of "village tourism" that places rural areas merely as a passive attraction for tourist consumption. The tourism village, on the other hand, has often been championed as an example of community-based tourism, allowing greater possibility to bring more equitable and sustainable impacts to the society (Sharpley & Roberts, 2004).

The development of tourist village in Yogyakarta can be classified into 3 stage category: (1) Embryonic Stage, where villages are initially turned into an attraction offered to visitors; (2) tourism village that is being developed and is able to organize tourist activities, known with category developing tourism village; and (3) tourism village which has been well developed and independent in organizing tourism. Categorization of tourism villages' development stage allows stakeholders, particularly those involving in the management and operationalization of tourism in the villages, to better plan, manage, and mitigate any changes in resources and markets. This manner also ensures the application of policy to satisfy both tourists and communities' interests. In addition, the classification also motivates each village to thrive into a better and impact rural tourism management by local communities.

With more than 100 tourism villages across Yogyakarta Province, rural tourism signify the importance of rural areas to the region's tourism development as a whole. While the trend aligns with the global shift of tourism from mass visitation to more individual, tailored mode of travel with increasing environmental awareness, rural tourism poses challenges in terms of maintaining the stability of resources while continuing to receive visitors. Despite its small scale nature, rural tourism also benefits local communities economically, coming from such increase as income and, in some cases, employment opportunity. Due to the small scale of economic contribution of rural tourism, the direct impact of tourism may provoke community's resistance. In

this situation, a strong and sociocultural rooted leadership can help resolve the problems. In addition, developing rural tourism by incorporating social capital helps minimize conflict and resistance among members of the communities.

The findings suggest that the nature of rural tourism in Yogyakarta is characterized by participatory nature with heavy emphasis on particular individuals seen as potential leaders. Within the daily operation of a tourism village, the management is separate from the formal village administration. The whole structure of tourism village management is entirely separated from the local administration, with a separate election, often by direct appointment, of the head of tourism village. With this pattern, leadership of rural tourism indicates a style influenced by social and cultural position of elected leaders. Though rural tourism or tourism village is often championed as one of the best practices of community-based tourism, its leadership indicates the opposite.

### Case 1: Pentingsari Village

Pentingsari rural tourism, marketed as 'Pentingsari Tourism Village' is the first case in this study indicating the pattern of local leadership significantly influenced by certain socio-cultural characteristics of individuals preferred to lead the tourism village. While leadership style and approaches are a continuum (McGehee et al., 2018; Moscardo, 2014), local leadership in Pentingsari indicates a strong emphasis on the distinct socio-demographic characteristics of individuals compared to general members of communities. As indicated by a research participant, local communities in the village view a leader as:

... because we believe that it is only young people that will make our village successful as a tourist destination and attraction. We [older people] always trust our younger generation as long as they respect us [older generation]; we support our youths.

The findings in Pentingsari village indicate that the key to rural tourism leadership lies on distinct socio-demographic profile of individuals rather than charisma. Within the context of rural communities, especially with a homogeneous and similar shared cultural value, charisma serves as the basis for a successful leadership. However, this study suggests that the pattern across tourism villages in Yogyakarta, recognized as homogeneous Javanese cultural communities, show that personal trait is less desirable for a rural tourism leadership.

Pentingsari Tourism Village, located in the slope of Merapi volcano and included in hazard region in the volcanic area, is among the first successful villages when tourism was introduced among rural communities. The population of the hamlet is around 400 people, making it a relatively small village to run tourism and be visited by

hundreds of visitors. In fact, however, the village was listed as the best tourism village nationally. It received an award from the UN World Tourism Organization for strictly maintaining local code of ethics while tourists visit the village. These exceptional awards from both national and international organization are praised as a result of effective leadership centered to single individual.

The village also experienced volcanic disaster when a major eruption of Merapi volcano occurred, recorded as the biggest eruption in the last 100 years. While the village suffered significantly, within two years following the eruption, the village revived and continued to receive visitors, now with more attractions as the landscape was changed due to the eruption. The findings suggest that local communities, being the same survivors of the eruption, develop a mechanism to rebuild the tourism village after the eruption by working together to re-promote their village with additional packages related to volcanic remnants found near the village.

The re-building of Pentingsari tourism village and creativity stemming from the disaster impacts, once again, signify how bonding and bridging social capital work across communities in rebuilding and re-promoting rural tourism. For example, bonding social capital is evidenced in the way local communities impacted by the eruption shared the same fate as survivors, where an informal rule governs the ownership of certain assets, such as the ownership of jeep off-road vehicles rented to the visitors, to be exclusively held by survivors. Another example indicating bridging social capital, where a variety of cooperation between local communities and both governmental and non-governmental organizations are made to support the tourism village.

### Case 2: Brayut Village

Unlike Pentingsari, which is located in the volcanic hazard area, Brayut Tourism Village depends primarily on both agricultural and cultural assets as attraction. This tourism village is located in small hamlet area in the area of Pendowoharjo Village, the official village administration, in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta. According to participant, the head of Brayut Tourism Village, it is among the first rural tourism attraction developed in Yogyakarta in the late 1990s.

As a village relying on agriculture and cultural assets for attraction, Brayut designs its tour packages based on these two themes. According to research informants, the primary attractions in Brayut village center around rice fields, rivers, and fruit plantations. Activities packaged and offered to visitors include participating in farming activities, harvesting fruits in the plantation, and trekking along the river. Meanwhile, cultural assets offered as attractions include learning the *gamelan* (Javanese musical instruments), traditional dancing, *wayang* (shadow puppets)

performance, and other folk performance such as *jathilan* (dance performance often involving trance).

Like other tourism villages in Yogyakarta, Brayut village also depends, almost exclusively, on one particular individual as the central leadership figure. The head of the village has never been changed for more than 10 years, signifying the importance of an individual with certain characteristics. By leading the village for such period of time, the leader has gained trust from communities to lead and manage the tourism village. This is similar to other villages designed as rural tourism attraction, where trust is coupled with distinct personal and socio-demographical characteristics of the leader that is rare for the majority of community members. To a certain extent, Brayut village leadership can also be categorized as a transformation leadership despite its emphasis on the distinct socio-demographical characteristic of a leader rather than her/his vision and mission.

In line with McGehee et al. (2018), social capital is related to rural tourism leadership in that it enhances the effectiveness of how an individual manages, leads, and inspires communities in achieving collective interest, particularly related to rural tourism benefits. The pattern revealed in Brayut village is similar to that in other case study locations, where cooperation and trust among communities are significantly high, making them work relatively easier to achieve collective interests related to optimization of tourism resources. A participant in Brayut village emphasized:

... there are women [involved directly in tourism services] and elderly. We even involved elderly as the key player placed at front as they directly provide home stays and cater for food. They are also more patient, have more spare times, and, most importantly, they can be more motivated again, considering their age. [...] ...Before we had tourists visiting our village, our elderly had no motivation after their spouses passed. But now they gain their motivation again as they have activities and people to talk, their guests staying in the home stays.

Moreover, cooperation with organizations and institutions outside the village is carried out and helps enhance the village, opening up more opportunities accessible for development. Cooperation with both fellow community members and organizations outside the village signifies how bonding and bridging social capital were working in the case of Brayut Village.

However, with the prominent role of a key person in managing the tourism village is centered to one particular individual, leadership has turned into elitism. While members of communities in the village generally agreed with whatever the decisions were made to develop the tourism village, there is a trade-off between balancing community-based tourism and elitism, instead of shared leadership. This pattern is

found across case study sites, making it vulnerable in terms of how rural tourism in Yogyakarta deals with their own leaders.

### Case 3: Nglanggeran Village

The village of Nglanggeran is located in a unique landscape as it lies adjacent to remnants of ancient volcano, high rocky hills bordering the village and its neighbors. The Desa Wisata Gunung Api Purba Nglanggeran, its official name, is one of the key players in local tourism due to its visitation and management. The village has been awarded the world's best tourism village due to its sustainable and community-based model of developing tourism. Generally, the village sells the unique landscape, agriculture, craft, cultural performances, and wellness as their unique packages.

Findings in this case study site also suggest similar patterns of placing leadership centered around particular individuals with distinct socio-demographical and cultural profile compared to the general members of communities in the village. While electing tourism village leader is through a democratic election on village level, it still tends to allow power to center around elected individual, especially during its early development stage. In practice, the community-based tourism (CBT) is championed in this village as a undergirding concept in managing the tourism village. The pattern of leadership, however, shows an opposite reality, where shared leadership pattern is not yet evidence throughout the fieldwork. In addition, a heavy reliance on particular leader in managing tourism resources jeopardizes the fair economic benefits among communities as suggested by Rucitarahma and Tiberghien's (2021) study in Nglanggeran village.

As indicated in the findings of the other two case study locations, social capital properties are significant in Nglanggeran village. Social characteristics such as mutual trust being the members of shared identity as Javanese villagers foster cooperation among member of local community to further develop village tourism. Awards from national and international organizations, such as UN World Tourism Organization, serve as a glue for even closer cooperation among community members to support the tourism village. It should be noted that in this instance, village leader functions as inspiration and motivation for collective pride due to the development of the village when they were successfully awarded internationally.

However, as suggested by (Rucitarahma & Tiberghien, 2021), in some cases, there is no adequate and fair share of benefits resulting from the rapid development of Nglanggeran tourism village. This evidence, as indicated in the findings, reveals how the degree of elitism occurred in the village management, particularly related to fair distribution of benefits and income. In conclusion, in those three case study locations, social capital is evidenced as one of driving forces to support the tourism village

development, allowing communities to expand their cooperation, either within the communities or with outside individuals and organizations that foster development. While both bonding and bridging social capital properties are supported to foster community-based tourism, leadership of the rural tourism in Yogyakarta tends to move away from shared/community-based leadership, centering the role on the elites of the tourism villages.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the leadership patterns in rural tourism destinations in Yogyakarta, represented by three cases in three distinct locations, show that it cannot be interpreted to fall into one particular type of leadership, such as shared/community-based leadership or transformation leadership. Hence, village leadership indicates the degree of local elitism, where power is found to be centered among few elites of the tourism villages. These rural tourism destinations, the three case study locations, are deemed as the province's best practices of community-based tourism, emphasizing greater role of local communities in planning, managing, and operationalizing rural tourism. Their leaderships, however, does not indicate the nature of shared or community-based leadership. On the other hand, social capital properties of bonding and bridging social capital are evidence across three case study sites, indicating that as a community, each tourism village thrives as a collective asset through tourism.

The present study has its limitation in terms of methodological approach. Since the study applies multiple case study as the research design, inherently it poses limitation in that its findings cannot represent and be attributed to the general population. This study is unique and limited to its cases that might be of significant difference when applied to different loci with different socio-cultural settings. Future research can adopt different methods that allow better generalization to better uncover how leadership is exercised in rural tourism context.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author hereby declares that there is no conflict of interest in the subject matter discussed in this manuscript.

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