

Strategic Management in Community-Based Ecotourism Development at Taman Beji Griya Punggul

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Abstract. The community-based ecotourism of “Taman Beji Griya” was opened for the first time in 2017. The attractions that are presented include waterfalls and cave combined with malukat and tirthayatra rituals. The success of the manager in developing ecotourism cannot be separated from the strategic management carried out. This study was conducted using qualitative methods through observation, interviews, and document studies. Data analysis uses interpretive descriptive techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation and verification. Based on this method, this study found four strategic managements that has been carried out by the manager. Environmental scanning is done by exploring the advantages and disadvantages of ecotourism objects to be developed. The strategy formulation was carried out collectively by involving all members of the Griya Gede Manuaba Punggul family. The strategy implementation is carried out in stages based on the consideration of the resources owned by the manager. Evaluation and control are carried out regularly every month, both in terms of object quality, service quality and finance. This management is carried out continuously so that the quality of tourism objects can be improved gradually.

Keywords: Development, Ecotourism, Strategic Management

1 Introduction

Bali is an international tourist destination that is so famous all over the world. Bali tourism transformed into the backbone of Bali's economy. However, the Covid-19 pandemic since the end of 2019 has had a significant impact on the sustainability of the Bali tourism industry. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (2021) shows that the impact of the pandemic has made the Bali tourism sector lose 8 million foreign tourists with a spending value of US\$ 8.8 billion with an average calculation of US\$ 1,100 per person per visit. The data confirms that the mass tourism industry that has been developed in Bali has proven to be less resistant to sudden changes in the global situation. This implies the importance of developing alternative tourism that can overcome the weaknesses of the tourism industry, one of which is ecotourism.

According to Arida (2017) and Wood (1999), the idea of ecotourism emerged from criticism of the paradigm of mass tourism which tends to be exploitative to the environment and natural resources. The ecotourism paradigm has also been adapted by the government with the

issuance of the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation (Permendagri) No. 33 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Regional Ecotourism Development. This regulation defines ecotourism as nature tourism activities in responsible areas by taking into account elements of education, understanding, and support for natural resource conservation efforts and increasing local community income. One of the phenomena of ecotourism development in Bali that attracts researchers to make it the object of this research study is the community-based ecotourism "Taman Beji Griya" located in Punggul Village, Abiansemal District, Badung Regency.

Preliminary studies show that "Taman Beji Griya" is managed by extended family of Griya Gede Manuaba Punggul. This ecotourism object combines natural resources, that is waterfalls and the "Kereb Langit" cave with Hindu religious traditions, namely tirthayatra and malukat. This object first opened in 2017 and tourist visits are relatively consistent and even increase from time to time. The development of this object does not change its manifest function as a beji merajan Griya Gede Manuaba Punggul. On the other hand, the development of ecotourism has a positive impact on the preservation of nature and the environment, as well as providing added value economically. The success of the manager in developing this ecotourism object certainly cannot be separated from the strategic management carried out.

According to Wheelen and Hunger (2003), strategic management includes four basic elements, as follows. First, environmental scanning is carried out on the external environment to observe opportunities and threats, as well as the internal environment to see strengths and weaknesses. Second, strategy formulation is the development of a long-term plan to determine effective management based on the opportunities and threats of the external environment that are assessed based on internal strengths and weaknesses. Strategy formulation includes determining the mission, goals to be achieved, developing strategies, and establishing policy guidelines. Third, strategy implementation is the strategic management process and its policies in action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures. The process includes a change in the overall culture, structure and management system of the organization as a whole. Fourth, evaluation and control is the process of monitoring activities and their results by comparing the actual performance with the expected performance.

Based on the problems above, researchers are interested in revealing the management strategy of community-based ecotourism development in "Taman Beji Griya". This study focuses on the four elements of strategic management mentioned by Wheelen and Hunger (2003) above, i.e, environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation and control. Thus, this study can be useful as a reference for the development of ecotourism, especially in Bali and generally in Indonesia.

2 Research Methods

This study uses qualitative methods with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and document studies. In this study, several aspects observed include accessibility, the natural and social environment around the object, infrastructure and facilities, tourist activities, the process of malukat, and the expression of tourists in various activities. Interviews were conducted on the management, community leaders around ecotourism objects, employees, and tourists. The study of documents used since the attempt to find the problem included in the selection of relevant concepts and theories. Data analysis was carried out by descriptive-interpretative method through three stages as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992), namely data reduction, data display, and verification.

3 Results and Discussion

The word strategy comes from the Greek 'strategos' which means a way of leading the military to conquer and win wars. In general, the definition of strategy is a means of achieving goals. According to Assauri (2013:75), strategy formulation is related to decision making in order to face competition in an interdependent life so that the strategy is prepared by estimating the behavior of one another. In particular, the strategy provides a formulation of what is to be achieved, how to map out the competitive arena faced, and how to implement it based on the allocation of resources so that it can take every environmental opportunity and generate competitive advantage. Hamel and Prahalad (in Umar, 2010:17) define strategy as an action that is incremental (always increasing), continuously, and carried out according to the point of view of what customers expect in the future.

In general, strategic management can be interpreted as a series of policies or actions that are carried out continuously, taking into account the opportunities, threats, resources, and capabilities possessed at each stage of planning, organizing, actuating and monitoring to achieve goals. Observation of the external and internal environment is the initial process of the concept of strategic management followed by planning to determine the direction and goals in an activity. Organizing involves the allocation of resources and potentials to synergize in carrying out the planned activities. The direction and implementation of activities is always guided by the plans that have been set. Supervision is the last stage which includes monitoring and evaluation activities to improve the next program of activities so that the planned goals are achieved properly (Umar, 2010:18-20). Management strategic is needed in the development of ecotourism because in principle every ecotourism is in the realm of competition with other ecotourism objects so that competitiveness determines its existence in the future.

Environmental Scanning

At first the ecotourism object of "Taman Beji Griya" was the beji merajan Griya Gede Manuaba Punggul and was also used by the surrounding Hindus to ask for holy water (tirtha) during dewa yadnya or pitra yadnya. The idea to develop ecotourism in beji griya emerged in early 2017, when Ida Bagus Eka Giriarta ('Gus Eka') decided to quit his job and wanted to become an entrepreneur. His motivation to develop beji griya as ecotourism was inspired by other malukat places in Bali. He considers that beji griya has great potential for it. So after that, he began to explore the potentials that can be developed, both internally and externally. The initial potential found from the object was the beji located in the "Kereb Langit" cave and the palinggih of Ratu Niang Sakti. Gus Eka thinks that these potencies are not enough to build an attractive malukat place. This became a challenge that might threaten the continuation of the planned development of the ecotourism object, which made Gus Eka hesitate to take further action.

On the instructions of Ida Pedanda Gde Buruan Manuaba, a religious ceremony was held for Ratu Niang Sakti to ask for instructions on the next steps to take. During the ceremony, Ida Pedanda Gde Buruan Manuaba received a magical clue (pawisik) namely "yeh" (water) and "abing" (cliff). Ida Pedanda and Gus Eka continued to convey the meaning of the pawisik. Finally, the answer of the pawisik was found around March 2017. It turned out that there was a large water channel from the top of the cliff that was clogged with dirt and shrubs. After that, several members of the Griya Gede Manuaba Punggul family, assisted by a number of sisyas, began to clean that. After the bushes along the water channel were cleared, it turned out that there was large water heading towards the cliff and gave rise to a very beautiful waterfall.

With those potencies, the plan to develop beji griya as an ecotourism object was continued. However, the manager is faced with another internal weakness, mainly the lack of funding

sources to develop the object. To overcome these weaknesses, the management decided that the develop this tourist attraction step by step. This decision is taken so that the funds disbursed to build and develop ecotourism objects can be fulfilled according to their strengths, as well as to test visitor responses. Through gradual development, especially on the core objects, such as the Ratu Niang Sakti temple, waterfalls, and the Kereb Langit cave, it turns out that the community's response is very positive which is shown by the presence of visitors every day.

Based on the description above, it can be found that environmental scanning is the first element of strategic management in the development of community-based ecotourism "Taman Beji Griya". Environmental scanning on the opportunities and threats dimension is directed to explore the availability of objects that have the potential to be used as tourist attractions, such as beji griya and waterfalls. Meanwhile, the environmental scanning on the strengths and weakness dimension includes the financial strength of managers and visitor responses.

Strategy Formulation

The strategy formulation begins with determining the long-term goal of ecotourism development, that is building ecotourism that provides added economic value without losing its religious function as a beji (Gus Eka, interview 3 April 2021). In principle, the development of community-based ecotourism relies on the available resources by involving the participation of the surrounding community. In this case, the strategy formulation of the "Taman Beji Griya" development includes five basic elements of community-based ecotourism, i.e., attractions, facilities, accessibility, amenity, community participation, and networking (Ace, 2017:50). The five elements are used as a framework for reviewing the strategy formulation carried out by the "Taman Beji Griya" manager.

Tourist attractions developed in "Taman Beji Griya" are natural and spiritual tourism (tirtayatra and malukat). Providing the beautiful and attractive place for malukat is the main target of strategy formulation to developing some tourist attractions in this object. Therefore, the development strategy plan is directed at arranging and beautifying the objects that are the main attractions, such as around the palinggih Ratu Niang Sakti, the Kereb Langit cave, and the Taman Beji Griya waterfall. This strategy was chosen based on the consideration of the superior potential of "Taman Beji Griya". In the SWOT analysis, optimization the superior potential is the right strategy to overcome various weaknesses (David, 1993).

In accessibility dimension, the manager plans access to locations that are easily accessible by tourists. Access to the location can be reached using four-wheeled vehicles by utilizing the district highway in Punggul Village, as well as the village road (Pekandelan Street) in Banjar Trinadi. For this reason, the manager appeals to the people of Banjar Trinadi to take advantage of the road. Furthermore, the management also provides a parking area on land owned by the griya which is about 200 meters from the location of the object. After from the parking lot, the access road to the location utilizes the reorganized subak road so as to reduce the risk of visitors slipping when crossing the road. On this trip, tourists can enjoy the atmosphere of the rice fields, as well as jogging.

This ecotourism development plan is also directed at developing the facilities needed by tourists when visiting these objects. In this case, there are several facilities that are planned to be developed further, such as a parking area, locker room, toilets, changing room, and coffee shop. On another aspect, the management also provides various facilities such as scarves (senteng) and malukat offerings for tourists. The physical facilities are related to the amenity dimension. In the long-term, development plan is to provide wizard services that support the convenience of tourists in enjoying activities at the venue. According to Suwantoro (2004:48), amenities are more likely to be provided by tourist service providers, such as the hospitality of employees who work at tourist attractions, as well as other facilities needed by tourists to

support their comfortable travels. In this regard, the management wants to equip employees with English skills, as well as to build a positive attitude in dealing with various tourist characters.

The participation of local communities is also being the main subject in the development of community-based ecotourism “Taman Beji Griya”. Given that community-based ecotourism must be born from, by, and for the local community. In this case, the management also plans to involve the participation of the community around the object, especially the *sisya griya*, as employees so that ecotourism is able to create jobs. In other words, the long-term goal of developing ecotourism is to increase economic value, maintain religious and environmental functions, and create jobs for the surrounding community.

In the networking dimension, the ecotourism development plan for Taman Beji Griya prioritizes social media networks. This cannot be separated from the potential of the ecotourism object which is Instagram-able with attractive spots for tourists to take pictures. In addition, the massive use of social media in contemporary society is also potential as a tourism promotion. On a different aspect, the development of networks with related parties, such as the Regency Tourism Office, sub-district and village governments, and other stakeholder to increase the capacity and quality of this ecotourism.

Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation in the development of ecotourism at “Taman Beji Griya” is carried out according to the long-term plan drawn up, that is ecotourism by combining aspects of nature tourism and religious tourism. The development began in April 2017 after the waterfall was discovered and confirmed to flow continuously. In the aspect of tourist attractions, the first step is clean up around the core area, such as around the *palinggih Ratu Niang Sakti*’s, waterfalls, and the *Kereb Langit* cave, as well as adding by some ornaments. The goal is for tourists to feel comfortable when *malukat*, enjoy the beauty of the area, and get interesting spots to take selfies.

The manager also compiles rules regarding the *malukat* procedure so that visitors get certainty about the correct procedure. In addition, someone is also assigned to guide the *malukat* process from one place to the next. This guide can also be asked for help to take pictures so that every visitor activity can be captured with camera shots. The procedures for *malukat* in that place are as follows, (a) Asking permission at the *palinggih Ratu Niang Sakti*; (b) *malukat* in “*Kereb Langit*” cave; (c) *malukat* under the waterfalls and visitors are expected to shout as loud as possible with the aim of removing all mental burdens, so that later they feel calm; (d) *malukat* at *pancoran Badawang Nala*; and (e) pray at *palinggih Ratu Niang Sakti*.

Strategy implementation in the aspect of community participation is carried out by strengthening cooperation with the surrounding community. The management always employs local peoples in terms of building facilities on site, such as builders and stone carvers, as a form of management's commitment to involve the local community. Strategy implementation at the network level is an integral part of the management's efforts to promote the “Taman Beji Griya” to the wide community. In this aspect, the manager is more likely to use social media networks, especially Facebook and Instagram for promotion. This network helps managers to promote for free because many visitors upload pictures on social media about their activities.

Various models of these strategy implementation have proven to be successful in improving the image and quality of ecotourism at “Taman Beji Griya”. This is evidenced by the increasing number of visits, both from local and foreign tourists. Most of the local visitors are Hindus who are aiming for *malukat*, as well as enjoying its natural beauty. However, there are also some from outside Bali, such as from Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and others. Meanwhile, many foreign tourists come to this place for *malukat*, not just enjoying its natural beauty (Gus Putra, interview 21 April 2021). With various implementations of these management strategies, most of these ecotourism development plans can be realized.

Evaluation and Control

The various patterns of development carried out by the management of “Taman Beji Griya” cannot be separated from the evaluation and control of the realities faced in the field. For example, the construction of a locker room, which had actually been planned, was finally accelerated due to input from visitors, so it had to be made a priority scale. Based on the evaluation results, the coffee shop which is managed directly by the management is not developed optimally or it can be said that it is just a way because from the evaluation results, not many visitors drink at the coffee shop. However, Gus Eka (interview 20 April 2021) remains optimistic that the coffee shop will be more advanced in the future because ways are constantly looking for ways to optimize it.

Evaluation and other controls are also related to the economic value of the object because it relates to employee salaries and other operational needs. This financial problem is crucial because visitors are not charged a special rate. Considering that the management avoids the commercialization of the object, so they have to look for other alternatives to access its economic value. In this case, the rental of senteng, kamen, locker room, and sales at the coffee shop are the only sources of income for the management. On the other hand, the malukat offerings are completely left to the employees who work at the venue. This means that the management must optimize other aspects to access the economic value, without commercializing and commodifying the sacred value of the ecotourism object. How to increase the source of income without setting tariffs on visitors is always the center of evaluation from time to time.

4 Conclusion

This study finds that the ecotourism development of “Taman Beji Griya” has been carried out through integrated strategic management, includes environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation and control. Environmental scanning is related to a SWOT analysis of the potential and resources owned, both internally and externally. The results of this analysis are used as the basis for formulating strategies that are prepared for the long term. The results of this plan are implemented in concrete actions so that ecotourism at “Taman Beji Griya” can be realized today. Management always evaluates and controls the development of ecotourism as a basis for determining the priority scale in future development so that this tourist attraction is visited by many tourists. Based on this conclusion, it is recommended that the management always improve the quality of ecotourism without ignoring the fundamental values and functions of the object as a holy place.

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