AN ANALYSIS ON THE BACKGROUND OF ONLINE TRANSPORTATION CREW TO SUPPORT THE TOURISM AND NON-TOURISM ACTIVITIES

(A Study on Online Transportation Drivers and Riders in Bandung)

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ABSTRAK

Transportasi menjadi hal yang sangat vital pada kegiatan pariwisata, utamanya berkaitan dengan aksesibilitas. Transportasi online merupakan satu di antara sekian banyak jenins alat transportasi yang dapat digunakan oleh wisatawan di Kota Bandung. Penelitian ini fokus pada analisis deskripsi para Driver/Rider transportasi online di Kota Bandung dalam melayani wisatawan dan konsumen umum. Metode penelitian adalah kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam terhadap para responden (operator/driver/rider) transportasi online yang ditunjuk secara acak untuk pengambilan data. Triangulasi data dan Focus Group Discussion (FGD) untuk memeriksa keabsahan data, dan analisis data menggunakan Miles Hubberman . Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, bahwa alasan para responden bergabung ke transportasi online adalah untuk merespon antusias dari masyarakat dan wisatawan di Bandung untuk menggunakan jasa Transportasi online. Menganggap menjadi operator transportasi online sebagai pekerjaan sampingan, namun ada juga yang benar-benar sebagai pekerjaan utama. Status keanggotaan ada yang ganda (anggota ojek pangkalan maupun transportasi online untuk menjamin keamanan) dan murni sebagai anggota transportasi online. Kendaraan didapatkan melalui pembelian kredit.

Kata Kunci: Pariwisata, Transportasi Online,Kota Bandung, Operator transportasi online.

ABSTRACT

Transportation becomes vital to tourism activities, especially when it comes to accessibility. Online transportation has become one of the choices for tourists to use in Bandung. This study focuses on analyzing how drivers or riders of online transportation in serving tourists and general consumers. The research method is qualitative with in-depth interviews with respondents (operators/drivers/riders) randomly chosen. Data Triangulation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are the methods use for data analysis. The results show that respondents join the online transportation, as the service has become such a trend in the city that more and more people are using it. Some takes the job as operators as their main job, while some others do that as simply a side job. Some even have a double membership status (both as offline and online transportation crew), yet some others choose to only become part of the online team. These riders or drivers purchase their vehicles by a credit system.

Keywords: tourism, online transportation, Bandung, online operator

INTRODUCTION

Accessibility is necessary in tourism activities, one of which is transportation. It plays an important role in the development of tourism and the economy as a whole (Truong and Shimizu 2016). Transportation not only helps to take tourists to their destinations, also helps them in these destinations (Truong and Shimizu 2016). In addition, easy, inexpensive, and fast access is another necessity for tourists (Bimmonte *et al*., 2015). One way to fulfill it is with online application-based transport.

Bandung is a tourist area that requires an online motorcycle taxi to deliver tourists to the many destinations the city offers. Many online motorcycle taxi companies are reaching out to the market by conducting massive recruitment of drivers or riders; they offer high incentive to their crew as to dominate the existing market, which finally prompts consumers (tourists) to choose their service.

This study aims to analyze and describe the background of the operators (drivers/riders) of online transportation in Bandung to choose their present job. In carrying out the background analysis, we use history, length of working, their reason to join, level of job satisfaction (Leon *et al*., 2018), resources and technology owned, future career prospects, as well as threats and challenges in the work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online transportation is an innovation in business, a combination of transportation service providers with internet-based data communication technology (Anindhita, Arisanty, and Rahmawati 2016). Online transportation means that all transactions are conducted through online bases, using Smartphone as the medium as well as using related applications and internet connections (Rahmawati, 2017). According to Yoeti (1996: 206), three (3) types of transportation commonly used in tourism are (1) air transportation, including international flight and domestic flight; (2) sea transportation, including regular lines and charter lines (cruiser); and (3) land transportation, example bicycles, *delman*, motorcycles, cars, taxis, buses, and trains. The focus of this study is on the land transportation services, namely motorcycles and cars.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by qualitative descriptive method. Respondents consisted of Online transportation Crew from 3 companies, there are Uber, Grab, and GoJek in City of Bandung. Respondents were determined through incidental sampling of riders or drivers encountered by the researcher. Technique of data retrieval by way of open interview with interview guide. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of resources by holding Fcous Group Discussion (FGD) involves crew representatives, user representatives, and researchers. The data analysis technique using Miles and Hubberman methods.

DISCUSSION

Live History Operator

Someone does a job (career) is not only to pursue money, but also to find out identity (Harris and McKenna, 2013). Bandung is one of the big cities in Indonesia and is famous for its tourist destinations, both cultural tourism, artificial tourism, and others. Geographically, Bandung is located in Java and is adjacent to Jakarta. It is also famous as the center of various industries and trade. Thus, Bandung is very interesting for the urban community to find work; some rural people think that someone dares to leave their hometown to other places for a job, especially *Minang* people, is the one to earn respect. The local transport operators are heterogeneous from various regions in Indonesia.

However, some people finally give up with the condition they find in the city—it is increasingly difficult to get a job, as available jobs are limited. Some people choose to go back to their hometown, and even some local people themselves find it difficult to compete with migrants from various regions. These people have to do a job with low payment, as their educational background is not good enough to help them get a better job. One of the many jobs found in Bandung is as an operator (driver/rider) of the online-based transportation that serves the needs of public transportation and tourists in Bandung.

The Length of Joining the Online Transportation Company

The business entered the city in 2015 with three (3) major companies, i.e. Gojek, Grab, and, Uber. The local people had the pros

and cons; the online transportation companies can provide new jobs for the people, yet on the other hand, it also threatens similar jobs such as *Ojek Pangkalan* (*opang*) or offline transporation, existing public transportation (*angkot*) and others.

Since their establishment, many people have decided to join the business; some of them survive in the business, while some others have been forced to quit the job (fired) as they violated the rules set up by the companies. Some have been working for more than a year, some have only been doing the job for months—yet, the number of drivers and riders continues to increase.

Tourists often use the online transportation because it is very accessible and offers a fix price. Travelers nowadays rely more on the internet to search for information about places they are going to visit—it is different from the past where travel agents are the main helper (cf. Wouters & Kichberger, 2015). A more conventional transportation by motorcylce or *ojek pangkalan* will require tourists to make some bargaining related to price. However, online transportation has its own shortcoming when it comes to safety. There has been no regulation related to this new emerging kind of transportation and conflicts have long existed with the more conventional form of transportation. The condition makes some tourists feel insecure and uncomfortable using the online transportation.

The Reason to Join the Online Transportation

The interview with some drivers and riders of the online transportation companies confirms that these people used to work as retailers, employees in furniture companies, distributors, employees at cooking oil companies, *opang* builders, and farmers. Bandung's high standard of living forces people to have high incomes, so it is quite normal for people to have two or more jobs at the same time.

They have never imagined doing this kind of job they are doing now, as online transportation is an innovation in the digital technology; some of them even are not quite sure the good sides and the bad sides of joining the company. Many of these drivers and riders said that they used to have a job but the uncertainty of income received or the pressure during work has made them to shift to the online transportation service company. They expected to have better income and some tips from the tourists.

Some people take the job as their main job, while some prefer it as only a part time job. A participant used to work as a farmer ans then he decided to leave farming as weather gets more unpredictable these days making farming business so hard to do. He has been in the online transportation company for the last two years and he earns the same and even more than what he earned as a farmer, and surely, the income now is more predictable. The other comfort of being a driver or rider in an online transportation company is the flexible working hours—one can decide when to do the job within a day.

Some do the job as an additional work to support their long-established business. To develop their main business further, the people are temporarily seeking for additional money to add their capital. The benefits gained are that meeting new people help them to expand their experience and relationships. Sometimes, they are able to exchange knowledge about their respective cultures with tourists from other regions. They even become friends with these tourists. In addition, relationships with fellow drivers or riders are also kept good, even when they are working for different companies; come people who enroll in two online transportation companies at once.

Income

Leon *et al.* (2018) explains that income levels can affect one's decision to stay on a job or not; and so does with online transportation. The driver or riders stay as they feel the job offer comfort, flexibility, and good income all at once. They do not feel much pressure as they can set their working hours based on their daily activities, so they still have much time left to spend with family. Compared to their previous jobs, things are so much better now—more income and more time outside the working hours, as stated by one of the participant who previously worked in an oil company. If they are fathers with toddlers or even babies, it means more time for them to help their wife to take care of the children. Most of the wives these days are also working, and they have fixed working hours so they need a helping hand from their husband. Within such condition, being a rider or driver

for an online transporatation company is a good choice for the husbands.

The family of the drivers and riders also support the job, as it is a good job. The drivers or riders often get tips from the tourists and from other services, like shopping or delivering the laundry. Their friends and surrounding community also support them. However, there are still some shortcomings in the job.

The absence of a strict government policy to legalize online transportation provides a sense of self-awareness for those drivers or riders. Conventional taxis or motorcycle taxis mostly reject online transportation in Bandung. Some even threaten the drivers or riders of online transportation. Dispute on the highways often happens, and this disadvantages many parties. Furthermore, tourists see Bandung as an unfriendly destination to visit due to the violence and intimidation when they take the online transportation. Therefore, the government must set up a policy to address the problem as to create a win-win solution for all parties.

The Services Given to the Customers of Online Transportation

The more tourists come, the more interaction the tourists will make with the local community. Related to this phenomenon Coles, Duval, and Hall (2005) divide the analysis of the tourism sector into two approaches, i.e. the bipolar investigations of contemporary travel and hospitality. The first analysis is done by using social science approach, which among others discuss about the relationship between the tourists and the host, the motivation of tourists to travel, and the typology of tourists. On the opposite side, te analysis of tourism is more oriented or viewed through a business perspective by focusing on the hospitality industry.

One of the interactions is realized in Bandung through online-based transportation. A strong reason to use online transportation is the ease and certainty, as well as the security and privacy tourists hope to have when traveling. However, security is something tourists have to worry much. The fast growing of online transportation has created a jealousy for the conventional modes of transportation, such as *Opang.* Many of the people working in the conventional modes of transportation blame the online transportation as a source of their loss of income, as people nowadays prefer the online one than the conventional transportation. This has made disputes between the two parties and there have always been possibilities for the people working in the conventional modes of transportation to do bad things to their fellow working for online transportation companies, such like breaking the cell phones, helmets, and even the vehicles of the online transportation drivers or riders.

To avoid conflicts, online transportation companies appeal for the time being that the drivers or riders do not show their attributes, such like a jacket and helmet with a logo of the company. The drivers and riders have categorized the city parts as a red zone (danger) and green zone (safe) to help them distinguish which parts of the city they can operate and which they cannot. The online transportation operates silently to be not identified by *opang*. When an online transportation driver or rider accepts an order from customers in the red zone, they will ask their customers to move slightly to the nearest safer zone. However, some online transportation drivers or riders also work in the conventional way, meaning that they have two jobs at the same time; this way, they can avoid conflicts with the conventional *opang* or other conventional modes of transportation. Some tourist destinations are categorized as a red zone—these online transportation drivers or riders are not supposed to pick up orders from such destinations, yet, they are allowed to drop customers from other places to such destinations.

In addition to protecting themselves and their passengers from *opang*, online transportation drivers or riders always ask their passengers to use safety-driving tools, such as wearing a helmet or safety belt. They also do not let their passengers to carry excessive goods because in addition to endanger the passengers, it also endangers the rider. They also provide clean and comfortable vehicles and they complete themselves with a driving license and the needed documents.

Utilizing the Devices Owned

The best service in tourism activities require safety and comfort, including the vehicle used. Being part of the online transportation crew, the most important thing required is a vehicle, either a motorcycle or car in accordance with the provisions imposed by

the company. Based on the results of interviews with participants, the vehicle used is a private vehicle whose condition is still good (usually under 5 years). They get the vehicle by installment using the money they earn from the job or the previous job.

The drivers or riders do not buy the car or motorcycle, as they want to join the online transportation crew; they have bought the vehicle long before the online transportation companies entered Bandung. Even for some who purchase the vehicle after the online transportation companies entered Bandung, they never intend the purchase as to join the companies. These people only want to maximize the ownership of the vehicle—and one of the ways is by joining the online transportation crew.

However, some did buy the vehicle as they intended to join the online transportation companies—most of them who bought a car did have the reason of joining the companies. For those applying for car installment, the down payment was paid using the money they got as the retired from their previous job plus their own saving. It is also normal that some drivers use a rent car—the payment is made weekly, monthly, yearly, or based on their need.

The Opinion of Drivers and Riders Related to the Prospect of the Company

The increasing number of tourists visiting Bandung makes the job as the online transportation crew more promising. Before deciding to become part of the online transportation crew, the prospective drivers or riders usually ask for information to friends who have been working as the online transportation crew. They seek for information related to the benefits and complaints faced during the work. Many of them then discuss the matter with their family and most then decide to join the online transportation companies.

The positive response from the community on the online transportation companies (sharing economy) shows that the future of these companies is good enough. The increasing number of users emphasizes this and it means more number of drivers or riders needed. However, local governments may have a heavier burden to bear unemployment given that resource owners in the mode of sharing economy model often do not require permanent workers to manage the assets they lease (cf. Fang, Ye, and Law, 2015).

Threats and Challenges

Government intervention is indispensable in private business activities in order to avoid conflicts and to create cooperation (Lam, 2016). However, this is not the case in Bandung. Conflicts arise in the transportation business between the online transportation with the conventional one (*opang*). Being an online transportation crew sometimes means to work under threats. At this time, a government policy on the legality of online transportation in Bandung is needed. Unfortunately, up to these days, there have not been any regulations set by the government related to online transportation even when it contributes much to the decline in unemployment, let alone be associated with tourism activities.

While waiting for the government regulations, and to prevent the conflict between *opang* and online transportation crew, that will only lead to bad effects to each party, the drivers and riders or the online transportation has taken some preventive measures to *opang* to join the online transportation crew because they can get more income. However, several reasons and problems occur so it is very difficult for *opang* to join the online crew.

Some problems occur, as requirements cannot be met by *opang* who want to join the online crew, such as they do not have a driver license or vehicle registration certificate. In addition, their vehicle is not eligible to register, as the vehicle is simply too old. Another reason is that *opang* do not accept the rate set by the online transportation companies. One of the research participants said that *opang* have not fully understood the ease of getting customers from the online system.

In addition to threats, *opang* also posses a challenge for the online transportation crew. Some *opang* were former online transportation crew—they got suspended because the violated the rules set by the company and they are in the blacklist. This suspended crew knows the trick of online transportation crew to get customers, and when they rejoin *opang* after being suspended as an online transportation crew, they know how to interfere with the online crew. Many *opang*

whose motorcycle is not eligible try another way to join the online crew by renting a motorcycle from relatives or agent so they can register as an online transportation crew.

The next challenge comes from customers. Some customers are impatient waiting for pick-up or for food orders. Sometimes, customers write the pick-up point different from their actual place making the riders or drivers find it hard to reach the customers—and this means more time and resource used. There is also problem with fake orders. The other challenge comes from the company's own policies that do not limit the number of online transportation crew—too many drivers or riders yet with no increase in the number of customers have made these drivers and riders experience decrease in the number of customers and income. They hope the company and the government can issue a policy related to quota (restrictions). According to one of the research participants, the number of online crew increases everyday, even the waiting list of people who register as online transportation crew can reach 100 to 150 names.

Reflection by Drivers and Riders

Most of those who have joined and become partners of application-based transportation services feel satisfied and happy with the work they do and income received. According to one of the research participants, he has been enjoying his job much as he has more time to spend with the family and he can save IDR 50,000-100,000 per day. In his previous job, he had to spend 8 hours a day, making him had no time for his family.

Many of the riders and drivers have started to be financially better, even some are already able to have a vehicle (a car or motorcycle) through installment. Those online drivers or riders feel comfortable with the work and hope to stay longer, as long as companies and governments support them by limiting the number of drivers or riders and by having regulations related to online transportation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

1. Online transportation is very useful to support the accessibility of tourism activities in the Bandung;
2. There has been no guarantee on the safety of drivers or riders because of frequent hostility by conventional transportation modes, especially *opang;* the online crew not infrequently gets a physical threat. As a result, the tourists as passengers also feel scared. The reason is there is no clear regulation of online transportation in Bandung; and
3. Drivers or riders consider the work as prospective that can guarantee their future as more and more people and tourists are using online transportation services in Bandung.

Recommendation

1. The government must established and enacted regulations on online transportation in Bandung immediately;
2. There should be security guarantee for drivers, riders, and travelers as well as the general passengers in using the online transportation; and
3. Furth Qer studies must focus on the impact of the existence of online transportation on the development of tourism.

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