

THE PULEWULUNG DESA WISATA:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF FREELANCER TOUR GUIDE

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The contribution of the freelancer tour guide in any developmental initiative cannot be undermined. Though they are not permanently employed within the organization but their networking to the tourism destination is of imperative. Mr. Agus Risatyawan famously known as Mr. WAWAN is such of among freelancer tour guide whose contribution to the Pulewulung Desa Wisata cannot be underscored. He has more than twenty (20) years of experience working as freelancer tour guide since 1999, connecting both international and domestic tourists to visit and experience the beautiful scenery of Pulewulung and Bali tourism destinations. He was born in 1968 (54) currently with three (3) kids living at Yogyakarta-Indonesia.

A Freelance Tour Guide

In 1995, he worked as a driver in film industry located in Jakarta, Indonesia. During the recession period in 1999, many organizations retrenched their employees and he was among them. Due to the needs of English-speaking drivers, a travel agent company showed the interest of working with him. A good command in English he had, he successfully gained the opportunity to work with Paramita Tour TX Travel, Kesturi Travel, and other several travel agencies. The journey as a freelancer tour guide was justly begun due to extensive network he created among the international and national tourists in 2010. Having good connection with international tourists from England, USA and Japan, who frequently contact him through email and other social media, made him very important person for the industry. Nevertheless, the strong customer relationship with established chain of international and national tourists motivated him to operate as freelancer tour guide from 2010. By hiring tour vehicles from his friends and other car rental companies, he was able to drive the tourists around tourism destination mostly in Bali and Yogyakarta. His connection to Bali was also of entrepreneurial in nature as he marketed handcrafts to the tourists in Bali and vice versa to Yogyakarta.

In 2017 when the Pulewulung Desa Wisata was opened, he started working with this destination organizing the different groups of tourists for Agro-Edu Tourism. The Agro-Edu Tourism Program at Pulewulung is designed to equip the tourists visiting the destination with the Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) for Salak cultivation, harvesting, post-harvesting, and processing. The visitors are also allowed to conduct research studies and pick-up Salak for enjoying the taste of its varieties from Super, Honey, and Ivory Salak. Mr. Wawan's contribution to this destination is more pronounced in sending different tourist groups especially his current plan to organize students groups from high school and universities around Yogyakarta to visit the designed area for agro-tourism education. Acting as a link between the Pulewulung and academia in higher learning institution will pave the way for more academic research on best practice related to crop cultivation, harvesting, post-harvesting, processing and quality assurance control for the Salak production.

Alex Tour Company

Furthering his work, he has a plan to register Alex Tour Company which he will be working under it to continue strengthening his network with both private and public sectors working in tourism industry. Having limited educational background obtained from Yogyakarta State Teaching and Educational Institution (Eight semesters) currently known as Yogyakarta State University (UNY) where he studied literature and English language and his full commitment in tourism, he decided to send his own daughter to the same university to study at the Faculty of Agriculture majoring in Agro-technology, where she will be working with her father after graduation. Working with his daughter will help Mr. Wawan to perform his work as a freelancer tour guides more professionally to meet the industrial standards operation procedures, laws and regulations related to tour guiding sector in Indonesia.

However, going forward, the challenges facing freelancer tour guides around the world cannot be underscored. Mr. Wawan as a freelancer tour guide faces some challenges towards achieving his career goals. Despite of selling his own tourist car during Covid-19 pandemic to finance his existence in the industry, still he is facing some financial difficulties toward implementing the current plan he has to organize students study tour, linking academia to the destination. His desire to work as a legal entity though registration of Alexis Tour Company requires money for its implementation. Moreover, working as a legal entity requires him to be registered and licensed as a tour operator which will serve as a paradigm shift from freelancer tout guide to tour operator typically due to his extensive experience he has already accrued from the industry.

Supports Needed

Appraising the contribution of freelancer tour guides and its support toward marketing tourism destination, this study call for financial support to Mr. Wawan from different tourism stakeholders and financial institutions to support him toward achieving his plan in marketing and promoting the aforementioned destinations. The financial support will help him to register his new tour company and pay for licensing for him to operate as a certified tour operator. It is in this way, his work will be of value addition and will create opportunities for others to join the chain as tour guides and tour porters. Having a connection with high learning institution such as Universitas Sanata Dharma, Magister Management in International Tourism, guarantee him a technical support as a requirement toward realizing his full potential.