

PASAR WADAI RAMADHAN (CAKE FAIR) BANJARMASIN: FADING LOCAL FOOD FESTIVAL

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Abstract

This research is tended to explore the cause of declining interest in the annual food festival in Banjarmasin, Pasar Wadai Ramadhan (Ramadhan Cake Fair). This festival has been running for 38 years and only during the month of Ramadhan. It originally sells traditional delicacies and as time goes by some local spectacles are shown during the festival to attract more visitors. The aim of this research is to provide a contribution to the image strengthening of Banjarese culture as well as economic sustainability for the people in South Kalimantan. SWOT analysis was used to conduct obtain the result of this research. The use of SWOT analysis to conduct this research is to bring out the result by conducting interviews, observation, and documentation. Based on the steps done, the result showed the cause of a lesser audience of this festival is due to the changes of occurring place for the event. To keep this annual festival sustainable, support from local authorities and locals is crucial in implementing a sustainable festival management strategy.

Keywords: Ramadhan Cake Fair, Sustainable festival, SWOT analysis, Sustainable festival management strategy.

Introduction

As a vast archipelago country, Indonesia owns hundreds of ethnicities. Each of these ethnicities has its delicacies commonly known as traditional food. To preserve the existence of these delicacies some provinces organize culinary festivals such as Bali Interfood Festival (Bali), Festival Kampoeng Tempo Doelo (Jakarta), Festival Sate dan Soto Nusantara (West Sumatra), and Festival Kuliner Teluk Jailolo (North Maluku) (Angelin, 2020). The way to preserve local food through festivals is a form of cultural appreciation since food is an inseparable element of a culture (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2013).

By creating a gastronomy event, a city provides a unique experience to its people and also visitors. This gastronomy event enables them to experience authentic customs and culture with food (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011). Therefore, Food tourism may be interpreted as attending food festivals, visiting restaurants and specific locations for testing the food, and/or experiencing the specialized regional produced food (Boyne, Hall, & Williams, 2003).

As the interest in savoring local food when traveling is growing from time to time; food now is seen as an important element (Özdemir & Seyitoğlu, 2017). The experience known as the “travel gastronomical experience” is considered the main experience (Chang et al., 2011) which drives tourism destinations to promote the available facilities and the edible aspect within to attract more visitors to come.

Both combinations of tourism and gastronomy bring socioeconomic impacts to an area. By collaborating these two elements; an area could have established integration in generating income through gastronomy tourism (Bessière, 2013). The income generated from this tourism sector is clear evidence of local economic development involving several professional sectors such as manufacturers/suppliers, chefs, markets, etc (Gheorghe, Tudorache, & Nistoreanu, 2014).

Following the idea of socioeconomic development, (Gheorghe et al., 2014)) stated that gastronomy plays an important part in tourist attraction. Gastronomy has become one of the main attractions for tourism since it defines the competitiveness of a destination and attracts tourists whose motive to travel is to devour local delicacies. Therefore, tourist destinations in recent days augmented the sector of gastronomy to be used as one of the magnets in grabbing tourists; take Taiwan for example (Lin & Chen, 2014).

Although food brings an impact on tourism, especially in the form of festivals; studies in this field are still scarce (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012). The scarcity of studies in this field offers a chance to conduct a descriptive study on how food festivals could be sustainable. Therefore, using Pasar Wadai Ramadhan as an example, this study aims to discover the sustainability of this food festival using a SWOT analysis. By using SWOT analysis theory based on several factors such as Destination Image, Branding, and Image Transfer as well as events in destination branding (food festivals in particular); the researcher aims to discover answers for each component in SWOT analysis in answering the research question: What is SWOT analysis for Pasar Wadai Ramadhan to maintain and enhance its sustainability? This research question is the guidance based on a study conducted in Banjarmasin, the capital of South Kalimantan which organizes an annual event only in the month of Ramadhan which has been running for 38 years.

The image of a destination has been recognized as one's mental representation of feeling, knowledge, and global impressions of a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Marketers should select the consistency of unique combinations in a brand element in establishing the destination's identity (Boo, Busser, & Baloglu, 2009) The importance of unique characteristics of a destination also has been highlighted by (Buhalis, 2000). He stated that every destination usually attracts a specific type of tourist. Therefore, the effectiveness of branding destination requires unique selling propositions which it is not easily copied. The intense competition among destinations in becoming the most visited place by tourists has made the respective authorities impose the authenticity of the place to attract the target tourists. Specifically, studies nowadays such as (Lai, Khoo-Lattimore, & Wang, 2019).

The core of destination branding is brand image formation. This is how tourists portray a destination based on its qualities and association (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011) From the point of view of destination marketing, customer-based brand equity has been incorporated into numerous studies. The success of a destination's branding is assessed through the image and loyalty of the tourists toward the destination (Tsai &

Wang, 2017). One recent interesting topic in marketing research is brand image transfer. It is common for companies to emphasize strategically their products or services by highlighting their most valuable assets to develop their brand names easily (Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2011). The approach of umbrella branding where a brand adopts a bigger and more successful name as its "parent" for its products is commonly used to make customers perceive the quality of the products or services as the same as "branded house" (Knox, 2004). By using the umbrella branding approach, a unit may also gain success for its product by extending the positive association of the product.

Studies on image transfer provide a solid theoretical base for destination marketers in applying brand concepts at the destination level. The adoption of the values of a corporation in featured products shows a sense of credibility and quality, which depicts its core values and builds up a more desirable image of the corporate. In tourism, the effect of spillover allows the image transfer possible from a product to a destination. Similarly, to the corporate image stated by (Balmer & Gray, 2003); a destination image covers the core values of the place and therefore allows it to take advantage of the well-established brand equity and knowledge for extending the products and services. Subsequently, the organizations of destination marketing are actively and increasingly organizing special events to attract potential tourists and strengthen a favorable image (Getz, 2008).

When a destination is paired with an event to be marketed, a unique experience may be experienced by tourists. The unique experience generated by food events within a destination signifies effective and successful destination marketing; it depicts the successful relationship between destinations, products, and consumers (Qu et al., 2011). For instance, participation in mentioned event permits tourists to have a special experience and more understanding of local's authenticity; which alters their perception of destination images on economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects (Deng & Li, 2014).

Academic studies conducted in the related field seldom explore the role of events in creating a unique identity or brand. These studies cover the use of special events as places of branding; for instance, a study conducted in 2016 by Peter on Dubai as the shopping paradise. In his study, Dubai was depicted as a shopping paradise through a shopping festival (Peter & Anandkumar, 2016). As there are numerous values depicted to tourists from various events; the existing study as mentioned earlier, mainly discussed the broad impacts of events on many destinations' images (cultural environment and economic benefits). However, it failed to investigate further what image or identity will be constructed if different special events were held (Hallmann, Zehrer, & Müller, 2015). Since events influence branding, the facets of a destination are also being influenced. (AL-HAFIZ & Firmansyah, 2019) stated that the tourism industry has several facets namely: culinary, sport, and medical; but there is a lack of understanding of how special events can depict the unique facets of an image from a destination (AL-HAFIZ & Firmansyah, 2019). Thus, the urgency to examine further destination branding through events is emerging.

As food has long become one of the main magnets in tourism destinations and serves as an added value to its branding; many regions are now benefitting from the immense opportunities of it for the advancement of destination marketing. For example, the Korean government has pledged to promote the food of this country profoundly; resulting in the well-known status of food across nations along with the history and culture of Korea (Lin & Chen, 2014). Another example would be Hong Kong which is famous for its food. Depicted as a “gourmet paradise”, the destination marketing organizations in this country tend to promote exotic flavor combinations between west and east incorporated into its cuisine (Horng & Tsai, 2010). Similar to the two mentioned examples, Singapore has also proposed the same notion by proposing the “The Food Capital of Asia” slogan for this Merlion country. This slogan is intended to foster culinary development with a broad variety of culinary delights (Henderson, 2004)

Resources of culinary tourism consist of aspects that are mainly categorized into four: activities, events, facilities, and organizations (Horng & Tsai, 2012) Among these categories, events for food (food festivals) have gained fame tremendously in recent years (Folgado-Fernández, Hernández-Mogollón, & Duarte, 2017). Food festivals do not only offer consumables but also promotions for their visitors externally; they also portray lifestyle and identity (Lau & Li, 2019). It supports the notion asserted by nowadays researchers on the immense potential for developing tourism destinations through food events (Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008). Which provide tourists to indulge themselves in the taste of indigenous flavors, take part in cultural activities, experience lifestyle authenticity, and learn the traditions of one destination (Wan & Chan, 2013) Further, the mentioned activities are translated into cultural appreciation which connects tourists to a destination through emotional connection (Hall & Sharples, 2008). Therefore, food festivals offer an authentic theme to a tourist destination’s image and development. It can also serve as a motivational factor for culinary tourism as well as sustainable tourism generally (Smith, Costello, & Muenchen, 2010).

By the context of the research in this paper, Pasar Wadai Ramadhan, which serves as an area selling the traditional food of Banjaresse, has made culinary activities one of the tourist attractions in Banjarmasin. The local government which serves as the sole destination marketing organization in this city is eager to promote the city by promoting its cross-cultural exchange. In particular, the local government has been hosting this annual event since 1985. The local government does not only provide the visitors with selections of traditional food sold; but also, entertainment such as folk dances and traditional music (Zainuddin. H, 2021)

Local governments need to investigate the effectiveness of food festivals in branding culinary destinations. It has been shown by several previous studies on the subject adopt the common practice of focusing on communication objectives over economic objectives, for it is hard to discover sales volume based on different influences (Kusumoto, 2002). At this point, the effectiveness of the advertisement is well-recognized as customers’ cognitive, affective, and connotative level response; such as customers’ recall and recognition of a brand, image perception, repurchase

intentions, and positive recommendations (Wan & Chan, 2013). Accordingly, in the context of the study, the effectiveness of a campaign as a tool of promotion dominantly comes out with destination image and loyalty affected by this image as the results (Qu et al., 2011) The SWOT analysis provides the theoretical base to understand how the SWOT analysis components (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of a festival can be used as a reference to build sustainable festivals based on the involvement of destination image, branding, and image transfer; Events in destination branding, and The role of food's festival in culinary destination branding.

Metod

The use of SWOT analysis as the basis of this study is referred to as phenomenological which is described as the reflective study of lived experience. The main attribute of phenomenological tradition is that this study is designed to describe the immediate experience of the subject rather than theorizing or conceptualizing it (Lisa, 2008). Its usage fits best with the descriptive model of the qualitative method since the outcome describes objectively the result of an investigation of an event (Elgar, 2007).

The sample and data collection for this study is taken by using purposive sampling and interview. Purposive sampling was used to target the visitors of the festival to acquire their opinions towards the festival; while the interview to draw it was done in the most flexible way to draw the richness of experience from the interviewees (Elgar, 2007). The semi-structured interview was conducted by inserting casual talks while asking the key questions to interviewees. It was done on the spot where this event took place and lasted for 15-20 minutes each. The initial discussions concerned the festival in general but then narrowed down to the personal point of view that can be used as improvements of the festival.

The analysis to conclude the result of this study was done by reading all the interview results to draw interpretative and common meanings. By doing so, the interpretations from the general narratives, as well as specific quotations, were met in agreement. It was then broken down and grouped into specific components of SWOT analysis to see each of the respective components to be put as the result later in the result and discussion section.

Result and Discussion

Based on the data analysis acquired, the result and discussion of this study are depicted in two parts: Ramadhan Cake Fair is an annual event that only occurs during Ramadhan. As an annual event, this event was started in 1985 and inaugurated by the appointed mayor at that time Mr. Kamarudin. The first place where this festival took place was on Jl. R.E Martadinata. Since then, this festival had been successfully grabbing the attention of the locals. Although originally it was only clusters of traditional food vendors, as time passed by it got bigger over time causing local authorities to relocate it into a bigger place. The new place was located in the Menara

siring area at the bank of Martapura river from then until the recent year. The relocation itself came with some improvements; one of them was the spectacles of traditional music and dances performed by local performers. This collaboration then attracted more visitors not only from the neighboring city but also from other countries.

The improvement in showing traditional dances and music during the festival was intended to establish a distinct festival that may be alike in other places. It is confirming the notion proposed by (Boo et al., 2009) that the efforts of local authorities as destination marketers were intended to build a unique destination's identity. This notion was confirmed by one of the interviewees whose home is in a neighboring city stating that he often visits Banjarmasin during Ramadhan only to experience the uniqueness of the festivals by having traditional food and watching spectacles while visiting his relatives.

The traditional foods sold during the festival varied from snacks to entrées. The local authorities claimed this festival aimed to ensure the existence of these traditional foods as part of the unique identity owned by Banjarmasin for it is one of the largest cities where Banjarese resides. The target from local authorities as destination marketing organizations supported the idea of Dimitrios which highlighted the uniqueness of one place may set one tourism destination apart from others (Buhalis, 2000).

Moreover, the decision to move the venue of this festival to the bank of Martapura river portrayed the effort of local authorities to strengthen the image of Banjarmasin as the city of thousand rivers. The umbrella branding technique used through the placement of the venue for this event intensifies the image as a city with easy access to fresh water, Banjarmasin is well-known for its freshwater seafood that can be found easily in the entrées sold within the festivals.

This festival accommodated hundreds of traditional food vendors consisting of traditional snacks, cakes, and entrée. These vendors had to register their stalls with local authorities.

Although this festival had minor drawbacks during the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021. The enthusiasm of visitors never extremely diminished. Visitors from local, neighboring cities, and even foreigners still find this festival interesting to see since they will not merely experience the authenticity of Banjarese food but also traditional spectacles.

Based on the analysis conducted from the result of the interview with the visitors of this festival, there are internal and external factors found as considerations in determining the SWOT analysis components for this study: The internal factors to be used as considerations in maintaining the sustainability of this event are the authenticity of the content of the festivals. The authentic content for this festival is its strength since it offers a distinct experience for the visitors where they could indulge themselves with the traditional food of Banjarese. Interestingly, authenticity also served as a weakness. The external factors that took into account as considerations in sustaining this event are the venue where the festival took place and external cultural exposure. The venue for

the festival is the opportunity factor that should be maximized by the organizer. Choosing the strategic and representable venue as an effort to strengthen the image of Banjarmasin as the city of thousand rivers and provide an accessible way for visitors are great opportunities to be used maximally. On the other hand, external cultural exposure, modernization, and advanced technology were considered threats to the sustainability of this festival.

Both of internal and external factors mentioned above were further classified into more detailed components in the SWOT analysis as follows: The authenticity brought by the organizer (the local authorities) built a strong image of Banjaresse cultural representation. Visitors would have been associated automatically with the food and traditional spectacles once they heard about the name of this festival. The repeated spectacles in representing the authenticity apart from the food sold were a point to ponder as a weakness for this festival. Visitors, especially locals got bored with the repetition of the shows shown during the festival. The chosen venue for organizing this festival was located in the center of the city. It provided the visitors with easy access to go to the festival. This venue was also representable in representing the image of Banjarmasin as the city of thousand rivers. The first threat was external cultural exposure brought by the food sold at this festival. It competed head-to-head with traditional food since it is sold at the same venue. Modernization was the second threat that caused some authentic ornaments omitted from the festival causing a less authentic image. Last but not least the ease offered by technology that allows people to order food without leaving home made some of the visitors go only once a month to this festival.

Using the detailed SWOT analysis components above, strategies could be generated to maintain the sustainability of the Ramadhan Cake Fair. Four pairs of recommended strategies could be created by the components above. The first pair is S-O (Strength and Opportunity), the second pair is W-O (Weakness and Opportunity), the third pair is S-T (Strength and Threat) and the last pair is W-T (Weakness and Threat). The details of each recommended strategy are as follows:

Strength and Opportunity	Weakness and Opportunity	Strength and Threat	Weakness and Threat
1) Promoting the event effectively 2) Cooperating with the private sector to make the festival bigger 3) Maintaining the authenticity of the festivals and also improving the quality of the venue	1) Collaborating with local art communities to provide varieties of spectacles 2) Providing adequate supporting facilities at the venue	1) Providing early exposure to younger generations through education 2) Collaborating with local celebrities in promoting the festival	1) Establishing relationships with local art communities and providing them with their needs so that in return they will come up with entertaining content 2) Keeping the authentic elements of the festival 3) Rotating the spectacles schedule to attract more visitors

Tabel 1. Recommended Strategy Based on SWOT

Source: Modified by researcher

Based on the suggested strategies above, the chances of sustainability of this festival were visible based on the strength and opportunity it owned. However, the weakness and threat of this festival were also detectable making it vulnerable. Both of these weaknesses and threats should be overcome to keep the sustainability of this festival.

Conclusion

As part of tourist attractions for years, Ramadhan Cake Fair represents the immense potential of culinary tourism that can be managed in the long run. When it involves basic elements in society such as local organizations, businesses, governments, and communities when organizing a festival; a festival will gain sustainability since they share the common sense of belonging. In the case of this study, the local government is the one that mainly organizes the festival; leaving the rest of the basic elements in society less active causing repeating spectacles shown during the festival. The use of recommended strategies in this study is hoped to enhance the sustainability of the festival by mitigating the threats and overcoming the weakness found.

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