

WORKING AS VENDORS AS A PROFESSION CHOSEN BY PEOPLE WITH LIMITED CAPITALS IN TOURISM SECTOR IN BALI

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to present the matters pertaining to the attempts made by the vendors 'pedagang acung' to keep being independent in tourism sector in Bali. As working people with extremely limited capitals, the principle of giving priority to safety is applicable to them. They sell souvenirs with limited capitals obtained from various souvenir entrepreneurs coming from different parts of Bali. The risk of suffering from loss has never caused them to find any difficulty. This qualitative study was conducted in the paradigm of cultural studies. The data were presented and interpreted in the form of narrative texts which are thick descriptive in nature.

The result of the study showed that working as vendors was still a profession which contributed to the decrease in unemployment in an area. This is in line with the concept of poststructuralism that people are basically referred to as *homo faber*, namely, the working creature, meaning that working is highly important to man. This means that employment does not only give the opportunity to generate income but also importantly means that employment is a personal identity. As a consequence, if working is different from not working or being jobless, then such a choice does not only lead to an opposing binary but also to a hierarchical social division and a structured social gap between those who are employed and those who are not. They all positively contribute to themselves, environment, entrepreneurs, and the local government.

Keywords: 'pedangang acung', profession, limited capital, tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

The visits made by the tourists coming to Bali from different parts of the world cannot be separated from globalization, whose one of its aspects is what is referred to as *ethnoscape*, the flow of people from one country to another country with different interests, one of which is tourism (Appadurai, 1994). The step by step development in tourism opens opportunities to those who desire to get involved in it. Those who would like to obtain benefit from tourism do not only come from the upper class but also from the lower class. Widiastini and Darmawan (2010) recorded that there were 107 vendors earning their income at two tourist destinations located at Kintamani area, Bali. They did not only compete with their fellow vendors but also with the art shops selling souvenirs around them.

The vendors, as the workers who come from the lower class with limited capitals and are involved in informal sector, in their activities, have established a group which can protect them (Ingeleson, 2013: 9). This is supported by the concept of the critical theory proposed by Ritzer (2012: 477-479) that every social relationship, including the economic relationship, always has the dimension of power, meaning that there are always the dominating party and the dominated one, leading to the structured and graded relationship. In this case, any income generated from any employment, including the income generated from a profession as vendors, constitutes the economic basis in the context of carrying out various functions of the family (Lestari, 2012: 22-26). The data obtained from the field showed that the vendors were frequently protested by those who were involved in the business of tourism in general and the guides in general. However, their existence is still maintained and space is still provided to them not only by the government, as working as vendors is a profession.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data were presented and interpreted in the form of narrative texts which are descriptive in nature, units of forms, regularity, patterns, explanation, configuration, cause and result, and proposition, related to both what appeared and ideology, and the dimensions of implied power or socio-politics. The conclusions drawn or verified included essential things, subjective meaning, conceptual findings, and universal process. The theoretical approach employed is proposed by Ahmad Erani Yustika (2003) concerning informal sectors in his book entitled *Negara vs Kaum Miskin* (the State vs the Poor). The data analysis was presented in a descriptive-narrative way.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the hierarchical theory of human needs proposed by Abraham Maslow, the most basic need is physical or physiological need. Therefore, man should eat and drink in order to survive. Similarly, although working as vendors are regarded as having no prestige and degrading the beauty of tourism, they still sell their products to satisfy what they need. On the other hand, Borglas (2013: 29) affirms that human hierarchy gives further explanation that man is *homo faber*, *homo laborans*, meaning that man makes himself exist by working; man does his best to make himself true man.

In this context, the vendors prove themselves that they are able to survive by working rather than begging.

The concept of postculturalism may define that employment is a personal identity (Karl Marx in Magnis-Suseno: 1999: 87-104). Being employed is different from being unemployed. Such a choice does not only lead to two opposing things; a community, according to Plummer (2011: 203), also establishes hierarchically social divisions and a social structured gap between those who are employed and those who are not employed. Such a choice serves as the umbrella related to another choice, for example, being bad and being good, being respected and being disrespected, and so forth (Heriyanto, 2012). Such a condition causes man to be prepared to do every profession. It is frequently accompanied by the jargon 'being labeled as doing rightful things is better than being labeled as being jobless'.

The vendors, in their activities, established a group. Soyomukti (2010: 295-310), Jonston and Johnson (2012: 3-46), and Soekanto (1995: 200) state that the establishment of any social group cannot be separated from the reason why it is established, what is intended to achieve, and the normative principle which regulates the relationship among individuals in such a social group. The relationship among individuals has a structure which contributes to the association of status and role, and every status requires complementary different roles; otherwise, the social group cannot work functionally (Ritzer, 2012: 339-427). The social interaction between a leader and his subordinates may be based on the patron-client relationship or the father-child relationship which is based on the paternal ideology (Atmadja, 2010: 222).

Based on the fact that the vendors establish a social group, then the social interaction among them does not only have internal dimension but also external dimension, meaning that the vendors do not only interact socially among them, but also between them and other social groups. The external social interaction does not only take place among individuals coming from different social groups but also involves the social interaction among groups. According to Soyomukti (2010: 295-310), such a condition certainly needs the principle of morality which functions to reduce conflicts.

Referring to what is stated by Ingleson (2013: 9) concerning laborers that they will feel comfortable if they are among those who have the same background. Then, it can be understood that the vendors will be comfortable if they earn their living by doing what they profession is. The close kinship relationship strongly motivates them to keep

working as vendors, as, according to them, working under a group means that they get protected. Apart from being safe working under a group, they will also find it easier to be defended by the organic intellectuals who are highly committed to helping those who are marginalized.

Seeing what has taken place in Indonesia in general, as stated by Yustika (2003: 89), if someone does not have any adequate skill it will be difficult for him to earn a living. That is why he should equip himself with skill and expertise. This also works in tourism sector. However, those who do not have the opportunity to be employed in formal sector do their best to be employed in informal sector in order to survive, as what has happened to the vendors that they have been accepted by the souvenir entrepreneurs.

Suyatno (2013: 22) explains that the contemporary economic sociology is also concerned with the economic sectors which are affected by any social association in addition to assuming that any economic action is not always rational-calculative. In this case, the souvenir entrepreneurs do not only demand for the benefit in cash but also the assistance of promoting the products they produce.

The phenomenon of cooperation between the souvenir entrepreneurs and the vendors has taken place so far. This is considered a common thing as the vendors do not have adequate skill and capitals; as a result, their lives are dependent on the capitalists of cultural industry. Khan in Suyatno (2013: 86) explains that a number of social relationships among classes which allows one class to control and exploit another characterize industrial capitalism. Suyatno (2013: 86) affirms that in the system of industrial capitalism the community is divided into two social layers; they are the class of capitalists which have capital and control production facilities and the proletarian class which does not control any production facilities but it is able to work.

Scott (1981: 23-38) talks about the principle of giving priority to safety in which a farmer is reflected to always do his best to minimize the possibility for any disaster to take place rather than to maximize his earning in order to avoid the risk of any loss. By referring to what is stated by Scott above, the reason why the vendors keep their profession can be understood although they have limited capitals and sell their products in retail. By working as vendors, they only need small amounts of money, meaning that if they are unlucky they will only lose small amounts of money as well. The existence of the vendors and distributors of souvenirs and the reinforcement of the vendors also

strengthen what is stated by Scott (1993: 4-5). The relationship between the entrepreneurs and the distributors of souvenirs (the patron) does not only economically benefit the vendors (the client) but also warrants the security and subsistence of products. In this way, the vendors can survive, although they do not understand the development of products with their new trends. Everything has been handled by the entrepreneurs of souvenirs.

Yustika (2003: 90) emphasizes that the work market of informal sectors, including the work market for the vendors, may play an important role in reducing the rate of unemployment. The vendors who are involved in informal sector can play a role in the economic activities through which those coming from the lower class earn their living. Apart from that, working as vendors may also function as a social security, as, in fact, working as vendors may also give contribution to social welfare. In this case, Yustika (2003: 90) believes that informal sectors constitute the embryo of entrepreneurship contributing to the economic growth in an area. In line with what is desired by the local government that good governance should be created, space is also given to the vendors to show that the local government gives every citizen to work and earn a living based on the ability they have. Participation and strategic vision are two of the nine characteristics of good governance determined by UNDP. The government is obliged to give its citizens the right and opportunity to work (Solekhan, 2012: 18).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The vendors are not only those who earn their living by working hard under tight business competition but they also choose such a profession as they are hierarchically labeled as *homo faber*, that is, those who work to satisfy their needs, meaning that such a profession is the basis of their family economy. When they do their activities, they tend to establish a group which can warrant their security, comfort and the sustainability of their business. In this context, every group has an objective to achieve and normative principles which regulate the relationship among individuals in such a social group.

Being limited in various capitals makes one not accepted in formal sectors which require particular expertise and skill. In this case, the informal sector is always the second choice after the formal sector. However, in spite of the low image of the profession in the informal sector, it has given positive contribution to the entrepreneurs and government. They have been able to sell and market the products of the Balinese

handicraft produced by the entrepreneurs to consumers especially tourists. In addition, they have also been able to reduce the rate of unemployment in an area as their status is still employed.

To avoid the vendors from being labeled as disturbing the business of tourism, it is necessary to improve their quality, especially their performance, attitude and the way in which they offer their products so that they will not be labeled as a social pathology from the perspective of tourism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In this opportunity, the writer would like to thank Prof. Dr. Nengah Bawa Atmadja, M.A. and Dr. I Gede Mudana, M.Si. from *e-journal of cultural studies* (www.ojs.unud.sc.id) for their knowledge and supervision given to the writer so this article could be well completed.

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