Cultural Arts Tourism Business during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Case Study: Saung Mang Udjo, West Java, Indonesia)

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

During a pandemic, the priority is the need for security from exposure to the virus. However, although safety is a particular concern, the fulfillment of psychological needs (recreation) must still be considered with various forms of entertainment. One of them is art entertainment or art tourism. Performing arts and culture tourism can be a recreational selection with a memorable impression and is also useful for cultural learning. An angklung music performance that is popular in Indonesia is Saung Angklung Udjo (SAU), Saung which means small house, angklung is a traditional bamboo musical instrument from West Java and Udjo is the name of the owner. The appropriate business strategy is required to survive in the slump during the pandemic. The study aimed to determine the strategy of performing arts and cultural performances in Saung Mang Udjo, West Java, during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study used a qualitative method with a Literature review model exploring detailed information from SAU management. Data collection by in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation were performed online. The study object is Saung Mang Udjo (SAU), Bandung, West Java. The study was performed from March to April 2021. The results obtained show that the business strategy applied by SAU management combines a cost leadership strategy and a differentiation strategy. It provides different, unique, and modern products without leaving the
attractive concept of traditional Indonesian culture, which consumers like at the lowest possible competitive prices. It also implements health protocol policies, following a special certification for tourism businesses, i.e., (CHSE) Cleanliness, Health, Safety, Environment Sustainability. A product differentiation strategy should emphasize the creativity of SAU management in making various kinds of innovative products during the pandemic that are interesting and fun, supported by friendly, skilled, insightful employees, which are more attractive to consumers than other competing products. Online marketing is prioritized during the pandemic by utilizing various media platforms.

**Keywords:** Cultural; art; tourism; business; pandemic; COVID-19.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is not just a health disaster. This virus has caused chaos for the Indonesian economy, both in investment, trade, or tourism. Tourism is one of many sectors that this pandemic has hardest hit. It was recorded that declining foreign exchange earning from the tourism sector was 80%, resulting from a decrease in foreign tourist and domestic tourist arrivals by 75% and 30%, respectively, and a decrease in the number of workers in the tourism sector resulting from reduced jobs [1].

There is a policy of restricting people's movement in public places to suppress the transmission of the spread of the COVID-19 virus where people can still perform activities by implementing health protocols such as wearing masks, maintaining distance, always washing hands with running water, or using hand sanitizers and implementing a clean lifestyle. It is known as adapting new habits or the new normal during a pandemic without a foreseeable end. In connection with the enactment of the new normal, tourist destinations and tourism activities are slowly reopening, and people who are tired of being isolated can return to travel on the condition that they must implement strict health protocols. An example is DUFAN (Dunia Fantasi) or Fantasy World (long form) playground tourism destination in Jakarta, which has reopened operations by implementing the policies recommended by the Government, including restrictions on visitors; online ticket reservation; body temperature check; providing hand sanitizer facilities, and having special supervisory officers who always travel around the area and special officers for environmental disinfection of DUFAN [2].

The survey results regarding travel anxiety during the pandemic revealed a low average value, indicating that this pandemic has not changed the desire of tourists to continue traveling [3]. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the needs of tourism consumers were based on fulfilling physiological (recreational) needs. Then during this pandemic, the priority is the need for security from exposure to the virus. Various policies to reduce virus exposure make the need for security dominant [4]. However, although safety is a particular concern, the fulfillment of psychological needs (recreation) must still be considered with various forms of entertainment. One of them is art entertainment or art tourism. A popular cultural arts tourism with angklung music performances in Indonesia is Saung Angklung Udjo.

Saung Angklung Udjo is located on Jl. Padasuka 118, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. Saung Angklung Udjo is a popular destination for cultural tourism and education. Apart from offering Angklung, a traditional bamboo musical instrument from West Java music performances, guest house accommodation with Sundanese nuance is also a center for handicrafts made of bamboo products and workshops on bamboo musical instruments to preserve the culture of angklung music. Angklung is a traditional musical instrument typical of West Java, Indonesia, made of many bamboo tubes shaken to produce one note for each tube. Since November 2010, UNESCO has designated angklung as a Masterpiece of Human Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage [5]. Saung Angklung Udjo was built in 1966 by Udjo Ngalagena (Mang Udjo) and his wife, Uum Sumiati. It was initially established as a training studio for local children to preserve traditional Sundanese arts and culture, i.e., the angklung art. Over time, it has grown with many enthusiasts beyond the surrounding area. Hence, the government-appointed Saung Angklung Udjo is a regional tourist destination favored and in demand by both domestic and foreign tourists [6].

During the pandemic, Saung Angklung Udjo closed its business temporarily and then began to operate with limited opening times and visitor capacity, which was adjusted to government
policies preventing the spread of Covid-19 cases. The big impact which is experienced is a decrease in the number of visitors who come to SAU. There are only three visitors daily or a maximum of 20 visitors weekly [7]. This, of course, raises various problems. There is a reduction in the performance schedule, and there is no fixed schedule for regular performances, a reduction in staff which has laid off more than 90 percent of the 600 employees who work in normal times to the remaining 40 people who are still employed [8]. The Indonesian Art Coalition, as of June 2020, recorded the impact of the pandemic that had paralyzed 234 cultural arts activities such as the production process, releases, and film festivals; concerts, tours, and music festivals; literary events; exhibitions, and fine arts museums; dance performances, as well as theatrical performances, mime, wayang, puppets, and fairy tales [9]. It is supported by data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) through the Directorate General of Culture, stating that 40,081 artists who work in Indonesia were affected by the cancellation of art performances and festivals, most of which came from West Java, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta [10]. The appropriate business strategy is required to survive in the slump during the pandemic.

Several previous studies are related to business strategies, cultural arts tourism, and the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Studies on tourism business strategies during the pandemic are generally related to nature tourism [11-16] and studies related to culinary business and accommodation business. Following the results of previous studies, no study has discussed cultural tourism business strategies during the pandemic to survive amid the Covid-19 pandemic that is currently attacking Indonesian tourism. The current study aimed to determine the performing arts and cultural performances strategy in Saung Mang Udjo, West Java, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Art is a human work that can be enjoyed with the five human senses (taste, smell, sight, hearing and touch) and has become a necessity of life, especially closely related to psychological needs. The results of works of art can be used as economic products [17]. One of the most popular is cultural arts. Cultural arts are works of art at a certain place and time resulting from individual or group activities. The elements involved include space, time, the artist's body, and the relationship between the artist and the audience [18]. Variety of cultural arts, including performing arts such as dance, theater, music, etc.); fine arts (painting, sculpture, etc.); and literary arts. [19] Indonesia has a variety of cultural arts, including performing arts from various unique regions.

Performing arts and culture tourism can be a recreational selection with a memorable meaning and is also useful as displayed cultural learning. There are many tourist attractions to visit to enjoy cultural arts performances, including the DKI Jakarta. One can find Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TIM), Taman Ismail Marzuki Arts Center (TIM), Wayang Orang Bharata. In East Java, there is a Reog Tengger art performance from the Tengger Tribe. Bali Island has the Kecak dance, and from West Java, there is a traditional musical instrument made of bamboo tubes, Angklung.

Strategy in the world of business or business is needed to achieve the vision and mission implemented by the company and achieve goals or objectives, both for short-term and long-term goals. Business strategy plans all company activities such as operations, transactions, and business decisions by considering the company's strategic elements [20]. Business actors need the right business strategy to overcome the economy's negative impact during the current pandemic. Indeed, it should consider the elements of strategy as previously stated, such as consumer needs, company resources, and other essential things. Porter (2012) (year) [21] revealed a formulation of a competitive business strategy by linking the company with the environment. The company's internal capabilities in determining vital business decisions are maintained in addition to potential business strategies. The generic strategies carried out by the company include a cost leadership strategy providing products preferred by consumers at the lowest possible competitive prices, a differentiation strategy providing a product that consumers believe is unique in terms of what is important to them, and a focus strategy focusing on providing for the needs of a particular group of buyers. A study by Teeratansirikool (2013) proved that the application of generic strategies positively and significantly improves company performance [22].

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative method. A qualitative study is considered effective in
exploring an individual's perceptions, opinions, experiences, and even a group emphasizing descriptive, inductive, theoretical development, and human studies [23]. It is related to the business strategy theme of a company to be extracted in depth from the management. The research design used is a case study which is an activity an in-depth investigation of the current state of affairs in an actual context. Case studies are used for social science research, such as strategic management in the company, including special and unique cases, which can be generalized or not [24]. Data collection was carried out in natural settings (natural conditions), primary data sources, and the data collection technique was in-depth interviews via telephone and video calls. with two resource persons, general manager and operational staff of SAU. The interview was based on an open-ended question guide prepared by the researcher regarding the business strategy carried out by the management of Saung Mang Udjo in running a business during the pandemic. Observations and documentation were performed online. Researcher as observer. Data collection could not be performed directly by visiting tourist sites due to limiting physical gatherings during the Covid-19 pandemic. The steps of qualitative data analysis in this study are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was perceived relatively heavily by the Saung Mang Udjo management. It began with implementing a policy of limiting business operations, resulting in a dramatic decrease in the number of tourist visits, company income, and the compulsion to terminate the employment contracts of most employees. In order to maintain business, management strived to keep business operations open when the government started implementing tourism policies in new normal conditions considering health protocols. Based on circular letter No. HK02.01/MENKES/202/2020, referring to Law No. 9/2010 concerning protocols, the health protocol is a series of activities related to regulations, including the arrangement of places and the course of activities following health rules especially in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The application of health protocols is mandatory for all lines of business, including tourism businesses, to protect the community's interests. The Indonesian government guarantees the security and safety of tourists by requiring special certifications for tourism businesses, namely the Cleanliness, Health, Safety, Environment Sustainability (CHSE) certification. Saung Mang Udjo moved quickly by following the requirements and detailed inspections from the government and is currently getting CHSE certification immediately after the policy was implemented. In the provisions of the health protocol based on the CHSE certification set by the government, it is not merely a regulation applied by business management but also by visitors. The management ensures that the facilities are adjusted to applicable regulations such as spaced seating, facilities for checking the body temperature of visitors and employees, implementing new provisions in operations. One of them is the provision of angklung music performances requesting visitors to make a reservation in advance, unlike normal conditions where visitors can directly come to the performance area according to the existing schedule. New shows can be held with a minimum reservation of 30 visitors. It differs from the normal conditions where the show was held at a definite schedule without a stipulation on visitors. The management holds Covid-19 tests for workers every 2 weeks and when there is an exit show project. Tests are carried out before and after the show. Obligations for visitors include the initial arrival of all visitors to check body temperature. Visitors are required to wash their hands with running water and soap or hand sanitizer that has been provided and maintain a distance between visitors. Fig. 1 is the implementation of the health protocols in Saung Mang Udjo's operations during the Covid-19 pandemic;

The current product of Saung Mang Udjo (SAU), which is still a favorite for tourists, is the angklung show because angklung is part of the cultural heritage and a core product at SAU. During the pandemic, performances are carried out by implementing health protocols, including music players and dancers using masks, face shields, and gloves, keeping the distance between players and requiring the audience to continue to apply health protocols. Fig. 2 is an offline performance with the strict application of health protocols carried out by SAU during the Covid-19 pandemic;

SAU management strives to maintain the best quality of products and services. Management
always evaluates products both from the internal management point of view and from visitors. Evaluation of visitors is seen from comments or reviews via social media such as YouTube, Facebook, or other social media regarding suggestions or satisfaction levels. The results obtained in general are that visitors are satisfied with the products offered by SAU during the pandemic. For example, there are visitors who give a 5-star rating with comments on activities carried out at SAU as fun and very memorable edutainment on google reviews. Some reviews or comments from SAU visitors during the Covid-19 pandemic are shown in Fig. 3.;

![Image of health protocols implementation in Saung Mang Udjo's operations during the Covid-19 pandemic](source: [25])

**Fig. 1.** The implementation of the health protocols in Saung Mang Udjo's operations during the Covid-19 pandemic

*Source: [25]*
Fig. 2. An offline performance with the strict application of health protocols carried out by SAU during the Covid-19 pandemic

Source: [26]
Fig. 3. Reviews or comments from SAU visitors during the Covid-19 pandemic

Source: [25,26,27]
Management makes product innovations related to limitations during the pandemic, i.e., virtual performance and tours. SAU also makes several innovations in arranging angklung music, traditional instruments, and modern musical instruments. During the pandemic, most angklung music performances and virtual performances featuring angklung, dance, and others are performed virtually. It expands cooperation with hotels or government offices to perform live performances of traditional angklung music at events held and collaborated with various parties in project events. Fig. 4 is an example of a virtual show innovation product carried out by SAU in collaboration with several agencies or company;

In addition, there is an offline (direct) performance tourism product in collaboration with a hotel in Bandung, West Java for an agreed period of time. Live Angklung music performances are shown at certain hours in one corner of the hotel's main lobby. Can be seen in Fig. 5

There is also a place rental product for organizing weddings, taking advantage of the wide-open area owned. Fig. 6 is a picture of the wedding venue;

Regarding the product prices set by management during the pandemic, there are no price changes for old products. Management revealed the reason for not lowering prices during the pandemic, even after closing the business for a while. It still requires operational costs and internal and external factors to be considered during the pandemic. Meanwhile, for new products during the pandemic, different price provisions are made to adjust to the declining level of people's purchasing power and the adjustment of efforts made. For example, virtual music performances via zoom start at IDR 40,000, while the price for offline music shows is IDR 75,000. This price is considered quite affordable and according to the quality of the products offered by SAU.

Online marketing is prioritized during the pandemic by utilizing various media platforms. Social media Instagram and YouTube are the management's choice in marketing products invasively during the pandemic. SAU disseminates information through Instagram and Youtube, easily accessible to all public members. It also creates the most captivating content possible on Instagram, uploading and improving the YouTube channel to attract many people to watch the virtual performance. Puspitarini (2019) study revealed that Instagram has practicality and benefits sales by simply uploading a photo or video of a product to an Instagram account, then consumers and consumers who see the photo are interested in buying [29]. The advantage of Instagram is that the number of users is enormous, especially in Indonesia, and increasing, making it easier for messages to spread. SAU has an Instagram account with 39.5K followers and a YouTube account with 13.1K subscribers (data as of October 2021). SAU strives to always be updated with the content displayed on the two social media accounts. the social media owned by SAU during the Covid-19 pandemic can be seen in Fig. 7;
Fig. 4. A virtual show innovation product carried out by SAU  
Source: [26]

Fig. 5. An offline (direct) performance at hotel carried out by SAU during the Covid-19 pandemic  
Source: [26]

Fig. 6. Wedding venue carried out by SAU during the Covid-19 pandemic  
Source: (Instagram/SaungAngklungUdjo, 2021)
Fig. 7. SAU social media
Source: [27,30]
In addition, SAU has expanded its marketing network in collaboration with Online Travel Agents (OTA). These include Traveloka, Tiket.Com, Myfave, Klook, which Indonesian people quite widely used. Cooperation with Online Travel Agents (OTA) can help to increase sales of tourism products. It is proof in a study \[30\], showing that room sales through OTA are proven to increase room occupancy; thus, the participation and support of the hotel from both employees and management must be increased to achieve the goal of increasing sales. It is also hoped that sales of SAU tourism products can increase. Fig. 8 are the OTAs in collaboration with cultural tourism business Saung Angklung Udjo;

Based on the discussion above, the business strategy applied by SAU management combines a cost leadership strategy and a differentiation strategy. During this pandemic period, SAU management provides new products that try to approach consumers through online products that all groups and regions can reach within or outside Indonesia. It includes attractive musical performances, which consumers love at the lowest possible competitive prices, and expanding cooperation with external agencies, such as performance projects in locations outside of SAU where other cultural tourism businesses refrain from doing this. SAU management strives to provide different, unique, modern products but does not abandon the concept of traditional Indonesian culture. A product differentiation strategy that emphasizes the creativity of SAU management in making various kinds of innovative products during the pandemic that are interesting and fun, supported by friendly, skilled, insightful employees, who are more attractive to consumers than other competing products.

![Fig. 8. SAU Promotion collaboration with OTAs](Source: [31,32,33])
5. CONCLUSION

Based on the description, it can be concluded that the obstacles to the Saung Angklung Udjo's cultural tourism business during the Covid-19 pandemic were the drastic decrease in visitors, temporary closure of businesses, reduced business operational time, which significantly reduced business income and even had to fire employees to reduce expenses. SAU's management made various efforts to continue operating and generate income during the pandemic. Developing virtual cultural tourism products such as virtual angklung music performances, when businesses are allowed to reopen, operations are carried out by complying with the provisions set by the government such as the implementation of CHSE certification and health protocols, business strategies that are implemented by combining cost leadership strategies and differentiation strategies. With a product differentiation strategy, the SAU management creates new products that seek to approach consumers through online display products that are different, unique, modern without leaving the concept of traditional Indonesian culture that all groups can reach, e.g., a collaborative performance project or an interesting new musical arrangement innovation, which consumers like. With leadership, competitive prices are adjusted to the current economic capacity of the community. The results obtained in general are that visitors are satisfied with the products offered by SAU during the pandemic. Based on the results and conclusions obtained, the researcher suggests several recommendations; It is hoped that further research can be carried out with other cultural tourism business subjects, involving consumers or the government to obtain richer data. Improving the quality and variety of virtual products due to the unpredictable Covid-19 pandemic situation when it will end.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participant's written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Available: https://www.instagram.com/angklungudjo/?hl=id


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