Slum Tourism: Who Empowers and Who is Empowered?

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This study examines how the process of implementing community empowerment for disadvantaged communities through NGOs could be viewed as a tourist attraction in slum tourism. This study used a phenomenological approach and collected data through interviews with four informants. This study emphasises the importance of including community empowerment initiatives led by local community members in slum tourism programmes. The results showed that NGOs play a crucial role in slum tourism. NGOs are considered the empowering entities while disadvantaged communities are considered the empowered entities based on additional studies. NGOs empower marginalised communities to prevent exploitation and enable them to benefit from slum tourism, improving their quality of life. The study emphasises the importance of local community engagement and empowerment in slum tourism, focusing on NGOs as empowering entities. The research highlights the importance of ensuring that slum tourism contributes to the betterment of disadvantaged communities by improving their quality of life rather than exploiting them.

Keywords: empowerment, participatory competence, populist competence, slum tourism, socio-political ability

Introduction

Tourism in slums could be regarded as a viable alternative to support social advancement and alleviate poverty. It has become a cause of ethical transformation and a method of moving and even transforming those who encounter it (Altamirano, 2022; Crossley, 2012). Slum tourism can also be a form of alternative imaginative travel (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019). In slum tourism activities, local parties always manage the community visits and reinforce the deep engage-

ment of the community in the slum tourism activity. However, slum tourism activities typically do not engage with the growth spirit that prevails in previously affluent neighbourhoods; tourists, not the local community, are empowered by this activity (Nisbett, 2017). On the other hand, slum tourism organisers can empower formerly affluent communities with political and local expertise and educate tourists about the neoliberalism that emerges from their activities.

Slum tourism is also a popular type of black tourism in developing countries such as India, Brazil, Kenya and the Philippines. It is a new form of tourism that comprises visiting slums to experience the conditions of the less fortunate slum dwellers (Yeganegi, 2015). A country with a tourism advancement policy paradoxically necessitates tourists. However, other policies attempt to control the country's urban image for branding purposes by not promoting slum tourism on a large scale (Dovey & King, 2012). As a result, slum settlements often remain hidden from the sight of tourists, both domestic tourists and, notably, international tourists. From the point of view from which slum tourism activities relate to the community, empowerment programmes should evaluate the residents' opinion of their neighbourhood as a tourist attraction. Nevertheless, there is still a scarcity of research that discusses the local community's viewpoint on slum tourism in the region (Nunkoo et al., 2013). Furthermore, improving the overall well-being and standard of living experienced by individuals within the community, which should be the main attraction of this activity, is neglected (Burgold et al., 2013; Rolfes, 2010).

Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, slum tourism was a global phenomenon that was the topic of various of opinions and controversies, but its popularity has since increased (Lopez, 2020). Slum tourism is contentious because it turns poverty into a tourist commodity. Poverty is a highly complex challenge as it is not merely the difficulty of inadequate satisfaction of everyday needs from a financial perspective, but also from a social, cultural and political perspective (Ras, 2013). Until recently, it was considered that targeted programmes to mitigate poverty and enhance the well-being of the population in deve-

loping countries were ineffective; that is, a top-down procedure that used the community as an advancement object in development programmes resulted in pre-prosperous societies losing their creativity and potential (Ras, 2013).

To activate the creativity and capability of the community, community tourism and public advocacy are necessary before prosperity, and become tools for empowerment activities among people on behalf of poor people (Steinbrink et al., 2012). Realising the notion of strengthening general-focused communities, which is the foundation for strengthening social life advancement communities, must be done from scratch (Soetomo, 2013). Multiple perspectives are required to understand the implementation and efficacy of community empowerment programmes in slum tourism activities. Numerous experts debate the dimensions of community empowerment; the most commonly known are populist competence, socio-political ability, and participatory competence (Bifulco & Facchini, 2016; Frisch, 2016; Kieffer, 1984). Squatter tourism research is an early study of slum tourism using these three dimensions, particularly noting that empowerment through participatory competence had not been formally adopted as an analytical tool before. Therefore, this study explores how community empowerment is integrated into slum tourism activities from these three dimensions.

Theoretical Framework
Slum Tourism
Activities in slums around the world have both advantages and disadvantages. They can improve the quality of life of the community and people experiencing poverty but also have the potential to exploit society and the less fortunate people visited by tourists. The term 'exploited' was devised because the daily lives of the poor became the main attraction for slum tourists (Slikker & Koens, 2015; Whyte et al., 2011). The challenge with slum tourism is to make it part of an empowered society that enhances the community's potential to become financially independent. Various stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), can authorise and support these initiatives. While the community holds the power, this is

fundamentally a local issue rather than one involving tourists directly.

There is a growing variety of interplay between local communities and NGOs. Additionally, the interaction between local communities, tourists, and other stakeholders offers the local community invaluable insights that will assist in achieving greater self-sufficiency. This multifaceted approach ensures that slum tourism can be both empowering and sustainable, benefiting all parties involved. Furthermore, improving infrastructure feasibility in slum tourism destinations and preserving the local environment are critical strands of improving the living standards of people experiencing poverty (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008). These efforts are essential in ensuring that slum tourism not only benefits visitors but also provides tangible improvements for the local communities.

The keyword' inclusivity' can be integrated into implementing empowerment programmes within slum tourism. Until recently, slum tourism was seen as a form of charity rather than an effort to strengthen the community. However, only inclusive tourism industries and activities can offer more significant benefits while prioritising human dignity. This sense of self-respect can inspire people to participate actively in community empowerment activities, primarily through slum tourism initiatives (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008).

Current global tourism policy places more focus on sustainable tourism. Many tourism concepts relate to sustainable tourism, e.g. slow and pro-poor tourism. Slow tourism is a holistic view promoting sustainability in all parts of the visitor journey. It is an option in addition to mass tourism (Krešić & Gjurašić, 2022). Pro-poor tourism is a sustainable tourism component, manifested in various programmes, including slum tourism. However, the term 'poor tourism' cannot be equated with slum tourism if there is no community empowerment programme to optimise the welfare and alleviate the poverty of the population whose houses are adopted as visitor attractions. Slum tourism has a sense of reality that can be divided into two categories based on motivation: social tours, which emphasise participation and authenticity, and dark tours, which portray poverty as a consumable good

and highlight the violence that stems from poverty (Freire-Medeiros, 2009).

As a type of tourism, slum tourism is usually divided into two categories: cultural travel and entertainment travel. Cultural slum tours that concentrate on strands of higher education, e.g. interacting with the local pre-prosperous community, enjoying cultural attractions demonstrated by the community, exploring and purchasing handicrafts produced by the local pre-prosperous communities and others, are presently ubiquitous amongst tourists. Tourists who take cultural slum tours can directly observe the life patterns of the residents and learn how life works in the area. In contrast, tour operators offering entertainment slum tours broadly provide sensation and excitement, viewing poverty as a safari. An example is the Favela tour experience in Brazil, a type of entertainment slum tour (Freire-Medeiros, 2009; Frisch, 2016; Ma, 2010).

Empowerment

Strengthening local communities in tourism activities results in a significant multiplier effect (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008). The multisectoral nature of tourism can enable network cooperation and coordination, which is advantageous for filling existing information gaps. Educating stakeholders with cross-sectoral interests is necessary to prevent future tensions and can positively affect disadvantaged communities, particularly in slum tourism destinations. To increase well-being through activity, tourism requires the active participation of everyone involved, and good tourism development will enhance locals' skills and generate jobs (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008).

There is a close relationship between populist competence and the practice of community development, which typically commences with individual advancement and results in broader social transformation. Local cadres can be defined as individuals or groups serving as a channel for the empowerment movement in the area. These individuals (local cadres) have integrity in their self-identity and everyday life despite their feeling of powerlessness. Underlying attitudes encompass pride, potent determination, deep roots in the community, devotion to independence, relati-

onship, and assistance from caring friends and peers (Strzelecka et al., 2017; Kieffer, 1984).

Socio-political skills are the ability to deal with the freedoms brought about by social movements. These movements can take the form of both education and the politicisation of marginalized groups weak, which can ultimately lead to structural changes based on their objectives. Socio-political ability depends heavily on which parties exercise authority and which do not (Duverger, 2012). Sustained engagement tends to break the cycle of helplessness and oppression; however, the theory lags: it only applies to reflective, context-conscious participation that allows individuals to develop more effective political action strategies, mechanisms, and collective support, as well as enhance their ability to compete more successfully in conducting social development research (Kieffer, 1984; Strzelecka & Wicks, 2015).

The community and other members can collaborate to develop strategies, mobilise resources, and improve language and literacy systems at the grassroots political level through intensive engagement, organisation, or collaboration to enhance awareness and capacity in the social and political spheres. Increased community involvement leads to a more thorough comprehension and a higher drive to take action, resulting in greater proactivity.

Participatory competence is a psychological condition characterised by confidence in one's ability to control oneself and others. In any empowerment effort, communities often encounter internal and external obstacles, but overcoming these obstacles can strengthen people's skills and determination. As individuals increase their ability to participate, they acquire a sense of mastery and competence. Individuals who acquire participatory competence can maintain a feeling of mastery and self-awareness, motivating them to incorporate their personal knowledge and abilities into their daily lives (Strzelecka & Wicks, 2015; Kieffer, 1984).

Tourism activities involving the community must be continuously developed to preserve and foster the community's independence (Shabalala, 2023). Therefore, future generations can benefit from community-based tourism activities. Human progress in the tourism industry should prioritise educating and training individuals to enhance their self-reliance, which is more advantageous in the long term than solely focusing on building infrastructure or offering monetary assistance (Rakhman, 2019).

Human resources are required at several levels in the tourism business, ranging from management to back office and field staff. Consequently, there is a high number of work opportunities available in the tourism activities sector. Typically, jobs in the tourism industry are free of sophisticated or specialised skills. Thus, it is accessible to a wide range of individuals, e.g. women from local communities, to help uplift underprivileged areas (Roe, 2013).

There are more possibilities for establishing small-scale tourist sites and attractions that can be managed by local communities and businesses. Consequently, the communities engaged will directly profit from the growth of tourism (Kamsma & Bras, 2002). The possibility of enabling community members to evolve into business owners and participate in the open travel sector indicates sustainable tourism's effectiveness (Simpson, 2008).

From an economic standpoint, empowerment is viewed as the ability to remove obstacles that prevent individuals who are not yet wealthy from enhancing their abilities and actively participating in the social aspect of the economic system (Adams, 2017). Historically, less prosperous communities have endured social, economic, and political exclusion from power.

Empowerment is crucial for the community to access economic opportunities and benefits (Rahman & Baddam, 2021). However, attracting the interest of disadvantaged individuals in empowerment programmes has several challenges. The community needs more participation; insufficient funds and inadequate knowledge and skills hinder underdeveloped communities from asserting complete control over their involvement in tourism development activities (Scheyvens, 2010). Empowering disadvantaged communities requires clear structure and accountability as motivating these social groups demands specific abilities to instigate a change in mindset towards self-reliance, emphasising that people from less privileged backgrounds grasp the primary responsibility in
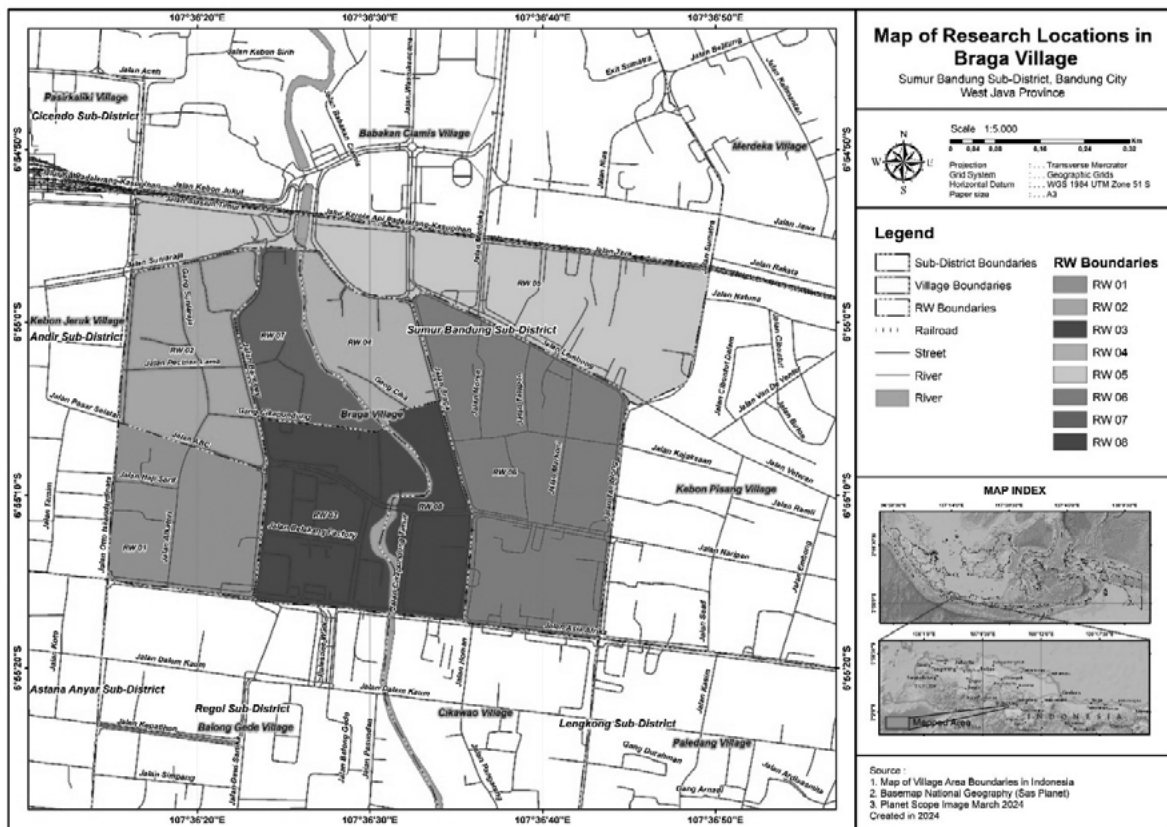
Figure 1   Map of Research Location in Braga Village

changing their living conditions (Ansari et al., 2012). There is a responsibility on the part of NGOs to ensure that community enthusiasm for enhancing self-sufficiency is accommodated in a variety of training programmes created in conjunction with pre-prosperous societies (Batubara et al., 2023).

Involving local people in developing and implementing the programmes is expected to improve the effectiveness of the community empowerment project (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). Firmness and direction are crucial when selecting individuals to lead underprivileged community groups, determining their level of authority and responsibilities, and ensuring that the empowerment effort progresses as planned and achieving the desired outcomes (Cole, 2008).

Engaging in creative endeavours and participating in artistic activities are vital for enhancing a location's quality. Optimising local community capabilities,

strengthening sustainability, and increasing a destination's competitive value can transform a place's economy. Communities with great creative potential and local cultural values are more inclined to develop a marketable product to increase their income.

Limited community involvement impedes the empowerment of pre-prosperous groups (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). Thus, stakeholders strongly endorse sustainable tourism advancement through prioritising initiatives that empower the community. Stakeholders need to help create anti-poverty policies in an effective, efficient, and communicative way. All stakeholders must wholeheartedly embrace the planned community empowerment effort. Stakeholders with expertise in laws and regulations should oversee and synchronise the implementation and policies of sectors connecting with tourism to prevent conflicts

Table 1 Informant Characteristics

Gender	Position	Education	Occupation
Female	Chairman of the Creavill Bandung Community	Bachelor of Literature and English	Marketing Assistant Manager at Insurance Company
Female	Creavill Bandung Public Relations Coordinator	Profession of Master of Psychology	Unemployed
Female	Residents of Braga Area	Bachelor of Literature and English	English Private Lesson Teachers
Male	Chairman of the Youth Organisation of the Braga Area	Vocational High School in Bandung	Engineer at pharmaceutical company in Bandung

with slum tourism. All stakeholders must prioritise sustainable tourist development (Byrd, 2007).

Methodology

This study utilised the phenomenological technique, which is well-suited to support scholars in various domains, such as knowledge tourism. Phenomenology is the qualitative examination of individuals' perceptions of their existence in the world (Neubauer et al., 2019). The phenomenological approach helps comprehend how social issues like poverty can enhance the well-being of local communities when adequately addressed and promoted. This concept aligns well with research on slum tourism. The application of phenomenology explores these phenomena and views socially constructed poverty as a unifying force attracting tourists to a community (Simarmata, 2018; Hayllar & Griffin, 2005). This research examines the slum tourism activities arranged by the Creative Village (Creavill) Bandung Community in the Braga area (see Figure 1). Creavill Bandung Community, renowned for its emphasis on empowerment, is crucial in establishing empowered groups within the community for the future.

The Braga area, located in the Sumur Bandung district of Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia, is a vibrant research location of eight neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood has the potential to offer unique insights into the lifestyle, culture, and economic activity of the local community. Regarding creative activities, the inhabitants of the Braga area are known for their artistic and cultural endeavours. Notable creative activities include producing traditional crafts and preserving cultural heritage through performances and events. Understanding these activities provides valuable insight into community identity and the potential for pro-poor tourism development.

The research was conducted from January to September 2021. Collecting primary data involved doing direct field observations and in-depth interviews with informants. The investigation commenced with desk research and studying material to understand the regional profile of the Braga Area and the Creavill Bandung Community, which runs The Real Braga Tour activities. Initially, researchers collected location-specific data and possible informants through desk research. An interview with the chairman of Creavill Bandung Community was done through the Zoom app to gather information about Creavill Bandung Community and the operations of The Real Braga Tour. The Real Braga Tour is in a location rich in arts, culture, and Sundanese traditions, making it ideal for non-governmental organisations to organise training programmes focused on empowering residents.

The chief of the Creavill Bandung Community contacted the Creavill Bandung Community public relations coordinator and local cadre, who then met with the researchers in the Braga area. The study included interviews with the second and third informants, accompanied by the chairman of the Creavill Bandung group and the local cadre from the Creavill Bandung Community during the observation in Braga. An interview was conducted with the chairman of Creavill Bandung Community, and an interview via WhatsApp video chat was held with the Creavill

Bandung Community coordinator of public relations, which resulted in obtaining further information. The fourth informant selected is the youth organisation located in the Braga area, to get more data throughout the implementation process observation.

Researchers observed the Braga area and participated in The Real Braga Tour's slum tour. Before commencing observations, field researchers contacted previous employees of the community public relations department at Creavill Bandung in January 2021 to seek authorisation to study and interview an informant about the history of slum tourism in the Braga region. Next, the researcher performed direct observation and follow-up in the Braga area after obtaining authorisation and completing a preliminary data analysis on slum tourism. Researchers participated in The Real Braga Tour from February to April 2021, and in May 2021, they conducted in-depth interviews with four informants (Table 1).

A researcher with experience in the tourism business conducted interviews. Each interview lasted between 2 and 3 hours per informant, varying based on the required facts and information. The ongoing study is currently active; the online interview procedure was initiated due to the spread of COVID-19, but all interactions were completed in person. The interview procedure utilised online media, e.g. the internet and social media. The 120-minute interview with the Chairman of Creavill Bandung Community was performed online with 41 open-ended questions. The interview with the Community Relations Division of Creavill Bandung Community was conducted through social media, consisting of 10 open-ended questions. The interview with local cadre lasted 180 minutes and took place in Bandung, with 39 open-ended questions.

Data was gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and study documentation, which involved taking images at the site and conducting internet searches. The results of the desk research and field observations were categorised into field notes, interview recordings, images of field circumstances and secondary data before the analysis. Field notes were developed as a tool for choosing content to write about to

enhance arguments in research reports and to find common themes.

Data reduction was employed to organise pertinent information from the acquired data. Data reduction aims to streamline and convert field data into a more manageable format for report generation. Information, e.g. interview dates, informant types and characteristics, and research locations have been condensed and organised according to study needs.

The final processed data is presented in different formats e.g. narrative, charts, flow charts, to facilitate the conversion of field observations into a research report. Effective data presentation enhances other readers' comprehension of the research's objectives, goals, and structure. A triangulation approach and validation audits conducted on informants linked to the research focus ensured the study's coherence and validity with actual life situations (Carter et al., 2014).

Results and Findings
Living Conditions in the Braga Area

The study found that poverty and slums in the Braga area result from residents' lack of legal residence. Braga residents are being removed from land owned by the legal landowner who possesses the land certificate. The occupation of the land in the Braga area lacks legality due to the regional government's failure to help or implement a programme to improve the community's welfare, which frequently requires official approval to access aid.

Several residences are shaded from direct sunlight, and other occupants reside in semi-permanent constructions along the riverbanks, leading to substandard living conditions. The distance between dwellings is very close or erratic, and the water quality is low. The issue is worsened by the regular flooding in certain parts of the Braga area during the rainy season because of the absence of water-retaining embankments, leading to an inadequate environmental drainage system.

Tourism has the potential to serve as a catalyst for addressing societal concerns in poverty and in the slums. The Creavill Bandung Community is launching The Real Braga Tour as a component of their tourist efforts. The Real Braga Tours focus on more than just

slum tourism, incorporating educational elements like historical tourism in the Braga area. This activity focuses on education and empowering the community, and the Creavill Bandung Community has not faced persecution or confrontations with individuals from the Braga region or any other groups.

The term 'slum tourism' was integrated into The Real Braga Tour activities, which could potentially lead to disagreements. However, an effective socialisation strategy by all members of the organisation, including the community leader, public relations division, local cadre, and Braga area residents, resulted in a unified positive opinion about the tours. The Creavill Bandung Community's transparency in sharing information about the funds earned from activities, such as The Real Braga Tour, on social media has helped build a strong level of confidence among the people and residents of the Braga area towards this community.

Interviews with local cadres from the Braga area revealed that slum tourism programmes, such as The Real Braga Tour, include participation from disadvantaged groups in the planning and execution process. Less affluent community members are not seen as passive bystanders who watch tourists go by. Participants in The Real Braga Tour are encouraged to engage directly with locals through playing activities with local children. Participants in the tours also conversed briefly with residents whose homes they passed during the trip.

Interviews with the chairman of the youth organisation of the Braga area and residents of the Braga area showed that many less affluent individuals in the area are not eager to engage in self-capacity building activities organised by Creavill Bandung Community. Society tends to be apathetic towards activities that do not offer direct financial rewards. The interviews show that only a few individuals in the Braga area are actively involved in the community empowerment events sponsored by Creavill Bandung Community. However, the small stature of the Community has fostered a solid emotional bond over time, leading to a sense of passion. Local leaders actively participated in the Community of Friends of the Museum of the Asian--African Conference. They backed Creavill Bandung Community in organising the Assisted Village pro-

gramme and community empowerment initiatives, such as setting up the Braga Creative Reading Centre. Before 2020, youth organisations, such as Creavill Bandung Community, which were expected to be influential among young people in the Braga area, were not actively involved in their community. The local Creavill Bandung Community can work with youth organisations to enhance living circumstances in the underprivileged population in the Braga area.

Several efforts were made to engage youth organisations in the empowerment plan, but there usually needed to be more participation. Previous organisations in the management sector, who were challenging to collaborate with and often kept their work programmes confidential, have created the perception that the youth in the Braga area do not have a structured platform to engage actively in their community. Youth organisations, as representatives of the younger age, should showcase how the youth movement can enhance the quality of life for a specific population. Youth organisations in the Braga area should enhance their presence by implementing active management, outreach, and communication methods to improve their public image and relations, especially among young people.

Non-governmental organisations are vital in developing ways to execute community empowerment projects to reduce poverty directly. Creavill Bandung Community fulfils various roles in community empowerment programmes linked with slum tourism, such as:

1. educating on middle-class economy issues for lower-class individuals;

2. aiding destinations in identifying key development areas;

3. advocating for specific communities, particularly addressing critical needs of pre-prosperous communities; and

4. enhancing skills in pre-prosperous communities through community-based organisations.

Populist Competence in Slum Tourism Activities

Creavill Bandung Community has strategically selected a local cadre from among the inhabitants of the

Braga region to speed up the development and execution of the community empowerment initiative in the same area. Local cadre represent Creavill Bandung Community programmes in the Braga area and are the main organisers of all Creavill Bandung Community events there. The interviewed local cadre mentioned that participation in the Creavill Bandung Community can enhance the local environment. Someone with integrity, pride, firm resolve, and significant community links is needed to lead community empowerment initiatives. The Creavill Bandung Community evaluates these traits when choosing their local leaders.

The spirit of change for Creavill Bandung Community and the local cadre is disseminated through diplomatic means, e.g. meeting with the public, youth organisations, and residents of the Braga area to disseminate community empowerment programmes for The Creavill Bandung Community and to discuss and negotiate with community elements so that the needs of the Braga area residents can be accommodated in any existing community empowerment programmes. The enthusiasm of Creavill Bandung Community and the local cadre to improve the environmental quality of the Braga area was warmly welcomed by the chairman of the Braga area youth organisation. The chairman plan to initiate scouting training program for residents of the Braga area in collaboration with the local cadre and the Educator's Club of the Museum of the Asian-African Conference.

Populist competency in the Braga Area is lacking, but the Creavill Bandung Community helps improve it. One of the responsibilities of the local cadre in Creavill Bandung Community is to seek residents' consent to engage in participatory activities to assess the inhabitants' potential and requirements. Braga area was chosen as one of the supported communities following a participatory evaluation. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a technique used to help Creavill Bandung Community map out regional concerns and possibilities. PRA focuses on thorough assessment by community volunteers in collaboration with community leaders, citizens' representatives, and the youth organisation within a specific timeframe.

With the help of the local cadre, programme volunteers conducted observations alongside interviews to study the life patterns of the local population. These activities were carried out simultaneously with the validation process for new volunteers by Creavill Bandung Community. For example, during the PRA process, a volunteer teacher from Creavill Bandung Community developed a lesson plan for the Braga Creative Reading House (RUMBA) alongside the other program volunteers. Each volunteer group analyses and shares the findings from their observations and interviews. The session presentations also serve as a platform for the entire community to engage in discussions. Each volunteer group follows the pre-established strategy to identify work programs based on the PRA findings.

The Creavill Bandung Community can utilise PRA to engage with the residents of the Braga area. Communities have a key role in designing empowerment projects for their area, ensuring that the programmes are tailored to address specific needs and have a significant impact. This approach involves analysing the area's requirements, vulnerabilities, and potential, as well as the characteristics of its residents.

Despite its proximity to the tourism hub in the Braga area, the community needs more awareness that developing tourism-related skills can lead to economic opportunities that may improve the lives of underprivileged individuals in the region. Hence, an entity or person is required to showcase the positive aspects and perks of tourism endeavours. This approach also aims to increase awareness and motivate underprivileged communities to leave their comfort zone. Without clear and regular standards, those with lower income will face stagnation as they may perceive a lack of opportunity for self-improvement.

Creavill Bandung Community organises slum tourism through The Real Braga Tour and engages in societal empowerment activities such as establishing RUMBA, providing anti-drug and sexual health counselling, and implementing the One Village One Product—One Village One Brand (OVOP-OVOB) program. Proceeds from selling small food items are donated to the community before the items are sold.

Socio-Political Ability in Slum Tourism Activities

Socio-political capability, characterised by strength and public influence, is crucial for society to advocate for itself and the community. Developing relationships through community education developed the Braga region community's socio-political ability. Enhancing a society's knowledge and skills through education will specifically increase problem-solving abilities and the ability to meet its requirements. Enhancing one's abilities and confidence is crucial for promoting self-reliance (Suharto, 2014).

Partnership is essential for maintaining the continuity of Creavill Bandung Community's work plan due to the community's restricted capacity or means to liaise with individual contributors or companies. Creavill Bandung Community must close this gap to ensure the community can benefit from the work programme. Engaging the community in collaborative activities among community members and external stakeholders will facilitate mutual understanding of issues and develop coordinated solutions. Additionally, engaging with individuals other than the residents will assist them in developing their abilities to initiate and negotiate.

Creavill Bandung Community prioritises the community in the Braga area above all else. Establishing local village empowerment necessitates a society with proficient hard and soft skills mastery. Skills are expected to empower those not yet wealthy and enhance the community's ability to participate in decision-making connected to life. Creavill Bandung Community's training programmes, including English Language Training, Public Speaking Training, and Training Guide, have enhanced the socio-political skills of Braga's citizens. Local officials at the Reading House noted that only a few individuals from the Braga region eagerly signed up for an English language training session. After the programme was promoted indirectly through The Real Braga Tour, more people from the Braga area became interested and engaged in the activity.

A training programme is being conducted for the youth in the Braga Area to integrate them with The Real Braga Tour. This initiative is complemented by Creavill Bandung Community ongoing efforts to build the self-capacity of its volunteers through various training sessions, conducted individually and in collaboration with other institutions, which focusing on developing lesson plans for instructors. These activities aim to enhance the volunteer's expertise for future educational initiatives within the broader community.

Collaborations between these three groups is pivotal for increasing the socio-political capabilities of the community. By assuming roles as role models, mentors allies, instructors and educators, these groups can drive greater community engagement. According to the Youth Organization Chairman of the Braga Area, current levels of community participation, especially among young people, could be improved. Therefore, strengthening collaboration among these entities will foster more active participation in empowerment activities.

Participatory Competence in Slum Tourism Activities

A prosperous society is a community that possesses and can utilise its power to create opportunities and increase its credibility. The pre-affluent community in the Braga area who wish to develop their full potential and leave their comfort zones still require intensive support and mentoring from institutions or communities such as Creavill Bandung Community for a more focused and measurable improvement programme.

Creavill Bandung Community conducted a Participatory Rural Appraisal (pra) in which residents of the Braga area actively expressed their desires through vocal participation. The community then utilised aspirations to develop empowerment programmes for society. As there is no role for the community in their self-development or the development of their surrounding environment, no significant change will occur regardless of how hard Creavill Bandung Community works unless the community becomes involved.

To develop formative populist competence, it is essential to gradually transform the thinking patterns of pre-prosperous community members in the Braga area, who typically engage in activities solely for immediate financial gain. Regular socialisation efforts can facilitate this transformation by emphasising the long-term financial and non-financial benefits of participating in community empowerment activities. Cre-

avill Bandung Community must also routinely advertise the benefits of the training programme and how skills already mastered can provide decent jobs and assist citizens' economies in recovering. Having undergone the training, the Creavill Bandung Community has become a key figure in opening distribution channels for a society confused by utilitarianism. Creavill Bandung Community organised the community empowerment programme before fully integrating with The Real Braga Tour activity; both programmes provide long-term economic and civic benefits.

This study examined the effect of empowerment implementation on public participation in slum tourism activities during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides empirical evidence that populist competence, socio-political ability, and community participation are increasing in the Braga area, a hub for slum tourism activities. Local cadres are crucial in implementing community empowerment programmes in slum tourism activities, including the "Real Tour" in developing countries. In the context of slum tourism in developing countries, the term "Real Tour" refers to a type of tour that aims to provide an authentic and immersive experience of local communities, particularly those in economically disadvantaged areas. Unlike traditional tourist experiences that may offer a commercialised view, the Real Tour focuses on presenting a genuine and unfiltered perspective of daily life in slum areas (Lopez, 2020; Prasetyanti, 2015).

In the Braga area, the presence of only one local cadre presents a major challenge for the participatory competence dimension. This limited number has led to reduce effectiveness and impact of the local cadre's role in environmental and slum tourism activities. The small workforce and limited availability of the local cadre restrict the area they can cover and the overall effectiveness of their efforts. The role of the local cadre is crucial in guiding and instilling a positive understanding amongst the populace that tourism--related skills, if acquired and mastered, can increase prosperity. Local cadres also act as diplomatic figures with various stakeholders, e.g. local officials, community leaders, youth organisations, and residents, when disseminating community work programmes and inviting constituents to participate in the planning and execution of activities. These findings are consistent with the previous slum tourism literature (e.g. Lopez, 2020; Prasetyanti, 2015). Furthermore, the result is also consistent with previous literature on the activities of slum tourism, which is one of the empowerment programmes originated for the community. It has the potential to become a pilot project that demonstrates to the residents the real benefits of how tourism activities are integrated effectively with the community empowerment programme (Marzuki & Khoo, 2016; Frenzel et al., 2015).

Conclusions

The strategy to enhance slum tourism activities is being carried out to boost performance. An empowerment plan should be executed by introducing an informal education programme to enhance the self-assurance of socio-political inhabitants, particularly those with lower incomes. Creating slum tourist activities involves enhancing skills and abilities. Braga Creative Reading House (RUMBA) conducts English language training, public speaking, and counselling training to enhance their approach, which is subsequently utilized to support the implementation operations of The Real Braga Tour.

NGOs engage citizens in learning activities and skill development, as well as directly involving them, as suggested by scholars. The objective is to educate people to realise their capabilities as proficient negotiators and decision-makers for their communities while establishing connections with donors and other external entities. Many citizens still need self-confidence and are hesitant to take the initiative or participate actively in empowerment programmes, which aligns with earlier reports on encouraging poverty eradication. The region's population are hesitant to engage in community empowerment initiatives like slum tourism because they prefer activities that offer immediate individual cash gains. To alter this mindset, NGOs and other organisations involved in slum tourism must provide regular education shift perspective and emphasise that participating in capacity-building programmes leads to more significant long-term benefits. The current limited quality of the local cadre affects the effectiveness of community empowerment

programmes in slum tourism. Therefore, it is essential to conduct both formal and informal activities regularly to enhance public awareness of the advantage of engaging in community empowerment initiatives within slum tourism. Formal and informal activities conducted by NGOs are crucial to combat the stagnant mindset prevalent among many individuals, particularly those in the pre-prosperous socioeconomic group. The participation of stakeholders in community empowerment initiatives organized by NGOs in the Braga area is affected by the engagement of local leaders in informing and establishing communication with stakeholders.

The results of the Participatory Rural Assessments (PRA) impact the development of community empowerment programmes in the Braga region. Slum tourism is a form of community empowerment activity that emerges from PRA. Teaching English language training, public speaking, and mentoring can boost poor people's self-confidence. Improving residents' negotiation and decision-making skills is influenced by their level of direct involvement in activities with external parties. Both talents are necessary to develop the self-reliance and resilience of the local community. However, the locals' low self-confidence impedes their engagement in community empowerment programmes in the Braga area. The lack of personal financial incentives in current community empowerment initiatives has also resulted in residents expressing a lack of enthusiasm in engaging in these activities. Regular training provided by local leaders and Creavill Bandung Community on the range of benefits, in both financial and non-financial terms, of active citizen involvement can change citizens' attitudes towards the possibility of improving well-being through community empowerment initiatives in the travel and tourism sector.

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