

Development of exotic cultural tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic in Gunungsari Village Madiun Indonesia

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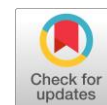
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Received 2020-10-05; accepted 2021-03-30; published 2021-04-07

ABSTRACT

This Community Service Program with the topic of developing exotic cultural tourism aims to target the unique tourism side offered by Gunungsari Tourism Village, Madiun District. The Gunungsari Tourism Village community through the Sentono Taruno Puroboyo Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) has offered Javanese cultural tour packages through the branding of Backdoor Tourism and Kampung Ajar Kejawen to the wider community. The program carried out to assist the development of the tourist village includes several activities adapted to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. The activities are documentary literacy writing, short story competitions about Javanese culture, travel guide booklets (bilingual), English language training, procurement of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), training in Javanese script on palm leaves and making decorative decorations from yellow coconut leaves through the You Tube channel, and digital technology training. The entire series of activities was carried out during the period from March to December 2020. The methods and approaches used were the Participatory Rural Appraisal Model, the Participatory Technology Development Model, the Community Development Model, persuasive, and educative. This activity has succeeded in equipping Pokdarwis members with basic communication skills in English, managing websites and YouTube channels, as well as providing personal protective equipment independently. The impact that partners can feel directly is the significant increase in the number of visitors to the Pundensari market due to the guarantee of strict implementation of health protocols.



KEYWORDS

Exotic cultural tourism
Tourism village
Gunungsari
Kabupaten Madiun



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1. Introduction

Tourism as a creative industry is currently under the government's attention. The sector which is considered capable of boosting the country's foreign exchange is currently tidying up here and there. Various efforts were made to develop the tourism sector from regional to central levels. At the central level, studies on the improvement of tourism facilities are underway. Meanwhile at the regional level, local tourism development through tourism village development has also been promoted. Apart from tourism with natural and artificial themes, a theme that is currently in demand is tourism with the theme of indigenous local culture [1]. Village-based tourism or tourism village is one of the ways to implement sustainable community-based tourism development [2]. The tourism village is a new hope not only for the world of tourism but also for the sustainable socio-cultural preservation of rural communities. However, it cannot be denied that the tourism sector is the most affected sector by the Covid-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia since the beginning of 2020. Not only because of the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) set by the Indonesian government, but also because there is no disaster mitigation system that is appropriate for this situation. For businessperson in tourism villages, these restrictions are of course very burdensome. Moreover, according to Made tourism villages are absorbers of rural labor, mover of regional economic growth, and tools for poverty alleviation (pro job, pro growth, pro poor) [3].

This means that the current pandemic will automatically affect labor absorption, economic growth, and poverty alleviation in villages. The development of the tourism sector is manifested in the formation of tourism-conscious groups of people who continue to actively move to encourage tourism activities in their respective regions. One of the Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) that is currently developing is the Pokdarwis "Sentono Taruno Puroboyo" located in Gunungsari Village, Madiun Sub-District, Madiun District. Stipulated on May 15, 2017, Pokdarwis Gunungsari Village is chaired by Mr. Bernardi Sabit Dangin. Gunungsari Village Pokdarwis aims to increase public awareness in the field of tourism, increase human resources, encourage the realization of *Sapta Pesona* (security, order, beauty, coolness, cleanliness, hospitality, and memories), improve the quality of tourism products in order to increase competitiveness, and restore the tourism as a whole. Gunungsari Village Pokdarwis activity is headquartered in one of the houses of Gunungsari Village residents which is named Griya Setapuran, Figure 1.



Fig. 1. Griya Setapuran which is the location of the pokdarwis Gunungsari Village

The sector that the Gunungsari Village Pokdarwis wants to raise and develop is cultural tourism objects. Ahimsa-Putra in Nafila, defines sustainable cultural tourism as cultural tourism that can be maintained [4]. In other words, there is a good management of cultural heritage so that the purpose of cultural tourism is the existence of culture and not merely emphasizes economic goals. Likewise with the Pokdarwis Gunungsari Village which prioritizes preservation and cultural dissemination as the ultimate goal of this cultural tourism. Gunungsari Village Pokdarwis hopes that the tourism sector, especially cultural and historical tourism in Gunungsari Village can develop and attract many domestic and foreign tourists to visit. By raising the concept of exotic cultural tourism, Pokdarwis carries the culture and history of the local community as a mainstay attraction as well as a means of cultural preservation. The concept of exotic cultural tourism was raised because Gunungsari Village wanted to make a Kejawen teaching village which introduce the traditions, culture, and history of Kejawen to the young Indonesian generation and also foreign tourists who visit Gunungsari Village, Figure 2.



Fig. 2. One of the activities of the Kejawen teaching village in Gunungsari Village

So far, Pokdarwis Gunungsari village has carried out several activities that promote Javanese cultural conservation, including the Javanese lontar script festival, Indonesian traditional games contest, and training in making decorations from coconut leaves and flowers, [Figure 3](#). Meanwhile, to introduce Indonesia's history, Gunungsari village has started a periodic museum. As the name implies, this museum will later be themed and each theme will be displayed for a period of 6 months. After 6 months, the theme of the museum will change to a continuation of the previous theme. With this concept, it is hoped that visitors will also visit the museum periodically and return the museum's original purpose as a place to learn about human history and culture, especially from Madiun.



Fig. 3. Pokdarwis Gunungsari Village Activity Profile

Through discussions with partners, priority issues that will be handled through this Community Service program are:

- The introduction of Javanese customs, culture, and history which are still carried out in a simple manner.
- Lack of attractions related to Javanese culture and history to attract foreign and domestic tourists.
- There is no documentary literacy about the culture and history of Gunungsari village. In fact, cultural and historical preservation is primarily through written literacy.
- There is no travel guide booklet, either in Indonesian or English language, which can be used to guide tourists.
- Lack of English language skills for villagers which causes communication limitations when foreign tourists visit Gunungsari village.
- Tourism promotion, both online and offline, is still very limited due to lack of IT mastery.

Coinciding with the new normal era set by the Indonesian government, Gunungsari Tourism Village, which has been on hiatus for almost 3 months, has begun to prepare for reopening by paying attention to standards set by the government. Kompas.com revealed the statement of the spokesperson for the Covid-19 Impact Handling Task Force in the Tourism and Creative Economy sector of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Ari Juliano Gema through an official statement on Sunday (31/5/2020) which confirmed that the tourism sector would reopen by paying attention to new normal protocols set by the government [5]. Ari said that the protocol refers to 3 main aspects: cleanliness, healthy and safe. This protocol is expected to improve hygiene, health and safety standards for business people in tourist attractions, the community, and also tourists. The reopening of the tourism sector is also fully supported by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which states that tourism is a pillar for recovery [6].

This means that the tourism sector can be the main pillar for post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery as long as the new normal protocol is applied. Initially, this community service activity aimed to develop the potential of Gunungsari tourism village which is rich in cultural exoticism. However, in the midst of its implementation there have been several changes and adjustments due to the pandemic in early 2020. The PkM program implementers have experienced a slight shift. What initially focused on developing exotic cultural tourism in Gunungsari village is now focusing on restoring exotic cultural tourism in Gunungsari village after the pandemic by paying attention to hygiene, healthy, and security standards set by the government. The first step in ensuring the cleanliness, healthy, and safety of this tourist spot is expected to be able to convince potential visitors to return to Gunungsari tourism village. The following are the points of discussion in this article; (1) What activities are carried out to develop exotic cultural tourism in Gunungsari Village, Madiun District?; (2) What steps are taken to develop exotic cultural tourism in Gunungsari Village, Madiun District after the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. Method

What is meant by this method is a pattern or system of actions that have been carried out or a sequence or stages that are necessary in carrying out community service activities. The implementation of this PkM applies several approaches; (1) The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which emphasizes community involvement in all activities starting from planning, implementing, and evaluating program activities [7]. Some of the basic principles that must be fulfilled in the PRA method include: mutual learning and sharing of experiences, involvement of Pokdarwis members and information, outsiders as facilitators, the concept of triangulation and optimization of results, practical orientation, and program sustainability. The purpose of using this approach is in accordance with what Supriatna expressed [8], so that the community is involved in the planning and implementation process of the program and can achieve the appropriateness and efficiency of the program for the community so that program sustainability is more guaranteed; (2) The Participatory Technology Development (PTD) model [9], that utilizes appropriate technology based on local cultural knowledge and wisdom. Zahumensky reveals that the differentiating factor of PTD from other approaches lies in the emphasis on the importance of proactive community participation during the activity process and the preservation of local culture in the activities carried out [10]; (3) The Community Development (CD) model is an approach that involves the community directly as the subject and object of implementing the partnership program for the community in this partner village [11]. Based on the aspect of community participation, CD applied to this activity is of the type of Development with community which is specifically marked by the strong pattern of collaboration between external actors and local communities [12]; (4) Persuasive, which is an approach that is appeal and support without coercion for the community to play an active role in this activity, (5). Educative, is the socialization approach, training, and mentoring as a means of transferring knowledge and education for community empowerment [13]. The technicalities for implementing PKM activities in Gunungsari village, Madiun District are as follows:

- Preparation; In the preparation stage, the PKM team socializes the program and work plans to partners, the Pokdarwis members. In the early stages, the PKM team will also provide an overview of this program importance for the sustainability of the pokdarwis of Gunungsari Village. This

preparation stage takes place during March 2020 with the direct persuasive method (outside the network).

- Implementation; The implementation of the community partnership program (PKM) in Gunungsari Village, Madiun District includes:
 - Documentary literacy training for the people of Gunungsari Village. The speaker of this training was Rr. Arielia Yustisiana, M.Hum, the activity took place offline on March 21-25, 2020. Each meeting lasted for approximately 120 minutes.
 - Implementation and assistance of short story writing competitions based on local wisdom, customs, culture, and history of Gunungsari Village, Madiun District, which was open to the public and conducted online.
 - Creating tourist guide booklets in two languages (Indonesian and English) about the potential in Gunungsari Village for the visitors. The author of the English version of this booklet is Priska Meilasari, M.Hum.
 - Training on writing Javanese characters on palm leaves and training on creating decorations from coconut leaves and various kinds of flowers which are open to the public. The speaker is the observer of Javanese culture and tourism village, Bernadi Sabit Daging. The total time required for training was 240 minutes and conducted online and offline.
 - English training for Gunungsari Village Pokdarwis on 7, 14, 21, and 28 April 2020 with Priska Meilasari, M.Hum. and Rr. Arielia Yustisiana, M.Hum. This activity lasted for 480 minutes in total and was carried out offline.
 - Graphic design training with canva for the members of Gunungsari Village Pokdarwis with L. Anang Setiyo Waloyo, M.T. This activity was carried out offline with a total activity time of 120 minutes on May 19, 2020.
 - Training on the creation and management of the website and You Tube channel for tourism promotion in Gunungsari Village. This activity was held on May 12 for training on Website management and on July 13, 21, 29 for training and assistance on YouTube channel. The total duration of this training and mentoring is 480 minutes with the speaker L. Anang Setiyo Waloyo, M.T. The implementation stage of the activities takes place from March to August 2020 with most activities were carried out online.
- Evaluation, monitoring, and reporting of activities; Evaluation, monitoring, and reporting of activities are carried out periodically by involving implementer members, village community leaders, and the Head of Gunungsari Village. This stage lasts from September to December 2020.

The PKM activities in Gunungsari Village were conducted from March 19 to December 21, 2020. In the preparation stage, all of these service activities are planned to be carried out offline. However, due to the pandemic that hit Indonesia in mid-April, most of the activities were then shifted to online. This activity involved 7 students to participate in PKM activities in Gunungsari Village. The partners involved in this PKM activity are all members of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) of Sentono Taruno Puroboyo, Gunungsari Village, Madiun District, East Java.

3. Results and Discussion

The conditions experienced by the community in the last few months have indeed raised concerns because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Several activities that were planned from the start were annulled into activities that had to be adjusted to health protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The following is descriptions of the results of Community Service Activities in Gunungsari Tourism Village

3.1. Activities Undertaken to Develop Exotic Cultural Tourism in Gunungsari Village

3.1.1. Documentary Literacy Writing

The PKM activity which was not disturbed by the Covid-19 pandemic was documentary literacy writing. Data and source collection had been carried out before the Covid-19 pandemic on March 21-25, 2020 so that the activity can be carried out offline, [Figure 4](#). Documentary literacy about Gunungsari Tourism Village can help the wider community to get to know more about this tourism village. Data collection about the Gunungsari Tourism Village was carried out through interviews with several village elders and indigenous people of the village. Apart from visiting and meeting directly with the informants, the PkM team documented the sites as well as several photos of the village's potential by involving students. All information about Gunungsari tourism village is packaged in the form of a documentary literacy book. The design and layout of the documentary literacy book were also done by 2 students who were involved in PKM. A documentary literacy book about Gunungsari tourism village was printed and given to the head of the Setopuro Pokdarwis as a written documentation about Gunungsari tourism village. This documentary literacy book is also used as a reference for the next PkM activity, the Short Story Contest on Javanese Culture.



Fig. 4. Collecting data through informants

3.1.2. Javanese Culture Short Story Contest

Short story writing competition was based on local wisdom, customs, culture, and history of Java in general and/or Gunungsari Village, Madiun District in particular. This competition was appointed as one of the work programs considering that one of the goals of Gunungsari village is to become a Kejawen teaching village (a place to learn Javanese culture). This short story competition began to be published on July 8, 2020, [Figure 5](#). It was conducted online with participants from students and the public society. The results of the short story writing competition were taken from the 20 best short stories published in the *kumcer* book (collection of short stories) then published and became property rights of Gunungsari Tourism Village. There were three winners in this short story writing competition. The winners got rewards in the form of cash money and e-certificates and got a collection of short stories books. Students are involved in this activity as competition poster and certificates designers as well as recipients of short stories from participants.



Fig. 5. Short story writing competition poster

3.1.3. Travel Guide Booklet

Other written documents about Gunungsari Tourism Village apart from documentary and *kumcer* literacy is travel guide booklet in two languages (Indonesian and English). This booklet contains the potential in Gunungsari village for visitors which is packaged in several cultural festival events, especially culinary culture, Figure 6. The booklet-making process involved residents and Pokdarwis as resource persons and the PkM team. The making of this travel guide booklet aims to make it easier for domestic and foreign tourists to get to know and understand the cultural elements that exist in every tourist activity in the village. In addition, this booklet can also be used at the same time for promotion in attracting domestic and foreign tourists so that they know the various activities at Gunungsari Tourism Village.

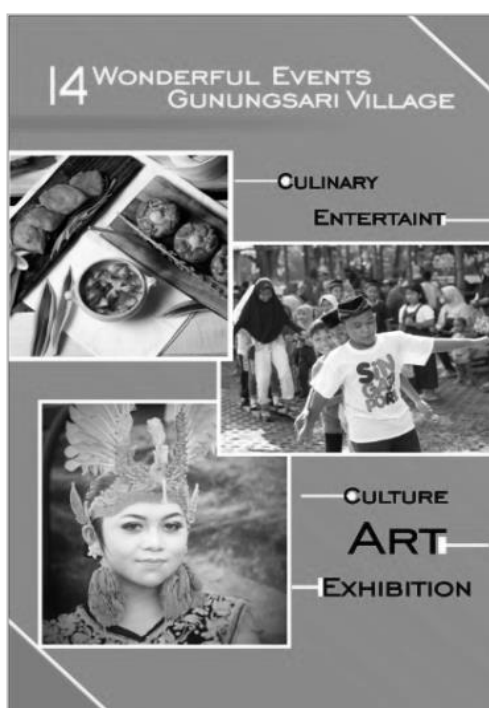


Fig. 6. Gunungsari Tourism Village booklet cover

3.1.4. English Language Training

Before the PSBB was applied due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the PkM team carried out several other training activities, such as English Language Training for Pokdarwis members and several residents of the Gunungsari Tourism Village. The activity was carried out offline on 7, 14, 21, and 28 April 2020. The purpose is to equip Pokdarwis members and villagers as the main motor driving tourism activities in Gunungsari Village with better English skills. The goal is so that they can communicate and act as tour guides for foreign tourists who come to Gunungsari Tourism Village. Therefore, in this activity, 3 English study program students who are members of the PKM team are involved as facilitators. English language training which is still based on the indigenous culture of the region is also hoped that Pokdarwis members and villagers can more freely convey the uniqueness of the culture and history of the Javanese community to the foreign tourists, [Figure 7](#). In facilitating the implementation of training, the PkM Team provides practical English learning modules. The provision of this module is very helpful for training activities so that the pokdarwis members and villagers who take part in the training benefit greatly because the module contains conversational exercises and English vocabulary words commonly used in conversation. This activity was followed enthusiastically by 10 pokdarwis members.



Fig. 7. English language training

3.1.5. Creating APD (Personal Protective Equipment)

The current Covid-19 pandemic has shifted PkM activities into activities that cannot be carried out by direct interaction with the participants. Likewise, the main activity of Gunungsari Tourism Village, named the Pundensari cultural market which is usually open every Sunday morning from 6 AM to 12 PM. With this activity, PkM team supported the creating of Covid-19 Personal Protective Equipment (APD) in the reopening of the Pundensari Cultural Market in accordance with the Covid-19 health protocol. Gunungsari villagers are very enthusiastic about the APD assistance for the Pundensari Cultural Market because they feel helped. The APD which were handed over to the Gunungsari village Pokdarwis for the needs of the Pundensari Cultural Market were 50 face-shields, 300 masks, 5 hand-sanitizers of 1 liter, 2 aesthetic washbasins made of stone, and mica cover between the buyer and the seller. For the face-shield creation, PKM team involved 4 students from the industrial engineering study program to train Pokdarwis members to make face-shields from simple materials on July 1, 2020, [Figure 8](#).



Fig. 8. Face shield creation Training

3.1.6. Training on Writing Javanese Characters on Lontar Leaves and Making Decorative Ornaments from Yellow Janur

One of the activities of Kampung Ajar Kejawan Pelempayung at Gunungsari Tourism Village is writing Javanese characters on palm leaves. The writing tool specifically uses a small carving knife and does not use ink but from the candlenut which is burned then the oil is taken which is affixed to the Javanese script carving that has been made on the palm leaves. Another activity of Kampung Ajar Kejawan Pelempayung is the making of decorations from yellow coconut leaves. Today's society have begun to forget the creative works of yellow coconut leaves. Gunungsari tourism village has also re-developed the culture of making decorative ornaments. Usually such decorations are only reserved for Javanese *Temanten* (Marriage) decorations. However, in this PkM activity, the training activities were transferred from the offline system to online by inviting an observer of Javanese culture and tourism village, Mr. Bernadi Sabit Dangan as the speaker. This training activity is packaged in the form of a Javanese characters writing tutorial via YouTube on July 10, 2020 [14]. Meanwhile, the training to make yellow coconut leaves decorations was carried out together with the Pundensari market after the adjustment of the new normal at the Pundensari market on August 7, 2020. This activity was attended by approximately 50 visitors of Pundensari market. This activity does not change its main purpose, which is to transmit the spirit of learning to understand and protect the customs, culture, and history of the Javanese people, [Figure 9](#).



Fig. 9. Training on writing Javanese characters on lontar leaves and making decorative ornaments from yellow janur

3.1.7. Digital Technology Training

Digital technology training include training on managing websites and You Tube channel, and training on the use of photo and video editing applications. This activity was attended by 20 Pokdarwis members. They welcomed the arrival of the training speaker, L. Anang Setiyo Waloyo, M.T., well. This training aims to help Pokdarwis in promoting Gunungsari Tourism Village through digital media. Promotion with digital media is very important especially in the pandemic situation which imposes social restrictions everywhere. In addition, this digital training is also expected to continue because digital technology has bright prospects in the future. To maximize digital media in promoting tourism villages, the PkM team taught website and You Tube channel management and provides tips on creating interesting contents for tourism promotion. This activity was conducted on May 12 for training on Website management, and on July 13, 21, 29 for training and assistance on YouTube channel. In addition, photo and video editing training was also carried out so that Pokdarwis members could make their own promotional materials for the Gunungsari Tourism Village. This activity was carried out offline with a total activity time of 120 minutes on May 19, 2020, [Figure 10](#). With the availability of the website, You Tube channel, and editing training, the promotion of the Gunungsari Tourism Village has been more attractive and reaches more people especially during the current pandemic era. The You Tube channel is named "Tourism Gunungsari". This channel has been actively uploading content since the beginning of the training until now. In addition, a village information system was also developed through the Gunungsari tourism village website [\[15\]](#).



Fig. 10. Digital technology training

3.2. Steps Taken to Develop Exotic Cultural Tourism In Gunungsari Village, Madiun District after the Covid-19 Pandemic

Responding to the pandemic which has not ended and the implementation of new normal period, the PkM team formulated two main steps in developing exotic cultural tourism in Gunungsari Village. The first step was the preparation of infrastructure for reopening tourism villages after the PSBB period. Preparation of these facilities and infrastructure includes the provision of hand washing places, procurement of thermogun to check body temperature, structuring tourism places so that the visitors are able to maintain safe distance, ensuring all visitors wear masks, maintaining a distance between visitors and sellers by installing plastic curtains at every stall. This first step was taken to convince potential visitors that Gunungsari tourism village is a clean, healthy, and safe tourism destination. Thus, visitors will no longer hesitate to enjoy the attractions at Gunungsari Tourism Village. The second step was to strengthen digital technology. Since the preparation of this PKM proposal, the team has realized the importance of maximizing promotion through digital media. For this reason, digital training programs such as website management and You Tube channel have been targeted from the start. However, the existence of this pandemic has been an impetus for accelerating the use of digital media. Therefore, several work programs have been converted into digital-based activities. For example, a short story competition which has been converted into an online competition. Besides, the Javanese script writing competition and coconut leaves decorative ornament competition were changed to making video tutorials uploaded on YouTube media. Apart from avoiding large crowds during the competition, the team also hopes that this video can reach and convey a message to love and preserve culture to more people.

3.3. Impact of the Community Partnership Program for Partners

Through evaluations and observations of the implementers with partners, the PKM activities of the UKWMS Campus of Madiun City team had a positive impact. The various trainings that have been held have added insight, knowledge, and skills to the members of the Setapuran Pokdarwis in Gunungsari Village. For example, the perceived impact of the You Tube channel training. In the early days of the pandemic forced all Pokdarwis members and business actors in Gunungsari village to stop all tourism activities. It cannot be denied that Pokdarwis members felt unsure about the continuity of Gunungsari Tourism Village. The vacuum also caused many members did not know what to do. However, with training in managing the You Tube channel, Pokdarwis members are made aware that they could continue to do activities even though by online system. Therefore, since the beginning of the YouTube channel management training until now, the "Gunungsari Tourism" You Tube channel has never stopped working. Through the "Ngobrol Bareng Kita" event, Pokdarwis has invited guests from various circles to talk about many things, especially in the fields of tourism and culture. When the government initiated a new normal era, Gunungsari village did not want to miss this opportunity to restart tourism activities in the village. During the transition from Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) to new normal, the PKM team conducted training on making APD (Personal Protective Equipment) for Pokdarwis members and sellers. The implementation of this training was an initial encouragement for the Setapuran Pokdarwis to

strictly implement health protocols when Pundensari market was reopened. On July 5, 2020, the Pundensari market conducted a reopening trial with the application of very strict health protocols. On July 11, 2020, the Pundensari market was visited by a monitoring team from the Madiun District Tourism Office and was declared ready to reopen because the health protocol had been implemented. Since it was reopened until now, the visitors of Pundensari market have increased. Based on the results of the evaluation regarding the Pundensari market activities, Pokdarwis stated that market turnover was increasing due to increasingly intense promotions through Instagram and YouTube.

4. Conclusion

It is undeniable that the tourism industry has been the sector most affected by the Covid 19 pandemic which has occurred in the past three months. After a period of large-scale social restriction, the new normal transition period seemed to be fresh air for the tourism sector to try to revive again. Activities designed to develop exotic cultural tourism in Gunungsari Village also go through an adjustment process. Several activities designed to strengthen human resources in the form of training and tourism promotion which are still relevant to be implemented during this pandemic. However, some method changes had to be implemented. For example, training and competitions that were planned to be held offline would have to change into online. In addition, promotional methods that were initially only through digital media must also be accompanied by improvements to tourist facilities to meet the covid 19 health protocol standards. However, the initial purpose of activities designed to promote Gunungsari Tourism Village more widely can be maximally achieved as evidenced by the existence of significant visitors increase.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank the Ministry of Research and Technology / National Research and Innovation Agency (Ristek / BRIN) who have provided financial support for this service activity.

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