

## **<sup>1</sup>Family Foundation, Is It An Innovative Strategy? The Case of Cultural Heritage Tourism in Toraja, Indonesia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Toraja has been considered as the icon of tourism in South Sulawesi province, Indonesia. As the number of tourist decreases and one tourism attraction belongs to many members of family, there is an expectation from stakeholders that innovative strategies should be implemented to develop tourism. To achieve this goal, *yayasan keluarga* (family foundation) has been established to manage tourism in Toraja. The study reveals that although family foundation has been the option to develop tourism and is an innovative strategy in managing tourism attractions, stakeholders believe that Toraja tourism should be developed together with the existence of the family foundation based on the principle of collaborative work. High demand on the role of the regional government in developing tourism exists although the family foundation is the main organizer of tourism attractions. Similarly, the regional government believes that the family foundation is a choice from the community and thus, it is the role of the family foundation to implement activities for tourism development in Toraja. This paper suggests that cultural heritage tourism in Toraja can be developed if the family foundation implements innovative strategies as well as strengthens relationship (synergy) and collaborative work with other stakeholders in Toraja.

Keywords: family foundation, cultural heritage tourism, collaborative work, Toraja.

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### **Introduction**

#### **Background**

Since 1970s, Toraja has been visited by domestic and international tourists for the purpose of visiting Tongkonan traditional house, traditional funeral ceremony, cultural artefacts and other tourism potential resources. Since then, Toraja Land and North Toraja (refers to Toraja) have been considered as main tourism destinations in Indonesia particularly South Sulawesi province of Indonesia. Many attempts have been made to attract more international tourists and to

maintain Toraja as the main tourism destination. It is the role of the provincial and regional board of tourism to promote and develop Toraja tourism. Hence, cultural heritage of Toraja, the icon and the driver for tourism development has been utilized to influence tourists determine Toraja as their tourism destination or trip agenda.

Stakeholders of tourism in Toraja convince that most areas in Toraja are attractions that make people should come and see. Cultural heritage and natural landscape are believed as the reasons for the visit. Almost all districts have tangible cultural heritage that enables the districts are visited by tourists. For instance, cultural attraction of "Londa", hanging grave located in caves is visited by many tourists. Londa is a grave

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which is intended for members of family either currently residing in Toraja Land and North Toraja or other area in Indonesia, even in the world. Since Toraja is recognized as tourism destination, many tourists choose Londa as the visiting agenda. This has also been supported by the role of the travel agent who includes Londa as part of the tourists' tour in Toraja.

However, the utilization of cultural heritage and natural landscape in Toraja seems to create a problematic phenomenon. The ownership of one cultural attraction in Toraja is by many members of family. One Tongkonan in a district for instance, belongs to all related family members. As the tourists' visit to Tongkonan or other cultural attraction grows rapidly and the family members expect to obtain economic benefits from tourism, there is a consequence that the economic benefits among the family members are unequal. Hence, family foundation is created to facilitate and to help community manage cultural heritage as tourism attraction. The issue that may arise from the management of cultural heritage through family foundation is whether it is an innovative strategy or conventional approach in tourism development of a destination.

### **Research Objective**

Purpose of this study is to provide useful insights on how the foundation works for the management of cultural heritage tourism in Toraja as well as what innovative efforts of the family foundation has been contributing for the development of Toraja tourism.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Linking Cultural Heritage Tourism and Innovation**

Cultural heritage tourism can be defined as the visit of tourists to cultural or heritage facilities including museums and monuments, archaeological sites and relics, historical sites, religious centers and any other tangible and intangible cultural manifestations. In cultural heritage tourism, tourists need to fulfill their wish about the culture of the host community as well as to understand meaning

of the culture. Culture is a capital to attract people outside the host community which then enables tourists to experience the culture of community through tourism as in Kockel (2009) and Nijkamp and P. Riganti (2009) that cultural heritage is owned by community. The meaning of this discourse is that the utilization and commodification of community's culture should provide benefits for the host people (George, 2010).

Since community may consist of group of people in a destination, potential conflict may occur if all community must obtain economic benefits. Equal benefits should be the principle of tourism development. This concept provides the chance for community to get involved in tourism activities. In order to achieve the goal of culture as competitive products and provide benefits for community, a manager should consider eight aspects including "perceived quality of the product, awareness, customer service attitude, sustainability, extent to which product is perceived to be unique or special, convenience, community support and involvement, management commitment and capability" (Silberberg, 1995).

The above principles can help community to manage cultural heritage tourism. It is the role of various stakeholders to implement strategies that can become a bridge between ownership and the chance to obtain economic benefits. In this sense, a destination should be encouraged to create innovation or innovative strategies so that the community can obtain more economic benefits (Silberberg, 1995). Innovation is a process of development (Hjalager, 2009, 2010).

Thus, the tourism product (particularly in cultural heritage tourism) should be managed in a way of providing the chance for stakeholders especially community to work together for a better management. According to Hjalager (2010) that the principle of collaborative and interactive process among stakeholders will determine how each member in group of community should participate in tourism. In other words, the success of cultural heritage tourism depends on how stakeholders transform their ideas into more innovative strategies and community-based management.

## **Tourism and Collaboration**

The increasing number of travel by tourists, the different motivations of people's travel and the different trend of tourism types are the reasons for managing tourism destination. Modes of transportation, easy access to destination and available accommodation in a destination make tourism as a growing industry. This enables most tourism destinations in the world to promote their attractions to potential customers or tourists. The growth of the tourists' travel means that most destinations in the world face competition. Different expectation by tourists means that destinations should win competition so that tourists determine their choice in a destination. Fulfilling the tourists' expectation means that there are many possibilities for destinations in the world to create and promote attractions based on the tourists' needs.

Competition among destinations is a contributing factor why collaboration is essential (Fyall and Garrod, 2005). As tourism provides good service for customers, collaboration is one of the requirements for the the tourists' satisfaction. The tourism industry (accommodation provider, transportation, catering or restaurant service and other related tourism services) are responsible for the successful competition by a destination. The involvement of the tourism industry in providing services for tourists means tourism is a multisector activity, not depending on just one type of service. Collaboration is required because one tourism organization or tourism industry cannot provide services without contribution of other tourism organization or industry (Go and Appelman, 2001).

There are many terms that can be used in understanding collaboration including "joint ventures, consolidations, networks, partnership, coalitions, collaboratives, alliances, consortiums, associations, conglomerates, councils, task forces, and groups" (Park, Lehto and Morrison, 2008). The key for collaboration is the involvement of stakeholders in the policy making for the purpose of finding solution that may affect the success of tourism development (Aas, Ladkin and J. Fletcher, 2005; Hall, 2000 and Jamal and Getz, 1995). Problem or issues regarding

tourism development of a destination may arise during the implementation of programs and activities. Hence, stakeholders are expected to resolve those issues by joining in decision making. Stakeholders are individuals or groups that have an interest on related issues (tourism). The individuals or groups are required to collaborate with other groups in a destination as well as to interact with other individuals (Hall and McArthur, 1998).

The goal for developing tourism in most destinations is to encourage visit by tourists with the emphasis on helping the economic prosperity for community and maintaining tourism resources based on the sustainable principles. Such goal requires innovation implemented by the tourism industry or tourism organizations in a destination. Synergy or partnership is essential because stakeholders in a destination may think innovative efforts for the products that a destination can promote. By involving stakeholders in managing tourism attraction, the chance to promote tourism is opened. Hence, partnership or collaboration is the option for more innovative efforts by the community.

## **Methodology**

This research employs a qualitative methodology in understanding how the family foundation implements innovative strategies for the management of tourism attraction in Toraja. Qualitative research is appropriate in describing the social reality and the point of view of people who are involved in the research (Kardorff and Steinke, 2004). A qualitative researcher seeks the social reality by analyzing experiences of individuals or groups, meaning of people's interactions and texts (Flick, 2007).

Five in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain relevant information about tourism in Toraja in general, and the way the family foundation is organized to manage cultural heritage tourism in Toraja. In-depth interviews to the head of the regional board of tourism in Toraja Land and North Toraja have provided information about the policy of cultural heritage tourism development and its link to the management of the family foundation. Similarly, the organizers of Lemo

(a famous hanging grave in Toraja) provided their time to be interviewed by the researchers. Their information is then, useful for data analysis as well as findings of the research. Lemo tourism attraction was chosen as the main location of the research because it represents family foundation in most areas in Toraja as well as has souvenir shops where community involves as the sellers. Besides, Lemo tourism attraction seems to an example of successful family foundation as suggested by the Head of the regional board of tourism in Toraja Land.

The researchers did participant observation by visiting the area and took note (diary) about the actual condition of Lemo. The researchers then, involved in discussion to obtain similar perception about what is happening in the research area. The discussion is based on the participant observation done by the researchers. The research was done in June 2016 staying in Toraja Land for four days. Since the researchers are residing in South Sulawesi province of Indonesia, discussion among people of Toraja (South Sulawesi people) and other researchers is an ongoing activity. In this sense, the researchers obtain relevant information about Toraja in general and the family foundation of Lemo hanging grave before, during and after the fieldwork.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Brief Description about Toraja Tourism**

Sulawesi is well recognized as the eastern part of Indonesia covering six provinces including South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, South East Sulawesi, Gorontalo and West Sulawesi. Two administrative areas including Toraja Land and North Toraja are located in South Sulawesi. The two independent regencies were based the government's decision in 2008 concerning the separation of Toraja into two areas, Toraja Land and North Toraja. The capital city of Toraja Land is Makale whereas Rantepao is the capital city of North Toraja. These two areas utilize similar cultural heritage as tourism attractions where most tourists come and see.

Aluk Todolo, an ancient belief and cultural heritage is still practiced by people in Toraja. For Torajanese, Aluk Todolo is a cultural identity and hence, what the tourists see in Toraja is part of the people's belief. Such belief is the manifestation of animism and dynamism that considers nature has mysterious forces (Mattulada, 1982). For most tourists, funeral ceremony is the most attractive attraction. This can be seen from the role of hotels and local guides in providing information about where and when tourists can see the funeral ceremony. For tourists, the uniqueness of the funeral ceremony maybe the reason for visiting Toraja. In fact, the cultural identity of Toraja is sometimes referred to the funeral ceremony because what the tourists see is mostly funeral ceremony (Rambu Solo) rather than understanding Aluk Todolo.

The arrival of tourists in Toraja has changed peoples' mind especially because tourism activity provides income for the local people. Indeed, three major sectors including agriculture, trade and services have been established in Toraja. Trade and services in particular, are developing since Toraja is open as tourism destination. Although tour guides (tourism stakeholders) in Toraja realize that the number of tourists is decreasing during the last ten years, there is still expectation from the regional government and community that tourism should be developed for income generation. Nevertheless, the highest number of tourists in Toraja seem to occur in December where Lovely December (before 2015) or Lovely Toraja (December 2015) is established. Various events were conducted in this period which then provides the opportunity for the local people to improve their income.

Factual economic benefits for the local people through tourism are those who work as tour (local) guides, souvenir sellers, hotel and restaurant employees, transportation provider and other multiplier effect. Other local people's economic activities relate to the cultural heritage practices such as buying and selling animals (pigs and buffaloes) for the funeral ceremony, making and carving statues for the purpose of ceremony and souvenirs. In short, cultural heritage owned by the local people has provided the chance for improving their income either for tourism purpose or for

other economic activities. It can be argued that cultural heritage tourism (may also refer to cultural tourism) is the basis for attracting international and domestic tourists visit Toraja.

### Family Foundation and the Need for Innovative Strategies

Given the positive consequences of tourism in terms of economic benefits, members of community around the tourism attraction are interested in getting involved in tourism activities. Since Lemo tourism attraction, hanging graves on the hill of stone is opened for tourists, community then realize that the tourists bring money for community. They then, buy souvenirs and pay the services provided by the tour guide and accommodation services. This means that tourism potentially supports the income generation for community. The visit of tourists to Lemo hanging graves has provided the opportunity for community to create alternative activities for gaining money through tourism.



Source: Photograph by researchers, 2016

Figure 1. Lemo tourism attraction in Toraja Land

Nevertheless, there is other consequence for the opening of Lemo as tourism attraction. Lemo is owned by many members of community, not just community around the attraction. In Lemo, there are several Tongkonan in which one Tongkonan belongs to many Torajanese. The existence of Lemo should not only benefit community around the attraction but it helps to maintain the existence of Toraja as well as helps to

protect their environment and cultural heritage. For this reason, there should be a strategy for managing Lemo that can provide equal benefits for the community around the attraction, members or family of the Tongkonan and Torajanese in general.

Family foundation has been the option for the management of cultural heritage tourism in Lemo in particular, and Toraja in general. According to the organizer, family foundation has been established for about eighteen years. Family foundation is a way for involving members of family who own Tongkonan traditional house around Lemo. It is the role of the organizer of the family foundation to manage Lemo based on the principle of equal benefits. Those who are chosen as the organizers are representative of family members and are expected to represent their voice through the management of Lemo as cultural heritage tourism attraction.



Source: Photograph by researchers, 2016

Figure 2. Lemo family foundation in Toraja

*Dewan Pembina* (members of council) is the top leader of the foundation (see figure 3). Members have the role to supervise the establishment of activities by the organizers of the foundation. The council is expected to give valuable input and advice for the continuity of the foundation. In the implementation phase, *ketua umum* (general/main leader) together with first and second leader has the role to organize or lead the management of the foundation. In many organizations, secretary's role is for helping the organizers for any administrative issues. Similarly, this role is intended for the secretary of the foundation. An interesting thing about the family

foundation is the existence of *perwakilan Tongkonan* (representative of Tongkonan) who are positioned as the organizers.

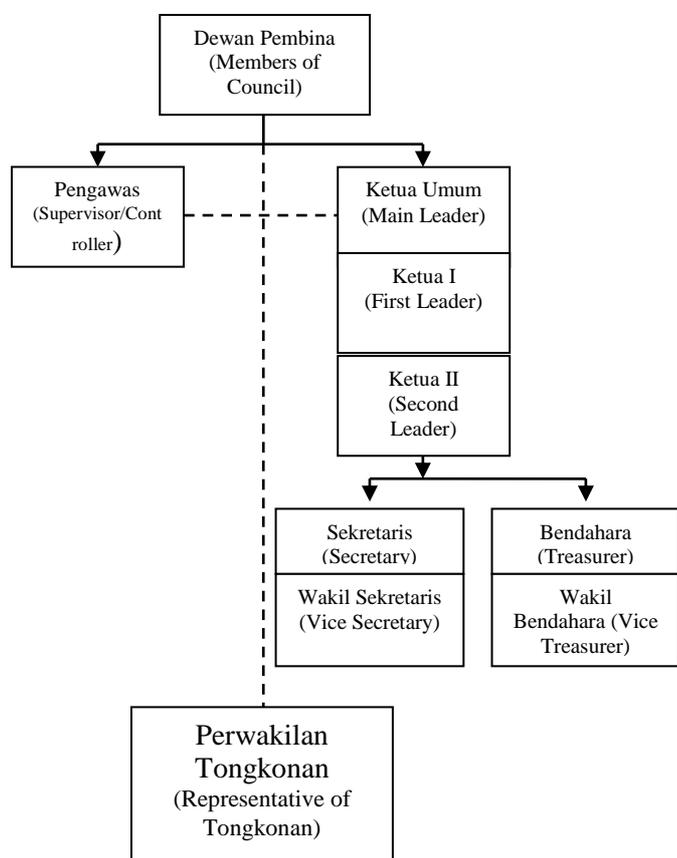


Figure 3. Structure of Lemo family foundation

From the tourism perspective, the family foundation is an innovative management in cultural heritage tourism. The principle of managing tourism attraction is the representativeness of community as the main stakeholder of tourism. The structure of the family foundation shows that members of family have the opportunity to get involved in tourism. Representativeness seems to be the way to accommodate people's voice. Indeed, the representative of Tongkonan is the main actor to avoid conflict among Torajanese. If souvenir sellers for example, are dominated by those who more capital (money to invest), family foundation should be able to provide policy that can help people with lack of investment. The family foundation is expected to provide a mechanism and programs to help community create innovative products.

The family foundation has also implemented innovative efforts to encourage more benefits for the community around Lemo. Four main innovative activities in Lemo under the management of the family foundation including statues makers, traditional dances performers, souvenir makers and sellers, and *sablon* (traditional printing on cloth). These activities are done by people who are residing in Lemo. The products they produce, traditional dances performed by the community, and souvenirs sold are the results of innovative activities. The family foundation has the role to facilitate these activities as well as to help Torajanese for the marketing of these products. Although the family foundation has been established for about eight years, the way the family foundation works is actually an innovation or tourism management.

Given such activities managed by the family foundation, there is still high expectation among community and the members of the foundation concerning more innovative strategies. Alternative strategies related to how to give professional services to tourists are required. Indeed, most tourists may spend their time to explore Lemo around thirty minutes to one hour. Some tourists just come and see the attraction in short time. In order to obtain more economic benefits, the organizer can provide additional services for tourists. For instance, providing a place for relax while the tourists gain knowledge or information about the culture of Toraja. In Lemo, there is no clear route and specific information about Lemo. The local guide is the only source of information for tourists. For this reason, the family foundation should think and implement innovative efforts so that he tourists can enjoy the visit, obtain clear information about Toraja culture and obtain memorable experience.

Interpretation seems to be essential in Lemo and most tourism attractions in Toraja. Interpretation is a way to provide information about the attraction to tourists. Here, the family foundation can create clubs for the local guide who are responsible for helping the tourists in gaining information about Lemo. Printed information on the site and standing board of information can be alternatives for the interpretation efforts. Mason (2003) argues that educating tourists through

interpretation is essential as a way to give information about cultural site. In other words, interpretation helps tourists to understand meaning of culture by the role of local people, guide and other means of written information.

Innovative strategies can also be implemented by encouraging community to create innovative products. Souvenirs for example, have been made the local people. Indeed, more souvenirs can be bought in the center of town in Toraja Land and North Toraja as well as in Lemo. However, the family foundation may create more creative souvenirs with good quality and different from what have been in the city. The creative souvenirs can only be purchased in Lemo. The souvenirs should represent the identity of Lemo, and the culture of Toraja. This effort can only be achieved if the local government together with the family foundation implement policy that the creative souvenirs can only be bought in Lemo.

### **Synergy and Partnership among Stakeholders for Professional Management of Cultural Heritage Tourism**

The main goal of the family foundation is to provide equal opportunity for the local people and members of the family to obtain benefits through tourism as well as to manage cultural heritage based on the principle of sustainable tourism. To achieve the goal, the family foundation is not the only actor. Synergy, collaboration or partnership is required to support professional management of Lemo as cultural heritage tourism attraction. Currently, total money which is obtained from the entrance fee is shared to the family foundation and the local government. The local government obtains forty percent from the entrance fee whereas sixty percent is given to the family foundation. If the collector of the entrance fee obtains five hundred thousand rupiahs on a daily basis for example, the money is shared to the family foundation (sixty percent) and the local government (forty percent).

Synergy between the family foundation and other stakeholders is the key for professional management of cultural

heritage tourism. In most destinations in Indonesia, financial issue often becomes an obstacle for developing a destination (and attractions). The case in Lemo can be an example of good destination and attraction management if related stakeholders play important role in optimizing Lemo as favourite tourism attraction. Each stakeholder has the role in supporting tourism development. The local government for example, has the leadership role for several aspects such as promotion, coordination, and facilitating role. Income from the entrance fee should really be utilized for helping the family foundation implementing innovative activities and strategies.

Synergy requires the involvement of educational institutions to support the family foundation. In reality, cooperation or collaboration between the regional board of tourism (*Dinas pariwisata kabupaten*) and the educational institution occurs within the support of education and training by the educational institution for the government staff. Partnership between the family foundation and the educational institutions (such as university or tourism higher schools) seems to be lack of attention. Since the local government has the authority to decide and establish partnership program, the family foundation seems to be neglected as the main actor of attraction management. Hence, it is important to emphasize that the partnership (synergy) between the family foundation and the educational institutions is essential in achieving professional cultural heritage tourism in Toraja. The local government however, is the facilitator for providing education and training by the role of the educational institutions.

The organizers of the family foundation should make connection with the provincial and central government. The regional government however, is the facilitator for the connection. Lemo family foundation has obtained financial aids from the central government in terms of *pnpn mandiri pariwisata* (financial support for independence in tourism). This indicates that the financial aids have proved the relationship between family foundation and the government. However, financial aids should be defined as a capital for making tourism attraction more

professional and attractive for tourists. Coordination should be maintained by planning and implementing educational and training programs for community with the help of the government.

### Conclusion

Lemo family foundation is established to accommodate the expectation of different stakeholders particularly because a tourism attraction belongs to families, not individuals. From the management perspective, the way family foundation works may be useful if the organizers really represent the voice of family members. Fulfilling the community's needs does not mean that all community must get economic benefits through tourism. Rather, the existence of cultural heritage and the family foundation should be the basis for giving equal opportunity for the community in getting involved in tourism. It is the role of family foundation to facilitate stakeholders to utilize tourism for economic booster and heritage protection as well as to resolve issues that may arise as the consequence of tourism development.

Family foundation does help to resolve the complexity of cultural heritage in Toraja. Although the family foundation exists, community still expects the role of government in developing tourism resources. In this sense, community believes that the government's role is essential whereas the family foundation is intended for internal management of one cultural attraction. Nevertheless, such expectation should not limit the role of the family foundation in creating innovative efforts. It is the role of the organizers of the family foundation to strengthen relationship with other stakeholders through synergy or partnership. A collaborative work can be an alternative to support the family foundation for more innovative and creative.

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