

THE LEGEND OF KYAI KARSOREDJO'S TOMB: RITUAL TOURISM AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

(Legenda Makam Kyai Karsoredjo: Wisata Ritual dan Ekonomi Kreatif)

Drajat Agus Murdowo

National Research and Innovation Agency

drajatgusmurdowo@gmail.com

Abstract: *Kyai Karsoredjo is a legendary figure among the people of Pandanan and the surrounding area in Klaten Regency. During his lifetime, he was considered a holy figure, possessing spiritual powers capable of helping people escape suffering. President Soekarno even met with Kyai Karsoredjo to seek his blessings against colonialism. Given Kyai Karsoredjo's reputation as a holy man, it is no surprise that Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb in Pandanan, Klaten, is considered a holy tomb. However, unlike the tombs of other holy men in Klaten, such as Ki Ageng Gribig, Sunan Bayat, Rangga Warsita, and others, Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb is not widely visited, making it less effective in stimulating the local economy. This is what intrigued the researcher, as to why Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb is not as crowded with pilgrims as other tombs. To answer this question, the researcher conducted a qualitative study using a literary tourism approach that focused on the study of literary tourism to places of literary value (literary places) or the homes of writers. Data collection techniques were carried out through field observations, interviews, and literature studies. The findings of this study indicate that the legend of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb as a religious tourism destination requires further development and innovation to attract pilgrims and stimulate the local economy.*

Keywords: *Innovation; Kyai Karsoredjo's Tomb; Religious Tourism*

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently aggressively developing tourism. The potential of local natural and cultural wealth is a leading sector that needs to be developed. The diversity of natural and human resources, including culture, can be a key asset for tourism. Culture can be a supporting factor for the creative economy, as Dyastiarini argues, stating that the creative economy has significant potential to support Indonesia's economic growth through support from education, culture, infrastructure, technological innovation, government policies, and diversity (Dyastiarini, 2024: 1-12). Culturally, Indonesia is rich in customs, arts, traditions, and so on. Culture refers to a broad spectrum of learned human behavior patterns and encompasses ways of life, the ability to live together, value frameworks, traditions, and beliefs, as well as knowledge, art, and literature (Springer, 2023).

In line with a society's culture, Durkheim divided societies into modern societies or societies of organic solidarity and traditional societies or societies of mechanical solidarity. Traditional societies are those that still strongly adhere to values, norms, and rules. Forms of adherence to norms, rules, and values can be seen in traditions still practiced by Indonesian people, such as pilgrimages, offering offerings, purifying ancestral relics, and so on.

Regarding grave pilgrimages, the government is developing religious tourism in the form of grave visits as a way to increase local income. Many graves scattered throughout the Klaten region are considered sacred figures, leading to numerous pilgrimages. Among the

sacred graves are those of Sunan Tembayat in Bayat, Ki Ageng Gribik in Jatinom, Raden Ranggawarsita in Palar, Kyai Melati in Klaten, Kyai Karsoredjo in Pandanan, and others.

One tomb of particular interest to researchers is the tomb of Kyai Karsoredjo. This tomb is generally unknown to the public, but it holds a historical connection to independence. Kyai Karsoredjo is believed to be a holy and charismatic figure and has a history of meeting Sukarno. It would be a shame if it were not known to the general public. The tomb of Kyai Karsoredjo is a creative economic force in the tourism sector because the arrival of pilgrims generates new economic activity. Therefore, it is necessary to explore and introduce it to the public through religious tourism at Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb. Researchers observed that Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb still needs development and innovation to make it attractive.

The tomb's existence cannot be said to be optimal as a religious tourism site. The community has not yet identified Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb as a religious tourism destination. Pilgrims from outside Klaten still rarely visit this tomb, even though it is adjacent to other cultural sites. How can Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb become a religious tourism destination and become widely known?

Several articles discuss Kyai Karsoredjo and ritual activities in Pandanan Village. One example is Silotika et al. (2017) who discusses one of the famous stories in Pandanan Village, the Folktale of Kyai Karsoredjo Dukuh Pandanan: A Review of the Sociology of Literature and Religious Values and Its Relevance as Teaching Material in Junior High Schools. He discusses literature from a sociological perspective and its religious values as teaching material for junior high schools. Therefore, there's no connection to religious tourism.

W. Pangestu's article, "The Meaning of the Wayang Tradition as Religious Tourism at the Tomb of Kyai Karsoredjo, Dukuh Pandanan, Soropaten, Karangnom, Klaten," examines the traditional wayang procession and its significance. Pangestu's article focuses on the development and significance of wayang performances as an aspect of religious tourism, rather than on the tomb as the center of religious tourism.

Dru Hendro, in "The Existence of the Bharatayuda Wayang Performance Tradition in the Village Cleaning Ceremony in Pandanan, Klaten: A Cultural Perspective" (2008), examines the function of wayang as a social interaction network, fostering a sense of togetherness, kinship, and solidarity within the community. The meanings that can be derived from wayang kulit performances include aesthetic, spiritual, socio-cultural, and welfare.

Referring to the aforementioned research and the existing problems, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this research has never been conducted before. Research on religious tourism at Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb in Pandanan has revealed the suboptimal use of religious tourism based on the story of Kyai Karsoredjo. This research will shed light on the reasons for this lack of community support for religious tourism at Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb. In addition to identifying the reasons, this study also outlines the necessary steps to promote religious tourism in Pandanan and drive the local economy. It also explores how religious tourism at Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb can be better understood and boost local incomes. This is crucial for academic documentation and the development of more in-depth research in other sectors.

B. METHOD

This research is a qualitative study based on informants, observations, and literature review. The approach used is literary tourism, focusing on literary tourism studies at places of literary value (literary places) or the homes of writers (Putra, 2019: 174). The literary-valued place approach is combined with the role model of figures. Thus, pilgrims not only gain the satisfaction of visiting but also gain the essence of literature, in this case the value of oral literature related to the stories of figures. Data collection techniques were carried out through field observation, interviews, and literature review. Data were analyzed by organizing and then reading the data. After completing the data reading, the data was described, classified, and interpreted into codes and themes. Finally, the data was presented in a manner related to the object of study (Creswell, 2015: 253-255).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Legend of Kyai Karsoredjo as Oral Literature

Kyai Karsoredjo was born in 1873 in Pandanan, Karanganom District, Klaten. As a young man, his name was Jumadikun. Jumadikun was different from other children; he enjoyed performing sacred rituals to attain inner perfection. By the age of 20, Jumadikun had already developed a special ability gained from performing sacred rituals. By the age of 20, Jumadikun had often helped the sick and those experiencing suffering. With sincerity, Jumadikun never collected anything from the villagers. Jumadikun's actions sparked public discussion, making Pandanan a popular village.

The sugar factory in Karanganom experienced a shortage of raw materials, namely sugarcane, due to the extremely hot dry season. During the dry season, the rice fields became barren and cracked, and all plants withered and died, including the sugarcane. The Dutch government asked Kyai Karsoredjo for help in bringing rain. Using his spiritual powers, Kyai Karsoredjo, also known as Jumadikun, succeeded in bringing rain during the dry season. After successfully overcoming the drought, Kyai Karsoredjo was confronted with the suffering of the Pandanan people, who were affected by the plague. The plague was rampant and vicious, attacking the people of Pandanan and the surrounding area. The Dutch government attempted to treat the residents and eradicate the plague, but to no avail. Kyai Karsoredjo, seeing the suffering of the people of Pandanan and the surrounding area, felt compassion and used his spiritual powers to try to eradicate the plague. Kyai Karsoredjo's efforts were successful, and the plague gradually disappeared.

Kyai Karsoredjo's spiritual power led the ruler of the Surakarta Palace, King Paku Buwana X, to regard him as a brother. When Sukarno wanted to expel the Dutch colonialists, Paku Buwana X ordered Soekarno to meet Kyai Karsoredjo. Soekarno finally succeeded in meeting Kyai Karsoredjo in a rice field (which later built the Wasesa Monument), in essence Kyai Karsoredjo blessed and gave Soekarno grinting grass as a symbol of strength.

2. Condition of the Kyai Karsoredjo Tomb Tourist Destination

The tomb is not just a place of pilgrimage and a repository of local wisdom, but also serves another function: stimulating the local economy. Creative economy sectors are

integrated with religious activities, such as micro, small, and medium enterprises, performing arts, and culinary arts. The integration of religious and creative economy activities will not compromise the sacredness of the tomb but instead strengthen its sacred value.

Tombs of prominent figures or ancestral tombs have become popular religious tourism destinations in Indonesia. This religious tourism has significant economic potential to support the local economy. However, this economic potential has not been properly utilized and managed by the local community or government. With creative innovation, the tomb's presence will attract many visitors. Innovations in product creation, service sales, and arts and cultural performances will add economic value to the surrounding community.

The tomb of Kyai Karsoredjo as a religious tourism destination, compared to the tombs of other prominent figures, is still less well-known among the public. This is due to the lack of development and innovation in religious tourism at Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb. Innovation in tourism to Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb is crucial to facilitate public awareness.

Development

The location of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb on the outskirts of Klaten city makes it difficult for pilgrims to understand or recognize Kyai Karsoredjo. Promotional efforts are needed to introduce Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb to the general public outside of Klaten Regency. Kyai Karsoredjo's stature needs to be highlighted and promoted to encourage pilgrims to visit Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb. The use of digital technology is crucial and necessary to facilitate public awareness of Kyai Karsoredjo. Social media platforms can be used as a spearhead for information about Kyai Karsoredjo. Through promotion, Kyai Karsoredjo's stature will become readily known to the public, ultimately leading to pilgrimages. In addition to promotion, easy access to Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb is essential. Clear transportation information will facilitate and expedite pilgrimages for pilgrims to Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb.

Signs are needed to guide pilgrims to Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb so that they can easily find it. Pilgrims from far away will have access to information and won't be confused about finding their way.

Another area that needs to be developed is the parking area. Parking is crucial for the comfort of visitors performing rituals at the tomb. With adequate parking, visitors will be able to park their vehicles without hesitation and relax, allowing them to perform their religious rituals with peace of mind. The issue of parking is indeed important because it affects the comfort and peace of mind of visitors. It is hoped that pilgrims who feel comfortable and safe will return to the site. Beyond parking, security is crucial for pilgrims. Security standards need to be improved to ensure visitors can perform their rituals with peace of mind. Public restrooms and toilets also need to be built so that pilgrims can comfortably cleanse themselves and relieve themselves. Pilgrims will not be confused about finding a place to purify themselves or simply relieve themselves. Another area that needs to be improved is the presence of culinary establishments. Culinary establishments are essential at the tomb site. Visitors can easily find drinks, snacks, and food.

Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb still lacks infrastructure and needs to be developed and equipped to attract visitors.

Innovation

Integrating tomb management with cultural preservation and community economic empowerment is a form of creative innovation. With a more modern approach, tombs are not only viewed as pilgrimage sites with historical value but also as sustainable religious tourism destinations. Therefore, creative innovations are needed to attract visitors, ultimately driving the local economy.

Through innovation, tombs can become a source of economic growth for the surrounding community while simultaneously building a sustainable economic ecosystem. Innovation offers products that facilitate visitors' understanding of the buried figure. Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb still requires creative innovations to attract pilgrims and tourists.

Product Innovation Takes the Form of Transferring Stories from Oral to Written Forms

The transfer of stories from oral to written forms is an innovation that brings about changes in human civilization. This change affects or alters the way people think, store knowledge, and build cultural identity.

Oral literature, which is characterized by its narrator and rooted in verbal traditions, is less able to convey understanding due to its limited reach within specific communities. Unlike written literature, written literature is seen as flexible, accessible both digitally and in books. The scope of written literature is limitless, meaning that oral stories are not solely dependent on the narrator but can be accessed digitally and in books. Visitors don't have to go to the community that owns the oral story to learn about the characters.

Translating oral stories into written form makes it easier for pilgrims to learn about the characters. This writing also documents the story so it doesn't disappear and can be used as a promotional tool. Oral stories can be written in three languages (Javanese, Indonesian, and English) to make it more accessible to various segments of society. This will make the story of Kyai Karsoredjo more accessible to people outside the community that owns the story. More visitors will learn about and be interested in Kyai Karsoredjo, thus encouraging them to undertake religious tourism.

Innovation in Creating a Comic Strip About Kyai Karsoredjo for Children

The innovation in creating a comic strip about Kyai Karsoredjo aims to introduce the story to children and preserve the story of Kyai Karsoredjo. Children will become the next generation to learn about Kyai Karsoredjo. Collective memory transforms into a collective document that will provide a broader scope for information for the younger generation.

Creating a comic strip about Kyai Karsoredjo will engage, enlighten, and facilitate children's understanding of Kyai Karsoredjo's struggle. The charismatic story and struggle of Kyai Karsoredjo are presented in a light, communicative, and engaging style, enabling children to absorb the values of humanity, heroism, courage, and faith.

This is a small effort with multiple meanings. On the one hand, it instills positive values in children from an early age and on the other, it ensures the sustainability of religious tourism.

Innovation in Filmmaking, Animation, and Documentary Films

The creation of animated films and documentaries is crucial in conveying information about the values of Kyai Karsoredjo's struggle to the public. Animated and documentary films are considered appropriate because film is a popular medium across generations. Through film, conveying moral messages to the public will be easier, and the story of Kyai Karsoredjo at the Pandanan tomb will become more widely known.

The animated film also serves as a cultural and historical documentation tool, introducing Kyai Karsoredjo as a brave, honest, helpful, and powerful figure in assisting the community. The animated film will explain the data, history, and activities of Kyai Karsoredjo, documented in a neat, beautiful, and engaging manner.

The film will strengthen the brand identity of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb as a must-visit religious tourism destination. With the increasing number of tourists, the local economy will have a positive impact, generating additional income for their families. Integrating the heritage of existing cultural sites to immerse pilgrims in the religious tourism of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb.

The location of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb is actually very strategic in Pandanan, surrounded by cultural sites. These cultural sites have not been optimally utilized by residents or the local government to add value to the creative economy. These include the Bangsal Sri Sidomulyo site, Sendang Pancuran Sri Mulyo, Tugu Wasesa, Menara Baskoro, Pelataran Cokromanggilingan, and Sendang Karanggotan. Each site, with its own myths, must be integrated and utilized to enhance the brand of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb. The richness of the cultural sites (physically) remains merely a beautiful building, and there has been no optimization to support the tomb's existence and its creative economy potential.

D. CONCLUSION

To attract tourists, Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb must improve through infrastructure development and creativity-based innovation. Relying on the tomb alone cannot attract visitors. Innovations are urgently needed to transform the face and presence of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb. Development and innovation at Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb will provide tourists with easy access to information, thereby attracting and increasing tourist visits. Increased tourist visits will improve the welfare of residents and enhance the region's image as a religious tourism destination. Thus, the potential of Kyai Karsoredjo's tomb as a creative industry will be enhanced and sustained.

REFERENCES

Creswell, John W. (2015). *Qualitative Research and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Translated from *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among*

- Dru, Hendro. (2008). *The Existence of the Bharata Yuda Wayang Performance Tradition in the Village Cleaning Ceremony in Pandanan, Klaten: A Cultural Perspective*. Other. ISI Denpasar.
- Dyastiarini, A., Hendrayati, S.L., Yuni, S., & Fransiska, C. (2024). Indonesian Creative Economy Performance in 2015-2012. *Balance Economic Journal*, 20(1).
- Pangapunten, W. (2022). *The Meaning of the Wayang Tradition as Religious Tourism at the Tomb of Kyai Karso Rejo, Dukuh Pandanan, Soropaten, Karanganom, Klaten*. Bachelor's thesis, Widya Dharma University.
- Putra, I Nyoman Darma. (2019). "Literary Tourism: Literary Studies with a Tourism Approach." In I Wayan Pastika, et al. (Ed.) *Nuances of Literary Imagery: Deepening and Renewal in Language and Literature Studies*. Denpasar: Pustaka Larasan.
- Silotika, I., Rahmat, & Suyitno. (2017). *The Folktale of Kyai Karsoredjo Dukuh Pandanan: A Sociological Review of Literature and Religious Values and Its Relevance as Teaching Material in Junior High Schools*. *Sabdasastra* 1(1).
- SpringerLink. (2023). *Culture and Development*. In *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*. Springer.