

Becak Wisata: the Innovation of a Traditional Transportation Mode in Supporting Urban Tourism

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Abstract

How informal sector creates innovation in gaining competition is very important in urban management. Commonly, informal sectors are embedded in their routines and lack of innovation capacities. Based on the case of becak wisata in Yogyakarta, it was found that as informal sector in tourism activity, the becak wisata drivers have created product innovation. This street level of innovation is mainly done by seeing the tourists as the potential demand/profitable customers. They have created innovation on physical performance of the pedicab, the capacity of pedicab to serve the tourists, and the union as the organization of the becak wisata. Furthermore the “becak wisata” has transformed not only as a transportation mode but also as one of tourism attraction. This product innovation is also supported by process innovation through networking with formal sector such as government agencies and hotel.

Key words: becak wisata, street level innovation

1. Introduction

A literature review indicates that tourism can be defined as a travel and stay of a non-resident with such reason such as for leisure, visiting friends and relatives, health, education, etc (WTO 1995). This sector has been spectacularly successful as an agent of economic development. This is evident of income generated through tourism, in 1998, international tourism and international fare receipts (related to passenger transport of residents of other countries) together accounted for an estimated US\$ 532 billion (WTO 2000). That is way, tourism as one of urban sector need to be developed.

Tourism as an agent of economic development has some impacts not only on national economic, but also on local social-economic (Gartner 1996; Roe and Khanya 2002; Markandya, Taylor et al. 2004). The impact on local social-economic is based on its special characteristic; it is extensive labor using than other sectors and can be developed at least initially on the basis of unskilled labor (Christie and Crompton 2001; Roe and Khanya 2002; Roe, Ashley et al. 2004).

Transportation is one of economic sectors influenced by tourism. “Transportation services and facilities are integral part of tourism” (McIntosh, Goeldner et al. 1995). This is based on the basic activity of visitor/tourist moving from one place to other place for tourism purposes. Every visitor/tourist will need transferability in their mobility, ease to move from one place to other place, from their home to tourism destination, from one tourism attraction to other tourism attraction, etc. Therefore, they will need transportation services and facilities. The transportation modes are very varied (depend on the distance, comfort, and travel cost) such as airline, train, bus, car, etc (McIntosh, Goeldner et al. 1995).

One of the popular transportation modes in some tourism attractions is pedicab (a pedal-operated tricycle for carrying passengers). People who are travel in New York, Copenhagen, Kohl, India, China, Indonesia, and other places will find this transportation mode in some tourism attractions. Some tourists prefer to use this unique transportation mode during their visit in tourism destination. The pedicab has different names and appearances in each country, such as Cyclo in