

The Implementation of Sister City Agreement on Tourism between the Special Region of Yogyakarta Indonesia and Kyoto Japan

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ABSTRACT

Sister City between Yogyakarta and Kyoto is one of the most active cooperations in Indonesia. This cooperation covers various fields such as academics, economy, culture, and tourism. This paper focuses merely on the tourism sector program from 2015 to 2018 because Yogyakarta and Kyoto are famous tourism destinations. Moreover, from 2015 to 2018, there was a significant increase in Japanese tourists coming to Yogyakarta. It prompts an investigation on 'how did the implementation of the cooperative agreement in tourism from 2015 to 2018 between the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Kyoto lead to mutual benefits?'. It is underpinned by two theoretical frameworks: the sister city concept and cultural diplomacy. This research aims to unpack the implementation of the Sister City Program between the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Kyoto in tourism from 2015 to 2018. This research revealed successful cooperation related to disaster risk and tourism management, promotion, and information.

Keywords: Sister City; Tourism; Yogyakarta; Kyoto

ABSTRAK

Sister City antara Yogyakarta dan Kyoto merupakan salah satu kerja sama paling aktif di Indonesia. Kerja sama ini juga mencakup berbagai bidang seperti Akademik, Ekonomi, Budaya dan Pariwisata. Fokus makalah ini adalah pada program sektor pariwisata pada 2015-2018, karena Yogyakarta dan Kyoto terkenal dengan mempromosikan pariwisata. Ditambah lagi, dalam rentang tahun 2015 hingga 2018 terjadi peningkatan signifikan wisatawan Jepang yang datang ke Yogyakarta. Hal ini membuat penulis kemudian, membahas perumusan masalah Bagaimana pelaksanaan Kerjasama antara Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta dan Kyoto di Pariwisata 2015 – 2018?" dengan menggunakan 2 kerangka teoritis, yaitu konsep sister city dan diplomasi budaya. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pelaksanaan program sister city antara Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta dan Kyoto di Pariwisata pada tahun 2015-2018. Dari hasil penelitian ini diperoleh bahwa ada kerja sama terkait Manajemen Risiko Bencana dan Manajemen Pariwisata, Promosi, dan Informasi.

Kata Kunci: Sister City; Tourism; Yogyakarta; Kyoto

1. Introduction

Sister Cities of Yogyakarta and Kyoto initially began as friendship cooperation between cities in 1985, considered the global paradiplomacy. This cooperation was due to personal relations between Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX and Kyoto Governor Mr. Hayashida Yukio. Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX helped Mr. Hayashida Yukio escape from Dutch jail when he was on duty in Indonesia during World War II. Because of the kindness of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, Mr. Hayashida then decided to continue their friendship with the local province—best friendship through signing the Sister City Agreement (Mukti, 2013).

The Sister City Agreement between the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia and Kyoto, Japan, has become the most active collaboration among similar agreements in Yogyakarta. This partnership was established due to the regional autonomy law regulated in Law No. 32 of 2004 on how regional governments conduct international relations and cooperation (Republik Indonesia, 2004). Previously, Law No. 37 of 1999 (Republik Indonesia, 1999) stipulates that international cooperation between local and overseas governments is a part of a policy shaping the nation and local development. Subsequently, in Law No. 28 of 2018, Article 24 regulates regional cooperation. Article 27 regulates the implementation requirements of sister cities. Then, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Regulation No. 3 of 2019 contains general guidelines for foreign relations by local governments.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 25 of 2020 encompasses the foreign cooperation procedure between the regional government and regional governments abroad (Mukti, 2020). The Sister City Agreement between Kyoto and Yogyakarta covers many scopes, but tourism is the main focus of discussion because the sector mobilizes and complements other economic sectors, from agriculture and livestock to industry, from construction to infrastructure (TASAM, 2016). Furthermore, tourism also closely related to cultural heritage, which increases cultural interaction.

Thus, tourism has been an attraction for Yogyakarta and Kyoto for a long time, becoming the priority of both cities. Both cities have become tourism centers for tourists who want to get closer to culture. As cooperation occurs between regions, the two cities must play an active role in increasing the index of tourist arrivals with the latest innovations and breakthroughs. In line with the objective of the Sister City Program is the promotion of international friendship to create and strengthen long term partnerships between citizens of cities in the world by motivating and empowering private citizens, their municipal officials and business leaders to dialogue and engage with other cities and their citizens in peace and understanding (Awumah, 2005).

The table below demonstrates the number of Japanese tourists who visited Yogyakarta from 2011 to 2018.

Table 1. Japanese Tourists Coming to Yogyakarta

| Year | Total (*Based on the Use of Accommodation Service) | Percentage (*Based on the Whole Tourists Coming to Yogyakarta/Year) |
|-------------|---|--|
| 2011 | 16,908 | 10% |
| 2012 | 19,074 | 10% |
| 2013 | 25,301 | 11% |
| 2014 | 27,047 | 11% |
| 2015 | 29,567 | 10% |
| 2016 | 25,548 | 13% |
| 2017 | 25,816 | 7% |
| 2018 | 40,686 | 10% |

(Source: Tourism Statistics of Yogyakarta, 2018)

Table 1 depicts that from 2011 to 2018, Japanese tourists visiting Indonesia are steadily growing. The data are based on accommodation services in Yogyakarta (Tourism Statistics of Yogyakarta, 2018). Accordingly, it leads to investigating how the Sister City Agreement induces tourism demand.

2. Theoretical Framework

In compiling this research, the author employed a descriptive qualitative method. The sources include literature review or library research, a data collection technique or information from various sources, both print media such as books, papers, newspapers, journals, and electronic media such as the internet or websites relevant to the research, using secondary data. The data were analyzed using exploratory research. Two key concepts, sister cities and cultural diplomacy, have provided the theoretical framework to inform this research.

2.1 Sister City

Sister cities refer to two cities officially tied to each other with a specific goal: promoting peace, friendship, or a feeling of mutual understanding between their people (Souder, Bredel, & Rodd, 2005). Sister city arrangements can also be defined as international cities united for cultural exchange and goodwill (Shoten, 2017). Sister cities could be stated as one form of foreign cooperation. Productive foreign cooperation has two characteristics: cooperation with high economy-level countries and cooperation with foundations or non-profit institutions.

Regarding these characteristics, Kyoto, as a high-performing city, could help Yogyakarta with social funds (Mukti, 2013, p. 290). Besides, the benefits of the Sister City Program extend to cultural promotion and international awareness. The regions can also participate in grant programs for global projects collaboratively. Coordinators and volunteers get involved in the community to be fully aware of the vibe and personal issues in each city. Through meetings and conferences, it allows everyone to learn about innovations, cultures, and experiences abroad (Cheapoair, 2011).

In addition, there are several requirements for regions wanting to implement the concept, stipulated in the Government Regulations No. 28 of 2018, Article 27, which states the following conditions.

Paragraph 1:

- a. Having a diplomatic relationship
- b. It is a local government affair.
- c. Local governments do not open representative offices overseas.
- d. Local governments and institutions abroad do not take care of domestic government affairs; and
- e. Following national and regional development policies and plans.

Paragraph 2: Cooperation in knowledge and technology must be transferable to Indonesia's human resources.

Paragraph 3: The Sister City Cooperation must fulfill the following points.

- a. Equality of administrative status
- b. Complete each other; and
- c. Improved relations between communities

The regulation states no participation in national-level affairs. Therefore, the agreed scope of the Sister City Program can include academics, cultural, economic, and information sharing. Moreover, in this academic collaboration, both parties send ambassadors to promote and deepen culture.

- a. Cultural cooperation is intended to respect each other's diversity to know unique heritage and histories, creating richer cooperation.
- b. Economic is the key to Sister City Cooperation. The trade between the two parties will increase the cooperation in sales of tourism products and services and corresponding job creation opportunities.
- c. Information sharing is one of the areas of cooperation with the aim of both parties handling the same problem and exchanging information to overcome common problems where areas are often affected by natural disasters. Kyoto can certainly help Yogyakarta create better disaster risk management responsibilities as a city more prepared in its disaster risk management.

Bilateral Cooperation Approach

2.2 Cultural Diplomacy

Nowadays, the development of diplomacy has become more varied. Diplomacy can be divided into hard or soft. The distinction between the two terms is that hard diplomacy often is a win-loss game, where the parties negotiating the outcomes often result in someone having to compromise on decisions (Bbaala 2015). In contrast, soft diplomacy is characterized as a win-win scenario in which both parties usually get to advance their agenda in their respective ways (Glosny, 2006). One of these soft diplomacy approaches is cultural diplomacy.

Two words should be defined to understand cultural diplomacy: culture and diplomacy. Culture is regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group and encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001). Conversely, diplomacy means an art of negotiation to gain national

interest. Cultural diplomacy is often used because values are related to the community and using it will make it easier to adapt and be accepted elsewhere. Cultural diplomacy is described as a big parable that involves cooperative relations between countries (Warsito & Kartkasari, 2007).

According to Warsito and Kartikasari (2007)), cultural diplomacy is everything in macro and micro, using aspects such as arts, tourism, sports, traditions, and technology for expert exchange. Cultural diplomacy is all about mutual understanding that leads to trust as the basis on which one can start cooperation, business, and peace. Though it influences society, cultural diplomacy should not be taken as propaganda because usually, propaganda tends to be associated with activities of a manipulative nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.

On the contrary, cultural diplomacy is based on values and beliefs such as respect and recognition of cultural diversity and heritage; global intercultural dialogue; justice, equality, and interdependence; protection of international human rights and global peace and stability (Carbone, 2017). Cultural diplomacy focuses on long-term agreements. In other words, cultural diplomacy is more about spreading positive cooperation and influence rather than misleading society. The agents of cultural diplomacy can be a state or non-state. As they bring the mission of a state and pursue the mission, cultural diplomacy needs tools or vehicles, and those tools can be anything, such as tourism, education, art exhibition, and interfaith dialogue. This research explored soft diplomacy situations, particularly in tourism, between Yogyakarta and Kyoto as sister cities.

3. Result and Discussion

The soft diplomacy implementation in tourism between the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Kyoto from 2015 to 2018 resulted in the followings.

1. Developed disaster risk management by making a map of evacuation and training of wood conservation training program for infrastructure renovation.
2. Tourism management, promotion and information sector have brought the sister cities to mutual success.

3.1 Disaster Risk Management in Tourism Sector

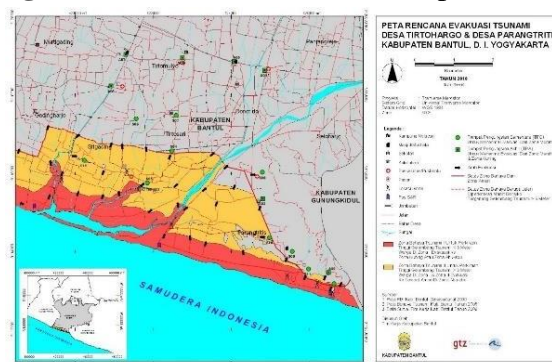
Disaster risk management is the action to reduce risk. It is necessary for tourist sites to maintain their safety. Disaster risk management should consider prevention, preparation, mitigation, transfer, and resilience. Both Kyoto and the Special Region of Yogyakarta have faced a common enemy in encountering disasters. Thus, disaster management is required because both regions are prone to disasters, such as volcanoes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and tsunamis. Even though this cooperation is carried out between regions, it does not indicate the absence of connection between other actors. In implementing disaster risk management, all sectors must be involved and communicate with the local community.

In this research, a discussion of evacuation maps and wood conservation infrastructure is provided in the context of tourism. Evacuation maps must be understood by the local community and traders who live in tourist areas because they will be the first to respond as they are more likely to know the place better than tourists. Hence, information sharing was carried out at first in the project based on the Sister City

Collaboration. It was conducted because Ritsumeikan University has a tv program informing the procedure for disaster evacuation as a community involvement project to explore disaster response. Yogyakarta can also model similar things to provide communication and responsiveness to disaster management from print, online, and face-to-face seminars.

The introduction of the disaster information system for evacuation preparedness to communities residing within susceptible areas has long been a concern for Indonesian cases, especially in the Special Province of Yogyakarta. As one of the most popular tourist destinations in Indonesia, Yogyakarta has many cultural, ecological, and educational tourism destinations. Besides making this map, the first thing performed was to consult residents and other stakeholders on the comprehensiveness and accuracy of its contents.

Figure 1. Tsunami Evacuation Map in Bantul



The above is an example of making a map of evacuation from a Tsunami in Bantul made by the Regional Disaster Management Agency. In case of a tsunami, people nearby will know the evacuation route to save enough time and search for the safest place. Moreover, Kyoto has provided expert exchanges related to wood reconstruction infrastructure to Yogyakarta. They have sent experts from Kyoto to Yogyakarta to teach conservation techniques for the environmental preservation of cultural heritage. The personnel who have been trained in Japan have been working in the conservation of several cultural heritage sites in Yogyakarta. There was also field observation where students and experts went to Kyoto to see wood infrastructure renovated. Comparative studies between universities in Yogyakarta and Kyoto have been frequently conducted to study architectural arts and cultural heritage conservation. There was also an escape from the cultural heritage environment in the Tamansari area, big city, limestone sites, and Ratu Boko temple.

3.2 Tourism Management and Promotion

Yogyakarta and Kyoto are known as areas driving the tourism sector. Given the importance of tourism to these sister cities, a discussion of tourism management and tourism promotion best practices shared between them is justified. Tourism management refers to managing many activities such as examining the tour destination, planning the

tour, making travel arrangements, and providing accommodation. It also involves marketing efforts to attract tourists to travel to particular destinations.

In addition to the main destination and attractions, the tourism management of Yogyakarta has also provided a variety of accommodations from star and non-star hotels to bus-style transportation such as Transjogja, taxis, *delman* and three-wheeled pedal (*becak*) as traditional transportation and pavement for a pedestrian making it easier for tourists to visit and enjoy tourist attractions. Indeed, Yogyakarta has provided many interesting tour packages to Japanese tourists. The data attached to the Free Independent Tourist (FIT) tourism statistics agency from 2015 to 2018 revealed that most Japanese tourists preferred staying at star hotels and using travel agencies.

In comparison, tourists from Kyoto enjoyed the nature theme destinations, cultural and historical sites where they could see religious rituals, and other sustainable tourism spots like eco-tourism. This information helps inform decision-making within the Tourism Departments in Indonesia to promote popular cities such as Bali and Yogyakarta (Tempo. Co, 2015). Since 2005, the government has developed eco-friendly tourism opportunities. Eco-tourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015).

One example of the eco-tourism often visited is the Ullen Sentalu Museum. It is a private museum managed directly by the royal family. A notable point of this museum is that to attract Japanese tourists, they use Japanese brochures, and every description of the displays is translated into the Japanese language. When entering the museum, a reminder of cooperation inscriptions building the friendships can be seen in a civilization commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the sister cities (Yogyakarta Province - Kyoto Prefecture) signed by Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X and Takaki Takeuchi.



Figure 2. Memento of the 20th Sister Cities

Apart from the Ullen Sentalu tourist museum, Yogyakarta has provided other historical tourist attractions such as the Kraton, Tamansari, and Kotagede. With good management development, such tourist attractions have several guides fluent in English, and some others are also fluent in Japanese. Hearing aids have also been provided in various languages in tourist attractions such as temples. In Yogyakarta, there is a Japanese-themed tourist spot called Kalinampu Natural Park. Tourists can feel they are in Japan and can use traditional Japanese clothes, yukata, and kimono.

In 2015, the Jogja Japan Week, known as JJW, was held to commemorate the 30th Sister City Anniversary. It was carried out at Graha Sabha Pramana with the concept of four seasons: winter, autumn, summer, and spring. The event began with a parade along

the way and created a *Torri* (Japanese gate) on display in front of Graha Sabha Pramana. It received a positive response in the community and has become one of the most eagerly awaited activities held every two years.

Apart from providing eco-tourism places, festivals have been held to attract tourists, such as the dance and traditional festivals, and maintain the attractiveness and cooperation between the two regions. Furthermore, an annual DIY-Kyoto painting exhibition at the Sonobudoyo Museum is organized annually. Each year, the theme carried out is different. In 2016, the theme was “Jogja Omahku”, where 30 out of 400 selected entries from a tight painting competition were presented in Basiyo XT Square Yogyakarta.

In the same year, the 30 selected paintings were brought to Kyoto to be exhibited together with the works of Japanese youth in the 2016 DIY-Kyoto Painting Competition. In 2017, the theme changed to “Harapanku”. This competition is divided into several categories, from kindergarten to high school students. In addition, a selection is carried out per district to find the best work because this event is a highly awaited event attracting many art enthusiasts.

Another prominent exhibition is Te Collabo, meaning Technology Collaboration, where there is a merger of Yogyakarta and Kyoto craftsmen’s artworks in the development of modifications of Yogyakarta batik fabrics and Kyoto silk. This exhibition has been performed in both Yogyakarta and Kyoto. Yogyakarta lessons are provided in tourism promotion and information to gain attention from international tourists to overcome the language barriers. A language is a tool for communication. Sometimes, language becomes a barrier, but in today’s times, it is an insignificant obstacle due to the availability of travel apps on mobile devices. For tourism information, Yogyakarta has an accessible website, visitingjogja.id, established in 2005. This website has many tourist destinations in Yogyakarta with brief information about the attractions delivered in four languages: Indonesian, English, Korean and Japanese. The features include contact persons and details for visitor centers. As per the discussion, using Japanese language features on the official website of tourist information in Yogyakarta can make it easier for Kyoto tourists to get information about respective tourist attractions and visit Indonesia. Below is the home view of the visitingjogja.id website in the Japanese language.



Figure 3. Official Website Tourism Information
Source: visitingjogja.id

The visitingjogja.id website is one of the examples of the use of owned promotion by the Yogyakarta Government. Besides the website, the government has Instagram and Facebook of Visiting Jogja. The government has also launched a mobile application named Visiting Jogja, which can be downloaded from Google Play and the Apple App Store.



Figure 4. Visiting Jogja Application

Source: visitingjogja App

The application provides rich tourism information, including weather forecasts, events held by the Special Region of Yogyakarta, accommodation, recommendations, food trails, and tourist maps. The application can also be used to make reservations for admission tickets. Furthermore, promotional media used by Yogyakarta is selling packages—tour packages to various destinations and events. Thus, the use of social media and paid promotion have mostly been carried out by private parties. Other forms of endorsement media have supported it (e.g., travel influencers), where the film, documentary, or micro-video (such as TikTok) have been employed as promotional media to showcase Yogyakarta as an icon and an appealing tourism setting.

In the case of promotional means, holding tour packages and souvenir shops have been part of the tourism strategy and an indirect medium to attract visitors. By purchasing gifts from Yogyakarta craftsmen and bringing them back to their place of origin (Kyoto), they can make souvenirs a promotional tool for Yogyakarta.

Despite these apparent successes, the Sister City Cooperation between Yogyakarta and Kyoto is not without its challenges, as some obstacles exist. Obstacles to the Sister City Tourism Cooperation

a. Human resources

In this context, human resources are defined as mobilizers, agents, and staff in an organization or institution with an important role in achieving the goals (reference needed). As an important asset, human resources can be an obstacle to the Sister

City Cooperation due to the lack of skilled labor competent in foreign languages and cross-cultural understanding (Wicaksono, 2018). Such issues can rise to misunderstandings and errors that can tarnish cooperation. In addition, the change of leadership within any party can be a further obstacle because each incoming leader can have a different policy and, as such, change the direction of strategic directions drastically, thereby resulting in a lack of continuity and sustained long-term desired goals.

b. Bureaucracy and Law

When carrying out the Sister City Cooperation, bureaucracy could exist. The obstacle caused by bureaucracy is the inefficient and ineffective collaboration due to long and often resource-sapping administrative processes. Governments are obliged to comply with the existing administrative system at escalating levels from the provincial government, then from the province to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the State Secretary. This process can take one month or more, causing inefficient collaborations. Aside from the bureaucratic differences in law or juridical between Indonesia and Japan, there are also other dominant constraints within formal institutions. According to Mukti (2013), the Japanese Government had requested 500 elderly nurses from Yogyakarta, but it was canceled because it did not get permission from the Government of Indonesia due to restrictions imposed by Indonesian laws.

c. Funding Budget

In implementing a funding budget, cooperation is crucial. The Sister City Program will not run properly without a dedicated and sustained funding budget. It should be noted that Yogyakarta cooperates with Kyoto and other international and regional cooperations to overcome the constraints of limited budgets for the Sister City Cooperation. The budget for implementing the Sister City Cooperation comes from allocating funds from local administrative councils and requires careful planning.

d. Covid-19 Pandemic

The latest obstacle experienced by this cooperation is the Covid-19 pandemic that has challenged how some of the Sister City Programs run. It is also because each region has focused on working in their respective countries to deal with the pandemic, prioritizing domestic health issues over other international matters.

3.3 Supporting Factors for Cooperation

Despite the constraints, this Sister City Cooperation continues to run until now and is considered one of the longest-lasting cooperations for both cities due to the many benefits obtained by the Special Region of Yogyakarta, such as improving cultural knowledge and increasing the number of foreign tourists, especially from Japan. In addition, many expert exchanges have been conducted in technology and education. Such initiatives have facilitated business and educational tourism opportunities to expand on visitor types and showcase other dimensions of relations.

Furthermore, Yogyakarta has a special fund that increases every year in anticipation of the budget in the cooperation. Special funds have been given to

Yogyakarta because of its privileged status in the administration of government affairs, where tourism is a strong socio-economic pillar. This Privilege Fund comes from the State Budget and has been given to the local government since 2013. Following Article 6 of Law No. 13 of 2012, this fund is used to fill positions, duties and authorities of governors and deputy governors for institutional, cultural, land, and spatial development. From 2013 to 2015, this privilege fund was most widely used for cultural programs to support one of the mission's aims to enhance cultural diplomacy and improve tourism competitiveness (Sakir & Mutiarin, 2015).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Yogyakarta and Kyoto have collaborated in the Sister City Agreement since 1985 very closely in cultural diplomacy arrangements such as tourism. This research reiterates the importance of growing closer ties between the two cities, given the importance of the tourism economy to wider socio-cultural and environmental implications. This research focuses on two aspects of the relations that mutually benefit Kyoto and Yogyakarta. In particular, creating a disaster risk management strategy, which includes creating an evacuation map and conserving buildings with wooden infrastructure with expert inputs, are valuable resources for tourism knowledge co-creation. In addition, the concept of cultural diplomacy has been utilized in the specifics of discussing tourism, in which Yogyakarta and Kyoto are closely working on cross-cultural and multilingual app development within the tourism sector. This collaboration has yielded positive results due to mutual interest in Sister Cities. Therefore, the recipe for success in cultural diplomacy stems from cooperation and sustained involvement among all actors and sectors to bring desired goals to fruition. These are likewise underpinned by supportive infrastructure, policy arrangements and funding mechanisms to enable Sister Cities to flourish.

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