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The construction of vocational education and training in hospitality for poverty alleviation in Sumba

This study focuses on hospitality education and poverty alleviation. Based on a case study of The Sumba Hospitality Foundation (SHF), this study aims to analyze the uniqueness of the hospitality education system. This study indicates that the Sumba Hospitality Foundation (SHF) construction of vocational education and training in hospitality can meet Local and Global Linkages to alleviate poverty. The students' education in SHF and during their internship in five-star hotels will empower them to develop their personalities as native Sumbanese and their professionalism in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Keywords: Vocational Education; Sumba; Local Global Learning; Sustainability; Poverty Alleviation

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Introduction

As promoted by international organizations (Abrassart and Wolter, 2019), vocational education is a powerful educational alternative to general education that would help overcome youth unemployment and skill mismatches on the labour market. Some researchers, such as Abdulkarim, Pantea, and others (Abdulkarim and Ali, 2012; Pantea, 2020; Nzonzo, 2017), showed that vocational education had an important role in supporting the increase in the social mobility of the people because it helped them to find better jobs and income or opportunities for a successful professional career. Thus, vocational education is one important factor in breaking the vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Vocational education is also an option for many young people in Indonesia to break poverty. This is indicated by the large number of vocational high schools in Indonesia, increasing year by year. In 2015, there were 12,696 vocational schools, and in 2019, that number jumped to 14,247 (basic data of the Vocational High School, Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). Compared to graduates of other vocational education, the number of graduates of vocational education in hospitality and tourism who work in the hospitality industry is still relatively low. Data from the Directorate of Vocational High School Development of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2017 showed that there were 82,171 graduates of vocational high school of tourism. Meanwhile, the workforce needs of 707,600 graduates of vocational high schools in the field of tourism. This means that the tourism industry still needs workers who graduated from vocational schools of hospitality and tourism. This is inseparable from the development of tourism as one of the world's strategic industries and the most effective sector to boost a country's foreign exchange.

The Indonesian Government had made considerable efforts to develop the tourism sector, including the tourism on Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara. Tourist destinations in Sumba, such as Weekuri Lagoon, Ratenggaro Village, Kampung Tarung, Tanggedu Waterfall,

Nihiwatu Beach, Wairinding Hill, etc., are favorite destinations for local, national, and international tourists. Sumba's riches, natural beauty, and cultural uniqueness have successfully grabbed local and international visitors' attention to indulge in and even hold tenures over the strategic lands around various tourist locations. The National Land Agency of Southwest Sumba in 2016 reported that many local people rented out and even sold their lands that were located along the coast to foreign investors. Michele et al. stated that, on average, the areas sold are those situated along the coastline. Nearly all coastal land pieces have been sold out to investors from abroad, mostly from France, the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands (Michelle and Settu, 2018). Such a condition leads to conflicts between the indigenous people and investors, as one recently taking place at Marosi Beach, West Sumba (BBC Indonesia, dated May 16, 2018). Tourism development that often triggers conflict cannot be separated from the social gap between investors and the people of Sumba. The data obtained from Statistics Indonesia in 2020 showed that the number of people living in poverty in East Nusa Tenggara Province was 1,146,320 people (Indonesian Central Board of Statistics, 2020). The province ranks third as the poorest province in Indonesia. This condition indicated that tourism has not been able to boost the welfare of the people.

Development of star-rated hotels and exclusive resorts along the coasts like Nihis Sumba Hotel (the best hotel in the world in 2016 and 2017 according to the travel + leisure magazine) and Rua Beach Resort Sumba, among others, is dominated by foreigners who speak foreign languages with foreign tourists in daily communication. The problem is that local staff members are of lower levels of knowledge and skills. Consequently, strategic occupational positions are largely held by outsiders, Indonesians, or foreigners. The low capability of local staff has made them unable to compete in an increasingly open and competitive job market. These problems encourage the Sumba Hospitality Foundation (SHF) to construct unique vocational education and training in hospitality to prepare professional

graduates in accordance with global demands. Thus, this research focuses on how the Sumba Hospitality Foundation constructs unique vocational education and training in hospitality for poor and vulnerable young people in Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia.

Educational Construction for Poverty Alleviation

Social inequality divides people into prosperity or destitution. This inequality is born from the people's inability to form a social network and structure to support them gain opportunities for their increased productivity. In this case, it can be interpreted that social poverty is the poverty caused by factors that inhibit an individual from making the best use of the existing opportunities.

Poverty characteristic indicates that poverty is a multidimensional manifestation of the problem (Cooper, 2008), as it constitutes the form of inability to access biological and basic needs as well as living standards set by the society socially, economically, politically, culturally, and in a variety of other manners. Poverty is associated with one's ability to access all facilities in place, particularly educational ones. Such a relationship between poverty and education is described by Stamboel (2012) as indicating that poverty hinders educational achievement at the macro and micro levels. At the macro level, poor economies generally have low enrolment rates, while at the micro-level, children of poor households tend to receive scarce education (Stamboel, 2012). In his book *The End of Poverty*, Jeffrey Sachs points out a mechanism that can be used in poverty alleviation, namely the development of human capital, especially in sectors of education and health (Sachs, 2005).

Education-mediated poverty alleviation is consistent with one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As conveyed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the SDGs were adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 (UNDP, 2020). As a follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs), the SDGs target Education for All (EFA). The SDGs of the 2030 agenda specifically ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The achievement of the SDGs targets in the educational sector is the government's responsibility and supported by other elements of society, and here is where the Sumba Hospitality Foundation feels the challenge to take part in the movement. The Sumba Hospitality Foundation seeks to construct a distinctive educational system to alleviate poverty by internationalizing the vocational education system.

Methodology

This research is a case study with a qualitative approach, which relies more on inductive logic. This means that the researcher was more concerned with understanding the subject's actions and knowledge development achieved and constructed throughout the research process. According to Yin, a case study is a method of researching a phenomenon focusing on a real-life context, a gap between the phenomenon and the existing context, or the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003).

It is insufficient that, Yin continues, a case study questions only the “what;” it should also ask the “how” and the “why.” The “what” seeks to gain descriptive knowledge, the “how” explanative knowledge, and the “why” explorative knowledge (Yin, 2003). Emphasis is placed on the “how” and the “why” as both questions are considered ideal for gaining an in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon studied. The questions selected will determine the strategies to be used to collect data (Yin, 2003).

Data collection was conducted by observation and in-depth interviews with administrators, director of education, teachers, students, graduates, and users of graduates from the Sumba Hospitality Foundation. Data collection was followed by data analysis. Miles and Huberman see analysis as three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data

display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The codes and coding technique utilized the case-oriented strategy referred to as ‘partial ordered displays’ to analyze the case study data. (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). This study uses manual coding techniques through inductive coding. The code identifies a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph important to the research. The following is an example of the process to develop code for analysis.

Table 1. Result research with Flate Coding Frame

Number	Thema	Code
1	Construction of vocational education and training through local values.	Sumba cultural values = SCV Sumbanese Traditional Building Design = STBD School with No Walls : SNW
2.	Construction of vocational education and training through global education	English Communication : EC International Volunteer (Teachers and students) : IV International Donations : ID
3.	Internship and work placement in 5 stars hotel in Bali and Sumba	Internship Program : IP Work Placement : WP

The thematic coding helps the researcher find themes in the text by analyzing the meaning of words and sentence structure. The nature of any relational thematic coding design is that it assists in the analysis process. Researchers make data-driven decisions using coding and qualitative data analysis processes. The applied codes enable a researcher to organise data, examine, and analyse them in a structured way.

Data analysis, results, and discussion

School with No Walls: Local and Global Linkages in Vocational Education for Poor and Vulnerable Students

The SHF's underprivileged students are high school graduates aged 17–23 years. While in previous years, the numbers of students admitted were fewer, the SHF admits students to fill 60 spots since 2018. In 2018, 800 applied, and in the following year, the number jumped to 1000. The students admitted are selected by the SHF administrators equally from four

regencies: East Sumba, Central Sumba, West Sumba, and Southwest Sumba, meaning that 10 to 15 students are chosen from each regency since 2016 to date. The SHF manager said, "Prospective students who will enroll in the SHF must first fill out the application. After that, there will be a written test, interview, and verification of prospective students to ensure that the students are from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds."

The SHF hosts select Sumbanese underprivileged youth to learn about hospitality, lifeskill, tourism, and environmental sustainability. This is in line with the concept of sustainability proposed by Pillai and Gupta, which described sustainability as a synergistic result of a combination of ecological sustainability, intergenerational justice, and human development (Pillai and Gupta, 2015). The students live in dormitories together with the administrators and local and international teachers. They live close to resort and learning facilities for more than one year.

The SHF classrooms adopted the open-air concept of the school of the universe under the Sumbanese traditional building design with thatched roofs and bamboo pillars. The idea behind such a construction design is that the school is built to a high quality in an affordable way for the underprivileged young people on Sumba. It breaks down the paradigm prevailing in the society that high-quality education always translates to high tuitions. Just the opposite, at the SHF, education of international quality is provided for underprivileged youth. The following is a photo of the SHF school that has no walls.



Figure 1. The SHF School with No Walls (2020)

The open-air school construction is created to match the Sumba Hospitality Foundation's vision that "genuine hospitality will take you to places you never imagined." Such a vision is presented on the SHF's website at <http://www.sumbahospitalityfoundation.org/>. An open-air campus illustrates the openness of education for all, especially the underprivileged. The SHF believes that all of the younger generation are entitled to the opportunities to develop and create better futures. Such a conviction is based on the grounds that the island houses a myriad of charms, has a unique culture, and rises as a local and international tourist destination.

The school building of bamboo, *alang-alang*, and similar materials consists of classrooms, students' boardings, teachers' resting rooms, administrators' office, administrators' pavilion, and kitchen. On July 16, 2018, the Sumba Hospitality Foundation opened Mariangi Eco Resort, which comprises five guest villas (Bamboe Pavilion), and Deluxe Room, which comprises four pavilions, along with pools in the open, restaurants, exquisite bars, and spas. The construction of the school building and supporting facilities are based on the green, eco-friendly concept.

Partnering with a Sumbanese woman, a Belgian of the same gender, developed an educational program on Sumba. This school's founding was underpinned by the concern with Sumba's conditions, an island blessed with unparalleled cultural and natural riches and rising in popularity among international and domestic tourists as a novel tourist destination in contrast to the high prevalence poverty of the inhabitants. The communities are not well-prepared. Tourism may serve as a solution to poverty alleviation if the communities are well-prepared to actively engage and benefit from tourism development in their region. This has triggered the spirits in them to construct a form of education that can reduce youth poverty on the island.

Founder and manager of the SHF built a local-global approach to developing vocational education and continuously dialogs with local and central governments in the development process. The local-global linkage education referred to is jointly constructed through hotel instruction that will produce those who can develop their personalities as Sumbanese natives who are always proud of their region and can develop their professionalism. This education concerns hospitality, English communication, interaction and communication with foreigners during the education, understanding of tourism knowledge, environmental sustainability through environment-friendly living habits, and permaculture farm training.

At first, the establishment of the school, along with the facilities, was self-funded. However, later, the education and school management funding has been sourced from a couple of entities: **first**, donations collected from the founder and a network of philanthropists; **second**, funds raised from parents in unburdening amounts as part of the parents' responsibility and pride to have been involved in their children's education funding; **third**, donations from local and international donators, who sponsor one student or more; and **fourth**, SHF's education funds raised by the SHF administrators from seminars and competitions. The SHF has applied such a vocational education funding mechanism from 2016 to date.

Internationalized Construction of Vocational Education and Training in Hospitality

Internationalization in the vocational education and training system, according to Tran and Dampsey, is a force that can render social changes (Tran and Dempsey, 2017), where students are expected to develop necessary skills, knowledge, and attributes in response to the new demands of the changing workplace context and global skills and knowledge mobility (Tran, 2013). Internationalization is a crucial response to the demands to develop graduates who possess adequate skills, knowledge, and attributes to engage and perform in a globalized and intercultural world (Tran and Dempsey, 2017).

Internationalization acts as a prominent agent of change in the hotel vocational education system, especially at the Sumba Hospitality Foundation, to cut off the chain of poverty and maintain the environmental and cultural preservation of the Sumbanese. The SHF students use English to communicate with teachers from Indonesia and foreign countries like Belgium, the Netherlands, England, Australia, Germany, the United States, and other countries during learning and practicing. The teachers take part in the learning through the SHF's recruitment system, that is, through the promotion run on social media and the official website of the SHF. Teacher composition includes permanent employees and volunteers. Fixed teachers are those who work under the contract system and receive salaries from the Sumba Hospitality Foundation. Meanwhile, volunteers teach and accompany the students through their practices voluntarily, most of whom are teachers, lecturers, pensioners, and interns from abroad.

The students and teachers effectively use English for communication during education and training. The students have their English proficiency enhanced, although when they started in the first couple of months, they still found communicating and learning in English hard. The following is the results of interviews with two of the students:

“When I started at the Sumba Hospitality Foundation, I was feeling self-conscious and nervous learning with foreign teachers because my English was not that good. But over the months studying here, I started to think that I would become a professional and be more confident in taking on new lessons” (interview with TS, 15 January 2020).

“At first it was extremely challenging to communicate with my foreign teachers because of my lacking English, but it is easy now that I have gotten used to communicating in English” (interview with K, 16 January 2020).

The students' English communication fluency was acquired from the routine instructional meetings and extra conversation class with teachers from abroad every Wednesday and Friday. Conversation classes are held in the evening. The school

administrators have the students take an English proficiency test to find out their English proficiency levels. The conversation classes are split into basic and advanced classes. The students also provide English communication training for the children living near the SHF location and interactive communication training for local people as part of their community services.

The education curriculum is focused on the hotel, tourism, and environmental sustainability education. The students learn for 17 months, ten of which at school and the remaining seven at some renowned hotels in Bali and the Nihi Sumba Hotel as interns. At the onset of the education at the SHF, the teachers first socialize the educational system and invite the students to construct their knowledge from their schooling and lives. After the initiation of the education, they start to receive education in the fields of their interests: restaurant and bar; housekeeping; front office; spa; and culinary/kitchen.

The students learn to construct themselves through their daily activities and life experiences. They learn to give meaning to the events and daily experiences they gain from their interactions with the teachers and others involved in the instructional process. Education becomes a process of experience reconstruction that takes place over and over. The students are taken to an exploration of personal interpretations to discover a more meaningful life. The students are motivated to understand and, at the same time, construct new meanings to their lives. They are to reconstruct the lessons they receive from the teachers continuously for their futures. They learn not only to reconstruct their lives as workers but also to "think as a manager or think as owner" to develop tourism and the environment sustainably on Sumba.

Internship and Work Placement

The students' instruction process is concluded with internship and work placement. Internship as a strategy of hospitality education and training is intended for the students to

develop their potentials actively and get closer to careers at five-star hotels in Sumba and Bali. The school will provide flight tickets and accommodations during the internship, while the internship site provides uniforms, meals, and training.

By the conclusion of the internship, the SHF students will receive evaluation and feedback from the institutions they serve as interns. The following is the result of the interview with the Public Relations of the Nihi Sumba Hotel related to the student interns at the hotel:

"Their overall performance is excellent, whether it is in terms of attitude or communication in English. The students from the SHF have outperformed students of other tourism schools. Perhaps you agree with me that the SHF students are far more matured and better in performance, and better in communicating in English. So, those who serve their internship here are very helpful, and many of those who have completed their trainings are hired here. We hire the best talents from the local community" (interview with PR, 17 January 2020).

The students must first finish their internship service before graduating and accepting job offerings. The SHF graduates are expected to have competencies according to their respective fields and be ready to work in national and international markets. The graduates will still get assistance from the SHF administrators to get their first job. This assistance will include information regarding local job opportunities, curriculum vitae, and interview preparation. Some SHF alumni, who are currently working at the Nihi Sumba Hotel, stated that they received assistance before finding jobs from the SHF administrator. The income they earn from their job at the hotel improves their family's economy and social status.

Discussion

The construction of unique vocational education of SHF seeks to link local and global needs. The vocational education process starts with the admission of students from low-income backgrounds. The learning process is conducted in an atmosphere that brings together local and global needs by involving domestic and international parties. Then, partnerships are

established with 5-star hotels in Bali and Sumba to allow alumni to do internships and work.

The following figure describes the learning process at the SHF.

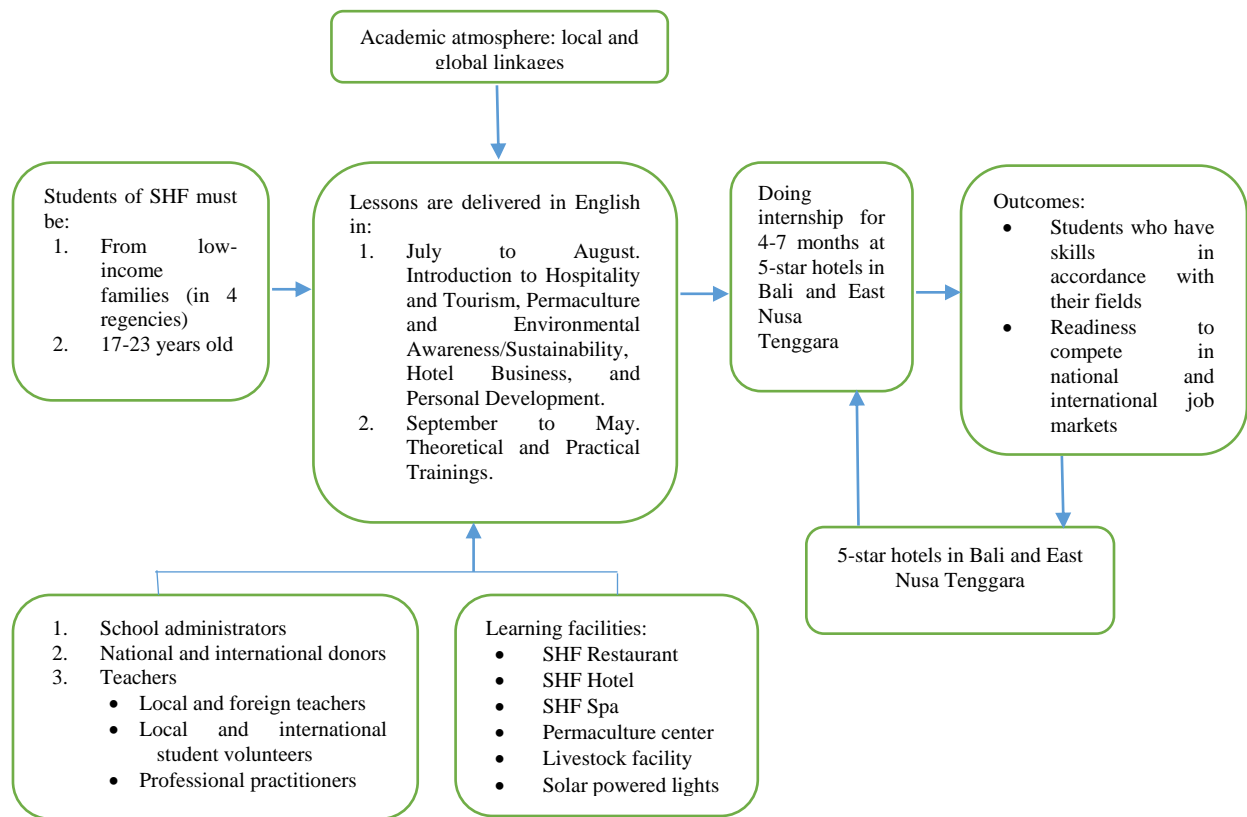


Figure 2. Learning Process at SHF: Local and Global Linkages

A learning process that integrates local and global needs, as stated by Hellsten, must be reciprocal and reflective as it facilitates cultural engagement and the development of a shared cultural understanding of the teaching staff and students. This learning process can be regarded as the principle and practice of an inclusive culture (Hellsten, 2008). Students learn a lot about other countries' cultures from their encounters with student volunteers, teachers, and school administrators who come from various other countries. Also, the practice of serving and communicating with hotel guests from other countries will enrich their work knowledge and practical skills. Learning situations like this bring the SHF alumni closer to the work reality in star-rated hotels.

The obstacles to this learning process were limited to the working period and limited involvement of foreign teachers at the SHF. Foreign teachers must obtain Social-Cultural Visa for educational purposes in Indonesia. They get an entry permit to provide education for 60 days (2 months), and the permit can be extended up to 180 days (5 months). Apart from Social-Cultural Visa, there are also administrators of the SHF who use Temporary Resident Visa. This condition affects the limited teaching period of foreign teachers so that at any time, there is always a turnover of foreign teachers because their visa validity period has expired. This situation demands continuous adjustments for all involved in the learning process because they have to readjust the vision and mission statements of education at the SHF, and it is certainly not easy.

Students and teachers who have different cultural backgrounds must adapt to each other. In short, the residence period of foreign teachers in Sumba is an obstacle in developing educational innovations and learning interactions. This becomes the main task for the vocational school management to manage foreign teachers so that they can synergize with each other and quickly adapt and interact with the culture of Sumba students, which are different from their culture and vice versa. So, the expectation is that the SHF graduates will have competencies following local and global needs and maintain sustainable tourism and the environment.

The covid 19 pandemics have caused Sumba Hospitality Foundation (SHF) administrators to seek funds and international volunteer teachers and students. Some donors have stopped assisting, some remain but reduce the amount, foreign volunteers cannot extend the contract, so they have to hire staff. The management needs to send students back to their homes. For that reason, the students have to study from home. As a form of responsibility, Sumba Hospitality Foundation managers must purchase credit and mobile phones for poor

students to support their study from home. This condition has led to more operational costs for the Sumba Hospitality Foundation.

Conclusions

The observation and in-depth interview results suggest the Sumba Hospitality Foundation's efforts in constructing a hotel vocational education system that can alleviate poverty. Poverty alleviation through vocational education is attempted equally for the underprivileged youth from Sumbanese regencies, namely, West Sumba, Southwest Sumba, Central Sumba, and East Sumba. The education funding involves numerous parties, from home and from abroad. The poverty alleviation among youth through education is aimed to tackle the problem of poverty and social inequality between the indigenous people and the managers and owners of the international hotels established along the coasts.

Educational construction is carried out using a local-global approach through hotel instruction that produces those who can develop their personalities as Sumbanese natives proud of their home island and have advanced professionalism. Effective communication in English is performed in daily activities in education and training under foreign and local teachers' guide.

The educational curriculum formulated to balance out some subjects covers a number of expertise with a focus on hotel, tourism, and environmental sustainability. The students are taken not only to construct their lives as employees but also to "think as a manager or think as owner" for the sustainable development of tourism and the environment on Sumba. The holistic knowledge delivered during the instruction and internship enables them to participate as agents of change and sustainable tourism on Sumba.

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