



## IMPACT OF COVID-19 SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS ON SEAFOOD CULINARY-BASED TOURISM INDUSTRY AT KAMPUNG SOLOR

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### ABSTRACT

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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has occurred in various sectors, one of which is the culinary industry. This study aims to identify the impact of COVID-19 social restrictions on the seafood-based tourism industry at the Solor Village Night Market. Using qualitative methods, research informants were selected by purposive sampling technique and resulted in as many as 24 culinary business unit owners becoming research participants. Data collection techniques were carried out starting from observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that: (1) COVID-19 social restrictions are implemented evenly throughout Indonesia, including in East Nusa Tenggara Province so that people are more active at home. (2) There are at least two

impacts of the pandemic that were felt for the culinary business unit managers at the Solor Village Night Market, namely the impact on the decline in income and the impact on job opportunities. (3) The impact of the COVID-19 social restrictions on the decrease in the income of the culinary business unit managers is influenced by several factors, such as the decline in people's purchasing power and the tendency of people to stay active at home so that economic activity is not optimal. (4) The impact of the pandemic on job opportunities was felt for the employees of the culinary business unit at the Pasar Malam Kampung Solor who rely on their daily wage income to support education, where as many as more than 50% of the employees were laid off. The next recommendation for business unit managers is to be able to use social media as an alternative promotion tool to maintain income in times of crisis.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; Culinary; Tourist; Social distancing; Business unit

### INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 was first identified in Wuhan City, China (Li et al., 2020), and it was reported that at the end of August, 2021, it had spread to 222 other countries in the world. This virus has infected about 202 million cases worldwide with a total death toll of 4.2 million. The number of increasing cases of Corona virus is influenced by the number of transmissions of transmission from sufferers to other healthy people so that it is increasingly spreading. This includes the State of Indonesia as the country with the fourth most population in the world (Combs,



2021). The very fast transmission of the Corona Virus has made the government set a social restriction policy for the Indonesian people known as Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) which aims to suppress the transmission of the corona virus (Nasruddin et al., 2020; Raditya, 2020; Ramalan, 2020).

The implementation of the PSBB policy is believed to be able to break the chain of transmission of COVID-19 by avoiding crowds of people and an appeal to stay at home during the pandemic. However, this policy has not been fully implemented by the community. One reason is because of economic incentives. Previous research also stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the lockdown policy, as well as the PSBB, as many as 50% of MSMEs went out of business, reduced labor, decreased exports and investment (Thaha, 2020). In addition, MSMEs also experienced a decline in turnover (Amri, 2020) due to the pandemic. More than 1.5 million workers were laid off and laid off, tourists canceled flights to Indonesia, and tourist arrivals decreased to 6,800 per day (Hanoatubun, 2020). This has caused the service sector affiliated with the tourism sector and its business units to experience the worst impact due to the pandemic.

The tourism industry in the Tourism Law Number 10 of 2009 is a collection of interrelated business organizations aimed at producing goods or services to meet the needs of tourists in the implementation of tourism such as travel agencies, transportation, accommodation services, creative industries, and the culinary industry. The implementation of social restrictions policies for people who are evenly distributed throughout Indonesia has disrupted one of the industries in the tourism sector, namely culinary. One of the tourism industries engaged in the culinary field is the Kampung Solor Night Market in Kupang City. Before the pandemic entered Indonesia in early 2020, this night market was always crowded with domestic and foreign tourists visiting Kupang City.

The main attraction at Pasar Malam Kampung Solor is fresh seafood served at affordable prices. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kampung Solor Night Market experienced a decrease in daily turnover and even a reduction in the workforce. One of the reasons for this is the implementation of various recommendations to maintain social distance (social restrictions) and an appeal to stay at home which causes the number of visitors who come to decrease.

As previously mentioned, previous research has explained the impact of COVID-19 on the Indonesian economic sector in general (Hanoatubun, 2020) and MSMEs in Indonesia in particular (Thaha, 2020; Amri, 2020; Hidayat, 2021). The culinary field is also affected, so it becomes an aspect that needs attention.

As one of the supporters of the tourism industry, culinary is an important thing that is part of the destination of tourists visiting (Zahrulianingdyah, 2018) and becomes a special attraction that influences tourists to visit an area. Therefore, this article seeks to identify the impact of the Covid-19 social restriction policy on tourism economic activity at the Solor Village Night Market which has been known as a culinary tourism destination in Kupang City. In addition, this research will also provide recommendations for tourism industry managers, especially in the culinary field, to be able to continue carrying out economic activities during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

## METHOD

This article is a type of field research that uses qualitative methods. Quoted in (Sugiyono, 2010) field research is research with the following techniques: 1. Observation; 2. Interviews or questionnaires regarding the current situation experienced by the research subjects. The subjects in this study were the owners of a culinary business unit operating in the Pasar Malam Kampung Solor with a total of 11 people selected through purposive sampling technique. Qualitative methods require an in-depth observation focus so that they can produce a comprehensive study. The types of data in this study are divided into two, namely qualitative data obtained from interviews with informants, and quantitative data obtained by considering the secondary data collection figures contained in the reports of culinary business unit owners. After all data has been collected and deemed sufficient to represent the situation of the Solor Village Night Market during the pandemic, this study conducted data analysis with the following techniques: 1. Data reduction, this technique aims to sort out the interview data obtained from research informants; 2. Presentation of data, this technique is done by compiling the results of data reduction based on patterns, thus facilitating data analysis and drawing conclusions; 3. Drawing conclusions, at this stage it is necessary to carry out an analysis in interpreting the meaning, explaining the findings, and detailing the findings that are not yet clear so that they are more detailed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **COVID-19 Social Restrictions Policy and Its Impact on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**

The COVID-19 social restriction is a government policy that aims to break the chain of the spread of the corona virus in Indonesia. This policy aims to limit the social movement of the community and is known by various names such as PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions), Transitional PSBB, Emergency PPKM (Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions), and four-level PPKM.

The implementation of the PSBB was first carried out in April in Jakarta, West Java, and Banten, including the Province of East Nusa Tenggara which followed this social restriction. At the very least, the implementation of PSBB has forced several sectors to cancel teaching and learning activities and work. In addition, there are also religious spaces, restrictions on activities in public places, restrictions on socio-cultural activities, restrictions on the number of passengers on public transportation, as well as various restrictions on other activities to maintain security. In this phase, MSME actors begin to feel the negative impact of the pandemic through the policies implemented. Especially in terms of decreasing turnover or income which tends to be obtained daily by MSME actors. In addition, the impact of the pandemic is also felt by MSME employees and people with low incomes. For example, for workers in the transportation service sector who claim to have difficulty getting passengers since the PSBB was implemented, people tend to spend their time at home to avoid transmission, making it difficult for workers in the public transportation sector to get passengers. Other sectors such as tourism services, for example, accommodation services and aviation services, experienced cancellations during the policy and resulted in layoffs. To a lesser extent, the

culinary industry is also experiencing the impact of COVID-19 social restrictions (Tokan, 2020; Widjaja, 2021).

The Kampung Solor Night Market, which is always open every day starting at 17.00 WITA until the early hours of the morning, experienced a drastic decline in sales, as a result, seafood that was not sold for consumption alone or even frozen in the refrigerator to be sold again the next day. Another impact occurred in the reduction of the workforce. The absence of visitors who come causes the income obtained is not optimal so that the local labor of the Kampung Solor Night Market has to be laid off until the situation returns to normal.

This condition will continue until June 2020 and September 2020 when PSBB begins to turn into a transitional period marked by a new normal life for the community. In this phase, the public will be allowed to carry out economic activities in business premises, buildings, and offices provided that they comply with health protocols. Specifically in NTT, Regent Regulation Number 36 of 2020 was issued on August 24, 2020, which discusses the Implementation and Law Enforcement of the Health Protocol for the Prevention of Corona Virus Disease 2019 in Kupang Regency. This regulation describes various community activities that are encouraged to continue to apply health protocols such as: learning activities, work activities in the workplace, religious activities in places of worship, activities in public facilities, activities in business places, activities in traditional markets, socio-cultural political activities and in public transport. In addition, strict health protocols are also implemented at various family events such as proposals, family gatherings, wedding receptions and thanksgiving. The condition of the Solor Village Night Market and other seafood culinary business units in Kupang City still feel that the COVID-19 social restriction policy has not been able to provide optimal economic benefits. This can be seen in the number of business unit owners who still close their businesses due to lack of capital to shop for necessities before resale.

### **The Economic Impact of COVID-19 Social Restrictions on Culinary-Based Business Units at the Solor Village Night Market**

#### **Overview of the Solor Village Night Market**

The Solor Village Night Market was opened in 2007 during the reign of the mayor, Drs. Daniel Adoe and located along Siliwangi Street to Garuda Street, Kampung Solor Village, Old City District, Kupang City. However, because it is on the main route, during the reign of the mayor, Jonas Salean, SH., M.Sc. In 2013 this night market was moved to Kosasi Street, Udayana Street, and Brawijaya Street, Kampung Solor Village, Kota Lama District, Kupang City. The Kampung Solor Night Market is a place in the form of several food stands that are open from 17.00-01.00 local time. The Kampung Solor Night Market has 24 business units that sell various food and beverage menus. The menu offered includes various types of seafood, such as grilled fish, fried fish, tamarind fish, grilled shrimp, stir-fried clams, grilled crab, lobster, squid, stir-fried vegetables, and other dishes. Not only seafood, this place also offers other menus such as various processed chicken meat, fried rice, meatballs, local salad, and others local dishes.

This place is the main recommendation for tourists visiting Kupang City. Especially for those who like seafood culinary as well as for tourists who are looking for halal culinary in Kupang City. The following photo attached is one of the

food stands at the Solor Village Night Market which is managed directly by the local community.



(Source: documentation,2021)

Picture 1. The culinary business units

### **Characteristics of Culinary Business Units at the Night Market of Kampung Solor**

The owners of the seafood culinary business unit at Pasar Malam come from various regions, not only from the City of Kupang, there are several owners of the culinary business unit from Flores, Rote, Java and Kalimantan. The owner of the culinary business unit depends entirely on the culinary business at the Solor Village Night Market. This effort is carried out to meet daily needs to send children to school.

In each culinary business unit, there are also employees who help the business unit owner serve visitors. The main characteristic of workers at the Kampung Solor Night Market is that they are around 17-20 years old. They are young people who come from around the night market. The task of this young employee is to help business unit owners to prepare menus, wash dishes, and prepare food with a daily wage payment system.

The management of the Solor Village Night Market is coordinated by an administrator who has been appointed based on a decree from the Mayor of Kupang whose task is to maintain the cleanliness and security of business activities at the Solor Village Night Market. Based on the results of observations, this study obtained informant data of 24 owners of seafood culinary business units at the Solor Village Night Market, Kupang City.

### **The Impact of COVID-19 Social Restrictions on the Culinary-Based Tourism Industry (MSMEs) Seafood at Kampung Solor Night Market**

#### **The Impact on the Decrease in Culinary Business Unit Income**

There are differences in the income received from culinary business units at the Kampung Solor Night Market. This makes the decrease in income the main impact resulting from social restrictions. Before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, the average income of the culinary business unit at the Night Market could reach IDR 2 million net from seafood sales profits. However, after the pandemic and social restrictions occurred, this amount decreased to a maximum of 1 million rupiah and an average of 300 thousand rupiah per day. As quoted in a fragment of

the results of an interview with one of the business unit managers at the Kampung Solor night market:

*"In this pandemic, income has decreased a lot because everyone is prohibited from going out to crowded places, so there are not enough visitors here, coupled with the strict implementation of the PSBB, there are also officers who are always around, so visitors are also afraid"*

The owner of the business unit admits that he is still grateful to receive some money to meet his daily needs. Especially in the initial phase of establishing the PSBB, the total income only reached 100 thousand rupiahs a day. The business unit owners always try to earn money alternatively by selling seafood online to customers who usually buy food at the Night Market and deliver it directly to the customers' homes. However, this is not done optimally because the majority of business unit owners are not active users of social media. So that business owners still hope that social restrictions can be relaxed and economic activity can resume with strict health protocols.

Another reason for the decline in the income of the culinary business unit at the Kampung Solor Night Market is the decreased purchasing power of visitors. The negative impact of the pandemic is felt equally in various sectors, especially in the services and services sector as well as people with low incomes. Previously, these people could at least buy food at the night market complete with drinks. However, since the pandemic occurred, people prefer alternative foods that are cheaper than fish, which tend to be more expensive. The decreased purchasing power of visitors is a follow-up effect of layoffs everywhere due to the pandemic. This is in accordance with a statement (Kurniawansyah et al., 2020) which says that the most obvious economic externalities from COVID-19 that are currently visible are the phenomenon of many employees being laid off, termination of employment (PHK) and various companies that are starting to go bankrupt. This situation automatically has an impact on other aspects, especially for freelance daily workers, MSME players, restaurant businesses, and community businesses that depend on mass crowds and tourist visits. This situation automatically also affects people's purchasing power which decreases significantly, whereby the circulation of money in society becomes very minimal, at the same time the production of goods is also very limited, resulting in a trade deficit in the economic cycle.

From this it can be concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative impact on business unit managers at the Kampung Solor Night Market. Traders experienced a decrease in income due to the implementation of the COVID-19 social restrictions and visitors' concerns about the spread of the virus which were the main factors in the decrease in the number of visits to the Night Market. Apart from that, the phenomenon of many employees being laid off, termination of employment (PHK) and businesses that went out of business during the pandemic also affected the decrease in consumers' purchasing power at the night market.

### **Impact on Employment Opportunities**

Before the pandemic, the existence of the Kampung Solor Night Market was very profitable for local culinary business unit managers. This is because geographically, this culinary tourism location is strategic, located in the center of Kupang City and close to the coast. Making it easier for various groups and

characteristics of tourists to come to visit at dinner. Services are carried out by business unit managers assisted by employees who are youths around the Kampung Solor Night Market.

The situation became different when the pandemic hit, based on the results of interviews with 24 informants who owned culinary business units, as many as 100% of managers admitted that they had laid off at least one employee to reduce daily expenses. Currently, the family of the owner of the culinary business unit is helping to provide services, so there is no need for daily wages as before. For example, several business units have started to be inactive in opening their culinary business due to limited capital so they are only open on Saturdays and Sundays or during holidays, when visitors are almost certain to come to shop. Of the 24 informants, 19 of them were still actively selling every day, while the rest only opened a culinary business when they had capital.

Several employees who were laid off or previously laid off were given a wage of 50 thousand rupiahs one day. The former employee of the culinary business unit admitted that the money was very useful in supporting his education and buying other school needs. Culinary business unit managers before the pandemic were able to pay wages to 1 to 3 employees. Some excerpts containing this information are attached as follows:

*"There are 3 people here who help one day, I give them Rp. 50,000. I know them because I live close by, so I can get a little, they say, it's good enough for snacks and buying books. Usually before the pandemic, I paid these workers Rp. 50,000 per day, but now that my income has decreased, I only give Rp. 40,000 per day."*

In contrast to the statement of one of these informants, another informant was forced to lay off his employees in order to survive in a very difficult situation during the pandemic, as he stated that:

*"I used to have 2 people who helped here but because my income has decreased so now they don't help anymore, we get less now so it's not enough if I have to pay more workers, now I sell myself with my husband who helps."*

Based on the interview excerpts, it can be seen that before the pandemic, the number of workers who depended on the culinary business unit at the Kampung Solor Night Market reached 60 people. However, this number decreased until more than half remained due to the fact that the majority of business unit managers chose to employ their families to reduce expenses. In addition, there are only 19 culinary business units that are still active in conducting culinary business to date from a total of 24 business units' informants. So, it can be said that the pandemic caused around 21% of business unit managers to experience business setbacks.

## CONCLUSIONS

The pandemic has impacted every layer of life, especially in the tourism service sector. The uncontrolled spread of the COVID-19 virus forces stakeholders to make social distancing decisions that are believed to be effective in reducing virus transmission. On the one hand, this method has resulted in a slowdown in the

spread of the virus, but on the other hand, people with daily incomes are increasingly having difficulty meeting their economic needs.

This research identifies the impact of imposing social restrictions on COVID-19 as a response to the pandemic and its relationship with one of the culinary-based tourism industries in East Nusa Tenggara Province, namely the Kampung Solor Night Market. Based on research results, the impact of COVID-19 social restrictions has made people reduce the intensity of their trips so that they do more activities at home. This is the main cause of culinary products at the Kampung Solor Night Market not being sold optimally. In addition, another impact is the loss of job opportunities due to decreased income for culinary business unit managers. Some of the things that contributed to the decline in business unit income were the low purchasing power of the people and the social restrictions that were continuously being extended. This has made several culinary business unit managers decide to reduce business intensity and even go out of business.

This raises a new direction for further research regarding efforts to restore the seafood culinary-based tourism industry for managers at the Kampung Solor Night Market. Culinary business unit managers have been able to get through the difficult times of COVID-19 by utilizing technology at hand to carry out promotions to previous customers and produce something good. However, due to limited knowledge and skills in using technology to carry out marketing, the income generated during the crisis was not optimal. Future research can analyze the technological readiness of the management of the culinary business unit at Kampung Solor Night Market so that they are ready to face crises in the future, so they can survive and do business in all situations.

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