



Rebranding “Nasi Uwet” as Pekalongan City Traditional Cuisine for Culinary Tourism as Part of Javanese Culture Maintenance

R.Aj.Atrinawati

Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang 50275, Indonesia
ninahartono61@gmail.com

Abstract. Using abundant but wasted raw material as a food source and processing it into decent meals is part of Javanese local wisdom to fulfil their daily need, save their environment, and earn money by selling the meal as a commercial product. This research shows how H. Zarkasi processes goat innard into delicious traditional cuisine and promotes it as a culinary tourism item of Pekalongan City. The research uses folklore field research to collect and analyse the data. The result shows that wasted raw material can be transformed into a profitable brand in culinary business and rebranding the product is needed to keep its sale. This research reflects the local people's cultural maintenance which saves their natural resources, supports their culinary business, and improves their economy.

Keywords: Rebranding, Traditional Cuisine, Culinary Tourism, Pekalongan City, Culture Maintenance

1 Introduction

Culture is defined by Tyler as a complete system of human beings' ideas, acts, and creations for their society [1]. As a creation, culture can be given, made, or imitated. People may practice their ancestors' culture, develop a new culture for their society, or adopt other societies' culture. One of the examples of creation is tradition. One of the examples of tradition is the way traditional cuisine is made and how people keep the recipe along with the way of cooking, serving and consuming it on particular occasions that were descended from their ancestors and passed down to the next generation.

Since culture can be defined as human beings' knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, capability, and habit [2], traditional cuisine belongs to culture as it reflects the knowledge of handling wasted raw material, the custom of utilizing it as a food source, the capability of processing it into decent meal, and the habit of consuming it in leisure time that leads to the development of culinary tourism.

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This research shows H. Zarkasi's knowledge of handling goat innard in a different way from commoners, the custom of utilizing it as a valuable food source, the capability of creatively processing it into delicious food named uwet, dan serving it in his food stall to develop the habit of consuming it as a commercial product that turns into traditional culinary tourism object. As a commercial product that has been established for years, rebranding is needed to preserve its existence as part of the culture and to keep its sale in the tourism business.

A culture consists of a "derivative of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individual of the population" [3]. The way people utilise wasted raw material as a food source and process it into a decent meal shows the way they experience a problem of abundant but unwanted food source, the way they solve the problem by developing a creative way to process it into a good and valuable meal, and the way they passed down this problem solving into their next generation. It should be maintained to keep with the benefit for the society. Otherwise, it can be left behind, only possessed by minorities, or taken by others since "political, economic and social changes might change people's attitude toward a culture that reduces its value, usage and respect" [4].

Preserving traditional cuisine, developing it as a culinary tourism object, and rebranding it to keep its existence and sale in the tourism business is one of the ways of maintaining culture. Branding a product means giving "name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of it, to identify the goods of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of competitors" [5]. The brand has already been established by giving a particular name for the well-processed wasted raw material along with its good image of the meal. Its existence shows its popularity as a preferred meal and its good sales as a culinary tourism product.

As the trend of culinary tourism changes, the business also changes. When people start looking for tasty, healthy, and modern culinary with the easiest way to purchase the product online, the established brand must adapt to the situation by rebranding their product to keep the old consumers' loyalty and to reach the new consumers. Rebranding a product does not always mean *giving a new name, symbol, or change in the design of an already-established brand*. It can also mean revitalizing the established brand that has lost its high value or is nearly forgotten by the consumers [6].

This research uses evolutionary rebranding [7] to create a new image and position of the established brand to build new and different positioning of the product for consumers and competitors. Therefore, the established product does not have a completely new name, symbol, or design, since it only has a new image and position as delicious but healthier traditional cuisine than a similar meal made of goat innard. The

dish can be enjoyed not only by senior citizens with their big families but also by the youth with their friends. Moreover, it can be served right on the consumers’ dining table by online order.

2 Methods

This research belongs to descriptive and qualitative research as it shows H. Zarkasi’s effort as local people to maintain the city’s culture by keeping the life of the traditional cuisine, preserving the environment by utilising goat innard as a beneficial food source and improving the economy by promoting *uwet* as a legendary traditional culinary object. “Nasi Uwet” H. Zarkasi food stall was chosen by using the Purposive Sampling Technique [8] by selecting food stalls with traditional cuisine made of wasted raw material that was established as Pekalongan City’s legendary traditional culinary tourism object. The data were obtained and analysed by using Dundes [9] two Folklore Methods, Identification and Interpretation.

The first method obtained data using the Documentation Method [10] Participatory Observation, Note-taking and Recording Techniques [11]. It is aimed at collecting complete information about the research object. The second method reflects the researcher’s interpretation of the obtained data reflecting a comprehensive explanation of the history, the ingredients, the way it is cooked, the way it is served or consumed, and the way it attracts people to taste it as a culinary product. The analysis is served in the form of a description of the researcher’s interpretation of the data.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Finding

Nasi Uwet H. Zarkasi is one of the legendary traditional cuisines from Pekalongan City. It is located in Sulawesi Street Number 25, Kergon Sub District, West Pekalongan District, Pekalongan City, Central Java Province. It opens daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and then starts to open again from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. It closes on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning to honour Friday as an Islamic holy day where Jumatan (Islamic praying for men) takes place in the morning. It also closes during Ramadhan month and opens again 7 (seven) days after Eid al Fitr or after Syawalan (Islamic local celebration of Syawal month).

Besides *uwet*, they also serve *megono* (a side dish made of young jackfruit), *garang asem* (a side dish made of beef flank and black nut as the main ingredient), side dish made of seasoned beef brain, knuckle or tongue, *japitan* (grilled seasoned beef chunk in bamboo clipper), beef *rendang* (spicy beef chunk), chicken *opor* (side dish made of chicken and egg with coconut milk and turmeric as main ingredient), boiled chicken

intestine *sate* dipped in *opor*, goat or chicken *sate*, and grilled or fried chicken. The price of a single *uwet* is 20.000 rupiah, while the price of other side dishes can be seen on the list of the menu.

H. Zarkasi starts to make and sell *nasi uwet* since 1955. His food stall was established in 1959. It was managed by him and his wife, Hj. Asidah. His wife passed away in 2001, and he passed away in 2010. Since then, the food stall has been run by five out of ten of their sons, helped by their daughters-in-law, as the second generation of the family. On the peak season, they can sell up to 200 *uwet* or 6kg of goat innard. The high demand for goat meat and dishes made of it is related to the culture of one of the city's residents.

Pekalongan is a city with Javanese, Chinese, and Arabic ethnicities. For the last ethnic, developing local goat farming is important to provide affordable goat meat for their need. Besides consuming dishes made of goat meat for their daily meal, they serve it in their celebration such as weddings, *aqiqah* (baby born celebration), or other Islamic celebrations. The goat meat is mainly processed as *sate* (grilled sticked meat chunks), *gule* (meat soup made of coconut milk and turmeric as the main ingredient), or *kambing guling* (roasted meat). The goat innard becomes the less preferred raw material that is not regarded as a premium food source since it is dirty, stinky and contains higher cholesterol levels than the meat.

Since the local people commonly process goat innard into *gule* using coconut milk which makes its cholesterol level rise, H. Zarkasi processes it in a different way to reduce its cholesterol level, to remove the dirt and the strong smell, and to make people enjoy the low price raw material in the form of a delicious dish. He processes goat innard into *uwet*, or *ulam wedus tulen* (Javanese), which means, a dish made fully from goat. It is done by thoroughly cleaning the innard and bonding small slices of goat lungs, tripe, and meat, tied to the goat intestine. It is cooked with onion, garlic, candlenuts, salt, sugar, pepper, and black soy ketchup, without coconut milk, turmeric, or lemongrass. The light soup of goat innard and meat is ready to serve with chopped tomatoes and small red chillies inside.



Fig. 1. Goat offal (1a) and *Uwet* (1b)

3.2 Discussion

Pekalongan City is known for its legendary traditional culinary tourism such as *soto tauto*, *garang asem*, *sego otot*, *sego megono*, and *sego uwet* as its best-seller traditional culinary. Most of them are using unwanted or wasted raw materials that is not mainly utilised as food sources with the best quality such as buffalo meat for *soto tauto*, young jackfruit as *megono* in *sego megono*, beef muscle as *otot* in *sego otot*, beef flank as *garang asem*, and goat innard as *uwet* in *sego uwet*.

The use of low-priced raw materials due to their less premium quality shows the local people’s smart idea of making use of available, abundant, but low-rated raw materials. It also reflects their creativity in processing raw material with particular characteristics that make it more difficult to process than the common raw material into a decent and delicious meal that can be enjoyed by commoners as a special dish.

The rising popularity of the dish leads to the idea of selling it as a commercial product to get financial benefit. When local people enjoy the dish in their leisure time and when people outside the city start to look for the dish while visiting the city, the dish turns into a culinary tourism product. The long life of the dish in the tourism business turns it into a legendary culinary tourism object that shares more benefits for the city’s environment, the local business, and the local government.

As traditional cuisine has already transformed into a culinary tourism product with economic value, it needs a more suitable brand to show its distinctive features than other similar products. When *soto auto*, *sego megono*, and *sego otot* have many brands since they are similarly provided by different sellers to fulfil the daily needs of the local people; *garang asem* and *sego uwet* have prominent brands because they have distinctive products. The products’ distinctive features make them different from other traditional cuisines and are preferred by local, regional, and international tourists during the weekend and holiday season.

Garang Asem Masduki is known for its difference from common *garang asem* in Java. It is not made of seasoned chicken that is wrapped with banana leaf and then steamed until it is cooked. It is made of beef flank that is boiled with black nut creating a beef black soup. Meanwhile, *Sego Uwet H. Zarkasi* is known for its different way of cooking goat innard than the common ones. The innard is not directly processed and it is not cooked with coconut milk to reduce its cholesterol level. It is thoroughly cleaned to remove the dirt and the *prengus* smell (particularly goat smell) and it is not cooked in single and different parts since *uwet* is made of small and thin slices of goat lungs, tripe, and meat that are neatly tied with intestine creating a bond of goat innard added with goat meat.

As the pandemic Covid-19 made *uwet* selling decline during and after the lockdown time, the flourishing online food delivery made the business suffer as more senior citizens as its loyal customers chose to stay at home, while the youth preferred modern food which is ordered online food delivery system. The brand needs to be revitalized to keep loyal customers and to reach new consumers. The revitalized rebranding is done

by creating social media promotion in the form of WhatsApp with its statuses showing the daily menu and Instagram with its reels and stories showing the same offers. Direct purchasing is added with online purchasing using the available platform showing the menus along with their prices.

To give new image and positioning, the social media post ads showing *uwet* as a legendary traditional cuisine that must be preserved as it is beneficial for the environment to make use of wasted material, it is good for the local people to keep their business, and it is profitable for the local government to add income from the tourism sector. To add more traditional flavour to the product, the name *nasi uwet* is slightly changed into *sego uwet* to resemble the name of *sego megono* as an old traditional cuisine and *sego otot* as a new one whose sales are rising due to their unique time selling in the midnight to serve the youth who love to stay up late at night and have a very late supper. The figure below shows the revitalizing rebranding result.

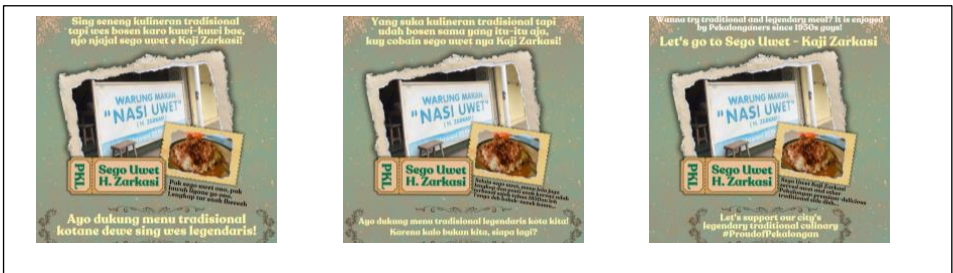


Fig. 2. Whatsapp (2. a), Instagram (2.b), and Social Media Ads (2.c)

4 Conclusion

From the findings and discussion, the researcher found out that H. Zarkasi as Pekalongan City local people shows his local wisdom as Javanese by making use of what common people do not prefer to use and turning it into valuable items which is beneficial for the environment, the people, and the city. Unlike Savitri's research on Tegal Regency's traditional cuisines showing old traditional cuisine that turned into modern one [12] or Atrinawati's research on Tegal Regency's traditional cuisine showing its modern promotion [13], this research shows the rebranding of old and legendary traditional cuisine whose selling is declining by giving new image and putting modern purchasing method. It is done to maintain the city's culture, preserve the city's environment, and support the city's business.

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