

Peer Review

Review of: "Kampung Pelangi Semarang: Its Success, Decline, and the Current Status of the Rainbow Village"

Muhammad Yamin¹

1. International Relations, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

Overview

This manuscript presents a comprehensive review of Kampung Pelangi Semarang (Rainbow Village), tracing its development as a slum revitalization project from its establishment in 2017 through its initial success, subsequent decline, and current status as of 2024. The authors have extensively compiled information from existing literature and complemented it with first-hand observations from site visits conducted in August 2024.

Strengths

1. Comprehensive documentation: The paper provides an exceptionally thorough historical account of Kampung Pelangi Semarang, drawing from multiple Indonesian-language sources that might otherwise be inaccessible to international readers.
2. Contextual framing: The authors effectively situate Kampung Pelangi within Indonesia's broader slum revitalization initiatives, administrative structures, and the national 100-0-100 movement.
3. Multi-dimensional analysis: The study examines physical transformations, socio-economic impacts, governance challenges, and cultural factors that contributed to both the success and decline of the initiative.
4. Visual documentation: The inclusion of recent photographs from 2024 provides valuable visual evidence of the current state of the village, including recent repainting efforts.
5. Comparative perspective: The comparison with other rainbow villages across Indonesia helps readers understand what made Kampung Pelangi Semarang distinctive.

Weaknesses

1. Structural redundancy: There is significant repetition of information across multiple sections, particularly regarding the formation and conflicts within Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group). A more streamlined organization would improve readability.
2. Analytical depth: While the paper excels at documentation, it could benefit from more critical analysis of the underlying socio-political dynamics that led to the project's decline. The "internal conflicts" of Pokdarwis are mentioned repeatedly but insufficiently explained.
3. Theoretical framing: The paper would benefit from a stronger theoretical framework. Concepts like "place identity," "participatory art," and "sustainable tourism" are mentioned but not systematically integrated into the analysis.
4. Methodological limitations: The authors should more explicitly discuss the limitations of their approach, particularly regarding the site visits. How many days were spent in the village? How many (if any) interviews were conducted in 2024? How was observational data systematically recorded?
5. Policy implications: The conclusion section is relatively brief and could be expanded to offer more concrete recommendations for policymakers and urban planners seeking to replicate or improve upon the Kampung Pelangi model.

Specific Comments by Section

Abstract

Well-structured and informative but could more clearly state the paper's original contribution to the literature.

Introduction

- Provides good context but could more explicitly state the knowledge gap being addressed.
- The research questions or objectives could be more clearly articulated.

Backgrounds and Rainbow Village (Section 2)

- The subsections on administrative divisions and slums in Indonesia are informative but perhaps too detailed for international readers.
- The characterization of Rainbow Villages (Section 2.4) is a valuable conceptual contribution that should be highlighted more prominently.

Kampung Pelangi Semarang: Overview (Section 3)

- The detailed information on location and demographics is useful, but some tables (particularly Table 4 on age-specific population) contain more detail than necessary.
- Structural and non-structural measures are well-documented, though the distinction between them could be clarified earlier.

Kampung Pelangi Semarang: Its Success and Recline (Section 4)

- This section contains the most valuable analytical material but also the most redundancy.
- The analysis of social media's role in promoting the village is insightful but could be strengthened with more specific data (e.g., hashtag analysis, visitor surveys).
- The discussion of Pokdarwis's internal conflicts should go beyond stating that conflicts occurred to analyze why they occurred.

Kampung Pelangi Semarang: Current Status and Future Possibilities (Section 5)

- The current status assessment is valuable but could benefit from more systematic observation criteria.
- The future challenges section provides good insights but could be expanded to include more specific recommendations.

Conclusions

- Concise but could more clearly articulate the paper's contribution to urban studies, tourism research, or development literature.
- The brief mention of future research directions could be expanded.

Technical and Editorial Suggestions

1. Tables and Figures: Some tables contain excessive detail that interrupts the flow of the narrative. Consider simplifying Tables 4 and 5.
2. Citations: The reference style is inconsistent in places. Some Indonesian sources are cited with first names, others with surnames only.
3. Terminology: Some technical terms (e.g., "blusukan", "participatory art") could benefit from more consistent definition when first introduced.
4. Language and flow: While generally well-written, some sentences are overly complex. Breaking these into shorter sentences would improve readability.

5. Figure quality: Some figures (particularly maps) could be improved with higher resolution and clearer labeling for international readers unfamiliar with Indonesian geography.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This manuscript presents a valuable and comprehensive account of an important case study in urban revitalization and tourism development. With revisions to address structural redundancy, deepen analytical perspectives, and strengthen theoretical connections, it would make a significant contribution to the literature.

Recommendation: Accept with major revisions.

The authors should:

1. Reorganize the paper to reduce redundancy
2. Deepen the analysis of governance failures and socio-political factors
3. Strengthen the theoretical framing
4. Clarify methodological approaches and limitations
5. Expand policy implications and recommendations
6. Address technical and editorial issues noted above

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.