

## The Street Clowns in Banjarmasin City as a Life Survival Strategy

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### Abstrak

Permasalahan perekonomian di masa pandemi Covid-19 menjadi satu polemik yang berkepanjangan. Hilangnya pekerjaan dan tuntutan pemenuhan kebutuhan harian menjadi fokus permasalahan perekonomian tersebut. Masyarakat dituntut untuk berpikir dan bereaksi terhadap kondisi tersebut untuk bertahan hidup. Artikel ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan satu strategi bertahan hidup dengan cara menjadi badut jalanan. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan secara komprehensif. Data penelitian dianalisis dengan teknik analisis data Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menguraikan bahwa faktor pendorong menjadi badut jalanan adalah tuntutan pemenuhan kebutuhan hidup. Perihal ini bermakna bahwa permasalahan ekonomi menjadi permasalahan utama sehingga pelaku memilih menjadi badut jalanan. Badut jalanan di Banjarmasin menjadi pilihan pekerjaan yang digandrungi oleh masyarakat menengah ke bawah. Dalam mendapatkan pekerjaan ini diperlukan hubungan pertemanan (networking). Di samping itu, diperlukan pembiasaan diri untuk hidup berhemat karena pendapatan tidak pasti setiap harinya.

**Kata Kunci:** Permasalahan Perekonomian, Strategi Bertahan Hidup, dan Badut Jalanan.

### Abstract

Economic problems during the Covid-19 pandemic became a long polemic. Job losses and demands for the fulfillment of daily needs are the focus of these economic problems. People are required to think and react to these conditions to survive. This article aims to describe a survival strategy by becoming a street clown. A qualitative approach with descriptive methods is used to describe comprehensively. The research data were analyzed using data analysis techniques Miles and Huberman. The study results indicate that the driving factor for becoming a street clown is the demand for life necessities. This matter means that economic problems are the main problem, so that the perpetrators choose to become street clowns. Street clowns in Banjarmasin are a preferred choice of work for the lower middle class. Getting this job requires networking. Also, it is necessary to familiarize oneself with frugality because income is uncertain every day.

**Keywords:** Economic Problems, Survival Life Strategies, and Street Clowns.

## **PRELIMINARY**

The conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic have also had an impact on the economy of the community. This condition causes a decrease in income, some even have to lose their jobs, so they have to find other alternatives to fulfill their daily needs. For example, economic problems become a factor for finding alternative ways of working on getting out of the poverty zone (Prasetyo, 2017; Mulyanto, 2005).

Nowadays, the phenomenon of street clowns is starting to be found on the streets. This condition is a new reality as a result of economic conditions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As previous research by Shaleh described that during the Covid 19 pandemic, there were street clowns in Medan who were children aged 6-8 years. Children who work on the streets as “clowns” are willing to rent clown clothes and equipment with rental rates ranging from Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 80,000 according to the size of the costume being rented. In fact, to cover the cost of renting costumes, these early childhood children work in the clusters until night (Assingily, 2020; Abbas & Erlyani, 2020).

Someone who chooses the profession as a street clown cannot keep up with the changing roles in developing the economy. Someone who can act like that is called a clown, unlike the clown costume, which is a manifestation and development of the clown profession. Everything, both the behavior and character of a complete outfit, is made to resemble a clown (with a big belly, big head, bright, colorful clothes), so it is called a clown costume (Prasetyo, 2017).

The rise of street clowns is found not only in Java but also in the city of Banjarmasin. Initially, street clowns were only used as a temporary entertainment service for children with birthdays in homes, buildings, and city parks, but now street clowns are jobs. Nowadays, it is no longer a job to entertain children's birthday services. Still, it has become a job to capture moments when people visit tourist attractions, one of which is in Banjarmasin. With this condition, street clowns are a phenomenon that appears in certain conditions closely related to the community's economic conditions (Sitompul, 2017). In particular, this article aims to describe the street clowns in the city of Banjarmasin as a survival life strategy.

## **METHOD**

A qualitative approach with descriptive methods is used to describe street clowns in Banjarmasin City. The qualitative approach is understood as a structured procedure by collecting oral and written data in the form of subjects and observed behavior (Emzir, 2010; Sugiyono, 2016; Abbas, 2020a). Based on the qualitative tradition, researchers do not change the natural setting in which they are researched. The data collection technique was carried out with three activities, namely; 1) observation at the intersection of Jalan S. Parman and along

the Brigjend H. Hasan Basry street, 2) structured interviews with research subjects (street clowns), and 3) Documentation related to street clown activities. Data analysis techniques Miles and Huberman used in the research, including 1) reduction of interview data, 2) presentation of data in narrative text, and concluding research results (Sarwono, 2006; Saebani, 2009; Abbas, 2020b). Increasing the validity of research data was carried out using triangulation and extension of observations.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Coronavirus has been present in the community since 2020. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is clear that the Coronavirus is a virus that can cause infection of the human respiratory system. This virus infection is known as covid 19. This virus can be transmitted quickly, so that it has spread to various countries, including Indonesia (Sumarni, 2020).

Currently, the Covid 19 pandemic is a problem that is the main focus of a country. Likewise, in Indonesia. This is because various impacts are resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic. These impacts are not only in terms of public health but also in the economic sector of a country. Currently, the economy has been under heavy pressure with the presence of Coronavirus. When this happens, it will impact economic stability so that it will also have an impact on people's lives in the economic sector. These sectors include mining, trade, industry, construction, hotels and restaurants, and the service sector.

The loss of jobs due to layoffs and decreased sales turnover is a reality that some people feel is affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. With these conditions, they find it difficult to earn income and survive because every day, there are basic needs that must be met. Everyone must be wise in doing everything. Even though the government has issued social assistance (Social Assistance) for residents affected by this pandemic, it is still not sufficient, and not everyone gets it.

The presence of clowns on the streets is a reality in society, which illustrates how people with middle and lower economic conditions must react to economic demands during a pandemic to survive. Street clowns are a manifestation of their freedom to fulfill their daily needs in implementing survival strategies. Freedom as self-fulfillment implies an idea that gives freedom to a person to develop all his potentials. Here there are two things, namely human nature and the provision of the means to develop each of these potentials (Hayat, 2012; Khomsan, 2015). A person who works as a street clown must wear a costume so that the public does not see that he has problems in the necessities of life as a human.

Choosing to work as a street clown is their strategy for survival. The strategy is a skill that a person carries out through job expertise following the abilities and skills. Being a street clown is not required to have special skills and more than other people, but it emphasizes the skill aspect by bringing up various ideas to attract street clown lovers and visitors (Ancok, 2003). The driving factor that causes a person to choose to work as a clown to survive is economic needs and seeking experience.

The presence of street clowns can be found in Banjarmasin City. As written on the Banjarmasin Post page, Rehan is willing to become a street clown to entertain passers-by. The action he did was to get money to help meet the family's food needs. Every day, Rehan must wake up early in the morning before sunrise and prepare to become a clown in Banjarmasin City. According to Rehan's confession, his decision to become a street clown was based on economic motives to fulfill his daily needs. He revealed that in a day, the income he earned was around Rp. 35.000,00- to Rp. 40.000,00-. His income was not entirely for himself. He has to set aside 30 percent to pay the rent for the clown costume. The father of two children admits that he stays for 12 hours every day. From 9 am to 9 pm. Raihan usually performs his actions at the traffic light junction of Jalan Cemara. He admits that he does this job for the short term. His business as a *pentol* (meatball) seller has fallen sharply due to the Covid-19 pandemic, making him change jobs (Source, Banjarmasin Post, 2021).

**Picture 1. Rehan in action as a clown.**



Source: Secondary Data, Banjarmasin Post (2021)

Based on the identification results, the main factor they chose to work as a clown was factors of economic needs; Humans are economic beings because humans cannot be separated from the needs of their lives and their families, both primary and secondary needs (Modjo, 2020; Livana, 2020). The more advanced the times, the more necessities of life and the more

alternative jobs that have sprung up, for example, street clowns. Initially, street clowns were only used as a temporary entertainment service for birthday children in homes, buildings, and city parks. Still, now street clowns have become permanent jobs for some people. It is no longer a job to entertain children's birthday services, but it has become a job to capture moments when people visit tourist attractions, one of which is in the city of Banjarmasin. Becoming a street clown is a sensible (logical) choice from the various job options that exist so far. Of the various informants interviewed, some of these street clown jobs are used as permanent jobs, and some just side jobs. In essence, those who work as street clowns do this job to make ends meet.

Even so, being a street clown also has problems in various ways, including weather factors, government regulations, and road users. The unpredictable weather factor in the city of Banjarmasin makes the weather one of the main factors inhibiting street clowns' work. Sometimes when the weather is normal, suddenly the rain comes pouring down. This is what makes street clowns stop doing their activities on the streets to entertain road users. This condition significantly affects the income level of street clowns in Banjarmasin. As the results of research by Zhafril (2015), "The Angklung Singer Group's Life Survival Strategy (A Study on the Angklung Singer Group in Malioboro Yogyakarta)" also revealed the same thing.

The role of government. A person who becomes a street clown in the city of Banjarmasin must be brave with government officials as the enforcer of urban spatial order. Even though no government regulation regulates whether street clowns are allowed or not to operate in the city of Banjarmasin, they are still worried about implementing local regulations that regulate them in making a living. The regional regulation in question is not a regulation regarding freedom to carry out activities, but a government regulation for order enforcement officers in the Banjarmasin city area regarding an area free from all activities that can disturb the city's beauty of Banjarmasin. Thus, it can be said that choosing a job as a clown is an option for them to survive amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Economic demands for their daily needs require them to think and be creative to earn money through work as clowns.

## **CONCLUSION**

The condition of the Covid 19 pandemic does not only affect the disruption of public health conditions. However, it also causes economic instability in a country, even on a global scale. With these conditions, a response from the community is needed to survive amid economic conditions in the era of the Covid 19 pandemic. Choosing a job as a street clown is a fact that has occurred in Banjarmasin City as a form of survival strategy for people with lower economic levels to be able to meet daily needs. The driving factor for becoming a street clown is to fulfill economic needs. Meanwhile, the first inhibiting factors for street clowns are the

weather and government regulations. To support his work as a street clown, clown actors have networking. The ability to live frugally is one way they can manage uncertain opinions daily.

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