The "Noble" Impacts of Mass Tourism on Bali Island: A Local Prospective

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Abstract

This study explores the impacts of mass tourism on the culture, social, environmental and economic of Bali islanders, Indonesia. A total of 20 in-depth interviews of local Balinese who residing in Bali island was conducted between the period of May13 – 18, 2018. Judgemental sampling was used based on stringent criteria of "localness" and demographic diversity. Interview questions were developed on the basis of openness in exploring thoughts and perception towards mass tourism and its impacts to the livelihood of the Balinese islanders. Thematic analysis was used in analysis the data and 4 themes emerged as the results of the study: 1) Economic opportunities, 2) Spill over effects from foreign competitions, 3) Bearable cost of living and 4) Safer Environment. Findings suggested that the sampled respondents did not show significant concerns over the effect of mass tourism. In contrast, the respondents show substantial degree of likeness and supports towards high influx of tourists. Findings seem to contradict to the past studies suggesting mainly negative impacts to the local community however, it was different here in Bali island. The increase of mass tourism had brought more benefits than harm was the overall perceptions gathered from the study. These benefits include the economic expansions, job opportunities, spillover of business opportunities, and improving safety and security.

Keywords: Mass Tourism, Bali Tourism, Tourism Policy, Sustainable Tourism, Destination Management.

1   INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, tourist arrival in Southeast Asia has experienced a rapid growth from 21.2 million in 1990 to 129.2 million in 2018 (UNWTO, 2018). Solely, in Bali, Indonesia in which one of the most popular destination in Southeast Asia, the international tourist arrivals reported in 2018 has reached 6.5 million (Gapura Bali, 2019) with the main markets covering Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, UK, USA, German as well as France. Indonesia's tourism eagerly aims to double the amount of tourist arrival by 2020, where government has acted to realize the goal by creating visa exemption for 30 countries, including China, USA and Germany (Chin, Haddock-Fraser & Hampton, 2017). The visa exemptions and the competitive nature of tour businesses in Bali island have enormously fueled the influx of massive arrivals which particularly in groups have created a whole new phenomena of mass tourism activities. The phenomena of having huge arrivals which naturally demand for massive tour activities not only in the form of accommodations, food, and transportations but also widening tourism alternatives in diverting the crowd. With the presence of mass tourism, both positive and negative issues derived from the tourists' activities inevitably bring impacts to the local communities in many aspects (Saufi, O'Briens & Wilkins, 2014). It is undeniable, as once a community becomes tourists' destination, the lives of community will become affected by the tourism activities (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2012).

The mass tourism in Bali has caused some serious damage to the island (Phillip, 2012). The booming of mass tourism in Bali has led to the traffic issues, changing the agriculture of the land, wastage as well as exceeding the carrying capacity (Chin, Haddock-Fraser &

Hampton, 2017). There were numbers of researches (Gursoy, Chi & Dyer, 2010; Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2013; Lee and Syah, 2018) have discussed the issues of mass tourism and ways to sustain and administer mass tourism in a more effective manner. However, these studies mainly focused on the agricultural, economic and environmental aspects of tourism while the social aspects of the community were still lacking (McCabe, 2018). Moreover, some of the similar studies (Saufi, O'Brien, & Wilkins, 2013; Latkova & Vogt, 2011) only limited to the respondents who are the operators the tourism-related activities rather than the destination communities. As such, this study seeks to close the gap of the existing findings of mass tourism impacts in specific to Bali Island by extending the enquiries to the local community and hoping that their voices can be channeled to policy makers, visitors and tourism operators to always prioritize locals' well-being by minimizing the negative impacts derived from mass tourism. Hence, the first objective of study was to explore Balinese community's point of views with regards to impacts of mass tourism both positive and negative aspects. Second, to understand the consequences of those impacts highlighted by the locals and recommend possible initiatives to reduce and prevent the mushrooming effects of those impacts.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Past Studies on Mass Tourism

Mass tourism was started in the second half of 19th century in England. According to Sezgin and Yolal (2012), there are three factors that contributed in development of mass tourism in the world, technology, production and management. The studies of Choi and Murray (2010) in New Braunfels located in Southwest Texas and Prendergast, Lam and Ki (2016) in Hong Kong found that negative impacts that were being experienced by the locals, like increasing crime rate, overcrowded that lead to heavy traffics, noise and loss of locals' identities would subsequently diminish the locals' support toward tourism. Meanwhile, Nelson (2014) focused on the negative impacts on the commoditization issue in Central America and the Caribbean. Apart from that, negative impact from socio-cultural also included the cultural dilution (Altinay et al., 2007). They found in their study in Jamaica that cultural dilution is inevitable due to the influences that tourists bring in to the destination (Altinay et al., 2007). Whereas, in fact Mason (2015) mentioned that in sustainable development, there should be a strategy to minimize the impacts and foster preservation on cultural aspects in order to maintain and strengthen community identity. The study of Badulescu, Badulescu and Bac (2015) in India and Romania found that those two different countries are facing similar challenges in dealing the impacts of mass tourism, especially in the economic aspect.

Besides, community's perception towards tourism activities also gained much attention. Referring to the recent study of Lai and Hitchcock (2016) who were investigating the residents' attitude toward mass tourism and its development in Macau. Meanwhile, Kim, Uysal and Sirgy (2012) studied on theoretical model that connect local's perceptions of tourism impacts and their overall satisfaction on tourism development. Saufi, O'Brien and Wilkins (2014) focused on investigating the locals' perceptions that inhibit their participation in tourism development in Lombok, Indonesia. It is inevitable that local community hold a significant role and demanded to be respected in term of their perception to establish and preserving a harmonious tourism destination. Subsequently, Sutawa's (2012) research in Bali indicated that community empowerment in tourism is the main key to develop community's welfares as well as to sustain and maintain sustainable tourism development. Interestingly, the paper of Sarker (2016) in Bangladesh, found that the benefits from mass tourism did not outweigh the costs due to inaccurate government intervention in terms of policies and regulations. The risks like water scarcity is one of them whereby it created a conflict between tourists and locals to fight

over safe and consumable water, which was happening in mass tourism destinations all over the globe, like in Coastal Mediterranean Spain (Rico-Amoros, Sauri, Olcina-Cantos & Vera-Rebollo, 2011), Bali (Cole, 2013), Bangladesh (Sarker, 2016). The water scarcity conflict was reported to be intense due to the high consumption of water from the hotel industry, especially those luxury hotels with 4 to 5 star-rated (Gabarda-Mallorquí, Garcia & Ribas, 2017).

2.2 Issues of Mass Tourism in Bali Island

2.2.1 Economic Leakage

It was estimated that 85% of the Bali's tourism economy is in the hands of non-Balinese (MacRae, 2010). Economic Leakage has been known as one of the negative impacts of tourism. Suryawardani et al.'s (2013) study discuss on the leakage based on the findings from 63 hotels in Bali province. Based on the calculation, the percentage of tourism leakage of a hotel was 49.25 %. The study indicates that the higher the level of hotel classification and accommodations that are owned by foreigners will have more leakage. The more leakage, the less revenue from tourism received directly by the hotel and indirectly by the local community.

2.2.2 Environmental Issues

Hundreds of hotels in Bali absorb huge amount of fresh water. For the past 10 years, the water tables across Bali have dropped up to 50 meters and 60% of its watersheds are declared dry (Wright, 2016). Horwath HTL (2015) found that the water consumption in Bali island has increased from around 6.3m³ to 9m³ per guest, that signifies a concerning increase of 43%, also Bali has faced phase of drought since 2015 which might worsen the water shortages issue. It is expected that by 2025, Bali will have serious water crisis when there are no priorities made for water management as Bali's population is expected to increase by at least 32% to over four million (Cole, 2015). Besides, the Bali government is also struggling in managing waste left behind by the mass tourism (Daily Telegraph, 2015). At least 20.000 m³ rubbish left behind by tourist around the most populated tourist area in Bali.

2.2.3 Tourist Misbehavior

Balinese are deeply attached to the religion and culture. However, mass tourism disrupts and disrespects the local Balinese cultural practices. One of the examples is that a tourist used Polynesian practices while giving out garland of flowers to new arrivals as they thought it was a Balinese custom (Philip, 2017). Also, Iverson (2010) found that the many locals have criticized about tourists who acted inappropriately and did not abide to their temple's etiquette. Moreover, another example of tourist misbehavior found on last March 2017, a foreign tourist from German has been thrown into Bali's prison for the assault of a man near Kuta nightclub that resulted in death (Tribun Bali, 2017). A Russian woman was found to use drugs in Kuta area, and a guy from Ireland was arrested for stealing motorcycle (Tribun Bali, 2017).

2.2.4 Land Constraint

According to Sutawa (2012) there are six areas in Bali that running under land deficit, Gianyar, Denpasar, Badung, Tabanan, Jembrana and Buleleng. Due to the land constraints issue, there are a lot of Hotels and Villas in Bali are only completed with leasehold certificate for a period of 30 – 50 years (Beritasatu, 2014). The struggle of land constraints is not only a great concern to existing businesses but also future investors and the city planners of the Bali Island. The government is struggling to get land space in improving the infrastructure development which are urgently needed such as the road widening projects, bigger airports and connecting road systems to other destinations outside from Denpasar (Balitribunnews, 2015).

2.2.5 Safety and Security

With the bombings happened in 2002 and 2005, the number of foreign tourists visiting to Bali have dropped by 57% and the average hotel occupancies stood at 18% in those years. Moreover, for the crime rate in Bali based on the official crime statistics of Bali Provincial 2015, the total amount of criminal act recorded was 7.164 cases. In 2015, the case of drugs was found as the most prominent crime recorded as many as 546 cases, followed by 453 thievery cases (BPS Bali, 2015). Such incidents would cause significant harm to Bali's destination image. Any negative nuisance related to safety and security of a destination may greatly impact the tourist arrival of a destination (Barker & Page, 2002).

2.3   Research Gaps

Despite the significant interpretations of the effects of mass tourism by the past studies, however the findings and discussions were mainly revolving the negative impacts of mass tourism (Chong & Lai, 2016; Choi and Murray, 2010; Lam and Ki, 2016; Nelson, 2014; and Chong, 2020). Hence, little understanding on positive impacts of mass tourism especially towards the host community. The significant implications of this study are 1) to close the gap of the current literature on impact studies of mass tourism and 2) to provide dual-perspectives of mass tourism both on negative and positive contributions towards the host community which helps to enhance the current Bali Island's tourism sustainable development plan.

3.0   METHOD

3.1   Research Approach

This is an exploratory research on understanding the impacts of mass tourism towards the Balinese community. Qualitative approach is being chosen over quantitative, as qualitative research aims to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of human experiences through intensive study of certain cases (Polit & Beck 2010). It also concerns more on delivering wider ideas against "seeing what you are already believing" possibility of semi-structured empirical work that result in richer and stronger conceptualization (Doz, 2011). On the other hand, quantitative method that concerns more on numerical data, which may only result in encapsulating the tangible and visible aspects of the phenomenon (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). Respectively with the objectives that aim to fully explore the impacts of mass tourism towards Balinese community in a wider lens and the sustainability visions of tourism industry in Bali. Hence, qualitative research that is believed to provide bigger lenses of real phenomena and stimulate deeper thought was being chosen (Weick, 2007). Case studies will be incorporated in this study, as it excels in providing robust experience that might not be possible to achieve through other kind of experimentation (Schell, 1992; Soy, 1997; Zainal, 2007) and Researcher Robert K. Yin has defined case study research as an attempt to investigate contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2013).

3.2   Data Collection - Interviews

Through in-depth interview, the study able to know and understand the local Balinese point of views and ideas clearly (Sachan, Singh & Sachan, 2012). Interview questionnaires were designed purposefully in exploring local's perspectives and opinions towards the issues of mass tourism without limiting their expressions through open-ended questions. Typology interviewing style were used during the interview process where the interviewer has to maintain the flow of the interviewee's story, keep the positive relationship with the interviewee as well as avoid the bias throughout the interview process (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

20 Balinese locals were purposively sampled for 5 sessions of semi-structured interview (refer to Table 1). The interview questions were formulated to explore areas pertaining to opportunities and challenges resulted from Mass tourism onto the local community. The questions were translated into Bahasa Indonesia and verified by local language expert to ensure its relevancy and validity. Pilot test on the interview questionnaire was carried out before the actual data collection and several terms of language were furthered enhance to align with the objective of the respective question. The 5 sessions of interview were carried out at the local's respective working and home environment to ensure that they are comfortable with the natural setting of the interview. It was started with casual talk before gradually entering the main subject matters to allow interviewee to grasp the idea of the interview in series of comfortable phases.

3.3 Data Coding and Analysis

Once data was gathered, initial interpretation of the responses were done in group to avoid interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Then, thematic coding was done to translate and to summarize the responses in order provides meaning the research questions following the 4 stages of thematic coding by Boyatzis (1998).

To enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the interpreted information, triangulation involving multiple sources validation was carried out to increase the accuracy of the interpreted information (Kolb, 2012). For instance, filed notes from the site observation, experiential audit, mystery shopping, photographs, newspaper articles and recent studies were used as other sources of data validation. This would be able to specify the questions that are not directly shown in the interview transcripts (Decrop, 1999). Furthermore, this study is done by a group of researchers hence investigator triangulation was also used whereby several qualitative researchers are involved in the interpretation of data to promote the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2009; Decrop, 1999).

Table 1. List of respondents and brief description.

Respondents	Brief Description
L-1	Male, 34 Years old, working as tour leader for more than 12 years.
L-2	Female, 45 years old, as food hawker for more than 20 years.
L-3	Female, 51 years old, as souvenir seller for more than 7 years.
L-4	Female, 42 years old, housewife with 4 kids. Occasionally part time as spa attendants.
L-5	Male, 29 years old, front office attendant at a local 5-star hotel for more than 5 years.
L-6	Male, 34 years old, concierge worker at a 5-star international hotel for more than 4 years.
L-7	Female, 60 years old, souvenir shop keeper at one of the main tourist spots for more than 20 years.
L-8	Female, 45 years old, souvenir shop keeper at one of the main tourist spots for more than 13 years.
L-9	Male, 46 years old, taxi driver for more than 3 years, previously work as porter at the airport for more than 12 years.
L-10	Male, 34 years old, travel agent attendant for more than 7 years.
L-11	Female, 27 years old, food and beverage servers at a high-end bistro for more than 2 years.
L-12	Female, 25 years old, food and beverage servers at a seafood restaurant for more than 3 years.

L-13	Male, 56 years old, photographer at one of the main tourist spots for more than 12 years.
L-14	Male, 54 years old, gatekeeper at one of the main temples for more than 23 years.
L-15	Male, 43 years old, tour guiding for more than 14 years.
L-16	Female, 44 years old, working at message centre for more than 11 years.
L-17	Female, 32 years old, food hawker at one of the main streets of Denpasar area.
L-18	Female, 29 years old, receptionist at a mid-scale international hotel for more than 4 years.
L-19	Female, 43 years old, room chambermaid for a 5-stars local resort for more than 6 years.
L-20	Male, 42 years old, fresh fruits hawker at the market for more than 16 years.

4   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The presentation of the findings was based on the 4 common themes derived from the coding process: 1) Economic opportunities 2) Competition from foreign businesses, 3) Increasing Cost of Living and 4) Safer environment due to international pressure. Each finding from the respective areas of assessment was elaborated, supported with fieldwork evidence and were jointly discussed by the research team members and verified by interviewees for clarification and actual reflection.

4.1   Economic Opportunities

Most of the respondents felt grateful and satisfied with the influx of tourists into Bali, as they relate the influx positively with better economic benefits to their businesses and salary incentives. It is inevitable that mass tourist inflow will directly benefiting the local community, especially in the form off economic contributions. Li's (2006) finding concurs that community within popular destination are economically benefited from direct employment, indirect employment (employment in related job) and small business ownership. Apart from that, local community are also benefited by improvement of infrastructure initiated by the government in preparing for bigger tourist arrivals (Archabald & Naughton-Treves, 2001). Which in turn, businesses flourished due to connectivity and accessibility improvement resulted from the infrastructure development. Interestingly, the economic leakage issues suggested in the past literatures do not really being perceived as an actual issue by the respondents. This finding also concurs with Suryawardani and Wiranatha's (2016) study suggesting that the influx of tourist arrival may bring greater economic contributions to the local more than the financial leakage to the foreign investors operating tourism businesses in that destination. However, the overreliance on tourism industry might not be beneficial at all time. Lack of diversity in sources of income would eventually paralyze potential knowledge and skills to be developed among the locals who are overly captivated by the richness of tourism offerings. Since tourism is a highly vulnerable economic segment, any uncertainties in the tourism industry would easily affect the local economy (Aramberri & Butler, 2005; Papatheodorou et al., 2010).

'In term of economic aspect, it is obviously very good. With the increase in tourism, as a result it creates many job opportunities and made Bali as a magnet for other people from other cities to try their luck in Bali'. (Local 1,2,3,5,6,11,13,14,16,17.)

'The tourism in Bali really affects locals' economy condition, especially on transportation and food. It definitely brings positive impact and the wellbeing of the locals can be increased. Without it, it would be hard for the locals to earn money for living'. (Local 6, 7, 9,15)

4.2   Spillover Effects from Foreign Competitions

The local respondents were asked whether or not they feel threatened by the existence of foreign businesses. However, most of the respondents don't think it that way. Majority of the local respondents believed that each of the businesses has their target market and strengths. Although there are number of foreign businesses available in Bali, it does not jeopardize their business because foreign businesses mainly on things that they not good at such as western food, wine bars, cocktail bars and many more while the local businesses are benefited by the spillover effect from the crowd generated by these foreign businesses. The locals' business is still doing fine as some of the tourist actually opt for local food and encourage the locals' business. The local restaurants have certain unique offerings towards the overall market. The finding indicates that foreign businesses are seen as positive spillover rather than threats or competition because their active injection of foreign investments has led to an increase of locals' businesses. The finding corresponds to Chuang's (2011) proposal that the local community seems to interpret foreign investments that coincides with tourism growth tends to increase economic activities and hence improving local economy.

"No. Although some of the tourists eat foreign food, but there are some who are curious with locals' food and opt for locals' restaurant. All businesses have different market segment, so I think the locals' business is doing fine". (Local 2,5,7,11,13,14,15,17)

4.3   Bearable Cost of Living

A question was asked to the locals on the perceived impact of their daily life due to increasing number of tourists to Bali each year. The responses indicated that the influx of mass tourism does not wholly impacted their daily life spending. The cost for the daily necessities remains the same but not the case in property prices and rental. The rental price in more popular areas, such as Kuta or Legian are commented to be highest in the Island. Hence, many locals have moved out of the areas in seeking for cheaper housing but still believed that the revenue generated in those areas are reasonable in justifying the price that you pay for shop rentals. The finding seems to show that the economic opportunities are the key in shadowing the effect of increasing cost of living. The balance between income received, and outcome payout can still be maintained properly without excessive burden. Mass tourism could provide more business for the locals which eventually increases their spending power (Sharma & Gurson, 2015). With the economic benefits that the locals get to enjoy, it is then may influence the support of local communities for the tourism development. Supported by Choi and Murray (2010), local's perception of positive impacts would influence their support for tourism.

"It might affect our daily life in some aspect, like the cost of rental that is become a bit pricey especially in the popular tourists' destinations. But I still perceived it as reasonable and affordable, because normally people earn a lot in term of income. Thus, it balanced out the income and outcome". (Local 6,13).

4.4   Safer Environment

Interestingly, question pertaining to possible safety issues due to mass tourism and whether locals are anxious about possible reoccurrence of Bali Bombing 2002 and 2005 tragedies, the response was no concern. Majority of respondents feel safe about their living in the island quoting that crime issues are not a great concern despite alarming news coverage on increasing crime rate within the island. Respondents interestingly pointed out that the security and safety procedures in fact were constantly improving due to global and economic pressures. Respondents commented that the government are constantly fighting to reduce fraud and scam by implementing licensing system for all tourism-related activities including public transports

and moneychangers. This finding contradicts with the past studies, where locals are more likely to experience increasing crime rate issues as tourism grows (Choi & Murray, 2010; Lam & Ki, 2016). The highest reported crime cases in Bali are basically drug trafficking (BPS Bali, 2015), whereby it does not affect the tourists that have pure intention to have a relaxing holiday in Bali. Wang and Pizam (2011) emphasized that policy, planning and development in high and low traffic of tourism destination should strive for a safe and secure experience for tourists. Some of the safety and security incidents can be alleviated by providing tourists with appropriate warnings beforehand, placing sufficient number of special police units and monitored video cameras could be useful in reducing the level of crime (Wang & Pizam, 2011). Most respondents believed that these methods are generally enforced in the island. In addition, to tackle the extortion issues that are basically inevitable in tourists' destination, government or officials may need to impose stricter law and regulation to reduce those unfavorable actions before it further jeopardizes the destination image (Muhammadi, 2015). On the other hand, as long as tourism activities do not harm the locals' welfare, locals will eventually be willing to support the tourism activities. It is important to gain the locals' supports, as they will affect the tourism movement (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003).

'It's safe and sound here. We do have security service every night to support the safety and security. The police and military service do patrol here every day to see the condition. Moreover, with the police tourists which is easily accessible 24 hour. Other than that, the community also takes part in protecting the safety as well'. (Local 7,9,10,12,13,15)

5.0   CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1   Conclusion

This study aims to explore the locals' perception of mass tourism and its impacts to the community. The finding of the study aims enhance destination management policies and strategies taken into consideration of locals' opinion. Unlike past studies, this research emphasizes the importance of environmental, economic and social aspects of assessment in relation to effect study of mass tourism. The integration of these 3 elements provides a more holistic approach in impact studies in particular to destination management. In conclusion, it's a complicated relationship between mass tourism and the local. Findings seem to contradict to the past studies suggesting mainly negative impacts to the local community however, it was different here in Bali island. The increase of mass tourism had brought more benefits than harm was the overall perceptions gathered from the study. These benefits include the economic expansions, job opportunities, spillover of business opportunities, and improving safety and security.

5.2   Implications

The findings of this study have extended the knowledge of mass tourism in particular to impact studies. The conclusion of the studies has also helped policy makers and destination developers to understand the implications of the locals' perceptions especially in the aspect of sustainability management. The favoritism towards mass tourism from the local Bali Islanders doesn't indicate that the local government, investors and tourism operators should take full advantage of such welcoming gesture but careful planning is still significantly needed. Cooperation between local community and government is significant in order to provide democratic governance, and sustainability of the tourism sector (Nunkoo, 2015). Government should give more opportunities for the local community to participate in the tourism development. One of the ways that can be done Bali official board of tourism is by allocating

the group of people to held to conduct regular meetings, workshop, and seminars in different regions in every each of the different planning stages. Any feedback and input by the locals may be considered as well to provide greater perspective. As Hanafiah et al. (2013) added that working together between government and local is vital in influencing the tourism development activities, and sustainability of the industry. Also, it should be made in a transparent and fairer tourism planning process with the local community to avoid any ulterior motive. Hence, the balance between tourism development and local community satisfaction could be reached.

5.3 Research Limitations and Recommendations

Whilst the comparatively small sample size of respondents cross-examined confines the completeness and comprehension of the data collected throughout the study, although the condition of data saturation was met. Also, the conclusions from this study is not generalizable to the entire tourism industry in the entire Bali Island as there are different cultural and demographic aspects which may provide diverse discernments and other setting. However, this study can still commendably discourse the thoughts and beliefs carried by local Balinese islanders in dealing with ever growing tourist arrivals and the developments facilitating such influx. Future studies could explore each of the perceptions individually to obtain a more specific richness of information regarding the individual issue, as this current study only explore the current phenomenon to identify thematic perceptions of mass tourism. Furthermore, this study's research design could further be replicated in different areas of emerging tourist destinations within South East Asia to explore differences between ethnicity and geographical positions to attain inclusive understanding of mass tourism.

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