

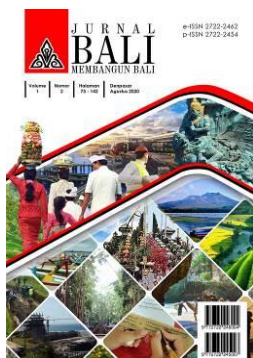


Balinese Women and Gender Equality in Tourism Industry

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Abstract

Purpose: This research aims to raise awareness among industry players and the wider community, especially those working in the tourism industry, regarding gender equality in the Bali tourism industry.

Research methods: The research methodology employed is a literature review. Analysis of textual descriptions was carried out using the Gender Equality Continuum Assessment concept.

Results and discussion: The findings reveal injustices faced by Balinese women working in the tourism sector, including the perpetuation of stereotypes implying limitations in managing the tourism sector and inadequate legal protections. These findings underscore the necessity of raising public awareness about gender inequality and enforcing legal protections for women in the tourism sector.

Implications: By implementing gender equality policies and raising awareness of gender roles, the tourism industry is expected to create a more inclusive and fair environment thereby promoting social justice and fostering economic development.

Keywords: Balinese women, women's role, gender equality, tourism industry.

Abstrak

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran para pelaku industri dan masyarakat luas, khususnya mereka yang bekerja di industri pariwisata, mengenai kesetaraan gender di industri pariwisata Bali.

Metode penelitian: Metodologi penelitian yang digunakan adalah tinjauan Pustaka. Analisis deskripsi tekstual dilakukan dengan menggunakan konsep Gender Equality Continuum Assessment.

Hasil dan pembahasan: Temuan ini mengungkap ketidakadilan yang dihadapi perempuan Bali yang bekerja di sektor pariwisata, termasuk berlanjutnya stereotip yang menyiratkan keterbatasan dalam mengelola sektor pariwisata dan tidak memadainya perlindungan hukum. Temuan-temuan ini menggarisbawahi perlunya meningkatkan kesadaran masyarakat tentang ketidaksetaraan gender dan menegakkan perlindungan hukum bagi perempuan di sektor pariwisata.

Implikasi: Dengan menerapkan kebijakan kesetaraan gender dan meningkatkan kesadaran akan peran gender, industri pariwisata diharapkan dapat menciptakan lingkungan yang lebih inklusif dan adil sehingga mendorong keadilan sosial dan mendorong pembangunan ekonomi.

Kata kunci: Perempuan Bali, peran perempuan, kesetaraan gender, industri pariwisata.

INTRODUCTION

Each gender has different needs and preferences, and tourist destinations must ensure that they can meet these needs. For example, tourist destinations can provide women-friendly facilities, such as clean and comfortable toilets and lactation rooms. Furthermore, tourist destinations can also organize activities and events that cater to the interests and preferences of tourists of various genders. Building a positive image

for tourist destinations that pay attention to gender diversity is crucial for attracting more tourists. Tourist destinations that consider gender diversity will be perceived as inclusive and friendly places for all genders (Putra, 2023). Some examples of tourist destinations that have successfully built a positive image by paying attention to gender diversity include cities like Amsterdam, Berlin, and Stockholm. These cities are known for their policies and initiatives that support gender equality and diversity.

Gender diversity plays a crucial role in the tourism industry because it provides significant benefits. Firstly, gender diversity can create an inclusive and friendly work environment for all genders. With balanced representation between men and women in the tourism industry, we can shape a fair work environment and appreciate the contributions of all individuals. This will enhance employee satisfaction and productivity (Karmila, 2016). However, gender discrimination remains a problem in the tourism industry. Some examples of gender discrimination in the tourism industry involve wage disparities between men and women performing the same job, lack of promotion opportunities for women, and unfair treatment of women in the workplace.

Although faced with unequal conditions, the struggle for gender equality continues with strong determination. To date, the improvement in the quality and quantity of women's participation in the workforce shows positive growth, as evidenced by the faster growth rate of women's workforce participation compared to men. However, challenges related to equal pay or wages comparable to men remain an issue. This gap is evident at every level of education, working hours, and field of work, with the disparity increasing at lower levels of education (Putra *et al.*, 2023).

In the above cases, there are various reasons supporting the view that women cannot be separated from gender forces in social construction. According to (Eka & Yanti, 2019) some of these reasons include: (1) Women's Dual Roles: Women are often faced with dual roles that are difficult to separate from other roles. They are expected to engage in household work or domestic work while pursuing a professional career. This view may shape the opinion that women may not be able to work optimally in the tourism industry. Women who choose to work are aware of the consequences of this dual role and are ready to take responsibility for their work. (2) Absenteeism and Job Termination: The high rate of absenteeism and job termination among women is often associated with pregnancy and postpartum phases. The required leave during this period makes companies reluctant to take risks and prefer to recruit men. Additionally, the need for permission from the husband when women are no longer single can also lead to job termination. (3) Low Women's Human Capital: The low assessment of women's human capital, involving education, training, and experience, may lead companies to prefer men as long-term investments. This assumption is

based on the view that men are considered more productive. (4) Limited Women's Working Hours: The tourism industry, especially hospitality, tends to divide working shifts with fixed hours, such as 07.00-15.00, 15.00-23.00, and 23.00-07.00. The second and third shifts are considered risky for women due to safety reasons. This can lead to limited job opportunities for women in this sector. Those four factors are also influenced by the prevailing socio-cultural factors in a region. Particularly in Bali, customs and women are closely intertwined.

In essence, Indonesia has sought to place women on equal footing with men, particularly in the context of employment, recognizing the important economic role played by women in national development (Rukmana, 2024). Although labor laws have guaranteed the rights and obligations of women, there is a phenomenon of women's employment that indicates inequality. Some companies still do not fully comply with existing regulations, and there is still unfair treatment towards female workers, including discrimination and even sexual harassment. Ironically, cases like these are often not openly revealed, allowing employers to continue employing women under concerning conditions. Continued efforts are needed to ensure that women in the workplace receive equal and fair treatment by labor laws. Public awareness, strong law enforcement, and support for women's rights are key to creating a safe, fair, and equal working environment for all.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses the Gender Equality Continuum Assessment research method based on a literature review with two main aspects: Gender Unequal and Gender Blind. The Gender Equality Continuum is a concept that can be used as a research method or framework to investigate the level of gender equality in a particular context. This concept helps to illustrate that gender equality is not a binary condition but rather a spectrum or continuum that encompasses various dimensions and levels.

Research on gender inequality covers various aspects and sectors of life, and analyzing gender equality in the tourism industry can provide a better understanding of inequality between men and women. Based on gender unequal, there are several research focuses that can be taken to explore gender inequality, including limited job opportunities or participation of women in decision-making in an industry.

Then, there is the term "gender blind," which refers to a condition where gender aspects are not considered or taken into account in a particular context. When a policy, program, or action is considered to be in this phase, it means that no effort is made to understand or accommodate differences or inequalities that may be related to gender roles. In some cases, gender blindness indirectly or unconsciously occurs in

recruitment and job selection processes, legal and law, and aspects related to women's health in the industry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender differences in reality create injustice (Nugraha, *et al.*, 2022), especially for women, including those who are Balinese women involved in the tourism industry (Nanta & Utami, 2023). The injustice faced by Balinese women working in the tourism sector includes the formation of stereotypes or labeling that female workers have limitations in managing the tourism sector. Involving a gender perspective and making policies or actions that are "gender-sensitive" or "gender-inclusive" are important to achieve gender equality and justice. By considering gender aspects, we can identify and address potential inequalities, creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all.

Gender Unequal: Balinese Context

According to Fakihi (Prasiasa *et al.*, 2023), essentially, gender is everything that can interchange between the characteristics of women and men, which can change over time and vary from one place to another, and differ from one social class to another. For example, women are known for their characteristics that are identical to being gentle, maternal, emotional, and other characteristics commonly associated with women. Conversely, the opposite of these characteristics belongs to men, strong, manly, masculine, and rational. Conversely, Ratna, 2005 (Prasiasa *et al.*, 2023), interprets gender as the opposite sex, which has psychological and cultural dimensions, encompassing differences between masculine and feminine.

In the framework of cultural studies, discussions about sex and gender emerge as a result of conditions in which women are subordinated by culture. This means that culture is the cause of women being considered to have a lower position than men, not solely because of women's biological conditions. The ingrained thoughts or stereotypes about women are what then create the perception that women indeed have a lower socio-cultural position than men, Moore, 1994 (Lestari *et al.*, 2023), state that women's subordination is not just cultural, but also rooted in gender-based division of labor.

In the development of tourism in rural areas or rural tourism, women residing in rural areas have dual roles, where they are not only responsible for household chores but also contribute to earning income for the family. Emphasizing this importance is so that women are not continuously subordinated and so that policies and implementation of women's capability programs consider the dual roles they play (Dwi *et al.*, 2018).

This is aimed at ensuring that policies do not add burdens to women beyond their current capacity.

With the feminist movement, women now have equal opportunities in various aspects such as employment, education, inheritance distribution, and others. For instance, in the field of employment, there is a growing number of women working as paid workers across various sectors, particularly in the tourism industry. Whether they are employed as permanent, daily, temporary, or part-time workers, this situation clearly indicates that women play a role in development in this era of globalization. In addition to their roles as paid workers in various tourism industries, Balinese women also function as unpaid workers, performing additional tasks outside their working hours such as cooking, childcare, house cleaning, and others at home (Dwi *et al.*, 2018). While at home, Balinese women return to their natural role as homemakers, obligated to fulfill the aforementioned tasks as well as those related to religious, customary, and socio-cultural activities, especially for married women. Besides being paid and unpaid workers, Balinese women must also fulfill their inherent duties such as childbirth and breastfeeding (Suardana, 2012).

On the aspect of gender unequal, research related to limited job opportunities for women in Bali and how important the role of women is in the development of tourism can be examined. Literature studies on the influence of tourism on the development process indicate that attention to the impact of tourism on the role of women in social dynamics is still lacking (Sudirman & Susilawaty, 2022). Some studies note that tourism contributes to changes in women's gender in some aspects, while other studies show that tourism opens opportunities for women to play a more active role in economic, social, and even political aspects. In some areas, especially in areas designated as tourist development centers like South Badung, Denpasar, and Ubud, women's roles seem more involved in the economic changes generated by tourism and benefit more from these changes compared to men (Sulatra & Pratiwi, 2021).

However, this is not in line with the prevalence of job opportunities that exclude women, especially in the tourism industry. To date, there are still many job opportunities that only specify male workers for those positions for various reasons and considerations (Rahayu, 2018). Some factors or aspects that become considerations for an industry to exclude women are the energy required in that sector, night shifts, and the dual role of Balinese women in social life.

One of the employees holding the position of human resource management in a five-star hotel in Ubud stated that Balinese women tend to have many customary activities (outside of work) that are obligatory to fulfill, which causes difficulties in arranging time or schedules while working (Murni *et al.*, 2019). This is different from

Balinese men who also have customary activities or obligations, but the timing and implementation are not too binding. Thus, this remains a primary consideration for the tourism industry in opening up job opportunities fully to women in Bali (Rahayu, 2018).

Gender Blind: Legal Protection

The involvement of women in the tourism industry serves as a nexus of multidimensional realities, giving rise to its polemics encompassing marginalization, discrimination, and subordination (Tumpak *et al.*, 2015). This assertion is further supported by UNWTO research (2016), indicating that gender stigma, job discrimination, low status, and inadequate wages are still experienced by women. These aspects contribute to the increased vulnerability of women in the tourism sector to experience sexual violence in any form (Suci Murni, 2023).

However, despite the numerous cases that have occurred, neither tourism management nor governmental authorities have been fully capable of protecting victims, and in some cases, they have exacerbated the harm suffered by victims, leading to power imbalances (Sri *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, to date, there has been no legal framework that adequately addresses sexual violence against women. Regrettably, there is not much research or societal awareness specifically focusing on sexual violence in the tourism sector (Putra, 2023b). The prevalence of sexual violence underscores the urgency for a comprehensive legal framework. For over a decade, various stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, academics, and practitioners, have been advocating for the Law on the Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU-PKS). This initiative arises from the recognition that existing laws have been inadequate in addressing sexual violence specifically (Rahayu, 2018).

The rapid growth of the global tourism sector is accompanied by the availability of diverse job opportunities for women. The provision of various employment opportunities in the tourism sector aims to reduce poverty and empower women in developing countries (Summary of UNED-UK's Project Report, 1999). The Global Report on Women in Tourism 2019 reported that 54% of those employed in the tourism sector worldwide are women. According to UNWTO (2015), besides providing employment opportunities for women, the tourism sector can also serve as a platform for women to explore their potential (Tumpak *et al.*, 2015).

Sexual violence in the tourism industry is inherently linked to power dynamics that can silence survivors. As female employees, this vulnerability arises when tourism products, such as "services," are emphasized. Success in various divisions like guest relations, sales, marketing, escort services, and others in the hospitality or event organizing sectors hinges on customer satisfaction (Ahmad *et al.*, 2015).

Consequently, this aspect can be a double-edged sword for women working in the tourism industry.

Within this system, guests hold the highest position in the tourism world, bringing revenue and foreign exchange to companies. This creates a power-dependency relationship where companies prioritize guest satisfaction for success. Most companies prioritize customers as "kings," and upon closer inspection, this phenomenon can lead to inequality or injustice as a result of customer satisfaction and power relations being excessively exploited by tourists or guests in the tourism sector (Utami *et al.*, 2023). Nevertheless, power dynamics are not solely vulnerable to exploitation by tourists towards employees but also susceptible to abuse by executives or employees in top positions, leaving women often powerless in certain situations.

"The Draft Law on Sexual Violence Criminal Offenses (RUU TPKS) has been officially ratified as a Law by the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) in a Plenary Session of the DPR RI on Tuesday (12/04/2022), in Jakarta", - Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform. With this decision, the tourism industry should now be more vigilant regarding reports or incidents of sexual violence and harassment that occur within the company environment, whether perpetrated by tourists/guests or by fellow employees, rather than prioritizing the maintenance of the company's brand image.

CONCLUSION

Gender differences in reality create injustice, especially for women, including Balinese women in the tourism industry. The injustice faced by Balinese women working in the tourism sector includes the formation of stereotypes or labels that female workers have limitations in managing the tourism sector. Involving a gender perspective and making policies or actions that are "gender-sensitive" or "gender-inclusive" is important to achieve gender equality and justice. Gender is something that can exchange between the characteristics of women and men, including psychological and cultural dimensions. Although equality of job opportunities is evolving, there are still job opportunities that exclude women, especially in the tourism industry.

Women in the tourism industry are vulnerable to sexual violence and discrimination. There is no adequate legal framework to protect victims of sexual violence in the tourism industry. The recently ratified Draft Law on Sexual Violence Criminal Offenses (RUU TPKS) demands the tourism industry to be more vigilant towards sexual violence. There is a need for awareness of gender roles in addressing inequality and better legal protection for women in the tourism industry, including in

Bali. With a sensitive gender approach, it can create a more inclusive and fairer environment for everyone.

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