

THE ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE SERVICE OF FAMILY TOURISM PRODUCTS IN TOURISM VILLAGES IN BADUNG – BALI – INDONESIA REGENCY**Sri Widowati¹****Ida Bagus Suryawan²**

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Tourism, Udayana University, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Family tourism is one of the niches of the tourism market that has developed a lot today. The characteristics of family tourism that are able to contribute positively to the economy are trusted by many business actors as a new target in the tourism sector. One of the targets of family tourism visits is the tourist village. With the basic characteristics of a tourism village based on nature and culture, the process of closeness of relationships between family members is increasingly positive. One of the elements of a tourist village is the local community which is the backbone as well as the object of tourism as well as an important actor in tourism services. This study aims to describe the extent of the role of local communities in the service of family tourism products in a number of tourist villages in Badung Regency, Bali Province, Indonesia. The form of the role of local communities is described as several elements, namely: active participation, capacity building, cultural and environmental preservation and partnerships with outside parties. The trend of family tourism in tourism villages has moved all elements in tourism villages to jointly carry out tasks, responsibilities and opportunities that can be achieved in the benefits of tourism. The strength possessed by the local community has proven to be able to drive offers and provide tourism services to family tourists very well. The strengths possessed by the Okal community such as resource ownership, the ability to control the environment, as a tourist attraction as well as as a tourism entrepreneur provide a complete package for tourism services.

Keywords:

Role, Local Community, Tourism Products, Family Tourism, Tourism Village

INTRODUCTION

Family tourism is one of the tourism segments that continues to grow in line with the increasing public need for recreational activities that can strengthen family relationships. This phenomenon is also in line with the trend of increasing tourist interest in community-based and nature-based experiences, which opens up great opportunities for the development of tourist villages as family destinations. The trend of family tourism in Bali's tourist villages shows a significant increase, in line with the shift in post-pandemic tourist preferences that prioritize nature-based experiences and local culture. According to data from the Bali Provincial Tourism Office, the number of tourist villages increased from 194 in 2019 to 294 in 2022, reflecting high interest in destinations like this.

Tourism villages, which offer cultural authenticity, natural beauty, and hands-on experience with local communities, have great potential to meet the needs of the family tourism segment looking for educational, recreative, and interactive activities. Data from the Central Statistics Agency of Bali Province shows that in August 2024, foreign tourists who came directly to Bali reached 616,641 visits, with tourists from Australia dominating by 23.17 percent. This is in line with the increasing interest of tourists in nature-based destinations and authentic experiences, which are the main attraction of tourist villages for families. Overall, tourist villages in Bali offer a wide range of activities suitable for family vacations, with a rich combination of education, recreation, and cultural experiences, making them an increasingly in-demand option in today's tourism trends. However, many tourist villages still focus on the concept of tourism in general without considering the specific needs and preferences of families, such as child-friendly facilities, educational interactive programs, or guaranteed safety aspects. This shows that there is a research gap to explore how tourist villages can be optimized as family tourism destinations.

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OBJECTIVES

This research is needed because of the high opportunity for the development of tourist villages and tourist villages are a rapidly growing sector, but optimization for the family tourism segment is still not directed. Besides that, it is also influenced by the specific needs of family tourism, that families have unique needs such as safety, comfort, and activities that unite all family members. The purpose of this study is to describe the role of local communities in creating authentic experiences that are in accordance with the needs of family tourism in tourist villages.

METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative research with an exploratory approach. The research location is located in a tourist village in Badung Regency, Bali Province – Indonesia in accordance with the determination of the regional head. Field observations and interviews with tourism village managers (BUMDES and or POKDARWIS) and village heads as authority holders in the village.

This study uses a number of theories such as the tourism motivation theory from Crompton [1], the family system theory from Murray Bowen [2] and the experiential learning theory from Kolb [3]. Crompton's Theory of Tourism Motivation [1] is one of the theories that is often used to understand the reasons or motivations of individuals in taking tourist trips. Crompton identified two main categories of travel motivation: socio-psychological motivation (push factors) and goal motivation (pull factors). Push Factors: It is an internal drive that comes from an individual's need or desire to escape from routine, seek relaxation, establish social relationships, increase self-esteem, or meet intellectual and emotional needs. This factor encourages individuals to travel without being tied to a specific destination. Pull Factors: Are the external attractions that a tourist destination has, such as natural beauty, local culture, facilities, or reputation that make a person interested in choosing the destination. This factor is closely related to the specific attraction offered by the location of the tourist destination.

Crompton also emphasizes that travel motivation is often a combination of these two factors. For example, a person may be motivated to travel because they want to escape from work stress (push factor) and at the same time be interested in the beauty of certain tourist attractions (pull factor). Family travel is often driven by motivation to strengthen interpersonal relationships, escape from routine, and provide educational experiences for children. Family Systems Theory, developed by Murray Bowen in 1978, is a theoretical approach in psychology that sees the family as a system that interacts and influences each other. This theory emphasizes that individuals cannot be fully understood separately from their family units because individual behavior is influenced by the dynamics of the family as a whole. Bowen identifies several key concepts, including *differentiation of self* (the ability of individuals to maintain a balance between emotional involvement in the family and independence), *triangulation* (the involvement of third parties in family conflicts), and *emotional cutoff* (the way individuals deal with family tensions by severing emotional connections).

According to Bowen [2], the family is an emotional system that consists of repeated patterns of interaction, and each family member plays a certain role in this system. An imbalance or strain in the family system can lead to dysfunction that continues into the next generation. Therefore, this theory is often used in family therapy to help individuals understand and correct unhealthy relationship patterns. The opinions of experts support the relevance of this theory. Nichols and Schwartz [4] explain that the Bowenian approach can help individuals identify recurring patterns of interaction and manage emotional relationships more healthily. Kerr and Bowen [5] added that understanding family *systems* is important for dealing with complex interpersonal problems, as families are often a source of support as well as emotional conflict.

Experiential Learning Theory [3]: Family tourism tends to prioritize activity-based educational experiences that are interactive and involve all family members. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) introduced by David Kolb in 1984 is a learning approach that emphasizes the importance of experience as the core of the learning process. This theory defines learning as a process that, through the transformation of experience, produces knowledge. Kolb stated that learning is cyclical, with four main stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. In this cycle, learning starts from the direct experience experienced by the individual (Concrete Experience), which is then followed by reflection to understand the experience (Reflective Observation). Next, individuals develop concepts or theories based on the reflection (Abstract Conceptualization), and finally test the concept through action (Active Experimentation). This cycle repeats, allowing learners to continuously develop their knowledge and skills through new experiences.

Kolb also introduced Learning Styles, which are individual preferences in learning, namely *Diverging*, *Assimilating*, *Converging*, and *Accommodating*. This theory has been applied in a variety of fields, such as education, management, and training, to help understand how individuals learn and develop. A number of experts support this approach. Dewey [6] had previously emphasized that hands-on experience is the basis of authentic learning. Lewin [7] also mentioned the importance of the action-reflection cycle in the learning process. Brookfield [8] added that critical reflection is a key element in deepening the learning experience. Moon [9] further integrates Kolb's theory with an experiential learning approach in the context of higher education, emphasizing its relevance for the development of critical skills. ELT provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding how learning occurs in a variety of contexts and how experiences can be transformed into meaningful knowledge, making it one of the most influential learning theories to date.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authentic experiences in tourism products are a key element in creating destination appeal, as modern travelers increasingly seek experiences that are meaningful, personal, and different from their daily routines. According to Pine and Gilmore [10] in the concept of Experience Economy, tourists are no longer just buying physical services or products, but are looking for emotional and transformative experiences. Authentic experiences refer to deep interactions with local cultures, nature, and people, creating a deeper sense of engagement and satisfaction than generic travel experiences. Cohen [11] elaborated that authentic experiences can be divided into two types: objective authenticity, which deals with the authenticity of local artifacts or cultures, and existential authenticity, which focuses on personal feelings and meanings felt by travelers.

The relationship between the elements of authentic experiences and travel products lies in how the travel products are designed to reflect the uniqueness and authenticity of the destination. Nature-based tourism products, such as ecotourism, often emphasize authentic experiences through direct contact with untouched natural beauty, such as trekking in tropical rainforests or snorkeling on coral reefs. In cultural tourism, such as visits to tourist villages or participation in traditional ceremonies, authentic experiences are realized through direct involvement with local cultural practices, whether in the form of traditional culinary, crafts, or dance. Meanwhile, in community-based tourism, authentic experiences are achieved through the participation of tourists in the daily lives of local communities, such as farming, cooking, or living in people's homes.

Authentic experience elements involve several important aspects, such as direct engagement, education (learning experience), and experience personalization (customization). Travellers feel more satisfied when they can engage directly, learn new things, and feel that the experience they get is unique and irreplaceable. Tourism products that are able to integrate these elements tend to be more in demand, especially in the context of sustainable tourism, where cultural and environmental preservation is an important added value. For example, tourists who take part in batik workshops in tourist villages not only get art products, but also in-depth experience of the manufacturing process and the philosophy behind them, thus fostering a higher appreciation of local culture.

Thus, authentic experiences not only meet the needs of tourists to have unique and meaningful experiences, but also support tourism sustainability by strengthening the relationship between destinations, local communities, and tourists. This makes authenticity the core of the development of innovative and competitive tourism products, especially in the modern tourism era that is increasingly connected to personal values and sustainability.

Family tourism in tourist villages has distinctive characteristics that reflect the needs, preferences, and dynamics of the family as a social unit on the trip. According to Backer [12], family tourism involves trips designed to create a shared experience among family members, focusing on activities that can be enjoyed by all members, including children, teenagers, and the elderly. In tourist villages, these characteristics are usually manifested in nature-based, cultural, and educational activities, such as farming, learning traditional crafts, or exploring child-friendly natural areas. Tourism villages are an attractive option for family tourism because they offer a safe environment, educational activities, and opportunities to strengthen family relationships through interactive and meaningful experiences [13].

However, the development of family tourism in tourist villages is inseparable from a number of obstacles. One of the main challenges is the limitations of family-friendly infrastructure, such as accessibility for strollers, adequate sanitation facilities, and safe play areas. Additionally, the lack of tour programs or packages tailored to the needs of families can be an obstacle to attracting this market segment. Another obstacle is the capacity of local communities to understand the needs of family tourists, which often require special training to provide

adequate services. Another factor that often arises is the conflict of interest between the needs of tourists and the sustainability of local culture, especially when family tourism has an impact on changing the behavior or values of the village community.

On the other hand, family tourism also offers a number of significant advantages for the development of tourist villages. This segment tends to have a higher level of expenditure because family trips involve several individuals at once [11]. In addition, family tours are often repetitive, where families who are satisfied with their visit tend to return to the same destination or recommend it to their relatives. The presence of the family can also encourage the preservation of local culture and traditions, especially through educational activities, such as learning traditional dances or cooking typical foods. From a social perspective, family tourism can encourage positive interaction between tourists and the local community, creating mutually beneficial relationships.

By understanding the characteristics, constraints, and advantages of family tourism, tourism village managers can design more effective strategies to attract this segment. Investing in family-friendly infrastructure, training of local communities, and the creation of engaging and educational activities are important steps to maximize the potential of family tourism in tourist villages. This not only increases the competitiveness of the tourist village, but also creates a meaningful experience for tourists and sustainable benefits for the local community.

Local communities must be actively involved, starting from the planning, implementation, to evaluation stages of tourism activities, so that they are not only objects, but also subjects in the development of tourist villages. The role of the community covers various aspects, ranging from the provision of tourism services such as homestay-based accommodation, tour guides, traditional culinary offerings, to the preservation of local culture which is the main attraction of tourist villages [14].

Important elements of the role of society include several things. First, active participation in decision-making, where local communities are empowered to voice their needs, ideas, and aspirations related to tourism development. Second, training and capacity building to improve their skills in providing professional tourism services, such as foreign language training, financial management, and digital marketing. Third, cultural and environmental preservation, where local communities play a role as guardians of traditional values and the authenticity of the village environment. Activities such as art performances, craft workshops, or conservation area management become tangible forms of their contribution. Fourth, partnerships with external parties, such as the government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, which allow local communities to access resources, training, and technical support to develop the potential of tourism villages in a sustainable manner [15].

In order for tourism villages to progress and develop, the community needs to have awareness of the importance of ownership of existing tourism programs. This ownership encourages them to maintain the sustainability of the tourist village, both in terms of social, economic, and environmental. In addition, the community must also have a collaborative mindset, which allows them to work together in groups or cooperatives to manage tourism businesses collectively, so that the economic benefits can be felt equally. No less important, people need to adapt to technology, for example by utilizing social media and digital platforms to promote their tourist villages to a wider market.

With the community as the main driver, tourist villages are not only attractive destinations for tourists, but also an empowerment instrument that is able to improve local welfare and preserve the wealth of local culture and nature. The role of the facilitator is to ensure that the community has access to the necessary resources, support them in building capacity, and facilitate harmonious relationships between the community and the external parties involved.

The development of the role of the community in the offering and service of family tourism products in tourist villages brings significant benefits, both for local communities and tourists. These benefits can be seen from the social, economic, cultural, and environmental perspectives, which mutually support the sustainability of tourist villages as family destinations.

For the village community, the development of their role as the main actor in family tourism products provides real economic opportunities. According to Mitchell and Ashley [14], community-based tourism can increase the income of local communities through their direct involvement in economic activities, such as the provision of homestays, handicraft production, local culinary offerings, and tour guide services. In the context of family tourism, the community also gains additional benefits through skills training, such as how to serve families with young children, which improves the quality of service and competitiveness of the tourist village. In addition, active involvement in tourism activities can increase the confidence of local communities and strengthen social cohesion through collective cooperation.

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Another benefit for the community is the preservation of local culture and traditions. Family tours are often looking for educational and authentic experiences, such as learning to dance, cooking traditional food, or learning about the history of the village. According to Cohen [11], these interactions not only enrich the tourist experience, but also encourage local communities to maintain and preserve their cultural values. From an environmental perspective, well-designed family tourism encourages the community to preserve the natural beauty around the village as the main attraction, for example through conservation practices and sustainable resource management [16].

For tourists, especially families, the involvement of local communities in tourism products provides a more personalized and authentic experience. Pine and Gilmore [10] in the concept of the Experience Economy emphasize that modern travelers seek unique and meaningful experiences. In family tourism, direct interaction with the local community, such as staying in a homestay or participating in the daily activities of the village community, provides an experience that is not only entertaining but also educational, especially for children. Tourists also get an insight into authentic rural life, which is hard to find in mass tourist destinations.

However, some experts have refuted the challenges in developing the role of local communities. Tosun [15] highlights that the lack of capacity, resources, and education of the community is often an obstacle in providing high-quality services to tourists. In addition, conflicts of interest between tourists and local communities can arise, especially if tourists have unrealistic expectations or do not understand the local culture. Therefore, support from external parties, such as governments, academics, and non-governmental organizations, is needed to provide training, mentoring, and mediation between the community and tourists.

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CONCLUSION

The development of the role of the community in the supply and service of family tourism products creates mutually beneficial benefits. The role of the community does not change much in the existing settings physically and non-physically. The community does not need to play a role or behave as an actor in tourism services. The community can directly carry out their daily lives while playing a role as a tourism operator. Communities get economic, social, and cultural opportunities, while tourists get an authentic and educational experience. However, to achieve this success, a planned, participatory, and sustainable approach is needed so that tourism villages can develop as inclusive and beneficial destinations for all parties.

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