

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Tourism stands as one of the world's fastest-growing industries, assuming a pivotal role in the economic and cultural landscape of many nations, particularly as a significant contributor to foreign trade and commerce. Tourism is a powerful force that has a profound impact on both the economy and culture of a destination (Rahyuda, 2022). Although tourism can lead to positive economic growth, create job opportunities, and increase foreign exchange earnings. Furthermore, tourism can facilitate cultural exchange and conservation by introducing visitors to various traditions, customs, and lifestyles. This exposure promotes mutual comprehension, admiration, and respect among different cultures, which contributes to the enhancement and preservation of cultural heritage. However, it is crucial to recognize that the influence of tourism on both the economy and culture may have positive or negative effects. It is regarded as one of the most notable social and economic phenomena of our time. At its core, tourism is often defined as "the activity of traveling to various destinations for pleasure and leisure.

Tourism encompasses two principal categories, international and domestic tourism, each offering a diverse array of travel experiences. International tourism entails journeys to foreign countries, requiring essential travel documents like passports, visas, and foreign currency exchange. This category is further divided into inbound tourism, referring to foreign visitors arriving in a specific country, and outbound tourism, involving residents traveling from their home nation to explore other destinations. In contrast, domestic tourism involves travel within one's own country, known for its accessibility due to the absence of formal travel documentation and currency exchange intricacies. Domestic travelers typically encounter fewer language and currency-related challenges, contributing to the convenience of exploring their homeland.

The Indonesian government is now investing heavily in the construction of infrastructure. Industrial development exists to address the broad changes that take place in the industrial environment. The travel and tourism sector is one that is undergoing changes. At the moment, one of the industries with the greatest potential

to generate revenue for both municipal and federal governments is tourism. The wellness tourism sector is only one of the several additional opportunities from the tourist business that still need to be explored. In essence, wellness tourism is a type of special interest travel where the goal is to keep visitors physically well. Yoga, meditation, spa services, and other conventional medical interventions are often practiced. Indonesia is a wellness tourism destination that places a high value on visitors' physical and mental well-being. Wellness travel locations are becoming more and more popular worldwide and appeal to a wide range of consumer bases. Even travelers who engage in a variety of wellness activities earn more than typical travelers. The Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia promotes and presents a broad range of wellness tourism destinations located throughout Indonesia in light of the industry's fast growth (Rahyuda, 2022). Travelling for health and searching for healing: Having participated in numerous professional events and congresses on health, medical, wellness and spa-related issues in the USA, Brazil, China, South Korea, Bali, Iran and Turkey, as well as in several European countries, I have not only discussed various topics, but more importantly I have learned a great deal too (M. Smith & Puczkó, 2014).

Bali, the enchanting province of Indonesia, is renowned for its distinct culture, vibrant tourism industry, and flourishing wellness sector. As one of the mega-diversity countries in terms of biodiversity, Indonesia has an abundance of natural beauty and diverse ecosystems that contribute to its tourism attractiveness. Furthermore, the tourism development in Bali has led to the growth of hotels, villas, and resorts, which can be witnessed through advertisements in Bali tourism magazines (Pratiwi & Sentanu, 2019). This development has not only boosted the economy but also provided a range of accommodation options for tourists, from budget-friendly hotels to luxurious resorts. The growth of tourism in Bali has been guided by regional regulations that prioritize cultural development and envision Bali as a tourist destination (Sudibya et al., 2023). As a result, Bali has successfully portrayed its unique cultural heritage through various arts, rituals, and traditions influenced by Hinduism. These cultural aspects have become a significant part of Bali's identity and continue to attract tourists from all over the world. In addition to its cultural attractions, Bali is blessed with a wealth of natural tourism objects,

including stunning beaches, lakes, mountains, and agro-tourism sites (Ni Made Trigunasih, 2022). The province of Bali is distinct from other parts of Indonesia in that it has a particular style. Bali is a unique place because of its abundance of natural beauty, panoramic vistas, and cultural and artistic expression. Bali is renowned for its arts, rituals, and traditions that stem from Hinduism's social and religious aspects. Bali has several distinct customs or habits that are still steadfastly followed in the community, as well as a variety of ancestors' cultural heritages that are strongly linked to Balinese culture. Bali is not only well-known for its customs but also for its abundance of tourist attractions, which are dispersed among several districts and include wellness, spiritual, natural, marine, adventure, and other types of tourism (Subawa et al., 2021) and Yoga tourism is part of wellness tourism (Ali-Knight & Ensor, 2017; M. Smith & Puczko, 2014). The economic level of sectors such as: workplace wellness, real estate wellness, healthy eating, physical activity, thermal/mineral springs, wellness tourism, and public health and prevention, is strongly influenced by the level of living and happiness in a country or even from a certain region (Lehto et al., 2006a; Öznalbant & Alvarez, 2020).

The term wellness is often used interchangeably with a health-oriented lifestyle or holistic health, emphasizing the upper level of individual functioning and minimizing the risk of potential factors and influence. The rapid increase in the tourism industry consecutively contributes to the development of the wellness tourism industry. "Wellness tourism is travel for the purpose of promoting health and well-being through physical, psychological, and spiritual activities (Stuart et al., 2005). Based on the World Health Organization (2002) reports, more than 77% of the chronic disease burden will be shouldered by low and middle-income countries. This prediction has given indications to developing countries to find alternative solutions to reduce the disease burden. In line with that, yoga can be regarded as one of the wellness activities that a person can engage with. The current situation shows that potential wellness tourists will be drawn away by financial considerations. The low level of public and private investment in health infrastructure results in better-off people still having to seek health treatment abroad.

Nowadays, significant numbers of people tend to seek for health well-being in life, since in everyday life many of them are facing high tension and stress, thus leading to the needs of body, mind, and spiritual restoration and healing. Despite the significant trend of body and mind, recovery increasing gradually, some study is still needed for exploration within this area. Past studies have focused on a preliminary study of yoga, niche marketing strategy, and motivation (Lehto et al., 2006a; Öznalbant & Alvarez, 2020). However, yoga tourism destinations from a stakeholder perception has had less investigation, hence this study intends to bridge this gap, particularly in Bali. Bali is one of the most popular international tourist destinations in Indonesia. In the contemporary era, the intersection of technology, leisure, and well-being has ushered in a paradigm shift in the global tourism landscape.

Applying the frameworks of marketing and hospitality theories, the marketing mix, and social media theory, the study aims to improve our theoretical knowledge of social media's function as a powerful marketing instrument in Bali's wellness tourism. The research investigates the hazy lines separating in-person and virtual interactions in a time when digital tools are progressively shaping health travel experiences. The research, which draws on theories of hospitality and marketing, recognizes that wellness travelers actively participate in co-creating their experiences, with the help of strategic choices made by travel agencies. Using the framework of the Marketing Mix, the study looks at how social media is used to coordinate the factors of product, pricing, place, and marketing in the Bali wellness tourist sector. Simultaneously, it examines closely how these new habits affect the systems and approaches that Bali's wellness tourism operators, advertisers, and legislators use. This study uses structuration theory to investigate the dynamic feedback loops between tourism agency, social media use, and industry change.

In navigating this exploration, the research underscores the temporal aspect, recognizing that both social media dynamics and wellness tourism structures are in a state of continual flux. Bali, as a vibrant epicenter of wellness tourism, serves as an apt backdrop for this inquiry, offering a rich tapestry of experiences that mirror global trends in this domain. The findings of this study aim to contribute not only to a nuanced understanding of wellness tourism in Bali but also to the broader

discourse on the transformative impact of social media on contemporary travel practices.



Figure 1.1 Number of Foreign Tourists visit Bali in 2023
Source: Bali.bps.go.id (2023)

The most recent statistical data indicates a significant increase in the number of international tourists visiting Bali in 2023. Handy Heryudhitiawan, the esteemed General Manager of I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, reported a staggering total of 810,930 international passengers. Within this number, 383,288 were new arrivals, while 427,624 were new departures. As we look ahead to January 2023, the surge in these figures during December 2023 can be attributed to the festive and celebratory season. Achieving a higher number of passengers served compared to the previous month is an achievable goal. The above graph also indicates a rising trend in the number of tourists visiting Bali, especially during the summer season. The concept of tourism was set forward at the Rome conference in 1963 and was defined as "a visit to a country other than one's own or the place of one's usual residence and work." Nevertheless, domestic tourism, which has grown to be a substantial source of income and employment possibilities in the hospitality sector, was not included in this definition. A more precise definition of this idea comes from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which states that tourists are "individuals who travel to and stay in a location outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year, for purposes such as leisure, business, or any other non-work-related activities."

1.2 Research Problem

A major portion of research on wellness tourism and its many forms has gone unsearched (Lehto et al., 2006a; Wray et al., 2010). Still, it appears that studies relating yoga to travel are increasingly prevalent (Aggarwal et al., 2008; Lehto et al., 2006a). Nonetheless, there is still a lack of information on yoga's role or prospective role as a catalyst for the growth of the travel industry, despite the long history of yoga being a major travel motivator (Ponder & Holladay, 2013). Moreover, there is a dearth of research establishing linkages between spirituality and tourism with the majority of the connections pertaining to the effects of yoga on communities and its alignment with certain branches of practice of which Ashthanga is one of the most well-liked (Ponder & Holladay, 2013).

The study that is being proposed also recognizes the significance of comprehending the impact of tourists' demographics as possible moderating variables. The association between social media usage and wellness tourism experiences can be strongly influenced by certain demographic factors, including age, nationality, and language and yoga level experience. While previous research suggests the growing impact of new technology and social media in tourism promotion, as indicated by the use of web pop-ups and online banners to attract tourists, However, there is a significant gap in understanding the specific and nuanced ways in which social media influences wellness tourists, particularly in the context of Bali, a renowned wellness and yoga tourism destination. This research aims to address this gap by investigating how social media platforms are utilized to promote wellness and yoga tourism in Bali and how this digital presence influences the decision-making and experiences of wellness travelers in the region." This research gap sets the stage for your study, highlighting the need for a more focused exploration of the role of social media in the context of Bali's wellness and yoga tourism. It also indicates that your study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights specific to this unique destination and niche within the broader tourism industry.

Bali's distinct cultural and geographic features are important in determining the nature of wellness tourism experiences. There is a need for study that looks at how the local Balinese culture, natural environment, and customs interact with social

media to affect visitors' wellness experiences because these elements have not gotten much attention in the literature that is currently available. With the ever-changing digital terrain, especially in the social media space, there are a number of developing trends that need more research. The swift creation of novel platforms, evolving user tendencies, and growing significance of user-generated content prompt inquiries into the most up-to-date and efficient wellness tourism marketing tactics. In Bali's wellness tourist setting, this field is yet largely untapped. According to research, companies that want to use social media in their marketing strategies need to understand that, in addition to upending the conventional, one-sided view of marketing and communication, social media is also altering customers' decision-making processes by introducing a new, outside-of-the-company factor.

Research provides evidence that organizations willing to include social media into their marketing strategies must realize that social media is not only changing the traditional one-sided way of seeing marketing and communication, but it is also changing the customers' decision-making by adding a new factor that is beyond the organization's control in the customers' decision-making process. Research on social media's role on tourism and marketing in Bali, Indonesia, is limited. Existing studies focus on conventional tourism marketing and wellness tourism in other locations, leaving a gap in understanding the unique dynamics in Bali's wellness tourism sector, which incorporates culture, tradition, and spirituality. Additionally, in this age of digital interconnectedness, a pertinent question emerges: How does the use of social media effect the wellness tourism in the context of yoga in Bali, Indonesia? This research seeks to unravel the multifaceted relationship between social media use and tourists' perceptions of wellness in Bali. Bali, Indonesia, is a unique wellness tourism destination known for its cultural heritage and holistic wellness offerings. However, there is limited empirical research on social media's impact on tourism in Bali. Existing research focuses on generic tourism experiences, leaving a gap in understanding how social media influences tourists' decisions to engage in wellness activities.

- i. What are the lived experiences of the yoga instructors in social media usage on wellness tourism?

- ii. What is the essence (value) of these lived experiences of yoga instructors?
- iii. What strategies that can be developed to enhance the effectiveness of social media marketing for the yoga studios?

1.3 Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following research objectives:

- i. Explore the experience of yoga instructors in relation to social media usage on wellness tourism.
- ii. To determine the essence of these lived experiences of yoga instructors.
- iii. To develop new strategies to enhance the effectiveness of some of social media marketing for the yoga studios

1.4 Benefits/Significance of research

The research has significance as it can offer a more profound comprehension of the function that social media performs in wellness tourism, specifically in relation to Bali's yoga studios. This study will provide important insights into how social media platforms affect the operations, marketing tactics, and general success of yoga studios by examining the lived experiences of yoga instructors. These results can help managers and studio owners create social media marketing plans that are more engaging and successful at drawing in wellness travelers. Furthermore, this study will fill a vacuum in the literature on wellness tourism by focusing on the unique experiences of yoga instructors and how they engage with social media. The study's practical implications can improve customer interaction, marketing initiatives, and service delivery in the wellness tourism sector, increasing wellness travelers' satisfaction and return rates. Additionally, the knowledge acquired can help lawmakers and academic institutions understand the value of social media, which will improve future industry professionals' support and training. In general, the goal of this research is to provide important theoretical and practical contributions that will help yoga studios, wellness travelers, and the wellness tourism industry as a whole.

1.4.1 Theoretical benefits/ implications

This study has important theoretical ramifications since it advances our knowledge of social media's function in wellness tourism, especially as it relates to

Bali's yoga studio industry. By offering a phenomenological perspective on how yoga instructor's view and use social media for wellness promotion, this study adds to the body of knowledge already in existence. The research contributes to the theoretical frameworks pertaining to social media marketing, digital engagement, and wellness tourism by emphasizing the teachers' lived experiences. Finding recurring themes and patterns in yoga instructors' experiences is one of the main theoretical advantages. Future studies and theoretical advancements in the domains of social media marketing and wellness tourism can benefit from these insights. This study also sheds light on the interactions between digital platforms and conventional health methods, providing a more complex picture of how contemporary technology affects age-old activities like yoga.

Additionally, the research serves as a basis for the creation of fresh theoretical frameworks that clarify why social media marketing tactics are so successful in drawing wellness travelers. This study improves our conceptual knowledge of the variables influencing engagement and involvement in wellness tourism activities by incorporating qualitative data into pre-existing ideas. Furthermore, the results may spark more scholarly debates about how social media influences the tastes and behavior of customers in the wellness sector. This study fills in gaps in the literature and sets the stage for more research on the changing relationships between social media, wellness, and travel.

1.4.2 Practical benefits/implications

These studies are significant, providing useful information and practical tips for Bali's yoga instructors. This study offers a clear grasp of how social media may be used to improve marketing efforts and engage both present and potential yoga practitioners by examining their experiences. Creating more potent social media marketing strategy is one important practical advantage. Yoga instructors can better attract wellness travelers by customizing their content and engagement strategies based on audience resonance. This may result in more people attending their yoga lessons as well as greater visibility and engagement rates. The study also emphasizes the significance of customized and focused social media marketing. By using these data, yoga instructors can improve the overall effectiveness of their marketing campaigns by producing material that speaks directly to the needs and

preferences of their audience in terms of wellbeing. This individualized strategy can contribute to the development of a devoted following and returning customer base. The report also notes the opportunities and problems that come with using social media to advertise yoga programs. Yoga teachers who comprehend these challenges might devise tactics to surmount them, like enhancing their digital competencies, strategically utilizing diverse social media channels, and partaking in ongoing education and adjustment.

Additionally, the study offers helpful advice for creating stronger online communities. Yoga teachers can create encouraging and engaging environments that improve their students' overall experience by encouraging a sense of connection and involvement through social media. The component of community building has the potential to enhance participant happiness and loyalty.

1.5 Structure of Research

The study is structured as follows: Chapter I introduces the research, exploring its origins, the practical implications of social media usage, and its theoretical foundations, with a focus on wellbeing in yoga tourism promotion in Bali, Indonesia. The objective is to investigate yoga instructors' experiences, understand their lived experiences, and develop new strategies to enhance social media marketing for yoga studios. Chapter II reviews existing literature on social media usage, wellness tourism, and marketing strategies, establishing a conceptual framework and formulating hypotheses for empirical investigation. Chapter III details the research methodology, focusing on yoga studios in Bali, describing the systematic approach to studying social media's role in wellness tourism promotion, and highlighting the phenomenological method used to examine yoga instructors' lived experiences. Chapter IV presents the study's results, exploring the connections between social media use and wellness travel, interpreting the findings with a focus on their implications for yoga instructors and studio managers, and suggesting policy changes to better support wellness tourism in Bali. Chapter V synthesizes the research conclusions, emphasizing their significance for academic research and practical applications, and suggests directions for future research in social media, wellness, and yoga tourism marketing in Bali.