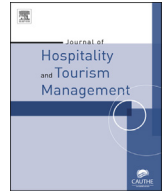




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Female tourism entrepreneurs in Bali, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Bali is one of the most popular islands in Indonesia for tourism due to its beaches, nightlife and religious sites. Female tourism entrepreneurs are a growing segment of the hospitality industry in Bali due to their involvement in food stalls and small restaurants. This paper will focus on the strategic decisions of female Balinese tourism entrepreneurs by utilizing a purposeful sampling method in which in-depth interviews were carried out over a six-month period. Meaning units (MUs) were abstracted, which were compared and discussed with the interviewees until a basic agreement of terms could be made. Using in depth interviews and other supplemental evidence, this trend was examined in order to explore how women were influenced by environmental factors, in addition to their culture and heritage. The findings from this paper will help other tourism entrepreneurs how to develop their businesses using limited resources and financial capital but also provide suggestions about how female entrepreneurs can succeed in the globally competitive tourism industry.

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1. Introduction

In the last few decades, there has been extensive interest and debate over women entrepreneurial characteristics as a predictor of entrepreneurial success (Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Riding & Swift, 1990; Sexton, 1990). This has been due to the increased role women play in business and society especially in developing countries (Gherardi, 2015; Ramadani, Gerguri-Rashiti, & Fayolle, 2015). Previous studies have mainly focused on work-family issues, pay differential across genders, women's entry in the labor force, and disparities in the work place (Ramadani, Dana, Gerguri-Rashiti, & Tasaminova, 2013). Policymakers and business experts often point to entrepreneurship involving women as a means of raising incomes and encouraging local self-determinism. The benefits to participating in business influence public policies and academic theories that are designed to promote female entrepreneurship (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). There is debate around how to encourage more women entrepreneurs due to the different opinions about how gender influences businesses business decisions. Some researchers such as Rao (2013) suggests that

entrepreneurship education can help entrepreneurs but particularly females who may have less access to resources. Despite the fact that prior research has found that the rate at which women are forming new ventures has increased significantly (CWBR, 2004), issues involving women in entrepreneurship have not received adequate attention in academic research (Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Tan, 2008). In addition, relatively less attention has been paid to female tourism entrepreneurs especially for developing countries like Indonesia. This is due to most research focusing on regional entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific rather than country-level entrepreneurship (Otsuka & Natsuda, 2015).

In earlier decades, however, Bras and Dahles (1998) found that in Bali women lacked empowerment, despite their entrepreneurial successes. Although the reasons behind the lack of empowerment are not clearly identified, it was noted that the Balinese women felt that their activities in tourism reinforced their gender roles, resulting in their lack of empowerment (Al Mazroei & Lynch, 2014). Despite the fact that the majority of tourism workers are women, studies focusing on Indonesian women entrepreneurs, particularly in Bali, are in short supply. This gap in the research about Indonesian women entrepreneurs is important to address particularly in Bali, which has a large percentage of females participating in the labor market.

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2. Research background

2.1. Women entrepreneurship in tourism

Female entrepreneurs are defined as females involved in making independent business decisions related to managing a business (Zapalska & Brozik, 2014). In general, despite the level of female entrepreneurship increasing, there still is little research on women entrepreneurs particularly in developing countries (Verheul, Van Stel, & Thurik, 2006; Welsh, Memili, Kaciak, & Al Sadoon, 2014). Notably, Brush and Cooper (2012) state that research on women entrepreneurs constitute less than 10% of all studies in the field of entrepreneurship. However, research shows that the contribution of women to the worldwide economic development is significant (De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi, 2014). This is seen in 2010 with 187 million women being involved in creating and operating enterprises, meaning that almost 42% of entrepreneurs in the world were women (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2010). Moreover, the interactions between entrepreneurial activities and society are multifaceted and hard to disentangle (Achtenhagen & Welter, 2011). Yet, recent research has shown that entrepreneurship needs to be explored in its societal context in order to capture the diverse facets of entrepreneurial activities (Steyaert & Katz, 2004).

Bali, the home of Indonesia's Hindu minority, is experiencing a rapid growth in tourism and hospitality businesses. This has meant that there are increasing opportunities for female entrepreneurs wanting to start their own tourism businesses. The role of women in the economy of Bali has been growing in importance for many years and enterprising women have become a significant part of the economy. It is believed that women can play an important role in promoting economic growth and development, as well as reducing poverty (Tambunan, 2006). Therefore, it can be anticipated that in the future, women are likely to be increasingly important to the economy (Ball, 2001). A large number of hotels and galleries are owned and managed by women. According to one estimate, women own 90 percent of such establishments (Copeland & Murni, 2010). There is a long tradition of women participating in the informal tourism sector and gaining greater control over their lives as a result (Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Women's participation in the informal sector has differed to that of men because of their focus on the food industry, in which they sell food goods to tourists (Ramadani et al., 2013). In addition, this informal type of entrepreneurship has meant that females have been able to supplement their incomes and be more independent without relying on the hierarchy typical in male owned businesses (Ramadani et al., 2015).

Progress of women in management and entrepreneurship has been a major step in increasing female Balinese participation in the process of economic development, generating job opportunities and improving their economic independence, social, educational and health status as well as their families' lives (Wright & Tellei, 1993/1994; Zapalska & Brozik, 2014). They experience, and the challenges they have to overcome (Starr & Yudkin, 1996). Particularly, after the economic slowdown in Bali that was caused by terrorist bombings in 2002 and 2005, women were urged to generate more income for the family. Street food stalls provide an opportunity to do so. The influence of tourism upon traditional food stalls (called *warungs*) is an example of adjusting traditional types of business to opportunities to emerging situations for women near local and international hotels (Cukier, Norris, & Wall, 1996). Married women, in particular, use *warungs* to become self-employed.

2.2. Tourism in Indonesia, Bali

As in many other developing countries, Indonesia has identified tourism as an industry that deserves to be nurtured, and in recent

decades, tourism has emerged as an important source of foreign exchange. According to the 2015 report released by Jakarta Post, the country's ranking in the biennial Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report jumped 20 places, from 70th in 2013 to 50th in 2015 (Jakarta post, 2015). The Indonesian island of Bali is a favorite destination for both adventurers and those in need of a little relaxation. The island is celebrated for pristine beaches, biodiversity, a cultural legacy, and an artistic heritage. These assets have encouraged a rapid growth in tourism, creating opportunities for both large and small businesses. The situation of Bali parallels many other developing regions where tourism has emerged as a major economic force (Bali Tourism Board, 2011).

According to Bandem (2003), many of the small islands of Bali are rapidly embracing tourism because (1) they lack marketable natural resources, (2) they are not suitable for manufacturing, (3) the small-scale, labor-intensive environment facilitates tourism, (4) cultural and ecological attractions exist, and (5) Bali lies in close proximity to populations possessing discretionary wealth that support tourism (including Australia, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and Japan.). The interest in Bali tourism goes back at least to the early 20th century when the Dutch opened a tourist bureau to promote the Dutch East Indies that extended to Bali (Copeland & Murni, 2010). The development of a tourism infrastructure in Bali and the arrival of wealthy aristocrats resulted in Bali being nicknamed "the Last Paradise." After Indonesia won independence, Bali's tourism sector continued to expand. Positioning itself as Bali as a destination for leisure travel, growth rates of 8%–10% annually been the highest in Indonesia (Copeland & Murni, 2010). This rapid expansion in tourism over the past thirty-five years has seen the average annual number of foreign visitors growing from 153,030 in 1981 to 2,576,142 in 2010 (Bali Tourism Board, 2011). Although terrorist threats existed in the first years of the 21st century, they have subsided and no longer discourage tourists as the tourism industry continued to exhibit rapid growth (Tsotsou & Ratten, 2010).

3. Method

The benefits of a qualitative approach to entrepreneurship research are becoming increasingly recognized by both academics and practitioners because it can delve more deeply into understanding the complex psychosocial issues that are part of women's entrepreneurship (Ramadani et al., 2015). This study utilized a qualitative methodology by including a series of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with female owners of small restaurants located in the Denpasar and Badung districts of Bali. A purposeful snowball sample of nine Balinese women restaurant managers was selected across a wide range of tourism services because of the emphasis on food in the informal economy and the number of female entrepreneurs starting food related businesses. This helped to provide both theoretical and literal replication (Yin, 1994) based on two dimensions of (1) small restaurants, and (2) over 5 years of work experience. This method helped to formulate a more intellectual strategy rather than the simple demographic stratification of epidemiological studies (Marshall, 1996). Nine females who granted permission to conduct in depth face to face interviews were willing to participate in, and potentially benefit from, this study and considered themselves active participants in entrepreneurship and innovation activities. Following Hellström, Hellström, and Berglund (2002), it is important to note that this study is not designed to make generalizations about behaviors and characteristics of all Indonesian women restaurant owners, but rather to focus upon those in Bali as a distinct group. In-depth interviews using a semi-structured protocol were conducted by two interviewers. Each interviewer was thoroughly briefed on the study's

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