

The Analysis on the Uniqueness of Spiritual Healing as Product Differentiation in the Bali Tourism

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Abstract

Spiritual healing is a health development of body, mind, and spirit by using spiritual powers, namely the *mantras* or spells, rituals, breathing energy, and other religious symbols that have been growing rapidly after the 2000s in Bali. Research was designed to discover the uniqueness of spiritual healing in Bali which has differentiation on tourism products. The research was qualitative research which data and information were collected based on observation, interviews and literature review. The observation was done in Ubud Tourism Destination, Gianyar and Region of Muncan, Karangasem. The interviews were done with five tourists who have experiences in Ashram Munivara and Ashram Ratu Bagus. The interviews were also done with three healers and the owner of Yoga Barn and Cepik Villa who have experiences to handle the tourists. The data were analyzed based on descriptive qualitative method by implemented the Theory of Products Planning. The results showed that spiritual healing in Bali comprises of output of processing by the tourists and the local people. In the processing, the local *gurus* and rituals are really important that have never omitted. The results indicated that the local *gurus* and the rituals are augmented quality of products of spiritual healing in Bali that distinguish it from similar products. Differentiaton in the form of local *gurus* and rituals have made spiritual healing as competitive productsin Bali tourism.

Keywords: spiritual healing, uniqueness, product differentiations, Bali tourism

Introduction

Spiritual healing is an attempt to build the health of body, mind, and spirit by using such spiritual mantras, rituals, breathing energy, and religious symbols that has become popular in Bali tourism business after the 2000s. Eat Pray Love Novel has contributed to promote Bali as a spiritual tourism destination since its publication in 2006. The novel publication of Eat Pray Love was a complement to tourism promotion of Bali after the Bali bombing on October 12, 2002 and October 1, 2005, in which the novel has put local healers like I Ketut Liyer and Ni Wayan Nuriasih as the search for foreign tourists to Ubud, Bali.

Searches of foreign tourists for spiritual healing in Bali have slowed down the process of stagnation of Bali tourism after the Bali bombing in 2002 and the second Bali bombing in 2005, making the visits of foreign tourists continued to increase again after the Bali Bomb II, i.e. from 1.6 million in 2007 to 4,001 million in 2015

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(BPS Bali Statistics Office, 2016). The increase in the number of foreign tourists is in line with the business growth of spiritual healing in the post-2006 of Bali tourism.

Since 2006, the spiritual healing has been growing with the emergence of Yoga and Healing centers in the classy hotels and villas. The rapid growth is evidenced with the developments of the Yoga Barn, Radiantly Alive, Yoga centers, and spiritual healing services in hotels, villas and home stays in Ubud started in 2006, right after the Bali bombing. Until 2015, the Government of Gianyar Regency recorded around 10 businesses of spiritual healing operating in Ubud Tourism Region (Tourism Office Gianyar, 2015). The data of Gianyar Regency government does not include the villas and hotels that provide spiritual healing services, such as Villa Sankara, BagusJati, Four Seasons, and others. This data also does not include activities in the people's homes that also offer spiritual healing, such as the Liyer House and Ni WayanNuriasih's.

The incomplete data collection has just been conducted by the Government of Gianyar Regency, while other regencies in Bali have not yet recorded the growth of spiritual healing businesses. The Karangasem Regency government is one of examples of regency that has not recorded these businesses, but the distribution of spiritual healing services has spread in Karangasem such as in the Villages of Muncan, Sidemen, Manggis and Candidasa.

Only a few of the local people have taken the spiritual healing business opportunities. Those who take advantage of these opportunities just Ratu Bagus, Arsana, Suambara, Liyer, Gunarta and Nuriasih. Most of these opportunities are taken by healers from overseas. Spiritual healing at the Yoga Barn, for example, that out of the 25 healers who work at the Yoga Barn, 22 healers are from abroad (Yoga Barn, 2016). Radiantly Alive is another example, of the five permanent healers introduced, only one healer is the local person (Radiantly Alive, 2016). Some healers from abroad also open these businesses independently around Ubud area, on Jalan Subak Sokwayah region, Ubud. In the small lane, it is standing Ubud Yoga House owned by Sheila Burch of California, USA, as well as some more cottages that offer Ayurveda and various other spiritual healing sessions (Yogahouse, 2016).

The foreign healers are mostly located in the tourism region of Ubud, Gianyar. In the Muncan region of Karangasem is still dominated by the local healers, as happened in the Ratu Bagus Ashram where the spiritual guru is the Balinese. Cepik Villa in Sidemen also still uses the local healers, although its products are a combination of Bali-India because Cepik Villa is networked with the Ananda Marga Ashram (Interview with the owner of Cepik Villa, Ayu Suciani, conducted on May 15, 2016).

The facts that happened in the Tourism Area of Ubud and in the region of Muncan show that both healers and the materials of spiritual healing sessions in Bali are dominated by foreigners, whereas in theory, the searches for spiritual healing sessions are actually the searches for traditional religion and ethnicity, that is called secular pilgrimage (Hollinshead, 1999), as the definition or the term of spiritual healing itself refers to the uses of natural energy indirectly through transformation of the healers to cure people independently (Aldridge, 1993; Sutcliffe, 2003;

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Winkelman, 2005). The use of indirect natural energy is a spiritual form, which is beyond the five senses, that it distinguishes the spiritual healing from other healing methods. The differences of spiritual healing from other healings are that the spiritual healing uses spiritual means, such as meditation, breathing techniques (*pranayama*), mantras/ spells, rituals, and certain symbols in the healing process independently, with the guidance and assistance from the healers.

The use of spiritual means such as meditation, breathing, mantras, rituals and particular symbols is closely related to the religious tradition. Examples of this search are on the participation of tourists in the Ritual of Ayuascha in the Amazone, America and African Sangoma Ritual (Winkelman, 2005 Binsbergen, 1999). The quest for spiritual healing by following religious activities also occurred in Pu-Tuo-San, China. Foreign tourists in the mountains of Pu-Tuo-San conduct religious activities, such as attending the Hermitage as practiced by the Buddhist monks to improve health (Wong et al, 2013). In Bali, Indonesia, foreign tourists also follow religious rituals of *PitraYadnya* (sacrifices or services to ancestors) for physical and emotional health (Narottama, 2012: 188-189). The quests in Africa, America, China and Bali (Indonesia) are more as quests for authentic experience or as authenticity.

India is a country which develops spiritual healing of Ayurveda for reasons of religious authenticity of local traditions, because India is the origin of Ayurveda which rooted in the religious traditions of India namely Hinduism. Therefore, India has a good reputation for Ayurveda as it has historical and religious background of the original. State of Kerala, India is specially developed as a center for Ayurvedic healings, because of its history and good reputation (Bookman, 2007:132; Kulkarni, 2008:35; Jyotish T., 2009:78; Begum, 2012:1). The quest for this authenticity also occurred in the City of Mysore, India which is historically the Yoga center (Maddox, 2015). Therefore, in the Indian context, such originality is a form of authenticity.

Authenticity is the perception of tourists, and what is provided by the hosts. Cohen (in Hall, 2003: 287) states that the meeting point between the tourists and the hosts is authenticity. Therefore, Apostolakis (2003: 801) states authenticity is divided into tourist experiences and the objects of the journey. From the objects of the journey, the search for such authenticity is a form of romanticism of the European people for Asia, America and Africa, because the European people have experienced an emptiness of values amidst the rapid industrial development in the countries. Emptiness of values have attracted the European people to the charms of the religions, the arts, and the natures of the Eastern world (Ritzer and Smart, 2014). The charms of the religions, the arts, and the natures are making Asia, Africa and America to become tourist attractions for spiritual healings.

Therefore, the charm of religion, art, and nature of Bali is the authenticity of spiritual healing in Bali. Authenticity as uniqueness is the product differentiation of spiritual healing in Bali. Differentiations of these products need to be researched to develop spiritual healing in Bali as the tourism product competitiveness. The uniqueness of Bali spiritual healing is new in terms of the research issues and the research sites, because the previous studies conducted in Bali (Susanti, 2009; Ariawan, 2012; Narottama, 2012) only researched on the attractiveness and the

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experiences of foreign tourists. Other research in the world are also on the subjects of the attractiveness issues (Maddox, 2015) and commodification (Holman, 2011).

The uniqueness of spiritual healing in Bali and its analysis of the tourism product with competitiveness is a new research, which arises from disparities in the concept of the quests for authenticity and the practice in the Bali tourism. Thus, the problems of this research are how the uniqueness of the spiritual healing in Bali, and how to develop its uniqueness in order to be competitive in the global competition. The purpose of this study was to identify the uniqueness of spiritual healing in Bali, and to analyze the this uniqueness as the differentiation of products as proposed by the Theory of Products Planning to face the global competition.

The research was conducted in Ubud Tourism Region and the Region of Muncan, because Ubud is a place of healing spiritual development the most (Tourism Office of Gianyar, 2015) and the Muncan Region is an emerging area with the Ratu Bagus Ashram. This research was a qualitative research which used five respondents from tourists, three healers, and two owner of spiritual healing bussiness.

The research started from December of 2014 untill January of 2016. This study used data collection methods by using literature study, observation, and interviews. The observations were done in Ashram Munivara, Ubud, Gianyar and Ashram Ratu Bagus, Muncan, Karangasem. The interviews were done with five tourists who have experiences in Ashram Munivara, Ubud, Gianyar and Ashram Ratu Bagus, Muncan, Karangasem. The interviews were also done with three healers and the owner of Yoga Barn and Cepik Villa who have experiences to handle the tourists. The data was analyzed qualitatively. The data were analyzed based on descriptive qualitative method by implemented the Theory of Products Planning.

Results and Discussions

Based on research in the Tourism Area of Ubud, Gianyar and Muncan Region, Karangasem, the forms of originality of spiritual healing have been modified. In both regions there are eight types of spiritual healing, namely *Asana* (bodywork), *Pranayama* (breathing), *Dhyana* (meditation), *Tantra* (the use of ritual), *Usada* (herbal medicine in addition to spells/mantras and rituals), *Magic* (astrology), *BayuSuci* (Shaking), and *Malukat* (holy bath ritual). Among the eight types of spiritual healing, the bodywork, breathing and meditation have been very common in the world, because they have spread very rapidly from India to Europe and America since the 1960s through the dissemination of yoga that brought by the neo-Hindu (Ramstedt, 2008: 1236). Spiritual healing with rituals, herbal combination with mantra-ritual, Shaking, and holy bath are the local contents of Bali because the Balinese rituals use them but they have been modified with a mixture of modern science and yoga.

The eight kinds of spiritual healing are also conducted at various places of activities ranging from hotels, villas, activity centers, and ashrams. Most places of spiritual healing activities are also the places that are not original, even fancy places. Of the various places of these activities, two ashrams namely Munivara Ashram in

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Ubud and Ratu Bagus Ashram in Muncan are two places that have an image of originality, because they were developed by the spiritual community of Bali.

Ketut Arsana is the founder of Munivara Ashram in 2006 and Ida Pandita Mpu Parama Daksa Natha Ratu Bagus is the founder of the Ratu Bagus Ashram in 1992. In the two ashrams, foreign tourists follow the spiritual practice at least a week, so that the experience becomes more pronounced. Foreign tourists who follow the spiritual practice in hotels, villas and activity centers, are foreign tourists who just want to get to know the products of spiritual healing in Bali.

Foreign tourists who followed these spiritual healings in the two ashrams expressed their experiences that the local gurus have their own charms. The charm is the energy. The local guru's energy helps foreign tourists to be more quickly connect to the energy outside themselves. The attractiveness of the local gurus is considered to be able to help them more quickly to deal with the energy outside themselves when compared to other spiritual gurus in their own countries.

This statement was conveyed by Shanta (55-60 years old), a tourist from the Netherlands who came to Bali specifically to meet with Ratu Bagus. He said that he had participated in various spiritual healing, but he felt Ratu Bagus has a different energy, so he can help him to be more quickly connected with the energy. The quick connection with the energy was the unique experience to be in the Ashram of Ratu Bagus. "When I Came here I could feel an energy in here and I Knew yess that it is and I know it is not logic" (interview with Shanta, June 20, 2015).

Anahita, a tourist from Spain explained that Ratu Bagus has a power that help a person to deal with energy more quickly. "Here (ashram) is the real place where they have to grow. Ratu is very important here, Ratu is a channel of God, ... when you want to learn how to connect in love and God, he (Ratu) is the channel" (interview with Anahita, August 3, 2014). Aysem Celikiz from Turkey also said the same thing, that Ratu Bagus has an active energy which helps to connect to the energy outside themselves (interviews, August 3, 2014).

The energy of Ratu Bagus is also felt by Jemma Vestal (30-35 years old), a tourist from Switzerland. She initially came for a short visit (1 Week) in February 2015. In this short visit, she was able to feel the energy on the first day until the following day. Therefore, she repeated her visit back on 6 - 29 May 2015. On May 23, 2015, she was seen to have Shaking exercise very seriously, so she stated that Ratu Bagus is very unusual (observation and interview, May 23, 2015).

Britanny (25-30 years old), a tourist from Canada also stated that Ketut Arsana (Master of Kundalini Yoga Tantra in Ubud) has an energy that could help to establish the stability of the mind. "When I met Arsana on the internet, I was interested to him. When I met him in the ashram, I felt the energy from Ketut Arsana, "(Brittanny, July 29, 2015 interview). Because of that, she lived up to 5 weeks to train with Arsana. Barber (53 years old), a tourist from Australia also said that Arsana a master who has a charisma that she endured 2 months to have training practice with Arsana (interview, July 29, 2015).

The energies of the gurus or masters are keywords that are possessed by the local gurus in Bali, as accounted by the tourists. Yoga master (guru), I Ketut

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Bandiastra says, the energies of the masters (gurus) are only the expression of foreign tourists to express their joys or excitements upon meeting with the native spiritual healing masters. This exciting feeling that brings the energy, which helps tourists to feel the peace of mind.

Bandiastra explained that until today, the most famous yoga centers in the world are in Canada and Australia. Yoga centers in these countries have yoga masters that are internationally certified, with good knowledge. But the tourists still come to Bali and India to seek genuine native masters or gurus. "If they meet with yoga masters in Bali, they are likely to meet with the genuine masters" (Bandiastra, interview, February 3, 2016).

The statement of Shanta, a tourist from the Netherlands supports the opinion of Bandiastra by saying "I come here because by being here alone to live more in my heart and then in my heart, I am happy, and when I live in my mind, I get worry" (Shanta, interview June 20, 2015). This statement indicates that Ratu Bagus and his ashram is a place to find happiness, to warm up her heart. The warming up of the heart is the key to finding happiness.

Anahita (55 years old), a tourist from Spain accounted "Ratu is the channel of God", or Ratu Bagus (Master of Yoga Shaking) is the channel for her to God. She said that her master as the channel of God because after having Shaking practice for two days, she could be connected to the energy outside herself. She said, with Shaking, she could feel the energy moving constantly with cosmic consciousness so that her mind becomes more stable.

Anahita experience shows that meeting with Ratu Bagus, had already made her mind to be happy. Happiness is helping to accelerate the process of being in the consciousness of cosmic energy, so she could move in cosmic consciousness. This cosmic consciousness movement has helped her to feel the stability of mind. With a stable mind, she could find happiness.

The experiences of the foreign tourists show that the quest for authenticity through the genuine masters and the experiences to follow the religious practices in the ashrams is a spiritual authenticity form of healing in Bali. The search for native masters (gurus) and the experiences to follow the religious rituals of ethnic Balinese spiritual healing are also realized by other service providers, such as Yoga Barn and Radiantly Alive.

The owner of Yoga Barn, I Made Gunarta (52 years old) said that he wanted to develop local healers at his yoga center gradually. Until 2016, he already has Made Murni who has studied and mastered Yoga and other healing expertise with international certification (Gunarta, August 30, 2015 interview). Radiantly Alive also invited a local healer to join his center (Radiantly Alive, 2016).

The search for native masters or learning from the great civilizations of the past (before the birth of modern religions), was the phenomenon of the Grand Tour of the 17th to 19th century (Cooper, 2012). At that time, the European elites undertook the tours to visit places of civilization heritage of the world such as in France and Italy.

The search of Grand Tour was then spread to many places in the world, such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia, because these locations also have great world

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civilization heritages. The search to all parts of the world (America, Africa, and Asia) continued to the New Age movement, which began in the 1960s with emphasis on individual searches to ethnic religions, to be apart from the established religions in the world (Ivakhiv, 2006: 264).

The journey to find this spiritual healing has resulted in the process called reduction of knowledge into science (Ritzer and Smart, 2014). Reduction of knowledge occurred by finding scientific explanations of the knowledge of the local knowledge. In the case of Ratu Bagus Ashram, tourists from Italy conducted the knowledge reduction on *Bayu Suci* became the so-called Shaking that is logically acceptable by the European people.

Another example is the knowledge reduction of Ketut Arsana's at the Ashram Munivara into Kundalini Yoga Tantra. Kundalini Yoga is a general science that has been known to the Western world (Europe), but the ritual performed by Arsana is poorly understood. Arsana then restat edit into Tantra, which is already a familiar teaching as a combination with yoga. By this combination, the ritual knowledge of Arsanawas reduced to yoga that has been very popular in the world.

Reduction of knowledge into science can be conducted in two ways. First, through the intervention of foreigners and second, it can be done by the healers by learning the modern science. Reduction through the intervention of foreigners can be seen in the case of Ratu Bagus Ashram that conducted reduction through the touch of Italian tourists.

The example of reduction done by the healer through his acquaintance with modern science was conducted by Arsana. This healer who has Omham Retreat has phrased his own knowledge in rituals into Tantra, which is common practice in the world community i.e. healing through dance, singing, and certain symbols. Arsana can express his local knowledge into a larger discourse because this healer is an educated man, he was the former religion teacher at the formal school.

The intervention of foreigners and reduction itself in building products are still maintaining the spiritual healing rituals and the local masters, while the herbal treatment has been modified. Therefore, the local masters and rituals are forms of uniqueness that should be maintained as a differentiation with products of other spiritual healing in the world, so that tourists can distinguish which spiritual healing that has the characteristics of Bali, and which one is not.

The local masters and rituals help tourists discover the authenticity and special experience. Authenticity appears from the local masters, while the special experience comes from doing the ritual with the guidance of the local masters. Therefore, meeting the genuine native masters and performing ethnic religious practices in Bali is the former of authenticity on the tourists who perform spiritual healing in Bali.

The different experiences in meeting the local masters and in performing religious rituals is called differentiation as proposed by the Theory of Products Planning. Based on the Products Planning Theory, there are four things that must be considered in planning the development of the product, namely identifying specific needs, target markets, positioning itself, and a competitive product (Seaton and

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Bennett, 1996: 115). In efforts to position themselves associated with building a product that is competitive, spiritual healing in Bali has local masters and special rituals as a differentiation with other products in the world, so that the local masters and the rituals can be referred to as augmented products of spiritual healing in Bali.

Conclusion

The uniqueness of spiritual healing in Bali is the local masters (healers) and the religious rituals. The unique local masters and rituals is described in the reduction process of knowledge into science that does not eliminate the local masters (healers) and the rituals, although the reduction was done by foreigners (tourists). The maintenance of local masters and the local rituals in the knowledge reduction process occurs because the local masters (healers) and the local rituals the energy generator in the spiritual healing in Bali which give the effect of joy and serenity.

The local masters (healers) and these rituals are the authenticity offered by local communities in accordance with the expectations of tourists to find authenticity in Bali. The authenticity of the local masters (healers) and these rituals are the special spiritual experiences of foreign tourists that serve as a differentiator (differentiation) of spiritual healing in Bali, with spiritual healing in other places in the world. Therefore, the local masters and the rituals are augmented products of spiritual healing in Bali, which must be maintained in the plan to build competitive tourism products of spiritual healing in Bali.

This research limitation is just cover the uniqueness of spiritual healing as product differentiations. This research is not measure what is significant uniqueness of spiritual healing which become push factors and pull factors for tourist. Measuring of push factors and pull factors of tourists who were clients of spiritual healers is a suggestion for further research.

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