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## SOCIAL CARRYING CAPACITY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR CONTROLLING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF SERANGAN VILLAGE, BALI

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### ABSTRACT

In the development of sustainable tourism, careful planning and comprehensive management are critical issues, particularly in relation to the potential social impacts arising from tourism activities. Tourists bring their cultures, values, and behaviors into local communities, inevitably influencing the social and economic life of the residents. To minimize these potential impacts, an effective management framework is required. One such framework is the concept of *social carrying capacity*, which serves not only as a measure of the optimal utilization of resources and tourism activities but also as a guideline for determining the maximum level of interaction and participation between local communities and tourists within a destination area. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study method focused on Serangan Village, Bali. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation to analyze how tourism development and reclamation have affected social life and community behavior. The analysis was conducted descriptively to explore how social carrying capacity can function as a framework for controlling the social impacts of tourism. The findings are expected to contribute to the formulation of community-based tourism management strategies that promote social balance and sustainability in tourist destinations.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector represents one of the largest and most dynamic industries worldwide, playing a vital role in supporting global economic growth. According to data released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), there were approximately 880 million international tourist arrivals recorded in 2009, marking a 4.2% decline compared to the previous year as a result of the global economic crisis (*UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2010*). Among these arrivals, countries in Europe and the Americas remained the leading destinations for international tourists. In the Asian region, China ranked fourth globally, with an estimated 50.9 million international tourist arrivals. The five countries that received the highest numbers of international visitors during that year were France, the United States, Spain, China, and Italy.

As one of the developing countries in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has demonstrated substantial potential in the tourism sector. Based on data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), the number of international tourist arrivals to Indonesia reached 5,890,000 in 2022, and nearly doubled in 2023 to 11,677,825. Among the forty-three countries identified as major sources of international tourists, the top five in 2022 were Malaysia, Singapore, Timor-

Leste, Australia, and India. In 2023, this composition shifted slightly, with Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, China, and Timor-Leste emerging as the leading source countries.

Bali, as Indonesia's premier tourist destination, also recorded a substantial increase in international tourist arrivals. According to data from the Bali Provincial Statistics Office, the number of international visitors arriving through I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport reached 2,154,040 in 2022 and rose significantly to 5,248,113 in 2023. This upward trend reaffirms Bali's position as a major attraction for international travelers visiting Indonesia. The continuous increase in tourist arrivals has generated multifaceted impacts on tourism destinations. While tourism contributes positively to economic development, employment generation, and investment opportunities, it may also give rise to challenges in socio-cultural, political, and environmental dimensions. Therefore, it is crucial to promote sustainable tourism management practices to ensure that economic benefits align with the preservation of local culture and the protection of the natural environment in tourist destinations.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

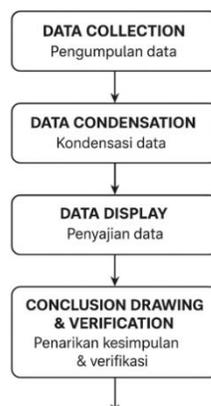
This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method conducted in Serangan Village, Bali. According to Moleong (2017:6), qualitative research aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and so on, in a holistic way and through descriptive methods using words and language, within a specific, natural context, employing various natural methods and according to Hendryadi et al. (2019:218), qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry process that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in their natural environment. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the social impacts arising from reclamation and tourism development, as well as to examine how *social carrying capacity* can serve as a framework for controlling these social impacts. The research location was determined in Serangan Village because the area has undergone significant social changes in the community's life after the reclamation project. The research was carried out over several months through main activities such as interviews, observations, and document collection.

According to (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019), the case study method effectively provides a comprehensive perspective on a specific situation by collecting data from multiple viewpoints. This research collected data using observation, documentation, in - depth interviews, and document studies. To ensure relevance and reliability, a purposive sampling technique was applied to select informants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Saunders et al., 2019). The informants included traditional leaders, village officials, tourism business actors, affected residents, and representatives from local government institutions.

Research data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation. Primary data were obtained from interviews and field observations, while secondary data were derived from books, reports, and articles relevant to the research topic, particularly concerning Serangan Village and tourism in Bali.

The purpose of descriptive research is to gather comprehensive and factual information that characterizes existing phenomena, identifies issues or assesses current conditions and practices, facilitates comparisons or evaluations, and reviews the approaches taken by others to address similar challenges, thereby enabling learning from their experiences to inform the development of strategies (Rakhmat, 2002).

Data analysis was conducted by organizing and describing the results of interviews and observations to identify patterns and meanings related to social carrying capacity. The findings were then compared with the theory of social carrying capacity to develop a social control framework that fits the local community conditions in Serangan Village. (Miles, 2014)



Picture 2.1 Interactive Analysis Model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014)



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The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, by comparing the results from various informants and data collection techniques. This research also adhered to research ethics, such as maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities, obtaining permission from local authorities, and ensuring that all processes respected local norms and cultural values.

### **3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN SERANGAN VILLAGE, BALI.**

the term *impact* according to the great dictionary of the Indonesian language (kamus besar bahasa Indonesia) is defined as "a strong influence that produces consequences (either positive or negative)." the arrival of tourists in relatively large and continuous numbers to a destination naturally exerts influence on various conditions in the host region. the influence brought by tourists to a destination is often represented by the culture prevailing in the tourists' country of origin. such research is important, as capitalizing on the determinants of pro-environmental tourist attitudes can trigger more environmentally benign behavioral intentions, which subsequently lead to more responsible tourist behavior, ultimately benefiting sustainable tourism development both nationally and internationally (Chiu, Lee, & Chen, 2014).

the culture brought by tourists can affect the behavior of the local community under certain situations and conditions. Mathieson and Wall (1982) describe culture as a conditioned element of behavior and a product of that behavior itself. according to Mathieson and Wall, there are at least twelve cultural elements that can be influenced by tourism activities on the local community, namely: handicrafts, language, traditions, gastronomy (food), art and music, history of the area (including visual reminders), types of work engaged in by residents, architecture, religion (including visible manifestations), education systems, dress and leisure activities.

Referring to Cooper (1993), the impact of tourism arises from interactions involving three key elements: tourists, the community, and the relationship between the community and tourists. Meanwhile, the impacts on the local community can be both positive and negative. Some of the consequences experienced by local communities due to the arrival of international tourists in Indonesia (Swesti, 2019) are

##### **1) Positive Impacts:**

- Preservation and protection of local culture through increased understanding and knowledge from international tourists about the culture of the local community, such as traditional dances, cultural history, and cultural buildings in a particular area.

- Improvement of the community's foreign language skills gained from interactions with visiting international tourists.

- Increased pro-environmental behaviour, refers to actions that consciously protect and sustain the environment. These behaviors, driven by individual responsibility and awareness, aim to reduce negative impacts and promote sustainable resource use (Brown et al., 2019; Li et al., 2022). (Jiang et al., 2021) highlighted the close link between pro-environmental behavior and sustainable tourism development, noting that such behavior fosters compliance with sustainability principles and regulations.

In nature-based tourism, pro-environmental behavior enhances the destination's image as environmentally friendly and contributes to its long-term appeal (Bilynets & Knezevic Cvelbar, 2022). (Bilynets et al., 2023) observed that effective environmental communication increases the likelihood of stakeholders adopting pro-environmental practices. This highlights the need for collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure that communication strategies rooted in local wisdom are successfully implemented to support sustainability goals.

- Enhanced openness of the community to newcomers, facilitating continuous cultural development through the integration of positive influences from outside regions (Saputra, 2016).

##### **3) Negative Impacts:**

- Local community responses to tourism can include conflicts of interest among stakeholders, social problems arising from the increase of illegal activities such as gambling and prostitution, as well as hostility or rejection toward tourism development due to the influx of international tourists.

- Potential cultural homogenization may occur, beginning with the erosion of local ethnic identity under the influence of Western industrial systems, national and multinational bureaucracy, consumer-oriented economies, and jet-age lifestyles.

- Processes of commodification, imitation, and profanation of local culture may occur as a result of international tourist arrival. (Shaw and Williams, in Ardika 2003:25)

- The arrival of international tourists may lead to a loss of cultural authenticity in the region, beginning with the transformation of the original cultural functions into commercial functions. This opinion is supported by Burns and Holden (1995), who observe a change in the function of culture, as culture is viewed as a commercial resource.

• The presence of international tourists may also create openings for values that are less compatible with local culture to enter the community, such as changes in local dress styles influenced by external fashions, especially in areas that traditionally have their own dress codes.

Environmental challenges are particularly prominent in nature – based tourism, where irresponsible human behavior often leads to ecosystem degradation (Martin – Ortega et al., 2022). However, (Han, 2020) argues that these issues can be mitigated through strategies that promote environmentally friendly or pro - environmental behavior —defined as conscious actions to protect and sustain the environment (Tian & Liu, 2022).

In general, the impact of tourism on Balinese culture has been evident since Bali first gained international recognition, beginning with the publication by American journalist Hickman Powell in his book *The Last Paradise: An American's 'Discovery' of Bali in the 1920s*, published in 1930. This publication gradually increased tourist arrivals to Bali, from 11,278 in 1969 to 2,546,023 in 2010. Since then, tourism has continued to act as a catalyst for change, gradually transforming the physical and social landscape of Bali. The development of various tourism facilities and infrastructure has not only affected Bali's physical environment but also influenced the local community.

Shifts in cultural values have become increasingly noticeable in Bali, particularly in the **Balinese value system**, which has become more open and permissive toward some of the negative influences brought by international tourists. One example of this can be observed in **Serangan Village**, located in the southern part of Bali.

### **Social Contact In The Context Of Tourism And Its Relation To The Behavior Of The Local Community In Serangan Village, Bali**

Serangan Village, Bali, was originally an island located in the southern part of Bali Island and administratively belongs to South Denpasar District. Serangan Village is one of the tourist destinations in Bali that has been specifically developed through a reclamation project. Before the development project, the total area of Serangan Island was 112 hectares. After the development project carried out by PT. Bali Turtle Island Development (BTID), there was a significant change in the shape of Serangan Island. This was due to the addition of land area through reclamation, amounting to 379 hectares, bringing the total area after reclamation to 491 hectares (Subadra, 2007).

From a positive perspective, both the local community and tourists found it easier to engage in tourism and other economic activities through land transportation. Subadra (2007) mentions several positive and negative impacts of the Serangan Island reclamation for the local community, including the following:

- 1) Opportunities for residents to expand residential areas.
- 2) Opportunities to engage in economically beneficial activities.
- 3) Construction of religious facilities that encourage the community to become more religious.
- 4) Local residents feel more comfortable living in the area and are less worried about potential disasters coming from the sea.
- 5) Opportunities for future tourism development and expansion.
- 6) Increased motivation among residents to send their children to higher levels of education.

With easier and faster access, the impacts have also occurred more rapidly. Alongside the positive impacts of the Serangan Island development, negative effects have also accompanied the lives of the local community in Serangan Village, Bali. The negative impacts that have occurred in this area include:

- 1) Demonstration effect, such as the use of accessories by local people that do not reflect their cultural authenticity, and the increasing consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- 2) Communal arrogance, manifested in the form of entrance fees imposed on non-Serangan residents.
- 3) Family conflicts, including cases of divorce.
- 4) Loss of community harmony, caused by gambling and alcohol-related conflicts.
- 5) Changes in residents' livelihoods, shifting from traditional occupations to other sectors.

The development of tourism in this area appears to have changed not only the physical landscape but also the social behavior of the local community. Previously, the residents of this area earned their living from fishing, but they have now shifted to the tourism sector, such as opening cafés or working as local tour guides. However, social conflicts often arise among the local residents themselves, as seen in several cases that have occurred in this area. To enter the area, everyone is required to pay an entrance fee, which unfortunately does not distinguish between tourists and non-tourists. The local authorities treat everyone entering the area as tourists, which often leads to tension among the community because people from outside Serangan feel they have the right to access the area freely.

Another social issue is that the connection between the reclaimed area and the main island of Bali has accelerated the development of Serangan as a center of tourism activities. The proliferation of cafés in the area is viewed by some residents as a trigger for social problems within the community. The growing tendency among residents to consume alcohol has also been influenced by the increasing number of cafés. Moreover, many housewives have experienced domestic conflicts because their husbands became involved in affairs with female café workers, most of whom come from outside Serangan Village.



Although the development has had positive economic impacts on the community—such as the emergence of new local businesses including equipment rentals, water sports facilities, trade, and other enterprises—it has also generated considerable negative effects. In addition to social issues, environmental problems have become a concern in this area. The island’s reclamation has altered sea currents along the southern coast, which has consequently affected the marine ecosystem and the biological composition of the surrounding waters. However, on the positive side, the development of this area has broadened the perspectives of local residents. The community has become more motivated to improve their quality of life, for instance, by encouraging their children to pursue higher levels of education (Subadra, 2007).

The social interactions occurring among the people in Serangan Village—between tourists and locals, among the local residents themselves, and even among tourists—have changed the social conditions of the community in this area. Social contact can be defined as a collection of various experiences (Cook and Sellitz, 1955) or as daily encounters with other people (Murphy, 2000). Each social contact can be positive, negative, or superficial (Fridgen, 1991). Social interactions that occur through tourism activities in a given area can have a significant impact, as demonstrated by the case of Serangan Village, Bali.

Social contact between the *host* and the *guest* also creates a clash of values that exist in the place where the interaction occurs. The people of Serangan, who in the past were not familiar with alcoholic beverages, now appear to be more permissive toward such behaviors. In addition, the improved access to the Serangan area as a result of reclamation has increased both the frequency and intensity of interactions between tourists and local residents, as well as between newcomers and locals. This, in turn, has led to changes in the community’s social behavior and lifestyle. Therefore, a framework is needed to control the social impacts of tourism activities in a given area.

#### **Control of Social Impacts of Tourism in Serangan Village, Bali**

Carrying capacity is often regarded as a management tool used to protect sites and resources from overuse. Hall and Page, in *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation* (2006:183), define social carrying capacity as “the ability of individuals and groups to tolerate others, their activities, and the level of acceptability.” The concept of social carrying capacity was first introduced by Pigram and Jenkins as:

As a framework for controlling the social impacts of tourism, the concept of social carrying capacity presented in this study is not merely a measure of the maximum utilization of resources and tourism activities involving tourists and local communities, but rather a measure of the maximum level of participation and interaction between the community and tourists within a tourism area.

This social carrying capacity can serve as a framework for limiting social contact between tourists and local residents, as well as among the residents themselves, in tourism activities—while still adhering to prevailing rules and social norms and ensuring that tourism remains an inclusive activity. The effectiveness of this framework largely depends on the involvement of local communities in the planning and development of tourism in a given area.

The carrying capacity framework can be structured within the concept of community-based tourism, and may include:

- 1) Zoning of tourism-related businesses in a particular area, especially those operated by the local community.
- 2) Establishing standard regulations for community participation in tourism activities, such as religious ceremonies, traditional and cultural performances. These rules also serve as preventive measures to avoid the commodification and commercialization of culture.
- 3) Setting age limits for workers involved in tourism-related businesses.
- 4) Developing special recreational areas for local residents who are not directly involved in tourism activities. Often, the construction of tourism infrastructure in certain areas causes conflicts with nearby residents due to decreased comfort as activities increase, while locals are unable to enjoy the facilities themselves.
- 5) Providing continuous and consistent training for local communities about the consequences of tourism development in their area and the appropriate ways for them to engage with it.
- 6) Conveying educational and persuasive messages, environmental communication can encourage all stakeholders to embrace pro-environmental behaviors, contributing to the long-term sustainability of natural attractions (He et al., 2023).
- 7)

In addition, to minimize social impacts, there are several considerations in determining the measurements or indicators of social carrying capacity, including:

- 1) Political stability and local security;
- 2) Control over population growth and urbanization;
- 3) Protection of the local way of life (preservation of the way of life);
- 4) Education and awareness programs regarding cultural differences and their potential impacts;
- 5) Adequate employment opportunities for the local community.

One example of efforts to minimize social problems in Serangan Village, Bali, is the “tahu malu” (sense of shame) social movement initiated by traditional leaders and the local government. This movement was carried out in collaboration with local security forces and has had a modest yet positive impact in reducing the social problems that have frequently occurred in the area.

In the long term, the role of the government and local community leaders is highly significant in creating a more conducive environment, especially in relation to tourism activities, as they help balance the external influences brought by tourists.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Tourism activities in a region inevitably generate various impacts—economic, environmental, and socio-cultural. One of the key issues in tourism development, particularly in the context of impact prevention, lies on the part of the tourists themselves, often referred to as “responsible travellers.” Tourists act as carriers of external cultural influences from the *guest* side. However, from the *host* side, one of the approaches that can be used to minimize these impacts is by applying limits of tolerance regarding community acceptance and participation in tourism activities, or by implementing the concept of social carrying capacity. The importance of community involvement in tourism development is also explained by Del Chiappa, Atzeni, et al. (2016), who state that policymakers and tourism destination planners must effectively involve communities in tourism planning. In other words, communities need to be positioned as subjects of development by allowing them to manage their own natural and cultural resources to effectively maintain and preserve them. The role of local governments, community leaders, and the people themselves is highly important in fostering awareness and understanding of foreign cultural influences that could potentially disrupt the social and cultural fabric of local communities. This approach provides specific boundaries for every tourism activity involving both the local community and tourists

#### 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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