

## The Covid-19 Pandemic Impact on Tourism Business in Kuta Beach Bali: A Naturalistic Qualitative Study

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on tourism in Kuta beach, Badung regency, Bali Province. This is a naturalistic qualitative inquiry with the purposive sampling method used for the informants. As the key instruments are the researchers through in-depth interviews, observations, and literature studies. The descriptive interpretative was applied to understand the tourism condition in Kuta beach due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings show the pandemic affected tourist activities in Kuta Beach, including businesses such as surfboard training and rental, restaurants, and accommodation. The pandemic impacted income declines, tourism businesses closure, and layoffs. Business actors expect the pandemic to end soon to increase foreign tourists to Bali. Even though there are domestic tourists who visit, but feel not effective in recovering their business. Insights from this research also found the local government, with support from the central government in Jakarta, try replaced tourism as the leading sector with agriculture.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Naturalistic Phenomenon, Tourism Business

## **INTRODUCTION**

Bali island depends on tourism as the main source of income due to its minimal industrial potential compared to Java, Sumatra, and other islands. Therefore, it has been a popular tourist destination among foreign countries for centuries (Last, 1955). The island's tourism development is iconic and excellent (Anom, Suryasih, Nugroho, & Mahagangga, 2017). Badung is among Bali's regencies, where most areas, especially the South, are global attractions. These include Nusa Dua, Uluwatu, Kuta, Legian, Canggu, and Seminyak beaches. Kuta beach has been Bali's tourism pioneer since its discovery as a tourist destination in the 20th century. The beach includes a natural attraction with sunset and nightlife and various tourism industries as a major tourist destination (Astawa & Suardani, 2017). Its beautiful beaches and sunsets make it a major tourist destination. The resident's hospitality and vacationing convenience enhance the tourist's unforgettable impression. The beautiful nature and unique community and culture increase tourists. Most tourists visit Kuta beach, which is considered a second home by some Australian foreigners. The beach attracts tourists with exciting activities such as watching the sunset, surfing, etc. The business in Kuta is rapidly growing, opening opportunities for locals, newcomers, and external investors. There is increased demand for accommodations, support facilities, and artificial attractions, including games, sports, shopping centers, and night entertainment venues. The economic benefits like improved welfare promotes local and external entrepreneurs settling in Bali and foreign investors. Kuta's local government depends on tourism for revenue (PAD) through hotel-restaurant taxes and other levies (Anom, Nugroho, & Mahagangga, 2016; Mahagangga, Suryawan, Anom, & Kusumanegara, 2018; Mahagangga, Anom, & Negara, 2021). Bali's tourism provided IDR 75 trillion in foreign exchange in 2019, contributing 28.9% of the total national foreign exchange at IDR 270 trillion (Balipost, 2020).

Until the tourism industry was mostly affected by the pandemic due to the law imposed by the government, which restricted access to communities, thereby making it possible for people to visit tourist regions. Therefore, tourism-related industries such as hoteliers, airlines, restaurants, tourist attraction managers, souvenir centers, travel agents, and tour guides experienced a decline in revenue (Subawa, Widhiasthini, Astawa, Dwiatmadja, & Permatasari, 2021). The pandemic caused unforeseen global health problems and economic emergencies in 2020. The travel and tourism sector was the most affected by the operationalization of flights, hotels closure, and travel restrictions, promoting virtual activities (UNWTO, 2020).

The pandemic affected the tourism business in Kuta beach, resulting in empty beaches, poppies alley, and Legian Street. The tourism-supporting facilities, such as accommodation, were closed and sold because the owners could not survive. There was an over-contract of shops and kiosk ownership selling souvenirs or tourist products (most were closed). Mahagangga, Anom, Suryawan, and Negara (2020) noted that Bali's tourism sector declined by 93% in 2019 due to the pandemic. Bali implemented tourist restrictions from China, Italy, the Vatican, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, England, and various South Korean cities. The highest decline reached 93.24% in April 2020, indicating the outbreak in Bali.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, marking the first global pandemic since the swine flu in 2009. There were 110,602,492 global infections, with 85,469,351 recoveries and 2,444,738 deaths on 18

February 2021 (WHO, 2021). It caused the acute respiratory disease called the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) (Stawicki et al., 2020). WHO (2021) released the COVID-19 variants after the first case in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in late December 2019. The variants included alpha, beta, gamma, delta, lambda, kappa, eta, iota, mu, and omicron.

The pandemic negatively and significantly impacted Indonesian tourism. This problem should be resolved because the national economy depends on tourism. It provides a broad strategic aspect, increasing foreign exchange, creating jobs, and stimulating the tourism industry's growth and development in various countries. The economic growth contributions are through foreign currency income and international investments (Purba, Fathiah, & Steven, 2021; Shao, Hu, Lou, Huo, & Zhao, 2021; Esquivias Sugiharti, Rohmawati, Setyorani, & Anindito, 2021).

The impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has greatly disrupted the tourism value chain. Rahmiati and Yustina (2022) state that the value chain adds to a better understanding of tourism by highlighting how to establish and manage effective local networks. The pressure on the tourism industry was most evident in the large drop in international tourist arrivals, with massive cancellations and reduced bookings. The decline also occurred due to a slowdown in domestic travel, mainly due to the reluctance of the Indonesian people to travel, worried about the impact of Covid-19. The decline in the tourism and travel business has had an impact on MSME businesses and disrupted employment. Even though tourism is a labor-intensive sector that absorbs more than 13 million workers. This figure does not include the derivative impact or multiplier effect that follows, including the derivative industry that is formed underneath (Sugihamretha et al., 2020).

Bali is very concerned with the development of the tourism sector. The impact of Covid-19 has had a major impact on various sectors, especially on tourism actors and businesses (Purwahita, Wardhana, Ardiasa, & Winia, 2021). Bali, which has been familiar with tourism since the Dutch colonial period, has really felt the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, several research results show that Bali tourism has several times been threatened by many factors, such as politics, the economy, security, and health (Anom et al., 2017; Mahagangga et al., 2020; Mahagangga et al., 2021; Vandenberg & Mahanggangga, 2021). But the Covid-19 pandemic is felt to be the worst for local tourism actors and local governments in Bali.

The Indonesian government's ability to recover the creative economy sector during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out through tax relaxation and loans, social and health assistance, and capacity building. The research results show that the expected results are far from satisfactory. Government intervention in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was ineffective because the government was weak in formulating creative economy recovery policies according to the needs of creative economy actors and accurate data. These findings indicate that the central and regional governments must increase their collaborative capacity to improve creative economy recovery programs in accordance with regional aspirations (Rosyadi, Sabiq, Ahmad, & Nuryanti, 2022).

The ability of the local government in Bali also shows that there are difficulties in dealing with a pandemic that is full of uncertainties. Bali tourism, which has been affected by the pandemic, has caused an economic contraction with the survival of 3 leading sectors apart from tourism, namely agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. Hence, the discourse for decades of the synergy of tourism and agriculture in Bali may be

realized. To be precise, the development of the tourism sector which has been proven capable of providing prosperity for the people of Bali for the previous decades must remain the locomotive of development by not neglecting the agricultural, fisheries, and livestock sectors (Setyari, Widanta, Sarjana, & Gupta, 2022).

The pandemic effects on Kuta beach should be observed among the global impacts because Bali tourism has never experienced a pandemic. Therefore, this study explained the pandemic impact on tourism at Kuta beach. The locals, consisting of native Balinese and migrants depending on the tourism sector, should acknowledge the pandemic effects, including the lack of foreign tourists and income, affecting their livelihoods to provide for their families, pay school fees, and other necessities. Tourist visits decreased, affecting the locals' source of income, who should realize the effects and implement survival strategies. There was a lack of government, donors, and other support, especially for tourism practitioners experiencing direct pandemic effects. However, the support might ineffectively match the living costs compared to before the pandemic. Most people showed apathy towards the government, and some doubted the pandemic dangers.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The qualitative paradigm used a naturalistic approach to understand, present, interpret, and acquire meanings for rigorous validity verification (Anom & Mahagangga, 2019). Interpretivism believes that individuals create a society's reality (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and understand a phenomenon from their experiences. Therefore, in-depth face-to-face interviews provided the primary data (Fan, Buhalis, & Lin, 2019).

A qualitative tourism study follows the qualitative theme evolution by Denzin and Lincoln to further develop tourism and cultural tourism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Furthermore, most tourism studies focused on Bali's economic growth, ignoring the ideological tourism aspects to solve various problems (Anom, Mahagangga, Suryawan, & Koesbardiati, 2020). The qualitative method provides a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and political tourism aspects (Jennings, 2018; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Riley & Love, 2000).

The purposive sampling method determined informants based on certain considerations, following the objectives, not population representation (Koentjaraningrat, 1983; Salim, 2006; Rahmadi, 2011). A qualitative study is called "internal sampling" because it does not generalize but obtains a depth of meaning (Yin, 1987).

**Table 1.** Profile of Informants

Gender	Initial	Age	Job
Female	A	52	Hotel owner
Female	B	58	Local informal merchant
Male	C	45	Restaurant owner
Male	D	40	Surfboard rental owner
Male	E	49	Tourist driver

Source: Researcher team, 2021

The informants included the locals in Kuta Beach with tourist businesses for two years. The interview protocol included four parts; the informants expressed their experiences

during the pandemic. Second, they provided their pre and post-pandemic opinions. Third, they provided their survival strategies. Finally, they expressed their hopes for the government, tourists, and others. Five informants included two hotel owners, a surfboard rental owner, a local merchant, and a tourist driver.

The study period was one month, focusing on Kuta Beach Legian Bali between December 2020 and December 2021, using the researcher's key instrument (Moleong, 2007). There were three data sources; focus observations (Sugiyono, 2008), in-depth interviews (Jennings, 2005), and literature studies (Zen, 2004). The qualitative data analysis revealed multiple realities and relationships between the researcher and the informants. Furthermore, a qualitative study is sensitive and adapts to various reciprocal influences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Muhadjir, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The data analysis began with field observations, interviews, and literature studies. The observations were through descriptions, while the interviews included the informant's information. The literature study included references, comparisons, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis cross-check. The second process referred to the results as qualitative data. The last stage before data presentation was interpretation, which avoids descriptive data. It combines practical experience, methodology mastery such as concepts, theories, field methods, sensitivity, good informant's relations, depth of data, and discovery of meaning, study focus mastery as state of the art, and researchers' ability to understand emics like a native point of view, and ethics such as researchers' interpretation of emic based on their expertise.

The importance of critical multilogicality is not to win knowledge but to nurture and regenerate the interest of an individual/institution/phenomenon. Furthermore, the interpretations should be inherently dialogic, synergistic, and open-ended. They are incomplete and unfinished and provide deeper contextual enlightenment (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015).

## **RESULTS**

Bali's tourism industry has experienced various crises with direct or indirect effects, especially on Kuta Beach. These incidents are caused by various factors, such as nature, politics, war, disease, endemic, pandemics, and others (Mahagangga, 2017; Sudira & Mudana, 2021).

The pandemic affected global tourism in Indonesia, especially Kuta beach. The impacts were fatal, despite Bali's previous experiences in tourism hiatus. The effects were caused by the stakeholder's lack of crisis preparations, poor coordination in all recovery components, and being in a comfort zone. The conditions were ideal for tourism businesses' income, local governments through hotel and restaurant taxes and levies, and the central government through state foreign exchange and airport taxes; hence the difficulties in accepting the pandemic reality.

Bali's Ngurah Rai Airport declined by 100% to 12 in August 2020 compared to August 2019 at 602,457, while Soekarno Hatta Airport decreased by -98.22%. The negative growth impacted the tourism sector, relying on foreign tourists, including the formal, informal, and MSMEs in the tourism sector (BPS RI, 2021).

**Table 2.** Number of Foreign Tourist Visits in Bali in 2018-2020

Month	2018	2019	2020
January	358.065	455.570	528.883
February	452.423	437.456	363.937
March	492.678	449.569	156.876
April	516.777	477.069	-
May	528.512	486.602	-
June	544.550	549.516	-
July	624.366	604.323	-
August	573.766	606.412	-
September	555.903	590.398	-
October	517.889	567.967	-
November	406.725	497.925	-
December	498.819	552.404	-
Total	6.070.473	6.275.210	1.049.696
Growth (%)	6.54	3.37	-

Source: Statistics Bureau of Bali Province, 2020

Tourist visits have declined by 50% since the government's pandemic announcement in March. This impacted Bali's economy, which depends on tourism. Table 2 shows that the lack of foreign tourists affected the economy. The pandemic affected Badung Regency, with various tourist accommodations and destinations such as Kuta beach. Most service companies, such as hotels and restaurants closed due to a lack of income, affecting their living. The outbreak had the worst effects in tourism history, reducing the business in Kuta Beach. Tourism businesses such as surfboard training and rental, restaurants, poppies stalls, and accommodations experienced unprecedented impact.

The surfboard training and rental business offer surfing sports training services and rental facilities with various packages at different rates. They are suitable for beginners and intermediate levels aged 6 to 60. The facilities attract ten customers on busy days and approximately five on weekdays. The weekday's hourly rental rates for a surfboard were IDR 150,000 to 200,000 before the pandemic. The hourly holiday rate was higher at IDR 300,000 to 400,000. The holiday prices increase was due to a large number of tourists enjoying the waves. Agents offered 5-7 surfboards to domestic tourists daily during the school holidays, compared to 2-3 surfboards for foreign tourists. This increase occurred in early June, with 20%-50% of domestic tourists during the national school holiday.

There were eight surf training and rental businesses of various types, including Odysseys, Gaby, Gecko Surfer, Wave, Pro, and Sunkissed Surf School. The pandemic caused an income decline in early 2020, requiring business people to implement survival strategies. Mr D, a surfboard business actor, expressed these difficulties, making some of his friends close their businesses temporarily. Additionally, some of his staff survived independently, as stated below :

"...I permitted my staff to open as normal without guaranteeing them salaries like before the pandemic... this is a difficult situation with local government and traditional villages regulations on the opening and closing of Kuta beach to reduce the coronavirus spread..."

Mr D's views were correct; with less than three surfboard rental places surviving, some entrepreneurs took turns in opening the rental space. Several foreigners rented surfboards in the morning and afternoon, including Bali students and expatriates. Mr D expressed that he opened his surfboard rental as he lacked other things to do. The staff was unable to perform other jobs, as explained below:

"We live, learn, and understand surfing without considering other business or work. Therefore, despite the ban on visiting the beach restricting activities, I visit and enjoy Kuta beach while waiting to rent the surfboards or talk to someone instead of staying home without a job!"

He suggested that his job provided income because it was materially and psychologically comfortable. It was easier to earn before the pandemic, requiring only opening and waiting for tenants. Apart from that, Mr C is a restaurant businessman who is also impacted by the pandemic. The pandemic greatly impacted his three restaurants in Kuta, Nusa Dua, and Ubud. It was not easy to survive; hence some innovations need to be implemented. The Central Statistics Agency in Bali Province showed 19 restaurants not located in a hotel/villa within Kuta Beach. All restaurants should adapt to the ongoing pandemic to avoid closure due to the inability to pay employees and operational costs.

Mr C stated that he started the restaurant business in 2000-2001, experiencing a different crisis like the Bali bombings in 2002 and the Mount Agung eruption in 2017. However, the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 was the worst crisis. Mr. C stated the following:

"...I do not know how long the pandemic will continue and cannot account for the personal amount of capital I have used to cover operational costs and salaries. The conditions are quiet, despite the reduced number of residents and expatriates... the important thing is to maintain the restaurant and employees!"

Mr C avoided layoffs for the waiters, management, and chefs. He implemented strategies such as reducing and alternating working hours, and wages, removing service fees, and survival ideas. For example, promoting online food orders and beverages and creating practical, simple, and affordable menus for local consumers, tourists, and expatriates.

Mrs A is a businesswoman owning a popular hotel in Kuta beach but lost the hotel due to the pandemic. The hotel was sold at a substandard price to cover bank debts. The hotel's pre-pandemic market price was estimated at IDR 11 billion, but it was sold for IDR 2 billion to pay the debts. The following shows Mrs. A's statement:

"...I did not expect this situation, the employees lost their jobs, and I went bankrupt. My calculations were wrong because there was no income. The hotel attracted foreign tourists from Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. We had no guests from mid-2020".

The Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association chairman, Haryadi Sukamdani, stated that 1,642 hotels closed due to the pandemic, including 501 in West Java, 281 in Bali, and 100 in Jakarta. They closed due to a lack of guests and empty food and meeting businesses. Indonesia experienced the pandemic impact, implementing various policies to inhibit the spread and improve economic and community welfare. The government recommended that people stay, work, and study from home, affecting the hotel industry to bankruptcy (Diayudha, 2020).

Mrs A stated that her hotel closure was due to a lack of guests and bankruptcy. She admitted that the central and local governments implemented recovery efforts. She implemented promotions and reduced prices like other hotels, with a 70% decrease in nightly rates. This attracted the local Balinese and domestic tourists to stay or work in Bali, as in mid-2021 the central government launched the work from the Bali movement due to the online working system suppressing the pandemic. However, the results were below expectations and could not overcome the gross operating loss. This caused losses due to the inability to cover the hotel's operational costs. Mrs A stated the following:

“...closing the hotel was the last alternative to save what could be accomplished. I have assets such as land and a house, but the price is minimal. I am silently waiting for the momentum to start a new business...!”

Mrs A sold her luxury vehicles, such as Porsche, Ferrari, Toyota Alphard, and others. She lacks new business options and is looking for a safe point while relying on savings or deposits to sustain her family. She avoids risks and is easing the trauma in the business world due to the pandemic.

Mrs B has been a trader in Kuta beach since the 1980s and has survived the pandemic. She offers hair braiding services and Balinese souvenirs. She worked from 9 AM and complained about her minus income as follows:

“The lack of guests is due to the pandemic. There are only a few visitors, but luckily my children are college graduates and are working. Besides, I have a private employee and a contractor that make me survive the pandemic...”

Her husband is a retired security guard, and her children have a steady income, but she does not like staying home. Most works was abandoned, providing undergraduates housing, and daily living expenses, including customs as local's obligations. Mrs B continued:

“I know there are no guests (foreign tourists), but the domestic guests provide income instead of staying home. I hope that the beach will open for the guests (foreign tourists).”

Mrs B explained that domestic tourists could visit the beach despite the government's social restrictions. Domestic tourists use private vehicles from big cities in Java, such as Jakarta and Surabaya. Moreover, young people in Jakarta enjoy the nightlife spots every weekend because Jakarta's nightclubs close at 10 PM since October 2021. They arrive on Thursday or Friday night and return on Sunday.

Mr E is a tourist transportation driver who has worked in the tourism industry for a long time. He was frustrated by the pandemic, with reduced income while paying for his



three children's education. He pays monthly installments for his vehicle. He stated the following:

"The government hesitates to receive foreign guests, but tourism should be open to improve economic conditions. It was easier to earn IDR 200 thousand to 400 thousand daily before the pandemic, especially IDR 50 thousand. It is difficult to earn money for food, children's needs, and religious rituals."

Mr E joined the online car rental to make a living as gojek and grab (most of his friends follow this job). Some of his colleagues' cars were confiscated due to pending loan installments. Some traded necessities by the roadside, such as coffee and young coconut ice, while some started farming and fishing. This situation really happened with the majority of tourist practitioners in Bali.

The main point of the informants' opinion mentioned that they were under pressure during the pandemic outbreak. They want the situation will require recovery soon because tourism as a tourist industry is their source of living. It is unthinkable that they will leave the tourism business and try to become farmers or fishermen. They need support to facilitate what they will do to survive until the condition is good enough.

The pandemic impacted the tourism value chain, including small and medium enterprises in the tourism and creative economy sector. This industry experienced high number of foreign tourists decline, airline tickets and hotel cancellations, and decreased bookings. Domestic travel reduced, especially domestic tourists and people's reluctance to travel. This affected the tourism and travel business, which impacted micro-enterprises, informal workers, and employment opportunities. Indonesian tourism is a labor-intensive sector with over 13 million workers, leading to the multiplier effect, including its derivative industries (Sugihamretha, 2020). The affected sectors included accommodation, food and beverage, processing (especially textiles), and trade, with many informal workers. Most entrepreneurs went bankrupt due to financial constraints during the pandemic (International Labour Organization, 2020). The limited capital was due to unequal asset access (Kende-Robb, 2019).

Most industries were affected except the health sector, pharmacy, social activities, information and communication, clean water supply, waste management, and recycling waste. The most affected sectors included transportation, travel, warehouses, accommodation, food, and tourism. The 2019 national labor force survey showed that 11.83% of workers are in the tourism industry. Furthermore, tourism contributed to 4% of the annual GDP (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).

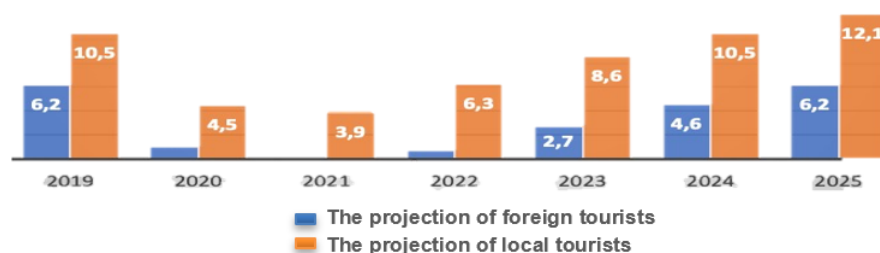
The government adopted global developments to manage the pandemic. It implemented strategies from 2020 to the post-pandemic, especially in the tourism sector. The former Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Wishnutama Kusbandio, implemented initial strategies (December 2020) for the new Minister, Sandiaga Uno (December 2020-present).

First, the innovation strategy was implemented in infrastructure, culture, culinary, fashion, and other creative economies. Second, the adaptation strategy implemented cleanliness, health, safety, and environment in tourist destinations. Third, a collaboration strategy emphasizes the collaboration of tourism stakeholders to manage the threatened jobs, reducing their income to a negative (Anggarini, 2021).

## DISCUSSION

This field study presented the COVID-19 pandemic attack against the tourism business in Kuta beach, Bali. The outbreak was used as a metaphor to show the pandemic as a common enemy treated like a combat strategy. The correct strategy includes understanding the situation, especially regarding the stagnant tourism development in Kuta beach, Badung regency, Bali province. Bali's provincial government, facilitated by the central government, implemented tourism recovery strategies. This improved the economic condition of the Balinese community, especially in Kuta beach. The local governments experienced challenges in planning, implementing, and executing work program strategies were directly affecting the lower-class, such as Kuta beach practitioners.

**Figure 1.** Projection of Tourist Numbers to Bali (in a million)



Source: National Development Planning Agency, 2021

Bali's provincial government, facilitated by the central government to implement tourism recovery strategies. According to Figure 1, the government has a prediction for the next four years (the blue chart show foreign tourist, and the yellow chart show domestic tourist). The local governments experienced challenges in planning, implementing, and executing work program strategies affecting the lower class. It appears to disregard the history of tourism development processes and restoration. Its future economic road map replaces the tourism sector. Moreover, they mention that:

“Based on the leading sectors, the primary sector (agriculture) can be developed because it is the upstream sector providing raw materials for the agro-based industry and is important in the economy. The added value showed that the primary sector had the second-highest contribution to the GRDP of Bali Province (15.1% in 2020), following accommodation and food and beverage (18.4% in 2020). Furthermore, the livestock sub-sector had a high forward linkage, GRDP contribution, the proportion of labor, and comparative advantage (base sub-sector). Other dominating sub-sectors included food crops and the annual and seasonal plantation, which can be developed based on future linkages and high labor proportion. Additionally, seasonal and annual horticulture are potential sectors with high comparative advantage (base sub-sector) and workforce proportion.”

From the perspective above, Bali transformed from the primary to the tertiary sector, shifting from agriculture to tourism in the 1980s. This marginalized the farmers and the agricultural sector (including Subak, especially South Bali). The supporting or formal sectors include private employees and civil servants. Tourism is Bali's second

economic priority after agriculture (Mantra, 1993; Nehen & Pitana, 1994; Picard, Wahyo, Couteau, & Wisatsana, 2006; Anom, 2016).

Agricultural land conversion is high, indicated by a reduced number of farmers. The central government facilitated land acquisition, credit applications, and tourism investment permits, increasing tourism in the 1980s. More investments in the hotel industry in Java (Jakarta) and Bali led to large-scale tourism resort infrastructure (Murdiastuti, Rohman, & Suji, 2014). Increased tourism limits Bali to meet the agricultural, livestock, and fishery products needs. Therefore, they are supplied from the surrounding areas such as Banyuwangi, Jember, Lumajang, Madura, Lombok, and others, including rice, vegetables, fruits like bananas, banana leaves, coconuts for religious ceremonies, meat, eggs, and other necessities.

Anthropologically, people's mindsets practicing traditional agrarian Geneology experience a cultural leap. Sociologically, there is a struggle between the old and young, but developments improve the older generation's view on tourism or the formal sector, embracing that the agricultural sector is inefficient. Therefore, the younger generation avoids the agricultural sector. Parents provide their children's education through agriculture, plantations, and animal husbandry to succeed in other sectors, including tourism.

It is difficult to continue with the agricultural sector as a discourse. However, pursuing it as a road map will increase the budgets of strategies and work programs. This shows an effort from Bali's provincial government to manage the pandemic. The return policy to the agricultural sector is difficult considering the tourism ideology embedded in the last century, discouraging changing the Balinese society structure and habitus, especially the younger generation unfamiliar with the agricultural sector.

If we look at China, the government has a strategy for tourism recovery by building tourism synergists. First, four themes are identified: prophylactic measures, tourism recovery and development, policy support, and departmental management. The government needs to strike the right balance between epidemic prevention and tourism promotion. Second, policy focus for tourism recovery varies by region within China. Eastern China attaches more importance to resuming production and preferential tax policies; central China emphasizes epidemic prevention and control and financial support, and western China focuses on the construction of tourism projects and subsidies, by contrast. The study of government policies is a necessity. Policies provide government and tourism marketers with information on how to respond to social and economic changes (Wang & Ap, 2013).

The data showed that tourism practitioners or business actors in Kuta beach hoped that foreign tourists would soon increase. They viewed that the government was slow, including the continuous travel restrictions. Some doubted the pandemic considering it a political and certain individual conspiracy, such as vaccines, antigen testing, PCR, and others. Political interests drive these discordant voices among middle to lower-class practitioners.

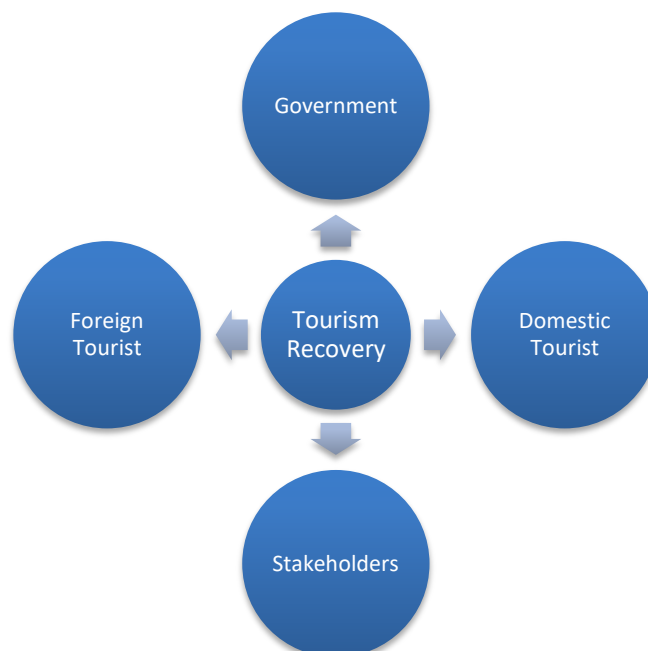
Figure 1 shows the lack of socialization among tourism actors, including Kuta beach. The community speculated that tourism would resume in October and December 2021. This was enforced by the central government, granting tourist visas. Openness, honesty, and support through concrete steps could improve the tourism community and support the government. Presenting the community with the data shown in figure 1 would surprise them. However, it educated on maturity because the data projected

domestic tourist's growth that should be adapted in services, products, and tourist attractions.

The Balinese community has strong customs, unions, and traditions and should avoid pragmatic interests and political influence. The community's strength indicating solidarity and consensus, should be realized and interpreted for sustainable tourism development. They should consider the next generation, not economics, politics, and current groups (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020; Polyzos, 2020; Vandenberg & Mahagangga, 2020).

Lack and doubt of government response will impact stability and security. Negative issues discredit the government, weakening the public trust and increasing chaos due to "entrails" problems or threatened welfare. This condition will exacerbate Bali's future problems. The region's tourism will be slowly restored through professional collaboration and cultural consensus of the Balinese community and strong capital, aligning and resetting the vision, and adapting innovative and creative work programs. The content can be adjusted through information technology to the target market. Furthermore, Bali is famous and demanded by tourists for its unique culture, nature preservation, and people's friendliness (Anom, Mahagangga, Suryawan, & Koesbardiati, 2020; Mahagangga, Anom, Suryawan, & Negara, 2021; Wulandari & Mahagangga, 2021).

**Figure 2.** Focus on Tourism Recovery Tourist



Source: Researcher team illustration, 2023

Learning from history, exogenous shock events have a significant impact on the micro and macro levels whilst stimulating technological innovation (Miao & Popp, 2014). Citizens are also advised to practice social distancing while many others are self-isolating themselves as a protective precautionary measure. Although the government imperatives are temporary, the overall containment of the pandemic may take longer for the situation to revert to normal (Kwok & Koh, 2021).

Bali's tourism development, especially in Badung regency (Kuta beach), has experienced external influences since its introduction by the Dutch colonial government in the 1900s to the compromise stage in 2012; hence is affected by the global tourism market. The post-pandemic tourism development will depend on the market, multinational conglomerates and tour operator networks, Jakarta's central government, and UNWTO. Strong external influences can cause positive evolution, adapted by internal tourism actors in Kuta beach and Badung regency (Bali) (Mahagangga et al., 2021).

According to figure 2, tourism recovery should be prioritized through communication, coordination, collaboration, transparency, and concrete steps for tourism stakeholders, government, and people directly affected by the pandemic. For example, first, the prioritized government budgets can stimulate the lower class economy, including the banks facilitating debtors' guarantees and low interests. Second, the government encourages tourist practitioners to do tourism planning and use it when the pandemic is over. Many cultures of tourism potential in Bali do not contribute to tourism, such as the traditional myth that correlated with a historical place, social activities, traditional medicine, philosophy, and others. Every conventional village in Bali has a legend that will provide many variations of tourist packages (tourist packages based on local wisdom). In the last 20 years, this has begun to be forgotten because cultural tourism attractions compete with artificial tourist attractions according to market demand, including starting to forget the quality of tourism and pursuit of growth, such as the quantity of tourism.

Bali has the slowest economic recovery than other provinces because it only relies on tourism. Therefore, people from the recovered provinces provide a potential market to be fully realized. There are prospective types of tourism, such as wellness, pilgrimage, religion, sports, gastronomy tourists, and culinary for domestic tourists that have not been optimized. Bali's provincial government should restore tourism instead of focusing on other sectors. Despite the theoretical perspective, it has future development prospects. The government province of Bali, including the central government in Jakarta, was alarmed due to the increased demands for an immediate solution. Therefore, the solution should be based on the data, not only on theoretical approaches. Many academics, practitioners, and other parties try to assume positively that the pandemic will soon pass. In this case, referring to figure 2, the government's focus should remain on tourism recovery, not switching to other sectors, which seem like a diversion to spend the government budget. Since the pandemic has not subsided, it is wise to do tourism planning by trying not to repeat past mistakes in Bali tourism.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research above can be concluded that the importance of stimulating business people directly affected by the pandemic. The stimulus includes a physical or non-physical, motivating unfavorable economic conditions. Physical stimuli include monthly cash assistance (currently irregular) and ease of bank capital. Non-physical stimuli include communication by listening to the problems, collaboration, and finding solutions. The pandemic can effectively be managed through quality and sustainable tourism awareness, including the domestic tourist market. It includes product innovations, tourist attractions, local food menus, and domestic tour packages. Traditional villages can spearhead socio-cultural harmony in synergy with official villages as a government extension at lower levels.

The tourism stakeholders, including the government, should focus on tourism recovery instead of replacing the leading sector. Agricultural sector development is effective but seems utopia geographically, socially, culturally, and psychologically. Building the agricultural sector with various work programs will open Bali to foreign tourists. Therefore, costly agricultural programs are avoided, and people return to the tourism sector because it is easier and faster to earn income than farming.

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