

# Wellness Tourism in Bali: Is it Possible?

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## Abstract

Bali is known as a leading tourist destination abroad, with various attractions that attract both international and local tourists. Among these attractions, Wellness Tourism has emerged as the top choice for tourists in Bali. Wellness Tourism aims not only to promote health and wellness but also to offer unique and valuable experiences for tourists. However, despite its popularity, there has been no structured and systematic effort to integrate mental health-based tourism concepts. In addition, preserving the sacred values of local communities is important to maintain Balinese cultural heritage and wisdom. Implementing health tourism in the wrong way can threaten to undermine these sacred values, highlighting the importance of using the right marketing mix strategy. To find out more about this, a qualitative study was carried out using purposive sampling, involving observation, interviews and documentation. Analysis was carried out using NVivo software. The findings show that the development of sustainable health tourism in Bali has gone well, showing the effectiveness of the marketing mix approach without any manipulation.

**Keywords:** *Marketing Mix, Health Tourism, Sustainability.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

Bali is one of the regions in Indonesia consisting of the main island, namely Bali Island, as well as several small islands around it. These small islands include Nusa Penida Island located southeast of Bali Island. The total area of Bali Island is 5633 KM<sup>2</sup>. Bali is widely renowned as an international tourist destination despite being a small province in Indonesia. Various tourist destinations in Bali attract both foreign and domestic tourists. Data indicates that direct visits by foreign tourists to Bali Province in October 2022 reached 305,244 visits, an increase of 4.84% from the previous month. Tourists from Australia led the visits to Bali in that month. Bali is popular among tourists as a must-visit destination, both for local and international tourists. One of the popular tourist destinations in Bali is Kuta Beach, famous for its stunning sunset.

In addition to Kuta Beach, there are other destinations such as Tanah Lot Beach, which has the Tanah Lot temple, the Hindu worship center in Bali. Bali also has lakes that are favorites of foreign tourists, such as Lake Batur around Mount Batur Kintamani. Furthermore, Bali is also known for Wellness Tourism, promoting health and fitness while enjoying holidays. Bali is projected as a leading destination for Wellness Tourism.

Some places in Bali offer wellness tourism packages, such as Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala in Bangli. The ritual of *melukat* is one of the activities favored by tourists in Bali. Another famous destination is Pura Tirta Empul in Gianyar, which is also a popular place to perform the *melukat* ritual.

Although Bali is highly potential to be developed as a wellness tourism destination, efforts to develop the concept of mental health-based tourism have not been fully implemented in a structured and systematic manner. Furthermore, the sacred values and local wisdom must be preserved for the sustainability of Balinese culture. Errors in implementing wellness tourism pose risks to damaging these sacred values. Therefore, further research is needed to optimize the potential of wellness tourism in Bali.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Wellness tourism is a part of health tourism that combines tourism services with healthcare services to promote health and fitness. Its main objective is to maintain and improve physical and mental health through activities such as spa therapy, yoga, and meditation. There are five pillars in wellness tourism: physical, mental, and emotional well-being; nutrition and healthy eating; spiritual exploration; and holistic healing.

Wellness tourism destinations provide various activities and facilities for tourists, including (1) Yoga, a practice to unite individual understanding with the higher, transcendent, and divine. It involves focusing the mind and controlling the body to achieve balance and harmony. (2) Meditation, a practice to focus and clear the mind with the aim of achieving mental tranquility and balance. It helps in developing good habits and enhancing understanding of life. (3) Melukat, a ritual of self-purification in Hindu belief, often performed in sacred places such as temples or sanctified bathing areas, to attain goodness and inner peace. (4) Trekking, a journey exploring nature by walking through less traveled routes. It allows tourists to enjoy the beauty of nature and physical challenges. (5) Spa, a service of treatment or care using water (hydrotherapy) to maintain body health and fitness. (6) Snorkeling: an activity of diving on the water surface using a diving mask, snorkel, and fins to see underwater scenery. It is an activity that can be enjoyed by everyone, without having to be proficient swimmers. All these activities provide a refreshing and comprehensive experience for tourists seeking physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

The second theoretical foundation is about marketing. Marketing is a series of processes to create, communicate, and exchange valuable offers for customers. Understanding customer needs, developing quality products, pricing, distribution, and effective promotion are important in selling products. The marketing mix, according to Kotler and Armstrong, consists of seven main factors: (1) Product: Everything that meets customer needs, including tourism products that can be individual products or package products. (2) Price: The amount of money exchanged by customers for the benefits of a product, with the goal of profit orientation, volume, image, or price stability. (3) Place: Transaction location and industry activities to reach customer markets. (4) Promotion: Efforts to convey information about products to customers and attract their interest. (5) People: Employees who perform production and marketing activities with enthusiasm in business. (6) Physical environment: Environmental factors that influence customer perceptions of products, such as

decoration, lighting, and aroma. (7) Process: Methods and activities used in providing products or services to customers, from ordering to delivery. The success of selling products is highly influenced by the right marketing strategy and marketing mix that meets market needs. There are also other supporting theories such as tourism destinations, market segmentation, target markets, market positioning, sustainability, and tourism sustainability.

### **C. METHOD**

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach with inductive analysis, primarily using phenomenology to understand the researcher's direct experiences in describing observed phenomena. The research locations are focused on Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala and Pura Tirta Empul in Bali. The operational definition includes key concepts such as Wellness Tourism, Marketing Mix, and Sustainability relevant to tourism development on the island. Data collection processes are conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation, with the participation of tourists, spiritual guides, tour guides, and community leaders selected purposively. Data analysis utilizes the Miles and Huberman model, involving data reduction techniques, data display, and conclusion drawing. Verification of authenticity is carried out through source and technique triangulation to ensure reliable analysis results in the context of tourism development in Bali.

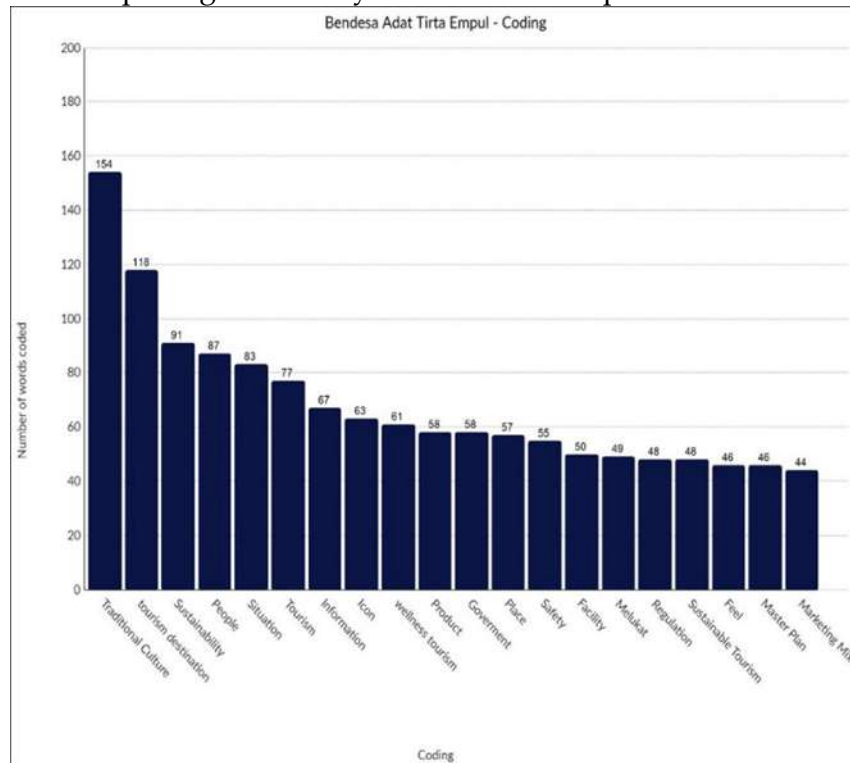
### **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The observation results indicate that the locations of Pura Tirta Empul and Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala attract many tourists with their natural beauty and rich melukat tradition. At Pura Tirta Empul, visitors can perform the melukat ritual in the sacred springs believed to have physical and mental healing properties. Both local and foreign tourists frequently visit this location. There are a total of 26 springs in this area. The melukat ritual can be conducted by Hindus and non-Hindus, but must adhere to the rules of Pura Tirta Empul, such as entering the temple area, wearing a sarong to cover the lower body, and using a sash tied around the waist. Women are especially required not to be menstruating.

On the other hand, at Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala, tourists can enjoy two beautiful waterfalls and experience harmony with nature. Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala has nine springs used for the melukat ritual. These springs are divided into two separate locations, with seven springs at the top and two springs located below the riverbank. Tourists can also take photos in front of the temple entrance, which has bells on top. Additionally, there are towering temples or shrines with nine spouts.

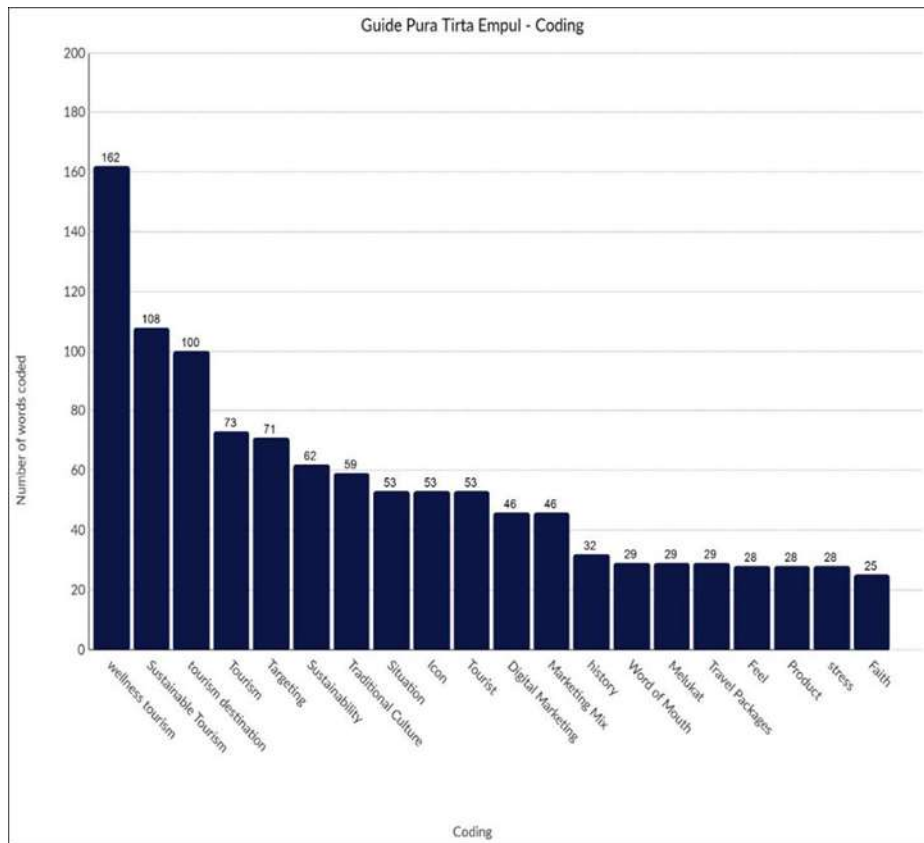
In-depth interviews with informants were conducted from May to November 2023. The informants included the Bendesa (local leader) and guides at Pura Tirta Empul, as well as managers and foreign tourists at Pura Pecampuhan Sala. The research aimed to understand the application of the marketing mix in the development of wellness tourism in Bali.

The first interview was conducted with Made Mawiarna, the Bendesa of Tirta Empul Village, on November 17, 2023, at Pura Tirta Empul. Made Mawiarna explained that Pura Tirta Empul is famous for its sacred water with healing properties, making it a tourist icon without the need for active promotion. The temple has been open to the public since 1967. Its marketing strategy relies on visitor testimonials and word-of-mouth promotion. Most tourists come to perform the melukat ritual, and the next step is to ensure the comfort and hygiene of visitors by renewing facilities such as lockers and clothing usage rules. There are plans to renovate the front area of the temple by adding statues and reliefs depicting the history of Pura Tirta Empul.



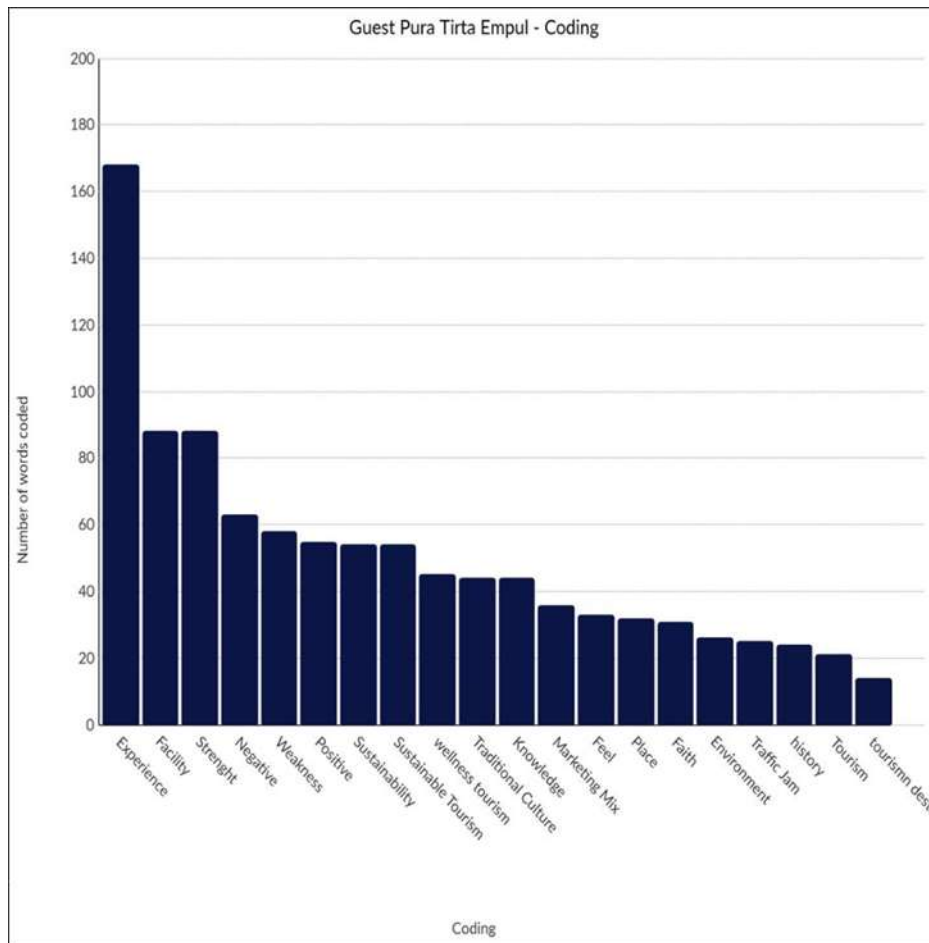
Based on coding diagram analysis using NVivo 14, the analysis results show that the applied marketing concepts involve traditional cultural elements, sustainability, and tourism destination aspects. The marketing mix application is carried out by considering segmentation, targeting, positioning, word-of-mouth promotion, and sustainability.

Subsequently, an interview with I Made Suwarta, a guide around Pura Tirta Empul, was conducted on November 18, 2023, via Whatsapp. Suwarta explained that the promotion of Pura Tirta Empul is mainly done through tour packages and visitor testimonials. The temple has been open to the public since 1967. He also highlighted the spiritual ambiance and historical stories of the place. Suwarta hopes that the government can develop wellness tourism while still paying attention to Bali's local culture, including spa traditions and traditional medicine.



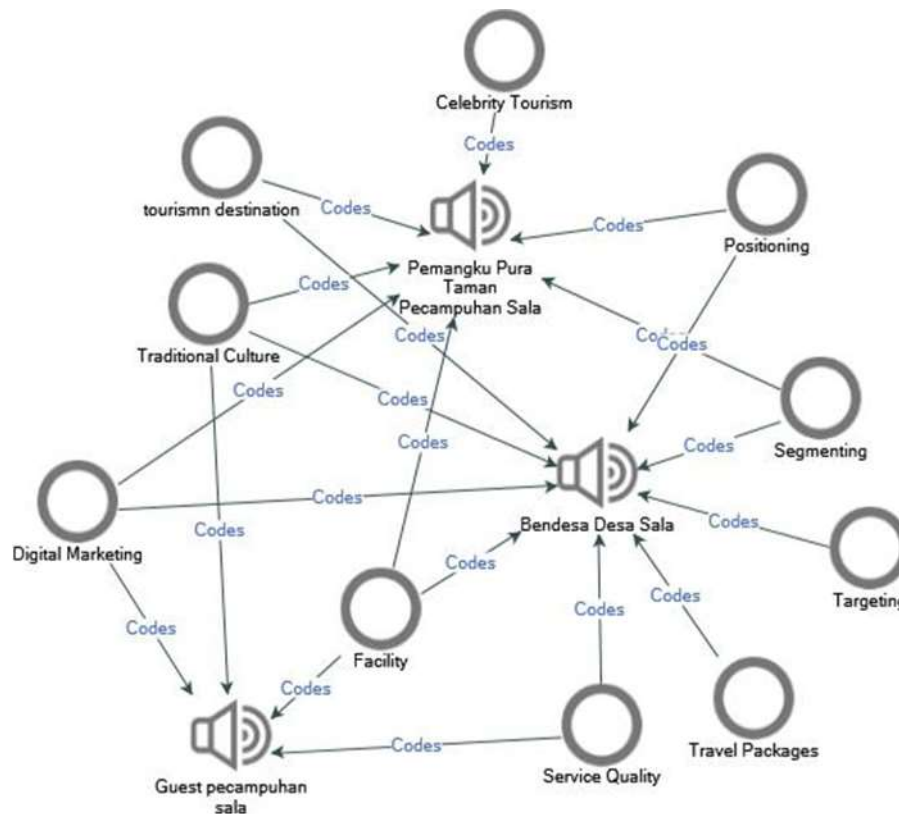
Coding diagram analysis using NVivo 14 for the interview with I Made Suwarta highlights the application of the marketing mix in the development of wellness tourism in Bali. Suwarta explained that the application is carried out according to the field conditions without tourism engineering. This can be seen from the support for sustainable tourism concepts, eco-friendliness, and sustainability in the marketing mix. Additionally, the role of digital marketing is also recognized as important in attracting tourists. The development of wellness tourism in Bali is considered successful if accompanied by the application of marketing mix, sustainable tourism, digital marketing, and eco-friendliness.

Ms. Lia, a foreign tourist visiting Pura Tirta Empul, also shared her experience in an interview. She learned about the place through her friend's recommendation and was interested in exploring around, performing the melukat ritual, and learning about the local culture. After the melukat ritual, she felt calmer and more relaxed. Although she enjoyed the beauty of the place, she also mentioned weaknesses related to crowding and cleanliness. However, she hopes that tourism in Bali will develop sustainably. Analysis using NVivo 14 shows keywords frequently mentioned by Ms. Lia, such as culture and melukat, in line with the focus of applying the marketing mix in developing wellness tourism in Bali. Additionally, the importance of sustainable tourism and eco-friendliness in tourism development is highlighted.



The analysis of coding diagrams using NVivo 14 for Ms. Lia's informant shows that in the development of wellness tourism in Bali, the application of the marketing mix is effectively done without engineering. The informant emphasizes the importance of the effectiveness of applying the marketing mix sustainably in the future. In addition to marketing mix and sustainability, the crucial role is also played by the concept of sustainable tourism and word of mouth, which enhance the destination's attractiveness to tourists. Recognition of the role of traditional culture in supporting wellness tourism is also an important highlight in the development of tourism in Bali.

Furthermore, based on the interviews and observations, the destination of Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala is a destination that has recently gone viral on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala, which also serves as a wellness tourism destination, has its own characteristics in attracting both foreign and local tourists.



As expressed by informant I Wayan Subagia as *Bendesa*, this location has a marketing system through a website. Additionally, he explained the existence of travel packages that provide hotel facilities as well as *melukat* rituals, which make Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala more well-known. He also mentioned the influence of various activities that can be done here, not just *melukat*, but also enjoying the natural beauty, practicing yoga, and meditation. Informant I Nengah Diana, as a stakeholder, also revealed that besides social media, the presence of famous figures also influences the increasing visits to Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala. Furthermore, she mentioned the importance of maintaining environmental sustainability and cultural sanctity at the location. She also emphasized the importance of enhancing the trust of visiting tourists by maintaining the ratings on Google Maps. Informant Mr. Flo also expressed that this destination has unique local traditions. He mentioned that besides being able to perform the *melukat* ritual, he could also enjoy the natural beauty there.

The observation and interview results show that all informants have enjoyed or experienced wellness tourism through social media. Wellness tourism pursues holistic well-being that includes six dimensions: physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, and environmental. Tourism managers agree that wellness tourism requires the support of the marketing mix and sustainability concepts to ensure its authenticity. The marketing mix is a set of marketing tools to achieve industry goals in the target market, while sustainability focuses on optimal development while preserving natural resources and local culture.

In this context, the concept of sustainable tourism is also found to be crucial, utilizing natural resources while considering ecological, social, and cultural aspects. These fundamentals are integrated into wellness tourism in Bali, which has been proven to increase tourist visits. Furthermore, modern tourists also consider

environmental and cultural aspects when selecting destinations, aligning with the growing awareness of environmental issues.

Interviews indicate that wellness tourism also involves eco-friendly and traditional cultural aspects. Traditional culture serves as the nation's identity that can support the economy and welfare of society, while eco-friendliness emphasizes environmentally conscious behavior. Managers implementing these aspects strive to enhance awareness and community involvement in preserving the environment and local culture. This not only enriches tourists' experiences but also preserves the authenticity of local culture.

## E. CONCLUSION

Conclusion of the discussion above is that the implementation of the marketing mix in the development of wellness tourism in Bali has been successful and sustainable without engineering. The managers of tourist attractions have successfully created a spiritual atmosphere and enhanced the mental health of tourists by maintaining local characteristics and traditions. Optimized promotion strategies through digital marketing, renovation of tourist sites to strengthen cultural values, and involvement of the local community as tour guides have also successfully created authentic and memorable experiences for visitors.

Managers have also implemented various regulations to preserve the culture and sanctity of tourist attractions. With collaboration between managers, the local community, and the government, wellness tourism destinations in Bali can continue to develop sustainably. The hope is that tourist attractions such as Pura Tirta Empul and Pura Taman Pecampuhan Sala can continue to be sustainable attractions for both local and international tourists.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My deepest gratitude is addressed to various parties who have provided guidance, encouragement, directions, and support throughout the process of compiling this research. Special thanks to Mr. Prof. Ir. Gede Sri Darma, S.T., M.M., D.B.A., IPU., ASEAN Eng., as the Head of Undiknas Graduate School, Mrs. Luh Putu Mahyuni, Ph.D., CMA., CAPF., CSP., as the Head of the Master of Management Program. Thank you to Dr. I.B Teddy Priantara, S.E., Ak, CA., MSi., CPA., BKP., CTA., CSRA., as the supervising lecturer who provided guidance and encouragement in completing this research. Lastly, to my beloved parents and family as the support system who always provide full support and the best prayers.

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