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Tour Guiding or Tour Misleading? Multifaceted Approach in Assessing the Standards of Cultural Tour Guiding in Bali Island

This study inspects the quality of tour guiding in Bali Island in specific to cultural tour. A total of 4 quality standards of tour guiding were conceptualized based on suggestions from UNESCO and the World Federation of Tourist Guide Association, namely 1) Knowledge, 2) Guiding techniques, 3) Compliance to Rules and Regulations, and 4) Sensitiveness. This study applied three research techniques: (1) In-depth Interview, (2) Site observation with experiential audit, and (3) Mystery shoppers in collecting data pertaining to perception, experiences, sharing of information, actions, and behavior in a natural setting. Two industry experts, seven cultural sites, fifteen tour operators, twelve tourists, and two non-local tour guides were sampled for interview, observation and evaluation. Thematic analysis was used to discover the overall indicators of performance, followed by benchmarking analysis to conclude on the level of compliance. Findings suggested that the sampled tour guides did show a certain degree of compliance, especially in guiding techniques and sensitivity towards tourists' needs. However, findings indicate a concerning gap in standards related to knowledge and abiding rules and regulations. The study also discovers that the performance of tour guiding varies and is somehow related to the presence of illegal tour guiding on the island. This study has contributed to understanding tour guiding qualities in Bali Island. Moreover, this study provides practical and realistic implications that contribute to the development of cultural tour guiding in Bali Island.

Keywords: Tour Guide, Cultural Tourism, Bali Tourism, Tour Operator, Sustainable Tourism.

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Introduction

The vital role of tour guides in the tourism industry is progressively acknowledged by the public and local tourism industries of different destinations (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2011; Hwang & Lee, 2019; Pratiwi, Saleh & Sentanu, 2019). This is because tour guides are the crucial interface between the visitor and the host destination, allowing opportunities for interaction between the group of members and the physical environment (Cheng et al., 2019; Sprake, 2012). The business development of travel agents and the overall image of a destination depends on the quality of services that the tour guide provides to the tourists (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Arcana & Wiweka, 2016; Huang, Hsu, & Chan, 2010).

Hence, any forms of overstatement by either tour agents or tour guides would mislead visitors and misrepresent a destination. The issue and past studies around the concept of misleading were mainly focused on advertisement (Hattori & Higashida, 2012; Karivawasam & Wigley, 2017; Faerber & Kreling, 2014). However, the evidence of misleading information in tourism is greater beyond published information (The Jakarta Post, 2016). The severity of misleading information should not only be judged on its skewness from the truth but, more importantly, the context of information exchange (Chong & Lai, 2018). Misleading information in the context of cultural exchange relevant to tourism destination would not only jeopardize consumers' trust but also disrespect the local community and misrepresent the image of a destination (Hutchinson, 2016; Bruno, 2012; Ka Leong, 2016; Chong, 2020).

In recent years, Bali's government and tourism promotional board have given immense attention to Bali tourism development in general and making cultural tourism part of the big plan. However, issues pertaining to commodification and scam involving tour guiding can be a great hindrance to the future growth of the tourism industry in Bali (Hutchinson, 2016; Sim, 2016; Bruno, 2012; Sutawa, 2012). This, in the long term, would be a serious issue (Caber et al., 2020); travel risk is constantly tied up to traveler's behavior in choosing their travel destination. Hence, the government and other organizations to fill up this gap by taking appropriate measures and minimizing the impact of tour guiding must have on the tourist so that the initiative that they are taking in promoting cultural tourism does not go in vain.

Throughout this paper, we would be looking at the missing gaps in how Bali is preaching in promoting tourism, especially cultural tourism and implementing new policies but failed to consider the impact of certain issues on their initiatives and tourist travelling perception. Thus, this research is planned to assist tour agencies, tour operators, and regulating bodies to become more aware of the tour guiding ethics and quality standards. The following research questions were thus addressed: 1) To evaluate whether Bali tour guides are providing relevant and appropriate knowledge to the tourists, 2) To inspect the extend of Bali tour guides in adhering to cultural protocol while tour guiding, and 3) To evaluate Bali tour guides' overall efforts in maintaining tourist satisfaction and minimizing the impact on the social and cultural aspect of Bali's community.

Literature Review

Cultural Tour Guide

With the little academic definition of what exactly a cultural tour guide can be referred to, understanding this concept should begin with the general roles of a typical tour guide. Bryon

(2012) describes a tour guide as a storyteller of touristic sites. Specifically, a tour guide provides information on the cultural, historical, contemporary development of a place and its community on organized sightseeing. A typically licensed tour guide will be required to undergo a certain duration of training and official assessments, which allowed official endorsement by recognized certification bodies. Licensed tour guides are usually well-linked and connected with the country's tour guide association, allowing them to enjoy certain exclusive protections and benefits; however, they are also subjected to certain ethical practices that limit them from a certain degree of commercial freedom (Bryon, 2012). Noting the importance of storytelling from the local perspectives and to a globalized group of visitors, Salazar (2005) took a societal point of departure and considered that a typical tour guide possesses “glocalization” skills.

On the contrary, a cultural tour guide by operational definition may not be necessary a licensed tour guide that oversees the whole process of visitors' itinerary. One may not deliver a story from a third-party perspective but tell the story from the originator's perspective. For example, Howard et al. (2001) interpret cultural guides as gatekeepers between visitors and locals in indigenous tourism, where indigenous guides play an important role in interpreting the value of their own culture. Similarly, Dahles (2002) questions the concept of tour guides acting as mediators as it ignores the political element of guiding. Hence, in this study, the concept of a cultural tour guide is operationally defined as local tour guides specialise in guiding cultural and historical sites and not limited to licensing status.

Issues with Misleading Tours

Misleading tours can be operationally defined as tour activities that have a clear intention of causing someone to believe something that is not entirely true. Previous studies have highlighted a few issues that contradict the behavior of tour guides to their actual role (Ap

and Wong, 2001; Mak, Wong, and Chang, 2011; Lai, 2015; Kuo et al., 2018; Chong, 2020). It is a well-known fact that tourists can form their independent impressions of destinations (Banyai, 2010). However, guides exercise great influence on tourist experience and interpretation of destinations (Kuo *et al.*, 2016). Tour guides provide interesting information and an enjoyable experience (acts as gatekeepers of a destination) and provide cultural and physical familiarity with destinations. Despite the technological advancement and information accessibility, cultural heritage sites contain a huge load of information that should be personalized and filtered to ease tourists' understanding (Ardissono, Kuflik & Petrelli, 2012). Personalization of cultural heritage information is essential as some tourists encapsulate themselves in their own "environment bubble" of familiarity, and therefore tour guides must be able to accommodate them (Cheng, Kivela & Mak 2011).

However, there is always a question that arose on whether the tour guides are genuine or motivated by self-economic needs. This fact is supported by Ap and Wong (2001), who found that the competence of tour guides is revealed in their attitude towards the job, specifically relating to the fact as to whether they are mostly motivated by genuine provision towards customer satisfaction or self-economic interest. Nonetheless, it is evident under preceding circumstances; tourists are frequently brought to designated shops and coerced into making purchases or even joining optional tours by tour guides to generate "sufficient" commissions (Nicely & Armadita, 2018). Hence, this has created an issue in which the tour guides are distracted from their "core" roles and services and inevitably forced to shift focus to a "salesperson role" in order to be able to overcome their financial burden (Mak *et al.*, 2011).

Other than that, many tour guides were found to hide certain information and practice leniency in enforcing certain regulations to please visitors' convenience and satisfaction (Weiler and Kim, 2011). These non-compliance attitudes were widely condemned and

considered to directly impact the heritage preservation of natural and cultural heritage in a destination (Becker, 2018; Chiao, Chen and Huang, 2018; Tsaur and Teng, 2017). For instance, leniency in stressing dress codes and codes of conduct in certain religious areas and other respectable historical areas (Pulido-Fernandez and Sanchez-Rivero, 2010; Wong, McKercher, and Li, 2016).

Studies on Resolving Misleading Tours

Past studies have suggested several approaches to solve issues derived or involving tour guiding. In terms of tourist harassment, Alrawadieh *et al.* (2019) suggested that greater collaborations can minimise it among major tourism stakeholders. This committee would then be responsible for planning contingency responses based on quarterly harassment issue reviews to be resolved before matters become severe. Besides that, Black and Weiler (2015) revised the key mechanisms to facilitate and enhance guides' performance of their diverse roles in terms of awards of excellence, training, codes of conduct, certification, professional associations, and finally, professional licensing. By implementing a "multi-mechanism approach seems to offer the utmost potential in shaping standards and improve performance across all roles." They have also acknowledged that such an approach may be hindered by limited human resources as well as financial aid and recommended the development of a professional association to aid guides in the short term and consider training, licensing certification, and award programs as long-term plan (Black & Weiler, 2015; Chong & Lai, 2018).

There are also suggestions to provide a focused effort concerning training certification (Hu & Wall, 2013; Richards & Font, 2019). A general tour guide should not only be educated in terms of "hard" skills, which are traditionally emphasized in leadership training (the instrumental role) but also improve their interpretation of delivery skills and enhanced

knowledge of environmentally responsible behaviors, which often lacks in the traditional leadership training (Carmody, 2013). These factors are especially crucial in order to protect a natural resource. However, these efforts were deemed to be overly optimistic and assume that the cause of misleading was mainly skill and knowledge related. Hence, this study proposes a gap in understanding the root cause of tour guiding issues. The resolution of misleading tours should begin with proper evaluation of tour guiding qualities not limited to service attitude, destination knowledge, ethics, values, and socio-cultural norms compliance.

Methodology

Research Approach

Qualitative research is particularly useful in assessing this study by exploring the tourists' experiences on cultural tour guiding and identifying suggested policy implementations and the evolution of suggested policy that governs cultural tour guiding and evolution by emphasizing their intention, relationships, and actions (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010; Gramatikov, 2010). This approach is best at eliciting the emic, which means the perspective of an insider. As a result, it can capture, explain, catalogue, and preserve such meaning from the perspective of tour guides being studied. For instance, mystery shoppers or interviews can present deeper insights into an individual's experience, answering more descriptive questions (Sirakaya-Turk, 2011).

Measures

A total of 4 standards of quality tour guiding were conceptualized based on literature review and the latest recommendations from UNESCO and World Federation of Tourist Guide Association: 1) Knowledge (Cheng et al., 2019; Mak, Wong & Chang, 2010), 2) Guiding techniques (Bogdan & Lasinski, 2019; Yamada, 2011), 3) Compliance to Rules and

Regulations (Wang et al., 2002), and 4) Sensitiveness (Mak et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2002). The “Knowledge” construct refers to knowledge related to the overall Bali Cultural Tourism and is mainly measured by the ability to explain and to suggest places of interest related to cultural activities. Secondly, the "Guiding Techniques" construct was conceptualized as the professionalism of tour guiding measured by the reliability and consistency of information delivery, punctuality, and attentiveness to tourists' needs. The third construct "Compliance to Rules and Regulations" refers to the attitude of being respectful and submissive to sites' regulations. In view of this perspective, the degree of compliance is measured by the tour guide's seriousness in following and enforcing the importance of written and unwritten laws pertaining to certain cultural sites. Lastly, “Sensitiveness” is measured by the tour guide's flexibility in considering the possible conflict between local and foreign tourist cultural beliefs and the ability to customize cultural activities which meet both ends. Table 1 exhibit the areas of assessment for quality tour guiding its respective indicators.

Table 1. Measures and Benchmark for Quality Tour Guiding

Areas of Assessment	Indicators/ criteria
[1] Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge in every aspect pertaining to a specific cultural site. • Able to suggest places of interest related to culture. • Language competence of tour guide.
[2] Guiding Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability and consistency of information delivery. • Following the schedules as planned/promised. • Be aware of tourist overall satisfaction, understanding and comfort. • Provide answers to questions with interest, and ensures tourist satisfaction.
[3] Compliance of Rules and Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow, complied and make known of the importance of with attire. • Respect and enforce of cultural site rules and regulations to visitors
[4] Sensitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect different cultural and social norms among

visitors.

- Aware of the behavior, feelings, or circumstances of others. (mystery shopper, content analysis)
 - Customize service according to cultural differences and level of acceptance.
 - Aware of the visitors' behavior, feelings, or circumstances of others.
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Data Collection

The process of data collection was carried out in two stages: 1) preparation stage (hereinafter referred to as pre-fieldwork), which is before heading to the fieldwork, where we will utilize the instrument – content analysis, to collect necessary and related literature to formulate instructions, evaluation checklist, and interview questions; 2) fieldwork stage - interview, site observation, and mystery shopper were undertaken to assess on the proposed measures.

Interviews

Two industry experts were purposively sampled for a semi-structured interview session: 1) representative from tourism governing bodies and 2) Local tourism researcher (refer to Table 2). Both industry experts were contacted two months before the interview session (24th August 2018) to brief the interview's purpose and obtain their consent to the data collection at their premises. The interviews were conducted on 21st and 22nd October 2018, respectively, by the research leader and one local interpreter. Furthermore, non-local opinions were also gathered through a purposive sampling of 12 tourists and two non-local tour guides from 23rd to 25th October 2018 by two research assistants and one local assistant (refer to table 2). The findings from these interviews were used to validate data gathered through observation, experiential audit, and mystery shopping. The interview questions were formulated to explore areas pertaining to tour guide governance, the importance of Balinese cultural education, current challenges, and development in the tour guiding business in Bali. Once data was gathered, initial interpretation of the responses was done in groups to avoid

interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Then, thematic coding was done to translate and summarize the responses to provide meaning to the research questions following the four stages of thematic coding by Boyatzis (1998).

To enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the interpreted information, triangulation involving multiple sources validation was carried out to increase the accuracy of the interpreted information (Kolb, 2012). For instance, field notes from the site observation, experiential audit, mystery shopping, photographs, newspaper articles, and recent studies were used as other sources of data validation. This would specify the questions that are not directly shown in the interview transcripts (Decrop, 1999). Furthermore, this study is done by a group of researchers; hence investigator triangulation can be achieved to ensure the reliability of data interpretation (Creswell, 2009; Decrop, 1999).

Table 2. List of tourism experts, non-local tour guides, tourists and brief description.

Respondents	Brief Description
IE-1	Senior representative from the Bali Tourism Bureau. Twenty-four years of experience in administrating the work of Bali tourism. Advisor for Travel Agent Association of Bali, Tour Guide Association of Bali, and Transportation Association of Bali.
IE-2	Senior academic and researcher of the largest and oldest tourism school in Bali. Ten years of working experience with the Bali Tourism Board. Research projects revolving around issues and challenges in administrating the growth of cultural tourism in Bali.
NLTG-1	Non-local tour guide, Chinese with six years of tour guiding experience. Majoring China outbound tourists.
NLTG-2	Non-local tour guide, Taiwanese with 14 years of tour guiding experience. Majoring Taiwan outbound tourists.
T-1	Chinese, 54 years old, first time visiting Bali, no major preference in tour.
T-2	Taiwanese, 34 years old, second visits to Bali, honeymooners.
T-3	Taiwanese, 29 years old, first time visiting Bali, honeymooners.
T-4	Chinese, 44 years old, first time visiting Bali, natural and cultural tour.
T-5	Malaysian, 60 years old, fifth visits to Bali, relaxation.
T-6	Malaysian, 65 years old, third visits to Bali, relaxation.
T-7	Thai, 27 years old, second visits to Bali, shopping, sun, and sea.
T-8	German, 56 years old, eight visits to Bali, relaxation.
T-9	Australian, 33 years old, fourth visits to Bali, surfing.
T-10	Chinese, 45 years old, first time visiting Bali, exploration tour.
T-11	Chinese, 32 years old, first time visiting Bali, conference tour.
T-12	Chinese, 36 years old, first time visiting Bali, exploring food and culture.

Site Observation

Seven cultural sites (Jambe Budaya, Pura Puseh Batuan, Tampak Siring, Uluwatu Temple, Tanah Lot, Gunung Kawi Temple, Shri Naraya Kreshna Kepakisan Temple) were purposively selected for observation and experiential audit based on its popularity and UNESCO's recommendations. 2 teams comprise of 2 research assistants, and two local tour guides were assigned to visits 3 and 4 cultural sites respectively on 26th October 2018. Since all the selected sites are opened for tourists, there were no issues of access. The accesses were simply through the purchase of entrance tickets, and no special permission was required as the observation routings were within the tourists' boundaries. Through site observation and experiencing the tour guiding session, we could observe and assess how the cultural guide performs his duty. A checklist for the observation and experiential process was developed based on the proposed quality standards. The tour guide was assessed on his or her (i) grooming, (ii) enforcement of rules and regulations, (iii) knowledge and language competency, (iv) trustworthiness, (v) attentiveness, and (vi) concerns over sustainability. Data collected in the form of field notes, video recordings, and photographs were analyzed using thematic coding with segregation of non-verbal cues and verbal cues. Photos and video primarily gather data-rich in nonverbal cues to stimulate critical reflection rather than a way to collect observational data (Tobin and Hsueh, 2009). Group deliberation was carried out to interpret these data and finalize with 12 themes. These themes were later benchmarked against the proposed quality standards to accomplish the outcome of the evaluation.

Mystery Shoppers

Mystery shopping technique is necessary for this study because it enables providing information on the travel agencies/ tour operator's services experience as it unfolds (Jacob et al., 2018). Travel agencies/ tour operator observation helps develop a richer knowledge of the experiential nature of tour guiding services. In preparation, structured checklists and codes

(based on proposed quality standards) were used to gather and measure specific information about travel agencies' service performance in Bali (Jacob et al., 2018). The main objective of this mystery shopping approach was to evaluate the professionalism, truthfulness, and ethical conduct of the travel agencies/ tour operators in promoting cultural tour packages.

The mystery shopping was conducted around the Kuta area, the most populated area for travel agencies and tour operators in Bali Island. There are numerous travel agencies, also known as a travel information booth, along the street. Multiple scenarios were preplanned before the mystery shopping exercise. Multiple scenarios are essential to avoid common method biases and increase the richness of the data (Wilson, 2001). The mystery shopping process was carried out by two teams comprised of 1 research assistant and one local assistant on 27th October 2018. Since the nature of data collection via mystery shopper requires a researcher to be in disguise, 'participants' of this study were not informed of their arrival. However, to ensure research ethics were properly upheld, questions were limited to typical tourist inquiries, and in-depth questioning was strictly avoided. Each mystery shopping process was video recorded, or voice recorded for group interpretation, thematic analysis, and discussion. The Mystery Shopping was stopped at the 15th travel agency when the data shows similar findings indicating the data have reached a point saturation suggested by Creswell (2013).

Findings and Discussion

Knowledge Gap

Findings show that none of the tour guides sampled are formally trained or educated in terms of the cultural aspect of a site. They were unable to provide reliable and consistent information, especially when explaining the cultural component of a site (temple). Most tour agencies plan their itinerary based on perceived popularity rather than the richness of cultural heritage. Furthermore, there were no specific tour guides that are specialized in cultural tour

guiding. This finding is consistent with data collected through interviews with sampled industrial experts, non-local tour guides, and tourists. There are only two types of guides in Bali, the licensed guide and the Chauffeur guides. Unqualified tour guides were reported, especially during peak seasons, due to a shortage of licensed tour guides. Other than that, the foreign tour guide who comes in a group hired foreign travel agencies back to their home country is also a concerning issue where the understanding and delivery of information about Bali Island was mainly self-taught through reading.

“The licensed guide will be more about the historical point of view of, as the Chauffeur guides are more into the lifestyle and they will explain about the you know the beliefs of Balinese.” [IE-1]

“it’s complicated here, we have the licensed tour guide who gone through proper training, so they have a proper license, and some we call chauffeur guides, they are as good as those who are licensed because of many years of experience in tour guiding.” [IE-2]

“Some foreign tourists prefer to have their own tour guide, for example the Chinese group who mainly uses their own Chinese tour guide who understand the information about Bali through reading.” [NLTG-1]

“We won’t know if the information is genuine, but we rely on them as we don’t understand what was written.” [T-10]

Accommodating Requests that Crossed Cultural Boundaries

The assessment indicates that the tour guides were generally very accommodating to the needs of their clients. Most tour guides were more than willing to customize and compromise certain misbehavior while touring some temples, heritage buildings, preserved areas, and local villages. However, overly accommodating to visitors' demands has, to a certain extent,

breached some important codes of conduct and undermined their respect for the local communities and preservation efforts of the cultural sites. This impact is apparent when observed at some of the temple sites that tourists were smoking and taking pictures while posing inappropriately.

“nothing much was mentioned about rules and regulations, I don’t see problems with dress code.” [T-11]

“many other tourists are doing that, I don’t see anybody say “no” to them, I guess is ok.” [T-2]

Non-Compliance to Rules and Regulations

This study found an unfortunate trend towards the emphasis of the rules and regulations. Many tour operators suggested that there were no concerns of regulations, but a few had correctly stressed its importance. Even so, they tend to be lenient when tourists responded with some resistance. This was consistent with the observation from the cultural sites demonstrated that site wardens tend to neglect the enforcement of the site's rules. Some tourists had disregarded rules and either: avoided dress etiquettes, littered cigarette buds in the temples, acted indecently, and tried to enter sacred grounds. Cultural sites’ gatekeepers were seen not asserting their authority in governing misbehavior among visitors. Many cultural site caretakers do not mind the littering and poor behaviors of the tourists, and they take a more laid back responsive approach when it comes to the site rules (usually yelling warnings with little physical effort involved). Sadly, tourism is many local main forms of income and method of day to day survival, most restriction to protect cultural sites have merely become gentle warnings (de Bernardi, 2019; Nunkoo, 2015).

“they are our clients, without them we have no income, what can we do?” [IE-2]

“I don’t think they care; you could see that many tourists are taking advantage of it.”

[T-9]

“I saw some signages about dress code and code of conducts, but it wasn’t stressed by my tour guide.” [T-6]

Sensitive to Tourists’ Socio-Cultural Background

The findings suggested that travel agencies, tour operators, and tour guides tend to respect different cultural and social norms among visitors. The observation and interview results showed that most of the cultural tour guides in Bali are flexible in practicing a low tour guide-to-client ratio. Thus, this allows the visitors to have more flexibility in tour activities, promoting a stronger bond between the cultural tour guides and visitors (Patterson, 2015). One standard that is often used in the tourism business would be the tour guide-to-client ratio. This is crucial in shaping the service delivery and the experience of the visitors (Patterson, 2015). Results from mystery shopping similarly demonstrated that tour agencies were aware of their client's behavior, feelings, or circumstances, resulting in customizing service according to cultural differences and acceptance levels. Evidently, most of the observed cultural tour guides did not force visitors to perform certain rituals or obey certain rules and regulations that conflict with their cultural or religious beliefs. According to Ap and Wong (2001), mediating and culture broking are two explanatory roles of the tour guides’ work. Tour guides intercede between tourists and locals and the environment. Interceding moves beyond telling tourists how to perceive and feel about their involvement; it leads them to their assumptions and facilitates reflection.

“Share their culture as well as ours but don’t force them to do whatever they don’t want to do.” [IE-1]

“most of them are ok and curious about certain rituals, they find it fascinating.”
[NLTG-1]

“they didn’t expect us to follow but I am willing to experience, it’s fun, that’s why we are here” [T-4]

Conclusion and Implications

This study concludes that the current state of tour guiding in Bali Island was rather inconsistent and much deficient in cultural heritage interpretation. The co-existence of legal and illegal tour guides and tour operators around Bali could be the root cause of such gaps. Even though legal tour guides seem to perform better in terms of knowledge sharing and tour management, this study found little differences between legal and illegal tour guides or tour operators in compliance with rules and regulations. Both parties seem to show a low degree of compliance and minimum enforcement of cultural sites’ code of conduct during the tour.

The fear of disappointing visitors has had them consider compromising rules to exchange visitors' satisfaction and return business. This belief has cultivated a positive remark on assessment pertaining to tour guides' sensitivity towards their clients' needs and discomfort and obvious sacrifices. Findings also have indicated that tour guides and tour operators have shown a high level of tolerance and flexibility in dealing with tourists' dislike, discomfort, and even to the extent of disobedience. Therefore, this seems to suggest that the ideology of ‘pleasing tourists in all possible ways for better tomorrow’ has imparted into tour guiding principles in Bali Island. However, it creates a one-sided approach in tourist management. This eventually would develop chain impacts on social, cultural, and environmental harmony and sustainability.

The theoretical implications of this study are three folds: 1) the findings of this study have extended the literature of misleading advertisement into the field of tourism studies, specifically on tour guiding; 2) this study also confirmed the existence of misleading tour caused by excessive cultural accommodation; and 3) developed a quality measurement model

of tour guiding which can be replicated for future similar studies of diverse contexts. The findings of this study have extended the spectrum of theories revolving around the topic of misleading advertisement (Hattori & Higashida, 2012; Karivawasam & Wigley, 2017; Faerber & Kreling, 2014) through recognizing both published information and information exchange. The outcome of this study argued the severity of misleading information should not only be judged on its skewness from the truth but, more importantly, the reliability and the competency of intermediaries as the medium of information exchange. Besides, this study helps affirm the existence of "cultural tolerance" in exchange for a win-win situation between the tourism host' and guest' expectations. More importantly, this study has demonstrated a degree of threshold to what extend a "cultural tolerance" can be translated via tour guiding.

Conclusively, the outcome of this study continues to stress the danger of misleading information in the context of tourism cultural exchange would jeopardize travelers' trust and disrespect the local community, which directly challenges the sustainability of a cultural destination. Ultimately, the cure to a problem would begin with an effective diagnosis. Hence, the comprehensive quality measurement model adapted from the World Federation of Tourist Guide Association in this study can be a useful replicable scale for future academic research and other stakeholders where performance evaluation or quality audit is concerned.

From an operational standpoint, this study contributes an updated and customized guideline for tour operators and tour guides who specialize in cultural tours. The guideline suggested that the performance evaluation for any cultural tour guiding should not limit to only knowledge-based assessment (site understanding and language competency) but also considering sustainable guiding techniques that emphasize the reliability and consistency of information delivery; respect of schedules as planned/promised; and sensitive towards tourist overall satisfaction, understanding and comfort dealing with cultural acts, performances or rituals. The guideline also stresses the importance of rules and regulations enforcement to be

closely monitored by tour guides towards the visitors. Furthermore, the guideline assists tour guides and operators to project responsible care towards the local community's beliefs and value system and the visitors. For example, the guideline stipulates the need to respect different cultural and social norms among visitors. Good practices such as being sensitive to visitors' behavior, feelings, or circumstances of others and considering customized service according to cultural differences and acceptance levels should be encouraged.

In terms of policymaking, this study offers explicit evidence for government regulation bodies, licensing agencies, tour guiding training institutions, and local tour guide associations concerning the issues of misrepresentations in Bali Island and potential rectifications to be considered. The study's outcome suggests that the likelihood of a tour guide considering modified truths and reluctance on imposing necessary cultural site regulations is mainly based on personal knowledge and obligation towards pleasing visitors. However, these continual pursues cultural tolerance and modifications are foreseen to jeopardize the sustainability of cultural tourism in the near future. Therefore, the local government should consider implementing knowledge and objective integration to control the distribution centers (cultural sites) and retailers (tour agencies, operators, and guides). Alignment between regulators, promotional bodies, and tour operators should be achieved in relation to respective expectations, challenges, and goals. In addition, a cultural tour guide assessment focused on the four aspects of this study (knowledge, tour guiding techniques, regulatory compliances, and visitor's sensitiveness) should be adopted as a more robust and wholesome assessment criterion by tour licensing/ certification bodies on new applications and periodic renewal basis to ensure quality tour guiding standards can be achieved.

This research briefly overlooks the tourism industry's operational perspective, specifically tour guides in the Kuta area and cultural tourism. Future research shall look into the management levels, investigate their plans of maintaining quality tour guiding in Bali and

comment on the feasibility of their plans. Aside from these, the local community also plays an important role in cultural tourism, especially cultural sites located in rural areas, villages, or plantation areas. A future exploratory study could be done in investigating the willingness, response, or readiness of the local community in accepting and being site tour guides. Future research could expand the research context to tour guiding areas such as nature and city tours while still maintaining the focus on Bali Island.

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