

# THE AUTHENTICITY OF YOGA AS TOURIST SPECIAL INTEREST IN UBUD BALI

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the characteristics of authenticity concept of tourist attraction. The purpose of this research was to identify the concept of authenticity of yoga as one of the main tourist attractions in Ubud, Bali. Data was collected in Kundalini Tantra Yoga straight from Master Ketut Arsana at Om Ham Resort and Retreat. The interview resulted in several different perspectives of an authenticity of tourist attraction for the stakeholders such as the business owner, tourist itself and the surrounding people. Ubud as the yoga's largest tourist attraction in Indonesia has influenced the raising number of visit to Bali especially to learn yoga. This phenomenon has encouraged people, both locals and foreigners, to be the yoga instructors due to the raising demand. This variety of yoga instructors offers a new concept because of the instructor diversity. Research findings: 1) There's a resistant from foreign tourist who cannot experience the pure, unique and authentic yoga which covered in the local wisdom of Bali due to the shifting from local to foreign instructor 2) This is an unsolved issue for local yoga instructor demands coming from foreign tourist whilst the locals are still reluctant to fill the gap.

**Keywords:** *Authenticity, Yoga, Special Interest Tourism*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia still has many tourism potentials, which may be developed. Some of the potentials are natural tourism objects, history, and culture. Tourism objects have various uniqueness and variety, such as, arts, foods, traditions, ceremonies, batik, and craft. Development of special interest tourism in Bali increases more. It is seen from various activities starting from management of tourists and several hotel businesses making tourism packages and lodging. Desire of tourists starts to change recently. Special interest tourism OS one type of tourism tourists start to love. Special interest tourism is tourism activity having more specific activity focus. Special interest tourism offers anything more than usual, a new and unique experience. Bali is tourism destination so far still being favorite for domestic and foreign tourists. The local government of Bali Province is now making efforts to increase visit quantity of foreign tourists for special interest segment of yoga as a tourism attraction in Bali.

According to Tourism Service Department Head of Bali Province, Anak Agung Yuniarta, yoga tourism is included in development of tourism to attract foreign tourists who want special interest. It is implemented to increase tourism visit to Bali. Many parties are asked to realize the tourism activity, such as, General Consulate of India in Denpasar, as origin state of combination between respiration and physical exercise, to promote destination of Bali and yoga tourism. We hope that more foreign tourists want to have holidays in Bali while training yoga in different environment from their states. Yoga is one exercise widely loved by people in the world because yoga is found giving benefits for health. The physical activity includes meditation, respiration regulation, physical exercise to train muscle strength and body flexibility so that it makes such exercise different from other exercises.

Ubud is very famous for spiritual tourism attraction of yoga. It is shown by high demand and tour package of yoga offered by Ubud, many foreign and domestic tourists are attracted by the package; for example, a hotel offers package called as Om Ham Resort and Retreat located in Ubud Bali. However, of observation conducted in some yoga places in Ubud, yoga instructors from Foreign Countries (Foreigners) are more than domestic citizens (Indonesians), especially local people. It

shows gap between reality and Regional Regulation No. 2/2012 on Bali Culture Tourism of Chapter IV, Article 8(2) stating that tourism business must be characterized by Bali culture, have vision for Bali culture Conservation, and participate in developing Bali culture.

Data of yoga teachers also show gap between reality and tourism theory stating that tourists travel to find authenticity; yet, what are found in Bali are Yoga Teachers, who are not Native Bali people. Meanwhile, Om Ham Resort and Retreat presents yoga package directly managed by Mr. Ketut Arsana, a Yoga Teacher coming from Bali in yoga class asked to lead to mental and physical health called as Kundalini Tantra Yoga. Both differences of Yoga Teachers would affect authenticity of the yoga. This problem will be presented furthermore, Analyzing and Explaining yoga activity found authentic by local and international yoga teachers, tourists, customary figures, explanation of yoga reason is made as attraction of special interest tourism in Ubud Bali.

## METHOD

This study used ethnographic method and it was designed according to scientific paradigm of cultural studies focusing on tourism attraction originality and authenticity. Tourism activity is social phenomenon, because tourism is associated with human behavior. Therefore, this study used qualitative and subjective method to collect human experiences. Human behavior reflected from their experiences can only be explained by subjective method (Mulyana, 2003:32). The selected study location is Om Ham Resort and Retreat Ubud Bali using method of observed data collection of yoga called as tourism attraction and directly participating in the yoga activity, interviewing with some specialists in yoga, especially Kundalini Tantra Yoga, such as, Local and Foreign Yoga Teachers existing in Om Ham Resort and Retreat, Manger Hotel, and some yoga practitioners and spiritual teachers as well as guests involving in Kundalini Tantra Yoga class and documents associated with this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authenticity is “some tourists perceive the inauthenticity of their settings. The elaboration of the authenticity concept offered in this paper highlights the need to define authenticity of both actors and their settings when appraising a tourist scene. Cohen's emphasis on tourists' ability to perceive authenticity and inauthenticity is included as an important element in the framework outlined. Accurate and inaccurate perceptions of authenticity, it was argued, need to be considered, together with tourists' preference levels for authenticity, in order to explain tourist satisfaction. Some research possibilities generated by this framework included the study of tourist satisfaction, and the social status and identity concerns inherent in tourists' social behaviour.” (Pearce:1986, Cohen 1988). And Mac Cannel said every tourist wants to have” authentic” experiences in which they can experience the “real” life of the society that they visit and to see the “true” original sights that made that place famous or infamous in the first place.

*Om Ham Resort and Retreat* is located in Tirta Tawar Street, Tunjungan Village, Ubud Sub-district, Gianyar District, Bali Province *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* only offers Kundalini Tantra Yoga yoga and some packages, such as, yoga and retreat, including Kundalini Tantra, room, diet menu, and spa. Available facilities consist of 1 *yoga studio* having capacity of maximal 50 persons, 1 *meeting room*, 1 restaurant (*tulsi dinning & lounge*), *bodyworks spirit spa*. Moreover, *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* has 4 types of rooms, namely: (1) *Ananda Room*, (2) *Shakti Room*, (3) *Sidhi Suite Room*, (4) *Mandala Suite Room*.

Kundalini Tantra Yoga is one *asana yoga* of some developing *asana yoga* types, and also the healing than combination the use of *tantra* along with *pranayama* (breath) to move the *kundalini* energy, which is the primal / life-force energy upwards simultaneously healing the spine glandular

and endocrine systems, ultimately the entire body. The combination is important for raising, flowing, moving and balancing the energy within our body so that it can assist the body's ability to heal itself naturally. *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* offers this yoga as tourism attraction here. *Kundalini Tantra Yoga* is god energy built by yoga motion, *yantra* means body, *tantra* which means a divinely inspired body of work and system which aids the raising energy for self development and spiritual awakening, tantra also the way to move our body to take natural energy (God). Kundalini is located in lower part of 2 fingers above anus and 2 fingers under pubic bone. If this Kundalini has been built, bias is expected to revive 7 cakra located in spine. *Tantra* teaching in Hinduism aims at going to a freedom (*moksa*), *moksa* means freedom of life, namely: peace, quietness, mutual favoring, and integration with God's characteristics.

*Kundalini Tantra Yoga* shown by Master Teacher, Ketut Arsana as Local Teacher and Mrs. Charlotte as Foreign Teacher, has many similarities because Mrs. Charlotte learned directly with Master Teacher of Ketut Arsana for 7 years for this *Kundalini Tantra Yoga* material. However, there is different yoga shown by Master Teacher with more complex and dynamic rhythm than Mrs. Charlotte with slow rhythm; other than yoga class of teacher, there is always section of relaxation with *singing bowl* and *blessing* done by the teacher touching each head of coming participant, whereas yoga class of Mrs. Charlotte has no such section, only relaxing in supine sleeping position. However, generally motion of Kundalini Tantra Yoga shown by both focuses on Kundalini in cakra maladara and 7 cakra of body there are a) *muladara chakra* this is the base chakra located in *coccygeal plexus*, b) *swadhistana chakra* located in *sacral plexus*, c) *manipura chakra* located in *solar plexus*, d) *anahata chakra* located in *cardiac plexus*, e) *visuddhi chakra* located in *pharyngeal plexus*, f) *ajna chakra* located above the eye brows we always call the third eye, g) *sahasrara chakra* located in cerebral cortex, as well as each instructor motion always says *keep breathing, lock your bottom, flowing and moving your body, raising and balancing*.

The sequence of Kundalini Tantra Yoga in Om Ham resort and retreat are 1) *abyantar pranayama*, 2) *utitha balasana*, 3) *utrasanaasana*, 4) *bhujanggasana*, 5) *adhomukhaswanasana* 6) *ekapadarajakapotanasana*, 7) *chakravakasana*, 8) *paschimottanasana*, 9) *uthitapadangustasana*, 10) *halasana*, 11) *suryanamaaskaara* section, 12) *savaasana*. This sequence will be different in every class. Its depend on the guest flexibility and the guest needed, but every posse has movement, flowing, and breathing.

All yoga can also be found authentic if the yoga integrate between thought, body, and soul with breath help (*pranayama*) to gain a relaxation, pleasantness, and health. Kundalini Tantra Yoga as tourism attraction in *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* is a type of *asana yoga*, which can be found authentic, because all process of yoga motions lead to breath (*pranayama*), concentration (thought), and yoga posture/motion (movement) for body. It is also affected by yoga shown by teacher 1, namely, Master Ketut; thus, nearly all movements and spiritual teachings are similar; according to tourists, the authenticity is compatible to idea of Cohen (1998:383) suggesting that authenticity is a negotiable thing, because authenticity is a concept being results of social construction and very contextual, especially in relation to tourism, authenticity is not static because tourists alone are not passive customers, but they are active customers participating in determining authenticity level of a society or results of culture.

Moreover, it is also said that this Kundalini Tantra Yoga is categorized in authenticity as a social construction and authenticity as negotiation of construction, because yoga shown in this *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* is not made or not using modern instruments. Teacher makes yoga movement from results of learning from previous experiences and yoga activity does not use modern yoga aids such as yoga available to other yoga studios or fitness centers. Whereas yoga as authenticity derives from negotiation of construction, because yoga authenticity is different from one individual and others, based on intellectuality and experiences of each individual. The study results collected from

customary figures and tourists indicate that authenticity concept is compatible to idea by *Major calyx* Cannell stating that *every tourist wants have 'authentic' experiences in which they can experience the 'real' life of the society that they visit and to see the 'true' original sights that made that place famous or infamous in the first place.* Where *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* only empowers locals as yoga teachers and one foreign teacher who has been Indonesian and all programs and techniques are made alone by the master Ketut inspired by his experiences for which he has been learning spiritual yoga diligently and he OS a therapeutic spa master so that he highly understands physiological anatomy of human body and what is needed by the body.

The following are principles based on *special interest tourism* of yoga in Ubud: (1) searching of a new thing of Kundalini Tantra Yoga is found different from yoga already available to Ubud before, because movement prioritizing continuous movement; (2) satisfaction in doing anything, the number of tourists returning to *Om Ham Resort and Retreat* in routine time indicate that they are satisfied in getting Kundalini Tantra Yoga with Master Ketut; (3) searching of new experiences as mentioned above, coming tourists learn Kundalini Tantra Yoga with Master Ketut finding difference from the previous.

## CONCLUSIONS

Yoga is a process of integration between thought, soul, and body, to lead to one point, namely, point of peace, quietness health. In addition, Kundalini Tantra Yoga is one type of yoga emphasizing on generation of Kundalini energy to revive 7 cakra in human body.

All available yoga types can be found authentic if these are compatible to yoga teaching to integrate though, soul and body, not only emphasizing on physical strength and avoid quietness of thought and soul. Yoga is found in Hinduism spiritual teaching and yoga has scientific values, called as *catur marga yoga Jnana marga yoga, Karma Marga Yoga, Raja marga Yoga, Bhakti mrga yoga, yoga asana*, what is being developed today is a part of Raja Marga Yoga, including Kundalini Tantra Yoga shown in *Om Ham Resort and Retreat*.

Kundalini Tantra Yoga with Ketut Arsana is tourism attraction of *special interest tourism* which is authentic and categorized in authenticity as a social construction because the shown yoga does not use modern instruments, the shown yoga is result of experiences of Master Ketut as healer; moreover, this Kundalini Yoga is included in authenticity category as negotiation of construction, because authentic feeling felt by each different visitor, it is based on intellectual level and experiences of each coming individual.

Yoga becomes *special interest tourism* in Bali, especially Ubud, because Ubud has suitable environment for yoga, the number of tourists coming to have quietness through yoga and the number of yoga studios appearing on areas of Ubud and having different concepts, there is also one governmental business to improve Bali tourism and prevent boredom of tourists, stakeholders such as hotel, tourist travel bureau, compete to make new creation to improve tourism in Bali, especially Ubud.

Development of local yoga teachers should be increased in order that it is not crushed by foreign yoga teachers coming to Bali. The related government should develop local people, Balinese people, to be yoga instructors giving certification or scholarship of certification as yoga instructors considering that price for certifications of yoga instructors is so high and it is only managed by private parties and the quantity is still low.

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