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Change and innovation in the development of Balinese dance in the garb of special interest tourism

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Abstract: This paper explores intangible cultural product transformation in the context of Balinese Dance, under the influence of tourism growth as a case study. Tourism has transformed part of Balinese culture’s orientation from religion to economy. This trend is mostly prominent in Balinese cultural product, particularly Balinese arts. Whereas in the days before tourism came to the island arts develop following religious demand, current development takes place in the garb of tourism and evolves in a more complex and secular setting. The current study investigates the development process in the Balinese dance within the framework of Special Interest Tourism (SIT). In particular, it looks closer at the orientation of Balinese dance innovation in Ubud, a Bali’s tourist spot that is praised as the Bali’s art center. The recent study employed a qualitative approach, which included observations, documentation and interviews. The data were collected during fieldwork conducted

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The majority of people consider culture to be a social capability that is both unchanging and resistant to change. In fact, culture is dynamic and constantly evolving over time. This study investigates the impact of tourism on cultural development in Balinese society through the lens of Balinese dancing as a cultural product, which serves as a case study. According to the findings of this study, the Balinese create cultural products that are tailored to the needs of tourists. They are partly shifting away from their earlier focus, which spanned centuries and consisted of the creation of cultural products for religious purposes. As for Balinese dance, it has been widely used for over a century to enhance the experience of visitors who come to the island of Bali while also demonstrating that the society is dynamic and always developing its culture to keep up with the demands of today’s globalized world.
in 2010 and 2018. Results of the study show that Balinese dances are growing as a mean to promote tourism industry in the island, maximizing tourist experience, as well as showing the Balinese identity as a “cultured society.” This implies that Balinese is still evolving “traditional arts” innovatively as part of their everyday lives, showing a living culture of their society.

Subjects: Tourism Society and Culture; Tourism Management; The Business of Tourism; Niche Tourism; Tourism Behaviour; Music & Drama

Keywords: Cultural tourism; innovation; authenticity; identity; Bali

1. Introduction
The development of the global tourism industry is showing a growing concern for the concept of sustainable tourism in both supply and demand. Both tourism service providers and tourists as consumers have an equal vision not only of taking optimal economic advantage of tourism activities but also of the sustainability of tourism resources, i.e. natural and cultural resources. The experience of the growth of the tourism sector has demonstrated a distinct fashion of demands on the current tourism business from the 1980s to the end of the 1990s. The former mode of tourism shows excessive demand for mass tourism with sea sun and sand as the major theme in the tourist industry. At the time, it becomes a tool for tourism growth. However, the growth of mass tourism mode has made an unequal tourism income whereas most of the income generated from tourism flies outside the destination (Pratt, 2015). The contemporary demand for tourism product, however, tends to consume unique experiences with a deeper impression of the attraction provided. Consuming experiences mean that tourists are willing to buy for not only tourism goods and services but more than that they pay for feelings they cannot get in their daily environment (Trauer, 2006). This new demand is greatly triggered by the awareness of tourists that is more aware of the resources they consume while traveling to a specific destination. As such, the development opens up a new group of visitors, as opposed to those in the category of mainstream tourism, known as special interest tourism (SIT). The domain of SIT may be comparable to the traditional form of tourism, such as beach tourism or cultural tourism and yet SIT has its unique character in terms of the focus and obligation of the visitors and tourism operators alike.

SIT is a pattern of tourism activities carried out on a small scale in the service of travellers who require a deeper experience from destinations or alternative attraction from their daily routines for recreational, business or other purposes within a short period of time (Prince & Ioannides, 2017). Although it takes place on a limited scale, SIT is a modern tourism trend of greater sophistication relative to mass tourism. Therefore, to grasp such a trend it requires a broader viewpoint. There are at least two basic approaches to look more closely at micro- and macro-perspectives of SIT (Trauer, 2006). The macro-perspective analyses SIT by conversations on the market, which involve not just the demand-supply factors, but also the media in the triangle system. Another perspective, i.e. the micro one, look at how visitors use the products that tourism service providers offer. The development of SIT must therefore follow the new emerging market, which is hungry for custom products or services, and offer those products and services to a specific niche market. In the SIT context, customization refers to tourism services that provide satisfaction and hobby-related experiences, interest in specific things, activities or lessons that are only available at a particular destination. Therefore, customization in tourism industry should meet unique tourist segments that need special service from tourism enterprises in a more individual way (Han & Cheng, 2013; Rydback & Hyder, 2018). Customization provided by the vendor would allow visitors to develop the tourism packages they have ordered from an individual context and value. In this sense, it is important, however, to take advantage of the trend of contemporary visitors who choose to take a solo travel or make their travel in a small community to optimize their travel experiences.
In the context of the development and sustainability of tourism on the island of Bali as the leading tourist destination in Indonesia, tourism actors on the island have proposed intensively for expanding special interest tourism in order to attract new markets alongside current visitors. Expansion of the industry to enter new markets is possible for Bali because the island has centuries of experience in the tourism field. In the 1920s, Western anthropologists and writers initiated the development of Bali as a tourist destination, including Van Hoevel in 1850 and Thomas Stamford Raffles in 1817, who viewed the islander as the living museum of ancient Javanese civilization during the Majapahit Kingdom period. Accordingly, Vicker (1989) also said that after Majapahit Kingdom's collapse, the island is the only place inside Indonesia's archipelago safe from the Islamization surge. It is important to note, however, that Islam had entered Bali since 1357 A. D. and coexisted with the Balinese Hindu community for centuries (Mashad, 2014).

2. Existing theory and research focus
This paper examines the process of change and innovation in the growth of cultural tourism in Bali by looking more closely at the Balinese dance as one of the leading arts on the island of Bali in order to satisfy demand in the SIT category. The current research explores the potential of the Balinese culture to create new cultural products for the tourist industry without weakening its identity as Balinese heritage. Therefore, the objectives of this analysis are to investigate the growth of tourism in Bali Island and, more importantly, examine the growth of Balinese dance in the sense of SIT as well as the policy to ensure its competitiveness and sustainability in the tourism industry. In this context, we define change as the process of transforming social mindsets to favourably accept dancing tradition as a means of developing the tourism industry. Meanwhile, innovation is defined in terms of the technological aspects that dance experts, performers and audiences utilize and accept.

2.1. Culture as resource in tourism industry
The tourism industry lies in an incessantly shifting competitive market. The primary drivers of these changes will come from shifting of customer values, transformation of political forces, issues in climate change and environmental problems and technology advancements in the next decade (Dwyer & Edwards, 2009). As a result, a destination should take responses to such dynamics in order to remain competitive by continuously taking strategic adjustment in the tourism market. Since a tourist destination is viewed as a business entity, innovation is seen as the capacity of a destination and of individual as well as organizations within it to adapt to the dynamic changes of such external factors. It is critical to dispute here whether external forces are becoming integrated into the internal social system or they are just a power influencing change and innovation in society independently (cf. Elder-Vass, 2015).

Tourism is a particular commercial phenomenon defined by the collaboration of different businesses in order to attract visitors. As a result, tourism progress is currently taking place through an interconnected network of not only in political and economic contexts but also intertwine within social, cultural, institutional and administrative contexts (Foris, 2014; Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2009). Particularly, the development of innovation capability in a tourist destination is emanating from and driven by internal resources and external environments. Whereas organizational capabilities such as human resources, creativity, open-mindedness and entrepreneurial capacity are now becoming the most significant drivers internally, the global issues such as economy, climate change, glocalization, social trends and technology have become key macro-level drivers that indirectly affect innovation growth in the destinations, alongside direct micro-level elements including customer demand, rivalry and government regulations (cf., Kirchberg, 2007).

2.2. Cultural tourism and innovation
The tourism industry in Bali has been growing rapidly since the 1980s, beginning with a program initiated by the Government of Indonesia to develop the Nusa Dua area in 1976. The area is located in Badung Regency and was planned to be particularly constructed as a tourist enclave,
isolated from native residential areas. The development of tourism in a concentrated area was aimed at protecting the local culture against the rush of tourists, thus preserving local customs, traditions and cultures (Picard, 1996). On the other side, tourists and their activities will be away from the bustle, laws and limitations on local activities. These discourses, however, lead into a gap since local culture is a valuable resource for and can flourish well within tourism environment (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003; Yamashita, 2003).

The wave of tourists who visit Bali Island over the past five decades has brought out a long debate on cultural preservation as well as tourism itself from various viewpoints on the island. As the debate continues, Balinese arts and crafts, which are the manifesto of Balinese culture, have become the focal point of this issue. Many of the concerns tend to be regarding the survival of Balinese society, but the inquiries cannot yet be addressed in a satisfactory manner. However, the debate can be viewed as a catalyst for Balinese to restructure their society under the guise of tourist culture. Within the framework of functionalism theory, we can see how social institutions in Balinese society have attempted to maintain a balance and harmony between culture as a tourism resource and as an integral part of their religion (cf., Giddens, 1993; Holden, 2005), despite critical views that tourism is simply a new form of exploitation of subordinate societies (Freire-Medeiros, 2008).

Bali has been declared as cultural tourism destination, and together with other destinations all over the world it brings out cultural tourism grow faster than the general tourism industry in average and emerges as one of the potential segments in the tourism industry. This makes demands in the segment is highly raising. As a result, cultural attractions historically known as an alternate mode of tourism are turning into a more mass tourism. In the case of Bali, this can only be seen through large waves of visitors to enjoy cultural attractions as a complement to sea sand tourism. Tourists in this classification never talk about whether to get truly interested in knowing the sense of the attractions they gaze (Urry, 1990). In other words, this type of visitors often finds local culture to be complementary to their recreational interests and, as a result, there is a shortage of literacy in the preparation of local culture.

In fact, dilemmas over the cultural-based development of the tourism sector in Bali have been under discussion since tourism was introduced on the island for the first time. In the 1920s, before Bali was first opened commercially as a tourism resort, there were doubts and questions regarding the prospects of Balinese culture. Until quite recently, and as tourism has been going on in the island for a century, this controversy still persists and appears to be debated from a number of viewpoints. Balinese culture, in addition, shows its longevity and remains to draw tourists from all over the world (Angraini, 2016). Throughout these discussions, Picard (1996) stresses the significance of addressing the effects of the growth of tourism at the earliest level of progress due to the possible effect of tourism on local identities and cultural crises. Culture, among other noticeable by art and craft products, is seen as an island capable resource of the island for ensuring the survival of its tourism industry. Therefore, it is necessary for the island to insure, conserve and improve the art and craft goods through creative practices (Mudra & Suartika, 2017).

Innovation in the field of cultural tourism, however, emerges as a dynamic and challenging study area as it requires the viewpoints of the various stakeholders. From anthropological perspective, an innovation in culture usually refers to capabilities in the development of novelties or new ideas in the field of new ways of doing things for better life—“as the underlying evolutionary force that propels cultures up the ladder of cultural complexity” (O’Brien & Shennan, 2010, p. 4). Culture-based tourism typically involves local residents, including a wide range of small-scale suppliers of cultural products. This condition allows these suppliers to operate in a dynamic environment, with a limited market share to control for each competitor within the industry (Walder, 2006). Within this form of business rivalry, it would be easy to copy and thus there will be less benefit from creativity efforts. In tourism-related industry, institutions such as the government, the industry association as well as the university certainly allow the formulation of a lateral
complex network to promote innovation and creativity in tourism product development among local suppliers (Flagestad, 2006; Paget et al., 2010). However, the complexity of rivalry on this industry implies that there is obstacle to innovation (Rogers, 2003).

2.3. Special interest tourism
Balinese arts is regarded as a valuable asset to Balinese. It is very necessary to preserve the traditions in Balinese society as well as the cultural products they generate for entertainment (Baker, 2016). The framework for promoting heritage and preserving community existence has generated a collaborative trade-off between tourism industry and local culture. In this context, the mutual benefit between both parties, i.e. visitors and residents, occurs in the ideal yet incompatible setting and thus, a consensus scheme is required to optimize benefits for each group. This means that the tourism industry allows tourists to spend their dollars on the authentic experience of Bali. At the same time, local society spends the money they receive from producing culturally based tourist attractions to support and sustain their cultural identity (Yamashita, 2003). This scenario enables the Balinese to continually serve new category of tourist that emerges in the tourism market through the ideation of Special Interest tourism (SIT). The SIT segment is seen as a more favourable market for the development of tourism in the island of Bali as the island has declared cultural tourism to be a trademark of the industry there.

There are tourists categorized as “the serious tourists” and are grouped within the SIT segment. Tourists in the SIT category are likely to look for a more responsible way of visiting a destination. Tourists in this segment also visit a destination to establish a direct relationship with aboriginal people and learn about and search for local life experiences, customs and rituals. In some degree, this intense contact may theoretically weaken indigenous culture because such activity leads to the phase of acculturation. Tourism development advocates, however, suggested maintaining the interaction properly to provide greater economic and cultural benefits for the local society (Smith, 2003; Yamashita, 2003).

However, the creation of the SIT remains unclear as to which forms of tourism may be classified as special interest tourism. Special interest tourism appears in many forms of tourism and is identified by specific activities, geographies or groups of tourists of similar interest (Trauer, 2006). First, specific activity terminology covers any special interest activity in a particular destination that is accessible and undertaken by visitors. These activities are expressed in many forms of tourism, such as sport tourism, adventure tourism and cultural tourism. Second, geographical area-based description of the SIT requires considerable interest when visiting areas such as the Antarctica. Such identification includes a travel to a single destination as a reflection of a broader geographical region, such as Europe and Africa. The final SIT categorization may be done by identifying the affinity groups. This can be analysed through units of identifiable visitors, such as grey tourism to identify groups of seniors who travel for similar reasons, pink tourism to recognize gay and bisexual visitors, or girly tourism to recognize groups of young females of common curiosity who travel to a particular destination. In other words, these affinity groups seek experience in a specific destination by trying to develop intimacy and coexistence inside their own exclusive groups. Based on this categorization, Trauer (2006) describes SIT as the opposite form of mass tourism. Similarly, Robinson and Novelli (2007) attribute culture-based tourism and special interest tourism as part of niche tourism that, in this context, is in contrast to mass tourism.

3. Method

3.1. Data collection
This research is qualitative in nature and using case study approach. Time series data were analysed, which were collected from two periods of fieldtrip in 2010 and 2018. A 3-month field trip in 2010 was conducted, meanwhile in 2018, we visited the same site for 2 weeks to investigate what have changed over the past 8 years. We expect to get enough information in terms of research context, meaning and significance by doing the same procedures both in 2010 and 2018.
(Rubin, 2021). The data were then obtained from multiple sources of information, i.e. audio-visual materials, observation, documentation and interview (Creswell, 2007).

The first source of information was discovered while conducting an investigation into YouTube videos. A comprehensive sampling technique was used, which was dependent on the scope condition (Rubin, 2021). We used this method to search for keywords in English and Bahasa related to Balinese Dance with a minimum of 50 comments and then chose 50 videos to observe. Only videos uploaded between 2010 and 2018 were used as data sources for this study. We refrained from observing documentary videos in order to focus on the natural and spontaneous behaviors of the people featured in the videos (Creswell, 2014). Although this method matches with some advantages such as unobtrusive data collection and its ability to capture data visually (Creswell, 2014), the videos we observe did not guarantee its representation of specific research locus, i.e. Ubud tourist area. However, by incorporating media technology, such as YouTube, we expect to explore more on the discourse and experience of local people in fabricating innovative cultural products (Margolis & Zunjarwad, 2018; Prosser, 2013; Saukko, 2018).

The second was conducted through observation of activities in dance studios, of which there are numerous in the Ubud area. We define the Ubud tourist area not by administrative or geographical boundaries, but by the definition provided by the tourism community, particularly tourist guides. As a result, we have expanded our research area beyond the District of Ubud to include some districts that provide products and resources for tourism in Ubud. Two studios were visited to gain a better understanding of how they practiced, developed and envisioned Balinese Dance and its improvement. We were not only to position ourselves as unobtrusive observers during the observation activities but also to develop communication with observed subjects in order to obtain subjective perspectives to supplement our data collection (cf., Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2013).

Documentation method of data collection in this study was conducted through document analysis available in the library of the Indonesian Institute of Art Denpasar and the Bali Provincial Cultural Office. Content and semiotic analyses were applied to analyse the source of information available in both destinations (Timothy, 2012). In the first destination, we analysed scientific documents and conducted an overarching analysis toward the result of some relevant theses. In the latter destination, we collect information from project reports regarding the nurture of Balinese arts and culture. From the document analysis, we acquired a balanced portion of information about Balinese Dance innovation and development.

To increase the validity and credibility of the research findings, a series of interviews were conducted. The primary informants in this study were a Balinese expert in indigenous Balinese dance (respondent A), a traditional dance instructor (respondent B), an observer of indigenous Balinese culture (respondent C) and a local economist (respondent D). The four respondents were chosen specifically for their relevance to the data insights envisioned from the in-depth interview (Rubin, 2021). Each interview was conducted at two distinct times and in an unstructured setting in order to elicit a broad range of respondents’ opinions (Creswell, 2014). As such, we expect consistency in the data gathered during the interview process. We also anticipated that by conducting interviews, we would ascertain the consistency of the data obtained through observation and documentation processes.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Balinese dance and the development of special interest tourism
Arts is one of the major cultural resources of the Balinese society that has established the island a world-famous tourism destination. Balinese art products, along with tradition and vibrant religious festivals, have long drawn visitors from all over the world to visit. The
Balinese culture absorbs other cultures easier than other ethnicities of Indonesia, which at the same time preserves its “pristine” identity. This potential is becoming a vital cultural resource for the growth of tourism in the island. The capacity to manage innovation in a cultural product ensures that Bali’s traditional arts have evolved continuously without weakening their core beliefs and are thus tied to past practices. In contemporary Balinese life, local community intends to build these cultural products in order to support the dynamic of and take a benefit from the tourism industry.

Many studies in the field of tourism have been conducted, and the relationships between hosts and guests were debated in the tourism state in order to examine the impact that resulted in the interaction. The debates are primarily regarding the usage of natural and cultural capital in tourism operations, which involve local authenticity for tourist experience. This paper takes a distinctive perspective by discovering the phenomenon, especially within the SIT segment. We explore a type of tourism that creates more intense relationships and connections between visitors and locals to reduce the harmful effects of tourist behaviour in a destination. This appears to be an antithesis to traditional theory of tourism research, which suggests that the more intense contact between the visitor and the host, the survival of culture and tourism in the destination can be assured as long as such engagement is well coordinated. In this case, the concept of vigilance is the key issue when visitors come to visit to consume and enjoy local knowledge (Trauer, 2006). This is in accordance with Yaguchi and Yoshihara (2004), stating the existence of a tourist destination has been developed and sold to the visitors as a paradise. As a consequence, in a given destination they visit, visitors should still have plans to do whatever they want, with very little restrictions. In the tourism field, the precautionary concept (Fennell & Ebert, 2010) ensures that visitors should get what they want in their journeys and recreational experiences, not just witnessing natural scenery, but also experiencing diverse community life through consuming what is perceived as “pristine” local identification. In order to satisfy these tourism requirements, a higher degree of creativity in the production of unique tourism products is needed, and thus only those with a high level of entrepreneurship will be commercially viable in a competitive tourist industry. The trade-off in the industry can be seen from how dance instructors interact in the following statement:

We have a diverse group of students, ranging from locals and other Indonesians to international visitors interested in learning how to perform. We teach dance techniques, and I believe that is the most authentic experience they can have. (Interview with respondent B)

In the case of Balinese Dance as a tourist attraction, dance is part of the Balinese economy of today. In the modern day of Bali, numerous dance presentations have turned from those for religious purposes into a luxury for tourist entertainment. According to Eiseman (1990), many visitor attractions show in Bali are also less of natural setting in their presentations. The absence of such a setting has given rise to the impression that the performance of Balinese Dance tends to be presented in commercial and mass production to gain a low price for mere tourist attraction. In order to address this scepticism, Balinese artists and choreographers have created a modern dance style, one of them by offering live performances at dinners. Some of the performances even show up to 200 performers performing Balinese rituals, including Balinese dance as part of the ritual. As such, visitors are not only pleased with the special Balinese Dances but also concerned in catching the dance performance’s sense, idea and context. In this sense, the tourists are treated as the “gods” who are amused with Balinese Dance as an offering. This in turn will provide a deep impression and experience for the tourists involved in the process of performance production. It is interesting to catch an opinion of respondent C regarding the matter:

When performers regard their guests as gods, they strive to provide the best service possible. And when “their gods” are unable to comprehend what they are performing, they will make adjustments based on the guests’ comprehension, which is usually a matter of shortening the duration of the performance.
Similar to many other traditional arts on the island, the nature of Balinese Dance is complex and flourishes all the time partially influenced by attempts to attract visitors to enjoy Balinese culture. However, the islanders also closely retain the Hindu culture as their core ideology. This is becoming one of the important factors in the growth of Balinese arts, as most of the islanders favour the traditional form of Balinese dance (Dibia & Ballinger, 2011). For the Balinese themselves, they love the traditional dance presentation until the end of the show even though it takes a long time to perform. Except for some reason, even the performance often going on all night. At the same time, however, the islanders are also open to new ideas towards modern dance style, which is typically experimented with traditional presentation. As a result, a new innovative performance can be created to please both visitors and locals.

The creativity in the development of arts on the island can be seen through the annual festival hosted by the Bali Provincial Government named the Bali Art Festival. The aim of the festival is to respond to the expectations and passions of artists to create new artistic performances (Symons, 2018). Supporting this objective, as for example, at the 40th Bali Art Festival in 2018, the present of the festival is indeed to deliver entertainment for cheerful Balinese. During a week of this event, many people mostly Balinese come to see this arts exhibition enjoying new music and dance performance. In the context of Bali as an international tourist destination, the enthusiasm of local spectators to consume conventional cultural performances indicates competitiveness in the international tourism sector, especially in the cultural tourism market. Porter (1980) describes this tendency by implying that the business under competition in the international market should first guarantee its productive selling in commodities whether they are goods or services in the domestic market. The Balinese enthusiasm for consuming traditional arts signifies the local market ‘s readiness to ensure the survival of traditional art, particularly in this case Balinese Dance, when such an art is provided and adapted for tourism industry motives.

The people of Bali are, of course, the main audience for the Balinese dances. Nevertheless, there are other unseen audiences to these dances, which is in the Balinese credence is illustrated in the ideas so-called sekala and niskala (Putri, 2017). The definition of sekala applies to something recognizable that can be stimulated and sensed by human senses. Niskala, as the counterpart of sekala, relates to imaginary objects that are intangible, untouchable and can only be sensed by divine processes. In the teaching of the Rwa Bhinneda philosophy of Balinese, the sekala and the niskala tradition must be balanced in order to generate human happiness and prosperity. For the Balinese performers, particularly here the dancers, it is important for them to entertain both sekala and niskala audiences:

To change or create a new style, we believe that everything must be done with the ease of gods, which is a costly process. Therefore, fraternization between pura and puri is critical. (Interview with respondent A).

Dancing has become a centuries-old custom in Bali. It can sustain and flourish on the basis of the internal demand as Balinese dancers have devoted their art skills to the pura (temple) and puri (palace) since before the twentieth century. The word pura means the cluster of religious temples and its system, and the term puri applies to the habitation of the raja or royalty, who have been deemed as the major advocates of traditional arts performances. The reason behind this patronage system is that the Balinese art performance to entertain gods costs a considerable amount of money and, therefore, then only nobilities and royal families can finance traditional art performances in the society (Arumsari et al., 2018). Royal Family members, often skilled in the arts, influenced the development of new dance ideas in addition to the improvement created by the dancers themselves instead. The royal family is enable to influence common dancer since dancing was a tradition among royal family members in Bali, and the princes had been educated to perform and create new moves since they were young. Having expertise of traditional dances would be valuable and prestigious to them, and thus such mastery could be used to gain legitimacy from ordinary citizens (Dunbar-Hall, 2003;
Hobart, 2007). This process demonstrates that the formation of dance tradition occurred within a confined social structure dominated by religious and political powers (Elder-Vass, 2015; Kirchberg, 2007).

In the modern world of Bali, the inspiration to produce and innovate towards dance creations is not simply emanating from the royal family. Commoners have also welcomed and contributed to the development of Balinese dance, particularly in the folk dance category in order to celebrate their own arts (Hobart, 2007). Innovations and improvements in folk dance are much quicker than those in the court dance division since folk dances are less structured in nature and thus easier to produce. In line with the rapid growth of the island’s tourism industry, Bali’s contemporary arts are not only targeted for Balinese tradition but also for visitors who have a special interest in the Balinese dances. As a result, a causal relationship exists between individuals and social structure in this developmental model (Elder-Vass, 2008).

4.2. Identity, creativity and authenticity of Balinese cultural products

Similarly to that of studying society elsewhere in the world, investigating the identity of the Balinese community, is very much to wander into a complex field of paradoxes, but particularly significant in the sense of the growth of tourism in the island. In a globalized world, identity is declared locally, in view of the progress of the global popular culture, as people are seeking to demonstrate their culture’s existence, quality and uniqueness. The Balinese passion to reveal their identity particularly in cultural expression is aimed for two-fold. The first refers to their position as minor ethnic in the world’s largest Muslim country that has made the Balinese society struggle to be accepted as part of Indonesia. Balinese is viewed as the last stronghold ideology of Hindu within the majority Muslim nation (Picard, 1996). Since Indonesia gaining independence in 1945, Pancasila (five moral principles) has defined the nation’s official ideology as its first principle, believing in one and only God, and this must include all ethnic and religious groups across the state. The Balinese Hindu thus at first did struggle to be accepted politically, as they worshiped multiple gods and deities (cf., Picard, 1997; Yamashita, 2003). The second way they addressed their culture and identity was through the adoption of tourism as a significant sector for the economic development in the island. The post-World War II period was characterized by an increasing usage of previous military airports for the benefit of civil and air travel businesses. As a result, inaccessible regions were easier to access and new tourism destinations began developing. With the increasing numbers of Western travellers, there was a competition among tourist destinations to attract such visitors. As visitors try something new, things that far from their everyday lives, a guarantee of authenticity is therefore necessary. Accordingly, the marketing of tourism requires uniqueness such as the cultural identification that can be used to indicate the real essence of a destination (Lanfant, 1995; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001).

Nevertheless, absolute authenticity is an illusion because culture is continuously evolving, either caused by the dynamics of civilization to create new innovations and technologies, or other cultures are diffusing from one particular area to another as a consequence of the exchange of practices or values. On the one hand, culture tends to evolve internally, as the components that form it continuously grow to meet society’s needs (Munck & Korotayev, 2000). Such evolutionary change prevails to culture components including language, spirituality and ideology, societal structures and cultural products as they change and respond to the maturity and sophistication progress of a community. On the other hand, it is important to note that there is no single pristine society that has not any interaction to other society. Factors like political relationship, economy connection and theological missions have historically bound cultures linked:

We do not wish to be perceived as a living museum, but tradition is critical to our economic engine of tourism. We follow global trends while also reverting to our true Balinese roots. (Interview with respondent D).
It is important to realize that Balinese cultural life has been continuously developing and modified by continual interaction with other society from outside. The arts, to some extent, have been the most dynamic aspect of Balinese cultural life, as this cultural component directly affects the Balinese economic structure thru tourism. It indicates that the Balinese artistry grows together with the tourists’ desire in searching authenticity, although it is still a huge debate on the criteria of authentic of a destination (Tiberghien & Xie, 2018). The majority of visitors cannot clearly see how “tradition” of the artistry products delivered to them has been adjusted. For example, traditional Balinese carving perceived by tourists as authentic and hence considered as a high-quality artwork was also touched by Chinese carving styles. But its unique features continue to exist, such that the visitors cannot discern this unless they are specialists in oriental artwork. The detailed design of Barong carving, as for instance, became very common in the 1970s to the 1980s as “authentic” Balinese wood sculpture. At present, however, Balinese craftsmen are creating work in a modern minimalist style in reaction to the consumer demand for basic carving and sculpture, and visitors tend to treat this latest kind of artwork still as “authentic.” Thus, this generates memorial experience for visitor through an asymmetric tourism production-consumption process (King & Kongpradit, 2019). This discussion corresponds to the viewpoint of respondent A as follows:

...It is exceedingly difficult for tourists learning Balinese Dance, particularly foreigners, to comprehend the underlying ideas. As a result, they only learn about the beauty of dance movement, not the philosophy behind.

The conceptions of the visitors regarding authenticity differ from those of the host due to the dichotomy of cultural production and its consumption (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2004). Visitors who come for a brief period stay will away from the unpleasant circumstances of the destination (Urry, 1990). One example is the Balinese house with prismatic roof tiles, sculptured stone and red burnt brick walls, which is regarded as authentic by tourists visiting Bali. In fact, the Balinese image of an authentic settlement applies to typical houses in rural regions, explored by ethnographers but undoubtedly beyond the scope of tourists. However, soon after the ethnographers introduce the form of typical Balinese houses to light, a new-fashioned course emerges offered by the tourism business to use this finding as an attraction for visitors. As a result, a typical house in an upland (about 500 meters above sea level) village of Penglipuran in the regency of Bangli has been restored to match the desires of visitors for amenities, without losing its basic architectural nature that is viewed as “authentic.”

Authenticity, moreover, is considered as necessary and yet not enough sufficient to create tourism commodities of value to tourists (cf., Tiberghien & Xie, 2018). In the art and craft market-product, although it is not always the case, the commodity to be marketed should meet imaginations and sensations of the visitors through what so called as constructive authenticity (Urry, 1990; Wang, 1999). One of the common traditions is the way Balinese celebrate their guest by conveying dance in almost the same way as their gods are welcome. Such tradition fulfills the desire of travellers to experience the paradise. In order to give a more in-depth sense of a welcome, however, the dancers are now also giving distinguished visitors a garland. This warmth is a really Hawaiian way of welcoming guests, which has not been recognized as authentic thing in the Balinese tradition (Couteau, 2005). On the other hand, the circumstances that cultural transformation process is taking place do not influence its reputation as “Balinese.” The perfect instances of the utilization of the Bali name and brand can be found in silverware and silk products. The handcrafted silver jewellery displayed in Celuk, a village in the district of Sukawati, which is well known as part of the tourist region of Ubud, is currently crafted on the basis of foreign designs. Conventional Balinese craft fashions are less saleable on the tourism market compared to those unconventional ones, i.e foreign designs, but tourists consider such foreign designs to have originated in Bali still. The products made from silk are similar. In point of fact, the Balinese does not even manufacture silk on their own. Yet silk is a commodity traded in Ubud, especially in traditional market place. The silk cloth is primarily imported from China and Thailand, only the final product is finished in Bali.
and marked as Balinese-made. The prototype is developed by outsider designers who have a sufficient knowledge of the markets but without removing the features of the Balinese fashion. On the other side, the typical ikat weaving fabric, which can be considered as authentic Balinese product, attracts little interest from visitors considering a high price for a souvenir and its stiff and rugged surface leaves it uncomfortable for using. The production of ikat cloth is therefore mainly for ceremonial purposes aimed at the domestic market.

The prominent wood in village of Mas and stone carvings of Batubulan village are no less intriguing. The bestseller wood carvings that widely available in Bali for furniture and decoration are imported from Java, in particular those from the town of Jepara in Central Java. The Jepara carving style is a more minimalist refined style of furniture commodity suited to the currently fashionable minimalist house design. In terms of the price, the Jepara carvings worth one-tenth of a Balinese carving style that is aesthetically detailed and expensive in matter of labor cost. Once a tourist gets their furniture he wants in Bali, he finds it to be originally crafted by the Balinese, and hence a genuine Balinese product. The stone carvings exhibited throughout the main street of the Batubulan village demonstrate the similar case. Much of them are produced in Java, especially those from the districts of Trowulan and Muntial. The Australian is the major customer of this “Bali sculpture” who proudly installed it in their Bali-style gardens. Even more examples there are the wall decorating sandstone goods made in Java and shipped to the Middle East which designed by foreigner but are marketed using Bali for its branding, which is free of royalty.

In the case of cultural tourism in Bali, this type of tourism has been the prominent type of tourism in the island, and therefore, the Balinese cultural products in some extent have been promoted for tourist market. Thus, cultural attractions have been the critical aspect of the open tourism system and become the motivation for tourists to travel to a desired tourism place (Bieger & Weinert, 2006). Consequently, the cultural attractions presented for visitors are focused on the old tradition though gradually using new technologies. Furthermore, the cultural involution phase encountered on the island is clearly obvious as, on the one side, the Balinese desire for a modern life but, on the other side, has used the reinterpretation of their folk culture as a means to achieve this. Younger generations who are usually unenthusiastic about older practices are now seeking to locate authentic traditions of ancient Bali and sell it to visitors, while at the meantime, developing with this culture innovatively to show the nature of their society that is dynamic, full of creative imagination and expertise in arts. Balinese youths who are members of and actively involved in volunteer village art organisations (seka) are critical players in this process. They take ancient tradition and modernize it via the use of technology and present their new art creation in festivals such as Bali Art Fiesta which take place annually.

Parties with dissimilar considerations are responding to such change and innovation with differing viewpoints. Those interested in cultural observation including sociologists and anthropologists may argue that transformation of a culture within a society is natural and should therefore be enabled so that the society can harmonize their life to global dynamics. In Balinese context, they argue that it is absurd to discover “authentic Bali” as the writers, photographers and anthropologists described about the island in the last century. In the contemporary day of the Balinese craftsmen as one of the transformational agents in Balinese culture work in response to market needs, technological innovations and global fashions, and also their own creativities. The adoption of cultural innovation in the Balinese society "may therefore be viewed not as a one-off [event], but as a continuous accumulation of change” (O’Brien & Shennan, 2010, p. 3). On the other side, giant investors in tourism sector, who are mainly outsiders, are also concerned with maintaining what they have seen as the original and unique of Bali in order to proactively respond to the increasing trend for cultural tourism. Analyzing this debate, it can be seen that both sides recognize the significance of market demand for the development of a more competitive tourist destination.
4.3. Transformation of the tradition

For those who are interested about Bali, this island of gods appears eternal and uninterrupted. These people appreciate the steadiness of Balinese society beside the fact that they can still enjoy similar cultural attractions when they come back to the island, even a couple of decades later. This is especially the case when revisiting Ubud, because dancing is performed every day in many corners of this region, either for tourist attractions or for purposes of worship. Social networks in the village of Ubud are highly established. In terms of tradition and social ties, the puri of Ubud plays an essential role in the society. Therefore, even though many outsiders are coming to Ubud and have had direct interactions with local residents and their traditions, this has not corrupted local cultural products, but instead strengthened them. The interaction has, in turn, arisen “New Ubud” as a new branding for Ubud as no more a village but a diverse international town (MacRae, 2016). However, since Ubud has historically been the house for talented artists and keep rooted in tradition and spirit still, the interaction between locals and visitors has actually generated more creative styles of dances, which always have a sense of being Balinese.

Following such result, the spectators particularly outsiders tend to see Bali as a sort of living museum devoted to the romanticism of and pristinely from the past. This is, indeed, unrealistic to discussing about Bali just in terms of a charming paradise limitedly:

...this is because outsiders are unaware of the specific changes that have occurred, and consequently view Balinese Dance as everlasting. (Interview with respondent D)

It is undoubtedly valid that the Balinese have effectively carried out tradition and traditionalism while evolving it within the context of tourism (George & Reid, 2005), and this is especially true in Ubud (cf., Taylor, 1991). Cultural evolution takes place since Balinese culture has long been interacting with outside cultures for centuries and continuously evolving in order to respond to societal transition and the surrounding environment. In other words, the Balinese culture has been continuously reinterpreted by recontextualize it for tourism aims (Elias-Varotsis, 2006) from generation to generation and at the same time tend to preserve the more conservative aspects of their culture in a more slowly changing religious activity.

Similar to the other classical forms of art across the island, the Balinese dances are complex and evolve over time inspired by the outsiders, but keep strongly of the older tradition. One of the reasons why this occurs is because the Balinese enjoy the traditional dance forms (Dibia & Ballinger, 2011). Balinese frequently stay up all night watching a traditional show, and the performances are common to finish just before dawn. In contrast, Balinese welcomes new and innovative performance styles as well. Based on the observation of the presented study from the Bali Arts Festival during a field research in 2010 and 2018. After 8 years, it showed almost the same atmosphere that hundreds of seats in the amphitheatre had been occupied few hours before the show. Majority of the spectators are Balinese, who desire to enjoy the newest fashions of the Balinese music and dance, with some among them are the supporters of the performer teams.

In contemporary Balinese artworks, court and folk dances in Ubud are both produced throughout a number of networks, such as dance courses, studios, seka (voluntary village art associations), art colleges and institutes, as well as partnership with expert from outside Bali, particularly the western. All of these networks usually incorporate artists from a variety of socio-cultural settings. The dance schools spread across the Ubud area, as for instance, teach traditional dance also to visitors instead of just teach it to the Balinese children. This in turn becomes a new attraction and experience for visitors in SIT category (Trauer, 2006). Some dance studios in Ubud tourist area are also offering to teach other traditional Indonesian dances as a complement to those originally from Bali. These can be the sources of Balinese dance to innovate because the studios learn with external cultures from where they get inspirations. The instructors in the school come from many different social strata and take the job as professional dance trainer. Considering the current
creation in Balinese dance, however, the distinction of the dance into court and folk schools clearly indicates their origin only and does not actually oppose the two.

5. Conclusion
Tourism in the modern era has shifted away from mass tourism toward more customized tourism within ecosystems that foster innovation. As a particular activity, it is distinguished by the presence and collaboration of multiple actors that facilitate visitors searching for specific activities of tourism. As a consequence, special interest tourism progress in Bali is taking place within an interconnected framework that involves the social, economic, institutional, cultural and political ecosystems. In this context, the Balinese ability to innovate art performance is influenced by both internal and external environments. It is clear that human resource, creativity, openness and innovation are the most significant internal factors for the process. Meanwhile, things such as world economy, environmental issues and technology are becoming the most critical macro-level factors affecting change and innovation of Bali’s performing arts, all together with micro-level factors including spectators as the consumer, religious authorities and pressures from both formal and informal local authority.

The evolution of culture is clearly evident in Bali, as the Balinese, on the one hand, want modern lifestyle, while, on the other hand, make a strong attempt to rediscover and conserve their traditions. Youth, who typically refuse tradition, many have joined the seka in search of “authentic” old Balinese practices to sell to tourists. At the same time, they are reworking the elements of their community to prove that Bali is a culturally vibrant society, full of inspiration and innovative in artistic skill. It also should be noted that the Balinese artists have embraced consumer preference, technological developments and global fashions, adjusting them for revitalization of their traditions.

It is realistic to say that media like television and the internet have greatly fostered Balinese performing arts to establish and promote themselves as tourism icon of Bali Island. The availability of information in the media inspires Balinese artists to keep innovating by incorporating contemporary fashion of arts and creativity into their new work. The media often helpful for promoting Balinese arts in the means that performing arts information as well as the event schedule can be comfortably searched over such media. Meanwhile, the presence of these media allows the Balinese art workers to reach their creativity as well. Likewise, outsiders including the tourists have provided inspiration for the Bali art developer to create new innovative artwork within the framework of special interest tourism development.

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