

# Destination Image: International Tourists' Perception of Bali's Cultural Landscape as UNESCO's World Heritage Site

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## **Abstract**

*This paper aims to find out the perception of foreign tourists towards the Subak Cultural Landscape as the UNESCO's World Heritage Site. Analysis of destination image can assist related parties in developing the destination according to its image and characteristics. Destination Image is a topic that has been extensively investigated in the field of tourism marketing, it is the overall impression obtained by individuals from a particular tourist destination. This overall impression is obtained from the perception of visitors related to the quality of the tourist attractions. Descriptive statistics is used to gather the information of the foreign tourists perception about the destination image. It can be seen that tourists feel that they do not get the interesting cultural activities offered by the organizers, even though this destination sells its big name as a cultural landscape that is recognized by UNESCO.*

**Keywords:** *Destination Image, Heritage Tourism, Cultural Landscape, Bali.*

## **Introduction**

One of the tourist attractions of Bali which is recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO is the Subak Cultural Landscape. Subak is a community organization that specifically regulates rice field irrigation systems which are closely related to culture and religion in Balinese society. The philosophy behind it is called Tri Hita Karana, which means three causes of happiness and prosperity, namely Parahyangan (harmonious relationship between humans and God), Pawongan (harmonious relationship between humans and each other), and Palemahan (harmonious relationship between humans and their environment).

There are 5 Subak locations recognized by UNESCO as World Cultural Heritage sites in Bali, namely Ulun Danu Batur Temple, Lake Batur, Subak Landscape in the Pakerisan River Basin, Subak Landscape from Catur Angga Batukaru in Jatiluwih, and Taman Ayun Temple. The most extensive location is the Subak Landscape of Catur Angga Batukaru in Jatiluwih, Tabanan Regency, Bali.

Although foreign tourists visit to several cultural landscape destinations looks good, there are still some obstacles faced by the Bali Provincial Tourism Office. The destinations visited by foreign tourists in particular are only focused on well-known locations, even though as a cultural landscape that has a fairly large area, there are still other destinations that can be visited. Although visiting well-known destinations, such as

Jatiluwi, Tirta Empul Temple, or Gunung Kawi Temple, not all foreign tourists who visit know that these destinations are included in the UNESCO protected WHS section, as well as the lack of foreign tourists' knowledge about the relationship between each of the destinations incorporated.

That is why research that specifically discusses about the destination image of a World Heritage Site is carried out because it seems that there is still a gap between what tourists know about the destination and what the site manager want to instill in the minds of tourists.

### ***Destination Image***

Destination image is a topic that has been extensively investigated in the field of tourism marketing [1-3]. Destination image is defined as each individual's mental representation of beliefs, feelings, and overall perceptions of a particular tourist destination [3]. Destination image is also interpreted as a combination of expressions of various attributes and emotional thoughts [4]. From these two definitions, it is assumed that the mental representation of each individual in question can be a combination of expressions and emotional thoughts related to certain tourist attractions. This is reaffirmed by [5] who states that the image of a destination is a combination of individual attributes and the overall impression felt by tourists. The individual attributes stated here can refer to emotional thoughts.

According to [6], destination image refers to a person's impression of a place that is not his place of residence. In this study it is emphasized that the image of a destination is the impression that a tourist gets from the place he visits. Destination image is also defined as a collection of beliefs, ideas, and impressions of a tourist place [2, 5]. Destination image is the overall impression obtained by individuals from a particular tourist destination. This overall impression is obtained from the perception of visitors related to the quality of the tourist attractions [7].

It is very important to separate the concept of traditional destination image from the concepts studied in recent years, because in the old studies only cognitive aspects were examined and used as dimensions. Currently, cognitive and affective aspects are studied simultaneously in shaping the dimensions of the destination image [8]. Destination image is a complex concept because it considers the cognitive and affective components that make up the overall image [3]. From this research, four dimensions of the destination image are presented, the first is public service, namely the quality of employment opportunities and the effectiveness of public services and local government, the second is the physical appearance that reflects the level of importance and characteristics of a city, such as scenery and architecture, the third is a social environment that focuses on the sense of security and friendliness felt by residents, the fourth is entertainment services related to the existence of facilities for fun and recreation.

The cognitive dimension in the destination image is related to the attributes of the place, while the affective dimension is related to the emotional aspects of visitors to the tourist destination [8]. After conducting a factor analysis, dimensions such as infrastructure and socioeconomic, atmosphere, natural environment, and cultural environment for cognitive aspects are generated, as well as visual images/images for affective aspects. To form a positive cognitive and affective image, various sources of information are needed [9]. Based on the research conducted, several dimensions are proposed which consist of cognitive and affective aspects of the destination image. The cognitive aspect consists of the quality of experience, attractiveness, and environmental value. As for the affective aspect, four bipolar scales were used, namely (impressive-

boring, comfortable-uncomfortable, attractive-gloomy, calming-complicated). Based on various studies, the combination of these two dimensions can better explain the image of a place that is judged by visitors, not only determined by the physical evidence [9].

The dimensions used in this study use two aspects, namely affective and cognitive because they are considered to represent the image better. Because the context of this research is special interest tourism, the affective-cognitive dimensions must be adapted to the characteristics of special interest tourists. The dimensions used in this study are the dimensions introduced by [8] by excluding the infrastructure and socioeconomic dimensions as well as the natural environment. This is done because the characteristics of special interest tourists are not sensitive to price, which is included in the socio-economic and infrastructure dimensions, as well as the context of the Subak site which is included in the cultural category. In addition, there are additional dimensions from [10] regarding historical sites in the dimensions of the cultural environment and [8] regarding the social environment. The dimensions used are the Social Environment which discusses the hospitality and quality of life of local residents which describes the social interaction needs of special interest tourists, Atmosphere, which describes the atmosphere of the destination which is a benchmark for special interest tourists who visit, Cultural Environment, considering that the subak site is included in the in the World Heritage Sites the cultural or cultural category as well as the Affective dimension which describes the feelings of tourists when visiting the destination in question.

### ***Methodology***

We use the descriptive method whereas the objective is to obtain an overview of the actual condition of destination image based on the perspective of foreign tourists. To gather the data and information we use descriptive survey using questionnaire. The population in this study is foreign tourists who visit the Subak Cultural Landscape of Bali. The convenience sampling method is used to gather the samples of 250 people.

Data collection was carried out using the intercept technique for foreign tourists who had finished visiting tourist objects and filling out questionnaires accompanied directly by assigned surveyors, in collaboration with officers from the subak management.

### ***Result and analysis***

Destination image consists of four dimensions, namely social environment, atmosphere, cultural environment and affective. There are several aspects that must be considered by the manager in several dimensions related to the image of the destination. Tourists feel that they do not get the interesting cultural activities offered by the organizers, even though this destination sells its big name as a cultural landscape that is recognized by UNESCO. This can be of special concern to be evaluated at a later date to provide added value for every foreign tourist who visits these destinations.

Based on the research results, the social environment aspect has the highest points while the cultural environmental aspect has the lowest points. This is an irony, because on the one hand the Subak Cultural Landscape is a cultural-based tourist destination, but instead the image of a destination with cultural characteristics has a low value. This can be a concern for managers to be able to develop aspects of the cultural environment for the better.

The welfare of local residents around the destination is a special concern for foreign tourists who visit the destination. The aspect of the social environment is a special issue because foreign tourists consider the manager and the government to have succeeded in giving feedback to local residents for the existence of tourist destinations in their

environment. This gives a positive impression and adds value to every foreign tourist visit to the destination.

### Conclusions

Due to the lack of activities and information regarding the culture in the destination, additional information and activities related to cultural aspects in each destination to strengthen the Image of the Destination as a World Cultural Heritage can be done. At Ulun Danu Batur Temple and Lake Batur, Tirta Empul Temple and Taman Ayun Temple, it is necessary to provide a schedule of religious ceremonies related to agricultural activities along with information guides for each activity. In addition to providing information about the role and function of these locus in the subak ecosystem, this can also provide a special attraction for visiting tourists. Information on planting and harvesting schedules as well as religious ceremonies need to be carried out in Jatiluwih. This can increase the attractiveness of the visit as well as provide information about the role and function of loci in the ecosystem which in turn can strengthen the image as a World Cultural Heritage.

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