Universitat de les Illes Balears

Instagram and tourism development: a practical approach of the economic, social and environmental effects to Bali

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Abstract

Many factors have contributed to the tourism boom Bali has experienced in recent years. The emergence of social media has been especially influential on the development of this sector. Instagram has marked the beginning of a new era, changing the mindset of both travellers and marketers. Foreign tourism in Bali has proved to be positively correlated to Instagram success, a phenomenon that has emphasized the power of user-generated content and influencer marketing. These innovations have affected Bali, whose evolution has been shaped by the increasing importance of tourism. Whilst the economic field has been the most rewarded, the social and environmental realms have borne the brunt of the hazards caused by the global fame of the island. The awareness of these impacts allows the proposal of a series of suggestions to adapt the strategy of the government of Indonesia to the modern times.

Introduction

Social media platforms have been a game changer for the travel universe. Instagram in particular has subtly redesigned the tourism sector and shaped the behaviour of their participants. The demand for exotic destinations has significantly increased since their appearance on this social networking site, which highly influences travellers' decisions. The integration of this factor on the demand side inevitably originates transformations at different levels in the epicentre of the tourism activity and therefore, in the supply side.

The tourism sector of Indonesia is the most fruitful in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)[1] and one of the most prosperous in the world, in large part, thanks to Bali. Tourism in this fashionable destination is a current issue, which is even more interesting when studied alongside a global trend such as Instagram, the fastest-growing social media platform.

Instagram has become a source of inspiration for travellers and has given rise to a new form of tourism denominated "Insta-tourism". Characteristics that were not valued by tourists before are currently prioritised. The concept of "Instagrammability" emerged with the popularity of this platform and it has been confirmed that tourists place high importance on this quality when making their destination choice. Furthermore, many travellers use Instagram to fuel their wanderlust and make their own wish list of destinations.

Aware of these changes, the government of Indonesia has adopted the use of consumer-generated content and influencer marketing as part of its promotional techniques. Social media platforms have elevated these concepts to the next level and have allowed a greater exchange of information among a wider circle of people who hold the power to influence each other. Therefore, the amount of information spirals upwards and it is either the higher the number of tourists in Bali, the higher the amount of user-generated content, or the higher of user-generated content, the higher the number of tourists in Bali.

These tourism-related developments, originated from the emergence of Instagram, have generated various impacts, affecting the economic, social and environmental panorama of Bali. These changes could be regarded as either a blessing or a punishment, but the implementation of the right measures could mitigate the negative effects and maximize the positive ones.

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[1] Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): "An organization of ten countries in southeast Asia, started in 1967 with the purpose of encouraging economic growth, and good relationships between countries in the area" (Association of South-East Asian Nations, n.d.).

Methodology

The present paper is a case study that aims to examine the effects of Instagram on the tourism sector of Bali. There has been little literature so far addressing this topic and the fresh perspective laid out hereby offers perceptive insights into it. Therefore, a research design has been carefully defined in order to ensure the most appropriate strategies are applied for the effective development of a thorough evaluation.

The following section contains a comparative analysis that puts tourism numbers into perspective. The average annual growth rate of foreign tourist arrivals has been calculated in order to facilitate the comparison of economic indicators across different sized regions. The overall average has also been estimated for the express purpose of finding out the position Bali holds in the global scenario.

A correlational method is first used to determine the relationship among the growth of Instagram and the success of Bali as a holiday destination. Quantitative data, collected from secondary sources, have been used to measure the evolution of these variables over time through the elaboration of graphs. Statistical information has allowed to conclude the existence of a positive correlation, although there is no evidence that prove causation.

After having established the theoretical approach, qualitative data are gathered in order to explore the impact of Instagram on the economic, social and environmental fields of Bali. As this is an issue that has been recently identified, an early-stage research is conducted hereby. An intense literature review has been carried out so that meaningful connections could be spotted and tools such as Google Trends and Statista have been useful to corroborate some of the findings.

The performance of a holistic assessment of the various components of the selected topic has been crucial. The observation of the effects arisen from the incorporation of Instagram in the tourism sector has required a full understanding of the previous Balinese conditions. The practical application of the theoretical assumptions introduced at the beginning of the research has helped to pinpoint the main highlights of this study, which means to provide a basis for future investigation.

The main points of this research are structured as follows: some background is provided and the most usual forms of tourism in Bali are listed in order to contextualize the narrative within a larger framework. Then, the correlational analysis is presented along with supportive proof and solid arguments, which are followed by the explanation of certain basics that need to be understood to grasp the core of the matter. Lastly, a series of tourism-related economic, social and environmental impacts caused by Instagram are examined in order to propose several recommendations that prove the usefulness of the theoretical knowledge, which is essential to design practical measures that enhance management decisions.

Background

The island of Bali is the most popular tourist destination in Indonesia. Although the origins of the tourism activity in the "Land of the Gods" date from long before the 1970's, it was at the beginning of the 70's decade when the political and infrastructural circumstances along with the promotional activities allowed a noticeable increase in the number of tourist arrivals (McTaggart, 1980). According with the data provided by the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics[2] (2020), a new record was set in 2019 as never before had Bali experienced a 13-year consecutive growth of the tourism flow, accounting for a 39% of the total number of foreign visitors to Indonesia in that year. This percentage denotes a substantial change in the market share of Bali because in 1970 its number of international tourists only represented 19% of all foreign tourist arrivals to Indonesia, meaning this that Bali has experienced larger tourism growth by itself than the country as a whole. Figure 1 traces the evolution of foreign tourist arrivals in Bali and the rest of Indonesia from 1980 to 2019.
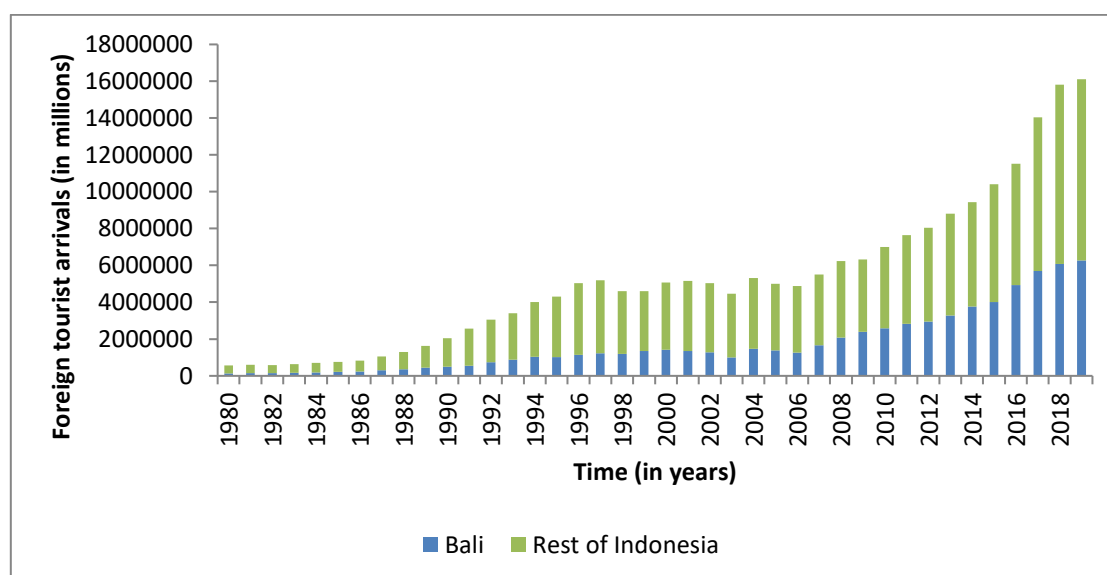
Figure 1. Number of foreign tourist arrivals to Bali and the rest of Indonesia (Jayasuriya, Sukadana, Manning and Meydianawathi, 2020, p. 8).

The graph below (Figure 2) depicts the annual growth rate of inbound tourists in France, Spain, USA, China and Bali as well as the overall annual average growth rate. Compared to the top four tourist destination regions in 2018, from 2007 onwards Bali has experienced the higher growth, whose rate has maintained above the average since then. Although Bali has suffered the most volatile fluctuations, mainly as a consequence of the terrorist attacks occurred in 2000 and 2005 that badly hurt tourism, foreign tourist arrivals have continued to increase even in times such as 2009 when the rest of analysed countries saw the annual growth rate of this unit of measure to go down below 0%.

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[2] Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics: https://bali.bps.go.id/
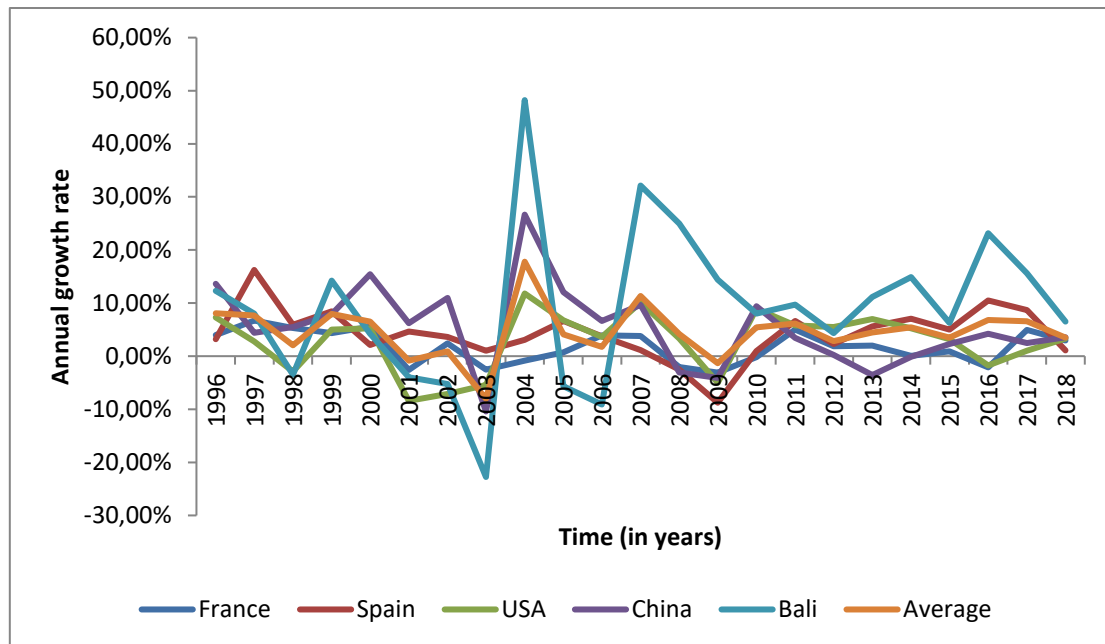
Figure 2. Annual growth rate of foreign tourist arrivals in selected countries and Bali from 1996 to 2018 (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020; the World Bank Group, 2018).

While the increase in the number of flights and the simplification of visa requirements are some of the most recognizable factors to have clearly favoured the positive tendency of tourism figures in Bali, other important elements have been disregarded until not long ago. This is true in the case of the influence of social media platforms on the success of Bali's positioning as a must-see destination.

The power of user-generated content and travel influencer marketing has expanded over the past years, especially since the emergence of Instagram. This app, launched in 2010 and two years later acquired by Facebook, has hit one billion monthly active users (Constine, 2018). As a matter of fact, it is this capacity to reach and connect such a large amount of people what turns Instagram into a vastly influential marketing tool in the tourism sector.

The use of this social media platform as a means of promotion leads to the redefinition of the consumer behaviour and the decision-making process related to travel choices. This is explained by the understanding of Instagram as a driving force behind travel. A survey conducted by Schofields Insurance (2017) has recently revealed that 40.1% of millennials choose their holiday destinations based upon their "Instagrammability", constituting this a pull factor[3] that lures travellers into a particular place due to its possession of such feature. Furthermore, according to a Podcast from Facebook IQ hosted by Duffy (2017), 67% of Instagram users resort to this platform as a source of inspiration to travel to new places. Therefore, it has the capability to intensify push factors, such as the hunger for adventure, by building excitement that ultimately encourages tourists to visit unexplored destinations.

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[3] Push factors are internal motives that cause strong impetus to travel, whilst pull factors are forces generated by the attractiveness of the holiday destination. Therefore, the first initiate travel desire and the latter explain the destination choice (UK Essays, 2018).

Indonesia has been declared the fourth most "Instagrammable" country in the world (Big Seven Travel, 2019). This popularity can be mainly attributed to Bali, whose hashtag has been used 60.9 million times by now. Other trendy hashtags include places such as Ubud (4.7 million), Kuta (2.7 million) or Seminyak (2.4 million) located in Bali. Moreover, there are various Instagram accounts such as "The Bali Bible", "Bali Life" or "Explore Bali", whose objective is to create a virtual community for those interested in either sharing or discovering experiences in breath-taking (and photogenic) Balinese locations. Additionally, there are uncountable blogs and articles listing the most Insta-worthy spots of the island.

The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism actively embraces the use of social networking sites throughout the development of a media strategy aimed to shape the destination branding image. "Wonderful Indonesia", the ongoing online marketing campaign, is mainly promoted through the Official Website of Indonesia Tourism[4] and social media, especially Instagram. Different forms of tourism are fostered for different market segments through this online communication channel.

Forms of tourism in Bali and the evolution of their promotion on Instagram

There are certain forms of tourism especially recurrent in Bali. Some of them have been long-established and others have appeared over time due to the emergence of the creative economy. This evolution is evident as the content published on the Instagram accounts of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and important travel agencies such as "The Bali Bible" has diversified.

Beach holidays are a highly demanded modality of leisure travel in this destination. Kuta and Seminyak beaches have experienced rapid development caused by the urge to cater for their visitors' necessities. These areas have become popular tourist spots and are continuously displayed on the Instagram account of the Ministry of Tourism. More recently, photographs of other sandy beaches such as Tegal Wangi and Kelingking have been posted.

The richness and diversity of the Balinese culture justifies the importance of cultural tourism, which mainly revolves around Bali's unique version of Hinduism, traditions (rituals and ceremonies) and art. Although these features are promoted on the Ministry of Tourism's Instagram, these aspects are less promoted than the region's natural resources. In fact, cultural posts seem to have diminished from the account as it previously displayed more content associated to cultural heritage. At the beginnings of its Instagram activity, images showed traditional customs, the performance of religious acts and local people. Nowadays, pictures of influencers posing in front of cultural sites such as the Lempuyang Temple, the Tirta Gangga Water Palace and the Puta Tirtu Empul Holy Spring predominate instead.

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[4] Official Website of Indonesia Tourism: https://www.indonesia.travel/gb/en/home

Nature tourism is highly consolidated thanks to the global fame of Bali's natural beauty, which permeates the feed of the aforementioned Instagram accounts. Photographs of scenic landscapes are frequently posted along with persuasive texts directed towards nature lovers in order to encourage them to visit these locations. The last few years have emphasised the frequency of such posts, most commonly at the Tegalalang rice terrace and the Kanto Lampo waterfalls.

Another important tourism segment is composed of adventure travellers, for whom the wide range of outdoor activities offered is the main driver. Both the Ministry of Tourism and "The Bali Bible" actively promote water activities on their accounts such as surfing, scuba diving and snorkelling as they allow tourists to enjoy the marine fauna (turtles, whale sharks, manta rays, etc.), but also other activities such as hiking are encouraged. A variety of places are recommended, for instance, Canggu is presented as a surfer's paradise.

Romantic tourism also continues to grow strong. Its magic scenery and luxurious villas have positioned Bali as the perfect destination for romantic getaways and honeymoons. This form of tourism is mainly advertised by the agencies, which frequently post pictures of perfect couples in idyllic locations.

Instagram tourism is increasingly gaining importance as well. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism fosters both aesthetic man-made attractions and natural wonders so that Insta-worthy pictures can be shared on this social media. Images of nests and swings (Figure 3), where people usually queue to take "Instagrammable" pictures, are usually posted. It is also common to find photographs of natural sites with messages like "Each waterfall [...] gives you plenty of opportunities for those incredible Insta shots!" (The Bali Bible, 2020).

Figure 3. Swing structure in Ubud, Bali (Ministry of tourism and creative economy of Indonesia)

Other forms of tourism such as spiritual tourism, spa tourism, rural tourism and gastronomy tourism are currently being developed. The latter is heavily promoted since the Ministry of Tourism has recently launched a joint project with the UNWTO, focusing its efforts on Ubud's local cuisine to attract tourists to try their innovative culinary experiences (UNWTO, 2019).

Correlation between Instagram users and international tourism in Bali

This research is based on the principle that the number of foreign tourist arrivals in Bali positively correlates to the number of Instagram users, who are influenced by this social media and promote the destination through content sharing.

The chart below illustrates the evolution of the variables described on the legend between 2010 and 2018, contributing firm proof to the existence of such direct relationship. The Y axis shows the number of Instagram users in millions on the left and the number of foreign tourist arrivals in Bali on the right, which are represented by the coloured lines. The X axis shows the period of time in years. A steady increase can be observed in the analysed measures from 2010 to 2015, year that seems to mark a turning point from which the growth sharpens in both cases. Therefore, the number of foreign visitors in Bali increases at the same time that the number of Instagram users do, meaning that these two states are positively correlated.
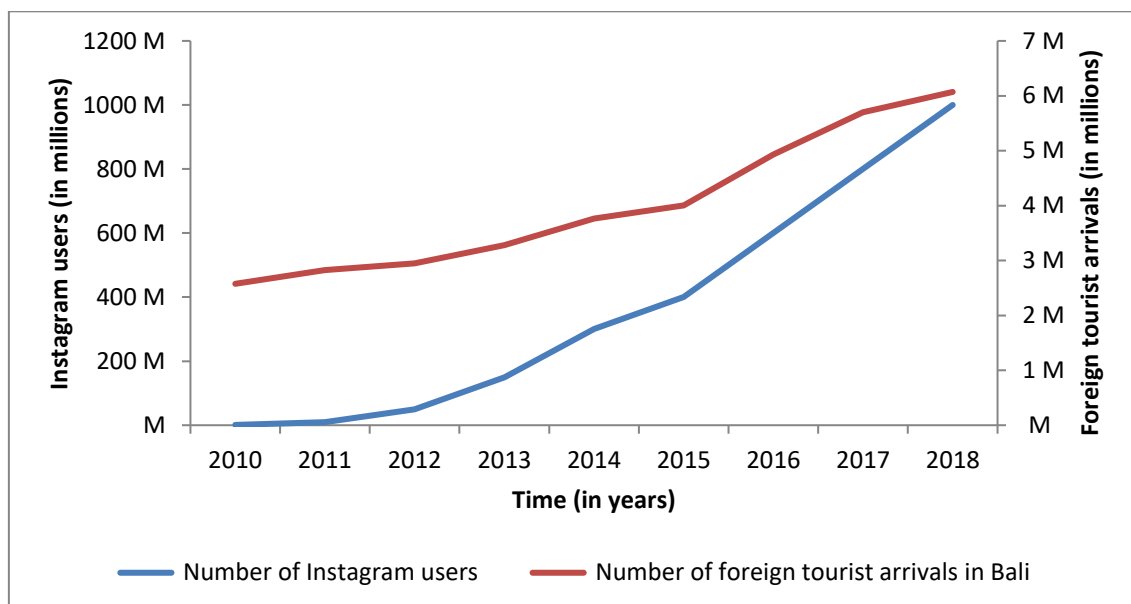
Figure 4. Number of global Instagram users and foreign tourist arrivals to Bali from 2010 to 2018 (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020; Constine, 2018).

Since the launch of Instagram in 2010, its number of users has skyrocketed. This evolution matches the upward trend of foreign tourists that Bali has seen since 2007. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, this tendency continued to be followed in 2020 as a new record had been set in January reaching an all-time high of 528.883 visitors during the first month of the year, according to the data provided by the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (2020).

After the emergence of Instagram, important events have taken place in the social media world that could have arguably benefited the tourism industry in Bali. In 2012 Instagram was acquired by Facebook, significantly accelerating the number of signups on this fast-growing app (200 million monthly active

users by March 2014). During the successive years, the growth rate of foreign tourist arrivals in the island escalated and reached a percentage of 11.16 in 2013 and 14.89 in 2014 (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The following major advent was the launch of Instagram Stories in August 2016. Tourism numbers increased concurrently, causing the growth rate to rise by 23.14% in 2016 and by 15.62% in 2017 (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Year	Instagram accounts	AAGR of international arrivals to Bali
2010	1 M	-
2011	10 M	9,73%
2012	50 M	4,34%
2013	150 M	11,16%
2014	300 M	14,89%
2015	400 M	6,24%
2016	600 M	23,14%
2017	800 M	15,62%
2018	1 B	6,54%

Table 1. Number of global Instagram users and average annual growth rate of foreign tourist arrivals to Bali (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020; Constine, 2018).

According to data provided by Statista (2020), the larger group of global Instagram users (up to 35%) are aged between 25 and 34 years, exactly the same age range that accounts for the majority of inbound tourists in Indonesia from their leading source markets such as China and Australia among others (Hertinmalyana, 2014; Rosyidi 2018). All persons included in this age group belong to the so-called millennial generation (includes anyone born between 1981 and 1996) and millennials are prone to react positively to visual stimuli such as pictures and videos posted on Instagram (Mintel, 2019). Furthermore, domestic tourism keeps being the one with the highest share (62%), amounting to 9.75 million of national visitors in 2018 (Bali Discovery, 2019). This is significant not only because Indonesia is the fourth country with the highest number of Instagram users (Statista, 2020), but because "96% of Indonesian leisure travellers who regularly use Instagram say they use the platform to discover travel photos and videos from influencers, celebrities and travel brands" (Facebook IQ, 2018). For all these reasons, tourism-related businesses incorporating Instagram in their marketing strategies have a better chance to reach their target market at both national and international levels. This also applies to destinations as 62% of the platform users utilise it to build excitement for upcoming trips (Duffy, 2017).

In the specific case of Bali, aspects such as the use influencer marketing, the government's social media strategy, the encouragement of consumer-generated content, the emergence of Instagram tours and both the setup of "Instagrammable" businesses and the addition of this value ("Instagrammability") to tourist attractions, are results of the Balinese society's awareness of the power that this platform holds over tourism development in the region.

User-generated content (UGC)

UGC is defined as "online content that is publicly available and created by end-users in a creative effort" (Dennhardt, 2012, p. 4). The outcome of the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies boils down to the empowerment of Internet users (Sigala, 2011), who currently have greater exposure to content posted by others determined to share their experiences. As a result, the term "electronic word-of-mouth" (eWOM) has been coined and it is described as "all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers" (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2017, p. 9).

The intangibility and experiential nature that characterize the tourism industry make it particularly sensitive to the effects derived from eWOM (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008), which has led to the redefinition of the travel behaviour (Kelly, 2013).

The conversion rate[5] of UGC is 4.5% higher than any other kind (Iqbal, 2019). UGC does not only effectively influence all stages of a trip, including travel planning and information search, but it also shapes the branding of the destination, which affects quality perception and causes tourism numbers to vary (Dedeoğlu, van Niekerk, Küçükergin, de Martino and Okumuş, 2020; Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015). More specifically, 70% of Instagram users share their own travel photos and therefore, they create UGC that influences the decision-making process of potential travellers (Duffy, 2017).

Several Balinese locations have been popularized through Instagram's UGC. Canggu, a small village on the south coast, had remained unknown to the public eye until Instagram users popularized it in 2011 through their publications on this app. Since then, the tourism activity has developed at an unprecedented rate and thousands of Insta-friendly businesses have started up (Kocharekar, 2018). It is been so successful that the hashtag #Canggu has been used 1.9 million of times.

The Official Website of Indonesia Tourism seems to back up these practices as it promotes Canggu as a place where tourists can visit a series of "Instagrammable" spots. Furthermore, one of its blog entries titled "15 Instagrammable destinations you must visit in Bali" encourages tourists to go on an "Instagrammable" route (Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

According to Greater Group (2019), one third of Instagram's most viewed stories are from businesses profiles, which makes it the perfect tool to create brand awareness. As the popularity of Instagram rises, a higher number of local businesses create an account and daily update its content mostly by sharing stories or reposting pictures previously uploaded by their clients. The truth is

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[5] The marketing term "conversion rate" refers to the number of sales of a product or service compared to the number of website visitors (Nielsen, 2013).

Instagram profiles have helped many Balinese restaurants, cafés and hotels to achieve a larger reach as they have encouraged their customers to post pictures mentioning them and tagging their location on their feeds and stories. Examples of cafés that exploit Instagram's functions as a means of promotion include the Kynd Community, Cafe Organic and The Lawn, each of them gathering more than a hundred thousand followers. Furthermore, there are hundreds of blogs on Google listing the most "Instagrammable" hospitality businesses, that is, another source of UGC that helps these enterprises position themselves as Insta-friendly places that are worth a visit.

The Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia has also joined this social media movement by publishing user-generated content to promote different tourism activities within the country. On the main page of the Official Website of Indonesia Tourism as well as on its Instagram, pictures published on different visitors' Instagram accounts are reposted. Moreover, there is a travel blog section where travellers write about their experiences and share their own Instagram photos.

Whilst consumer-driven content marketing is on the rise, influencer marketing continues to be significant in Bali's tourism industry.

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is described as a sector that intends to promote products (regarded as destinations in tourism) or enhance brand awareness through content sharing by influencers (Carter, 2016). The most popular platform for this purpose is Instagram, used by almost 90% of marketers engaged in this practice (Gretzel, 2018).

Although influencer marketing is widely used by hotels and resorts in Bali, such as the Dash Hotel Seminyak Bali and W Hotels, the consideration of its application to a larger scale implies the involvement of the destination management organisation (DMO). The Bali Tourism Board, whose vision is to be a professional DMO, has been building strong relationships with influencers in order to have a positive impact on tourists' attitudes towards the destination and help strengthen the destination branding (Bali Tourism Board, 2020; Kelly, 2019).

The Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia has been collaborating with online influencers for 5 years and in 2016, it launched the "Trip of Wonders" campaign. This tourism strategy consisted in inviting a selected group of international travel influencers to visit and promote Indonesia (Velarmino, 2018; Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

This year, the Indonesian Government endeavours to hire foreign influencers to lessen the economic consequences caused by the Coronavirus outbreak. The Government has announced its intention to invest on influencer marketing to boost tourism and has revealed that the Instagrammer's engagement rate will be a critical factor in the recruitment process (Gorbiano, Iswara and Pangestika, 2020).

Economic, social and environmental effects of Instagram to Bali

The tourism boom Bali has experienced is due in large measure to the increase in the use of visual-heavy social media, such as Instagram, which enables the sharing of travel experiences to a wider social circle (Kacaribu, Lumbanraja, Revindo, Sabrina, Pricilia and Natanael, 2018). The massive success of this platform generates a series of economic, social and environmental effects, mostly positive in the economic field but rather negative in the social and environmental realms.

Economic effects

Creation of job opportunities

Bali has experienced a significant economic transformation. The restructuring of the economy is related to the rapid tourism growth that the island has undergone during the last decades, which has resulted in the migration of workers from one sector to another (Jayasuriya, Sukadana, Manning and Meydianawathi, 2020). As shown in the figure below, the percentage of labour force in the agriculture and manufacturing industries have lost weight in favour of services, especially those related to tourism. Although from 2003 to 2010 changes were modest, the following seven-year period stood out by its noticeable changes. The share of agricultural workforce plunged from 31% in 2010 to 19% in 2017, while in contrast the percentage of workers employed in the tourism sector (trade, hotels and restaurants) soared a further 7%, accounting for one-third of all jobs (Jayasuriya et al. 2020).
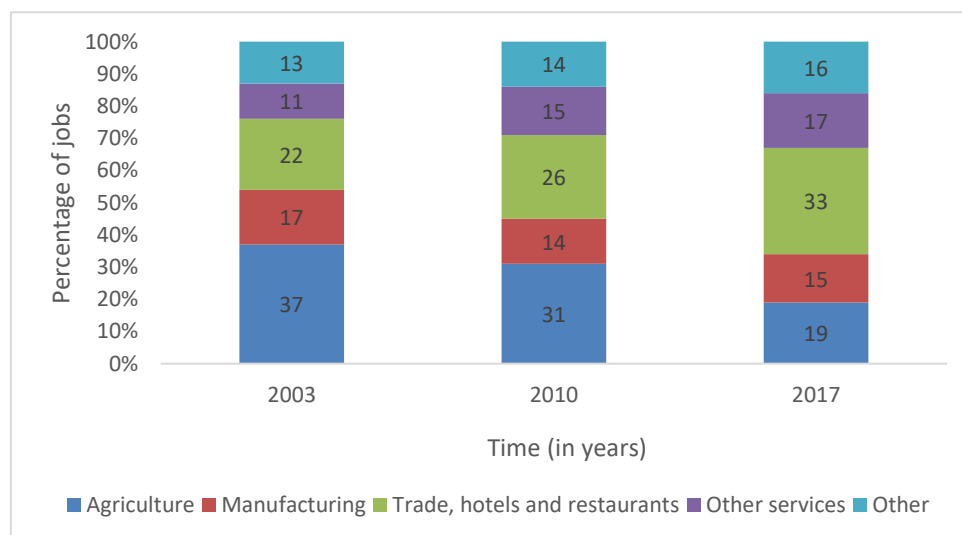
Figure 5. Percentage of jobs in different industries, Bali, 2003, 2010, 2017 (Jayasuriya, Sukadana, Manning and Meydianawathi, 2020, p. 14).

The rise in employment has been consistent with the development of the relevant infrastructure. According to Statista (2019), Bali holds the largest percentage of hotel rooms in Indonesia, accounting for a 15,36% of the total. Economic agglomeration has caused an uneven distribution of accommodations

throughout Bali, concentrating them in general and starred hotels in particular, in the southernmost region of the island (Badung).
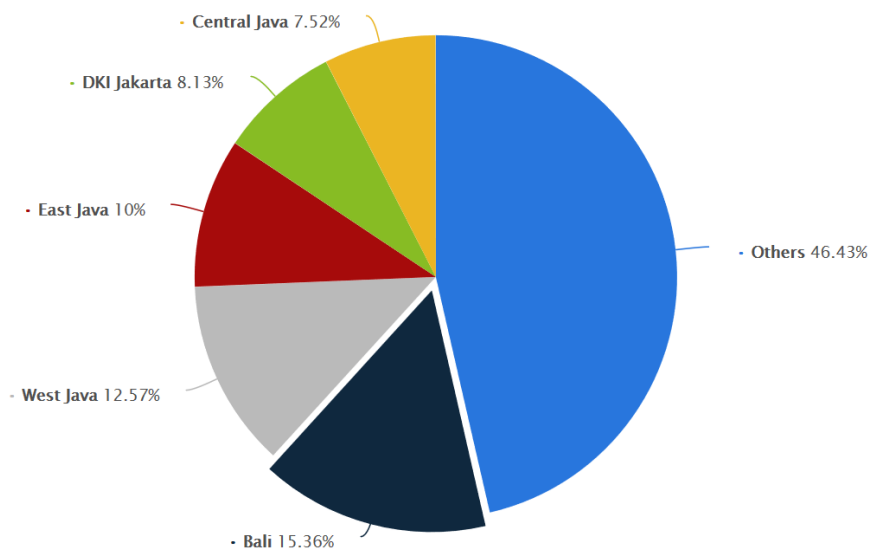

Figure 6. Distribution of accommodation rooms in Indonesia in 2018, by province (Statista, 2019).

The table below shows the progression of the number of registered rooms and hotels, both starred and non-starred, in Bali. A gradual increase of these establishments can be appreciated since 2000, although it decelerated during the second part of the decade. From 2010 to 2015, the number of accommodations available rocketed, especially in the case of starred hotels, which grew by over 80% (a percentage almost five times higher than their counterparts). During the past four years, the surge of hotels has followed the same pattern for starred hotels. However, the number of non-starred hotels has leapt just below 120%, against a 20% of increase seen in the previous five-year period. There are currently 507 star-rated hotels with almost 59000 rooms and 3912 non-rated hotels with just over 54000 rooms.

Year	Starred hotels				Non-starred hotels			
	No. of hotels (unit)	Growth (%)	No. of rooms (unit)	Growth (%)	No. of hotels (unit)	Growth (%)	No. of rooms (unit)	Growth (%)
2000	113		17027		1255		19529	
2005	146	29,2%	20110	18,11%	1477	17,69%	21822	11,74%
2010	155	6,16%	21133	5,09%	1536	3,99%	21931	0,5%
2015	281	81,29%	31596	49,51%	1798	17,06%	28717	30,94%
2019	507	80,43%	58770	86%	3912	117,58%	54184	88,68%

Table 2. Number and growth of rooms and starred and non-starred hotels in Bali, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2019 (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020; Jayasuriya, Sukadana, Manning and Meydianawathi, 2020).

Not surprisingly, Instagram has contributed to the creation of job opportunities in Bali. On the one hand, direct employment is generated as there are certain jobs that are inherently connected to this social media platform. Some examples of

these are marketing employees recruited to manage the Instagram account of the contracting companies, Instagram tours' guides or influencers hired to promote the island through this channel. On the other hand, marketing strategies developed on Instagram indirectly create employment because the higher their success, the higher the number of incoming foreigners to Bali and therefore, the higher the number of jobs offered in every branch of tourism (hotels, restaurants, etc.).

Price increase in restaurant services

Social media platforms have proved to be a determinant factor for consumers in the restaurant sector as they provide pre-consumption information that influences their decisions (Fernández Miguélez, Díaz Puche, Campos Soria and Galán Valdivieso, 2020). A research carried out by the Italian group Zizzi revealed that millennials spend five days a year scrolling through food images on Instagram (Hosie, 2017), which sheds light on the influential leverage of Instagram. Tangible attributes, such as food presentation and restaurant design, have been altered in restaurants all across Bali in order to enhance their Instagram presence, which needs to be strong or a 30% of the aforementioned generation might be put off (Hosie, 2017; Upserve, 2018). Café and restaurant owners, especially in tourist areas such as Canggu, have admitted to decorate their local and elaborate the menu having Instagram on mind (Saiidi, 2019). Digital promotion, particularly online reviews in the form of food captions uploaded on Instagram, attracts customers and builds brand loyalty (Tunjungsari and Wirawan, 2017). According to a report released by Maru/Matchbox (2017), 69% of millennials take a photo or video of their meal before eating. Food pictures have taken over Instagram under popular hashtags such as #food, #instafood or #foodie, which have 384, 168 and 150 million publications respectively (Instagram, 2020). This current trend, coupled with the geotag and hashtag options available on Instagram, brings recognition to restaurant businesses (Tunjungsari and Wirawan, 2017). In the case of Ubud, where the development of gastronomy tourism is in progress, such marketing tool could be a make or break element.

The use of social media by foodies has prompted restaurants and cafés around Bali to add value to their product through the creation of more visually alluring dining experiences, which has caused prices to increase (Kacaribu et al., 2018). On the one hand, this fact causes a reduction on the purchasing power held by Indonesians, who spend a higher share of their household consumption on these services. On the other hand, it improves the corporate financial performance of restaurants due to higher profitability levels (Fernández Miguélez et al., 2020).

Higher attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI)

FDI has the potential to boost economic growth in developing countries (The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, 2015). Empirical research positively associates the activity on social media platforms to FDI, which has been found to bear a direct correlation with

UGC (Paniagua, Korzynski and Mas-Tur, 2017). Social media engagement enhances capabilities that influence FDI, including the dissemination of information and destination management (Ting, Poh Ming, Cyril de Run and Yin Choo, 2015; Paniagua et al., 2017). The branding of the nation through social media has positive effects on FDI as it reduces the uncertainty perceived by foreign investors through the enhancement of their knowledge (Paniagua et al., 2017).

Social media greatly contribute to the internationalization of private and public entities, enabling them to present their projects to investors from foreign countries (Paniagua et al., 2017), which in turn initiates corporate excitement and improves the position of the country in the investment value stream (Paniagua et al., 2017; Ward, 2012). Instagram does not only enhance online presence and identity, but it enables stakeholders to easily interact for businesses purposes (Ting et al., 2015). The Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) actively promotes annual events such as the Regional Investment Forum or the World Economic Forum through its Instagram account. Furthermore, the Finance Ministry of Indonesia recently hired social media influencers to encourage domestic direct investment (DDI) among millennials (Diela, 2019).

Although historically the FDI policy of Indonesia has been very restrictive (Lindblad, 2015), the liberalization of relating conditions in recent years has improved the business environment in Indonesia, increasing its attractiveness as a host country of FDI and facilitating tourism investments (Oxford Business Group, 2020; Syadullah and Yasin, 2019). The growth of FDI in the Indonesian tourism sector, registered by the BKPM, can be attributed to the implementation of fiscal incentives as well as to the reinforced destination image achieved through social media (Syadullah and Yasin, 2019; Paniagua et al., 2017), being Bali one of the top five provinces receiving FDI in tourism (Oxford Business Group, 2017).

The introduction of favourable economic policies, aimed to incentivize the investment on properties, has revitalized the real estate sector in Insta-famous locations such as Canggu (Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, 2018; Neubauer, 2019; International Business Publications, 2016). The continuous sale of houses has brought about noticeable price increases, unaffordable for the average local Balinese (Invest Islands, 2018; Neubauer, 2019; International Business Publications, 2016), in addition to other problems such as gentrification, traffic congestion and rapid urbanisation, which involves the depletion of rice fields (Neubauer, 2019; International Business Publications, 2016). The term "Canggu" has been searched on Google Trends and the resulting graph displays a higher positive growth not long after Facebook's acquisition of Instagram.

Figure 7. Global interest over time for Canggu from 2004 to 2020 (Google trends, 2020).

Social effects

Creation of false expectations

The intangible characteristic of travel products justifies the credibility UGC instils in potential travellers (Ye, Law and Gu, 2009; Gretzel and Yoo, 2008) and, by extrapolation, the reliability placed on Instagram visual content. UGC helps to develop the destination image by shaping consumers' perceptions during the pre-consumption stage (Hidalgo, Sicilia and Ruiz, 2014; Muhoho-Minni and Lubbe, 2017; Sigala, Christou and Gretzel, 2012). This affects the consumers' travel decisions as well as their expectations about the destination, which ultimately determine the level of tourist satisfaction, defined by the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm[6] (Narangajavana, Callarisa, Moliner, Rodríguez and Sánchez, 2017). The problem arises when unrealistic (filtered or edited) images of the destination are diffused and visitors' expectations are not met due to the misrepresentation of reality induced by Instagram posts.

In many recent articles, Instagram influencers are held responsible for the proliferation of this practice as they share deceitful photographs, which generate false expectations ultimately leading to disappointment. This is the case of the Lempuyang Temple, also known as the "Gates of Heaven", a well-known tourist attraction popularized by Instagram (Dickinson, 2019). The hashtags #lempuyangtemple and #gatesofheaven gather thousands of images on Instagram, most of them displaying almost an identic scene (Illustration 8). However, the real landscape widely differs from the one captured in it (Illustration 9). Tourists have already started to report, many of the times via Instagram, that the body of water that appears in the image is product of an optical illusion achieved by holding a mirror underneath a camera (Borangiu, Drăgoicea and Nóvoa, 2016; Kucheran, 2019; Ritschel, 2019; Konstantinides, 2019). The disparities between expectations and reality have led to tourists' dissatisfaction, bringing about the diffusion of numerous negative reviews on Instagram.

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[6] The expectation-disconfirmation paradigm establishes that tourists develop expectations regarding the services to be offered at a particular destination and subsequently, they compare them with the actual performance. According to this theory, the extent to which tourist expectations are met determines the level of tourist satisfaction (Narangajavana et al., 2017).

Figure 9. Edited image of the Lempuyang Temple (The Bali Bible, 2020)

Figure 8. Original image of the Lempuyang Temple (Rejmers, 2020)

Commodification of the Balinese landscapes

The conspicuous nature of tourism, a form of consumption associated to a high social status, has been further emphasized by the online sharing of travellers' photographs (Boley, Jordan, Kline and Knollenberg, 2017). Behind the simultaneous broadcasting of travel experiences hides the desire of Instagram users to enhance their social image through the impression management opportunity provided by such platform (Sheungting and McKercher, 2015; Boley et al., 2017). Modern tourism is characterised by the ubiquity of social media, a phenomenon that influences culture (Smith, 2018). The process that describes the impact of the media on institutional practices is called mediatisation, a concept that connects communication to commodification (Agha, 2011). Recent literature specifically researches the contribution of Instagram to culture commodification in tourism destinations, whose identity is already at stake since tourism itself is defined as an agent of change that reinforces the commodification of culture (Smith, 2018).

Smith (2018) states that "consistent visual motifs on Instagram echo a colonial iconography that sees tourist destinations as available for possession and consumption, effacing local [...] identity" (p. 172). Instagram posts of Bali depict an idyllic place with no signifiers of its culture. No Balinese life features are observed, but rather the exotic beauty of the island is the focus of tourists' most common posts, where the person normally stands against majestic landscapes such as paddy fields, lush jungles, sandy beaches or magnificent waterfalls. The continuous depiction of a fantasised tropical panorama dispossesses Bali of its distinctive identity, resulting in the conversion of Balinese landscapes into commodities that once published on travellers' Instagram accounts are traded by social media likes. Businesses have recognised the pursuit of Instagram users for the perfect picture and have installed swings and nests in strategic locations all across Bali. From these structures, extremely popular thanks to Instagram, tourists pose in front of a camera overlooking impressive views. This

performance identifies with the "promontory witness" motif established by Smith (2017), which refers to the inherent colonial connotation of photographs that capture an individual gazing outwards from an elevated viewpoint at an aesthetic landscape that seems to be available for possession due to the lack of signs of local life (Smith, 2019). The fact that the access to these tourist attractions is a buyable experience is another proof of the commercialization of a decontextualized landscape, depicted as ideological and commodified for personal aggrandizement (Smith, 2019).

Death

In contemporary tourism, Instagram represents a novel form of travel writing as tourists are able to visually narrate their travel experiences (Smith, 2018). Broadcasting trips has become a common practice among travellers, and competitive social comparison has made it a dangerous one as well (Taylor, 2020). This modern travel culture motivates tourists to strive for the ideal Instagram picture, regardless of the risk the process may involve (Smith, 2018). The amount of injuries and deaths caused by such effort are proof that this trend has been pushed beyond its boundaries.

Far from learning the lesson, the fashionable "Do it for the gram"[7] philosophy incentivizes tourists to put themselves in jeopardy to achieve the perfect picture (Newman, 2018). Being the scenario for numerous fatal accidents, Bali's most dangerous Instagram spot is known as the Devil's Tear, a rocky outcrop facing the Indian Ocean (Yasuko, 2019). Intrepid tourists have risked their lives for the sake of a perfect Instagram selfie, striving to capture the background effect of the waves crashing against the rocks. However, some have sustained injuries while others have died in the process as they fall onto the rough surface below (Duff, 2019). Recently, the local government have had a security fence installed. However, this does not seem to deter tourists from endangering themselves to achieve their desired photograph. The last victim, reported in January, was a Chinese tourist who was dragged into the sea by a huge wave after trespassing the protective measures for a selfie (The Bali Sun, 2020).

Travellers are especially vulnerable to suffer selfie-related accidents because the process, which implies distractions that disturb situational awareness, develops in unfamiliar surroundings (Flaherty and Choi, 2016). Nevertheless, visitors still commit life-threatening actions in order to achieve social validation through their selfies (Yongjun, Jung-Ah, Eunice and Sejung, 2016).

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[7] "Do it for the gram": doing things for the sole purpose of posting it on Instagram (Newman, 2018)

Furthermore, some travel influencers are accused of boosting reckless behaviours due to their desire to post breath-taking pictures on their Instagram. The content Instagrammers post is particularly influential as it defines the most visualized compositions of the travel genre, encouraging ordinary Instagram users to imitate their posts (Smith, 2019). For instance, a North American couple of macroinfluencers have been criticised for threatening their own safety in order to post an impressive picture on their joined travel Instagram account (@positravelty). As shown in the image aside, taken at the Balinese Kayon Jungle Resort, the legs of the influencer dangle off a 12-meter infinity pool while her partner holds her by her arms (Hodge, 2019). Instagrammers do frequently display their achievements by publishing dramatic images of spectacular self-location in order to contribute evidence that they have been there and gain positive feedback (Smith, 2018; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2015).

Figure 10. Influencers posing for a photograph in Ubud, Bali (Castille and Workman, 2019)

Environmental effects

Negative externalities

Instagram helps to spread the word about the existence of potential places of interest by converting its users into marketers that promote them through content sharing (Sumarjan, Zahari, Radzi, Mohi, Hanafiah, Bakhtiar and Zainal, 2013). Travellers resort to Instagram for research and validation, being travel accounts particularly inspiring for their followers, who overcrowd the places displayed on them (Kanchan, 2020). The influence of Instagram on these locations can be observed through Google Trends. The graph below shows that searches for "Nusa Penida" (an island south-east of mainland Bali) started to gradually go up in 2013 and soared two years later after Instagram made it become a viral sensation.

Figure 11. Global interest over time for Nusa Penida from 2004 to 2020 (Google Trends, 2020)

Nowadays, travel itineraries are commonly steered by Instagram via geotags (Smith, 2018; Haubursin, 2018). The narration of travels through images posted on Instagram triggers the "hermeneutic circle", a practice whereby individuals gaze upon pictures in tourism media and hope that their experience is an accurate representation so they can photograph the same thing (Smith 2019; Smith, 2018). This phenomenon explains Instagram's capacity to draw tourists to specific locations, eventually resulting in overtourism. Geotagging has exacerbated the problem due to increased exposure and accessibility, which causes the influx of tourists to sensitive areas to rise to harmful levels (Payne, 2019; University of Pennsylvania, 2019). Geotagged photos bring to light unknown wonders and turn them into popular tourist sites overcrowded by Instagram-driven visitors who stop by in order to replicate photographs they have previously scrolled through (Planet Ark, 2020; University of Pennsylvania, 2019). Consequently, the landscape is subjected to physical changes that deteriorate the environment, leading to the reduction of tourist satisfaction (National Geographic, 2019; Payne, 2019). Places such as Kuta Beach handle hordes of visitors on a regular basis and therefore, suffer environmental degradation (mainly plastic pollution) arisen from their digital popularity (National Geographic, 2019).

Figure 12. Plastic pollution in Kuta Beach (Oliphant, 2017)

Wildlife suffering

Wildlife tourism continues to be consumed despite the high corruption and cruelty that characterize it in Bali (Walker, 2018; World footprints, 2019). Tourism entertainment activities are responsible for the mental and physical suffering of thousands of wild animals in the island, forced to behave unnaturally for profit (World Animal Protection Organisation, 2019; Animal Logic, 2018). The World Animal Protection Organisation examined twenty-four wildlife venues located in Bali and found that none of them covered the basic needs of the captive animals, which endure really poor conditions (World Animal Protection Organisation, 2019). Among other amusement activities such as elephant riding, these tourist attractions offer the possibility to have pictures taken with a variety of wild species, which are daily used as photo props. Orangutans, civets, dolphins, turtles, tigers and lions, some of which are sedated in order to be submitted, are inflicted stress by being forced to pose all day long for photographic purposes (World Animal Protection Organisation, 2019).

The increasing demand for wildlife selfies within these centres, fuelled by the desire to stand out on social networking sites such as Instagram, intensifies the exploitation of the Balinese fauna (Holloway and Humphreys, 2020; World Animal Protection Organisation, 2019; World footprints, 2019). The World

Animal Protection Organisation found that the number of wildlife selfies uploaded on Instagram increased by 292% between 2014 and 2017, observing inappropriate interaction in 40% of them (World Animal Protection Organisation, 2017). The sharing of these pictures on social media, especially when posted by friends or influencers, sends a message that these activities are acceptable and advertises them to a multitude of people who ignore the repercussion of their participation in these acts (Daly, 2019; World Animal Protection Organisation, 2019). Social media focus clouds the judgment of Instagram users, who prioritize their image over the lives of helpless animals (World footprints, 2019).

Narcissistic selfies posted on Instagram hide a dark reality where animal abuse is present at all times (Daly, 2019). Steve Mclvor, the World Animal Protection Organisation CEO, claims that "If you can ride, hug or have a selfie with a wild animal, then it's cruel - don't do it, no matter how many likes it will get on social media" (World Animal Protection Organisation, 2018). In order to restrain this trend, Instagram elicits a notification informing about the potential association of hashtags such as #lionselfie with content that encourages harmful behaviours toward wild animals (Daly, 2019; Hutton, 2019). This measure intends to educate users about unethical wildlife tourism so that its demand is stopped (Hutton, 2019).

Recommendations

Since tourism is one of the main sources of foreign-currency earnings, great importance is attached to this sector. Thus, the government of Indonesia has developed a medium-term plan to boost tourism beyond Bali. This plan, named "Ten new Balis", intends to expand the economic effects tourism has had on Bali to ten different Indonesian regions (Smith, 2019).

The Indonesian government expected to attract 20 million tourists by 2019, but the country received little more than 16 million tourists. From the acknowledgement of this data emerges a first recommendation, related to the excessive focus on numerical targets. Quantity should not be placed before quality. Although it is convenient to have a forecast, the failure to accomplish such objective in the established terms does not necessarily imply a negative result. Immediate reactions are not indicative of long-term success, sustained growth is.

Environmental issues should be managed proactively rather than reactively to ensure natural assets remain resilient. The development model should incorporate improvement measures to avoid ecological disasters such as the garbage emergency and the scarcity of clean water that Bali currently faces. Resources should be able to absorb the demand so that ecosystem services are not compromised. Environmental assessments should be conducted in order to mitigate negative impacts. Sustainability should come first and neither the social nor the environmental carrying capacity should be exceeded. Otherwise, the factors that attracted visitors in the first place could be harmed.

Limits have not been respected in Bali, which has seriously damaged its reputation. Several media have already reported the impacts caused by overtourism, tarnishing the image of the island. Fodor's Travel, a renowned travel content brand, has recommended to avoid Bali in 2020 due to its social and environmental problems. In response to this publication, the government called on tourists to upload only positive content about the destination. However, these are not issues that should be hidden, but rather exposed to raise awareness among visitors of the importance of their actions to help protect the environment. Although the Indonesian government has failed to understand it so far, social media can be highly instrumental in crisis management.

Furthermore, social media platforms can fulfil an educational role because they can be used to provide behavioural advice to foreigners to lower their social impact. There have been cases of influencers that have posted pictures and videos that reveal their participation in disrespectful actions, attributed mostly to the severe lack of familiarization of the offenders with the Balinese customs. Therefore, Instagram could be utilised to promote cross-cultural understanding by informing the public about traditions and appropriate manners in Indonesia, which is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world.

An economic aspect that should be monitored is related to the liberalization of FDI policies that has helped Indonesia to fundraise for their tourism projects. Although this seems entirely beneficial, quantities should be kept under control so that economic leakage does not involve a massive reduction of the national income. Furthermore, an excessive number of foreign investors could arise resentment among the locals.

The last recommendation is related to the development of responsible travel. Community-based tourism encompasses all the values transmitted through these recommendations as it enhances the local economies, favours nature conservation and fosters culture preservation. The integration of the Balinese locals into the tourism sector could reduce poverty, provide authentic cultural exchanges and encourage sustainable activities.

Conclusion

Instagram has captivated travellers, leading to changes in the travel industry of Bali. Although the increasing popularity of Bali as a holiday destination can not be directly attributed to Instagram, a positive correlation has been detected between the number of foreign tourist arrivals in the island and global Instagram accounts. Whilst no causality can be confirmed, there is an undeniable bilateral relation between these variables.

This social media platform has not affected only the travellers' decision-making process, but also the businesses' approach. The emergence of concepts such as UGC and influencer marketing has helped enterprises located in Bali and the DMO to influence the perception of potential visitors. Therefore, Instagram has affected the natural evolution of tourism.

The economic development of Bali has been shaped by the tourism boom that Instagram has helped to trigger. Employment has been generated and the adequate infrastructure has been constructed so that this region could operate as a proper tourist destination. Foreign direct investment has been attracted to this end and Instagram has helped to enhance the image of Bali to the eyes of potential investors, although this has also led to the increase of prices in the real estate sector. The value of the food offered in restaurants has also been pushed up due to its constant organic promotion on Instagram.

Changes in the social field have also been observed. On the one hand, deceitful images posted on Instagram lead to the creation of false expectations, which end up disappointing many visitors. On the other hand, the use of landscapes for commercialization purposes contributes to the loss of their identity. More importantly, there is still another social problem that has even more serious consequences. There have been many deaths caused by the thirst for validation that has pushed many tourists to endanger themselves to achieve the perfect Instagram picture.

Last but no least, the environment has suffered negative externalities. The popularization of hidden locations has increased the demand for ecological services in areas that had no transit before Instagram, which has caused the deterioration of the environment. Moreover, the desire to stand out on Instagram has caused the normalization of animal abuse.

These impacts could be minimized if the appropriate measures were put into action. The right economic policies, sustainable practices and fluid communication are vital to achieve long-term growth and there are certain forms of tourism, such as community-based tourism, that could help to reach these objectives.

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