

The Role of Balinese Women in Cultural and Economic Sustainability

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Abstract

Balinese women have an important value in creating community welfare, because they occupy a very strategic position as cultural preservationists who are role models in implementing customs and as economic support in the family. Balinese women are very special because they have multiple roles, where the implementation of daily roles has an impact on the welfare of their surroundings, both family roles, economic roles, and traditional religious roles. Society through the view of gender as a socio-cultural construction also regulates the need for women to show interest in social interaction. The purpose of this study is to explain the value of Balinese women as a figure capable of improving the welfare of the community in the implementation of its role. This qualitative research using a phenomenological approach processes information from three Balinese women who are considered to meet the criteria as respondents. The originality of this research is able to provide a new perspective in addressing the improvement of community welfare through aspects of the implementation of the role of human resources (resources), namely Balinese women as cultural preservation figures. So that a sustainable culture will ensure the sustainability of the tourism industry which in turn improves the family economy, regional and government revenues and community welfare.

Keywords: Balinese women, triple roles, cultural sustainability, economic sustainability, public welfare.

1. Introduction

Community welfare can be improved in various ways, depending on the focus of each region. Bali is an area that focuses on the tourism industry. Culture is one aspect that is able to maintain the existence of the tourism industry, as well as a challenge in its preservation. Beautiful places can be found in various regions, but unique cultures cannot be found in all regions. Therefore, it is very important to preserve the culture so that Bali remains the belle of the tourism industry. Change is an eternal condition that always causes uncertainty. The tourism industry must have a good strategy in order to survive the uncertainty. Bali relies on the tourism industry as the main income of the region, and is able to survive until now, because of the strong preservation of culture. This is where Balinese women emerge to ensure the sustainability of tourism in Bali because they are cultural preservationists.

Balinese women have multiple roles. Since time immemorial, Balinese women have been known to be tough and hardworking (Kurniasari, 2023). Women/wives can be said to perform value-added activities for 24 hours every day. They wake up early to cook, wash, clean the house, carry out religious activities at home, in the banjar (neighborhood) and village. Carrying

out traditional religious activities towards the creator, others and the environment. The organization of these traditional religious activities is carried out for generations, so that it has become a culture that is preserved to this day. Many of them are not only housewives, but also help the family economy. It can be said that today's tough and hardworking Balinese career women are the carvings of the past. The cultural preservation carried out by Balinese women is based on various interpretations of their roles, namely as housewives, workers and as traditional members in social life.

Balinese women can be said to have qualified *self-management* skills. This is evident from their success in balancing time, pressure and behavior in each of their roles well, namely being able to be a wife and mother role model for the family, being able to excel so that they become company leaders in their career path so that they can support the family economy, and being able to continue to carry out traditional religious activities in every aspect of their lives as cultural preservationists.

Society through the view of gender as a socio-cultural construction also regulates the necessity for a woman to present her roles in social interaction (Moser, 1989; Nakatami, 2005; Tirtayani, 2007; Komalasari 2019). Balinese women in presenting their roles are categorized into three roles, namely family roles, economic roles and religious customary roles by reinforcing the application of culture through their daily activities. The family role is the role of women as housewives who serve their husbands, children, parents and in-laws. As mothers, women always educate their children by teaching good behavioral, moral and spiritual culture so that they can be applied in family life, schools and the surrounding environment. When being a wife as well as a *partner* in running the household, Balinese women also instill a culture of serving, respecting and supporting their husbands in all circumstances. When being a child to her parents and in-laws, Balinese women show a culture of service and devotion to them.

The economic role is the role of Balinese women as supporting the economic welfare of the family. While working they apply a culture of integrity and hard work without forgetting their nature as real women. Often Balinese women in their work face various obstacles such as role conflicts, socio-cultural barriers, history, strong gender *stereotypes* (Budhwar, 2005; Fernando and Cohen, 2011). Where it greatly affects their psychological side and behavior at work, but they are able to survive because they view work subjectively based on their own point of view, this culture is instilled so that women become effective leaders in the future (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2003).

The role of adat-religious is the role of Balinese women who are part of a socio-cultural community, Balinese women always instill cultural preservation in the implementation of adat-religious activities, by working on the needs of *banten* (*religious ceremonial* facilities) from the beginning of the process of both planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling the implementation of religious ceremonies until the activity is completed. All of these activities are carried out by Balinese women as a tradition that is passed on from generation to generation, so that it can make Balinese culture become *ajeg* or sustainable as an *icon of* world cultural tourism.

2. Literature Review

Women Triple Roles. Multiple roles in the lives of modern women with all the hectic activities must be dealt with by being able to divide time for work and personal life. Differences in history, structure, culture, and customs owned by a region require women to carry out different and even more complex roles. Women in the 21st century, according to Moser (1989), do not only perform two roles but three roles at once. The three roles include family roles, economic roles, and social roles. The social role is a role in the community environment and the implementation of these three roles is called *triple roles*. This social role exists because in the 21st century women generally have strong community ties such as ties in culture, religion, and race in organizing an activity that takes place in the local residential area. The interpretation of the three roles of women is again stated by Nakatami (2005) that Balinese women have three roles.

The research on the meaning of the three roles of Balinese women was continued by a *phenomenological study* from Tirtayani (2007) on the *triple roles* of Balinese women. The results of the study stated that, society through the view of gender as a socio-cultural construction, also regulates the necessity for a woman to present her roles in social interaction. Women in the presentation of *triple-roles* gender roles, raises expectations of good role implementation, in the family environment, work environment, and the general public (socio-cultural community).

Hall and Lindzey (1993) stated that the influence of the environment is very important on behavior change, because it can be a support or even an obstacle to one's aspirations. The balance of the presentation of *triple roles* in women will affect the behavior of women themselves because the suitability of the presentation of women's roles is expected by the community, while role mismatches are not expected because they can cause conflicts, both internal and external. The mismatch of role implementation in society will also get sanctions as a form of evaluation of the role mismatch. Where sanctions are a way used by the community in maintaining the implementation of roles to match the expected roles. *Triple roles* carried out by female workers always include role conflicts, because they demand a balance in the implementation of family roles, work roles and customary/religious roles. Komalasari (2019) states that role conflict is the simultaneous emergence of two or more role pressures. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified three things that underlie conflict. First, *time-based conflict*, is the time needed to carry out one of the demands (family or work) which can reduce the time to carry out other demands (work or family). Second, *strain-based conflict*, occurs when the pressure of one role affects the performance of the other. Third, *behavior-based conflict*, relates to a mismatch between behavior patterns and those desired by both parts (work or family). Situations or circumstances that can trigger role conflict, according to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) include 1) time demands for one role that are interrupted by another role, 2) stress in one role on another role that reduces the quality of each role, 3) anxiety and fatigue caused by the tension of one role complicates the other role, and 4) behavior that is effective and appropriate in one role but not effective and appropriate when transferred to another role.

The same thing is expressed by Graves *et al.* (2007) which states that role conflict is a situation where a person's role expectations come at the same time, both from the individual himself and from the environment, but are conflicting. A similar definition is also put forward by Oktarina (2022) that role conflict is the implementation of various roles that give rise to conflicting role requirements or expectations.

These definitions must be critically reviewed when defining the concept of *triple roles conflict* in developing countries such as Indonesia. In developed countries, the definition of role conflict, which includes family and work roles, may be able to provide a clear understanding of the role conflicts that exist there, but in Indonesia the elements of customary / religious roles cannot be represented. From the review of the various definitions of *triple roles* and the definition of role conflict outlined by these experts, the definition that seems appropriate to describe *triple roles conflict* activities in Bali is the level of interference or incompatibility in women's efforts to carry out roles in the domains of work, family, and custom/religion. This is what will be discussed in more depth in this research, how the role of Balinese women creates cultural and economic sustainability as a whole.

3. Research Method

This research uses phenomenological qualitative research methods, by processing information from three resource persons who are considered in accordance with the research objectives. The first resource person is an employee of a large state-owned bank in the Denpasar area, in the Credit Administration Monitoring Management Unit, as Regional Credit Administration Manager. The second resource person is a Balinese woman who works as a lecturer at LLDIKTI VIII dpk at a private university that has excellent accreditation. The second resource person is an employee who works at the Bali Provincial Mental Hospital, as the Head of Finance. Information from these three resource persons was then processed and supplemented with literature and confirmation from Hindu religious scriptures, resulting in conclusions that can be believed to be true.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1 Community welfare through cultural preservation in the family role

A woman's nature is to be a good wife and mother for her children. Women have a gentle nature of loving and serving (Burke and Singh, 2014) The future of the next generation depends on how a mother is able to instill culture through ethical, moral and spiritual values for her children. This is a very demanding and noble role. Women are naturally given the ability to do several jobs at once. Women have a more active brain than men (Cahya, 2017), so they are able to do many things, including endless household chores. It is expected that when their children grow up, they will be able to overcome all problems and be useful in their work. The interviewee said that instilling a good attitude is always done to her children, which she got from her parents' upbringing since childhood, they believe that carrying out family roles is a future responsibility.

Women in Hinduism have *swadharma* (obligations) as stated in the book *Menawa Dharmasastra* III.56 (Darmayante, 2012), stating that the position of a woman is very

honorable. In line with the following sloka listed in *Regveda* III, 53.4, that women are actually the basis of family happiness. This indicates that with the *multi-tasking* owned by women, they gain a very honorable position and become the basis of family prosperity. Women as housewives in the implementation of family roles are able to preserve culture by always maintaining maternal, loving, tough and serving family attitudes and traits. These traits instilled by mothers will be shown through compassion, tolerance, mutual respect, hard work and integrity in the behavior of their children. This will then be followed and become a role model for her children and grandchildren in the future, as a continuous hereditary process. A good mother will be the mirror of the family, thus creating the next generation with integrity. The role of the family that she plays is expected to be able to carve the character of the next generation of the nation that can be proud of.

Here it can be said that the role of the family carried out by Balinese women is vital, they are able to provide sculptures that make the next generation have an attitude of integrity, resilience, full of responsibility, and environmental sensitivity, so that it is expected to be able to become *resources* that are responsive and quickly adapt to environmental changes. The role of Balinese women by directing the next generation to have good behavior and creating a happy and harmonious family is believed to be able to realize community welfare.

4.2 Community welfare through cultural preservation in the economic role

Economic demands make every family, especially in Bali, must try to fulfill their daily needs by working. Nowadays, not only husbands have to work to fulfill their families' lives, but many wives also work (Valimaki *et al.*, 2014). Women who in the past only played the role of a mother who took care of the household and children, now take on the role of a working woman, this applies to the lives of Balinese women. Women who have a career either in the field of scientists, politicians, bureaucrats, military or in business in Hinduism are called *Brahma Vandini* (Lestari, 2016). Through the economic role of Balinese women as career women, they are also able to preserve culture. Balinese women view their career subjectively or based on their own perspective. Often money, position, or facilities are not the only goal of their work, but a sense of self-worth motivates them to work hard and never give up and perform well.

There are two slokas from different scriptures, which speak of the *swadarma* (duty) of a mother in the family which is a living symbol for work in the sacred literature *Bhagawadgita* III on *Karmayoga* (Darmayante, 2012). The sloka states that working is more noble than doing nothing, so it is clear that the mother as the child's guide should work according to her *karma* (deeds) and *swadharma* (obligations) for the benefit of improving the family economy. Next, the Yajurveda XIV.22 confirms the same thing about the role of Balinese women according to Darmayante (2012) that women are family supervisors, family assets as well as supporting (welfare) the family. In Hindu culture and beliefs, the family, community and environment accept Balinese women to work to support the welfare of the family.

It can be said that through work, Balinese women can preserve culture by carrying out the mandate of the sloka in the Vedic scriptures. In accordance with the sound of the *sloka*, Balinese women through their application are expected to be able to preserve culture by being able to

become leaders who are reliable assets in organizing everything, obeying the rules, and supporting the welfare of the family.

This spirit of work culture is what Balinese women transmit to their co-workers, which is a positive added value for the sustainability of their work. The resource persons shared and gave an understanding of how they manage their work and co-workers so that they have a good performance culture, so that women are able to preserve culture through their economic role. It is these positive attitudes and traits that Balinese women can transmit to their co-workers in the organization. These attitudes and traits will be passed down through generations, so that future generations are expected to have reliable performance and productivity in achieving organizational goals. The role of Balinese women by applying work enthusiasm, positive traits, mutual support with colleagues will help the company in realizing a good performance culture that is believed to be able to improve company performance in order to realize community welfare.

4.3 Community welfare through cultural preservation in the religious customs role

The role of Balinese women in cultural preservation cannot be doubted. Their efforts in preserving culture are in the form of the implementation of continuous religious traditional activities. The holy sloka from Manawa Dharmasastra IX.28 (Darmayante, 2012) supports this, saying that women play an important role in the implementation of religious ceremonies. This important role includes preparing *banten* (ceremonial tools) to completing the series of activities of the religious ceremony. For Balinese women, the implementation of religious customs is an inseparable job in their daily lives. This is due to the frequency of the implementation of religious ceremonies, both large and small, very often even every day, and women are busy preparing for it long beforehand.

This role is so inherent in Balinese culture, there is no day without religious activities. In Bali, the implementation of customary activities can be categorized into five parts called *Panca Yadnya*. *Panca Yadnya* are five sacred offerings that are sincere to God, which in Balinese terms the Hindu community mentions *Ida Sanghyang Widi Wasa* (Hidden, 2015). The five parts are *Dewa Yadnya* (a holy offering ceremony that is sincere to the gods), *Butha Yadnya* (a holy offering ceremony that is sincere to the elements of nature), *Manusa Yadnya* (a holy offering ceremony that is sincere to fellow humans), *Pitra Yadnya* (a holy offering ceremony that is sincere to humans who have died/parents/ ancestors) and *Rsi Yadnya* (a holy offering ceremony that is sincere to the Hindu saints).

Balinese women are required to master many things related to ritual processions, prayers, customs and culture and traditional ceremonial processions according to Hindu procedures. One of the things that must be mastered is "*Mejejaitan*". *Mejejaitan* is the process of making various means of praying ceremonies such as *banten* or offerings made of coconut leaves or janur, ental leaves equipped with flowers and fruit, which are used in daily rituals and traditional ceremonies during major holidays.

For Balinese women, the process of making *banten* is a manifestation of worship and devotion to the Creator. Balinese women have a sense of sincerity and noble awareness in preserving this. Balinese women know in more detail what kind of *banten* is offered, when it is offered, how the procession of religious customs is carried out, so it can be said that without the touch of women, religious customs activities would not run well. Such is the importance of women's position in the implementation of religious customs, as a manifestation of how decisive they are in cultural preservation efforts.

Balinese women perform the meaning of this role continuously and continuously, and are taught from generation to generation. The interviewee's interpretation of the role of religious customs that she performs daily, that the religious-customary activities have been carried out for generations in addition to the obligation to carry out religious-customary activities to show a sense of devotion and offerings to the Creator, also to create *ajeg* (sustainable) Bali. Interviewees agreed that Balinese culture must be preserved by women, because women are the driving force of custom, because it is with this custom that Bali has become famous throughout the world.

The expectations of the three speakers are the same, namely that the younger generation of Bali, especially Balinese women as an *icon* of cultural preservation, must be able to preserve this ancestral heritage in the midst of the times. Although today the world is increasingly sophisticated with various technological inventions, cultural roots remain the foundation of the nation that must be maintained. The added value of Balinese women as cultural preservationists, will be able to make the community and business actors in Bali able to survive the uncertainty and even achieve company goals. The role of Balinese women by carrying out religious customs activities on an ongoing basis as a form of devotion to the creator, others and the environment will help uphold Balinese culture in a sustainable manner, so as to maintain the Balinese tourism industry in order to realize community welfare.

4.4 Cultural Preservation Can Overcome Uncertainty Towards Community Welfare

Balinese women perform *triple roles*, namely family roles, economic roles, and religious customary roles (Moser, 1989; Komalasari, 2019). Balinese women are not only an employee responsible for the company, but also a housewife responsible for the family, and as a member of the indigenous social community responsible for implementing religious customs both in the family, *banjar* (neighborhood association), and village. These three roles often demand optimal time, pressure and behavior simultaneously, so balancing them is not easy. These three roles of women are emphasized in the following quotation from the Vedic Manawa Dharmasastra III.59 (Darmayante, 2012),

"*Tasmadetah Sada Puja, Busanaccha Dana Sanaih, Buthi Kamir Narair Mityam, Satkaresutsa Vesu Ca*". Meaning:

Women are God's creatures with their own complexity of roles and glory (religious, aesthetic, economic, and social). As a religious being, she is perfect before God, she is at once the organizer of the details of the domestic aspects, as well as the honest cashier for their family.

On the belief side, Hinduism firmly states the truth about the three roles of Balinese women. Balinese women succeed in carrying out their three roles well because of the support of family, environment and cultural customs, which are clearly stated in the scriptural slokas.

This support makes Balinese women able to become cultural preservation figures in the meaning of *their triple roles*. The preservation of Balinese culture from generation to generation has a positive impact on the sustainability of the tourism sector in Bali. Balinese culture is a magnet that can attract tourists to visit Bali, thus bringing fresh air to industries engaged in the tourism sector and also able to revive the supporting goods and services industry in Bali. We must be ready to face all changes, both internal and external. But we must be able to manage change well, so that it brings progress and not the other way round. Balinese women are at the forefront in facing these changes, while still carrying out their role as cultural preservation figures. Culture must remain strong, but the packaging can change following the times, for example in the digital era as now Balinese culture can be promoted through the internet with *e-commerce, e-marketing, e-money*, so that anxiety due to uncertainty can be resolved. By being able to overcome this uncertainty, it will then create overall community welfare.

5. Conclusion

Balinese women are resilient, they are able to perform their *triple roles* well. They are able to balance family roles, economic roles and religious traditional roles, which demand time, pressure and behavior that often come simultaneously. They are able to face the meaning of the role as an obligation with a sense of sincerity and become part of their lives for generations. Consciously or unconsciously, the implementation of the meaning of the role makes the position of women indispensable, and becomes the main wheel of the driver and preservation of culture. This is what makes Balinese culture sustainable and preserved to this day, amidst the onslaught of technology and modernization.

Balinese culture is a strong magnet for tourists visiting Bali. All businesses, both those directly related to the tourism industry and those not directly related, can stay alive and grow, because of the preservation of Balinese culture. The efforts of the younger generation to preserve Balinese culture can overcome the problem of uncertainty. This is able to provide a new view in terms of aspects of human resources (*resources*), namely Balinese women, in overcoming the uncertainty of the economic environment, and the business world or industry today.

The success in overcoming this uncertainty can be proven that the Indonesian tourism sector has again made proud achievements, the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) which has just been officially released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) on May 21, 2024 shows Indonesia's position has again shot up 10 ranks, from 32nd to 22nd in the world (Kemenparekraf, 2024). Meanwhile, Bali ranked first in the Tourism Development Index in Indonesia in 2024 (Disparda Bali, 2024) The measurement is based on four main aspects, namely, environmental aspects, governance, cultural tourism potential, and infrastructure. This situation is able to make all industries that carry out business activities in Bali can grow and develop well, due to the added value role given by Balinese women as a cultural preservation

figure. With the preservation of Balinese culture, the tourism industry will be maintained and even improved, in order to create prosperity for families, companies and society in general.

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