



## CHILDREN' INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM

**Ni WayanMekarini**  
**I Made SuwitraWirya**  
**IGAB Widiantera**

Triatma Jaya Institute of Tourism, Bali

### Abstract

The study entitled children' involvement in tourism investigate reasons of school-age children put themselves into tourism at their young age. Researchers intent to explore the various threats that can force them away from their ideals. Data collection is done by observation and in-depth interview. Later, data is analyzed based on the theory of social dynamics and ideology that are related to the norms upheld. After analyzing, data are presented systematically to support easy understanding. The study found out that the involvement of school age children in tourism as seen on Mandalika Lombok because of low financial condition. Most children work as souvenirs sellers for school fee and family need. They also have another talent, such as giving information for best photo spots and also organizing motion and position for best picture. These children acquire special skills from adults to be able to become photographers and operate various cameras. The existence of the adults behind them is a worrying thing since they may take them as a money-making machine. Children may also involve in sex exploitation behind the bank note they chased. If there is no supervision by the object manager, parents and the community, children are at risk of dropping out of school and becoming workers at their young age. Even if the economic condition of the family is no longer weak but the children tend to be hopeless to catch their ideal. The local management should take responsibility of involving young age employee which is against human right for children protection.

**Keywords:** involvement, low financial condition, school age, exploitation, hope

### Introduction

The local government of West Nusa Tenggara is working hard to develop a strategy for increasing employment and community incomes.



With the central government, the Lombok government continues to provide space for children and young people of school age to gain higher knowledge through programs funded by the government. The education and skills program is aimed at the younger generation to equip themselves with sufficient knowledge and skills when entering the work place. Local government incentive to invite local residents to build their area rather than looking for work abroad as Indonesian labor (TKI) or female labor (TKW). Because not a few TKI sent home in pain due to persecution, doing crime, without proper wage, and receive other untrusted treatment. The root of the failure problem was allegedly due to lack of education and skills possessed.

Like the island of Bali, the island of Lombok is also considered a small island that has a fascinating natural charm. The width of the island of Lombok is around 5,435 km<sup>2</sup> so that it can be accessed from end to end in a short time. The island of Lombok consists of 4 regencies and 1 city state, such as West Lombok Regency with the capital of Gerung, Central Lombok Regency with the capital of Praya, East Lombok Regency with the capital of Selong, North Lombok Regency with the capital of Tanjung, while the Mataram city state with the capital of Mataram. In tourism sector, Lombok is proud to have got high tourist visits to Gili Air, Gili Trawangan, Gili Meno, Senggigi Beach, Segara Anak and Kuta which are best magnets with charming beaches and interesting activities. The attention of the World begin to focus on the natural attraction of Lombok Tengah when the opening access through the International Lombok Praya Airport in Central Lombok. Interest becomes stronger when the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Joko Widodo popularizes the Mandalika coast and succeeds in becoming viral. Finally, the great sprinter raised to scent the Indonesian nation who the son of central Lombok. Therefore, the appeal of Lombok is complete for all Indonesian and foreign countries. The stigma that Lombok as a barren area and the supplier of Indonesian migrant workers has been abandoned.

Children involvement in the workplace is still not accepted. Children should have the opportunity to adequately train the rough motor conditions with various gestures and games after the learning process. If the time to play is consumed for work, then it is believed will bring adverse impact on its development. Various forms of bad things become possible because children are still not ready yet to familiarize of how to



see the World. Unfortunately the world of tourism gives access to children to collect money. For example, some children exploitation occurred the world of tourism began to be badly heard. In Bandung West java, the exploitation involved children which were carried out using hotelfacilities. It injured three boys in early 2018. Of course this tragedy would not be the last which is bring a bad impact and must be evaluated in order to restore the Indonesian image as safe and comfortable tourism destination. In that case, the greatest hope is directed to the participation of the community in the supervision.

Based on the background above, the formulation of problem are described as follows.

- (a) How children involve in tourism area on the coast of Mandalika, Lombok?
- (b) how far are children involved in tourism area on the coast of Mandalika, Lombok?
- (c) What is the impact of children involvement in tourism on their education?

In line with the formulation of the problem, the study aimed to find out (a) the reasons children involved in working in the world of tourism on the coast of Mandalika Lombok, (b) the level of involvement and working in the world of tourism on the coast of Mandalika, Lombok, and (c) the impact on the education they lived while working in the world of tourism.

### **Theoretical Review**

The development of tourism should be in line with the wishes of the local people. Tourism that is not supported by the community in that location will cause a complicated problem for the operation of the hotel or restaurant that leads to big losses of investors. Therefore, the sociological approach becomes an alternative that should be the main consideration. The sociological approach sees social phenomena as processual, comparative, and emotional. Such a viewpoint is intended to make the analysis more comprehensive and meaningful (Cohen, 1979). Processual studies are studies that pay attention to the aspects of time and process series, while comparative studies consider comparisons of one situation with different situations. Equally important is the perspective of emic that is the view of several sectors



involved in the development of tourism including the aspects of tourist relations with local communities. How local people perceive changes and make sense of visitor arrivals to their areas need to be explored. Generally, if the public is open to changes and diversity then tourism is definitely growing rapidly. On the contrary, a homogeneous view requires a more thorough understanding while instilling a sense of the beauty of diversity. The characteristic of the Sociological approach sees that the tour indicates the existence of human movement in the dimension of space and time. The movement is generally performed as an activity outside of work time as an activity outside the daily routine. Trips promise tranquility, the beauty of the tourist location or attractions offered. Travel activities are activities for a while (temporary) to enjoy the place or attraction without the desire to get life in the place. Mass movement can be a vehicle for new socialization of human encounters in a particular place based on fantasy, fantasy or image (Urry, 1990).

Turner and Ash (1976) states that there is social impact of tourism to the culture. Turner and Ash assert that Tourism is everywhere, the enemy of authenticity and cultural identity. "Wherever tourism grows it will erode the authenticity and local cultural identity. Thus, the identity opportunities of people in tourist destinations will shift or even experience degradation is very open. Of course, it is not easy for all the members of the local community, especially for people in tourism area who intend to improve the standard of living. It means that degradation and cultural shifting is there on the tourism object that make the identity fade.

Based on ideology concept (Halliday, 1985: 5) community represent it as part of cultural context representation, which is associated with sense, norms, knowledge, and values. Lexicon selection to realize a meaning is different among groups because sense is beyond the language aspect. For example, the meanings of the statue, picture, or dance are different. Eggin (1994: 113) states that ideology is the most abstract contextual element that is implicitly realized in the text. Ideology includes language relationship with mind, participants, and culture which clearly describe field, actors, channel, and the meaning source. On the other hand, text is also a discourse which shows power domination (Kress (1985: 29). In discourse, ideology covers the entire system of ideas and perspectives on the world to be



able to form unconsciousness (false consciousness) to comply. It happens because the ideology comes from experiences that are condensed on the groups from previous generation to the next generation. It then was appointed as a rule in social life that must be obliged to all group members. Ideology is essentially a form of knowledge and its relation to social class structure and the implementation of specific social practices. Knowledge can be a social convention which was subsequently accepted as cultural norms and values. For example, repetition of certain tradition makes the implementation of certain social practices of conventional practices that must be implemented. Thompson (1984: 60) reveals that ideology is a way of creating a stable social order, legitimacy explicit, and evokes the spirit of the past. Thus, ideology is always "immanent" in effective social relations which later turned into imbalanced relation. Based on those definitions, this study of ideologies beyond the children involvement in tourism explores the range of knowledge and perception of the world that make up the group identity and legitimacy aspects which also create domination to force social arrangement.

### **Research Methodology**

Children in Tourism Research is a field research that examines the sociological behavior of the community in the study sites. Research is carried out in a natural setting and is ethnosynchronous, in the sense that the description is tentative and applies to a particular society. Synchronic characteristics refer to research that aims to describe a phenomenon at a certain time and how the phenomenon is expressed (Bungin, 2008: 181). This research focuses on the behavior and childrenpoint of view in the dimension of space and time that occurred in MandalikaKuta area, Central Lombok. Data were collected by observation technique of skimming and interview with informant. Information from the informant made into the main data then studied to identify problems encountered. As a qualitative research, the researcher's skills to obtain the required data greatly determine the depth of the research. Explanatory notes are excavated classified to set the direction toward the conclusion of the study.

### **Discussion and Result**

It is believed that every guest who travels makes use online information and recommendations through internet access. The



beautiful location shared by the previous visitors might be the first thing to attract others on the social media. Since one feel attracted so further exploration they did to make herself convinced. In the other words, comments and solicitation recommended by previous travelers become a magnet before determining the destination to be visited. But if Mr. President recommended it, every Indonesian citizen feels obliged to follow the recommendation. So, detailed information shared through social media networks has the potential to support quantity of visitors level to those locations.

The involvement of children in tourism occurs in newly developed areas of tourism sector such as central Lombok. It was evident in the observations of researchers on the Kuta beach, better known as Mandalika, that there were more than eight children involved in Mandalika beach. The children are aged around eight to fifteen. When viewed from its age, it is immediately known that these children are students at elementary or secondary school. They are not only consist of boys but also some girls. Children involved in the Mandalika coastal tourism area are not children who live or originate near the site, because the location and development of Kuta beach as a tourist attraction does not blend with the local people's village. Mandalika beach location is a new location away from the residential location of the population so that children must travel about ten kilometers from the house to this beach. This means that of course there is a strong need for him to take that long journey. In interviews with these children, it emerged that they had to help family finances by working. The desire to improve family income and be able to buy school needs independently encourages them to work at a young age. Regardless of the motivation to work at a young age, there is an intriguing thing related to selling techniques. At first the children offered visitors bracelets, necklaces, hair ornaments and small souvenirs. Although offered at low prices, most visitors are not interested in buying souvenirs because of their low quality and are considered not durable. However, the children did not give up. If visitors begin to glance at their merchandise, the child will approach and follow the visitor until they actually buy it. If visitor are not agree to buy souvenirs provided, children will issue the next step that is to buy souvenirs as a donation for the sustainability of their education. That is only one reason that makes visitors give up money voluntarily as well as giving pocket money to their children. On this stage, quite a few visitors donate



without taking the items offered or allowing the change to be the child's pocket money.. Thus it is reflected that merchandise is not the main aspect of livelihood but pinches the value of humanity.

Here's an example of the expressions.

1. Bu inikalungbagus, belilah.  
'Mom, this is nice necklace, buy it, please'
2. Boleh pilih yang mana. Sayakasi 3 lima ribu  
'You may choose any. I give five thousand for 3 pieces'
3. Initidak mahal.  
'It's not expensive'
4. Belilahitung-itungibu bantu sekolah kami bu  
'Buy it, mom as if you help our school fee, mom'
5. Ibutentujarang-jarangkesini, jadibantulahbuatsekolah kami  
'Mom, of course you rarely come here, so help my study'

The stage of the struggle for children to raise money on Kutabeach does not stop at the sale of merchandise. Children who are successful take a bit closer to visitors begin to show intimacy by giving information about the beautiful spots in the coastal area. If trust starts to appear, children start selling other information and skills, like where are the best photo spot and why it s be the best. The information given as if a professional guide since they know every detail of the beach. To the visitors they began to offer his skills to take pictures. This is again astonishing how they confident to operate camera on visitor phone cell. The following is series of children description of the Mandalika beach.

1. Kalo selfie hasilnyatakbagus  
'If you take picture by yourself it would not be the best'
2. Takdapatgambar yang enak  
'It can not capture the best site'
3. Mari sayaambil kangambar  
'Let me take your picture'
4. Spot foto yang bagus disiniadabanyak  
'There are lots of good photo spots here'
5. Kalodisini juga bagustapiharusberdiriagakkesana  
'It's good here too, but you have to stand a bit further'
6. Ya, ibuterusmundurdulutrusnolehkesini  
'Yes, mom,..keeps going back and then look at here'
7. Tangannyamenunjuk



- 'Put your hand points'
- 8. Bukanbegitupibegini  
'It's not like that, but like this'
- 9. Telunjukkebawah, janganbengkok  
'Finger down, do not bend'
- 10. Ya, cobaperiksahasilnya, bagus  
'Yes, try checking the results, good'

These children are clever enough to give explanation that selfie is not able to reflect the true beauty of the beach. The children stated carefully that they were trained and able to capture visitors well with any camera series. Visitors are directed to certain position of faces, hands, feet and body to produce satisfactory images. Visitors can get pictures as if flying in the clouds, hovering on the surface of the water, piercing / pushing / lifting the hill as well as to be twin in pictures. The skill is not only owned by one or two children, but they are all capable of shooting well. That means the children have received training on how to take pictures and are introduced to various types of mobile phones. Researchers did not see the children equip themselves with phones cell, but were always able to operate various brands of mobile phones belongs to the visitor. At the end of the visit, children were able to give their farewells and await the next visit and also express their hope that visitors would bring along some other friends back. Of course, the familiar impression that he stated push visitors to send some more tipping as a thanksgiving along the visit.

Selling technique owned by these children as if it is previously arranged willand accepted as a form of internalization. The stages are detected flowing well and very rarely fail to take the hearts of visitors. If the line drawn, it looks children's behavior at Kuta beach location is a combination of requests and abilities. Children are pressed for money to continue their education and help family finances, while on the visitors side there is the impression that they have done good by giving donations to the children's education and are helped by having the best pictures from those little hands.

In the field it is reflected the role of adults who encourage children to work with a predetermined groove. There is the role of adults who think about the ways to be followed in work. It seems that money-making opportunities are viewed more openly at the age of children than adults. In fact, there are concerns that children are used by adults



by providing them with certain skills that can touch visitors' sympathy. In the interview it was found out that the children made sure to keep studying in school diligently and only spent rest time at Mandalika beach. Vague exploitation of children occurred since it's not the right time to make money. However, they admit that the work they undertake is only done as a side job after the learning task is completed. The possibility of dropping out of school is very vulnerable because of the strong demands of parents to improve family finances and children begin to enjoy spending time without touching books. If there is an indefinite omission then the children tend to become workers at a young age. Unformed maturity has an impact on the vulnerability of being the object of sex exploitation that is slowly approaching along with the embedded bank note received. Therefore anticipatory action must be taken. Supervising is urgently needed by managers to prevent children from falling into young labor and abandoning their study responsibilities. Children must be listed and ascertained the continuity of their education. Regular monitoring in the area around the site may prevent children from the possibility of sexual exploitation and kill children future. If crowded happened on week end, on weekdays beach conditions are relatively quiet with a small number visitors. This situation can be used by predators to act. Reminding government statement that preventing children from exploitation is everybody duty. People are obliged to prepare preventive actions rather than shouting loudly after. Therefore, the involvement of underage children in the world of tourism area needs to be watched carefully and even minimized.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

The involvement of children in tourism object as seen on the Mandalika coast of Kuta is very worrying. No fewer than eight children stand by visitors offering souvenirs such as necklaces, bracelets or hair ornaments. They urge visitors to buy their wares for the school fee. However, these young children are not ordinary sellers. They even able to explain the best photo spots including organizing motion and position to produce the best picture. These seem trained with special skills by adults to be able to become child photographers and operate various cameras belonging to visitors. The existence of adults behind the work is worrying. Exploitation is vulnerable in children because it is used by adults as a money-making machine. They would be victim of further



exploitation especially sex exploitation which is hide behind the money they chased. If there is no supervision, then the children are in risk of dropping out and becoming young workers. It can be recommended that the managers should perform data collection and supervision to make sure those school-age children continuing their study. It must be also ensured that children do activities on the beach after school. This means that supervision is needed to stop their access to the beach on school hours to support children protection from under age worker.

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