

## The Analysis of Bale Banjar Shifted Function: Socio-Cultural and Economy Implications in Kuta, Bali

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### ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the shift in the function of bale banjar in Kuta District, Bali, in the context of modern tourism development. This shift in function includes a transformation from a center for social and cultural activities into a commercial and multifunctional space. This research also examines the socio-cultural and economic implications of these changes. Data was obtained through qualitative methods with in-depth interviews, observation and documentation studies. The research results show that modern tourism has a significant impact on changes in the function and form of bale banjar, as well as changing the social and economic dynamics of local communities. These changes affect traditional cultural values and the social identity of communities, necessitating appropriate conservation and adaptation strategies to maintain a balance between tourism development and preservation of traditional values. This research provides an important contribution in understanding the dynamics of bale banjar transformation and its implications for Balinese society in the modern tourism era.

**Keywords:** *bale banjar*; functional transformation; socio-cultural implications; economic implications; modern tourism; Kuta; Bali.

### INTRODUCTION

Bale banjar is one of the communal structures that is very important in the life of Balinese people. (Sanjaya & Juliarthana, 2019). Bale banjar functions as a center for social, cultural and religious activities (Hening Wagiswari et al., 2019). As a public space, bale banjar is a gathering place for residents to interact, hold traditional ceremonies and various community activities (Gantini et al., 2014). However, the rapid development of tourism in Bali, especially in Kuta District, has brought significant changes to the function and use of bale banjar. Kuta District, known as one of the main tourism centers in Bali, has experienced rapid economic growth due to a surge in the number of tourists. In 2019, Bali received more than 6.3 million foreign tourists, with most visits focused on the Kuta area. Tourists who visit Bali generally have the motivation to get out of their daily routine and engage with local culture. They visit Bali because of its rich natural and cultural resources. Tourist visits are driven by cultural factors, social status, physical needs and interpersonal needs. Bali is an example of a destination in Indonesia that is successful in presenting harmonization of natural and cultural resources so as to provide added value to the region (Maulana et al., 2020).

This tourism has triggered profound social and economic changes, including changes in the use of communal spaces such as bale banjar. Lots of bale banjar are now used for commercial activities, such as renting space for events, shops, and restaurants. This change in function has changed the social dynamics of society, where traditional social interactions and community activities are starting to be displaced by economic activities (Suryawati, 2018). This raises concerns regarding the preservation of traditional cultural values and social identity of the Balinese people. Therefore, it is important to understand how this transformation occurs and what implications it has for society. This research is very urgent because changes in the function of bale banjar have the potential to threaten the sustainability of the cultural values and social identity of the Balinese people. As a center for social and cultural activities, bale banjar plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion and preserving local traditions. With the change in function to a commercial space, there is a risk that the cultural and social values that have been maintained will be eroded. Apart from that,

this research is also important to provide guidance for the government and local communities in formulating appropriate conservation and adaptation strategies. A deep understanding of the dynamics of this change will help in designing policies that can balance economic needs and cultural preservation.

The problem formulation in this research is: (1) How is the transformation of the function of bale banjar in Kuta District, Bali? (2) What are the socio-cultural and economic implications of the change in the function of the bale banjar? (3) What factors influence the transformation of the function of bale banjar in Kuta? This research aims to: (1) Analyze the transformation of the function of bale banjar in Kuta District, Bali; (2) Identify and analyze the socio-cultural and economic implications of changes in the function of bale banjar and (3) Investigate the factors that influence changes in the function of bale banjar in Kuta. Although there has been research regarding changes in the function of communal spaces and their impact on society, studies that focus on bale banjar in Kuta in the context of modern tourism are still very limited. This research fills this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the transformation of the function of bale banjar and its socio-cultural and economic implications. Thus, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the changing dynamics of communal space in the context of modern tourism in Bali. This research also enriches the literature on preserving traditional architecture and cultural values in the face of modernization and globalization pressures. By using an in-depth qualitative approach, this research is expected to provide new insights that are useful for academics, practitioners and policy makers in designing effective and sustainable conservation strategies.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses several previously existing literature to strengthen references for the research to be conducted. This research is small in scope, including a type of library research, namely research whose object of study uses library data in the form of literature as the data source. This research was carried out by reading, reviewing and analyzing various existing literature (Zed, 2008). Previous studies show that public spaces play an important role in maintaining cultural and historical values. Traditional bale banjar in Bali have been centers of social and cultural interaction, but modernization and tourism have changed many of these functions to a more commercial one. These changes are often influenced by economic dynamics and government policies that support tourism.

### Transformation of Public Spaces and Traditional Architecture

The transformation of public space is a topic that is often discussed in urban and architectural studies. (Birer & Çalışır Adem, 2022) stated that public space plays an important role in the perception of the historical value and texture of the city. Public spaces can support historical preservation and be an important presentation tool to promote awareness and appreciation of the historical environment. Their study in Amasya shows that good public space design can support historical values as a means of presentation and preservation. (Proaño et al., 2023) in their study of social and spatial patterns in Quito, Ecuador, emphasized the importance of public space in creating strong social relationships. They found that the success of urban design depends on the ability to adapt spatial conditions to the social interactions that occur within it. Well-designed public spaces can improve people's quality of life by providing places for social interaction and collective activities. (Carmona, 2019) outlines a series of normative principles that can be used by planners in governing the design and management of public spaces. These principles include a strategic planning framework and evaluation of the quality of public space design that can assist in creating quality and functional public spaces. This research shows that the quality of public space has a direct impact on the quality of urban life.

### Socio-Cultural and Economic Role of Bale Banjar

Bale banjar is a communal space that is very important in the lives of Balinese people. (Suwardani et al., 2018) emphasized that bale banjar functions as a place for social and cultural activities, as well as a center for community interaction. Bale banjar helps maintain the sociocultural identity of the Balinese people and plays an important role in preserving local traditions. (Gantini et al., 2012) explained that the bale banjar initially functioned as a gathering and deliberation place for banjar residents. However, the development of urban life has led to changes in the function of bale banjar

to become more multifunctional, including for economic, educational and artistic activities, in line with subsequent findings from (Gantini & Hanan, 2017). This research shows how bale banjar has adapted to changing times while still maintaining its social role. (Mahastuti Ni Made Mitha, 2018) in their study of the decorative ornaments of bale banjar in Legian, Kuta, found that many bale banjar had undergone modernization in their design. However, most of the bale banjar still maintains the traditional Balinese architectural style in its ornaments and shapes. This research shows how bale banjar can adapt to changes in modernity while still maintaining its traditional architectural identity.

### **Implications of Bale Banjar Transformation in the Tourism Context**

Changes in the function of bale banjar in the context of modern tourism have significant socio-cultural and economic implications. (Juniastira, 2021) researched the development of bale banjar architecture and found that changes in function were often driven by economic needs and the growth in the number of banjar krama. Bale banjar, which was previously only used for social activities, is now also used for commercial activities, which can create pride and economic benefits for the community. (Sanjaya & Juliarthana, 2019) highlighting that bale banjar can also be used as a creativity space for young people in Denpasar City. Their research shows that bale banjar can be an ideal place for creative activities, providing space for young people to be creative and interact positively. This shows the potential of bale banjar to adapt to the needs of the younger generation without losing its social function.

### **Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach (Mappasere & Suyuti, 2019) to explore and understand the shift in the function of bale banjar in Kuta District, Bali, as well as the socio-cultural and economic implications of these changes. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with local residents, community leaders and tourism observers, as well as direct observation in the field. This interview aims to explore their views and experiences regarding changes in the function of bale banjar and its implications. Direct observations were carried out in several banjar bales to record physical conditions and activities that occurred. Secondary data was obtained from literature, government documents and relevant previous studies. The main instruments used in this research were semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis steps include data transcription, coding, categorization, and interpretation to find patterns and relationships between themes that are relevant to the problem formulation and research objectives. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research uses data triangulation, namely combining data from various sources (interviews, observations, and documentation) to mutually confirm and strengthen the findings. Apart from that, peer debriefing is also carried out by involving colleagues to review and provide input on research results. This approach allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex and dynamic phenomena that occur in bale banjar in the modern tourism era.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research results show that the bale banjar in Kuta District has experienced a significant functional transformation. Initially, bale banjar functioned as a center for social, cultural and religious activities for the local community. However, with the rapid development of tourism, lots of bale banjar are now used for commercial activities. For example, several bale banjar have been converted into spaces for event rentals, restaurants, and souvenir shops. This shift not only changed the physical function of the banjar bale but also affected the social structure of the community. This transformation resulted in a reduction in traditional social interactions and an increase in financially profitable economic activities.

### **Function Transformation of Bale Banjar**

This research found that bale banjar in Kuta District, Bali, has experienced a significant functional transformation from a traditional communal space to a multifunctional space that includes

commercial uses. Initially, bale banjar functioned as a center for social, cultural and religious activities. However, with the rapid development of tourism in Kuta, lots of bale banjar are now used for commercial activities such as renting out spaces for events, shops, restaurants and even accommodation. Data from interviews with local residents shows that 70% of the bale banjar in Kuta have experienced changes in their main function. For example, Bale Banjar Kubu Alit Kedonganan which was previously used for traditional ceremonies and community meetings is now rented out as a convenience store. One resident stated, "We are seeing a big change in the way bale banjar is used. It is now used more for business than for community activities". Data from interviews with local residents and community leaders also revealed that many local people felt they had lost communal spaces that used to be gathering places for various traditional and social activities. "In the past, bale banjar was a place where we gathered for traditional ceremonies and social activities, but now many have turned into commercial places," said a resident. This is in line with the findings (Gantini et al., 2012), who noted that lots of bale banjar in Denpasar also experienced similar changes in function.



**Figure 1.** Bale Banjar Kubu Alit Kedonganan, the ground floor is used for a convenience store

### Socio-Cultural Implications

Changes in the function of bale banjar have significant socio-cultural implications. Previously, bale banjar was a place where residents gathered for social interaction, celebrating traditional ceremonies, and developing local arts and culture (Gantini, 2014). This transformation has reduced the frequency and quality of social interactions within communities. A community leader in Kuta said, "Bale banjar used to be a symbol of togetherness and our cultural identity. Now, with its dominant commercial function, we feel we have lost important social and cultural ties." (Mahastuti Ni Made Mitha, 2018) noted that the modernization of bale banjar often sacrifices traditional elements that are full of cultural meaning. For example, traditional architectural ornaments and designs are often replaced by modern elements that are more functional for business purposes. This change also has an impact on the younger generation who are increasingly unfamiliar with the cultural values that should be preserved through bale banjar. Many of the younger generation now know bale banjar more as a commercial place than as a center for traditional and social activities.



**Figure 2.** Bale Banjar Pekandelan Legian, the ground floor is also rented out for a shop

### **Economics Implications**

On the other hand, the transformation of the function of the bale banjar also has a significant economic impact on the local community. Lots of bale banjar now contribute to the economy through space rental and commercial activities. "Now we get additional income from renting out the bale banjar for various events," said a bale banjar administrator. Data from interviews shows that income from renting banjar bales in several villages reaches IDR 50 million per month, which is used to finance community activities and building maintenance. (Juniastira, 2021) found that lots of bale banjar in Bali now have a dual function, not only as gathering places but also as centers of economic activity. This transformation is often driven by economic needs and the growth in the number of banjar krama. However, it is important to note that these economic benefits must be balanced with efforts to maintain the cultural values and social identity of the community.



**Figure 3.** Bale Banjar Tuban Griya, the front part of which is rented out as a billboard.

### **Factors That Influence Transformation**

This research identifies several factors that influence the transformation of the function of bale banjar in Kuta. The main factor is economic pressure from tourism which encourages communities to maximize the use of space for more financially profitable activities. Apart from that, local government policies that support tourism development also play an important role in facilitating changes in the function of bale banjar. Apart from economic and policy factors, social changes also play an important role. Shifts in people's values and lifestyles, especially among the younger generation who are more influenced by modernization and globalization, have also driven changes in the function of bale banjar. "Today's younger generation is more interested in business and tourism than tradition and culture," said a senior resident.

### **Discuss**

The transformation of the function of bale banjar in Kuta District reflects the complex dynamics between economic needs and cultural preservation. Tourism has brought significant economic benefits to local communities, but these changes have also created major challenges in maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion. This research emphasizes the importance of a holistic conservation strategy, which does not only focus on economic aspects but also considers socio-cultural aspects. For example, one strategy that can be implemented is the integration of commercial activities with cultural activities. Bale banjar can function as a multifunctional space that still maintains its traditional elements, while accommodating the economic needs of the community. This is in line with the findings of (Suwardani et al., 2018) which emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between modernization and cultural preservation.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that the transformation of the function of bale banjar in Kuta District, Bali, is the most important factor influenced by the rapid development of tourism. In several ways, this

rapid tourism development has also had an influence on the existence of Bale Banjar as a place for residents to gather and carry out their activities. Bale banjar, which originally functioned as a center for social, cultural and religious activities or traditional activities, has now undergone a change in function to become a commercial and multifunctional space. Apart from that, changes in the shape of the banjar bale can also be seen from what was originally one floor and open (wantilan) to now having developed into two to three floors with the ground floor used for commercial functions. Apart from that, there are also several banjar bales which have a closed and private front appearance. This transformation has significant socio-cultural implications, including the reduction of traditional social interactions through traditional activities and the threat of local cultural values. On the other hand, this transformation also has a positive impact in the form of significant economic benefits for local communities, with additional income generated from space rental and commercial activities. However, these changes pose major challenges in maintaining a balance between economic needs and cultural preservation. High awareness is needed, especially by the younger generation of the community, to continue and/or maintain the continuity of traditions and culture through activities that are regularly held in the bale banjar. Apart from that, concrete examples are also needed from the elders in continuing the tradition by passing on knowledge about ceremonial arrangements, building layout, installation of appropriate materials, application of appropriate decorations in a bale banjar in a certain area. Therefore, a holistic conservation and adaptation strategy is needed, which considers economic and socio-cultural aspects simultaneously. One approach that can be taken is to integrate commercial activities with cultural activities in the bale banjar, so that traditional functions and cultural values can be maintained. The government's role as a regulator or rule maker must also be emphasized. So that the granting of permits for commercial businesses involving cultural domains or traditional buildings can be more stringent. In this way, it is hoped that the existence of the bale banjar with its main function will still maintain its authenticity. This research in a broad sense provides important insights for policy makers and local communities in designing effective and sustainable conservation strategies for bale banjar in the modern tourism era.

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