Tourism Police Strategy in Maintaining the Security and Comfort of Foreign Tourists in Bali

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Article Information:	Abstract in English
	Bali is one of Indonesia's top tourist destinations, attracting millions of visitors annually. However, the increasing number of tourists also leads to higher security risks, such as pickpocketing, fraud, and other criminal activities. To address these challenges, tourism police play a strategic role in maintaining security and providing services to foreign tourists. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of tourism police in Bali and identify the challenges they face. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis.The findings indicate that tourism police play a crucial role in enhancing tourism security; however, several obstacles persist, including limited human resources, insufficient foreign language training, and ineffective coordination with the tourism industry stakeholders. In conclusion, improving police training, investing in surveillance technology, and fostering stronger collaboration between law enforcement and tourism stakeholders are essential to creating a safer and more comfortable tourism environment.

INTRODUCTION

Bali is a leading tourist destination in Indonesia that has its own appeal for both domestic and foreign tourists. The natural beauty, unique culture, and sustainability of the local community make Bali a favorite tourist destination throughout the year. Based on data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2023), Bali receives more than 6.7 million foreign tourists each year, making it one of the areas with the highest tourist visits in Southeast Asia. The contribution of the tourism sector to the local economy is also very significant, with an estimated 60-80% of regional income coming from the tourism industry (McEachern, 2000). This shows that tourism is the backbone of the Balinese economy, creating jobs, and improving the welfare of the local community. However, behind the rapid development of the tourism sector, there are major challenges that must be faced, especially in terms of tourist safety. As the number of tourists increases, security risks also increase, especially in the form of crimes targeting foreign tourists. According to research by Sari & Nurhadi (2022), several types of crimes that often occur in Bali include pickpocketing, fraud, robbery, and sexual violence. These crimes often occur in major tourist areas such as Kuta, Seminyak, Ubud, and Canggu, which are the centers of tourist activity. Tourists who are less vigilant or unfamiliar with their surroundings are often easy targets for criminals. A report from the Bali Police shows that between 2022 and 2024, there were many crimes involving foreign tourists. Theft is the most common crime, especially in crowded places such as beaches, art markets, and nightclubs. In addition, many tourists experience fraud in various forms, such as unreasonable taxi prices, forged tourist tickets, and fraud in vehicle rental transactions.

Cases of violence against tourists are also a concern, including incidents of sexual exposure that are often not reported because tourists are reluctant to file complex legal procedures in foreign countries (Hughes, 2018). In addition to the risk of crime, foreign tourists also face challenges in terms of miscommunication with security officers and lack of information regarding crime reporting procedures. Many tourists do not know the steps to take if they experience a crime, or are reluctant to report it because of language barriers and bureaucracy that is considered complicated. The police response to cases involving tourists is also still not optimal, giving rise to a negative perception of Bali's security in the eyes of foreign tourists. In an effort to overcome this challenge, the Indonesian National Police has formed a special tourism police unit tasked with providing the best service for foreign tourists. The tourism police have the main task of patrolling tourist locations, providing information to tourists, and handling cases related to tourist safety. The existence of the tourism police is expected to increase tourists' sense of security and strengthen Bali's image as a friendly and safe tourist destination. However, Putra's (2021) research revealed that the effectiveness of the tourism police still faces several obstacles, including limited personnel, lack of foreign language training, and weak coordination with the tourism industry and local government. In previous literature reviews, the effectiveness of the police in the tourism sector is greatly influenced by several main factors, such as human resource management, cooperation with local communities, and the implementation of problem-oriented policies (Goldstein, 1990). With this approach, the police are expected to play a more strategic role, not only as law enforcers but also as partners in managing tourism security. Steps such as increasing officer training, utilizing technology in security systems, and active community involvement in maintaining tourist security are aspects that need to be further developed. With the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, synergy is needed between the police, local government, tourism industry players, and local communities in creating a safer environment for tourists. Through the right strategy and effective coordination, Bali can maintain its reputation as one of the best tourist destinations in the world that is not only beautiful but also safe for all tourists who visit.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

In this study, several main theories are used as a conceptual basis for understanding the role and effectiveness of tourism police in maintaining tourist security. Each theory provides a different perspective in analyzing the challenges and strategies that can be applied in the context of tourism policing.

1) Problem-Oriented Policing

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) is an innovative approach to policing that emphasizes the identification, analysis, and resolution of root causes of crime systematically. Goldstein (1990) criticized traditional policing methods that are more reactive and based on direct law enforcement without looking at the underlying causes of crime. In the context of tourism policing, the application of this theory can help design preventive strategies based on data and analysis of crime trends in tourist areas. For example, by monitoring crime patterns that often occur in tourist areas such as Kuta, Seminyak, or Ubud, the police can design more effective policies, such as more strategic personnel placement, increased patrols in vulnerable areas, and security education for tourists.

The POP approach also emphasizes the importance of the involvement of various parties in solving criminal problems. The police do not only act as law enforcers, but also work together with tourism industry players, local governments, and local communities to create a sustainable security system.

INDIKATOR
Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen & Bisnis
Scientific Journal of Management & Business

Vol. 9 No. 2, April 2025

p-ISSN: 2598-6783
e-ISSN: 2598-4888

By using the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) model, the police can identify tourism security problems, analyze the causal factors, design appropriate solutions, and evaluate the effectiveness of policies that have been implemented.

2) Human Resource Management Theory

The effectiveness of the police is highly dependent on the quality of the human resources they have. According to Robbins (2017), organizations that want to achieve optimal performance must pay attention to aspects of planning, recruitment, training, and individual performance management. In the context of tourism police, this aspect is very important because the tasks they carry out are not only limited to law enforcement, but also involve serving tourists. Routine training for tourism police members is a key element in improving professionalism. Foreign language skills, a deep understanding of tourist culture, and communication skills are important factors that must be possessed by police who interact with international tourists. In addition, training in handling specific cases that often occur in tourist destinations, such as fraud, theft, or conflicts between tourists, is also a primary need in improving the effectiveness of police services. In addition to training, the welfare of police personnel is also an important factor in improving their performance. Incentives, recognition of achievements, and a conducive work environment can increase work motivation and professionalism of police members in providing maximum service to tourists.

3) CMM (Coordinated Management of Meaning) Communication Theory

Communication is a fundamental aspect in maintaining relations between the police and the community. The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory developed by Cronen & Pearce (1981) explains that effective communication is not only about conveying information, but also how the message is interpreted by the recipient. In the context of tourism police, effective communication with tourists and stakeholders in the tourism sector is crucial in creating a safe and comfortable environment. One of the main challenges faced by tourism police is language and cultural barriers. Many foreign tourists do not understand Indonesian, while not all tourism police have good foreign language skills. This often leads to miscommunication, especially when tourists experience problems or become victims of crime.

Therefore, cross-cultural communication training and the use of multilingual communication tools are solutions that can be applied. In addition, the CMM theory also emphasizes the importance of context in communication. In interactions between police and tourists, there are various elements of communication that need to be considered, such as body language, tone of voice, and the use of terms that are easily understood by foreign tourists. By understanding the principles of good communication, the police can build better relationships with tourists, increase their sense of security, and reduce the potential for conflict that can occur due to miscommunication.

4) Social Control Theory

In the perspective of social control theory developed by Hirschi (1969), individuals tend to behave according to social norms and rules if they have strong ties to their community. In the context of tourism policing, this theory shows that the effectiveness of tourism security depends not only on the presence of the police, but also on the active involvement of local communities and tourism industry players. Police who have good interactions with the community will find it easier to obtain information about potential threats or security disturbances in tourist areas.

In addition, people who feel responsible for the security of their environment will also be more active in reporting suspicious incidents and working with the police to create safer conditions for

tourists. One implementation of this theory in the context of tourism in Bali is the involvement of pecalang (customary security units) in maintaining order in tourist areas. Pecalang often work together with tourism police in supervising tourist activities, regulating traffic, and providing information to tourists about local rules and culture. The synergy between the police and community elements has proven effective in creating a safe and conducive tourism environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to analyze the role and effectiveness of the tourism police in maintaining the security of foreign tourists in Bali. This approach allows researchers to understand the phenomenon in depth through various data collection techniques. The main data were obtained through in-depth interviews with various parties involved in tourism security, including the tourism police, foreign tourists, and tourism business actors such as hotel owners and travel agents. In addition, direct observations were conducted in several main tourist locations such as Kuta, Seminyak, and Ubud to obtain a real picture of police interactions with tourists and the effectiveness of security strategies implemented in the field. This study also reviewed official documents such as police regulations related to tourist security, annual police reports, and statistical data on crimes involving foreign tourists. To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied the triangulation technique, namely comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document analysis so that the research findings were more accurate and reliable (Creswell, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tourism police play a very important role in maintaining the security and comfort of foreign tourists in Bali. Based on interviews with several members of the tourism police, they stated that their main duties include routine patrols in major tourist areas, providing information and assistance to tourists, and handling crime reports involving foreign tourists. One of the informants, an officer in the Kuta area, explained that the tourism police are not only tasked with handling crime cases but also act as tourism ambassadors who provide guidance and assistance to tourists who experience difficulties in the field. In addition, in observations conducted in several tourist locations such as Seminyak and Ubud, it was seen that the presence of the tourism police provided a sense of security for tourists. Several tourists interviewed stated that they felt more comfortable knowing that there were police officers who could help them if problems occurred. However, there were also several tourists who expressed that sometimes they had difficulty communicating with the police due to language barriers. In some cases, tourists had to ask for help from hotel staff or tour guides as translators when interacting with the police.

1) Limited Human Resources and Lack of Foreign Language Training

One of the biggest challenges faced by the tourism police is the limited number of personnel compared to the number of tourists visiting Bali each year. Based on internal police documents from tourism police members on duty in various tourist areas, while the number of tourists visiting can reach more than 6 million people per year. This causes a gap between the security needs of tourists and the capacity of available personnel.

In addition, from interviews with several officers, they revealed that foreign language training is still a major obstacle. The majority of tourism police only have a basic understanding of English, while tourists who come come from various countries such as Germany, France, China, and Japan. One officer in Ubud revealed that they often have difficulty providing information to tourists who

do not speak English, so they have to use a translator application or ask for help from local residents who are more fluent in foreign languages.

  2) Limited Technological Infrastructure in Supporting Patrols and Surveillance

In the digital era like today, the use of technology to support patrols and surveillance is a very important aspect. However, the results of observations show that the technological facilities owned by the police are still limited. One example found in the Kuta area is the lack of surveillance cameras (CCTV) that are directly connected to the police system. Police officers who were interviewed stated that they still rely on manual reports from the public or direct patrols in the field to detect potential security disturbances.

Based on the analysis of police documents, there is still a need for the development of technology-based security systems, such as emergency applications for tourists that can be directly connected to the police or AI-based monitoring systems to detect suspicious activities in tourist areas. Unfortunately, budget constraints and lack of supporting infrastructure are the main obstacles in implementing this technology.

  3) Lack of Coordination between the Police and Tourism Industry Actors

  Coordination between the police and the tourism industry sector is also a significant challenge in improving police effectiveness. In interviews with several hotel managers and travel agents, they stated that communication with the police is sometimes still not optimal, especially in terms of reporting incidents or handling complaints from tourists who experience crimes. Several business owners stated that there is still a delay in response from the police when incidents occur involving foreign tourists.

  In addition, several tour operators and tour guides stated that they often have to handle tourist security issues themselves without direct involvement from the police. One tour guide in Seminyak stated that in several cases of pickpocketing or lost items, tourists were reluctant to report to the police because the procedures were considered too complicated and time-consuming. Therefore, a better coordination mechanism is needed between the police and the tourism sector to ensure that tourists get maximum protection without having to experience excessive administrative difficulties.

Disscusion

1) Implementation of Problem-Oriented Policing in Tourism Police

  The results of the study found that the efforts of tourism police in maintaining tourist security tend to be more reactive than preventive. Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) developed by Goldstein (1990) emphasizes the importance of a data-based policing approach in analyzing the root causes of crime and developing more effective prevention strategies. However, in practice, the police in Bali still deal more with crimes after the incident occurs, compared to identifying crime patterns and implementing preventive strategies.

  Based on the results of interviews with several members of the tourism police, many cases of pickpocketing and fraud against tourists occur repeatedly in the same locations, such as in the Kuta and Seminyak areas. However, there is no data-based system that can help the police predict crime trends and take preventive action. This is in line with Putra's research (2021) which states that the police in Indonesia are still minimal in utilizing technology in data-based decision making. Therefore, a more sophisticated system is needed to analyze crime patterns in tourist areas, such as the use of artificial intelligence-based CCTV and crime reporting applications that can be accessed directly by tourists.

2) Human Resource Management in Tourism Police

The effectiveness of tourism police in providing services is highly dependent on the quality of human resources (HR) they have. Robbins (2017) in HR management theory states that competence, training, and work motivation are the main factors in improving organizational performance. In this study, it was found that many members of the tourism police still experience obstacles in multilingual communication. The results of interviews with officers in Ubud showed that tourists from countries such as France, Japan, and China often have difficulty communicating with the police due to the limited foreign language skills of officers.

In addition, the lack of training in understanding tourist culture is also an obstacle in providing optimal service. For example, in some cases, foreign tourists feel uncomfortable with the police's overly formal or unfriendly communication style, which can lead to misunderstandings and reduce their sense of security. This shows that in addition to language training, tourism police also need to receive culture-based social interaction training in order to be better able to understand the needs of tourists from various backgrounds.

3) The Role of Communication in Police Effectiveness

Communication is a crucial aspect in the success of police duties, especially in the context of tourism police who interact directly with tourists. The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory developed by Cronen & Pearce (1981) emphasizes that meaning in communication depends not only on the content of the message, but also the social, cultural context, and interactions between individuals. This study found that miscommunication between tourists and the police often occurs due to language barriers and differences in expectations in communication.

The results of observations show that tourists who are victims of crime often find it difficult to report incidents to the police because there is no clear communication mechanism. Some tourists even prefer not to report incidents because the procedures are considered too complicated and there is a lack of assistance in translation. In situations like this, the role of tour guides or hotel staff is often more dominant in helping tourists communicate with the police. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the communication skills of tourism police, including the provision of fast translation services or the use of application-based technology that can help facilitate interactions between police and tourists.

4) The Importance of Social Control in Tourism Security

In the theory of social control developed by Hirschi (1969), it is stated that individuals tend to obey social norms and laws if they have strong ties to their community. In the context of the Balinese police, the involvement of local communities in maintaining tourist security is a very important aspect. One form of implementation of this theory is the cooperation between the tourism police and the pecalang, which is a traditional security unit in Bali. The results of interviews with the pecalang showed that they are often at the forefront in handling minor conflicts between tourists and local residents before involving the police. In some cases, the pecalang also act as mediators in resolving disturbances, especially in incidents related to violations of cultural norms by tourists. However, although the role of the pecalang is very significant in maintaining security, coordination between the police and this traditional security unit is still not well established.

According to McEachern (2000), effective tourism security management requires synergy between various stakeholders, including the police, traditional communities, and tourism industry players. Therefore, a clearer policy is needed in integrating the role of pecalang with the tourism police so that the tourism security system is more organized and responsive to the needs of tourists.

CONCLUSION

The tourism police have a very strategic role in maintaining security and providing services for foreign tourists in Bali. Their existence not only functions as law enforcers but also as facilitators in providing information and helping tourists who experience obstacles during their vacation. However, this study found that there are still various challenges that must be overcome, such as limited human resources, lack of foreign language training, limited technological infrastructure to support patrols and surveillance, and lack of coordination between the police and tourism industry players. These challenges have an impact on the effectiveness of the police in providing maximum protection for tourists.

Therefore, various efforts are needed to improve the quality of tourism services and effectiveness. As a recommendation, first, there is a need to increase foreign language training for police officers so that they are better prepared to communicate with tourists from various countries. Second, investment in surveillance technology such as installing CCTV in major tourist areas and developing digital-based emergency reporting applications needs to be increased to accelerate the response to security incidents. Third, increasing coordination between the police and tourism stakeholders, including hotels, travel agents, and local communities, is essential to create a safer and more comfortable tourism environment for all tourists.

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