

Pandemic Leadership: Lessons from Bali Tourism Sector Approach to Covid-19

Dodi Wirawan Irawanto^{a*}
Pusvita Yuana^b
Khusnul Rofida Novianti^c
I Putu Satwika^d

^{a,b} Management Department, University of Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia; ^c Management Department, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Malang, Indonesia; ^d STMIK Primakara, Bali, Indonesia

Abstract

The tourism sector is no longer can run as before the pandemic, as coronavirus outbreak is extraordinarily impacted and strike in modern times when the world tourism industry is more connected than at any previous moment in history. The pandemic has generated circumstances around the world, causing “Business as Usual” to be disrupted, and everyone has accepted a new normal life using strict health protocol. The impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) generated an economic and social shock, which will likely transform how people live and work, as well as how industries and organizations operate. This paper aims to analyze the leadership approach of the Indonesian government in the Bali tourism sector, which is the sector that produces the highest contribution to national income for Indonesia which has suffered the heaviest blow as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Findings revealed as perceived by the tourism sector leaders in the post Pandemic situation, that demand reconciliation is the common factor needed in navigating the business recovery in the post-pandemic situation. Theoretical and practical implications are also drawn in this study.

Keywords

Leadership; Tourism Sector; Bali; Indonesia; Covid-19

Received: 9 September 2021; Accepted: 4 October 2021; Published Online: 31 December 2021

DOI: 10.21776/ub.apmba.2021.010.02.2

Introduction

The current coronavirus outbreak is extraordinary. It is the first pandemic of such magnitude to strike in modern times when the world is more connected than at any previous moment in history (Tourish, 2020). COVID-19 has generated unusual circumstances around the world, causing “Business as Usual” to be disrupted

(Belhadjali & Abbasi, 2020). The global economy has been shattered, scores of lives have been lost, and everyone has accepted a new normal life using strict health protocol. The impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) generated an economic and social shock, which will likely transform how people live and work, as well as how industries and

organizations operate (Irawanto et al., 2021). The recent coronavirus outbreak has highlighted that these issues with leaders' decision-making have gotten stronger. The risk of failure grows as systems become more complex and interconnected. Leadership becomes a valuable commodity and a highly sought-after skill in this environment. As a result, people all around the world look to decision-makers at the top of the corporate ladder for leadership (Forster & Heinzl, 2021).

Effective leadership is critical to overcoming a catastrophe (Forster & Heinzl, 2021). Leaders must make sense of a quickly growing and very uncertain situation that challenges their society's fundamental values in any crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic (Boin & 'T Hart, 2003). Faced with this uncertainty, countries enacted a variety of policies at varying speeds and decisions during COVID-19, no exception for Indonesia. The tourism industry has been in decline all across the world as a result of the coronavirus outbreak in late 2019 (Novianti, 2021). Tourism has been marketed as a viable method for encouraging international trade, economic growth sustainability, and the best weapon to alleviate poverty as the world's largest and fastest-growing industry (United Nation World Tourism Organization, 2013). The number of confirmed COVID-19 positive patients had increased by 18.671 from the previous day to 4.026.837 on August 25, 2021. The number of deaths increased by 1.041 to 129.293 within the same period, while the number of recovered patients increased by 33.703 to 3.639.867. The Indonesian central government, in this case through the Covid-19 Task Force of the Indonesian government, is urging all regional leaders to show strong leadership so that people can feel safer in their everyday lives and prevent economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. With a strong dedication and leader initiatives, the community will not be exposed to COVID-19 if the district's chief continues to lead properly. The way leaders

respond to the crisis could have a significant impact on the economic, social, and health foundations of their communities. Some of these leaders will rise to the challenge, while others will fade into obscurity. This is the time for genuine leaders to assist processes and individuals in overcoming their shortcomings and fears to improve their results.

In Indonesian culture, where collectivism is emphasized, it is critical to distinguish between subcultures and the hundreds of ethnic groups (Passakonjaras & Hartijasti, 2019). According to a recent report from the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project, global leadership research, Indonesian leadership is defined by a distinct style that differs from both Western-style and Asian-style leadership (Irawanto et al., 2011). According to the findings of the Globe, Indonesian employees expect their leaders to pay particular attention to their co-workers and to demonstrate this attitude in a charismatic manner. The globe project was conducted based on the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), an instrument widely used in the leadership behavior literature. This paper aims to analyze the leadership approach of the Indonesian government in the Bali tourism sector, which is the sector that produces the highest contribution to national income for Indonesia which has suffered the heaviest blow as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bali Tourism Sector Approach to Covid-19

On March 2, 2020, President Joko Widodo reported the first two verified cases of COVID-19 infection in Indonesia. The first major legislation is the establishment of the Indonesia Task Force for Rapid Response to COVID-19 (Gugus Tugas Percepatan Penanganan COVID-19) on March 13, 2020. (Djalante et al., 2020). Even though it took more than 10 days after the first reported instances in early March 2020, the Task Force's establishment provides

improved inter-agency coordination and response capabilities, notwithstanding delays in top leadership. The 'Work from Bali' (WFB) program launched by the Indonesian government is claimed to have a multiplier effect on the tourism sector in Bali. WFB is one of the policies taken by the government to revive the tourism sector and the creative economy. It is planned that the WFB will be attended by seven ministries, including the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing, PUPR, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and Ministry of Investment. However, this strategy has elicited both positive and negative responses, and it is currently being researched further.

The Indonesian government is attempting to socialize limitations on community activities to combat the spread of COVID-19, which is becoming increasingly widespread. President Joko Widodo chose regional quarantine over large-scale social restrictions (PSBB). By targeting the province and district/city levels, this strategy enforces physical distance constraints that are more severe, disciplined, and effective. In early January 2021, following the PSBB, the government announced a policy restricting community activities (PPKM) for Java-Bali. This phase should prevent Covid from spreading between the center and the regions, as well as between the regions themselves. PPKM provisions, namely the company implements a policy of working from home for 75% of workers except for the essential sector of online teaching and learning activities, restrictions on places to eat 25% of the total capacity, and restrictions on community activities.

The decision of Bali's Governor, I Wayan Koster, refers to the Ministry of Home Affairs' decision, which issued Minister of Home Affairs Instruction Number 34 of

2021 about the implementation of PPKM Levels 4 to 2 in Java and Bali. The legislation builds on the Indonesian government's semi-lockdown policy, which, among other things, mandates that all non-essential firms establish a 100 percent work-from-home policy. PPKM level 4 was relaxed in several ways, including enabling shopping centers and mosques to operate at 50% capacity, and restaurants to serve dine-in guests at 25% capacity, among other things. However, visitors must prove that they have been vaccinated using a mobile tracing application issued by the government called "PeduliLindungi". Domestic travel is prohibited, and inter-regional travel is only permitted with a valid vaccination certificate or a negative COVID-19 test result. Travelers leaving or entering areas under level 3 and level 4 PPKM using public transportation must have a vaccination certificate or a negative RT-PCR Test Result valid for 2x24 hours at the time of departure. In response to the rising number of cases of COVID-19 outbreaks in Bali, governments of friendly nations have adopted international regulatory regulations, such as the Australian government's repatriation of roughly 200 Australian people from Bali via returned planes from Ngurah Rai airport.

Research Methods

Using a qualitative approach, this research tries to describe the Indonesian leadership approach in the Bali tourism sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study participants were drawn from two sectors which are the Bali accommodation sector and the travel sector based in Denpasar, Bali about 30 people. This strategy was considered acceptable to break down mistrust barriers, but it may have hampered the respondent's ability to engage in conversation to define and gain insight into leadership factors and styles in Indonesian values that needed to be considered for implementation in Indonesia.

Focus group discussions (FGD) and face-to-face interviews were utilized to gather information on the respondents' perceptions of the important leadership factors. By inviting participants and encouraging them to participate actively in the seminar, the focus group discussion is held in a seminar-like setting. Digital recordings of both interviews and focus group talks have been made. The recording, however, was only done after the participants' agreement, which had been revealed by the research coordinator before the sessions began. All participants agreed to be registered after

being assured that the information given would only be used for research purposes. The information collected from the FGDs was then coded to obtain common perceptions from respondents and to look for aspects of emphasis on leadership preferences in the Bali tourism sector during the pandemic. The reading of field notes during observations and selected interviews served as the starting point for data analysis (Irawanto et al., 2020) using the LBDQ-XII questionnaire as mentioned in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire XII

Factor 1 : measures of representation to which degree leader talks as the community representatives

Factor 2 : Reconciliation of demand illustrated how well the leader reconciles contradictory conditions and eliminates system disorder

Factor 3 : Uncertainty tolerance shows the extent to which leader can tolerate uncertainty and postponement without anxiety or getting angry

Factor 4 : Tests of persuasiveness to degree that leaders successfully use persuasion and logic, display strong beliefs

Factor 5 : Initiation of institutional steps to the extent to which leaders clearly define their own position, and lets followers know what is expected

Factor 6 : Freedom tolerance represents the degree to which the leader allows initiative, judgment, and action scope for followers

Factor 7 : Role assumption tests to what degree the leader deliberately exercises the role of leadership instead of providing leadership to others

Factor 8 : Consideration demonstrates how the leader regards the comfort, well being, status and contributions of followers

Factor 9 : Production emphasis measures to what degree the leader applies pressure for productive output

Factor 10 : Predictive tests of accuracy to the degree to which the leader shows foresight and ability to predict outcomes accurately

Factor 11 : integration represents the degree to which the leader maintains a closely-knit organization and solve inter-member conflicts

Factor 12 : indicators of superior orientation to the degree to which the leader maintains a cordial relationship with superiors, has an impact on them; and is striving for the higher status

After the first and second focus group discussions, the work of reading and analyzing field notes began, and it proceeded to correspond with the coding of questionnaires filled out by the respondents, allowing the analysis to be processed. The major researcher used narratives analysis to analyze the transcripts, which required breaking down the material through an open coding approach. The available codes were divided into multiple categories and sub-categories, presumably verifying the LBDQ XII (Leadership Behavior Description

Questionnaire) manual's 12-factor structure in Table 2 below.

Majority of which were classed as leadership constructs, confirming the LBDQ XII's twelve elements. Table 2 shows the resulting construct, as well as the number of encoded sources and open codes associated with each construct, while the discussion section explains the constructs. The study results, as well as proof gathered from the analyzed data source, are addressed in greater detail in the section below.

Table 2. Emergent Themes from Focus Group Discussion

No.	Factors	Accommodation Sector	Travel Sector	Emergent themes
1.	Representation	12	2	Figurehead
2.	Demand Reconciliation	12	13	Resolve conflict
3.	Tolerance	12	13	n/a
4.	Persuasiveness	12	13	Using positive narration
5.	Initiation for Structure	12	4	Work standard
6.	Tolerance of Freedom	1	0	Be flexible
7.	Role Assumption	12	8	Be ready
8.	Consideration	12	13	Work target
9.	Production Emphasizes	7	13	Set the highest target possible
10.	Predictive Accuracy	0	13	n/a
11.	Integration	12	9	Maintain cohesiveness
12.	Superior Orientation	12	0	High motivation, Im the boss

Result and Discussion

To find emergent concepts from the LBDQ-XII, the categories and sub-categories (where possible) were explored further. Two major researchers independently code the data for reliability and validity. Internal validity began with the use of member-checking to ensure that the data accurately and consistently captured and represented their thoughts (reliability). The researchers developed contrasts and analogies to emergent notions and categorized them in table 2 using the strategies of reading the narratives numerous times and looking back to literature.

The amount of coding agreement was measured using the Meyrick (2006) method, which allowed for straightforward inter-code interpretation. Our data analysis yielded the majority of which were classed as leadership constructs, confirming the LBDQ XII's twelve elements. Table 2 shows the resulting construct, as well as the number of encoded sources and open codes associated with each construct, while the discussion section explains the constructs. The study results, as well as proof gathered from the analyzed data source, are addressed in greater detail in the section below.

Before we embark on the narrative conceptualization drawn from the research, borrowing Pfeifer's (2013) definition that leading in crisis is defined as the ability of a leader to respond to dynamic environmental conditions by inviting all elements within the organization to adapt and collaborate to deal with the uncertainty that occurs. Therefore, the narratives drawn from the FGD are based on the real leader's real-time situation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all conditions are unclear. The leadership behavior of a leader is challenged to be able to face that. According to the Focus Group Discussion results, several factors gave the same results for both respondent sectors, such as demand reconciliation, tolerance of uncertainty, persuasiveness, tolerance of freedom, consideration, predictive accuracy, and integration. These factors are required to deal with uncertain conditions. Most respondents' responses regarding "tolerance of freedom" indicated that to survive the pandemic, managers inevitably made the decision not to allow employees to act as they wished to minimize the higher risks. This finding is different from previous research which shows that the majority of respondents give their employees freedom and flexibility to adapt to their needs (Irawanto, et al., 2020). This difference is caused by current conditions

due to the uncertainty over the end of the pandemic and the influence of government regulations that require managers to close their businesses.

In addition to this uncertain condition, all themes obtained from the FGD showed that as a leader they need to adapt quickly to the changes of the national policy, therefore as an effective leader they must also be able to minimize the risks that occur. As the predictive accuracy factor indicated that the leader needs to make a detailed plan and put it into action so they can survive well in any conditions. As Pfeifer (2013) notes that leaders who have the characteristics of crisis leadership will easily respond to any existing problems because they have the targeted strategies to uncover the solutions efficiently.

Aside from that, leaders should be open and honest about the uncertainties that exist. When many people's lives are interrupted and families have lost loved ones, strong empathic responses are critical (Ahern & Loh, 2020). Responses that acknowledge and 'apologize' for the illness, the interruptions in care, and the specific work and relationship-related personal impacts of social restrictions, as well as personally thanking individuals and groups for their effort and commitment to the task. Constituents of a leader are also more likely to forgive less favorable outcomes if they believe the criteria and tactics employed in reaching those outcomes were acceptable.

Conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendation

The prominent findings revealed as perceived by the tourism sector leaders in the post Pandemic situation, that demand reconciliation is the common factor needed in navigating the business recovery in the post-pandemic situation. This is undoubtedly reasonable, as the new normal working climate maybe not be avoidable in the future, therefore leaders are demanded to be wise in resolving the conflict in a win-win situation. These along with the tolerance

behavior, in these uncertain conditions the leaders also need to show the capabilities to accommodate the conflict in a humble climate, wherein in this context Balinese people are collectivist. What may interest Naghavi & Mubarak (2019) point out that to resolve the conflict harmoniously, collectivist people need to put forward the notion of tolerance. Although some of the managers stated that under this condition, it is not a problem to choose to be a dictatorial leader, the leader should be equipped with a creative and visionary attitude.

This study has several limitations such as the access to the sample in the real condition is not as expected, i.e the invitation is to the manager, but because of the PPKM, he/she delegated to supervisor. Also, as the FGD is scheduled for 3 hours, due to the national policy that any indoor activities should be limited to 1.5 hours. However, with the strategies applied by the teams, any unclear coding is followed by follow-up communication through WhatsApp.

This study provides several contributions to the development of theory in leadership : (1) extend the usage and validation of LBDQ XII in the tourism sector and (2) validate the broad range of leadership factors that emerged from the themes within the scope of the study. Also, this research will benefit the practitioners, especially tourism practitioners allow them to select correct leadership behavior in facing a crisis like Pandemic Covid-19 hence they can manage their business in the right direction.

Notes on Contributors

Dodi Wirawan Irawanto is a lecturer in the Department of Management, Brawijaya University. His research interest is focused on Human Resource Management, Leadership, and Human Resource Planning. He finished his master's degree at the University of Wollongong – Australia and his doctoral in Massey University – New Zealand. One of his research publications is “The Influence of Paternalistic Leadership to the Commitment of Civil Government in

Achieving a Credible and Accountable Government”.

Pusvita Yuana is a lecturer in the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Brawijaya University. She completed her master's degree at Gadjah Mada University. She is interested in research topics on behavioral finance and financial management.

Khusnul Rofida Novianti is a lecturer in the management department, University of Muhammadiyah Malang. She graduated from the University of Brawijaya. Her research interest is knowledge management, human resource management, and cross-cultural management.

I Putu Satwika am a senior lecturer in the school of information technology (STMIK Primakara) Bali. He graduated from the University of Indonesia and currently taking a doctoral degree in ITB. His research interest is in artificial intelligence.

References

- Ahern, S., & Loh, E. (2020). Leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic: building and sustaining trust in times of uncertainty. *BMJ Leader*, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1136/leader-2020-000271>
- Belhadjali, M., & Abbasi, S. (2020). COVID-19: The Role of Leadership in Response to Disruption. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 8(8), 362–365. <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijer.vol8.iss8.2530>
- Boin, A., & 'T Hart, P. (2003). Public Leadership in Times of Crisis: Mission Impossible? *Public Administration Review*, 63(5), 544–553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6210.00318>
- Djalante, R., Lassa, J., Setiamarga, D., Sudjatma, A., Indrawan, M., Haryanto, B., Mahfud, C., Sinapoy, M. S., Djalante, S., Rafliana, I., Gunawan, L. A., Surtiari, G. A. K., & Warsilah, H. (2020). Review and analysis of current responses to COVID-19 in Indonesia: Period of January to March 2020. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 6, 100091. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2020.100091>
- Forster, T., & Heinzl, M. (2021). Reacting, fast and slow: how world leaders shaped government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(8), 1299–1320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1942157>
- Irawanto, D. W., Novianti, K. R., & Roz, K. (2021). Work from home: Measuring satisfaction between work–life balance and work stress during the covid-19 pandemic in indonesia. *Economies*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9030096>
- Irawanto, D. W., Ramsey, P. L., & Ryan, J. C. (2011). Tailoring leadership theory to Indonesian culture. *Global Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097215091101200301>
- Irawanto, D. W., Riani, A. L., Hartijasti, Y., & Novianti, K. R. (2020). *Construct of Leadership Behavior Across Generations in Indonesia*. 160(Icbmr), 320–325. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.201222.046>
- Meyrick, J. (2006). What is good qualitative research? A first step towards a comprehensive approach to judging rigour/quality. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11(5), 799–808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105306066643>
- Naghavi, N., & Mubarak, M. S. (2019). Negotiating with Managers from South Asia: India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Cross-Cultural Business Negotiation* (Issue January, pp. 1–564). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-00277-0>
- Novianti, K. R. (2021). Maximizing Bali

- Village Tourism Potential Using Penta-Helix Model. *International Journal of Social Science and Business*, 5(1), 86–92. <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijssb.v5i1.30650>
- Passakonjaras, S., & Hartijasti, Y. (2019). Transactional and transformational leadership: a study of Indonesian managers. *Management Research Review*, 43(6), 645–667. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-07-2019-0318>
- Pfeifer, J. W. (2013). *Crisis Leadership: The Art of Adapting to Extreme Events* (Issue March).
- Tourish, D. (2020). Introduction to the special issue: Why the coronavirus crisis is also a crisis of leadership. *Leadership*, 16(3), 261–272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715020929242>
- United Nation World Tourism Organization. (2013). *Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook* (First). <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284415496>