

## **TRADITIONAL BALINESE MASSAGE AS SPA BRAND IN SANUR BEACH AREA**

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### ***Abstract***

*As a part of tourism Industry, Bali has become famous for its best SPA destination in the world. One of its best SPA treatments is the traditional Balinese Massage. Many SPA lovers are fond of the massage since it offers many great things and uniqueness. People can easily spot the treatment as main attraction in both small scale business and also in five stars hotels. Balinese massage itself is a SPA treatment that comes from many combinations as Hindu, Buddhism, and also Chinese culture since ages. Since many SPA industries are selling Balinese massage as its main course and many people are also like to have the treatment, it is deemed necessary to find out the traditional Balinese massage as a SPA brand especially in Sanur beach area. The research is design qualitatively where it is using instruments like observation sheets, questionnaires, and interview to gain research data towards SPA industries, clients, and therapists in Sanur beach area. The data gained shows that traditional Balinese massage has excellent; 1) Brand Favorability of Association, where the treatment can meet the clients' need and satisfaction, 2) Strength of Brand Association, where the treatment has formed strong associations in the mind of consumers as a result of actively and continuously thinking about certain information on the treatment, 3) Uniqueness of Brand Association, where the treatment have a unique or special characteristic that is hard to duplicate by other products, like the use of oil and aroma therapy, so that imprint in the minds of customers, 4) Loyalty, where the customers are always enjoying the treatment and keep asking for it regularly. It is hoped that the government can see the result this research and keep promoting Balinese massage in the world to attract more visitors to come to Bali, especially Sanur area.*

**Keyword:** *Traditional Treatment, Balinese massage, Brand, Touristic Area*

### **BACKGROUND**

With the rapid development of tourism, Bali that depends a lot on cultural tourism has helped in providing opportunities for the Spa industry in giving services for health and beauty rooted in local customs and habits. Bali as one of

the main tourism destination is very popular with its variety of SPA facilities, aimed at providing care for the body and state of mind. SPA's existence itself is inspired by local culture and also from abroad. Care and services available provide diverse options for guests who come, whether to relieve stress, soothes the body, or one way to get out of the routines.

The provider of accommodations, ranging from hotels, resorts and villas are providing SPA support facilities as their first effort since Bali has been named to be one of the best SPA destinations. SPA indeed is very familiar for hospitality industries on the island.

Bali spa industry is growing rapidly because it is supported by numerous factors. First, tourists traffic both domestic and foreign tourists is higher than other areas so spa has better opportunity in this island. Second, the tradition and the environment in Bali strongly support the development of the spa industry as well as supporting its products. And third, spa services in Bali have its own characteristics and synergy with tourism industry that might be hard to find in other areas.

Traditional Balinese Massage services are common in many Spas in Bali, and it is not only known by foreign tourists who come to Bali, but can also be enjoyed in several countries. Many business owners have been cooperating with the spa industry in Bali to open branches outside the island because of its touch of Indonesian culture, especially Balinese, in its Traditional Balinese Massage. The different types of cares and services provided to the body are characterized by habits of local communities in its treatment with the technique of "Pijat" and "Urut". In the course of SPA treatments, these massage movements and sequence combinations are known as Balinese body treatments or Traditional Balinese Massage.

Traditional Balinese massage is so popular where almost SPA industries provide treatment that uses oil as a medium of the massage, and become mandatory treatment that exist in every SPA. The existence of traditional Balinese massage can be seen almost in every brochure, billboards, and a menu offers by the SPA therapist, whether they are in both large and small SPA industries. Furthermore, traditional Balinese massage could be the brand for SPA operating in Bali, including in the tourist area of Sanur.

At the local SPA in Sanur Beach area, SPA therapists are trying to attract guests to come and try out a variety of treatments available, and Traditional Balinese Massage is often a main course of the menu for them to attract the attention of the tourists. As a seemingly mandatory treatment and always offered, the Traditional Balinese Massage become truly familiar and increasingly well known by other tourists, and attached to the minds of spa connoisseurs.

Generally, therapists who work at the local SPA are trying to market Balinese Traditional Massage by offering directly to tourist who pass by along the beach path in Sanur, while occasionally offering brochures or massage packages. In the marketing, traditional Balinese massage is packaged to attract the impression of client by combining it using scented oils and some ingredients that have the effect of like softening the skin. With so many deals and importance for the SPA industry, Traditional Balinese Massage could be considered an important part of the SPA industry in Bali. This massage becomes an image that must be tested and have some impact on attraction area like Sanur.

Sanur area became one of one of the famous tourist destination for foreign tourists, especially for families as well as elderly/seniors. For local people, like the ones living in Denpasar, Sanur is an excellent choice to spend holidays. The presence of many local SPAs that offers Traditional Balinese Massage become one of the tourist facilities that are able to accommodate the needs of foreign tourists who choose Sanur as a tourist destination compared to Nusa Dua or Kuta, which also offers coastal touristic.

Based on the previous explanations and the importance of Traditional Balinese Massage for SPA industry, especially in Sanur area, it is deemed high to make a research of how the traditional Balinese massage become SPA image in Sanur tourism area. It is hoped the research can help the SPA industry across the island to make a better policy of state of consideration of the matter regarding SPA and Traditional Balinese massage.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses mostly qualitative approach by using, mostly descriptive method. In this method, data are collected through questionnaires, field observation and in-depth interviews with related informants. The questionnaires distribution was conducted by distributing structured list of questions sheet to respondents. Observation was done either directly or indirectly from the researcher to the object of research. In-depth interviews were conducted by the researchers by asking questions to the informants directly. The data obtained in the field is the real situation, in a natural setting. The subject of the study was several SPA industries, SPA therapists, as well as SPA customers and Tourists in Sanur Beach area. The raw data gained are then processed into understandable and informative data.

### *The Overview of Research Location*

Sanur is close to Denpasar City, the capital city of Bali province. Sanur is located in the southeastern part of Bali Island. It is a 30 minutes' drive from Ngurah Rai International Airport. One of the oldest and well-known maritime destinations in Bali, Sanur beach is very popular for its sunrise view. As a coastal touristic area, Sanur Beach is also a famous site for diving and snorkeling. The friendly environment conditions for families, kids, and elderly, is a favorite tourist area for both local and foreign tourists. Almost every day, this area will be overrun by families, young couples, parents, and other communities to come together to enjoy the beach atmosphere. Sanur is a home to many great resorts, hotels, villas, restaurants, water sports and SPAs. The local SPAs are easy to find along the beach.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Balinese Traditional Massage*

Traditional massage that we know today, especially Balinese massage, has undergone a long journey up to the point where the Balinese massage is very famous all over the world. If we traced from history, we must look deep into the past where it can be seen the activity was ancient and can be seen in stone reliefs displayed at Borobudur temple which was built in the 8th to 9th century. There reliefs have proved the massage itself is a part of Indonesian culture for centuries.

But long before, traditional massage have been first introduced with the arrival of Hindu in 400 A.D, where Hindu priest came to introduce Ayur Vedic Medicine that use oil for massaging process and also potions from plants. Then later came the Chinese medicine culture which is carried by Buddhist monks who introduced techniques such as acupuncture and reflexology. In addition, our traditional massage is also influenced by Arabic culture that happened to be passing by to trade for spices (Shari, 2010).

During the reign of Majapahit, massaging was highly a developed culture. But when Islam came and soon after the collapse of Majapahit in 1450 A.D, many Hindus fled to Bali with also bringing their knowledge into it. This is then a traditional Balinese massage techniques are very similar to those we can find in Java. Along with population changes that occurred in Bali, massage activity on the island is mostly used for general healing process through pain and performed by male masseur (Ellis, 2016). In addition to the usual massage techniques with hands, Shari (2010) states traditional massage also use a tool known as coin scrapings (*Kerokan*), which usually aims to reduce fever or flu that is believed to be a result of bad wind. The process is fairly painless, although some say that the culprit is a powerful process to deal with initial complaints of fever. Scrapings treatment is performed on the neck, back, shoulders, and even sometimes on Buttocks and abdomen.

But the times has passed by, the original traditional massage is now very hard to find. Most initial traditional massage techniques have started to change, especially with the tourism booming in Bali. Traditional massage techniques have begun to meet the demand of tourists who want the massage for relaxation purposes. As for the traditional massage techniques, they involve several standard methods such as; Crabbing, Cat Squeeze, palming, Rolling Skin, Thumb Circles, Knuckle Slides, wringing, Thumb Slide, Slide Forearm, Kecak, Thumb Walking, and also Chopping (Ellis, 2016).

### ***Brand Image***

Brand plays an important role in a product because a good brand will be able to add value to the products sold (Surachman. 2011). Another definition of Brand proposed by Sunyoto and Danang (2012) which states that brand as a something inherent to the thoughts and actions of customers who are at the same time be a liaison between customers and products (In Saputri and Pranata, 2014). So based on these two definitions Brand can be regarded as an identity of a product attached to the customer's mind, as well as a liaison between the customer and the product. On the other hand, after consumers enjoy a brand or product, then there will be a brand image, where brand image is an impression that emerges and perceived by consumers to a brand stored in consumer's memory and can affect consumers (Saputri and Pranata, 2014).

From the definition it can be concluded that a good brand image has obviously affected the customer satisfaction and loyalty to the products we market. Indeed, much research has been done on the relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction and loyalty. But there are also other studies which mentions that positive brand image is not directly affect customer loyalty, despite the fact mentioned that customer loyalty will be formed through positive customer satisfaction (Zhang. 2015).

There are several factors that affect the brand image (according to Keller in Saputri and Pranata, 2014), among others; 1) Brand Favorability of Association. The benefits afforded by a brand can satisfy the needs and desires of consumers, 2) Strength of Brand Association. Formed strong associations in the mind of consumers as a result of actively and continuously thinking about certain information on a product, 3) Uniqueness of Brand Association. A product must have a unique or special characteristic that is hard to duplicate by other products, so as to imprint in the minds of customers, 4) Loyalty, namely commitment of the customers to survive in the subscription products we market.

## **RESULT AND DICUSSION**

The results of this study have been divided into four main sections that correspond to the factors which form the basis of brand image, which is of course linked to the study variables, namely the form of traditional Balinese massage and SPA Brand image.

### ***Brand Favorability of Association.***

Based on the results of interviews with the SPA therapist and customers, it was found out that traditional Balinese Massage became their main menu of choice to provide care and the need for relaxation. Consumers always prefer traditional Balinese massage treatments as primary choice for reducing stress, because oil used has a calming aroma. As previously mentioned in the introduction, one of the industry's strategies to meet demand in SPA is by adding essence such as aroma therapy and other materials that will make the client more comfortable and convenient during massage treatment. To add another benefit, a researcher, Hartanto (2014), has found out that sandalwood aroma therapy can significantly influence short-term memory for particular cases and treatment.

In addition to providing relaxation and a sense of comfort, the expected effect of traditional Balinese massage includes soften skin. The effect is obtained as a result of the use of oil in a very good treatment for guests with dry skin. So it can be concluded that the traditional Balinese massage is able to meet customers' needs and requirements.

### ***Strength of Brand Association.***

Traditional Balinese massage can be said as the most marketed and well known SPA business in Bali, especially in Sanur beach area. Nearly the whole place SPA surveyed by researchers is including Balinese massage as their main menu, making this treatment became so attached to the customer of the SPA. For the reason Balinese massage as the main attraction, make this treatment as a truly treatment that must be mastered by the therapist. Every person who wants to work in the industry as a therapist SPA in Bali are expected to master this treatment, and have certain knowledge of treatment and products used, and also sufficient skills to provide good care.

For the good result of the traditional Balinese massage has kept the client's interest in trying new products that complement this type of massage, which makes them always think of the treatment in the future. In fact, according to some clients who have ever tried traditional Balinese massage, they even become addicted and cannot wait to get the treatment again.

***Uniqueness of Brand Association.***

If we view from the understanding of traditional Balinese massage in the research literature, it clearly can be seen the uniqueness of this type of treatment than other treatments sort of Thai massage. Traditional Balinese massage was considered to represent the culture of Bali as the massage use scented oils and natural ingredients, which when compared with the treatment of Thailand, Thai massage, is different because it does not use oil and emphasizes stretching movements and pressure points such as Balinese massage. The use of palms and fingers while massaging and oil can help reaching certain parts, such as the scapula or trapezius area better, that surely will provide more leverage to the treatment. Besides, bruises caused by friction while massaging can be mitigated by the oil as a medium. Some clients prefer to be treated by traditional Balinese massage because they get better health benefits due to the use of oil in a massage mixed with material that is able to warm the body, thereby reducing the light illness effects of like flu symptoms.

***Loyalty***

Data obtained as a result of interviews with the SPA therapist and questionnaires' result distributed to SPA clients has obtained data that the clients' repetition in ordering traditional Balinese massage is significant enough. Consumers are familiar with traditional Balinese massage and will always choose this treatment. From survey result in some SPA places has mentioned that their regulars who always ordered the traditional Balinese massage is more than 50% each month, which makes traditional Balinese massage as the most demandable treatment in the industry.

The matter has an impact on the high demand for therapists that master traditional Balinese Massage. Even the therapists to work abroad are generally required to master the Traditional Balinese massage, because of this treatment is always available on the menu of treatments in abroad SPA industries. In addition to being the most common treatment and can be found in many SPA abroad, the products used are also well-known and easily found in SPA stores, such as oil with the scent of frangipani flower, which is the typical flower of tropical countries.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Traditional Balinese massage has become main attractions for SPA industry in Bali, especially in Sanur area. The uniqueness of the treatment has attracted many visitors and regulars to enjoy the massage and get many benefits from it. This has made the treatment become a brand and brand image of SPA and Bali, and possibly in the world. What people enjoy about the treatment, besides the uniqueness are the benefit of the treatment. Many SPA industries have done many things to market this treatment, which one of them is by combining it with aroma therapy. As we know, Balinese Massage use oil, that make it difference with other massage, as Thai Massage, and combine it with essence like frangipani. The flower aroma is believed to bring benefit like relaxation and mind calmness for the clients. This combination has made Balinese massage become popular among SPA lovers all around the world.

It is truly hoped that the government can see this and make traditional Balinese massage more famous than before, by keep introducing it to the world. The government can be actively joining exhibition that related to the industry and using local products to support our tourism in general, especially the SPA industry.

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