

THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE TRADITIONAL BALINESE WEDDING CEREMONY IN TAMAN PRAKERTI BHUANA, GIANYAR, BALI

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to critically examine the commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies that occur at Taman Prakerti Bhuana, which offers Balinese wedding services in a more attractive and prestigious package. The study aims to understand how sacred cultural practices, rich in spiritual meaning, are transformed into commercial products focused on consumer satisfaction and economic gain. The issues will be addressed by answering the following research questions: (1) What is the form of commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana, (2) Why does the commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies occur at Taman Prakerti Bhuana, and (3) What are the implications of the commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana. These issues are analyzed using the theories of religious commodification and Bourdieu's theory of practice, employing qualitative research methods. Data collection techniques include literature study, observation, and interviews, followed by interpretative analysis. The research findings indicate that this phenomenon leads to the degradation of traditional values such as "menyama braya," a concept of togetherness and mutual cooperation in Balinese society. The commodification of these ceremonies also impacts the social dynamics of the local community, reducing active community participation and eroding the spirit of mutual cooperation. Ultimately, this study highlights the challenges faced in preserving Balinese culture, where traditional rituals that undergo changes to meet market demands risk losing their authenticity and original meaning.

Keywords: *Commodification, Traditional Balinese Wedding Ceremony, Taman Prakerti Bhuana*

INTRODUCTIONS

Marriage is a highly intriguing socio-cultural phenomenon that plays a crucial role in maintaining the existence of a society. In Hinduism, marriage is referred to as *Wiwaha*, which is performed during the *Grahasta Ashrama* stage. *Grahasta Ashrama* is often interpreted as the stage of household life, where an individual establishes a nuclear family

by uniting a couple in the sacred bond of marriage. The *pawiwahan* or marriage ceremony is categorized as a *Manusa Yadnya* ritual. This ceremony is rooted in religious *tattwa*, representing a sacred duty, *swadarma*, or an obligatory responsibility that is regarded as a debt. This debt must be repaid through the performance of *Yadnya rituals*.

Marriage ceremonies are traditionally held at the groom's house in Balinese traditions since the groom is considered as the *pengarep* (the one responsible). A typical practice in the *menyama braya* system is the groom's family engaging relatives to assist with wedding ceremony preparations. The Balinese community embraces the concept of *Menyama braya*. This idea might be seen as a noble endeavor that promotes social cohesion. The cultural ideals ingrained in *menyama braya* emphasize social recognition, equality, and brotherhood—basically, the idea that no matter who we are, we are all related.

As time progresses, the *menyama braya* tradition in Balinese wedding ceremonies has gradually diminished. This decline is largely attributed to globalization, where everything can be accomplished instantly and appears more convenient. Wedding ceremonies, in particular, have been indirectly impacted by globalization. What was once a practice that always involved relatives and the local community is increasingly being replaced by professional wedding service providers. These service providers offer venues that are more suitable for accommodating guests, albeit at a significantly higher cost compared to hosting the ceremony at the groom's residence, which traditionally relied on the *menyama braya* system and involved local residents. The rising economic demands, coupled with deep-rooted traditions, have led some to view this shift as a problem that requires a viable solution.

As if in response to the challenges faced by some Balinese individuals, Taman Prakerti Bhuana has emerged as a service provider offering a more convenient and economical solution for those wishing to hold ceremonies. Among the most frequently conducted ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana is the *Pawiwahan* or wedding ceremony. These weddings are organized based on pre-designed packages, such as the Silver, Gold, Silver Executive, Gold Executive, and Platinum packages. Each package differs in terms of price and the facilities provided. The traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies, as packaged in these offerings, are intentionally commodified—produced, marketed, and sold to the Hindu-Balinese community. According to Adorno (as cited in Piliang, 1999: 34), societies of this nature tend to generate a cultural industry. This cultural industry is evident in the packages produced by the owners of Taman Prakerti Bhuana.

The organization of wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana, Gianyar,

indicates the occurrence of cultural commodification practices. According to Piliang (2004), commodification refers to the process of transforming an object that previously had no exchange value into a commodity with exchange value for the purpose of economic gain. The commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies, as described above, is a phenomenon that warrants closer examination. From a cultural studies perspective, this study seeks to uncover the underlying meanings behind the commodification of Balinese traditional wedding ceremonies, which have become increasingly prevalent in recent times..

RESEARCH METHOD

The study on the commodification of wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana, Gianyar, adopts a cultural studies paradigm with a qualitative approach. The objective of this research is to understand the meaning of events within specific contexts through the description and analysis of social phenomena, attitudes, and perceptions of individuals or groups. A qualitative method is employed to collect descriptive data in the form of words and behaviors through observation and in-depth interviews, as well as quantitative data from statistical reports to support the findings.

The research site was selected at Taman Prakerti Bhuana due to its ability to accommodate *yadnya* ceremonies with affordable yet luxurious packages, along with facilities that support the execution of these ceremonies. Data were gathered from primary sources, such as direct observations and interviews with key informants, as well as secondary sources like relevant documents and literature. The data analysis method involves qualitative description to systematically explain and present the research findings, using descriptive text, charts, tables, and images to illustrate the cultural phenomena being studied.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Forms of Commodification

The commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana encompasses the activities of production, distribution, and consumption. This perspective is grounded in Fairclough's framework, which posits that commodification involves not only production but also distribution and consumption.

1) Ceremony as a business product

Ceremonies as business products refer to the phenomenon where traditional rituals, which were originally integral to the cultural and spiritual practices of a community, are transformed into commercial services that can be sold and marketed. In this context, ceremonies are not only viewed in terms of their sacred and cultural values but also as commodities that can generate economic profit for those who provide them, such as organizers, venues, and related service providers. In practice, the commercialization of ceremonies involves various commercial elements, such as offering complete ceremony packages that include *babantenan* (offerings), decorations, food, documentation, and exclusive venues, as seen at Taman Prakerti Bhuana. This approach is designed to make it easier for people who wish to hold ceremonies without being directly involved in the complex preparations. However, it can also lead to the loss of the ceremony's meaning and sacredness.

a. Babantenan

The traditional Balinese wedding ceremony at Taman Prakerti Bhuana also involves the use of *banten* (offerings). The preparation of the *banten* for these ceremonies is entirely managed by Taman Prakerti Bhuana. All aspects related to the *babantenan* necessary for conducting the wedding ceremony are produced by Taman Prakerti Bhuana through its *Pasraman Upakara*. The creation of these offerings is no longer solely for religious ritual purposes but also to meet market demand, thereby transforming them into products that can be bought and sold by consumers.

b. Supporting Facilities

Taman Prakerti Bhuana has also developed facilities such as the Grand Ballroom, Buffalo Garden, and Taman Prakerti Bhuana Hotel to support the execution of grand and luxurious traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies. These developments are designed with a modern concept that meets commercial standards, allowing these facilities to be included as part of wedding ceremony packages offered to couples who wish to hold their weddings with a Balinese cultural touch.

c. Wedding Packages

The commodification in the form of packages refers to the process of transforming local traditions or culture into a marketable product. Taman Prakerti Bhuana plays a pivotal role in packaging traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies as a product, incorporating various aspects such as the ritual elements and the symbolic meaning of marriage. Taman Prakerti Bhuana offers several wedding packages that consumers can choose from, including the Silver, Silver Executive, Gold, Gold Executive, and Platinum packages. These packages are the result of a production process that combines traditional elements with the needs of modern consumers. They are designed and produced with a range of services and facilities that can be tailored to the preferences and budgets of consumers, thus marketing the traditional Balinese wedding ceremony as an accessible product for diverse social groups.

2) Marketing of Balinese Marriage Ceremony

The distribution of commodification involves the processes of disseminating and marketing modified products, such as wedding ceremonies, religious tourism, and religious products. This includes marketing steps and strategies aimed at expanding market reach and enhancing the product's appeal. Once a product has been commodified, the next step is to distribute and market it to consumers through various channels, including mass media, to reach a broader audience. In this context, Taman Prakerti Bhuana also distributes these commodified products through mass media such as social media and websites, making it more accessible to users.

3) Consumption

Consumption relates to principles of truth, well-being, and morality, interpreted through narratives that contain specific values such as myths and ideologies. Consumption is not only based on material utility but also involves self-reflection, body image, and social status, serving as symbols or communication tools in social relations. In a culture of consumption, individuals often feel a sense of deficiency, making consumption more complex and frequently associated with consumerism and hedonism. In Bali, local consumers, predominantly Hindu, purchase religious products for rituals. In this context, the product consumed is commodified, specifically the traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies offered at Taman Prakerti Bhuana.

Consumption within commodification refers to the process of utilizing products that have undergone commodification by society. In the context of commodified religious

products, people purchase items developed from religious aspects, such as amulets, *bajangan* (decorative items for ceremonies), or weddings. The consumption of traditional weddings involves treating ritual and cultural elements of traditional weddings as products that can be purchased and enjoyed by consumers, focusing on providing services that meet market needs (Santosa:2022). The reason people purchase wedding packages at Taman Prakerti Bhuana is because these products are viewed as effective, efficient, and attractive solutions. Given common challenges faced by Balinese people, such as high decoration costs, expensive buffet prices, and inadequate space for ceremonies, combined with the current preference for luxury over the ceremony itself, these products are seen as a practical solution.

4) Implementation of Marriage Ceremony in Taman Prakerti Bhuana

Commodification can lead to a shift from a collective and communal approach in the organization of traditional ceremonies toward a more individualistic approach. Practices that were previously carried out collectively by the entire community may become the responsibility of individuals or families, thereby reducing social bonds and solidarity. Traditional roles within the community, such as those of customary elders or community leaders, may be displaced or lose their authority if traditional practices are increasingly controlled by economic forces rather than traditional values. Commodification tends to promote individualism, diminishing the strong social ties that were once fostered through collective practices like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation).

In Balinese tradition, *menyama braya* embodies the spirit of togetherness, solidarity, and brotherhood that binds community members in daily life. It represents a manifestation of mutual aid and solidarity, where every community member plays an active role in supporting one another, creating strong social bonds (Wulandari: 2024). Practically, *menyama braya* forms a crucial foundation for social relationships in Bali, where each individual is seen as part of a "large family" or community that helps and supports each other selflessly. However, this concept is under pressure and undergoing changes due to the increasing commodification of culture, particularly in traditional practices such as weddings. This commodification often shifts the focus from collective values to a more individualistic and commercial orientation, which can erode the spirit of *menyama braya* in society, as seen in the practices at Taman Prakerti Bhuana.

At Taman Prakerti Bhuana, wedding ceremonies are offered in several packages

tailored to users' budgets. These include the Silver Package, Silver Executive, Gold Package, Gold Executive, and Platinum Package, which come with *banten* (offerings), venue, catering, and other supporting facilities. The primary differences among these packages lie in the number of guests, the duration of the event, and the facilities provided during the reception. As the number of guests and the duration of the ceremony increase, so do the costs, which is why specific packages are provided to help users select the one that best meets their needs.

B. Factors Contributing to the Commodification of Balinese Traditional Wedding Ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana

1) Habitus Factor

Habitus is a concept introduced by Pierre Bourdieu referring to the ingrained habits and practices that shape individuals' perceptions and actions within the social world, based on their life experiences, cultural background, and social class. Habitus plays a crucial role in maintaining social stratification as individuals with similar backgrounds tend to have similar habitus, which influences how they understand and react to social dynamics. Although habitus tends to be stable, it can evolve through new experiences. In this context, habitus is influenced by economic desires seeking to profit from traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies.

Desire and habitus are interrelated concepts influencing individual behavior. Desire reflects the drive or ambition to achieve something, while habitus represents the patterns of habits and dispositions formed from social and cultural experiences. Both interact to shape how individuals behave and make decisions in various situations. In the commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies, economic desire underlies the motivations of Taman Prakerti Bhuana's owner to commodify these ceremonies. This economic desire is a primary motivation behind establishing Taman Prakerti Bhuana as a venue for traditional Balinese weddings. Additionally, the owner's habitus, being the descendant of a *Sulinggih* (a high priest in Balinese Hinduism), involves patterns of habits and dispositions shaped by their social and cultural experiences as the child of a *Sulinggih*. The owner's participation in social practices such as *muput karya* (a ritual of offering prayers during ceremonies) reflects their cultural and social experiences.

Modern lifestyle also significantly influences the commodification of Balinese traditional weddings at Taman Prakerti Bhuana. According to Pierre Bourdieu, habitus is an internalized system of dispositions formed through social and cultural experiences, which impacts various aspects of life, including individual lifestyle. Modern lifestyle reflects changes in how individuals interact with their social and cultural environments, where traditional values are often replaced or combined with global norms and practices (Salain, 2017: 65). Modern lifestyles have significant impacts on traditional activities, particularly in communities with strong cultural traditions, such as Bali. Changes in behavior patterns, preferences, and values adopted in modern lifestyles often affect how communities conduct and interpret their

traditional practices.

In the context of commodifying Balinese traditional weddings, modern lifestyle influences this process at Taman Prakerti Bhuana. This is due to younger generations who approach wedding ceremonies with consumption patterns oriented towards trends and status, influenced by their interaction with global culture and modernization. Additionally, weakened social capital affects the commodification of traditional Balinese weddings. The complexities of modern life have led to a decline in social solidarity, such as mutual assistance and communal support, making it challenging for individuals to conduct ceremonies within their traditional community settings.

2) Capital Factor

According to Bourdieu, capital encompasses various forms of social power such as economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, all of which play a significant role in shaping identity and social stratification. In the context of the commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana (TPB), cultural capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1984), refers to the culturally valued tastes and consumption patterns encompassing a broad range of areas including art, education, and language (Harker et al., 2005: 16). In this case, cultural capital is embodied by the owner of TPB, who is a descendant of a *Sulinggih* (a high priest in Balinese Hinduism). As the child of a *Sulinggih*, the owner possesses knowledge of traditional ceremonies acquired through informal education. Additionally, the owner also holds symbolic capital.

The symbolic capital of the TPB owner includes their Brahmana caste. This caste represents recognition, honor, and authority inherent to Brahmana, allowing them to influence and maintain their status within Balinese society. The use of titles such as "Ida Bagus" or "Ida Ayu" to address or refer to members of the Brahmana caste also symbolizes their high status. These titles not only signify respect but also reinforce the social hierarchy where the Brahmana caste stands at the top. This recognition serves as symbolic capital that continuously reminds the community of the Brahmana caste's significant position and role. Additionally, the owner of Taman Prakerti Bhuana holds a bachelor's degree (S.Sos), which further contributes to their symbolic capital.

TPB's social capital is bolstered through collaborative networks with various institutions, while symbolic capital, such as titles and cultural symbols, reinforces their position as spiritual elites in Bali. This allows them to uphold their status, authority, and the continuity of religious traditions within the Hindu Balinese social order. The weakening of social capital within the community also contributes to the

commodification of traditional Balinese ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana. According to Salain (2017: 102), the weakening of social capital in Balinese society is a factor driving the commodification of traditional wedding ceremonies, where traditional values are increasingly overshadowed by economic interests. The erosion of social capital makes the community more susceptible to external influences that promote the commodification of traditional practices, particularly Balinese wedding ceremonies. As social connections weaken, these ceremonies, once held within traditional community settings, are increasingly performed outside these environments, such as at Taman Prakerti Bhuana.

3) Field Factors

In Bourdieu's framework, the concept of *field* (ranah) refers to a social space where struggles for resources (capital) and access to power occur, closely linked with the concept of habitus. Habitus underpins the formation of the field, while the field is the arena in which habitus operates. Together, they create a reciprocal relationship between social structures and individual behavior.

In the context of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies, modern lifestyles and the weakening of social capital pose challenges for families to conduct ceremonies that meet social expectations. The owner of Taman Prakerti Bhuana, driven by economic desires, identifies an opportunity in this context by offering appealing, affordable, efficient, and luxurious wedding packages. This strategic move positions them as active participants in the social arena, engaging in the competition for economic gain and influence.

4) Practices of Traditional Balinese Wedding Ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana

Traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies often involve significant costs, including expenses for the preparation of the ceremony, the wedding feast, attire, jewelry, and other ceremonial aspects. Economic limitations can affect the ability of the marrying couple or their families to hold a ceremony with a certain scale and grandeur. Financial constraints may lead couples or their families to opt for a simplified version of the wedding ceremony. Additionally, traditional Balinese weddings require substantial time and effort, and limitations in these resources can impact various aspects of the preparation and execution of the ceremony. This context represents a domain of competition for economic resources. Furthermore, the weakening of social capital within the community also contributes to the commodification of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana.

Based on the above, it can be illustrated that the habitus associated with modern

lifestyles, coupled with weakened social capital and the economic desires of the owner of Taman Prakerti Bhuana—who seeks profit from traditional Balinese weddings—along with the economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital possessed by the owner, are maximized within the domain of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies. This results in the social practice of commodifying traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies.

C. Implications of the Commodification of Balinese Traditional Marriage Ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana

1) Degradation of Traditional Value

Degradation of traditional values is related to the decline in quality and the shift in meaning of cultural practices, such as Balinese traditional weddings, due to commodification. Commodification transforms cultural practices into marketable goods to meet market demands, often at the expense of their spiritual and social depth. Balinese wedding rituals, once rich in spiritual significance, are increasingly being distorted into mere commercial products. According to interviews, a consumer named Agung Eka chose a wedding package at Taman Prakerti Bhuana for prestige and aesthetics rather than its ritual value, indicating a shift in focus from intrinsic values to commercial aspects.

The reduction in cultural significance is also evident in the changing perceptions of the community towards traditional rituals, which are now often seen as mere exhibitions rather than cultural celebrations. Many couples prioritize decoration and luxury over the essence of the ritual itself, as highlighted by Kadek Reza. The adaptation of practices for the market, as implemented by Taman Prakerti Bhuana, emphasizes the commercial aspects of wedding receptions, often neglecting cultural authenticity to cater to consumer preferences. This indicates a risk of losing profound cultural values due to commodification.

2) Implications for the Local Community

The commodification of cultural practices such as Balinese traditional weddings impacts the local community by altering social structures, economic dynamics, and cultural values. The effects include a shift from collective and communal approaches towards individualism, diminishing social bonds and solidarity within the community. Practices that were once performed collectively are now often the responsibility of individuals or families, reducing the traditional roles and authority of community elders. The concept of *menyama braya*, which embodies solidarity and togetherness in Balinese culture, faces pressure and transformation due to commodification, shifting

the focus from collective values to commercial and individualistic orientations.

CONCLUSION

The commodification of Balinese traditional wedding ceremonies at Taman Prakerti Bhuana has led to significant changes in traditional elements, emphasizing aesthetic and commercial aspects over deep spiritual and social values. Ceremonies once rich in symbolism are now seen as commercial products, with ritual elements often simplified or removed to meet modern consumer expectations. Factors such as changes in societal habitus, economic motivations, and market demands have accelerated this commodification process, resulting in reduced community participation in ceremonies and a decline in communal spirit. To address these impacts, it is recommended that cultural studies strengthen documentation and preservation of traditions, researchers conduct long-term studies on the effects of commodification, and cultural practitioners actively maintain the authenticity of ceremonies while collaborating with various stakeholders to manage commercial aspects without sacrificing cultural essence.

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