

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS: UNRAVELING THE ALLURE OF INDIA FOR BALINESE HINDU PILGRIMS

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Abstract

In recent decades, enthusiasm for religious tourism has increased significantly. Bali, an island predominantly populated by Hindus, is known for holy trips called tirtha yatra. India has emerged as an attractive religious tourism destination for Balinese Hindus undertaking tirtha yatra. This study aims to identify the factors influencing Balinese Hindus to embark on tirtha yatra trips to India. The research employed a mixed-method approach, utilizing interviews, questionnaires, and literature reviews for data collection. The study population comprised Balinese Hindus who undertook tirtha yatra to India from 2015 until 2019. A sample of 120 respondents was selected through quota sampling from five travel agencies. Factor analysis was employed as the primary data analysis technique. Findings revealed six key factors influencing Balinese Hindus to undertake tirtha yatra to India: cultural, religious, escape (seeking respite from daily life), environmental (both natural and man-made attractions), special events, and wish-fulfillment factors. These results provide valuable insights into the motivations behind religious tourism among Balinese Hindus and have implications for both tourism management and cultural studies.

Keywords: Tirtha Yatra, Religious Tourism, Balinese Hinduism, Pilgrimage Motivations, India Spiritual Destinations

A. INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism has emerged as a significant trend within the global tourism landscape, reflecting the evolving preferences of travelers seeking meaningful and spiritually enriching experiences. A survey by the World Travel Association revealed that 25% of respondents expressed interest in holidays centered on religion and spirituality (The Sacred Journey, 2017). This growing enthusiasm for spiritual travel aligns with the fact that approximately 240 million individuals embark on religious journeys annually (Jackowski, 2000), primarily comprising

adherents of major world religions, such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Gan, Ma, & Song, 2000).

India has long been a beacon of spiritual allure, attracting devotees from across the globe in search of enlightenment and a deeper connection with the divine. Among those drawn to the subcontinent are Balinese Hindus, whose ancient ties to Indian civilization have fostered a profound reverence for the sacred landscapes and traditions of the region. Rooted in the cultural and spiritual concept of Tirtha Yatra, Balinese Hindus view India not only as a pilgrimage destination but also as a symbol of their shared religious origins. The historical connections between Bali and India are well-documented in ancient texts like the *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* and *Kathāsaritsāgara*, highlighting centuries of religious and cultural exchanges (Phalgunadi, 1991).

The resurgence of spiritual tourism in India is particularly evident in its ability to adapt to modern tourism practices while maintaining its traditional ethos. With its emphasis on sacred experiences and cultural immersion, India's spiritual tourism landscape aligns with the *Atithi Devo Bhava* philosophy, which regards guests as deities (Dixit, 2020). Notable pilgrimage sites, such as the Vaishno Devi Shrine and Haridwar, continue to attract millions of visitors annually, offering diverse opportunities for spiritual engagement (Gupta & Basak, 2017; Polus & Carr, 2023).

For Balinese Hindus, Tirtha Yatra to India is a spiritual journey that extends beyond religious obligations to encompass personal fulfillment and the exploration of shared cultural heritage. This form of tourism reflects broader trends in diaspora travel and acculturation, as individuals reconnect with ancestral roots and spiritual practices (du Preez & Govender, 2020). Moreover, the increasing accessibility and tailored planning of pilgrimage routes underscore the evolving dynamics of religion-based tourism in the context of the global tourism industry (Şen Küpeli et al., 2017).

Despite the growing interest in Tirtha Yatra, there remains a gap in understanding how spiritual tourism intersects with contemporary tourism practices and socio-economic transformations. Existing research highlights the motivations, challenges, and outcomes of religious tourism (Manisha Agarwal et al., 2023), but few studies specifically address the experiences of repeat pilgrims or the unique cultural intersections between Bali and India. Furthermore, the impact of global disruptions, such as COVID-19, on spiritual tourism perceptions and career opportunities within the tourism sector reveals additional layers of complexity worth exploring (Shah et al., 2021).

This study aims to bridge these gaps by analyzing the motivations and socio-cultural significance of Tirtha Yatra for Balinese Hindus. By examining this phenomenon within the framework of global spiritual tourism trends, the research contributes to a deeper understanding

of how traditional spiritual practices are being redefined and sustained in the modern tourism context.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach supported by a qualitative approach. Data was obtained using the interview method with the management of the travel agency that provides tour packages *tirtha yatra* to India and the traveling Hindus *tirtha yatra* to India, distributing questionnaires addressed to Hindus in Bali who had traveled *tirtha yatra* to India and literature studies. The number of samples is simplified by calculating the Maholtra formula, namely the number of variables multiplied by 5 or 5 x the number of variables. This research tested 24 variables, so the number of samples used was 120. Samples were obtained through the method *quota sampling*. Data collection by taking respondents as samples from 5 (five) travel agencies that provide packages *tirtha yatra* to India. A total of 24 Hindus who use the package *tirtha yatra* to India from each travel agency were taken as respondents. Factor analysis is used as a data analysis technique. Data analysis using the SPSS application (*Statistical Product and Service Solution*) for Windows.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Instrument Test

a. Validity Test

Validity test results on variables that influence Balinese Hindus to travel *tirtha yatra* to India is presented in Table 4.1 as follows:

Table 4.1
Validity Test Results

No.	Variable	r_{count}	r_{table}	Decision
1.	escape	0,709	0,361	Valid
2.	Relaxation	0,678	0,361	Valid
3.	Strengthen kinship relationships (<i>strengthening family bonds</i>)	0,674	0,361	Valid
4.	Class and lifestyle (prestige)	0,447	0,361	Valid
5.	Social interaction (social interaction)	0,534	0,361	Valid
6.	Opportunity to learn new knowledge (educational opportunity)	0,557	0,361	Valid
7.	Realizing dreams (wish-fulfilment)	0,584	0,361	Valid
8.	Pilgrim (pilgrimage)	0,763	0,361	Valid
9.	Religion (religion)	0,727	0,361	Valid
10.	Health	0,580	0,361	Valid
11.	Destination authenticity (perceived authenticity)	0,681	0,361	Valid
12.	Perayaan special (special events)	0,466	0,361	Valid
13.	Tourist attraction (tourist attraction)	0,503	0,361	Valid
14.	Culture	0,569	0,361	Valid

15.	Environmental conditions (natural environment & man-made environment)	0,464	0,361	Valid
16.	Deeper faith	0,528	0,361	Valid
17.	Intimacy with God	0,603	0,361	Valid
18.	Admire an architectural or natural wonder	0,777	0,361	Valid
19.	Income (salary)	0,779	0,361	Valid
20.	Travel security (job security)	0,714	0,361	Valid
21.	Personal satisfaction (sense of achievement)	0,684	0,361	Valid
22.	Recognition	0,693	0,361	Valid
23.	Self-respect for spirituality (responsibility)	0,629	0,361	Valid
24.	Religious experience (personal growth and advancement)	0,636	0,361	Valid

Source: Research Results (2024)

Based on Table 4.1, it is known that (r calculated) is greater than the critical number of the correlation table (r table) 0.361, which means it is valid. This shows that the instrument used is appropriate for measuring data related to factors that influence Balinese Hindus who travel *tirtha yatra* to India.

b. Reliability Test

Reliability test results of research instruments in research on factors that influence Balinese Hindus who travel *tirtha yatra* to India is presented in Table 4.2 as follows.

Table 4.2
Reliability Test Results
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.928	24

Source: Research Results (2024)

Based on Table 4.2, the results of the value reliability test *Cronbach's Alpha* as big as 0.928 and the value of N of Items = 24, these results indicate that the value *Cronbach's Alpha* greater than the minimum value *Cronbach's Alpha* 0.6, which means that the instrument is to measure the factors that influence Hindus in Bali to travel *tirtha yatra* to India is *reliable*.

Factor Analysis

The factor analysis was carried out by selecting variables that influence Balinese Hindus who travel *tirtha yatra* to India. The results of factor analysis can be explained as follows:

1) Formulating the Problem

Factors influencing Balinese Hindus who travel *tirtha yatra* to India identified from 24 variables.

2) Forming a Correlation Matrix

The analysis process is based on a correlation matrix between variables, to obtain proper factor analysis all variables must be correlated. All variables pass the test *Bartlett's Test of Sphericity*, KMO test (*Kaiser Meyer Olkin*) and MSA test (*Measures of Sampling Adequacy*). The test results obtained are presented in the following tables:

Table 4.3
Mark Bartlett's Test and SME

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,805
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1017,637
	Df	276
	Say.	,000

Source: Research Results (2024)

Table 4.4
MSA value for each variable on Anti-image Matrices

	x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6	x7	x8	x9	x10	x11	x12	x13	x14	x15	x16	x17	x18	x19	x20	x21	x22	x23	x24	
Anti-image Correlation	x1	.736 ^a	-0.13	-0.1	0.281	-0.02	-0.15	0.064	-0.04	0.056	0.001	-0.12	0.077	-0.14	-0.09	0.066	-0.03	-0.11	0.103	-0.47	-0.15	0.152	0.253	0.049	-0.11
	x2	-0.13	.799 ^a	-0.11	-0.32	0.133	-0.04	-0.07	0.063	-0.09	-0.09	-0.34	-0	0.159	-0.01	-0.12	-0.24	0.244	0.047	-0.08	0.008	-0.19	-0.1	-0.24	0.215
	x3	-0.1	-0.11	.750 ^a	-0.29	-0.04	-0.12	-0.08	-0.21	0.045	0.054	0.033	-0.01	-0.05	0.15	0.03	0.047	0.088	-0.52	0.078	0.187	0.047	-0.08	-0.2	0.053
	x4	0.281	-0.32	-0.29	.515 ^a	-0.14	-0.06	0.141	-0.03	0.106	-0	0.172	-0.18	-0.18	-0.14	0.055	0.187	-0.33	0.098	-0.15	-0.16	0.208	0.17	0.302	-0.25
	x5	-0.02	0.133	-0.04	-0.14	.848 ^a	-0.11	-0.16	-0.08	-0.03	0.143	-0.09	0	-0.04	-0.14	-0.07	-0.19	0.054	0.049	0.024	-0.15	-0.02	-0.03	-0.12	0.13
	x6	-0.15	-0.04	-0.12	-0.06	-0.11	.881 ^a	0.034	0.073	-0.18	0.105	-0.04	-0.03	0.048	-0.15	-0.03	-0.02	-0.14	0.178	-0.14	0.029	-0.12	-0.14	0.081	-0.06
	x7	0.064	-0.07	-0.08	0.141	-0.16	0.034	.748 ^a	0.013	-0.18	-0.18	0.179	-0.15	-0.06	-0.19	0.054	0.187	-0.01	0.001	-0.06	-0.1	-0.07	-0.03	0.136	-0.04
	x8	-0.04	0.063	-0.21	-0.03	-0.08	0.073	0.013	.842 ^a	-0.24	-0.24	-0.06	0.016	0.239	-0.13	0.087	-0.02	-0.03	-0.08	-0.06	0.038	-0.12	-0.03	0.053	-0.05
	x9	0.056	-0.09	0.045	0.106	-0.03	-0.18	-0.18	-0.24	.869 ^a	-0.12	-0.07	0.148	-0.05	-0.01	-0.17	0.052	0.011	-0.11	0.097	0.036	0.039	0.056	-0.06	-0.16
	x10	0.001	-0.09	0.054	-0	0.143	0.105	-0.18	-0.24	-0.12	.865 ^a	0.036	0.046	-0.24	0.1	-0.05	-0.21	-0.24	0.089	-0.06	-0.04	-0.05	0.002	0.027	-0.12
	x11	-0.12	-0.34	0.033	0.172	-0.09	-0.04	0.179	-0.06	-0.07	0.036	.787 ^a	-0.14	-0.12	0.031	0.082	0.155	-0.19	-0.08	-0.09	0.055	-0.09	-0.14	0.282	-0.23
	x12	0.077	-0	-0.01	-0.18	0	-0.03	-0.15	0.016	0.148	0.046	-0.14	.739 ^a	-0.07	0.032	-0.06	-0.2	0.046	0.026	0.006	-0.11	-0.01	0.229	-0.22	-0
	x13	-0.14	0.159	-0.05	-0.18	-0.04	0.048	-0.06	0.239	-0.05	-0.24	-0.12	-0.07	.863 ^a	0.106	0.008	-0.04	-0.09	-0.17	0.009	-0.07	-0.09	-0.17	-0.11	0.077
	x14	-0.09	-0.01	0.15	-0.14	-0.14	-0.15	-0.19	-0.13	-0.01	0.1	0.031	0.032	0.106	.813 ^a	0.184	-0.07	-0.06	-0.21	0.005	0.027	0.006	-0.18	-0.08	0.036
	x15	0.066	-0.12	0.03	0.055	-0.07	-0.03	0.054	0.087	-0.17	-0.05	0.082	-0.06	0.008	0.184	.882 ^a	-0.05	-0.1	0.046	-0.19	-0.17	-0.02	-0.1	0.061	-0.16
	x16	-0.03	-0.24	0.047	0.187	-0.19	-0.02	0.167	-0.02	0.052	-0.21	0.155	-0.2	-0.04	-0.07	-0.05	.828 ^a	-0.15	0.01	-0.04	-0.07	-0.06	-0.02	0.19	-0.28
	x17	-0.11	0.244	0.088	-0.33	0.054	-0.14	-0.01	-0.03	0.011	-0.24	-0.19	0.046	-0.09	-0.06	-0.1	-0.15	.728 ^a	-0.06	0.118	0.019	-0.09	-0.08	-0.36	0.35
	x18	0.103	0.047	-0.52	0.098	0.049	0.178	0.001	-0.08	-0.11	0.089	-0.08	0.026	-0.17	-0.21	0.046	0.01	-0.06	.792 ^a	-0.27	-0.18	-0.01	0.032	0.011	-0.01
	x19	-0.47	-0.08	0.078	-0.15	0.024	-0.14	-0.06	-0.06	0.097	-0.06	-0.09	0.006	0.009	0.005	-0.19	-0.04	0.118	-0.27	.835 ^a	-0.03	0.044	-0.09	-0.14	0.188
	x20	-0.15	0.008	0.187	-0.16	-0.15	0.029	-0.1	0.038	0.036	-0.04	0.055	-0.11	-0.07	0.027	-0.17	-0.07	0.019	-0.18	-0.03	.893 ^a	-0.06	-0.11	0.067	-0.21
	x21	0.152	-0.19	0.047	0.208	-0.02	-0.12	-0.07	-0.12	0.039	-0.05	-0.09	-0.01	-0.09	0.006	-0.02	-0.06	-0.09	-0.01	0.044	-0.06	.868 ^a	0.083	0.001	-0.16
	x22	0.253	-0.1	-0.08	0.17	-0.03	-0.14	-0.03	-0.03	0.056	0.002	-0.14	0.229	-0.17	-0.18	-0.1	-0.02	-0.08	0.032	-0.09	-0.11	0.083	.861 ^a	-0.23	-0.11
	x23	0.049	-0.24	-0.2	0.302	-0.12	0.081	0.136	0.053	-0.06	0.027	0.282	-0.22	-0.11	-0.08	0.061	0.19	-0.36	0.011	-0.14	0.067	0.001	-0.23	.743 ^a	-0.41
	x24	-0.11	0.215	0.053	-0.25	0.13	-0.06	-0.04	-0.05	-0.16	-0.12	-0.23	-0	0.077	0.036	-0.16	-0.28	0.35	-0.01	0.189	-0.21	-0.16	-0.11	-0.41	.764 ^a

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

Source: Research Results (2024)

On Test *Bartlett's (Bartlett Test of Sphericity)*, obtained a value of 1017.637. These results indicate that there is a correlation between variables so that a factor model can be used.

On the KMO Test (*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin*), The resulting value is 0.805. These results indicate that good sampling is adequate using factor analysis in the correlation matrix because the KMO is above 0.5.

In the MSA Test, the results obtained were that the 24 variables tested had met the criteria, because each variable had an MSA value > 0.5 so that all variables could be processed to the stage of determining the number of factors.

3) Determining the Number of Factors

Determining the number of factors is done to determine the number of factors formed that represent the variables. The method for determining the number of factors used is the method *Home Compose Analysis* (PCA). The results of determining the number of factors are presented in detail in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.086	29.524	29.524	7.086	29.524	29.524
2	1.973	8.222	37.746	1.973	8.222	37.746
3	1.467	6.115	43.861	1.467	6.115	43.861
4	1.391	5.797	49.658	1.391	5.797	49.658
5	1.158	4.824	54.482	1.158	4.824	54.482
6	1.059	4.412	58.894	1.059	4.412	58.894
7	.975	4.064	62.958			
8	.946	3.941	66.899			
9	.839	3.496	70.395			
10	.774	3.225	73.620			
11	.726	3.024	76.644			
12	.671	2.797	79.441			
13	.634	2.641	82.082			
14	.601	2.503	84.585			
15	.561	2.337	86.922			
16	.516	2.149	89.071			
17	.485	2.022	91.093			
18	.424	1.768	92.861			
19	.395	1.647	94.509			
20	.343	1.429	95.938			
21	.322	1.344	97.281			
22	.271	1.129	98.411			
23	.221	.922	99.332			
24	.160	.668	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Research Results (2024)

Table 4.5 shows that value *own value* whose value is ≥ 1 only reaches the 6th factor. So it can be determined that from the 24 research variables used, there are 6 (six) factors that influence Balinese Hindus to travel *tirtha yatra* to India.

4) Factor Rotation

In this stage, the factor matrix is simplified, which has a structure that is still difficult to interpret. Therefore, factor rotation is carried out to produce a simple structure so that all factors analyzed in the model can be explained easily. This research uses rotation *varimax*, because the grouping results are easy to analyze theoretically.

Table 4.6
Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
X1	.084	.078	.713	.058	.093	.022
X2	.374	.269	.643	.260	.033	.183
X3	-.097	.197	.277	.653	.066	.230
X4	.136	.078	.186	.265	.134	.712
X5	.613	.135	.136	.028	.068	.234
X6	.167	.135	.227	.711	.442	-.008
X7	.327	-.173	-.050	.307	.279	.698
X8	.328	.728	-.031	.010	.214	-.102
X9	.097	.802	.092	.393	.217	-.239
X10	.012	.073	.614	.188	-.043	.101
X11	.635	.099	.145	.165	-.044	-.032
X12	.267	.046	.011	-.024	.705	.093
X13	.592	.153	.184	.143	-.016	.303
X14	.722	.184	.204	.256	.044	-.040
X15	.256	.246	.189	.751	.008	.162
X16	-.093	.549	.119	-.116	.149	.230
X17	.127	.523	.056	.055	.129	.137
X18	.655	.237	.292	-.111	.115	.151
X19	.571	.129	.186	.248	.143	.162
X20	.506	.225	.159	-.021	.257	.399
X21	.316	.089	.099	.049	.698	-.066
X22	.318	.182	.300	.148	.510	-.171
X23	.303	.600	.085	.230	.132	.012
X24	-.049	.110	.621	.108	.094	.102

Based on Table 4.6, it is known that Factor 1 consists of 7 (seven) correlated variables, namely social interaction (X5), perceived authenticity of the destination (X11), tourist attraction (X13), culture.) (X14), admiration for architectural wonders (X18), income (salary) (X19) and travel security (job security) (X20). Factor 2 consists of 5 (five) correlated variables, namely pilgrimage (pilgrimage) (X8), religion (X9), deeper faith (X16), intimacy with God (X17) and self-respect for spirituality (responsibility) (X23). Factor 3 consists of 4 (four) correlated variables, namely escape (X1), relaxation (X2), health (X10) and religious experience (personal growth and advancement) (X24). Factor 4 consists of 3 (three) correlated variables, namely strengthening family relationships (strengthening family bonds) (X3), opportunities to learn new knowledge (educational opportunities) (X6) and environmental conditions (natural environment & man-made environment) (X15). Factor 5 consists of 3 (three) correlated variables, namely special celebrations (special events) (X12), personal satisfaction (sense of achievement) (X21) and recognition (X22). Factor 6 consists

of 2 (two) correlated variables, namely class and lifestyle (prestige) (X4) and realizing dreams (wish-fulfilment) (X7).

5) Factor Interpretation

Interpretation is based on *factor loading* that each variable has in the factors formed. In this stage, the existing variables are grouped *factor loading* minimum 0.5. This stage also involves giving names to the factors formed. The name of the factor formed must refer to the variables that form the factor or be based on the variables that have it *factor loading* highest among other variables that are in one factor. The results of the factor interpretation are presented in the following table.

Table 4.7
Factors that Influence Hindus in Bali
Traveling *Tirtha Yatra* to India

No.	Factor	Variable	<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>
1.	Culture	Culture	7,086	0,722
		Admire the architectural wonders		0,655
		Destination authenticity		0,635
		Social interaction		0,613
		Tourist attraction		0,592
		Income		0,571
		Travel safety		0,506
2.	Religion	Religion	1,973	0,802
		Pilgrim		0,728
		Self-respect for spirituality		0,600
		Deeper faith		0,549
		Intimacy with God		0,523
3.	Release	escape	1,467	0,713
		Relaxation		0,643
		Religious experience		0,621
		Health		0,614
4.	Environmental conditions	Environmental conditions	1,391	0,751
		Opportunity to learn new knowledge		0,711
		Strengthen kinship relationships		0,653
5.	Special celebration	Special celebration	1,158	0,705
		Personal satisfaction		0,698
		Confession		0,510
6.	Class and lifestyle	Class and lifestyle	1,059	0,712
		Realizing dreams		0,698

Source: Research Results (2024)

1. Cultural Factors:

Hindus in Bali see cultural similarities with Indian rituals, such as the melukat (holy bath) in Bali and bathing in the Ganges River in India. Both are believed to cleanse the mind and soul, bring blessings, and eliminate bad influences. The Ganges is also revered as an incarnation of a goddess, believed to purify sins.

2. Religious Factors:

Tirtha Yatra is a spiritual journey for purification and devotion, with holy rituals like bathing in the Ganges. It symbolizes gratitude, repentance, and a quest for salvation, enhancing faith and the connection to God. The practice embodies achieving harmony in life and devotion to God.

3. Emission Factors:

This journey provides relief from stress, a break from routine, and an opportunity for self-reflection. It is not about luxury but personal enlightenment and simplicity. The religious rituals during the journey leave a deep impression and serve as a form of self-actualization.

4. Environmental Factors:

The holy sites visited during Tirtha Yatra include natural elements (rivers, sacred places) and man-made structures tied to Hinduism's growth. The journey is also motivated by learning about Hindu origins and epics like the Mahabharata.

5. Special Celebration Factors:

Hindus often align their journeys with significant religious celebrations in India, such as Pitra Pooja (ancestor purification), Ganga Aarti (fire worship), and the Kumbha Mela, where rituals in the Ganges play a central role.

6. Class and Lifestyle Factors:

Undertaking Tirtha Yatra to India enhances both religious and social prestige, as it requires significant financial preparation and reflects a higher socioeconomic status. It is seen as the realization of a long-cherished spiritual goal.

D. CONCLUSION

The factors influencing Hindus in Bali to undertake Tirtha Yatra to India, based on a thorough factor analysis of 24 variables, can be categorized into six key areas: cultural factors, religious factors, release factors, environmental conditions, special celebrations, and class and lifestyle. These findings highlight the multifaceted motivations behind this sacred journey, encompassing spiritual, cultural, and personal aspirations.

The appeal of Tirtha Yatra packages while fostering meaningful connections between travelers and the sacred landscapes they seek to explore. Such initiatives will not only satisfy the spiritual aspirations of pilgrims but also contribute to the broader goals of cultural preservation and economic sustainability within the religious tourism sector.

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