

# An Analysis of Media Use, Gratification Sought, and Information Needs by Tourists in Bali before, during, and after the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract** —This study aims at exploring the media use, gratification sought, and information needs of tourists in Bali and whether there is any difference before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. With accidental and purposive sampling, 115 tourists visiting four (4) Bali's main beaches answered the questionnaire and analyzed with Paired sample t-test, testing the hypothesis that there is a difference among media use, gratification sought, and information needs of tourists before, during, and after the pandemic. The result shows tourists mostly use whats app (group), Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook followed by electronic and print media. The main gratifications sought are spending free time, get Covid-19 information, and release tension from problems. Before the pandemic, information needed are prevention, while after the pandemic is vaccine effectiveness, and after pandemic is travel rules. After the pandemic, tourists require information on travel rules, vaccine effectiveness, prevention, and vaccine availability. The paired sample t-test indicates that a difference on media use, gratification sought, information needs of tourists before, during, and after the pandemic. Understanding tourists' media use, gratifications

sought, and information needs are very important for Bali's government and private sectors for effective and efficient communication in relation to Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *media, gratification, information, Covid-19, pandemic.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The nearly two (2) years on-going Covid-19 pandemic has impacted people way of life such as the necessity to stay or work from home (WFH) and banned travelling activities which has ever since increased the use of communication and information medias because public increasingly demand updated and accurate data and information as well as for entertainment [1]. In 2020, the Indonesia Broadcasting Commission recorded a 50 % increase on TV viewers and a significant increase of information search in the internet [2]. The long-lasting and uncertain pandemic have made the public gradually get stressed and consequently need a travelling or holiday. Therefore, public or tourists try to search for information related to travelling and situation in a certain destination such as policies related to air and land travelling, opening hours in tourist facilities in a destination, personal health

conditions required to visit a destination, enter into its facilities, and others.

One of Indonesia's favourite destinations is Bali. Considering the very high demand of travelling to Bali, people have been accessing various medias to find out the latest information related to Bali. Therefore, both Indonesia and Bali's government as well as private sectors have to be able to provide updated and accurate information required by tourists in relation to travelling to Bali. To do so, it is important to identify the preferred media use, motivations to use media, and information needs by tourists. However, there have currently been limited and updated studies of the ways tourists access information; the media they access, information they need, and the motivation or gratification in using media. In fact, research on how tourists access media and search for information during pandemic is very important because during pandemic public or tourists are in uncertain situation, things escalate very fast so that they require accurate information in quick as possible [3].

Based on the above rationale, the research problems attempted to solve in this study are; what are tourists in Bali's media use, information needs, and gratifications sought, and whether there is any difference before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The result of this study is expected to be beneficial for both governmental and non-governmental organizations in communicating any policies, regulations, products, and services especially for tourists related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas's media uses and gratification theory explains that people search for information from a certain media under certain circumstances [3]. The media use differs between normal and crisis situation [4] caused by socio demographic factors such as country of origin, sex, level of education, and income [3] [5] [6]. During pandemic, there is a change on types of information needed by people [2]. A research in 10 Indonesia's cities showed that most people access private TV and media social to get information, directions, entertainments, and make a comparison [4]. A study in a tourist destination in India showed that most foreign tourists access information from website-based media while local/domestic tourists access print media and informal sources of information [5].

Media use and gratification is influenced by situational, demography, and public level of involvement [3]. There is a difference on information access to regional health agencies, TV, radio, doctor, and magazines as information source during normal and crisis situation. Media use is also influenced by

age where the youth use media to maintain relationships, get socialized, self-expression, show off, spend free time, and travelling or holiday [7]. Their study indicated that women would rather use Snapchat and Google+ while men use Facebook and Youtube. Instagram is preferred by young people and Facebook and Google+ is preferred by older people. Media has a certain characteristic as a basis of selection for young people. Instagram and Snapchat are for self-expressions or showing one-self as a popular figure, spend free time, and entertainment. Facebook is used to get information and educational purposes. Whatsapp is for friendships and Twitter is for showing off as a popular figure, get information, and educational purposes. Youtube is used for spend free time, entertainment, friendships and get socialized [8].

A study in Canada shows that people look for information related to transmission risk and its impacts from family doctor, internet, schools, e-mail, and by themselves [8]. In Spain, the main media accessed are main stream TV and print media [9]. In Indonesia, people look for information in social media such as Whatsapp, Youtube, Wikipedia, Facebook, blogger, Instagram, Google+, and Wordpress [10]. There are two groups of obstacles in accessing information from media such as internal and external factors [11]. A study in a destination in India indicates that language is the main obstacle in which local tourists get problems in accessing information online (31%) indicating low literacy and technology mastery. The foreign tourists' problem is the source credibility [5].

Compared to normal situation, people require different information during pandemic such the symptoms and spread patterns [12]. Communication plays a very important role during pandemic particularly in tourism industry. However, this phenomena is rarely studied. Pandemic is such a crisis situation which is full of uncertainty characterized by a high demand of data and information by people and tourists which consequently results in significantly increased data and information search [13]. The need of data, information, and communication is even much more important and unique in tourist destinations because people have been in 'locked down' situation for such a long time and really in need for travelling. Therefore, there are an increased search of information either before, during, and after the pandemic. Unfortunately, there has been limited studies conducted in this kind of situation especially in tourist destinations. Studies are highly required by tourist destinations due to the complexity of the pandemic itself, destination image and reputation, tourist behavior during pandemic, and the tourist industry itself [14].

This study aims at investigating the media use, gratification sought, and information needs of tourists in Bali before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, due to the three different time periods, whether tourists have the same of different characteristics in terms on media use, information needs, and gratification sought especially in tourist destinations. Investigating the tourists who visit Bali as one of the most important destinations in Indonesia will result in a comprehensive overview of the aforementioned characteristics.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

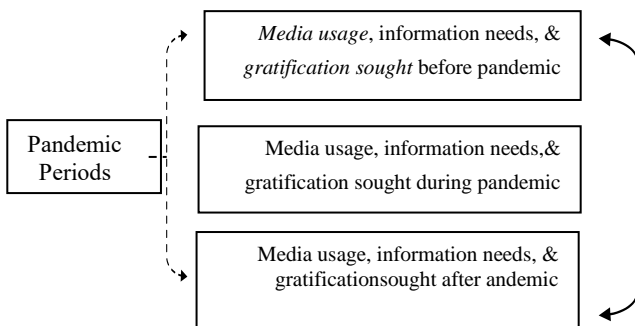


Figure 1. Research Design

This study employees a quantitative approach with associative research and survey method. The independent variable is the Covid-19 pandemic time periods in Indonesia; before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The dependent variable is the media use, gratification sought, and information needs. The Indonesian government declared the pandemic to have started on March 2 2020 until May 31<sup>st</sup> and the new normal started from June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 until present. So the time period of before the pandemic means before March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. The study population is local, domestic, and international tourists who stay in Bali during the time period mentioned above who were selected with a mix of accidental and purposive sampling method with Lemeshow’s formula (Lemeshow, 1997; [15]. The accidental sampling method means the sample are those who were accidentally met in Bali during the study time period and the purposive sampling means the respondents of this study are the tourists either local, domestic, and international who visit tourist destinations in Bali. The mixed sampling method is used because there is no definite data on the number of tourists in Indonesia-Bali during the pandemic.

The data is gathered by survey method with questionnaire, interview, and documentation analyzed by descriptive statistics and the paired sample t-test. Prior to that, classical assumption tests of normality, auto correlation, heteroskedasticity and

multicollinearity are conducted with @SPSS data analytic software. The paired sample t-test is used to analyze the data because the qualitative independent variable consists of two (2) categories. It is used to analyze the research model of pre-post or before and after a treatment or situation. The paired sample t-test is a method used to analyze the effectiveness of treatment indicated by an average score of before and after a treatment or situation [15].

This study testes three main hypotheses; (H01) there isn’t any difference among tourists in Bali’ media use, information needs, and gratification sought before and after pandemic, (Ha1) there is a difference among tourists in Bali’s media use, information needs, and gratification sought before and after pandemic, (H02) there isn’t any difference among tourists in Bali’s’ media use, information needs, and gratification sought during and after pandemic, (Ha2) there is a difference among tourists in Bali’s media use, information needs, and gratification sought during and after pandemic, (H03) there isn’t any difference among tourists in Bali’s media use, information needs, and gratification sought before and after pandemic, (Ha3) there is a difference among tourists in Bali’s media use, information needs, and gratification sought before and after pandemic.

The formula used to calculate the coefficient correlation is Karl Pearson’s *Product Moment as follow;*

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2) - (n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

**Note:**

- r = Correlation Coefficient
- x = Independent variable
- y = Dependent variable
- n = Number of counted years

The questionnaire consists of four (4) main questions such as demography (nationality, age, sex, and education background), media use, media gratification, and information needs related to the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia tested by using validity test of product moment correlation and reliability test of alpha (α) coefficient test [16].

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

After distributing the questionnaire for nearly 2 months to tourists in the four (4) main beaches in Bali; Kuta beach, Tanjung Benoa beach, Canggu beach, and Jimbaran beach, a total of 150 respondents gave responses but only 115 questionnaires (77%) proceed to the data analysis. It

was found out that the respondents were 41 males (36%) and 74 females (64%), aged 17-24 years old are 34 respondents (30%), 25-44 years old are 69 respondents (60%), and 44-60 years old are 12 respondents (10%). 91 respondents (79%) are Indonesian and 24 respondents (21%) are foreigners. In terms of educational background, 23 respondents (20%) are elementary school – senior high school graduates, 29 (25%) respondents are Diploma 1-Diploma 3 graduates, 57 (50%) are Diploma 4 – bachelor graduates, and 6 respondents (5%) are master or doctoral degree graduates.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MEDIA USE

Media (%)					
<i>Before</i>	%	<i>During</i>	%	<i>After</i>	%
WA group	80	WA group	82	WA group	82
Youtube	76	Youtube	81	Youtube	82
Instagram	75	Instagram	80	Instagram	81
Online Medias	73	Online Media	80	Media Online	79
Facebook	65	Facebook	68	Facebook	69
TV	51	TV	54	TV	52
Telegram	40	telegram	47	telegram	48
Twitter	39	Twitter	43	Twitter	45
Radio	32	Radio	31	radio	30
Newspaper	32	Magazine	29	Newspaper	30
magazine	30	newspaper	29	Magazine	29

The descriptive analysis on the media use indicates that there has been no apparent difference of the preferred types of media used either before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic by tourists in Bali. However, it can be clearly seen that online-based medias are the most preferred media more than electronic medias and print medias. As seen on Table 1, compared to before the pandemic, there is an increase of media use during and after the pandemic in nearly all types of media. Above all, WhatsApp groups is the most preferred media by tourists before, during, and after the pandemic. The use of WhatsApp Group slightly increased from 80% before the pandemic, to 82% during and after. Other online medias are also oftenly accessed, and significantly increased from 73% before the pandemic to 80% both during and after the pandemic. The significant use of online media especially social media nowadays is apparent especially in Indonesia. In US, for example, the high use of interpersonal media as WhatsApp is related with social connection especially

during pandemic which is associated with loneliness and need life satisfaction [18]. Social media has been perceived as easy and accessible for sharing, posting, and reacting to any information shared [18]. The fact that online media is the most preferred media either before, during, and after pandemic is different than a recent study indicated that TV is the most used media to get information during pandemic [5]. This is because tourists are characterized by their mobile activities during which they need media which are practical and easy to access when they are offhome or off office [6].

The descriptive analysis of gratification sought shows that during and after the pandemic, entertainment, spend free time, get Covid-19 related information and release tension from problems are the most gratification sought by the tourists in accessing media. These five gratifications are considered as the most important things to get in their activities of accessing media, which are considered acceptable considering the long stressful impacts of Covid-19 pandemic especially the work-from-home policies and strict limitations of travelling or outdoor activities. Latest studies have indicated the increased cases of domestic stress caused by the pandemic [5]. Gratifications of looking for information and direction, and entertainment and comparisons are the two most sought by the people in Indonesia [5]. Consequently, people switch their offline activities to online activities in the attempt to get entertainment, release stress, and keep updated with the latest news. Above all, they monitor the latest development of the possibility to go travelling.

TABLE 2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GRATIFICATION SOUGHT

<i>Before (%)</i>		<i>During (%)</i>		<i>After (%)</i>	
Spend freetime	70	Entertainment	75	Entertainment	77
Entertainment	69	Spend free-time	73	Spend freetime	75
Release problem	68	Covid information	67	Self-motivation	67
Motivation	61	Release problem	66	Release problem	66
Confidence	58	Motivation	66	Confidence	64
Close to community	55	Covid reference	66	Info covid	64
Release emotion	53	Confidence	63	Covid reference	61
Talk topic	51	Close community	59	Self-value	59
Appreciation	49	Self-value	59	Close to	59

				community	
Self-value	44	Talk topic	57	Release emotion	57
Covid information	40	Release emotion	56	Talk topic	56
Covid Reference	39	Appreciation	52	Appreciation	53

The table also indicates an increase in the use of media in the attempt to get those gratifications seen from the percentage which increases before the pandemic to during and after the pandemic. For example, before the pandemic, tourists use media to spend free time (70%) while during and after pandemic the most gratification is entertainment by 75 % and 77 %. Similarly, while before the pandemic people activities of get entertainment (69%), increases to 73 % and 75 % during and after the pandemic. During the pandemic, accessing Covid-19 information and Covid reference are the third and fifth most gratification searched by the tourists. It indicates the importance of providing accurate information related to the pandemic.

TABLE 3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF INFORMATION NEEDS

Before (%)		During (%)		After (%)	
Prevention Info	58	Vaccine effectiveness	84	Travel rules	77
Travel Rules	55	Prevention info	80	Vaccine effectiveness	76
Pandemi Info	55	Symptoms	77	Prevention Info	75
Spread patterns	55	Spread patterns	76	Vaccine availability	75
Countries' strategy	55	Travel rules	76	Treatments	75
Symptoms	54	Pandemi info	76	Spread Info	73
Specific Info	53	Cases records & Regions	75	Pandemi Info	73
Vaccine effectiveness	53	Vaccine availability	75	Symptoms	73
Treatments	53	Treatments	75	Countries' strategy	72
Cases Records & Regions	53	Specific Info	73	Cases record & regions	71
Vaccine availability	50	Countries' strategies	73	Specific Info	70

The descriptive analysis indicates a significant rise on the information search during and after the pandemic. Before the pandemic, tourists need information related to prevention (58%), while after the pandemic, information on vaccine effectiveness is the most searched (84 %), and travel regulations is the most searched information after the pandemic (77%). Other information searched are prevention tips, symptoms, and spread patterns. After the pandemic, tourists require information related to travel regulations, vaccine effectiveness, prevention, and vaccine availability.

The results of the hypotheses tests are presented in Table 3 indicating the result of paired sample t-test. Part 1 shows the result of media use. First, the  $t = 3,350$  with  $\text{Sig (2-tailed)} = 0,001 < 0,05$ , means  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted or there is a difference between media use before and during pandemic. Second,  $t$  value  $= 2,541$  with  $\text{Sig (2-tailed)} = 0,000 < 0,05$ , means  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted or there is a difference between media use during and after pandemic. Third,  $t$  value  $= 3,574$  with  $\text{Sig (2-tailed)} = 0,001 < 0,05$ , means that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, or there is a difference on media use before and after pandemic.

Although the statistical test shows a significant difference between the media use before, during, and after the pandemic, it is apparent that there has been no typical difference of the preferred media use by the tourists. However, there is a clear indication of an increase in the tourists' attempt to access the media. The descriptive statistics in Table 1 show how the frequency of the tourists in using media has increased gradually from before the pandemic to during and after the pandemic. As has been aware that nowadays social media-based media have been mostly used by tourists in Bali in sequence WhatsApp group, Youtube, Instagram, other online apps, and of course Facebook. However, compared to print media such as magazine and newspaper, tourists prefer to access electronic media such as TV and radio. Social media has recently been the most favourite media to access information especially for travellers or tourists with high mobility and demand of information during travelling. Social media is not only hugely popular in Indonesia but also overseas. Being tourists or travellers with high mobility and limited access with more formal devices (laptop, PC), social media-based medias of WhatsApp app, Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook are the best solutions in the attempt to get latest data and information during travelling. This finding should be well considered by both authorities and private sectors to plan their strategic communication programs of Covid-19 pandemic targeting both local/domestic and

international tourists in which social medias based media are to be used as top priority.

**Table 4. Result of paired sample T-Test use**

**2. Hipotheses Test**  
**Table 4; Results of Paired Sample T-Test Use, Gratification Sought, & Information Needs.**

Pair	Mean	Deviation	Std. error mean	95%confidence interval level		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	
				Lower	Upper				
<b>I. MEDIA USE</b>									
1.a	Before During	14.513	46.454	4.332	-23.094	-5.932	3.350	114	.001
1.b	During After	1.296	25.087	2.395	-6.041	3.449	2.541	114	.000
1.c	Before After	15.809	47.432	4.423	-24.571	-7.047	3.574	114	.001
<b>II. MEDIA GRATIFICATION SOUGHT</b>									
2.a	Before During	43.043	54.645	5.096	-53.138	-32.949	8.447	114	.000
2.b	Before During	4.374	26.498	2.471	-4.521	5.269	2.151	114	.000
2.c	Before During	42.670	55.957	5.218	-53.006	-32.333	8.177	114	.000
<b>III. INFORMATION NEEDS</b>									
3.a	Before During	112.626	111.379	10.386	-133.201	-62.051	10.844	114	.000
3.b	Before During	13.313	50.432	7.262	2.888	23.738	2.530	114	.003
3.c	Before During	99.313	109.209	10.184	-119.487	-79.139	9.752	114	.000

*Table Source: from processed primary data*

Part 2 of the table indicates the result of paired sample t-test of the media gratifications sought. First, t value is = 8,447 with Sig (2-tailed) = 0,000 < 0,05, means Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted, or there is a difference on the media gratification sought before and during the pandemic. Second, t value =2,151 with Sig (2-tailed) = 0,000 < 0,05, means H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, or there is a difference on the media gratification sought during and after the pandemic. Third, t-value = 8,177 with Sig (2-tailed) = 0,000 < 0,05, means H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significance difference between media gratification sought before and after the pandemic.

The statistical difference of the gratification sought by tourists in Bali before, during, and after the pandemic is in line with the descriptive statistics results of the gratification sought. There has been apparent difference on the gratification sought particularly between before and during and after the pandemic. For example, before the pandemic, the tourists' most gratification sought is to spend free time. However, during and after the pandemic, the gratification sought is to get entertainment. The frequency also rises from 69 % before the pandemic, to 73 % and 75 % in sequence during and after. Another difference is that releasing problem is the gratification sought before the pandemic, while the ones during and after are Covid-19 related information and self-motivation. This is because during pandemic, there has been a high demand of multiple information because of the very fast changing situation. In relation to travelling and tourist destination such as Bali, people need to make sure about all the related regulations of travelling to and staying in a destination in order for them to make maximum preparation. After the pandemic or new normal, people feel they need to get re-motivated after passing through stressful and uncertain situation during the long pandemic.

The last sample t-test presents the results of information needs before, during, and after the pandemic. As seen on part 3 of the table, first, t value is = 10,844 with Sig (2-tailed) = 0,000 < 0,05, means that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, or there is a difference on information needs before and during pandemic. Second, t-value = 2,530 with Sig (2-tailed) = 0,003 < 0,05, means that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, there is a difference on information needs during and after the pandemic. Nilai t value = 9,752 with Sig (2-tailed) = 0,000 < 0,05, H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, there is a difference on information needs before and after the pandemic.

It is clearly inferred that there is a difference on tourists in Bali's information needs before, during, and after the pandemic. For example, before the pandemic, probably public or tourists have been slightly aware of the spread of Covid-19 across the globe, have already considered the need for information related to prevention tips. However, during and after the pandemic, the information requires are related to vaccines effectiveness and travelling regulations. There has been quite a number of vaccines available world-wide and therefore various information related to their effectiveness to certain regions or countries, group of people, and ages. Because tourists have strong willingness to travel either at national or international levels, they really need information on what vaccines are effective for people in which countries and what age. For example, certain countries do not consider certain types of vaccines and do not grant permit for those people who are willing to enter their countries.

Another information perceived to be very important by the tourists after the pandemic is travel rules or regulations. Because this pandemic spread worldwide but not at the same time and level of severeness, every country and regions or destinations experiences different levels of infection and quality of control. Therefore, people willing to travel have to be alert on any information related to travelling such as what Covid-19 test should be taken, how, and when. Not only for travelling, there is also a high demand of information of a specific destination people willing to visit. Because different regions have various levels of pandemic, information regarding the extent to which a destination experiences covid-19 is very important for the tourists. Other information needed by tourists especially during and after the pandemic are related to prevention information, symptoms, vaccine effectiveness, spread patterns, vaccine availability, and countries strategies.

Because the Covid-19 has developed itself into new variants with different spread patterns, symptoms, and levels of severeness to people, tourists perceive that they require information in relation to prevention info, symptoms, spread pattern vaccine

availability, how other countries manage the pandemic (other countries' strategy), and specific info on treatment methods.

During pandemic characterized by uncertainty fast-change of situation, there is a high demand of information and media access including in tourist destinations. For successful communication, it is important to understand the media used, gratification sought, and information needs of tourists.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This study generally aims at investigating the media use, gratification sought, and information needs of tourists in Bali related to the Pandemi Covid-19 and whether there is any difference before, during, and after the pandemic. Online-based medias such as Whats App (group), Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook are the most used medias followed by electronic media (TV, radio) while print media are least preferred. There are variations on the gratifications sought where during and after the pandemic, entertainment, spend free time, get Covid-10 related information and release tension from problems are the most gratification sought. Before the pandemic, the gratifications are to spend free time (70%) while during and after pandemic the most gratification is entertainment by 75 % and 77 %. There has been a significant rise on the information search during and after the pandemic. Before the pandemic, tourists need information related to prevention, while after the pandemic, information on vaccine effectiveness is the most searched, and travel rules is the most searched information after the pandemic (77%). Other information searched are prevention tips, symptoms, and spread patterns. After the pandemic, tourists require information related to travel rules, vaccine effectiveness, prevention, and vaccine availability. Understanding tourists' media use, gratifications sought, and information needs are very important for the both governmental and non-governmental organizations for effective and efficient communication especially in relation the pandemic Covid-19.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study project was financially supported by Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB) through the 2021 competitive grant research.

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