

## MANAGING CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY BY REVITALIZING BALINESE CULTURAL IDENTITY

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**Abstract:** In running the sustainability of a business, Balinese Indonesia depends on a philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* (three causes of well-being) guiding people to live harmoniously with others as well as their surroundings. This principle makes Bali become the most competitive and distinctive tourism business compared to other parts of Indonesia. However, the eroding market position and massive expansion of international hotel chains force the indigenous businessman to look insight from outside to maintain the business sustainability. The main objective of this study is to examine a broader comprehensive view of how the company identifies sustainability impetus without neglecting the right practices and values prevalent among Balinese Indonesia. Experimental data have been acquired from native ethnic specialists and organization influential executives. The results indicate that from an internal perspective, the responsive leader is the most determinant force. In contrast, from an external perspective, the most significant factor is the company's distinction. The study combines both company's sustainability impetus from inside and outside organization and how the cultural values affect these drivers. Since cultural identity has strategic importance in Bali tourism, it is necessary to revitalize *TriHita Karana* culture's application related to strategy formulation and implementation in the hotel industry to gain a competitive advantage as well as organizational performance.

**Keywords:** harmony, corporate sustainability; drivers, culture, leadership.

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### Introduction

Business executives are increasingly concerned on the interconnection of cost-effective, ecological, and societal sides of the business (van der Berg et al., 2019; Akhtar, 2019; Bartok, 2018), and how these links affect the business operations (Manning & Reimsbach, 2019). Attaching sustainability standards into an organization's framework usually present difficulties (Rajiani & Kot, 2018; Wróblewski & Dacko-Pikiewicz, 2018). As such, the intricacy and the multi-dimensional issues make numerous sustainability approaches depend on technology-driven arrangements and administrative experimentation. Ironically, this policy

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tends to neglect the organization framework's components and the four elements of sustainability: economic, environmental, social, time, and their interactions (Lozano, 2019; Hamed et al., 2019).

Lately, corporate sustainability (CS) has developed as a mantra for conducting the business (Das et al., 2020), and the compulsory path for organisations (Ashrafi et al., 2020). As such, to turn out to be perceived as ecological minded, the organization should embrace changes that incorporate the presentation of clean high-tech, manageability business plans, and by giving a fair price of product and service. (Demirel & Kesidou (2019).

Bali in Indonesia is a well-known small island tourism destination where cultural identity is driven by the Hindu-based *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) philosophy. THK literally translating as the "three causes of well-being" centers on the belief that prosperity will only be accomplished through a harmonious connection between individuals and nature (*Palemahan*); the relationships among human beings themselves (*Pawongan*); and the relationship between human beings and God (*Parahyangan*). Previous empirical work in Bali had shown a strong influence of THK on destination strategy and the importance of culture for the realization of the destination's strategic goals (Rahmawati et al., 2019).

For quite some time, hotels have struggled with cost-effectiveness and profitability. Since the massive development of the hotel industry around the globe, especially in Bali, the competition has created little room to get enough customers for breaking-even (Cong, 2020). This way, hotels are trying to preserve their dominant position in the competitive market by exploiting various competitive advantages. Building on this finding, the research was expanded in the form of a qualitative case study with tourism stakeholders to focus on the role of culturally-inspired business in Bali and how they view the corporate sustainability drivers amidst of turbulence.

### Literature Review

CS is corporate exercises that proactively try to support sustainability balance, including the financial, natural, and societal measurements. It also encounters the interrelations throughout the time dimension at the same time highlighting the organization's frameworks regarding tasks and creation, the executives and technique, authoritative structures, acquirement and showcasing, appraisal and correspondence, and also business partners (Lozano, 2019).

Some authors (Schönborn et al., 2019; Soderstrom & Weber, 2020) emphasize that CS is not just changing in crude materials, procedures, and items. The current trends and directions in CS lead to more value oriented enterprises (Reicher, 2019). It is also about revising corporate culture and behaviors, implementing good practice, and defeating non-mechanical obstructions. Accordingly, hierarchical changes for sustainability must go past contrasts in innovation or the board frameworks for they demand cultural modification. (Obal et al., 2020; Civelek et

al., 2019). When cultural modification is implemented, adjustment in the hearts, minds, and souls of the organisation’s members is compulsory. These progressions, as a rule, take quite a while and require some level of karma and aptitude (Tian & Christensen, 2020). Durable CS change likewise requires entire encompassing viewpoint on change management including subtle issues, for example, mental models, the hierarchical structure, and proposition on the best way to accomplish these progressions (Thakur & Mangla, 2019).

CS is usually forced by external and internal factors. Their important role in the development of the national economy is underlined in the research of Zhulega et al. (2019). The external factor tends to end in revival counter, yet it is more opposed to helping with moving towards sustainability. In the other hand, internal factor is more proactive (Broccardo et al., 2019). Other external drivers include government’s initiatives and stakeholder pressure (Zahid et al., 2019; Plaček et al. 2019). From this perspective, internal elements and processes must be fully explored or understood (Álvarez et al., 2019). One of the inward drivers in big enterprises has been ethical leadership, which is perceived to be one of the necessary components for the fruitful presentation, execution and organization of progress (Joseph et al., 2019). However, the company is not able to change on the endeavors of the leader only. Other inside impetuses are risk management and assurance of business distinction (Schaltegger & Burritt, 2018), improvements in economic values (Garry & Harwood, 2017), and enhancements in the corporate image (Song et al., 2019).

To sum up, the main reasons for companies to participate in CS are listed in the table below:

**Table 1: Internal and external reasons to engage in CS**

Internal reasons	External reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Responsive leadership</li> <li>○ Business report</li> <li>○ Precautionary rule</li> <li>○ Company's way of life</li> <li>○ Moral commitment to CS</li> <li>○ Sustainability report</li> <li>○ Avoiding hazard</li> <li>○ Sustainability agent of change</li> <li>○ Demands from representatives on organizations CS endeavors</li> <li>○ Economic concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reputation, for example, corporate or brand distinctive positioning</li> <li>○ Customer requests and desires</li> <li>○ Regulation and enactment</li> <li>○ Society’s raising mindfulness</li> <li>○ Access to assets</li> <li>○ Collaboration with third parties</li> <li>○ Negative exposure</li> <li>○ NGOs protest</li> <li>○ Environmental or social emergencies</li> <li>○ National or territorial conditions</li> <li>○ Market openings</li> <li>○ Market positioning</li> <li>○ Shareholder activism</li> <li>○ Peer-pressure</li> <li>○ Market requests for non-budgetary data</li> </ul>

Culture influences management practice (Rajiani & Pyplacz, 2018). The core element in culture is the value, which is a broad tendency to prefer individual states of affairs over others. They are about evil vs good; dirty vs clean; immoral vs moral, and irrational vs rational. Relationships between people in a society are always affected by the values moulding part of the collective programming of people's minds in society (Hofstede, 2007; Ranasinghe, 2019; Wróblewski & Kasperek, 2019). In Bali, the foundation of shared beliefs and values is the THK philosophy which transcends to all aspects of life, including business and governance. THK philosophy strongly influences the values, attitudes and social norms in Bali's tourism system and a deep connection with the natural environment is firmly rooted in this belief system (Rahmawati et al., 2019; Sukawati & Astawa, 2017). With this analogy, the Balinese managers are assumed to practice the harmonious elements in managing the business for sustainability.

However, this notion raises unexplored issues such as: are these exclusive cultural identities of Balinese Indonesians make them competitive and adaptive to the business environment? How do business practitioners perceive their effectiveness? These questions call for theory refinement and the development of a more comprehensive theoretical model of especially in the Balinese specific culture. These unexplored issues were the focus of this study.

### **Methodology**

This paper employs a qualitative method to collect data for it provides in-depth information about the situation and interprets people's understanding and experience where people are being studied (Ritchie et al., 2013). Besides that, this paradigm provides a set of interpretive practices. Semi-structured interviews with seven interviewees were conducted. Three types of respondent were identified: the conceptor, the implementer, and the beneficiary. Three criteria were used to determine the suitable respondents; (1) perceived high knowledge in Balinese philosophy; (2) involved in managing in the hospitality industry; (3) and experienced in practicing the THK philosophy. After the tight screening, the conceptor consisted of one chief executive officers of one of the most famous local brand hotels integrating the concept of THK located in Ubud Bali. Two professors of management from Udayana University Bali, and one high-rank officer in provincial government who formulated the policy development of Bali island, were added to validate the conception of THK. Further, Two (2) managers of hotels in Ubud implementing the concept THK in management were selected as implementers, and the beneficiary was one village chief who experienced the benefit of the hotel operation upon implementing the idea of THK.

All seven interviewees are identified as R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and R7. The interview was conducted in September 2019 to January 2020. The application of qualitative study may reveal matters not explored in the theoretical background (Sampson & Johannessen, 2020). Probing questions to top executives aims at

obtaining answers to: how can corporation measure sustainability achievement ;and how can executives detect, regulate, and evaluate the forces to sustainability? As Jovchelovitch (2019) points out, executives in a group, or a corporation, may become the most dependable informant.

Tape recorders were used during the interview, and later the data were transcribed. Each meeting lasted for approximately one to two hours. The data then were analysed using a thematic approach, and two critical challenges were emerged based on the interviewees responds, which include the reasons from inside and outside organizations to involve in CS.

### Results and discussion

All interviewees agreed and rated all the internal and external drivers proposed where most of them viewed leadership as the primary internal reason. The other internal reasons specified by informants are the precautionary rule, company's way of life, ethical and moral case, avoiding hazard, employees' point of view, on in the company sustainability agent of change and economic concern. The most frequently mentioned external reasons emphasized by the respondents were: reputation; customer requests and desires; regulation and enactment as well as society's raising mindfulness. The interviewees then classified all drivers into *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) philosophy integrating the relationship between people and environment (*Palemahan*); people and people (*Pawongan*), as well as people and the Creator (*Parahyangan*).

**Table 2: Inner and outer reasons in *Tri Hita Karana***

Internal reasons	External reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Responsive leadership (C)</li> <li>○ The precautionary rule (C)</li> <li>○ Company's way of life (P)</li> <li>○ Moral commitment to CS (E)</li> <li>○ Sustainability reports (E)</li> <li>○ Avoiding hazard (E)</li> <li>○ Sustainability agent of change (E)</li> <li>○ Demands from representatives on organizations CS endeavors (P)</li> <li>○ Economic concern (P)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reputation, e.g. corporate or distinctive brand positioning (C)</li> <li>○ Customer requests and desires (P)</li> <li>○ Regulation and enactment (P)</li> <li>○ Society's raising mindfulness (E)</li> </ul>

*C = Creator*

*P = People*

*E = Environment*

The finding is in line with the previous study (Joseph et al., 2019) that the way the company is being led becomes the main CS motive. The importance of leadership might be due to the some of the interviewees are currently occupying the very

strategic position in both business and public sectors.

As R1 said: When a leader maintains harmony between the three relationships of the creator, people, and environment, then prosperity will be successfully achieved.

This cosmological philosophy of life has proven to be a significant concept that has preserved the sustainability of diverse culture and the environment in Bali, as well as peaceful living among people with different backgrounds, even amid erosion caused by population growth, globalization, and homogenization.

In terms of business activity implementation, Respondents<sup>2,3</sup> stated: The *parahyangan* concept is applied by giving offerings to God. Business activities are not only focused on maximizing profit only but also a form of awareness hereafter. Any business activity undertaken is mostly controlled by God. Similarly, in the implementation of *pawongan* concept, the leaders are human beings, God's creatures like others. The business is also expected to be able to create a balanced relationship with the environment. Keeping harmony or balance is conducted by not exploiting the environment excessively in order not to jeopardize the continuity of the business in the future. This should always be the primary consideration when executing business strategies.

This view reflects the precautionary principle indicating the relationship with the creator, human and the environment when running the business that must be obeyed.

Culture is essential in knowledge creation learned from older generations as the tacit role of knowledge mostly consists of culture (Arsawan et al., 2018). Thus, it is evident that THK values as an organizational culture in Bali can directly affect the capabilities of the business internally through better organizational learning, team work's coordination, and integration, as well as externally, to respond to the market timely and adequately.

Further, in implementing the concept of *palemahan*, there is a growing number of hotels in Bali that are also putting their focus on promoting the sustainable development of Bali based on the THK culture through the improvement of environmental sanitation, conservation, and beauty along with the creation of ecological health (Budhiasa & Riana, 2020).

R4 stated: Business people believe they can gain significant recognition from the growing market for sustainable services if they successfully conserve and maintain the environment. Since the concept of sustainable tourism has become a marketing tool, such recognition would also carry financial benefits for participating hotels. By translating the practices of sustainability into new business offerings, hotels in Bali would be able to compete with other tourist destinations.

Thus, based on the above description, it could be recognized that *palemahan* as one of the THK cultural factors have a positive influence on corporate sustainability of organizations to compete in a changing environment.

In the *parahyangan* context, the Balinese are obliged to comprehend the cultural context in their everyday life such as honouring elemental forces like air, sky,

water, rivers, mountains, plants, and others as well as by showing hospitality and cultivating compassion towards fellow human beings. The parahyangan aspect is related to mental endurance and moral virtue in anticipating daily challenges. To maintain a harmonious relationship with God is one way to achieve a good quality of life. This religious system is reflected in interaction to human beings and nature, for example, in providing services based on honesty, compassion, loving, kindness, heartiness, patience, hospitality, generosity. This activity is called *sewaka* (worshipping) based on *prema* (divine love).

Concerning *pawongan* in the Bali hotel industry, Respondents 5,6 stated that:

To create harmony within the social environment (*pawongan*), guidelines of behaviors and work ethics should be established based on joy and sadness. By practicing these guidelines, people inside the organization can live harmoniously and assist each other in carrying out their duties and responsibilities successfully. For example, a superior might assign tasks to their subordinates as it is their obligation and as in return, the assistants should not perceive the tasks given as personal tasks but as tasks imposed from the organization.

THK philosophy strongly influences the values, attitudes and social norms in Bali's business system. This moral obligations and a deep connection with the natural environment are firmly anchored in this belief system.

This condition is confirmed by R7 stating: Since the establishment of the hotel 30 years ago, the community has never experienced any conflict with the hotel, even a lot of benefit has been received by people such as employing people in the village surrounding, and most of all expansion of hotel does not damage the environment that people believe as a sacred place of spiritual living.

However, research has continuously proved that values and beliefs do not automatically translate into responsible behavior (Hofenk et al., 2019). Values and attitudes are, therefore, only two of the many factors influencing actual behaviour. Accordingly, the results of our study do not suggest that philosophy increases responsible expression in the hospitality industry. Bali's tourism development trajectory has been extraordinarily unsustainable, and THK philosophy has not been able to prevent this from occurring. Bali currently faces severe water shortages and water inequity, wide-spread waste pollution, as well as biodiversity and habitat loss (Kerr & Wardana, 2019). Continued rapid growth in tourist numbers will lead to even more damaging impacts (Adityanandana & Gerber, 2019). Therefore, significant behavioral changes have to occur immediately to avoid the worst effects of future tourism growth.

In this case, THK culture emphasizes that the entire relationship should be based on pure intention, truth, and sense of responsibility. It could only be realized if every person in the organization shares the same insight and vision. The change in organizations' strategic thinking would not solely question the organizations' resource portfolio, but also the way the organizations adjust the requirements from the stakeholders. Therefore, organizations have to enact their dynamic capabilities

to improve or even to renew their resource base. What is more, they are urged to reconsider their innovation process (Riana et al., 2019), i.e. the procedures in building new competencies and resources as a means of revitalizing the value of THK. This revitalization needs to integrate economic, environmental, social, time, and their interactions.

This finding contributes to effective international management in helping partners, managers, and employees appreciate the variety by which Indonesian mainly Balinese people work together as well as the expectations they have for their leaders. Further, since the majority of theories of management have a Western perspective, Indonesian cannot assume that management and organizational approaches currently valid in another part of the world possess universal value or applicability. Therefore, contextual application and adaptations of Corporate Sustainability (CS) are demanded in coping with the current sustainable management initiatives.

### Conclusion

The concept of sustainability is aligned with Tri Hita Karana culture, namely *parahyangan*, *pawongan*, and *palemahan* that takes into account the harmony between humans and God, humans with fellow humans, and humans and the environment. However, we argue that the organizational culture of business in Bali is insignificant to their performance. This is because of the local value-based culture lies in the domain of values, not in the realm of action so that THK-based culture is not sufficient enough to affect the corporate sustainability in Bali directly. The THK values need to be transformed into a strategy as well as an action plan to make it able to carry financial benefits for hotels and building hotels ahead of their competitors. To bring THK culture into the domain of actions, the role of leadership is crucially needed. As such, this study introduces a novel Corporate Sustainability model by integrating the local and looking West models with particular references to the unique Balinese cultural identity.

The field study was conducted successfully because of the courtesy of one of the CEOs'. Unfortunately, such courtesy may lead to a problem. Like other ethnographic field studies, this study could be suffered from issues of data credibility. Even though informants being interviewed had the freedom to express their views and their names were not mentioned in this report, it is possible that they might supply information about the company in favorable tones. This, of course, could result in subjective findings that might not reflect the real description of phenomena being investigated. Further study is recommended to expand the sample to a broader area of Bali, so the generalizability of finding can be generated.

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#### ZARZĄDZANIE ZRÓWNOWAŻONĄ KORPORACJĄ PRZEZ REWITALIZACJĘ BALIJSKIEJ TOŻSAMOŚCI KULTURALNEJ

**Streszczenie:** Zrównoważony rozwój firm, Balijska Indonezja opiera się na filozofii Tri Hita Karana (trzy przyczyny dobrego samopoczucia), która prowadzi ludzi do harmonijnego życia z innymi, a także z otoczeniem. Ta zasada sprawia, że Bali staje się najbardziej konkurencyjnym i wyróżniającym się biznesem turystycznym w porównaniu do innych części Indonezji. Jednak niszcząca pozycja rynkowa i masowa ekspansja międzynarodowych sieci hoteli zmuszają rdzennych biznesmenów do szukania wglądu z zewnątrz w celu utrzymania stabilności biznesu. Głównym celem tego badania jest zbadanie szerszego, kompleksowego poglądu na to, w jaki sposób firma identyfikuje impuls zrównoważonego rozwoju, nie zaniedbując właściwych praktyk i wartości panujących wśród balijskiej Indonezji. Dane badawcze zostały uzyskane od rodzimych specjalistów etnicznych i wpływowych organizacji. Wyniki wskazują, że z perspektywy wewnętrznej reagujący lider jest najbardziej determinującą siłą, natomiast z perspektywy zewnętrznej najbardziej znaczącym czynnikiem jest rozróżnienie firmy. Badanie łączy w sobie impuls firmy zarówno w organizacji, jak i poza nią, oraz wpływ wartości kulturowych na te czynniki. Ponieważ tożsamość kulturowa ma strategiczne znaczenie w turystyce na Bali, konieczna jest rewitalizacja aplikacji Tri Hita Karanaculture związanej z formułowaniem i wdrażaniem strategii w branży hotelarskiej, aby uzyskać przewagę konkurencyjną, a także wyniki organizacyjne.

**Słowa kluczowe:** harmonia, zrównoważony rozwój firmy; kierowcy, kultura, przywództwo

### 振兴巴厘文化身份，管理企业可持续发展

**摘要:**在经营企业的可持续性方面，印度尼西亚巴厘岛依靠TriHitaKarana(三大幸福因)的哲学来指导人们与他人及周围环境和谐相处。与印度尼西亚其他地区相比，这一原则使巴厘岛成为最具竞争力和特色的旅游业务。然而，侵蚀性的市场地位和国际酒店连锁店的大规模扩张迫使土著商人从外部寻找洞察力，以保持业务的可持续性。这项研究的主要目的是从更广泛的角度来看待公司如何确定可持续发展的推动力，而又不忽略印度尼西亚巴厘岛普遍存在的正确做法和价值观。结果表明，从内部角度来看，负责任的领导者是最决定性的力量。相比之下，从外部角度来看，最重要的因素是公司的与众不同。这项研究结合了公司内部和外部组织的可持续发展动力以及文化价值观如何影响这些驱动因素。由于文化特征在巴厘岛旅游中具有战略重要性，因此有必要振兴TriHitaKaranaculture在酒店业中与战略制定和实施相关的应用，以获取竞争优势和组织绩效。

**关键词:**和谐，企业可持续发展；司机，文化，领导才能。