

Original Research Article

MILLENNIALS' TRAVEL BEHAVIOR IN SMALL ISLAND DESTINATION: THE OVERVIEW OF GILI TRAWANGAN, INDONESIA

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aims to analyze the travel behavior of millennial generation tourists in Gili Trawangan starting from the pre-, during-, and post-travel stages. This study also explores the potential of Gili Trawangan as a small island destination.

Methodology: This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach and data collection using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and literary techniques. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out in the period of May and June involving 100 millennial generation tourists on Gili Trawangan, both international and domestic, as respondents.

Result: This study concludes that Gili Trawangan is one of the small island destinations that provides tourism supporting products such as water tourism attraction, accessibility, ancillary service, and tourist activity. From the demand side, millennial tourists who visit this island consist of productive generations who come from several big cities in Indonesia or abroad. They can be categorized as a digital generation because of their dependence on smartphones and social media in every aspect of daily life, including for work, entertainment, and travel. Therefore, the travel decision-making of millennial tourists is strongly influenced by digital information such as social media status and digital advertisements. Although in general there is almost no significant difference between the travel behavior of the two types of tourists. However, there are some basic differences caused by socio-cultural differences and economic conditions.

Implication/Applications: This research is useful as a reference for tourism industry stakeholders on the island of Gili Trawangan to comprehensively understand the characteristics of millennial generation tourists. Theoretically, the results of this study can also enrich the existing information related to the behavior of millennial tourists, especially those who visit small island destinations.

The originality of the study: Some of the limitations of this study were the small sample size and short questionnaire distribution period. Therefore, further research is expected to be able to examine other island tourist destinations, with larger sample sizes and an even distribution of holiday sessions.

Keyword: small island, millennial tourist, travel behavior, tourist destination, overview

1. INTRODUCTION

Millennials are the preferred segment by various industry marketers and are the generation that places tourism and hospitality at the top of their list of must-do activities (1). Apart from being very large in number or representing 31.5% of the world's population, they are also known to have high purchasing power with an estimate of up to \$200 billion and have the potential to influence others (2,3). Therefore, it is not surprising that various tourism stakeholders try to attract this generation by offering a variety of attractive products and services (4). As a generation that has a high work routine, they tend to prefer to spend their free time relaxing or having fun. One of the favorite destinations for this generation is small islands (5–7).

Small islands have attracted great attention from tourism academics, especially their important role as favorite tourist destinations. This phenomenon is a paradox when small islands are often considered as geographically and economically marginalized areas, despite having unique cultural, environmental, and local products (8–11). Some of the islands that have become leading destinations

in the world include the Maldives, Bora-bora (French Polynesia), Palawan (Philippines), Seychelles (Kenya), Santorini (Greece), The Cock Island (South Pacific), and Bali (Indonesia).

Indonesia as an archipelagic country is one of the countries that has the largest island-based tourist attraction in the world. These topographical characteristics encourage Indonesia to develop as an archipelago-based destination. Some of Indonesia's small island destinations include Pahawang Island, Derawan Island, Karimunjawa Islands, Saumlaki Island, Mentawai Island, Weh Island, Nusa Penida Island, Komodo Island, Wakatobi Islands, Raja Ampat Islands, and a Marine Tourism Park (MTP) consisting of Gili Meno, Gili Air Air, and Gili Trawangan (12).

Gili Trawangan is one of the most popular archipelagic tourist destinations in Indonesia, after Bali, for both domestic and international tourists (13,14). This island is known for providing supporting infrastructure facilities that are in demand by various segments of tourists, from families to millennials (15,16). The younger generation not only enjoys a variety of water tourism activities but also enjoys the nightlife by providing a variety of bars and restaurants. This facility is not widely available in other tourist islands in Indonesia. The massive development of Gili Trawangan was also one of the issues considered in the selection of this research location.

The pressure of commercialization of tourism (17) on small islands has posed a serious threat to the sustainability of the environmental and socio-cultural aspects of the community (9). The United Nations (2015) notes that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) tend to share common vulnerabilities and characteristics, including remoteness, limited resources, vulnerability to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, over-reliance on international trade, and a fragile environment (18).

Generally, to identify the vulnerability of small island destinations, academics conduct studies from a supply or product perspective, especially on tourism potential and activities. However, in this study, the researcher uses a demand or market point of view, by exploring the behavior of millennial tourists (10). This tourist segment was chosen because of their characteristics which are known to be very tolerant, care about socially responsible campaigns, take part in humanitarian actions, and have a strong desire to travel frequently (2). Although tourist behavior is a highly researched area (19–22), however, millennial preferences are still considered the latest demographic for the industry amid limited information availability (2,20,23,24). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the travel behavior of millennial generation tourists visiting Gili Trawangan, especially from the pre-, during-, and post-travel stages. In addition, this study also explores the potential of Gili Trawangan as a small island destination.

This research can contribute as a reference for tourism stakeholders on the island of Gili Trawangan to comprehensively understand the characteristics of millennial tourists. Theoretically, the results of this study can also enrich knowledge related to the behavior of millennial tourists, especially those who visit small island destinations. Some of the limitations of this study are the small sample size and the period of distributing the questionnaire in one-holiday session. Therefore, further research is expected to be able to examine other island tourist destinations, with larger sample sizes and an even distribution of holiday sessions.

2. MATERIAL LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Millennial's traveler

Generational typology is an issue that has been studied by many researchers, such as (25,26), and most recently (27). They divide the period of each generation with a different classification. One of them is how Reeves and Oh divide generations into four groups, including the Mature Generation who were born in the era of 1924-1945; Boom Generation (1946-1964); Generation X (1965-1980); Millennial Generation (1981-2000) and Generation Z (2001-present), which are then used as the foundation for determining the millennial generation in this study.

William Strauss and Neil Howe (26) in their book "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation", noted that this generation uses a lot of digital communication technologies such as email, SMS, and social media including Facebook and Twitter. The millennial generation was born and raised in the digital era and advanced technology (24,28–30). This phenomenon certainly greatly affects the development of their behavior and personality. One of the positive influences of this generation's

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characteristics is their fluency in digital technology (31–33). Bill Gates himself calls this generation the Generation I or Information Generation.

2.2 Small Island destination

Small island destinations often receive more negative impacts than benefits from the tourism industry, especially with limited carrying capacity, compared to other destinations. The literature has noted that islands have been used as tourism commodities since the mid-twentieth century (11), either as island-states (Barbados, Fiji), island dependencies (Guadeloupe, Jersey), or state islands (Okinawa, Cozumel). This phenomenon is then increasingly developed along with the increase in tourism as a strategic commercial sector and mass industry-based (8,9).

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Theoretically, until now, academics from various disciplines are still debating the definition and concept of "island" destinations. One of the difficulties faced is the characteristics of the islands that vary from one another, and not all of them are tourist destinations. Islands also differ from each other by climate, fauna, and vegetation or by different geopolitical, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental developments. Therefore, many researchers use the definition "in their own terms". However, in this review, an island destination is defined in general terms, namely as a piece of land surrounded by water with an area of fewer than 10,000 km² (Sharpley, 2012), and becomes a tourist destination (34).

2.3 Tourist behavior

Based on the thoughts of experts, tourist behavior can be assumed as various tourist activities when starting and ending their journey. The tourist demand can then be studied from various points of view, one of which is economics to understand a person's ability to travel, including the determinants of their travels. While the psychological point of view examines the motivation and behavior of tourists. One approach focuses on dividing the three phases of travel behavior, namely pre-, during- and post-travel (35–37). Pre-trip is characterized by the presence of stimulation and introduction to motivation which is continued in planning and organizing. The next phase is during-trip where tourists enjoy the trip followed by a post-trip where tourists have returned to their original place with the experiences brought and begin to readjust to their normal lives (38–40). (29), added that this process can also be divided into two phases, namely making decisions and traveling, or specifically can be translated into the Initiation phase, information search, assessment, final decision, during travel, and post-travel. Currently, millennial generation travel behavior is strongly influenced by social media or electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). This phenomenon allows them to share their travel experiences on social media and plays a very important role in shaping tourists' awareness, expectations, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior (20,41).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach by collecting field data using three techniques (42), namely distributing questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and checking reference documents. The questionnaires were distributed for two weeks (May and June) to millennial tourists on Gili Trawangan. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were initiated by determining the number of informants purposively by considering their competencies according to data needs (43–45). The examination of the required documents is obtained from official documents owned by official government institutions and informal ones that are privately owned by certain community members. In line with this research, the documents used are records related to millennial tourist data.

In this study, the research subjects were the Millennial Generation who visited Gili Trawangan who was born in the 1981-2000 range. Due to the unknown population size, the sample size refers to the Rao Purba formula (42) as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{4(\text{Moe})^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

Z = 1.96 score at a certain level of significance (degree of confidence determined 95%)

Moe = Margin of error, maximum error rate is 10%

By using the above formula, the following calculation is obtained:

$$n = \frac{(1,96)^2}{4(0,1)^2} \quad n = \frac{3,8416}{0,04} \quad n = 96,04 \quad n = 100 \text{ (integration)}$$

Thus, the sample involved is 100 respondents, both foreign and domestic tourists. The analytical method used is triangulation technique or by analyzing data from interviews, questionnaires, and secondary data or literature. Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative data are interpreted descriptively.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Gili Trawangan as a small island destination

Geographically, Marine Tourism Park (MTP) covers Gili Meno, Gili Air, and Gili Trawangan with a total area of 2,954 hectares. Gili Trawangan itself is the largest island among the three islands which has an area of ±3.4 km². Gili Trawangan Island is located in Gili Indah village, Pemenang sub-district, North Lombok district, West Nusa Tenggara province. This tourist island is chart-topping in the North Lombok district, especially for water tourism activities such as swimming, water sports, cycling, sunbathing, snorkeling, kayaking, fishing, sub-wing, and diving. As a small island, modern transportation is unavailable in this area. The only transportation used by the public and tourists is Cidomo (a traditional horse-drawn carriage typical of Gili Trawangan). Nevertheless, this island is listed as one of the islands that provide the most complete tourism support facilities, ranging from accommodation, ancillary services, tourist activities, and tourism organizations.

4.2 Profile of respondents

The survey shows that millennial tourists who visit the island of Gili Trawangan mostly come from big cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Bogor, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Bekasi, and Tangerang. Meanwhile, international tourists come from Australia, USA, Europe, Malaysia, Japan, and India. Some of the characteristics found in this study, including the following.

Table 1: Respondent characteristics

Description	Option	Percentage (%)	Description	Option	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	51	Origin	Jakarta	24
	Male	49		West Java	28
Year of birth	1982-1987	26		Central Java	5
	1988-1993	25		East Java	5
	1994-2000	49		Bali	5
Marital status	Single	71		Foreigner	18
	Married	29	Others	15	
Educational background	Senior high school	43	Occupation	Students	23
	Bachelor's degree	30		Employee	40
	Diploma	23		Professional	9
	Master's degree	3		Manager	5
	Others	1		Others	23
Travel frequency	Once a month	18		Expenditure	< IDR 500K
	Once a year	47	IDR 500K- 1.000K		20
	Every 6 months	5	IDR 1.000K- 2.500K		21
	Once a week	4	IDR 2.500K - 5.000K		24
	Uncertain	26	< IDR 5.000K		24
Holidays member	Friends and relatives	50	Financial sources	Saving	74
	Families	40		Fulltime job	38
	Alone	6		Part-time job	16
	Others	4		Parents	19
				Incentive	14

Source: The author's own study, 2021

Table 1 illustrates that millennial tourists who visit Gili Trawangan are mostly productive groups consisting of students and workers, both professionals, entrepreneurs, employees, and managers.

This job profile affects their vacation patterns, which generally only take advantage of national holidays or company leave opportunities. They are also more comfortable organizing their own trips (88%) and vacationing with family or friends. Their spending power is also quite high and fits the average price offered on Gili Trawangan. The source of their vacation budget is also mostly generated from work, savings, and only a small part is still supported by their parents. Most millennial tourists are also active users of social media and smartphones (99%), which means they can be grouped as the digital generation (29). The social media they have include Instagram (90%), WhatsApp (89%), Facebook (77%), Line (53%), and Twitter (38%).

4.3 The way millennials prepare their pre-travel

The results of data collection show that millennials who travel to this island are more interested in visiting places they have never visited (90%). In addition, the travel decision-making of this type of tourist is also strongly influenced by digital information such as social media status and digital advertisement, although other factors such as curiosity and image of a destination are still dominant. In this section, respondents are given the opportunity to choose more than one option and then on average they will be sorted by percentage. Other factors that influence millennial tourists preparing for their trip can be seen in the following table.

Table 2: Millennial's pre-travel characteristic

Description	Option	Percentage (%)	Description	Option	Percentage (%)
Travel motivation	Out of routine	93	Pull factor	Curiosity	86
	Relaxing	53		Destination image	57
	Visiting friend or relative	22		E-WOM (family, friend, relative)	47
	Healthiness	9		Social media	26
Information sources	Social media	89	Digital Advertisement	18	
	Website	78	Film	12	
	Experience of others	37	Type of travel	Individual (small group)	84
	Travel blog	23		Group	16
	Travel magazine	20	Comparison factor	Price	89
Tourism official website	18	Quality		69	
Reservation method	Online channel	95	Promotion	49	
	Travel agent	5	Positive comment	35	

Source: The author's own study, 2021

Table 2 indicates that the main motivation for millennial travel is to refresh and restore their enthusiasm for work. This motive is related to their daily activities or work, especially high-intensity routines (93%). Therefore, they tend to like flexibility and prefer to travel with small groups or privately (84%). Price and quality are also still important factors that they often consider, in addition to promotions or discounts and positive feedback or comments. Some of the determining factors that are also considered from a destination include the location (76%), facilities (70%), attractions (59%), access (52%), amenities (restaurants, gift shops, religious facilities, health facilities) as much as 33%, and Services (32%).

Like most digital generations, most respondents (95%) prefer online media to make reservations for accommodation, transportation, and tourist activities. Some online media or online travel agents that are often used include Traveloka (78%), Tiket.com (22%), Pegipegi (18%), Agoda (14%), and Trivago (13%). Most of them also plan vacations ranging from 1 week (32%) to more than one month (31%) before the trip. The payment methods chosen include e-banking transfers (72%), cash (61%), credit cards (30%), and vouchers (7%).

4.4 International vs. domestic tourist behavior during travel

In this section, the characteristics of millennial tourists during their trip will be compared between domestic and international tourists. This analysis aims to understand the differences in behavior patterns between the two types of tourists while on Gili Trawangan. Some of the factors identified

include the type and preferred tourist activity, length of stay, the type of accommodation used, to the media used to find tourist references. The comparison can be shown through the following table.

Table 3: Millennial's on-travel characteristic comparison

Description	Option	Percentage (%)	
		Domestic	International
Type of transportation	Fast boat	56	89
	Slow boat	44	11
Tourist activity	Water sport (Snorkelling, Diving, etc.)	87	100
	Taking picture	64	100
	Culinary tourism (Food & beverage)	35	93
	Bicycling	33	100
	Cidomo (local transportation) tour	30	56
	Interaction with locals	24	28
	Sunbathing	7	100
Type of accommodation	Homestay	72	11
	Non-star hotel	33	-
	Villa	21	33
	Star hotel	14	56
	Hostel	14	-
	Air B&B	6	-
Type of restaurant	Traditional food seller	73	-
	Restaurant	32	100
	Fast food	26	28
	Café or bar	24	100

Source: The author's own study, 2021

Table 3 confirms that in terms of the type of transportation, the majority of international tourists prefer fast boats to slow boats. Factors that influence the decision include mileage and price factors. Two types of fast boats operate in the Gili Indah MTP area, namely charter boats and direct fast boats directly from Padang Bai (Bali), with ticket prices ranging from IDR 100K to IDR 350K per person, and takes about 1 hour 30 minutes. Meanwhile, traditional ships depart from the port of Bangsal (North Lombok), with a capacity of more than 30 people one way. Usually, at the same time, these ships also transport raw materials needed by local people on the island for commercial purposes or for their own consumption. The trip can be reached in 35 minutes with a much more affordable ticket price, which is around IDR 15K.

The survey also found that the length of stay of the majority of millennial tourists on Gili Trawangan island was between 3-7 days as many as 58% of respondents, 1-2 days as many as 33%, and only 9% of respondents who chose one day trip (without overnight). In contrast to domestic tourists who choose homestays, international tourists tend to choose the accommodation that provides security and comfort guarantees such as five-star hotels and villas. Likewise, in terms of the type of restaurant chosen, if most domestic tourists are quite sure of traditional food vendors, international tourists actually tend to prefer modern restaurants, bars & cafes, or even fast food. Affordable prices are one of the reasons domestic tourists prefer traditional food over others. On the other hand, although there is not much significant difference between the tourism activities chosen by the two types of tourists. However, one of the contrasts is when international tourists really enjoy sunbathing and bicycling activities, not so with domestic tourists. They are worried that the sun will affect their skin, such as burning or browning.

Given that Gili Trawangan is a small island, some tourists (66%) who vacation only use Google Maps or ask local residents to get information about the location of hotels, restaurants, or tourist activities. Meanwhile, the millennial generation's interest in souvenirs can also be said to be high with 61% of respondents going to buy something, 22% might buy it, and only 17% stating they are not interested.

4.5 Millennial's post-travel characteristic

After traveling, this study found that millennials often share their experiences through social media and tell stories to their friends and relatives. This behavior also makes millennials attractive to tourism stakeholders, especially because they can be a very effective marketing "tool" for companies.

Table 4: Millennial's post-travel characteristic

Description	Option	Percentage (%)	Description	Option	Percentage (%)
What to do after travel	Posting on social media	85	Type of social media	Instagram	92
	Share the story (WOM)	81		Facebook	60
	Planning another trip	29		Twitter	19

Source: The author's own study, 2021

Table 4 confirms that this generation prefers to share their experiences through audio-visual media, especially through social media that supports this feature. They also often provide feedback or rewards (90%) for their experience of products and services enjoyed through online websites (88%). Feedback given can be through comments (48%), ratings (44%), and tipping in the form of money (8%).

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Gili Trawangan is one of the small island destinations that has tourism supporting products such as water tourism attraction, accessibility, ancillary service, and tourist activity. From the demand side, millennial tourists who visit this island are productive people who work as students or workers, and come from several big cities in Indonesia or abroad. They have high spending power, however, have limited free time, mainly because of the high routine of work. This people can also be categorized as a digital generation because of their dependence on smartphones and social media in every aspect of daily life, including for work, entertainment, and travel. Therefore, the travel decision-making of millennial tourists is strongly influenced by digital information such as social media status and digital advertisements, although other factors such as curiosity and image of a destination are still dominant. Their motives for traveling are mostly aimed at refreshing and restoring enthusiasm for work. The busy routine of urban life is also the reason for their penchant for flexibility, including when on vacation. They tend to plan their own itinerary and travel with small groups or even alone. They also actively seek information and make reservations for accommodation, transportation, and tourism activities through electronic media, especially through social media and online travel agents.

Although in general there is almost no significant difference between the travel behavior of international and domestic tourists. However, there are some basic differences which are caused by socio-cultural differences and economic conditions. Some of these differences can be seen in how international tourists tend to choose transportation, accommodation, and restaurants that are able to provide quality, security, and comfort. Meanwhile, domestic tourists tend to consider the affordable price factor compared to other factors. This reason is quite understandable considering that the average price of products and services offered on the island of Gili Trawangan can be categorized as high. Meanwhile, from the aspect of tourism activities, international tourists really enjoy sun bathing and bicycling activities, ignoring the effect of sunlight on their skin, but not so with domestic tourists. After traveling, millennials often share their experiences through social media and tell stories to their friends and relatives. This behavior also makes millennials attractive to tourism stakeholders, especially they can be used as a very effective and inexpensive marketing "tool".

6. LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

The results of this study can be useful for tourism stakeholders in Gili Trawangan. For entrepreneurs, these findings can be a reference for a closer understanding of the behavior of millennial tourists. So that they can design more accurate marketing strategies according to the profile of the millennial market segment. In addition, for small island destination managers, they can understand the potential impact given by the type of millennial tourists through their behavioral information. Therefore, they are expected to be able to educate millennial tourists, especially to maintain the sustainability of natural and socio-cultural resources. This study still has various weaknesses, especially from the aspect of the sample involved and the location of the island chosen. Therefore, further research is expected to be able to fill the gap of this research and adopt a more comprehensive methodological approach.

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