



Local Community Perception Towards Foreign Culture In Gili Trawangan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out how local people perceive foreign cultures in the tourist area of Gili Trawangan in Gili Indah Village, Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency (KLU). This type of research is qualitative research. The type of data used is primary data, which was obtained by conducting interviews with 15 respondents. The results of this study indicate that Gili Trawangan is famous for its beautiful beaches, so it is not surprising that many foreign tourists visit Gili Trawangan. The entry of foreign cultures into Gili Trawangan certainly brings cultural changes, but not all cultural changes have a negative impact, some also have a positive impact. The positive impacts of the entry of foreign cultures into Gili Trawangan include the existence of economic opportunities for some local people, the presence of foreign tourists brings great economic opportunities. The tourism industry provides employment and a source of income for the local population through accommodation, restaurants, transportation and various tourism-related businesses. Meanwhile, the negative impacts of the entry of foreign cultures into Gili Trawangan include foreign tourists who can bring cultural influences from their countries of origin.

Keywords: *Local Community Perception, Foreign Culture, Gili Trawangan*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

November 20,
2025

Revised

December 03, 2025

Accepted

February 15, 2026

Journal Homepage

<https://ojs.staialfurqan.ac.id/IJoASER/>

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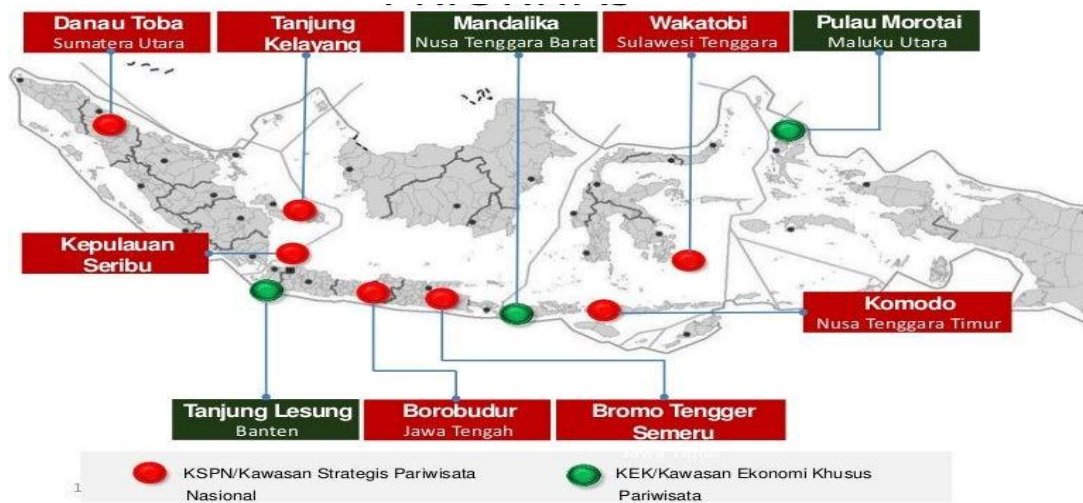
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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sector that makes a significant contribution to regional economic development, particularly in destinations with natural and cultural attractions. The development of the tourism sector impacts not only the economy but also the social and cultural life of local communities. The influx of foreign tourists to a destination often brings new values, customs, and lifestyles that have the potential to influence the local community's lifestyles. In some cases, these changes can be positive, such as increasing community insight and opening up new business opportunities. However, on the other hand, these changes can also raise concerns about the erosion of local cultural values.

Indonesia has been recognized by *United Nations World Tourism Organization* (UNWTO) as the 9th best tourist destination in the world. In 2022, international tourist arrivals to Indonesia reached 5.47 million, a 251.28% increase compared to the previous year. The government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, has designated 10 priority destinations, including Mandalika in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB).

Figure 1.1. 10 Priority Tourism Destinations



West Nusa Tenggara Province experienced a significant increase in foreign tourist visits, from 11,890 in 2021 to 126,539 in 2022. One of the main tourist icons is Gili Trawangan, located in Gili Indah Village, North Lombok Regency. In 2022, foreign tourist visits to this island reached 123,000, far exceeding the 20,000 domestic tourists. This dominance of foreign tourists brings in foreign cultures that interact directly with the local community. Public perception of this phenomenon is important to study because each individual has a different interpretation based on their experiences and values.

Table 1.1
Number of Tourist Visits to NTB Province

Month	2022		2021	
	Foreign tourists	Domestic tourists	Foreign tourists	Domestic tourists
January	1841	88605	777	71704
February	2143	82770	641	67420
March	3429	117268	956	84707
April	1904	60179	771	69331
May	5628	109696	777	70002
June	8695	112069	697	88522
July	14612	109719	797	57880
August	24335	102707	1010	56742
September	16035	105759	1104	78919
October	14848	110417	1033	94482
November	14994	114433	1961	104462
December	18075	136134	1366	107975
Amount	126.539	1.249.756	11.890	952.146

Source: NTB Tourism Office, 2023

Several previous studies have shown that public perceptions of foreign tourists are strongly influenced by direct interaction experiences, perceived economic benefits, and the community's level of cultural readiness to accept social change. In this context, the Gili Trawangan tourist

area is an interesting location for research because it is an international tourist destination frequented by many international tourists.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to determine how local people perceive the entry of foreign culture into the Gili Trawangan tourist area.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach oriented towards natural phenomena. The researcher acted as the key instrument in data collection. The research location was in Gili Indah Village, Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency (KLU). Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 15 local community respondents. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three stages: data condensation (*data condensation*), data presentation (*data display*), as well as drawing and verifying conclusions (*drawing and verifying conclusions*).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Research Location

Gili Trawangan is a small island in the Lombok Strait, covering an area of approximately 3.5 km². It's known as a marine tourism destination, with its main attractions being its beaches, marine ecosystem, and panoramic sunsets.

As an international tourist area, Gili Trawangan has quite complete tourism facilities such as hotels, restaurants, tourist transportation, and various tourism service businesses managed by the local community.

Respondent Characteristics

Based on research data, the majority of respondents were male (11 people) (73%) and female (4 people) (27%). Tourism has become a top development priority on Gili Trawangan, directly impacting both macro and micro economic factors.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

No	Respondent's Initials	Gender	Age (Years)	Job/Role
1	Respondent 1	Man	45	Public figure
2	Respondent 2	Man	38	Transportation Business Actors
3	Respondent 3	Woman	30	Homestay Manager
4	Respondent 4	Man	27	Tour guide
5	Respondent 5	Man	52	Local Traders
6	Respondent 6	Man	33	Restaurant Employees
7	Respondent 7	Woman	25	Tourism Administration Staff
8	Respondent 8	Man	40	Shop Owner
9	Respondent 9	Man	29	Diving Instructor
10	Respondent 10	Woman	35	Craft Manager
11	Respondent 11	Man	48	Religious/Traditional Figures
12	Respondent 12	Man	22	Freelance Daily Worker
13	Respondent 13	Man	31	Driver Boat
14	Respondent 14	Woman	28	Hotel Receptionist
15	Respondent 15	Man	36	Area Cleaning Officer
TOTAL			Age 20-30 years: 5 (33.3%)	
Male: 11 people (73.3%)			Usian 31-40 thn: 6 (40,0%)	
Women: 4 people (26.7%)			≥ □0□thn: 4 (26,7%)	

Source: Processed Data

Field Findings

Based on the results of interviews with 15 local community respondents, several main themes were found regarding community perceptions of the entry of foreign culture.

1. Public Perception of the Economic Impact and the Entry of Foreign Culture Local residents view the influx of foreign culture as a logical consequence of Gili Trawangan's status as a global tourist destination. Interviews revealed a significant shift in livelihoods; while previously dependent on the fishing sector, the majority have now shifted to the tourism services sector. Respondents strongly favored the economic aspect. Foreign tourists are considered a major source of income for accommodation, restaurant, and transportation service owners. These findings indicate that residents tend to view the presence of foreign culture positively as long as it is directly related to improved welfare and accommodation occupancy. These findings suggest that residents tend to view foreign culture positively when it is linked to improved economic well-being.

2. Perceptions of Changes in Social and Communication Patterns

Intensive interaction with foreign tourists has brought about changes in communication patterns and lifestyles. Some key findings from the field include:

- **Lifestyle and Entertainment:** The emergence of culture *nightlife* (nightlife) with western music and consumption of alcoholic beverages in public areas/bars which is now a common sight.
- **Language Assimilation:** There has been an increase in the use of foreign languages in everyday communication. Although increasing *skill* communication and global insight, on the other hand there are concerns that this is starting to shift the use of regional languages in certain formal interactions.
- **Behavior Transformation:** This interaction provides lessons in discipline, particularly regarding time management and professionalism in serving guests. The community becomes more open to global developments and has a greater ability to adapt.

3. Challenges to Local Cultural Values and Social Norms

Despite this openness, respondents expressed concerns about the shift in indigenous cultural values. Some tourist behaviors, such as overly revealing clothing and alcohol consumption in public areas (*nightlife*), is considered to be in contrast to local norms.

- **Concerns of the Young Generation:** The community is concerned that the mindset of the younger generation will be influenced if it is not balanced with strengthening local cultural values through the role of families and traditional leaders.
- **Social Interaction:** So far, relations have been good as the community tries to remain friendly for the sake of tourism services.

Respondents emphasized the need for regulations and oversight, with local culture still being maintained through the roles of families, traditional leaders, and local governments, to ensure interactions remain consistent with local cultural norms. These findings demonstrate public awareness of the importance of maintaining local cultural identity amidst the globalization of tourism.

4. Environmental Impact and Space Competition The rapid growth of tourism brought by foreign culture has triggered two sides of development:

- **Infrastructure:** There are improvements to public facilities such as roads, piers, and access to clean water that residents can enjoy.
- **Ecosystem Load:** The surge in visits has brought with it the problem of rubbish and coral reef damage, which are major complaints.
- **Economic Competition:** The public is also starting to feel the increase in business competition due to the entry of large investors or capitalists, which creating tight space competition for local community-owned micro-enterprises.

5. Sustainable Tourism Adaptation and Development Strategy Society does not reject foreign cultures, but rather filters them. The emerging hopes for the future include:

- **Identity Strengthening:**The desire for local culture (dances and traditions) to be regularly displayed as a counterbalance to foreign culture.
- **Empowerment and Conservation:**The community hopes that the government will not only focus on promoting the number of tourists, but also on the quality of sustainable tourism, environmental preservation, and conservation education to maintain Gili Trawangan's identity in the future.

These findings indicate that respondents hope that future tourism development will pay more attention to:

- Tourism infrastructure
- Environmental conservation
- Empowerment of local communities
- Strengthening local culture

Analysis of Findings

Based on the overall field findings, it can be concluded that community perception is selectively adaptive. They accept foreign cultures that provide economic and social benefits, but remain conscious of preserving local cultural values. This indicates a natural process of cultural acculturation within the tourist destination community..

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and analysis of field data, it can be concluded that the local people of Gili Trawangan have a perception that multidimensional and adaptive to the influx of foreign culture. On the one hand, society demonstrates a high degree of openness because foreign culture is considered a major catalyst for economic transformation that improves welfare, creates new jobs in the tourism services sector, and encourages village infrastructure development. The shift in livelihoods from traditional sectors (fisheries) to the service sector reflects the community's pragmatic attitude in responding to global opportunities. However, on the other hand, an attitude of alertness to non-economic impacts, especially related to the degradation of marine ecosystems, waste problems, and the potential shift in social norms and traditional values among the younger generation due to an intense westernized lifestyle. As a strategic step forward, tourism development in Gili Trawangan should not only be oriented towards the quantity of visits, but must also transform towards sustainable quality. It is recommended to local governments to more actively promote environmental conservation programs and tighten regulations on night entertainment activities to remain in line with public ethics. For local communities strengthening cultural identity through introducing indigenous traditions to tourists must continue to be encouraged as a means of cultural filtration. Finally, collaboration between traditional leaders and business actors is needed to ensure that economic progress does not compromise the preservation of nature and local cultural identity, the core spirit of tourism on Gili Trawangan.

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