

## PREWEDDING PHOTO HYPERREALITY IN BALI

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### ABSTRACT

The practice of Hindu marriages in Bali has been unknowingly hit by the name pop culture, or in lifestyle terms as pre-wedding photos. The wedding customs of the Hindu community in Bali as a local tradition or local culture that previously did not recognize the term pre-wedding photos began to be inserted and produced through materialistic discourses and practices. Pre-wedding photos encourage the presence of an element of hyperreality from the millennial lifestyle that is mixed by digital and virtual spaces, as a trend of 'futuristic', 'replica', and 'copy' which has actually surpassed reality itself since its presence in 1996. The research is located in Bali and uses qualitative methods. The problems studied include (1) why there is a tendency for hyperreality in pre-wedding photos; (2) what are the forms of hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali; (3) what are the implications of the hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali. In general, this research is to deconstruct what is behind the pre-wedding photo phenomenon and reveal facts that can provide an overview of knowledge and understanding of its relationship with the hyper-reality of pre-wedding photos in Bali. The analysis of this research uses several theories, namely hypersemiotic theory, deconstruction theory, and commodification theory. The results show that (1) the factors that cause hyperreality in pre-wedding photos are lifestyle factors, commercial industry factors, globalization factors, and the factors of negotiation between photographers and clients (brides); (2) forms of hyperreality in pre-wedding photos in Bali show visual engineering, cultural fabrication, love accentuation, hybrid identity, parody and reinterpretation of style; (3) the implications of the hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali show three implications, namely the implications of aesthetic innovation, the implications of an unstable commercial industry, and the implications of shifting meaning. What is presented in the pre-wedding photo phenomenon is a celebration of desire (symbol sales) in various manipulative ways and various supporting media.

**Keywords:** Hyperreality, pre-wedding photos, Hindu community, Bali

### INTRODUCTIONS

Without realizing it, the marriage practice of the Hindu community in Bali has been hit by pop culture, or in lifestyle terms called pre-wedding photos. The marriage custom of the Hindu community in Bali is a local tradition or local culture. Previously, the term pre-

wedding photo was not known, but recently it has begun to be inserted and produced through hyper-realistic discourses and practices. Hyperreality is built by the millennial lifestyle that blends with digital and virtual spaces as a trend of 'futuristic', 'replica', and 'copy' which actually goes beyond reality itself. Pre-wedding photos are a new culture, a new culture that has hit globalization. It is a form of articulation of modern or postmodern culture. That is, the phenomenon has gone beyond a reality called post-reality (symbolic game). In general, the purpose of making pre-wedding photos is as a medium that can inform the identity of the prospective bride and groom who will get married. Pre-wedding photos are able to present memories of the past into a need that is difficult to refuse, especially because it is once-in-a-lifetime moment, namely marriage. The art of photography is not only documentary, but also able to offer the production of self-image in social relations.

Pre-wedding which colors the practice of marriage in the Hindu community in Bali illustrates a culture that cannot be separated from the influence of globalization. In this study, not all districts in Bali were used as research locations. This is because (1) this study does not talk about the dichotomous tradition, (2) the method used is qualitative so it is not administrative in nature (representation of samples) and (3) pre-wedding photos are a pop culture that hit all districts. Thus, it will always give birth to new meanings that are produced in the future. This means that there are no more differences or boundaries for each district because it is global (boulders society).

Pre-wedding photos are lifestyle products, namely products that have a commercial business opportunities. A status is related to prestige. The results of observations made so far show that Balinese culture, both in urban and rural areas, is still contested or has a high sense of shame. Geriya considers that the euphoria of globalization and modernism illustrates progress, progress, and the prestige of life which is accompanied by a dehumanization bias (2004: 44). Furthermore, Atmaja (2017) also said that the practice of pre-wedding photos in rural areas is something that is common. That is, if someone does not make a pre-wedding photo, it will raise questions and be considered to have no capital.

The problem that occurs is when pre-wedding photos display photos that are not "real" or do not match reality. Many prospective brides and grooms display something "hyperreal" with certain concepts. This means that a person can become more perfect, both in terms of physical appearance and a luxurious appearance that is not in accordance with the reality of the life of the prospective partner. In this case, the art of photography, especially pre-wedding photos, becomes an art product that produces self-identity that is

able to bring someone beyond the boundaries of reality in the world of hyperreality. In a local Balinese newspaper it is stated that Balinese youths (teenagers) are now carrying out relatively lavish wedding ceremonies. This does not only happen in urban communities, but also in rural communities such as Dajah Village, Karangasem Regency (Nusa Bali, June 16, 2019). Glorification or the process of luxury through the phenomenon of pre-wedding photos in Bali is a hyperreality fact. The fact that now Balinese people see pre-wedding photos as something that must and needs to be done when going to a wedding. However, many of them are willing to spend quite a lot of money even though their economic situation is low. The identity displayed in the pre-wedding photo is only an engineering because the real state of society is not the same as the surface of the hyperreality world.

Based on the observations of Puspa Kumari, Head of the Karangasem Regency Social Service, it was found that most of the underprivileged residents in Abang Subdistrict, Karangasem Regency Bali performed lavish wedding ceremonies, either using payas agung (renting a beauty salon), distributing invitations (bringing a large number of invitees), as well as making pre-wedding photos (displaying and printing large sizes). When these things are done, it will automatically affect the views of the guests to the bride's family or the bride and groom themselves.

The opposite of the explanation from the Head of the Social Service was conveyed by I Wayan Gede Surya Kusuma, Bendesa Adat, Abang District. Surya Kusuma stated that although the wedding ceremony was carried out by poor people, namely using payas agung, bringing in many invited guests, and taking pre-wedding photos, it was common and natural. It is said to be normal and reasonable because the family concerned is considered capable and has previously prepared the costs (Nusa Bali, 16 June 2019).

From the news above, it is illustrated that traditional values are no longer a priority, but have moved to symbolic values. In addition, status becomes important like a contest or competition in the world of hyperreality. The existence of pre-wedding photos in Bali is evident from the results of observations and interviews in several places that are used as places for pre-wedding photo shoots, such as the Bali museum, Art Center, and Bajra Sandhi. The data obtained strengthens that the interest in pre-wedding photos in Bali is quite high and has increased.

The first thing that needs to be studied more deeply is why there is a tendency for hyperreality in pre-wedding photos. Second, what are the forms of hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali. Third, what are the implications of this hyperreality? This causes research on the hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali to be significant and relevant

to be carried out, especially in the context of cultural studies. Today's Balinese people can be faced with a crisis of their original cultural identity in the challenges of the global world. In addition, there is no research on the hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali, so this research is important to do.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Understanding the meaning of something by using qualitative research always places the research subject in the same position as the researcher, building similarities to create interaction (Yusuf, 2014: 330). The research design for pre-wedding photo hyperreality includes: 1) a description of the art of photography, especially pre-wedding photos, including both in terms of practice, technique, function, meaning, and form. Knowing the views both in terms of social, cultural, economic related to the manufacture and business of pre-wedding photos in Bali 2) an explanation of the aesthetics of photography, the concepts of pre-wedding photos, the meaning in pre-wedding photos 3) excerpts of documents, archives, documentation, and etc. The location of the research will be carried out in several areas of the province of Bali which are often used for pre-wedding photo shoots. Sources of data obtained both primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained, directly or indirectly in the field, both from interviews and observations. Interviews with several informants, such as wedding couples, photographers, community leaders, cultural observers, stakeholders, photography experts, and entrepreneurs (wedding organizers). Observations were made to see the representation of pre-wedding photos, such as seeing firsthand the life conditions of the bridal couple who took pre-wedding photos with a luxurious appearance. Secondary data is data obtained and collected from several places, offices, and institutions in the form of books, journals, photographs (pre-wedding photos), articles and related documents or showing the hyperreality of pre-wedding photos, then processed according to the needs of research analysis.

## **DISCUSSION**

The early development of portrait photography could not be separated from the trend that developed within the bourgeoisie. The exclusive impression offered by the art of portrait photography in the past encouraged the bourgeoisie to start documenting themselves not only for personal use but to be shown to the public at large. As a form of artistic creativity, the idea to make pre-wedding photos of one of the prospective bridal couples in Bali was finally realized by a Balinese photographer, namely Anom Manik

Agung in 1996. In the end, the development of pre-wedding photos in Bali has developed periodically until now. Economically, pre-wedding photos are able to provide useful implications for service actors in the field of photography. Based on this, it can be said that pre-wedding photos can become a necessity when viewed from an economic perspective. However, in terms of spirituality or Balinese culture, pre-wedding photos are not a necessity because in Hindu marriages in Bali there is no known process of pre-wedding photos. When viewed from the development of Hindu marriage in Bali, it appears that it only concerns changes to the rule of law that are still related to caste, social status, and position (roles of men and women) so that it affects the forms of marriage. Pre-wedding photos began to be inserted in various marriages of all religions, including the Hindu community in Bali as the fulfillment of lifestyle desires. These needs are only part of the needs that involve efforts to build social relations in modern society and form self-identity. Marriage ceremonies in the Balinese Hindu religious tradition have developed in the context of packaging. Packaging can be said to highlight the lifestyle and contestation of a religious ceremony, namely marriage. Goffman said that social life mainly consists of ritualized theatrical performances, later known as dramaturgy (dramaturgical approach) (1956: 8). Pre-wedding photos are seeding the lifestyle and modern society's fondness for style. On the other hand, the factors of economic development without realizing it affect the lifestyle of the Balinese people. This was also conveyed in Urbanus' research (2017) regarding the lifestyle of the Balinese people. In the study it was stated that the habits and lifestyle of the Balinese people changed in a relatively short time towards a luxurious life and tended to be excessive which in turn led to a consumptive lifestyle.

From an aesthetic point of view, pre-wedding photos are a commodification process. That is, the elements in the visual pre-wedding photo are a deliberate process of formation either through editing or adding objects that cause visual changes (manipulative). Making pre-wedding photos for most of the prospective bride and groom will automatically increase the cost of the wedding. Hyperreality occurs when the bride and groom with middle to lower economic conditions do everything they can to make pre-wedding photos even though it is quite expensive, as happened in Dajah Village, Karangasem. It was published in a local newspaper, that Balinese youth (teenagers) are now carrying out relatively lavish wedding ceremonies (Nusa Bali, June 16, 2019). Global products have begun to be inserted, and even have mixed up the side of spirituality and lifestyle so as to create what is called contemporary spirituality. According to Marx in Piliang, there is a contrast between the image displayed and the actual reality which is called 'fetishism'. Pre-wedding photos are a commodity that has a charm that it doesn't

really have (Piliang, 2010: 330). The fabrication of culture to be able to violate moral values is depicted in the visuals presented. This can be seen from the traditional Balinese clothes used for pre-wedding photo shoots that are not in accordance with the standard, using open clothes, to showing poses that are not in accordance with religious and cultural norms.

According to Sulastriani's view as the representative of the Bali Provincial Culture Office regarding the pre-wedding photo phenomenon related to the appearance of clothes that are on average luxurious, not in accordance with Balinese identity, they are considered excessive and encourage hyper-reality values in Balinese culture (interview, 4 May 2020). Culture is not impossible to change over time. Cultural mixing in Ritzer's terms is called "cultural hybridization" as a result of globalization and production. The unification of these and other global processes with local realities with the aim of producing new and distinctive hybrid forms indicates continued heterogenization rather than homogenization (2012: 999). In the end, in line with the development of technology and creative industries, it will become a commodity, especially in Balinese culture. The development of the creative industry is also marked by the number of pre-wedding photo service businesses in Bali. Based on the data obtained (interviews with 25 bridal couples) it is known that all of these couples took pre-wedding photos. In addition, based on observations, it appears that in every practice of the ceremony or wedding reception of the Hindu community in Bali there is a display of pre-wedding photos at the location of the ceremony. According to Griya (74 years), a Balinese cultural expert, Balinese weddings are currently experiencing symptoms of glorification or luxury because the priority is no longer on the wedding ceremony itself, but on the practice of pre-wedding photos (interview, 23 May 2019). The final result offered in the art of photography is the result of interpretation in controlling visual elements into concrete physical reality. The facts obtained prove that pre-wedding photos have influenced Balinese culture into the realm of hyperreality. There is complexity in the religious and cultural relations of the Balinese people. Thus, it is undeniable that the current practice of wedding ceremonies or wedding parties has put aside meaning and prioritizes prestige and lifestyle. The development of the consumer society has influenced the ways of aesthetic expression. These changes are related to the way these objects are produced or consumed. This resulted in the phenomenon of cultural hyperreality.

## **CONCLUSION**

The hyperreality of pre-wedding photos is a form of production resulting from a process of interest and development of the times. The tendency of the presence of hyperreality in pre-wedding photos in Bali is caused by several factors. First, the lifestyle actor, namely the need is only in the form of packaging signs that are following the times. Second, the commercial industry factor with advertisements in its social media. Third, the globalization factor, the phenomenon of pre-wedding photos as a global product offers various efficiencies and conveniences for bridal couples to do various things in packaging signs and information. Fourth, the negotiation between the photographer and the client, the visual embodiment of an attractive pre-wedding photo is the photographer's role in describing his professional side.

In this study, the forms identified as hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali are as follows. First, visual engineering, packaging of the embodiment is a simulation through visual changes that are not in accordance with reality. Second, cultural fabrication, the influence of the pre-wedding photo phenomenon on a culture causes the values that exist in that culture to be disguised. Third, the accentuation of love, as one of the concept and visual formations in pre-wedding photos, presents the disclosure of excessive love symbols. This is stated in poses that can be said to transcend cultural values in Hindu society in Bali. Fourth, the hybrid identity, the dynamic nature of Balinese culture and the openness to foreign cultures bring out the new sides which unwittingly lead to the disguise of cultural identity (mixed culture). Fifth, parody and reinterpretation of style, is one form of the presence of elements of hyperreality. This happened because it was presented not from a habit (something new) of the Hindu community in Bali.

Regarding the implications of the hyperreality of pre-wedding photos in Bali, it is divided into three discussions, namely the implications of aesthetic innovation, the implications of an unstable commercial industry, the implications of shifting meaning. The implications of aesthetic innovation, namely the creative industry and income, the pre-wedding photo phenomenon provides business opportunities, both to the community and the government so that they can increase income from the economic sector. The unstable commercial industry is caused by the commercialization of public facilities, the commodification of culture and the hegemony of new cultures. The shift in meaning is related to ideologies in the connotation and denotation meanings that are inserted in each creation of pre-wedding photo works. Contemporary spirituality of marriage is related to the marriage procession of the Hindu community in Bali, which not only prioritizes spirituality, but also is worldly. In addition, they are also led into a lifestyle trap in the form

of artificiality, a play of signs and images filled with various aspects of activities with meanings that are not actually related to the context of spirituality. The authority of the sign in the hyper-reality of pre-wedding photos may also have been overemphasized so that everything becomes relative. The presence of meanings in each pre-wedding photo work provides opportunities for an unlimited range of interpretations.

Based on the results of the analysis in the previous chapters, the new findings in this study can be expressed as follows.

1. Pre-wedding photos create a phenomenon of hyper shifting to the reality of Balinese culture. Previously hyperreality became a reality because it was done by everyone and became something that was commonplace, even though at first it was opposed by some parties. This shows that culture is unstable and can change. Inevitably, if one day the pre-wedding photo is not done, it will reap the discussion, both by relatives and the community. In addition, everyone is able to make pre-wedding photos and does not know both the upper and lower middle class.
2. Photography ethics, namely the extent to which a photographer's morality (which is allowed and not) is related to the relationship between photography ethics (photographers), technological sophistication, and aesthetic insight. Basically, technology has provided the means and media in the realization of pre-wedding photo works, while photographers only use it. That is, the embodiment of art through the help of technology is able to make ethical values questionable as a form of expression in the name of creativity.

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