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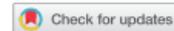
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# The practices of virtual reality marketing in the tourism sector, a case study of Bali, Indonesia

Nyoman Sri Subawa<sup>a</sup>, Ni Wayan Widhiasthini<sup>a</sup>, I. Putu Astawa<sup>b</sup>, Christantius Dwiatmadja<sup>c</sup> and Ni Putu Intan Permatasari<sup>a</sup>

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## 1 ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyse the practices of virtual reality marketing in the Bali tourism sector in Indonesia. This is a qualitative and descriptive research with the purposive sampling method used to acquire data on Bali's tourism components through in-depth interviews, observation, journals, and the Netnographic approach. The result showed hegemony in the practice of virtual reality marketing to tourists and potential consumers, using significant technology. The marketers practice the hegemony of virtual reality marketing on tourists and potential consumers. Tourism capitalism as a chain link in the tourism business can be integrated into marketing through virtual reality. This study acts as a guide to the application of virtual reality marketing and limited to Bali Province, Indonesia. Practically, it acts as a guide to the application of virtual reality marketing, with its social implication as a disconnection to tourism networks.

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Virtual reality marketing;  
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## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry was mostly affected by the pandemic due to the law imposed by the government, which restricted access to communities, thereby making it possible for people to visit tourist regions. Therefore, tourism-related industries such as hoteliers, airlines, restaurants, tourist attraction managers, souvenir centres, travel agents, and tour guides experienced a decline in revenue. Baum and Hai (2020) stated that the hospitality and tourism industry received an impact on an unprecedentedly large scale. Therefore, tourism industry actors are required to utilize other marketing strategies to creatively market their products. One of such strategy is the use of virtual reality marketing abbreviated as VRM.

Tussyadiah et al. (2018) stated that the development of VR marketing technology offers widespread opportunities to hotels and tourism industry. However, Beck et al. (2019) reported that its use tends to affect the tourism sector with various challenges to the tourist objects, including tourism activities and cultural heritage, natural and beautiful beaches. The challenge referred to this case is to package the diversity and authenticity of Balinese cultures by utilizing the advancement of technology for virtual marketing. Therefore, smart tourism aids tourists in interacting with an attractive environment without having to travel with a 360-degree video used to cover live tours through video conferencing applications. The practice of some of these phenomena emerged due to the investment of virtual reality marketing (VRM) at high costs. Subawa and

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<sup>19</sup> Widhiasthini (2020) reported that information technology development is extremely effective in triggering <sup>36</sup> economic change, including the tourism industry.

As <sup>36</sup> one of the leading tourist destinations worldwide, Bali is also experiencing a decline in domestic and foreign visits. Data obtained from various sources shows that the decline has reached 95 per cent since March 2020. The components of tourism need to be prepared for these changes by creating new innovations, such as VRM, which needs to be thoroughly studied in research based on community, particularly in the tourist segment. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out <sup>38</sup> a research related to the problem formulation such as factors affecting VRM practice in Bali. <sup>38</sup> This research aims to strengthen the readiness of tourism elements in Bali and the infrastructure and human resources involved in VRM.

## 2. Literature review

Research which focuses on the tourism sector, particularly since the pandemic outbreak, provides inspiration to conduct a research on tourism related to the marketing and economic fields. The research conducted by Newsome (2020) scrutinized the emergence of online perspective as a reflection of the tourism industry. Baum and Hai (2020) also stated that the tourism industry is on an unprecedented scale. On the other side, Ozili (2020) studied about the socio-economic impact of the pandemic which has received responses from various countries by issuing various policies that regulate social interactions and economic activities, as a sociological consequence. Moreover, the pandemic has devastating <sup>21</sup> consequences for the global tourism and hospitality industry which can change tourist's lifestyle choices, travel behaviour and tourism preferences <sup>8</sup> in the short and long term (Wen et al., 2020). It affects tourism consumption patterns as well as the growing <sup>8</sup> popularity of free and independent, luxury travel, and health tourism. Based on those phenomena, tourism and hospitality industry can respond to the changes. As an academic response to this pandemic, Jiang and Wen (2020) conducted research on the pandemic's effects which affect marketing practices and hotel management in providing service trends. All of those studies above give inspiration to conduct research related to trends in the tourism industry as the sector which is most affected by this outbreak.

The results of subsequent research are related to marketing, particularly on niche markets, which are studied through the use of VRM. Thus, niche market is an important thing to describe in this literature review. According to the research carried out by Hoskins and Griffin (2020), a strong brand position <sup>23</sup> is extremely important in a market niche. It is supported by Schaefer (2014) who stated that an overdraft has several meanings, for instance, consumers presume that a niche market offers products that are different from usual, while companies view it as a promising opportunity that is getting saturated. Min et al. (2017) further stated the importance of considering the decision to migrate into the new high-tech markets, which is already dominating large companies. The results from the study carried out by Sousa and Alves (2019) reported that the larger the new market's size, the greater the opportunities offered. Miller et al. (2020) stated that there is a customer-centric iterative approach to product development in response to an ever-dynamic market environment. All these studies reviewed the market niche as untapped while emphasizing on the technological benefits <sup>25</sup>. Therefore, this research is based on the use of VRM to exploit the potentials of a niche market <sup>25</sup> in the tourism industry.

Various studies have been conducted on the tourism sector since the inception of the pandemic. For instance, Newsome (2020) carried out a research, which focused on the emergence of an online perspective as a reflection of the tourism industry. Baum and Hai (2020) stated that the tourism industry is an unprecedented scale. While, Ozili (2020) examined the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, which has received responses from various countries by issuing numerous <sup>31</sup> policies that regulate social interactions and economic activities, as a sociological consequence. In addition, Wen et al. (2020) stated that the pandemic has <sup>8</sup> devastating consequences on the tourism and hospitality industries globally. It has changed tourists' lifestyle choices, their travel behaviour and

preferences, and consumption patterns, with an increase in free and independent, luxury and health tourism. According to Jiang and Wen (2020), the pandemic affected the marketing and management practices of hotels in providing service trends.

Pourfakhimi et al. (2020) reported the impact of electronic promotion through word of mouth, which exceeds other publicity forms. Meanwhile, Avgeli (2018) stated that the economic perspective contributes to tourism providers' knowledge and understanding. Additionally, Leri and Theodoridis (2020) researched the relationship between the construction of holistic experiences, emotional responses, and the intention to revisit is important. The research carried out by Dorcic et al. (2019) and Gharibi (2020) reported that the evolution of technology and mobile applications led to the acceptance of smart tourism service providers, which has become a trend. This is consistent with the studies carried out by Go et al. (2020) and Cassia et al. (2020), which illustrated the acceptance of current artificial intelligence (AI) in the hotel and tourism industry. Similarly, the digital tourism ecosystem is accessed by disabled persons, and it also provides travel experience. These studies are recommended to analyse changes in the tourism industry, based on technological advances and digitization. According to Yung and Khoo-Lattimore (2019), studies on the application of VRM in the tourism industry lacks detailed knowledge, theory, and conceptual framework.

Several theories are applied in this research, namely Social Change, Knowledge, Power, and Hegemony. According to the theory of social change, any alteration in a society tends to affect the social system, including values, attitudes, and patterns of community behaviour. However, those that take place due to economic, technological, geographic, or biological conditions impact social life (Smith, 2010). In this research, changes in behaviour of the tourism industry towards marketing were analysed using information technology. Foucault stated that the Knowledge and Power theory refers to active structures' totality, increase in intervention, and exercising power during social interactions. It is inseparable from social life (Elden, 2016). Gramsci's theory of hegemony is related to the dominant class and bourgeoisie in Europe that ruled based on the agreement of subordinate groups. This was because the bourgeoisie was extremely hegemonic towards the lower classes and had to coerce them to win their support when contesting for leadership election (Juan, 2015). Hegemony theory is also analytically related to modern politics based on hierarchical organization, representation, unification, state, and ideology. It also refers to a leaderless, participatory, networked movement in global capitalism (Kioupiolis, 2018). Gencoglu (2019) researched its development by creating a collective identity.

### 3. Research framework

Changes in the tourism industry are associated with the development of various marketing strategies, with VRM used to offer services to domestic tourists. In addition, certain phenomena in the application of this technology include the emergence of niche market segments and sustainable tourism. Its economic growth impacts were analysed based on the Theories of Social Change, Knowledge-Power, and Hegemony, as shown in Figure 1.

### 4. Research methodology

This research encompasses primary and secondary data reported narratively. This qualitative descriptive study applied a Netnography approach, which is carried out by observing the use of the internet in marketing tourism products. Kirova (2020) stated that this technique is an interactive technology integration to influence tourists. The managerial and professional use of technology in this sector is valuable. Data collection technique was based on in-depth interviews by continuously repeating the same questions until the informants became mentally exhausted. Additionally, online observations and studies of virtual documents concerning tourist sites were conducted. The informants consist of marketing travel agents, government officials, tour guides, tourism object managers, souvenir shops, hotel owners, restaurants, travel entrepreneurs, and tourists, totalling 13 people. The informants

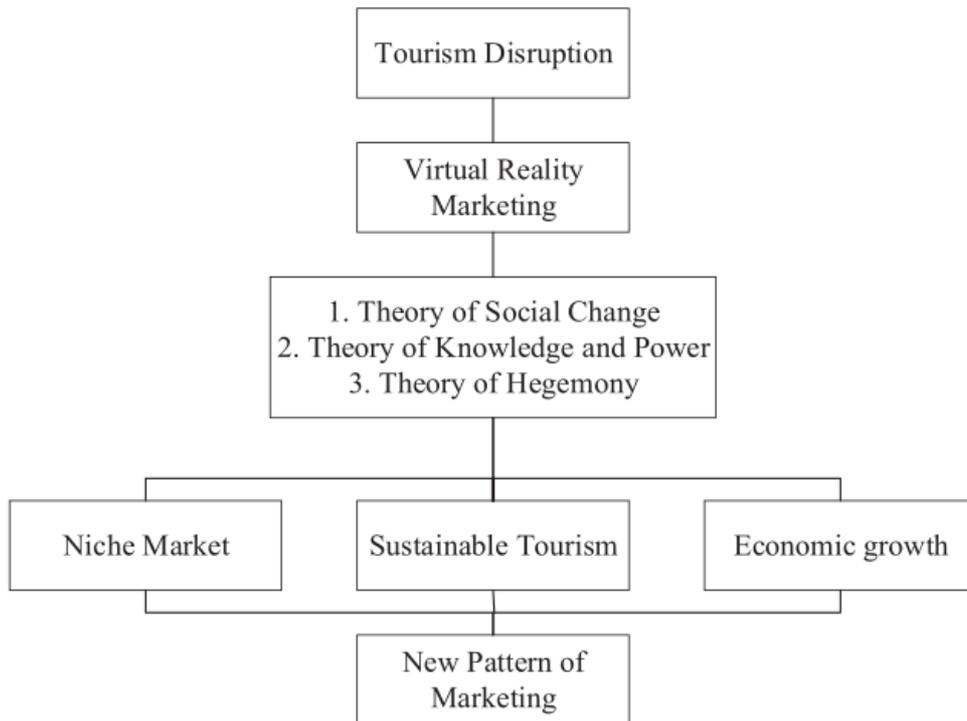


Figure 1. A research framework.

were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria activeness, competence, experience, and knowledge of tourism. The research location is Bali, globally known as a tourist destination. It has various tourist objects scattered in all districts and cities, therefore, the tourism sector is a major source of local revenue, and most of the citizenry are highly dependent on this industry. The presentation stage is carried out after data reduction and coding and processing the information obtained from the informants before interpreting them. Triangulation is used for testing the validity of data sources, research persistence, theories, and concepts as well as emerging phenomena. The testing of gathered qualitative data is done after doing deep observation on those qualitative data. Furthermore, the data is related to the observation results, the existing concepts and theories then, it could reach the qualifications as a valid data.

## 5. Results and discussion

VRM is an alternative method used in marketing tourism products, a sustainable manner for community groups due to the imposed policy of the government restricting movements. The following subsections provide details on the use of VRM as a marketing technique.

### 5.1. Niche market

According to numerous studies, the society needs to prepare for the changes associated with the new normal period, due to the inception of the Covid-19 pandemic, by implementing strict health rules. These behaviour changes include observing social distancing, avoiding crowds, minimizing mobilization, work activities, education, and shopping, which are carried out from home using online media. Likewise, actors in the tourism industry used VR to carry out marketing activities for certain products. According to Lacka (2020), Trunfio et al. (2020), and Chin-Feng Lin et al. (2020),

the video content needs to possess a panoramic view to be attractive to viewers. Yoy Bergs et al. (2019) further reported that tourists' emotions are incited by a series of cautiously designed and detailed tourist trips. Kim et al. (2020) stated that tourists tend to prefer this type of tourism after they are exposed to an authentic experience, therefore, it triggers the intention to return to tourist objects using VR facilities. They also stated that by marketing tourism products through VR, it is expected that it incites them, and they experience firsthand accommodation, tourist destinations, or other superior products. It can be highlighted that the niche market are tourists who pay more attention on health protocol in the new normal life, elderly tourists, and tourists with physical disability, they prefer to use the VRM as a reference to enjoy tourism products. They can enjoy VRM on their virtual visit or doing a conventional visit to a certain tourism place.

This virtual visit triggers desires or reminds the tourists on the status of their trips. Jung et al. (2016) related it to social presence gained through virtual visits. Informant I, the owner of several hotels, strongly agrees that VRM is a new advertising product. Informant II, a tour guide accustomed to escorting tourists, reported that they had to get used to revealing the tourist attraction condition using technological assistance. 'Initially, it felt strange', as reported by the informant. These irregularities are closely related to changes in the tour guides' work routines, such as discussing the tourist objects that are frequently visited. In fact, tourists are incited to enjoy the crashing waves of Tanah Lot, the beautiful view of Mount Batur, Balinese people's religious atmosphere in Besakih Temple, feel the crowd of traditional markets, and various other real sensations. All of these are part of Balinese local wisdom, which is a global tourism commodity.

Virtual reality marketing encourages tourists to visit attractions places, despite being in different countries, need to see and enjoy them with the aid of technological devices used in different places. They are expected to possess excellent speaking skills, as well as the appropriate technological support. Therefore, irrespective of the fact that they are not physically present, tourists as consumers or potential consumers feel the traveling sensation. Adachi et al. (2020) suggested an increase in the use of VR as a tourism promotion activity, specifically to enhance tourist visits to certain destinations. Gibson and O'Rawe (2018) stated that VR is widely used in marketing activities, to replace promotional tools such as brochures, to build sensory experiences to attract tourists and influence consumer decision-making processes. Several hotels in Bali have used VR to promote their activities, namely Club Med Bali, The Westin Resort, Bondalem Beach Club, and the Royal Santrian. They are members of international and national business networks. They use VR as a promotion means to advertise ballroom, resort, and other facilities, as reported by two informants III and IV that are Senior Marketing officers of the star hotels.

Similarly, several studies show that various hotels have determined the benefits of using VR as reported by Wei (2019), which stated that these applications are absolutely useful for marketing. These activities are carried out through the use of smartphone-based virtual reality. Furthermore, it is used to explore hotel facilities, which leads to an immersive experience that results in the desire to make direct visits (Israel et al., 2019). Meera and Vinodan (2019) discovered that VR is also used in health tourism to introduce innovative products to tourists or customers.

Informants VI and VII, VIII defined the VR as a promotional tool used to increase revenue for hotels, restaurants, shopping centres, and various other facilities. This is understandable, considering that its use by marketers creates tourism opportunities with a novel sustainable concept. Based on Dorcic et al. (2019), this technological application impacts consumers and service providers' behaviour, and acts as a smart tourism product, considered as the future hospitality industry. This is enjoyed by elderly tourists that desire to repeat their previous travels, and those, suffering from illness, or including those at risk supposing they indulge in a conventional tour.

Virtual reality is actually effective in a unique, special, and limited market. According to the research carried out by Wu et al. (2016), it is necessary to pay attention and identify the niches in this sector to obtain segmentation. Therefore, there is a need to determine product design. The study carried out by Santos et al. (2016) stated that the emergence of a new tourism profile trend is caused by constant change, such as the pandemic, therefore, the market environment needs to

be accelerated to embrace the millennial and senior segments. Furthermore, it is necessary to determine the marketing strategy based on preparation, tour, and post-trip stages. However, during the preparatory stage, it is necessary to pay attention to the readiness of technological devices used, tourist objects, and tour guides that clearly understand the tourist areas to be addressed. At the travel time stage, it is important to observe the connectivity between the tour guide and tourists in order to realize the expectations of both parties. It is essential to carry out evaluation activities after a trip to obtain input from tourists. It is essential to inquire about any complaints and find out whether they are interested in visiting in person. It is also necessary to discover whether their desire to visit these tourist destinations needs to be fulfilled, even when virtually carried out. Thus, the steps taken include monitoring tourist testimonials, particularly finding out whether they are satisfied with the virtual visit.

Consequently, a characteristic of the disruption era includes the major changes that have occurred in the marketing sector. Consumers have shared testimonials, uploaded photos, and comments on their various social media accounts. The IX informant that worked as a tour guide for ten years reported that 'any form of trip engaged in, needs to be made the pleasant trip for tourists because they aid in promoting these activities through posts on their social media accounts'. The research carried out by Wu et al. (2019) stated that tourism operators need to focus on providing virtual services in order to satisfy tourists. Furthermore, a pleasant experience causes them to be loyal, thereby desiring to visit in person, and even advocate their experiences to others. At this point, tourists as consumers participate in marketing the products they use. This has led to the disruption of tourism marketing patterns, additionally, Buhalis et al. (2019) reported that the use of the internet creates a smart environment that changes the structure and processes of the tourism industry. Pourfakhimi et al. (2019) stated that e-tourism technology causes a unique field phenomenon, and Samala et al. (2020) added that virtual reality is integrated to improve tourism services. However, it is unable to move beyond the touch of direct services.

Additionally, Willis and Chiasson (2007) focused their attention on cultural fit, and Antonio Gramsci categorizes consent as positive hegemony. In this process, the tourists and tour guides are both considered as hegemonic parties. The characteristic domination is carried out by the tour guide, preceded by an agreement between the two parties. Foucault (Jobe, 2017) describes this phenomenon in the knowledge-power theory. Therefore, the tour guides have the power to direct tourists through VR because they possess detailed knowledge of the destinations.

## 5.2. Sustainable tourism

Tourism innovation is one of the important strategies used to strengthen global competitiveness, therefore, by increasing local tourism, collaborating with various elements, and diversifying tourism facilities products and services, the industry is sustained (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2016). Tourists destination are likely to remain stagnate, decrease and even lose tourists assuming they are unable to rejuvenate designs, and determine the originality of ideas and products to be marketed to tourists. Furthermore, attention to change and global threats such as terrorism, outbreaks of diseases, need to be anticipated, therefore, it is essential to carry out proactive actions (Brooker & Burgess, 2008). Bali tourism experienced some of these conditions, which is inevitable from other incidents in a local, national and global scale. Based on this, it is necessary to determine a sustainable tourism concept as proposed in the research carried out by Dixon (2017), which reported the need to pay attention to geopolitical conditions and emulate Canadian tourism. Therefore, this concept needs to be strengthened by determining a unique market position and for tourism to be economically sustainable. VRM is a form of a new tourism promotion strategy which can improve the society's willingness to do travelling activities, with the utilization of Virtual Reality Tourism.

Changes in the new normal order are also applicable to the tourism sector, therefore, geopolitical changes need to become a major concern for the use of VRM in assisting domestic tourists. The Indonesian government's policy was subsequently supported by the Bali Provincial Government, namely

opening Bali for domestic tourists' arrival, which were in accordance with Fusaro (2017), Parisot (2015), and Kim (2019), geopolitics which brings changes to the world of capitalism. As part of the disruption in the tourism sector, VRM is also closely related to funds and digital transactions. It also acts as an investigatory measure, such as in the implementation of e-commerce, and the users are satisfied with this platform (Subawa & Mimaki, 2019). Digitalized payments certainly support this practice. Tourists that are interested in packages offered through VRM tend to fulfil certain obligations, in accordance with the use of fintech payments through price quotes via e-commerce. This system aided the tourists to obtain information and place orders through interactive online communication.

Informant X, the travel agency manager, stated that currently, non-cash payments had become a practice in the tourism industry. Actors are certain about financial income because payments have been made before the activities begin. Informant XI, a senior marketing officer at an international networking resort, stated that 'since this new normal era, they have been using more VR to advertise their products rather than the conventional marketing such as personal selling. Therefore, the video visualization has to describe the actual situation of their resort'. Based on the two informants' opinions, sustainable tourism is closely related to the power of information technology, which is a consequence of international social restrictions. The research carried out by Stephanie Hays et al. (2013) revealed that information technology plays an important role in sustainable tourism. In addition, social media serve as a marketing medium to reach a global audience, therefore, causing tourist visits to be more significant. This is further strengthened by the study carried out by Ben Haobin Ye et al. (2020) which stated that tourism actors use social media to advertise their business and identify tourist behaviour as well as the factors that cause these changes. The social change theory is applied in the analysis that all societal changes affect the social system, including values, attitudes, and community behaviour patterns. Likewise, in this research, information technology, particularly VRM is the mainstay that is classified as a response to changes in people's attitudes and behaviour, specifically marketers in the tourism sector.

All tourism components need to be ready to anticipate the various dynamics by focusing on domestic tourists. It is essential to consider the research carried out by Trunfio et al. (2006), which stated that it is essential to analyse the regional approach as a cluster that identifies collective strategies of the roles performed by tour operators in developing new tourism destinations and typologies. Furthermore, Johnston and Tyrrell (2007), Salazar and Cardoso (2019) stated the importance of training and development to understand sustainable tourism, which anticipates the dynamics of economic conditions, tourist behaviour, and the environment occasionally. This sector needs to establish comprehensive indicators, such as economic, socio-cultural, psychological, political, administrative, tourism commercialization, the physical environment, and community psychological factors, as a strategic plan for sustainability. Consequently, the disclosure of these factors and their relationship to the new normal era as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, led to the eventual consideration of various decisions offered by VR. Signorile et al. (2018) stated that sustainable tourism is closely related to the public and private sectors' involvement. However, the condition of tourism in Bali is regulated by the public sector or government. It is also facilitated by various tourism sector organizations. Meanwhile, the private sector is obliged to comply with all these regulations and maintain a conducive environment in order to realize sustainable tourism. Tourists can carry out social mobility in a tenable manner by implementing optimal health standards. According to an informant, in the tourism sector organization's management stated that the Bali Provincial Government is routinely involved in formulating policies, monitoring, and evaluating the established programmes.

The purpose of considering sustainable tourism is to establish originality, therefore, it continues to develop exponentially and adaptively to changes (Ruhanen et al., 2019). In this instance, it certainly relates to trends, lifestyles, and tourist behaviour. Castro-Spila et al. (2018) and de Lange and Dodds (2017) reported the importance of mapping vulnerability, social innovation, and integration to achieve sustainable tourism. The social entrepreneurship aspect is an effort to boost the tourism industry's growth by exploring its potentials. This creates a new trend, namely the

emergence of selfie tours displayed from a unique view, initiated by young entrepreneurs. The observations show that selfie has taken advantage of the authenticity of the natural environment, as well as deliberately creates a new social environment as a tourist attraction. There is a tendency for tourists to explore new natural attractions, such as the Nusa Penida area, which has an extremely beautiful authentic sea view.

Meanwhile, Budeanu (2013) and Nadalipour et al. (2019) reported that there is a need to maintain the balance between nature, community culture, and social media use in mutually agreed terms, particularly for areas that define tourism-centricity. Therefore, this balance requires great attention, particularly in regions that depend on this sector as their main income source, namely Bali. The existing phenomenon shows that new tourist destinations tend to be exploited to a certain degree, leading to saturation. This fact needs to be studied, analysed, and considered economically, socio-cultural, and ecologically by involving all tourism stakeholders.

### 5.3 Economic growth

The evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic led to a global decrease in economic growth, which also affected the Bali Province. Olivia et al. (2020) stated the strength of economic disruptions is currently on an unpredicted scale. The survey was conducted to examine the impact of the virus on Indonesia's economy, as well as the government's efforts to overcome the economic crisis in a 'new normal' period. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (August 2020) showed a decrease in economic growth by -7.22 per cent in Bali for the 20<sup>th</sup> semester of 2020. Furthermore, several business fields were also affected by this pandemic such as transportation, warehousing, accommodation, food and drink services, airports, and the occupancy rate of star-rated hotels, which decreased significantly by -94.37 per cent. These sectors are the driving force for the Bali tourism industry.

Conversely, the Work from Home pattern and restrictions on community activities led to an economic increase in information and communication, online shopping, and sales, as well as the virtual organization of events by 78 per cent. This condition is related to VRM, which is also based on information technology. Virtual reality has become an option for marketers to continue to publicize their products to boost economic growth. Informant XII, a senior hospitality marketing officer, stated that during this pandemic, the officer aggressively advertised products using VR, followed by scheduling online meetings. 'They continued to advertise MICE products (meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions), and provide accommodation through VR, in addition, simulated health protocols, food services, meeting rooms that have been standardized by the government were also broadcasted', as reported by informant XIII in explaining the efforts involved in convincing hotel users. These observations show that in this new normal, hotels with MICE facilities aggressively carry out their marketing activities through the use of VRM, and they focus on targeting domestic consumers from education institutions and other organizations.

The increase in the use of information technology to advertising tourism products is the response of industry players to government policies to improve the Indonesian economy. Based on the research carried out by Musyawwiri and Üngör (2019), an appropriate government policy improves aspects of the economy by exploring the relationship between its growth and an inclusive prosperity framework. A sustainable developmental programme is realized in the Indonesian context by increasing investment

(Kurniawan & Managi, 2018). On the contrary, Suryahadi et al. (2020) stated that the pandemic's impact is bound to increase, thereby reducing the 2020 economic growth projection from 5 per cent to approximately 4.2 per cent and -3.5 per cent. The reality of using VRM is an attempt by the Indonesian government to encourage the incessant promotion involved in tourism (Negara & Ramayandi, 2020), and this was also reported by Aritenang and Chandramidi (2020). The effectiveness of the strategy outlined in government policies increases economic growth (McLeod & Rosdaniah, 2018). The use of VR, particularly in the marketing field, is expected to boost the tourism industry's growth, particularly domestically.

Moreover, it creates employment opportunities, an increase in people's income, and purchasing power. The GPS data illustrates the downturn in Bali's economy, VR marketing was widely used to accelerate the growth of the tourism sector, with the main target being the domestic market. Therefore, because the economy primarily drives this industry, it has a huge influence on Bali's economic growth.

## 6. Research findings

This study discovered that the VRM is targeted at the niche market. It simply means that consumers or tourists are based on specific categories, namely, those that have been to Bali and desire to visit again because the COVID-19 pandemic situation restricts them and elderly tourists that suffer from chronic diseases, as well as the pregnant ones. However, this category of tourist is at risk supposing they decide to travel according to the Indonesian government warning policy. Second, there is a hegemony in VRM practices applied by marketers. The third finding is that the capitalist tourism network forms a single marketing concept. It serves as the link in the tourism business, such as hotels, restaurants, airlines, souvenir centres, spas, tourist transportation, etc. Fourth, VRM is a form of sustainable tourism and an effort to increase Bali's economic growth.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on these results and analysis, it was concluded that the factors behind the VRM practice include the following: (1) It is used to target domestic tourists because government policies are starting to open up opportunities for movement and market overdrafts. (2) The availability of advanced technological facilities plays a vital role in displaying high-quality images and enjoyable sounds. (3) The disruption of this sector and economic growth is boosted through VRM optimization. This study has certain limitations, from the territorial aspect, only VRM application in Bali, Indonesia, was examined. The practical implication adopted by tourists, players, and stakeholders is an alternative to tourism practices, and it also leads to sustainability. Subsequent studies are recommended to (1) carry out a review of VRM in various regions in order to obtain a comprehensive comparison, and (2) there is a need to focus on the readiness of government regulations that adopts VRM.

## 28 Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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