THE ROLE OF FEMINISM IN ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL ACTORS TOWARDS EMPOWERING THE EFFORTS OF RECOVERING WOMEN IN POST- PANDEMIC TOURISM

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Abstract
This study seeks to unravel the role of feminism in shaping the engagement of international actors bilaterally, regionally, and multilaterally in the endeavor to revive and enhance the economic and social condition of women in the tourism industry within the post-pandemic condition. Through the lens of feminism that also perpetuates an understanding from the liberal-institutionalism view, this paper discovers that the engagement of actors who conduct cooperation leading to the establishment of institutions and programs with a focus on the prevailing notion of innovation is underpinned by the salient concept of shared value, which prioritizes the importance of women's rights and gender equality.

Keyword: Women, Feminism, COVID-19, Post-pandemic, Cooperation, Tourism

Introduction
The challenges faced by women working in the tourism industry have been immense, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is evident that the emergence of COVID-19 has negatively impacted the tourism industry, with adverse effects ranging from international travel restrictions to the closure of public places, including tourist attractions such as beaches and museums, which diminish countries' economic growth due to a decline in state revenues. For instance, as per the assertion made by the Statista Research department (2020), Indonesia has experienced a loss of revenue of up to 85 trillion Indonesian rupiahs. The closure of public places and tourist attractions had many negative repercussions, especially for women, who have been hit harder economically by the pandemic since they constitute a significant proportion of workers in severely affected sectors, such as accommodation and food services. However, as a result of the devastation caused by COVID-19, the tourism industry has been put in a favorable circumstance to reevaluate its duty to preserve women's contributions and participation within the tourism industry.
Based on the analysis of the varied extent of women’s involvement in the tourism sector worldwide, as depicted in Picture 1.1, a decline in tourism is anticipated to have the most negative impact on women’s employment due to the high reliance on the tourism industry. This circumstance, along with restricted mobility and lockdown measures, has led to a substantial increase in domestic and other forms of violence against women and girls globally (UN Women, 2021).

The role of women in the tourism sector holds tremendous significance as their growing representation and contributions have been instrumental in reshaping the industry. Their active involvement has not only fueled economic expansion but also fostered cultural preservation and enriched the overall customer experience. When women assume leadership and management positions within the sector, their diverse perspectives and innovative thinking foster improved decision-making processes and bolster organizational performance. Moreover, their exceptional interpersonal skills and meticulous attention to detail render them pivotal in delivering personalized and exceptional service, resulting in heightened levels of customer satisfaction. By empowering women in the tourism sector, we have the potential to unlock their full capabilities, promote gender equality, and establish a more comprehensive and prosperous industry that benefits all stakeholders. We can see women’s participation in the tourism industry in terms of social engagement, as an individual opportunity to engage in tourism activities. Women groups or communities usually work together to meet the needs of tourists so as to bring cohesiveness to the community.

Discrimination against women still continues to make it difficult for them to grow in their careers and find equitable employment opportunities. Women frequently experience unequal salary, a lack of leadership opportunities, and a lack of appreciation for their work. Furthermore, women continue to experience a disproportionate amount of sexual harassment in the tourism industry. Such behavior not only violates their rights and well-being but also makes the workplace unwelcoming and unsafe.

Despite women constituting the majority of the tourism sector, their role in tourism activities continues to be predominantly restricted. Women’s activities in tourism are limited to cleaning inns, tour guides, and cooking. Women are only caretakers of tourism facilities, not as active actors in tourism but their income in tourism activities is also
sometimes erratic and relatively low because the majority of income is obtained from the
distribution of the results of activities. Many of the women working in the tourism sector
are not with the main objective to earn income. Although women follow tourism, many
do low paid and low—skilled jobs. This condition results in inequality between women
and men.

METHODS

The authors have endeavored to present the findings by gathering primary and
secondary data from various sources, including interviews, official documents, and
credible literature available on the internet such as journals and article reviews. The
analysis use liberal-institutionalism's concepts focusing special emphasis on the necessity
of international actors cooperating and preventing conflicts while pursuing common
goals. Liberal-institutionalism, underscores the paramountcy of cooperative engagements
among international actors as a means to accomplish shared objectives and forestall the
emergence of conflicts. It posits that by establishing and adhering to institutional
structures, states can establish partnerships, uphold norms, and maintain stability within
the international system. This approach recognizes that concerted efforts, coordination,
and mutual agreements can effectively address complex global challenges and promote
mutual benefits among diverse actors.

Simultaneously, within the domain of the tourism industry, feminist perspectives
have emerged as a significant framework that highlights the importance of women's rights
and gender equality. Feminism contends that the rise of gender-based discriminations and
inequities within this sector necessitate urgent attention and remedial action. By
integrating feminist principles, tourism stakeholders can strive to eliminate
discrimination, empower women, and create inclusive environments that ensure equal
opportunities for all genders. Recognizing the agency and aspirations of women in the
tourism industry is essential for fostering equitable practices, enhancing social justice,
and promoting sustainable development.

Consequently, incorporating feminist principles into the discourse of the tourism
industry aligns with the broader objectives of liberal-institutionalism by fostering
cooperation, addressing gender disparities, and promoting inclusive practices. This
integration can help to engender a more egalitarian and harmonious global tourism
landscape that not only meets the diverse needs of all stakeholders but also advances the
larger goals of peace, social progress, and human rights.

Results and Discussion

Along with the dreading discrimination incorporating the acts of sexual
harassment and gender-based violence in the tourism sector globally, solutions are formed
from a rise in concerns and the determination to stop discrimination against women and
fulfill the rights of women which continue to be violated. Feminism thus plays the role of
becoming a shared belief across the world in achieving gender equality. As gender issues
in the tourism sector become more prominent and reach the awareness of more parts of
the world, cooperation is established, prompted by the common shared belief of feminism
as the base of highlighting gender equality to tackle violence against women. The form
Levels of Cooperation

Bilateral

An examination of the cooperation between Indonesia and Canada offers an overview of a bilateral cooperation that is based on shared values and a set of goals. The cooperation was undertaken in an effort to empower women in the tourism domain and enhance both parties' tourism industries as a whole.

Throughout the past five years, the Indonesian tourism industry has attracted a rising number of tourists worldwide, including Canadians and vice versa. This was attainable because the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Canada convened a Bilateral Consultation Forum on 30 July 1997 to collaborate on political, economic, and socio-cultural issues where both nations have similar concerns. As a highlight of the 60th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Indonesia and Canada in 2012, this forum, which is the beginning point for collaboration between Indonesia and Canada, was elevated to a more strategic level in 2021 and hosted yearly. This cooperation has had several positive impacts on both Indonesia and Canada, including an increase in each country's gross domestic product (GDP) through the tourism industry, particularly in terms of commercial goods relations, indicating reciprocity within the partnership.

In an effort to promote the Indonesian tourism industry and attract Canadian tourists, the Embassy of Indonesia utilized various promotional channels to showcase a diverse range of commercial goods. These goods, which include snacks and souvenirs, were crafted by women from different regions of Indonesia, highlighting the innovative processes within the tourism industry. A visual representation of this promotional strategy can be observed in the following picture.

Picture 1.1. Women's Participation in Promoting Commercial Goods Through a Tourism Show
(Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018)
Apart from endorsing commercial products, the Embassy of Indonesia engages in promoting Indonesian tourism through diverse channels such as involvement in tourist shows, international forums, and joint advertising with Indonesian communities throughout Canada. The actors or institution’s role and the underlying reason for cooperation are undoubtedly crucial. Therefore, the application of feminist theory in conjunction with neoliberalism theory can aid in elucidating the collaborative efforts between Indonesia and Canada in the realm of tourism.

**Regional**

In achieving gender equality and fighting for women’s rights in tourism with feminism as a base theory, cooperation between multiple nations is needed. To raise awareness on how feminism helps with ASEAN’s concern regarding gender equality and tourism growth, the ASEAN Gender and Development Framework for Tourism was created. Developing gender equality and advancing women are important ASEAN landmarks to empower women’s human rights, free them from violence, support self-determination, and transform the society’s economic, social, and political structures in regard to the legitimacy of women’s role in tourism.

The Gender and Development in Tourism Forum was hosted by ASEAN in Manila in 2015 with Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam as participants. The forum looked at how gender equality should be incorporated in ASEAN tourism. The forum highlighted the steps taken by the ASEAN member states regarding laws and policies on women, the position of women in the tourism industry, the problems and gaps in the field of gender and development, and the mechanisms, tools, and strategies for gender and development. (ASEAN, 2020)

The six strategies used are:

1. Improve ASEAN Member States’ institutional ability to address gender issues in the tourism industry.
2. Recognition of successful prevention and intervention of discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence in tourism among ASEAN Member States.
3. Reduce the number of cases of sex trafficking and/or prostitution in the ASEAN Member States’ tourism sectors.
4. Harmonized ASEAN gender and tourism development policies.
5. Encourage gender equality among ASEAN member states in employment in the tourism industry and in commercial enterprises.
6. Encouraging the leaders of all ASEAN members to adopt a gender-responsive leadership style in the tourist sector.

Gender discrimination in tourism refers to any gender-based differentiation, exclusion, or limitation that has the impact of, or is intended to have the effect of, preventing any individual from expressing their human rights and basic freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civic, or other areas based on the ASEAN Gender and Development Framework In Tourism. Women in ASEAN countries are particularly
at risk of gender-based violence, such as domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and human trafficking. Inadequate legal protections and enforcement procedures, as well as cultural attitudes that support violence against women and girls, are some of the causes of this.

ASEAN Member States are capacitated on the prevention of sexual harassment and gender-based violence by creating policy on sexual harassment discrimination and gender-based violence that are formulated. Based on the ASEAN Work Plan, they held a interviews and survey regarding the member state’s willingness to fight on discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. By providing methods, institutions, time, and space for men, women, and vulnerable groups in tourism, ASEAN Member States are dedicated to advancing and supporting gender equality.

**Multilateral**

Programs and initiatives such as Women in Tourism Indonesia (WTID) and The International Women in Travel and Tourism Forum (IWTTF) are part of a broader movement within the tourism industry to address gender inequality and empower women. These initiatives recognize that women have historically faced various barriers and challenges in the tourism sector. The primary goal of these programs is to promote gender equality by advocating for women's rights, creating opportunities for women's advancement, and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment within the tourism industry. They strive to challenge and change the structural and cultural factors that perpetuate gender inequities, and to create a more level playing field for women professionals.

**Woman in Tourism Indonesia (WTID)**

Women in Tourism Indonesia (WTID) endeavors to advance gender equality and empower women and girls, as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 5. In alignment with this goal, WTID seeks to enhance gender equality in the Indonesian tourism industry and raise awareness about the value of women's participation in this field (UN, 2022). WTID strives to foster gender equality and diversity within the tourism sector by facilitating networking opportunities, offering training programs, and providing mentoring initiatives for women working in tourism. Moreover, the organization advocates for equal remuneration, work-life balance, and career advancement prospects for women in the tourism industry (Women in Tourism Indonesia, n.d.).
WTID has developed several programs, including WTIDRecognition, WTIDpedia, WTIDpride, WTIDtalk, and WTIDiscuss. WTIDRecognition acknowledges the contributions of underappreciated individuals who play crucial roles in highlighting women’s involvement in the tourism industry. WTIDpedia is an educational program that focuses on raising awareness about topics such as sexual harassment and relevant tourism laws. WTIDpride promotes locally crafted products, such as souvenirs and culinary delights, made by women. WTIDtalk and WTIDiscuss organize seminars and discussions that directly educate people about the significance of women in tourism and related subjects. In conclusion, Women in Tourism aims to cultivate a more fair and sustainable tourism industry by empowering women and promoting gender equality.

In dealing with these issues and finding solutions and innovations, the United Nations Women suggest recommendations which include actions for the public sector, the private sector, and multi-stakeholder partnerships, civil society, and international organizations. The recommendations focus on the empowerment of gender equality in labor policies in tourism recovery, targeted financing, acknowledgement of the distribution and proportions of pay and care work, the participation of women in decision making, engagement in gender-responsive procurement, promotion of gender balance in boards, flexible work arrangements, and support women entrepreneurs in tourism.

To contribute in achieving a betterment for women in the tourism industry, the NGO Women in Tourism Indonesia has created innovative programs for women. An example to their program is their help in promoting small and medium enterprises by women such as the Hastuti Jogja Craft Souvenir which produces recycled products and shares knowledge through activities. The strategies in which Hastuti Jogja Craft becomes innovative in spreading knowledge about crafts in tourism is by socializing in various schools. The benefits to this are through its social economic incentive, women empowerment, and women production promotion.
Women in Travel and Tourism Forum (IWTTF)

The International Women in Travel and Tourism Forum (IWTTF) is a collaborative platform that brings together women representatives from diverse sectors of the travel and tourism industry. Its main focus is to discuss and address issues related to gender equality, female empowerment, and sustainability. The forum aims to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, which aims for gender equality and the empowerment of all women. The IWTTF works in partnership with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, and international organizations (IOs) such as Intrepid Travel, Google, The Travel Foundation, Charitable Travel, the European Union (EU), and GTTP.

However, the theory of liberal institutionalism recognizes that institutions can face limitations due to power imbalances, competing interests, and limited resources. In the case of the IWTTF, the forum may encounter challenges in engaging with stakeholders who have different priorities or who do not prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment in the tourism industry. Despite these challenges, the IWTTF plays a crucial role as a platform for multilateral cooperation, bringing together women from various sectors within travel and tourism. Its primary objective is to promote gender equality and empower women in the industry. The forum's partnerships with other institutions highlight the significance of institutional linkages in working towards shared objectives.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted far-reaching consequences on the tourism industry, manifesting in disproportionate impact on women employed within this sector. The closure of public spaces and tourist destinations has precipitated a decline in tourism revenues, thereby engendering widespread job losses and economic hardships for women who make up a significant proportion of the workforce in the tourism industry. Unfortunately, discriminatory practices persist within the tourism industry, impeding the advancement of women professionals and impinging upon their access to equitable employment opportunities. Gender-based pay disparities, limited representation in leadership positions, and instances of sexual harassment pervade the sector, relegating women primarily to low-skilled and poorly remunerated roles.

To redress these multifaceted issues, collaborative efforts at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels have been initiated. By integrating feminist principles with the broader objectives of liberal institutionalism, cooperation can be fostered, gender disparities can be addressed, and inclusive practices can be promoted within the tourism industry. Through acknowledging the agency and aspirations of women in tourism, stakeholders can collectively endeavor to engender equitable practices, social justice, and sustainable development. Thus, it is crucial to empower women within the tourism industry, eliminate all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence, and provide equal opportunities for the advancement of women.
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