The International Journal of Social Sciences World
TIJOSSW is Available Online at:
https://www.growingscholar.org/journal/index.php/TIJOSSW
Vol. 4 No. 1, January- June 2022, pages: 87~94
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5915324
ISSN **2690-5167**
Growingscholar Publisher

The Multiplicity of Photography Visualization Meaning: Periodization of Bali Pre-Marriage Photos in Post Reality Studies

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Article history:
Received: November, 25, 2021; Accepted: January 20, 2022; Displayed Online: January 29, 2022; Published: June 30, 2022

Keywords

Periodization;

Photography;

Pre-wedding;

Post-reality;

Abstract

Currently, Balinese people have been faced with a new culture, especially in the marriage tradition known as pre-wedding photos. Pre-wedding photos are photos made before the marriage process is carried out with the aim of providing information that the couple will get married. As an addition, pre-wedding photos have developed since they were introduced in 1996. The development of pre-wedding photos has led to the presence of various new meanings in the form of visual language. The meanings generated from the visual elements of pre-wedding photos merge and shift the realities of life, which are merely lifestyle stereotypes, creating false awareness, and expectations of a marriage. The purpose of this research is to reveal what kind of meaning you want to build from pre-wedding photos from each period of its development, especially in Bali. The research approach uses qualitative methods, namely observation and interviews. The data will be analyzed qualitatively interpretively and using several theories, among others, the theory of deconstruction, commodification and semiotics. The results of the study reveal that each period of the development of pre-wedding photos gives birth to new meanings that are influenced by globalization and changes in the lifestyle of the Hindu community in Bali.

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1. Introduction

Pre-wedding photos or what are often called pre-wedding photos have become a commodity that colors Hindu marriages in Bali. Previously, in Balinese Hindu marriages, they did not know the term or process of pre-wedding photos. But now it seems as if pre-wedding photos are an important part of the Balinese marriage process and contradicts what is the essence of a wedding, especially in the traditions of the Balinese Hindu community (Dinata & Pradnyanita, 2021). The embodiment of meaning in each pre-wedding photo concept is one of the reasons why pre-wedding photos are needed. These meanings are the key that marriage is not only about customs or ways of interpreting cultural values but also marriage is a place for fighting lifestyle desires in social relations in modern society (Cf. Langkameng & Latupeirissa, 2020).

The embodiment of various concepts in pre-wedding photos gives birth to various processes of various meanings. Most of the sign concepts in pre-wedding photo work are information to be conveyed. The information in each creation of pre-wedding photo works is a reinterpretation from various parties, not only the bridal couple but also the relations of pre-wedding photo services such as photographers, beauty salons and event organizers. The marriage tradition of the Hindu community in Bali is currently experiencing what is called post reality (Cf. Sujaya et al., 2021). The presence of a process of new meanings in visual photography in the form of pre-wedding photos or better known as pre-wedding photos. Visual meaning, especially in photographic works, is able to provide various interpretations of a sign (Sontag, 1977). These signs are present as a way of representing the couple's life, and certain identities in building a positive image.

The meaning or sign in the post reality in question is a form of sign or meaning that goes beyond reality itself. In line with this, Piliang (2004) stated that a sign can be said to be beyond, when it has gone out of the limits of the normal principles, nature, and functions of signs as a means of communication and information delivery. That is, the meaning presented in the pre-wedding photo is no longer the real meaning but has been produced through the commodification mechanism of signs. Reality that is built by elements of simulation, replica, and manipulative is one way to conceptualize oneself through the art of photography. The development of the art of photography, especially pre-wedding photos in Bali, is proof that pre-wedding photos are not only influenced by technological developments but also the development of taste, lifestyle and creativity in the post-modern era.

2. Materials and Method

This research uses an approach to the study of culture and the art of photography. The research was conducted in the districts of Denpasar, Badung and Gianyar. Locations were chosen randomly because this phenomenon is global and affects all districts. The method used is observation, interviews, and literature. All data were analyzed using interpretive qualitative methods with the first stage of data reduction, data presentation, and the third stage of drawing conclusions. The theories used are 1) semiotic theory, to analyze the meaning process and 2) commodification theory, to analyze the development of pre-wedding photos in Bali.

3. Results and Discussion

The development of pre-wedding photos or pre-wedding photos in Bali has occurred after 1996. In general, it can be stated that, from 1996 to 2004 there were not many commercial photographers. At that time the photographer had not explored the place for pre-wedding photo shoots due to limited equipment and references. In addition, there has also been no development of

the concept or theme of outdoor (nature space). Pre-wedding photos that year have not developed significantly. However, in subsequent periods or years it began to develop significantly. Based on the results of interviews with several Balinese photographers as well as members of the PFB (Bali Photographers Association) who have started in their fields since 2001, periodic explanations are made about the development of pre-wedding photos in Bali.

The development of pre-wedding photos chronologically is based on the trend of the style or theme that is raised. Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that, indeed, periodic determination of the classification of themes and concepts is very difficult, this is because each period the same pre-wedding photo concepts can appear in one period to another. That is, it is very difficult to classify precisely or with certainty the trend of a concept in each period. To be able to further help the classification of this matter, it can be described or classified through the themes raised in the concept of pre-wedding photos.

These themes do not only concern clothing or places that are used as backgrounds, but also more specifically supporting elements or properties into thematic elements that can be classified and important things from an analysis of meaning. This is explained through a table on how the chronological (period) of the concept of pre-wedding photos is associated with trends, both themes and supporting elements thematically, in this case, property or supporting objects. Each theme and property used in addition to supporting the concept in pre-wedding photos is also able to provide a certain meaning to be represented. The data were obtained from interviews with several photographers, observations through social media, and library data. The chronology of the development of the pre-wedding photo concept in a periodized manner and the trend of themes in each period is shown in the following table.

Table 1
Pre-wedding photo concept periods in Bali

Year	**Prewedding Photo Concept**	**Theme**	**Elements/Properties**
2005-2007	Modified Balinese Customs (formal)	Balinese Traditional Clothing	Balinese architectural gate
2007-2010	Modified Balinese Customs (formal), classic (non-formal) and casual outdoor (non-formal) concepts Photo studio concept	Balinese Traditional Clothing, simplicity (rural Balinese)	Bike, caterpillar baskets (*sanan*), animals, *capil* hats, boats.
2010-2013	Modified Balinese Customs (formal), classic (non-formal) and casual outdoor (non-formal) concepts	Balinese Traditional Clothing, Simplicity, (rural Balinese people), Nature (landscape), minimalist, elegant.	Long cloth, torch, plain fan, boat.

2013-2016	Modified Balinese Customs (formal), classic (non-formal) and casual outdoor (non-formal) concepts	Kingdom, Nature (landscape), minimalist, elegant, glamorous.	Smoke, plain and ornate fans, umbrellas.
2016-2019	Modified Balinese customs (formal), classic (non-formal), ancient and casual outdoor (non-formal) concepts	Royal, colossal, nature (landscape), minimalist, elegant, glamorous, luxurious	Torch, smoke, frankincense, royal umbrella, throne, horse, flower accessories
2019-2021	Modified Balinese custom (formal) indoor and outdoor, manipulative, classic (non-formal), ancient and the concept of casual indoor and outdoor (non-formal)	Street, colossal, elegant, glamorous, royal luxury, sightseeing.	Smoke, Gamelan, puppets, sticks, glasses, dry leaves/dry plants, masks.

Seeing from the table above, the development of pre-wedding photos does occur, but these developments are still based on the concept of traditional Balinese pre-wedding photos. Consistency in the concept of traditional Balinese pre-wedding photos as a main concept can be maintained even though there are many photo themes raised. This is inseparable from the use of elements or properties characterized by Balinese identity which are increasingly varied and diverse. These elements become one aspect that can be used as a sign that can help interpret a meaning in pre-wedding photos. Mosco (1996) said "commodification is defined as the process of transforming goods and services, including communication, which are valued for their use, into commodities where they are valued for what they will bring in the marketplace". Commodification is the process of transforming or changing use value into exchange value. In this case, the process of meaning through the concept or theme of pre-wedding photos is motivated by an ideology where commodification is created because of demand factors from both prospective partners and from the ideology of a photographer. That is, commodification is one of the elements that comes from the development of the creative industry for pre-wedding photo services.

The development of pre-weeding photos in Bali is of course influenced by globalization and this can be seen from the development of the concept in line with the development of global trends. Modifications of traditional clothes, poses, shooting locations that have been explored and modified are proof of a culture that cannot be separated from the influence of globalization.

According to Scholte in Kristeva (2015: 29), globalization can occur and expand its reach with three commodification. First, consumerism connected with global products expanded by industrial capitalism. Second, the growth of institutions operating in a global scope (expanding the reach of financial capital). Third, globalization has encouraged the expansion of commodification in new areas involving information and communication. Associated with Scholte's view, pre-wedding photos are a global product adapted from a phenomenon that has existed before in western weddings.

In the end, this influence develops with the presence of various pre-wedding photo concepts that vary from the general look to the unnatural. These concepts are divided into three categories, namely modified Balinese customs, classical Balinese customs, and conceptually manipulative Balinese customs. Semiotic analysis on pre-wedding photos in Bali was conducted to find out the meanings between the sign and the marked so that it can be interpreted what meaning is hidden in the concept of pre-wedding photos in Bali. Inglis (1998) explain that Raymond Williams' semiotic concept in which there are three main uses of ideology, namely (1) a belief system that

characterizes a particular group or class (Cf. Candrawati et al., 2021), (2) an illusionary belief system-false ideas or false consciousness that is contrasted with true knowledge or scientific knowledge, (3) the process of general production of meanings and ideas (William, 2020). In the following discussion, more emphasis is placed on the use of the 3rd point because it is the 3rd point that dominates in discussing the meanings behind the visual elements in pre-wedding photo works. The following is an example of a photo that has an element of hyperreality in terms of meaning.



Synopsis:

One of the pre-wedding photos in 2019 of the couple I Komang Dwi Putra (29 years) and Ni Kadek Aris Mahyoni (27 years). Pre-wedding photo with classic Balinese traditional concept with royal theme. They are a couple of the Hindu community in Bali. The photoshoot was carried out in Gianyar Regency and took in the afternoon.

	Denotation	Connotation
Visual	Couple wearing classic Balinese traditional clothes with poses as if they were a king and queen in Balinese culture. The couple was accompanied by two small children who were holding umbrellas and spears. The atmosphere is made as if at night accompanied by a full moon and smoke.	This connotes that they are a couple from a noble or caste family. The atmosphere looks more religious and identifies that they are Balinese Hindus.



Synopsis:

One of the pre-wedding photos in 2020 of the couple Bayu (28 years) and Windy (26 years). Pre-wedding photos with classic Balinese traditional concepts with elegant themes. They are a couple of the Hindu community in Bali. Men have a background as spiritual figures as well as sports instructors as well as female partners.

	Denotation	Connotation
Visual	Couple wearing traditional Balinese clothes with hugging and kissing poses. Photographs were taken in the morning and used a framing composition. Narrow doff technique with a blurry impression and dominated by a natural impression.	Connotes that they are a romantic couple, loyal, love each other and will love forever.

What presented in pre-wedding photos takes place a kind of reality reduction, through markers and markers. In reality, the first couple is not a descendant of a royal or a descendant of a Balinese king. In reality, there are no guarantees for a second partner in a relationship and anything can happen. Uncertainty and as a motivation in running the household are one of the reasons for the presence of the pre-wedding photo concept. Visually, the implied meaning does not represent reality, this proves that the presence of a concept or theme in a pre-wedding photo is just a simulation. The signifier pretends to be what it really is (actually), while the signifier is a multiplicity of meanings that are led to contain a partial truth about reality (describing reality). According to Piliang (2012), in semiotics, the mechanism is known as the metonymy mechanism.

Commodification is the process of transforming or changing use value into exchange value. In the pre-wedding photo service industry, this is one of the factors in creating the commodification of the pre-wedding photo concept consisting of supporting elements. These elements indirectly become elements that give meanings to be realized or shown to the public. Desire that is not the main purpose of the wedding itself or the purpose of pre-wedding photos as a documentary value is a reflection of the exchange rate made for certain interests in the appearance industry. The interest relates to the impression as a society that dissolves in the desire for a lifestyle like a show that shows various images that will always be needed. Therefore, it is undeniable that the process of new meanings will continue to be present in line with the development of lifestyle and globalization.

4. Conclusion

The process of meaning comes from the need for lifestyle desires and the influence of globalization even though self-potential is no longer a reference. The development periodically describes every development of the meaning process supported by the supporting elements of the properties used. Pre-wedding photos are considered to be a necessity because their function is no longer purely documentary but as information on representing one's identity or building an illusionary image. Not only based on the wishes of the prospective bride and groom, but the process of meaning is also influenced by the pre-wedding photo service industry as an industry that is always needed, especially for modern society. The process of meaning that has benefits not only for the prospective bride and groom but also for the service industry as a product of globalization. If it is seen that there is a system that is repeated both in terms of production and distribution which results in the process of meaning in pre-wedding photos will always develop, especially in the Hindu community in Bali. Each period produces forms of its own multiplicity of meanings. The authority of the sign may also have been overemphasized so that everything is relative. The presence of meanings in each pre-wedding photo work provides opportunities for an unlimited range of interpretations. That is, each sign refers to another sign in the system. What is presented in the pre-wedding photo phenomenon is a celebration of desire (symbol sales). This is in line with Press' hyperreality thinking, namely "when we no longer produce objects, we produce symbols in various manipulative ways and with various supporting media" (Press, 1983).

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the journal editor who has proposed double-blind reviewers, and therefore, this manuscript has been reviewed and accepted.

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