

Post-Pandemic 'Bleisure' Trend in Indonesia: Literature Review Regarding Lifestyle Changes and Implications for the Tourism Industry and Employment

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ABSTRACT

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This article examines the growing trend of Bleisure – blending business and leisure travel – in Indonesia post-pandemic, analysing its impact on work patterns, the tourism industry, and employee well-being. The study highlights how the increased flexibility in work arrangements and the rising need for work-life balance have driven the adoption of Bleisure among professionals. Grounded in Work-Life Balance Theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg, 1959), and Organizational Change Theory (Lewin, 1951), the research explores both the benefits and challenges of Bleisure. The findings suggest that while Bleisure enhances job satisfaction and work-life integration, it also poses risks such as burnout and unequal access among employees. Furthermore, the impact on the tourism industry is significant, with changes in travel duration and spending patterns. The study concludes that effective management and supportive policies are essential for maximizing the positive effects of Bleisure on both employees and the tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced global society, including Indonesia, to adapt to various profound changes in daily life, especially in terms of work and lifestyle. One of the most significant impacts is the increasing adoption of remote work which has become the new norm in many sectors (Muliadisa & Wiyasha, 2023; Negarayana, 2021; Pitanatri, Saputra, et al., 2022; Widahartana, 2021). With this new flexibility has also emerged a travel trend that combines business and leisure, known as "Bleisure" (business + leisure). Bleisure, which previously may have only been of interest to a handful of professionals who frequently travel, has now become a wider phenomenon and is sought after by various groups of workers. Bleisure offers professionals the opportunity to extend their business trips with additional time for vacation, or vice versa, combine personal travel with business matters. This phenomenon is not something completely new; Even before the pandemic, a survey conducted by SAP Concur in 2019 showed that 58% of business travelers worldwide had added personal vacation time to their business trips. Before the pandemic, the Bleisure concept was well known among business travelers, especially those who frequently travel for work. Research conducted by the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) shows that in 2018, approximately 60% of business travelers worldwide have added a leisure component to their business trips. However, this trend had not yet fully become mainstream in Indonesia at that time, especially because the work culture tended to be conventional and there were strict boundaries between business and personal matters. However, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of the Bleisure trend in Indonesia, as the boundaries between work and personal life are increasingly blurred due to remote work and work time flexibility.

The Bleisure trend in Indonesia is increasingly gaining attention as travel restrictions ease and domestic tourist destinations reopen. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia noted an increase in interest in domestic tourism, where nature tourism and tourist villages are the main choices. In addition, with the support of continuously developing digital infrastructure, workers now have the freedom to work from anywhere, allowing them to combine productivity with exploring new destinations.

Several key factors are driving Bleisure's popularity in Indonesia post-pandemic. First, flexibility in work and mobility enabled by digital technology have changed the way people plan their trips. Second, the need for work-life balance is becoming increasingly pressing, prompting professionals to look for innovative ways to utilize their travel time. Third, this trend is also driven by changes in consumer behavior who now value experience and well-being more than just prioritizing work productivity. The Bleisure trend in Indonesia is also driven by changes in demographics and consumer preferences. Millennials and Gen Z, who now dominate the workforce, are known to value flexibility, experience and work-life balance more than previous generations. They no longer see business travel as an activity that should be separated from personal pleasure, but rather as an opportunity to explore new places and improve the quality of life (Damanik et al., 2020, 2022; Diwyarthi, 2021; Pitanatri, Damanik, et al., 2022). As a result, tourist destinations in Indonesia, such as Bali, Yogyakarta,

and Lombok, are starting to market themselves as "Bleisure-friendly" by offering facilities that support work productivity while providing a quality holiday experience. Bleisure not only benefits individuals, but also has a significant impact on the tourism and hospitality industry in Indonesia. With increasing demand for accommodation that is not only comfortable for work but also offers a leisure experience, the sector must adapt to the new needs of Bleisure travellers. Several tourist destinations in Indonesia, such as Bali, Yogyakarta and Lombok, have taken advantage of this trend by offering attractive Bleisure packages for remote workers. This trend is also supported by advances in digital technology which allows workers to remain productive anywhere and at any time. Improved internet infrastructure, collaborative work applications, and increasingly sophisticated technological devices have made it easier for workers to perform their tasks from locations far from the traditional office. According to a report from *Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJII)* The Indonesia Internet Service Providers Association, internet penetration in Indonesia has reached more than 73% in 2021, indicating that digital connectivity has become the backbone for many sectors, including the tourism and employment sectors. However, along with the development of the Bleisure trend, challenges have also emerged for the world of work. Companies need to adapt their work policies to support employees who want to take advantage of this trend without sacrificing productivity. In addition, there are also concerns about the boundaries between work and personal time becoming increasingly blurred, which could affect workers' mental well-being.

After considering these various aspects, a deeper study of Bleisure trends in Indonesia post-pandemic was carried out by exploring the factors driving its popularity, as well as the implications for the tourism industry and employment in Indonesia. This literature review will provide a comprehensive overview of how this trend is developing and what can be anticipated in the future. This research focuses on how the Bleisure trend influences post-pandemic changes in work and travel patterns in Indonesia, identifies the main factors driving Bleisure adoption among working professionals, and evaluates its impact on the tourism industry, including changes in duration of stay and tourist spending. In addition, this research will also outline the implications of Bleisure adoption on worker welfare, especially in terms of work-life balance, burnout risk, and equal access to Bleisure opportunities, in order to provide comprehensive insight for companies and tourism industry players.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical basis for research on Bleisure trends in Indonesia post-pandemic involves several key concepts related to changes in work patterns, Bleisure adoption, its impact on the tourism industry, and worker welfare. These theories help understand the Bleisure phenomenon in a broader social and economic context.

Work-Life Balance Theory, The theory developed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), states that balance between work and personal life is the key to individual well-being and work productivity. In the context of Bleisure, this

theory explains how flexibility in combining work and recreation can increase job satisfaction and reduce stress. This research will explore how Bleisure contributes to work-life balance and its impact on worker wellbeing.

Second, Motivation-Hygiene Theory, Proposed by Frederick Herzberg (1959), this theory distinguishes between motivational factors that increase job satisfaction and hygiene factors that, if not met, lead to dissatisfaction. According to Rahjasa, P. S. L. (2022) Motivation can also be interpreted as a driving force which is intended as a natural urge to satisfy and maintain life. In the context of Bleisure, this theory helps understand how the leisure and flexibility aspects of travel can serve as motivational factors that improve job satisfaction, while the inability to separate work from personal time can be a hygiene factor that leads to burnout.

Organizational Change Theory, The theory popularized by Kurt Lewin (1951), describes the process of change in organizations through three stages: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. This theory is relevant to understanding how companies adapt their policies to accommodate the Bleisure trend, and how these changes affect work structures and organizational culture. This research will use this theory to analyze companies' adaptation to the Bleisure trend and its impact on employees and the industry.

METHODOLOGY

The following research methodology uses an in-depth literature review approach to analyse post-pandemic Bleisure trends in Indonesia. This research will collect and analyse various academic sources, industry reports, and related publications that discuss changing work patterns, factors driving Bleisure adoption, its impact on the tourism industry, and its implications for worker well-being. These sources will be identified and selected based on their relevance and credibility, then analysed thematically to identify trends, patterns and key insights underlying the Bleisure phenomenon. Through this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how Bleisure affects various aspects of work and industrial life in post-pandemic Indonesia.

RESEARCH RESULT

The "Bleisure" trend is a term that combines "business" and "leisure" referring to trips that combine business with recreation. Although this concept existed before the COVID-19 pandemic, its popularity has seen a significant surge in the post-pandemic era. A literature review is used to discuss how the pandemic is changing work and travel patterns, the factors influencing Bleisure adoption, its impact on the tourism industry, and the implications for worker well-being.

Post-Pandemic Changes in Work and Travel Patterns

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes in the world of work, with many companies adopting remote work policies. A study by McKinsey & Company (2021) found that 52% of workers in Indonesia want to continue the remote work model even after the pandemic ends. This increased flexibility

allows workers to combine business travel with leisure, which in turn is driving the rise of the Bleisure trend. According to a report by SAP Concur (2019), before the pandemic, 58% of global business travelers were already adding personal vacation time to their business trips. However, following the pandemic, this trend has become increasingly integrated into professional lifestyles, with a significant increase in domestic travel and the use of digital technology to support remote productivity.

Remote work is often considered an added benefit that only a handful of professionals enjoy, especially in the technology and consulting sectors. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed this outlook drastically, making remote work the norm for many organizations around the world. A study by Gartner (2020) found that 88% of organizations worldwide encouraged or required employees to work from home during the pandemic, and many of them plan to maintain these policies permanently, even after the pandemic ends. In the Indonesian context, a survey by the World Economic Forum (2021) shows that more than 60% of workers expect the flexibility of remote work to remain in the future, indicating a permanent change in working patterns.

In addition to changes in the way work is done, the pandemic has also changed the way people view travel. Before the pandemic, business trips were typically undertaken with a primary focus on work productivity, with little or no time for recreation. However, strict travel restrictions during the pandemic have made people miss the experience of traveling, both for personal and business matters. According to a report from Deloitte (2021), after the pandemic, business travelers are likely to extend their stays to include leisure time, a trend that is very different from pre-pandemic travel patterns. These changes reflect a shift in priorities where professionals now see business travel as an opportunity to achieve a better work-life balance.

Factors Driving Bleisure Adoption

Apart from changes in work and travel patterns post-pandemic, the adoption of the Bleisure trend in Indonesia is also driven by various interrelated factors, including increased work flexibility, technological advances, as well as shifting values in the modern workforce which increasingly emphasizes work-life balance. and the need for recreation as a way to improve mental well-being and productivity.

Work and Technology Flexibility: Advancements in communication and collaboration technology, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Workspace, allow workers to stay connected with their teams from any location. According to data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2021), internet penetration in Indonesia has reached more than 73%, creating a digital infrastructure that supports this trend. This allows professionals to work from remote locations and makes business travel more flexible.

Work-Life Balance: More and more workers are looking for balance between their professional and personal lives. Millennials and Gen Z, who now dominate the workforce, are known to value flexibility, experience and personal

well-being more than previous generations (PwC, 2016). They seek not only career success but also the opportunity to enrich their lives through travel and new experiences.

Need for Recreation: The pandemic is increasing stress and anxiety among workers, leading to an increased need for rest and recovery. According to a study by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), prolonged remote work can increase the risk of burnout if not managed properly. Therefore, Bleisure offers a solution by giving workers time to relax without leaving their work commitments completely.

Impact on the Tourism Industry

The tourism industry in Indonesia must adapt to the increasing demand for Bleisure travel. Popular destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta and Lombok have begun offering tailored facilities and services for travellers looking to combine work and leisure. According to a report from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia (2021), domestic tourism is experiencing an increase in interest, with nature tourism and tourist villages becoming the main choice for Bleisure travellers. Hotels and resorts now provide amenities such as comfortable work spaces, high-speed internet access, and special package offers that include spa services or local tours. This trend has several important impacts that need to be considered.

Increased Tourist Duration and Expenditure, One of the most significant impacts of the Bleisure trend on the tourism industry is the increase in length of stay and tourist spending. Bleisure travelers tend to extend their stays, incorporating a few extra days for recreation once business is over. According to research conducted by Expedia Group (2022), Bleisure travelers spend an average of 25% more than traditional business travelers, as they tend to take advantage of additional services such as spas, luxury restaurants and local tours. This provides a significant economic boost to tourist destinations and local businesses, which previously relied solely on business travelers for short-term income. Additionally, the Bleisure trend also provides an economic boost to local communities, as travelers tend to stay longer and spend more money compared to traditional business travelers. This has a positive impact on developing tourism infrastructure, creating jobs and increasing income for the local tourism industry.

The second impact is **Diversification of Tourism Services,** responding to increasing demand from Bleisure tourists, the tourism industry in Indonesia has adapted by introducing new services and facilities tailored to the needs of these travelers. For example, major hotels in cities such as Jakarta and Surabaya have begun offering Bleisure packages that include access to comfortable work spaces, high-speed internet, as well as recreational activities such as city tours and culinary experiences. According to a report by Horwath HTL (2021), many hotels and resorts have also added exclusive co-working space and lounge facilities for business travelers who want to stay productive while enjoying holiday facilities. This adaptation not only increases the attractiveness of tourist destinations for business travelers but also expands the customer base of the hospitality industry.

Increased Focus on Domestic Tourism, The COVID-19 pandemic has changed traveler preferences, with many people now preferring domestic to international travel. This provides opportunities for domestic tourism to grow and develop. The Bleisure trend is also reinforcing this shift, with business travelers preferring to explore local destinations after finishing work. A study by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia (2021) shows that domestic tourism will experience an increase of 15% in 2021, with destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta and Lombok becoming favorites for Bleisure travelers. This increase has encouraged investment in local tourism infrastructure and created new jobs in the hospitality and related services sector.

Implications for Worker Welfare

One of the main positive impacts of the Bleisure trend is the improvement in work-life balance for employees. With the ability to combine work and vacation, employees can enjoy the benefits of business travel while still having time for relaxation and recovery. According to a study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2019), a good work-life balance contributes significantly to reduced stress levels and increased employee productivity. The Bleisure trend allows employees to enjoy free time without having to take additional leave, which ultimately can increase job satisfaction and loyalty to the company.

While the Bleisure trend offers many benefits, including better work-life balance and increased wellbeing, there are also challenges to overcome. One of the main challenges is the blurring of the boundaries between work and personal life, which can cause workers to have difficulty truly taking a break. Research by APA (2020) shows that the pressure to remain productive while traveling can increase stress and reduce the effectiveness of recreation itself. However, blurring the boundaries between work and recreation also carries its own risks, especially related to the potential for burnout. When employees are in Bleisure mode, there is a tendency to keep checking emails and continuing work even though they should be taking a break. A study by Microsoft (2020) found that remote workers tend to work longer hours and find it more difficult to separate work and personal time, which can increase the risk of exhaustion and burnout. In the long term, this situation can have a negative impact on employees' mental health, reducing the effectiveness of the recreation they would otherwise enjoy during a Bleisure trip. Therefore, companies need to consider policies that support employees to take truly work-free vacation time, even when they are on a Bleisure trip.

Apart from that, there are also challenges related to equality of access. Not all workers have the same opportunity to take advantage of the Bleisure trend, especially those working in sectors that do not support remote work. This can create a gap between employees who have access to work flexibility and those who don't, which can impact team dynamics and overall employee well-being. Employees who work in certain industries or who have more flexible positions may be better able to take advantage of this trend than those in fixed-hour jobs or those on the front lines. According to a study by Harvard Business Review

(2021), differences in access to remote work and Bleisure opportunities can widen the gap between more senior employees and those in entry-level positions. This can create a sense of unfairness among employees and potentially create an imbalance in the work team.

To mitigate the negative impact of the Bleisure trend, companies need to take proactive steps. Some companies have begun developing policies that allow employees to take advantage of Bleisure trips without sacrificing their mental health. This includes providing clear guidelines on work time limits during travel, as well as providing resources for stress management. A study by Deloitte (2021) shows that companies that actively support work-life balance and employee mental health tend to have higher retention rates and happier employees.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The Bleisure trend, which covers business and leisure aspects in one trip, has experienced significant development in Indonesia post-pandemic. This research identifies that changes in work patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased work and the adoption of digital technology, have driven the adoption of Bleisure. This is in line with the Work-Life Balance Theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) which shows that the combination of work and recreation can increase individual well-being and job satisfaction. A review of the literature shows that factors such as the need for work-life balance, technological advances, and changes in workers' values play an important role in the implementation of Bleisure in Indonesia. However, while Bleisure offers benefits such as improved work-life balance and job satisfaction, it also poses challenges such as the risk of burnout and blurred boundaries between work and personal time. The Theory of Needs and Motivation (Herzberg, 1959) highlights how aspects of recreation can function as motivators, but the inability to separate work from recreation can be a hygiene factor that leads to dissatisfaction. Bleisure's impact on the tourism industry, including increases in length of stay and spending, as well as diversification of services, represents a significant change in the sector.

The Theory of Organizational Change (Lewin, 1951) helps explain how companies adapt policies to accommodate the Bleisure trend and its impact on organizational culture and structure. This research concludes that the adoption of Bleisure in Indonesia brings significant benefits to workers and the tourism industry, but there needs to be clear policies and company support to overcome emerging challenges and ensure employee welfare is maintained.

To maximize the benefits of Bleisure and overcome emerging challenges, companies in Indonesia must develop policies that support work-life balance by establishing clear guidelines for the Bleisure journey, providing training for employees in time management and burnout prevention, and ensuring equal access to Bleisure opportunities for all employees. In addition, collaboration between companies and the tourism industry is needed to create attractive Bleisure packages and support the growth of the tourism sector.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research needs to be conducted to explore the long-term impact of the Bleisure trend on employee productivity and well-being in various industrial sectors in Indonesia, including differences in its impact on different demographic groups, such as age, gender and position level. In addition, future research could focus on quantitative analysis regarding the effectiveness of company policies in managing Bleisure, as well as their impact on employee retention and organizational performance. Further studies are also important to understand the tourism industry's adaptation and response to increased demand for Bleisure, including service innovation and changes in marketing strategies. This research will provide deeper insights and empirical data to support policies and best practices in harnessing the Bleisure trend sustainably.

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