

Learning to work on a cruise ship: Accounts from Bali

Luh Putu Artini

Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Bali: *tien_miasa@hotmail.com*

Pam Nilan

University of Newcastle: *Pamela.nilan@newcastle.edu.au*

This article studies the motivations and the formal and informal learning contexts for well-educated, young Balinese from poorer areas who enroll in cruise ship training colleges. The major motivations were obtaining a high income and helping the family. While basic hospitality and tourism skills are acquired, trainees also named other capacities such as politeness, confidence and tricks, such as juggling, as advantageous. The work on board was acknowledged to be arduous and demanding. Physical and mental preparation was needed. On retirement from a cruise ship career, savings enable them to start a small business in Bali. However, many such small enterprises fail. We identify the need for further short course training and other support in post-cruise ship work business planning and management.

Keywords: Cruise ship training; school to work transition; skills; capacities; entrepreneurship; small business.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we consider motivations, and formal and informal learning contexts for young Balinese cruise ship trainees from two of the poorer regencies of the island province. Although Bali is one of the most economically successful provinces of Indonesia, not all regencies in the province are equally prosperous (Widiadana & Atmodjo, 2012). The current generation of young people in Bali (and in Indonesia as a whole) is the most highly educated there has ever been, and young people greatly value education (Nilan, Parker, Bennett, & Robinson, 2011). In Bali almost all children complete primary school; the great majority complete junior high school, and 69 percent of those aged 16-18 years enrol in senior high school (BPS, 2012). This figure confirms the claim that “senior high school certificates have increasingly become the lowest level of qualification needed for a formal sector job” in Indonesia (Naafs, 2012, p. 55). However, in the two regencies considered in this article, senior high school enrolment rates are lower. In Regency BA, the senior high school enrolment rate is only 55 percent, while in Regency BU the rate is 65 percent. When it comes to post-compulsory education, the contrast is even more marked. In the capital, Denpasar, 27 percent of those aged 19-24 are engaged in further education, while in Regency BA the rate is only seven percent and in Regency BU only 17 percent (BPS, 2012). That is, while a number of young people in these two regencies graduate from senior high school with examination marks sufficient for university entry, relatively few do so, presumably for economic reasons. It is at this point of transition from high school to further education that our study is focused. Although cruise ship training courses are expensive they are, nevertheless, attractive options for senior high school graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

To understand this educational choice, we need to look at the sweeping changes in the Indonesian nation since the birth of constitutional democracy in 1998. Mass education, in combination with the economic and political conditions of contemporary Indonesia, has produced a generation of young people who are future-oriented (Parker & Nilan, 2013). Senior high school graduates no longer imagine they will simply find a civil service job or a clerical job in a private company. They know that they must make strategic career choices that require a measure of entrepreneurial thinking (Nilan et al., 2011). For academically successful youth from poorer backgrounds, for whom university is not a realistic option, working on a cruise ship is an attractive means for building a prosperous future. Indonesia has had a long history of temporary overseas migration for work (TKI). This kind of work has greatly increased and diversified in the new millennium. Cruise ship work is part of this new overseas labour strategy, and has become ever more popular, especially with well-educated young men. As cruise ship recruitment demand has increased in Indonesia, so has the need for specialised training. Cruise ship training colleges backed by transnational cruise lines have appeared in eastern Indonesia, with a particular concentration in Bali. This educational setting forms the basis for this article.

Mass cruising has become a popular choice for tourists from wealthy countries all over the world, especially honeymooners and older people. More and more intensive and specialized training of cruise ship staff is needed for cruise lines to remain competitive. Ordinary tourism and hospitality courses are not enough. A different kind of training and a different knowledge-set is required for cruise ship work than for ordinary hotel work. The relationship between cruise ship passengers and on-board service staff is of a much more of a personal nature than usual tourist transactions. The hotel roomboy and the cruise ship roomboy, for example, provide a very different form of service. The hotel roomboy does not normally know anything about room guests and is paid a fixed salary for a straightforward service. Even in Bali, a hotel room boy might have only a few words of English. In contrast, a cruise ship roomboy needs to be a competent speaker of English to enable him to converse with passengers and learn as much as possible about each new set of room guests in order to deliver a personalized service. Not only must he know his room occupants by name but he must also be eager to respond to their requests and even anticipate their needs, since his income depends on tips. Learning to work on a cruise ship, therefore, requires specialized training beyond basic tourism and hospitality skills. We argue that cruise ship training further emphasizes the point made by Urry (1998) that, for tourism, labour itself is a component of the service product and so all aspects of the worker's demeanor matter to the employer, especially appearance, the way they speak and their representation of personality.

This article identifies the reasons young Balinese enroll in cruise ship training and the kinds of skills and capabilities they acquire. The section below briefly describes the methodology used to collect and analyze data and provides a profile of those interviewed. The section that follows describes the results, illustrated by quotes from respondent (identity of respondent in brackets after the quote). The article concludes with a discussion of the long-term implications for small business entrepreneurship.

METHODOLOGY

The authors collected data in the period 2010 to 2012 from 35 informants in Bali. The majority of cruise ship service workers are male; our sample shows this gender profile. The most common jobs trainees in our sample were assistant steward, roomboy, waiter, waitress, assistant waiter and barman. We conducted both group and individual interviews. By using the interview method we were able to explore "factors that underpin participants' answers" (Legard, Keegan, & Ward,

2003, p. 141). Interviews were recorded, then transcribed and analyzed using thematic coding (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

As shown in Table 1, trainee cruise ship workers represented two-thirds of those we interviewed. We carried out interviews at two cruise ship training college: one in Regency BA (College B) and one in Regency BU (College S). We also interviewed experienced cruise ship workers in a number of different towns in Bali. All translations from Indonesian to English are by the authors. Places and informants have been de-identified to protect the identity of those interviewed. The gender of the informant is indicated by F or M. It should be noted that Balinese names start with a birth order word, for example Wayan, Made, Ketut, Ngurah and so on. The trainees at College B preferred their birth order name to be used, then a capital letter to represent their personal name. Older interviewees also preferred this. Trainees at College S preferred to give themselves the pseudonyms they would like future passengers to call them by.

Table 1: Details of informants

Name	Sex	Age	Position	Place	Date of interview
Agus F	M	19	Cruise ship laundry trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Ayu V	F	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Bliss	F	32	Cruise ship trainer	College B	13 July 2012
Davo	M	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College S	14 July 2012
Eddy	M	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College S	14 July 2012
Gede T	M	23	Cruise ship assistant waiter	Town S	14 July 2012
Gusti K	M	48	Cruise ship cleaner	Town S	4 May 2010
Ketut B	M	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Ketut C	M	46	Cruise ship chef	Town L	14 July 2012
Komang D	M	21	Cruise ship barman trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Luh J	F	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Made D	M	45	Cruise ship waiter	Town L	14 July 2012
Made M	F	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Made W	M	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Made Y	M	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Nengah G	M	41	Cruise ship crew cook	Town S	4 May 2010
Nengah K	F	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Ngurah W	M	53	Cruise ship crew cook	Town S	4 May 2010
Niki	M	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College S	14 July 2012
Nyoman B	M	48	Cruise ship waiter	Town L	14 July 2012
Passenger J	M	33	Previous cruise ship passenger	Australia	28 June 2011
Puspah	F	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Putu S	M	20	Cruise ship service trainee	College B	13 July 2012
Queenie	F	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College S	14 July 2012
Suki	F	19	Cruise ship service trainee	College S	14 July 2012
Wayan W	M	20	Cruise ship barman trainee	College B	13 July 2012

RESULTS

The context of the cruise ship industry plays an important part in understanding the motivations and training of cruise ship workers. We, therefore, begin by providing background information on the industry before exploring other issues important to trainees.

Background: The mass cruising industry

The transnational cruise industry has been rapidly expanding over the last twenty years (Larsen, Marnburg, & Øgaard, 2012). The workforce on board a cruise ship is like a mirror of the globalized labour force: well-paid, high-status crew members from Western countries are few in number but occupy senior positions. Most other workers are from South or Southeast Asia (Gibson, 2008; Seal, 1998; Wood, 2002). “The majority (70%) of the people that work on cruise ships come from low wage countries” (Terry, 2011, p. 663). Despite pockets of poverty, Bali has an excellent reputation for both standard of education and tourism:

They want to recruit from Bali, because the English is much better. And also they have the history of serving guests. (Bliss)

An experienced cruise ship worker said that fellow crew members were usually from “the Philippines, Indonesia and India.” He added, “nobody from Malaysia or Singapore because they have good money there, they don’t need to go” (Ketut C). Recruiting from Bali and other parts of Southeast Asia not only means that cruise ship companies can pay low wages, it also means they can advertise to attract passengers who expect devoted personal service. The deliberate employment of Southeast Asian service staff allows them to re-create the nostalgic colonial cruising atmosphere; a suitably “enchanted” experience (Ritzer, 1999). The following advertisement makes specific mention of Bali, using words like “relaxation,” “magic” and “authentic:”

Lucky guests on MSC Magnifica are expertly looked after by a 1,000-strong crew, enjoying the best of modern Italian style. At the heart of MSC Magnifica is a lush haven of tranquillity, the luxurious MSC Aurea Spa. This sumptuous wellness centre offers a myriad of relaxation options from saunas and Turkish baths to a fitness centre, beauty salon, Thalassotherapy room, relaxation area and massage rooms. Why not give in to the magic of an authentic Balinese massage? (MSC Cruises, 2010)

The Balinese masseuse mentioned here would probably be highly trained but not well paid. To keep cruises affordable, labour costs are kept down.

Cruise ship income and conditions

Service workers in the cruise ship kitchen or laundry earn a base salary with no tips. Those workers who have direct contact with passengers, such as waiters, busboys/assistant waiters, bar staff, bartenders and roomboys earn only a small base salary. They rely on tips to bring their income up to approximately US\$2,500 per month. Increasing tips means honing the skills of personalized service. One Australian passenger said that whenever he went out the roomboy cleaned the room, restocked the bathroom and replaced the chocolates on the pillow, then was always waiting near the door with a big smile to welcome him back (Passenger J). Cruise ship service training in Bali emphasizes this kind of attentiveness. Cruise ship service staff do not merely carry out tasks, they learn to manage “their emotional expressions so as to generate in customers an appropriate feeling state” (Sallaz, 2010, p. 301) that will maximize tips.

A possible income of US\$2,500 per month is invariably mentioned in cruise ship recruitment advertising in Bali. This seems a lot to young trainees, but it vanishes rapidly in the repayment of

training loans (up to US\$3,000) and other related start-up loans. Recruits must pay a fee to the agent as well as travel to and from the port of departure. Most cruise lines demand employees buy a one-way ticket and pay a return-trip deposit. There are also costs on board. Ex-cruise ship waiter Made D in Town L told us that a fresh uniform must be worn each day, but workers themselves pay for uniform laundering from their salary.

Cruise ship trainees dream not only of wealth but also of adventurous voyaging on the high seas and seeing the world (Gibson, 2006). Once again the reality is very different. An experienced cruise ship worker spelled out the challenges,

12 hours a day, everyday, 7 days a week with break, and if we have a midnight buffet, we can work 14, 16 hours a day. It is very hard. And then so we get too much pressure, not only from our supervisor or our bosses, but from our guests, because we often have very demanding guests, very demanding guests. (Nyoman B)

As this account suggests, working conditions on board are far from easy. A shift can last 12 hours a day. Service workers and crew members work around 6.5 days a week, for around nine months at a time (Brownell, 2008, p. 204). They sleep in a crowded, windowless cabin (Cruiseshipjobs, 2010) and their labour environment is largely unregulated (Wood, 2002). Unlike service staff in land-based hotels, “they can’t go home, see their family or separate themselves from the place of work” (Dennett, Cameron, Jenkins, & Bamford, 2010, p. 3). They are both confined and isolated (Larsen et al., 2012). Internet and mobile phone access for crew members is limited and unreliable. During a contract, a typical voyage lasts one week. Experienced cruise ship worker Gede T summarized it thus: “For the first week they’re sailing from Miami to the Caribbean, and then the next week they’re sailing to the Bahamas or wherever.” He added: “Sometimes we are overnight in Venice, so we go out. But the bad thing is we need to work hard ... so maybe sleep for only three or four hours, and then we have to work again.” Each trip requires thorough cleaning tasks and replenishment of supplies on return to port, so the work never stops.

He described his typical working day,

I start at 7 o’clock. I go there and then prepare: set up the tables, arrange the cups, arrange the glasses, everything. Because the system is self-service. So when the guest asks for something I come over to them. May I help you? Something like that. I clear up the dirty glasses and dirty cups. At night, I start from 6 o’clock in the evening. I work in the dining room as an assistant waiter. The waiter takes orders from the guests, I pick up the food for them. It’s 12 hours [a day]. (Gede T)

Another experienced cruise ship worker mentioned the problem of dealing with difficult passengers,

If you make one mistake, you have one guest complain, you can go home. You can get fired. Yeah, it’s very bad. (Made D).\

There is a lack of regulation and worker protection in the cruise ship industry because crews “are subject neither to the labor laws of their countries of origin nor to those of the country of their employer” (Wood, 2000, p. 351). Mass cruise ships sail under flags of convenience from open registries located in countries with a lax attitude to enforcement, especially Panama, Liberia and the Bahamas (Wood, 2000). “Cruise lines can hire cheap foreign labor from less developed countries like the Philippines and Indonesia, and then charge low fares to create a mass market for cruising” (Toh, Rivers, & Ling, 2005, p. 131).

Like other Indonesians, Balinese are perceived as highly suitable for cruise ship service work. For example, Holland America’s Caribbean catalogue declares: “At the heart of Holland America’s unmatched onboard experience is our renowned Indonesian and Filipino staff. Trained at our very

own school in Jakarta, Indonesia, they pride themselves in exceeding your every wish” (Wood, 2002, p. 425). Moreover, smiling Indonesian workers feature on the cover of the brochure. It seems that,

The Southeast Asian presence in the Caribbean cruise experience is unmistakable on all the large ships. It appears that the Caribbean tourist gaze is partly constructed via (an equally constructed) Southeast Asian exoticism. (Wood, 2002, p. 425)

However, the right personal attitude and demeanor has to be learned. Ex-cruise line chef Ketut C in Town L admitted a major challenge in his training practice was to teach the young recruits to smile. “You have to smile all the time,” he said, “and a real smile, as if you mean it.” As his comment indicates, direct contact service staff are specifically trained to please passengers. While this is also true for all hotel service workers, the penalty for failing to learn to smile appropriately is far worse, since being dumped without recourse in the next port is possible.

Motivations and expectations

All the Balinese cruise ship trainees and workers in our study were from economically struggling families; this being a usual pattern. In the two regencies sampled for this study, bright, young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds complete senior secondary school and review their limited choices. They do not proceed to university but opt for what seems to be a much quicker pathway to prosperity. The great motivation for choosing to enter cruise ship training was building wealth. For example, after finishing school, 19-year old Agus F had completed a brief course in hotel laundry work. He landed a job in Dubai but the wages were too low, so he came back to Bali and trained to work on a cruise ship:

I worked in a hotel in Dubai but the salary is only enough for myself. I could not help my brother go to school in Indonesia, nor my parents. That’s why I applied to get the better salary from the cruise ship. (Agus F)

This indicates that cruise ship trainees appear to be primarily motivated to help their struggling families. Agus F was keenly anticipating the prospect of travelling “around the world by sea,” as were his fellow trainees. For example, ‘I want to work on a cruise ship to have an overseas experience, to learn about everything in the world’ (Wayan W). However, Wayan W always returned to the key themes of money and family,

The first thing is, I want to get more salary to make my family happy. Then I want to develop a small automotive business. I want to make a small garage in my home. (Wayan W)

Despite such solid ambitions and mindful planning, it might be ten years or more before Wayan W can realize his dream. Training and obtaining a contract both incur significant debts, which must be repaid to a bank over successive contracts. For very poor cruise ship applicants who cannot obtain a bank loan, money lenders offer special “deals” with even higher interest to be repaid. Experienced cruise ship workers often mentioned the burden of debt repayment. For example, at the age of 37, Nengah G from Town S joined up to get a better income as a cook after working for ten years in hotels. He was shocked at the start-up costs. He first purchased an application form for Rp.100,000 (US\$10) from the Bali Paradiso cruise ship agency. Then he was interviewed and offered a contract, but then paid Rp.32 million (US\$3,200) for a 14-day training program in Surabaya. Travel, passport and visa saw further costs of more than Rp.10 million (US\$1,000). He took out a significant bank loan. Nengah G was paid US\$1,001 per month but 50 percent of his first month’s salary went to the agent. On return the bank loan interest and some of the principal had to be paid, so he quickly signed up again. He earned more on the second contract but, once again, not much money was left afterwards. He enrolled his wife in a Masters degree to

build her career before departing again. Nengah G said that he could finally buy a used car after another two contracts. Starting a small agribusiness was his long-term goal, but this would not be possible for another ten years. In short, despite their strong motivation and future dreams, once young Balinese enter cruise ship training and work, they are bound into a debt cycle that takes years to clear.

Training courses

While older, experienced tourism and hospitality staff such as Nengah G above can apply to get a cruise ship contract after a short training course, young people straight from school have no experience and, therefore, must complete a year-long training program at a recognized college. For the young college trainees we interviewed, awareness of cruise ship work seems to begin long before graduation from senior secondary school. Firstly, cruise ship training colleges advertise directly to pupils and give cruise ship career presentations at schools. One girl in the first semester at College B said, “in the last year of senior high school there was an information session about working on cruise ships with pictures and everything” (Made M).

Secondly, it seems everyone knows someone who has prospered from cruise ship work. Another girl from the same college said simply: “I want to work on a cruise ship because the wages are higher than for hotel work” (Ayu V). Clearly she has heard this from many sources. Accordingly, there is a capillary effect in recruitment, with younger people following the lead of older family members or neighbours into cruise ship work. The following excerpt from a group interview at College B indicates this capillary effect,

Int: How long ago did you start to know about cruise ship work? What was the first time you heard about it, Agus F?

Agus F: I have known about cruise ship work since junior high school (...) I heard about it from a neighbour.

Int: When did you first get to know about cruise ship work Ketut B?

Ketut B: In the second year of junior high school.

Int: Where did you hear about it from?

Ketut B: From my uncle. He works for Carnival Lines.

Int: Made Y?

Made Y: I heard about it from a family member when I was in junior high school.

Int: Who was that family member?

Made Y: My cousin.

Later, fellow classmate, Nengah K, told us that both her uncle and her older brother were already working on cruise ships. A similar story unfolded when we interviewed cruise ship trainees at College S, for example,

Queenie: I first heard about it from my older brother who works on a cruise ship and he said the pay is better.

Int: Davo?

Davo: I got my information from my friend and my cousin who both work on cruise ships.

Int: Niki? What about you?

Niki: I got my information from my own father because he used to work on cruise ships.

Int: Eddy?

Eddy: I found out about it from my big sister's boyfriend and from my own cousin.

In terms of school-to-work transition, these senior high school graduates appear to have chosen intensive specialized training for temporary overseas work over a much longer university education that leads to the professions. This choice made by the graduates is conditioned by their social class position. From that position, these academically competent young people are taking up what seems to them the quickest way to a high income that can boost the prosperity of their low-income families.

Values of family, kin and community still strongly prevail in Bali. Looking after the interests of parents and paying for the schooling of younger siblings were prime motivations for entering cruise ship work, as we saw above. And, of course, families expect the cash flow to keep coming once it has been established.

Suitable applicants can enter a training college as soon as their final examination results become available. However, the high standard of academic entry to cruise ship training colleges means that many applicants miss out. It appears there are almost no fails in cruise ship training courses. We were told that if trainees are slow to master the practical skills, they are free to make up time on those skills after hours. The written tests are not particularly demanding because they rely on rote learning of printed manuals of practice and regulation. Nevertheless, unattractive, timid or sullen trainees may be counselled out of cruise ship work and urged to pursue hotel work, where the application criteria are less narrow.

Cruise ship recruitment advertising offers young people who have just left school the dual promise of exciting travel and high wages. An online advertisement in Indonesian reads: "Attention senior high school graduates who like travelling and meeting new people. There are many opportunities to work on cruise ships that offer nine times the wages in Indonesia. Please log onto Bogor Hotel Institute." The promised income of "nine times the wages in Indonesia" must seem impressive to a high school graduate. However, since the rate of "nine times" is more or less the exchange rate between the Indonesian rupiah and the Australian dollar, it really means the wages are low by international standards. Nevertheless, stories of cruise ship workers who have accumulated enough savings to open a small business abound in Balinese communities, and feed the dreams of senior secondary school graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds. At both College B and College S, in two of the poorer regencies in Bali, there were billboards featuring ocean liners outside the campus and large framed photographs of ships and crew on the walls inside the buildings. Brochures offered testimonials from successful graduates working for the transnational cruise lines of the world along with proud shipboard photos to inspire the new trainees.

Cruise ship training colleges have grown in number in Bali and numerous institutions now offer cruise ship training courses as part of their tourism and hospitality provision. The following excerpt from an article in the *Bali Post* is instructive,

More than 50 graduates from LP2B [Institute for Tourism Training in Gianyar] have left to work on cruise ships. Institute director Dedek Arimbawa saw them off to Quail Cruise Lines and SS Oceanic. One graduate will work as a Spa Therapist for the MSC Cruise line (*Bali Post*, 2010a).

Another article in the *Bali Post* reported on graduation from the Balindo Paradiso training school in Town D, a college that works under the guidance of a direct recruitment agency Bali Paradise Citra Dewata, which has close links with the transnational Mediterranean Shipping Cruise line. The training was said to have "emphasised professional experience standards that matched those

of the Mediterranean Shipping Cruise (MSC) line in Sorrento, Italy” (Bali Post, 2010b). Here students take courses in English, Italian, French, German, Russian and Portuguese, along with courses on sanitation and cleanliness, leadership and international etiquette. It appears that since 1999, Balindo Paradiso has produced 3,467 graduates. Of these, 2,255 have taken jobs on MSC cruise ships (Bali Post, 2010b).

Learning skills and attitude

When senior high school graduates with no experience enter the one-year cruise ship training course, they first complete basic hospitality training, then specialized learning modules for bartender, waiter, cook, housekeeping and laundry that meet the criteria demanded by international cruise lines. Modules also include learning about cleanliness, health and safety procedures, and the cruise ship layout and working environment. As one of the College S trainees said, to work on a cruise ship “you must know standard operational procedure” (Queenie). Trainees must also complete intensive English subjects especially designed for cruise ship work. They are promised that all cruise ship training college instructors have worked for international cruise lines, although this may not be the case for those that teach English. The learning atmosphere is very formal. Students wear uniforms and keep strict hours of attendance with frequent testing. Repetition, role play and rote learning are the favoured pedagogical methods. Both colleges had training rooms set up like the workspaces on board a cruise ship: restaurant, bar and guest room.

Many trainees mentioned that from the time of junior high school, their established ambition to work on a cruise ship had strongly motivated them to study hard at English, since they knew it to be a core skill. For example, one interviewee said “one of our teachers knew all about it, that you had to have good English, that you had to really be able to speak English” (Luh J). This points to motivation to learn to actively speak English rather than just learning it as an academic subject on paper, which is how English is often understood by pupils in Indonesia and even in the tourist haven of Bali.

In our interviews with experienced cruise ship workers, they named confidence and politeness as important job capacities that young recruits needed to quickly develop. Although polite phrases in English and some European languages as well as proper body deportment are rehearsed often in cruise ship training courses, the issue here gets back to the comment by Ketut C that “you have to smile all the time, and a real smile, as if you mean it.” As indicated above, cruise ship service workers endure long shifts with few days off. Yet they still have to deal pleasantly with difficult passengers. Tellingly, two of the sample cruise ship interview questions listed on the Mediterranean Hotel and Cruise Ship Training Center Bali website (2012) are (in English):

How would you deal with a difficult guest?

How would you deal with an intoxicated passenger?

Capacities of confidence and politeness do indeed seem germane and are addressed in the training colleges through verbal repetition of calming phrases and role play. On the same training college website, a set of tactics for service staff to deal with rude passengers is given:

1. Check your temper. Even though you may fume inside about rude customers, you have to stay in control of the situation. Take a deep breath before you proceed.
2. Paste a smile on your face. No matter how rude a customer gets, always smile. You’ll send out a message that they’re not getting to you and this may make them back off.

3. Appease them with promises, even if they're false. When you're a server, you have no control over how long food takes or how fast the bartender makes the drinks. Let them know you're on top of everything and promise to give a status update.
4. Ignore the rude comments. You can choose not to respond to a comment a rude customer makes. Leave the table and return when the order's ready. If they continue to harass you, ask your manager about switching tables with another server.

It seems logical that many of the trainees already know that cruise ship work is physically arduous and psychologically difficult given the capillary recruitment trend. In interviews with trainees from College S, some of the young men alluded to this, emphasizing the physical and mental capacities needed to deal with the work, for example,

Int: What do people tell you about cruise ship work?

Davo: They say the work on board is really hard. But you must keep in your mind the promise of money, of wages that are much higher than you can get in Bali. They say that if you want to work on a cruise ship you must be physically and mentally prepared. So since I do want to work on a cruise ship I must physically and mentally prepare myself.

Niki's father told him the same thing: "Dad said that cruise ship work was really difficult and also mentally demanding, but from doing that very difficult job he earned a satisfying amount of money and improved the lives of people in our family." A female classmate implied that the skills and capacities offered by the training course itself ensured her quality as a worker, and this was an effective preparation:

I am preparing myself for cruise ship work first in quality, the quality of myself as a worker who has capabilities in the areas of language, hospitality skills and operating procedures. With those skills and capacities I can master the world of cruise ship work no matter what kind of job I get. (Suki)

Some of the trainees had developed extra skills to add sparkle and panache to the job. For example, Komang D had learnt to juggle bottles:

Before the cruise ship training, I took a short bartender course and there I learnt to juggle [bottles] - so I can really serve the guests. (Komang D)

Service staff who deal directly with passengers develop many different kinds of strategies to charm and entertain them, with the aim of increasing their income per month through tips. The informal curriculum of training colleges facilitates this development as the young trainees pass knowledge and skills among their classmates. For example, in class breaks they may practise dancing and singing. Experienced cruise ship waiters told us about encouraging the guests to dance after dinner by taking to the dance floor themselves. Others mentioned helping bar guests sing karaoke, and even posing for romantic photos with female passengers who thought they were handsome.

DISCUSSION

The data from cruise ship trainees that we have presented above illustrates the nascent entrepreneurial thinking of a generation of young Indonesians strongly oriented to a future career in a rapidly developing nation with an economic growth rate of over six per cent (*The Jakarta Globe*, 2012). They certainly do not see schooling as an end in itself, as their great-grandparents might have done in the colonial era of the early twentieth century. Neither do they see the final year examination in purely scholarly terms, as demonstrated by their strong motivation to actively learn spoken English. These trainees are young people from economically struggling families in two of the poorest regencies in Bali, itself one of wealthiest provinces in Indonesia. A university

degree is not an option for them, despite English language competence and good marks in their final examination. A university degree is expensive, takes four years to complete and does not guarantee a well-paid job. University graduate unemployment rates continue to be unacceptably high in Indonesia (UNESCO, 2012), a fact which is regularly publicized in the media. In contrast, enrolling in a cruise ship training course, while even more expensive, takes only one year and guarantees a well-paid job as an outcome. It, therefore, represents a strategic career choice that will deliver a prosperous future.

This does not mean, though, that the difficulties and humiliations of the job will not strongly impress them once they are on board. None of the experienced cruise ship workers we spoke to were keen for their own younger siblings or children to work on cruise ships, for example,

I would never recommend my younger brother work on a cruise ship. I do not want [him] to have experiences like me. He will get more education and become a bank teller. (Gede T)

A possible reading of this comment is that many who have done cruise ship service work might have experienced it as exploitive and demeaning (Larsen et al., 2012). While Gede T's nominated occupation of bank teller may not, in the end, deliver to his younger brother a very different total salary over an entire working life—indeed it might be less—bank work carries a far higher status; connoting regular working hours, a pleasant working environment and a measure of autonomy in the workplace.

In their accounts, the young trainees we interviewed were looking past the arduous period of cruise ship work towards the future time when they can finally break into small business, which is really their ultimate goal. The transition from senior high school through cruise ship training college to cruise ship work and then into small business represents an important pathway through which small-to-medium enterprise entrepreneurship is advancing in Indonesia. The trainees plan to use not only saved capital but also their training and experience to set themselves up in business. Carefully honed capacities of confidence and politeness, as well as mental toughness should stand them in good stead. Managing subsequent contracts, overseas travel, a deferred income and loan repayments over a long period must also contribute to their skill base. At College B, Agus F and Luh J were both dreaming of opening a small restaurant. Nengah K wanted to set up a mini-mart. Puspah was planning to set up a boutique stocking surf brands to attract Western customers. Made M wanted to operate a small shop from the front of the family home. Made Y imagined he would set himself up in a garment manufacturing business, while Ketut B saw himself building rental villas. The trainees at College S had far less definite plans except for Queenie who wanted to start a food cooperative and Davo who wanted to open a small shop with living quarters above. In both cases, such small enterprise development would not be possible without the start-up capital gained through cruise ship training and work. At the same time respondents were well aware that it could take some years of cruise ship contracts to pay off debts and save up enough money to realize these goals.

Some cruise ship trainees specifically identified the number of contracts needed to gain enough capital to start up their dream business. Made W for example, who wanted to start a mechanics workshop, considered five contracts would be enough. Similarly, Putu S who wanted to start up a photographic studio, also considered that five contracts would be sufficient. However, anecdotal evidence we collected from ex-cruise ship employees indicates the transition to business ownership is not so straightforward. In the first place it usually took many more contracts to get the capital than they had originally anticipated. Furthermore, many found that their original dreams were not viable. For example, retired cruise ship worker Gusti K had always planned to start a photocopy shop near a private university in Town D, but when he looked around there were

already too many photocopy shops in the same area. Similarly, Ngurah W dreamed of establishing a steak house in Town D. He went ahead and opened the steak house in a prestige area, but it seemed that not many people liked to eat that kind of food and the restaurant closed just a year after it opened. The small businesses of many other ex-cruise ship employees we heard about were also struggling to survive. This would seem to be a lost enterprise opportunity for the local economy. Throughout the years of cruise ship contracts, the workers hold on to dreams of small business conceived at the start of the career, but their goals need to be adjusted, and linked to a practical business plan at the end. What ex-cruise ship employees with start-up capital need is training in financial planning and management of small businesses. Research on tourism education in Dominica, another developing country with a high human capital investment in cruising tourism, indicates that a lifelong approach to tourism education and training is much better (Cuffy, Tribe and Airey, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Mass cruising has become a record-breaking transnational tourism industry (Toh et al., 2005), with new and even bigger ships coming onto the market every year. As the industry grows, so too does the demand for specialized service staff from places like Bali. At the elite end of the cruising market, companies compete in offering unique on-board services such as bespoke tailoring shops and traditional healing spas. All this development has implications for the future of cruise ship training courses currently offered in places like Bali. Larsen et al. (2012, p. 596) maintain that at present there is “inadequate training in the cruise sector.” This constitutes a risk for cruise lines because it is in their interests to recruit and develop skilled staff. It is probable that as competition further intensifies and qualification recruitment criteria rise, so too will the base salaries of at least some staff. When this happens, the current year-long cruise ship training courses detailed above may expand in length, quality, number of learning modules and cost. They will then start to look less like tourism and hospitality training at the lower end of the tertiary education sector and more like an elite public relations and personal services diploma on a level with other tertiary education provisions. However, it is likely that the kind of senior high school graduates who most commonly choose this training program in poor areas will not change very much because, for them, traditional university study will continue to remain unattractive; being expensive, time-consuming and carrying a future unemployment risk. We note that, in the period since data collection took place, a further fully equipped cruise ship training college has opened in Karangasem, another poor regency of Bali where very few young people continue on to university education. It already has many more applicants than it can take.

The new trend to transnational cruise ship training and work in Bali builds on Indonesia’s long history of temporary overseas migration for work. Indonesian people are accustomed to the idea of making sacrifices of comfort, convenience, and time away from family to gain income and boost the family fortunes through working outside the country. However, cruise ship work represents something new for the education sector in Indonesia because the young cruise ship trainees already come from a far better-educated sector of society than most temporary migrant workers do at present. They may be from economically struggling families but they have completed the minimal qualification for entry to the formal labour market – completion of senior secondary school – and so the cruise ship training course is already like a tertiary qualification in that it permits entry to a career that is far better paid than most temporary overseas work or service in the land-based tourism sector. The level of English language competence expected of a cruise ship worker is also much higher than for those other forms of service labour.

In other words, as a rather unintended outcome of the surge in people taking up cruise ship work, returning cruise ship workers have the ideal basic skills, competencies and capital for subsequent successful business entrepreneurship in the tourist economy of Bali. However, they lack business management and accounting skills, so they need mentoring and support to turn their dreams of small business into a practical reality. The provincial government of Bali could certainly maximize the evident entrepreneurial potential here by offering multiple options for gaining the necessary business management skills and experience. Two possible courses of action are suggested here. First, the local Ministry of Manpower Planning could offer a series of rolling financial planning and management short courses to cruise ship workers during their three-month break between contracts. Second, a longer bridging program of the same kind could be offered to long-term cruise ship workers when they finally leave the career. In summary, post-cruise ship training and mentoring would seem to be a worthwhile human capital investment in future business entrepreneurship in Bali and potentially increase local Balinese ownership of small enterprises in the poorer regencies. This has implications for innovative policy change in non-university adult education at the provincial level.

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