



Destination Management in achieving Sustainable Tourism in Bali

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Tourism has gained traction and is being developed and implemented in various tourist destinations across Bali. This concept seeks to strike a balance between economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection. Local wisdom values such as Tri Hita Karana and Sad Kerthi serve as the philosophical foundation for tourism practices that align with the spiritual, social, and ecological values of Balinese society. This study aims to examine how destination management influences the achievement of sustainability, particularly through the role of regulatory frameworks, stakeholder collaboration, and active community participation. A qualitative descriptive method is employed, with data collection techniques comprising observation through a literature review. This study employs the Destination Management Model (DMM) as the principal analytical framework to explore how destination governance influences the achievement of sustainable tourism. Findings showed Bali is progressively aligning its tourism development with the principles of sustainable destination management. However, significant structural and cultural challenges persist, necessitating multi-stakeholder collaboration, improved governance frameworks, and enhanced community engagement to maintain Bali's status as a world-class tourism destination without compromising its authenticity. The most pressing challenges include the effectiveness of governance and regulatory enforcement, limited awareness and capabilities among small-scale tourism actors, and the intensifying pressures of unchecked tourism development. To overcome these issues, a holistic approach—grounded in local values and involving active participation from communities, regulators, tourism operators, and tourists themselves—is essential.

Keywords: Destination management, sustainable tourism, Bali, development.

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BACKGROUND

Tourism constitutes one of the primary sectors driving economic growth in Indonesia, particularly in the province of Bali. Since the colonial era, Bali has been widely recognized as a premier tourist destination, renowned for its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and the hospitality of its people. Over the past few decades, the tourism sector in Bali has experienced rapid and expansive growth, contributing significantly to the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), primarily through the accommodation, food, and beverage sectors.¹ However, behind this promising economic growth lies a series of adverse impacts that pose serious challenges to the sustainability of tourism development. Issues such as the conversion of agricultural land into villas and hotels, environmental degradation, erosion of local culture, and widening socio-economic disparities have become

increasingly apparent. Estimates indicate that between 600 to 1,000 hectares of rice fields are lost annually in Bali to make way for tourism infrastructure, raising concerns about food security and the preservation of cultural identity.

In response to these challenges, Sustainable Tourism has gained traction and is being developed and implemented in various tourist destinations across Bali. This concept seeks to strike a balance between economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection. Local wisdom values such as Tri Hita Karana and Sad Kerthi serve as the philosophical foundation for tourism practices that align with the spiritual, social, and ecological values of Balinese society.² The Provincial Government of Bali, through Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2020 and other initiatives, actively promotes the development of tourism based on sustainability principles.³ In addition, various local communities and

tourism actors have initiated models of community-based, conservation-oriented, and agro-tourism in villages such as Penglipuran, Taman Sari Buwana, and the Turtle Conservation area in Serangan Island.

Despite Bali's strong commitment to sustainable tourism, its implementation on the ground continues to face numerous complex challenges. A significant issue is the ongoing conversion of agricultural land into tourism-related facilities, including hotels, villas, and restaurants. This trend threatens local food security and disrupts the agrarian landscape, which is an integral aspect of Bali's cultural identity. Environmental issues such as waste accumulation and the overburdening of tourism destinations' carrying capacity further exacerbate the situation.

Moreover, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)—which form the backbone of the tourism sector—often struggle to access relevant information

and lack awareness regarding sustainable practices. Other impediments to the transition towards sustainable tourism include the high initial investment costs for adopting environmentally friendly technologies and scepticism regarding the effectiveness of such technologies. Furthermore, weak regulatory enforcement, particularly in spatial planning and business licensing, results in non-compliance with sustainability standards by many business actors. Efforts to raise awareness among tourists regarding sustainable tourism values also remain limited, leading to a lack of collective consciousness in supporting environmental and cultural conservation.^{4,5,6}

METHODS

Given these issues, this study aims to examine how destination management influences the achievement of sustainability, particularly through the role of regulatory frameworks, stakeholder collaboration, and active community participation. A qualitative descriptive method is employed, with data collection techniques comprising observation through a literature review. The research sites include destinations such as Penglipuran Village, Sangeh, and Nusa Dua, selected for their potential to exemplify the implementation of the Tri Hita Karana principles. The data analysis process begins with observing and recording narratives from relevant literature sources, followed by categorizing the data based on indicators of the destination management model. The data are then analysed and interpreted within the framework of this model and presented descriptively with supporting visual illustrations.

To address the aforementioned challenges, this study employs the Destination Management Model (DMM) as the principal analytical framework to explore how destination governance influences the achievement of sustainable tourism. A qualitative case study approach is adopted, focusing on selected destinations that have actively implemented sustainability principles and integrated local wisdom, namely Penglipuran Village, Sangeh Monkey Forest, and the Nusa Dua

tourism area. These sites were chosen due to their demonstrated efforts in adopting the Tri Hita Karana philosophy, which emphasizes the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the divine. This conceptual foundation aligns with sustainable development goals in the Balinese context.

The analysis is structured around five core components of the Destination Management Model:

- Destination Governance – examining how destination management and policy frameworks are directed to support sustainable tourism development;
- Community Involvement – assessing the extent of local community participation in decision-making processes and tourism activities;
- Tourism Supply and Demand Management – evaluating the regulation of tourist attractions and infrastructure in accordance with the carrying capacity of the destination;
- Environmental sustainability – analyzing environmental preservation efforts, including waste management and the responsible use of natural resources;
- Cultural preservation – exploring strategies for safeguarding and promoting local cultural heritage, which remains a central pillar of Bali's tourism appeal.

By applying this framework, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism in Bali's practical implementation and inherent challenges. Furthermore, it seeks to formulate evidence-based policy recommendations to strengthen inclusive and long-term-oriented destination governance models.^{7,8}

Destination Governance and the Challenges of Policy Implementation

One of the key components of Destination Management is Destination Governance, which refers to how policies and management strategies are formulated and executed to support sustainable tourism. In Bali, the regional government has demonstrated a clear commitment to promoting sustainable tourism practices through the enactment of regulatory

frameworks such as Regional Regulation (*Perda*) No. 5 of 2020 concerning the Standards for the Implementation of Balinese Cultural Tourism and Governor Regulation No. 8 of 2020, which emphasizes the importance of local wisdom, natural resources, and cultural values as the foundational pillars of tourism governance. These policies reflect a substantial advancement in efforts to embed sustainability within tourism development, particularly through the institutionalization of values such as Tri Hita Karana, which advocates for harmony between human beings, the environment, and the divine.

Nevertheless, the implementation of these regulations remains inconsistent and underdeveloped at the grassroots level. Weak law enforcement, combined with insufficient coordination between central and regional governments, has impeded the practical realization of these sustainability goals. A notable example is the corruption scandal involving the establishment of a resort on Berawa Beach, which illustrates the persistence of governance issues and the vulnerability of regulatory mechanisms to malpractice. Furthermore, the lack of synchronization between spatial planning and business licensing policies continues to undermine the coherence of tourism development strategies. Additionally, financial tools such as the Foreign Tourist Levy (PWA)—intended to support sustainability initiatives—have yet to be fully optimized, both in terms of their collection mechanisms and the allocation of funds toward impactful environmental and cultural programs. These challenges underscore the need for stronger institutional integrity, improved intergovernmental coordination, and more transparent mechanisms of policy enforcement.⁹

Community Involvement and Local Empowerment

With respect to Community Involvement, several tourism destinations in Bali have successfully fostered active local participation in tourism-related activities. These community-based tourism models highlight a meaningful synergy between tourism development and cultural preservation, wherein residents play



Figure 1.¹³ Penglipuran Village.



Figure 2.¹⁶ Illustration of green lush rice field in Indonesia.

central roles in the tourism experience. Exemplary cases include Penglipuran Village, Taman Sari Buwana, and Jatiluwih, where residents are directly involved in tourism operations and planning.^{10,11,12}

In Penglipuran and Taman Sari Buwana, for instance, tourists are invited to stay with local families and participate in daily routines such as farming and cooking, thereby promoting economic empowerment and cultural immersion. Jatiluwih Village, which adheres to a traditional agricultural system (*subak*), has even been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In these villages, tourism transcends passive consumption and encourages visitors to engage in authentic

local practices, from participating in traditional ceremonies to cultivating rice fields. This approach not only enhances the cultural value of the destination but also strengthens the socio-economic resilience of rural communities.

Nonetheless, challenges persist. Not all tourism villages have equal access to information, training, or enabling technologies. Many Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) still struggle to understand and implement sustainable business practices, leading to a disparity in the quality and resilience of tourism experiences across different regions. Limited access to digital platforms, sustainable technology, and

formal education continues to hinder the inclusive development of community-based tourism, posing a significant barrier to the broader realization of sustainable tourism in Bali.

Growth and Sustainability Tensions

Tourism Supply and Demand Management is another critical dimension in achieving sustainable tourism in Bali. The island has experienced a consistently high volume of tourist arrivals, with the accommodation, food, and beverage sectors reporting a year-on-year growth of 13.03% in Q1 of 2024. This rapid expansion has undeniably brought positive economic outcomes, significantly boosting Bali's GDP.

However, this growth has also created immense pressure on infrastructure and natural resources, resulting in unintended negative consequences. These include land-use changes, such as the widespread conversion of agricultural land into commercial tourism facilities, contributing to phenomena such as gentrification, infrastructural strain, and environmental degradation. One of the most alarming consequences is the annual conversion of 600 to 1,000 hectares of rice fields, which poses serious risks to food security and the continuity of Bali's agrarian-based cultural heritage. Such imbalances threaten the very sustainability of Bali's tourism sector by eroding the ecological and cultural foundations that attract visitors in the first place.

To mitigate the mismatch between tourism demand and environmental carrying capacity, alternative strategies must be pursued. One promising approach involves the development of homestay accommodations, where tourists stay in local homes rather than large-scale hotels. This strategy not only alleviates environmental stress but also supports local livelihoods by redistributing economic benefits more equitably. Additionally, integrating tourism activities with local daily life—such as farming, traditional crafts, or cultural events—can promote a more mindful and participatory tourism experience, reducing the ecological footprint while enriching visitor engagement.



Figure 3.¹⁹ Rice terraces in Jatiluwih.

Preserving Bali's Ecosystems Amidst Tourism Pressures

Environmental sustainability represents a critical pillar within the Destination Management Model and plays a fundamental role in the sustainable development of Bali's tourism sector. Several initiatives, such as the turtle conservation program in Serangan Island¹⁴ and ecotourism efforts in Taman Sari Buwana, have exemplified a commitment to preserving local ecosystems. These destinations have emerged as models of sustainable tourism practices, prioritizing ecological protection and biodiversity conservation. However, many other destinations across the island continue to face pressing environmental challenges. Issues such as waste accumulation, freshwater resource degradation, and inefficient energy use remain pervasive.¹⁵ Tourism activities generate significant amounts of waste, place substantial pressure on clean water supplies, and contribute to landscape destruction—particularly through unregulated hotel and resort development. These environmental stressors not only threaten the natural foundations of tourism in Bali but also undermine the island's long-term sustainability goals.

The adoption of environmentally friendly technologies and comprehensive environmental education for tourism stakeholders is urgently needed.

Nonetheless, the implementation of green technologies continues to face obstacles, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The high cost of investment, coupled with a lack of awareness and limited trust in the effectiveness of these technologies, has hindered widespread adoption. To address these challenges, policy incentives, financial support mechanisms, and sustained educational outreach are necessary to facilitate a broader transition toward eco-conscious tourism operations.

Sustaining Identity through Living Heritage

Cultural preservation is another core dimension of Bali's tourism management strategy and serves as the spiritual and philosophical foundation of the island's tourism identity. Bali has consistently upheld Tri Hita Karana, a local philosophy emphasizing harmony among humans, nature, and the divine, as the guiding principle in destination planning and development. Traditional values, embedded in ancient texts such as the *Dharma Pamaculan* manuscript, continue to inform both daily life and the development of culturally rooted tourism experiences.^{17,18}

This wisdom is increasingly being actualized through Agri-based educational tourism models, where local philosophies and agricultural practices are integrated

into visitor experiences. Destinations such as Jatiluwih and Penglipuran have effectively engaged tourists in immersive cultural interactions, allowing them to understand and participate in the Balinese way of life rather than remaining passive observers. In areas like Nusa Dua, managed by the Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), cultural values are preserved through the enforcement of traditional architectural regulations, the maintenance of temples within tourism zones, and the continued presence of local communities practicing customary rituals.

Despite these efforts, cultural heritage remains vulnerable to the pressures of globalization and short-term economic interests. If not protected through collective awareness and intergenerational transmission, the intrinsic values of Balinese culture may be diluted or commodified. Furthermore, weak regulatory oversight and pragmatic tendencies among some segments of the population pose ongoing threats to the integrity of cultural practices and identity, potentially leading to cultural displacement or erosion.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Bali is progressively aligning its tourism development with the principles of sustainable destination management. However, significant structural and cultural challenges persist, necessitating multi-stakeholder collaboration, improved governance frameworks, and enhanced community engagement to maintain Bali's status as a world-class tourism destination without compromising its authenticity.

The most pressing challenges include the effectiveness of governance and regulatory enforcement, limited awareness and capabilities among small-scale tourism actors, and the intensifying pressures of unchecked tourism development. To overcome these issues, a holistic approach—grounded in local values and involving active participation from communities, regulators, tourism operators, and tourists themselves—is essential.

The success of Bali's sustainable tourism future hinges on coordinated cross-sectoral efforts, the strengthening

of institutional capacities, and a deepened commitment to cultural and environmental stewardship. Only through such integrated strategies can Bali ensure the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage while continuing to thrive as a leading global tourism destination.

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