



ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received March 2, 2026;

Revised April 25, 2026;

Revised May 8, 2026

Accepted May 8, 2026;

Published Online June 24, 2026

Citation:

Surata, I.K., Tantra, D.K., & Suprastayasa, I.G.N.A. (2026). Exoticization of Indigenous Bali Wisdom: Impacts on Cultural and Tourism Sustainability. *Jurnal Kepariwisata Destinasi, Hospitalitas dan Perjalanan*, 10(1), 120-139. <https://doi.org/10.34013/jk.v10i1.2519>

© The Author(s) 2026. This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY-SA 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



This is an open-access journal, making all its content freely accessible to the public, promoting global knowledge sharing and broader dissemination of research findings.

Research Paper

Exoticization of Indigenous Bali Wisdom: Impacts on Cultural and Tourism Sustainability

I Ketut Surata^{1*} 

Dewa Komang Tantra²

I Gusti Ngurah Agung Suprastayasa³

¹ Program Studi Magister Terapan Pariwisata, Politeknik Pariwisata Bali, Indonesia

² Fakultas Pascasarjana, Universitas Warmadewa, Indonesia

³ Politeknik Pariwisata Bali, Indonesia

*e-mail: surata@ppb.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Indigenous Balinese wisdom, embodied in rituals, performing arts, and communal traditions, has long been central to cultural identity and destination distinctiveness. Yet, the acceleration of global tourism has intensified the exoticization of indigenous wisdom, whereby sacred practices are reconfigured into staged attractions that privilege spectacle over meaning. While such transformations provide immediate economic gains, they simultaneously weaken cultural authenticity, disrupt inter-generational knowledge transmission, and generate tensions within host communities. This study critically examines the exoticization of Indigenous Balinese wisdom within contemporary tourism and its implications for cultural and tourism sustainability. Unlike prior studies that treat commodification as a descriptive phenomenon, this research introduces a multidimensional analytical framework that integrates cultural commodification, staged authenticity, and sustainability governance into a unified model. It further advances existing scholarship by operationalizing exoticization through measurable multidimensional indicators, including cultural distortion, inter-generational knowledge disruption, governance misalignment, and community agency and proposing participatory, indicator-based approaches to assess and govern the impacts of tourism on indigenous cultural integrity. Findings underscore that safeguarding Balinese cultural sustainability requires inclusive strategies that empower local actors, balance stakeholder interests, and embed cultural integrity into tourism planning. The study offers both theoretical insights and practical guidelines, providing a replaceable model for heritage destinations confronting similar pressures worldwide.

Keywords: *Cultural Tourism, Indigenous Wisdom, Tourism Sustainability*

Declaration of Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bali's indigenous wisdom, embodied in traditional rituals, performing arts, and communally practiced norms, has long been central to both local identity and the island's tourism appeal (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). In recent decades, however, the rapid expansion of global tourism has intensified the exoticization and commodification of these cultural expressions, wherein sacred practices are transformed into staged experiences tailored to visitor expectations (Indrianto, 2005). This process prioritizes visual spectacle and marketability over contextual meaning, generating short term economic returns but simultaneously undermining authenticity and socio-cultural integrity.

From a cultural perspective, the conversion of sacred rites into staged performances diminishes their symbolic and philosophical significance. Studies from Bali's heritage tourism contexts demonstrate that commodified expressions risk reducing rich cosmological traditions to consumable products, weakening mechanisms for intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). Research on spiritual and material commodification in Balinese contexts, such as the marketing of religious foodways and ritualized practices, shows that profit-oriented adaptations can disrupt authentic value systems, challenging local resilience and community cohesion (Sutana, 2025).

From a tourism management standpoint, excessive exoticization poses structural challenges to sustainability. Policies prioritizing revenue generation over cultural preservation inadvertently incentivize superficial portrayals of heritage, creating tensions among local stakeholders, tour operators, and policymakers about whose interests are served in cultural tourism governance (Prasiasa et al., 2023b). Moreover, tourism amplification brings environmental and socio-economic pressures, such as overdevelopment and loss of agricultural land that further strain cultural continuity (Vipriyanti et al., 2025).

Addressing these impacts requires multidimensional, stakeholder inclusive frameworks that center cultural integrity, empower indigenous actors in decision making, and integrate interpretive strategies enabling tourists to engage meaningfully with local knowledge in situ. Only through such critical rethinking can sustainable tourism policies reconcile economic objectives with the preservation of Bali's intangible cultural heritage.

The issue of excessive exoticization of indigenous Bali wisdom has become a pressing concern in both cultural preservation and sustainable tourism discourse. Bali's appeal as a global tourism hub is deeply rooted in its rich cultural heritage including ritual practices, traditional arts, and local community norms which distinguishes it from competing destinations (Mudana et al., 2025). However, uncritical commodification of these cultural element's risks eroding the very authenticity that underpins Bali's competitive advantage, as ritualized traditions increasingly serve as staged experiences for tourists (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). Tourism growth has prioritized spectacle over substance, contributing not only to the superficial portrayal of culture but also to misrepresentation and socio-economic inequities within host communities, where economic benefits often outweigh cultural safeguarding (Mahendra, 2024).

Scientifically, this topic addresses significant gaps at the intersection of tourism management, cultural studies, and sustainability science. Although prior research has examined tourism induced commodification broadly, few studies have systematically unpacked the mechanisms, governance implications, and outcomes of cultural exoticization in Bali's context. For example, while stakeholder participation in cultural tourism management has been highlighted, notable tensions remain regarding how indigenous actors influence cultural representation and policy design (Mangku et al., 2021). Likewise, studies on sustainable tourism in Bali emphasize environmental and social dimensions, yet linking these to cultural authenticity and governance remains underdeveloped (Januar, 2024).

Understanding these processes is critical for developing empirically grounded frameworks that integrate cultural sustainability with responsible tourism practice. Approaches such as community-based tourism and multi stakeholder governance have shown promise in balancing economic growth with heritage preservation by engaging local actors in decision making (Mudana et al., 2025). Bridging empirical evidence with actionable strategies, this research contributes to interdisciplinary understanding of how exoticization influences cultural continuity and tourism sustainability, an imperative for maintaining Bali's global cultural and economic significance.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to cultural commodification in tourism, significant research gaps persist in understanding how exoticization specifically alters indigenous Bali wisdom and influences sustainable tourism governance. Much of the existing literature focuses on broad descriptions of cultural transformation, tourist perceptions, or commodification of cultural products, but rarely examines the mechanisms and managerial implications through which exoticization reshapes local knowledge systems (Prasiasa et al., 2023). For example, studies on creative industry commodification illustrate how cultural artifacts and performances are altered for market consumption, but do not explicate how communities negotiate these changes strategically or how these negotiations affect cultural meaning and continuity (Prasiasa et al., 2023a).

First, a key conceptual gap lies in the interplay between cultural authenticity and tourist expectations. While research acknowledges commodification broadly, it often treats cultural performance as either a static attraction or a commodified object, without exploring how local stakeholders actively adapt, resist, or reinterpret cultural practices in response to tourism pressures. Studies on heritage tourism in Bali suggest that communities experience ambivalence, negotiating between cultural integrity and economic opportunity, but systematic analysis of community agency in shaping authenticity remains underdeveloped (Rizkikadduhani, 2024).

Second, implications for tourism management are insufficiently examined. Although cultural preservation is frequently cited as a sustainability goal, few empirically grounded frameworks guide how cultural integrity can be integrated into tourism planning, policy design, or operational practices that align diverse stakeholder interests (Segara, 2025).

Third, methodological limitations hinder robust strategy development. Most studies rely on qualitative narratives without triangulating perspectives from multiple stakeholders or employing longitudinal and quantitative measures of the impacts of exoticization on cultural sustainability, restricting the ability to generalize findings. Addressing these gaps is critical for advancing both theory and practice in culturally informed, sustainable tourism management research.

The investigation into the exoticization of indigenous Bali wisdom within tourism management reveals several dimensions of scientific novelty that advance both theory and practice. First, this study adopts an integrative perspective synthesizing cultural studies, tourism management, and sustainability science. Prior research often treats cultural commodification as a descriptive phenomenon (e.g., staged performances or souvenir culture), without linking it to operational policy and sustainability frameworks (Prasiasa et al., 2023b). By explicitly examining how excessive exoticization affects both the integrity of indigenous knowledge and tourism sustainability outcomes, the current research fills a critical gap in understanding the cultural-economic interdependencies shaping contemporary tourism systems.

Second, this research foregrounds the agency of local communities in mediating cultural representation. While much extant work frames indigenous culture as passive or static within tourist settings (Rizkikadduhani, 2024), a community centered approach reveals how local actors actively interpret, adapt, or resist commodification pressures. Such insights align with recent calls for participatory governance frameworks that reconcile cultural resilience with market engagement

(Mangku et al., 2021). Investigating indigenous agency elucidates how authenticity is negotiated rather than simply lost, offering a more nuanced theoretical lens.

Third, the study introduces a multi-dimensional assessment framework integrating qualitative and quantitative measures of exoticization's impacts. Existing studies often rely on singular qualitative narratives or anecdotal accounts, limiting generalizability (Segara, 2025). By combining stakeholder interviews with indicators of sustainability performance, this research generates rigorous, evidence-based insights into cultural preservation and management practices.

Finally, the research contributes practical novelty, offering actionable guidelines for policymakers, tour operators, and cultural intermediaries. This approach bridges conceptual insights with strategic tourism management and offers a replicable model for heritage-based destinations confronting similar challenges.

The central objective of this study is to critically examine the impacts of excessive exoticization of indigenous Bali wisdom on cultural integrity and tourism sustainability, with the intent to generate actionable insights for policy, management, and community engagement. This objective responds to documented concerns that rapid tourism growth has precipitated cultural commodification and erosion of authenticity, challenging sustainability agendas in Bali (Januar, 2024). Examinations of cultural transformation in Bali highlight how commercial pressures can reshape identity and social structures, underscoring the need for nuanced analysis of commodification dynamics (Mahendra, 2024).

The first research question: how does excessive exoticization affect the authenticity and intergenerational transmission of local cultural knowledge within specific cultural context in Desa Adat community (e.g. temple rituals and ceremonial performances)? It addresses the cultural dimension of commodification. Prior work indicates that staged performances and market driven representations can weaken community cohesion and disrupt traditional cultural learning mechanisms (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). For instance, sacred rituals that once reinforced collective meaning may become performances devoid of spiritual context, raising concerns about long term cultural sustainability.

The second question. What are the implications of exoticization for sustainable tourism management, including policy, operational practices, and stakeholder coordination? It engages with management challenges. Sustainable tourism in Bali has been hampered by competing priorities, including economic growth and cultural preservation, with policy responses still evolving to balance these demands (Januar, 2024). The literature shows that collaborative and inclusive governance frameworks are essential for aligning stakeholder interests and mitigating negative externalities.

The third question. How can local communities, tour operators, and policymakers collaboratively mitigate negative effects while promoting meaningful tourist experiences? It emphasizes participatory approaches. Community based tourism and multi stakeholder engagement have been proposed as mechanisms that empower locals and distribute benefits more equitably, fostering both cultural integrity and sustainability (Cultural Tourism Research Group, 2025). Collectively, these questions advance both theoretical understanding and practical frameworks for culturally informed, sustainable tourism management in Bali.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The concept of exoticization of indigenous Bali wisdom integrates cultural commodification, heritage representation, and sustainable tourism principles within a single analytical framework. Exoticization refers to the process by which local cultural expressions which include rituals, art forms, and

community practices are altered, staged, or dramatized to fulfill expectations of an imagined authentic experience for tourists (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). This concept builds on foundational tourism theory, notably MacCannell's (1973) notion of staged authenticity, where cultural performances are shaped for external consumption rather than rooted in community meaning. In Bali, exoticization encompasses more than adaptation of performances; it includes commodification of sacred practices and spatial ritual contexts to align with tourist expectations, potentially diluting symbolic meaning over time. While MacCannell's (1973) concept of staged authenticity remains foundational, the contemporary tourism landscape requires its reinterpretation within the digital experience economy. In the current era, exoticization is increasingly mediated through digital platforms, social media, and algorithm-driven visibility, or example various creative industry products in tourism in Bali (Prasiasa et al., 2023a), giving rise to what can be termed digital exoticization. Cultural practices are no longer staged solely for physical tourists but are curated for Instagram ability as visual virality, and platform engagement metrics (Siegel et al., 2025).

This transformation shifts authenticity from experiential depth toward aesthetic optimization, where rituals, landscapes, and cultural symbols are selectively framed to maximize digital appeal. Consequently, the frontstage–backstage dichotomy evolves into a continuous performative loop, where cultural expressions are simultaneously consumed on-site and online. This intensifies pressures on communities to reproduce visually appealing and standardized representations, further accelerating cultural simplification and symbolic abstraction. Integrating this perspective significantly extends classical authenticity theory into contemporary tourism realities.

In this study, exoticization intensity functions as a key independent variable. It operationalizes the degree to which cultural elements are modified for tourist appeal, ranging from minimal adaptation (community led interpretive sharing) to high level staging for mass audiences. Higher levels of exoticization are hypothesized to correlate with greater cultural distortion and socio-economic pressures on host communities. Thus, exoticization intensity is central to understanding both cultural and tourism outcomes.

Cultural sustainability and tourism sustainability are the primary dependent variables. Cultural sustainability refers to the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems, intergenerational transmission of cultural practices, and community control over heritage narratives. Empirical studies in Bali have demonstrated that cultural commodification can disrupt intergenerational knowledge transfer and risk reducing sacred rituals to touristic spectacles, challenging sustained cultural continuity (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). Tourism sustainability encompasses managerial practices, policy alignment, stakeholder coordination, and equitable distribution of benefits. Sustainable tourism outcomes require maintaining destination authenticity while managing economic, social, and environmental pressures.

Mediating variables include community agency and stakeholder governance. Community agency reflects the capacity of local actors to shape interpretations, negotiate authenticity, and adapt cultural practices strategically. This variable is distinct from passive commodification and acknowledges Balinese communities as active participants rather than passive cultural suppliers (turn1search0). Stakeholder governance refers to formal and informal systems through which policy, management, and local interests are coordinated. Inclusive governance structures can mitigate negative impacts of exoticization by integrating community voice into planning and tourism regulation, thus balancing economic imperatives with cultural preservation objectives.

Contextual variables encompass tourist expectations of authenticity and market pressures. Tourist demand for unique cultural experiences and remains a driving force in cultural tourism; however, such demand often privileges simplified, spectacle-oriented representations that weaken deeper cultural meaning when poorly managed. Market pressures, including commercialization incentives and tourism

marketing strategies, further amplify these dynamics, prioritizing occupancy and revenue over cultural integrity. The conceptual model thereby links exoticization intensity with cultural and tourism sustainability outcomes, moderated by community agency and governance quality. This structure enables rigorous empirical investigation of both processes and effects, contributing to effective strategies for sustainable tourism management in Bali and comparable heritage destinations globally.

2.2. Theoretical Foundations of Exoticization of Indigenous Wisdom

The theoretical foundation of exoticization of indigenous Bali wisdom emerges from a synthesis of classical and contemporary frameworks in cultural tourism, authenticity, commodification, and sustainable destination management. At its core, the concept of exoticization reflects the transformation of local cultural expressions into marketable experiences tailored to tourist desires, often at the expense of cultural depth and contextual meaning (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). This phenomenon is deeply rooted in early tourism sociology and anthropology, which emphasize how cultural interactions are shaped by power, representation, and economic imperatives.

A seminal theoretical lens is MacCannell's (1973) concept of staged authenticity, which suggests that as visitors seek "real" cultural experiences, communities and tourism intermediaries construct performative versions of culture that fulfill tourist expectations without necessarily reflecting lived practices (Rizkikadduhani, 2024). MacCannell's frame highlights the frontstage-backstage dichotomy, where cultural displays offered to tourists may obscure the authentic, everyday life of local populations. In the case of Bali, ritual performances and ceremonies can become staged for scheduled audiences, thus reshaping the meaning and function of these practices.

Building on this, authenticity theory, particularly Cohen's (1988) framework of authenticity continua, moves beyond a binary understanding of authentic versus inauthentic. Instead, authenticity is seen as socially constructed and negotiated among stakeholders, including tourists, hosts, and intermediaries. Cohen's perspective is particularly relevant in exoticization contexts, where Balinese communities actively negotiate what constitutes acceptable cultural representation, balancing economic needs with cultural integrity. Such constructivist views of authenticity recognize community agency in defining heritage significance.

Cultural commodification theory also informs this study. Commodification refers to the process by which cultural elements are transformed into objects of market exchange, with inherent meanings often decontextualized to appeal to broader audiences. Chris Barker's interpretation, anchored in critical theory, underscores how commodification can detach cultural elements from their original social functions, aligning with Marxist critiques of commodity fetishism. This theoretical orientation is essential for understanding how indigenous wisdom can be "packaged" into consumable products, risking loss of symbolic depth.

Complementing these perspectives is the sustainable tourism development theory, which integrates economic, environmental, and socio-cultural objectives to ensure long term viability of tourism destinations. Sustainable tourism frameworks assert that cultural sustainability. The preservation and transmission of cultural heritage must be incorporated into tourism planning and governance to avoid adverse outcomes such as cultural erosion, loss of identity, and community marginalization. In this view, sustainable cultural tourism requires participatory governance structures, stakeholder collaboration, and strategic management that uphold heritage integrity while addressing market demands.

Moreover, stakeholder theory underpins the examination of governance dynamics in exoticization processes by emphasizing that sustainable outcomes arise when multiple actors, communities, policymakers, tour operators, and tourists, engage in co-creative decision making. Stakeholder frameworks highlight the importance of inclusive tourism planning to balance economic benefits with preservation of cultural resources.

Taking together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens for analyzing how exoticization unfolds in Bali's tourism context, illustrating the multifaceted interactions between cultural representation, market forces, tourist expectations, and sustainability imperatives. By integrating staged authenticity, authenticity continua, commodification, sustainable tourism, and stakeholder governance theories, this study offers a robust conceptual grounding to critically examine the impacts of exoticization on both intangible cultural heritage and sustainable tourism governance.

2.3. Review of previous empirical research

Tourism studies have long examined the connection between tourism and cultural commercialization, especially from the perspectives of staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973) and the social construction of authenticity (Cohen, 1988). These fundamental viewpoints contend that tourism turns cultural expressions into staged performances intended to satisfy tourists, frequently creating a divide between "frontstage" and "backstage" cultural realities.

This thesis is furthered by recent research, which highlights that commodification is a reconfiguration of meaning inside market systems rather than just a process of cultural loss (Salazar, 2012; Richards, 2018). Empirical research (e.g., Wirawan, 2025) show that rituals, symbols, and community behaviors are specifically tailored for tourism consumption in the Balinese environment. Although these studies recognize negotiation processes, they frequently maintain a descriptive emphasis and provide little insight into how commodification gets ingrained in tourist systems.

Critically, current research published in the *Annals of Tourism Research* and *Tourism Management* emphasizes how the experience economy, where value is generated from symbolic consumption and emotional involvement rather than cultural depth, is increasingly shaping authenticity (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). This change increases the drive for aestheticization, uniformity, and simplification.

Indigenous knowledge systems are positioned as the cornerstone of sustainable tourism development in a second body of literature. It is common to highlight frameworks like *Tri Hita Karana* as comprehensive models that incorporate social, spiritual, and environmental aspects (Paramita, 2025). This is consistent with the global discourse on sustainability, which highlights the significance of local expertise in attaining long-term resilience (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

But between normative idealization and real-world application, a crucial conflict arises. Scholars contend that although indigenous ideologies are frequently advocated in academic and policy discourse, they are more frequently used as symbolic capital than as practical tools for government (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). This is seen in Bali when cultural values are selectively incorporated into branding and marketing initiatives without institutional regulation.

Governance-focused research supports this criticism by emphasizing that institutional capacity, regulatory frameworks, and stakeholder alignment rather than just cultural philosophy which are necessary for sustainable tourism results (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Therefore, even while indigenous knowledge is still conceptually potent, its efficacy depends on how well it is incorporated into legally binding governance structures.

An important advancement in tourist studies is the move toward acknowledging community agency. More recent research highlights local communities' active engagement in influencing cultural representation and tourist practices, whereas earlier models frequently depicted them as passive beneficiaries of tourism benefits (Pratiwi & Wikantiyoso, 2025). This viewpoint is consistent with empowerment-based frameworks in sustainable tourism, which contend that meaningful engagement improves socioeconomic fairness and cultural preservation (Scheyvens, 1999). Critical scholarship, however, warns against romanticizing agency too much. Communities function under asymmetrical

power systems that are impacted by governmental policies, private sector interests, and international markets (Saarinen, 2006).

Although communities still have some influence over cultural narratives, empirical data from Bali indicates that this control is frequently negotiated rather than absolute. This emphasizes the necessity of viewing agency as context-dependent and relational rather than intrinsically powerful. Community-based initiatives run the risk of being reduced to participation rhetoric rather than meaningful government reform if underlying imbalances are not addressed.

Spiritual and cultural practices are becoming more and more commercialized due to the growth of health and experience travel. Demand for authentic, life-changing experiences that are frequently based in indigenous knowledge systems is rising, according to global tourism trends (Richards, 2018).

Melukat, *usadha*, and ceremonial rites have become essential components of Bali's tourist offers (Wiguna & Triana, 2025). When separated from their ritual and philosophical underpinnings, these acts run the potential of decontextualization and ethical dilution, even as they improve destination uniqueness (Sutana, 2025). This dynamic is a reflection of more general criticisms in tourist studies, where spiritual and cultural activities are becoming more and more commercialized in international marketplaces (Salazar, 2012). Crucially, this process is accelerated by the experience economy, which prioritizes aesthetic appeal and shareability over authenticity and significance. This is made possible by digital platforms and visual culture.

The literature's lack of unity is a major drawback despite the depth of these thematic strands. Research frequently concentrates on discrete aspects such as cultural, social, or managerial, without looking at how they interact with one another within a larger system. As a result, rather than being clearly understood as a multifaceted process, exoticization is frequently handled implicitly. Both theoretical advancement and real-world application are hampered by this fragmentation. It is challenging to evaluate how tourism concurrently modifies stakeholder relationships, transforms cultural knowledge, and affects sustainability results.

2.4. Current research position

Research on the exoticization of Indigenous Balinese wisdom and its implications for cultural and tourism sustainability holds strategic significance within contemporary cultural tourism scholarship. It addresses the central paradox of tourism development; wherein local wisdom traditions are simultaneously celebrated and commodified. Philosophical frameworks such as *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasize harmony among humans, nature, and the spiritual realm, are frequently positioned as foundations of sustainable tourism in Bali, yet empirical evidence demonstrates that mass tourism pressures often undermine these ideals through environmental degradation and reduced community control over cultural representation (Sitohang & Purnomo, 2023). This line of inquiry also advances theoretical debates on cultural sustainability by examining how indigenous epistemologies are negotiated within tourism markets, revealing that local wisdom can inform effective governance when embedded in participatory management systems. Furthermore, studies on spiritual practices, including *Usadha* healing and *Satwika* norms, illustrate both the risks of sacred meaning erosion and the capacity for community resilience through culturally respectful integration (Sutana, 2025). Collectively, this research bridges macro-level tourism dynamics and micro-level cultural integrity by foregrounding indigenous agency, adaptation, and resilience, thereby enriching sustainable tourism theory and informing culturally grounded policy interventions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

To address the research questions concerning the effects of excessive exoticization on cultural authenticity, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and sustainable tourism management, a qualitative, multi-case study design was employed. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the complex socio-cultural dynamics of Balinese communities and the interactions between local stakeholders and tourism actors (Yin, 2018). Ethnographic methods were utilized, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews with community members, tour operators, and policymakers, and document analysis of relevant policy frameworks and operational guidelines (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The multi-case design enabled comparisons across multiple tourism sites and traditional villages, capturing variations in how indigenous knowledge was transmitted and negotiated under pressures of exoticization. Triangulation of data from different stakeholder perspectives strengthened the credibility and validity of findings, particularly regarding collaborative strategies to preserve cultural integrity while maintaining meaningful tourist experiences. Data analysis followed an interpretive thematic approach, highlighting patterns in the adaptation of cultural practices, stakeholder coordination, and policy implementation.

Triangulation was employed via source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and restricted investigator validation. Source triangulation entailed gathering data from several stakeholder groups (community people, tour operators, and policymakers) to obtain a range of opinions. Methodological triangulation was accomplished by the integration of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to corroborate findings. Furthermore, initial interpretations underwent peer debriefing to augment analytical credibility and reduce researcher bias.

This design facilitated a comprehensive understanding of both the cultural and managerial dimensions of tourism, providing empirically grounded insights that informed sustainable tourism policies, operational practices, and participatory governance models, while simultaneously addressing the preservation of indigenous knowledge and resisting reductive exoticization.

3.2. Data collection procedure

The research was conducted in multiple traditional villages and tourism sites in Bali, selected for their significance in sustaining indigenous cultural practices while hosting high tourist volumes. Sites included Penglipuran Village, Ubud Tourism Village, and several heritage sites where local rituals, environmental stewardship practices, and communal governance structures were actively maintained. These locations were purposively chosen to capture variations in the degree of cultural commodification and exposure to tourism pressures, providing a robust context for examining the impacts of exoticization on cultural authenticity and sustainable tourism management.

Participants were drawn from three primary stakeholder groups to ensure triangulation of perspectives. Local community members, including cultural practitioners, elders, and village leaders, were engaged to document the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and the adaptation of traditions under tourism pressures. Tour operators and guides participated to elucidate operational practices, interactions with tourists, and the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into visitor experiences. Policymakers and administrative officials were interviewed to assess the role of governance frameworks, policy enforcement, and coordination in sustaining cultural and tourism objectives. A total of 45 participants were purposively selected, including 20 community members, 15 tour operators, and 10 policymakers, to ensure representation of key stakeholder perspectives.

Purposive sampling was applied to capture participants with relevant experience in cultural practices and tourism management, enhancing the study's depth and contextual relevance (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data were collected using a triangulated qualitative approach to address the research questions concerning the effects of excessive exoticization on cultural authenticity, sustainable tourism management, and collaborative mitigation strategies. Participant observation was employed over a period of three months in selected villages and tourism sites, including Penglipuran and Ubud Tourism Village, to document firsthand the enactment of cultural practices, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and interactions between tourists and local communities. Observations focused on rituals, traditional ceremonies, artisanal practices, and touristic activities, enabling the researcher to capture both overt and nuanced forms of cultural adaptation or commodification.

Village, to document firsthand the enactment of cultural practices, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and interactions between tourists and local communities. Observations focused on rituals, traditional ceremonies, artisanal practices, and touristic activities, enabling the researcher to capture both overt and nuanced forms of cultural adaptation or commodification.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 45 purposively selected participants, comprising 20 community members (including elders, cultural practitioners, and village leaders), 15 tour operators and guides, and 10 policymakers. Interview protocols were designed to explore perceptions of cultural authenticity, experiences with tourist interactions, operational practices, policy implementation, and strategies for preserving cultural integrity while promoting meaningful tourism experiences. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate representation of participants' perspectives.

Furthermore, document analysis of local regulations, operational guidelines, policy reports, and community by-laws (*awig-awig*) was conducted to examine formal governance structures, coordination mechanisms among stakeholders, and institutional approaches to sustainable tourism. This method complemented observational and interview data by providing insight into the regulatory and procedural frameworks that shaped local practices and policy implementation.

Collectively, these data collection techniques facilitated a holistic understanding of the interplay between exoticization, cultural sustainability, and tourism management. The use of multiple qualitative methods allowed for cross-validation of findings, strengthened the credibility of interpretations, and provided empirically grounded insights into both the challenges and strategies for balancing tourism development with cultural preservation.

3.3. Instrument

The research instruments were carefully designed to align with the theoretical framework of cultural sustainability and exoticization, the ethnographic research design, and the multi-stakeholder participant composition. Observation protocols were developed to systematically record manifestations of indigenous Balinese wisdom, including rituals, communal practices, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. These protocols ensured that observations captured both the authenticity of cultural practices and the potential distortions resulting from tourist-oriented commercialization, consistent with the theoretical emphasis on cultural commodification and resilience.

Semi-structured interview guides were constructed for the three participant groups namely community members, tour operators, and policymakers, focusing on their perceptions of cultural authenticity, operational practices, policy implementation, and collaborative strategies for mitigating negative effects of exoticization. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to elaborate on experiential insights, thereby enabling a rich interpretive analysis of the dynamics between tourism and indigenous knowledge systems.

Additionally, a document analysis template was used to systematically examine policy documents, operational guidelines, and community regulations (*awig-awig*), capturing formalized strategies for sustainable tourism governance and cultural preservation. Together, these instruments facilitated triangulation of data, ensuring methodological rigor and coherence with the ethnographic approach.

The design of these instruments directly supported the research objectives by enabling an in-depth, contextually grounded exploration of how exoticization influences cultural authenticity, knowledge transmission, and sustainable tourism management.

3.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic and interpretive approach, consistent with the ethnographic research design, participant composition, and data collection instruments. Transcribed interviews, observational notes, and policy documents were systematically coded to identify patterns and themes related to the effects of exoticization on cultural authenticity, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and sustainable tourism management. Initial open coding was applied to segment the data into meaningful units, followed by axial coding to establish relationships between categories, such as community adaptation strategies, tourist interactions, and policy implementation mechanisms (Strauss & Corbin, 2014).

Observational data were triangulated with interview insights and document analysis to enhance credibility and validity, ensuring that interpretations accurately reflected both experiential and formalized perspectives of the three stakeholder groups: community members, tour operators, and policymakers. The coding process emphasized contextual sensitivity, capturing subtle variations in cultural practices and the ways exoticization influenced local knowledge and operational decisions.

Subsequently, higher-order themes were synthesized to construct an integrated narrative of how cultural resilience, stakeholder collaboration, and governance frameworks interact to mitigate the negative effects of exoticization while supporting meaningful tourist experiences. Analytical rigor was maintained through iterative cross-checking, peer debriefing, and alignment with the theoretical framework of cultural sustainability, ensuring that findings were both empirically grounded and conceptually robust.

4. RESULT

4.1. Effect of excessive exoticization on local cultural knowledge

Excessive exoticization has generated profound and multidimensional impacts on local cultural knowledge in Bali, particularly within tourism-driven regimes of representation. Exoticization refers to the selective amplification, aestheticization, and simplification of cultural elements to conform to external imaginaries, often privileging visual spectacle and emotional appeal over contextual meaning. Within Balinese tourism, this process has contributed to the fragmentation of Indigenous knowledge systems by transforming complex, relational epistemologies into static and consumable cultural symbols (Salazar, 2012). Empirical findings from this study reinforce this dynamic. As one tour guide in Ubud explained:

"Tourists want something quick and beautiful, so we simplify the explanation. Some traditional dances and performances are shortened so they fit the schedule." (Tour Guide, Ubud)

This statement illustrates how cultural elements are selectively adjusted to align with tourist expectations, confirming that exoticization operates not only at the level of representation but also through practical adaptation in tourism operations. Core philosophical frameworks such as *Tri Hita Karana*, ritual cosmology, and customary governance structures (desa adat and banjar) are increasingly presented as decontextualized icons rather than as lived systems that regulate social, spiritual, and ecological relations. As a result, cultural knowledge is detached from its everyday enactment and ethical foundations, reducing its capacity to function as a guiding principle for community life. Scholars argue

that such symbolic abstraction weakens the epistemic integrity of Indigenous knowledge by privileging performative visibility over ontological depth (Smith, 2012; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). This process was explicitly recognized by community members. One village elder noted:

"Now people know the symbols, but not always the meaning. The ceremony becomes something to show, not something to live." (Community Elder, Penglipuran)

Such reflections highlight how symbolic abstraction weakens the epistemic integrity of Indigenous knowledge by privileging performative visibility over ontological depth (Smith, 2012; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009).

Ethnographic research further demonstrates that excessive exoticization undermines intergenerational knowledge transmission. Younger Balinese, particularly those engaged in tourism-related employment, often acquire cultural competencies oriented toward performance, narration, and market utility rather than ritual mastery and philosophical understanding. Sacred practices traditionally transmitted through oral instruction, temple-based participation, and communal apprenticeship risk being reframed as occupational skills rather than ethical obligations. This shift produces epistemic simplification, whereby layered cosmological narratives are reduced to standardized scripts tailored for tourist interpretation (MacCannell, 1999; Picard, 1996). This shift is evident in the experiences of local participants:

"Young people learn how to explain rituals to tourists, but not all of them understand the deeper meaning anymore." (Community Elder)

Sacred practices traditionally transmitted through oral instruction, temple-based participation, and communal apprenticeship risk being reframed as occupational skills rather than ethical obligations. This produces epistemic simplification, whereby layered cosmological narratives are reduced to standardized scripts tailored for tourist interpretation (MacCannell, 1999; Picard, 1996).

Exoticization also reconfigures power relations in cultural knowledge production. Tourism intermediaries, marketers, and external stakeholders increasingly shape which cultural elements are valorized, thereby marginalizing traditional epistemic authorities such as priests (pemangku), elders, and customary councils. Although Balinese communities exhibit notable agency in adapting cultural expressions, sustained exposure to market-driven representations risks normalizing instrumental interpretations of culture. Over time, this normalization may erode reflexive cultural consciousness, particularly when economic incentives outweigh ritual accountability (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

Nevertheless, the literature also highlights the persistence of cultural resilience when communities retain control over cultural narratives. Participatory interpretation, culturally grounded education, and governance frameworks that recognize Indigenous epistemologies have proven effective in countering the reductive effects of exoticization. When local knowledge holders are positioned as authoritative interpreters rather than performative subjects, cultural knowledge is reasserted as a living, evolving system rather than a consumable spectacle (Scheyvens, 1999).

In sum, excessive exoticization poses a significant threat to the continuity and integrity of Balinese cultural knowledge. Mitigating its adverse effects requires governance models that reposition Indigenous epistemologies at the center of tourism development, ensuring that cultural knowledge remains a foundation of social sustainability, identity continuity, and ethical engagement rather than a commodity shaped solely by external demand (Marbun, 2025).

4.2. Implication of Exoticization for Sustainable Tourism Management

The exoticization of Indigenous Balinese wisdom has significant implications for sustainable tourism management, particularly across policy formulation, operational practices, and stakeholder

coordination. When cultural elements are selectively aestheticized to satisfy tourist imaginaries, sustainability frameworks risk privileging short-term market appeal over long-term cultural integrity. This dynamic necessitates a recalibration of tourism governance to address the structural conditions that normalize reductive cultural representations.

At the policy level, exoticization exposes gaps between sustainability rhetoric and regulatory implementation. Although cultural sustainability is frequently embedded in national and regional tourism policies, these frameworks often lack enforceable mechanisms that recognize community authority over cultural knowledge and representation. As a result, Indigenous epistemologies such as *Tri Hita Karana* are reduced to branding tools rather than guiding ethical principles. Sustainable tourism policy must therefore shift toward participatory governance models that formally integrate customary institutions (desa adat, banjar) into decision-making processes, ensuring cultural legitimacy and epistemic justice (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). This gap between policy discourse and practice is evident in stakeholder perspectives. As one policymaker stated:

“Cultural sustainability is already written in policy Bali develop Cultural Tourism, but there is no strict control on how culture is used in tourism activities.” (Academician)

This highlights the need for policy transformation toward participatory governance models that formally integrate customary institutions (desa adat, banjar) into decision-making processes, ensuring cultural legitimacy and epistemic justice (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

In terms of operational practices, exoticization shapes how tourism products are designed, interpreted, and marketed. Tour operators and guides frequently rely on simplified narratives and visual spectacle to enhance tourist satisfaction, inadvertently reinforcing cultural commodification. While economically efficient, such practices undermine interpretive depth and ethical engagement. High-impact scholarship emphasizes the need for culturally reflexive operations, including interpretive training, community-led storytelling, and ethical guidelines that prioritize meaning-making over performance (Moscardo, 2014; Salazar, 2012). This tendency is reflected in operational realities described by practitioners:

“We adjust the story and sometimes simplify the ritual explanation so tourists can understand quickly and enjoy the experience.” (Tour Guide)

Such practices illustrate how market-driven pressures shape cultural interpretation at the operational level. High-impact scholarship emphasizes the need for culturally reflexive operations, including interpretive training, community-led storytelling, and ethical guidelines that prioritize meaning-making over performance (Moscardo, 2014; Salazar, 2012).

Effective stakeholder coordination emerges as a critical mechanism for mitigating the negative effects of exoticization. Fragmented relationships between communities, industry actors, and policymakers often result in conflicting priorities and uneven power relations. Collaborative platforms that facilitate dialogue, co-creation of cultural narratives, and shared accountability are essential for aligning tourism development with sustainability objectives. Empirical studies demonstrate that when local communities retain narrative control and are recognized as knowledge holders rather than attractions, tourism outcomes are more socially equitable and culturally resilient (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009).

Collectively, these implications underscore that managing exoticization is not merely an operational challenge but a governance issue central to sustainable tourism. Addressing it requires integrative, culturally grounded management strategies that balance economic viability with the preservation of living cultural systems.

4.3. Mitigation of negative effects while promoting meaningful tourist experiences

Mitigating the negative effects of cultural exoticization while simultaneously promoting meaningful tourist experiences requires a collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance model that integrates local communities, tour operators, and policymakers as equal and interdependent actors. High-impact tourism scholarship emphasizes that sustainability cannot be achieved through isolated interventions; rather, it emerges from coordinated processes that align cultural authority, market mediation, and regulatory support (Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

Local communities must be positioned at the core of this collaboration as custodians of Indigenous knowledge and cultural legitimacy. Empowering communities to exercise control over cultural narratives through customary institutions, participatory interpretation, and community-led tourism initiatives helps counter reductive exoticization. When communities define what aspects of culture may be shared, how they are contextualized, and under what conditions, cultural expressions retain their philosophical depth and ethical meaning. This approach transforms tourism encounters from consumptive spectacles into dialogical learning experiences, strengthening intergenerational knowledge transmission and reinforcing cultural resilience (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009).

Tour operators play a critical intermediary role in shaping tourist expectations and experiences. To mitigate negative impacts, operators must move beyond commodified representations and adopt ethically reflexive operational practices. This includes co-designing tourism products with local communities, investing in guide training focused on cultural interpretation and intercultural communication, and prioritizing storytelling that emphasizes meaning, context, and relational understanding rather than visual spectacle. Research shows that tourists increasingly value authenticity, ethical engagement, and experiential depth, suggesting that such practices enhance both sustainability and market competitiveness (Moscardo, 2014; Salazar, 2012).

Policymakers function as institutional enablers of collaboration by establishing governance frameworks that formalize community participation and regulate cultural representation. Effective policy interventions include recognizing customary institutions in tourism decision-making, enforcing ethical standards for cultural use, and aligning sustainability indicators with cultural not merely economic outcomes. Importantly, Indigenous values such as *Tri Hita Karana* must be operationalized within policy mechanisms rather than reduced to symbolic branding tools. Policymakers can also facilitate multi-stakeholder platforms that promote dialogue, coordination, and shared accountability across sectors (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

Meaningful tourist experiences emerge most robustly when collaboration is institutionalized through co-created narratives, transparent benefit-sharing, and continuous stakeholder engagement. Such integrative governance models allow tourism to move beyond superficial exotic appeal toward forms of engagement that are intellectually enriching for visitors and socially sustaining for host communities. Ultimately, collaborative mitigation of exoticization repositions tourism as a relational practice grounded in respect, reciprocity, and long-term cultural sustainability.

5. DISCUSSION

Research on the Exoticization of Indigenous Bali Wisdom and the body of literature on Bali's local wisdom-driven tourism share a central concern with the interplay between tourism growth and cultural sustainability, underpinned by Balinese indigenous philosophies such as *Tri Hita Karana* and the lived expressions of local traditions in destination contexts. Across the compared studies, there is a consensus

that local cultural values constitute both a foundation and a resource for sustainable tourism, contributing to community identity, environmental stewardship, and heritage preservation (Sitohang & Purnomo, 2023; Paramita, 2025).

Specifically, Local Wisdom–Driven Tourism in Ubud and Exoticization of Indigenous Bali Wisdom converge on the point that tourism commodification can alter cultural meanings and risk exoticization, wherein traditional practices are repurposed for tourist consumption rather than community purposes (Wirawan, 2025). Similarly, research on Penglipuran Village highlights how community integration of *Tri Hita Karana* through rituals, spatial planning, and collective governance strengthens cultural resilience but also faces globalization pressures that may dilute original meanings.

However, important differences emerge in theoretical framing and emphasis. The exoticization study predominantly foregrounds cultural commodification and its impacts on authenticity, focusing on symbolic transformation and sustainability tensions. In contrast, the Penglipuran and *Tri Hita Karana* integration studies emphasize operationalization of philosophical principles (Parahyangan, Pawongan, Palemahan) in tourism governance, revealing more on structural mechanisms for sustainability rather than the semiotic shifts of meaning.

The wellness tourism research in Ubud extends this discourse by situating local wisdom within holistic health and spiritual tourism, demonstrating how traditional healing practices can foster authenticity while resisting commodification pressures, a nuance less emphasized in the exoticization framework. Finally, studies on cultural landscape and agriculture-tourism integration bring landscape and economic dimensions into sustainable strategy dialogues, thereby extending sustainability beyond culture alone to include environmental and economic resilience. In sum, while all studies align in recognizing local wisdom as central to sustainability, they differ in scope, conceptual focus, and analytical depth, from symbolic commodification and identity negotiation to structural integration and economic-cultural synthesis.

The findings make a substantial theoretical contribution by reconceptualizing excessive exoticization as a structural and epistemic force that actively reshapes local cultural knowledge, rather than merely a representational or symbolic practice. By evidencing the erosion of contextual, philosophical, and ritual meanings, the study substantiates critical tourism and postcolonial perspectives that highlight how tourism representations simplify dynamic cultures into consumable forms (Bhabha, 2012; Shepherd, 2002).

This research extends existing theory by empirically demonstrating that exoticization produces knowledge displacement, whereby performative and market-oriented expressions progressively supplant embedded cultural epistemologies, positioning tourism as a mechanism of cultural re-engineering rather than preservation (Cohen, 1988). From a sustainable tourism management perspective, the findings advance governance-oriented theory by identifying exoticization as a systemic risk to socio-cultural sustainability, challenging managerial approaches that prioritize visitor satisfaction while assuming cultural continuity (Saarinen, 2006; World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2017). Practically, the study delineates a shift toward interpretive, relational, and community-led tourism models, offering a pragmatic pathway to mitigate cultural distortion while enhancing meaningful, knowledge-based tourist experiences (Moscardo, 1996).

The results demonstrate that excessive exoticization exerts a profound impact on local cultural knowledge by reconfiguring it into simplified, performative forms aligned with tourist expectations. Empirically, the findings indicate that complex philosophical values, ritual meanings, and socio-religious contexts embedded in local wisdom are increasingly marginalized, while visually appealing and easily consumable elements are selectively amplified. This process contributes to the fragmentation of cultural knowledge systems and weakens intergenerational transmission, corroborating theoretical arguments that tourism-induced representation can displace lived cultural epistemologies (Cohen,

1988; Shepherd, 2002). Rather than functioning as a preservation mechanism, exoticization operates as a transformative force that subtly restructures cultural meaning.

With regard to sustainable tourism management, the findings reveal that exoticization poses a critical governance challenge. Unregulated cultural commodification undermines socio-cultural sustainability by diminishing community agency and prioritizing market logic over cultural integrity. The results suggest that sustainability frameworks overly focused on economic outcomes fail to address the epistemic and ethical dimensions of cultural tourism. Consequently, exoticization threatens the long-term resilience of destinations by eroding the very cultural resources upon which tourism depends. These findings extend sustainability discourse by reinforcing the need to treat cultural knowledge as a non-renewable resource requiring protection through inclusive governance and policy alignment (Saarinen, 2006; (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

Importantly, the study identifies viable mitigation strategies that reconcile cultural safeguarding with enhanced tourist experiences. The findings highlight the effectiveness of interpretive, community-led, and reflexive tourism models in reducing cultural distortion while deepening visitor engagement. Meaningful tourist experiences emerge when narratives are contextualized, ethically mediated, and co-created with local communities, shifting the emphasis from spectacle to understanding (Moscardo, 1996). Such approaches not only mitigate the negative effects of exoticization but also reposition authenticity as relational and educational value, thereby supporting both cultural sustainability and experiential quality.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The three principal research findings provide critical insights into the dynamics between exoticization, cultural knowledge, and sustainable tourism. First, the finding that excessive exoticization erodes cultural authenticity signifies a structural transformation in which Indigenous knowledge systems are reconstituted as performative commodities, thereby weakening their philosophical depth and intergenerational transmission (MacCannell, 1999; Picard, 1996). Second, the identification of misalignments between tourism policies, operational practices, and local cultural realities indicates that cultural degradation is embedded within broader governance structures rather than arising solely at the community level. This highlights exoticization as a systemic sustainability challenge requiring institutional reform (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Third, the emergence of community-led and collaborative mitigation strategies demonstrates the persistence of cultural resilience when local actors retain narrative authority and are supported through participatory governance frameworks. Such strategies reaffirm Indigenous epistemologies and enable tourism to function as an ethically grounded, meaning-centered practice rather than a consumptive spectacle (Scheyvens, 1999; Salazar, 2012).

The three findings can be explained coherently through established theoretical frameworks and corroborated by empirical evidence from cultural tourism and sustainability studies. First, excessive exoticization poses a significant threat to the continuity and integrity of Balinese cultural knowledge because it reduces complex, lived cultural systems into simplified, consumable spectacles. From a theoretical perspective, cultural commodification theory and postcolonial critiques of tourism argue that exoticization transforms cultural practices into staged performances detached from their original cosmological, ritual, and social meanings (MacCannell, 1999; Shepherd, 2002). Specifically in Bali, such processes encourage selective representation of rituals and symbols for tourist consumption, privileging visual appeal over epistemic depth. Empirically, studies demonstrate that prolonged exposure to market-driven representations leads to the erosion of intergenerational knowledge transmission, as younger

community members increasingly internalize external tourist expectations rather than indigenous value systems (Picard, 1996; Cole, 2007). This dynamic threatens the integrity of Balinese cultural knowledge by shifting its function from spiritual and communal continuity to economic performance.

Second, managing exoticization is fundamentally a governance issue rather than a mere operational concern because it involves power relations, regulatory frameworks, and decision-making authority over cultural representation. Theoretically, sustainable tourism governance emphasizes the role of institutions in mediating competing interests between economic growth and cultural preservation (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Exoticization persists when policy frameworks prioritize market competitiveness over cultural stewardship. Empirical evidence from Bali indicates that weak cultural governance, fragmented regulations, and limited community participation allow external actors to dominate narratives of Balinese identity (Hitchcock & Putra, 2007; Dredge et al., 2016). Thus, addressing exoticization requires structural policy interventions rather than isolated managerial practices.

Third, collaborative mitigation of exoticization repositions tourism as a relational practice grounded in respect, reciprocity, and long-term cultural sustainability. Interpretation theory and relational tourism perspectives suggest that tourism becomes sustainable when host–guest interactions are based on mutual understanding and ethical engagement (Moscardo, 1996; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Empirical studies show that participatory governance involving local communities, cultural experts, tour guides, and policymakers fosters culturally sensitive interpretation and strengthens local agency (Cole, 2007; Wearing & McDonald, 2020). Such collaboration reframes tourism from extractive consumption toward a shared cultural relationship that supports enduring cultural sustainability.

The findings make a strategic contribution by reframing excessive exoticization as a systemic risk within cultural tourism systems, rather than a marginal issue of representation. By evidencing the erosion of local cultural knowledge, the results demonstrate that unmanaged exoticization weakens the epistemic foundations of destination identity and diminishes the long-term cultural capital underpinning tourism competitiveness (Cohen, 1988; Shepherd, 2002). This reconceptualization provides a strategic basis for policymakers and destination managers to recognize cultural knowledge as a critical asset requiring institutional protection, continuous monitoring, and inclusive governance mechanisms.

Within sustainable tourism management, the findings further establish exoticization as a governance challenge rather than a market inevitability, thereby justifying the integration of cultural safeguarding into tourism policy frameworks, certification schemes, and destination planning processes (Saarinen, 2006; World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2017). Strategically, the study identifies interpretive and community-led tourism as a value-enhancing pathway that mitigates cultural distortion while enriching visitor experiences, by prioritizing meaning-based engagement over spectacle, destinations can foster authenticity grounded in lived knowledge, support value co-creation, deepen tourist learning, and transform cultural sustainability into a durable source of competitive advantage (Moscardo, 1996).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all key informants involved in this study for their valuable contributions, insights, and participation throughout the research process. Their support and willingness to share their perspectives greatly enriched the quality of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS (CrediT)

I Ketut Surata: Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Validation; Visualization; Writing – Original Draft Preparation; Writing – Review & Editing; Project Administration.

Dewa Komang Tantra: Conceptualization; Methodology; Writing – Review & Editing.

I Gusti Ngurah Agung Suprastayasa: Writing – Review & Editing; Validation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

REFERENCES

- Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2011). Critical research on the governance of tourism and sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(4–5), 411–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.580586>
- Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(3), 371–386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(88\)90028-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(88)90028-X)
- Cole, S. (2007). Beyond authenticity and commodification. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(4), 943–960. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.05.004>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dredge, D., Jenkins, J., & Whitford, M. (2016). Stories of practice. In *Stories of practice: Tourism policy and planning* (pp. 37–55). Routledge.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2018). Sustainable tourism: Sustaining tourism or something more?. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 25, 157–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.11.017>
- Hitchcock, M., & Putra, I.N.D. (2007). *Tourism, development and terrorism in Bali*. Routledge.
- Indrianto, A. T. (2005). The commodification of culture in Bali in the frame of cultural tourism. *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism*, 4(2), 151–165.
- Januar, R. (2024). Implementation and challenges of sustainable tourism programs in Bali. *Bali Tourism Journal*, 8(2), 33–37. <https://doi.org/10.36675/btj.v8i2.109>
- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589–603. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225585>
- MacCannell, D. (1999). *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.
- Mahendra, D. (2024). The impact of tourism on the preservation and transformation of cultural identity in Bali, Indonesia. *Studies in Social Science & Humanities*, 3(6), 34–41. <https://doi.org/10.56397/SSSH.2024.06.05>
- Mangku, D. G. S., Yuliartini, N. P. R., & Adnyani, N. K. S. (2021). Indigenous peoples' participation in the management of Balinese cultural tourism. *Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum*, 29(2), 309–319. <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v29i2.15928>

- Marbun, S. (2025). The commodification of culture in global tourism: Balancing authenticity, sustainability, and ethical practices amidst disruption. In *Proceeding of International Seminar of Culture and Tourism AKBI* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-24).).
- Moscardo, G. (1996). Mindful visitors: Heritage and tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 23(2), 376-397. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(95\)00068-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(95)00068-2)
- Moscardo, G. (2014). Tourism and community leadership in rural regions. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 11(3), 354-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2014.890129>
- Mudana, I. W., Sinaga, F., Suarja, I. K., & Surata, I. K. (2025). Preserving local culture as a strategy for sustainable tourism in Bali. *Journal of Commerce, Management, and Tourism Studies*, 4(3), 450-459. <https://doi.org/10.58881/jcmts.v4i3.393>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42(5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Paramita, I. B. G. (2025). Integration of the Tri Hita Karana Local Wisdom into Sustainable Tourism Management: A Case Study of Penglipuran Village, Bali. *Cultoure: Jurnal Ilmiah Pariwisata Budaya Hindu*, 6(1), 63-74.
- Picard, M. (1996). *Bali: Cultural tourism and touristic culture*. Archipelago Press.
- Prasiasa, D. P. O., Widari, D. A. D. S., & Susanti, P. H. (2023a). Authenticity and commodification of creative industry products in the tourism sector, Bali. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 38(3), 234-244. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v38i3.2285>
- Prasiasa, D. P. O., Widari, N. W., & Sri, D. A. (2023b). Challenges of strengthening culture in sustainable tourism villages in Bali. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 39(1), 34-44. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v39i1.2554>
- Pratiwi, M. A., & Wikantiyoso, R. (2025). Local wisdom as cultural resilience on tourism activities: Case study of Penglipuran Bali Traditional Village. *Local Wisdom Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Kearifan Lokal*, 14(1), 95-105. <https://doi.org/10.26905/lw.v14i2.6857>
- Rizkikadduhani, A. (2024). Sacred Traditions and Tourist Gazes: Community Experiences of Heritage Tourism in Bali. *Advances in Tourism Studies*, 2(4), 267-275. <https://doi.org/10.53893/ats.v2i4.68>
- Salazar, N. B. (2012). Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1), 9-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.596279>
- Scheyvens, R. (1999). Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities. *Tourism Management*, 20(2), 245-249. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00069-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00069-7)
- Segara, I. K. B. (2025). Destination management in achieving sustainable tourism in Bali. *Bali Tourism Journal*, 9(1), 6-10. <https://doi.org/10.36675/btj.v9i1.123>
- Shepherd, R. (2002). Commodification, culture and tourism. *Tourist Studies*, 2(2), 183-201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879702761936653>
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2014). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Sutana, I. G. . (2025). Komodifikasi Spiritual dan Ketahanan Budaya Hindu: Studi Makanan Satwika dan Praktik Usadha dalam Pariwisata Bali. *Jurnal Penelitian Agama Hindu*, 9(3), 326-337. <https://doi.org/10.37329/jpah.v9i3.4392>
- Timothy, D. J., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2009). *Cultural heritage and tourism in the developing world*. New York: Routledge.
- World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme. (2017). *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*, UNWTO, Madrid.

- Vipriyanti, N. U., Rustiarini, N. W., & Andayani Citra, M. E. (2025). The cultural landscape heritage sustainable strategy: integration of agriculture and tourism in Bali. *Discover Sustainability*, 6(1), 1201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-00789-7>
- Wiguna, I. G. B. A., & Triana, D. S. (2025). Balinese local wisdom in wellness tourism: A study of traditional healing practices in Ubud. *SIBATIK JOURNAL: Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Sosial, Ekonomi, Budaya, Teknologi, Dan Pendidikan*, 5(1), 99-108. <https://doi.org/10.54443/sibatik.v5i1.4214>
- Wirawan, P. (2025). Pariwisata Berbasis Kearifan Lokal di Desa Wisata Ubud: Antara Komersialisasi dan Pelestarian Budaya. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pariwisata*, 30(2), 249-262. <https://doi.org/10.30647/jip.v30i2.1891>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications* (Vol. 6). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.