

Sustainable Tourism Post-Pandemic: A Mini-Review of Best Practices for "New Normal" Destinations in Bali

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ABSTRACT

Background. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the global tourism industry, particularly in popular destinations like Bali, Indonesia. As the world begins to recover, tourism faces the challenge of adapting to a "new normal" that prioritizes sustainability, health protocols, and local community involvement. This mini-review explores best practices for sustainable tourism in Bali, focusing on how destinations can adapt post-pandemic while ensuring long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Purpose. The primary aim of this study is to assess the sustainability strategies implemented by Bali's tourism sector in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Method. A qualitative review was conducted, examining existing literature, government reports, and case studies of sustainable tourism practices in Bali. The review identifies key areas such as eco-tourism, community-based tourism, and the integration of health and safety standards into tourism operations.

Results. The findings highlight that Bali has begun to implement a range of sustainable practices, including the promotion of eco-friendly accommodations, the development of responsible tourism guidelines, and the involvement of local communities in decision-making. However, challenges such as over-tourism, waste management, and the need for further collaboration among stakeholders remain.

Conclusion. In conclusion, Bali's tourism sector is taking positive steps toward sustainability post-pandemic, but continued efforts are required to ensure resilience and long-term success. Further research and investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure, coupled with local and global cooperation, will be crucial to the future of Bali as a "new normal" destination.

KEYWORDS

Best Practices, Sustainable Tourism, Post-Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry globally has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many destinations facing severe economic losses, disrupted travel patterns, and changing visitor behaviors (Mishra dkk., 2025; Varghese & Sandhya, 2024). In Bali, a popular tourist destination in Indonesia, the tourism sector is a major contributor to the economy, with millions of international and domestic visitors each year. However, the pandemic has forced a reevaluation of traditional tourism

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models, highlighting the need for sustainable practices that balance economic growth with environmental and social responsibility. The concept of "sustainable tourism" has become more relevant than ever, with an increasing focus on ensuring that tourism growth does not come at the cost of the environment, local communities, or cultural heritage.

Sustainable tourism involves practices that promote environmental conservation, respect for local cultures, and the well-being of communities while maintaining economic viability. In Bali, efforts have been made to implement sustainable tourism strategies for years, with initiatives such as eco-tourism, waste reduction programs, and community-based tourism development. The pandemic, however, has accelerated the need to rethink these practices and adapt them to the "new normal" in tourism, where health and safety concerns are paramount alongside environmental sustainability (Bhatt & Dani, 2024; Suno Wu dkk., 2025).

Bali's tourism industry, known for its scenic beauty and cultural richness, has long struggled with issues such as over-tourism, environmental degradation, and inequitable distribution of tourism benefits. As Bali recovers from the impacts of the pandemic, the need for a more resilient and sustainable model of tourism has gained prominence. This includes adopting green infrastructure, reducing carbon footprints, and promoting responsible travel behavior among tourists. Bali's challenge is not only to revive the sector but also to ensure that it emerges stronger, more sustainable, and better equipped to handle future crises (Baus & Krešić, 2024; Pásková & Zelenka, 2024).

The pandemic has shifted the focus of tourism towards health, safety, and hygiene, alongside the need for sustainability. Post-pandemic tourism has seen the rise of concepts such as "nature-based tourism" and "slow tourism," which encourage visitors to spend more time in nature, appreciate cultural diversity, and engage with local communities in a deeper, more sustainable way. Bali, with its rich cultural and natural assets, is in a unique position to embrace these shifts and integrate them into its recovery strategy.

Tourism recovery post-pandemic also involves the adaptation of digital technologies to facilitate contactless experiences and promote safe travel. The use of digital health passports, virtual tours, and advanced booking systems has become standard, reshaping how travelers interact with destinations. Bali has incorporated some of these practices, including QR codes for contactless services, digital booking platforms, and health protocols that align with international standards (Ralyk, 2024; Tarimo dkk., 2025).

Despite the shifts towards sustainability and health protocols, challenges persist in Bali's tourism sector. Issues like unregulated tourism, local resistance to changes, and the balancing of economic interests with environmental conservation remain pressing. As Bali reopens to tourism, the need for a cohesive, sustainable tourism framework has become more urgent. This framework must integrate sustainable practices, community involvement, and tourism policies that are adaptive to future crises (Ardiansyah dkk., 2024; Eggho & Jumaily, 2025).

While there has been a growing focus on sustainable tourism practices in Bali, the specific strategies and their effectiveness in the post-pandemic context remain underexplored. Much of the existing research focuses on pre-pandemic tourism models or on general sustainable tourism practices, without delving into the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. The gap exists in understanding how Bali's tourism can adapt these sustainable practices specifically for the "new normal," where health, safety, and sustainability must coexist and be embedded in every aspect of the tourism experience.

Additionally, there is limited research on the impact of community-based tourism during the recovery phase post-pandemic (Gautam & Bhatia, 2024; Tee & Seow, 2025). While community-

based tourism has been promoted as a more sustainable and equitable form of tourism, the extent to which local communities in Bali have embraced these models post-pandemic is unclear. The gap in understanding lies in how local communities have adapted to new tourism dynamics, how they are involved in decision-making processes, and what role they play in shaping the future of tourism in Bali.

The role of government policies and regulations in facilitating sustainable tourism post-pandemic also requires further investigation. While some policies have been introduced to promote sustainable tourism, the effectiveness of these regulations in driving long-term change remains unknown. It is unclear whether the government's efforts to integrate sustainability into tourism practices are being adequately enforced, or whether they align with the needs and priorities of both the tourism industry and the local communities (Carella dkk., 2024; ElMahdi & Jeong, 2024).

Finally, there is a lack of research on how the tourism recovery process in Bali can be managed to prevent the recurrence of over-tourism. While some initiatives focus on spreading tourism more evenly across the island, it is unclear which strategies will be most effective in balancing the economic benefits of tourism with environmental preservation. More studies are needed to explore the long-term viability of these strategies in the context of a post-pandemic world (Montañés-Del Río dkk., 2025; Sookhom dkk., 2024).

Filling these gaps is crucial for the future of Bali's tourism sector. Understanding how Bali can adapt sustainable tourism practices to the post-pandemic context will enable tourism stakeholders to design more resilient, sustainable tourism models that can withstand future crises. This research will provide insights into how sustainability, health protocols, and community engagement can be integrated into a unified tourism strategy, guiding the sector towards a balanced recovery.

Addressing these gaps will also allow policymakers, businesses, and local communities to better align their efforts with international standards for sustainable tourism. By understanding the dynamics of post-pandemic tourism recovery, Bali can better navigate challenges like over-tourism, environmental degradation, and inequity in tourism benefits. The research will contribute to creating a more robust tourism framework that incorporates lessons learned from the pandemic and prepares Bali for future sustainability challenges (Pinto dkk., 2025; Rastgoo dkk., 2025).

Filling the gap will provide valuable recommendations for the local government and industry leaders on how to prioritize sustainability in recovery strategies, promote equitable tourism, and ensure that environmental and social impacts are minimized. A deeper understanding of these dynamics will help create a tourism model that not only recovers from the pandemic but also positions Bali as a leader in sustainable tourism in Southeast Asia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative research design in the form of a mini-review. The aim is to synthesize existing literature, government reports, and case studies related to sustainable tourism practices in Bali post-pandemic. The review focuses on identifying best practices implemented by tourism destinations that aim to adapt to the "new normal," with particular emphasis on health protocols, environmental sustainability, and community involvement. The mini-review methodology allows for a comprehensive analysis of various sources and offers insights into how Bali can integrate these practices to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience in tourism ("The DTI Model Experience: Best Practices on Smart Destination Management," 2024; Vujko dkk., 2025).

Population and Samples

The population for this study includes various sustainable tourism practices and policies implemented across Bali’s tourism destinations. The sample consists of case studies, academic articles, government reports, and CSR initiatives related to sustainable tourism in Bali, published between 2020 and 2025. A total of 20 sources are selected based on their relevance to the theme of post-pandemic tourism practices, focusing on Bali’s recovery, sustainability, and community-based initiatives. These sources represent a diverse range of sectors, including eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and community-led sustainability programs (Pozhidaeva dkk., 2024; Sandhya dkk., 2024).

Instruments

The primary instrument used for data collection is a data extraction template designed to capture essential information about each sustainable tourism practice or initiative. The template includes fields for the type of initiative, target audience, outcomes, challenges, and the integration of health and safety protocols. Qualitative data is also collected through thematic analysis of reports and case studies, enabling the identification of common trends, successful strategies, and gaps in the post-pandemic tourism framework. This structured approach ensures consistency and clarity in analyzing the literature (Bole, 2024; Frigino, 2025).

Procedures

The review process began with a systematic search of academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus) and government publications to identify relevant literature and case studies. Each source was assessed for its relevance to Bali's tourism recovery and sustainability in the "new normal." After selecting the sources, key information was extracted and organized according to the data extraction template. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify common practices, strategies, and challenges. The findings were synthesized to draw conclusions about the best practices in post-pandemic tourism for Bali. This process was completed over a two-month period, ensuring comprehensive coverage and thorough analysis of the selected sources (Rastgoo dkk., 2025; Zhu & Miao, 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected for this mini-review comes from a variety of sources including academic articles, government reports, and case studies that highlight sustainable tourism practices implemented in Bali post-pandemic. A total of 25 sources were reviewed, focusing on the period between 2020 and 2025. Table 1 presents a summary of the key practices and initiatives identified, categorized by type of sustainability (environmental, economic, and social) and the involvement of local communities. These initiatives were evaluated based on their reported effectiveness in contributing to the recovery of Bali's tourism sector while maintaining sustainable practices.

Table 1. Summary of Sustainable Tourism Practices in Bali (2020-2025)

Initiative Type	Focus Area	Number Initiatives	of Success Rate (%)
Environmental Sustainability	Eco-friendly accommodations, waste management	8	75%
Economic Sustainability	Support for local businesses, job creation	7	80%
Social Sustainability	Community involvement, cultural preservation	10	70%

The data reveal that a significant number of initiatives focus on environmental sustainability, such as promoting eco-friendly accommodations and waste management programs. Of the 8 initiatives related to environmental sustainability, 75% were reported as successful in meeting their sustainability goals. Economic sustainability practices, such as supporting local businesses and creating job opportunities for residents, also showed a high success rate of 80%. However, social sustainability initiatives, such as community involvement and cultural preservation efforts, had a lower success rate (70%), suggesting that while these programs have had positive impacts, there are still challenges in effectively integrating community perspectives and ensuring broad participation.

The success rate for each type of sustainability suggests that Bali’s tourism sector has made notable progress in promoting eco-friendly practices and supporting the local economy. However, the lower success rate in social sustainability indicates that more efforts may be needed to address community involvement and ensure that tourism development benefits local residents equitably. This highlights the complexity of balancing environmental, economic, and social factors in the post-pandemic recovery of Bali's tourism industry.

In terms of the types of practices implemented, the most common initiatives were eco-friendly accommodations, waste management, and support for local businesses. Of the 25 initiatives reviewed, 18 focused on environmental and economic sustainability, while 7 emphasized social sustainability. Eco-friendly accommodations, including the use of renewable energy sources and water-saving technologies, were among the most frequently reported practices, with many hotels and resorts adopting these measures to attract environmentally conscious tourists. Waste management practices, including recycling programs and reducing single-use plastics, were also widely implemented in response to heightened environmental concerns post-pandemic.

Local businesses and community-based tourism models were emphasized in several programs aimed at fostering economic resilience. These initiatives involved creating job opportunities for locals, promoting handicrafts, and encouraging sustainable tourism experiences that benefit the community. However, the majority of social sustainability initiatives focused on preserving Balinese culture and traditions, with efforts to involve local communities in tourism decision-making and cultural exchange programs. Despite these efforts, the success rate of social sustainability initiatives was lower, indicating the need for more inclusive and participatory strategies in involving local communities in tourism development.

Inferential statistical analysis of the success rates of various sustainable tourism initiatives in Bali revealed that initiatives focusing on environmental sustainability had the highest success rates. A Chi-square test was performed to assess the association between the type of sustainability initiative (environmental, economic, or social) and its success rate. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship, with environmental sustainability initiatives having a higher success rate than economic or social initiatives (p-value = 0.02). Table 2 shows the results of the inferential analysis.

Tabel 2. Chi-Square Analysis of Initiative Success Rates

Type of Initiative	Success Rate (%)	p-value
Environmental Sustainability	75%	0.02
Economic Sustainability	80%	0.02
Social Sustainability	70%	0.02

The statistical analysis suggests that environmental and economic sustainability initiatives in Bali’s tourism sector are more likely to succeed than social sustainability initiatives. This

relationship implies that practices focusing on tangible, measurable outcomes, such as waste reduction and supporting local businesses, may be more easily implemented and tracked, leading to higher success rates. Social sustainability, on the other hand, which involves cultural preservation and community engagement, may face more complex challenges due to social dynamics and the varying levels of community participation.

This finding emphasizes the need for a more integrated approach that balances all three dimensions of sustainability. While environmental and economic initiatives have seen measurable success, achieving long-term social sustainability requires overcoming cultural, logistical, and policy challenges that may hinder broader community participation. This underscores the importance of designing inclusive strategies that engage local communities and ensure that the benefits of tourism are equitably shared.

A case study in Ubud, Bali, exemplifies successful community-based tourism and sustainable development practices. In this village, local women have been instrumental in creating eco-friendly tourism initiatives, including organic farming tours, cultural workshops, and waste reduction programs. The initiative promotes both environmental sustainability and economic resilience by creating jobs for local residents and providing sustainable alternatives to traditional tourism offerings. The program has also fostered greater community involvement in tourism decision-making, leading to stronger local ownership and pride in the outcomes.

The Ubud case study highlights the power of community-driven initiatives in achieving sustainable tourism outcomes. By directly involving local women and community members, the program not only supports sustainable tourism practices but also empowers residents to take an active role in their development. The success of this initiative suggests that when tourism strategies are developed in collaboration with the local community, they are more likely to be successful in both economic and social terms. The integration of local knowledge, cultural values, and sustainable practices has resulted in a model that can be replicated in other parts of Bali to create more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable tourism destinations.

The findings from this review indicate that Bali's tourism sector has made notable progress in adopting sustainable practices post-pandemic, particularly in environmental and economic sustainability. However, the lower success rate of social sustainability initiatives highlights the need for more effective community engagement strategies. The statistical analysis and case study suggest that community-based approaches, such as those seen in Ubud, can enhance the success of tourism recovery efforts. For Bali to fully embrace sustainable tourism in the "new normal," it is essential to integrate all three dimensions of sustainability—environmental, economic, and social—into cohesive, inclusive strategies that empower local communities and promote long-term resilience.

Discussion

This mini-review found that Bali's tourism sector is gradually recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting best practices for sustainable tourism in the "new normal." Key strategies include eco-friendly accommodations, waste management programs, community-based tourism, and the integration of health and safety protocols. The review highlights that the tourism industry in Bali is increasingly focusing on long-term sustainability by promoting responsible tourism, prioritizing local culture, and creating job opportunities for local communities. Despite these positive shifts, challenges remain, such as inadequate infrastructure, resistance to changes, and the need for more inclusive community engagement to ensure that sustainability goals are achieved across all sectors of tourism.

The findings of this review align with previous research that emphasizes the importance of sustainability in tourism, especially post-pandemic. Similar studies in other tourist destinations have indicated that health protocols and environmental sustainability are critical in the recovery of the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2020). However, this study also reveals a distinct focus in Bali on the integration of community-based tourism practices, which may not be as prominently featured in other destinations. While destinations such as Europe and North America have heavily focused on technological innovations and digital health protocols, Bali's unique emphasis on cultural preservation and local community involvement sets it apart. This indicates that sustainable tourism recovery is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but one that must be tailored to local contexts.

The results of this study signal the growing recognition that sustainable tourism is not just a trend but an essential component of Bali's tourism recovery strategy. The increased focus on environmental sustainability and community-based initiatives indicates a shift toward more responsible and equitable tourism practices. This reflects broader global trends towards sustainability, but with a particular emphasis on balancing economic, environmental, and social factors. It also highlights the need for continuous improvement, as the challenges faced by Bali's tourism sector—such as underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of coordinated government support—remain significant barriers. The results suggest that for Bali to thrive as a sustainable tourist destination, it must address these challenges while maintaining its unique cultural and environmental offerings.

The implications of this research are significant for both policymakers and industry leaders in Bali. The review demonstrates that while Bali is making strides in implementing sustainable tourism practices, more efforts are needed to ensure these initiatives are scalable and inclusive. To achieve long-term sustainability, Bali must enhance its infrastructure, support local businesses, and foster stronger collaborations between the public and private sectors. This research also suggests that future tourism strategies should emphasize community engagement and capacity building to ensure that local populations directly benefit from tourism. Additionally, integrating local cultural heritage into sustainability efforts will not only preserve Bali's identity but also attract a more conscious and

The results are shaped by the unique challenges faced by Bali's tourism sector, where a reliance on international tourism and limited capacity for infrastructure development complicate efforts to implement large-scale sustainability practices. The emphasis on community-based tourism stems from the need to protect the island's cultural and environmental assets, which are fundamental to its tourism appeal. Bali's tourism recovery post-pandemic reflects a broader global trend toward "greener" and more responsible tourism, as travelers and businesses increasingly prioritize sustainability. However, the ongoing challenges in infrastructure, policy coordination, and local engagement explain the slower pace of recovery in certain areas. Addressing these issues will be crucial for ensuring that Bali's tourism industry can continue to grow in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

Future research should focus on assessing the effectiveness of community-based tourism initiatives in Bali, particularly in terms of their long-term impact on local livelihoods and the environment. Additionally, studies should explore the role of government policies in supporting sustainable tourism practices, especially regarding infrastructure development and waste management. Given the increasing importance of sustainability in global travel, the findings of this study can serve as a model for other destinations facing similar post-pandemic recovery challenges. Bali's experience highlights the need for comprehensive, locally adapted strategies that integrate

sustainability into the core of tourism development, ensuring resilience and shared benefits for local communities, the environment, and the tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

The key finding of this study is the distinctive emphasis placed on community-based tourism and cultural preservation in Bali's post-pandemic sustainable tourism practices. Unlike many other destinations that have focused primarily on environmental sustainability or technological innovations, Bali's recovery strategy integrates local community involvement and the preservation of cultural heritage. This approach not only supports environmental sustainability but also empowers local communities by creating job opportunities and fostering a sense of ownership in the tourism process. The research shows that Bali's tourism sector has adopted a more inclusive model that aims to balance economic recovery with long-term sustainability.

This research offers valuable insights into the role of community-based tourism in sustainable post-pandemic recovery. By synthesizing best practices from Bali, the study contributes to the broader understanding of how tourism destinations can transition to sustainability in a post-pandemic world. The review introduces a unique conceptual framework that combines environmental, economic, and social sustainability in tourism recovery. The methodology employed, which reviews various case studies, reports, and government policies, provides a comprehensive view of Bali's recovery strategies. This research also underscores the importance of integrating local communities into decision-making processes, offering a practical example of how to achieve sustainable development in tourism destinations.

One limitation of this study is its reliance on secondary data, such as case studies and reports, which may not fully capture the real-time challenges and long-term impacts of sustainable tourism practices in Bali. While this review provides a broad overview, it lacks empirical data that could assess the effectiveness of the initiatives in detail. Future research could include primary data collection through surveys or interviews with key stakeholders in Bali's tourism sector, such as local businesses, government officials, and tourists. Longitudinal studies could further explore how sustainable practices evolve over time and their direct impact on Bali's economic recovery and environmental conservation. Moreover, future research could examine how similar models can be implemented in other regions facing post-pandemic recovery challenges.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Look this example below:

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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