# Strategy and Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages in the Buleleng Regency

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I Gusti Ayu Purnamawati <sup>1</sup>, Gede Adi Yuniarta <sup>2</sup>, and I Gusti Bagus Baskara Nugraha <sup>3</sup>

# **Abstract**

Analysis of personal motivation, use of digital information, and green tourism branding in Buleleng Regency is very important for the sustainability of the ecotourism villages that are starting to be developed. This research used a quantitative approach with a population of 16,521 people with respondent selection using purposive sampling to obtain 236 people. The primary data type was by giving questionnaires (Likert scale) to village heads, traditional Kelian, official Kelian, homestay owners, tourism awareness group (pokdarwis) heads, tourists, and village communities. All data was analyzed using WarpPLS 7.0. This research reveals that personal motivation, the use of digital information, and branding, influence the sustainability of ecotourism villages in Buleleng Regency. The results of this research are in line with the theory of planned behavior and attribution which explains individual motivation and the factors determining the success of a business, including technological support in the use of accounting information, while promotion is an external attribution. This research can provide information for the tourism village actors in Buleleng Regency regarding the promotion and management of tourism which should be in synergy with traditional villages and official villages. All community roles cannot be separated from collaboration between stakeholders who have a big responsibility in expanding the village towards independence.

**Keywords:** personal motivation; use of digital information; branding; sustainability of ecotourism villages.

#### Introduction

The local community is currently developing the ecotourism village in Buleleng Regency of Bali Province, considering that its management combines local wisdom and maintains the authenticity of local natural resources. Tourism villages are expected to absorb labour and overcome problems and development challenges faced by the central and regional governments in terms of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Regional development is one of the solutions to these challenges, whose main objective is to increase the number and types of job opportunities for the community. Therefore, local governments and communities must work together and jointly take initiatives in regional development. Local governments must be able to assess the potential of existing resources to design and build the regional economy (Bibri et al., 2020). Micro, small, and medium-scale economic activities generally support the regional economy (MSMEs) (Tambunan, 2019). Economic development on a national scale cannot be separated from the role of MSMEs. This can be seen from its existence in micro and macroeconomic activities, providing jobs, creating an innovative side, and more competitive market opportunities (Hayati & Fatarib, 2022).

Until now, 327,310 recorded MSMEs with a growth percentage of 4 percent in 2019 spread across nine regencies or cities. The researchers chose Buleleng Regency as the research subject because of the nine regencies or cities in Bali. Buleleng Regency is the



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Jl. Udayana No 11, Singaraja, Bali, INDONESIA

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>School of Electrical Engineering and Informatics, Institut Teknologi Bandung Jl. II, Lebak Siliwangi, Coblong, Bandung City, West Java 40132, INDONESIA Corresponding author; Email: <sup>1</sup>ayu.purnamawati@undiksha.ac.id

widest regency in Bali, which is assumed to have many MSME actors, but there are still quite a few MSME actors in Buleleng Regency. This can be seen in Table 1, which states that the number of MSMEs in Buleleng Regency is still the fifth highest in Bali. It is undoubtedly a problem when compared to other districts, for example, Gianyar Regency, which is an area that ranks seventh in Bali but can occupy the first position as an MSME actor (Arismayanti et al., 2019).

Table 1. Number of Micro and Small Business Licenses in Buleleng Regency

Subdistrict -		Amount		
Subdistrict	2018	2019	2020	
Buleleng	297	153	115	565
Banjar	93	95	34	222
Seririt	123	69	41	233
Gerokgak	257	144	284	685
Busungbiu	113	71	55	239
Sukasada	145	106	59	310
Sawan	109	83	83	275
Kubutambahan	81	45	24	150
Tejakula	123	120	99	342
Total	1,341	886	794	3,021

Source: Buleleng Regency Trade, Industry, Cooperative and MSME Office (2021)

MSMEs must always be encouraged and overcome their weaknesses so they can compete and not be oppressed by competitors from foreign countries. One solution for MSMEs is facilitating trade and investment liberation to immediately adapt to globalization trends by optimizing information systems and applications (Pu et al., 2021).

A business will be successful if the entrepreneur can run the right company. Personal motivation is related to the desire to think creatively and innovatively, which is used as the basis, resources and struggle to create added value for goods and services with the courage to face risks. Personal motivation drives the behaviour and character inherent in every entrepreneur in managing a business to achieve the expected goals. This motivation generally encourages receiving information when running a business and establishing relationships with business contacts. An essential part of entrepreneurship can determine business success (Gamage et al., 2020). Research (Hermundsdottir & Aspelund, 2021) groups companies based on their motivation towards sustainable practices, whereas companies driven by competitiveness practice fewer environmental saving activities and are more oriented towards commercial aspects. Research (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021), (Skeiseid et al., 2020) uses seven dimensions of personal motivation in driving ecotourism; the results provide management guidance to public institutions and information for companies to develop products that meet demand. Consumers' attitudes towards sustainable and more environmentally friendly holiday options are often seen as a significant challenge for the tourism industry. (Shammre et al., 2023) Found that green entrepreneurial motivation influences green innovation as well as environmental performance. Meanwhile (Kornilaki et al., 2019) revealed the importance of self-efficacy in explaining the formation of sustainable behaviour from small businesses operating in the tourism sector.

Digital information for business success will be used well with assistance in developing markets, prices, and relations with the government. According to research conducted by an entrepreneur, they can promote the products they produce through social media and websites (Amoah et al., 2023); (Purnamawati & Yuniarta, 2021); (Purnamawati et al., 2023). Promotion is company communication with consumers to encourage sales; this promotional activity is felt to be essential and needed. This is due to the increasing distance between producers and consumers and the presence of intermediaries (Alexandrescu & Milandru, 2018). According to research conducted by (Utami et al., 2023), it is stated that promotional strategies have a positive and significant

influence on the success of a business. Likewise, research (Badi, 2018) argues that design and promotion positively and significantly impact business success. This differs from a study conducted by (Hanaysha, 2018) that promotion has a negative and insignificant effect on business success. (Chiwaridzo & Masengu, 2023) shows that social media branding and technology adoption have a positive influence on green tourism which is mediated by tourist behavior in it. These results contribute to policy, environmentally friendly tourism supply chains, and environmentalists for promotional strategies.

Experts warn that addiction to cellphones is starting to emerge now (Egger et al., 2020) (Brooks et al., 2020) and the potential for addiction to Virtual Reality devices in the future is a concern in itself (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). It is feared that this negative impact will spread to the tourism sector. Dilemmas like these have motivated some researchers to explore the possibility of implementing digital free tourism, a form in which there is no internet and cellular signal, or the use of digital technology is controlled (Armutcu et al., 2023)(Cai & McKenna, 2023). Going digital leads to excessive use of technology as tourists access electronic devices. Another opinion from (Saseanu et al., 2020) research shows that tourism business activities continue to ignore their obligations regarding the environment, due to a lack of understanding of the benefits obtained or examples of good practice. Tourism (Mikaylov et al., 2019) as a source of environmental damage and pollution, the largest consumer of scarce resources, and the cause of negative impacts in society. However, tourism must adapt to all challenges in the digital revolution by applying the principles of sustainable development through the adoption of technology (Phung & Nguyen, 2023).

Technology as a disciplinary force and conducting collaborative auto-ethnography to explore individuals. This research contributes to understanding tourism in the context of personal motivation, use of digital information, green tourism branding in addition to contributing to critical studies in the fields of technology and tourism. Methodologically, this research emphasizes the potential for collaborative applications in analyzing self-transformation. Practically speaking, this research offers suggestions for tourism providers.

#### Literature Review

The theory of Planned Behavior, the theoretical basis, states that attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioural control together form an individual's behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 2006). This concept refers to actions that are caused by a background goal, thus forming a planned behavior. This theory cannot be separated from the concept of attribution, especially in identifying the determining factors for the success of a business and vice versa (Davis et al., 2017). On the other hand, it provides confidence that someone interprets the events they experience based on their behavior. The point is to conduct a study of the error patterns and biases that arise (Birnberg et al., 1977), (Graham, 1991).

Attribution theory is considered relevant to explain the factors that support the success or failure of a business. Specifically, in this research, the elements of attribution theory that are focused on are internal and external attributions. Internal attribution refers to factors in using accounting information, while promotion is an external attribution (Martinko & Mackey, 2019).

One alternative to solving the problem of educational unemployment is by empowering education graduates with entrepreneurship programs. Promoting an entrepreneurial culture in society will help open new jobs for the educated unemployed. The influence of entrepreneurship education is one factor that fosters interest in entrepreneurship among the younger generation. Their attitude, behaviour and knowledge about entrepreneurship will help their tendency to open new businesses in the future (Barit, 2023).

# The Influence of Personal Motivation on the Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages

Personal motivation refers to the psychological aspect of a person's behaviour in the form of a commitment to sustainability, being able to use resources such as finances, raw

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materials and labour with creative and innovative efforts and daring to take moderate risks to find business opportunities (Jiatong et al., 2021), (Purnamawati et al., 2022). Currently, the success of a business in increasing company growth depends on the entrepreneurial abilities of the owner. Relevant research reveals a lot about entrepreneurship from an educational perspective, by creating mindsets and opportunities for the growth of the competence of the younger generation to become independent and creative entrepreneurs (Westhead & Marina, 2016); (Al-Jubari et al., 2019); (Hu et al., 2018); (Pan et al., 2018); (Jena, 2020).

H<sub>1</sub>: Personal motivation influences the sustainability of ecotourism villages.

# The Effect of Using Digital Information on the Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages

Information Technology has become a significant complement to various aspects of life, including for tourism villages. Information technology provides opportunities for the tourism sector through platforms for promotional activities and services (Sarja et al., 2021). Along with the progress of the times, tourist villages need the role of information technology to carry out various innovations by utilizing digital-based technology. Previous research has discussed a lot regarding the implementation of IT in tourist villages, such as Paksebali Village, Klungkung-Bali, which is developing a tourism village towards the current progress known as an intelligent eco-tourism village (Pantiyasa, 2019) (Helmita et al., 2021). Digital Villages are currently starting to be implemented to communicate in all aspects of village development to improve the quality of efficient public services, increase village competitiveness with village innovation, resolve strategic village problems and facilitate marketing reach. Digital tourism villages utilize ICT in developing their tourism ecosystem, namely internet technology and social media, which, in the end, helps synergistically and visually in disseminating tourism information in a village (Purnamawati et al., 2022).

**H2:** The use of Information Technology has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism villages.

# The Influence of Branding on the Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages

A business's success is closely related to the promotions to introduce its products to a broad audience. Branding can be used to channel information and persuade individuals to take actions that create exchanges in marketing activities. Creating an attractive perception of the existence of a tourist village with its advantages for stakeholders is a challenge faced by tourism actors. In the context of this research, efforts to develop Sudaji and Les Villages in Buleleng Regency as ecotourism destinations pose significant challenges for internal and external stakeholders (government, tourists, and business actors), especially in maintaining their sustainability. Branding is essential in developing this destination. Sudaji Village is an old village famous for its naturalness, solid Balinese culture, and tradition of the bukakak dance, which is still maintained today. Branding is a perception resulting from experience regarding using a product or enjoying the tourist destination itself. Branding can be compared to a combination of tangible and intangible characteristics, even said to be a trademark, which is expected to influence and produce value (Ahmad & Ardhanariswari, 2018). So, the success of a brand depends on the efforts made to maintain public trust.

H<sub>3</sub>: Branding affects the sustainability of the ecotourism village.

# Methodology

The location of this research targets tourism actors in Sudaji and Les Villages, Buleleng Regency. The reason for conducting research at these locations is that these two villages are developing and have tourist advantages compared to other towns, as evidenced by the government award of the tourist village award. Even though it has many benefits within the village, its management still needs to be more optimal due to the synergy

between traditional towns, tourism managers, official villages and BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises).

The type of this research is a quantitative research, that analyze the influence of personal motivation, the use of digital information, and branding on the sustainability of tourist villages in Buleleng Regency. Data was collected using a questionnaire with a 1-5 Likert scale. The collected data is then tested first for validity and reliability, and hypothesis testing. The total population of both villages was 16,521 people, with respondent selection using purposive sampling to obtain a sample of 236 people.

Table 2. Variables and Indicators

Variable	Name		Indicators			
Y	·- ·y · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·					
			tourist village			
		2.	Tourism training			
		3.	Increased employment opportunities			
		4.	Participation in tourism activities			
		5.	Growth rate of tourist visits			
		6.	Community empowerment			
		7.	The relationship between the community and tourism			
			managers is closely intertwined.			
		8.	The role of local government			
		9.	Linkages between communities			
		10.	Environmental knowledge			
		11.	Local wisdom.			
X1	Personal	1.	Self-confidence and optimism			
	Motivation	2.	Courage to take risks			
		3.	Having commitment			
		4.	Having a work ethic			
		5.	Having an independent attitude.			
X2	The use of	1.	Information about tourist destinations, including the inter-			
	information		pretation of tourist attraction objects, itineraries, and maps for			
	technology		guidance, accommodation and tourist facilities;			
		2.	Competence in terms of sharing various information originating			
			from tourism providers as providers and tourists;			
		3.	Awareness of the focus of digital-based tourism activities,			
			especially in promoting cultural excellence, information on			
			tourist destinations			
		4.	Specific potential, providing important documentation for tourists			
			for sustainable tourism activities.			
Х3	Branding	1.	Iconic symbols			
		2.	Social goals to be achieved.			
		3.	Adaptation to market changes			
		4.	Emotional landscape			
		5.	Social empowerment to strengthen the brand			

In this research, the scale used to compile the questionnaire is the Likert scale as shown on Table 2.

Table 3. Likert Scale

Description	Score
Strongly Agree (SS) = No. 1	5
Agree $(S) = No. 2$	4
Neutral (KS) = No. $3$	3
Disagree (TS) = No. 4	2
Strongly Disagree (STS) = No. 5	1

In general, the formulation for testing this hypothesis is:

$$Y = \gamma_1 X 1 + \gamma_2 X 2 + \gamma_3 X 3 + \varepsilon$$

Where,

Y: Endogenous variable (Tourism Village Sustainability)

X: Exogenous variable (Personal Motivation, The Use of Information Technology, Branding).

: The coefficient of influence of exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables.

ε : error term.

# **Analysis and Discussion**

# Analysis

Accurate data analysis can provide appropriate research results, namely using the WarpPLS 7.0 structural equation in the form of outer model and inner model information (Kock, 2020). Table 4 shows the convergent validity of test results.

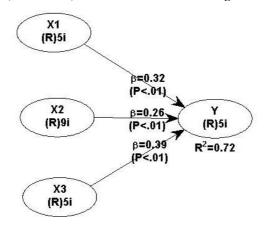


Figure 1. Direct Effect

Table 4. Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Variable	Indicator	<b>X</b> 1	X2	Х3	Y	Correlations among l.vs. With sq. rts. of AVEs			
						X1	X2	X3	Y
X1	X1.1	0.889*				0.792			
	X1.2	0.974*							
	X1.3	0.957*							
	X1.4	0.966*							
	X1.5	0.969*							
X2	X2.1		0.920*				0.754		
	X2.2		0.840*						
	X2.3		0.890*						
	X2.4		0.950*						
	X2.5		0.866*						
	X2.6		0.871*						
	X2.7		0.960*						
	X2.8		0.943*						
	X2.9		0.834*						
Х3	X3.1			0.953*				0.741	
	X3.2			0.984*					
	X3.3			0.974*					
	X3.4			0.757*					
	X3.5			0.980*					
Y	Y1				0.989*				0.749
	Y2				0.902*				
	Y3				0.954*				
	Y4				0.918*				
	Y5				0.947*				

Source: processed data

<sup>\*)</sup> P-value < 0.001 (Valid)

The first value is said to be fulfilled if  $\geq$  0.7. While the acceptance of the Cronbach alpha value is in the range  $\geq$  0.5 to 0.6.

Table 5. Latent Variable Coefficients

Coefficients	X1	X2	Х3	Y
R-squared				0.724
Adjusted R-squared				0.721
Composite reliability	0.892	0.921	0.858	0.813
Cronbach's alpha	0.844	0.903	0.793	0.713
Average variances extracted	0.628	0.668	0.649	0.666
Full collinearity VIFs	2.451	2.059	2.440	2.396
Q-squared				0.725

Source: processed data

#### Table 6. Model Fit and Quality Indices

Average:

path coefficient=0.322, P<0.001;

R-squared=0.724, P<0.001 and contribution ratio=1.000, acceptable if <= 0.9, ideally = 1; adjusted=0.721, P<0.001;

block VIF=2.203 and full collinearity =2.586 (acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3);

Tenenhaus GoF=0.633, small  $\geq$  0.1, medium  $\geq$  0.25, large  $\geq$  0.36;

Sympson's paradox, Statistical suppression, and Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio=1.000 (acceptable if >= 0.7, ideally = 1)

Source: processed data

#### Discussion

# The Influence of Personal Motivation on the Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages

The results of data analysis show that hypothesis one is accepted. Based on observations made when going directly to business actors in the Sudaji Tourism Village, one of the significant challenges faced concerns the sustainability and success of the business itself. This is also reinforced by an interview conducted by researchers with one of the tourism actors in Sudaji Village, namely Mr San-San as the owner of Ommunity Bali:

"During the pandemic, I felt that the tourism situation in Sudaji village was tranquil, especially at the homestay that I manage, but now it is busy with visitors because it is entering the holiday season. I am still enthusiastic and committed to making this design better known in Bali and abroad. I keep praying and applying three philosophies in my life: Tri Kaya Parisudha, Tri Hita Karana, and Tri Murti."

With personal motivation for business actors, achieving business success and sustainability will undoubtedly be more accessible. Personal motivation is a behaviour with high involvement because making a decision involves internal factors such as personality, perception, motivation, learning (attitude), external factors such as family, friends, neighbours (subjective norms) (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

One of the results of previous research that can support the results of this study is research by (Tang et al., 2022), (Ma et al., 2018), (López-Sanz et al., 2021). Several factors influence personal motivation. Rural tourism product providers can emphasize rural tourism product innovation, adopt new ideas and methods, incorporate folk customs in rural areas, have agricultural festivals, rustic dishes, and other locally produced ingredients, recreational involvement, design innovative tourism products that have characteristics, and the development of rural tourism products must provide comfort in the sense of kinship, and blend with the surrounding environment.

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# The Influence of the Use of Information Technology on the Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages

The second hypothesis is accepted according to the hypothesis formulation. The sustainability of tourist villages can also be influenced by information technology. Information technology can be used to measure and communicate what management needs. Information technology can also determine the amount of raw material usage, purchases, daily production, daily sales, and increases and decreases in capital. Information technology plays a vital role in tourism villages (Purnamawati et al., 2022), (Cao et al., 2022), (Purnamawati et al., 2023).

This research is closely related to attribution theory because the use of information technology is an internal factor in attribution theory, which explains that one of the factors that support the failure or success of a business is a factor that comes from internal. The use of information technology in Buleleng Subdistrict is still lacking in business management because not all areas are covered by the internet network. From the results of interviews that researchers conducted with one of the UMKM actors in Sudaji Village who also uses information technology in his business, namely Mr San-san as the owner of Ommunity Bali, which is as follows:

"Everything nowadays is made easier by technology. My kids are even ahead of me when using mobile apps. They taught me a lot about how to use it, especially for the promotion of the homestay business that I manage. I can even easily send it to friends in other countries via WhatsApp. The beauty of this village will be better known to all parts of the world when we use technology. For this reason, its use also needs to be supported by an adequate internet network. Here also the location has been reached by Google map. But it's not in the right position."

Therefore, from the interview results above, the achievement of the success of a business can be supported through the use of information technology because MSME actors can be assisted in collecting information both financially and non-financially more accurately. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of business activities had to adapt, starting from changes in prices, sales, and costs.

The results of this study align with research conducted by (Sila, 2022) (Dwivedi et al., 2023), which states that the use of information technology significantly influences the success of Business. If business actors do not make good use of it in their business activities, the consequence will be the inability of business actors to plan perfectly to achieve business success (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Business actors will obtain positive benefits in business success if they have a good understanding of technology, so the better the attitude of Business actors in using information technology, the better their management success will be (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018). Therefore, information technology can be used as a basis for planning and monitoring their business so that business actors can see an overview of the development of their business success. Other research that is also in line with this research is research from (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), who believes that the use of information technology influences the success of a business.

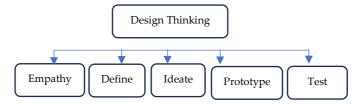


Figure 2. Design Thinking



Figure 3. Mobile Apps Prototype

Innovative efforts were made by stakeholders in developing the Sudaji Tourism Village. Creating mobile apps (Figure 3) and websites for tourism promotion to increase the number of tourist visits. The manufacturing stage is through design thinking which includes: empathy, define, ideate, prototype, test (Figure 2). preparing the prototype in collaboration with academics and adapting it to the needs of tourism promotion. The community and other stakeholders become pilot tests in testing the digital products being developed.

#### The Effect of Branding on the Sustainability of Ecotourism Villages

The third hypothesis is also accepted based on statistical analysis. Business continuity is closely related to business actors' promotion to introduce their products to the public. Branding is the flow of information and persuasion in a direction created to direct a person or organization to actions that raise excellence in marketing (Golob et al., 2022). One of the goals of branding is to inform all types of products offered and try to attract potential new consumers with specific product characteristics (Utama et al., 2023). Business actors market their products more online, mainly on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. This was also reinforced by an interview conducted by the researcher with Mr Gede Yudi, the owner of Warung Bali Mule, Les Village, Tejakula District, Buleleng, regarding the promotion he carried out by word of mouth by visiting tourists, where the results of the interviews were as follows:

"During Corona, my business was empty of visitors, but I never promised visitors that my shop would be open continuously. As long as they make an appointment beforehand to come, I will prepare the food they want. So they have to contact me first. My warung's characteristic is its traditional flavours, with the feel of an old and traditional Balinese warung. Even my food ingredients come from the surrounding environment. This branding is what makes my stall very popular with tourists. Moreover, tourism villages are currently starting to develop in Buleleng Regency".

Based on the results of interviews between researchers and tourism actors, branding is very influential on the sustainability of a business. It is closely related to previous research, such as according to a study conducted by (Gidaković et al., 2022) (Huo et al.,

2022), which states that branding has a positive and significant influence on business sustainability.

# **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The role of tourism is central as a catalyst for economic growth with digitalization as a supporting system to increase efficiency. The results of this research confirm the positive impact of personal motivation, use of digital information, green tourism branding on tourism activities. The use of the internet creates market opportunities and creates a green and sustainable tourism character, thereby being able to significantly answer hypotheses regarding the support of the green economy and the promotion of tourism through digital technology. Providing empirical evidence of tourists' tendencies to choose tourist destinations by identifying other variables related to the green economy, psychological aspects, and digitalization of tourism. The results of this research can provide input for the government in implementing policies so that tourism village actors experience increased business results, which is then expected to help with sustainability in running their businesses. It is hoped that this research can provide information for the community, especially for tourism village actors in Buleleng Regency regarding the promotion and management of tourism which should be in synergy with traditional villages and official villages. All community roles cannot be separated from collaboration between stakeholders who have a big responsibility in expanding the village towards independence.

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