

THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TOURISM AT SUBAK TEBA MAJELANGU

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the economic potential and challenges of community-based tourism management in Subak Teba Majelangu, a rural area in Bali, Indonesia, known for its UNESCO-listed Subak irrigation system. The paper examines how integrating local wisdom, particularly the Balinese philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* (harmony with nature, fellow humans, and spirituality), can guide sustainable tourism practices while fostering community empowerment. The Subak system, a complex agricultural water management method, is not only an important cultural asset but also a significant driver of eco-tourism, offering a unique opportunity to balance environmental conservation with economic development. This qualitative research combines a literature review, interviews with local stakeholders, and case study analysis. Findings suggest that community-based tourism in Subak Teba Majelangu holds considerable economic potential through direct revenue from eco-tourism activities, local handicrafts, and agricultural produce. The involvement of the community in tourism management ensures the equitable distribution of benefits, enhances cultural pride and supports sustainable practices. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited capacity in tourism management, and external pressures from mass tourism threaten the long-term sustainability of the initiative. The study further explores how local wisdom embedded in the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy supports the integration of sustainable tourism practices. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony between tourism development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection. By fostering a shared vision for tourism management and investing in capacity-building, Subak Teba Majelangu can mitigate the negative impacts of tourism while maximizing its economic benefits. In conclusion, Subak Teba Majelangu presents a valuable model for sustainable, community-based tourism that can be replicated in other regions. Its success depends on continuous collaboration among local communities, government authorities, and external partners. The research highlights the critical need for strategic planning, infrastructure development, and education to ensure the preservation of both cultural heritage and natural resources while supporting local economic growth.

Keywords: community-based tourism, Subak Teba Majelangu, sustainable tourism, local wisdom, economic potential, educational tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long been a pillar of economic development, contributing to income generation, job creation, and community welfare (UNWTO, 2021). In destinations rich in cultural and natural resources, implementing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as a sustainable model for ensuring that tourism benefits are equitably distributed among local communities (Bakker & Hesp, 2009). CBT focuses on empowering communities to actively participate in and manage tourism activities, allowing them to maintain control over resources, preserve local traditions, and improve their economic livelihoods (Cater, 2006).

At the same time, educational tourism has gained traction as a unique travel concept that offers enriching learning experiences to visitors (Smith & Tan, 2019). Unlike mass tourism, educational tourism emphasizes understanding local culture, environment, and heritage through immersive activities (Buckley, 2012). This approach aligns well with global demands for authentic, meaningful travel experiences that also contribute to the sustainability of the destination (UNESCO, 2020). Combining educational tourism with community-based management creates an opportunity to support the dual goals of economic empowerment and cultural preservation (Wahab & Pigram, 1997).

Bali, as a global tourism destination, is known for its deeply rooted cultural traditions, spiritual practices, and picturesque landscapes (Guerin & Harrison, 2011). Central to Bali's identity is the Subak system, a traditional irrigation method that has shaped the island's agricultural and cultural practices for centuries. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Subak is more than just an irrigation method—it embodies the Balinese philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and the divine (UNESCO, 2020). Subak Teba Majelangu, located in Denpasar Regency, is one such Subak system that holds immense potential to be developed as an educational tourism destination. At Subak Teba Majelangu, tourists gain insights into Bali's *Subak* system through hands-on activities like rice planting, guided tours, and workshops on traditional farming. These experiences highlight the cultural and spiritual aspects of Balinese agriculture, rooted in *Tri Hita Karana*. Visitors leave with a deeper understanding of sustainable practices, cultural preservation, and the harmony between nature and community. Subak Teba Majelangu offers visitors a chance to explore the intricacies of Balinese farming techniques, experience the communal spirit of Subak, and understand the cultural values that underpin this sustainable agricultural system (Suryani, 2017).

With its lush rice fields, cooperative community management, and spiritual significance, it provides a living example of how local wisdom and environmental stewardship can coexist. Developing Subak Teba Majelangu into a destination for community-based educational tourism could serve as a powerful strategy for generating economic benefits while safeguarding Bali's cultural and natural heritage (Pramudita, 2019). However, the journey toward establishing Subak Teba Majelangu as a model educational tourism destination is not without challenges. Among these are the limited knowledge of the destination among tourists, insufficient infrastructure to support large-scale tourism, and the risk of over-commercialization that could undermine its cultural authenticity. Additionally, the community's capacity to manage tourism in a professional and sustainable manner requires further enhancement, including training, financial support, and strategic partnerships with external stakeholders (WWF, 2018).

Despite these obstacles, the economic potential of Subak Teba Majelangu as an educational tourism destination remains significant. Revenue can be generated through entrance fees, guided tours, workshops on farming practices, and the sale of local products such as handicrafts, agricultural produce, and traditional cuisine (UNWTO, 2021). The involvement of the local community ensures that these economic benefits directly support the livelihoods of those living in the area, fostering a sense of ownership and pride (Bakker & Hesp, 2009).

This study focuses on exploring the economic opportunities presented by community-based tourism at Subak Teba Majelangu and the strategies needed to unlock its potential. It also highlights how combining educational tourism with community-based approaches can create a sustainable tourism model that prioritizes cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and equitable economic growth. The findings aim to provide valuable insights for stakeholders, including local governments, tourism operators, and community leaders, to develop Subak Teba Majelangu as a unique and impactful tourism destination in Bali.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the economic potential of community-based tourism (CBT) in educational tourism at Subak Teba Majelangu. It focuses on identifying economic opportunities, assessing community roles, and analyzing sustainable development strategies. Data collection includes a literature review of CBT and Subak-related studies, secondary data from government and tourism reports, and, if applicable, field observations. Data is analyzed thematically and through a SWOT framework to evaluate strengths, weakness, challenges, and growth opportunities. Findings are validated by cross-referencing multiple sources and incorporating stakeholder feedback to ensure reliability and actionable recommendations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Economic Potential of Subak Teba Majelangu

Subak Teba Majelangu demonstrates significant economic potential through its development as a community-based educational tourism destination. Its unique blend of cultural heritage, traditional agricultural practices, and picturesque landscapes positions it as an ideal site for offering meaningful and sustainable tourism experiences. The key areas of economic potential include:

- 1) Revenue from Educational Tourism Activities Subak Teba Majelangu can generate income by offering engaging, educational activities that attract visitors seeking authentic experiences.
- 2) Local Product Sales The Subak community can capitalize on the growing demand for unique, locally made products by selling.
- 3) Cultural and Eco-Tourism Events Subak Teba Majelangu can host special events that attract both domestic and international tourists.
- 4) Collaborative Partnerships and Funding Opportunities By partnering with stakeholders such as government bodies, NGOs, and private tour operators, Subak Teba Majelangu can access funding, technical expertise, and marketing support.

- 5) Employment Generation and Skill Development Tourism activities provide direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community, including roles as guides, artisans, farmers, and hospitality providers.
- 6) Sustainability Branding Positioning Subak Teba Majelangu as a sustainable tourism destination aligned with the principles of *Tri Hita Karana* adds a competitive advantage.

4.2 Role of the Community in Tourism Management

The active participation of the local community is a cornerstone of successful tourism management at Subak Teba Majelangu. Community-based tourism emphasizes local ownership, ensuring that residents directly benefit from tourism activities while maintaining control over the destination's development. At Subak Teba Majelangu, the community fulfills several critical roles that enhance the sustainability and authenticity of its tourism offerings:

- 1) Tour Guides and Educators Local community members serve as guides, sharing in-depth knowledge of the Subak irrigation system, its history, and its cultural and environmental significance. As educators, they lead workshops and hands-on activities, such as rice planting and crafting, that provide visitors with immersive and meaningful experiences.
- 2) Entrepreneurs and Producers Community members take on entrepreneurial roles by producing and selling goods that reflect Subak's identity.
- 3) Cultural Ambassadors and Performers Community members perform traditional dances, music, and rituals as part of the tourism experience. These performances not only entertain visitors but also educate them about Balinese traditions and values.
- 4) Decision-Makers and Planners The local community plays a direct role in planning and managing tourism development through village assemblies and local organizations. Decisions are made collectively to ensure that tourism aligns with community values and priorities.
- 5) Environmental Stewards As custodians of the land, the community ensures that tourism activities do not harm the environment or disrupt the Subak's delicate ecosystem. Community members promote eco-friendly practices, such as waste management and organic farming, to preserve the integrity of their environment.
- 6) Hospitality Providers Residents offer homestays, local cuisine, and other hospitality services that enrich the visitor experience while providing an additional income source. The authenticity of these experiences enhances Subak Teba Majelangu's appeal as a cultural tourism destination.

4.3 Challenges in Developing Subak Teba Majelangu

Despite its significant potential, the development of Subak Teba Majelangu as a community-based educational tourism destination faces several challenges. These challenges span infrastructure, community capacity, environmental concerns, and socio-cultural issues. Addressing these obstacles is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability and success of the tourism initiative.

- 1) Infrastructure Deficiencies One of the primary challenges is the inadequacy of infrastructure to support a robust tourism industry.
- 2) Limited Human Resource Capacity The local community plays a central role in tourism management, but gaps in skills and knowledge present significant barriers.
- 3) Risk of Over-Commercialization The success of Subak Teba Majelangu as a tourism destination could lead to over-commercialization, which poses risks to its cultural and environmental authenticity.

- 4) Environmental Concerns Increased tourist activity can strain the delicate ecosystem of Subak Teba Majelangu, which is dependent on harmonious interactions between humans and nature.
- 5) Financial Constraints The development of tourism infrastructure and programs requires significant financial investment, which is often beyond the means of the local community.
- 6) Competition from Other Destinations Subak Teba Majelangu faces competition from other well-established tourism destinations in Bali, which often have better infrastructure, stronger branding, and more resources. Subak Teba Majelangu faces strong competition from well-known destinations in Bali, such as Jatiluwih and Tegalalang Rice Terraces, Penglipuran Village, Munduk, and Bali Pulina Agro Tourism. These sites often have better infrastructure, stronger branding, and established tourism networks. To stand out, Subak Teba Majelangu must emphasize its unique cultural and educational experiences, leveraging its local wisdom and community-based approach

4.4 Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development

Subak Teba Majelangu presents significant opportunities to be developed as a sustainable tourism destination, leveraging its unique cultural, ecological, and educational potential. With continuous benefits in economic, socio-cultural, and environmental terms. Economically, it can generate income through entrance fees, guided tours, and the sale of local products while creating employment opportunities for the community. Socio-culturally, it helps preserve traditional farming practices, rituals, and local wisdom, fostering pride and participation among residents. Environmentally, it promotes sustainable farming, conservation of natural resources, and education about the importance of ecological balance. These integrated benefits position Subak Teba Majelangu as a model for sustainable tourism in Bali. By adopting innovative strategies and aligning with global tourism trends, Subak Teba Majelangu can establish itself as a model for community-based tourism that prioritizes long-term benefits for both the community and the environment.

- 1) Promoting Educational and Experiential Tourism The Subak system, a UNESCO-recognized cultural heritage, offers a rich foundation for educational and experiential tourism
- 2) Development of Eco-Tourism Activities Eco-tourism aligns well with the values of the Subak system and offers numerous opportunities.
- 3) Strengthening Community-Based Management Empowering the local community in managing tourism activities ensures equitable distribution of benefits and fosters a sense of ownership.
- 4) Leveraging Digital Marketing and Promotion Digital platforms offer cost-effective tools for promoting Subak Teba Majelangu to a global audience.
- 5) Hosting Cultural and Eco-Tourism Events Organizing events can draw attention to Subak Teba Majelangu and attract a larger visitor base.
- 6) Collaborating with Government and NGOs Strategic partnerships with government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and private sector stakeholders can provide resources and expertise.
- 7) Capitalizing on the Global Shift Toward Sustainability With increasing awareness of climate change and the importance of sustainable travel, Subak Teba Majelangu can appeal to eco-conscious travelers.

4.5 Integrating Local Wisdom into Tourism Management

The integration of local wisdom into tourism management is crucial for preserving the cultural authenticity and sustainability of Subak Teba Majelangu. Balinese local

wisdom, deeply rooted in the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* (the three causes of harmony: human-spiritual, human-human, and human-nature relationships), serves as the foundation for a holistic and ethical approach to tourism development.

- 1) Embedding *Tri Hita Karana* in Tourism Practices The concept of *Tri Hita Karana* provides a framework for balancing tourism activities with cultural and environmental preservation.
- 2) Showcasing Traditional Practices Local wisdom embedded in traditional agricultural practices can be a central theme of the tourism offering. Subak Irrigation System, Rituals and Ceremonies, and Traditional Knowledge.
- 3) Promoting Locally Made Products Local wisdom can also be reflected in the production and sale of goods that highlight Balinese craftsmanship and sustainable practices.
- 4) Enhancing Community Participation through Local Wisdom The principles of communal cooperation (*gotong royong*) and mutual benefit underpin the management structure of Subak Teba Majelangu.
- 5) Preserving Cultural Identity The integration of local wisdom into tourism management ensures that cultural authenticity is maintained.
- 6) Educating Visitors about Local Wisdom Tourism can serve as a platform for spreading awareness of Balinese local wisdom.
- 7) Aligning Tourism with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Integrating local wisdom into tourism management aligns with global sustainability initiatives

4.6 Discussion

The integration of community-based tourism at Subak Teba Majelangu presents a unique opportunity to blend the economic benefits of tourism with the preservation of cultural and environmental resources. The findings from this study emphasize the transformative potential of sustainable tourism when local wisdom and community participation are at the core of management practices. However, the development of Subak Teba Majelangu faces significant challenges, particularly in infrastructure, resource management, and capacity-building.

1) Economic Potential and Community Benefits

The economic potential of Subak Teba Majelangu lies in its ability to leverage its cultural heritage and natural resources to attract a niche market of eco-conscious and educational tourists. Community-based tourism, as seen in the Subak system, allows for the equitable distribution of benefits among local stakeholders. The involvement of the community in the tourism process ensures that tourism revenues directly support local livelihoods, reduce poverty, and improve overall well-being.

Agricultural Productivity: Subak systems efficiently manage water resources, ensuring that rice paddies and other crops receive adequate irrigation. This leads to higher agricultural productivity and stable food supply. The Subak system, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, attracts tourists interested in sustainable agriculture and cultural heritage. This boosts local tourism and generates income for the community.

Sustainable Practices: By promoting sustainable farming practices, Subak systems help maintain soil fertility and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers, leading to cost savings for farmers.

Social Cohesion: Subak systems foster a sense of community and cooperation among farmers. The communal management of water resources encourages collaboration and mutual support.

Cultural Preservation: Subak practices are deeply rooted in Balinese culture and religion. Preserving these systems helps maintain cultural traditions and passes them on to future generations.

Environmental Conservation: Subak systems contribute to the conservation of natural ecosystems by promoting biodiversity and preventing deforestation. This helps maintain the ecological balance and supports wildlife habitats. Overall, the Subak system offers significant economic potential and community benefits by promoting sustainable agriculture, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering social cohesion. It's a model of how traditional practices can be integrated with modern environmental and economic goals.

2) Role of Local Wisdom in Tourism Management

The integration of local wisdom, particularly the principles of *Tri Hita Karana*, plays a vital role in ensuring that tourism activities align with the cultural, spiritual, and environmental values of the community. By promoting harmony between people, nature, and spirituality, Subak Teba Majelangu can provide an enriching tourism experience that emphasizes sustainability and respect for local traditions. Local wisdom also offers a unique and authentic selling point for the destination. In summary, local wisdom serves as a foundation for sustainable tourism management, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved, environmental practices are sustainable, and economic benefits are shared with the local community. The traditional irrigation system, Subak, is not only a model of sustainable water management but also a tourist attraction. It highlights the integration of local wisdom in managing natural resources and attracting visitors. It enhances the visitor experience and helps maintain the social fabric of the destination. Integrating local wisdom into tourism management practices leads to more resilient and harmonious communities and destinations.

3) Challenges in Tourism Development

Despite the significant opportunities, several challenges hinder the development of Subak Teba Majelangu as a successful community-based tourism destination. Infrastructure deficiencies remain one of the primary obstacles to attracting larger volumes of tourists. Improved roads, facilities, and communication infrastructure are needed to make the destination more accessible and comfortable for visitors. Moreover, the lack of trained human resources in tourism management poses a challenge to the operational success of the initiative. To address these issues, the local community will require support in terms of capacity-building and professional development. Involving local communities in tourism planning and decision-making can help ensure that development aligns with their needs and values. Sustainable Practices: Promoting sustainable tourism practices, such as eco-friendly accommodations and responsible water use, can help mitigate environmental impacts. Cultural Preservation: Implementing programs to preserve and promote local culture and traditions can enhance the authenticity of the tourism experience and benefit the community. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative approach involving government, local communities, and tourism stakeholders to ensure that tourism development in Subak areas is sustainable and beneficial for all parties involved.

4) Balancing Sustainability and Economic Growth

One of the key issues discussed in this study is the need to balance economic growth with sustainability. While tourism offers considerable financial benefits, it also places pressure on the environment and the local culture. Over-commercialization and mass tourism can erode the very elements that make Subak Teba Majelangu a unique and desirable destination. Sustainable practices must be embedded into the tourism model from the outset to ensure that growth does not come at the cost of ecological or cultural degradation. Creating local markets for sustainably produced goods can provide farmers with stable income and reduce dependency on external markets.

Fair Trade Practices: Implementing fair trade practices ensures that farmers receive a fair price for their products, promoting economic stability and reducing the temptation to convert agricultural land for other uses. Advocating for policies that support sustainable agriculture, fair trade, and the preservation of cultural heritage can create an enabling environment for balancing sustainability and economic growth. Incentives for Sustainability: Providing incentives, such as tax breaks or grants, for farmers and businesses that adopt sustainable practices can encourage widespread adoption of environmentally friendly methods. Universities and research institutions can conduct studies on the Subak system, providing valuable insights and data that inform policy and practice. They can also develop educational materials and programs to promote awareness and understanding. By implementing these strategies, the Subak system can continue to thrive as a sustainable model of traditional agriculture while also benefiting from economic growth through tourism and modernization. This approach ensures that the cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of the Subak system are preserved and enhanced for future generations.

5) The Role of Government and External Partners

Government support and collaboration with external partners are essential in overcoming many of the challenges faced by Subak Teba Majelangu. Financial resources are necessary to improve infrastructure and to launch marketing campaigns that raise awareness of the destination. The Subak system, a traditional irrigation system and social organization in Bali, relies on the support and collaboration of government and external partners to thrive and sustain its unique cultural and agricultural practices. The government can create policies that protect and promote the Subak system. This includes zoning laws to prevent the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, and policies that encourage sustainable farming practices. Furthermore, government policies that prioritize sustainable development and provide incentives for community-based tourism initiatives can significantly enhance the feasibility of such projects. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector stakeholders can also help bring in technical expertise and funding to develop tourism infrastructure, implement eco-friendly practices, and improve community capacity. Investing in infrastructure that supports the Subak system, such as modernizing irrigation channels, improving access roads, and building eco-friendly tourism facilities, can enhance the productivity and appeal of Subak areas. By working together, the government and external partners can ensure the sustainability and prosperity of the Subak system, preserving its cultural heritage and promoting economic growth while maintaining environmental integrity.

6) Future Prospects

Looking forward, Subak Teba Majelangu has the potential to evolve into a model for sustainable, community-based tourism that can be replicated in other rural areas in Bali and beyond. By adopting integrated tourism management practices that combine local wisdom with modern sustainable tourism strategies, the destination can ensure long-term viability while preserving its cultural and natural heritage. Promoting the Subak system as a cultural attraction can draw tourists interested in traditional farming practices and Balinese heritage. Offering guided tours, workshops, and hands-on farming experiences can enhance visitor engagement. The Subak system's sustainable practices can be leveraged to develop eco-tourism initiatives. Highlighting eco-friendly farming methods and conservation efforts can attract environmentally conscious travelers. Expanding organic farming practices within the Subak system can improve soil health, increase crop yields, and meet the growing demand for organic products. This can also enhance the marketability of produce from Subak areas. By

focusing on these areas, the Subak system can continue to thrive as a model of sustainable agriculture and cultural heritage, providing lasting benefits to local communities and contributing to global sustainability goals.

CONCLUSION

Subak Teba Majelangu exemplifies how community-based tourism rooted in local wisdom can promote economic growth and cultural preservation. By integrating *Tri Hita Karana* principles, it balances spiritual, environmental, and community needs while fostering equitable economic benefits. Its rich cultural heritage and traditional farming practices offer unique experiences for eco-conscious and educational tourists. However, challenges such as infrastructure gaps, capacity building, and reliance on tourism revenues must be addressed. Collaboration among stakeholders and sustainable practices are vital for its long-term success. With strategic investments and modern marketing, Subak Teba Majelangu can thrive as a model for sustainable tourism in Bali.

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