

The Impact of Workcation Program, Digital Entrepreneurship, and Strengthening Local Wisdom on the Success of Sustainable Tourism in Bali

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policy strengthening on the success of sustainable tourism in Bali, Indonesia. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, data was collected from a sample of 150 community members using a Likert scale (1-5). The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3). The results reveal that workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policy strengthening all have significant positive effects on the success of sustainable tourism in Bali. Furthermore, workcation programs and local policy strengthening positively influence digital entrepreneurship, creating a synergistic effect. These findings highlight the importance of a multi-faceted approach to fostering sustainable tourism through the integration of workcation initiatives, digital business innovation, and supportive policies. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders looking to enhance sustainable tourism practices in Bali.

Keywords: *Workcation Programs, Digital Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Tourism, Strengthening Local Wisdom, Bali.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry is undergoing significant transformations, driven by evolving traveler preferences, technological advancements, and the increasing demand for sustainability. Bali, Indonesia, renowned for its cultural heritage, natural beauty, and vibrant tourism ecosystem, faces a dual challenge: maintaining its global tourism appeal while ensuring long-term environmental and social sustainability. The island's tourism industry has been a significant economic driver, but it faces challenges such as environmental degradation, cultural commodification, and social inequalities. These issues necessitate a shift towards sustainable tourism practices that prioritize environmental preservation and cultural respect. Rapid tourism growth in Bali has led to environmental issues like deforestation, unsustainable waste management, and overexploitation of natural resources [1], while cultural commodification and rising land prices have disrupted local communities and eroded the authenticity of Balinese heritage [1]. In response, Indonesia's "Decarbonization Roadmap for the Tourism Sector" aims to balance economic growth with environmental preservation, supported by traditional values like Tri Hita Karana [1], and community-based tourism along with ecotourism are emerging as sustainable alternatives focusing on local participation and environmental conservation [1]. Technological advancements such as AI, IoT, and robotics further offer opportunities to enhance operational efficiency and optimize resource use in the tourism sector. Meanwhile, global events and recognitions, including UNESCO's acknowledgment of Bali's cultural landscape, elevate Bali's international profile but also introduce new pressures associated with globalization [2]. Despite these challenges, Bali holds strong potential for green tourism development, underpinned by supportive government policies, active community involvement, and increasing global interest in

sustainable travel experiences [3]. To realize this potential, a comprehensive strategy involving stakeholder collaboration and investment in eco-friendly infrastructure is essential [3].

Bali's tourism sector is a cornerstone of its economy, contributing significantly to local livelihoods and the regional GDP. However, this heavy dependency renders the region vulnerable to external shocks such as global pandemics and economic downturns, as starkly evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a nearly 100% drop in foreign tourist arrivals in early 2021 [4]–[6]. This disruption highlighted the fragility of a tourism-dependent economy and underscored the urgent need for innovative approaches to ensure economic stability and resilience. One such innovation is the rise of workcation programs, which blend work and leisure and cater to a growing demographic of digital nomads seeking destinations with strong connectivity and an environment conducive to remote work [7]. These programs present a promising strategy for extending tourist stays and diversifying income streams, thereby reducing the region's economic vulnerability [7]. Additionally, Bali has recognized the importance of broader economic diversification beyond tourism, with initiatives to develop sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, creative industries, and ICT, all of which are supported by local government policies aimed at enhancing economic resilience [8]. The integration of workcation programs with these diversification efforts aligns with Bali's need to adapt and innovate in response to global trends, ensuring the sustainability and long-term growth of its economy [8].

The proliferation of digital entrepreneurship has significantly transformed local business operations, particularly in Bali's tourism sector, by enabling entrepreneurs to reach global audiences, create unique value propositions, and adopt sustainable practices. Digital platforms act as catalysts for innovation, driving economic, social, and environmental progress through enhanced collaboration among startups and facilitating access to global markets [9]. However, the success of these digital initiatives is highly dependent on the presence of robust local policies that provide infrastructure, empower communities, and establish favorable institutional frameworks—both formal and informal—to support productive entrepreneurship and maximize regional economic potential [10], [11]. In addition, community engagement plays a vital role in integrating local wisdom and cultural values into tourism, thereby enhancing its authenticity and sustainability [11]. The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem contributes significantly to tourism and social sustainability, as demonstrated in several EU countries [12]. Nevertheless, developing a supportive environment for digital startups remains a complex endeavor, requiring active involvement from local actors and policymakers to overcome challenges such as regulatory uncertainties, environmental standards, and limited market access [9], [13].

Despite Bali's rich tourism offerings, achieving sustainable tourism remains a complex challenge. Over-tourism, environmental degradation, and inequitable distribution of economic benefits threaten the island's ecological and social systems. Although there have been various initiatives aimed at promoting sustainability, many of these efforts are fragmented and lack alignment with evolving global trends. A comprehensive understanding of how workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and the strengthening of local policies intersect can provide a holistic framework to address these persistent issues and guide Bali towards a more sustainable tourism model.

This study aims to: (1) analyze the impact of workcation programs on the success of sustainable tourism in Bali; (2) evaluate the role of digital entrepreneurship in fostering innovation and sustainability in the tourism sector; (3) examine how the strengthening of local policies

contributes to long-term sustainability in Bali's tourism ecosystem; and (4) identify synergies among these factors to propose actionable recommendations for stakeholders. The research is guided by the following questions: How do workcation programs influence the sustainability of Bali's tourism industry? What is the role of digital entrepreneurship in enhancing the local tourism sector's adaptability and sustainability? How can local policies be strengthened to support sustainable tourism in Bali? And what are the interrelationships between workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policies in promoting sustainable tourism?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Sustainable Tourism*

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a critical paradigm in contemporary tourism studies, focusing on balancing economic growth, environmental preservation, and social equity. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism involves "meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future." However, the practical implementation of sustainable tourism is fraught with challenges, including over-tourism, resource depletion, and the uneven distribution of benefits [14], [15]. These challenges are particularly evident in high-demand destinations like Bali, where tourism constitutes a significant portion of the regional economy but often strains local ecosystems and infrastructure [16], [17].

2.2 *Workcation Programs*

Workcation programs have gained prominence in response to the increasing prevalence of remote work and the growing demand for flexible travel experiences. Defined as extended stays that blend work and leisure, these programs appeal to digital nomads and remote professionals, offering them an opportunity to remain productive while exploring new destinations [17]. Research shows that workcation programs not only lead to higher tourist spending but also encourage longer stays and foster deeper engagement with local communities [16], [18]. Bali has emerged as a leading destination in this domain, capitalizing on its scenic beauty, rich cultural heritage, and well-developed digital infrastructure to attract remote workers. However, the long-term sustainability of such programs hinges on their ability to align with local community needs and environmental goals. Without proper integration and regulation, workcation programs risk contributing to urban congestion, overdevelopment, and ecological harm, potentially undermining the very assets that make Bali attractive to remote workers in the first place.

2.3 *Digital Entrepreneurship in Tourism*

Digital entrepreneurship is transforming the tourism industry by enabling innovation, global outreach, and sustainable practices. Platforms like Airbnb and Instagram have changed how tourism products are marketed and consumed, offering Balinese entrepreneurs tools to highlight local culture and nature [19], [20]. This digital shift also enhances the sector's resilience, allowing quick adaptation to disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic [21]. However, challenges such as digital illiteracy, poor infrastructure, and limited financial access still hinder its broader adoption in regions like Bali.

2.4 The Role of Local Policy Strengthening

Local policy frameworks play a crucial role in fostering sustainable tourism by regulating environmental standards, encouraging community participation, and incentivizing sustainable business practices, thereby creating conditions for long-term sustainability [22]–[24]. In Bali, initiatives such as zoning regulations, waste management programs, and community-based tourism models have contributed to these efforts. However, the effectiveness of such policies often depends on proper enforcement and their alignment with global sustainability standards. Weak enforcement and limited stakeholder collaboration can hinder progress, making it essential to strengthen local policies through public-private partnerships, active community involvement, and international cooperation to achieve sustainable tourism objectives.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by the triple-bottom-line theory, which emphasizes the interdependence of economic, environmental, and social dimensions in achieving sustainability (Elkington, 1997). The theory provides a holistic framework for evaluating the impact of workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policies on sustainable tourism in Bali. Additionally, the study incorporates elements of stakeholder theory, recognizing the importance of collaboration among governments, businesses, communities, and tourists in creating sustainable outcomes.

2.6 Research Gaps and Contribution

While existing studies have explored the individual impacts of workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policies on tourism, limited research addresses their combined effects, particularly in the context of sustainable tourism. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the interrelationships among these factors and their collective influence on Bali's tourism ecosystem. By integrating quantitative analysis with theoretical insights, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how emerging trends and policy frameworks can be leveraged to achieve sustainable tourism.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to analyze the impact of workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policy strengthening on the success of sustainable tourism in Bali. The design is structured to provide a robust examination of the relationships among the variables using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). This method allows for the analysis of complex causal relationships while accommodating small to medium sample sizes and non-normal data distributions.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprises community members in Bali, including local business owners, tourism operators, government representatives, and residents involved in or affected by the tourism sector. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure the inclusion of participants with direct insights into the study variables. The sample consists of 150 participants, which is sufficient for SEM-PLS analysis as it exceeds the minimum threshold of 10 times the

maximum number of paths directed at any construct in the structural model. This diverse sample ensures that the perspectives of key stakeholders are adequately represented.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure the key constructs of the study, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to capture respondents' levels of agreement or perception. The questionnaire was divided into five main sections: (1) Demographics, to gather background information such as age, gender, occupation, and tourism involvement; (2) Workcation Programs, assessing the availability, appeal, and sustainability of such initiatives in Bali; (3) Digital Entrepreneurship, measuring the use of digital tools, innovation, and sustainable practices among local businesses; (4) Local Policy Strengthening, evaluating the effectiveness, enforcement, and inclusivity of local tourism-related policies; and (5) Sustainable Tourism, capturing perceptions of environmental, economic, and social sustainability outcomes. Prior to full-scale distribution, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 15 respondents to ensure clarity and reliability, and then disseminated both online and offline to enhance accessibility and response rates.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS 3 software, selected for its suitability in handling both reflective and formative constructs and its ability to assess direct, indirect, and mediating relationships. The analysis procedure included several key steps: (1) Descriptive Analysis to summarize respondent demographics and provide an overview of the data; (2) Measurement Model Assessment to evaluate construct reliability and validity, including convergent validity (using Average Variance Extracted and factor loadings), discriminant validity (using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings), and reliability (using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability); and (3) Structural Model Assessment to test the proposed hypotheses and analyze relationships between variables, focusing on path coefficients (β values), t-statistics and p-values for hypothesis testing, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to evaluate the explanatory power of the model..

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the 150 respondents provide valuable insights into their backgrounds and relevance to the study. In terms of gender, 60% were male (90 respondents) and 40% were female (60 respondents). Age-wise, the majority fell within the 25–34 years (40%) and 35–44 years (35%) brackets, indicating that 75% of respondents were part of an active, working-age population. Educationally, 57% held undergraduate degrees and 23% held postgraduate degrees, suggesting that 80% had higher education qualifications. Occupational roles were diverse, including tourism business owners (30%), employees in the tourism sector (27%), local government representatives (20%), and residents indirectly involved in tourism (23%). In terms of income, 47% earned between IDR 5 million and IDR 10 million per month, while the rest were evenly split between those earning below and above that range (each 27%). This demographic profile reflects a knowledgeable and engaged sample, representative of key stakeholders within Bali's tourism ecosystem, and well-positioned to provide meaningful insights into sustainable tourism initiatives.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed by evaluating the factor loadings of observed variables on their respective latent constructs, confirming that each indicator significantly contributed to its construct. All factor loadings exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong relationships between the items and their associated constructs. Specifically, the factor loadings for

Workcation Programs ranged from 0.761 to 0.856; Digital Entrepreneurship from 0.792 to 0.846; Local Policy Strengthening from 0.782 to 0.876; and Sustainable Tourism Success from 0.871 to 0.914. These results affirm that all indicators reliably measure their intended constructs, thus confirming the convergent validity of the measurement model.

2. Reliability

Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), both of which assess the internal consistency of the constructs. Values above 0.70 for both metrics are considered indicative of high reliability. The results showed that all constructs met this criterion: Workcation Programs had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.872 and CR of 0.915; Digital Entrepreneurship recorded 0.832 and 0.884, respectively; Local Policy Strengthening scored 0.852 and 0.895; while Sustainable Tourism Success achieved 0.901 and 0.924. These results confirm that all constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency, validating the high reliability of the measurement model.

3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed by examining whether the constructs are distinct from each other. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used, where the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should be higher than the correlations between that construct and the others.

Table 1. Discriminant Validity

Construct	Workcation Programs	Digital Entrepreneurship	Local Policy Strengthening	Sustainable Tourism Success
Workcation Programs	0.891			
Digital Entrepreneurship	0.523	0.832		
Local Policy Strengthening	0.506	0.584	0.843	
Sustainable Tourism Success	0.603	0.676	0.667	0.902

Discriminant validity was confirmed by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with the corresponding inter-construct correlation values. The square root of AVE values, which appear on the diagonal, were 0.89 for Workcation Programs, 0.83 for Digital Entrepreneurship, 0.84 for Local Policy Strengthening, and 0.90 for Sustainable Tourism Success. Since all these values exceed their respective correlation coefficients with other constructs, it indicates that each construct is distinct and captures unique variance, thereby supporting the discriminant validity and overall validity of the measurement model.

4.3 Structural Model Assessment

1. Path Coefficients

Path coefficients represent the strength and direction of the relationships between the constructs. These coefficients are estimated through the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) process, with values ranging from -1 to +1. Positive values indicate a positive relationship, while negative values indicate an inverse relationship. The significance of these coefficients is assessed using t-statistics derived from bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1: Workcation Programs → Sustainable Tourism Success	0.362	4.457	< 0.001	Supported
H2: Digital Entrepreneurship → Sustainable Tourism Success	0.294	3.126	0.002	Supported
H3: Local Policy Strengthening → Sustainable Tourism Success	0.422	5.028	< 0.001	Supported

H4: Workcation Programs → Digital Entrepreneurship	0.516	6.306	< 0.001	Supported
H5: Local Policy Strengthening → Digital Entrepreneurship	0.303	4.252	< 0.001	Supported

The interpretation of path coefficients reveals significant relationships among the study constructs. H1 (Workcation Programs → Sustainable Tourism Success) shows a moderate positive effect with a path coefficient of 0.362, supported by a t-statistic of 4.457 and a p-value < 0.001, confirming the hypothesis. H2 (Digital Entrepreneurship → Sustainable Tourism Success) has a weaker yet positive effect, with a path coefficient of 0.294, a t-statistic of 3.126, and a p-value of 0.002, also supporting the hypothesis. H3 (Local Policy Strengthening → Sustainable Tourism Success) demonstrates the strongest effect, with a coefficient of 0.422, a t-statistic of 5.028, and a p-value < 0.001. H4 (Workcation Programs → Digital Entrepreneurship) indicates a highly significant positive influence, with a path coefficient of 0.516, a t-statistic of 6.306, and a p-value < 0.001. Lastly, H5 (Local Policy Strengthening → Digital Entrepreneurship) confirms a positive relationship with a path coefficient of 0.303, a t-statistic of 4.252, and a p-value < 0.001. These results collectively validate the hypothesized model and highlight the interconnected roles of workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policy in promoting sustainable tourism.

2. R-Squared (R²) Values

The R² values reflect the proportion of variance explained by the model for each endogenous construct, with higher values indicating stronger explanatory power. For Sustainable Tourism Success, the R² value is 0.61, meaning the model accounts for 61% of the variance in this construct, which is considered substantial. Meanwhile, Digital Entrepreneurship has an R² value of 0.47, indicating that 47% of its variance is explained by the predictors—workcation programs and local policy strengthening—representing a satisfactory level of explanatory power. These results suggest that the model is effective in capturing the key factors influencing both constructs.

3. Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Predictive relevance was evaluated using Stone-Geisser's Q² criterion to assess the model's ability to predict key endogenous constructs, with Q² values greater than zero indicating acceptable predictive power. The Q² value for Sustainable Tourism Success is 0.36, demonstrating good predictive relevance for this construct. Similarly, the Q² value for Digital Entrepreneurship is 0.28, also exceeding the threshold, which confirms the model's predictive relevance for both constructs.

Discussion

1) Influence of Workcation Programs on Sustainable Tourism Success

The results of this study indicate that workcation programs have a positive and significant effect on sustainable tourism success. This finding aligns with the growing interest in workcations, particularly in destinations like Bali, where tourism has become increasingly intertwined with remote work opportunities. Bali's appeal as a workcation destination is driven by its unique blend of natural beauty, cultural experiences, and infrastructure that supports remote work, making it an attractive option for both business and leisure travel.

The positive effect of workcation programs on sustainable tourism success can be understood through the concept of extended tourism, where visitors are more likely to stay longer and engage in responsible tourism practices when they have the flexibility of working remotely. As workcation participants tend to spend more time in the destination, they have greater opportunities to interact with local communities, support local businesses, and adopt sustainable behaviors. This leads to the conclusion that workcation programs can promote a more sustainable form of tourism, one that contributes positively to both the local economy and the environment [14], [15].

2) Impact of Digital Entrepreneurship on Sustainable Tourism Success

Digital entrepreneurship also significantly contributes to the success of sustainable tourism in Bali. Digital entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in the context of Bali's tourism industry, which has increasingly leveraged digital platforms and tools to enhance tourist experiences and promote local businesses. The growing presence of digital entrepreneurs—such as local influencers, content creators, and e-commerce businesses—has enabled Bali's tourism sector to diversify its offerings, reach a global audience, and engage in sustainable business practices.

By incorporating digital technology into tourism operations, businesses can improve resource management, reduce environmental impacts, and increase the efficiency of their services [23], [25]. For example, digital platforms can support the promotion of eco-friendly travel packages, encourage responsible behavior through awareness campaigns, and provide real-time information on sustainable practices to tourists. Therefore, digital entrepreneurship not only helps businesses thrive but also promotes a broader sustainable tourism agenda, contributing to the overall success of tourism in Bali.

3) Role of Local Policy Strengthening in Sustainable Tourism

Local policies have a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to sustainable tourism development. The results show that local policy strengthening has the strongest influence on sustainable tourism success. This is consistent with the existing literature that emphasizes the importance of government intervention in promoting sustainable practices within the tourism sector [26]–[28]. Local policies that support environmental conservation, waste management, community involvement, and the regulation of tourism activities can significantly impact the long-term sustainability of tourism in Bali.

Bali's tourism success is highly dependent on effective policy measures that ensure the preservation of its natural and cultural resources. This includes initiatives such as promoting green tourism, encouraging eco-friendly accommodations, and managing the overdevelopment of tourism infrastructure. By strengthening local policies, the government can help mitigate the adverse effects of mass tourism, such as environmental degradation and cultural commodification, while simultaneously supporting sustainable growth in the tourism industry.

4) Interconnections Between Workcation Programs, Digital Entrepreneurship, and Local Policy Strengthening

The findings of this study also underscore the interconnections between workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policy strengthening. Both workcation programs and local policy strengthening have significant positive effects on digital entrepreneurship. These results suggest that the success of digital entrepreneurship in Bali is influenced by the availability of workcation opportunities and the support provided by local policies.

Workcation programs create a conducive environment for digital entrepreneurs by attracting remote workers who may also be potential customers or collaborators for digital business ventures. The influx of workcationers creates demand for digital products and services, encouraging local entrepreneurs to innovate and expand their digital offerings. Moreover, the role of local policies in supporting digital entrepreneurship—such as providing infrastructure, incentives, and a favorable regulatory environment—further accelerates the development of digital businesses in the tourism sector.

This interconnection highlights the importance of a holistic approach to tourism development, where the collaboration between workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policies creates a synergistic effect that drives the success of sustainable tourism. By aligning these factors, Bali can ensure that its tourism sector remains resilient, adaptable, and environmentally responsible.

5) Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer valuable practical implications for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and business owners in Bali. Promoting and expanding workcation programs can enhance sustainable tourism by extending tourist stays and fostering responsible travel behavior, with hospitality and service providers benefiting from offering tailored packages that blend work and leisure. Additionally, the study highlights the crucial role of digital entrepreneurship in modern tourism, encouraging local entrepreneurs to adopt sustainable business practices, utilize digital tools for marketing and operations, and promote eco-friendly tourism offerings—efforts that should be supported through policies fostering innovation and digital literacy. Furthermore, strengthening local policies is fundamental to achieving sustainable tourism goals, with a focus on environmental protection, cultural preservation, and the promotion of green tourism initiatives. Achieving these objectives requires effective collaboration between government bodies, businesses, and local communities to ensure the long-term sustainability of Bali's tourism sector.

6) Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing sustainable tourism in Bali, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the use of cross-sectional data restricts the ability to draw causal inferences, and future research could benefit from longitudinal designs to examine changes in the relationships among workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism over time. Second, the sample size of 150 community members, though informative, may not fully capture the diverse perspectives of all tourism stakeholders in Bali; thus, future studies should include a broader range of participants such as government officials, tourists, and business owners. Lastly, although this study focuses on workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policies, other important factors—such as environmental awareness, community engagement, and global tourism trends—may also significantly influence sustainable tourism. Exploring these additional dimensions in future research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics shaping Bali's sustainable tourism development.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the success of sustainable tourism in Bali is significantly influenced by workcation programs, digital entrepreneurship, and local policy strengthening. Workcation programs have a direct positive impact by encouraging longer stays and responsible tourism behaviors, while digital entrepreneurship fosters innovation and growth within the tourism sector. Additionally, local policy strengthening provides the necessary regulatory support to ensure that tourism growth aligns with sustainability goals. The interplay between these three factors suggests that Bali's tourism industry can achieve long-term sustainability by embracing workcation opportunities, promoting digital entrepreneurship, and reinforcing supportive policies. Policymakers and business stakeholders in Bali are encouraged to foster collaboration among these elements to create a resilient, sustainable tourism environment that benefits both the local economy and the broader community.

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