



Volume 9 Issue 1, June 2026, pages: 183-190

AGRO-WELLNESS TOURISM AS A SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM STRATEGY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

**Komang Trigita Juliastari^{1*}, Ni Nyoman Deni Ariyaningsih²,
I Gusti Ayu Melistyari Dewi³, Komang Shanty Muni Parwati⁴,
Firlie Lanovia Amir⁵**

Institut Pariwisata dan Bisnis Internasional^{1*345}

Universitas Mahasaraswati²

trigita.juliastari@ipb-intl.ac.id

Received: 09/03/2026

Revised: 22/04/2026

Accepted: 25/05/2026

Abstract

Agro-wellness tourism has emerged as an innovative approach in sustainable rural tourism that integrates agricultural activities, wellness experiences, and local cultural values. This study aims to explore the potential and challenges of agro-wellness tourism development in rural Bali through a systematic literature review approach. Data were collected from reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Garuda, using keywords related to agro-wellness tourism, rural tourism, and sustainable tourism development. A total of selected literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis with thematic synthesis to identify key patterns and insights. The findings indicate that Bali has significant potential for developing agro-wellness tourism due to its unique agricultural landscape, particularly the Subak system, as well as its strong cultural and spiritual traditions. Agro-wellness tourism contributes to rural economic diversification, job creation, and the strengthening of local micro-enterprises, while also supporting environmental conservation and cultural preservation. However, several challenges remain, including limited infrastructure, inadequate human resource capacity, weak digital promotion, and insufficient stakeholder collaboration. In addition, there are potential risks related to cultural commodification and environmental degradation if development is not properly managed. This study contributes to the literature by positioning agro-wellness tourism as an integrated rural tourism model that connects agriculture, wellness, and cultural experiences within a sustainable development framework. The findings provide implications for policymakers and tourism stakeholders in designing more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable rural tourism strategies in Bali.

Keywords: Agro-Wellness Tourism, Rural Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Bali, Systematic Literature Review

1. INTRODUCTION

Global tourism has increasingly shifted from mass tourism to personalized, sustainable experiences that emphasize physical and mental well-being, giving rise to wellness tourism, which prioritizes health, relaxation, and holistic experiences (Bhuyan

et al., 2025; Anarini et al., 2024). Concurrently, rural agricultural areas have developed agro-tourism by integrating farming activities with recreational and educational experiences. The intersection of these trends has led to agro-wellness tourism, a model combining agriculture, natural landscapes, local wisdom, and wellness activities, offering a sustainable and inclusive approach that can enhance rural community welfare.

Bali exemplifies a strategic location for agro-wellness tourism due to its rich rural landscapes, traditional agricultural practices, cultural philosophy emphasizing harmony between humans, nature, and spirituality, and its global wellness reputation (Sinaga et al., 2025). Villages such as Ubud, Tabanan, Bangli, and Jatiluwih offer opportunities for organic farming, yoga and meditation, healthy culinary experiences, and cultural immersion. The Subak system further strengthens Bali's agricultural identity, supporting sustainability-focused tourism. Post-COVID-19, growing demand for health-oriented travel has created potential for agro-wellness services such as health retreats, herbal therapies, and mindfulness programs. Beyond enriching tourist experiences, agro-wellness tourism can diversify rural incomes and strengthen local economic resilience. It also empowers MSMEs by creating opportunities for small-scale business development within rural communities. In addition, this tourism model supports community-based employment that involves local participation in tourism activities. Overall, agro-wellness tourism offers a more sustainable alternative to conventional tourism models, which often place pressure on local environments and cultural resources.

The growing global awareness of health and well-being in the post-COVID-19 era has contributed to the continued expansion of wellness tourism; however, much of the existing literature tends to discuss wellness tourism and agro-tourism as separate domains rather than as an integrated concept (Subawa et al., 2023). Modern travelers increasingly seek destinations that provide not only relaxation and outdoor experiences, but also meaningful engagement with nature, local food systems, and culturally rooted healing practices. In this context, Bali's rural tourism villages offer strong potential to develop integrated agro-wellness tourism experiences that combine agricultural activities with holistic wellness practices grounded in local wisdom. Unlike conventional wellness tourism that is often spa- or resort-centered, agro-wellness tourism in Bali emphasizes direct participation in organic farming, traditional herbal knowledge, and community-based cultural practices, creating a more immersive and place-based experience. From an academic perspective, this integration remains underexplored, particularly in terms of how agricultural systems such as Subak can be systematically positioned within wellness tourism frameworks. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing agro-wellness tourism as a sustainability-oriented rural development strategy that integrates agriculture, wellness, and community empowerment within a single framework. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, which connects rural agricultural systems with wellness tourism development as a unified model for sustainable destination competitiveness in Bali (Vipriyanti et al., 2025).

This study identifies a gap in the literature regarding the integration of agriculture and wellness tourism within a unified rural tourism framework, particularly in the context of Bali's Subak-based landscape. While previous studies have examined agro-tourism and wellness tourism separately, limited attention has been given to their synergistic relationship. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring agro-wellness tourism as an emerging concept within sustainable rural tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Agro-wellness tourism is an emerging concept that integrates agricultural activities, wellness practices, and rural tourism experiences into a single holistic tourism model. This concept builds upon the theoretical foundations of sustainable tourism, which emphasizes the balance between economic development, environmental preservation, and socio-cultural integrity (Snyder, 2019). In this context, tourism is no longer viewed merely as an economic activity, but as a system that must contribute to long-term community well-being and ecological sustainability.

From the perspective of rural tourism theory, agro-wellness tourism aligns with the idea of experience-based tourism, where visitors actively participate in local agricultural and cultural practices. This approach is consistent with the concept of community-based tourism, which emphasizes local participation, empowerment, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, wellness tourism theory highlights the increasing demand for travel experiences that support physical, mental, and spiritual well-being through nature-based and holistic activities.

Previous studies have shown that agro-tourism contributes to rural economic diversification and agricultural sustainability, while wellness tourism is strongly associated with health-seeking behavior and lifestyle transformation among modern travelers (Tranfield et al., 2003; Booth et al., 2016). However, most of the existing literature treats agro-tourism and wellness tourism as separate domains. Studies focusing on agro-tourism tend to emphasize agricultural education and rural economy, whereas wellness tourism research focuses on spa, relaxation, and health retreat industries.

In the context of Bali, research has highlighted the potential of Subak-based agricultural landscapes and cultural heritage as key attractions for sustainable tourism development. Nevertheless, there is still limited scholarly attention given to the integration of agriculture and wellness into a unified agro-wellness tourism framework. This indicates a clear research gap in understanding how agricultural systems, wellness practices, and rural community participation can be systematically combined to create a sustainable tourism model.

Therefore, this study positions agro-wellness tourism as an integrated conceptual framework that bridges agriculture-based tourism and wellness-oriented tourism within a sustainable rural development approach. This integration is expected to provide new insights into how rural destinations such as Bali can enhance competitiveness while maintaining environmental and cultural sustainability.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review (SLR) method. This method was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the development of the agro-wellness tourism concept, its potential implementation in rural Bali, and the challenges faced in its management (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A systematic literature review was applied to ensure a more structured and transparent process in selecting and analyzing relevant studies. The literature review was conducted through a search of various relevant scientific sources, such as national and international journal articles, proceedings, academic books, tourism agency reports, and policy documents related to sustainable tourism development and wellness tourism (Snyder, 2019). Data sources were obtained from scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Garuda using keywords such as agro-wellness

tourism, rural tourism, sustainable tourism, wellness destination, and Bali tourism development (Tranfield et al., 2003; Booth et al., 2016).

The literature was selected based on the relevance of the theme, the credibility of the sources, and the recency of publications within the last ten years. These criteria were applied to ensure the quality and timeliness of the data analyzed. In addition, inclusion criteria consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles and relevant academic publications, while non-academic or duplicate sources were excluded from the analysis.

The data analysis process involved identification, classification, evaluation, and synthesis of the collected literature using content analysis techniques. This study employed thematic grouping to interpret key findings related to the potential of agro-wellness tourism in improving the rural economy, preserving the environment, strengthening local culture, and developing health- and agriculture-based tourism experiences. Furthermore, the analysis focused on several emerging challenges, including limited infrastructure, human resource readiness, digital promotion, changing tourist preferences, and environmental sustainability issues.

The results of the literature synthesis were then used to develop a conceptual understanding of the opportunities for agro-wellness tourism in Bali as a sustainable rural tourism destination. Using a literature review method, this research is expected to provide both academic and practical contributions to the development of tourism strategies based on health and agriculture that are adaptive to the dynamics of the modern tourism industry.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Integration of Traditional Agriculture and Wellness Tourism in Bali

The integration of traditional agriculture and wellness tourism in Bali represents an increasingly relevant development within sustainable tourism transformation. Bali has long been recognized as a global destination that combines natural beauty with a strong agrarian cultural system preserved through Subak (Ardana et al., 2024). Rather than functioning solely as an irrigation system, Subak reflects a philosophical foundation based on harmony between humans, nature, and spirituality. This value system provides a strong basis for integrating agriculture with wellness tourism development.

In this context, wellness tourism is expanding beyond spa, yoga, and meditation activities toward more experiential and nature-based practices. Traditional agricultural activities such as rice farming, organic cultivation, and herbal-based practices are increasingly positioned as wellness experiences that provide physical, mental, and emotional benefits.

Empirically, literature shows that this integration offers multidimensional value; however, its implementation remains uneven across rural areas. Key constraints include limited managerial capacity, weak institutional coordination, and insufficient tourism packaging skills at the village level. Therefore, stronger governance and community empowerment are required to ensure sustainability.

4.2 Bali's Natural and Cultural Resources as an Attraction for Agro-Wellness Tourism

Bali possesses strong natural and cultural capital that supports the development of agro-wellness tourism. The island's landscapes, biodiversity, and cultural traditions create an integrated tourism experience that combines agriculture, spirituality, and wellness-based activities. Locations such as Jatiluwih, Ubud, and Kintamani illustrate

how agricultural landscapes function as both productive and experiential tourism spaces (Putra et al., 2023).

The Subak system further strengthens Bali's identity as a cultural landscape that aligns with sustainable tourism principles. Its recognition as a world heritage site emphasizes its role not only as an agricultural infrastructure but also as a cultural ecosystem. In addition, Bali's biodiversity, particularly medicinal plants and herbal resources, supports the development of wellness-oriented products such as traditional healing and herbal therapies.

However, the utilization of these resources remains fragmented. Many initiatives still focus on isolated tourism products rather than an integrated agro-wellness system. This indicates a gap in developing a holistic destination model that connects agriculture, wellness, and rural community participation.

4.3 Challenges of Digitalization and Promotion of Agro-Wellness Tourism Destinations

Digital transformation plays an essential role in enhancing the competitiveness of agro-wellness tourism destinations. However, rural tourism actors still face significant barriers in digital literacy, infrastructure, and promotional capacity (Walterová, et al: 2026).

Most destinations still rely on conventional promotional methods, which limits global visibility. Agro-wellness tourism, which is experiential and multidimensional in nature, requires more advanced digital storytelling strategies to communicate its value. The lack of such capacity reduces destination competitiveness in digital platforms.

Another issue is the imbalance between promotion and sustainability management. In several cases, tourism promotion focuses on increasing visitor numbers without considering environmental carrying capacity. This may lead to risks such as overtourism and cultural commodification. Therefore, digitalization should be aligned with sustainable tourism principles.

4.4 Novelty and Research Contribution

This study contributes to the literature by positioning agro-wellness tourism as an integrated rural tourism model that connects agriculture, wellness, and cultural experiences within a single framework. Unlike previous studies that separately discuss agro-tourism and wellness tourism, this research emphasizes their interdependent relationship in supporting sustainable rural tourism development.

The novelty of this study lies in highlighting the Subak system as not only an agricultural infrastructure but also as a foundation for wellness-oriented tourism experiences. This expands the conceptual understanding of rural tourism into a multidimensional system that integrates ecological sustainability, cultural heritage, and community-based wellness experiences.

From a practical perspective, this study provides insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders in developing more integrated and sustainable rural tourism strategies in Bali.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that agro-wellness tourism in rural Bali has significant potential as a sustainable tourism model that integrates agricultural, health, cultural, and local economic dimensions. Bali's agricultural landscapes, traditional healing practices,

spiritual values, and rural cultural heritage represent key assets that offer an authentic alternative to conventional tourism. In addition, agro-wellness tourism contributes to rural economic diversification by generating employment opportunities, increasing farmers' income, and strengthening local micro-enterprises based on indigenous products. It also supports environmental conservation and cultural preservation through tourism activities grounded in sustainability principles and community participation.

Despite these opportunities, several structural and managerial challenges remain. The development of agro-wellness tourism is constrained by limited infrastructure, inadequate human resource capacity, weak digital promotion systems, and suboptimal collaboration among stakeholders. These limitations reduce the competitiveness of rural destinations and hinder optimal development.

In addition, there is a potential risk of cultural commodification and environmental degradation if tourism growth is not properly managed. Therefore, a more strategic and integrated development approach is required. This includes strengthening community empowerment, enhancing innovation based on local wisdom, improving the quality of wellness-based services, and implementing supportive policies that prioritize inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Such efforts are essential to ensure that agro-wellness tourism in Bali develops in a balanced and long-term sustainable manner.

REFERENCES

- Anarini, D. T. P., Parwati, K. S. M., Hendrajana, I. G. M. R., & Amir, F. L. (2024). Implementasi Community-Based Tourism Dalam Mendukung Pariwisata Berkelanjutan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pariwisata dan Bisnis*, 3(6), 872–881.
- Ardana, P. D. H., Suparwata, D. O., Sudrajat, A., Chatun, S., & Harsono, I. (2024). The Role Of Bali's Traditional Subak Farming System In The Preservation Of Natural And Cultural Resources. *West Science Nature and Technology*, 2(1), 31–38.
- Ariyudha, A. A. D., Nahak, S., & Senastri, N. M. J. (2025). Policy Regulation Of Tourism Development With Integrated Agriculture In Bali. *Jurnal Hukum Prasada*. <https://ejurnal.warmadewa.ac.id/index.php/prasada/article/view/3960>.
- Bhuyan, K. N., Naik, R., & Khangarot, G. (2025). Wellness Tourism: Nurturing Nature And Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) While Travelling. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*.
- Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016). *Systematic Approaches To A Successful Literature Review*. Sage Publications.
- Dewi, R. D. C. (2025). Development Of Medical Wellness-Based Health Tourism In Indonesia: Case Study Of Traditional Medicine And Melukat Ritual In Bali. *Multidiscience: Journal of Multidisciplinary Science*, 2(1), 281–289. <https://doi.org/10.59631/multidiscience.v2i1.333>.
- Hanita, M., Bangso, F. Dt., & Aprian, M. (2024). Beyond Attraction: Unveiling Bali's Cultural Community's Role In Tourism Resilience. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 34, 100953. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2024.100953>.
- Karimova, G. (2026). Developing Halal Wellness Tourism In Uzbekistan: Opportunities And Challenges. In *ACE International Conference Proceedings* (pp. 182). ACE Conference Series.
- Mon, A. M. (2026). Wellness Tourism And Its Potential For Community Development In Inle Lake Region. In *ACE International Conference Proceedings* (pp. 180). ACE Conference Series.

- Parwati, K. S. M., Hendrajana, I. G. M. R., & Putra, D. P. K. E. (2022). Business Planning Strategy For Etnowellness SPA Products In Pinge Tourism Village, Tabanan Regency. *Enrichment: Journal of Management*, 12(5), 3710–3715.
- Pradnyawati, I. A. K., Anom, I. P., & Sendra, I. M. (2024). Integrating Agro-Cultural Tourism: A Product Diversification Model For Sibatana Tourism Village, Karangasem Regency. *Asian Journal of Management, Entrepreneurship and Social Science*, 4(3), 1537–1560.
- Putra, I. D. G. A. D., & Adhika, I. M. (2024). The Traditional Village As A Part Of A Cultural Landscape: The Development Of Cultural Agriculture Tourism In Catur, Bali. *Sinergi*, 28(1), 43–54. <https://doi.org/10.22441/sinergi.2024.1.005>.
- Putra, M. G. B., Amir, F. L., & Parwati, K. S. M. (2023). Analysis Of The Potential Of Subak As A Sustainable Tourism Attraction Based On Agro-Tourism In Jatiluwih. *Pusaka: Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, Travel and Business Event*, 57–62.
- Sinaga, F., et al. (2025). Green Tourism: A Strategy For Realizing Environmentally-Based Wonderful Indonesia. *Jurnal Teknologi dan Manajemen Industri Terapan*, 4(3), 2152–2156.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature Review As A Research Methodology: An Overview And Guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.
- Subawa, N. S., Mimaki, E. A., Mimaki, C. A., Baykal, E., & Utami, M. S. M. (2023). Exploring The Hidden Potential Of Bali's Wellness Tourism: Which Factors Encourage Tourists To Visit? *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(2), 2269722. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2269722>.
- Susanti, I. A. M. D., Antara, M., Darmawan, D. P., Suryawardani, I. G. A. O., & Wiranatha, A. S. (2020). The Revitalization Of Gianyar Traditional Market Into A Healthy Cultural Tourism Market. *International Journal of Life Sciences*, 4(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.29332/ijls.v4n3.469>.
- Thanh, P. V. (2026). Agro-Wellness Tourism: A New Niche For Rural Revitalization In Vietnam. In *ACE International Conference Proceedings* (pp. 196). ACE Conference Series.
- Toktosunova, N. (2026). Sustainable Staffing Models For Seasonal Tourism In Mountain Resorts. In *ACE International Conference Proceedings* (pp. 198). ACE Conference Series.
- Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards A Methodology For Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge By Means Of Systematic Review. *British Journal of Management*, 14(3), 207–222.
- Utama, I. G. B. R. (2014). Agrotourism As An Alternative Form Of Tourism In Bali Indonesia. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2517811>.
- Vipriyanti, N. U., Rustiarini, N. W., Andayani Citra, M. E., & Sedana, G. (2025). The Cultural Landscape Heritage Sustainable Strategy: Integration Of Agriculture And Tourism In Bali. *Discover Sustainability*, 6(1), 1201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-00789-7>.
- Walterová, J., Vylita, T., & Huseynli, A. (2026). Revisiting Therapeutic Landscapes In Spa Context: Toward A Multisensory, Evidence-Based Framework For Healing Environments. *International Journal of Biometeorology*, 70(2), 50.

