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Research Article

A Qualitative Case Study of Overtourism *vs.* Regenerative Tourism in Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract:

Introduction: The booming tourism in Bali has further fuelled the debate on overtourism, destruction of the environment, commercialisation of cultures, and the rising pressure on available resources that require destination management strategies beyond traditional sustainability planning. This study seeks to critically address governance, community engagement, and environmental management practices as a way of transitioning overtourism into regenerative tourism in Bali.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were conducted, as study adopted a qualitative case study design, with 24 purposively selected stakeholders. Thematic analysis led to four themes: tourism growth and impacts, community involvement and empowerment, regenerative practices and implementation challenges, and policies and governance.

Results: The results indicate that stakeholders are positive about regenerative tourism, yet weak governance coordination, limited institutional capacity, and insufficient financial resources, and intensive tourism limit its implementation.

Conclusion: The study contributed to the regenerative tourism literature as it illustrates that regenerative tourism is a governance change and not an environmental intervention. The results note that adaptive governance, stakeholder engagement, cultural management of the tourism destination, and long-term planning are important in improving tourism resilience and sustainability in Bali.

Keywords: Overtourism, regenerative tourism, destination management, sustainable tourism, community engagement, Bali.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is among the rapidly expanding industries in the world and is a significant source of revenue in the economies of developed and developing nations (Fang, 2020). Tourism within an emerging economy is seen as a dynamic force for economic development and growth that offers the potential for economic benefits, job creation, and infrastructure development (Khan *et al.,* 2020). However, this has created what has been called "overtourism, " meaning that the number of tourists is greater than the capacity of the places they visit to accommodate them, and therefore negatively impact residents, the nature of the visited places, and the economy of the visited places (Thommandru *et al.,* 2023). Emerging economies face several issues in these contexts, including overcrowding, utilisation of natural resources, environmental degradation, and loss of cultural identity, as a result of the rapid growth in the number of tourists (Kainthola *et al.,* 2021; Koh, 2020; Navarro-Ruiz *et al.,* 2020). To address these issues, a shift towards regenerative tourism practices has developed. Regenerative tourism is not about relieving negative impacts anymore, since the classical tourism policies are more geared toward alleviating negative impacts, yet it also involves restoring and enhancing the local ecosystems, cultures, and economic systems, balancing the growth of tourism with its conservation, empowering the local communities, and promoting environmental responsibility (Khater *et al.,* 2025). This transformation will be essential to sustainability of tourism in the emerging economies in the long

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run, since the development of tourism in the emerging economies is normally fast-paced, which is not conducive to the ecological and cultural conservation.

The phenomenon poses a serious threat to the social life and landscapes of such destinations in most new markets, where the nature of overtourism activity is overcrowding, increases in costs, loss of culture, and destruction of natural ecosystems through the uncontrolled flow of tourists (Alsharif *et al.,* 2025; Verhun & Bondarchuk, 2022). While tourism positively affects the local economy, it usually leads to dependency on tourism, thus placing these communities at risk of external disruptions, such as pandemics or political instability. In addition, the effects of mass tourism can cause damages to weak ecosystems that are irreversible, such as tropical rainforests, coral reefs, and mountainous areas, which can be destroyed in the long run (Olaiya *et al.,* 2021; Utama *et al.,* 2024). Thus, the adverse effects of overtourism require the introduction of effective destination management strategies to alleviate the adverse effects of this phenomenon and allow a shift towards regenerative tourism. The destination management policies used, including incorporating governance structures, policy controls, community involvement, and environmental controls, are significant in dealing with these problems. Although much has been said about overtourism and sustainable tourism practices, few empirical studies have compared overtourism and regenerative tourism approaches in emerging economies. The literature available is largely focused on how to decrease overtourism by means of traditional conservation (Jamader *et al.,* 2025; Sharma *et al.,* 2025) and on the emerging concept of regenerative tourism (Hussain & Haley, 2022). However, little has been done concerning how the two strategies can exist and be properly managed in a destination with certain difficulties, such as infrastructural deficiency, lack of resources, and political instability.

As a leading tourist destination in Indonesia and one of the best-known islands in the world, Bali offers millions of tourists from around the world its natural beauty, cultural heritage, spiritual practices, and hospitality services. The island now has tourism as the major industry that not only provides jobs but also assists in developing the region and aids businesses on the island. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, according to (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2025), in December 2024, there were 551,100 international tourists, which is 16.54% higher than in December 2023, and the hotel occupancy rate remains increasing. Nevertheless, the rapid growth has given rise to the issue of overtourism, such as its effect on the transport system, waste disposal, water provision, and the delicate coastal and cultural resources (Pramono *et al.,* 2026). The growing number of tourists seeking to visit the most sought-after attractions such as Ubud, Kuta, Canggu, and Uluwatu has also resulted in traffic congestion, pollution, and difficulty in maintaining the culture of Bali. Consequently, and in turn, shift towards regenerative tourism is needed, which aims to reduce tourism's negative impacts by actively attempting to rehabilitate ecological systems, empower the local community, and conserve the cultural heritage of the tourism destination through participatory governance and long-term planning (Sugita *et al.,* 2025). Although much has been studied in the literature on regenerative tourism and Bali is part of the analysis, the common understandings from the key actors with regard to the opportunities and challenges, as well as the governance processes to facilitate the transition remain unclear.

Hence, this study focuses on filling that research gap by critically analysing the destination management practices in Bali, the popular tourist destination currently experiencing problems of overtourism, environmental degradation, cultural commodification, and the increasing costs of the tourist resources. The context of Bali is suitable to discuss about sustainable to regenerative tourism, as Bali is still relying on the tourism industry to support the economic development of the island, and maintaining ecological systems, cultural heritage and good health for the local community are essential. In particular, governance arrangements, community involvement and environmental management systems to address issues arising from tourism development are examined.

For this analysis, theories that support it, including TALC (Tourism Area Life Cycle) by (Butler, 2004; Doxey's Irritation Index, 1975), cited by (Utama *et al.,* 2025) and the Triple Bottom Line by Elkington (Nogueira *et al.,* 2023), were utilized. The frameworks serve as a helpful model for comprehending the development pathway of tourism, the responses from different actors, as well as the level of social, environmental, and economic integration in destination management strategies in Bali. The TALC has also proved to be helpful in comprehending how Bali has developed and matured as a tourist destination, and the Triple Bottom Line framework in assessing regenerative practice beyond conventional sustainability metrics.

This study adds to the literature on regenerative tourism, providing limited discussion that centres on the processes of Bali's transition from managing impacts to destination systems to become more restorative and resilient. The results of this study can assist decision makers and destination managers to realize the importance of participative governance, community empowerment and regenerative models for the sustainability of tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This research was based on Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) Theory which emphasizes on meeting the current tourist demand while maintaining the possibility of satisfying the future tourist demand (Streimikiene *et al.,* 2021). It's a theory of balancing the economy, society and environment. This is difficult in new tourist destinations where the tourism industry can easily go beyond the ecological and social limits and consequently damage the environment, the culture, and, to a high degree, the dependence on tourism revenues (Elgammal, 2022; Séraphin *et al.,* 2022). This viewpoint is especially pertinent in Bali, where the burgeoning tourism sector has resulted in economic growth and social welfare, as well as necessities for local resources, affording, and environmental sustainability.

The stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) cited in (Mahajan *et al.,* 2023) serves as a basis for the motivation of the work, as it emphasizes the different types of stakeholders, their interests, resources and power in governance and decision making in the tourism sector. There are several stakeholders of the tourism system in Bali, which includes the government, the tourism industry, the local community and environmental organisations and tourists. These groups must collaborate with one another, because what is good for the economy may not be good for the long-term health of the environment or of community empowerment. Hence, the stakeholder theory can be used to analyse the influence of participatory governance and community involvement on implementing regenerative tourism practices.

The study also encompasses Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) and Doxey's Irritation Index, which focuses on Bali's tourism development trajectory and the social dynamics of overtourism. TALC explains the various stages of tourism development that a destination goes through in its evolution from exploration to consolidation and possible stagnation and decline (Butler, 2004). In this context, the framework is useful for understanding the increasing pressures placed on the infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities by the development of "mature" tourism in Bali, as well as the opportunities for regenerative interventions. Doxey's Irritation Index complements TALC because it can be applied to understand how the community is responding to the increasing intensity of tourism, and that too much tourism growth may result in reduced acceptance and social tensions.

In addition, the management of tourism in Bali is assessed using the triple bottom line (TBL) framework, which considers economic, social, and environmental outcomes (Nogueira *et al.,* 2023). In an industry that is beginning to contemplate a new paradigm shift in tourism towards regenerating ecosystems and supporting communities, TBL provides a greater depth of understanding of whether a destination's measures contribute to regeneration. In addition, the concepts of systems thinking and adaptive governance are applied to the analysis because they recognise that tourism is an interconnected system where environmental, social, and economic aspects depend on each other (Khater *et al.,* 2025). Adaptive governance focuses on flexibility, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement to address tourism issues (Wani *et al.,* 2025).

Lastly, a cultural analysis of the concept of regenerative tourism in Bali is offered, drawing on the Balinese philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, which is rooted in the harmony between humanity, nature and spirituality (Sitiari *et al.,* 2024). This vision goes beyond traditional understandings of sustainability and is based on the integration of values in governance, participation and protection of the destination. These theoretical lenses can also be combined to produce a holistic approach to the issue of Bali's transition towards being a regenerative destination.

The framework has however three additional angles of interpretation: resilience theory, post-growth tourism and degrowth. The concept of resilience (Holling, 1973) is related to the capacity of a destination system to buffer and rebound from the disturbances caused by tourism activities, adapt to new stresses and maintain key ecological, social, and economic functions. This is also applicable to Bali where the outcomes are not only for the effects of tourism growth, but also for the capacity of institutions, communities and ecosystems to withstand such pressures. As a counterpart critique, post-growth tourism questions what growth actually means for tourism, and focuses on the quality of the tourism destination, its welfare and environmental sustainability (Higgins-Desbiolles & Everingham, 2024). The degrowth movement has endorsed this powerful critical awareness and advocates against any kind of tourism which exceeds ecological and social boundaries and prioritises the minimisation of pressure on resources, sufficiency and wellbeing of the community.

These views are not intended to be alternative primary lenses for the analysis used in the study, but to enable the study findings to be critically understood from the perspective of how Bali's current governance processes are addressing the impact of tourism growth and whether they are creating a more resilient and regenerative Bali destination system.

These perspectives are presented as complementary (not competing) lenses for analysis. In order to explain sustainable tourism development, the normative approach of sustainable tourism development is used, while stakeholder theory is used to explain the distribution of interests, influences, and participation among the actors who govern the destination. Doxey's irritations' and TALC Cycle provide a classification of Bali's overtourism pressures according to the maturity of the destination, as well as the responses of the hosts, while the triple bottom line serves as an instrument for measuring the connection between economic, social and environmental outcomes. These pressures can be tackled through adaptive governance, which explores how coordination, flexibility, monitoring, and institutional learning could help to address these pressures, and Tri Hita Karana, which addresses the issues of regeneration from the cultural perspective of understanding the balance between people, nature, and spirituality in Bali. The theory is then extended from sustainability to the ability of the destination system to absorb, adapt, and transform in response to disruption, as per resilience theory. Post-growth and degrowth offer a necessary counterpoint and ask whether it is possible to maintain growth in numbers within pathways of long-term regeneration. The framework thus shifts analytically, from addressing the impacts of tourism to understanding what kind of responses from stakeholders and governance approaches can be found, and ultimately to what extent the growth model itself allows for or hinders regenerative transition.

The primary analytical lenses used in this study are Sustainable Tourism Development Stakeholder Theory and Adaptive Governance. The remaining theories were used as supporting or contextual lenses.

2.2. Previous Studies

Overtourism and regenerative tourism literature have developed considerably, especially regarding tourist attraction sites in developed and emerging economies. Although both

concepts have been researched extensively, a qualitative study that analyses Bali is not very prevalent. The fact that there are more tourists than the destination can accommodate introduces overtourism, which involves overpopulation, environmental destruction, and social displacement (Amore *et al.,* 2020; Schwarz *et al.,* 2025; Zemla, 2020). The issues of overtourism can also contain negative connotations, such as environmental destruction, congestion, and displacement of the local population (Damjanovic, 2021). In the case of emerging economies, these issues are exacerbated because of the scarcity of infrastructure and resources (as seen in Bali, Indonesia, where tourism has developed without any regulation, the waste-collection capacity and water availability are insufficient) (Sowards & Banerjee, 2021).

Furthermore, a case study was conducted to gain insight into the local residents' perceptions of the intrusive nature of overtourism in Canggu (Bali) (Suyadnya *et al.,* 2025). They discovered that issues raised by local residents generally included inter-communal conflicts, traffic congestion, and noise pollution. Furthermore, the literature has also signified particular types of crimes (scams and theft) that they increase due to overtourism, which has increased tension among communities and negatively impacted local resources (Pradnyana, 2025). Although these studies are insightful on the issues of overtourism, they usually dwell on the adverse effects but offer little or nothing on how such effects can be mitigated while allowing tourism to boost the local economies and conserve cultural and environmental integrity.

Regenerative tourism has proven to be a concept that is more than a countermeasure to the negative impacts of tourism. It addresses the issues of rebuilding and upgrading local ecosystems, cultures, and economies (Dredge, 2022; Schmidt *et al.,* 2025) state that regenerative tourism is a dynamic process of tourism activities that contributes to the improvement of the natural and social environment. New Zealand and Costa Rican case studies show that regenerative tourism can lead to various positive results, including protecting biodiversity and empowering communities (Fusté-Forné & Hussain, 2022; Igoumenakis *et al.,* 2024). However, these studies have been limited in the sense that they are typically focused on small and community-based projects. Minimal information is available on the scaling and application of regenerative tourism in larger and more commercial tourism destinations, especially in emerging economies.

Furthermore, Bali is increasingly seen as a prime setting for the sustainable to regenerative tourism transition in reaction to high tourist numbers, as recent research has increasingly focused on this part of the world. (Pratama *et al.,* 2026) explored the meaning of regeneration as applied in tourism in Penglipuran village, Bali, and found that the introduction of Tri Hita Karana principles strengthened the social responsibility aspect of the destination by reconstructing cultural identity, ecological sustainability, and community participation. Nevertheless, the work was also founded on the premise of one community-based tourist village, and this is why the results of the research cannot be readily generalised into other tourist sites in Bali, and there is no in-depth discussion of governance issues associated with the management of large-scale tourism. Likewise, (Nugroho *et al.,* 2025) analysed participatory governance in Penglipuran Village and found that the ability to collaborate, local knowledge, and learning through sharing are essential for the implementation of regenerative tourism, while the engagement of stakeholders at the most basic level prevents the implementation of successful regeneration. However, the study focused mainly on governance processes and failed to account for a more in-depth analysis of the various stakeholder groups' perceptions regarding the overall environmental, social, and economic effects of regenerative tourism. Additionally, (Sonder & Hidayana, 2025) reported that economic, socio-cultural, and environmental advantages resulted from conservation and visitor management strategies for managing overtourism. However, the main focus of the research was related to destination management practices, and the qualitative analysis of the collaborative interpretations of the opportunities and challenges of implementing regenerative tourism in Bali was limited. A stakeholder-based qualitative study is still required to obtain a more comprehensive picture of regenerating tourism governance in Bali, including the voices of stakeholders such as tourism entrepreneurs, community leaders, environmental advocates, and tourism policymakers.

2.3. Research Gaps

The literature on overtourism and regenerative tourism is significant, but there are still significant gaps, particularly in emerging economies (Bellato *et al.,* 2022; Rastegar, 2025). The majority of the literature focuses on the negative impacts of overtourism (Amore *et al.,* 2020; Damnjanović, 2021; Zemla, 2020) or the positive effects of regenerative tourism (Dredge, 2022; Hussain & Haley, 2022). However, few studies have understood the possibility of the two concepts coexisting and complementing each other. More specifically, research is needed to evaluate the application of the precepts of regenerative tourism in destinations that are victims of overtourism, especially in areas where infrastructure is poorly developed and political conditions are volatile. The second crucial gap is the failure to pay attention to the regional contexts of rising economies. Moreover, there is limited attention given to the regional contexts of emerging economies in Southeast Asia. Despite the growing literature on overtourism at the global level, relatively limited attention has been given to the socio-political, economic, and environmental realities of destinations such as Indonesia and Bali.

Another important gap in the literature is the lack of research on the scalability of regenerative tourism. Small-scale and community-based projects have been successful in regenerative tourism (Bellato *et al.,* 2023). Nevertheless, its practices in large, high-demand tourist locations have not been properly researched. The bulk of the literature has focused on comparatively controlled environments, and there is a lack of

literature on the potential to apply regenerative tourism operations to large, commercially-driven destinations with a high number of tourists and greater economic demands. Moreover, there is insufficient emphasis on integrating community-based tourism and regenerative practices into tourism management strategies. Although several studies have focused on the benefits of community participation in tourism management (Bellato *et al.,* 2022; Rastegar, 2025), the few studies that have been conducted have not examined how community empowerment can be used to stimulate the idea of regulatory tourism in emerging economies. Studies are required to learn how local communities, especially marginalised people, can be attracted to participate in regenerative tourism projects to ensure sustainability and fair benefits. Based on that, this study offers critical responses to the following points which have not been sufficiently answered in the literature:

How do stakeholders perceive the impacts of overtourism and regenerative tourism prospects in Bali?

How do stakeholders perceive the role of community participation and regenerative practices in addressing overtourism?

What governance barriers do stakeholders perceive in the transition from overtourism to regenerative tourism?

Another conceptual gap is the lack of research on the transition from overtourism to regenerative tourism, which considers resilience and post-growth research. Past studies have often focused on the environmental and social impacts of overtourism and the practice of regenerative tourism based on restoration and community-led approaches, without considering the adaptive capacity of destinations to respond to the cumulative effects of tourism and whether the future growth of tourism limits this process of regeneration. Thus, resilience theory (Holling, 1973) is applicable in discussing the ability of Bali's ecological, social, and institutional systems to absorb and adjust to the pressures associated with tourism. The concept of post-growth tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles & Everingham, 2024) asks important questions about why growth in the number of tourists should still be the main goal of destination development and degrowth questions forms of tourism growth that put more pressure on the environment and community well-being. These views are complementary to the known lenses of sustainable tourism development, stakeholder governance, destination life-cycle development, and adaptive governance in this study. Their incorporation enables the study to shift from the question of how to manage overtourism to whether the institutional and economic setup of Bali's tourism model is compatible with a long-term transition towards regeneration.

Thus, the resulting gap is not only the lack of another case study of Bali, but also the lack of a sufficiently theoretical explanation for how a high-volume, mature destination might evolve from a management phase of dealing with the pressures of tourism to a phase of regeneration without recycling the growth patterns that created the pressures in the first place. This study aims to fill this gap by analysing, from a stakeholder perspective, the impacts of tourism, community empowerment, regenerative practices, and governance constraints, and interpreting the results from complementary perspectives of resilience, post-growth, and degrowth.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study is based on a qualitative case study methodology to assess destination management strategies in response to overtourism and in favour of regenerative tourism in Bali, Indonesia. The qualitative case study design is appropriate for this study, as it can provide significant insights into the effectiveness and flexibility of different strategies in Bali's socio-economic, cultural, and environmental settings by analysing how this destination manages overtourism and integrates regenerative practices. This research design is most appropriate because it allows for a general view of destination management practices. It helps unravel the trends, dilemmas, and successes of how tourism growth is managed to meet sustainability objectives, along with answering the coping strategies of the destination in dealing with the burden of overtourism and how regenerative tourism is being practised.

3.2. Case Selection

Bali, Indonesia, was chosen to fulfil the aims of this study. Bali is a premier case of a destination struck by overtourism. It is one of the most successful cases in Southeast Asia. The overcrowding has led to environmental degradation, lack of waste disposal facilities and high prices of goods in the area (Suardhana *et al.,* 2024). But, Bali in the past few years has been making an effort to revitalize tourism, including sustainable farming and cultural conservation projects. To conclude, Bali is a very important success story in the field of moving towards more sustainable and regenerative development of areas, particularly those seriously affected by mass tourism. This makes Bali a wonderful case to learn the possibilities and constraints of non-traditional approaches to sustainable tourism development.

3.3. Data Collection

In this study, semi-structured interviews were employed as a key instrument for data collection as they provide flexibility in comprehending the perspectives of key actors in tourism management. The semi-structured interviews were open-ended in nature and the participants were interviewed in-depth to give them the freedom to express their knowledge and experience on local tourism. The interview topics included key areas including impacts of overtourism, embracing the principles of regenerative tourism, and challenges faced in the local tourism landscape. The interview guide was based on literature and checked by experts in tourism and in qualitative research for relevance, clarity and in relation to the research purpose. The

semi-structured format allowed for further questioning, based on the responses of the participants, to generate a diverse and rich range of data (Appendix **A**). The primary overtourism areas, community engagement, regenerative tourism and governance were included in the interview guide, while follow-up questions focused on emerging issues, such as safety and crime, culture conservation, renewable energy and environmental law enforcement.

The interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online, depending on the availability and access of the participants. Among other data collection methods, interviews were chosen because the data collected during interviews are rich and qualitative, as they portray the role of tourism management in emerging economies. This was also done in the case of sensitive or contextual questions, which are often topical in developing countries and are therefore normally determined by political, economic, and cultural considerations. Overall, the semi-structured interviews helped the researchers understand the perceptions, issues, and perspectives of the local actors and provided a general idea of the situation of overtourism and regenerative tourism in the study area.

3.4. Respondent Selection

The interviewees who participated in the interviews were chosen based on their engagement with tourism management and their first-hand experience with the practice of overtourism and regenerative tourism activities. Twenty-four stakeholders from the case study destination of Bali, Indonesia, were interviewed. These included six tourism operators, six policy makers, six community leaders, and six environmental advocates. These groups were also chosen because they are the main stakeholders in the development and implementation of tourism strategies at the local and governmental levels.

Tourism operators were chosen because they have experience in dealing with many visitors, marketing tourism products, and sustainable practices in the tourism industry. Policymakers were selected because they play an important role in regulating tourism activities and making policies related to overtourism and sustainability in tourism. Community leaders were chosen because of their knowledge and positive or negative influence on the community and their knowledge of the impacts of tourism. Finally, environmental advocates were chosen to provide input on how tourism management can accommodate regenerative tourism practices to ensure greater sustainability of the environment and the welfare of the community. Data were collected from a variety of stakeholders at the ground and high levels. Table **1** presents the demographic profiles of the respondents.

3.5. Sampling Justification

The total sample of 24 participants for the selected case study destination was not designed to be statistically representative but rather analytically rich with purposive qualitative enquiry. This study adopted an exploratory qualitative case study design, in which participants were intentionally selected because of their direct involvement in tourism governance and destination management. Tourism operators, policymakers, community leaders, and environmental advocates were selected as participants to provide rich information on overtourism and regenerative tourism practices. The focus of the qualitative case study research was more on contextual information than statistical representativeness. Consequently, the results can be viewed as analytical conclusions about the views of stakeholders and are not necessarily generalisable to all tourism stakeholders in Bali.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents.

Stakeholder Group	Total Participants	Male	Female	Age Group (20–30)	Age Group (31–40)	Age Group (41–50)	Age Group (51+)	Education Level
Tourism Operators	6	3	3	2	2	1	1	Bachelor's Degree (4), Master's Degree (2)
Policymakers	6	3	3	1	2	2	1	Bachelor's Degree (2), Master's Degree (4)
Community Leaders	6	3	3	2	2	1	1	Bachelor's Degree (4), Master's Degree (2)
Environmental Advocates	6	3	3	1	2	2	1	Bachelor's Degree (3), Master's Degree (3)
Total	24	12	12	6	8	6	4	Bachelor's Degree (13), Master's Degree (11)

3.6. Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This technique was selected because it enables the identification of themes, patterns, and strategies in the data. This is particularly relevant in this study, as it helps explain how destination management plans are implemented and developed to address overtourism and how regenerative practices are included in destination management plans. This was initiated by becoming familiar with the transcripts of the interviews, followed by the coding of the key themes and concepts that would be identified. These codes were then organised into greater themes that reflected the major issues mentioned by the respondents.

Following (Braun & Clarke, 2006) thematic analysis ensured that the themes were systematically reviewed, refined and narrowed in order to identify the most important factors in the tourism management strategies for the case study destinations. These themes were also considered based on the research questions, and conclusions were drawn regarding the effectiveness of existing destination management practices and an estimation was made of the extent of the potential for scaling regenerative tourism practices in emerging economies.

Once the themes were generated and further developed, the findings were examined through the complementary theoretical lenses of the study. The key thematic interpretations were sustainable tourism development, stakeholder relations, destination development, social responses and governance. Resilience, post-growth and degrowth theories are the critical interpretive perspectives to understand the adaptive capacity of the destination, the implications of continuing tourism development and the challenges that exist between high-volume tourism and the goal of a regenerative destination. This distinction allowed not only for themes to be grounded in the participants' experiences but also for the discussion of how the empirical findings relate to the theoretical questions of this overall research gap.

3.7. Ethics

This study followed the accepted ethical standards for qualitative studies. Before the respondents participated, all were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. All participants were informed about the consent to the interviews. The participants were coded and not named or given their organisational identification (*e.g.,* P1, P2) to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed data kept in secure location and used only for academic studies.

3.8. Trustworthiness of the Study

The quality of the qualitative results was assessed using the criteria proposed by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); cited in (Stahl & King, 2020). To ensure that the insights of four stakeholder groups (tourism operators, policy makers, community leaders and environmental advocates) were credible, data triangulation was used in the selected destination. This method enabled repeating patterns to be confirmed, and reduced the risk of making a one-sided analysis.

Member checking was also carried out by sending the selected participants a summary of interview results by e-mail to get their feedback on the correctness of the interpretations. The interpretation was confirmed by participants, and there were minor requests for clarification regarding the wording, but no changes were made to coding or final themes.

To increase reliability, an audit trail was kept throughout the research. Interviews were recorded in detail with reference to coding, theme development and analytical memo and the research process was clear and traceable. Peer debriefing was also conducted, and the coding scheme and emerging themes were discussed with other colleagues who are experienced with conducting qualitative research to help address researcher bias and consistency of analysis. These procedures enhanced the credibility, dependability, confirmability and trustworthiness of the study.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Coding Process

The interviews were transcribed and subject to a thematic analysis, which was carried out according to the six steps of the thematic analysis model proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, the transcripts were read several times to familiarise the researchers with the data. In stage 2, initial open codes were generated from meaningful statements related to overtourism, regenerative tourism, governance, community engagement, and sustainability. The related codes were then aggregated into larger groups of codes and candidate themes. These codes enabled the data to be organised and for patterns to be found which represented the major themes of the research in the third stage. The themes were then revisited, elaborated, and labelled in the later stages. The codes found in the interviews, their description, and the frequency of the keywords are shown in Table **2**.

Third, common themes were searched from these codes, which were later reviewed in the fourth step. The fifth and sixth steps were to give names to the identified themes and to write them in a narrative form. The last four general themes are presented in Table **3**. During the coding process, the same codes were compared continuously to maintain consistency.

4.2. Thematic Analysis

4.2.1. Theme 1: Tourism Growth and Its Impacts

In this theme, Bali's tourism growth is highlighted and the impacts of this growth from different stakeholders' perspectives are discussed. The summarised form of the analysis is presented in Table **4**.

Table 2. Coding process.

Code	Description	Keywords	Frequency of keywords occurrences	Final Theme
Overcrowding	Citations of high numbers of tourists overloading and straining attraction sites.	"overcrowded", "visitor volume", "traffic", "congestion"	36	Tourism Growth and Its Impacts
Environmental Stress	Reactions involving environmental destruction, such as rubbish, pollution, water scarcity, and destruction of ecosystem.	"pollution", "waste", "plastic", "water shortage", "erosion", "degradation"	44	Tourism Growth and Its Impacts; Regenerative Practices and Their Challenges
Cultural Preservation	Discussions concerning preservation of Balinese traditions, heritage, and cultural identity amid tourism growth.	"culture", "heritage", "traditions", "identity", "local customs"	28	Community Involvement and Empowerment
Community Engagement	References to local participation in tourism planning and decision-making.	"Community involvement", "participation", "consultation", "local voice"	24	Community Involvement and Empowerment
Economic Impact	Statements regarding employment, income generation, business opportunities, and increased living costs.	"employment", "income", "business", "cost of living", "prices"	39	Tourism Growth and Its Impacts; Community Involvement and Empowerment
Regenerative Practices	Initiatives to regenerate environmental, cultural and community resources through tourism.	"restoration", "tree planting", "eco-tourism", "sustainability", "regeneration"	23	Regenerative Practices and Their Challenges
Government Regulation	Tourism policy, visitor management, environmental laws and infrastructure planning.	"policy", "visitor limits", "waste management", "renewable energy", "infrastructure", "laws"	34	Policy and Governance
Policy Enforcement	References to implementation, monitoring, compliance, and enforcement of tourism regulations.	"enforcement", "compliance", "monitoring", "inspection"	27	Policy and Governance
Safety and Security	Statements concerning visitor safety, traffic safety, emergency preparedness, and destination security.	"safety", "security", "traffic", "public safety"	18	Policy and Governance
Resistance to Change	Discussions about reluctance among stakeholders to adopt regenerative tourism practices.	"resistance", "barriers", "challenges", "reluctance"	21	Regenerative Practices and Their Challenges

Table 3. Identification of themes.

Theme	Codes Involved
Tourism Growth and Its Impacts	Overcrowding, Environmental Stress, Economic Impact
Community Involvement and Empowerment	Community Engagement, Cultural Preservation, Economic Impact
Regenerative Practices and Their Challenges	Regenerative Practices, Environmental Stress, Resistance to Change
Policy and Governance	Government Regulation, Policy Enforcement, Safety and Security

P2 (Tourism Operator) highlighted,

"Bali is teeming with tourists. Increased visitors, yet lacking infrastructure: We're seeing more waste, water shortages, and stress on the local environment."

P5 (Tourism Operator) respondent said,

"Due to soil erosion and the growing number of visitors to the area, there are concerns that the environment is being harmed."

P8 (Community Leader) stated,

"Rising local prices due to tourism make it hard for the local community to afford housing and food prices."

P4 (Environmental Advocate) explained this as follows:

"….yeah, so huge plastic waste and like beach pollution, they have definitely increased and it is more during peak season…also there is issue of noise because tourist areas get busier there is noise pollution as well which is louder in already populated tourist areas…I mean local clean-up initiatives do help, but I think without a stronger waste management system the problem continues to grow."

P23 (Policymaker) stated

"I would say that managing visitor flow has become essential. There are some popular areas who receive very high number of tourists than they can comfortably support, but there also some destinations who are underutilised…I think what is needed is better planning and infrastructure so that tourism distribute more sustainably."

The results indicate that stakeholders perceive tourism development as both an opportunity for economic development and a growing sustainability challenge. The respondents did not question the practice of tourism as such, but consistently pointed to the problem of how it is being managed. Tourism industry representative P2 linked the growth of tourism with the lack of infrastructure and the pressure on natural resources, while P5 confirmed this by stating that environmental degradation is a consequence of tourist activity that is becoming increasingly visible. From the community perspective, P8 pointed out that the increased living costs are not in parallel with the economic benefits of tourism, as the benefits are not equally enjoyed by all community members. Likewise, P4 and P23 expanded the scope of discussion to include pollution-related, noise-related, and waste management-related issues as governance matters, and that the distribution of tourists is not sufficient. These narratives suggest that pollution is not just an issue of environmental concern but also points towards the inability of institutions to adequately manage growing tourism in Bali, suggesting that stakeholders perceive tourism pressures as exceeding the destination's ecological and infrastructural capacity.

Based on these views, it is not necessarily that overtourism in Bali is an issue of the number of visitors, but that it is the result of the limited capability of the destination to withstand the impact of tourism by applying appropriate planning, infrastructure, and long-term management. It also indicates increasing challenges of resilience because various stressors (environmental, social, and infrastructure) have the capacity to reduce the capacity of a destination to sustain the ecological and community processes on which tourism is based.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Community Involvement and Empowerment

Theme 2 shows the importance and empowerment of the community. Theme 2 is summarised in Table **5**.

P1 (Community Leader) stated that,

"We are now being incorporated in tourism planning and no longer do the government and big business make all the decisions, we are also at the table and it is changing."

P18 (Policymaker) stated,

"The local people have ownership of the tourism benefits now. They have the authority to allocate the revenue and are part of planning for sustainable tourism."

P11 (Community Leader) said,

"We have initiated workshops where the locals are being taught on sustainable practices and how they can be involved in benefiting through eco-tourism."

P17 (Environmental Advocate) highlighted,

"The preservation of the environment and the cultural heritage of Bali are of the same importance. Conservation efforts are likely to be more successful, and visitors more likely to respect our traditions and sacred places, when led by local communities."

P24 (Tourism Operator) said that,

"Companies have found that engaging the local community gives visitors a more positive experience. There is a growing demand for tourists to have experiences of genuine culture, which is good for both citizens and tourism businesses."

Table 4. Tourism growth and its impacts.

Destination	Economic Impacts	Environmental Impacts	Social Impacts
Bali, Indonesia	Increased tourism revenue, employment opportunities, dependence on tourism Income from heritage tourism and local businesses Growth in tourism income and business opportunities, higher investment	Accumulation of waste, scarcity of water, noise pollution, environmental degradation Soil erosion, degradation of ecosystem, damage to heritage sites Pressure on coastal ecosystems and natural resources	Infrastructure under-pressure due to overcrowding, pressure, quality of life was reduced Visitor congestion, pressure on local communities, restricted access Rising cost of living, housing affordability issues, inequality in tourism benefits

Table 5. Community involvement and empowerment.

Destination	Community Involvement	Community Empowerment	Key Implications
Bali, Indonesia	Stakeholders reported a greater involvement of local communities in the development of tourism, with the process of involving communities through collaboration and consultation.	The communities who participated in the tourism benefits, sustainability education and cultural preservation projects became empowered in their involvement with environmental conservation work as more communities became involved.	The respondents believed that increased participation of the community would render the governance more legitimate and would contribute to the preservation of the Balinese culture, encourage stewardship of the environment and contribute to the tourism development.

The results revealed that community participation was becoming more accepted by stakeholders as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism, not just as a result of tourism development. P1 reported that decision-making was moving from centralisation to an increasing number of community voices being heard, indicating that communities are playing an increasingly important role in tourism planning. This is reinforced by the comments from P18, who associated empowerment and increased community control over the receipt of tourism benefits and tourism planning processes, suggesting that participation is more than just consultation and involves shared governance responsibilities. P11 also mentions that educational activities are a means of empowerment; therefore, local education and capacity building are also important empowerment measures to enable participation in regenerative tourism. In addition, community involvement is strongly associated with the culture preservation process, where community stakeholders are aware of the need to involve communities in the culture preservation process to enhance the visitors' experience in Bali and to protect the culture of Bali. Overall, these results show that the respondents considered community empowerment to be a participatory governance process that, in turn, strengthens cultural resilience, environmental protection, and sustainable tourism development.

4.2.3. Theme 3: Regenerative Practices and Their Challenges

This theme was based on the identification of regenerative practices and their challenges. The summarised findings are presented in Table **6**.

P15 (Policymaker) stated,

"We have been encouraging projects such as planting trees and sustainable agriculture as part of the tourism experience. Visitors experience sustainable farming methods and support the regeneration of the area."

P20 (Environmental Advocate**)** said,

"We are attempting to rehabilitate the trails and regulate the number of tourists to preserve the ecosystem surrounding Bali, and it is a challenge since people still want to come and see lots of people but we have to balance between conservation and tourism."

P9 (Policymaker) highlighted,

"A lot of chatter about regenerative tourism, but it's difficult to put into practice when there's a lot of mass tourism demand. More support from government and business is required to make it happen."

P13 (Environmental Advocate) said,

"Regeneration should not be limited to planting trees, but more investments in renewable energy, coastal restoration, and single-use reductions of plastic should be implemented in tourism to make it a real restoration of the environment."

P22 (Tourism Operator) explained,

"There are a lot of companies willing to do more green but the expenses are still too high without incentives and technical assistance...when companies are also trying to be competitive, sustainability is challenging."

Table 6. Regenerative practices and their challenges.

Destination	Regenerative Practices	Key Challenges	Overall Finding
Bali, Indonesia	Planting trees, restoring ecosystem, sustainable agriculture, initiatives for visitor management	Mass tourism pressure, limited institutional support, high implementation costs, slow adoption of renewable practices	Regenerative tourism was seen favourably by stakeholders and some felt that it can only be successful with greater government and investment support, and more extensive stakeholders' collaboration.

Results indicate that the principles of regenerative tourism were overall seen positively by stakeholders, yet, there was a lack of understanding of its application for the context of continuous tourism development. P15 and P20 considered restoration projects such as environmental management and visitor control to be good developments, but reported on the conflict between the increase of tourism and environmental protection. Likewise, P9 and P22 suggested financial constraints, lack of institutional support and tourism business pressures are the barriers to implementing regenerative methods. Given these concerns, P13 said that regeneration needs to be based on broader environmental measures, not just conservation measures, like the use of renewable energy, waste reduction and ecosystem restoration.

This tension is not solely on the implementation of individual regeneration projects. This poses a more basic question regarding the growth assumptions of Bali's tourism model. Reduce environmental pressure for regeneration if required for restoration. But the structural relationship between higher visitor numbers and the environmental restoration and well-being advocated by regenerative tourism can be in conflict. This implies that the results provide empirical implications for the Bali in the post-growth and degrowth framework by raising doubts about the quantitative growth being the appropriate measure of the success of tourism. It is not a question of the absence of tourism, but of the change of destination development so as to increase the ecological, social and cultural value of tourism.

In general, these views suggest that the respondents viewed regenerative tourism as an emerging governance model, and not yet an actual practice. To realise this long-term success, there is a need to have a coordinated buy-in of all stakeholders, increased policy push, and investments to ensure that the environment is restored without adversely affecting the economic sustainability of the tourism industry in Bali.

4.2.4. Theme 4: Policy and Governance

Policy and governance are of major importance in tourism planning and management. The findings of this theme are summarised in Table 7.

Considering this, P21 (Tourism Operator) highlighted about policy and governance,

"We have implemented the rules of ticket quota to limit visitors and have begun a program to encourage off-season tourism, he said. This will help to ease the burden on the site at peak periods."

P10 (Policymaker) stated,

"The government is just starting to get in tune with the value of sustainable tourism, but greater investment and support are needed to facilitate larger regenerative tourism initiatives."

P6 (Tourism Operator) stated,

"There are rules, but they are not always followed. Increased efforts are required on the part of the government to ensure that these rules are upheld, particularly in terms of waste management and environmental conservation."

P12 (Policymaker) explained,

"Sustainable infrastructure, public transport, and renewable energy should be a major focus of future tourism planning to prevent continued growth of tourism exceeding the island's carrying capacity."

P19 (Environmental Advocate) said,

"The environment is a subject to laws and yet enforcement is irregular so, pollution and unsustainable development will continue until it is followed up and appropriate punishment is in place."

P7 (Environmental Advocate) explained this as follows:

"We have experienced that with visitor numbers growing, it has become a challenge to control crowd and provide public safety for crimes like theft, scam …but government has taken serious actions as we have now increased police patrols, emergency response teams, and surveillance in high-traffic area."

The results show that respondents saw governance capacity as the key element of why a policy on regenerative tourism can or cannot lead to tangible results. P21 and P10 were conscious of the gradual evolution of policy and strategic planning but participants repeatedly stressed that this was not enough in the absence of increased institutional buy-in and investment. P6 echoed this sentiment, stating that although measures are being put in place to protect the environment, they are not being adhered to due to poor implementation. P12 also spoke about governance, the need for sustainable infrastructure, renewable energies and integrated planning that would allow future tourism development, with P19 adding that without the constant monitoring and enforcement of environmental laws, it was not enough.

In addition, P7 discussed the issues of safety and security in the event of overtourism and governmental actions to address the challenge. From these perspectives, it can be concluded that

stakeholders view effective governance as the ability to formulate, implement, and continually adjust tourism management strategies. Therefore, it was concluded that the effectiveness of an institution is a key factor in ensuring the balance between tourism development and environmental protection and Bali's long-term sustainability as a tourist destination.

An overall summary of the themes and their quotations is provided in Table **8** for an easy understanding of the study findings.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study give a more nuanced understanding of negotiations for regenerative tourism in Bali, and a clearer picture of the contestation between economic growth and the ecological, social and cultural boundaries of destination development.

The four themes are not unique issues but rather reflect an interrelated transition trajectory in which tourism pressures are felt and call for regenerative responses, and current governance and economic frameworks help shape and impede the development of these capacities. This study builds on Sustainable Tourism Development Theory (Streimikiene *et al.,* 2021) and demonstrates that sustainability issues in mature destinations are not only related to balancing economic, social, and environmental goals, but also to the institutional capacity to change the tourism system towards restoration. Recent Bali-specific research also suggests that in the face of growing pressures of overtourism, the use of conventional sustainability approaches is becoming increasingly insufficient, and tourism is expected to become more regenerative (Pratama *et al.,* 2026; Sonder & Hidayana, 2025).

The first theme, tourism growth and its impact, is related to (Butler's, 2004) tourism area life cycle (TALC), in which Bali can be considered a mature destination facing consolidation and stagnation pressures. The results, however, further expand this understanding by illustrating that destination maturity cannot only be defined by the number of visitors or the size of the infrastructure but also has far-reaching socio-cultural implications. Some of the environmental impacts mentioned included waste accumulation, pollution, water scarcity, soil erosion, and ecosystem degradation, and some of the social impacts were improvement of living costs, local affordability, noise, and preservation of cultural heritage. This was in line with the findings of Doxey in his Irritation Index, which suggests that with an increase in the intensity of tourism, the perception of the hosts might vary with time as the gains of tourism decrease and the costs rise. This is also seen in Bali studies that correlate overtourism with environmental stress and issues in sustaining the resilience of a destination (Sonder & Hidayana, 2025).

These results also accord with the resilience theory of (Holling, 1973), which views exposure to tourism pressures as only a part of the issue; the issue is whether the destination can sustain the pressure without losing key ecological, social, and institutional functions. The accumulation of waste, lack of water, congestion, increasing living costs, and damage to ecosystems are all mounting pressures that can gradually undermine the adaptability of the system. The findings thus further build on the TALC interpretation that destination maturity should not only be viewed as a process of stagnation or decline but also as the degree of adaptive capacity of governance institutions, communities, and ecological systems to deal with aggregate pressures. Therefore, regenerative tourism is not just another form of management; it may be seen as a way to bolster the adaptive and renewal ability of a mature tourist destination.

It also expands the current concept of overtourism, arguing that environmental degradation is not only visible ecological damage but also the everyday environmental quality experienced by residents. Respondents linked high numbers of visitors to ongoing noise issues in popular tourist destinations, plastic pollution, beach pollution, and demands on waste management systems in these popular tourist destinations. These issues have a strong impact because they not only lower environmental values but also affect the community and the experience of visitors to the destination. This was observed by (Suyadnya *et al.,* 2025), who discovered that noise pollution and traffic congestion are the concerns of the residents in Canggu, (Sowards & Banerjee, 2021; and Pramono *et al.,* 2026) who have established that the rapid growth of tourism in Bali is accompanied with poor waste management, water shortages and infrastructure overburden. Combined, these findings suggest that pollution is not solely a problem confined to the environment, but it is a symptom of overall lack of governance and/or planning that goes with the maturity of a destination. Nevertheless, the findings are founded on the thoughts of the stakeholders and are not a direct measurement of carrying capacity, which means that overtourism is not a material but a socially constructed phenomenon among destination actors.

The second theme is community involvement and empowerment, which points to the importance of stakeholder engagement in the transition process to regenerative tourism. The results indicate a shift in destination management to more participative strategies, where communities require more participation in the planning and distribution of tourism benefits, as the stakeholder theory suggests (Freeman, 1984) cited in (Mahajan *et al.,* 2023). This follows the study conducted in Bali that highlights the importance of community knowledge, collaboration, and community learning to establish regenerative tourism (Nugroho *et al.,* 2025; Pratama *et al.,* 2026). Nevertheless, this study indicates that there is a major difference between empowerment and participation. There was an increase in the stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process, but as previously observed, participation does not necessarily translate to institutional power or control in the outcome of tourism development. Thus, the results supplement the discussion on regenerative tourism by providing the need for a mechanism to enable a change in decision-making power in addition to stakeholder participation. This is also supported from Tri Hita Karana, as the Balinese perspective on regeneration appears to represent a view of environmental protection, cultural continuity, and well-being in the community as interdependent rather than mutually exclusive objectives (Sitiari *et al.,* 2024).

This finding can also be analysed from the perspective of social resilience. Community empowerment is not only important for increased participation, but for the ability to cope with the tourism disturbances through the involvement of local knowledge, collective capacities and decision-making power. This distinction is relevant because procedural inclusion could come at the cost of not increasing adaptive capacity in the absence of influence. In this way, the resistance of Bali's tourism system can be related to the question of whether communities are a passive recipient of the benefits of tourism or whether they are actors who can shape the way in which the pressures of tourism are absorbed, negotiated, and transformed.

The third theme, regenerative practices and related challenges, reveals the central paradox of the tourism transition in Bali: as tourism becomes more aware about the need for regenerative practices, it doesn't necessarily result in structural changes, and the need for mass tourism hasn't changed. Some of the participants mentioned sustainable farming practices, ecosystem restoration, managing visitors, and conservation efforts; they also highlighted economic barriers, lack of incentives, infrastructure issues, and the need for a plethora of tourists. The existing results add to the literature on Bali research, which indicates that regenerative initiatives can be implemented in a community-based initiative (Pratama *et al.,* 2026), and expand on the topic by outlining the challenges to scaling a regenerative project within a developed tourism economy. This corresponds to the greater concerns of the theoretical appeal of regenerative tourism, but the challenge of the practical application of regenerative tourism in locations where the existing economic framework continues to cherish growth and the flow of visitors (Bellato *et al.,* 2023; Fusté-Forné & Hussain, 2022).

The findings are especially relevant when analysed with reference to post-growth and degrowth perspectives. From a post-growth perspective, the challenge is to think differently about visitor volume growth as a standard measure of destination success and determine whether tourism provides sufficient ecological, social, and cultural benefits and values compared to the pressures it places on a destination (Higgins-Desbiolles & Everingham, 2024).

This tension was identified in the results, whereby the stakeholders indicated that the economy of the tourism sector is important, but also indicated that tourism demand is too mass to impede restoration, infrastructure improvement and environmental protection. An even more telling reading of this contradiction is offered by degrowth: is it still possible to have more quantitative growth, while maintaining ecology and community welfare? More important, the results do not imply that Bali has to end tourism or any economy, but that Bali has to do more to ensure that the effects of tourism and economy are felt in a way that is sustainable in the long-run. Rather, a shift to regeneration may mean decreasing activities, pressures, and resource use where they go beyond the carrying capacity of the destination, and increasing attention to quality, local value and ecological restoration. This moves the debate on tourism regeneration away from 'greening' projects towards a rethinking of what successful tourism development looks like.

Finally, the theme of governance demonstrates that the regenerative transition in Bali is not due to the lack of sustainability policies, but rather a matter of policy implementation, coordination and enforcement. Priorities were identified, including the need to improve visitor movement and visitor waste management, to use renewable energy, to develop facilities sustainably, to develop public transport and to have more stringent environmental laws. This aligns with the theoretical understanding of adaptive governance (Wani *et al.,* 2025), which posits that intricate sustainability challenges demand adaptable institutions, continuous monitoring, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders. The results show that governance fragmentation is still a critical constraint to scaling regenerative approaches, as found in recent Bali research (Nugroho *et al.,* 2025; Sonder & Hidayana, 2025). Importantly, stakeholders' perspectives indicate that the attitudes are not based on ignorance of the need for change, but are based on the conflicting priorities of the costs of change, competitiveness, environmental protection, and community interests.

In addition to environmental management, Theme 4 findings indicate that safety and security should be acknowledged as important elements of regenerative destination management, rather than merely operational management issues. With the growing intensity of tourism, the need for destination protection of these three aspects of environmental quality, public safety, and residents' well-being simultaneously increases to achieve long-term destination resilience. This means that visitor flow management has a wider governance role, as it is about reconciling ecological carrying capacity with safe and positive visitor experiences. Integrated institutional coordination between environmental management, safety planning, infrastructure development, and regulatory enforcement is needed to develop regenerative tourism. The latter can be explained within the framework of recent studies in Bali, which have identified theft and fraud as common crimes due to the excessive number of tourists (Pradnyana, 2025) and highlighted the necessity of adaptive governance and coordinated destination management in the framework of overtourism (Sonder & Hidayana, 2025; Nugroho *et al.,* 2025).

Table 7. Policy and governance.

Destination	Policy and Governance Measures	Key Governance Challenges	Overall Finding
Bali, Indonesia	Tourism planning, visitor management, sustainability policies, environmental regulations.	Weak policy enforcement, ineffective infrastructure, poor investment, inconsistent environmental monitoring, safety and security problems.	Respondents agreed that further enforcement, sustainable infrastructure and better long-term planning and coordination to support regenerative tourism are needed to achieve good governance.

Table 8. Themes summary.

Theme	Key Findings	Participant (Profession)	Illustrative Quotation
Tourism Growth and Its Impacts	Overcrowding, environmental degradation, water shortages Soil erosion, ecosystem damage, overcrowding, pollution. Rising prices, local affordability issues	P2 (Tourism Operator)	*"Bali is teeming with tourists. Increased visitors, yet lacking infrastructure. We're seeing more waste, water shortages, and stress on the local environment."*
		P5 (Tourism Operator)	*"Due to soil erosion and the growing number of visitors to the area, there are concerns that the environment is being harmed."*
		P8 (Community Leader)	*"Rising local prices due to tourism make it hard for the local community to afford housing and food prices."*
		P4 (Environmental Advocate)	*"Yeah, so huge plastic waste and like beach pollution, they have definitely increased and it is more during peak seasons…….also there is issue of noise because tourist areas get busier there is noise pollution as well which is louder in already populated tourist areas…I mean local clean-up initiatives do help, but I think without a stronger waste management systems the problem continues to grow."*
		P23 (Policymaker)	*"I would say managing visitor flows has become essential. There are some popular areas who receive very high number of tourists than they can comfortably support, but there also some destinations who are underutilised…I think what is needed is better planning and infrastructure so that tourism distribute more sustainably."*
Community Involvement and Empowerment	Local communities included in tourism planning Local people benefiting from tourism revenue and planning Workshops educating locals about sustainable tourism	P1 (Community Leader)	*"We are now being incorporated in tourism planning and no longer do the government and big business make all the decisions, we are also at the table and it is changing."*
		P18 (Policymaker)	*"The local people have ownership of the tourism benefits now. They have the authority to allocate the revenue; they are part of planning for sustainable tourism."*
		P11 (Community Leader)	*"We have initiated workshops where the locals are being taught on sustainable practices and how they can be involved in benefiting through eco-tourism."*
		P17 (Environmental Advocate)	*"The preservation of the environment and the cultural heritage of Bali are of the same importance. Conservation efforts are likely to be more successful, and visitors more likely to respect our traditions and sacred places, when led by local communities."*
		P24 (Tourism Operator)	*"Companies have found that engaging the local community gives visitors a more positive experience. There is a growing demand for tourists to have experiences of genuine culture, which is good for both citizens and tourism businesses."*

Regenerative Practices and Their Challenges	Tree planting, sustainable farming, challenges of mass tourism Visitor quotas, trail restoration, balancing conservation Difficulty in implementing regenerative practices due to mass tourism	P15 (Policymaker)	*"We have been encouraging projects such as planting trees and sustainable agriculture as part of the tourism experience. Visitors experience the sustainable farming methods and support regeneration of the area."*
		P20 (Environmental Advocate)	*"We are attempting to rehabilitate the trails and regulate the number of tourists to preserve the ecosystem surrounding Bali, and it is a challenge since people still want to come and see lots of people but we have to balance between conservation and tourism."*
		P9 (Policymaker)	*"A lot of chatter about regenerative tourism, but it's difficult to put into practice when there's a lot of mass tourism demand. More support from government and business is required to make it happen."*
		P13 (Environmental Advocate)	*"Regeneration should not be limited to planting trees, but more investments in renewable energy, coastal restoration, and single-use reductions of plastic should be implemented in tourism to make it a real restoration of the environment."*
		P22 (Tourism Operator)	*"There are a lot of companies willing to do more green but the expenses are still too high without incentives and technical assistance...when companies are also trying to be competitive, sustainability is challenging."*
Policy and Governance	Regulations not consistently enforced (*e.g.,* waste management) Visitor quotas, off-season promotion, need for further financial support Financial constraints, need for better implementation of policies	P6 (Tourism Operator)	*"There are the rules but they're not always followed. Increased efforts are required on the government's part to make sure that these rules are upheld, particularly in terms of waste management and environmental conservation"*
		P21 (Tourism Operator)	*"We have implemented the rules of ticket-quota to limit visitors and have begun a program to encourage off-season tourism. This will help to ease the burden on the site at peak periods."*
		P10 (Policymaker)	*"The government is just starting to get in tune with the value of sustainable tourism, but greater investment and support are needed to facilitate larger regenerative tourism initiatives"*
		P12 (Policymaker)	*"Sustainable infrastructure, public transport, and renewable energy should be a major focus of future tourism planning to prevent continued growth of tourism exceeding the island's carrying capacity."*
		P19 (Environmental Advocate)	*"The environment is a subject to laws and yet enforcement is irregular so, pollution and unsustainable development will continue until it is followed up and appropriate punishment is in place."*
-	-	P7 (Environmental Advocate)	*"We have experienced that with visitor numbers growing, it has become a challenge to control crowd and provide public safety for crimes like theft, scam …but government has taken serious actions as we have now increased police patrols, emergency response teams, and surveillance in high-traffic areas."*

In addition, governance results are associated with resilience and post-growth attitudes. Adaptive governance can make a destination resilient by helping institutional actors track changing tourism pressures, coordinate and align stakeholders, and make policies adaptive to change. However, adaptive governance can be considered limited if institutional adaptation continues to focus on the expansion of tourism. A resilient governance system should not only have the ability to adapt to disruption but also the ability to restructure development paths when current patterns of development create chronic ecological and social stresses. Therefore, post-growth and degrowth perspectives provide a critical boundary for adaptive governance because institutions must not only adapt tourism management to environmental and social limits but also reconsider whether continued quantitative growth is compatible with those limits.

Collectively, the results indicate that regenerative tourism is a product of the interplay between governance capacity, stakeholder engagement, and ecological restoration, and an opportunity to reflect on the extent and direction of tourism development. This reading is more cohesive in terms of incorporating multiple lenses. TALC refers to the increasing pressures created in tourist destinations because of the successive development of tourism, while Doxey refers to the changing social implications of the intensity of tourism, and Stakeholder Theory refers to the distribution of interests and the power of decision-making.

Adaptive governance recognises and pinpoints the institutional space needed to coordinate responses, and resilience theory emphasises the capacity of a destination to absorb, adapt, and renew as a result of the response. Post-growth and degrowth bring a new dimension to the issue that challenges the idea of achieving a regenerative outcome while maintaining the economic model that is based on growing numbers of visitors. The theoretical implication is that the process of regeneration is not only a more sustainable form of tourism management but also requires institutional adaptation and, if necessary, rethinking the size and form of tourism growth. Although the insights are context-specific owing to the qualitative nature of the design and the distinctive socio-cultural context of Bali, they offer a valuable conceptual understanding of how established tourist destinations can transition from the management of tourism impacts to the development of regenerative systems.

CONCLUSION

The study results indicate that the concept of regenerative tourism should be understood as a transition process from an institutional and developmental perspective, rather than only as a strategy for environmental managementin the context of Bali. From a theoretical perspective, the results expand the concept of sustainable tourism development and destination governance, as they show that besides stakeholder empowerment, adaptive institutional capacity and ecological and social system resilience are needed for regeneration, as well as a more fundamental question about the growth orientation of tourism development. Resilience and post-growth/degrowth provide an indication that managing the effects of overtourism may not be enough if the pressure of tourism in terms of scale and intensity is ongoing.

The findings show that while regenerative tourism has the potential to contribute towards ecosystem restoration, boost community engagement, and uphold cultural identity, it faces challenges due to Bali's dependence on high-volume tourism growth. This study highlights that the impacts of overtourism in Bali are not only quantitative, but also qualitative, meaning it concerns governance. How waste is managed, how infrastructure is developed, environmental law enforcement, stakeholder coordination, and the distribution of costs and benefits of tourism.

Through the lens of tourism stakeholders – including tourism operators, tourism policymakers, community leaders and environmental organisations – the paper aims to give a more holistic understanding of the perception and negotiation of the concept of regenerative tourism in the tourism system of Bali. The results show that for effective regeneration, a balanced empowerment of the community, adaptive governance, environmental restoration, and culture-based empowerment (Tri Hita Karana) should be provided. However, it is also evident from this research that the vision of regeneration is not straightforward and simple to be realised as there are economic interests encouraging visitors' growth. From the experience in Bali, it can be said that regenerative tourism is not a single solution for mass tourism, but it is a process of transformation that needs institutional commitment, cooperation among stakeholders, and long-term planning of the destination.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The results are subject to some limitations. In this study, the sample was qualitative type and was determined by purposive sampling, which consisted of tourism actors in Bali. This provided the researcher with detailed and context-specific data, but limited the generalisation of this data to the population of residents, businesses and visitors. Therefore, the results must be understood as the interpretation of the stakeholders on the issues of regenerative tourism and not as the representation of all perspectives in the Bali tourism system. Future research involving larger local and tourist samples and smaller tourism businesses may help reverse this limitation.

Secondly, the findings are based on experiences and perceptions of the respondents, who may be influenced by their roles, organisational interests and involvement in tourism governance. While a variety of stakeholder groups were engaged to provide a certain level of analysis, further research would be useful to identify how perceptions and regenerative efforts evolve over time by conducting longitudinal studies. Thirdly, this work is not about the actual performance of the regenerative interventions but about the perspectives of the stakeholders and governance issues. Future research should consider measurable effects of the regenerating tourism activities like environmental changes, welfare, consumption of resources and economic viability.

Further research can be carried out to explore the possibility of small-scale regenerative projects to transform Bali.

Programmes addressing sustainable tourism and renewable energy sources, sustainable infrastructure development, waste management, visitor flow management and the restoration of ecosystems need particular attention in destinations with a growing tourist sector.

POLICY AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results have several implications for policy makers, destination managers, and tourism stakeholders in the context of enhancing the regenerative tourism in Bali. There is a need to transform the attitude towards the reactive method of overtourism towards a more active destination management, where environmental, social and economic aspects are included in the long-term process of destination planning. This includes improving visitor management, waste management, and investing in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, as well as regularly implementing environmental policies.

Second, the findings show that there is a need for collaboration with various stakeholders. DMO's should have more effective arrangements to include local communities, tourism businesses, policy makers and environmental groups in tourism decision-making. Bali has taken the next step to ensure that the community is involved, but the involvement must be more than consultation but ensure that the community is more actively engaged in resource allocation, planning and monitoring process.

Thirdly, the different policies on regenerative tourism need to take into account the cultural and institutional context of Bali and not use the similar models of sustainability. Local philosophies such as Tri Hita Karana can be incorporated to open up approaches and link environmental protection with cultural heritage and community resilience. Nevertheless, to attain regenerative results, it is essential to overcome the structural conflict between tourism development and environmental sustainability. Therefore, the sustainability of tourism in Bali in the long-term is not only dependent on the introduction of greener solutions, but also on the establishment of governance structures, which can balance economic interests with environmental rehabilitation and empower the community.

At the operational level, Bali can consider implementing targeted tourist taxes at the village level, where a certain percentage is set aside for Tri Hita Karana related cultural, environmental and community projects. Visitor-management systems can also be used to manage dynamic pricing, in tandem with timed-entry quotas, for destinations that experience high pressure, like Canggu and Ubud, to minimize peak-period congestions. Finally, local monitoring systems can be transparent, and tourism income can be seen to be reinvested in infrastructure, cultural preservation, and ecosystem restoration.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

STD	=	Sustainable Tourism Development
TALC	=	Tourism Area Life Cycle
TBL	=	Triple Bottom Line

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

S.I. and I.I. have contributed to the study conceptualization, methodology, data analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript writing.

ETHICAL APPROVAL & INFORMED CONSENT

This study followed the accepted ethical standards for qualitative studies. Before the respondents participated, all were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. All participants were informed about the consent to the interviews. The participants were coded and not named or given their organisational identification (*e.g.,* P1, P2) to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed data kept in secure location and used only for academic studies.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data will be made available on reasonable request by contacting the corresponding author [S.I.].

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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DECLARATION OF AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT for language editing and refinement purposes. Following the use of this tool, the author carefully reviewed and revised the content where necessary and accepts full responsibility for the final published version of the article.

APPENDIX A

Appendix: Interview Questions

1. How has the influx of tourists affected local infrastructure and the environment in your area?
2. What specific challenges do you face with overcrowding and resource depletion due to mass tourism?
3. Is there any safety issues with mass tourism in Bali?
4. How involved are local communities in tourism planning and decision-making in your destination?
5. Can you provide an example of a successful initiative where local communities have benefited from tourism?
6. What regenerative tourism practices are currently being implemented, and how effective have they been?

7. What barriers have you encountered in trying to implement regenerative tourism, particularly from businesses or tourists?
8. How do you feel about the visitor quotas or other regulations currently in place to manage tourism numbers? Are they effective?
9. How well are tourism regulations enforced in your destination, and what challenges do you face with enforcement?
10. What role do you think local businesses and government should play in promoting sustainable tourism practices?
11. Looking ahead, what changes would you like to see in the tourism sector to make it more sustainable and beneficial for local communities?

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