Journal of Innovative and Creativity
Journal Homepage: https://joecy.org/index.php/joecy
e-mail: journaljoecy@gmail.com

Faculty of Education
University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai
ISSN 2775-771X (Online)
ISSN 2962-570X (Printed)
6 (2) 2026, Page: 24247-24255

Strategies for Developing Cycling Tourism in Mengesta Tourism Village

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Published: April , 2026

ABSTRACT

This study aims to formulate strategic directions for the development of cycling tourism based on natural and local cultural potential in Mengesta Village, Tabanan, Bali. The research seeks to identify and analyze the village's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, in order to design sustainable and community-oriented tourism strategies. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews with local stakeholders (including Pokdarwis and community members), and document analysis. The analytical tool used is SWOT analysis, which systematically examines internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats). The results of the SWOT analysis are further synthesized into strategic formulations (SO, WO, ST, and WT strategies) to provide comprehensive development recommendations. The findings reveal that Mengesta Village has strong potential for cycling tourism development, supported by its scenic rural routes (±5–15 km), well-preserved agrarian environment, low traffic density, and the presence of the culturally significant subak system. However, several weaknesses were identified, including limited human resource capacity, lack of safety and service standards, inadequate supporting infrastructure, and suboptimal marketing strategies. Opportunities include the growing trend of cycling, wellness, and slow tourism, as well as increasing demand for environmentally friendly and authentic rural experiences. Meanwhile, threats consist of economic instability due to seasonal agriculture, competition with established destinations, and potential environmental degradation. The study concludes that Mengesta Village has significant potential to develop as a sustainable cycling tourism destination. By leveraging its natural and cultural assets while addressing existing limitations, the village can create competitive and resilient tourism products. The integration of sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, and asset-based development approaches ensures that tourism development not only enhances economic benefits but also preserves environmental quality and strengthens community participation in the long term.

Keywords: Development Strategies, Cycling Tourism, Tourism Village, SWOT

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the tourism industry has undergone a significant paradigm shift toward sustainable tourism and wellness tourism (Yanan et al., 2024). Cycling tourism is now a global trend and is increasingly in demand because it offers a combination of sports, recreation, and health recovery in the great outdoors (Putra et al., 2023). Post-pandemic, public awareness of healthy lifestyles has increased, driving a preference for safe and healthy outdoor activities. In line with this, the growing trend of slow tourism indicates that travelers are no longer merely seeking mass-market destinations but are prioritizing authentic, immersive, and eco-friendly experiences (Pirolo & Moscarelli, 2025). In this context, cycling emerges as a form of tourism activity aligned with the principles of Sustainable Tourism due to its low emissions, support for environmental conservation, and promotion of more meaningful social interaction with local communities.

This trend presents a strategic opportunity for regions with agrarian characteristics, such as Mengesta Village in Penebel Subdistrict, Tabanan Regency, Bali. This village features vast rice paddy landscapes, a pristine natural environment, and strong agriculture-based community activities (Putra et al., 2023). These conditions reflect significant local asset potential, encompassing both natural and cultural assets. From the perspective of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), this potential serves as the primary capital that can be optimized as the foundation for tourism development (Amanda & Darwis, 2024). The ABCD approach emphasizes that development should be grounded in existing local strengths and resources, thereby providing Mengesta Village with a strong foundation to develop cycling tourism based on its natural and cultural potential. Supported by relatively good accessibility (45–60 minutes from the center of Tabanan Regency) and favorable road conditions, this village has the potential to become a competitive and sustainable destination for specialized tourism.

However, tourism development in Mengesta Village still faces various structural challenges. From a socioeconomic perspective, the community's income, which depends on the harvest season, leads to economic instability (Putra et al., 2023). Human resource capacity, particularly within the he Mengesta Village Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), remains limited in terms of sustainable tourism management, service delivery, and guiding. Additionally, the lack of service and safety standards for cycling tourism poses a challenge in ensuring the quality of the tourist experience. These issues indicate that while the village possesses strong assets, the capacity to manage these assets optimally still needs to be improved.

Furthermore, the low level of integration of local SMEs into tourism activities means that economic benefits have not been distributed evenly among the community. This runs counter to the principles of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which emphasizes the importance of active local community participation and the equitable distribution of economic benefits. Additionally, a weak marketing system particularly regarding the use of digital media along with limited supporting infrastructure such as road signs, information centers, and rest stops, indicates that tourism products are not yet ready for optimal marketing. Consequently, competitive cycling tour packages are not yet available at the downstream stage, resulting in low community engagement and limited economic contributions from tourism.

Given these conditions, the development of cycling tourism in Mengesta Village requires not only the utilization of natural and cultural resources but also an integrated strategic approach. Within the framework of Sustainable Tourism, development must strike a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects. Meanwhile, through a Community-Based Tourism approach, the involvement of the local community must be strengthened so that they become key players in the tourism value chain. On the other hand, the Asset-Based Community Development approach emphasizes the importance of optimizing local assets as the foundation for sustainable development rooted in internal strengths.

Thus, this study aims to formulate a strategy for developing cycling tourism based on local natural and cultural potential in Mengesta Village through a SWOT analysis approach, integrating the principles of sustainable tourism, CBT, and ABCD. The resulting strategy is expected not only to enhance the destination's competitiveness but also to foster community involvement, strengthen the local economy, and ensure the sustainable preservation of the environment and culture.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach to formulate a contextual, in-depth, and practical strategy for developing cycling tourism in Mengesta Village. Informants for this study were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria, competencies, and authority relevant to the research objectives. The key informants selected include internal managers from the Mengesta Village Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) to explore governance aspects and human resource capacity constraints; traditional leaders or subak managers to explore cultural values and agrarian education; and traditional culinary and local agricultural product MSME operators to analyze the readiness of the village's economic supply chain. Additionally, village government officials were involved to provide perspectives on regulations and macro-level policies for tourism villages, while representatives of

tourists or cycling communities were interviewed to capture market expectations regarding route comfort and the need for supporting facilities on-site.

Data was collected using a combination of three main techniques; open observation, interviews, and document analysis to obtain a comprehensive and rich descriptive picture. Observations were conducted directly by traversing rural roads and rice fields spanning in Mengesta Village to assess route feasibility, variations in terrain, traffic density levels, and to map critical points requiring road signs and potential locations for rest areas. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide with informants to explore the root causes of issues related to limited service standards, digital marketing challenges, and the seasonal income fluctuations of the local community. Meanwhile, a documentary study was conducted to gather supporting secondary data such as the profile of Mengesta Tourism Village, the organizational structure of the Pokdarwis, village route maps, and demographic data on the agrarian community.

The data analysis in this qualitative study adopts the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which is then integrated with a qualitative SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) matrix as a strategy formulation tool (Miles et al, 2014). The analysis process begins with data condensation, where interview and observation results are summarized, selected, and focused into categories of internal potential, governance weaknesses, market opportunities, and infrastructure challenges. Next, the data is presented (data display) in a narrative and structured manner in the form of a matrix to map the cause-and-effect relationships between issues from upstream to downstream. Through the qualitative SWOT matrix, these components are converted into concrete strategic alternatives, including the SO strategy to optimize cycling routes and *subak* culture to capitalize on the cycling tourism trend, WO strategies to improve route signage and the safety capacity of Pokdarwis, ST strategies to minimize fluctuations in farmers' income through tourism diversification, and WT strategies to develop competitive digital tourism packages. The final stage of this analysis involves drawing conclusions and conducting verification to generate actionable program recommendations.

To ensure the validity, reliability, and objectivity of the descriptive data obtained, this study employed triangulation techniques (Sugiyono, 2020). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing and cross-referencing interview results from the Pokdarwis Chairperson, village officials, and local MSME operators to assess the consistency of their commitment and readiness for tourism development. In addition, technical triangulation was also applied by matching verbal information obtained from in-depth interviews—such as complaints regarding the lack of rest areas or the absence of safety signs—with physical evidence found through direct spatial observation along the rice field paths in Mengesta Village. Through this cross-verification, all presented data is ensured to be valid and free from subjective bias.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

SWOT Matrix Analysis

The data analysis technique used in this study is a SWOT analysis technique with a qualitative approach, which consists of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. SWOT analysis aims to maximize strengths and opportunities, but can minimize weaknesses and threats. According to Rangkuti (2011), SWOT analysis is a systematic identification of strategic factors to formulate a strategy.

Strengths

Mengesta Village possesses strong internal advantages for developing cycling tourism. The village offers rural and rice field routes ranging from approximately 5 to 15 kilometers, with varied contours that are both safe and comfortable for cyclists of different skill levels. The agrarian landscape remains highly pristine, characterized by low traffic density and a well-preserved natural environment, which enhances the overall cycling experience. In addition, the area is enriched with authentic local cultural potential, particularly the traditional agricultural system and subak activities, which carry significant cultural, ecological, and educational value. Accessibility is also relatively adequate, as the village is located within 45–60 minutes from the center of Tabanan Regency, with most roads already paved, making it reachable for visitors.

Figure 1. Swot Matrix Analysis

Internal Factors / External Factors	**Internal Strengths (S)** 1. Safe and varied bike paths (approx. 5–15 km) 2. A picturesque rural setting with light traffic 3. The educational authenticity of Subak culture 4. Good accessibility (45–60 minutes from downtown)	**Internal Weaknesses (W)** 1. Limited human resources capacity within the Pokdarwis 2. No established service and safety standards 3. Minimal route support facilities (rest areas and signage) 4. Digital marketing is not yet fully optimized 5. Local SMEs are not yet integrated into the tourist route
External Opportunities (O) 1. Global trends in cycling tourism 2. The growth of wellness and slow tourism 3. Travelers' preference for local interaction and education 4. Policy support for sustainable tourism	**SO Strategy (Maxi–Maxi)** **1. S1, S2, O1, O2:** Develop integrated specialty cycling tour packages spanning approximately 5–15 km that highlight pristine natural landscapes to target the wellness tourism market. **2. S3, O3:** Create guided storytelling experiences based on ecological education about the *subak* system to provide the immersive experiences sought by the slow tourism segment.	**WO Strategy (Mini–Maxi)** **1. W1, W2, O1, O4:** Conduct safety-standard training programs for Pokdarwis to meet international special-interest tourism standards. **2. W3, W5, O2, O3:** Establish community-based rest stops featuring local MSME products and traditional cuisine at scenic points along the cycling route. **3. W4, O1:** Optimize social media and digital promotions to market the unique landscape of the Mengesta cycling route directly to the cycling community.•
External Threats (T) 1. Fluctuations in residents' income due to the harvest season 2. Fierce competition with other tourist villages in Bali 3. The risk of environmental degradation due to tourism activities	**ST Strategy (Maxi–Mini)** **1. S1, S3, T2:** Leverage the unique cultural characteristics of Tabanan's *subak* system as a key differentiator (unique selling point) so that the Mengesta cycling tour can compete with competitors in Bali. **2. S2, T3:** Implement daily visitor quotas (carrying capacity) on cycling routes to preserve the natural environment and prevent degradation of the rice field ecosystem. Use strengths to minimize threats.	**WT Strategy (Mini–Mini)** **1. W5, T1:** Integrate the community's culinary and agricultural supply chains into bike tour packages as an alternative source of income to mitigate the economic impact of lean harvest seasons. **2.W2, W4, T2:** Accelerate the standardization of safety services and the launch of ready-to-sell digital tour packages to avoid losing momentum and falling behind other established tourist villages.

Weaknesses

Despite its strengths, several internal limitations hinder the optimal development of cycling tourism in Mengesta Village. The capacity of Pokdarwis remains limited, particularly in terms of tourism management, service standards, and sustainable tour guiding competencies. Furthermore, there are no established minimum service standards or specific safety standards tailored to cycling tourism, which may affect visitor confidence and experience. Supporting infrastructure along the

cycling routes is still minimal, including the lack of directional signage, information centers, and designated rest points. In addition, the marketing system is not yet fully developed, with low utilization of digital promotion channels, resulting in an underprepared downstream tourism product. The integration of local economic potential, such as traditional culinary micro-enterprises and agricultural products, into tourism activities also remains insufficient.

Opportunities

Externally, Mengesta Village has significant opportunities to position itself within the growing cycling tourism market. There is a notable increase in both global and national trends toward special interest tourism, particularly cycling tourism. In the post-pandemic era, there has been a shift in tourist preferences toward wellness tourism and slow tourism, which emphasize health, relaxation, and meaningful engagement with nature. Additionally, modern tourists show a high level of interest in environmentally friendly activities that offer deeper social interaction with rural communities. These trends align well with the characteristics of Mengesta Village. Moreover, there is increasing conceptual and policy support at the macro level for the development of sustainable rural tourism, which can further facilitate and legitimize such initiatives.

Threats

However, several external threats may challenge the sustainability of cycling tourism development in Mengesta Village. The local community's economic condition tends to fluctuate due to its high dependence on agricultural cycles, particularly harvest seasons, which may affect consistency in tourism service provision. The village also faces strong competition from other established tourism destinations in Bali that already offer similar cycling tourism products with more developed infrastructure and market recognition. Additionally, there is a potential risk of environmental degradation or a decline in the aesthetic quality of the natural landscape if tourism development is not carefully managed according to environmental carrying capacity principles.

Discussion

SO Strategies

The first strategy, which proposes the development of integrated cycling tour packages of approximately 5–15 km highlighting pristine natural landscapes, aligns closely with the ABCD principle of asset mobilization. The agrarian landscape, low traffic environment, and scenic rural routes are not merely passive resources but are repositioned as key tourism products. By targeting the wellness tourism market, this strategy capitalizes on the intrinsic environmental quality of the village as a competitive advantage. Within the ABCD framework, such an approach strengthens community ownership, as local stakeholders become active agents in transforming their everyday environment into a source of economic opportunity (Indrawati et al, 2025). Moreover, this strategy encourages endogenous development, where growth is driven by locally available resources rather than external dependency, ensuring greater sustainability and resilience.

The second strategy, which focuses on creating guided storytelling experiences based on ecological education of the *subak* system, further reinforces the ABCD approach by utilizing intangible cultural assets. The *subak* system, as a traditional irrigation and socio-cultural institution, represents a form of local knowledge deeply embedded within the community. By transforming this into an immersive storytelling experience, the strategy not only enhances tourist engagement but also empowers local residents particularly farmers and community leaders as knowledge holders and interpreters. This reflects the ABCD emphasis on recognizing community members as assets with valuable skills and knowledge, rather than as beneficiaries of development. In addition, such storytelling experiences foster cultural preservation and intergenerational knowledge transfer, which are critical aspects of sustainable community development (Wiwin et al, 2025).

Taken together, these strategies illustrate how Mengesta Village can operationalize ABCD by integrating both tangible (natural landscapes) and intangible (cultural practices and local knowledge) assets into its tourism development model. This approach not only aligns with current tourism trends such as wellness and slow tourism but also ensures that development remains community-driven, participatory, and rooted in local identity. As a result, the implementation of these strategies has the

potential to generate inclusive economic benefits while simultaneously strengthening social cohesion and preserving environmental and cultural integrity.

The first strategy, conducting safety-standard training programs for Pokdarwis to meet international special-interest tourism standards directly aligns with the CBT principle of capacity building. One of the key challenges identified in Mengesta Village is the limited capability of local human resources, particularly in managing tourism services and ensuring safety. By providing structured training, the community is not only equipped with technical competencies but also empowered to take a more active role in tourism governance. Within the CBT framework, this strengthens local control over tourism development, reduces dependency on external operators, and enhances the quality of visitor experience. Moreover, aligning with international standards increases the village's competitiveness in the cycling tourism market while ensuring that development remains inclusive and community-driven.

The second strategy, establishing community-based rest stops featuring local MSME products and traditional cuisine at scenic points strongly reflects the CBT principle of local economic empowerment. By integrating local micro and small enterprises into the tourism value chain, this approach ensures that economic benefits are distributed more widely among community members, rather than being concentrated in a few actors (Santosa et al, 2023). These rest stops function not only as supporting infrastructure but also as platforms for showcasing local identity, culture, and culinary heritage. In CBT, such initiatives are crucial because they create direct linkages between tourists and local livelihoods, fostering authentic interactions and strengthening the socio-economic fabric of the community. Additionally, this strategy supports the growing demand for experiential tourism, where visitors seek meaningful engagement with local culture.

WO Strategies

The WO strategies for Mengesta Village reflect a clear effort to address internal limitations by leveraging external opportunities, and they can be meaningfully interpreted through the lens of Community Based Tourism (CBT). At its core, CBT emphasizes active community participation, local ownership, capacity building, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Each of the proposed strategies demonstrates how these principles can be operationalized in the context of cycling tourism development.

The third strategy, optimizing social media and digital promotions to market the unique landscape of the Mengesta cycling route relates to the CBT principle of community participation in promotion and storytelling. Digital platforms provide an accessible and cost-effective means for local communities to control their own narratives and directly reach target markets, such as cycling enthusiasts. By involving local stakeholders in content creation and promotion, this strategy encourages a sense of ownership and pride in the destination (Suhartono, 2019). Furthermore, it reduces reliance on external intermediaries, allowing the community to capture greater value from tourism activities. From a CBT perspective, effective digital promotion is not merely about marketing but also about empowering communities to represent their identity and assets in ways that are authentic and sustainable.

Overall, these WO strategies demonstrate a coherent application of CBT by transforming existing weaknesses, such as limited capacity, infrastructure gaps, and weak promotion into opportunities for community empowerment and participation. By focusing on training, local enterprise integration, and community-led promotion, Mengesta Village can build a more inclusive and resilient tourism model, where the benefits of cycling tourism are equitably shared and aligned with local values and capacities.

ST Strategies

The ST strategies for Mengesta Village demonstrate a deliberate effort to use existing strengths to mitigate external threats, and they are highly consistent with the principles of Sustainable Tourism. This theoretical perspective emphasizes the balance between economic viability, environmental protection, and socio-cultural preservation to ensure long-term sustainability of tourism destinations.

The first strategy, leveraging the unique cultural characteristics of Tabanan's *subak* system as a key differentiator reflects the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism. The *subak* system is

not only an agricultural practice but also a cultural landscape that embodies local wisdom, community cooperation, and spiritual values. By positioning it as a unique selling point, Mengesta Village can differentiate its cycling tourism product from other more established destinations in Bali, thereby addressing competitive pressures. From a sustainable tourism perspective, this approach promotes cultural preservation by transforming local traditions into valuable tourism assets without commodifying them excessively. It also encourages community pride and reinforces the continuity of traditional practices, as local stakeholders recognize the economic and cultural importance of maintaining the *subak* system. In this way, competitiveness is achieved not through imitation, but through the protection and enhancement of authentic local identity.

The second strategy, implementing daily visitor quotas based on carrying capacity directly aligns with the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism. The increasing popularity of cycling tourism poses a potential risk of environmental degradation, particularly in fragile agrarian landscapes such as rice fields. By regulating the number of visitors, Mengesta Village can control tourism intensity and minimize negative impacts on the ecosystem, including soil damage, waste generation, and disruption to agricultural activities. This reflects the core principle of carrying capacity within sustainable tourism, where development must remain within the limits that the environment can sustain over time (Sri, 2011). Furthermore, such a policy ensures that the quality of the tourist experience is maintained, as overcrowding can reduce the attractiveness of the destination. Importantly, this strategy also supports long-term economic sustainability, as preserving environmental quality ensures that tourism resources remain viable for future generations.

Taken together, these strategies illustrate a holistic application of sustainable tourism principles, where cultural uniqueness is leveraged to enhance competitiveness, while environmental limits are respected to prevent degradation. By integrating these approaches, Mengesta Village can develop a cycling tourism model that is not only competitive in the short term but also resilient and sustainable in the long term, ensuring that economic benefits do not come at the expense of environmental integrity or cultural authenticity.

WT Strategies

The WT strategies for Mengesta Village focus on minimizing both internal weaknesses and external threats, and they can be effectively interpreted through the framework of Sustainable Tourism. This approach highlights the importance of resilience, inclusivity, and long-term viability by ensuring that tourism development supports economic stability while maintaining environmental and socio-cultural integrity.

The first strategy, integrating the community's culinary and agricultural supply chains into cycling tour packages as an alternative source of income directly reflects the economic sustainability dimension. One of the key vulnerabilities identified is the fluctuation of local income due to dependence on agricultural cycles. By embedding local products, such as traditional cuisine and farm-based commodities, into the tourism experience, the community can diversify its income sources and reduce economic risk during off-harvest periods(Xu et al, 2019). Within the sustainable tourism framework, this approach promotes inclusive economic development by strengthening linkages between tourism and local livelihoods (Volix, 2023). It ensures that the benefits of tourism are distributed across different segments of the community, including farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs. At the same time, it enhances the authenticity of the tourism product, as visitors are offered direct engagement with local food systems and agricultural practices, reinforcing the value of local resources without overexploiting them.

The second strategy, accelerating the standardization of safety services and the development of ready-to-sell digital tour packages, relates to the institutional and economic resilience aspects of sustainable tourism. In a highly competitive tourism environment such as Bali, delays in product readiness and lack of service standardization can result in lost market opportunities and reduced competitiveness. By establishing clear safety standards and packaging tourism products in a market-ready digital format, Mengesta Village can improve service quality, build visitor trust, and respond more effectively to market demands. From a sustainable tourism perspective, this contributes to long-term viability by ensuring that tourism development is professionally managed and capable of adapting to external pressures. Moreover, digitalization can support more controlled and targeted

marketing, which aligns with sustainability goals by attracting appropriate market segments (e.g., responsible and experience-oriented tourists) rather than mass tourism that may exceed the destination's carrying capacity (Yanan et al, 2024).

Taken together, these WT strategies demonstrate how Mengesta Village can enhance its resilience by addressing structural weaknesses while safeguarding against external risks. By diversifying income sources and strengthening institutional readiness, the village can build a more adaptive and sustainable tourism system. This ensures that tourism not only generates immediate economic benefits but also contributes to long-term stability, community well-being, and the preservation of local resources.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the SWOT analysis reveals that Mengesta Village possesses strong internal assets that position it well for the development of cycling tourism, particularly its scenic rural routes, well-preserved agrarian environment, authentic cultural resources such as the *subak* system, and relatively good accessibility. These strengths provide a solid foundation to respond to growing external opportunities, including the increasing demand for cycling tourism, wellness and slow tourism trends, as well as a rising preference for environmentally friendly and community-based travel experiences. At the same time, supportive policy frameworks for sustainable rural tourism further enhance the feasibility of development in the area.

However, several internal weaknesses must be addressed to fully realize this potential. Limitations in local human resource capacity, the absence of standardized safety and service protocols, insufficient supporting infrastructure, underdeveloped marketing systems, and weak integration of local economic activities into tourism products remain critical challenges. In addition, external threats such as fluctuating local incomes, strong competition from more established destinations in Bali, and the risk of environmental degradation highlight the need for careful and strategic planning.

The formulated strategies SO, WO, ST, and WT, collectively emphasize a development approach that is asset-based, community-oriented, and sustainability-driven. These include leveraging natural and cultural uniqueness as competitive advantages, strengthening community capacity and participation, integrating local economic activities into tourism value chains, enhancing digital promotion, and implementing environmental management measures such as carrying capacity controls.Overall, the development of cycling tourism in Mengesta Village should be directed toward a sustainable tourism model that balances economic benefits, environmental conservation, and socio-cultural preservation. By optimizing its internal strengths while systematically addressing its weaknesses and mitigating external threats, Mengesta Village has strong potential to emerge as a distinctive and competitive rural cycling tourism destination in Bali, with long-term resilience and inclusive benefits for the local community.

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