

## ***Kawidu* Rice Fields as a Natural Laboratory for Sustainable Cultural Learning in Bali based on Ethnopedagogy**

Maria Mulyana<sup>1\*</sup>, Rahma Novia Rismawati<sup>2</sup>, Kadek Ericka Junitadewi Mantara Putri<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1,2,3</sup>Program Studi Pendidikan Vokasional Kesejahteraan Keluarga, Universitas Dhyana Pura, Bali, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [mulyanahemat@gmail.com](mailto:mulyanahemat@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

Cultural tourism in Bali faces the challenge of declining rice field area due to land conversion into villas, residential areas, and commercial facilities. This decline has resulted in the loss of cultural heritage and the ecological function of rice fields as part of the traditional Subak agricultural system. This study develops the concept of *KAWIDU* (Educational Tourism Activities) based on ethnopedagogy as an effort to preserve culture and the environment. The ethnopedagogical approach integrates local values and cultural wisdom into practical learning activities in the field, which improve the hard skills and soft skills of the local community and tourists. The implementation of *KAWIDU* in Tangguntiti Village, Tabanan Regency, Bali, involves the community in the process of rice field education, introduction to the Subak system, and environmentally friendly agricultural practices, while also developing economic potential through educational tourism. As a result, *KAWIDU* not only strengthens cultural and environmental awareness but also adds economic value to the local community by increasing their capacity as tour guides, craftsmen, and facilitators. Promotion through social media and digital platforms supports the sustainability and accessibility of this educational tourism. This study recommends further development of *KAWIDU* as a model of sustainable education and tourism that connects culture, ecology, and the local economy for the holistic advancement of Balinese society.

**Keywords:** educational tourism, ethnopedagogy, rice -field -conservation, sustainability

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bali is widely known as a tourist destination rich in cultural heritage and natural beauty. One cultural heritage site of strategic value is the rice fields with their unique subak system, which has been recognized as a world cultural heritage site by UNESCO. Rice fields not only serve as agricultural land, but also as a symbol of harmony between humans, nature, and local spirituality. However, tourism development and urbanization have led to the conversion of rice fields into villas, hotels, residential areas, and commercial facilities, threatening the sustainability of rice fields in Bali, especially in areas such as Tabanan regency.

This problem is exacerbated by a lack of local-based understanding and education that integrates the cultural and ecological values of rice fields, both for the surrounding community and tourists. The educational curriculum at various levels in Bali has also not comprehensively included local content related to rice field conservation and the subak system. Therefore, an innovative approach is needed that can educate and involve the community and tourists in sustainable rice field conservation efforts.

This essay introduces the concept of *KAWIDU* (Educational Tourism Activities) based on ethnopedagogy as a solution for rice field conservation. Ethnopedagogy is a learning method that highlights local wisdom and cultural values as sources of relevant knowledge and practices. By utilizing rice fields as natural laboratories, *KAWIDU* integrates hard skills and soft skills in rice field management and increases cultural



and environmental awareness among the community and tourists.

This study aims to examine the role of ethnopedagogy in rice field educational tourism activities to improve understanding of technical skills and cultural values, as well as to analyze the implementation of *KAWIDU* that has a positive impact on cultural preservation, the environment, and the welfare of local communities in Bali.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The preservation of cultural heritage and sustainable environmental management are increasingly critical within the tourism sector, especially in culturally rich regions such as Bali, Indonesia. Agricultural landscapes, particularly traditional rice paddies (*sawah*), embody not only economic value but also serve as living repositories of local wisdom and culture. However, rapid land conversion for urban development threatens these vital cultural landscapes, leading to a significant decline in *sawah* areas and associated socio-cultural practices.

In this context, the concept of educational tourism activities, referred to as *KAWIDU* (Kegiatan Wisata Edukasi), emerges as an innovative approach that integrates environmental conservation with cultural education. *KAWIDU* uses *sawah* as a natural laboratory for experiential learning, engaging both local communities and tourists in direct agricultural practices. This approach aims to raise awareness about the importance of preserving rice paddies and their underlying cultural systems, most notably the traditional irrigation system known as *subak*.

The educational framework underpinning *KAWIDU* is grounded in ethnopedagogy, a pedagogical concept that synthesizes local wisdom and cultural values into learning processes. Ethnopedagogy emphasizes experiential knowledge transmission rooted in indigenous practices, fostering both hard skills (technical and practical agricultural skills) and soft skills (cultural appreciation, environmental ethics, and community engagement). This dual skill development supports socio-cultural sustainability by empowering local communities and enhancing tourist understanding.

Furthermore, ethnopedagogy-based educational tourism aligns with sustainable development goals by promoting cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and socio-economic benefits for local populations. Through participatory learning and community involvement, this framework establishes a replicable model of cultural-ecological education that supports rural resilience amidst pressures from urbanization and modernization.

In summary, the theoretical foundation of this study integrates the principles of cultural tourism, environmental education, and ethnopedagogy to propose *KAWIDU* as a sustainable strategy for conserving Bali's *sawah* landscapes. This framework facilitates a holistic understanding of tourism's role in cultural preservation and community empowerment, highlighting the potential of educational tourism to bridge tradition and modernity.

## METHOD

This research methodology uses a qualitative approach with a case study focusing on the implementation of *KAWIDU* (Educational Tourism Activities) in Tangguntiti Village, Tabanan Regency, Bali. Data collection was conducted through participatory observation to directly observe the learning process and the participation of the community and tourists in rice field management using an ethnopedagogical approach, in-depth interviews with stakeholders to explore their perceptions and experiences, and documentary studies including literature analysis, statistical data related to rice field conversion, and evaluation of *KAWIDU*'s social media and website as promotional and educational instruments. The data was analysed thematically using coding techniques to identify the role of ethnopedagogy in improving hard skills and soft skills, as well as the socio-economic and environmental impacts of rice field educational tourism. Data validation



was carried out through source triangulation and verification by informants to ensure the credibility of the findings. This approach enabled researchers to gain a deep understanding of cultural and environmental sustainability through local wisdom-based educational tourism, while also providing practical contributions to rice field conservation and local community empowerment.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the implementation of *KAWIDU*, an educational tourism activity centered on traditional rice paddies with an ethnopedagogical approach, significantly contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental sustainability in Bali. The integration of ethnopedagogy, incorporating local wisdom and cultural values into experiential learning, enhances both hard skills (technical knowledge of rice paddy management and the traditional subak irrigation system) and soft skills (awareness and appreciation of environmental stewardship and cultural identity) among local communities and tourists. This experiential pedagogy facilitates deeper engagement and comprehension, fostering sustainable learning processes.

At the community level, the deployment of *KAWIDU* in Desa Tangguntiti promotes active involvement of local residents as artisans, guides, and facilitators, thereby generating additional income streams and reinforcing agrarian traditions. Educational components that encompass rice cultivation, harvesting, and processing into traditional food products nurture social cohesion and reinforce the continuity of agrarian cultural practices. Infrastructure development such as gazebos, trekking paths, and improved access routes, complemented by digital promotion through an official website and social media, have proven effective in enhancing accessibility and outreach, thus extending the program's impact to a broader tourist audience.

Furthermore, this study confirms that *KAWIDU* delivers multifaceted benefits encompassing cultural conservation, environmental protection, and economic empowerment. By countering the threats of agricultural land conversion documented in Bali, this initiative functions as a living laboratory, raising cultural and environmental literacy while empowering local stakeholders to safeguard Bali's agrarian heritage. These findings align with literature emphasizing the vital role of culturally-based educational tourism in sustainable development and community welfare enhancement.

The ethnopedagogical framework adopted in *KAWIDU* transcends conventional knowledge transfer, acting as a catalyst for reinforcing local wisdom and community empowerment. This underscores the necessity for integrating similar culturally grounded educational tourism models into regional tourism and educational policies to foster inclusive, sustainable growth. With strategic implementation, culturally-rooted educational tourism like *KAWIDU* can serve as an innovative paradigm for conserving cultural landscapes and ecosystems, while simultaneously elevating the quality of life for indigenous populations.

## CONCLUSION

*KAWIDU*, as a rice field-based educational tourism activity with an ethnopedagogical approach, has proven effective in preserving culture and the environment in Bali. Through the integration of local values and hands-on learning practices, *KAWIDU* has been able to improve the understanding of both local communities and tourists regarding the importance of rice field management and preservation, particularly the subak irrigation system, which is a cultural heritage of Bali. The implementation of this program in Tangguntiti Village shows that *KAWIDU* not only strengthens cultural and environmental preservation but also provides economic benefits by empowering local communities as key players in educational tourism



management.

The development of supporting infrastructure and digital promotion strategies supports the sustainability and accessibility of the program, so that this educational tourism concept has the potential to become an innovative model for the sustainable management of cultural heritage and natural resources. Thus, *KAWIDU* makes a significant contribution to building collective awareness and strengthening the role of local communities and the younger generation in preserving and developing Bali's rice field ecosystem for the common good.

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