

## Survival strategies of informal sector workers in Bali's tourism industry

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**Abstract:** The informal tourism sector plays a vital role in the local economies, particularly in destinations such as Bali. This aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8, which focuses on promoting decent work and economic growth. These workers, who are often ignored, greatly enrich the experience of tourism but encounter distinct obstacles on a daily basis. Gaining insight into their methods for staying alive is crucial. Informal workers face distinct limits compared to formal sector employees, resulting in less defined sustainability and growth strategies. A thorough investigation was carried out in nine regencies in Bali, utilizing observations and interviews, in order to examine these tactics. This method facilitated a comprehensive comprehension of their day-to-day routines and difficulties. The study identified four crucial survival strategies: implementing prudent financial management to sustain businesses and meet daily needs, utilizing communication skills to maintain income and continuity, enhancing social capital through positive relationships with fellow workers, and comprehending government policies. Out of these factors, effectively managing economic capital is crucial for maintaining livelihoods in the fiercely competitive tourism business. The results of this study provide a basis for future policies or interventions aimed at supporting and enhancing the lives of informal sector workers in tourist areas such as Bali.

**Keywords:** Bali, informal workers, SDG 8, survival strategies, tourism

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### Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic, which has endured for almost two years, has had a significant and disruptive impact on the tourism industry, causing serious consequences for both the formal and informal sectors (Atmojo & Fridayani, 2021; Collins-kreiner & Ram, 2021; Škare et al., 2021; Yeh, 2021). Due to worldwide travel restrictions and the closure of borders, both international and domestic tourism came to a standstill, resulting in a significant decline in tourism earnings (Gössling et al., 2020; Păvăluc et al., 2020; Škare et al., 2021). Income in the informal sector, which encompasses souvenir vendors, local tour guides, food sellers, bicycle rental businesses, and other small-scale operators, experienced a drastic decline of up to 80% (De Villiers, 2022; Tilaki et al., 2021; Widiastini et al., 2022). A significant number of individuals who relied on tourism for their sustenance were compelled to pursue alternative methods of subsistence. Moreover, the significant decrease in tourist numbers had a negative impact on local ecosystems, which usually derive advantages from tourism activities. This research is supported by multiple fundamental theories.

This paper cites several theories, namely social practice theory, deconstruction theory, moral economic theory of farmers, tourism area life cycle, and social capital theory (Adib, 2012; Akintimehin et al., 2019; Barry, 2010; Darbi & Knott, 2016; Lahiri-Dutt, 2018; Lunt, 2020; Siregar, 2019). The theory of disruptive innovation highlights the influence of the pandemic on well-

established tourism practices, creating opportunities for innovation and adaptation within the sector (Christensen, 2013). The vulnerability and resilience theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the vulnerabilities that workers in the informal sector encounter and the actions needed to enhance their capacity to endure and recover from these shocks (Adger, 2000). This work is highly significant, both in terms of its academic and practical ramifications. This research contributes to the current body of knowledge regarding the impact of global crises on tourism, with a specific emphasis on the informal sector. Additionally, it offers significant perspectives on the practical implementation of vulnerability and resilience theories within this particular context. The report clearly highlights the urgent need for joint efforts between the government and the tourism industry to strengthen the recovery of informal sector operators. To effectively address the impact of the pandemic and support the recovery of small businesses, it is crucial for individuals to understand the scale of the problem and identify effective strategies. This will enable them to develop policies and programs that help these organizations resume their activities. Consequently, this will enhance the local economy and strengthen community resilience.

The local economy suffered significant repercussions throughout the Covid-19 recovery phase. Workers in the informal sector of the tourism industry implemented diverse survival tactics to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. Initially, a significant number of individuals transitioned to online enterprises, leveraging social media platforms and e-commerce to promote and sell their goods and services (Bai et al., 2021; Gunadi et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2020). Furthermore, it was imperative to adapt to new health protocols, which involved implementing hygienic practices and social distancing measures in order to restore consumer confidence (Makoni & Tichaawa, 2021; Pitoyo et al., 2021). Furthermore, it became crucial to diversify income sources by creating and expanding businesses or initiatives that could contribute to their financial stability (Eddyono, 2023; Orié, 2023; Sari et al., 2023). In addition, the cooperation with other participants in the tourist industry contributed to the development of innovative and secure travel packages that are more attractive to travelers (Anggarini, 2021; Khamung & Hsu, 2023). Ultimately, numerous workers relied on state help and relief programs provided by non-governmental organizations to sustain their commercial operations amidst these difficult circumstances.

Government and institutional support are essential for assisting workers in the informal tourism sector, especially during and after the pandemic. Several governments worldwide have implemented diverse financial support initiatives and direct cash transfers to reduce the economic strain on workers in the informal sector who have been impacted by the pandemic (Komin et al., 2021; Maryanto et al., 2022; Suryadi, 2018; Harb et al.:2022). In addition, individuals are offered training and instruction in new skills, particularly in the areas of digitization and health protocols, to help them adjust to changes in the market. International institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contribute by offering technical assistance and advocating for policies that prioritize the need of informal workers (Komin et al., 2021; Power, 2020). The partnership among the government, commercial sector, and local communities is enhanced to establish a comprehensive and enduring tourist ecosystem that is inclusive and sustainable. The aforementioned endeavors illustrate the crucial function played by the government and other institutions in bolstering the well-being and advancement of workers in the informal tourist industry, despite the presence of various obstacles (Gaffar et al., 2022; Komin et al., 2021; Ali et.al: 2023).

Prior studies on informal sector workers in the tourism industry have yielded valuable knowledge regarding the dynamics and difficulties encountered in this sector (Biggs et al., 2012; Çakmak et al., 2018; Darbi & Knott, 2016; Ranasinghe et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2011; Widiastini et al., 2018). These studies emphasize the attributes of informal work, including its flexibility, limited job security, and frequent absence of official acknowledgment from authorities. Informal workers in the tourism sector are recognized for their substantial economic impact, which includes job creation, revenue generation, and support for local economies. Nevertheless, the primary difficulties encountered by these individuals are the instability of their income, the absence of adequate social safety nets, and their susceptibility to changes in market conditions (Arsa et al., 2021; Farraz & Fathiah, 2021; Gururaja & Ranjitha, 2022; Hastuti et al., 2020; Makoni & Tichaawa, 2021; Sari & Zufar, 2021). The Covid-19 outbreak has worsened these problems, as travel restrictions and temporary closures of tourism locations have directly decreased their

revenue. This scenario emphasizes the pressing necessity for efficient survival tactics that encompass not just economic factors but also offer social and psychological assistance to the workers. Hence, additional investigation is required to cultivate groundbreaking strategies that may effectively tackle the susceptibilities of the informal sector in tourism, particularly when confronted with global emergencies such as the pandemic.

Extensive research on the effects of the pandemic on the tourism industry has revealed a notable lack of understanding about how informal sector workers have responded to this crisis. While numerous studies examine the general economic consequences (Akuoko et al., 2021; Komin et al., 2021; Rasul et al., 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021; Soliku et al., 2021), there is often a dearth of comprehensive comprehension regarding the reactions and adjustments of informal sector workers, including souvenir vendors, local tour guides, food sellers, bicycle rental services, tattoo services, manicure, pedicure, and others, to the pandemic circumstances. Moreover, there is a dearth of precise data regarding the adaptation tactics employed by workers in the informal sector, a crucial aspect for comprehending the efficacy and shortcomings of different approaches. This gap also encompasses a deficiency in policy guidance expressly targeted at efficiently assisting this group, both in the immediate and extended periods. Frequently, current policies prioritize the formal sector within the tourism industry, taking into account regional economic concerns. This circumstance necessitates further research that is specifically targeted towards data collecting and analysis regarding how informal workers adjust to changes in the business environment. Further extensive and focused research is necessary to formulate more efficient policy suggestions that can assist workers in the informal tourism industry to not only endure but also prosper after the pandemic.

It is imperative to secure the long-term viability of the informal tourism industry workforce during the Covid-19 recovery phase in order to uphold the national economy and protect the rights of workers. To develop this approach, it is essential to consider various theories, including social practice theory, deconstruction theory, moral economic theory of farmers, and social capital theory (Adib, 2012; Akintimehin et al., 2019; Barry, 2010; Darbi & Knott, 2016; Lahiri-Dutt, 2018; Lunt, 2020; Siregar, 2019). Social practice theory, a scholarly discipline that investigates how individuals and groups employ their expertise and skills in particular social contexts (Adib, 2012; Darbi & Knott, 2016; Widiastini, 2016; Widiastini et al., 2022), is relevant when examining workers in the informal tourism industry. The concept of deconstruction, as explained by Jacques Derrida and utilized by Hollnagel (2010) and Mambrol (2021), helps in understanding how safety measures are implemented and adjusted in specific social contexts. More precisely, it investigates the ability of systems to adjust and flourish in various circumstances.

Informal sector workers endeavor to establish, sustain, and enhance their social capital while providing tourism products and services to visiting tourists. This is due to the fact that social capital empowers them to endure. The notion of social capital, as explained by (Akintimehin et al., 2019; Widiastini et al., 2022), posits that social interactions and networks serve as valuable resources. Trust, when viewed as social capital, serves as a network that fosters stronger interactions and facilitates the formation of bonds. Ultimately, trust has a significant impact on the overall quality of life. Therefore, trust, which serves as a type of social capital, plays a crucial role in cultivating collaborative connections. Enhancing social capital through collaboration and mutually beneficial interactions can assist workers in the informal tourist sector in bolstering their ability to adjust and sustain themselves in the aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak. This study examines sustainable options for informal tourism industry workers in the context of Covid-19 rehabilitation, using these four ideas as a framework.

Studying the reactions of workers in the informal tourism industry to the Covid-19 issue is essential for the rehabilitation process after the pandemic. An in-depth comprehension of the techniques employed by individuals and organizations to endure and prosper in this crisis can offer useful insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders (Budiarto et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2002; Kaplinsky & Kraemer-Mbula, 2022; Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023; Ratten, 2020). This research aims to discover best practices and potential prospects for sector recovery by examining the adaptation and innovation actions performed by informal workers. This information is crucial for policymakers to develop more focused programs and policies that promote the long-term viability of the tourism sector (Çakmak et al., 2018; Dzigbede & Pathak, 2020; Mawani et al.,

2021; Suwatno, 2021). The findings of this research offer valuable direction for industry stakeholders to create comprehensive and efficient measures to assist informal workers. Moreover, next study can utilize these discoveries to advance ideas and models pertaining to economic and societal resilience within the framework of crises. The recommendations obtained from this research will greatly assist in formulating policies and business strategies that not only support the revival of the tourism industry but also enhance its ability to withstand future challenges.

## Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to investigate the resilience of informal sector workers who serve tourists. The qualitative component employs a case study design that incorporates semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Interviews yield comprehensive insights into workers' experiences and strategies, while observations and documents provide contextual information and validate the findings. The qualitative component's data is evaluated using thematic analysis, which includes transcribing, coding, and identifying important themes. The interpretation of qualitative data is guided by theoretical frameworks such as resilience theory, social practice theory, deconstruction theory, the theory of the moral economy of the peasant, and social capital theory. The quantitative component is distributing questionnaires to a broader sample of informal sector workers to collect data on many facets of their resilience, including adaptive methods, financial stability, and social support networks. Statistical analysis is used to detect patterns and correlations in the data. The study design is strengthened by including the SWOT, EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary), and IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) frameworks. A SWOT analysis is used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are associated with the resilience of workers in the informal sector. EFAS is a tool used to analyze external elements that may impact a business, such as tourism trends and regulatory changes. On the other hand, IFAS is used to examine internal components of a business, such as the abilities of its workers and the level of support from the community. This comprehensive approach guarantees a deep comprehension of the resilience tactics and sustainability of workers in the informal sector of the tourism industry, establishing a strong basis for practical recommendations and policy consequences.

This study adopted a cultural studies technique to investigate the significant factors contributing to the survival of informal sector workers and the strategies they utilize to establish themselves in tourist areas (Siregar, 2019; Widiastini, 2016; Widiastini et al., 2018). The notion of deconstruction enables researchers to comprehend, uncover, and examine the preexisting structures inside a system (Siregar, 2019; Widiastini, 2016; Widiastini et al., 2018). When implementing a resilience strategy, it is crucial to thoroughly evaluate the structure, policies, and challenges of the informal tourism sector. The study aims to examine the resilience mechanisms implemented by informal sector workers in tourist hotspots in Bali.

To ensure the long-term viability of the informal sector in nine destinations in Bali, it is necessary to apply Scott's moral economic theory. This theory helps us comprehend the significance of ethical values and fairness in economic activities (Lahiri-Dutt, 2018; Widiastini et al., 2018). When designing sustainable plans for the informal tourist sector, which frequently relies on local communities, it is crucial to take into account these principles. The safety-first principles embraced by workers in the informal sector reflect a cautious mindset that avoids taking chances. Even the slightest risk is perceived as a threat to their livelihood, and so, they are unwilling to accept it.

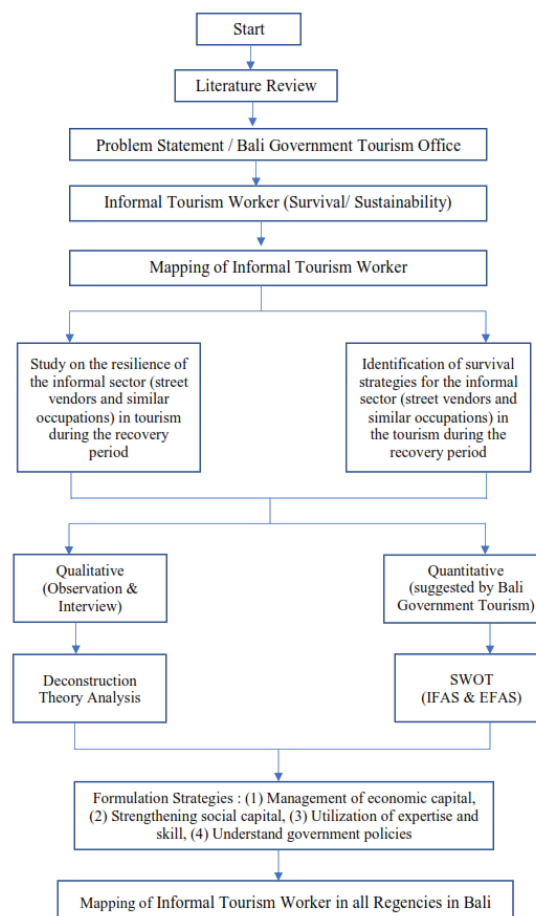
### 1. Methodology Flow

This study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being investigated. The primary methodology employed was qualitative, with the objective of enhancing comprehension through the collection of descriptive data. The researchers mostly employed in-depth interviews and observations (Curry et al., 2009; Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Wilson et al., 2016), to investigate people's experiences and perceptions of work in the informal sector at tourist locations. Observations were utilized to collect data on the context, encompassing the physical surroundings, social interactions, and daily activities that impacted the individuals' perceptions (Hatch, 2002; Tracy, 2019). The participants

consisted of individuals employed in the informal sector, with two individuals picked from each tourist destination. This resulted in a total of four locations spread over eight regencies and one municipality in Bali.

In order to enhance the analysis and offer a more comprehensive viewpoint, quantitative methods were also utilized. This involved employing questionnaires consisting of twenty inquiries categorized into dimensions of strengths, shortcomings, possibilities, and challenges within the informal economy. The questionnaire responses were examined using SWOT analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This analysis was used to generate the Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS), which identified the factors related to sustainability. The IFAS and EFAS metrics encompassed the process of identifying crucial factors, allocating weights, evaluating performance, and computing weighted scores for each factor.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies facilitated a comprehensive and all-encompassing acquisition of information, leading to a thorough comprehension of the examined issues. The qualitative technique provided profound insights into the context and meaning, whilst the quantitative approach supplied a systematic framework for objectively examining both internal and external aspects. This combination enhanced the research by providing diverse and comprehensive insights, which helped in identifying measures to promote the long-term viability of the informal sector in the tourism industry. The study investigated the dynamics of the informal sector, namely how interactions between informal economic actors, market conditions, and government laws generate its distinct characteristics. The study used in-depth interviews and participant observation to demonstrate how informal business operators responded to economic uncertainty, legislative changes, and social issues. Figure 1 displays the overall approach flow used in this research.



**Figure 1.** Overall process flow

## 2. Research Focus Area

Table 1 depicts the selected regencies and their tourism attraction areas. The research venues were chosen with the expectation that their diversity would provide a broader and more in-depth view of the area's tourism business. Each place has unique qualities that provide varied perspectives on the growth of regional tourism (Baker & Coulter, 2007; Brata & Umiyati, 2020; Putra et al., 2021). By expanding the research focus over multiple districts, peculiarities and similarities in tourist attraction management were discovered, which are critical for understanding the dynamics of the informal tourism sector as a whole.

**Table 1.** The regencies and its respective tourist attraction locations

No	Regency	Destination
1	Bangli	Batur Tengah Village, Penglipuran Village
2	Gianyar	Ubud Village, Tirta Empul, Siyut Beach
3	Klungkung	Kertagosa, Kusamba Beach
4	Karangasem	Besakih Beach, Tulamben Beach
5	Tabanan	Tanah Lot, Bedugul
6	Jembrana	Medewi Beach, Baluk Rening Beach, Rambut Siwi, Perancak Beach
7	Buleleng	Lovina Beach, Wanagiri, Penimbangan Beach
8	Badung	Kuta Beach, Canggu Beach
9	Denpasar	Sanur Beach, Sindhu Beach, Serangan Beach

The research undertaken at various locations proved critical since each area was distinctive in terms of geographical factors, cultural variety, and specific local economic patterns. This allowed the researchers to go deeper into understanding how these components interacted to define the features of each region's tourism business. Furthermore, the selection of different places was critical in uncovering issues and opportunities in the tourism industry that would not have been obvious if the research had been undertaken in a single area.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of tourists across the nine regencies under study. Badung Regency and Denpasar District (in green) are identified as the areas with the highest tourist visitation rates. Following these, Gianyar Regency, Tabanan Regency, and Buleleng Regency (in yellow) also have significantly high visitation levels. In contrast, Karangasem Regency and Klungkung Regency (in orange) experience relatively low tourist traffic. Despite the notable popularity of Kintamani and Penglipuran areas, Bangli Regency overall has a modest visitation rate. Jembrana Regency (in red) registers the lowest number of tourist visits.

Research at these locations was also aimed at identifying best practices and challenges faced in the development of sustainable tourism. Surveys, interviews, and observations with workers in the informal tourism sector were the primary instruments used. This helped collect qualitative and quantitative data regarding their perceptions and experiences in maintaining their businesses. The aspect of local community engagement in the management of tourist attractions, where they take roles as workers in the informal sector, was also considered. This aspect is one of the crucial elements in the development of inclusive and sustainable tourism.

Consequently, these research locations not only represented the diversity of regional tourism but also became key to developing effective and inclusive strategies to enhance national tourism potential. With this approach, the research strives to provide recommendations that are not only theoretical but also practical and implementable, supporting the development of tourism that favors both the formal and informal sectors.



**Figure 2.** Tourist distribution

### 3. Analysis

The study on informal tourism sector workers sustaining their businesses during and after the pandemic used quantitative data analysis methods, such as the Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS), to identify resilience factors (Oktari et al., 2023; Situmeang et al., 2020). The IFAS tool assesses strengths and weaknesses in the informal sector, identifying internal capabilities and constraints. On the contrary, EFAS evaluates possibilities and hazards in the external environment, such as market developments and regulatory changes. The Deconstruction Method simplifies complex data, allowing for a more in-depth study of the underlying survival mechanisms.

The process involved two stages: first, assessing the resilience of the informal sector (such as street vendors) in tourism during the recovery period, and second, identifying strategies for their resilience. Relevant previous research was elaborated upon, adopted, and cited. Interview guidelines, observations, and questionnaires were systematically developed based on the established research problems to be used as data collection tools at the predetermined locations. The criteria for respondents were that they had been selling at the location for a minimum of five years. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with local government officials to understand the government's role in supporting these informal sector workers.

The questionnaire results were analyzed by conducting a SWOT analysis to produce IFAS and EFAS, aiming to identify factors of survival strategies in the informal tourism sector. The metrics of IFAS and EFAS are created by:

- Identifying key internal (external) factors affecting survival strategies.
- Assigning weights to each factor based on its importance.
- Rating the performance of the informal sector on each factor.
- Multiplying the weight by the rating to calculate a weighted score for each factor.
- Summing up the weighted scores to get the total weighted score.

## Results and Discussions

### EFAS and IFAS Analysis

The following results present data collected directly from respondents. Table 2 showcases the outcomes of the Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS).

In the analysis of strengths, it's evident that skills or expertise, with a rating of 2.87, indicate room for improvement, suggesting vendors might benefit from additional training or skill development to enhance competencies (Magidi & Mahiya, 2021; Palmer, 2007). Similarly,

networking or relationships, rated at 2.5, imply underutilization or insufficient extent of networks and relationships held by vendors (Akintimehin et al., 2019; Ritter et al., 2004). While there is an ability to adapt, as indicated by a rating of 2.57, vendors need to be more proactive in facing changes in situations and market demands. Additionally, a rating of 2.35 in finding new business opportunities suggests vendors may encounter challenges in innovation or seeking new opportunities during difficulties. Conversely, the highest rating in fund management (3.05) indicates vendors' effectiveness in managing finances, aligning with the principle of safety first in peasant moral economic theory (Wahyudi et al., 2022; Widiastini, Trianasari, et al., 2022).

However, when examining shortcomings, it becomes apparent that vendors encounter difficulties, particularly in accessing finance. This is shown by a rating of 2.67, suggesting considerable obstacles in acquiring funding that could impede business expansion (Distinguin et al., 2016; R. Handayani, 2018). The most significant rating is noticed in the decline in visitor numbers (3.67), indicating a significant impact on enterprises that heavily rely on tourism. Furthermore, the rating of 3.22 for distribution difficulties implies significant challenges in the process of delivering goods or services. Similarly, the rating of 3.22 for government support shows either unfulfilled demands or elevated expectations for aid from the government. These findings emphasize the key areas that need intervention to improve the resilience and sustainability of vendors in the informal tourism sector.

**Table 2.** Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS)

<i>Strengths</i>	Weight	Rating	Score
Skills or expertise	0,09	2,87	0,28
Networking or relationship	0,08	2,5	0,21
Ability to adapt to changing situations and market demands	0,08	2,57	0,22
Finding new ways or business opportunities in dealing with challenges	0,08	2,35	0,19
Management of funds to maintain a business or job	0,10	3,05	0,32
Total	0,43		1,22
<i>Weakness</i>	Weight	Rating	Score
Limited access to get venture capital	0,09	2,67	0,24
Decrease in the number of tourists	0,12	3,67	0,46
Difficulties in supplying or distributing goods or services	0,11	3,22	0,35
Financial ownership and social security	0,09	2,9	0,28
Government assistance or support	0,11	3,22	0,35
Total	0,52		1,68

Table 3 presents an assessment of the External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS) for individuals employed in the informal tourist sector. It highlights both favorable circumstances and potential risks. The use of online platforms for marketing tourism products or services is considered a threat, with a score of 0.18. Implementing technology necessitates a substantial allocation of financial resources and effort, which carries the potential for financial loss if the business fails to fulfill its anticipated outcomes or objectives, hence jeopardizing its survival (Lahiri-Dutt, 2018; Widiastini et al., 2018). Furthermore, there is a high probability of uncertainty or fluctuations in the demand for tourism products or services, with a score of 0.38, due to the current Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) scenario, specifically market uncertainty (Liu & Sukmariningsih, 2021). Regarding collaboration, which scores 0.19 on EFAS, informal sector workers rely heavily on social capital to build networks and friendships (score 0.21 on IFAS). The trust-based social capital (Akintimehin et al., 2019; Widiastini, Trianasari, et al., 2022) managed by these workers in Bali's tourist destinations enhances their adaptive capacity and sustainability, enabling them to navigate challenges and seize emerging opportunities.



**Table 3.** External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS)

<i>Opportunity</i>	Weight	Rating	Score
Change the type of product or service	0,08	2,35	0,19
Using digital technology to promote or run a job or business	0,08	2,27	0,18
Collaborate with related business actors	0,08	2,35	0,19
Take advantage of increased demand from local tourists by tailoring tourism product or service that offerings	0,09	2,62	0,24
<b>Total</b>	<b>0,33</b>		<b>0,8</b>
<i>Threat</i>	Weight	Rating	Score
Utilizing online platforms to market tourism products or services	0,08	2,25	0,18
The decrease in income has affected to difficulties in meeting basic needs	0,11	3,2	0,36
Applying for a loan from a financial institution or micro institution	0,08	2,42	0,21
Uncertainty or changes in demand for tourism products or services	0,11	3,27	0,38
Difficulty in reaching markets or reaching tourists	0,11	3,27	0,38
Occupational health or safety risks	0,13	3,67	0,48
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.62</b>		<b>1,99</b>

### Survival Strategies in Maintaining Business for Informal Sector Workers in the Tourism Industry

The tourism industry, particularly in Bali, has been heavily impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly affecting informal sector workers due to the decline in tourists and restrictions on economic activity. These workers must develop survival strategies to sustain their businesses and overcome the challenges they face. Survival strategy is crucial for maintaining business sustainability. As discussed previously, informal sector workers manage their resources meticulously to survive and focus on developing products and adopting technological advancements to minimize costs, labor, and time.

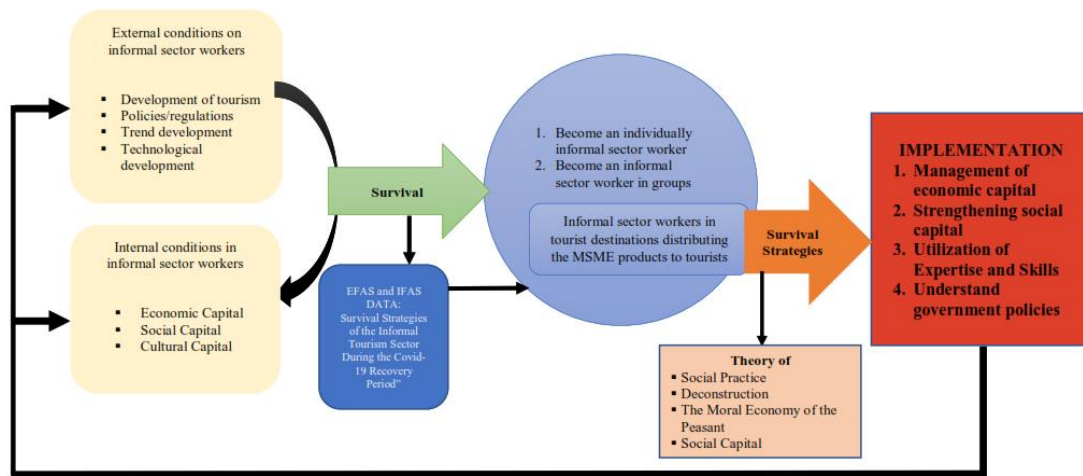
Figure 3 highlights the external and internal conditions that affect the survival of informal sector workers operating in Bali's tourist destinations during the pandemic and recovery stages. External conditions include tourism development, government policies, market trends, tourist needs, and technological advancements. Internal conditions encompass economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital. The decline in tourism during the pandemic led to trend changes to meet tourists' needs (Mirayani et al., 2023; Solemede et al., 2020; Suprihatin, 2020), resulting in government policies aimed at sustaining tourism and imposing various restrictions on the community, including informal sector workers.

In practice, informal sector workers in Bali's tourist destinations either work individually, selling tourism products or services directly to tourists, or in groups. They offer various products, often sourced from local business owners, SMEs, or agricultural businesses, making them resellers (Widiastini, 2016). For instance, fruit traders around the Bedugul tourist area sell agricultural products from Buleleng Regency farmers. These traders help connect producers with consumers, creating an external collaborative practice between traders and product providers. Survival strategies employed by informal sector workers in Bali's tourist destinations are studied using a cultural studies approach (Arybowo, 2010; Handayani et al., 2017; Longhurst et al., 2016) and analyzed using social practice theory, deconstruction theory, the theory of moral economy of the peasant, and social capital theory. Social practice theory (Adib, 2012; Darbi & Knott, 2016; Widiastini, 2016; Widiastini et al., 2022) suggests that individuals actively shape and reform their practices according to their context. During the pandemic, informal sector workers in the tourism industry may have modified their practices by utilizing their communication skills and adjusting their interactions with visitors. Additionally, they establish effective communication with the local government, traditional villages, local communities, and fellow workers.

The theory of moral economy of the peasant, as discussed by (Adelman, 2020; Chiari, 2015; Lahiri-Dutt, 2018; Widiastini et al., 2018) offers a conceptual framework for comprehending the decision-making process of informal sector workers, which is influenced by societal values,

norms, and market logic. These workers modify their approaches to give priority to health and safety, even if it results in a decrease in their earnings. They exercise caution when it comes to creating online products and marketing strategies, prioritizing the management of their money and the enhancement of their contact methods with consumers. By adopting a cautious attitude, they are able to mitigate the potential risks associated with investing money, exerting effort, and allocating time towards enterprises that are questionable. It is of utmost importance for them to uphold their customary selling techniques at tourist areas.

Workers in the informal sector have survived the epidemic thanks to their social capital, which includes networks with other workers and the local community. The idea of social capital (Akintimehin et al., 2019; Prasetyo et al., 2020; Widiastini et al., 2022) illustrates how relationships and social networks can be useful resources when faced with a challenge. By adhering to safety and health rules, they ensure that they may continue to sell various tourism products and services to visiting tourists, thereby supporting their livelihood.



**Figure 3.** Survival strategy in maintaining business of informal sector workers in the tourism industry

A survival plan for informal sector workers in Bali's tourism attractions can be outlined using an analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Table 4 lists four important items carried out by informal sector workers at Bali's tourism destinations: (1) Managing economic capital, (2) Increasing social capital, (3) Using expertise and talents, and (4) Understanding government policies.

The research of tourist locations in Bali, particularly in terms of pandemic survival techniques, necessitates a thorough approach. This strategy entails financial management, building social capital, employing talents and knowledge, and comprehending government policies. Popular tourist locations including as Kintamani (Batur Tengah Village), Ubud, Tanah Lot, and Kuta Beach have well-established finance management systems. Being in well-known tourist locations correlates with significant business competition, necessitating rigorous budget management to assure long-term viability in the face of declining tourist numbers.

Penglipuran Village, Wanagiri Village, and Lovina Beach are well-known for their distinct cultures. These locations build social capital through community activities, enhancing local engagement and preserving local wisdom, making them more appealing as tourist attractions. During the pandemic, arts and crafts communities in Ubud, Bedugul, and Penglipuran Village concentrated on marketing local craft products online or developing new skills relevant to current tourism trends. Each destination may take a different approach based on its specific resources, qualities, and problems.

**Table 4.** Strategies implementation at the nine regencies

No	Regency	Tourist Location	Implementation Strategies			
			1	2	3	4
1	Bangli	Batur Tengah Village				
		Penglipuran Village				
2	Gianyar	Ubud Village				
		Tirta Empul				
		Siyut Beach				
3	Klungkung	Kertagosa				
		Kusamba Beach				
4	Karangasem	Besakih Temple				
		Tulamben Beach				
5	Tabanan	Tanah Lot				
		Bedugul				
6	Jembrana	Medewi Beach				
		Baluk Rening Beach				
		Rambut Siwi				
		Perancak Beach				
7	Buleleng	Lovina Beach				
		Wanagiri				
		Penimbangan Beach				
8	Badung	Kuta Beach				
		Canggu Beach				
9	Denpasar	Sanur Beach				
		Sindhu Beach				
		Serangan Beach				

## Conclusion

The study identifies critical survival measures for informal sector workers in the tourism industry during the COVID-19 epidemic. These techniques include managing financial and material capital by prioritizing expenses, lowering operational costs, and practicing prudent financial management, all of which are critical during times of income loss. Workers in the informal sector are encouraged to make the most use of their current resources in order to meet new challenges. Improving communication skills is critical to maintaining connections with customers, business partners, and other stakeholders. Compliance with regulations governing corporate operations, health protocols, and permits is critical for business continuity. Utilizing networks, forming collaborations, and keeping positive relationships with many stakeholders are critical to sustaining business during difficult times.

These ideas offer a road map for resilience and adaptation for Bali's informal sector workers, who are critical to the local tourism industry. Emphasizing resource optimization and financial management can result in more sustainable business strategies. The emphasis on social capital highlights the value of community and collaborative efforts in the tourism industry. However, the research's scope may be limited, as it focuses largely on the informal sector, which may not reflect the larger dynamics of Bali's tourism economy. In the absence of quantitative data to measure the impact of these tactics, the study may rely on qualitative assessments. The findings are particularly pertinent to the epidemic situation and may not be completely applicable to regular situations.

Further research should look into how these techniques affect the long-term stability of the informal sector economy. Comparative studies of the informal and formal sectors of tourism could reveal unique difficulties and answers. Furthermore, studying the evolution of these tactics post-pandemic and their implementation in different economic conditions would be valuable. Expanding the research to include other locations could provide a more complete knowledge of the tourism industry's characteristics.

## Recommendations

The government may provide financial aid and incentive programs for informal sector workers in the tourism business affected by the pandemic. This financial assistance can help businesses preserve liquidity and cover fundamental necessities during difficult times. The government can also provide training and education programs to improve the skills and knowledge of informal sector workers in the tourism industry. These programs can help them adapt to changing situations, increase service quality, and compete more effectively. Furthermore, the government might encourage collaboration among informal sector workers, tourism associations, and educational institutions to develop effective programs and strategies for dealing with the pandemic's effects.

Academics are expected to train and consult informal sector workers on topics such as company innovation, financial management, digital marketing, and technology use. Academics can help informal sector workers enhance their skills in managing firms throughout the pandemic. Academics can also do study and analysis on market trends, customer behaviour, and developments in the tourism business throughout the pandemic period. The findings of these studies may provide useful insights for informal sector workers, allowing them to make better informed business decisions.

Enhancing the quality of products and services is essential for informal sector workers to adjust to new circumstances and strengthen their competitiveness. Establishing collaboration and networking with pertinent parties might create fresh company prospects and offer assistance in tackling obstacles. Collaborating with business partners to exchange experiences and information can serve as a valuable source of inspiration and knowledge acquisition. Utilizing social media, internet, and e-commerce platforms is crucial for broadening market penetration. Informal sector workers must engage in proactive online promotion of their enterprises to attract new customers, particularly for the purpose of expanding their market by indirectly targeting consumers.

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