

Regenerative Pathways in Community-Led Tourism: A Photovoice Study of Vanaprastha Tourism Practice in Binyan Forest, Bali

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the potential of Bali's Binyan Forest as a prototype for Vanaprastha Tourism—a holistic model rooted in Balinese Hindu philosophy that integrates ecotourism, wellness, and spiritual reflection. Despite its proximity to the Batur UNESCO Global Geopark and its rich biodiversity, the forest remains underdeveloped as a community-led tourism destination. To explore this potential, the research employed a participatory photovoice methodology, engaging local youth to capture photographs and narratives that reflect the forest's ecological, spiritual, and cultural significance. Data were analyzed thematically, combining visual and narrative evidence to highlight community perspectives. The findings reveal that Binyan Forest embodies key assets—such as canopy shade, sacred springs, gentle slopes, and tranquil spaces—that correspond to the seven core elements of Vanaprastha Tourism. Community accounts further emphasized the forest's capacity for healing, contemplation, and gentle exercise, while also identifying management challenges including waste and trail erosion. The study's originality lies in linking the Vanaprastha framework with participatory action research, offering a transferable methodology for regenerative destination development. It demonstrates how meaningful tourism experiences can emerge from ecological preservation, cultural respect, and community voice rather than from constructed attractions or heavy infrastructure.

Keywords: Bali; Community-led Tourism; Photovoice Methodology; Regenerative Tourism; Regenerative Tourism.

1. Introduction

Tourism holds a vital role for Indonesia, particularly for Bali. As a strategic economic sector, tourism has proven its ability to stimulate regional development, increase national income, create employment opportunities, and strengthen Indonesia's positive image on the international stage (Kiswantoro & Sugiarto, 2023). For decades, Bali has been the main icon of Indonesian tourism and a leading world destination due to its stunning natural landscapes, unique culture, living traditions, and the hospitality of its people (Astuti et al., 2024). Beyond its economic contributions, tourism also plays a crucial role in preserving local culture, strengthening national identity, and fostering cross-cultural understanding through harmonious interactions (Terkenli & Georgoula, 2021; Astuti et al., 2024).

In recent years, global developments have revealed significant shifts in tourism trends, driven by a growing awareness of environmental sustainability, work-life balance, and social responsibility. Travelers increasingly seek destinations that offer authentic, environmentally friendly experiences with direct benefits for local communities. This shift encourages the emergence of new tourism models grounded in sustainability principles (UNWTO, 2024; Mondal & Samaddar, 2022; Fadli et al., 2022).

One of the concepts emerging in response to these changing trends is Vanaprastha Tourism. Etymologically, the term Vanaprastha originates from Hindu philosophy, describing a stage of life when an individual gradually withdraws from worldly engagements to live closer to nature in pursuit of inner peace, rejuvenation, and spiritual enlightenment

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Suyasa et al., 2023). Applied in tourism, Vanaprastha represents a model that integrates ecotourism, wellness tourism, and forest bathing practices (*shinrin-yoku*) with the philosophical and spiritual values of Balinese tradition. It offers tourists more than leisure: opportunities for spiritual exploration, mental restoration, and a deeper awareness of harmony between humans and nature (Suyasa et al., 2023).

To implement Vanaprastha Tourism, seven core elements need to be present within a destination: (1) visit – ensuring that tourist activities generate educational, spiritual, and environmental value; (2) nature – prioritizing natural attractions while preserving sustainability; (3) forest – emphasizing natural forests as spaces for meditation, spiritual practices, and forest bathing; (4) healing – offering physical, mental, and spiritual refreshment; (5) culture – highlighting local traditions, wisdom, and philosophy as authentic experiences; (6) exercise – providing light activities such as yoga, trekking, or meditation to improve well-being; and (7) sustainable economy – ensuring that the local community directly benefits from tourism activities in ways that support social, cultural, and economic harmony (Suyasa et al., 2023, 2024a, 2024b).

Binyan Forest in Kintamani holds strong potential to be developed into such a holistic tourism destination, combining health, spirituality, and environmental conservation. However, this potential remains largely untapped. To explore it more comprehensively, this study adopts the photovoice method. This participatory research approach engages local community members in capturing and narrating aspects of the forest relevant to Vanaprastha Tourism. By analyzing photos and narratives from both residents and potential visitors, this research aims to create a holistic understanding of Binyan Forest's attractions and to provide a foundation for its sustainable development as a Vanaprastha Tourism site. While existing studies on sustainable and wellness tourism in Bali have focused on ecotourism, cultural heritage, and community-based initiatives, little attention has been given to holistic tourism models that integrate spiritual philosophy with empirical community participation methods. Moreover, research applying photovoice in Indonesian tourism contexts remains scarce. This study, therefore, introduces an innovative approach by combining the concept of Vanaprastha Tourism with the photovoice method, allowing local voices and visual narratives to shape the understanding of holistic tourism potential in Binyan Forest, a conservation area within the UNESCO Global Geopark. On the other hand, this study aims to address these gaps by exploring how the photovoice method can uncover the comprehensive tourism opportunities of Binyan Forest from the perspectives of local community members and prospective visitors. By doing so, the research not only enriches the conceptual development of Vanaprastha Tourism but also provides practical insights for sustainable and community-driven destination planning.

Research Problems

This study seeks to explore the potential of Binyan Forest as a holistic tourism destination and to examine how the photovoice method can reveal its ecotourism, health, and spiritual values. Specifically, the study aims to identify the potential of Binyan Forest for development as a holistic tourism destination and to understand how photovoice can be used to capture and communicate the ecotourism, health, and spiritual values of the forest.

Research Objectives

This study aims to assess the potential of Binyan Forest as a holistic tourism destination that integrates aspects of nature, wellness, and spirituality. In addition, the study aims to analyze the results of the photovoice method to identify elements of Binyan Forest that are relevant to the concept of Vanaprastha Tourism.

Research Benefit

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the literature on the application of the photovoice approach in the development of holistic tourism, particularly in tropical forest areas. Practically, the study is expected to provide guidance for forest management and support the establishment and development of tourism awareness groups (POKDARWIS) within local communities.

2. Literature Review

Holistic Tourism

Holistic tourism is understood as an approach that integrates physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions into a single travel experience (Manjula et al., 2024; Dillette, 2021). Unlike conventional tourism, which often emphasizes leisure and entertainment, holistic tourism seeks to provide meaningful experiences that contribute to long-term well-being. Activities such as yoga, meditation, wellness retreats, and spiritual ceremonies are commonly included to foster personal growth and life balance.

Bali presents a particularly strong foundation for the development of holistic tourism. The island's unique blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and spiritual traditions—rooted in the Tri Hita Karana philosophy of harmony among people, nature, and the divine—provides a rich environment for holistic experiences (Sari, 2024; Suyasa et al., 2024a; Susanti, 2022; Dini & Pencarelli, 2021). Practices such as *melukat* (ritual purification), open-air yoga, and spa treatments with local herbal remedies exemplify how Bali combines wellness and spirituality with cultural authenticity. Scholars also highlight that Bali's holistic tourism model resonates with growing global demand for destinations that emphasize sustainability, authenticity, and meaningful engagement with local communities (UNWTO, 2024; Fadli et al., 2022). Thus, holistic tourism in Bali is more than a form of leisure, it represents an integrated lifestyle experience that contributes to individual well-being while reinforcing cultural continuity and ecological stewardship.

Vanaprastha Tourism

The concept of Vanaprastha originates in Balinese Hindu philosophy, referring to a stage of life where individuals gradually detach from worldly concerns and retreat to nature in search of peace, reflection, and enlightenment (Suyasa et al., 2023; 2024). In a tourism context, Vanaprastha is reinterpreted as a model that integrates ecotourism, wellness, forest bathing (*shinrin-yoku*), and spiritual enrichment, offering a distinctive form of holistic travel. While *shinrin-yoku* in Japan emphasizes mindful interaction with forests to improve physical and mental health (Li, 2022; Kotera et al., 2022), Vanaprastha Tourism adds a deeper cultural and spiritual dimension. It combines natural immersion with rituals, yoga, meditation, and cultural practices rooted in Balinese tradition. As such, Vanaprastha Tourism represents not only a wellness-oriented retreat but also a transformative journey of spiritual reflection and cultural learning (Doran-Sherlock, 2023).

This integration of ecological, wellness, and spiritual dimensions positions Vanaprastha Tourism as a novel response to global challenges in sustainability, mental health, and cultural preservation. However, empirical applications of this model remain limited, particularly in Southeast Asia, highlighting the need for case studies that contextualize its implementation.

Photovoice in Tourism Research

Photovoice is a participatory qualitative method that empowers participants to document their lived experiences through photography and narrative (Kingsbury, 2021; Davis & Mitchell, 2022). By combining visual and textual data, it reveals perspectives that may remain hidden in conventional interviews or surveys. Photovoice also facilitates community empowerment, as participants become co-researchers who identify problems, articulate aspirations, and propose solutions.

In tourism research, photovoice has gained recognition for its ability to capture authentic experiences of both visitors and host communities. Studies demonstrate that it can uncover hidden cultural meanings, highlight sustainability challenges, and provide actionable insights for policy-making and community-based tourism initiatives (Kingsbury, 2021; Davis & Mitchell, 2022). Yet, its application remains relatively scarce in Indonesian tourism studies, where traditional qualitative methods dominate.

The present study builds on this methodological gap by applying photovoice to the context of Binyan Forest. Through visual storytelling and local narratives, photovoice offers a nuanced understanding of the ecological, cultural, and spiritual values of the forest, while also amplifying community voices in tourism development.

UNESCO Global Geopark and Binyan Forest

The Batur UNESCO Global Geopark, established in 2012, is Indonesia's first geopark recognized for its unique volcanic landscape and cultural significance (UNESCO, 2022). It integrates geological research, environmental conservation, and sustainable tourism (Agastya & Paripurno, 2024). The conservation forests surrounding the Batur caldera play a crucial ecological role as biodiversity reserves and water catchment areas while also serving as cultural and spiritual landscapes (Wiramatika et al., 2021; Astarini et al., 2024).

Within this geopark, Binyan Forest in Buahon Village stands out as an area of ecological richness and cultural heritage. Its natural springs, sacred sites, and pristine forest cover align strongly with the principles of Vanaprastha Tourism. However, the area has yet to be fully developed for tourism, and no structured Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) has been established to manage it. This research, therefore, situates Binyan Forest as a unique case study within the geopark framework to explore how holistic tourism models can be operationalized in a community-driven and sustainable way. To consolidate these insights, Table 1 summarizes the key concepts drawn from the literature, outlines their central focus,

and highlights their specific relevance to this study of Binyan Forest.

Table 1. Key Concepts in the Literature and Their Relevance to This Study

Concept / Framework	Focus in Literature	Key References (APA 7th)	Relevance to This Study
Holistic Tourism	Integrates physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions for well-being.	Manjula et al. (2024); Dillette (2021); Sari (2024); Dini & Pencarelli (2021)	Establishes the foundation for positioning Bali and Binyan Forest as a holistic destination.
Vanaprastha Tourism	Derived from Hindu philosophy; combines ecotourism, wellness, forest bathing, and spirituality.	Suyasa et al. (2023, 2024); Li (2022); Kotera et al. (2022); Doran-Sherlock (2023)	Provides the conceptual lens for developing Binyan Forest as a tourism model grounded in philosophy and culture.
Shinrin-yoku (Forest Bathing)	Japanese practice of mindful immersion in forests to enhance health and relaxation.	Li (2022); Kotera et al. (2022)	Comparative framework highlighting similarities and differences with Vanaprastha Tourism.
Photovoice Method	Participatory research using photography and narratives; empowers community voices.	Kingsbury (2021); Davis & Mitchell (2022)	Core methodology to capture community and visitor perspectives in Binyan Forest.
UNESCO Global Geopark	Integrates conservation, research, and sustainable tourism in geologically significant areas.	UNESCO (2022); Agastya & Paripurno (2024); Wiramatika et al. (2021); Astarini et al. (2023)	Frames Binyan Forest within a globally recognized sustainability and conservation agenda.

Note: Author Compilation

While Table 1 provides a structured synthesis of the key concepts, a visual diagram is also necessary to illustrate the interconnection of these ideas. The following visual representation not only strengthens the theoretical grounding of the research but also guides readers in understanding how different strands of literature converge to support the study’s novelty and empirical focus.

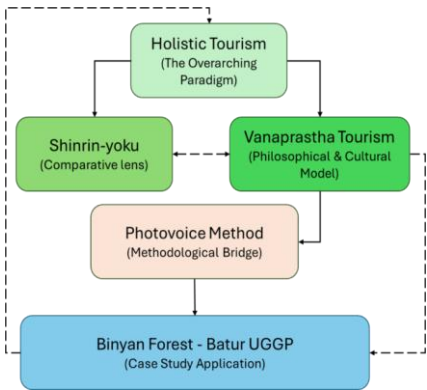


Figure 1. The Conceptual framework Diagram

The above diagram maps a primary, top-down pathway—from Holistic Tourism to Vanaprastha Tourism, operationalized through Photovoice, and applied in the Binyan Forest case. It also marks non-primary links: a bidirectional comparative tie between shinrin-yoku and Vanaprastha, and upward feedback loops from the case study back to Vanaprastha and, ultimately, to Holistic Tourism for theoretical refinement.

3. Research Method

Research Design Overview

Steered by the Conceptual Framework (refer to Figure 1) and the literature synthesis (see Table 1), this study employs an empirical qualitative design with a participatory orientation using the photovoice method. The overarching paradigm is Holistic Tourism, with Vanaprastha Tourism as the principal theoretical lens and shinrin-yoku serving as a comparative lens—photovoice functions as the methodological bridge from theory to empirical application in the Binyan Forest case.

To ensure procedural transparency, the research design is organized into two stages, progressing from preparation and capacity building (Stage 1) to data generation, interpretation, and reporting (Stage 2). A visual summary of the workflow and feedback loops is presented in Figure 2 below:

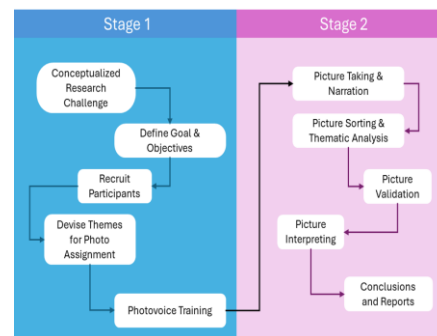


Figure 2. Vanaprastha Tourism Photovoice Research Design

The figure 2 The figure presents a staged workflow with feedback loops: Stage 1 (preparation and capacity building) proceeds to Stage 2 (data generation, interpretation, and reporting). Loops from Picture Taking & Narration → Sorting & Thematic Analysis and from Validation ↔ Interpreting indicate iterative refinement. See Figure 1 for the theory-to-method pathway and Table 1 for the literature synthesis supporting the step design.

Stage 1: Preparation and Capacity Building

- Conceptualize the Research Challenge. We clarified the problem context and aligned it with the seven elements of Vanaprastha Tourism articulated in the framework (see *Figure 1; Table 1*).
- Define Goals and Objectives. We specified aims and research questions suitable for an empirical qualitative design.
- Recruit Participants. Using purposive sampling, we invited 11 local youth (Pokdarwis) meeting inclusion criteria (residence, forest familiarity, willingness to photograph and discuss, ability to caption images).
- Devise Themes for the Photo Assignment. Drawing on the framework, we outlined prompts for accessibility/visit, forest structure, healing spaces, sacred sites, cultural practices, gentle exercise areas, and livelihood/CBT prospects.
- Photovoice Training. We conducted a short, ethics-embedded workshop covering safe and culturally sensitive image capture, captioning, and consent procedures.

Note: Steps (a)–(e) correspond to the left (blue) panel of Figure 2 (Stage 1).

Stage 2: Data Generation, Interpretation, and Reporting

- Picture Taking and Narration. Over ~1 week, each participant captured 8–15 photographs and produced brief narrative captions linked to the assignment themes.
- Picture Sorting and Thematic Analysis. Participants pre-sorted images; the research team coded visual/textual units and developed provisional categories.
- Picture Validation (Member Checking). Provisional themes were returned to participants for confirmation, correction, or elaboration.
- Picture Interpreting (FGD). In facilitated group discussions, participants presented selected images, read captions, and co-interpreted meanings using SHOWeD-style prompts; this step formalized the collective sense-making process and refined the themes.
- Conclusions and Reports. We integrated validated themes into design implications for Vanaprastha Tourism in Binyan Forest and prepared the final report.

Note: Steps (a)–(e) map to the right (violet) panel of Figure 3.2 (Stage 2). The diagram also depicts feedback loops from “Picture Taking & Narration” to “Sorting & Thematic Analysis” and from “Validation” back to “Interpreting,” which we used iteratively during analysis.

The Site Context and Participants

The research site is located in Banjar Binyan Forest, Buahon Village, Kintamani District, Bangli Regency, Bali. Located within the Batur UNESCO Global Geopark, 1.4km away from

Geopark Museum. the site features volcanic geomorphology, sacred springs, and intact forest cover—attributes that align with the seven elements of Vanaprastha Tourism (visit, nature, forest, healing, culture, exercise, and sustainable economy) and easily accessible from Geopark icon of Batur Volcano/Geopark Museum.



Figure 3. Map showing the location and distance of Binyan Forest.

Participants were 11 local youth forming the emerging tourism awareness group (in Bahasa Indonesia: Kelompok Sadar Wisata-Pokdarwis) in Banjar Binyan. A purposive sampling strategy was employed with inclusion criteria:

- permanent residence in Buahian;
- familiarity with the forest environment;
- willingness to produce photographs and participate in group discussion; and
- ability to provide brief captions for images.

The sample size is appropriate for photovoice because the method privileges depth of narrative, iterative reflection, and collective interpretation over statistical representation.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

Data for this study were generated through an integrated set of instruments designed to elicit both visual and textual accounts of the forest. Participants produced photographs with smartphones or digital cameras that documented elements salient to Vanaprastha Tourism—such as site access, large or shaded trees, flat resting areas, understory and bushes, springs, and sacred or ritual spaces. Each image was paired with a participant-authored caption and short narrative that recorded what was depicted, where it was taken, and why it mattered for holistic tourism (ecological, wellness, spiritual, or cultural values). To scaffold collective interpretation, facilitated discussion guides drew on SHOWeD prompts—what do you See, what is Happening, how does this relate to our lives, Why does this exist, and what can we Do—ensuring that personal observations translated into shared meanings. Throughout all activities, the researcher-maintained field notes that captured contextual descriptions, nonverbal cues, and reflexive memos to preserve the situational richness of the data collection.

Data collection unfolded as a coherent, participatory workflow (see Figure 3.2). The process began with an orientation and ethics briefing in which the research team explained the study's aims, procedures, and data rights, and obtained written informed consent. A short training session clarified how to capture images that were relevant to the conceptual framework and how to compose concise, descriptive captions, with explicit guidance on cultural sensitivity and privacy (e.g., avoiding identifiable faces without permission and approaching sacred sites respectfully).

Following the briefing, participants undertook a photovoice assignment over approximately one week. During this period, each participant created a portfolio of 8–10 photographs that expressed perceived holistic values of the Binyan Forest. After the field period, participants reviewed their portfolios. They independently selected 3–5 images for group discussion, preparing captions that specified the object, place, and intended meaning of each photograph while flagging any potentially sensitive content for additional review.

Interpretation proceeded through one or more facilitated group discussions. In these sessions, participants presented their selected images, read their captions aloud, and elaborated their narratives using the SHOWeD prompts. The discussions served as a co-interpretive space in which individual perspectives converged into shared understandings, enabling the emergence of thematic patterns and concrete priorities for stewardship and tourism design. This explicit incorporation of the focus group as an interpretive step addresses a common limitation in photovoice reports that rely solely on document analysis. Finally, preliminary themes synthesized by the research team were returned to participants for member checking. Participants confirmed the accuracy of interpretations, added clarifications, or proposed revisions, after which the research team consolidated the themes and integrated them into the final analysis. This iterative sequence—from image creation and narration, through collective interpretation, to participant validation—ensured that the resulting

account was both empirically grounded and authentically reflective of community perspectives.

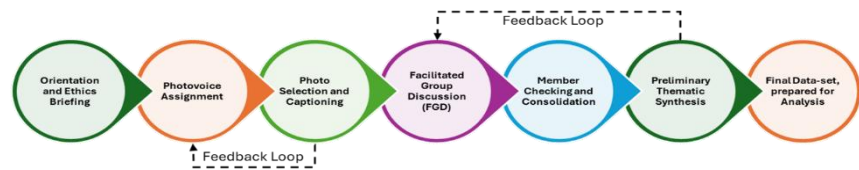


Figure 4. Data Collection Procedures

Figure Note: The primary sequence (solid arrows) proceeds: (1) Orientation & Ethics (+ training) → (2) Photovoice Assignment → (3) Photo Selection & Captioning → (4) Facilitated Group Discussion (SHOWed prompts) → (5) Preliminary Thematic Synthesis → (6) Member Checking & Consolidation → (7) Final Dataset Prepared for Analysis. Dashed arrows indicate iterative feedback: (3) may loop back to (2) for additional images; (6) may loop back to (4) for clarification. Instruments captured across all steps include participant photographs, captions/narratives, and researcher field notes.

Data Analysis

Photovoice materials were examined using a qualitative descriptive orientation and a thematic procedure. The analysis aimed to capture how participants perceived Binyan Forest and to identify opportunities and constraints for destination development aligned with the study's conceptual pathway (Holistic Tourism → Vanaprastha Tourism → Photovoice → Case Study; see Figure 3.1) and staged research design (Figure 3.2). Themes were derived from recurring patterns across two forms of evidence: (a) the visual content of photographs and (b) the textual content of accompanying captions or brief narratives.

The unit of analysis was a photovoice unit, defined as a photograph paired with its caption or narrative. Each unit received a unique identifier and was cataloged in a master matrix that linked the image file, caption text, participant pseudonym, and contextual notes (including location and observable conditions). Captions were lightly edited for clarity while preserving meaning. This organization enabled systematic comparison between and across participants.

The coding progressed as a successive, iterative sequence (see the analysis-cycle figure), beginning with close familiarization and systematic organization of the corpus. Photographs and their accompanying captions were imported into a master matrix and provisionally grouped by topical features that recur in the site: accessible entry points, large or shady trees, quiet flat areas, understory/bushes, springs, and sacred places. For each photovoice defined as a photograph paired with its caption, the participant's intended meaning was summarized to establish an initial map of the material and to anchor later comparisons across contributors and micro-sites.

Open coding followed, applied to every photovoice unit to mark key ideas and repeat expressions that signaled value or concern (e.g., calm/quiet, purifying water, easy entry, healing, safety, litter/erosion). Codes captured both the descriptive dimension (what is depicted) and the interpretive dimension (why it matters—ecological, wellness, spiritual, cultural). A living codebook was maintained so that definitions and inclusion/exclusion rules could be clarified as additional cases accumulated.

Through axial/thematic development, related codes were clustered into candidate themes that articulated opportunities (e.g., healing spaces, gentle-exercise areas, sacred water sites, forest immersion, visitor access and wayfinding) alongside cross-cutting constraints (e.g., waste, trail erosion, unclear signage). Boundaries and labels were refined via constant comparison across participants and locations, with negative-case analysis used to test whether emerging claims accommodated disconfirming evidence. Throughout, triangulation within units—examining convergence between image content and caption meaning—served as an internal check on interpretive drift.

Selective integration then assembled the thematic structure into a coherent account by tracing an explicit chain of evidence—image → caption/narrative → theme → design/management implication—and by aligning each theme with the seven elements of Vanaprastha Tourism (visit, nature, forest, healing, culture, exercise, sustainable economy). Where integration exposed ambiguities, the process deliberately looped back: themes were tightened and, when needed, earlier codes were revisited and adjusted. Iteration continued until thematic sufficiency was reached, that is, when additional units no longer added new properties to the themes. An audit trail (codebook versions, decision notes, participant × theme matrices) and brief reflexive memos documented key interpretive moves, supporting transparency and reproducibility of the analytic pathway.

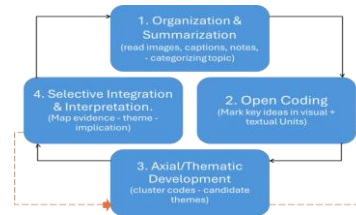


Figure 5. Diagram of Coding Procedure (Successive, Iterative Cycles)

Unlike some photovoice designs that incorporate focus group discussions (FGD) for interpretive depth, the present analysis relied directly on participant images and narratives. Interpretations therefore remained close to participants' own words and visuals. To balance the absence of FGD, emphasis was placed on (a) seeking patterns across multiple photovoice units, (b) close reading of contextual cues within the images, and (c) cross-checks between visual and textual evidence.

Analytic rigor was supported through several guardrails: triangulation within units (consistency between an image and its caption); collaborative review (codes and themes examined by more than one analyst and reconciled with an audit trail); reflexive memoing (assumptions, turning points, and decision rationales recorded during coding); and authenticity (participant statements quoted, with minor copy edits, alongside representative images). Analysis concluded at thematic sufficiency once additional units no longer added properties to themes. Thick description accompanies each theme to aid judgments about transferability.

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Table 2. Analytic Concern on the Absence of FGD and the Rigor & Trustworthiness Measures

Analytic Concern	Typical Photovoice with FGD (Purpose)	Present Study (No FGD) – Approach	Rigor Guardrails Used	How Adequacy Is Demonstrated in the Manuscript
Interpretive depth	Joint meaning-making; group elaboration of images	Meanings derived directly from image-caption pairs; close reading of contextual cues in photos	Triangulation within units (image ↔ caption ↔ field notes)	Chain of evidence per theme (image → caption → theme → implication) in Results/Discussion
Consensus building	Participants negotiate labels and priorities	Theme labels refined via collaborative analyst review (not participant debate)	Peer debriefing /Collaborative review; codebook versioning	Codebook updates and rationale noted in the audit trail (Methods: Rigor)
Validation of themes	Member checking during/after FGD	Validation through pattern consistency across units and participants	Pattern seeking across units; negative-case analysis	Examples of convergent cases; disclosure of disconfirming cases that refined themes
Risk of researcher bias	Mitigated by participants challenging the researcher in discussion	Mitigated by reflexive memoing and explicit decision logs	Reflexive memos; audit trail (decision log, matrices)	Cited memos/decisions; reference to participant × theme coverage matrix

Participant voice authenticity	Voices surfaced in group talk and transcripts	Voices preserved in original captions and verbatim quotes	Authenticity principle (minimal edits; verbatim excerpts)	Representative quotations paired with images in Results
Contextualization of images	Context co-constructed in group dialogue	Context captured via field notes and captioned “object–meaning–place”	Field-note triangulation; caption templates	Location/condition details embedded in captions and theme narratives
Stopping rule (saturation)	Often reached when FGD yields no new insights	Reached when additional units add no new properties	Thematic sufficiency criterion	Explicit sufficiency statement in Methods (Data Analysis)
Analytic Concern	Typical Photovoice with FGD (Purpose)	Present Study (No FGD) – Approach	Rigor Guardrails Used	How Adequacy Is Demonstrated in the Manuscript
Transparency & transferability	Discussion transcripts plus researcher account	Transparent claim–evidence map; thick description per theme	Audit trail; thick description	Cross-referenced figures/tables; contextual details for each theme

Note: Author Compilation

The table clarifies how interpretive depth, validation, and transparency were secured without focus group discussions (FGD), which are commonly used in photovoice to co-construct meaning and consensus. In this study, meanings were derived directly from image–caption pairs, supported by careful reading of visual context and field notes. Rigor was maintained through a set of guardrails: triangulation within units (aligning image, caption, and context), collaborative analyst review with a versioned codebook, and negative-case analysis to challenge emerging themes. Reflexive memos and an audit trail (decision log, participant $\times$ theme matrices) documented interpretive moves, while thematic sufficiency provided a clear stopping rule when additional units no longer added properties to themes. Authenticity was preserved by pairing representative images with minimally edited participant quotations, and thick description supplied the contextual detail needed for readers to judge transferability. Together, these measures substitute for FGD’s consensus-building function by demonstrating pattern consistency, a transparent claim–evidence map, and cross-referenced reporting, thereby sustaining credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the findings.

4. Research Results and Discussion

Overview of Findings

The photovoice corpus—comprising images and accompanying captions/narratives produced by local youth—reveals a coherent picture of Binyan Forest as a setting where immersion in nature, restoration, and cultural meaning is co-located. Across participants, photographs most frequently depict (a) canopy shade and quiet flat areas suitable for pausing, reflection, or light movement; (b) springs and sacred places associated with purification and respect; (c) clear access points and gentle slopes that enable multi-age visitation; and (d) textural details of understory, roots, and leaf litter that signal an intact forest floor. Captions attach meaning to these scenes through recurring terms such as calm, cool, purifying water, easy entry, quiet place, stretching/yoga, and respect for sacred zones. This visual–textual pairing positions Binyan Forest as a candidate Vanaprastha destination where wellness, contemplation, and local wisdom can be experienced without heavy infrastructure (see Table 1 for conceptual anchors; Figure 1 for the theory-to-application pathway).

A thematic map emerges that aligns closely with the seven Vanaprastha elements: Visit (access and visitor readiness), Nature (geo-ecological qualities), Forest (canopy structure and immersion), Healing (restorative spaces), Exercise (gentle movement), Culture (sacred sites and customary ethics), and Sustainable Economy (community roles and livelihood aspirations). Within this map, several cross-cutting risks recur—most notably litter accumulation, incipient trail erosion from motor use, and limited wayfinding—which, if unattended, could erode the very qualities participants value. The pattern suggests that low-cost, light-touch management decisions (routing, signage, litter control) will have disproportionate benefits for visitor experience and ecological integrity.

Evidence distribution indicates both convergence and functional divergence. Convergence is strong around shaded flats near the forest edge and around water sources: these locales are repeatedly framed as healing and mindful spaces. Divergence appears in preferred settings for stillness some participants gravitate toward semi-open vantage points with long views, whereas others favor deeper, enclosed “rooms” created by the canopy. Such variation suggests a zoning logic that accommodates quiet contemplation, gentle walks, and culture-guided visitation without fragmenting the forest core (see Figure 2 for the staged design implications carried forward in the analysis).

The corpus also documents visitor feasibility through images of approachable entrances, modest slopes, and natural congregation nodes, implying readiness for short, structured experiences and potential linkage to Batur UNESCO Global Geopark itineraries. Conversely, photographs of discarded packaging and shallow ruts indicate where preventive care is needed: waste points at nodes (not along trails), selective trail hardening or re-routing, and minimal yet legible direction cues.

Taken together, the overview portrays Binyan Forest as a coherent, multifaceted landscape: nature immersion (Forest, Nature) underpins restorative and mindful practices (Healing, Exercise) within a living cultural framework (Culture), while community aspirations (Sustainable Economy) guide the site toward community-led, low-impact operations. The sections that follow (Section 4.2) unpack each theme in a consistent chain: descriptive evidence → thematic interpretation → Vanaprastha-aligned implication—so that readers can track how recommendations arise directly from the images and narratives captured in the field.

Thematic Findings

Visit (Access and Visitor Readiness)

Evidence: Photographs show road access, footpaths, and gently sloping entrances.



Figure 6. Easy to reach, appropriate for all ages and suitable for a first-stop orientation.

Interpretation. The forest is visitor-ready for short, structured experiences and can serve as a complementary site linked to the Batur UNESCO Global Geopark. Implications. Provide inclusive wayfinding (legible signage, simple maps), define safe entry/exit nodes, and coordinate scheduling with Geopark routes to avoid peak crowding.

Nature (Geological Landscape and Ecology)

Evidence. Images highlight forest contours, and vegetation patterns that align with geomorphology.



Figure 7. reading Geology in The Living Landscape

Interpretation. The site offers geo-ecological value suited to interpretive education and slow-paced observation. Implications. Develop interpretive trails connecting geology and biodiversity; include low-impact stops for observation and short talks without altering the natural character. Interpretation. The forest is visitor-ready for short, structured experiences and can serve as a complementary site linked to the Batur UNESCO Global Geopark.

Forest (Canopy Structure and Immersion)

Evidence. Tall trunks, layered canopy, filtered light, and naturally enclosed “rooms” appear repeatedly.



Figure 8. natural “room” for unhurried immersion

Interpretation. The forest supports immersion and contemplative experiences that anchor the Vanaprastha notion of being present with nature. Implications. Designate quiet zones and etiquette (low noise, limited group size), maintain buffers around core stands, and avoid infrastructure that fragments canopy continuity.

Healing (Restorative and Reflective Spaces)

Evidence. Shaded flats, cool air, water sounds, and images of pausing or breathing are linked to captions such as “calming,” “for meditation,” and “to recover from stress. Interpretation. The forest contains healing spaces that visitors associate with restoration of attention and mood. Implications. Mark discreet mindfulness points (e.g., “breathe,” “listen”), keep them free of permanent structures, and set visitor-flow thresholds to preserve quiet.



Figure 9. stillness and a natural seat of roots, for breathing and recovery

Exercise (Gentle Movement and Well-Being)

Evidence. Photographs capture wide flats and short, gentle slopes; captions mention stretching, yoga, light walks, and morning routines.



Figure 10. light Walk, Stretching, Read or simply still

Interpretation. Opportunities exist for low-impact movement that complements reflective practices. Implications. Define gentle-trek loops and small practice areas; stabilize vulnerable trail segments; adopt low-signage solutions that remain legible without visual clutter.

Culture (Sacred Sites and Local Wisdom)

Evidence. Springs, shrines, heritage trees, and offerings are shown with captions invoking purification, respect, and customary boundaries.



Figure 11. Offerings and waterflow as a living tradition

Interpretation. The forest functions as a living cultural landscape where spiritual values are active and guide behavior. Implications. Co-develop cultural protocols and storylines with local custodians; protect sacred zones from crowding or commercial overuse; pair interpretive messages with gentle reminders about appropriate conduct.

Sustainable Economy (Community Role and Livelihoods)

Evidence. Captions articulate aspirations for local guiding, small-scale products, and visitor services that do not harm the forest.



Figure 12. Community development to strengthen stewardship and tourism services

Interpretation. A community-based model aligns livelihoods with conservation and strengthens stewardship. Implications. Implement community-based tourism arrangements (training youth guides, clear revenue-sharing), curate local products consistent with site values, and set limits on group size and activity types to safeguard ecological and cultural integrity.

Discussion: Linking Findings to the Vanaprastha Framework

This section interprets the results through the lens of the seven Vanaprastha elements—visit, nature, forest, healing, culture, exercise, and sustainable economy—and translates the evidence into design, management, and governance implications suited to a geopark forest. The argument proceeds from interpretation to application, followed by trade-offs, an implementation roadmap, monitoring indicators, and contributions.

Interpretation vis-à-vis the Framework

Visual-textual evidence indicates that meaningful experience in Binyan Forest is produced by the co-location of quiet shade, sacred water, gentle movement, and unobtrusive access. Photographs and captions converge on (a) approachable entry points and modest slopes (visit), (b) geo-ecological qualities and intact understory (nature), (c) layered canopy creating “natural rooms” for immersion (forest), (d) shaded flats and water soundscapes associated with calm and recovery (healing), (e) spaces suitable for stretching, yoga, and short walks (exercise), (f) springs and shrines shaping respectful conduct (culture), and (g) aspirations for community-led guiding and small services (sustainable economy). These patterns suggest that destination distinctiveness rests on low-intensity, co-located practices, not on built attractions (cf. Table 3.1; Figures 3.1–2).

Design and Management Principles (Evidence → Action)

Findings translate into a set of light-touch, place-sensitive principles:

- Zoning and etiquette: designate quiet zones near shaded flats and sacred waters; set group-size and noise expectations to preserve restorative conditions.
- Gentle movement: mark short, gentle-trek loops and micro-areas for stretching/yoga; stabilize vulnerable segments to prevent erosion.
- Interpretation without clutter: deliver geo-eco-cultural storylines at nodal points or through guide narration; avoid dense signage along trails.
- Wayfinding: use minimal but legible direction cues (entry/loop/exit) concentrated at nodes; pair with simple maps.
- Sacred-site protection: apply buffers, time windows, and custodian presence; steer organized activities away from ritual locales.
- Community-first operations: adopt a community-based tourism model with youth guiding, small-group bookings, and transparent benefit sharing.

Managing Trade-offs and Risks

Three trade-offs require active management:

- Access vs. tranquility: increased visit ability can undermine quiet; mitigate through temporal dispersion, capacity limits, and quiet-zone enforcement.
- Cultural integrity vs. commercialization: demand for “sacred” experiences risks overexposure; prioritize custodian consent, selective “no-photo” areas, and co-created narratives.
- Trail condition and litter: shallow ruts and packaging concentrate at nodes; respond with motor restrictions, selective trail hardening/re-routing, and segregated waste points at nodes rather than along paths.

Implementation Pathway (Phased, Low-Cost Steps)

- a. Phase 1 – Protect & Prepare: delineate quiet zones and sacred buffers; mark gentle loops; place node-based maps and waste points; issue etiquette guidance.
- b. Phase 2 – Pilot: run youth-led mindfulness walks, geo–eco storytelling, and small-group yoga at non-sacred flats; monitor noise, litter, and trail wear.
- c. Phase 3 – Scale Responsibly: formalize community agreements, expand guide training, refine booking/capacity rules, and adapt zoning using monitoring data.

Monitoring Indicators (Practical and Measurable)

A practical indicator set supports adaptive management:

- a. Experience quality: visitor ratings of calm/quiet, route clarity, and respect at sacred sites.
- b. Ecological condition: litter counts at nodes; trail condition indices; simple observations of spring turbidity/flow.
- c. Cultural integrity: custodian assessments of protocol compliance and ritual disturbance.
- d. Community benefit: guide-days delivered, uptake of local products/services, and revenue distribution records.

Contribution to Vanaprastha Theory and Practice

The evidence refines the operational profile of Vanaprastha Tourism in three ways:

- a. Restorative outcomes arise from environmental conditions (shade, water sound, low noise) maintained primarily through behavioral guidance, not infrastructure.
- b. Cultural meaning functions as governance—it sets norms for where, when, and how practices occur.
- c. Small-format, community-led operations are fit-for-purpose in a geopark forest, sustaining authenticity while distributing benefits.

Practical Contribution

The study offers immediately actionable measures—quiet-zone identification, spring protection, trail care, minimal wayfinding, and participatory interpretation—capable of elevating experience quality with modest cost and intervention.

Limitations and Directions

As a single-site, youth-focused corpus, findings are context-specific and not intended for statistical generalization. Future work could incorporate multi-stakeholder inputs, longitudinal monitoring of indicators, and comparative cases across geopark forests to test transferability and refine zoning/etiquette protocols.

Synthesis

The photovoice collection provides a clear understanding of how Binyan Forest exemplifies Vanaprastha Tourism in action. Across images and captions, participants repeatedly foreground four co-located conditions: quiet shade beneath a layered canopy, the presence of sacred water, opportunities for gentle movement on flat and modest slopes, and unobtrusive access supported by simple wayfinding. Read through the Vanaprastha lens (Table 1; Figure 1), these conditions connect directly to the seven elements: visit is feasible without heavy infrastructure; nature and forest provide immersion; healing and exercise become practicable and appealing; culture governs conduct around springs and shrines; and a sustainable economy becomes imaginable through small, community-led services. The synthesis, therefore, emphasizes an experience shaped less by built attractions and more by environmental qualities and cultural ethics that already exist on site (see also Figure 3.2 for the staged design logic).

The reasoning from evidence to implication follows a transparent chain of logic. Photographs of shaded flats paired with captions invoking calm and recovery substantiate a healing theme; in management terms, this justifies the identification and etiquette of quiet zones, which caps group size and noise. Images of springs and shrines, accompanied by narratives of purification and respect, anchor a cultural theme; this translates into buffers, guardian presence, and the relocation of organized activities away from ritual locales. Scenes of gentle slopes and open flats, often accompanied by short walks, validate an exercise theme; here, the implication is to take short, gentle loops and stabilize vulnerable segments. Conversely, photographs of litter and shallow ruts reveal cross-cutting risks; these motivate waste points at nodes rather than along trails, selective trail hardening or re-routing, and minimal yet legible direction cues. In each case, the image–caption pair provides the warrant for a theme, and the theme points to a concrete, low-cost action.

Viewed as a simple logic model, the site's inputs include intact canopy, sacred water, flat areas, clear entries, and community readiness. The mechanisms that convert these inputs into experience are behavioral and spatial rather than built: low noise, respectful conduct, slow

pacing, and light interpretation. The immediate outcomes are improved visitor experience calm, clarity, a felt sense of respect and reduced disturbance through explicit norms. The longer-term outcomes are strengthened cultural stewardship, ecological care, and community-based livelihoods consistent with Vanaprastha. Operationally, this amounts to an “grammar” of zoning, etiquette, light interpretation, and community governance: quiet and movement are separated without fragmenting the forest core; cultural meaning sets the bounds of permissible activity; stories of geology, ecology, and culture are conveyed at nodes or through guides rather than through dense signage; and youth guiding with transparent benefit sharing aligns incentives for care.

Inevitable trade-offs can be managed within this grammar. Greater access risks eroding tranquility, so temporal dispersion and capacity limits remain intact. Interest in sacred experience risks commercialization, so custodian consent, no-photo zones, and co-authored narratives maintain integrity. Use pressure-sensitive litter and trail wear, so node-based waste points and selective trail maintenance minimize impacts. A small indicator set visitor ratings of calm and route clarity, litter counts and trail condition scores, custodian assessments of protocol compliance, and basic community-benefit metrics closes the loop between actions and outcomes and supports adaptive refinement over time.

The synthesis also clarifies the contribution. For theory, it shows that Vanaprastha’s restorative promise is realized primarily through behavioral and spatial cues quiet, buffers, pacing rather than through added amenities, and that cultural meaning functions as governance, specifying where, when, and how practices occur. For practice, it offers a low-cost pathway ready for implementation in a geopark forest: identify quiet zones, protect springs, route gentle loops, keep wayfinding minimal but clear, and foreground community-led guiding. Under these conditions, Binyan Forest can deliver a restorative, culturally respectful, and sustainable visitor experience while preserving ecological integrity and local authority.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study achieved its aim of assessing the potential of Binyan Forest for holistic Vanaprastha Tourism by employing the participatory photovoice method to capture the nuanced perspectives of local youth. The corpus of images and narratives converges on a clear and conclusive thesis: Binyan Forest is poised to serve as a living prototype for Vanaprastha Tourism a light-footprint, community-led practice where meaningful, restorative experiences emerge intrinsically from co-located environmental and cultural conditions, rather than from constructed attractions.

The analysis reveals that the forest’s distinct value is encoded in its unique environmental grammar. The combination of shade layered under a mixed canopy, the auditory hush of sacred springs, modest slopes, and naturally occurring congregation nodes collectively creates the ideal conditions for calm, slow movement and cultural reflection. Crucially, the photovoice methodology proved to be an exceptionally apt tool, functioning not merely as a documentary technique but as a robust interpretive framework. It successfully surfaced the residents’ tacit spatial knowledge precisely pinpointing where people naturally pause, where the quality of quiet is most fragile, and where ecological pressures are just incipient and translated those granular insights into a coherent, place-sensitive governance agenda. In this strategic framing, development is less about physical construction and more about careful curation: curating appropriate behaviors and sequences for arriving gently, moving attentively, lingering briefly, and leaving no trace.

Concurrently, the method delineated the site’s specific vulnerabilities with unusual precision, identifying key problems not as generalized issues but as discrete challenges of visitor etiquette, timing, and load management. Litter accumulation is node-specific, trail wear is highly localized, and the primary cultural risks are tied to visual intrusion and the threat of over-commercialization at sacred sites. The overarching conclusion is that the forest is not a blank canvas awaiting development projects but an already articulate ecological and cultural place asking for careful listening. The path forward must therefore deliberately privilege the implementation of behavioral norms, protective buffers, and gentle activity sequencing over the installation of permanent hardware to protect the very ecological and cultural integrity that constitutes its core value.

Recommendations

Derived directly from these conclusions, a graduated and learning-oriented implementation pathway is recommended to transition Binyan Forest thoughtfully from a prototype into a sustainable tourism practice, guided by the principles of adaptive management. In the short term, during Phase 1 (0–3 months), the focus should be on protecting and preparing the forest through the establishment of essential safeguards. These actions include clearly defining quiet zones for contemplation and creating sacred buffers around springs and shrines in close consultation with cultural custodians. In addition, designated waste collection points should be installed at key gathering areas rather than along the trails, sensitive trail segments should receive light stabilization, and a concise and accessible visitor etiquette guide should be developed. The guide should establish clear expectations regarding noise levels, group sizes, photography practices, and maximum dwell times. In Phase 2 (4–12 months), the focus should shift toward piloting and learning through small-scale, youth-led experiential tourism activities managed by the local community group (Pokdarwis). These activities may include guided mindfulness walks, gentle stretching or breathing sessions in designated non-sacred flat areas, and interpretive storytelling that integrates local ecology, geology, and culture without relying on excessive signage. By implementing a booking system, capacity limits, and designated time windows, these pilot activities can preserve the tranquility of the forest while generating practical data for continuous adaptation and improvement. In Phase 3 (12 months and beyond), the model can be scaled responsibly as operational capacity and community expertise develop. This phase should include expanding first-aid and storytelling training for guides, establishing transparent and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms within the Pokdarwis structure, and selectively integrating Binyan Forest into broader tourism itineraries associated with the Batur UNESCO Global Geopark. Such integration should be undertaken cautiously to benefit from existing visitor flows while preventing noise, congestion, and other negative impacts from entering the forest core.

To build upon the findings of this foundational study and address its inherent limitations, several directions for future research are recommended. First, subsequent photovoice activities should broaden the participatory scope by involving a wider range of stakeholders, including village elders, women's groups, formal cultural custodians, and local micro-vendors. Expanding participation in this manner would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how perceptions of value, risk, and tourism management may converge or differ across demographic groups and seasonal conditions. Second, future research should deepen impact assessment by combining rich visual narratives with more objective quantitative measures. For example, soundscape recordings could be used to assess levels of auditory tranquility, while pre- and post-visit questionnaires could measure changes in visitors' perceived well-being and provide stronger evidence regarding the restorative effects of the forest. Third, future studies should pursue comparative replication by applying the same methodological approach in other forested destinations within the global geopark network. Comparative research across different locations would help determine whether the findings and proposed holistic tourism model are context-specific or can be generalized to other forest-based destinations with similar ecological, cultural, health, and spiritual characteristics. Such replication would also strengthen the methodological contribution of photovoice as a participatory tool for understanding and developing sustainable tourism destinations.

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