

# Dynamic of Migration lifestyle and settlement of nomad in Bali, Indonesia

Tangguh Okta Wibowo\*

Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Jakarta - Indonesia.

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**Correspondent email:**  
tangguh.okta@umn.ac.id

**Abstract** This research highlights the lifestyle of digital nomads, which is becoming a more common lifestyle in today's digital age. Bali is one of the most popular destinations for nomads. This research aims to explore the motivations of digital nomads in Bali. The research uses the case study research method by mapping several informants as research subjects. This article discusses the experiences of foreign tourists in Bali, particularly digital nomads, and the migratory lifestyle. It explores conversations and perspectives on Bali's attractiveness, working life, cultural interaction, and modern mobility. The findings show that the concept of 'nomad' is associated not only with high levels of mobility, but also with individuals who have chosen to settle in Bali due to finding the culture and lifestyle appealing. Modern mobility reflects the search for meaning in one's life experiences, which may include a search for stability and a depth of experience in one place. Furthermore, the discussion examines that the emergence of Bali's digital nomad community brings both economic benefits and challenges of overtourism on local communities.

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## 1. Introduction

A nomadic lifestyle has become a prevalent image in our current digital age (Haking, 2018; Hermann & Paris, 2020; Bali.com, 2023). The term "digital nomad" in this context refers to individuals who can work, recreate, and live in a flexible manner, often by working remotely or through online work that allows them to move between different locations (Domínguez-Mujica et al., 2022; Green, 2020; MacRae, 2016). The concept of a digital nomad differs from that of a traditional nomad, particularly in its reliance on internet technology. A key aspect of digital nomadism is the mediating role that various digital technologies and infrastructures play in enabling remote work (Nash et al., 2018). Digital nomads blur the boundaries between work, leisure, home, and travel (Hermann & Paris, 2020).

Digital nomadism represents a contemporary form of lifestyle mobility, driven by the integration of mobile technologies into everyday life and work environments. This challenges conventional notions of home, office, and national ties, with implications not only for individual lives but also for family dynamics and society as a whole (Olga, 2020). These workers are no longer confined to physical offices and traditional working hours (Marx et al., 2023).

In the digital age, nomadic work disrupts traditional boundaries between work, leisure, home, and travel, contributing to a new dynamic in the world of work. Digital nomads choose to work online and live temporarily in exciting locations of their choosing, fundamentally altering the traditional paradigm of the workplace, working hours, and personal life. For many, becoming a digital nomad means breaking free from the rigid routine of office work. They are no longer bound by the traditional 9-to-5 schedule, enjoying the freedom to manage their own time, select their

work environment, and determine how long they stay in one place. This represents a significant shift in how work and life are perceived. Consequently, digital nomadism is no longer exclusive to entrepreneurs, freelancers, and contract workers; corporate employees are also beginning to untether their work from fixed offices and 9-to-5 schedules (Marx et al., 2023).

This paper explores the phenomenon of digital nomads in Bali, a popular destination for remote workers. The rise of remote work, accelerated by restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to more companies allowing or supporting their employees to work from anywhere (Bahri & Widhyarto, 2021; Bali.com, 2023). Bali, with its attractive location, offers a wealth of opportunities for both work and leisure. Known as the Island of the Gods, Bali provides a range of recreational options, including beaches, nature tours, local culture, culinary delights, and socializing opportunities.

Bali has become a top destination for many digital nomads, comparable to places like Bangkok, Medellin, Chiang Mai, Ubud, and Canggu. The island is renowned for its stunning beaches and picturesque rice terraces. The warmth of Balinese culture and its openness to technological innovation have fostered the development of digital nomad hubs (Haking, 2018). The Balinese are known for their friendliness and helpfulness, with a high level of tolerance and openness to foreign cultures and intercultural differences. These qualities are among Bali's strengths, contributing to its status as a world-class tourism destination (Mustafa et al., 2020).

Studies on digital nomadism indicate that Bali's appeal lies in its low cost of living, cultural openness, and the absence of income tax obligations (Bahri & Widhyarto, 2021; Gede et al., 2021; Rakhmadi, 2022). These factors, along with coworking facilities, easy access, fast internet, various tourist attractions, natural beauty, friendly local culture, and safety,

make Bali an ideal destination for digital nomads. Locations like Canggu and Ubud have become hubs for nomads, creating a productive ecosystem through coworking spaces and supportive communities (Octavia, 2022; Putu & Prabawati, 2020).

The model of digital nomad tourism in Bali offers opportunities for online businesses and fosters an entrepreneurial spirit that can enhance the well-being of local communities through community-based management (Christiansen et al., 2023; Haking, 2018). Nomads are drawn to Bali by the flexibility of geographically and time-independent work, as well as the chance to expand their networks (Gede et al., 2021; Putu & Prabawati, 2020). To develop this new type of tourism in other parts of Indonesia, the government can replicate Bali's success by providing similar facilities and fostering a welcoming environment for digital nomads (Gede et al., 2021). As a result, digital nomad tourism has the potential to become a significant alternative sector for economic development in Indonesia.

Nonetheless, in the context of the growth of digital nomads in Bali, an unresolved question remains: how will the behavior and economic contribution of these nomads impact the destinations they visit in the long run, particularly Bali? While digital nomads have the potential to be significant contributors to the local economy, it remains to be seen whether this contribution will be sustainable or fluctuating. Additionally, changes in digital nomad behavior and preferences over time are an intriguing aspect to explore. Will they remain loyal to a particular destination, or will they shift to new locations? What are the implications for the local community?

This research aims to map not only the motives of digital nomads but also how workers categorized as digital nomads choose Bali as a destination and how they rely on technology and communication devices to complete work that was traditionally done in an office setting. This location-independent lifestyle offers workers the advantage of reducing work-related stress. By working outside the office, they can enjoy cities or locations that also serve as leisure or recreational spaces.

This article explores how foreign tourists choose Bali for vacation and work, or as a base for their nomadic lifestyle, and reflects on their daily life experiences while in Bali. However, the depiction of digital nomads in Bali is not entirely positive. Their presence raises issues regarding income, as they do not pay taxes on earnings from remote work outside Indonesia. Moreover, the growing presence of digital nomads in Bali has also led to concerns about gentrification. The income disparity between foreign nomadic workers and local communities can create socioeconomic divides and transform local neighborhoods (Bahri & Widhyharto, 2021).

Furthermore, social media plays a significant role in the discourse surrounding foreign migrants in Bali, with the local community frequently sharing and circulating stories about problematic foreign tourists. The researcher also examined the long-term impact of the digital nomad lifestyle in Bali. Additionally, overtourism is a critical issue associated with the growth of the digital nomad community in Bali, and this article investigates how it can lead to cultural conflicts between foreign tourists and locals. Overtourism refers to the excessive growth in the number of visitors, leading to crowding in areas where local residents experience the impact of temporary and seasonal tourism surges, resulting in permanent changes to their lifestyle and restricted access to facilities (Dodds &

Butler, 2019; Goodwin, 2017; Milano et al., 2019). The term overtourism implies a loss of a sense of belonging, reduced sense of place, increased congestion, privatization of public spaces, and rapid growth in tourism and tourist numbers (Milano et al., 2019).

Therefore, this research is crucial to understanding the digital nomad phenomenon in Bali. Nomadism encompasses not only the physical mobility of individuals from one country to another and their use of mobile devices and internet technologies for work, but it also involves several issues surrounding nomadic behavior, economic contributions to the local economy, social media discourse, and the phenomenon of overtourism. The findings contribute to expanding the existing literature by discussing the relationship between motivation, long-term stays (beyond short-term migration), and overtourism—topics that have largely been overlooked in previous research on digital nomads.

## 2. Methods

This research employs the case study research method to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon of digital nomadism in Bali, with a particular focus on the perspectives of foreign travelers. Case study research is a holistic approach that encompasses both the investigation and analysis stages (Stake, 2000). It enables a comprehensive depiction of a specific situation, program, event, or activity, and can focus on both individuals and groups as the subject of analysis. While a case study may incorporate multiple cases, the research subject is always a clearly defined and bounded system (Miller & Salkind, 2002). The case study method allows for detailed and in-depth analysis of a small number of cases, providing the researcher with a profound understanding of the context and deeply ingrained practices of digital nomads. This study adopts a qualitative methodology to offer a comprehensive understanding of the digital nomad trend in Bali, with particular emphasis on the societal and cultural changes occurring.

The research utilizes a descriptive qualitative design, placing emphasis on dialogue to ensure that the diverse perspectives presented in this study are valued and not compared to determine the most "correct" viewpoint. The aim of the research is not to achieve consensus but to present a range of real-life experiences that can both empower and disempower individuals, while highlighting their complexity within the multidimensional realm of various perspectives (Saukko, 2003).

The research team employed a multifaceted approach to data collection. Methods included online research and social media monitoring conducted between January and September 2023, as well as on-site field research carried out from May 27 to May 30, 2023. The field research was preceded by a literature review, after which the researcher visited various locations in Bali, including Canggu, Seminyak, Ubud, and Nusa Penida. The field research commenced in Canggu, a popular destination for foreign tourists.

Subsequently, the researcher conducted interviews with several informants, who were selected using a random sampling approach to capture a broad range of perspectives from digital nomads from various countries. These interviews aimed to gain insights into the digital nomad experience and the daily lives of those who live and work in Bali. In-depth interviews were conducted with four informants from different countries (Australia, Germany, the United States, and Latvia).

Additionally, three local informants, who have resided in Bali for an extended period, were interviewed as key informants. The fifth informant is a spa manager in Canggu with over 30 years of experience. The sixth informant is a café owner catering primarily to foreign tourists. The seventh informant is a travel agent who frequently guides tourist guests around Bali. All informants were selected randomly to capture a wide range of digital nomad experiences. The research team prioritized research ethics by using pseudonyms in this paper, avoiding any infringement on the participants' privacy, and ensuring their comfort during the interviews.

Furthermore, the researcher refrained from inquiring about tourists' residence permits (KITAS) to avoid any impression of law enforcement activity. The data collected from these diverse sources, including observations, interviews, and digital resources, will undergo qualitative analysis. This analysis aims to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the digital nomad experience in Bali, shedding light on its impact on the local community and environment. The research seeks to uncover authentic and "underground" information that reflects the real-life experiences of digital nomads in Bali.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### From Work to Recreation

Bali has become a hub for young digital nomads, life coaches, and wellness entrepreneurs, drawn by the affordable cost of living, which allows them to promote six-figure lifestyles to potential clients. The influx of digital nomads to Bali has risen considerably in recent years (Valentish, 2023). These remote workers are attracted to the island by its tropical climate, vibrant culture, and reasonable living expenses (Susilo & Chen, 2023). Motivated by favorable weather conditions, diverse tourist activities, and comfortable accommodations and cuisine, digital nomads often choose Bali—especially Ubud and Canggu—as their destination (Green, 2020; Octavia, 2022).

During fieldwork, the researcher observed that tourists were thoroughly enjoying their time in Bali. On the researcher's first visit to the island, they arranged to meet an Australian tourist for coffee at a local café through the Couchsurfing application. The tourism industry in Bali could benefit from the contributions of digital nomads, who are able to work without time or space constraints. However, despite this potential, no specific research has yet been conducted on the impact of digital nomads on tourism in Bali (Rakhmadi, 2022). Many foreign tourists are captivated by the natural beauty, unique culture, and relaxed atmosphere of Bali—a common experience reflected in the feedback from the Australian tourist, who mentioned visiting several places in Bali, including Nusa Penida, Lovina, and Kintamani.

The interviews revealed that Bali often serves as a gateway to broader adventures across Indonesia. Beyond its breathtaking beaches and vibrant nightlife, Bali offers the opportunity to explore the wider natural and cultural wonders of the Indonesian archipelago. One informant stated: *"yeah, so, I take a leave, I prefer I take job and take a leave. I made couple closure, but rumor travelling around the world many years."*

This informant prefers to work and save vacation time for travel. The remuneration earned while working in Australia provided sufficient funds for a short visit to Bali. Travel has become a fundamental aspect of this individual's life. Although this does not directly promote flexible working or advocate for the nomadic lifestyle, it exemplifies the concept of transitioning

from work to leisure through travel. After working for a few months, the informant took a short recreational trip to Bali for three days, followed by a visit to another Indonesian city. The informant plans to travel to Yogyakarta and Jakarta next.

Travel involves diverse objectives, yet it invariably entails an individual occupying the same space as another person or visiting a particular locale or event, thereby engendering physical proximity that is deemed imperative, appropriate, or desirable (Urry, 2002). Traditional work approaches prioritize productivity and professional relationships. Meanwhile, international travel and immigration policies significantly impact the digital nomad lifestyle, distinguishing it from traditional travel or leisure activities (Bahri & Widhyarto, 2021).

Informant 1 broadly noted Bali's undeniable charm as a popular destination for digital nomads, offering a distinctive experience for those seeking adventure, remote work, or a relaxing getaway. Bali remains a highly sought-after destination for those seeking more than a conventional vacation. This assertion is supported by another informant, a foreign tourist from America who had previously resided in Jakarta, Indonesia, for a considerable period.

Informant 2, a former lecturer at a private university in Tangerang, Jakarta, exhibits remarkable mobility, having relocated to Bali after two years. Currently employed in the education sector in Denpasar, he serves as a brand ambassador for an online course, managing its operations in the Bali region. His daily commute from Uluwatu to Denpasar, working from 9 am to 5 pm, underscores the necessary mobility. Frequent, unplanned travel allows individuals to embrace Bali's unique atmosphere, whether for permanent residency or remote work. Economic gains are not the primary motivation; the ambiance and local culture also drive relocations. This mobility leads to tangible experiences, integration into local culture, and the forging of community connections, solidifying individuals as integral parts of Bali's cultural landscape.

#### Bali Nomads and Migration Lifestyle

This section examines lifestyle migration, with a particular focus on digital nomads. It explores how mobility, work flexibility, and the desire for diverse environments drive this trend. Bali is a favored destination due to its natural beauty, rich culture, and global community. Digital nomads rely on technology for work and highly value the ability to choose flexible locations. Bali appeals to them as a place that offers novel experiences. Changes in mobility and lifestyle migration are closely intertwined, shaping our increasingly mobile society.

The discussion in this section pertains to digital nomads, a distinct group of travelers who do not fit into traditional categories of either tourism or immigration. These individuals possess a high degree of mobility and often face job insecurity, which necessitates identity validation for legal arrangements. Digital nomads work and travel simultaneously, and studies suggest that they constitute a unique category of travelers (Christiansen et al., 2023). In this context, Informants 3 and 4 noted that the term "nomad" can also encompass individuals who have previously vacationed in Bali. Informant 3, a German citizen, has extensively traveled across multiple Indonesian cities and is an avid surfer who embraces challenges in the surf. His adventurous spirit led him to stay in Bali for an extended period. During his time in Bali, he did not encounter significant financial difficulties, as he was able to fulfill his work



obligations for a German firm using his laptop. Despite a mild stutter, he communicated effectively in Indonesian. Informant 3 found Bali's atmosphere, culture, and lifestyle agreeable and enjoyable.

In contrast, Informant 4, who is of Latvian nationality with Russian and Georgian roots, prefers obtaining a KITAS, a residence permit for staying in Bali. During the conversation, the topic of KITAS arose due to her intention to remain in Indonesia. She intends to secure employment in Bali first and, upon achieving this, will acquire a KITAS permit that will enable her to remain in Indonesia for an extended period: "I need to get a job first. If I can get a job, I can get a KITAS, which will allow me to live here."

The importance of KITAS in this context is that it will enable Informant 4 to remain in Bali, particularly in Nusa Penida, which she believes differs significantly from Bali. She views scuba diving as a popular recreational activity on Nusa Penida (Gerungan & Chia, 2020). Furthermore, the discussion on KITAS demonstrates how immigration regulations influence a person's decision to stay in a particular country or region. Informant 4 expressed her preference to stay in Nusa Penida rather than Bali, and KITAS would allow her to do so.

Digital nomads must navigate various issues related to the formalities of living in a foreign country, particularly concerning visas that often do not permit them to work. They must consider the risk of illegal status and frequently keep their work intentions in the country a secret (Aroles et al., 2022). To meet her daily needs in Nusa Penida, Informant 4 works remotely as a designer for a website company in Latvia. The salary she earns is sufficient to support her nomadic lifestyle in Bali.

Conversations about KITAS also revealed cultural and social norm differences across countries. Informant 4 explained that in her culture, she did not need to seek permission or approval from her parents or family to make decisions about her life. This underscores how culture and social norms can influence individual decision-making regarding mobility and migration. The conversation with Informant 4 highlights the complexity of migration and mobility experiences in the era of globalization. Individuals like Informant 4, with diverse backgrounds and experiences, can make life decisions freely, considering factors such as employment, environment, culture, and immigration regulations. This reflects how mobility and migration have become integral aspects of life for many people worldwide in the modern era.

It is important not only to highlight the lifestyle mobility patterns that exist on the border between travel, leisure, and migration (Cohen et al., 2015), but also to recognize that the definition of "nomad" is not limited to work conducted during travel or high mobility. It also includes individuals who have chosen to settle in a new environment, such as Bali, because they find its culture and lifestyle particularly appealing. This suggests that these individuals have had prior experience with the place they are relocating to, illustrating the diversity and flexibility within the concept of digital nomadism, which is not always related to work but also to the exploration of different cultures and life experiences.

Furthermore, the researcher emphasized that the digital nomad lifestyle is not confined to constant travel; it can also accommodate individuals who prefer a more stable base. These individuals may choose to settle in a foreign country while retaining the ability to work remotely and explore their surroundings during their free time. In this way, they can enjoy

the best of both worlds—the stability of a familiar environment and the excitement of immersing themselves in a new culture. Digital nomads are not only mobile within a country but can also move across countries. The next section will discuss the transition from nomads to long-term residents in Bali.

### From Nomads to Long-Term Stay

The transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a long-term stay in Bali highlights the complexities of mobility and migration in the era of globalization. This shift, as reflected in the experiences of the third and fourth informants, underscores how culture and social norms influence individual life decisions. The digital nomad lifestyle is characterized by a desire to combine work and travel, driven by the pursuit of professional autonomy and flexibility (Bahri & Widhyarto, 2021).

Conversations with the third and fourth informants reveal their decision to settle in Bali with complete autonomy, illustrating how individuals shape their lives by considering factors such as employment, environment, culture, and immigration regulations. This autonomy highlights the positive impact of globalization in empowering individuals to take control of their destinies. Additionally, these conversations reveal cultural and social norm differences between their home countries and Bali. The rise of digital nomads in Bali is driven by various factors, including affordability, vibrant culture, and government support (Susilo & Chen, 2023). For instance, in the culture of Informant 4, there is no need to seek permission or approval from parents or family when making life decisions. This highlights the significant role culture plays in shaping social norms related to mobility and migration.

The findings of this study align with previous research (Bahri & Widhyarto, 2021; Gede et al., 2021; Haking, 2018; Prabawa & Pertiwi, 2020; Putu & Prabawati, 2020; Rakhmadi, 2022), indicating that the term "digital nomad" is no longer limited to those engaged in travel or highly mobile jobs. The concept now encompasses the exploration of different cultures and life experiences. Informant 4 exemplifies how someone might choose to settle in a new environment, such as Bali, due to the special appeal of its culture and lifestyle. She expresses a desire to reside in Nusa Penida for an extended period rather than Bali itself. Digital nomads, who work without constraints of time and space, have the potential to significantly contribute to Bali's tourism industry. Despite this potential, there has been no specific research on digital nomad tourism in Bali or Indonesia. It is crucial for digital nomads to be able to support themselves and sustain their stay in Bali by working to earn an income, typically by working remotely for companies based in their home countries. Bali's attractiveness to digital nomads is further enhanced by rapid advances in information and communication technology, including the availability of high-quality coworking spaces such as Hubud, Dojo Bali, Outpost Canggu, and Sanur Creative Hub, which offer essential amenities like high-speed internet and flexible membership options (Rakhmadi, 2022).

Furthermore, the researcher identified at least three main types of tourists who travel to Bali, as displayed in Table 1. The first type consists of tourists who visit solely for recreation, with their stay typically limited to around three days. The second type includes tourists who work remotely from Bali, though their work is not geographically bound to the location. These tourists can stay for around 60 days, in line with the visa regulations that allow them to remain in

Table 1. Types Of Foreigner Tourists In Bali

Type	Days to stay	Details
One	1-3	Tourists who come only for recreation and spend some time in Bali for limited time. They visited several areas in Bali temporarily and will return to their country at a certain time. They can also visit other than Bali, in Indonesia, for example Yogyakarta, Jakarta and others.
Two	30	Tourists who work in Bali remotely from their country or a location that is not bound by geographical boundaries. Almost the same as the first type, but they have more flexible time and motivation to live in Bali for a certain time while working remotely and usually rent a villa or residence in Bali.
Three	30 to 180	The last type relates to digital nomads in Bali who then reside in Bali for a longer period. More advanced than the second type, because the third type has a longer residence time. They can stay in Bali to enjoy areas in Bali, especially the Canggu and Ubud areas which have a good atmosphere for working while on holiday. At least, they have time to stay until their KITAS in Bali has expired.

Source: Researcher's analysis (2024)

Bali (Christiansen et al., 2023; Richards, 2015). The final type includes digital nomads who extend their stay in Bali beyond 60 days, as they can extend their visa twice for a total of 180 days (Christiansen et al., 2023). These categories reflect the diversity and flexibility within the concept of digital nomads, which extends beyond work to include the exploration of different cultures and life experiences. This flexibility provides individuals with the freedom to live a nomadic life that aligns with their desires and interests, without having to follow a package such as a tourist village which can take up to 1 month (Putriand & Wahjuwibowo, 2021). The transformation from a nomadic lifestyle to an extended stay in Bali demonstrates an individual's ability to adapt and take advantage of global opportunities to achieve self-fulfillment and a desired lifestyle. Moreover, this shift underscores the important role of culture, social norms, and personal freedom in guiding life choices and mobility in the modern era.

### Overshadowing the nomads

The growth of the digital nomad community in Bali represents a significant phenomenon with complex economic and social impacts on this tourism destination. This discussion addresses two key aspects related to the expansion of the digital nomad community in Bali: the long-term economic contributions of nomads and the effects of this phenomenon on local communities. While the presence of digital nomads offers substantial economic potential for tourism destinations like Bali, it also introduces notable disparities. Overtourism describes a situation where both locals and visitors perceive that the volume of tourists has become excessive, leading to a decline in the quality of life and the visitor experience. This contrasts sharply with responsible tourism, which aims to enhance living conditions and create attractive destinations for both visitors and locals (Goodwin, 2017; Milano et al., 2019). Overtourism refers to the rapid expansion of tourism in a destination, overwhelming local infrastructure and resources and causing cultural conflicts between foreign tourists and the Balinese.

This research examines the impact of digital nomads on Bali's tourism development, including shifts in foreign tourist migration and infrastructure growth. Interviews with local informants (Informants 5, 6, and 7) revealed a rapid increase in tourism, particularly in Canggu, and highlighted potential cultural conflicts between foreigners and locals. Conversations underscored a shift in the lifestyle profile of tourist migration, with emerging digital nomad groups becoming increasingly numerous and diverse.

The influx of foreign tourists contributes to significant economic growth for the local community, improved infrastructure, and increased government revenue. However, it also leads to rising numbers of tourists in specific areas of Bali. Informant 5 noted that prior to the pandemic, the high season occurred only during certain months, such as Christmas and New Year. Now, every month, especially in Canggu, is considered high season. The continuous flow of tourists creates new challenges. Canggu has become a 24-hour hotspot for tourists, with daily parties. The contrast between areas like Canggu, known for its vibrant nightlife, and Ubud, which caters to those seeking tranquility and yoga, is striking. Seminyak retains more traditional Balinese cultural characteristics, while Canggu is experiencing rapid and noisy changes. These developments raise concerns about the impact on Bali's cultural identity.

Based on observations and interviews, distinguishing between foreign tourists with remote jobs (digital nomads) and those who are backpackers is challenging. The seventh informant noted that Bali has changed significantly since the pandemic. Previously, tourists were often wealthy, but now, many visitors come with limited economic resources. This indicates a fragmentation among tourists entering Bali, blurring the image of the nomad who combines remote work with leisure travel. The distinct identity of digital nomads is increasingly difficult to differentiate from other tourists, even those who stay in Bali for extended periods.

Furthermore, our exploration of Bali, from Kuta, Seminyak, Canggu, and Sanur to Ubud and Nusa Penida, revealed noticeable differences. Along the roads, we frequently observed foreign tourists (often referred to as "bule") riding motorcycles without helmets. This phenomenon is particularly evident in Ubud, when on narrow streets, tourists ride motorcycles freely. We have seen instances where tourists stopped in the middle of the road to purchase roadside meals.

The situation observed in Bali, especially in Ubud and Canggu, highlights a significant issue related to the impact of digital nomads and foreign tourists on overtourism. Foreign tourists disregarding traffic rules, such as helmet use, reflect a lack of supervision and enforcement. This behavior fosters a sense of entitlement, negatively impacting the local community and Bali's tourism image. Bali's growing reputation as a digital nomad hub has led to overcrowding and increased competition for resources, potentially degrading the quality of life for both locals and nomads.

Problems caused by foreign tourists are diverse and often highlighted on social media accounts created by locals

or tourists with blogs. For instance, vigilante social media accounts feature videos of visitors breaking laws (Valentish, 2023). An online article noted, “*If living in Bali for 23 years doesn’t give you a free pass to be an asshole on the island, what makes this guy think that two years is enough?*” (Coconuts, 2023). Additionally, there are reports of Caucasians disrespecting sacred sites. For example, Canadian health teacher Jeffery Craigen faces deportation after filming himself performing the *Maori haka Ka Mate* naked at Mount Batur (Valentish, 2023). Similarly, influencer Alina Fazleeva was deported for posting a photo of herself naked in a sacred tree, claiming to hear ancestral voices (Valentish, 2023). There are also stories of conflicts between locals and foreign tourists, with tourists even challenging “*pecalang*” (traditional Balinese security officers). Overtourism exacerbates inequality and class tensions (Milano et al., 2019).

Moreover, informants highlighted that many foreign tourists are taking over jobs typically held by locals, such as tourism marketing, vehicle rentals, and photography, often without proper work permits. This situation marginalizes Balinese workers, with some tourists occupying roles that locals previously filled. While not all tourists contribute to this issue, the blurring of nomadic identities complicates the situation, especially when many tourists lack substantial economic resources. High mobility has intensified urban concentration, leading to gentrification and urban sprawl (Horiuchi, 2023). Reliance on tourism as the main economic driver exacerbates gentrification and inequality issues (Bahri & Widhyarto, 2021). Local people face competition for low-paying service jobs, while foreign workers often occupy higher-paying managerial positions.

The Canggu area was originally a village inhabited by locals, but now they are displaced due to the high growth of tourism. The expansion of tourism in Canggu has led to the sale or rental of rice fields and land for tourism purposes. We argue that increased mobility is directly proportional to inequality, overcrowding, and the problems faced by existing tourists. Overtourism makes spatial disparities in Bali’s popular tourist areas highly visible. While tourism and Balinese culture can be mutually beneficial and create a virtuous circle, many Balinese worry that tourism could degrade their culture. Currently, the discourse on foreign tourists in Bali suggests that they are not merely enjoying their vacations but also causing problems. Locals use Instagram to mock tourists who behave poorly at holy sites, impacting both the local community and Bali itself.

However, overtourism may not fully capture the core discussion of the effects of digital nomads. Although significant tourist activity is concentrated in certain areas of Bali, such as North Kuta (Canggu) and Gianyar (Ubud), it is less visible in North, West, and East Bali. The rapid growth in the number of tourists creates substantial pressure on infrastructure and the environment in specific areas of Bali. This rapid expansion in the tourism sector poses challenges for the sustainability and preservation of Balinese culture. To address these challenges, a new tourism model is needed, one that emphasizes respect for tourism resources to achieve a robust sustainability policy.

Furthermore, establishing protection zones to safeguard cultural heritage and natural resources is crucial to limit or even prevent development that could lead to the degradation of valuable landscapes (Vandarakis et al., 2023). The increasing number of foreign digital nomad tourists coming to Bali, particularly in the Canggu area, presents new issues. The growth of the digital nomad community in Bali is a complex

phenomenon with both positive and negative economic and social impacts. On the positive side, digital nomads contribute to the local economy, infrastructure development, and employment opportunities, including the proliferation of co-living spaces (von Zumbusch & Lalicic, 2020).

Conversely, this rapid growth also exacerbates overtourism. Addressing overtourism requires stronger regulation and leadership from the Bali government, moving beyond the self-governing approach that has contributed to the problem (Koens et al., 2018; Mihalic, 2020). Effective tourism management must balance economic benefits with the protection of Bali’s natural and cultural environment, ensuring that tourism growth is evenly distributed and that local community’s benefit from this growth. With changing tourist patterns and rapid economic development, destination management in Bali must continuously adapt to balance economic growth with environmental and cultural preservation.

Local communities remain dependent on the tourism industry for their livelihoods, creating a precarious situation where their economic well-being fluctuates with tourist numbers and external factors beyond their control. To address this issue, governments and stakeholders should prioritize local empowerment and ensure a more equitable distribution of tourism revenue, fostering sustainable economic growth and reducing local vulnerability. Additionally, local communities are sometimes excluded from government decisions regarding infrastructure expansion in Bali (Westoby et al., 2021). The government should provide more opportunities for local community participation in tourism development, such as involving local representatives in regular meetings, workshops, and seminars on sustainable tourism management. Community input is valuable for strategic planning in tourism development and conservation (Chong, 2020). The future of Bali as a sustainable tourism destination depends on the collaborative actions of all relevant parties.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper offers a comprehensive analysis of international tourists’ experiences in Bali, focusing on their personal narratives, the allure of the destination, the balance between work and personal life, and their engagement with local culture. It expands the case study of digital nomads by exploring different cultures and life experiences. It highlights Bali’s appeal as a tourist destination and the potential for meaningful interactions among digital nomads. The digital nomad lifestyle, which blends mobility and migration, has made Bali a top choice due to its natural beauty, rich traditions, and serene atmosphere.

The growing nomad community in Bali has complex economic and social impacts, including long-term economic contributions and the challenges of overtourism on local communities. Despite the economic benefits, nomads also strain resources and raise concerns about cultural clashes. It shows inequality of development which is focused on only some areas of Bali. Furthermore, the rapid development of tourism, especially in Canggu, reflects the expansion of infrastructure, in contrast to traditional areas such as Seminyak, as well as tourist behavior that ignores traffic regulations and threatens the existing culture in Bali. Some foreign tourists taking local jobs contribute to gentrification and inequality. It shows that there is the marginalization of the Balinese from the professions replaced. The rapid growth in the number of tourists creates



enormous pressure on infrastructure and the environment in certain areas of Bali. Achieving a balance is essential for Bali's long-term sustainability as a tourism destination.

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