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Exploring the Canggu-Bali Magnet as a Choice for Digital Nomads

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Abstract: Tourism is a leading sector worldwide, but the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of life around the world. Over time, tourism in Bali has now gained popularity and become a favorite tourist destination for tourists, especially digital nomad tourists. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and review in more depth the intentions of digital nomad tourists to work from Canggu-Bali. The research design used in this study is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The results of this study show that Canggu has become a magnet for digital nomads around the world. With a unique combination of natural beauty, rich local culture. Digital nomads who choose to work from Canggu experience a significant increase in their quality of life. Factors such as access to comfortable co-working spaces, refreshing tropical weather, and a healthy lifestyle and outdoor activities, make Canggu more than just a place to work, but also a place to find balance between work and personal life.

Keyword: Canggu, Nomad Tourists, Culture, Co-Working.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of life around the world. One of them is the tourism sector. Tourism is a leading sector throughout the world. The tourism industry is an industry that plays an important role in every region and continues to grow (Hollenhorst et al., 2014; Amin, 2015; Araujo et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2018 in Prayana & Darma, 2023). Bali, which is famous for its tourism sector, has experienced a downturn during this pandemic. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic with cases that continue to soar has encouraged the governments of each country to take steps with various approaches to deal with this pandemic. The steps taken by the government with various non-pharmaceutical measures such as lockdown policies (home isolation or quarantine), encouraging social distancing, closing schools/universities and workplaces so that work from home (WFH) and study from home are enforced. In addition, there have been cancellations or postponements of various types of events such as concerts, festivals, conferences, and so on, as well as restrictions on international, regional, and local travel as preventive measures (Gössling et al., 2020).

Most people have limited their activities outside the home. This condition has caused the economy to start to deteriorate, sales in the goods and services sector have experienced obstacles which have an impact on the reduction in the number of workers (PHK), then spread to tourism activities which have started to stop, followed by the tourism supporting sector which has experienced losses (Maharani et al., 2020; Ngwacho, 2020; Susilawati et al., 2020; Bijoy et al., 2022 in Prayana & Darma, 2023). The Covid-19 pandemic has not only encouraged people to adapt their lifestyles but also changed their motivations and travel methods. This change began with the era of disruption which showed changes occurring very quickly and without limits. The presence of this era makes society open to technological advances so that they are not left behind in all fields (Agustina et al., 2017; Fitriani Lubis, 2019; Syakdiyah et al., 2019; Galanakis et al., 2021 in Prayana & Darma, 2023).

The Covid-19 pandemic that has spread throughout the world has resulted in very rapid, drastic changes and a shift in society to the digital era. The tourism industry has also begun to develop towards the digital world. Post-pandemic tourism emphasizes sustainable strategies, especially in efforts to maintain the sustainability of tourism. Significant changes are needed in sectors such as ecotourism, medical tourism, and agricultural or livestock tourism. This type of tourism is considered an alternative (Das et al., 2021). Destination marketing strategies depend on the extent to which management understands tourist motivations and their impact on subsequent behavioral intentions (Leong et al., 2015).

People are starting to pay more attention to health, paying attention to cleanliness, and adopting a healthier lifestyle (Yuan et al., 2021). In the end, each country returns to its respective activities, but still with "new habits" and ensuring that new cases begin to decline and vaccine distribution is carried out evenly (Rogerson, 2021). People can now choose the travel method that suits their needs. The developments that have occurred have significantly created a positive impact on the Bali tourism industry. Now the tourism sector has grown rapidly and contributed greatly to the global economy. Now tourism in Bali has gained popularity and become a favorite tourist destination for tourists, especially digital nomad tourists.

In addition, adaptation to this situation is also seen in the concept of "Work from Bali," where several individuals and companies utilize technology to work from the island of Bali or other locations, creating flexibility in the work environment and promoting a more mobile lifestyle. This new dynamic in the way of working reflects an effort to adapt to the challenges faced by the world as a result of lifestyle changes caused by the global pandemic and has become a new trend.

This trend is growing when tourists choose to do their work outside the office environment by utilizing electronic devices such as laptops and internet connections in a coworking space. Meanwhile, they also combine tourism activities, creating a phenomenon known as digital nomads (Sofia et al., 2023).

According to Mouratidis (2018), the term digital nomad comes from "digital" which refers to the use of computer technology and "nomad" which refers to individuals who move from one place to another without limits. In addition, he emphasized that digital nomad travel is often driven by 2 or 3 motivations at once, such as vacationing without leaving work responsibilities or working while on vacation. Digital nomads are a group of workers who use the flexibility provided by digital technology and are not tied to a specific location (Jarrahi et al., 2019).

Digital nomads are individuals who use technology to work remotely and live an independent and nomadic lifestyle (Nash et al., 2018). For digital nomads, this extreme mobility and organizational independence pose new challenges in digesting the meaning of work for them and how they define themselves in work (Ens et al., 2018; Reichenberger, 2018). More and more individuals are seeking freedom, traveling for various important

reasons to fulfill personal curiosity and hedonistic desires (Richard 2015, Muller 2016 in Prabawati, 2020). The evolution of work, technology and the lifestyle of mobile work in synergy has expanded the choice of jobs with certain specializations carrying out their professional activities anywhere in the world (Mouratidis, 2018).

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Digital nomad tourists do not only visit for tourism but also for work or what is often called "workation". They explore various destinations while completing their work. The tourist destinations sought by digital nomads are areas that have complete tourism support accommodation such as lodging (villas, hotels, homestays, etc.), tourist attractions (natural and artificial tourist attractions), cafes or restaurants around which are considered, and most importantly the availability of comfortable workspaces and optimal internet networks (Prayana & Darma, 2023). A digital nomad wants to disguise himself as a local community to get an expensive experience that they can only get at quality tourist attractions (Prabawati, 2020).

Currently, Bali has become one of the centers for digital nomads, with co-working spaces that continue to be opened to accommodate new and returning digital nomad tourists to Bali (Prabawati, 2020). This is also in line with the statement "Bali has become one of the hottest digital nomad hubs in the world, as co-working spaces are continuously opening to accommodate new and returning digital nomads" (Delaney, 2016; Kachroo-Levine, 2017; O'dell, 2017 in Haking, 2018).

Bali has two main destinations for digital nomad tourists, namely Canggu and Ubud. Ubud has been known as a pioneer for digital nomad tourists since 2014, but over time Canggu has become the most popular destination among digital nomads according to the Nomadlist list. According to Prabawati (2020), digital nomad tourists choose Canggu Village as their basecamp because all the supporting components of digital tourism activities are available such as attractions, amenities, accessibility, and additional services. The existence of communities such as digital camps and nomad academies creates an ecosystem for digital nomad tourists. Meanwhile, according to Prabawa & Pertiwi (2020), there are 2 factors that motivate digital nomad tourists to come to a destination, namely push factors and pull factors. Push factors are related to work and expanding networks. Meanwhile, pull factors are inspiring destinations, supportive places to live and work, and fun activities.

With the large number of digital nomads in Canggu, it will strengthen the overall digital ecosystem and related parties such as business owners in Canggu need to provide and improve facilities for digital nomads, such as co-working space, co-living, internet connection speed and other facilities that can support the needs of digital nomad tourists. Therefore, it is very important to understand their perceptions, intentions and behaviors related to visits to a tourist destination.

Previous research has enriched insights into the perceptions, motivations, and intentions of digital nomads working from Canggu. However, there is still little research that has conducted in-depth exploration in an effort to comprehensively understand and explore the perceptions, motivations, and intentions of digital nomads working from Canggu. By understanding the factors that influence the decisions of digital nomad tourists, business

owners and tourism managers can plan and develop their businesses better so that tourism in Bali becomes quality and sustainable. Based on the background above, this study was conducted to fill the gap in the literature related to the factors that influence the intention of digital nomads to work from Canggu, Bali.

METHOD

The research design used in this study is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This research was conducted in Canggu Village, North Kuta District, Badung Regency, Bali. This is an interesting phenomenon involving the presence of digital nomad tourists in the Canggu Village area. In this study, data collection techniques were carried out by means of in-depth interviews and documentation. The source of informants was determined intentionally by the researcher with purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. As informants in this study are digital nomad tourists who have lived in Canggu Village for approximately 2 months. The data analysis technique used in this study is the Miles and Huberman interactive data analysis technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bali is an island in Indonesia that is known as one of the world's tourist destinations. The island of Bali is located in a vast tropical country and is mostly Hindu. This island is often called the Island of the Gods or the Island of a Thousand Temples, seen from the thousands of temples, religious ceremonies and arts. Tourism in Bali is growing rapidly due to the combination of natural beauty, rich in art and culture, and the friendliness of the local people who make it a favorite destination for tourists around the world. One of the tourist destinations that is widely visited by tourists is Canggu Village.

Canggu Village has experienced very rapid development in recent years. Tourists who come to Canggu not only spend their time on vacation but also while working. Tourists are interested in visiting Canggu because of its nature, culture, comfortable workplace and entertainment venues. Canggu has beautiful nature, namely its beaches. Tourists can enjoy the sunset, surf and relax. The beaches in Canggu Village are Batu Bolong Beach, Batu Mejan Beach, Nelayan Beach, Perancak Beach and Berawa Beach. Canggu also offers a wide selection of restaurants and cafes for tourists who want to work, including Bwork, Tropical Nomad, Puco Rooftop, and Tribal.

Based on the interview results, there are 3 main codes identified related to the perception of digital nomad tourists working from Canggu-Bali, namely: 1. The comfort and facilities of the workplace make digital nomad tourists interested in working from Canggu-Bali; 2. Working from Canggu-Bali can improve the mental health of digital nomad tourists; 3. Working from Canggu-Bali can improve the quality of life of digital nomad tourists.

Canggu has developed rapidly for digital nomad tourists. The comfort and facilities of the workplace are the most important part and can support the digital nomad lifestyle. Canggu provides many co-working spaces that are facilitated with comfortable seating, equipped with high-speed internet connections, quiet workspaces and restaurants and cafes that provide healthy food choices, allowing digital nomads to continue working productively and creatively. Here is the explanation.

"Bali offers comfortable workspaces designed to meet the needs of remote workers. These spaces, such as Dojo Bali, Bwork, and Tropical Nomad in Canggu, provide high-speed internet, private meeting rooms, The atmosphere in these spaces is often relaxed yet professional, encouraging productivity and creativity" (I1).

The same thing was also explained by I2, I4 working from Canggu-Bali because of the comfortable working environment. Here is the explanation.

"There are a lot of people here, and what used to be a quiet little town is now a bustling center full of co-working spaces and people working in cafes. Canggu has a comfortable working environment."

Quality of life is an important aspect that can affect the productivity and well-being of digital nomads. With a calm atmosphere, favorable weather and close beach access, it helps digital nomads enjoy quality free time and helps them stay motivated in their work. In addition to the tourism offered, the friendliness of the people in Bali is a positive thing for digital nomads. Here is the explanation.

"It's a good quality of life here. You look around... blue skies, it's cheap living. It's atmosphere here, really cozy and also really calm and all people are loving. yeah it's great" (I2)

Other informants have similar explanations, Canggu offers an environment that can support a balance between work and personal life. Canggu is not only a place to work, but also a place that supports the growth and well-being of digital nomads. Here is the explanation.

"Canggu offers a very good quality of life, I can balance my work and personal life. The beaches are beautiful, good weather, good surf and the people are very welcoming and friendly." (I4)

The calm and natural environment, beautiful beaches help reduce stress and provide a natural relaxing effect. Working from Canggu-Bali provides benefits for the mental health of digital nomads. Digital nomads find that working from Canggu not only increases their work productivity, but also helps achieve good mental balance. Canggu offers various activities that support mental well-being, such as yoga, meditation, spa treatments, and surfing. Here is the explanation.

"After a long day of work, I can relax on the beautiful beach, take a yoga and meditation class, or indulge in a relaxing spa treatment. it keeps me productive and maintains my mental health" (I1)

Other informants have similar explanations regarding the increase in mental health while working from Canggu-Bali because it is an ideal place to relieve stress, here is the explanation.

"Definitely, for the type of business I do, it needs a lot of focus, right? Because it's engineering design. So you are solving really hard problems, so your head is loaded all the time. So being able to just like easily empty my head and then go back again. Canggu has been very helpful and being able to train every day and do yoga, keep me really balanced" (I3). I4 also has a similar opinion to I1 and I3. I4 expressed the following:

"During my time working in Canggu, I have a balanced lifestyle, which is crucial for long-term productivity and mental health. Bali's natural beauty and tranquil surroundings are the perfect combination for achieving a work-life balance" (I4)

Based on the interview results, there were 2 main codes identified related to the influence of external parties on the intention of digital nomad tourists to work from Canggu-Bali, namely 1. Digital nomad communities and organizations; 2. Vloggers and Bloggers.

Through the digital nomad communities and organizations active in Canggu, they can get a lot of information. This community provides a platform to share experiences, tips, and advice for living and working in Bali. They hold networking events, workshops, and meet ups that allow digital nomads to meet, learn and support each other. Here is the explanation.

"So I joined the digital nomad organization and community, usually we often do meetings, conferences and workshops. We chose Canggu as a gathering place" (I4)

In addition, digital nomad communities and organizations provide information about accommodation, coworking spaces and various local facilities to support remote work. With

these communities and organizations, digital nomads build social and professional networks to support each other. Here is the explanation.

“So I followed the online community, nomad list, digital nomad facebook groups. There they shared various information and recommendations about Canggu. So I was interested in trying to work in Canggu” (I2)

Digital nomads who work from Canggu often get information through vloggers and bloggers who share their experiences online. These vloggers and bloggers discuss various tips ranging from finding accommodation, recommendations for coworking spaces and other tourist and entertainment places to visit in Canggu. They provide insights into daily life in Canggu, including the cost of living, transportation and how to adapt to the local culture. Here is the explanation.

“A lot of vloggers and bloggers reviewing their lives while working in Canggu. They share their experiences through vlogs, blogs and social media, their life in Canggu looks very interesting” (I3)

Vloggers share more interesting visual content such as videos and photos, helping digital nomads prepare themselves before arriving in Canggu, Bali. They provide online reviews of their experiences while working and living in Canggu, so that information is available practically and easily. Here is the explanation.

“Vloggers give positive reviews of Canggu. so I'm interested in working and living in Canggu” (I4)

Based on the results of the interview, there were 4 main codes identified related to the perception of obstacles or supporters of digital nomad tourists working from Canggu-Bali, namely: 1. Congestion; 2. Internet Facilities; 3. Availability of Entertainment and Tourism Places; 4. Affordable Cost of Living.

With the increasing number of visitors and rapid development in tourism in Canggu, it often faces traffic congestion problems. Canggu, which is relatively narrow, is now filled with vehicles, especially during working hours. Congestion can reduce travel comfort and increase travel time between one place and another. This traffic jam is one of the main challenges when living in Canggu. Here is the explanation.

“Obviously here is the traffic. the traffic is really bad. it's cramped as you can see and there's no clear road markings” (I1)

The same thing was also explained by I2, I3, I4 about the traffic jam that occurs in Canggu-Bali. Here is the explanation.

“I would say maybe it's a traffic. it's traffic jam. Yeah” (I2)

“I guess everyone says is traffic. It's the worst. Yeah. Going here (co-working space) like 20 minutes. I was actually from Uluwatu, it's one and a half hours” (I3)

“The traffic is just busy. Yeah..The traffic is pretty rough and when you're behind the trucks that like blow smoke out of the exhaust pipes, that's pretty bad” (I4)

Internet facilities are very important for digital nomad tourists who want to work from Canggu. Digital nomads rely heavily on connectivity to work. Many cafes, restaurants, and co-working spaces offer free Wi-Fi with adequate speed. However, internet quality and speed can vary depending on location and weather. Digital nomads will choose to work at cafes, restaurants, or co-working spaces that have a good reputation for connectivity. Here is the explanation.

“The cafes and restaurants here provide good internet connection speed and stability, comfortable seating, and plenty of plugs. villas in Canggu that also offer free internet facilities” (I2)

“Many cafes in Canggu are specially designed for digital nomads, offering free Wi-Fi, comfortable seating, and a quiet atmosphere conducive to work.” (I4)

Digital nomads really need entertainment and tourist attractions in Canggu to support the balance between work and personal life. Working in the long term can cause mental and physical fatigue if not balanced with relaxation and recreation time. Entertainment and tourist attractions in Canggu, such as beaches, yoga studios, nature tourism, clubs, and bars provide opportunities for digital nomads to relieve stress. Here is the explanation.

“After a long day of work I can enjoy the sunset at the beach and relax with friends. and the beach is close to where I live” (I1)

By spending time outdoors, interacting with local culture and society, and enjoying fun activities, it gives new energy and increases productivity and creativity. Therefore, the availability of entertainment and tourism in Canggu is an important aspect for the well-being and success of digital nomads in living a remote working lifestyle. Here is the explanation.

“I love Canggu. There’s a lot of beaches, beach bars, beach clubs. Yeah nice place. The culture and the weather” (I4)

The affordable cost of living allows digital nomads to enjoy a balanced lifestyle while working from Canggu. Accommodation, food, transportation and daily necessities are very affordable compared to big cities in Western countries.

Accommodation in Canggu offers a variety of prices, from luxury villas to more basic guesthouses. Food has a wide selection, from local warungs offering traditional Balinese dishes at low prices, to more premium international restaurants. Transportation is also relatively cheap, with many options to rent a motorbike or use online transportation services. With an affordable lifestyle, digital nomads can manage their budget well.

“Bali offers a more affordable cost of living, accommodation, food, and transportation. I can enjoy working here” (I2)

“My food, transportation and daily expenses in Bali were very affordable. I spent \$500/month to rent a villa, \$60/month to rent a motorbike and \$8-20 per hour for a massage” (I3).

CONCLUSION

Canggu has become a magnet for digital nomads around the world. With a unique combination of natural beauty, rich local culture. Canggu offers an ideal environment to work and live. Digital nomads who choose to work from Canggu experience a significant increase in their quality of life. Factors such as access to comfortable co-working spaces, refreshing tropical weather, and a healthy lifestyle and outdoor activities, make Canggu more than just a place to work, but also a place to find balance between work and personal life. Thus, working from Canggu not only increases productivity, but also provides a more meaningful and satisfying life experience. However, from the statement above, there are several things that must be improved so that tourism in Canggu remains sustainable and of high quality, namely traffic. This is input for the Government to improve tourism in Canggu Village-Bali. Based on the results of the analysis and discussion in this study, the perception and intention of digital nomad tourists who work from Canggu-Bali are influenced by several factors. These factors are Attitude/Perception, Subjective Norms/External Influences, and Perceived Behavioral Control/Perception of Barriers or Supporters.

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