

BETWEEN IGNORANCE AND ENTITLEMENT: LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON TOURIST MISCONDUCT IN CANGGU, BALI

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Article History

Received: 06-05-2026

Revision: 20-05-2026

Accepted: 23-05-2026

Published: 25-05-2026

Abstract. Bali is an international tourism destination known for its natural beauty, culture, and friendly people. However, the increase in foreign tourist visits has also given rise to various socio-cultural issues, particularly tourist behavior that does not conform to local norms. This study aims to analyze the forms of deviant foreign tourist behavior and their impact on the socio-cultural dynamics of Balinese society, particularly in the Canggu area. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving local communities, traditional leaders, tourism industry players, and the Bali Tourism Office, selected purposively. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and thematic drawing of conclusions. The results show that foreign tourist behavior such as wearing inappropriate clothing in sacred areas, disrespecting traditional rituals, and violating social norms create social tensions and concerns about shifting local cultural values. These findings emphasize the importance of cultural education, tourist supervision, and collaboration between local governments, tourism actors, and indigenous communities to maintain cultural sustainability and social harmony in Bali.

Keywords: Tourist Misbehavior, Local Perspective, Canggu Bali

Abstrak. Bali merupakan destinasi pariwisata internasional yang dikenal karena keindahan alam, budaya, dan keramahan masyarakatnya. Namun, peningkatan kunjungan wisatawan mancanegara juga memunculkan berbagai persoalan sosial budaya, terutama perilaku wisatawan yang tidak sesuai dengan norma lokal. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bentuk penyimpangan perilaku wisatawan asing serta dampaknya terhadap dinamika sosio-kultural masyarakat Bali, khususnya di kawasan Canggu. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi dengan melibatkan masyarakat lokal, tokoh adat, pelaku industri pariwisata, dan pihak Dinas Pariwisata Bali yang dipilih secara purposive. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku wisatawan asing seperti mengenakan pakaian tidak pantas di area sakral, kurang menghormati ritual adat, dan pelanggaran norma sosial menimbulkan ketegangan sosial serta kekhawatiran terhadap pergeseran nilai budaya lokal. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya edukasi budaya, pengawasan wisatawan, dan kolaborasi antara pemerintah daerah, pelaku pariwisata, dan komunitas adat untuk menjaga keberlanjutan budaya serta harmoni sosial masyarakat Bali.

Kata Kunci: Perilaku Menyimpang Wisatawan, Perspektif Lokal, Canggu Bali

How to Cite: Suwono, E., Adijaya, J., & Adityaji, R. (2026). Between Ignorance and Entitlement: Local Perspectives on Tourist Misconduct in Canggu, Bali. *HORIZON: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 4 (3), 892-901. <http://doi.org/10.54373/hijm.v4i3.5621>

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has become one of the major contributors to global economic growth, including in Indonesia, where tourism supports regional income, employment opportunities, and community welfare (Mardhani et al., 2021). Bali, as Indonesia's leading cultural tourism destination, plays a central role in this sector because of its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and strong international reputation (Apriyanti, 2024). Data from Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) show that out of 13.9 million international tourists visiting Indonesia in 2024, approximately 6.3 million chose Bali as their destination. This condition confirms Bali's dependence on tourism as a primary driver of regional economic development (Budhi et al., 2022).

Despite its economic benefits, the rapid growth of tourism in Bali has also generated various social and cultural challenges. Increasing tourist arrivals contribute to congestion, environmental pressure, and changes in local social life. More importantly, cases of tourist misconduct such as wearing inappropriate clothing at sacred sites, disrespecting religious ceremonies, public nudity, and violating local regulations have become increasingly visible. These behaviors are often perceived by local communities as disrespectful toward Balinese cultural and religious values, potentially threatening social harmony and cultural sustainability (Satrya et al., 2023). Such conditions indicate that tourism development not only produces economic impacts but also creates tensions between global tourism practices and local cultural norms.

These issues are particularly evident in Canggu, a rapidly developing tourism area in Badung Regency. Previously known as a quiet agrarian village with strong communal traditions, Canggu has transformed into a global tourism and digital nomad hub due to infrastructure expansion and tourism investment policies. This transformation has accelerated land conversion, reduced agricultural areas, and altered local social structures (Sunarta et al., 2025). Alongside these changes, interactions between tourists and local communities have become more complex, especially regarding compliance with local norms and cultural expectations. The emergence of tourist misconduct in Canggu reflects not only individual behavior but also broader social dynamics related to globalization, gentrification, and shifting social values (Suyadnya et al., 2025).

Previous studies have discussed the social and cultural impacts of tourism in Bali, including tourist behavior and destination sustainability. However, research applying the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB) to examine local community perceptions of tourist misconduct remains limited. Most studies focus on tourism impacts in general without

specifically analyzing how social norms shape community responses toward inappropriate tourist behavior. This study offers novelty by applying TNSB to understand how local communities interpret, respond to, and evaluate tourist misconduct within the socio-cultural context of Bali, particularly in Canggu. The study also emphasizes the relationship between social norms, cultural values, and regulatory practices in managing tourist behavior.

Based on these issues, this research aims to: (1) examine how local communities respond to and evaluate tourist misconduct through the perspective of the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB); (2) identify the social and cultural impacts of tourist misconduct on the Balinese community; and (3) formulate policy recommendations based on TNSB to strengthen regulatory frameworks and preventive strategies in managing tourist behavior in Bali. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to tourism and socio-cultural studies, while practically providing recommendations for local governments, tourism stakeholders, and destination managers in developing culturally sensitive and sustainable tourism governance.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine local community perceptions of tourist misconduct in Bali, particularly in the Canggu area. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of social experiences, meanings, and community responses toward tourist behavior within a natural socio-cultural context (Creswell, 2014). The study focused on Canggu due to its high intensity of interaction between international tourists and local communities, as well as the increasing emergence of socio-cultural issues related to tourism activities.

The research participants consisted of local residents, tourism industry actors, traditional community leaders, and local government representatives involved in tourism management. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct experiences and involvement in tourism activities in Canggu. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, field observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were used to explore participants' perceptions regarding tourist misconduct and its social and cultural impacts. Observations were carried out in tourist areas to identify patterns of tourist behavior and interactions with local communities, while documentation studies included tourism regulations, policy documents, photographs, reports, and relevant previous studies.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The study also applied source and technique triangulation to enhance data credibility by comparing information obtained from different

participants and data collection methods. Through this process, the research aimed to produce a comprehensive understanding of tourist misconduct and its implications for the socio-cultural dynamics of the Balinese community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Transformation of Canggu

Canggu has undergone a radical shift in identity, transforming from an agrarian region into an international enclave dubbed "Bule Village" (Village of Foreigners) by tourism practitioners. Within just one decade, landscapes formerly dominated by green spaces and agriculture have been aggressively converted into high-density tourist facilities. This activity shift—moving from the saturated Kuta area to Canggu—was initially driven by the area's natural beauty and "laid-back" atmosphere; however, the resulting overtourism has triggered a rapid built-up expansion. This environmental transformation has brought systemic disruptions, including chronic traffic congestion, declining air quality, and increased waste (Sunarta et al., 2022; Grekousis et al., 2024). Based on interviews with three key stakeholders—senior tour guides, active tour guides, tourism office authorities, and two local residents working in tourism and hospitality in the Canggu area—it was found that tourist misconduct phenomena in Canggu are not merely individual issues but the result of deviant social norm construction.

Analysis of Misconduct Phenomena through the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB)

In-depth analysis of field data indicates that violations by tourists in Canggu are triggered by interactions among perceived norms, social identity, and external influencing factors. Within the TNSB framework, the influence of descriptive norms is amplified or weakened by several moderating variables, including injunctive norms, group identity, outcome expectations, and situational constraints.

Strength of Descriptive Norms and Normalization of Violations

Analyzing from the TNSB framework, Descriptive Norms emerge as the strongest variable driving violations in Canggu. (1) Mass Mimicry Effect: The first and second informants, who are tour guides and local residents, confirmed that violations such as riding without helmets have reached a certain point. When a tourist observes the majority of peers violating rules without sanctions, such behavior is no longer viewed as irregularity but as a group identity, (2) Pandemic Legacy: Triangulation of data from various empirical sources reveals that the roots

of regulatory noncompliance have been firmly embedded since the pandemic era, particularly in the form of resistance to mask usage. This dynamic has not only persisted but evolved into the foundation of bold behavior observed today. Consequently, it has shaped widespread perceptions among the community that Bali has become a rule-free space, especially when violations are conducted collectively and implicitly approved by the group. These findings align with the Theory of Normative Social Behavior, which posits that individuals tend to imitate behaviors perceived as common within their social group (Rimal & Real, 2005).

Erasure of Injunctive Norms

Injunctive Norms are behaviours that one is expected to follow and expects others to follow in a given social situation; they are maintained by the threat of disapproval or punishment and by the process of internalization (Gavrilets S. (2020) whereas in Canggu these norms have degraded due to several factors:

- Communication gaps: language and cultural barriers exist, particularly among Russian tourists, rendering regulatory messages (such as SE No. 7 of 2025) ineffective in absorption. When these language barriers exist, these messages may not get their point across among tourists.
- Alcohol and nightlife factors: the amount of beach clubs gathered in Canggu decreases tourists' self-control. alcohol influence leads to disregard for both social and legal sanctions in favor of momentary pleasure.
- Failure of education at first contact point: motorcycle rentals are identified as the most vulnerable critical point in the compliance chain. Intense price competition and dominance of ownership by foreign nationals cause service providers to frequently neglect verification of driver's licenses and enforcement of helmet requirements. This condition provides implicit legitimacy for tourists to violate traffic rules from their initial contact with Canggu's roads. The weakening of injunctive norms demonstrates that formal regulations are ineffective without strong communication and consistent law enforcement (Cialdini et al., 1990).

Psychosocial Construction: Between Ignorance, Entitlement, and Supremacy

Triangulated data reveal differences in violation typologies based on tourists' backgrounds, influenced by cultural proximity as tourists from Asia tend to comply more with regulations due to shared cultural values and respect for local authority. In contrast, some Caucasian tourists exhibit superiority toward local culture and rules. Caucasian tourists feel they have

paid for their visit to Bali, and areas like Canggu have been constructed to their tastes in terms of food, language, and facilities, placing them above local rules. Violations here stem not from ignorance but from a sense of entitlement to do as they please. This exploratory tourist behavior aligns with Tourist Behavior Theory, which explains that tourists seek novel experiences over stability (Cohen, 1972).



Figure 1: Tourist misbehavior on the Canggu Shortcut (Source: Author’s documentation, 2026)

Structural Responses: Mitigation, Law Enforcement, and Cultural Resilience

Tabel 4. Strategi Pemerintah dan Otoritas Lokal dalam Menanggulangi Tourist Misconduct di Bali Berdasarkan Perspektif Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB)

Strategy	Instrument	Sociological Objective	Norm Classification
SE No. 7 of 2025 (Do's and Don'ts)	Written guidelines transforming ignorance into compliance	Shock Therapy through regulatory awareness	Injunctive Norms
Deportation and Fines	Demonstrating that economic contribution confers no legal immunity	Disrupting entitlement perceptions	Descriptive Norms
Implementing Tourist Levy Social Media Counter-Narratives	Economic filtering to transition from mass to quality tourism Campaigns highlighting misconduct consequences (accidents, deportations, fines)	Quality Control of tourists profile Reframing perceived “normal” behavior in Canggu	Injunctive Norms Descriptive Norms
Enhanced Law Enforcement Presence	Increasing police patrols in high-tourist areas	Strengthening perceptions of enforcement consequences	Injunctive Norms
Digital Pre-Arrival Warning Systems	Pop-up notifications on travel apps / booking platforms about local rules	Pre-arrival norm-setting	Injunctive Norms
Zoning & Behavioral Regulation Areas	Spatial zoning for temples, roads, and sacred areas	Spatial control of behavior	Injunctive Norms
Influencer Partnership Programs	Collaborations modeling compliant behavior	Transformation of aspirational social norms	Descriptive Norms

Based on Table 4, the government and local authorities have implemented various strategies to reduce deviant tourist behavior in Bali, particularly in tourist areas like Canggu. These strategies are implemented through regulatory, educational, and social approaches related to concepts in the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB). Regarding injunctive norms, the government implements written regulations, such as Bali Governor's Circular Letter No. 7 of 2025, which contains guidelines for tourist behavior (Do's and Don'ts) to raise tourist awareness of local norms and culture. Furthermore, the implementation of fines, deportation, and access restrictions to sacred areas reinforce the perception of consequences for rule violations.

Meanwhile, regarding descriptive norms, the government emphasizes that tourists' economic contributions cannot be used as an excuse to ignore Balinese social and cultural norms. The implementation of quality tourism is also aimed at developing a tourist profile that is more respectful of local culture. Furthermore, collaboration between the government, indigenous communities, and tourism operators is being carried out to foster more compliant tourist behavior through the formation of aspirational social norms. These findings indicate that addressing tourist misconduct requires not only formal regulations but also strengthening social awareness and the ongoing internalization of cultural norms.

Field Enforcement Dilemma

A dilemma exists between police priorities, whose main jobs are to help with traffic flow and congestion management over addressing tourist misbehavior in Canggu. This is often misinterpreted by tourists as tolerance for their misconduct. Interviews with the third informant, AAP, a local tour guide, confirmed this, stating, "Police are always present in congestion-prone areas in Canggu but do not always take action against tourist misconduct because they focus on managing traffic flow." This statement is reinforced by Tri, a tourism practitioner, who noted that authorities only issue verbal warnings without legal sanctions to tourists committing violations, leading to repeated misconduct.

On the other hand, Pecalang, which are traditional Balinese security guards, remain the last guard standing in preserving the sanctity of local values through social sanctions, although their formal authority is limited to customary spaces, which is their respective administrative village. Suggestions from locals, such as making monitoring posts for tourists in areas where misconducts are often happening could lead to awareness for tourists to behave better and follow the local regulations. Another suggestion which is a minimum saving amount for tourists combined with tourist levy policy could filter out tourists' quality and attract higher

quality tourists. The implementation of the Provincial Tourist Levy in Bali (IDR 150,000) is further complicated by regional-specific costs. I Gede Putu Budiastawa, the Head of Tourism Destinations for Bangli Regency, notes that the primary challenge lies in the cumulative financial pressure placed on visitors. In regions like Bangli, tourists encounter multiple layers of fees—provincial taxes, regional retributions, and occasionally, unofficial levies at specific sites. However, Budiastawa argues that if these funds are transparently redistributed to enhance the quality of attractions, the resulting high-standard infrastructure will naturally filter the market, attracting higher-quality tourists who value cultural preservation over low-cost, deviant behavior (Krisnawati, 2023).

Implications

This research advances studies on tourist behavior, particularly norm violations in tourism destinations. Findings reinforce the relevance of the Theory of Normative Social Behavior in explaining tourist actions, where social norms outweigh formal regulations. It also expands understanding of how external factors like globalization, alcohol, and social dynamics shape behavior in tourism contexts. The study offers practical steps for tourism stakeholders and government (1) tourist education; share local rules more effectively via digital platforms and arrival points even before tourists enter Bali, (2) stronger law enforcement; build consistency to cut perceptions of leniency that fuel violations; partner closely with local police, (3) entry point oversight; monitor rental services tightly, as they shape early tourist habits, (4) nightlife management; control alcohol's influence on behavior through stricter rules and checks, and (5) stakeholder collaboration; government, businesses, and locals must team up to balance tourism growth with cultural values.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, tourist misconduct in the Canggu area emerges as a multidimensional issue shaped by the interaction of social, cultural, psychological, and structural factors within Bali's tourism ecosystem. The analysis shows that the rapid transformation of Canggu from a traditional agrarian village into a global tourism destination has contributed to shifts in local social norms and weakened community control over tourist behavior. Within the framework of the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB), descriptive norms were identified as the strongest factor influencing misconduct, as tourists tend to imitate behaviors they perceive as common or socially accepted among other visitors. At the same time, injunctive norms have not functioned optimally due to weak law

enforcement, communication barriers, and the increasing perception among some tourists that economic contribution provides social privilege or immunity from local regulations. The study also reveals that tourist misconduct is reinforced structurally through tourism business practices, particularly in vehicle rental services that often neglect regulatory compliance. These findings contribute theoretically by extending the application of TNSB in tourism studies, particularly in explaining how social norms shape tourist behavior in culturally sensitive destinations. Practically, this study highlights the importance of strengthening integrated regulations, consistent enforcement, cultural education, and collaboration between government, tourism stakeholders, and customary communities to preserve Bali's socio-cultural sustainability and maintain harmonious relations between tourists and local society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future studies are recommended to expand both the scope and methodological approach of research on tourist misconduct in Bali in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. First, future researchers should involve a larger and more diverse number of informants, including tourists from different nationalities, tourism workers, customary leaders, local government officials, and business actors. A broader participant base would allow researchers to capture more varied perspectives regarding the causes, forms, and impacts of tourist misconduct in different social contexts.

Second, future studies are encouraged to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches through mixed-method research designs. Quantitative methods, such as surveys and statistical analysis, could strengthen the empirical measurement of variables related to tourist behavior, social norms, and public perceptions. Meanwhile, qualitative approaches would remain important for exploring the cultural meanings, social experiences, and community responses behind the phenomenon. The integration of both approaches would provide richer and more balanced findings regarding the relationship between tourism development and socio-cultural dynamics in Bali.

Third, comparative studies across different tourism areas in Bali, such as Seminyak, Ubud, Kuta, or Uluwatu, are highly recommended. Each destination has distinct tourism characteristics, cultural environments, visitor profiles, and regulatory practices that may influence the forms and intensity of tourist misconduct. Comparative analysis would help identify whether the patterns found in Canggu represent a broader phenomenon across Bali or are specific to highly globalized tourism areas. Such studies could also support the

development of more contextual and location-based tourism policies for preserving Balinese cultural sustainability.

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