

## URBAN TOURISM IN BALI FROM A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

The development of urban tourism in Bali has become increasingly complex alongside the growth of tourism activities, rising pressure on public services, and mounting demands for social and environmental sustainability. This condition underscores the urgency of studies that view tourism not merely as an economic sector, but also as an arena of public administration and governance. This study aims to analyze the relationship between urban tourism and public administration practices, as well as to identify relevant policy implications within Bali's urban context. The theoretical framework draws on the concepts of urban tourism, destination governance, and public administration, with particular attention to institutional capacity and cross-sectoral coordination. The research employs a qualitative method using a literature review approach, drawing on academic books, scholarly journal articles, and policy documents. The findings indicate that the effective management of urban tourism is strongly influenced by local government institutional capacity, clarity of roles among stakeholders, and the integration of cross-sectoral policies. These results highlight the importance of strengthening public governance as a prerequisite for the sustainability of urban tourism.

**Keywords:** Destination Governance, Public Administration, Urban Tourism.

### A. INTRODUCTION

Urban tourism has expanded rapidly in cities around the world as a response to urbanization, the transformation toward service-based economies, and the increasing mobility of tourists who utilize urban spaces as primary destinations. This growth has generated complex implications for urban governance and public service provision (Hall & Page, 2023; Richards, 2021). While contributing to local economic growth, urban tourism also poses serious challenges related to environmental sustainability, pressure on urban infrastructure, and cross-sectoral policy coordination within local government contexts (UNWTO, 2022). In developing countries, urban tourism often reveals uneven public administrative capacity in managing the density of tourism activities, conflicts over land use, and competing interests among government, private-sector actors, and local communities (Nunkoo et al., 2023). These dynamics are clearly evident in Bali, particularly in urban areas such as Denpasar and the Sarbagita, where a shift from nature- and culture-based tourism toward urban tourism has intensified, directly affecting public service systems and urban governance. Accordingly, this study focuses on urban tourism in Bali from a public administration perspective, emphasizing governance capacity, policy coordination, and the role of local governments in ensuring the sustainability of urban tourism development.

Bali is widely recognized as an international tourism destination grounded in cultural and natural attractions. However, over the past two decades, tourism patterns have shifted toward

urban tourism activities concentrated in urban areas featuring city centers, entertainment facilities, culinary scenes, arts, and urban lifestyles. Denpasar City and Badung Regency exemplify the growth of urban tourism in Bali.

This development carries broad implications for public administration, particularly in urban planning, infrastructure provision, public service delivery, and the management of social and environmental impacts. Therefore, the study of urban tourism needs to be linked to public administration as a discipline concerned with the management of the public sector and public policy. The ongoing research on urban tourism in Bali positions urban tourism in Denpasar–Sarbagita as a governance arena that simultaneously demands public administrative capacity, cross-sectoral coordination, high-quality public services, and effective environmental impact control.

Arismayanti and Pitana (2025) demonstrate that “tourism villages” in urban Denpasar have not developed optimally due to weak governance ecosystems, particularly in stakeholder roles, management coordination, and inconsistent community involvement in sustaining destinations. Wiryananda and Parahita (2024) reveal a development paradox in Sarbagita: tourism’s contribution to economic performance coincides with tendencies toward social and environmental unsustainability, suggesting that more adaptive, locally grounded (customary village–based) policy strategies are crucial to balancing the three pillars of sustainability. Kerti et al. (2025) emphasize that while collaborative tourism policy forums in Bali exist, collaboration remains largely symbolic and dominated by government actors; as a result, sustainability agendas have not been operationalized into measurable cross-sectoral mechanisms, and strengthening institutional capacity is a prerequisite for translating local values and philosophies into effective governance practices.

The relevance of these three studies to research on urban tourism in Denpasar–Sarbagita lies in their shared focus on tourism as a governance problem dependent on multi-actor coordination, institutional design, and the government’s capacity to manage public services and sustainability impacts.

Their differences lie in analytical emphasis. Arismayanti and Pitana (2025) focus on “tourism villages in urban areas,” centering on the formation of community-based destination ecosystems at the local level. Wiryananda and Parahita (2024) adopt a macro-level evaluation of metropolitan sustainability in Sarbagita (economic, social, and environmental indicators) without specifically mapping the implementation processes of public services at urban tourism nodes. Kerti et al. (2025) examine policy collaboration at the provincial level using local wisdom as a normative framework but do not translate this into the configuration of urban tourism in Denpasar–Sarbagita as a “public service space” that daily bears the burdens of mobility, waste, congestion, security, and destination infrastructure needs.

The originality of this research is articulated through addressing the gaps left by these studies. The proposed novelty lies in formulating an analytical model of urban tourism in Denpasar Sarbagita from a public administration perspective that explicitly links (i) local government institutional capacity (regulations, resources, and coordination mechanisms), (ii) cross-sectoral implementation processes (synchronizing tourism, transportation, environment, public order, and spatial planning), and (iii) the performance of public services experienced in urban spaces (transportation, cleanliness, security, and public spaces) as determinants of urban tourism sustainability. This integrated framework has not been comprehensively developed in studies focusing on urban tourism villages, metropolitan sustainability indices, or provincial-level policy collaboration.

The urgency of this research arises from consistent indications that tourism growth in Bali particularly within the Sarbagita metropolitan area creates tangible trade-offs between economic performance and social environmental pressures, while collaborative mechanisms

and institutional capacity remain insufficient to ensure sustainability values function as operational practices rather than mere policy narratives. Under these conditions, urban tourism risks exacerbating public service burdens (congestion, waste management, public space quality, safety) and generating policy fragmentation across interconnected metropolitan jurisdictions. Consequently, public administration based recommendations (capacity, process, and service performance) are urgently needed to ensure that urban tourism management remains compatible with the principles of good governance and sustainable development.

Aligned with this framework, the objectives of the study are to: (1) analyze the institutional capacity of local governments in managing urban tourism in the Denpasar Sarbagita area, including policy instruments, resources, and coordination mechanisms; (2) explain the policy implementation processes of urban tourism through cross-sectoral and multi-actor interactions (government, business actors, communities/local society, and local institutions) in public service provision and impact management; and (3) formulate policy implications and governance recommendations to strengthen public service quality and the sustainability of urban tourism in Bali.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Urban tourism refers to travel activities undertaken by individuals to urban areas for various purposes, ranging from recreation and business to participation in social and cultural activities centered within cities. Unlike many other forms of tourism that tend to focus on a single primary attraction, urban tourism is inherently multidimensional, encompassing cultural heritage, meetings and conventions, sports, gastronomy, nightlife, shopping, as well as experiences related to health and well-being (Edwards et al., 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). This complexity makes urban tourism difficult to define in a singular way; nevertheless, numerous studies concur that the sector makes a significant contribution to economic growth, spatial transformation, and the competitiveness of major cities (García-Hernández et al., 2020).

Conceptually, urban tourism can be understood as tourism activities that take place in urban areas by utilizing city-specific resources, such as historical heritage, economic centers, national and international events, as well as modern infrastructure and public facilities. In practice, the development of urban tourism is often associated with urban revitalization strategies, the strengthening of city branding, and the promotion of the creative economy as a driving force of contemporary urban development (Ashworth & Page, 2019; Colomb & Novy, 2022).

However, the rapid expansion of urban tourism also generates sustainability challenges. Sustainable urban tourism requires cross-stakeholder collaboration among governments, industry actors, local communities, and tourists to ensure that economic benefits do not come at the expense of environmental quality and urban social cohesion. Achieving a balance between economic growth, environmental carrying capacity, and local community well-being is therefore a key prerequisite for the long-term sustainability of urban tourism (Aall & Koens, 2019; Koens et al., 2021).

Beyond governance considerations, understanding the spatial patterns of urban tourism has become a crucial issue. Spatial analysis enables researchers and urban planners to better comprehend tourist motivations, movement patterns, intensity of urban space use, and the resulting socio-economic impacts. Recent studies indicate that the development of urban tourism is strongly influenced by the spatial and temporal characteristics of intra-city travel, the organization of tourist destinations, and broader geographical and urban morphological contexts (Yang et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023). Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of spatial patterns and the determinants of urban recreational spaces constitutes a critical

foundation for designing inclusive and sustainable urban tourism policies and development strategies.

### **Public Administration**

Public administration as a field of study examines how public policies are formulated and implemented by governments and non-governmental actors. In the context of tourism, public administration plays a role in:

- Formulation of tourism regulations and policies
- Coordination between government agencies
- Public-private-community partnerships
- Provision and oversight of public services

### **Urban Tourism Governance**

Tourism is a social activity involving individuals or groups who intend to stay or travel outside their usual place of residence for a period of no more than 12 months for various leisure, business, religious, or other personal reasons, but who do not receive remuneration or wages for their travel. These tourist activities involve, directly impact, and impact the local community. The tourism system comprises three basic elements: the tourists themselves (the actors in the system), geographic elements (tourist-generating areas, tourist destinations, and tourist route areas), and the tourism industry (businesses and organizations involved in delivering tourism products). The interactions between these elements take the form of transactions and impacts. It is important to highlight these relationships, especially in academic circles, where divisions of subject matter often prevent a full appreciation of these relationships and transactions. Tourism governance is a form of regulation of the relationships between tourism actors and tourism resources, consumers, the government, and other parties with interests in the same tourism resources.

Good governance principles can improve organizational performance and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. Tourism management must involve various parties, such as local governments, the private sector (tourism businesses), and local communities. The legal basis for tourism is Law Number 10 of 2009, Article 18, which states that the Government and/or Regional Governments regulate and manage tourism affairs in accordance with statutory provisions. This article stipulates that tourism must be planned, organized, and controlled for all tourism affairs (Law 2009). Conservation of nature and the environment is one of the principles of tourism governance, as stipulated in the Tourism Law.

Urban tourism governance emphasizes collaboration between local governments, businesses, local communities, and tourists. Good governance principles such as transparency, participation, and accountability are key to successful urban tourism management.

## **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research is positioned within the qualitative tradition, employing a literature review approach, primarily to strengthen conceptual understanding and formulate policy implications regarding the relationship between urban tourism and public administration practices in Bali. This choice is noteworthy because urban tourism issues are not solely about tourism activities, but also about how cities are governed through policy narratives, actor interests, and institutional dynamics that often operate non-linearly. In such a context, a qualitative approach is more appropriate because it allows researchers to interpret the meaning and logic of policies in depth, rather than simply reducing them to numerical indicators that often fail to adequately capture social complexity (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interestingly, the literature review also provides researchers with the opportunity to map the

state of knowledge, analyze trends in findings, and synthesize findings that can serve as the basis for academic arguments and more targeted policy recommendations (Snyder, 2019).

Data sources were collected from academic books, scientific journal articles, policy documents, and institutional reports relevant to the theme of tourism and public administration in Bali. However, to prevent the literature review from becoming merely a "compilation of readings," the search was conducted systematically and transparently: researchers identified keywords that represented conceptual intersections (e.g., urban tourism, city branding, destination governance, public administration, Bali), developed inclusion criteria based on relevance, publisher credibility, and relevance to the urban context, and then conducted a step-by-step filtering to maintain the quality of the sources used (Booth et al., 2016; Snyder, 2019). For policy documents and reports, document analysis is crucial because it provides insights into regulatory direction, program priorities, and implementation logic often these aspects that determine how tourism develops in urban spaces (Bowen, 2009).

The analysis phase was conducted descriptively and analytically, presenting literature findings in a structured manner while examining the conceptual linkages between urban tourism and public administration practices, such as destination governance, intersectoral coordination, the role of regulation, and institutional capacity. Operationally, the analysis follows the usual stages in qualitative studies: data reduction through thematic grouping, data presentation in the form of matrices or concept maps, and drawing conclusions that are continuously verified by comparing across sources to strengthen the accuracy of interpretation (Miles et al., 2014). Thus, this literature review does not stop at a summary, but moves towards a synthesis that explains why and how the concept of urban tourism can resonate or conversely conflict with public administration practices in the context of Bali which has its own unique governance characteristics and destination dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Urban Tourism in Bali**

Rapid global change has compelled the tourism sector to continuously adapt to evolving conditions. Innovation has therefore become a necessity for the tourism industry not only to survive, but also to continue growing and contributing meaningfully to civilization. Looking ahead, three main types of innovation are required in the field of tourism.

The first is scientific and technological innovation. This type of innovation includes strengthening eco-efficiency in tourism, advancing the use of information technology in tourism management, innovating technological applications in tourism services including transportation and enhancing partnership-based interactions in tourism management.

The second is socio-cultural and economic innovation. This category encompasses the development of tourism studies and ethics that continue to evolve over time. Other forms of innovation relate to heritage tourism, city tourism, and place governance, which are increasingly important in shaping sustainable and inclusive urban destinations.

The third is tourism governance innovation. This form of innovation involves advancements in tourism research methodologies, innovation in tourism positioning and market segmentation, the development of new governance arrangements, and, ultimately, trust-building mechanisms in tourism management.

Urban tourism in Bali has developed through several key dimensions, including:

- Urban tourism in Denpasar, featuring heritage sites, museums, and cultural festivals
- Entertainment and lifestyle districts in Badung Regency
- International events, culinary tourism, and the creative economy

### **Forms of Urban Tourism in Bali**

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Several areas in Bali reflect the characteristics of urban tourism, including the following:

### **Denpasar**

- The administrative and cultural center of Bali
- Main attractions include Bali Museum, Puputan Badung Square, and Badung & Kumbasari Traditional Markets
- Characterized by urban cultural tourism, historical tourism, and local culinary tourism

### **Kuta–Legian–Seminyak**

- An urban area dominated by modern tourism activities
- Attractions include nightlife entertainment venues, beach clubs, shopping centers, and luxury hotels
- Primarily targets young and international tourist segments

### **Sanur**

- A blend of urban environment and coastal tourism
- Suitable for family tourism and health and wellness tourism
- Supported by public facilities and good transportation accessibility

### **Ubud (semi-urban)**

- Although widely known for cultural and nature-based tourism, Ubud has evolved into an arts-oriented town
- Features art galleries, cafés, coworking spaces, and international cultural events

These developments have increased regional revenue but have also generated challenges such as traffic congestion, waste management issues, land-use conversion, and growing pressure on public services.

### **Characteristics of Urban Tourism in Bali**

- A fusion of traditional culture and modernity
- Tourism activities that operate throughout the day
- Well-developed tourism infrastructure
- Active involvement of local communities in the creative economy
- High concentration of tourists in specific areas

### **Impacts of Urban Tourism in Bali**

#### **Positive Impacts**

- Increased regional revenue
- Job creation
- Growth of the creative economy
- Revitalization of urban areas

#### **Negative Impacts**

- Traffic congestion
- Land-use conversion
- Rising cost of living for local communities
- Environmental and cultural pressures

### **The Role of Public Administration**

From a public administration perspective, local governments play a strategic role in:

#### **Public Policy Formulation**

Local governments design urban tourism policies that are integrated with spatial planning and sustainable development strategies.

#### **Coordination and Collaboration**

Urban tourism requires cross-sectoral coordination (tourism, transportation, environment, and culture) as well as collaboration with the private sector and local communities.

### **Public Services and Infrastructure**

The provision of public transportation, waste management, safety, and public spaces serves as key performance indicators of public administration in supporting urban tourism. Public services play a highly strategic role in ensuring the success of urban tourism, as cities function not only as tourist destinations but also as living spaces for residents. The quality of public services directly affects tourist experiences, city image, and tourism sustainability. Key responsibilities in infrastructure provision and accessibility include:

- Public transportation systems (city buses, MRT/LRT, airport rail links)
- Road quality, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, and bicycle lanes
- Signage, tourism wayfinding systems, and public facilities

Well-developed infrastructure enhances tourist mobility and overall comfort.

### **Challenges and Governance**

Urban tourism has expanded rapidly as cities grow as centers of culture, economy, and entertainment. However, this growth also poses significant challenges for public service delivery.

The main public administration challenges in managing urban tourism in Bali include:

- Limited bureaucratic capacity
- Overlapping policies across administrative jurisdictions
- Insufficient participation of local communities
- Tensions between economic interests and cultural sustainability

To address these challenges, an adaptive, collaborative, and sustainable public service governance framework is required, including:

- **Collaborative Governance**

Urban tourism governance should involve government as regulator and facilitator, the private sector as service provider, and local communities as both beneficiaries and active participants.

- **Integration of Tourism Policy and Urban Planning**

This includes synchronizing tourism development plans with spatial planning regulations and managing tourism zones based on carrying capacity principles.

- **Reducing Land-Use Conflicts and Environmental Pressure**

Integrated governance is essential to minimize spatial conflicts and mitigate environmental stress resulting from intensive urban tourism activities.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on this literature review, it can be concluded that urban tourism in Bali, particularly in the Denpasar-Sarbagita urban space, is a development phenomenon that simultaneously strengthens the local economy and creates governance pressures, especially on public services, cross-sector coordination, and socio-environmental impact control; thus, the formulation of the problem regarding the role of public administration is answered through the finding that the success of urban tourism management is largely determined by the institutional capacity of local governments, the quality of multi-actor coordination, and the application of good governance principles in policy planning and implementation (Hall & Page, 2023; UNWTO, 2022). The main meaning of this finding shows that urban tourism cannot be treated as a mere "tourism sector" matter, but rather as an arena of public services and metropolitan governance that demands operational, not just normative, synchronization

of tourism-spatial planning-transportation-environment. Thus, the research objective of explaining the relationship between urban tourism and public administration practices is achieved by affirming the direct relationship between destination dynamics, public service burden, and regional governance capacity. The distinctive contribution of this research lies in its positioning of Denpasar-Sarbagita urban tourism as a “public service space” and in the formulation of an analytical framework that links (i) institutional capacity, (ii) cross-sector implementation processes, and (iii) public service performance as determinants of urban tourism sustainability, which have not been fully integrated by studies focusing on urban tourism villages, metropolitan sustainability indices, or provincial-level policy collaboration; therefore, it is recommended that local governments strengthen bureaucratic capacity and inter-regional coordination mechanisms within Sarbagita, clarify the division of roles across agencies, and establish measurable and carrying capacity-based public service performance indicators (transportation, cleanliness, security, public space) as prerequisites for ensuring that urban tourism growth remains in line with Bali’s social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

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