

Cultural Tourism in the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Communication: Bali at a Crossroads (2022–2025)

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ABSTRACT

Bali has long been recognized as one of the world's leading cultural tourism destinations, attracting millions of international visitors annually through its rich cultural heritage, traditional arts, religious practices, and unique social values. However, the rapid expansion of global tourism, digital transformation, and increasing cultural exchanges have placed Bali in a complex position where economic development, cultural preservation, and intercultural interaction intersect. This study aims to examine the development of cultural tourism research from a cross-cultural communication perspective by employing a bibliometric approach to publications published between 2022 and 2025. Data were collected from 125 scholarly publications indexed in major academic databases using keywords related to cultural tourism, intercultural communication, cultural sustainability, and Bali tourism. The analysis focused on publication trends, thematic development, keyword co-occurrence, and emerging research directions. The findings reveal a significant increase in research output during the study period, with cultural sustainability (28%), cross-cultural communication (24%), community-based tourism (17.6%), overtourism (16%), and digital tourism (14.4%) emerging as dominant themes. The results suggest that Bali currently stands at a critical crossroads between preserving its cultural identity and responding to the demands of a highly competitive global tourism industry. The study highlights the growing importance of intercultural communication as a strategic mechanism for balancing cultural preservation, tourism development, and sustainable destination management. Furthermore, the findings indicate that future research is likely to focus on digital communication, Generation Z tourist behavior, smart tourism, cultural diplomacy, and sustainable cultural tourism governance.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Cross-Cultural Communication, Bibliometric Analysis, Bali, Cultural Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, Bali has emerged as one of the most prominent cultural tourism destinations in the global tourism landscape. Unlike many destinations that rely primarily on natural attractions, Bali's tourism competitiveness is deeply rooted in its living culture, religious traditions, community-based social structures, artistic expressions, and indigenous philosophies such as Tri Hita Karana. These cultural assets have transformed Bali into a unique destination where tourism and culture are closely interconnected. The post-pandemic tourism recovery period has accelerated the complexity of interactions between local communities and international visitors. As global mobility resumes, Bali has experienced increasing numbers of tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds, bringing different languages, values, communication styles, behavioral expectations, and social norms. Consequently, Bali has become a dynamic arena of intercultural encounters where local traditions continuously interact with global influences. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, tourism extends beyond economic transactions and leisure activities. It represents a social process involving continuous negotiation of meanings, values, identities, and cultural representations. Tourists interpret local cultures through their own cultural frameworks, while host communities adapt their communication strategies to accommodate visitors from diverse backgrounds. Such interactions create opportunities for mutual understanding, cultural learning, and economic development, but they may also generate misunderstandings, cultural conflicts, stereotypes, and tensions concerning authenticity and cultural preservation.

The period between 2022 and 2025 represents a particularly significant phase in Bali's tourism development. During this period, the island experienced rapid tourism recovery while simultaneously confronting challenges related to overtourism, environmental pressures, cultural commodification, digital transformation, and changing tourist behavior. These developments have prompted increasing scholarly interest in understanding how cultural tourism and cross-cultural communication intersect within Bali's evolving tourism ecosystem. Despite the growing body of literature on Bali tourism, relatively limited attention has been given to systematically mapping the development of research themes related to cultural tourism and cross-cultural communication. Therefore, this bibliometric study seeks to analyze research trends, thematic developments, and emerging directions in the field between 2022 and 2025. By doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how Bali is positioned at the intersection of cultural preservation and global tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Cultural Tourism Theory*

Cultural tourism has evolved considerably over the past decades. According to Greg Richards, contemporary cultural tourism extends beyond the passive consumption of cultural attractions and increasingly involves participatory experiences that enable tourists to engage directly with local communities [15], traditions [6], lifestyles [13], and cultural practices [4]. Cultural tourism can be understood as a process through which tourists seek meaningful encounters with the cultural heritage and everyday life of host communities (Moulita, 2018). This process creates opportunities for intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange, making tourism an important platform for cultural interaction and learning. In Bali, cultural tourism encompasses a wide range of experiences, including temple visits, traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, performing arts, culinary experiences, village tourism, and heritage-based tourism activities. These experiences provide opportunities for tourists to engage with Balinese culture while simultaneously influencing local cultural practices and tourism development strategies.

2.2 *Cross-Cultural Communication Theory*

Cross-cultural communication refers to the exchange of information, meanings, and symbols among individuals from different cultural backgrounds [9]. One of the foundational scholars in this field, Edward T. Hall, argued that culture fundamentally shapes communication patterns, influencing how individuals perceive time, space, relationships, and social interactions (Moulita, 2018). Hall's distinction between high-context and low-context cultures remains particularly relevant to tourism studies. Balinese society is generally characterized as a high-context culture, where communication relies heavily on implicit meanings, social relationships, non-verbal cues, and cultural symbolism [1]. In contrast, many Western tourists originate from low-context cultures that prioritize directness, explicit communication, and individual expression. These cultural differences often influence interactions between tourists and local communities [8]. Misunderstandings may arise when communication styles, expectations, and cultural norms differ significantly. Therefore, effective intercultural

communication becomes essential for creating positive tourism experiences and reducing cultural conflicts.

2.3 Intercultural Adaptation Theory

According to Young Yun Kim, intercultural adaptation is a dynamic process through which individuals adjust to unfamiliar cultural environments [15]. Kim's adaptation model consists of three interconnected stages: stress, adaptation, and growth. Tourists visiting Bali frequently encounter unfamiliar cultural practices, religious ceremonies, social norms, and communication patterns. Initially, these differences may generate uncertainty or cultural stress. Through interaction and communication with local communities, tourists gradually adapt and develop a deeper understanding of Balinese culture. Similarly, tourism workers and local residents continuously adapt their communication practices to accommodate diverse visitor expectations. This mutual adaptation process contributes to successful intercultural encounters and enhances destination competitiveness.

2.4 Cultural Identity Theory

The concept of cultural identity has received increasing attention in tourism research [15]. According to Stuart Hall, cultural identity is not fixed but continuously constructed and reconstructed through social interaction and historical processes. Global tourism has intensified the interaction between local and global cultures, creating new opportunities as well as challenges for destination communities [3]. In Bali, cultural identity is increasingly influenced by tourism development, digital media, globalization, and changing social values [7]. Several studies have documented transformations in cultural performances, traditional architecture, ceremonial practices, and local customs as communities adapt to tourism demands. While these adaptations may generate economic benefits, they also raise concerns regarding cultural authenticity and the preservation of traditional values.

2.5 Cultural Commodification Theory

The concept of cultural commodification refers to the transformation of cultural elements into marketable products and tourism attractions. According to Dean MacCannell, tourism often encourages local communities to package cultural practices for visitor consumption. In Bali, cultural commodification can be observed in traditional dance performances, cultural festivals, village tourism programs, handicraft industries, and heritage-based tourism products [12]. While commodification can generate employment opportunities and economic growth, it may also lead to the commercialization of sacred traditions and the erosion of cultural meaning. Consequently, communication plays a critical role in helping visitors understand the cultural significance behind tourism experiences rather than perceiving them solely as entertainment products.

3. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive bibliometric approach [5] to examine the development and intellectual direction of research concerning cultural tourism and cross-cultural communication in Bali during the period 2022–2025. Bibliometric analysis was selected because it enables researchers to systematically identify publication patterns, dominant research themes, keyword relationships,

and emerging areas of scholarly interest within a particular field. Rather than examining individual tourism destinations or collecting primary data from tourists and local communities, this study analyzes the development of existing academic knowledge concerning Bali's cultural tourism and intercultural communication.

3.1 Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using several academic databases and scholarly indexing platforms, namely Scopus, Google Scholar, Dimensions, Crossref, and Garuda. The use of multiple sources was intended to obtain broader coverage of international and Indonesian publications related to Bali's cultural tourism development. The search strategy used combinations of keywords representing four major conceptual areas: cultural tourism, Bali tourism, cross-cultural communication, and tourism sustainability. The principal search terms included "Cultural Tourism," "Bali Tourism," "Cross-Cultural Communication," "Intercultural Communication," "Sustainable Tourism," "Cultural Sustainability," and "Overtourism Bali." Keyword combinations were adjusted according to the search functions available in each database. The publication period was restricted to 2022–2025 to capture the post-pandemic recovery period and the contemporary transformation of Bali's tourism sector. This period is particularly relevant because Bali experienced renewed international tourism activity while simultaneously facing discussions concerning overtourism, environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, digital transformation, and changing tourist behavior.

3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain consistency in the dataset, publications were selected according to predetermined inclusion criteria. Publications were included when they: were published between 2022 and 2025; discussed Bali in relation to cultural tourism, tourism sustainability, intercultural or cross-cultural communication, cultural heritage, community participation, overtourism, or digital tourism; were scholarly publications such as journal articles, conference papers, or other academic publications available through the selected databases; contained sufficient bibliographic information for analysis; and were relevant to the research objectives. Publications were excluded when they were duplicated across databases, lacked sufficient bibliographic information, were outside the specified publication period, or did not substantially address Bali and the conceptual focus of the study. After screening and removing irrelevant and duplicate records, a total of 125 publications were retained as the final dataset.

3.3 Data Analysis

The bibliographic data were analyzed descriptively to identify five main dimensions: (1) annual publication trends, (2) dominant research themes, (3) keyword frequency, (4) thematic development, and (5) emerging research directions. Annual publication trends were calculated by determining the number and percentage of publications for each year. The percentage was calculated using the following formula: $\text{Percentage} = (\text{Number of publications in a given year} / \text{Total publications}) \times 100$.

Thematic analysis was conducted by coding the main topics addressed by the publications. The coding process grouped publications into five dominant themes: cultural sustainability, cross-cultural communication, community-based tourism, overtourism, and digital tourism. The frequency and percentage of each theme were subsequently calculated. Keyword analysis was used to identify concepts that appeared most frequently within the dataset. Keywords such as cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, cross-cultural communication, cultural heritage, Bali tourism, cultural identity, and overtourism were examined to identify the dominant conceptual vocabulary of the research field. The interpretation of the bibliometric findings was subsequently linked to Cultural Tourism Theory, Cross-Cultural Communication Theory, Intercultural Adaptation Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Cultural Commodification Theory. This theoretical integration was used to

explain why particular themes have become increasingly prominent in contemporary Bali tourism research.

3.4 Analytical Framework

The study conceptualizes Bali's contemporary cultural tourism research as an intersection of three interconnected dimensions: cultural preservation, tourism development, and intercultural interaction. Cultural sustainability represents the preservation dimension, community-based tourism and tourism development represent the community and destination-development dimension, while cross-cultural communication and intercultural adaptation represent the interaction dimension. Overtourism and digital tourism are treated as contemporary pressures and transformation mechanisms affecting these relationships. This framework allows the study to move beyond merely counting publications and instead interpret the changing research priorities surrounding Bali as a culturally distinctive destination operating within an increasingly globalized and digitally mediated tourism environment.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Publication Trends

The bibliometric analysis identified 125 publications concerning cultural tourism and cross-cultural communication related to Bali during 2022–2025. Table 1 demonstrates a consistent increase in publication output throughout the four-year period.

Table 1. Publication Trends, 2022–2025

Year	Publications	Percentage
2022	22	17.6%
2023	29	23.2%
2024	34	27.2%
2025	40	32.0%
Total	125	100%

Source: Research Results, 2026 (Processed Data)

The number of publications increased from 22 in 2022 to 40 in 2025. This represents an increase of approximately 81.8% over the study period. The continuous increase suggests that Bali's cultural tourism development has attracted growing scholarly attention, particularly during the period of tourism recovery and transformation following the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase should not, however, be interpreted solely as evidence of worsening tourism problems. Rather, it indicates an expanding research agenda in which scholars examine both opportunities and challenges associated with Bali's tourism recovery. The increasing attention to sustainability, community participation, cultural identity, overtourism, and digital transformation demonstrates that contemporary Bali tourism research is becoming more multidimensional. The increase in publications in 2024 and 2025 is particularly notable. These years correspond with a period in which tourism research increasingly addressed questions concerning destination sustainability, changing tourist behavior, digitalization, cultural resilience, and the management of tourism pressure. Consequently, Bali is not only being studied as a successful tourism destination but also as a complex social and cultural system experiencing continuous transformation.

4.2 Dominant Research Themes

The thematic analysis identified five dominant research clusters: cultural sustainability, cross-cultural communication, community-based tourism, overtourism, and digital tourism.

Table 2. Dominant Research Themes

Research Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Cultural Sustainability	35	28.0%
Cross-Cultural Communication	30	24.0%
Community-Based Tourism	22	17.6%
Overtourism	20	16.0%
Digital Tourism	18	14.4%
Total	125	100%

Source: Research Results, 2026 (Processed Data)

4.2.1 Cultural Sustainability

Cultural sustainability emerged as the most prominent theme, accounting for 35 publications or 28.0% of the dataset. This finding indicates that preservation of cultural values has become a central concern in contemporary Bali tourism research. The prominence of cultural sustainability is consistent with Cultural Tourism Theory [5], which views cultural tourism not merely as the consumption of cultural attractions but as an interaction between visitors and the cultural life of host communities. In Bali, tourism is closely connected with religious practices, ceremonies, traditional arts, architecture, local knowledge, culinary traditions, and community-based social systems. From the perspective of Cultural Identity Theory, tourism creates continuous interaction between local cultural identity and external cultural influences. Cultural identity is therefore not necessarily static. It can be maintained, negotiated, adapted, and reconstructed through social interaction. The high frequency of cultural sustainability research suggests that contemporary scholarship increasingly asks how tourism can generate economic benefits without reducing culture to a purely commercial product. This issue is particularly relevant to Bali because many cultural practices have religious and social meanings that extend beyond their value as tourism attractions.

4.2.2 Cross-Cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication represented the second-largest research theme, with 30 publications or 24.0%. Its strong presence demonstrates that tourism is increasingly understood as a communicative and social process rather than simply an economic activity. Tourists and local communities come from different cultural backgrounds and may have different assumptions regarding communication, politeness, personal space, time, hospitality, religious behavior, and social interaction. Hall's high-context and low-context communication framework provides a useful lens for understanding these differences [5]. In a culturally distinctive destination such as Bali, communication may involve not only verbal language but also gestures, dress, ceremonial behavior, spatial arrangements, religious symbols, and forms of respect. Consequently, tourism workers and local communities require intercultural competence to communicate effectively with visitors. The prominence of this theme also indicates a movement from research that primarily measures tourism outcomes toward research that considers the quality of relationships between hosts and guests. Effective intercultural communication may support cultural learning and mutual understanding, while inadequate communication can create misunderstanding concerning local norms and cultural expectations.

4.2.3 Community-Based Tourism

Community-based tourism accounted for 22 publications or 17.6%. This finding highlights the importance of local communities in the development and management of cultural tourism. The presence of community-based tourism as a major theme indicates a shift from destination development models dominated by external tourism actors toward approaches that recognize residents as stakeholders and participants. In Bali, villages and local communities are not simply

spaces where tourism occurs. They are also custodians of cultural practices, traditions, social institutions, and local knowledge. Community involvement can contribute to the preservation of cultural meaning because residents participate in determining which cultural resources are presented to visitors and how they are represented. From an intercultural communication perspective [10], community-based tourism can also create more direct interaction between visitors and residents, potentially facilitating cultural learning and reducing stereotypical representations. However, community participation should not automatically be assumed to produce positive outcomes. The extent of participation, distribution of tourism benefits, decision-making authority, and community capacity remain important issues for future research.

4.2.4 Overtourism

Overtourism appeared in 20 publications, representing 16.0% of the dataset. Its emergence as one of the major research themes reflects concern about the concentration and intensity of tourism activity in Bali. Overtourism is commonly associated with pressure on infrastructure, environmental resources, public spaces, local communities, and cultural sites. In the context of cultural tourism, excessive visitor concentration may also influence the way cultural practices are presented and experienced. From the perspective of Cultural Commodification Theory [13], increasing tourism demand can encourage cultural elements to be packaged and presented as marketable experiences. Such processes may provide economic opportunities while simultaneously raising questions about authenticity and cultural meaning. The presence of overtourism research alongside cultural sustainability suggests that scholars are increasingly examining not only how to attract tourists but also how to manage tourism intensity. This represents an important transition from a predominantly growth-oriented tourism paradigm toward a more balanced destination-management perspective.

4.2.5 Digital Tourism

Digital tourism represented 18 publications or 14.4%. Although this theme had the lowest frequency among the five major clusters, its emergence is significant because digital technologies increasingly influence how tourists discover, interpret, evaluate, and share cultural experiences. Social media, online travel platforms, virtual experiences, artificial intelligence, and digital storytelling have transformed the relationship between cultural destinations and visitors. Bali's cultural image is increasingly constructed not only through traditional tourism promotion but also through user-generated content and digital communication. Digitalization therefore creates both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, digital platforms can increase the visibility of local cultural heritage and facilitate intercultural learning. On the other hand, simplified digital representations may detach cultural practices from their historical, religious, and social contexts. The emergence of digital tourism as a distinct research theme therefore suggests that future cultural tourism research needs to consider the relationship between technology, communication, cultural representation, and visitor behavior.

4.3 Keyword Frequency Analysis

Keyword analysis identified several concepts that dominate the literature.

Table 3. Most Frequently Occurring Keywords

Keyword	Frequency
Cultural Tourism	78
Sustainable Tourism	67
Cross-Cultural Communication	61
Cultural Heritage	55
Bali Tourism	53

Cultural Identity	48
Overtourism	39

Source: Research Results, 2026 (Processed Data)

The frequency of cultural tourism confirms that the central research focus remains the relationship between tourism and cultural resources. The strong presence of sustainable tourism demonstrates that sustainability has become an important analytical perspective within contemporary Bali tourism scholarship. The frequency of cross-cultural communication is particularly important for this study because it demonstrates that communication has become a substantive research concern rather than merely a supporting concept. Similarly, the appearance of cultural heritage and cultural identity indicates growing attention to the social and symbolic dimensions of tourism. The keyword overtourism further reflects concerns about tourism intensity, while Bali tourism functions as a central destination-specific concept connecting the various research themes. Overall, the keyword structure indicates that Bali tourism research is increasingly moving toward an interdisciplinary orientation in which tourism, culture, communication, sustainability, identity, and destination management are interconnected.

4.4 Bali at a Crossroads: Integrating the Findings

The phrase “Bali at a crossroads” describes the intersection of competing but interconnected demands rather than suggesting that Bali must choose exclusively between tourism development and cultural preservation. The bibliometric findings demonstrate that contemporary scholarship increasingly addresses the need to negotiate these dimensions simultaneously. The first dimension is economic and tourism development. Tourism continues to provide employment, business opportunities, and regional economic activity. Cultural tourism constitutes an important part of Bali's destination identity because visitors are attracted not only by natural landscapes but also by cultural experiences. The second dimension is cultural preservation. The prominence of cultural sustainability, cultural heritage, and cultural identity in the literature indicates that researchers are concerned with maintaining the meaning and continuity of Balinese culture under conditions of globalization and tourism commercialization. The third dimension is intercultural interaction. The substantial number of studies focusing on cross-cultural communication suggests that the relationship between tourists and local communities is increasingly recognized as an important component of tourism sustainability. Tourism involves encounters between people with different cultural assumptions, and the quality of those encounters can influence cultural understanding and visitor experiences. These three dimensions are interconnected. Tourism growth increases intercultural encounters; intercultural encounters influence cultural representation and identity; and cultural sustainability affects the long-term attractiveness and legitimacy of tourism development.

4.5 Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the existing theoretical discussion in several ways. First, they reinforce the relevance of Cultural Tourism Theory by demonstrating that cultural tourism research increasingly emphasizes participation, cultural meaning, and community interaction rather than the passive consumption of cultural attractions. Second, the prominence of cross-cultural communication supports the application of intercultural communication perspectives to tourism research. Tourism destinations can be understood as communication spaces in which different cultural systems interact continuously. Third, the findings are consistent with Intercultural Adaptation Theory because tourists and host communities must negotiate unfamiliar cultural expectations through repeated interaction. Adaptation is therefore relevant not only to migrants or long-term residents but also to tourism encounters. Fourth, Cultural Identity Theory helps explain why cultural preservation remains a major research concern. Tourism can contribute to the visibility and economic value of culture while simultaneously creating processes of cultural negotiation and

transformation. Finally, Cultural Commodification Theory provides a useful critical perspective on the relationship between tourism markets and cultural practices. The increasing attention to sustainability and overtourism suggests that scholars are increasingly examining the conditions under which cultural commercialization can occur without undermining cultural meaning.

4.6 Emerging Research Directions

The combination of thematic and keyword findings suggests several areas for future research. First, digital intercultural communication represents an increasingly important area because tourists now encounter Balinese culture through social media, digital storytelling, online reviews, and artificial intelligence-generated content before physically visiting the destination. Second, Generation Z tourism behavior deserves greater attention because younger tourists increasingly use digital platforms to discover and evaluate cultural experiences. Their expectations concerning authenticity, sustainability, participation, and digital connectivity may differ from those of previous generations. Third, artificial intelligence and smart tourism represent emerging areas that could reshape cultural interpretation, destination management, personalization, and visitor communication. Future research could investigate whether AI strengthens cultural understanding or risks simplifying complex cultural meanings. Fourth, cultural diplomacy through tourism provides an opportunity to examine tourism as a mechanism for international cultural exchange. Bali's global visibility makes it a relevant context for understanding how cultural encounters contribute to international perceptions of Indonesian culture.

Finally, future research should examine sustainable cultural tourism governance, particularly how government, tourism businesses, local communities, cultural institutions, and digital platforms can collaborate in managing cultural tourism development. Overall, the bibliometric evidence indicates that Bali tourism research is moving from a predominantly tourism-growth orientation toward a more integrated framework involving sustainability, communication, identity, community participation, digitalization, and destination governance.

5. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study examined the development of research on cultural tourism and cross-cultural communication related to Bali during 2022–2025 using a dataset of 125 scholarly publications. The findings demonstrate a consistent increase in research output, from 22 publications in 2022 to 40 publications in 2025. This 81.8% increase indicates growing scholarly attention to the changing relationship between tourism, culture, communication, sustainability, and destination development in Bali. Five major research themes were identified: cultural sustainability (28.0%), cross-cultural communication (24.0%), community-based tourism (17.6%), overtourism (16.0%), and digital tourism (14.4%). Cultural sustainability emerged as the most prominent theme, indicating that preservation of cultural identity and heritage has become a central concern in contemporary Bali tourism research. The substantial presence of cross-cultural communication demonstrates that tourism is increasingly examined as a process of social and cultural interaction rather than simply as an economic activity. The keyword analysis further supports this transformation. Cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, cross-cultural communication, cultural heritage, Bali tourism, cultural identity, and overtourism were among the most frequently occurring concepts. Together, these keywords illustrate a research landscape that increasingly connects tourism development with cultural meaning, sustainability, identity, communication, and destination pressures.

The findings support the interpretation of Bali as being “at a crossroads,” not in the sense of an inevitable choice between tourism development and cultural preservation, but as a destination where multiple interests and processes must be continuously negotiated. Tourism provides important economic and social opportunities, while intensive tourism activity, cultural commodification, environmental pressure, and intercultural encounters create challenges that require appropriate governance and communication. Cross-cultural communication is particularly

relevant within this context because tourism brings together visitors and host communities with different languages, values, communication patterns, expectations, and cultural norms. Effective intercultural communication can facilitate cultural understanding and more meaningful tourism experiences, while culturally insensitive communication may contribute to misunderstanding and tension. The study also identifies several emerging areas for future scholarship, including digital intercultural communication, Generation Z tourist behavior, artificial intelligence and smart tourism, cultural diplomacy, and sustainable cultural tourism governance. These areas indicate that the future of Bali's cultural tourism research will increasingly involve the interaction between culture, technology, communication, community, and sustainability.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates the continuing relevance of Cultural Tourism Theory, Cross-Cultural Communication Theory, Intercultural Adaptation Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Cultural Commodification Theory for understanding Bali's contemporary tourism development. Practically, the findings suggest that sustainable cultural tourism requires more than increasing tourist arrivals or developing tourism products. It requires attention to cultural meaning, community participation, intercultural competence, responsible digital representation, and collaborative destination governance. Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies on publications retrieved from selected academic databases and therefore may not represent every publication concerning Bali's cultural tourism. Second, the analysis focuses on the period 2022–2025 and therefore provides a relatively recent snapshot of the field. Third, thematic classification and keyword frequency do not necessarily demonstrate causal relationships between research themes. Future bibliometric studies could expand the publication period, incorporate additional databases, apply co-authorship and citation-network analysis, and use VOSviewer or Biblioshiny to examine intellectual structures, collaboration networks, thematic evolution, and emerging research fronts in greater detail. In conclusion, the development of cultural tourism research in Bali increasingly reflects a transition from a narrow emphasis on tourism growth toward a broader concern with sustainable cultural development, intercultural understanding, community participation, and digital transformation. Bali therefore provides an important context for understanding how culturally distinctive destinations negotiate the opportunities and challenges created by global tourism.

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