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OFFLINE TRAVEL IN AN ONLINE WORLD: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF ANALOGUE TOURISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study examines the persistence and implications of offline travel within an increasingly digital tourism ecosystem dominated by online travel agencies, algorithmic recommendation systems, and mobile applications. It adopts a mixed-methods design involving semi-structured interviews with foreign tourists in Bali, an online survey, and secondary data from industry reports and destination case studies to explore social, economic, and psychological dimensions of analogue travel practices. Findings indicate that offline travel is sustained by quests for authenticity, deeper interpersonal interactions, and digital detox benefits, yet is constrained by convenience gaps, perceived inefficiency, and fear of missing out among younger, highly connected segments. Economically, offline channels continue to support micro, small, and medium enterprises, homestays, and local guides, particularly in rural and digitally excluded areas, but face intense price competition and visibility disadvantages relative to OTAs. Psychologically, offline travel enhances autonomy, self-efficacy, and attentional restoration, while simultaneously generating frustration for tourists accustomed to seamless digital services. The study contributes to tourism scholarship by clarifying the underexplored interplay between online and offline travel experiences and offers practical insights for policymakers and businesses seeking to design more balanced, human-centred tourism futures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2023, when Google Maps surpassed one billion monthly users, a small but growing community of travellers began consciously reviving paper maps, printed guidebooks, and serendipitous wanderings that deliberately sidestep algorithmic itineraries (Stäheli & Stoltenberg, 2024). This resurgence of what may be termed analogue or offline travel challenges the hegemony of digital tourism infrastructures, even as contemporary destinations become progressively organized around connectivity, platforms, and data-driven services. The tension between ubiquitous digital tools and the human desire for unmediated exploration raises critical questions for the future of tourism development (Pencarelli, 2020)t.

`Digitalization in tourism has been intensified by the broader Fourth Industrial Revolution, the proliferation of OTAs such as Traveloka, Booking.com, and Airbnb, and the emergence of immersive technologies including virtual reality and metaverse-based tourism experiences (Choi et al., 2022). These innovations have rapidly transformed traditional tourism value chains, reshaping how tourists collect information, make reservations, navigate destinations, and share experiences post-trip. While digitalization promises efficiency, personalization, and expanded market reach,

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it also reconfigures power relations between global platforms and local actors, alters social interactions, and reshapes tourists' psychological relationships with place, time, and self (Hassan & Saleh, 2024). Recent work on digital detox and digital-free tourism suggests that technological dysconnectivity is increasingly becoming a tourism product in its own right, marketed as a means to enhance well-being, authenticity, and relational depth (Stäheli & Stoltenberg, 2024).

Despite the dominance of digital tools, a persistent demand for offline or "traditional" travel experiences can be observed. Offline travel, in this article, refers to travel practices that rely minimally on digital platforms and instead depend on face-to-face interactions, analogue media (e.g., paper maps), and in-situ decision-making (Benyon et al., 2014). Such practices emerge from multiple motivations: A search for authenticity and immersion in local culture that is perceived as diluted or over-curated in digital environments. A desire to escape digital fatigue and reclaim time from constant connectivity, notifications, and social media pressures. A wish to re-engage with slower, more exploratory modes of movement that foreground spontaneity and human contact (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010).

Studies on digital detox tourism indicate that temporary disconnection from devices is linked to reduced stress, heightened attentional capacity, and more meaningful interpersonal interactions during travel (Hassan & Saleh, 2024). At the same time, tourism digitalization research highlights the expectation especially among younger travellers that services be instantaneous, seamless, and algorithmically supported, from inspiration to booking and on-site navigation. Offline travel must therefore be understood not as a relic of the past but as an intentional, sometimes reflexive, response to digital excess and its perceived costs (Hassan & Saleh, 2024).

Existing tourism literature has extensively documented the impacts of digitalization on distribution channels, consumer behaviour, and destination competitiveness, yet it pays comparatively less attention to the continued relevance and evolving forms of offline travel (Gössling, 2020). Bibliometric and systematic reviews of digital detox and digital-free tourism show that research has primarily focused on well-being outcomes, smartphone usage patterns, and specific detox products, while the broader interplay between online and offline experiences across the entire travel journey remains underexplored. There is limited empirical work integrating: How tourists negotiate online and offline tools in pre-trip planning, on-site decision-making, and post-trip sharing. How offline travel practices affect local economies, particularly MSMEs, traditional travel agencies, and community-based tourism enterprises in the Global South. How the psychological trade-offs of offline travel including digital detox benefits, frustration with analogue processes, and FOMO vary across generations and digital literacy levels (Komalasari et al., 2020).

Moreover, while digital disruption of traditional travel agencies and homestays has been documented in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian destinations, these studies often emphasize revenue decline and survival strategies without systematically examining how tourists who consciously prefer offline channels shape these outcomes. The social implications of offline travel, including its role in fostering social capital, strengthening community-based tourism, and sustaining a sense of place in contexts marked by digital divides, remain insufficiently theorized and empirically grounded (Belleflamme & Neysen, 2009).

This study addresses a fundamental contradiction in contemporary tourism: offline travel persists and, in some cases, thrives, even as destinations are increasingly optimized for digital navigation, platform-based bookings, and data-driven services. This raises several interrelated research problems: How does offline travel compete with, complement, or resist online platforms such as Traveloka and Airbnb that offer standardized, low-friction transaction processes? How do rising expectations shaped by technological advancements influence tourists' attitudes toward offline versus digital travel practices? What challenges do tourists face when choosing offline modes of travel in environments where infrastructure, information, and services are designed around digital access? How do offline travel practices affect social interactions, local economic structures, and tourists' psychological satisfaction, including perceptions of authenticity, well-being, and autonomy?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Conceptualizing Offline and Digital Travel
The contrast between offline and digital travel can be framed using several foundational theories of human behaviour and technology adoption. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) posits that behaviour is driven by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, suggesting that tourists' choices between offline and online channels are shaped not only by perceived convenience but also by social influences and self-efficacy regarding technology use. Diffusion of Innovation theory emphasizes how new technologies spread through populations, highlighting the attributes of innovations (e.g., relative advantage, compatibility, complexity) and the role of early adopters in normalizing digital platforms (Nordman, 2004).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) further refines this perspective by focusing on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as key drivers of technology adoption. In the context of digital travel, TAM helps explain why OTAs and mobile applications have become dominant: they offer efficiency in comparing prices, accessing reviews, and securing instant confirmation. However, TAM has been critiqued for under-emphasizing

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affective and experiential aspects, such as authenticity or emotional connection, which may motivate tourists to maintain offline practices even when digital options are technically superior on utilitarian criteria (Bowie & Chang, 2005).

Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) shifts attention from goods and transactions to co-created value emerging from interactions between providers and consumers. Applied to tourism, SDL suggests that value is co-produced through encounters between tourists and local actors' guides, hosts, community members rather than delivered unilaterally by service providers. Offline travel tends to foreground such co-creation, as itineraries are negotiated in situ, and services are adapted in real time based on interpersonal relationships. This stands in contrast to standardized, algorithmically mediated offerings on digital platforms, which, while efficient, may limit opportunities for rich, context-specific co-creation (Lusch & Vargo, 2014).

The Paradox of Choice theory provides an additional lens, arguing that an abundance of options can lead to decision fatigue and decreased satisfaction. Digital platforms typically present hundreds of accommodation and activity choices, which, although empowering, can overwhelm tourists. Offline travel often narrows choices through trust-based recommendations from local agents, guides, or word-of-mouth, thus reducing cognitive load and potentially enhancing post-decision satisfaction (Divisekera, 2003), (Kotler, 2005).

2.2 Social Interaction, Identity, and Offline Travel

Social Interaction Theory, including Goffman's dramaturgical approach, emphasizes that individuals manage impressions and perform roles differently across social contexts (Li et al., 2021). In tourism, face-to-face encounters with local communities allow tourists to enact particular identities such as "adventurer" or "responsible traveller" in ways that may feel more authentic than online interactions mediated by screens and platforms. Offline travel often provides unstructured opportunities for such interactions, from spontaneous conversations with locals to unplanned visits to community events (Chanthinok et al., 2015).

Social Identity Theory argues that individuals derive part of their self-concept from membership in social groups and seek to maintain a positive image of these groups. Offline travel can reinforce social identities linked to cultural sensitivity, environmental consciousness, or anti-consumerism, particularly among tourists who deliberately avoid mass, platform-mediated tourism. Self-Perception Theory adds that individuals infer their dispositions from their own behaviour; thus, choosing to travel offline may strengthen a self-image of being independent, adventurous, or authentic, which in turn influences future travel decisions (Damayanti et al., 2021).

These theoretical perspectives collectively suggest that offline travel is not merely a functional alternative to digital tourism but is deeply intertwined with tourists' identity work, social positioning, and search for authenticity.

2.3 Digital Detox and Psychological Perspectives

The growing body of research on digital detox tourism highlights that intentional disconnection from digital devices during travel can yield significant psychological benefits, including reduced stress, improved mood, and enhanced presence in the moment. Attention Restoration Theory posits that natural environments and low-stimulation settings help restore depleted cognitive resources, a process that may be undermined by constant digital engagement. Offline travel, particularly in nature-based or rural settings, can therefore function as a form of attentional and emotional restoration (Stäheli & Stoltenberg, 2024).

Self-Determination Theory emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs. Offline travel often enhances perceived autonomy through self-directed navigation, manual planning, and the necessity of problem-solving without app-based support. Some studies suggest that tourists feel a sense of accomplishment when they successfully manage travel logistics through direct interaction with locals rather than relying on algorithmic guidance. However, for highly digitized cohorts such as millennials and Generation Z, offline procedures like queuing for tickets or manual booking may be experienced as inefficient, frustrating, and misaligned with their expectations of immediacy (Hassan & Saleh, 2024).

The fear of missing out (FOMO), linked with Social Comparison Theory, complicates digital detox efforts. While being offline may improve in-the-moment presence, some tourists experience anxiety about not documenting or sharing their experiences on social media, which may affect their overall satisfaction. This ambivalence underscores the need to examine psychological outcomes of offline travel as multidimensional rather than uniformly positive (Meng et al., 2008).

2.4 Economic Impacts: OTAs, Traditional Agencies, and Homestays

Digital platforms have reshaped tourism distribution channels, frequently to the detriment of traditional travel agencies and small-scale accommodation providers. Empirical studies in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian destinations show

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that many brick-and-mortar agencies have experienced significant revenue declines or closure due to competition from OTAs that leverage dynamic pricing, large-scale marketing budgets, and algorithmic visibility advantages. At the same time, some offline agencies have survived by targeting niche segments, such as older tourists or corporate clients, who value face-to-face service and customized itineraries (Belleflamme & Neysen, 2009).

In Bali and similar destinations, traditional homestays that previously relied on direct bookings or telephone reservations have faced occupancy declines as travellers increasingly prefer platform-based accommodations with transparent reviews and easily comparable prices. Research on digital exclusion in rural tourism destinations emphasizes that operators lacking digital skills or reliable connectivity struggle to compete, often bearing higher operational costs to outsource digital marketing or platform management. Nonetheless (Utama & Junaedi, 2018), offline travel channels remain economically significant. Studies on community-based tourism and local economic linkages indicate that tourists who book and consume services offline tend to generate direct, locally retained income for guides, homestays, and small vendors, thereby reducing value leakage to external platforms (Junaedi et al., 2021).

2.5 Digital Divide and Spatial Inequalities
The digital divide unequal access to infrastructure, devices, and digital literacy shapes who can participate in digital tourism systems and under what conditions. Remote islands and rural regions in Indonesia frequently face limited or unreliable internet connectivity, high data costs, and hardware constraints, which hinder both residents' ability to market their services online and tourists' reliance on digital tools during travel. Reports and case studies from Indonesian regions highlight situations where homestays and tour operators continue to depend on offline promotional methods such as brochures and word-of-mouth, and where tourists are forced into analogue navigation due to the absence of digital maps or ride-hailing services (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010).

These conditions create a complex interplay between necessity and choice: some tourists experience enforced offline travel due to infrastructural limitations, while others seek such environments precisely for their digital disconnection potential. For local communities, however, the digital divide often translates into structural disadvantages in competing with digitally savvy destinations and businesses. Offline travel thus intersects with broader questions of equity, access, and regional development (Komalasari et al., 2020).

2.6 Synthesis and Conceptual Framework
Drawing together the preceding theoretical and empirical strands, this study conceptualizes offline travel as a multi-dimensional phenomenon shaped by: Technology-related perceptions (perceived usefulness, ease of use, and risks). Social and identity processes (authenticity, social capital, self-image) (Lonn et al., 2018). Psychological needs (autonomy, restoration, accomplishment, avoidance of digital fatigue). Economic structures (platform competition, MSME resilience, local linkages). Spatial inequalities (digital divide, infrastructural constraints)

This framework guides the empirical investigation of offline travel in Bali, focusing on how tourists and businesses navigate the online–offline continuum and what implications this has for future tourism development.

3. RESEARCH METHODS
3.1 Research Design and Approach
This study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates qualitative and quantitative data to capture the multidimensional nature of offline travel experiences and their impacts. A convergent approach is employed, in which qualitative insights derived from interviews and observations are analyzed alongside descriptive statistics generated from survey data and secondary sources (Plano Clark et al., 2008). Through this design, tourists' subjective meanings, motivations, and perceived outcomes of offline travel can be explored in depth, while at the same time patterns in booking behaviour, channel preferences, and attitudinal tendencies are quantified. The combination of approaches is therefore particularly appropriate for examining the interplay between experiential dimensions such as authenticity and digital fatigue, and more measurable aspects such as frequency of offline bookings and perceived satisfaction with different travel modes (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009).

3.2 Study Context and Sampling
The empirical component of this research was conducted in Bali, Indonesia, a prominent international tourism destination that simultaneously hosts highly digitalized sectors such as urban hotels and formal attractions closely integrated with online travel agencies—and offline-oriented community-based tourism villages and traditional homestays. This context offers a rich setting to examine how online and offline travel modes coexist, compete, and complement one another within the same destination (Ferdinand, 2014). The primary respondents comprised foreign tourists who had experience using both online and offline travel arrangements while visiting Bali. Purposive sampling was applied to select informants on the basis of their familiarity with multiple booking channels, their willingness and

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ability to articulate their travel experiences, and variation in age, nationality, and travel style. In total, 21 tourists who had opted for offline arrangements such as community tour packages, conventional travel agencies, or direct homestay bookings participated in semi-structured interviews. In addition, a broader group of tourists completed an online survey containing Likert-scale items designed to measure perceived authenticity, social connectedness, psychological satisfaction, and comparative evaluations of offline versus digital travel practices (Maxwell, 2008).

3.3 Data Sources and Collection Techniques
The study relied on three principal categories of data: primary qualitative data, primary quantitative data, and secondary data. Primary qualitative data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 21 foreign tourists, focusing on their motivations for choosing offline channels, perceived advantages and disadvantages, and reflections on authenticity, social interaction, and well-being during their trips (Shook et al., 2004).

These interviews were complemented by participant observation in selected offline-oriented settings, including community-based tours and traditional homestays, where interactions between tourists and hosts, flows of information, and booking procedures were systematically documented. Primary quantitative data were collected through an online survey distributed to tourists in Bali, which employed Likert-scale items to assess key constructs such as perceived usefulness and ease of use of offline and digital channels, perceived authenticity and social connectedness, experiences of digital fatigue, and overall travel satisfaction (Yuksel, Atila; Yuksel, 1999).

Secondary data were obtained from tourism industry reports such as publications from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia and international organizations like UNWTO—that discuss digitalization trends, OTA penetration, and post-pandemic tourism recovery, as well as from academic articles and case studies on online versus offline travel agents, digital disruption of traditional agencies, and digital exclusion in tourism, with particular emphasis on Bali and other Indonesian destinations (Lonn et al., 2018).

3.4 Data Analysis
Qualitative data from interviews and participant observations were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. An inductive coding process was applied to identify and organize recurring themes related to tourists' motivations for engaging in offline travel, their perceptions of authenticity and digital fatigue, their views on economic dynamics between offline and online providers, and their reported psychological outcomes. To support systematic management and retrieval of codes, qualitative analysis software such as NVivo may be employed, although the procedure can also be conducted manually provided that clear documentation of coding decisions and revisions is maintained (Bungin, 2008).

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of frequencies, means, and percentage distributions, in order to generate an overview of tourists' attitudes and self-reported behaviours concerning offline and digital travel practices. Where relevant, cross-tabulations by age group or travel style were explored to detect patterns, particularly potential generational differences in preferences, satisfaction, and channel usage (Jennett et al., 2012).

Triangulation was used to strengthen the validity and credibility of the findings by systematically comparing themes emerging from qualitative interviews and observations with trends identified in survey results and insights drawn from secondary data. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were carefully addressed, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, and exercising caution in reporting case-specific information about businesses and communities to avoid unintended negative consequences (Patton, 1987), (Maxwell, 2008).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Challenges of Offline Travel in the Digital Era
The findings reveal that tourists who choose offline travel in Bali encounter several challenges vis-à-vis digital platforms. First, offline services often appear less price-competitive compared to OTAs that offer discounted rates and promotional bundles. Tourists with high price sensitivity or accustomed to algorithmically optimized deals frequently perceive offline options as more expensive or less transparent. Second, the absence of centralized review systems and real-time availability information can create uncertainty, especially for tourists who rely on ratings to manage perceived risk.

Additionally, manual procedures such as visiting travel agency offices, filling out paper forms, or queuing for tickets are viewed by many younger tourists as time-consuming and inefficient compared to one-click booking on mobile applications. These perceptions align with broader evidence that travellers under 35 expect brands and

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platforms to tailor offers proactively and value seamless omnichannel experiences. Offline travel therefore confronts a convenience gap that shapes its attractiveness in a highly digitized market.

Yet, despite these challenges, offline travel persists as a deliberate choice for certain segments. Interviews indicate that tourists often accept inconvenience as the "price" of authenticity, human connection, or digital detox. Some describe offline procedures as part of the travel experience itself, providing opportunities for spontaneous encounters, learning, and storytelling with local actors.

4.2 Social Impacts and Authentic Interactions

The social impacts of offline travel in Bali are particularly pronounced in community-based tourism settings, where direct engagement between tourists and local residents forms the core of the experience. Offline bookings through village cooperatives or local guides facilitate more intensive interaction, from joint participation in cultural activities to informal conversations about daily life. These encounters contribute to the development of social capital, as tourists and hosts build trust-based relationships that may extend beyond the duration of the trip.

Offline travel also enables tourists to participate in forms of "performative authenticity," where both tourists and hosts co-construct narratives of local culture that feel more genuine than standardized tour offerings. Such interactions can reinforce tourists' self-image as responsible or culturally sensitive travellers, aligning with social identity processes. At the same time, there is a risk of romanticizing offline travel and overlooking the performative and staged aspects inherent in many tourism encounters, whether digital or analogue.

4.3 Economic Implications for Local Businesses

Economically, the study confirms that offline travel channels remain significant for MSMEs, traditional agencies, and homestays, but they operate under increasing pressure from digital platforms. Case evidence from Bali and related literature indicates that while offline travel agents and homestays have historically contributed a large share of reservations in certain market segments, their relative position has been eroded by the expansion of OTAs. In some destinations, a substantial proportion of brick-and-mortar agencies have closed or downsized following the rise of platforms like Traveloka and Airbnb.

However, offline travel continues to sustain local economies in several ways. Direct bookings often involve fewer intermediaries, allowing a larger portion of tourist expenditure to remain within the community. Community-based tourism initiatives, for example, rely heavily on offline marketing and local networks, yet still manage to attract tourists seeking unique, place-based experiences. In rural or digitally marginalized areas, offline travel is not simply a choice but the default mode of operation for local businesses, which may lack the resources or skills to engage effectively with digital platforms. These patterns suggest that offline travel can contribute to more equitable economic linkages, but only if it is recognized and supported in policy frameworks that currently prioritize digitalization.

4.4 Psychological Outcomes: Digital Detox, Autonomy, and Frustration

The psychological outcomes of offline travel are ambivalent and highly dependent on tourists' expectations and digital habits. On the positive side, many respondents report that traveling without constant device use enhances their sense of presence and relaxation. They describe experiences of digital detox, where the absence of notifications and social media allows for deeper immersion in local environments and relationships. These experiences resonate with findings in digital detox tourism research that link intentional disconnection to improved well-being and attentional restoration.

Offline travel also seems to support autonomy and self-efficacy. Tourists who plan routes using physical maps or local advice often express pride in "figuring things out" without relying on algorithms, a form of competence satisfaction aligned with Self-Determination Theory. Nevertheless, not all psychological consequences are positive. Some tourists, particularly those accustomed to high levels of digital support, experience administrative frustration with manual processes and uncertainty due to limited information. FOMO can surface when tourists are offline for extended periods and worry that they are not documenting or sharing "Instagrammable" moments, which may affect their retrospective evaluation of the trip.

These mixed outcomes highlight the need for nuanced understandings of offline travel as neither inherently superior nor inferior to digital tourism but as a distinct mode with its own benefits and costs.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to explore how offline travel persists and what social, economic, and psychological implications it carries in an era characterized by pervasive digitalization. Drawing on multiple theoretical perspectives and mixed empirical evidence from Bali, it shows that offline travel is sustained by tourists' search for authenticity, human connection, and relief from digital fatigue, while being constrained by convenience gaps, information asymmetries, and generational shifts in expectations. Offline travel continues to play an important role in supporting MSMEs,

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homestays, and community-based tourism, especially in digitally marginalized regions, yet these actors face structural disadvantages in competition with OTAs.

For tourism scholarship, the study underscores the importance of examining the offline–online continuum rather than focusing exclusively on digital transformation. Future research should more systematically investigate how tourists combine digital and analogue tools across different stages of the travel journey and how these choices shape well-being, identity, and local development. Comparative studies across destinations with varying levels of digital infrastructure would further illuminate the interplay between choice and constraint in offline travel.

For policymakers and practitioners, several implications emerge. First, tourism policies should avoid equating modernization solely with digitalization and instead support hybrid models that integrate digital tools without eroding the human-centric and locally embedded qualities that many tourists value. This may involve capacity-building programs that help traditional businesses selectively engage with platforms while preserving offline strengths, such as personalized service and community-based experiences. Second, destination marketing strategies should recognize offline travel as a legitimate and desirable segment, especially in relation to well-being, sustainability, and cultural preservation agendas. Finally, investments in infrastructure and digital literacy must be accompanied by safeguards to ensure that the benefits of digital tourism are distributed equitably, without marginalizing communities that continue to rely on offline modes of tourism.

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