

Experience Quality's Impact on Green Customer Satisfaction Mediated by Green Perceived Value in the Malang Ecotourism Landscape

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Abstract: This research, conducted using a quantitative-explanatory approach, aims to analyze the relationship between experience quality and customer green satisfaction, focusing on environmentally friendly tourist destinations in Malang City. The study collected data from 360 respondents through an online questionnaire and applied SEM-PLS for analysis. The respondents were selected purposively. The findings, which are of significant importance, indicate that experience quality significantly influences both customer green satisfaction and green perceived value, with the latter mediating the relationship between experience quality and customer green satisfaction. This reiteration of the findings underscores the importance of positive experiences and perceived environmental values in enhancing overall satisfaction at eco-friendly tourist destinations.

Keywords: Eco-Tourism, Experience Quality, Green Perceived Value, Customer Green Satisfaction.

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Introduction

The significance of the research topic, the presence of natural resources in Indonesia, including its strategically advantageous geographical location, expansive and diverse territory, rich cultural heritage, culinary offerings, and exotic tourist attractions, is not to be understated. This sector, which plays a crucial role in contributing to the Indonesian economy, is of great interest to both domestic and international visitors. As per data released by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf, 2023), the tourism sector made up 2.24% of the national GDP in 2020, increased to 2.40% in 2021, and experienced substantial growth, reaching 3.60% in 2022, with a projected rise to 4.10% in 2023. This growth is attributed to the sector's capacity to create employment opportunities and drive significant economic activity (Liu-Lastres et al., 2023). They support the data released by Kemenparekraf (2023), which mentioned the increment of 1,2 million employees from 2020 to 2021. This employment significantly impacts the national economic growth by lowering the unemployment rate.

However, the flipside of positive trends in Indonesia's tourism sector has abandoned its environmental impact, particularly on the nature-based tourism spot. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) findings, the nation's tourism industry is experiencing excessive growth in some tourist hotspots without adequate attention to sustainability concerns (Ollivaud & Haxton, 2019). The frequent visitors and lack of waste management significantly contribute to environmental damage. The substantial increase in tourist numbers in tropical coastal regions can impact economic and ecological resources. This, in turn, can lead to

alterations in coastal ecosystems due to activities such as land conversion and waste generation (Nelson et al., 2019). Highlighting Malang as one of Indonesia's regions with the best natural attractions must confront the fact that some beaches are among the most significant contributors to waste pollution (Jawapos, 2024). Poor waste management conditions have resulted in the contamination and pollution of surrounding areas. Furthermore, the lack of access to public transportation to reach natural attractions in Malang means that visitors rely on private transport, leading to increased emissions. Aside from being detrimental, environmental degradation significantly disrupts visitors' comfort and satisfaction (de Oliveira & Santos Lobo, 2021), which could reduce visitor numbers to the region in the long term.

To mitigate the adverse impacts of tourism, it is essential to focus on environmental considerations and embrace sustainable practices (Streimikiene et al., 2023; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Han, 2021). In light of current global environmental and economic conditions, sustainability has emerged as one of humanity's most critical challenges. Tangible initiatives to tackle these challenges involve the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of global objectives established by the United Nations (UN) to be achieved by 2030 (UNDP, 2023). The SDGs target sustainable development across three key dimensions: social, economic, and environmental (UNDP, 2023). Sustainability must be integrated into all human activities, particularly tourism.

Achieving an environmentally sustainable tourism sector necessitates a comprehensive approach that aligns with implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, SDG No. 14, addressing Life Below Water, and SDG No. 15, addressing Life on Land, emphasize the critical need to preserve the underwater and terrestrial ecosystems, which serve as the primary attractions for Indonesian tourism (UNDP, 2023). The current challenge confronting the tourism sector is the need for stakeholders to uphold natural balance at tourist destinations. Concerns include the use of environmentally harmful water transportation, underwater tourism activities that disregard ecosystems, inadequate waste management, the development of tourism lands causing harm to ecosystems, and other activities with adverse environmental impacts (Adewumi et al., 2019; Birenda et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2020). Moreover, in the social context, these issues significantly impact the communities surrounding tourist zones. Contaminated water, pollution resulting from poorly managed waste, deteriorating air quality due to the development of tourism lands, and related concerns (Generowicz et al., 2023; Chakraborty et al., 2021) underscore the importance of tourist destinations not solely prioritizing profit but also considering social and environmental aspects.

The discussed phenomenon has been thoroughly explained within the framework of The Theory of Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997), which holds particular relevance in the context of environmentally oriented tourism in Indonesia. The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) proves instrumental in establishing a sustainable tourism sector where economic growth aligns with the well-being of local communities and the preservation of the natural environment. This concept is in harmony with global endeavors to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the tourism sector, ensuring the continued appeal of Indonesian tourism to both domestic and international visitors while upholding sustainability principles. Moreover, the imperative of integrating sustainable concepts into the tourism sector lies in its capacity to enhance tourist satisfaction (Torabi et al., 2022; Pahrudin et al., 2022). Tourists are increasingly focused on environmentally friendly activities (Gautam, 2020; Confente & Scarpi, 2021; Chow et al., 2019), as they perceive their engagement as contributing to environmental improvement. Tourist satisfaction is positively linked to various aspects, including positive recommendations to

friends, family, and acquaintances, as well as a willingness to support sustainability principles such as conservation efforts and the reduction of adverse environmental impacts (Chen et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022).

The satisfaction tourists feel tends to foster a proclivity for future visits, as Lee et al. (2020) emphasized. Their research elucidates that this inclination is rooted in the positive and high-quality experiences encountered during visits to tourist destinations. These experiences may involve connecting with beautiful nature, supporting sustainable practices, or participating in environmentally friendly activities. High-quality experiences not only create lasting positive memories but also contribute to reinforcing environmental awareness (Al-Msallam, 2020). This, in turn, triggers a sense of responsibility toward the environment and encourages active engagement in sustainable behaviors (Han, 2021). Consequently, a superior experience in green tourism can influence the satisfaction of environmentally conscious customers and inspire tourists to assume a more proactive role in preserving nature. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Suhartanto et al. (2020), Rehman et al. (2023), and Hossain et al. (2023), which underscores that the quality of the experience significantly and positively impacts tourists' satisfaction with environmentally friendly tourist destinations (customer green satisfaction).

Research exploring the link between experience quality and customer green satisfaction reveals varied findings, with some studies, such as those conducted by Moon & Han (2020), presenting divergent results. Moon and Han (2020) argued that experience quality does not influence customer green satisfaction. They suggested that tourists are no longer solely focused on the quality of experiences; instead, their attention is more directed toward assessing the extent to which a tourist destination aligns with sustainable environmental goals. Tourists evaluate whether the sustainable values of the tourist destination resonate with their own beliefs. To reconcile the inconsistency observed in these studies, there is a recognized need for a mediating variable capable of bridging the relationship between experience quality and customer green satisfaction in environmentally friendly tourist destinations. In this study, the mediating variable employed is green perceived value.

The positive experiences of tourists visiting environmentally friendly tourist attractions play a crucial role in awakening their awareness of the significance of environmental conservation and fostering a deeper understanding of the ecological values upheld by the tourist destination (He et al., 2018). Consequently, the quality of the experience can enhance green perceived value by influencing tourists to appreciate and support the sustainability principles implemented by the environmentally friendly tourist destination. This relationship is substantiated by prior research conducted by Suhartanto et al. (2020) and Tabaeian et al. (2023), which indicates that experience quality significantly and positively influences green perceived value.

Moreover, visitors with a high green perceived value are inclined to believe that their visits positively impact the environment and actively support sustainability principles (Wong et al., 2021). Wong et al. (2021) explained in their study that visitors who are satisfied with the tourist destination generally have positive experiences related to sustainability, such as waste minimization, the use of green energy, or conservation efforts. In essence, Green Perceived Value establishes positive expectations regarding sustainability, and when these expectations are met during the visit, visitors are likely to feel satisfied and content. Customer Green Satisfaction emerges as a pivotal element in promoting environmentally friendly tourist attractions, creating awareness of environmental issues, and encouraging more sustainable behavior among visitors (Suhartanto et al., 2020). The higher the perceived value concerning sustainability, the more likely visitors are to be satisfied with their experiences and contribute positively to

the tourist destination's image as a sustainable destination. This relationship is also supported by prior research conducted by Carvache-Franco et al. (2022) and González-Rodríguez et al. (2020), which indicates that green perceived value significantly and positively influences customer green satisfaction.

Based on observations by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Indonesia has achieved the eighth position among the top 10 countries with the highest ecotourism index scores globally, scoring 80.1 points. This accomplishment reflects Indonesia's commitment to promoting and preserving its ecotourism potential. Notably, Malang in East Java Province has been acknowledged as the leading city for ecotourism in Indonesia (Tugu Malang, 2023). Consequently, research conducted in Malang is anticipated to offer a more comprehensive, tangible, and focused understanding of the research topic, shedding light on the potential and actual success in the local development of ecotourism.

This research aims to thoroughly analyze the relationship between experience quality and customer green satisfaction while exploring the mediating roles of green perceived value in the context of environmentally friendly tourist destinations. The novelty of this study lies in the innovative use of green perceived value as a mediating variable to elucidate the relationship between experience quality and customer green satisfaction, a relatively uncommon approach in previous research. Additionally, the choice of Malang City as a case study in the context of sustainability concepts has yet to be explored. In line with these considerations, applying the triple bottom line theory is vital for understanding the research phenomenon and encompassing all the variables employed in the study. Therefore, the hypotheses in this research are:

- H1: Experience Quality significantly and positively influences Green Satisfaction.
- H2: Experience Quality positively and significantly impacts Green Perceived Value.
- H3: Green Perceived Value positively and significantly impacts Green Satisfaction.
- H4: Green Perceived Value mediates the relationship between Experience Quality and Green Satisfaction.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative-explanatory approach, targeting all visitors to tourist attractions in Malang City, East Java Province, as its population of interest. The exact size of this population is indeterminate. To determine the sample size, the research employs a purposive sampling technique, referencing the formula provided by Hair et al. (2019). This formula involves multiplying the number of variable categories by factors such as 5, 10, 15, and 20. Following this formula, the minimum sample size for this research is calculated to be 280 (14 items multiplied by 20). However, the total sample size for this study is set at 360 respondents. The criteria for respondent selection include individuals who reside in Malang City and have visited one of the eco-tourism destinations in Malang. Since a 17-year-old is considered an adult who can make a rational decision, and this age is also considered a stage where an individual is aware of the phenomena in their surroundings, the required criteria to participate in this research is at least 17 years old.

Data collection for this research relies on an online questionnaire distributed through the Google Form platform, utilizing a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The chosen data analysis method includes descriptive statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis facilitated by the SmartPLS 4 software. The SEM-PLS analysis is executed in

three stages: outer model analysis, inner model analysis, and hypothesis testing, following the approach outlined by Hair et al. (2019).

Table 1. Definition Operational Variables

Variable	Indicator	Items	References
Experience Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immersion 2. Surprise 3. Fun 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I was so captivated when visiting the city of Malang that I could momentarily forget my troubles. 2. Malang City differs from any other city I have visited. 3. I feel that time passes so quickly when visiting Malang City. 4. The tourist destinations in Malang City are exceptional. 5. I am pleased with the tourist destinations in Malang City. 	Lemke et al. (2011); Jin et al.(2015)
Green Perceived Value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental Value 2. Customer Expectation 3. Environmental Concern 4. Environmental Orientation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall, Malang City demonstrates a robust environmental concern. 2. Visiting Malang City can motivate me to participate actively in environmental conservation. 3. I visited Malang City because it is environmentally friendly. 4. Malang City is more environmentally friendly than other cities. 	Chen (2010); Zeithaml (1998)
Green Satisfaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental Commitment 2. Environmental Performance 3. Environmental Friendly 4. Overall Satisfaction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The environmental conditions in Malang City meet my expectations. 2. I am satisfied with visiting Malang City due to its commitment to environmental preservation. 3. Overall, I am satisfied with Malang City's efforts towards environmental conservation. 4. Considering all my experiences in Malang City, my decision to visit this city was wise due to the environmental conservation efforts undertaken. 5. I am willing to revisit Malang City because the city is environmentally friendly. 	Chen (2010); Oliver (1997); Jin et al.(2015)

The research framework formulated in this study is shown in Figure 1.

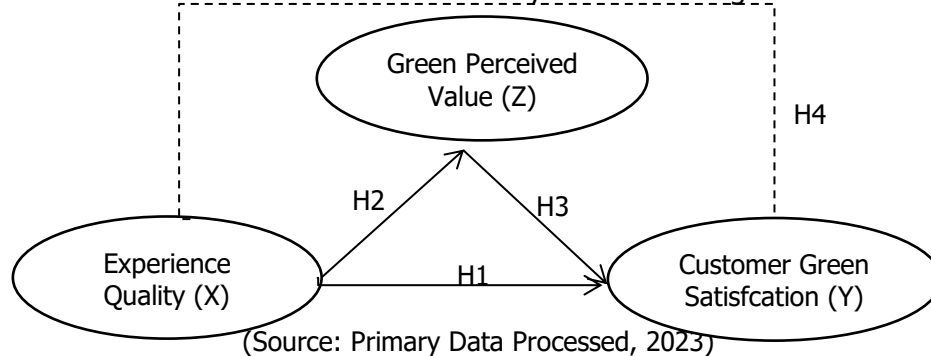


Figure 1. Research Framework

The dotted lines in Figure 1 represent the indirect effects of experience quality and perceived value on green satisfaction. These indirect effects visually demonstrate the interconnected nature of different elements that collectively shape the green perceived value.

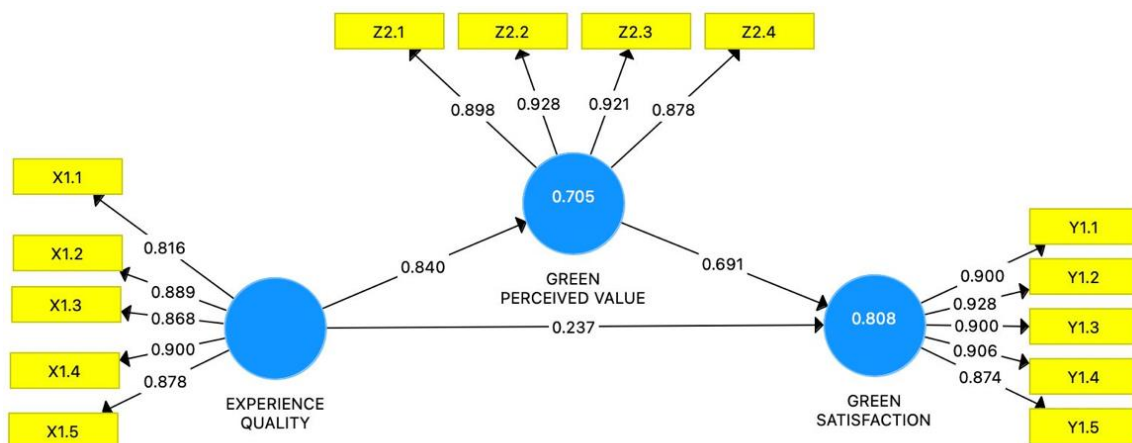
Results and discussions

Results

Evaluation Model

In this research, the data analysis utilizes SEM-PLS supported by SmartPLS 4 software. The evaluation of the research model involves three key stages: external model analysis, internal model analysis, and hypothesis testing concerning the research constructs.

During the external model analysis stage, the focus is on assessing the validity and reliability of latent variable constructs. Validity is determined based on factor loading values, where indicator values are deemed valid and robust if the factor loading coefficient exceeds 0.6. It is essential that the factor loading values of other constructs also surpass 0.6 on the variable being measured. Figure 2 presents the results of the outer loading analysis, which assesses these factor loading values.



(Source: Primary Data Processed, 2023)

Figure 2. Outer Loading Result

Table 2 indicates that the reflective measurement in this study attains a high level of validity. This is evident from the correlation values of each item on all variable indicators, which exhibit factor loading values exceeding 0.60 with the measured constructs. Consequently, it can be inferred that all items in this study are valid and demonstrate high correlations.

The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) test outcomes further substantiate the validity of test results. Indicators in this study are deemed valid if the AVE value surpasses 0.50, as per established guidelines (Hair et al., 2019; Ghazali & Latan, 2012). All variables in this study, including service quality, product innovation, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, exhibit AVE values greater than 0.50. This leads to the conclusion that these variables are considered valid.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

Variables	Items	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Interpretation
Experience Quality	X1.1	0.816	0.920	0.940	0.758	Valid
	X1.2	0.889				Valid
	X1.3	0.868				Valid
	X1.4	0.900				Valid
	X1.5	0.878				Valid
Green Perceived Value	Z2.1	0.898	0.927	0.948	0.822	Valid
	Z2.2	0.928				Valid
	Z2.3	0.921				Valid
	Z2.4	0.878				Valid
Green Satisfaction	Y1.1	0.901	0.942	0.956	0.813	Valid
	Y1.2	0.928				Valid
	Y1.3	0.900				Valid
	Y1.4	0.906				Valid
	Y1.5	0.874				Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed (2023)

R-Squared

The obtained R-Square values for each latent dependent variable in the current testing scenario, evaluated using Smart PLS 4, are as follows:

Table 3. R Square Result

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Green Perceived Value	0,705	0,704
Green Satisfaction	0,808	0,807

Source: Primary Data Processed (2023)

Table 3 presents the R-Square values for the variable Green Perceived Value (Z) influenced by Experience Quality (X), with a value of 0.705. Additionally, for the variable Green Satisfaction (Y) influenced by Experience Quality (X) and Green Perceived Value (Z), the R-Square value is reported as 0.808. These findings indicate that the variation in variable Z, influenced by variable X, accounts for 70.5%. Furthermore, the variation in variable Y, influenced by variables X and Z, accounts for 80.7%.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses, with a significance level set at 5%, represented by a significance level of probability (α) ≤ 0.05 . Table 4 outlines the results, indicating that the significance values for the impact of Experience Quality (X) on Green Satisfaction (Y) are $0.048 < 0.05$ (H1), leading to the acceptance of H1. The findings for the influence of Experience Quality (X) on Green Perceived Value (Z) and Green Perceived Value (Z) on Green Satisfaction (Y) are $0.000 < 0.05$ (H2) and $0.000 < 0.05$ (H3), respectively, resulting in the acceptance of H2 and H3. Additionally, the mediation test results for Green Perceived Value (Z) indicate that it can serve as a mediator in the relationship between Experience Quality and Green Satisfaction (H4: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), confirming the acceptance of H4.

Table 4. Hypotheses Testing Result

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Explanation
H1: X -> Y	0.237	0.238	0.059	3.990	0.000	significant
H2: X -> Z	0.840	0.837	0.029	28.623	0.000	significant
H3: Z -> Y	0.691	0.690	0.056	12.423	0.000	significant
H4: X -> Z -> Y	0.580	0.577	0.050	11.667	0.000	significant

Source: Primary Data Processed (2023)

Discussions

Experience Quality and Green Customer Satisfaction

According to this research, Experience Quality positively and significantly impacts Green Customer Satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Suhartanto et al. (2020), Rehman et al. (2023), and Hossain et al. (2023), which highlighted that better experience quality leads to higher Green Customer Satisfaction. In this context, experience quality refers to visitors' overall experience during their visit to tourist destinations in Malang. The positive relationship between Experience Quality and Green Customer Satisfaction indicates that the level of green customer satisfaction is also influenced by how visitors experience and perceive various aspects of tourism in Malang. This is reflected in the research with the highest indicator contribution of 0.900 (X1.4), indicating that tourist destinations in Malang have their uniqueness and specialty. One of the unique features of tourist destinations in Malang is the dominance of ecotourism sites such as waterfalls, springs, beaches, and mountains. When visitors experience and enjoy the natural beauty and good services in Malang tourist destinations, they feel satisfied and positively impressed with their experience.

Furthermore, this positive experience enhances visitors' satisfaction and fosters positive word-of-mouth recommendations. This positive narrative, shared by the visitors, can strengthen the reputation of the tourist destination in Malang. This strong reputation can attract more people to visit Malang and reinforce its image as an attractive and environmentally friendly tourist destination. Thus, the quality of experience for visitors plays a significant role in shaping Green Customer Satisfaction. By providing quality and satisfying experiences, Malang can strengthen its reputation as an environmentally friendly and appealing tourist destination.

Mediating Role of Green Perceived Value

This research highlights the importance of the relationship between Green Perceived Value and Green Customer Satisfaction in the context of ecotourism in Malang. This finding aligns with previous research, such as that conducted by Wong et al. in 2021. Wong et al. (2021) affirm that tourists' perceptions of a destination's commitment to green principles can strongly incentivize sustainable practices. In this context, the study indicates that visits to ecotourism destinations in Malang have significant potential to motivate tourists to engage actively in environmental conservation efforts. The research findings suggest that the highest value of the indicator, at 0.928 (Z2.2), confirms that ecotourism in Malang can motivate tourists to participate in environmental conservation efforts. In other words, when tourists perceive that tourist attractions in Malang are firmly committed to environmental conservation and eco-friendly practices, they tend to be satisfied with their experiences. This positive experience can motivate

them to support environmental conservation efforts through direct action or by promoting sustainable behaviors to others.

Furthermore, the research highlights the relationship between Experience Quality and Green Customer Satisfaction. The results show that the direct relationship between these two factors is positive and significant. This means that a satisfying experience for tourists directly contributes to their satisfaction with the green efforts undertaken by ecotourism destinations in Malang. Additionally, the research found that Green Perceived Value partially plays a mediation role. This means that although Experience Quality directly influences Green Customer Satisfaction when tourists' experiences do not meet maximum levels or match expectations, Green Perception Value can be a crucial factor in creating satisfaction. Green Perceived Value allows tourists to continue to perceive consistent eco-friendly values, even when their experiences may not meet expectations. From these results, it can be concluded that ecotourism destinations in Malang need to continue their commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable practices. This will help enhance tourists' experiences and strengthen the relationship between Experience Quality, Green Perceived Value, and Green Customer Satisfaction, thereby supporting efforts to promote more sustainable and eco-friendly ecotourism in Malang.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence that Experience The research findings indicate that experience quality significantly influences Green Satisfaction, aligning with previous studies that collectively emphasize the positive impact of high-quality experiences on satisfaction in the context of environmentally based attractions and cities. The research underscores the interconnectedness between positive experiences and their influence on tourists' perceptions of sustainability, contributing to their satisfaction and active support of environmentally friendly practices.

Moreover, the study highlights the role of Green Perceived Value in shaping Green Satisfaction. The positive relationship between Experience Quality and Green Perceived Value suggests that good experience quality can enhance tourists' confidence in the commitment of tourist attractions to sustainable practices. In essence, positive experiences contribute to a favorable perception of the environmental values upheld by the destination, reinforcing tourists' satisfaction and support for sustainable initiatives.

Ultimately, this research provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics between experience quality, green perceived value, and tourist satisfaction. The implications extend beyond individual attractions to entire cities, emphasizing the need for destinations to prioritize environmentally conscious practices to enhance their image and satisfaction levels. This aligns with the broader principles of responsible tourism and sustainable development.

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