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We hope that the JASTH article can fulfill the repository of applied science and become a reference for writers and researchers in applied science of tourism.

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Tourism marketing: Channel, factor, and strategy for foreign market share in Badung Regency

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Abstract: Badung Regency, a prominent tourism hub in Bali, Indonesia, attracts a diverse range of international tourists. Effective marketing strategies are essential to enhance its competitiveness and address challenges such as traffic congestion and the need for improved digital marketing. This research aims to identify marketing channels and factors, determine key priorities in tourism marketing development, and formulate marketing strategies for international tourist markets in Badung Regency. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, including a literature review, direct and online observation, document analysis, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and surveys. Data analysis used Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) and Analytical. Hierarchy Process (AHP) methods, supported by SPSS and Expert Choice software. The study identified eight key marketing factors, i.e., tourism products, pricing, tourism image, digital marketing, tourism services, Networking, competitors, and branding, encompassing 48 indicators. Based on IPA, variables are categorized into four quadrants, with 14 indicators in the top priority quadrant. AHP analysis identified ten top marketing strategies, including improving traffic conditions, enhancing online content marketing, strengthening social media marketing, and standardizing tour-ist services. These strategies are crucial for addressing issues and Enhancing international tourism marketing in Badung. The findings highlight the significance of tailoring. Marketing strategies to improve Badung's competitiveness in the global tourism market. The strategic focus on digital marketing, service quality, and brand management can significantly boost tourist satisfaction and loyalty. This research provides a comprehensive framework for developing effective marketing strategies to enhance Badung's appeal as a premier international tourist destination.

Keywords: analytical hierarchy process, Badung Regency, foreign market, importance-performance analysis, marketing strategy

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Introduction

Tourism marketing is an important part of tourism development. According to Pop et al. (2022), tourism marketing has a strategic role in efforts to achieve company success in the long term, especially in harmonizing the relationship between business and customers. Tourist destinations that are adaptive to technology, such as Virtual Reality (VR), will make it easier to achieve tourism marketing success to tourists (Yung et al., 2021). Tourism marketing is not Only seen as the application of technology in achieving customer satisfaction, but according to (Wen et al., 2021), tourism marketing can also be relevant to the development of sustainable tourism such as economic, ecological, and socio-cultural aspects (Cavalcante et al., 2021). In addition, various important aspects are linked to tourism marketing, namely tourist motivation, destination familiarity, revisit, image (Soliman, 2021), tourist behavior, and tourism management (Wen et al., 2021).

The success of tourism development is determined by effective, adaptive, and competitive marketing and promotion strategies (Briggs, 2001; Sofronov, 2019; Rahmoun & Baeshen, 2021). Marketing strategies aim to increase tourist visits by packaging products, services, networking, and digital marketing in ways that highlight the destination's uniqueness, offering added value compared to competitors (Sofronov, 2019). Sofronov (2019) emphasizes that uniqueness is crucial in attracting tourists, as destinations that offer unique and distinct experiences are more likely to be remembered and favored by tourists. For example, packaging tourism products showcasing natural beauty and integrating local culture and authentic experiences can provide a distinct appeal to tourists. An important aspect of tourism marketing is tourist satisfaction, which is closely related to loyalty and willingness to return (Amoako et al., 2019; Supanun & Sornsaruht, 2019; Fitriana, 2021). Marketing that reaches the level of "delighting the customer" creates memorable experiences at a tourist destination (Rivera & Villar, 2019; Ariana et al., 2021a; 2021b).

Tourism in Badung has achieved various important marketing aspects, evidenced by the diversity and competitiveness of tourism businesses and the high number of tourist visits (Wall, 1996; Suryawardani & Utami, 2017). Tourists visiting the region are diverse regarding country of origin, demographics, travel preferences, socio-economic status, and psychographics. Tourists come not only from various countries but also from different demographic groups such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y, and Z. Each of these groups has different travel preferences, ranging from nature tourism and cultural tourism to man-made attractions, all available in Badung Regency. Additionally, tourists from various socio-economic backgrounds, from the middle class to the upper class, can find services and facilities that suit their needs and budget. Psychographically, tourists visiting Badung have diverse motivations and interests. Some seek relaxation and tranquility at beautiful beaches like Kuta and Nusa Dua, while others may be interested in cultural and spiritual experiences at places like Uluwatu and Taman Ayun Temple. These preferences include tourists seeking hedonic happiness, those looking for pleasure and entertainment (Ariana et al., 2021a), as well as those seeking eudaimonic happiness, who look for meaning and self-development through deep travel experiences (Ariana et al., 2021b).

Research related to tourism marketing in Badung has been conducted by various parties. Suarja et al. (2021) studied marketing strategies for rural tourism, finding that the integration of rural uniqueness and appropriate marketing strategies can enhance attraction and tourist visits. Arismayanti (2017) focused on culture-based and heritage branding, demonstrating that a strong cultural identity and heritage promotion can create a strong and attractive destination image for tourists seeking authentic experiences. Mahendrayani & Suryawan (2018) re-searched destination marketing strategies to increase visitor numbers, emphasizing the importance of innovative tourism product development and effective promotion through various communication channels. Wardani et al. (2018) examined shifts in marketing strategies in the hospitality industry, finding that adaptation to changing trends and tourist needs is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the dynamic tourism industry. Post-pandemic studies by Wiranatha et al. (2022) identified marketing channels and factors, as well as domestic marketing strategies in Badung. This research is relevant because Badung's tourism is influenced by international issues and changes in global tourism phenomena (Maitland & Newman, 2014; Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). Issues such as security, health, and tourism trends affect tourist motivation and the existence of tourism in Badung. Security issues like the Bali Bombings I and II and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted tourism in Badung (Hitchcock & Darma Putra, 2005; Henderson, 2003; Gurtner, 2004). The COVID-19 pandemic led to a drastic decline in tourist visits and had a detrimental effect on Badung's economy and tourism industry (Antara & Sumarniasih, 2022; Subadra & Hughes, 2022).

In facing issues vulnerable to changes in tourism conditions, consistent actions are needed to ensure the comfort and safety of tourists in Badung Regency. When tourists feel safe and comfortable, they are more likely to return (Ibrahim & Gill, 2005). This is crucial for reviving and revitalizing tourism in Badung as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in addressing the impacts of the pandemic, which has now become endemic, Badung Regency needs to take various measures to increase the tourist market, particularly the international market share. Therefore, adaptive tourism marketing strategies are needed to increase the international market

share. This study aims to identify marketing channels and factors, determine key priorities in marketing development and formulate tourism marketing strategies for international markets in Badung Regency. The involvement of various tourism stakeholders, such as the government, businesses, and the community, is crucial in formulating these strategies to achieve high-quality and sustainable tourism. With these efforts, Badung tourism can develop towards better tourism while still considering the essence of quality and sustainable tourism. This initiative will help ensure that Badung Regency remains an attractive and competitive tourist destination in the international tourism market.

Methodology

This research was conducted in 2023 in the administrative region of Badung Regency, which includes three areas, i.e., North Badung, Central Badung, and South Badung. The selection of the research location was based on its alignment with the research objectives, accessibility, representativeness, and availability of the necessary data. The proper choice of location is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth overview of the conditions and dynamics of tourism marketing in Badung Regency. There are several reasons for this study to choose a location in Badung Regency, namely (1) Badung is the center of Bali tourism, (2) Badung has popular tourist destinations such as Kuta, Nusadua, and Canggu. The popularity of Badung tourism is evidenced by tourism data such as Badung has 92 types of tourism consisting of 19 tourist villages and 73 tourist attractions (Badung Regency Tourism Office, 2024). In 2023, Badung recorded 4370 types of accommodation, and there are 5,351 types of culinary businesses. Furthermore, in terms of the tourism market in Badung, foreign tourist visits in 2024 more than 6.4 million tourists. (3) another reason for choosing the research location in Badung is because Badung gets a high Regional Original Income from the tourism sector (4) Badung has a diversification of tourism products, (5) Badung has a competitive advantage at the level of international tourism, and (6) Badung as the main tourist destination locus for tourism recovery due to the tourism impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, especially in 2020-2023.

The data collection methods used in this research included various approaches, namely literature review, observation, document study, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and questionnaire distribution. The literature review was conducted to find relevant concepts, approaches, and information related to the research problem by searching for literature such as books, scientific journals, and research reports related to tourism marketing, especially in Badung Regency. Observations were made both offline (in-person) and online. Offline observations involved direct observation to obtain information about the actual conditions of tourist destinations, tourist attractions, tourist behavior, and the types of tourism activities of interest. In contrast, online observations used the netnography method, which adheres to the principles of internet ethnography. Document study is a research method conducted by reviewing and analyzing information sources related to the tourism marketing system stored in document form.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a research method conducted in person, involving the participation of stakeholders in the field of tourism marketing. The main purpose of FGD is to gain a deeper understanding of tourism marketing issues and obtain perspectives from various stakeholder groups involved. Data collection through questionnaires was used to gather views and assessments from respondents on various aspects of the tourism marketing system that have been implemented and those that are expected. The aspects covered in the questionnaire include market segmentation, marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place, partnership, process), institutional factors, human resources (HR), and marketing facilities and infrastructure. Respondents in this study included experts or academics in tourism, government officials related to tourism, and stakeholders in the tourism industry, such as the Regional Tourism Promotion Board (BPPD) and tourism industry associations (30 respondents). Additionally, Samples were taken from international tourists visiting Badung to evaluate market analysis and tourism marketing in Badung (100 respondents). The count of 100 samples was obtained from the adoption of the Slovin formulation (Tejada & Punzalan, 2012). In detail, the number of foreign tourists visiting Badung is 5,386,878 people (in 2023), so that N: 5,386,878 and e (error) is 10%, and the number of samples determined in this study is 100 respondents. The data obtained

through the questionnaires will form the basis for formulating more effective marketing strategies that meet the needs.

Data analysis in this study used Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) aims to identify performance and importance factors in tourism marketing. This method has long been used in tourism and hospitality research to measure important attributes and the performance expected by consumers. Some tourism studies that have used IPA analysis include those on travel and tourism (Evans & Chon, 1989; Go & Zhang, 1997; Yanti et al., 2022), leisure and recreation (Guadagnolo, 1985; Hollenhorst et al., 1992), education (Alberty & Mihalik, 1989; Ortinau et al., 1989), and healthcare marketing (Dolinsky, 1991; Dolinsky & Caputo, 1991; Hawes & Rao, 1985). IPA analysis consists of two stages: calculating the average value for performance and importance using a Likert scale and determining the level of alignment between performance and importance based on the average values. The results of this analysis will map indicators into quadrants on a Cartesian diagram, divided into four quadrants: main priorities, strengths, low priorities, and excess resources.

The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used to formulate priority marketing strategies based on the results of the IPA analysis. AHP is a decision-making method that addresses complex problems by transforming them into a hierarchical structure (Supriadi et al., 2018). The AHP steps include defining the problem and desired solutions, creating a hierarchy structure with a main goal, performing pairwise comparisons, calculating eigenvalues and testing consistency, and checking the hierarchy's consistency. The basic principles of AHP include decomposition, judgment comparison, and priority synthesis. In processing data using the AHP method, Expert Choice (EC) software was used to assist in decision-making. EC facilitates data input of criteria and choices, as well as goal setting (Nasibu, 2009). The program supports quantitative and qualitative analysis and provides graphic visualizations that help interpret the results. By using a combination of IPA and AHP methods, this research aims to formulate effective and targeted marketing strategies to increase the market share of international tourists in Badung Regency. These strategies are expected to drive the development of Badung tourism towards high-quality and sustainable tourism.

Results and Discussions

Analysis of Foreign Market Share Marketing Channels in Badung Regency

Results should be clear and concise. The results should summarize (scientific) findings rather than provide data in great detail. Present raw data here without comment, using tables and figures if this makes the data clearer. What answer was found to the research question; what did the study find? Was the tested hypothesis true?

Respondents to this research were taken from international tourists visiting Badung to evaluate market analysis and tourism marketing in Badung. The respondents represent diverse demographic and psychographic profiles, providing critical insights into the preferences and characteristics of international tourists in Badung. The majority of visitors originate from Germany (19.5%), followed by Australia (15.0%) and France (13.3%), with smaller proportions from Poland, Spain, and other countries. This indicates a strong market presence from Western Europe and Oceania, highlighting the potential for focused promotional strategies targeting these regions. In terms of gender distribution, the respondents were almost evenly split, with 52% male and 48% female, showing a balanced demographic suitable for inclusive marketing campaigns. The age groups were dominated by Generation Y (27–42 years) at 53%, followed by Generation Z (11–26 years) at 39%. These younger generations are drawn to adventurous activities and digitally shareable experiences, making social media and digital marketing vital tools. Additionally, students and professionals made up the largest occupational groups, comprising 34% and 28% of respondents, respectively. Students, with their flexible schedules and propensity to travel, are an important market, while professionals represent a segment with higher spending power.

The study also revealed that most respondents were first-time visitors (73%), reflecting the success of efforts to attract new markets. Meanwhile, 27% were repeat visitors, showing a moderate level of destination loyalty that can be leveraged with targeted retention strategies.

Leisure and recreation were the primary motivations for visits, accounting for 69.5%, followed by education and research (19.5%). The preference for independent travel, indicated by 89% of respondents opting for trips without package tours, highlights the need for customizable and flexible travel offerings. Most tourists traveled with friends (41%) or family (39%), emphasizing the importance of group-friendly attractions and accommodations. Social media emerged as the most influential source of information (36%), followed by word-of-mouth from friends or relatives (26%). This underscores the critical role of digital platforms and user-generated content in shaping travel decisions.

Marketing channels in tourism are complex and diverse elements used by service providers to reach and influence target markets (Kontis et al., 2019; Tsiotsou & Ratten, 2010). Travel agencies, both offline and online, websites, social media platforms, and travel apps are some of the commonly used marketing channels (Bitner & Booms, 1982; Law et al., 2015; Nurtirtawaty et al., 2021). Collaboration with business partners such as airlines, hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions is also an integral part of the marketing channels, creating unique and attractive tourism experiences (Buhalis, 2000). In the digital era, platforms like TripAdvisor, Klook, and Get Your Guide play a crucial role in determining marketing channels and market share, providing real-time data on tourism trends in Bali. Identifying the types of tourism preferred by tourists in Bali, even though not all activities are in Badung, remains relevant since Badung is a primary area where tourists stay when visiting Bali. TripAdvisor provides reviews and recommendations that help tourists plan their trips, covering various types of tourism, such as nature, culture, adventure, and spiritual tourism. Klook offers booking services for tourist activities with a range of attractive packages and often provides special discounts. Get Your Guide offers various travel products, assisting tourists in planning memorable experiences. Data from these three platforms, along with information from focus group discussions and immigration data, are used to analyze marketing channels in Badung Regency. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of foreign tourists in Badung Regency

No.	Country	Total Visits	Tourist Characteristics
1.	Australia	135,986	Nature Tourist, Cultural Tourist, Backpacking, and Youth Tourist
2.	India	41,234	Adventure Tourist, Cultural Tourist, Wellness Tourist (Vegan), Religious and Spiritual Tourist
3.	France	29,201	Nature Tourist, Cultural Tourist, Leisure Tourist, Special Interest Tourist (Wedding)
4.	China	37,485	Adventure Tourist, Shopping Tourist, Leisure Tourist, Cultural Tourist
5.	United Kingdom	27,478	Nature Tourist, Cultural Tourist, Special Interest Tourist
6.	Korea (Sth), Republic	26,035	Adventure Tourist, Leisure Tourist
7.	Germany	19,232	Nature Tourist, Cultural Tourist, Special Interest Tourist
8.	United States of America	27,434	Nature Tourist, Cultural Tourist, Special Interest Tourist, Educational Tourist
9.	Italy	8,347	Nature Tourist, Cultural Tourist
10.	Malaysia	15,549	Shopping Tourist, Nature Tourist

Table 1 above shows that the top 10 countries of international tourists visiting Badung are Australia, India, France, China, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Germany, the United States, Italy, and Malaysia. Additionally, several types of tourist attractions in Badung can be generally classified, including cultural tourists, incentive tourists, nature tourists, leisure tourists, religious and spiritual tourists, sport and recreation tourists, backpacking and youth tourists, special interest tourists, wellness, health or medical tourists, business tourists, educational tourists, adventure tourists, and shopping tourists. These findings are also supported by various opinions

expressed during the focus group discussion, particularly highlighting the Indian tourist market as a significant market for Bali and Badung. Dr. Yoga Iswara, Chairman of the Indonesian Hotel General Manager Association (IHGMA) Bali, said that:

> "The Indian market can replace the Chinese market. The Indian market is very loyal to Bali, considering the cultural similarities and the people's religious rituals. Therefore, the tourism industry should not forget about the Indian market" (FGD, 13 July 2023).

Badung's tourism sector attracts millions of international visitors annually, with its primary markets dominated by Australia (Sobocinska, 2011), China (Rosyidi, 2018), and India (Thirumaran, 2008), along with a significant number of tourists from various European countries (Ariana, Putra, & Sukana, 2023). Notably, Australian tourists perceive Kuta, Legian, and Seminyak as their "second home," indicating a deep sense of familiarity and attachment to these destinations. Meanwhile, Indian tourists often include Bali as part of a multi-destination trip, frequently visiting Malaysia before arriving in Bali (Hitchcock & Putra, 2007). In recent years, China has emerged as the dominant tourism market for Badung, Bali, with a substantial increase in visitor numbers (Rosyidi, 2018). The surge in international tourist arrivals can be attributed to several key factors, including geographical proximity, accessibility, cultural and government policies, and evolving tourist preferences. Specifically, tourist preferences extend beyond the allure of natural attractions and the uniqueness of Balinese culture, traditions, and arts. More importantly, tourists are drawn to Badung due to its strong destination image, which is associated with positive tourism experiences. Studies suggest that traveling to Badung, Bali, fosters a sense of happiness and well-being among visitors (Ariana et al., 2024). Moreover, the island is widely recognized for its tranquillity and hospitality, reinforcing its reputation as a peaceful and comfortable destination for both domestic and international tourists (Ariana et al., 2016; Ariana, 2017).

It is undeniable that the interest of Indian tourists in visiting Bali is increasing, ranking just below the Australian market. The presence of Indian tourists offers a significant opportunity for the recovery of the tourism industry post-pandemic. The cultural and religious similarities between Bali and India also contribute to the growth of visits. To strengthen the Indian market, the government needs to promote tourism to South Asia, organize marketing events and sales missions, and establish direct flights between India and Bali. Besides focusing on the Indian market, it is also crucial for the government and the tourism industry to maintain existing markets, including tourists from Australia, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, South Korea, the UK, and the Middle East. The analysis of the international tourism market in Badung Regency can be seen through the changes before and after the COVID-19 pandemic based on tourist arrival data. The data on tourist arrivals from 2019 to 2023 shows a transformation in market share (Figure 1). Although this data is derived from arrivals at Ngurah Rai Airport, it can serve as an indicator of the tourism condition in Badung Regency.

In 2019, the top five countries of origin for foreign tourists visiting Bali were Australia, China, India, Japan, and the United States. Other countries that also served as significant sources of tourists included South Korea, France, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, Russia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Spain, and Italy. This data indicates that Bali, especially Badung, is attractive to tourists from various continents around the world. After the COVID-19 pandemic, there were several changes in the rankings of the countries of origin for tourists in 2023. Thailand, which was previously in the top 20 tourist arrivals to Bali, was replaced by Vietnam. Significant changes were also observed in the rankings of tourist visits from China and Japan. China, which was previously ranked second, dropped to fourth place. Meanwhile, Japan, which was initially ranked sixth, fell to fourteenth place. The decline in tourist visits from China was primarily influenced by the Chinese government's policy prohibiting its citizens from traveling abroad during a certain period. On the other hand, the Indian tourist market showed significant growth, rising to second place in 2023. This demonstrates the dominance of the Indian market in Bali and Badung, which has positively contributed to the recovery of the tourism industry post-pandemic. Despite changes in some markets, tourism in Badung continues to show resilience and significantly contributes to the improvement of the local economy.

2019					2023 (January – August)			
Country	Arrival	Rangking	Share (%)		Country	Arrival	Rangking	Share (%)
Australian	1.247.387	1	19.9		Australian	844.843	1	24.7
Chinese	1.183.991	2	18.9		Indian	288.430	2	8.4
Indian	372.029	3	5.9		British	173.051	3	5.1
British	287.258	4	4.6		Chinese	171.634	4	5.0
Japanese	257.220	6	4.1		American	168.145	5	4.9
American	276.511	5	4.4		Singaporean	144.346	6	4.2
South Korean	212.846	7	3.4		South Korean	143.405	7	4.2
French	208.975	8	3.3		French	140.765	8	4.1
German	197.478	9	3.1		Malaysian	133.545	9	3.9
Malaysian	184.892	10	2.9		German	128.181	10	3.7
Singaporean	163.377	11	2.6		Russian	99.749	11	2.9
Russian	143.238	12	2.3		Dutch	81.202	12	2.4
New Zealand	132.284	13	2.1		New Zealand	69.431	13	2.0
Dutch	116.615	14	1.9		Japanese	67.511	14	2.0
Taiwanese	107.366	15	1.7		Philipine	61.160	15	1.8
Philipine	106.902	16	1.7		Vietnam*	54.949	16	1.6
Canadian	73.727	17	1.2		Taiwan	52.989	17	1.5
Thai*	61.083	18	1.0		Italy	50.277	18	1.5
Spanish	56.431	19	0.9		Spain	41.361	19	1.2
Italian	56.374	20	0.9		Canadian	40.107	20	1.2
Total	5.445.984		86.8		Total	2.955.081		86.4
Other Country	827.409		13.2		Other Country	463.826		13.6
Total 2019	6.273.393		100.0		Total 2023	3.418.907		100.0

*Thailand in 2023 not in the top 20

4 Stay →(green)
10 Up →(yellow)
7 Down →(red)

*Vietnam replaces Thailand as top 20

(Source: immigration data (processed), 2024)
Figure 1. Market changes based on ranking of foreign tourist visits 2019-2023

Analysis of Foreign Market Tourism Marketing Factors in Badung Regency

The analysis of international market tourism marketing factors in Badung Regency involves eight main factors, including tourism products, prices, tourism image, digital marketing, tourism services, networking, competitors, and branding. Each of these factors consists of relevant indicators, with a total of 48 indicators used to understand various aspects of tourism marketing in this area. The explanation of each factor is as follows:

a.   Tourism Products
     Badung Regency offers a diverse range of tourism products, including natural attractions, cultural experiences, and supporting facilities. These tourism products consist of a combination of tangible and intangible elements that create a comprehensive experience for tourists. Factor analysis shows that variables such as unique and diverse attractions, availability of accommodation, restaurants, and supporting facilities have a high correlation in forming the tourism product factor.

b.   Prices
     Proper pricing is crucial to attract international tourists. Prices should reflect the quality of the destination and the added value provided. Factors such as special pricing offers, discounts, and affordability play an important role in the tourism marketing strategy in Badung.

c.   Tourism Image
     The tourism image of Badung is significantly influenced by service quality, cleanliness, safety, and environmental management. A positive image can increase tourists' desire to return and recommend the destination to others. Factors such as cleanliness at the destination, health management, and the comfort of transportation services significantly contribute to the tourism image of Badung.

d.   Digital Marketing
     Digital marketing is becoming increasingly important in reaching international tourists. Developing official websites, using social media, online advertising campaigns, and search engine optimization (SEO) are some strategies used to promote the destination. The analysis shows that variables such as strengthening content marketing, developing promotional apps, and utilizing email marketing have a significant impact on digital marketing.

e. Tourism Services

The quality of tourism services is a key factor in building tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Standardizing services, integrating advanced technology, and meeting tourist expectations are some aspects that need attention. The analysis shows that variables such as services meeting tourist expectations and the implementation of service standardization have a high correlation with the quality of tourism services.

f. Networking

Collaboration with various parties such as tourism industry players, associations, government, mass media, and universities is crucial in promoting tourism in Badung. The pentahelix model, which involves collaboration between business, government, community, academia, and media, provides significant benefits in tourism development. The analysis shows that all variables contribute significantly to the tourism networking in Badung.

g. Competitors

Understanding and analyzing competitors is an important step in marketing strategy. Identifying competitors, market analysis, and strengthening competitiveness are some aspects that need attention. The analysis shows that variables such as identifying competitors and analyzing the market and competitors have a significant impact on marketing strategies.

h. Branding

Branding is one of the main strategies in marketing tourism in Badung. The tagline campaign "Badung the Soul of Bali," brand management, brand awareness, and tagline promotion are some factors influencing branding. The analysis shows that variables such as the promotion and communication of the tagline, as well as strengthening the tagline at local and international events, have a high correlation in forming the branding factor.

The factor analysis in this study used several statistical techniques to ensure data validity and reliability, including KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett's Test values, Anti-Image Correlation values, and Extraction values. These values must be above 0.5, meaning each factor and its indicators meet the criteria for further analysis. The complete results of the factor analysis can be seen in Table 2. The number of indicators analyzed before the factor analysis was 48. The results showed that no indicators needed to be eliminated based on the Anti-Image Matrices values analyzed using SPSS. The results indicate that all indicators are valid and can be used to measure the tourism marketing factors in Badung Regency. Thus, this analysis provides a comprehensive and accurate overview of the factors influencing international tourism marketing in Badung Regency.

Table 2. Analysis of tourism marketing factors of the foreign tourist market in Badung Regency

Code	Factor	Indicator	KMO	Anti Image	Extraction
A1	Tourism Products	Unique tourist attractions	0.658	0.704[a]	0.602
A2		Diverse tourist attractions		0.718[a]	0.741
A3		Attractive tourist attractions		0.775[a]	0.827
A4		Availability of accommodation		0.857[a]	0.642
A5		Availability of restaurants		0.559[a]	0.830
A6		Availability of shopping places		0.675[a]	0.675
A7		Availability of Travel Agencies		0.688[a]	0.684
A8		Availability of supporting tourist facilities		0.692[a]	0.628
A9		Organization of various national and international events (MICE)		0.699[a]	0.746
A10		Availability of various entertainment facilities (nightlife)		0.662[a]	0.845
B1	Prices	Affordable prices for tourists	0.666	0.644[a]	0.590

Code	Factor	Indicator	KMO	Anti Image	Extraction
B2		Pricing that matches the quality of the tourist destination		0.768a	0.593
B3		Discounts for tourists		0.652a	0.535
B4		Special pricing offers on holidays/special occasions.		0.630a	0.725
C1	Tourism Image	Preventive measures against security disturbances	0.753	0.792a	0.604
C2		Comfort of tourist transportation services		0.719a	0.734
C3		Cleanliness at tourist destinations		0.655a	0.682
C4		Handling and procedures for tourist health and safety		0.863a	0.744
C5		Handling of illegal charges against tourists		0.762a	0.653
C6		Traffic conditions in Badung		0.770a	0.680
D1	Digital Marketing	Strengthening social media marketing	0.875	0.760a	0.587
D2		Development of websites for each tourist destination		0.837a	0.749
D3		Marketing through online platforms, marketplaces, and online travel agents		0.884a	0.661
D4		Strengthening financial technology in transactions (Paypal, Gopay, Shopee Pay, electronic payment)		0.947a	0.636
D5		Website optimization through Search Engine Optimization (SEO)		0.793a	0.731
D6		Strengthening and developing content marketing on online media		0.905a	0.805
D7		Development of promotional applications		0.941a	0.766
D8		Utilization of email marketing to consumers (email blasting)		0.912a	0.790
E1	Tourism Services	Implementing service standards for tourists	0.633	0.578a	0.880
E2		Tourism services in line with the latest technological developments		0.623a	0.864
E3		Services that meet tourist expectations		0.699a	0.840
E4		Services provided to ensure tourist satisfaction		0.728a	0.729
E5		Enhancing competitive advantage by integrating local culture, tolerance, and diversity		0.596a	0.809
F1	Networking	Collaboration with tourism industry players	0.844	0.899a	0.721
F2		Collaboration with tourism associations		0.818a	0.844
F3		Collaboration with mass media		0.852a	0.699
F4		Collaboration with the government		0.783a	0.755
F5		Collaboration with the community		0.788a	0.574
F6		Collaboration with universities		0.960a	0.635
G1	Competitors	Identification of competitors	0.820	0.802a	0.782
G2		Analyzing the market and competitors		0.799a	0.770
G3		Determining priority competitors		0.836a	0.752
G4		Strengthening competitiveness		0.846a	0.710
H1	Branding	Tagline campaign "Badung the Soul of Bali"	0.871	0.889a	0.887
H2		Brand management for Badung tourism		0.848a	0.922
H3		Brand awareness for international tourists		0.907a	0.909
H4		Promotion and communication of the tagline "Badung the Soul of Bali" to international tourists		0.849a	0.926
H5		Strengthening the Badung tagline at local, national, and international events		0.865a	0.917

Source: Processed data (2024).

Main Priorities in Developing Foreign Market Tourism Marketing in Badung Regency

Based on the factor analysis of all the marketing indicators examined in this study, the indicators that remained significant after the factor analysis were identified. Further analysis was conducted to determine the main priorities through several stages: (1) Importance Analysis, (2) Performance Analysis, (3) Suitability Level Analysis, (4) Gap Analysis, and (5) Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA).

Importance Analysis

Badung Regency has become a significant force in Bali's tourism industry, nationally and internationally. Badung significantly contributes to Bali's accommodation sector, hosting 827-starred hotels and 39,219 non-starred hotels. Additionally, Badung frequently receives prestigious awards such as those from Travel and Leisure Asia and the Bali Tourism Award. However, despite its excellent tourism accommodations, Badung has only 17 rural tourists out of the 238 in Bali, contributing just 7.1%. Nevertheless, Badung has maintained inclusive rural tourism like Sangeh, Munggu, and Canggu. This success is commendable, owing to the intelligent policies of stakeholders who have effectively promoted tourism. According to the analysis of Badung's foreign tourism market factors, eight main factors have been identified: networking, tourism image, tourism services, digital marketing, branding, competitors, tourism products, and prices. The results show that all these factors are considered very important, with an average score of 4.71 (Figure 2). The five factors above the average are networking, tourism image, tourism services, digital marketing, and branding, while the other three are competitors, tourism products, and pricing. This analysis implies the importance of synergy among stakeholders, including academia, business, community, government, and mass media, in planning, implementing, managing, and controlling tourism in Badung. This collaborative approach will enhance service quality, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty to Badung's tourist destinations, ensuring sustainable growth in the region's tourism industry.

Figure 2. Importance level of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency

Performance Analysis

The analysis of the performance or quality level in the foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency highlights the efforts made to enhance marketing. The performance of this marketing is assessed based on how well the results meet the expectations of tourism stakeholders. The analysis involved measuring the performance level of Badung's tourism marketing through questionnaires analyzed based on focus group discussions (FGD). Overall, the results indicate that the average performance of Badung's tourism marketing is good, with a score of 3.56 (Figure 3). However, this score is lower than the previously reviewed importance level. The factor with the highest performance is tourism products, scoring 3.97, followed by tourism services at 3.73, and networking at 3.67. This indicates that the marketing performance of these three factors is quite good. On the other hand, some factors are below the average, namely digital marketing with a score of 3.42, competitors with a score of 3.40, tourism image with a score of 3.25, and branding with a score of 3.22. The pricing factor has the same average score as the overall performance, which is 3.52. These results show that while the overall performance of Badung's tourism marketing is considered good, there is a need for improvement, particularly in the factors that are below average. Therefore, to improve the quality and effectiveness of tourism marketing in Badung Regency, efforts should be made to enhance the factors that still need to be improved. These improvements are expected to positively impact tourist satisfaction and loyalty, as well as support an increase in international tourist visits to Badung. Therefore, synergy among various stakeholders in optimizing digital marketing, strengthening branding, setting competitive prices, and managing competition effectively is crucial for advancing the tourism sector in Badung Regency.
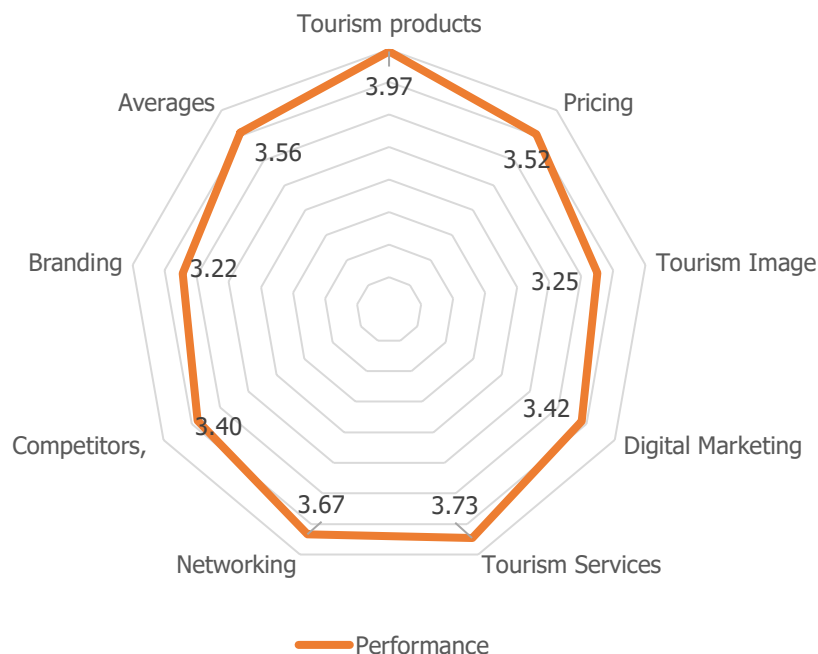
Figure 3. Performance level of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency

Suitability Level Analysis

In the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA), the Level of Suitability (LoS) between the performance and importance of international tourism marketing in Badung Regency is calculated to understand how well the marketing performance matches existing expectations. This suitability level is determined by comparing the average scores of performance and importance. The higher the percentage, the better the quality of tourism marketing. The analysis results in Table 3 show

that the average performance level of tourism marketing in Badung Regency is 3.56 (categorized as good), while the average importance level is 4.71 (categorized as very important). The comparison between these values yields a suitability level of 75.1%. This percentage indicates that while the performance of tourism marketing is good, there is still room for improvement to meet expectations optimally. This result demonstrates that the alignment between importance and performance is functioning well, but some aspects require more attention, especially those in the satisfactory category, such as traffic conditions. From the questionnaires completed by tourism stakeholders in Badung Regency, several variables were identified that need to be maintained and improved. The five highest-rated variables that need to be maintained are the availability of accommodation, restaurants, shopping places, travel agencies, and affordable prices for tourists. These variables indicate that infrastructure and accessibility aspects are crucial in attracting and retaining international tourists. On the other hand, the five lowest-rated variables that need improvement are cleanliness at tourist destinations, traffic conditions in Badung, brand awareness among international tourists, promotion and communication of the "Badung the Soul of Bali" tagline to international tourists, and strengthening the Badung tagline at local, national, and international events. This suggests that while infrastructure and accessibility are good, destination management and branding aspects still require special attention to enhance the overall attractiveness and experience for tourists. Therefore, this suitability level analysis provides a clear guide for stakeholders to focus on areas that need improvement and maintain their strengths, ensuring that tourism marketing in Badung Regency continues growing and meets international tourists' expectations.

Table 3. Suitability level analysis of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency

Code	Factor	Indicator	Performance	Importance	LoS (%)	Interpretation
A1	Tourism Products	Unique tourist attractions	3.98	4.96	80.2	Good
A2		Diverse tourist attractions	4.01	4.81	83.4	Very Good
A3		Attractive tourist attractions	4.15	4.88	84.9	Very Good
A4		Availability of accommodation	4.19	4.62	90.8	Very Good
A5		Availability of restaurants	4.09	4.46	91.6	Very Good
A6		Availability of shopping places	4.07	4.35	93.6	Very Good
A7		Availability of Travel Agencies	3.82	4.27	89.4	Very Good
A8		Availability of supporting tourist facilities	4.05	4.69	86.4	Very Good
A9		Organization of various national and international events (MICE)	3.58	4.77	75.1	Good
A10		Availability of various entertainment facilities (nightlife)	3.73	4.31	86.6	Very Good
B1	Prices	Affordable prices for tourists	4.01	4.23	94.7	Very Good
B2		Pricing that matches the quality of the tourist destination	3.89	4.46	87.1	Very Good
B3		Discounts for tourists	3.01	4.12	73.1	Good
B4		Special pricing offers on holidays/special occasions	3.19	4.50	70.8	Good
C1	Tourism Image	Preventive measures against security disturbances	3.54	4.81	73.7	Good
C2		Comfort of tourist transportation services	3.53	4.81	73.5	Good
C3		Cleanliness at tourist destinations	3.37	4.96	67.8	Good
C4		Handling and procedures for tourist health and safety	3.48	4.85	71.8	Good
C5		Handling of illegal charges against tourists	3.32	4.69	70.7	Good
C6		Traffic conditions in Badung	2.23	4.81	46.4	Fair
D1	Digital Marketing	Strengthening social media marketing	3.57	4.85	73.7	Good

Code	Factor	Indicator	Performance	Importance	LoS (%)	Interpretation
D2		Development of websites for each tourist destination	3.42	4.88	69.9	Good
D3		Marketing through online platforms, marketplaces, and online travel agents	3.71	4.85	76.5	Good
D4		Strengthening financial technology in transactions (Paypal, Gopay, Shopee Pay, electronic payment)	3.32	4.62	71.9	Good
D5		Website optimization through Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	3.36	4.65	72.2	Good
D6		Strengthening and developing content marketing on online media	3.40	4.77	71.2	Good
D7		Development of promotional applications	3.40	4.85	70.2	Good
D8		Utilization of email marketing to consumers (email blasting)	3.17	4.62	68.6	Good
E1	Tourism Services	Implementing service standards for tourists	3.53	4.85	72.8	Good
E2		Tourism services in line with the latest technological developments	3.47	4.65	74.6	Good
E3		Services that meet tourist expectations	3.80	4.77	79.6	Good
E4		Services provided to ensure tourist satisfaction	3.98	4.77	83.4	Very Good
E5		Enhancing competitive advantage by integrating local culture, tolerance, and diversity	3.87	4.81	80.5	Good
F1	Networking	Collaboration with tourism industry players	3.71	4.77	77.7	Good
F2		Collaboration with tourism associations	3.76	4.88	77.0	Good
F3		Collaboration with mass media	3.64	4.88	74.5	Good
F4		Collaboration with the government	3.64	4.85	75.1	Good
F5		Collaboration with the community	3.70	4.88	75.8	Good
F6		Collaboration with universities	3.59	4.81	74.6	Good
G1	Competitors	Identification of competitors	3.38	4.58	73.9	Good
G2		Analyzing the market and competitors	3.43	4.77	72.0	Good
G3		Determining priority competitors	3.38	4.69	72.1	Good
G4		Strengthening competitiveness	3.42	4.69	72.9	Good
H1	Branding	Tagline campaign "Badung the Soul of Bali"	3.39	4.73	71.8	Good
H2		Brand management for Badung tourism	3.31	4.81	68.9	Good
H3		Brand awareness for international tourists	3.06	4.65	65.8	Good
H4		Promotion and communication of the tagline "Badung the Soul of Bali" to international tourists	3.10	4.69	66.0	Good
H5		Strengthening the Badung tagline at local, national, and international events	3.21	4.77	67.3	Good

Code	Factor	Indicator	Performance	Importance	LoS (%)	Interpretation
		Average	3.56	4.71	75.5	Good

Gap Analysis

After evaluating the suitability level, the following analytical step is conducting a gap analysis to identify the differences between the importance and performance levels in Badung Regency's tourism marketing. This analysis aims to measure the extent of the gap between expectations and the actual performance of marketing efforts. The smaller the difference between importance and performance levels, the higher the quality of tourism marketing. The gap analysis results show five factors with Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) values that approach or exceed the average performance and importance levels. These five factors are tourism image, digital marketing, tourism services, networking, and branding. These factors are considered the highest in Badung's tourism marketing, indicating that they most closely meet or exceed stakeholder expectations. These findings provide a detailed picture of the gaps between performance and importance, with an overall average importance level of 4.71 (very important) and a performance level of 3.56 (good) (Figure 4). This indicates that, although the marketing performance has been good, there is still room for improvement to meet the stakeholders' expectations fully. Focusing on the factors with the largest gaps can help Badung Regency improve the quality of its tourism marketing, which will positively impact international tourists' satisfaction and loyalty.
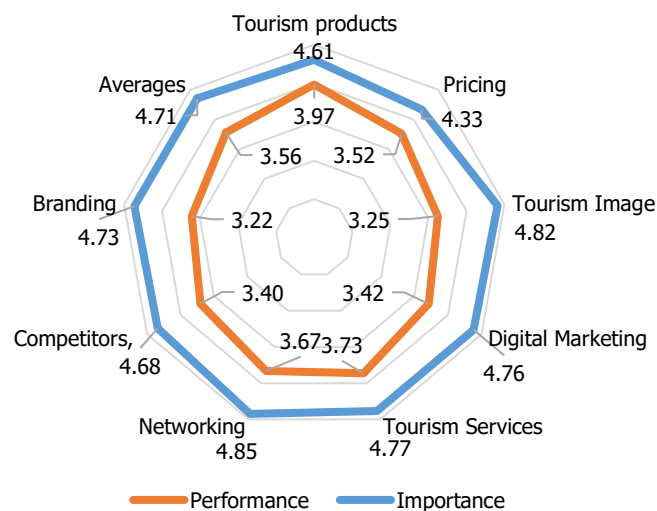
Figure 4. Gap analysis of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA)

The Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency is represented through a Cartesian diagram that categorizes 48 variables into four quadrants: A, B, C, and D (Figure 5). Quadrant A represents the main priorities, Quadrant B indicates strengths, Quadrant C shows low priorities, and Quadrant D highlights excess resources. The analysis results reveal that the average level of importance is 4.71 (very important) on the Y-axis, while the average performance quality reaches 3.56 (good) on the X-axis. After comparing the position of each variable, it was found that Quadrant A (main priorities) includes 14 variables, Quadrant B (strengths) comprises 14 variables, Quadrant C (low priorities) consists of 11 variables, and Quadrant D (excess resources) contains nine variables.
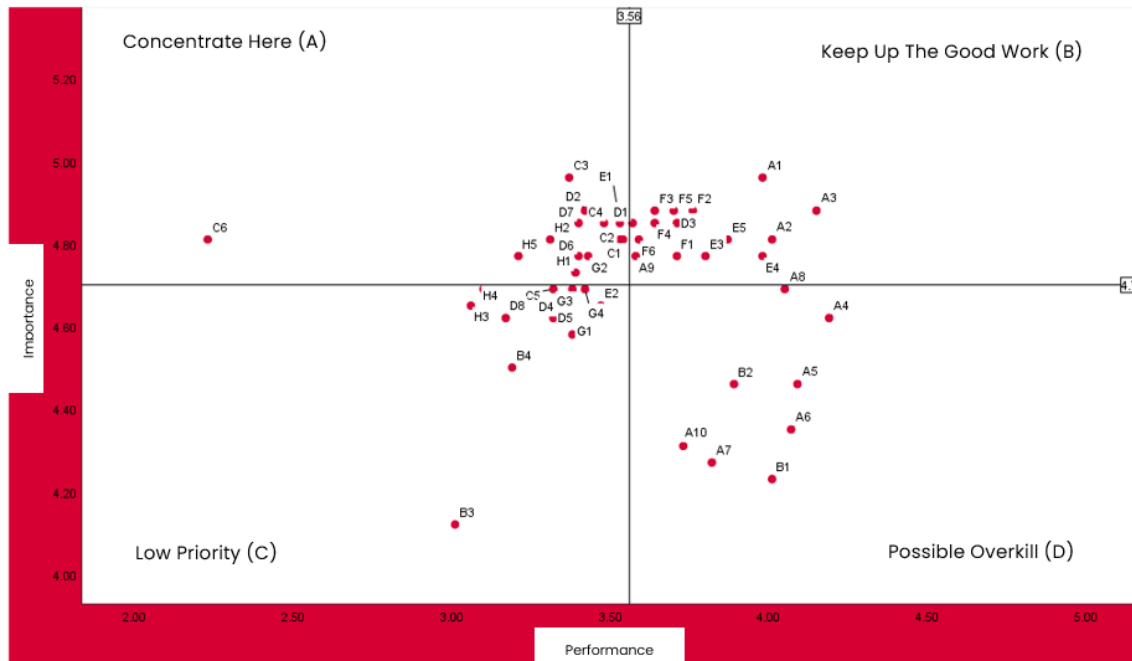
Figure 5. Cartesius diagram of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency

Quadrant A includes the main priorities, which encompass variables considered very important by respondents but whose performance quality still does not meet expectations. There are 14 variables in this quadrant, including preventive measures against security disturbances, the comfort of tourist transportation services, cleanliness at tourist destinations, health procedures, and the development of websites for each tourist destination. To enhance the effectiveness of tourism marketing in Badung, these variables require sufficient resource allocation to be implemented well and become strengths. The variables in Quadrant A include preventive measures against security disturbances, the comfort of tourist transportation services, cleanliness at tourist destinations, health and safety procedures for tourists (COVID-19, foot-and-mouth disease, malaria disease, dengue, rabies, accidents, etc.), traffic conditions in Badung, strengthening social media marketing (Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, etc.), development of websites for each tourist destination, strengthening and developing marketing content on online media (video production, graphic design, copywriting, content creation, etc.), development of promotional applications, implementing service standards for tourists, analyzing the market and competitors, the "Badung the Soul of Bali" tagline campaign, Badung tourism brand management, and strengthening the Badung tagline at local, national, and international events.

Quadrant B represents strengths, where the variables considered important meet the expected quality. There are 14 variables in this quadrant, such as unique tourist attractions, marketing through online platforms, services meeting tourist expectations, and collaboration with tourism industry players. These variables showcase achievements that need to be maintained to ensure consistent strengths in tourism marketing. The variables in Quadrant B include unique tourist attractions, diverse tourist attractions, attractive tourist attractions, hosting various national and international events (MICE), marketing through online platforms, marketplaces, online travel agents (Tripadvisor, Traveloka, Airbnb, Get Your Guide, Klook, Rakuten, etc.), services that meet tourist expectations, services provided to ensure tourist satisfaction, enhancing competitive advantage by integrating local culture, tolerance, and diversity, collaboration with tourism industry players, collaboration with tourism associations, collaboration with mass media, collaboration with the government, collaboration with the community, and collaboration with universities.

Quadrant C is low priority, covering 11 variables considered less important with low-performance quality. These variables have minimal impact on international tourism marketing in

Badung and thus do not require prioritized actions. However, monitoring and evaluating these variables are still necessary, considering that tourist preferences can change quickly. Examples include handling illegal charges against tourists and using email marketing to consumers. The variables in Quadrant C include special pricing offers on holidays/special occasions, handling illegal charges against tourists, strengthening financial technology in transactions (Paypal, Gopay, Shopee Pay, electronic payment), website optimization with the implementation of search engine optimization (SEO) systems, utilizing email marketing to consumers (email blasting), tourism services in line with the latest technological developments, identifying competitors, determining priority competitors, strengthening competitiveness, brand awareness among international tourists, and promoting and communicating the "Badung the Soul of Bali" tagline to international tourists.

Quadrant D represents excess resources, including nine variables considered less important by respondents but with very high-performance quality. These variables indicate an over-allocation of resources, which could be redirected to improve the variables in Quadrant A. Examples include the availability of accommodations, restaurants, shopping places, and affordable prices for tourists. The variables in Quadrant D include the availability of accommodations, the availability of restaurants, the availability of shopping places, the availability of travel agencies, the availability of supporting tourist facilities (money changers, tourist information centers, ATMs, etc.), the availability of various entertainment facilities (nightlife), affordable prices for tourists, pricing aligned with the quality of the tourist destination, and offering discounts to tourists.

The IPA analysis results provide a comprehensive guide for stakeholders in determining priorities and appropriate resource allocation to enhance the effectiveness of tourism marketing in Badung Regency. By focusing on the variables in Quadrant A, maintaining the quality of the variables in Quadrant B, and conducting periodic evaluations of the variables in Quadrant C and D, Badung can better meet tourists' expectations and strengthen its position as a major tourism destination.

Foreign Market Tourism Marketing Strategy in Badung Regency

This section will explain several tourism marketing strategies for the foreign tourist market in Badung Regency. These strategies are prepared based on the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) results described earlier. In this analysis, variables in quadrant A were identified as the top priorities that must be considered in developing foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency. This strategy was also prepared by considering the opinions of experts and stakeholder groups through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Based on the results of IPA analysis, 14 tourism marketing strategies for foreign market share in Badung Regency were obtained, namely: (1) Preventive efforts against security disturbances; (2) Convenience of tourist transportation services; (3) Cleanliness in tourist destinations; (4) Handling and procedures for tourist health and safety (COVID-19, foot and mouth disease, malaria, dengue fever, rabies, accidents, etc.); (5) Traffic conditions in Badung; (6) Strengthening social media marketing (Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok, Instagram, etc.); (7) Website development in each tourist destination; (8) Strengthening and developing marketing content on online media (video production, graphic design, copy writing, content creator, etc.); (9) Development of promotional applications; (10) Implementing standardization of services to tourists; (11) Market development and competitor positioning; (12) "Badung the Soul of Bali" tagline campaign; (13) Badung tourism brand management; (14) Strengthening Badung tagline at local, national, and international events. Of the 14 strategies above, a priority selection analysis was conducted based on the level of importance through pairwise comparisons using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) method, resulting in the order of the top 10 priority strategies as follows: (1) traffic conditions in Badung; (2) strengthening and developing marketing content on online media; (3) strengthening social media marketing; (4) implementing standardized services to tourists; (5) developing promotional applications; (6) developing websites in each tourist destination; (7) market development and competitor positioning; (8) cleanliness in tourist destinations; (9) preventive efforts against security disturbances; and (10) convenience of tourist transportation services (Figure 6).
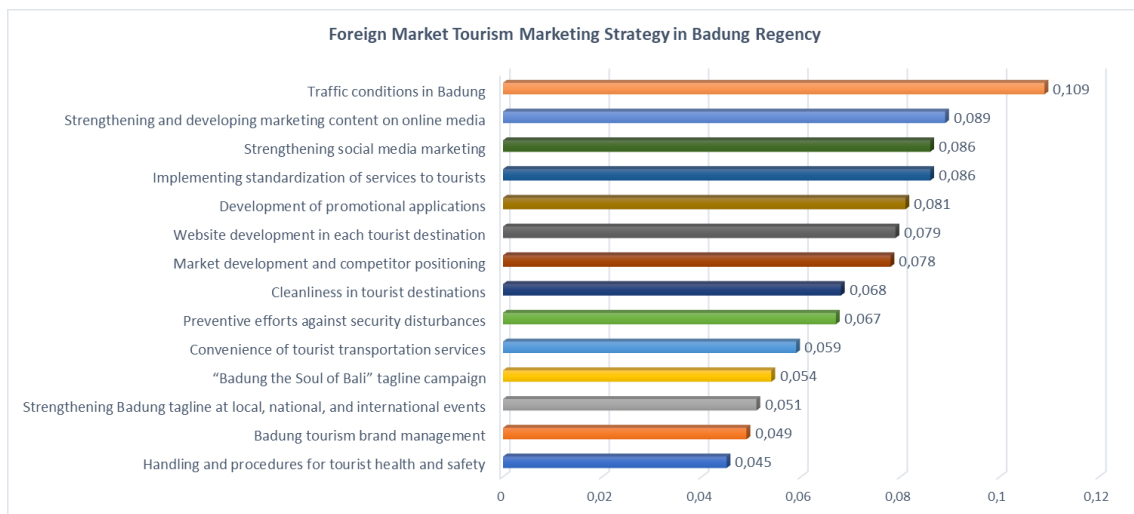
Figure 6. Priority strategy for foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency

The primary priority in the marketing strategy for the international tourist market in Badung Regency is mitigating traffic congestion, particularly in the South Badung area, which frequently experiences severe bottlenecks (Figure 7). Over the past few years, traffic congestion in Badung has emerged as a critical challenge for tourism in Bali. This issue is particularly prevalent in key tourist hubs such as Kuta, Canggu, Seminyak, and Legian, where high visitor concentrations contribute to severe traffic bottlenecks. The primary factors driving this congestion include the increasing number of tourist arrivals, a surge in private vehicle usage, and inadequate road infrastructure. Consequently, prolonged traffic congestion disrupts tourist mobility and diminishes the overall tourism experience, ultimately affecting Bali's destination image due to a decline in perceived comfort and accessibility.

There are several action plans to deal with traffic congestion, especially in popular tourism areas in Bali, such as (1) Building a quality and adaptive transportation system and management For example, it is carried out (one-way system), (2) Infrastructure development through the provision of adequate public transportation and road facilities such as by being treated as a Suttle bus for tourist services, (3) Restrictions on private vehicles, (4) Utilization of digital technology in transportation management likes real-time transportation schedules, CCTV, and smart traffic management (5) In-line transportation planning with spatial planning, and (6) law enforcement in transportation management, For example, with car-free zone. Several previous studies have revealed that traffic congestion in Bali, particularly in Badung, is a critical issue that needs to be addressed (Aryasih et al., 2024; Chong, 2020; Ivan et al., 2024). Efficient transportation infrastructure is an essential factor in enhancing the attractiveness of a tourist destination, as smooth traffic allows tourists to visit more destinations in a shorter amount of time (Kanwal et al., 2020; Sugiama et al., 2022; Virkar & Mallya, 2018). Therefore, improving traffic management and road infrastructure in this area can enhance tourist satisfaction, as they can easily and quickly access various tourist attractions.

The second priority strategy is strengthening and developing marketing content on online media. Engaging and informative marketing content plays a crucial role in promoting tourism destinations in the digital era. According to Kotler et al. (2019), effective content must be relevant, engaging, and capable of adding value to its audience. For Badung, this means producing content highlighting natural beauty and local culture and providing transparent information about accommodation, cuisine, activities, and available facilities. The use of video, graphic design, creative writing, and content creation by influencers can increase Badung's visibility and appeal in the international market. Wang & Fesenmaier (2004) also emphasize that the quality of digital content can significantly influence tourists' decisions in choosing a destination, making it essential for Badung to develop and update their content across various digital platforms continually.

Third, strengthening social media marketing. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have become highly effective marketing tools for reaching a wider audience, especially the younger generation, who are highly connected to information technology. Social media marketing allows destinations to interact directly with potential tourists, build communities, and enhance their positive image. According to Hays et al. (2013), social media can increase tourist engagement and loyalty and expand marketing reach. This strategy can be implemented for Badung by developing creative and interactive marketing campaigns, such as photo or video contests, travel stories, and special promotions through social media. This increases Badung's visibility in the international market and creates an emotional connection between tourists and the destination, which is an essential factor in promoting tourist loyalty. Fourth, the implementation of standardized services for tourists. High service standards are crucial to ensure tourists have a satisfying experience. Consistent and high service standards can increase tourist satisfaction, ultimately enhancing their loyalty to the destination. This involves staff training, facility improvements, and monitoring service quality. Service standardization will provide Badung with a competitive advantage in the tourism industry. Fifth, developing promotional applications is essential to the tourism marketing strategy. Promotional applications can help raise consumer awareness of the tourism products or services offered and build customer relationships and loyalty through relevant and engaging content. In the future, Badung, in the context of tourism marketing, is expected to bring in quality tourists. This is characterized by tourists, such as high tourist expenditure, appreciation for the preservation of Balinese nature and culture, maintaining safety and comfort in tourism, and prioritizing the benefits of tourism to the local community.

Figure 7. Traffic congestion in Badung Regency

Sixth, the development of websites for each tourist destination. Websites are a primary source of information for prospective tourists. By providing comprehensive, accurate, and easily accessible information about attractions, accommodations, restaurants, activities, and other facilities, websites can assist potential tourists in planning their trips to Badung. Seventh, market development and competitor positioning. In facing the increasingly competitive market dynamics, Badung needs to develop its tourism market and determine its competitive position continuously. This involves understanding market trends, tourist behavior, and effective marketing strategies. Eighth, cleanliness at tourist destinations. Cleanliness is crucial to maintaining the quality of the tourist experience and environmental sustainability. A clean tourist destination leaves a positive

impression on tourists and encourages them to return or recommend the destination to others. Maintaining the cleanliness of the destination not only creates a comfortable and healthy environment for tourists and contributes to environmental preservation. According to Murni et al. (2019), direct involvement of the local community in maintaining environmental cleanliness is vital to fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their area, ultimately supporting the sustainability of tourism in the region. Therefore, efforts to maintain cleanliness at tourist destinations play a role in ensuring tourist comfort and satisfaction and are an integral part of a sustainable tourism strategy involving active participation from the local community. Ninth, preventive measures against security disturbances. Preventive measures are necessary to prevent security issues that could damage the destination's image. Tourist safety should be a top priority to ensure they feel secure during their visit to Badung. Tenth, the comfort of tourist transportation services. Comfortable and safe transportation services are vital in the tourism industry. Transportation service providers must ensure that tourists enjoy a pleasant and hassle-free journey. This analysis highlights issues that must be addressed seriously, particularly in managing traffic, enhancing online marketing content, strengthening social media marketing, and implementing service standardization. All these efforts aim to improve the quality of tourism marketing in Badung Regency, meet international tourists' expectations, and encourage increased tourist visits and loyalty to the Badung tourism destination.

Conclusions

In the study of foreign market tourism marketing in Badung Regency, it can be concluded that the analysis of foreign market share marketing channels in Badung, namely (1) Australian tourists are primarily interested in nature tourism, cultural tourism, backpacking, and youth tourism activities, while Indian tourists prefer adventure tourism, cultural tourism, wellness tourism (vegan), and religious and spiritual tourism. French tourists are more inclined towards nature tourism, cultural tourism, leisure tourism, and special interest tourism, particularly weddings. Meanwhile, Chinese tourists favor adventure tourism, shopping tourism, leisure tourism, and cultural tourism. Tourists from the United Kingdom are drawn to nature tourism, cultural tourism, and special interest tourism, whereas South Korean tourists primarily engage in adventure tourism and leisure tourism. German tourists prefer nature tourism, cultural tourism, and special interest tourism, while American tourists are interested in nature tourism, cultural tourism, special interest tourism, and educational tourism. Italian tourists mainly engage in nature tourism and cultural tourism, and Malaysian tourists are most interested in shopping tourism and nature tourism. (2) Eight primary factors influence tourism marketing in Badung, namely tourism products, prices, tourism image, digital marketing, tourism services, networking, competitors, and branding. In addition to the two market conclusions and key tourism marketing factors in Badung, (3) this study identifies ten priority marketing strategies that serve as the foundation for a more structured, targeted, and sustainable tourism marketing approach. These strategies aim to enhance Badung's positioning as a competitive tourism destination in the future, namely: (a) Traffic conditions in Badung, (b) Strengthening and developing marketing content in online media, (c) Strengthening marketing through social media (such as Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram), (d) Implementation of standardized services to tourists, (e) Development of promotional applications, (f) Website development in each tourist destination, (g) Market development and competitor positioning, (h) Cleanliness in tourist destinations, (i) Preventive efforts against security disturbances, and (j) Convenience of tourist transportation services. These ten priority marketing strategies are not merely conceptualized as macro-level policies but are also designed to be operationalized through concrete and applicable programs that enhance the competitiveness of Badung's tourism sector. Moving forward, the implementation of these strategies is expected to strengthen Badung's tourism image and solidify its position as a premier tourism destination in Bali and Indonesia, enabling it to compete effectively on the global stage.

Acknowledgement

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Integrating gastronomic potential in tourism destinations: A case study of the Likupang special economic zone, North Minahasa, Indonesia

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the integration stages of gastronomic tourism in the Likupang Special Economic Zone. Several potential culinary icons have been identified and can be developed as gastronomic tourism attractions for the SEZ Likupang. The research method used is qualitative. The data collection techniques used include field observations, in-depth interviews, and literature studies to obtain a complete picture of the efforts to integrate gastronomic tourism in the development of the SEZ Likupang destination. In-depth interviews were conducted during observations with 7 key informants across SEZ Likupang stakeholders, namely the government, entrepreneurs, and culinary practitioners. This research aims to identify key factors influencing gastronomic tourism integration in the Likupang SEZ and measure its feasibility through stakeholder perspectives and policy alignment. Specifically, it evaluates the level of current integration efforts and identifies the economic and cultural impact of gastronomic tourism on the local community. The purpose of this research is to analyze the conditions and identify the potential so that it can provide strategic recommendations for the central and regional governments to initiate the integration stages of gastronomic tourism using the methodological framework developed by the UNWTO. The results of this study indicate that the SEZ Likupang is still in the early stages of destination development and has not made systematic efforts to integrate its gastronomic tourism potential. In addition, there are also 14 culinary icons and 10 recommendations for the integration strategy stages of gastronomic tourism that can be developed and implemented in the development of the SEZ Likupang.

Keywords: gastronomic, integration strategy, local culinary, tourism destination, tourist village, SEZ Likupang

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Introduction

Gastronomic tourism is an essential element in the development of a tourism destination, as it is considered to contribute to the length of stay and tourist expenditure, thereby simultaneously stimulating economic growth at the local, regional, and even national scales (Nugroho et al., 2021; Pakpahan et al., 2023; Sutanto et al., 2022). In addition to the economic impact of tourism, the integration of gastronomic tourism with a destination can also provide added value and create a separate market for tourists, and can even be used as an identity or brand for the destination (Latifah & Damayanti, 2016). However, the local community needs to be involved from the beginning of the destination development strategy formulation to facilitate the integration process of the existing local culinary characteristics with the development plan, as well as to provide a comprehensive and unique experience for tourists in the future (Sutanto et al., 2022; Zakharia et al., 2021). The integration process of local cuisine with a destination is needed to consider which one the core area and the buffer area (Ma, 2018; Zakharia et al., 2021).

Similarly, in the development of a Special Economic Zone for Tourism the core area will be the center of tourism activities, while the buffer area plays a role in supporting and complementing the tourist experience in the core area (Feng, 2017; Sutoni et al., 2021). These two areas can play a role in the division of tourism attraction management, distribution of tourism attractions, and the development of the quality of life in the local community (Name, 2009). Specifically in the buffer area, a destination or Tourism Special Economic Zone can also be the exploration area of gastronomic identity, as the local community living in the buffer area can play a role as the preserver of gastronomy and other cultural heritage of the Tourism Special Economic Zone (Chaigasem, 2021).

Therefore, the exploration of the design and development strategy of the Likupang Special Economic Zone for Tourism in North Minahasa, Indonesia in integrating its culinary potential as a means of strengthening gastronomic identity is important. The designation of Likupang as part of the 5 National Strategic Tourism Destinations was driven by the growing trend of tourism to North Minahasa, with international tourist arrivals increasing significantly from 8,901 people in 2011 to 93,964 people in 2019 (Patadjenu et al., n.d.). In addition to the increasing trend of international tourist visits, According to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, tourism contributed 3,8% to Indonesia's GDP, with an estimated 5,47 million international arrivals in 2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), 2023; Indonesia.go.id, 2025). In the 3 years since Likupang was designated as a Special Economic Zone, the number of domestic tourists was recorded at 3,078,151 tourists, reinforcing the need for structured gastronomic tourism development (Zonautara.com, 2024). The 2022 Special Economic Zone Development Report also explained that the Likupang SEZ has its advantages in the tourism sector, particularly in the themes of resorts and cultural tourism (Dewan Nasional Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus, 2023). In terms of marine potential, Likupang, which is not far from the Bunaken National Park, is also part of the Coral Triangle Area with high marine biodiversity and even become a concentration area for 30% of the world's marine biota. In addition to the Coral Triangle Area, the location of the Likupang SEZ is also close to the Wallace Conservation Center, which provides an overview of the diversity of fauna and flora.

The large potential for marine and natural diversity in the Likupang Special Economic Zone is also an entry point to explore the culinary potential that can be developed into its gastronomic identity. In addition to natural and environmental factors, gastronomic identity can also refer to an integral part of the cultural heritage of a region, which not only includes traditional and regional specialties, but also the history, cooking techniques, local ingredients, and cultural values associated with the region's cuisine. Demographically, in the Academic Manuscript of the North Minahasa Regency Spatial Planning Document 2021-2025, it is explained that the Minahasa culture is the dominant culture as the ethnic group, especially the Tonsea sub-ethnic group, is the largest population (Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Minahasa Utara, 2023). Apart from the Minahasa ethnic group, there are also North Nusa cultural traditions, cultural practices, or ceremonies carried out by the North Nusa community, including the tulude ceremony which is held in several villages, including the villages within the Likupang Special Economic Zone, such as Marinsow Village, Pulisan Village, and Kinunang Village.

In practice, the combination of environmental and cultural factors in gastronomic identity can provide a unique tourism experience and differentiate one destination from another (Dalem, 2021; Manaf, 2020; Raji et al., 2020). Programs offered by gastronomic tourism can include cooking classes, food tours, and cultural performances that provide tourists with a comprehensive experience of the richness of local gastronomy (Hjalager & Richards, 2003; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Lin et al., 2011). Therefore, if the strategy of integrating gastronomic potential can be carried out from the early stages of the Likupang SEZ development process, not only the economic impact of tourism will be obtained, but also the simultaneous growth of the social and cultural conditions of the community.

Based on the description above, the focus of this research is to analyze the stages of integration of gastronomic tourism in the Likupang SEZ and identify the potential of culinary icons, both in the core area and the buffer area, to be developed into the identity and gastronomic tourism attraction for the Likupang SEZ. This research is also expected to provide recommendations for the development strategy of gastronomic tourism based on the methodological stages of gastronomic tourism integration designed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization in 2019, by utilizing the collaboration of the core area and the buffer area of the Likupang SEZ.

To achieve these objectives, this research is guided by the following research questions: (1) What are the key challenges and opportunities in integrating gastronomic tourism in the Likupang SEZ? (2) How does the relationship between core and buffer areas influence gastronomic tourism development? (3) What strategic actions should be taken to enhance gastronomic tourism integration in the region? Furthermore, this study contributes to the growing body of research on sustainable tourism by offering practical insights into how gastronomic tourism can be integrated into an emerging tourism hub. The findings will provide policymakers, local businesses, and tourism stakeholders with strategic recommendations to enhance the cultural and economic value of Likupang SEZ as a gastronomic destination.

Methodology

A qualitative approach using the case study method was employed in this research to explore the potential and unravel the complexities of identifying the development of integrated gastronomic

tourism potential in the Likupang Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The research was conducted in three main locations, divided into two buffer areas and one core area. The buffer areas include the City of Manado and North Minahasa Regency, while the Likupang SEZ serves as the core area of the research. The research was conducted over a six-month period from June to December 2023. The initial phase involved literature reviews and stakeholder mapping (June-August), followed by field observations and interviews September. Data analysis and interpretation were conducted in October, with final reporting completed in December. Two types of data were used namely primary and secondary data. Interviews and direct observation methods were employed as techniques for collecting primary data.

To obtain primary data for this study, the researcher used a non-probability sampling technique, specifically snowball sampling, This sampling approach was chosen due to the limited availability of documented experts and practitioners in gastronomic tourism development in Likupang. By using snowball sampling, we ensured that key informants with deep industry knowledge and practical experience were included in the study. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, consisting of open-ended questions focusing on three main themes: (1) stakeholders' perceptions of Likupang's gastronomic tourism potential, (2) existing integration strategies and challenges, and (3) recommendations for future development. Sample questions included: 'What are the most significant challenges in promoting Likupang as a gastronomic destination?' and 'What policies or infrastructure improvements do you think are necessary for enhancing gastronomic tourism in Likupang SEZ? Seven key informants from various stakeholders were interviewed to gather data on the potential and integration process of gastronomic tourism in the core and buffer areas of the Likupang SEZ. The list of 7 informants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. List of informant (self-research)

Informant	Name	Agency/Business	Information
1	Henry W Kaitjily	North Sulawesi Provincial Tourism Office	Head of Tourism
2	Chef Jeanli Wangke	Indonesia Chef Association (ICA) North Sulawesi	Head of Association
3	Diane Pangow	North Minahasa Culture and Tourism Office	Head of Tourism and Culture
4	Benny Towoliu	Manado State Polytechnic	Lecturer
5	Jessica Bawekes	Marinsow Village	Head of Village
6	Teddy Tabaluyan	Wakeke Tinutuan Restaurant	Owner
7	Eduard Nani	Pondok Hijau Restaurant	Owner

In addition to conducting field observations and interviewing seven key informants, the researcher also conducted a document study related to the development of the Likupang SEZ to analyze the tourism development strategies of the Likupang SEZ. The list of the documents can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. List of document study (self-research)

Number	Title
1	Final Report of the SEZ 2022
2	Academic Manuscript of the North Minahasa Regency Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARKAB)
3	Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) 2021-2026 of North Minahasa Regency
4	North Minahasa Regency in Figures 2023

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data, with responses categorized into key themes aligned with the UNWTO gastronomic tourism integration framework. Data triangulation was applied by comparing interview insights with document analysis to ensure reliability and validity. The methodological steps for developing a strategic plan for gastronomic tourism from UNWTO are illustrated in Figure 1.
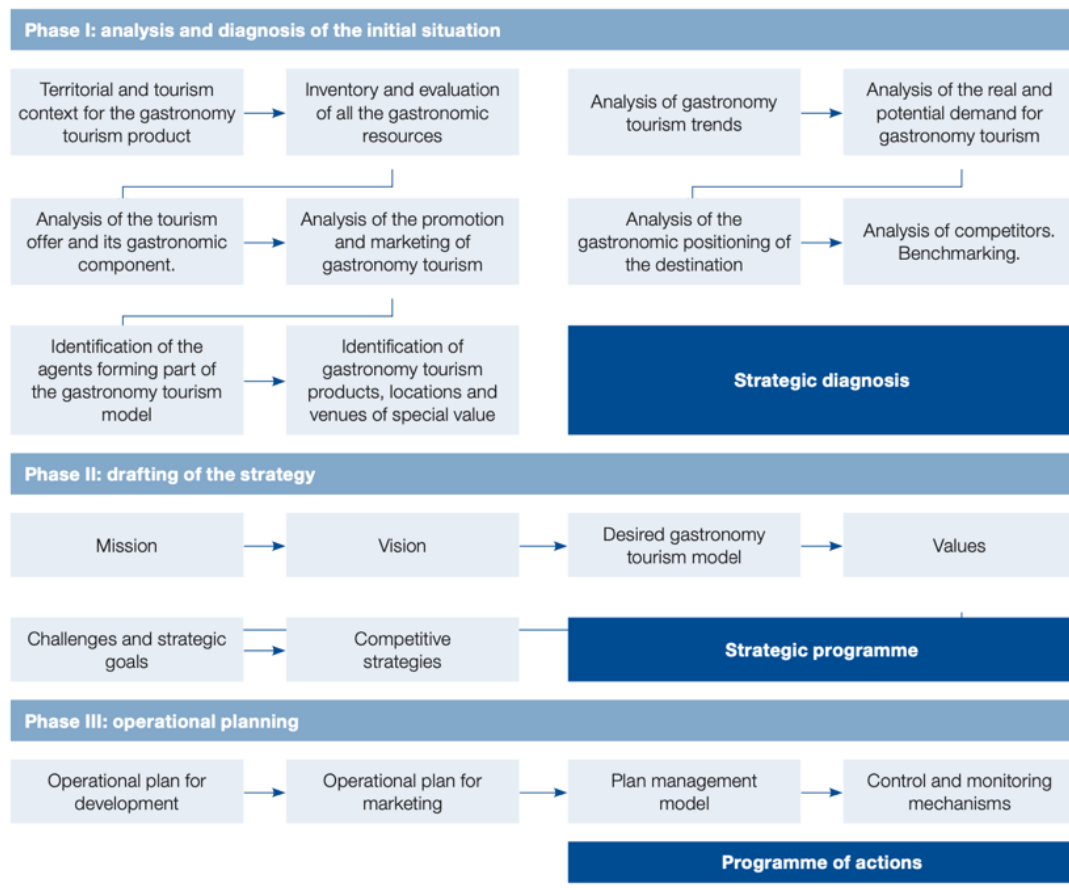
(Source: UNWTO, 2019)

Figure 1. Methodological stages of developing a gastronomy tourism strategic plan

To explore the culinary icons of the Likupang SEZ that can be developed into a gastronomic identity, the researcher used the conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 2.
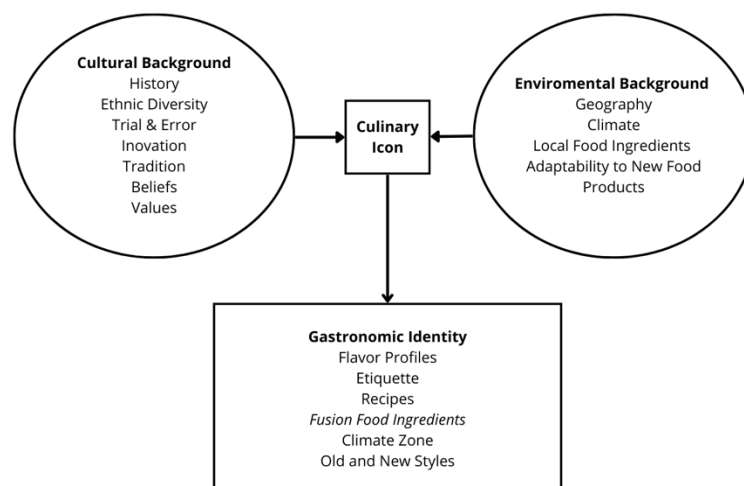
(Source: Gastronomic Identity Harrington, 2006)

Figure 2. Elements of gastronomy

Results and Discussions

Diagnosis of Gastronomic Tourism Integration in the Likupang Special Economic Zone

Likupang is one of the 5 Super Priority Destinations designated by the Indonesian government in 2019 and is also part of the National Strategic Tourism Area supported by the stipulation of Government Regulation Number 84 of 2019 (Firmansyah, 2021). The development of Likupang, which is administratively located in North Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province, is also part of the mandate of Government Regulation Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan for 2010 – 2025 (Patadjenu et al., n.d.). The designation of Likupang as a Special Economic Zone for Tourism is based on Government Regulation Number 84 of 2019. The concept of smart and sustainable tourism that highlights Minahasa culture as a distinctive feature will differentiate Likupang from other destinations in Indonesia in the future (Dewan Nasional Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus, 2023). Until now, the development of the Likupang Special Economic Zone is considered to have had a multiplier effect on the surrounding community, starting from the establishment of homestays in 3 tourist villages, namely Kinunang, Marinsow, and Pulisan, to the construction of community centers for tour guide training, hospitality service, craft, and local arts training, as well as venues for art and cultural performances. There are at least 4 stakeholders who directly manage the Likupang Special Economic Zone, including PT. Minahasa Permai Resort Development is the Developer and Management Agency, the North Sulawesi Provincial Government, the North Minahasa Regency Government, and the National Special Economic Zone Council.

The profile of the Likupang Special Economic Zone in the 2022 SEZ Report is described as a tourist area with geostrategic advantages, with the theme of resorts and cultural tourism. In the researcher's view, resorts can also function as showcases for various cultural potentials that have been packaged as tourist attractions, including gastronomic tourism. In addition to culture, according to Harrington, the elements that shape gastronomic identity are the environment. Therefore, each gastronomic identity that will be developed must refer to its forming elements, namely culture and environment.

> *"Culinary in this area, in my view, should be promoted as optimally and as well as possible. This is due to the existence of abundant marine natural resources in Likupang, which has a fairly extensive coastline." (Jeanli Wanke, Chairman of Indonesia Chef Association, Sulawesi Utara)*

In addition to the abundant potential of marine products and the typical North Sulawesi seafood dishes that can be integrated with the Likupang SEZ, there are also several other natural potential products from gardens and forest products.

> *"This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation. Although I am not sure exactly, this food is said to come from the people living in the rural areas, especially around the forest. They have to rely on the vegetables that grow in the forest to survive. They pick the vegetables and cook them into porridge. Porridge alone feels lacking, so they try various vegetable combinations to add flavor." (Teddy Tabaluyan, Owner of RM Takeke)*

With the potential of marine and other natural products, the development of a gastronomic tourism development map in the Likupang SEZ is also related to the division of areas and regions of tourism activities, including culinary tourism, both in the core and buffer areas of the destination. The interaction between the core and buffer areas plays a critical role in tourism sustainability. While the core area functions as the primary tourist attraction, the buffer area supports supply chains, including agricultural and seafood production. A well-structured core-buffer synergy can enhance visitor experiences while ensuring equitable economic distribution.

In the Regional Regulation Draft of North Sulawesi Province, there is already a regulation and division of areas or regions of tourism activities, including in the Likupang SEZ. The document also explains that the Likupang SEZ will be integrated with 5 Regencies/Cities, namely Manado, Bitung, Tomohon, Minahasa, and North Minahasa. This can also be interpreted as a division of the geographical

area of tourism activities, with the Likupang SEZ as the core area and the surrounding areas as the buffer area.

Furthermore, when reviewing the geographical data related to the number of restaurants in the buffer area of the Likupang SEZ, there is a trend of increase from 2019 to 2021, although there was a significant decline in 2022 due to the pandemic. Table 1 provides an overview that the majority of the restaurant population is located in the capital of North Minahasa Regency, namely the city of Airmadidi, which is 49.7 km from the Likupang SEZ and can be reached in 1 hour and 18 minutes by land travel.

Table 3. Number of restaurants in North Minahasa regency, 2019 – 2022

Sub-District	2019	2020	2021	2022
Kema	3	3	3	1
Kauditan	10	10	10	2
Airmadidi	36	36	36	32
Kalawat	12	12	20	11
Dimembe	12	12	12	15
Talawaan	-	4	5	6
Wori	-	1	4	2
Likupang Barat	-	2	5	3
Likupang Timur	2	2	10	5
Likupang Selatan	-	1	2	-
Total	75	83	107	77

(Source: Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Minahasa Utara, 2023)

Next, the initial integration efforts of gastronomic tourism in the Likupang SEZ can also be seen from the collaboration carried out by the Tourism and Culture Office with several other Regional Government Work Units.

> *"So, the production and marketing of the products are in the area. Likewise, there are plans to establish a training center for creative economy actors in the Likupang area. Currently, in the Zero Points area built by the Trade Office, there are facilities used to support Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, especially in the culinary sector. Culinary products are displayed in the food court managed by the Trade Office. When people come to Likupang, especially in the North Likupang region, this also hosts various programs." (Diane Pangouw, Head of Creative Economy, Tourism and Culture Department North Minahasa Regency)*

The emphasis on the importance of collaboration in the process of exploring and identifying the gastronomic potential in the buffer and core areas indicates the initial efforts to integrate gastronomic tourism in the Likupang SEZ. There are at least 3 tourism villages in the core area of the Likupang SEZ that can be encouraged to become showcases for gastronomic tourism.

> *"The hope is that the efforts initiated by the central government, particularly for Marinsow, can produce products, such as souvenirs or culinary items, that can be promoted at major events. For example, typical dishes like sambal dabu-dabu and sambal roa have already become attractions in Manado, as well as fried banana dishes in Pantai Pal that are usually served with sambal dabu-dabu and sambal roa. In addition, there is great potential in snack products such as fish chips that can be made from bananas or sweet potatoes, as well as other souvenirs. All of these are potentials that exist in Marinsow Village, and the main hope is that this can develop into a substantial asset so that Marinsow Village can become more advanced, independent, and prosperous." (Jessica Bawekes, Secretary of Marinsow Village)*

As one of the tourism villages located in the core area of the Likupang SEZ, the acceptance of the local community of Marinsow towards destination development is very important. The local community can become agents who shape the model of gastronomic tourism in the future. However, the integration efforts undertaken are also not without obstacles, support is still needed from both the

provincial and central governments, as well as the private sector, to accelerate existing gastronomic tourism activities.

> *"As the government in North Minahasa, we want to further support the culinary subsector, especially in terms of developing their own products and marketing efforts so that these products are better known, not only abroad but also in other regions. We also hope to assist them in improving the processing of their products by using more sophisticated technology and more modern equipment." Diane Pangouw, Head of Creative Economy, Tourism and Culture Department North Minahasa Regency)*

The findings obtained at the North Minahasa Regency level are also in line with the results of document studies and interviews obtained at the North Sulawesi provincial level as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Culinary-related words in government documents (self-research)

Title	Gastronomy	Culinary	Context
Final Report of the SEZ 2022	0	1	Culinary Sector
Academic Manuscript of the North Minahasa Regency Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARKAB)	0	1	Culinary Tourist Attraction
Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) 2021-2026 of North Minahasa Regency	0	2	Culinary Tourist Attraction

Therefore, based on the diagnosis obtained through interviews and document studies on the development plan of the Likupang SEZ, it can be said that the process of integrating the potential of gastronomic tourism has not yet been carried out optimally. When viewed using the methodological framework of the UNWTO's gastronomic tourism integration strategy, the condition is still in the early stage of Phase 1, particularly the stage of determining the context of a tourism area and identifying the culinary potential to be developed.

A detailed SWOT analysis of gastronomic tourism potential reveals several insights. Strengths include a rich culinary heritage, diverse seafood-based dishes, and government support for tourism development. Weaknesses involve inadequate infrastructure, limited stakeholder coordination, and an underdeveloped culinary branding strategy. Opportunities arise from the increasing demand for authentic food tourism experiences and the potential to integrate local cuisine into broader tourism packages. Threats include competition from other well-established gastronomic destinations and environmental sustainability concerns regarding seafood.

While preliminary efforts have been made to integrate gastronomy into tourism, current strategies remain fragmented. The lack of a centralized policy framework and minimal private sector involvement indicate that integration is still in its infancy. Comparisons with successful models such as Thailand gastronomic tourism development suggest that strong multi-stakeholder collaboration and infrastructure investment are crucial for sustainable growth (Muangasame & Park, 2019). A comparative analysis with other successful gastronomic tourism initiatives, such as Penang, Malaysia, and San Sebastián, Spain, reveals key success factors: strong branding, government incentives, and well-developed food trails (Carral, 2020; Fusté-Forné et al., 2021; Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020; UNWTO, 2019). Likupang could adopt similar models by leveraging its unique cultural and environmental assets.

Culinary Icon of the Likupang Special Economic Zone

Based on interviews, field observations, and literature studies, 14 culinary icons can be developed into the gastronomic identity of the Likupang Special Economic Zone, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Culinary icons of the Likupang special economic zone based on raw material sources

No	Culinary Icon	Seafood-Based	Other Resource-Based
1	Bubur Tinutuan		V
2	Klappertaart		V
3	Dabu-Dabu Roa	V	
4	Woku Belanga	V	

5	Panada	V	
6	Ikan Rica-Rica	V	
7	Es Brenebon		V
8	Sayur Bunga Pepaya		V
9	Perkedel Nike	V	
10	Nasi Jaha		V
11	Pisang Goroho		V
12	Abon Cakalang	V	
13	Nasi Kuning Cakalang	V	
14	Cakalang Fufu	V	

The local culinary assets identified in the Likupang SEZ, both in the core and buffer areas, have great potential to be integrated into the development of gastronomic tourism. This can be done by optimizing the opportunities provided by the existing regulations, collaboration between stakeholders, and empowering the local community (Araujo, 2016; Manaf, 2020; Sukardi et al., 2022; Zakharia et al., 2021).

In Table 4, seafood-based dishes dominate the local culinary icons. This is due to the geographical location of the Likupang Special Economic Zone, which is located in North Minahasa Regency, near the coastal areas. This region has easy access to abundant marine raw materials such as fish, shrimp, and shellfish, making them the main commodities in local culinary production. Furthermore, the local community has inherited traditional knowledge and skills in processing marine products into distinctive regional dishes.

The Likupang Special Economic Zone possesses a rich culinary heritage intimately tied to its abundant marine resources, reflecting a strong coastal gastronomic tradition. Seafood-based dishes such as Dabu-Dabu Roa, Woku Belanga, Panada, Ikan Rica-Rica, Perkedel Nike, Nasi Kuning Cakalang, and Cakalang Fufu not only showcase the distinctive flavors of North Sulawesi, but also illustrate how the local community has inherited and preserved these culinary practices over generations. For instance, Woku Belanga is often prepared during traditional celebrations or thanksgiving events, where the cooking process is carried out collectively by the community as a form of respect for ancestors and nature. Similarly, Panada is frequently served during family gatherings or religious rituals as a symbol of community and blessings.

Facing the era of modern tourism, there is a significant opportunity to harmonize the wealth of these traditions with culinary innovations, such as more visually appealing presentations or more environmentally sustainable packaging, in order to enhance the tourism appeal and reinforce the local cultural identity. Innovative developments can also be applied to Nasi Kuning Cakalang, which is traditionally served during important events like birthday celebrations or thanksgiving ceremonies. Although this dish is deeply rooted in tradition, adaptations in presentation or flavor variations can attract the interest of the younger generation and tourists seeking unique yet authentic gastronomic experiences. By integrating innovative elements without compromising the authenticity of the taste and tradition, these seafood-based cuisines can become the primary attraction for tourists in Likupang.

In addition to its abundance of seafood, the Likupang Special Economic Zone is also rich in other natural products that are processed into distinctive and equally appealing local cuisines, reflecting the wealth of its terrestrial culinary traditions. Bubur Tinutuan, Klappertaart, Es Brenebon, Sayur Bunga Pepaya, Nasi Jaha, and Pisang Goroho are examples of dishes that utilize natural ingredients such as vegetables, legumes, coconut, and bananas. For instance, Bubur Tinutuan is often served during traditional ceremonies or family gatherings as a symbol of health and well-being. Similarly, Nasi Jaha, which is cooked in bamboo through a roasting method, is commonly prepared for weddings or thanksgiving events as a symbol of community and resilience.

This culinary tradition not only showcases the diversity of natural resources in Likupang but also demonstrates the creativity and innovation of the local community in utilizing the available land-based produce. Klappertaart, although influenced by Dutch culture, has been adapted and become part of the local tradition, often served during Christmas celebrations or other important events. Likewise, Pisang Goroho is frequently presented as part of certain traditional rituals, where the banana is believed to bring good fortune. By combining traditional techniques with innovative approaches, such as the development of new recipes or the use of more modern processing technologies, these land-based cuisines can continue to evolve into flagship products that support environmental and local economic sustainability, while also enriching the culinary tourism experience in Likupang.

These culinary icons can be developed through the management of tourism villages, such as Marinsow Village, Pulisan Village, and Kinunang Village, which are located within the core area of the Likupang Special Economic Zone. The development of these culinary icons can be carried out in various ways, such as the establishment of culinary training centers, the formation of culinary communities, the organization of culinary festivals, and the inclusion of culinary elements in tourism packages (Setiawan et al., 2022; Sukardi et al., 2022). In addition, efforts to increase the added value of these culinary icons can be done through the use of digital technology, such as the creation of culinary-based mobile applications and social media promotions (Ishak et al., 2023; Schimperna et al., 2020).

Recommended Strategy for Integrating Gastronomic Tourism in the Likupang Special Economic Zone

The management and development of local food ingredients for the local culinary icons of the Likupang Special Economic Zone needs to be carried out comprehensively by involving various relevant parties. The local government as the policymaker and coordinator of destination development can take strategic steps that refer to the methodological stages of preparing a gastronomic tourism strategic plan developed by the UNWTO, as shown in Figure 1.

10 other recommended integration strategy points are in line with Phase 1 of the UNWTO framework, including:

1. Determining the tourism area according to its gastronomic products, such as the center of the seafood area in the Likupang SEZ.
2. Conducting an inventory of the resources forming the developed gastronomic icons, such as the fish auction center, the skipjack smokehouse, or natural product plantations.
3. Analyzing the existing activity offerings to align with their gastronomic components.
4. Analyzing the appropriate promotion and marketing for the gastronomic tourism of the Likupang SEZ.
5. Identifying the parties that can be involved in the development and implementation of the gastronomic tourism model, including the Marinsow Tourism Village, Kinunang Tourism Village, and Pulisan Tourism Village.
6. Identifying locations and areas that can provide added value to gastronomic tourism products.
7. Analyzing gastronomic tourism trends that are in line with the development of the Likupang SEZ.
8. Analyzing the potential demand for gastronomic tourism in the Likupang SEZ.
9. Conducting an analysis related to the bargaining position of gastronomy from the Likupang SEZ.
10. Conducting a competitor analysis for the development of gastronomic tourism in the Likupang SEZ.

This study is limited by its qualitative nature, focusing on a single SEZ. Future research should incorporate quantitative analysis and comparative case studies to enhance generalizability. Additionally, potential biases in stakeholder interviews may influence findings, necessitating broader survey methods.

Conclusion

This study highlights the untapped potential of gastronomic tourism in the Likupang Special Economic Zone (SEZ), emphasizing the need for structured policy interventions, stakeholder collaboration, and branding efforts. While the integration of gastronomy has not yet been a top priority, there is growing awareness among local governments—from the provincial to the village level—regarding its potential as a key tourism attraction. Initial steps have been taken to explore existing culinary assets, yet a more comprehensive identification of gastronomic tourism potential is required to formulate strategic development recommendations.

The establishment of core and buffer areas in a tourism destination significantly influences tourism management, particularly in infrastructure development, resource allocation, and attraction enhancement (Mottiar & Ryan, 2007). In this regard, collaboration among stakeholders—spanning government agencies, entrepreneurs, media, local communities, and academics—is essential from the planning phase to continuous monitoring (Islahuddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, the integration of

locally sourced food and products with geographical indications plays a crucial role in strengthening the identity of gastronomic tourism (Pamukçu et al., 2021).

For the Likupang SEZ, a strategic approach should involve not only the identification of core area resources but also the consideration of buffer zones that share similar cultural and environmental characteristics. This broader perspective can aid in defining a distinct gastronomic identity for the region. The insights from this study suggest that future development efforts should focus on creating integrated tourism attraction packages that blend cultural and environmental elements with local gastronomic icons.

Future studies should explore the economic impact of gastronomic tourism on local employment, conduct longitudinal assessments of policy effectiveness, and investigate consumer behavior trends to refine marketing strategies. A holistic approach, integrating culinary heritage with sustainable tourism practices, will be key to positioning Likupang as a premier gastronomic destination in Southeast Asia.

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Exploring local friendliness, perceived discrimination, and brand love's mediation on tourist behavior in Tangkahan, North Sumatra

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Abstract: This study explores the impact of local hospitality and perceived discrimination on tourist behavior, with brand love as a mediating variable, in the context of Tangkahan tourist attractions in North Sumatra. We collected data from a survey of 237 tourists visiting Tangkahan and analyzed it using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis shows that local friendliness positively and significantly affects brand love. In contrast, perceived discrimination has no significant effect on brand love. In addition, local friendliness also has a positive and significant effect on tourist behavior, while perceived discrimination has no significant impact on tourist behavior. Furthermore, brand love has a positive and significant influence on tourist behavior. Brand love indirectly mediates the relationship between local friendliness and tourist behavior. However, brand love does not significantly mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and tourist behavior. The practical implications of this study suggest the need for a more holistic strategy to improve the tourism experience, including addressing discrimination and strengthening the positive elements that influence brand love.

Keywords: brand love, local friendliness, perceived discrimination, tourist behavior, Tangkahan tourism

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Introduction

Tourist sites are essential for travelers since they offer enriching experiences and serve as venues for recreation, education, and respite from everyday life (Rehman et al., 2024). The diverse tourism alternatives, encompassing natural beauty, cultural richness, and contemporary attractions, enable tourists to tailor their visit to their interests (Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, the tourism sector fosters local economic development by generating business opportunities for the adjacent community (Sultan et al., 2021). Effective management enables tourist places to sustain growth and deliver enduring advantages for both visitors and local populations (Naeem et al., 2024).

The sector can develop innovative new products and services by analyzing traveler patterns and preferences (Tuan et al., 2021). This may encompass the creation of novel tourist attractions, exclusive travel packages, or supplementary services that augment the overall visitor experience (Su et al., 2020). Furthermore, knowledge regarding tourist behavior is crucial in the strategic design and implementation of suitable infrastructure, including transportation, lodging, and public amenities, which contribute to enhancing the overall comfort and satisfaction of tourists (Kitsios et al., 2022).

Brand love is a sentimental notion that signifies a robust connection between consumers and a specific brand (Zhang et al., 2020). Brand love plays a crucial role in the tourism business as it directly influences tourist loyalty, enhances the sense of quality, and boosts the intention to visit a specific destination (Attiq et al., 2022). Tourists who have a strong affection for a tourist

site are more likely to be loyal and frequently suggest it to others (Wu, 2021). Increasing visitation and revenues, as well as enhancing the destination's market image, can positively influence the tourist industry (Azzahra & Fachira, 2022). Prior research findings demonstrate that brand love significantly contributes to the support of the sustainable tourism business (Yasa et al., 2022). One technique for creating brand love in tourists is for managers to possess the skill of delivering a genuinely authentic and irreplaceable experience (Dwita & Budiarti, 2022).

The presence of a friendly local environment might help foster an atmosphere that is favorable for debate and communication (Nguyen, 2022). Tourists are more inclined to engage with people, exchange tales, and get insights into local everyday life and cultural values when they feel welcomed (Lin et al., 2021). This conversation facilitates mutual comprehension of each party's viewpoints and life encounters, hence diminishing any preconceived notions and generalizations that could be present (Bahja & Hancer, 2021).

Furthermore, amicable exchanges might foster the development of reciprocal confidence between tourists and Indigenous inhabitants (Silva et al., 2024). Tourists who are treated well are more inclined to have trust in the positive intentions of local inhabitants, and the opposite is also true (Park et al., 2022). Establishing mutual trust is crucial for fostering a secure and pleasant atmosphere for all individuals involved (Chancellor et al., 2021). Tourists' likelihood of fully enjoying their visit and considering a return in the future is increased when they feel secure (Nofiyanti et al., 2021).

Prior research findings demonstrate that the level of friendliness exhibited by locals has a substantial impact on a traveler's inclination to revisit a tourist site (Liew et al., 2021). When promoting a destination to their families, tourists often take into account the friendliness of the local people (Szromek et al., 2022). The failure of the tourism industry is closely linked to the local hospitality industry's failure to engage with tourists (Chebby et al., 2024). To guarantee that all tourists feel accepted and appreciated during their journeys, it is crucial to tackle any instances of perceived prejudice (Russen et al., 2021). When travelers encounter actual or perceived discrimination while traveling, it can have a detrimental effect on their travel experience and diminish their contentment with the location (Ro & Olson, 2020). Tourism service providers must prioritize fair and transparent treatment of all clients, ensuring that rates and offers are equitable and consistent without any form of discrimination based on national origin or appearance (Lim, 2020). Destinations can establish trust, cultivate strong connections with tourists, and promote return visits and favorable referrals (Qu et al., 2020).

Encountering discrimination can result in significant psychological strain and have adverse effects on the mental well-being of travelers (Leng et al., 2024). When travelers experience unjust or prejudiced treatment while on a journey, they frequently experience unease and apprehension, which can have an impact on their overall emotional state and welfare (Verhaeghe & De Coninck, 2022). This emotional stress not only diminishes the present experience but also diminishes the pleasure and contentment of the trip (Carden et al., 2022).

Research findings have demonstrated that perceived prejudice directly influences the level of brand love and loyalty among visitors (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2023). Tourists encounter perceived discrimination after their initial visit to a location (Qu et al., 2020). Perceived prejudice is viewed as a customary or cultural practice among local individuals in their pursuit of personal gain (Lim, 2020). Prior studies indicate that perceived bias can directly influence visitors' affection and allegiance toward a brand or destination they frequent (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2023). Travelers encounter discriminatory treatment during or following their visit to a location, adversely affecting their perception of the area and diminishing the probability of return visits or referrals to others (Qu et al., 2020). Perceived bias may manifest not just through individual behaviors but also as cultural or customary practices employed by local groups to secure personal advantages (Lim, 2020). This indicates that tourists' experiences are shaped not only by the sights and services provided but also by the social interactions encountered during their journey.

Nonetheless, studies that expressly investigate the interaction between local hospitality and perceived discomfort in influencing visitor behavior remain scarce. In ecotourism locales like Tangkahan, North Sumatra, renowned for its community-based tourism model, a deeper comprehension is required regarding how local hospitality influences tourists' affinity for the destination, alongside the role of perceived discomfort as a barrier to establishing an emotional

bond with the locale. Moreover, several research studies continue to emphasize the mediation function of brand love in the interplay between local hospitality, perceived discomfort, and visitor behavior. Studies have demonstrated that brand affection markedly increases passengers' allegiance to a particular tourism destination. This study seeks to address the literature gap by examining the mediating role of brand love in elucidating the effects of local hospitality and felt discomfort on visitor behavior in Tangkahan Visitor Attraction, North Sumatra. Consequently, the findings of this study are anticipated to furnish destination managers and stakeholders with enhanced insights for formulating more effective strategies to augment attractiveness and deliver a more favorable tourist experience.

Theoretical Review

Tourist Behavior

The behavior of tourists is crucial in the process of tourism planning, as it plays a significant role in the promotion and sale of tourism products (Rong et al., 2024). Important elements in the study of customer behavior in the tourism industry are decision-making, values, motivation, self-concept, personality, expectations, attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (Wijaya et al., 2023). By emphasizing the diffusion of negative consequences and promoting sustainable tourism practices, we have made significant progress in managing disruptive visitor behavior (Wu et al., 2024).

Tourist expenditure on lodging, meals, recreational pursuits, and mementos creates substantial economic benefits for local communities and proprietors (Hussain et al., 2024). When tourists visit a destination, they allocate funds across several sectors, immediately augmenting the revenue of local businesses (Wu et al., 2022). Furthermore, this economic stimulus contributes to enhancing the quality of life for local inhabitants, as the supplementary revenue enables tourists to avail themselves of superior services and enhance their living conditions (Omidvar & Deen, 2024). Tourists' presence has a substantial impact on the economic development and well-being of local communities (Pratminingsih et al., 2022).

Brand Love

Brand love is shaped by factors such as the distinctiveness of a brand's features and sensory appeal, customer happiness, alignment with one's identity, and individual experiences. This ultimately results in brand loyalty, a readiness to spend more for the brand, plans to spread positive word-of-mouth, and the ability to forgive the brand for any missteps (Ali, 2023). Researchers have identified three distinct forms of destination brand love. By comprehending these forms, marketing firms may effectively cultivate and enhance brand love among tourists, leading to higher levels of visitation and income (Nasib et al., 2023). Brand love comprises seven fundamental components that are more effective in predicting loyalty, word-of-mouth, and resistance to bad information compared to a single overall assessment (Joshi & Garg, 2021).

Tourist loyalty is greatly influenced by brand affection (Ahuvia et al., 2020). Tourists who have a strong affinity for a destination are more likely to exhibit loyalty and have a higher inclination to revisit (Bae & Kim, 2023). Brand identity, brand image, and tourist satisfaction are significant factors that influence the development of brand love (Hamdy et al., 2024). Furthermore, the utilization of celebrity endorsements and social media platforms can enhance the emotional connection between tourists and the site (Huang & Liu, 2021).

Prior research findings indicate that brand affection has a direct and substantial impact on tourist behavior (Morando & Platania, 2022; Prihatini et al., 2023; Rianthomy et al., 2023). Brand affinity is believed to enable a tourist to choose a tourist destination based on both intellectual and emotional factors to experience a feeling of safety and comfort (Junaid et al., 2020). Brand affinity enables tourists to overlook minor flaws and instead concentrate on the appealing features that they like (Robertson et al., 2022).

H1: Brand love has a direct and significant influence on tourist behavior.

Local Friendliness

Local hospitality can be demonstrated through a range of uncomplicated yet significant behaviors (Szromek et al., 2022). Local hospitality encompasses various acts of kindness and generosity, ranging from friendly greetings and assistance with directions to engaging in conversations and exchanging stories about the local culture and traditions (Silva et al., 2024). In certain cultures, it may extend to inviting outsiders to participate in family or community events and offering them local food and beverages (Recuero-Virto & Arróspide, 2024).

The impact of local hospitality in shaping a favorable initial impression for travelers is significant (Chebby et al., 2024). Tourists who feel welcomed and valued are more likely to have a pleasant and memorable experience (Park et al., 2022). This not only enhances tourists' contentment during their visit but also motivates them to endorse the place to their acquaintances and contemplate revisiting in the future (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Positive social exchanges might mitigate potential cultural clashes between tourists and local inhabitants, fostering a peaceful and courteous atmosphere (Savelli et al., 2022). Upon arrival at a destination, travelers bring their own set of values, norms, and customs, which may vary from the local culture (Nofiyanti et al., 2021). Unfamiliarity with local customs can lead travelers to unintentionally breach social standards (Ahmad et al., 2022). Nevertheless, by fostering a cordial and empathetic demeanor among the local populace, such circumstances can be effectively resolved, circumventing discord and fostering enhanced comprehension (Chancellor et al., 2021).

Conversely, travelers who are shown local hospitality are more likely to show a positive and respectful attitude toward the local culture (Nowacki et al., 2021). Tourists are inclined to exert effort in comprehending and valuing local traditions and practices (Park et al., 2022). Engaging in this practice not only enhances the tourist's personal experience but also demonstrates a sense of regard for the local community being visited (Ren et al., 2021).

Prior studies have demonstrated that the level of friendliness exhibited by locals has a direct and substantial impact on a tourist's affinity for a certain brand (Linderová et al., 2021; Tarinc et al., 2023; Weaver et al., 2022). Moreover, this influence has the potential to cultivate favorable attitudes and behaviors among tourists, especially those who are inexperienced in visiting tourist destinations (Liew et al., 2021).

H2: Local friendliness has a direct and significant effect on brand love.
H3: Local friendliness has a direct and significant effect on tourist behavior.
H4: Local friendliness has an indirect and significant effect on tourist behavior through brand love.

Perceived Discrimination

Perceived discrimination refers to a tourist's subjective experience of perceiving unfair or differential treatment based on variables such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality, or other personal qualities (Lin et al., 2022). This form of discrimination can manifest either directly or indirectly and can take place in various situations throughout the trip, such as encounters with local inhabitants, providers of tourism services, or fellow travelers (Verhaeghe & De Coninck, 2022).

At times, travelers may think that their nationality or physical appearance results in increased fees or less advantageous agreements (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2023). This scenario has the potential to evoke emotions of inequity and disillusionment, compromising the overall quality of the travel encounter (Leng et al., 2024). Tourists may have a sense of exploitation due to their status as "outsiders" or the perception that they have more financial means (Carden et al., 2022). The inequitable pricing not only diminishes the level of pleasure among tourists but also has the potential to harm the global reputation of the location (Jamaludin et al., 2024).

Previous research findings indicate that the perception of prejudice has a direct and negative effect on tourists' affection for tourist locations (Runtunuwu & Husen, 2023; Shang et al., 2022). Discrimination fosters the inclination of travelers to communicate their negative encounters with others (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2023). Enacting and ensuring the implementation

of unambiguous anti-discrimination rules across all facets of the tourism sector is a crucial measure towards establishing an inclusive and equitable environment for all visitors (Ulinnuha, 2021). These regulations should encompass diverse sectors, such as lodging, transportation, and tourism destinations, to guarantee the equitable and courteous treatment of all customers, irrespective of their race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, or appearance (Min & Joireman, 2021).

H5: Perceived discrimination has a direct significant effect on brand love.
H6: Perceived discrimination has a direct significant effect on tourist behavior.
H7: Perceived discrimination has an indirect significant effect on tourist behavior through brand love.

Methodology

This research employed a quantitative methodology using survey-based techniques. We chose this methodology to assess the correlation between the variables under study, specifically local hospitality, perceived discrimination, brand love, and visitor behavior at the Tangkahan tourist destination in North Sumatra. The target population and sample of this study consisted of tourists who have visited the Tangkahan tourist attraction at least twice a year. The sampling technique used in this study is random sampling. Through the purposive random sampling technique, we obtained 237 tourists who were willing to participate in the data collection of this study. Then, we collected research data sourced from primary data, which was obtained through the distribution of research questionnaires that were prepared based on the indicators of the research variables.

Additionally, local friendliness can be assessed by indicators such as LF1 (friendly attitude), LF2 (local assistance), LF3 (positive engagement), and LF4 (openness). The variable of perceived discrimination is measured by indicators of injustice (PD1), social exclusion (PD2), variations in treatment (PD3), stigma (PD4), and sentiments of non-acceptance (PD5). The variables of brand love are measured by indicators of liking, emotional attachment, satisfaction, self-identification, and intention to revisit. Indicators such as intention to revisit (BT1), recommendations (BT2), good reviews (BT3), social involvement (BT4), and loyalty (BT5) are used to quantify tourist behavior. Ultimately, data analysis employs SEM (structural equation modeling) with Smart PLS.

Results and Discussions

Results

Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

The measurement model analysis (outer model) employs two tests: (1) construct reliability and validity and (2) discriminant validity. The following are the test results:

Table 1. Outer model results

Code	Indicators	Loading Factor
LF1	The local people at this tourist destination are very friendly	0.974
LF2	I felt like I got a lot of help from the local people when I visited	0.957
LF3	I frequently engage in positive interactions with local residents	0.910
LF4	The locals here are very open to visitors	0.938
PD1	I feel treated unfairly by the local people	0.876
PD2	I feel excluded from social activities by local residents	0.818
PD3	I feel there is a significant difference in treatment among the local population	0.858
PD4	I feel stigmatized by local residents because of my status as a visitor	0.812
PD5	I felt unwelcome by the locals during my visit	0.835
BE1	I really like this tourist destination	0.796
BE2	I feel a strong emotional attachment to this destination	0.719
BE3	I was very satisfied with my experience at this destination	0.707

BE4	I feel that this destination reflects me	0.723
BE5	I feel that this destination reflects me	0.728
BT1	I intend to visit this destination again	0.946
BT2	I would recommend this destination to others	0.927
BT3	I will give a positive review of this destination	0.953
BT4	I participate in social activities around this destination	0.971
BT5	I feel loyal to this tourist destination	0.956

Table 2. Composite reliability

Variables	Composite reliability
Local Friendliness	0.865
Perceived Discrimination	0.850
Brand Love	0.866
Tourist Behavior	0.826

Table 1 demonstrates that all indicators satisfy the loading factor's threshold of 0.5, indicating that the indicators in this study have successfully fulfilled it. The composite reliability test in Table 2 indicates that if the value is more than 0.6, all variables may be considered trustworthy. For this study data to be deemed suitable for the subsequent data testing phase.

Table 3. Discriminant validity results

	Tourism Behavior	BrandLove	Local Friendliness	Perceived Discrimination
LF1	0.393	0.387	0.752	0.571
LF2	0.444	0.441	0.851	0.654
LF3	0.441	0.442	0.841	0.663
LF4	0.427	0.428	0.820	0.648
LF5	0.445	0.442	0.854	0.655
PD1	0.425	0.416	0.730	0.955
PD2	0.434	0.424	0.687	0.935
PD3	0.472	0.475	0.607	0.885
PD4	0.433	0.438	0.623	0.883
PD5	0.472	0.468	0.636	0.913
BE1	0.861	0.842	0.427	0.603
BE2	0.860	0.841	0.458	0.623
BE3	0.856	0.836	0.437	0.607
BE4	0.863	0.850	0.447	0.621
BE5	0.854	0.833	0.438	0.609
BT1	0.837	0.851	0.430	0.595
BT2	0.830	0.856	0.421	0.608
BT3	0.841	0.858	0.434	0.607
BT4	0.831	0.852	0.471	0.626
BT5	0.835	0.854	0.438	0.606

The study variable's indicators exhibit the highest cross-loading value on the variable they represent, as seen in Table 3. The findings demonstrate that the indicators utilized in this study possess strong discriminant validity in aggregating their corresponding factors.

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)
R-Square
The data processing of the Smart PLS 3.0 software produces the R-Square value as follows:

Table 4. Determination coefficient (R-square)

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Brand Love (Y1)	0.585	0.579
Tourist Behavior (Y2)	0.554	0.551

(Source: SmartPLS 3.3.3)

The data from Table 4 indicates that the R-squared adjusted value for the brand love variable is 0.579, which corresponds to 57.9%. The remaining 42.1% is attributed to other factors that were not included in this study. The R-squared value of the tourist behavior variable is 0.551, which represents 55.1% of the variation. The remaining 44.9% is attributed to other factors that were not included in this study.

Predictive Relevance (Q2)

The Q2 value is synonymous with the coefficient of determination (R-square). A Q-square value (Q2) of 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance. Conversely, a Q2 value less than 0 indicates that the model has less predictive relevance. In other words, higher Q2 values indicate that the model is more suitable for the data. To determine the Q2 value, you may utilize the following method:

$$Q2 = 1 - (1 - R^2)(1 - R^2) \dots (1 - R^2) \tag{1}$$
$$Q2 = 1 - (1 - 0.579)(1 - 0.551)$$
$$Q2 = 1 - (0.664)(0.696)$$
$$Q2 = 1 - 0.462$$
$$Q2 = 0.537$$

Based on the results, the Q2 value is 0.537. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the factors examined in this study, i.e., local friendliness, perceived discrimination, brand love, and tourist behavior, significantly impacted the authenticity data in the current structural model, accounting for 53.7% of the variance. We should individually make the other 46.3% without relying on research factors.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Local Friendliness (X1) → Brand Love (Y1)	0.573	0.617	0.391	2.163	0.000
Perceived Discrimination (X2) → Brand Love (Y1)	0.455	0.521	0.317	1.751	0.426
Local Friendliness (X1) → Tourist Behavior (Y2)	0.627	0.718	0.154	2.267	0.001
Perceived Discrimination (X2) → Tourist Behavior (Y2)	0.374	0.392	0.118	1.592	0.814
Brand Love (Y1) → Tourist Behavior (Y2)	0.502	0.561	0.283	2.147	0.001
Local Friendliness (X1) → Brand Love (Y1) → Tourist Behavior (Y2)	0.563	0.556	0.249	2.217	0.000
Perceived Discrimination (X2) → Brand Love (Y1) → Tourist Behavior(Y2)	0.253	0.262	0.269	1.615	0.175

Table 5 above directly states that local friendliness significantly influences tourist brand love. However, perceived discrimination does not affect the love of the tourist brand. Then, local friendliness has a significant direct effect on tourist behavior. However, perceived discrimination does not affect tourist behavior. Finally, indirectly, brand love has a significant role in mediating local friendliness in tourist behavior. However, brand love does not have a role in mediating perceived discrimination in tourist behavior.

Discussions

The Influence of Local Friendliness on Brand Love

The findings of the hypothesis test demonstrate that the level of friendliness exhibited by locals substantially impacts the extent to which tourists develop a strong affection for the Tangkahan tourist destination. The study's findings indicate that the amicability of local inhabitants towards tourists can enhance their overall experience by offering diverse information about the Tangkahan tourist site. Nevertheless, tourists find the disorganized selling practices of the local people in the Tangkahan region to be disruptive. The region has seen a transformation from a cozy spot to a commercial site.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior research, which indicated that being friendly toward local customers can enhance their affinity toward a company (Chebby et al., 2024; Recuero-Virto & Arróspide, 2024; Satrya & Susanto, 2023). As stated by Szromek et al. (2022), when tourists experience acceptance and appreciation from the local community, they are more likely to develop a strong connection with the place, which is a crucial factor in developing brand loyalty. An essential element of brand love is when visitors not only have a positive opinion of the place but also develop a strong emotional attachment to it. This emotional connection leads to increased loyalty and a desire to visit the destination again in the future (Silva et al., 2024).

The Influence of Perceived Discrimination on Brand Love

The data analysis findings suggest that there is no substantial influence of directly perceived prejudice on the brand love of visitors in the Tangkahan tourism region. The findings of this study suggest that food sellers in the Tangkahan tourism region frequently increase prices for tourists who are not from outside Langkat Regency.

The findings of this study contradict the findings of prior studies, which indicated that perceived discrimination has a notable impact on brand affection (Ngarbingan & Suryantari, 2022; Rahmiati, et al., 2023; Russen et al., 2021). In the long term, the image of a resort might be negatively impacted by perceived prejudice (Lim, 2020). This image is essential for cultivating brand affinity, as tourists frequently prefer places that they see in a good light (Qu et al., 2020). However, discrimination might result in a negative perception, which can weaken the emotional connection required to cultivate strong brand loyalty (Le Hong & Hsu, 2024).

The Influence of Local Friendliness on Tourist Behavior

The findings of the hypothesis test indicate that there is a notable impact of local friendliness on visitor behavior in the Tangkahan tourism region. The outcomes of this study suggest that the community's attitude towards foreign tourists is still suboptimal. The neighborhood typically lacks in providing international tourists with a warm and welcoming reception. This discovery demonstrates that the current community lacks proficient English communication abilities.

The findings of this study corroborate the findings of prior studies, which indicated that the amicability of locals had a favorable impact on visitor conduct (Kepramareni et al., 2024; Linderová et al., 2021; Mazliza & Adiati, 2023). Research has also shown that the level of friendliness exhibited by locals has an impact on tourists' likelihood to suggest a place to others (Savelli et al., 2022). Tourists who experience acceptance and get assistance from local inhabitants are more inclined to share favorable tourist experiences with their acquaintances and relatives, both in person and via digital platforms such as social media and online reviews (Tarinc et al., 2023). This demonstrates that the friendliness of local people not only influences the personal experience of tourists but also has a ripple effect through word-of-mouth, which may enhance the reputation of the destination (Nguyen, 2022).

The Influence of Perceived Discrimination on Tourist Behavior

The findings of the hypothesis test suggest that there is no substantial impact of directly perceived prejudice on visitor behavior in the Tangkahan tourist region. The findings of this study suggest that visitors perceive discrimination while seeking information, leading to a decrease in

expenditure throughout their visit to the site. This can be demonstrated. This is demonstrated by the inclination to avoid purchasing local products, refrain from patronizing certain restaurants or motels, or even reduce the length of the tourist stay. Individuals who experience discrimination are more inclined to file official grievances with the administration of the tourist destination, tourism groups, or even law enforcement agencies. Written reviews or complaints on social media have the potential to harm the reputation of the location.

The findings of this study align with prior research, which indicated that perceived prejudice adversely impacts tourist behavior (Ismail & Sition, 2024; Verhaeghe & De Coninck, 2022). Moreover, experiences of prejudice might diminish the confidence of visitors in the local populace, service providers, and even the tourism authorities in the region (CardenCarden et al., 2022). This might instill a sense of caution or unease among visitors throughout their visit (Shang et al., 2022). Instances of discrimination reported by tourists might significantly harm the overall reputation of the area (Le Hong & Hsu, 2024). This may lead to a decline in future tourist numbers (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2023).

The Influence of Brand Love on Tourist Behavior

The hypothesis test findings indicate that brand love has a clear and substantial impact on visitor behavior in the Tangkahan tourism region. The findings of this study suggest that travelers who have a strong affinity for the Tangkahan tourist site are more likely to engage actively in online communities associated with the location. Tourists will furthermore exchange experiences, offer recommendations, or even advocate for the place in response to criticism.

The findings of this study align with prior research, which asserted that brand love serves as the primary foundation for cultivating robust visitor behavior within the tourism sector (Lv & Wu, 2021). Brand affinity may enhance the confidence of tourists in a place, especially the conviction that it will deliver a reliable and gratifying encounter (Shen et al., 2021). This sense of trust may instill a sense of calmness in travelers, allowing them to fully enjoy their vacation without any concerns or worries (Khalid et al., 2024). Tourists who have a strong affinity for a certain brand are often more accepting of small issues or unpleasant occurrences that may arise during their journey (Yadav et al., 2023). Tourists who have a strong affinity for a particular brand are more likely to have a good outlook on the many characteristics of a trip (Polat & Çetinsöz, 2021).

The Influence of Local Friendliness on Tourist Behavior Through Brand Love

The data test findings clearly indicate that the level of local friendliness in the Tangkahan tourism region is greatly influenced by brand love. The study's findings suggest that being kind to locals may enhance brand affinity, and the location has the potential to reinforce its identity among tourists. Tangkahan is renowned among tourists for its captivating natural beauty and its welcoming and amiable people, which fosters a strong sense of connection to the area. Brand affinity can motivate tourists to actively participate in events organized by the local community, such as festivals, cultural showcases, or environmental preservation initiatives. The establishment of a strong local rapport serves as a solid basis for this engagement, and the development of a deep affection for the brand reinforces it, leading to increased levels of participation.

The findings of this study align with other research, which indicates that the brand has a crucial role in enhancing tourist behavior (Bahja & Hancer, 2021). Brand affection is also seen as a fundamental factor for tourist destination managers (Nguyen, 2022). Tourists who encounter genuine hospitality are inclined to actively pursue and derive more satisfaction from authentic encounters (Tarinc et al., 2023). The connection between visitors and the distinctiveness of local culture and customs is facilitated by brand love (Weaver et al., 2022). This can incentivize tourists to participate in more immersive activities, such as acquiring knowledge about indigenous crafts or embarking on a cultural excursion (Lin et al., 2021). When tourists develop a strong emotional attachment to a brand as a result of experiencing local friendliness, they become less responsive to the attractiveness of other travel locations (Nowacki et al., 2021). Therefore, even if other places have more appealing amenities or lower pricing, travelers would still opt for Tangkahan because of the emotional connection they have established (Ren et al., 2021).

The Influence of Perceived Discrimination on Tourist Behavior Through Brand Love

The results of the hypothesis testing suggest that brand love does not have a substantial impact on moderating perceived discrimination against tourist behavior in the Tangkahan tourist region. The outcomes of this study suggest that while visitors may perceive that the prejudice they encounter influences their behavior as tourists, brand affection does not play a substantial role in altering or reinforcing the connection. To clarify, brand love is ineffective in mitigating the adverse effects of perceived discrimination on tourist behavior, or it lacks the potency to transform unfavorable perceptions into more favorable conduct among visitors.

The findings of this study align with prior research, which indicated that decriminalization is a significant aspect for travelers to take into account when selecting tourism locations (Verhaeghe & De Coninck, 2022). Tourists will give higher importance to social justice and personal experiences rather than their emotional connection with the brand (Ro & Olson, 2020). Discriminatory events might diminish or eliminate the favorable impact of brand love, even if visitors initially have strong positive views towards a brand (Ulinnuha, 2021). Tourists choose the practical features of the tourist experience, such as comfort, pricing, and accessibility, over emotional considerations like brand loyalty (Leng et al., 2024). If visitors see these functional aspects as insufficient or encounter prejudice, their sense of brand affection may not have a substantial impact, thereby diminishing the importance of brand affection as a mediator (Le Hong & Hsu, 2024).

This research enhances the comprehension of visitor behavior by 53.7% through the variables of local hospitality, perceived prejudice, and brand affection. Additional factors affect 46.3% of the outcomes. In his 2019 study, Kim (2019) determined that tourist behavior may be anticipated with 41.6% accuracy by utilizing factors associated with various tourist destinations, social network analysis, degree centrality, and density. Mohammadi et al. (2023) assert that tourist behavior exhibits a coefficient of determination of 46.2% through factors such as destination evaluation, food requirements, satisfiers/dissatisfiers, and religious/medical/lifestyle dietary considerations. Consequently, the findings of this study present greater uniqueness compared to prior research, especially in the formulation of tourist behavior models.

Conclusions

The findings of this study show a clear and significant correlation between local hospitality and brand love and visitor behavior. However, perceived prejudice does not have a large impact on brand loyalty or traveler actions. Brand love indirectly influences the effect of local hospitality on visitor behavior. However, the concept of brand love does not play a role in moderating the impact of perceived prejudice on tourist behavior. The practical findings of this study suggest the need for more holistic strategies to improve tourism experiences, including addressing discrimination and reinforcing the positive elements that influence brand love.

Based on the results of the study, there are several recommendations for future research. First, future research could focus more on hospitality strategies, examine the role of communities in creating positive tourism experiences, and develop training for local residents to be more welcoming to tourists. Second, further exploration of brand love is needed, especially in understanding how the uniqueness of local culture, tourists' personal experiences, or destination storytelling can strengthen emotional bonds with the destination, increase loyalty, and encourage repeat visits. Third, since perceived discrimination does not have a significant effect on brand love and tourist behavior, future research can explore other factors, such as service satisfaction, tourist safety, and cultural values in shaping tourist perceptions and experiences. Fourth, to get a better idea of how different factors affect tourist behavior, future research can look at moderating or mediating variables like tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, or economic factors. Lastly, comparative studies across different tourist destinations, both domestic and international, can help identify best practices in tourism management, as well as understand whether local hospitality and brand love factors are universal or contextual.

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Customer behaviour in restaurant establishments in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract: The tourism and hospitality industry was adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Restaurants were affected greatly as businesses shut down because of the lockdown restrictions and limited movement within the country. There were distinct customer behavioural differences when visiting and dining in restaurants. These establishments were expected to execute the recommended safety protocols. Due to the lack of South African studies of this nature, this paper explores the shifts in customer behaviour when customers paid visits to various restaurant establishments in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Using the convenience sampling technique, the study achieved a valid sample size of 156 respondents by visiting ten restaurants. A quantitative research method was applied for an existing questionnaire that included Likert scale questions as well as open ended questions. The data was analysed using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) as well as a dimension reduction technique. Findings indicate that customers' behaviour has radically changed when dining out as a direct result of COVID-19. Quantitative analysis illustrates three factors: delivery service option, hospitality establishment hygiene and cleanliness and safety measures are viewed as the distinctive behaviours that customers were gravitating toward as lockdown restrictions eased. Open-ended responses were analysed using content analysis whereby three themes emerged, namely: feelings of being unsafe; fear of contracting the virus and willingness to return to restaurants. Aspects such as cleanliness, physical environment and availability of delivery services are significant when it comes to customers' willingness to dine in hospitality establishments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, customer behaviour, hospitality establishment, hygiene and cleanliness, safety, restaurants

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Introduction

Many customers were concerned about dining out, even at dine-in hospitality establishments that had outdoor dining areas due to the potential risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus (Yang et al., 2020). The apprehension caused by the pandemic created avoidance behaviour for example, increasing physical distance from other individuals in social exchanges (Yang et al., 2020). There was a rising trend amongst hospitality establishment customers to avoid dine-in options as it required contact with other diners (Kim et al., 2021). Many customers became subjectively biased towards the establishment's cleanliness since the onset of the pandemic (Kraemer et al., 2020).

There were, however, customers who were less careful and who failed to comply with the safety protocols. Many customers believed that the vaccine made them immune to adhering to the safety protocols. This behaviour posed a risk of a surge in infections. As a result, many other customers were potentially unwilling to visit hospitality establishments as they were anxious that the non-compliance to safety rules put them at risk of contracting the virus (Yang et al., 2020).

Recommendations to reduce the rate of transmission of COVID-19 were proposed by the South African government for hospitality establishment managers as well as their customers. The safety practices that customers had to adhere to included the wearing of a shielding face mask,

use of a hand sanitiser, and observing social distancing. Hospitality establishment managers had to ensure that customers complied with these rules and instructions. The hospitality establishment managers furthermore had to ensure that their service staff wore protective gear, that cautionary food handling procedures were in place, that there was persistent sanitising of public areas, and the layout of tables was done in such a manner to ensure as little human contact as possible (Kim et al., 2021).

Thus, this study explores the shifts in customer behaviour when customers paid visits to restaurant establishments in the Gauteng province in South Africa to achieve the following objectives 1) To establish the changes in customer behaviour when visiting hospitality establishments in Gauteng during COVID-19; 2) To determine potentially statistically differences in perceptions of customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19 across gender and frequency of visiting a restaurant; and 3) To determine the willingness of customers to dine at restaurants in terms of their comfort and safety during COVID-19. Findings from this study will provide significant insights from the customer perspective, particularly in South Africa, on whether dine-in restaurants are still a popular choice of patronage or have the pandemic completely altered the customer's behaviour towards dining out.

Literatur Review

Customers' dining behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic have been the focus of research studies globally. Many previous studies have focused on customers' views on risk and the subsequent restaurant strategies to attract them. In Australia, Wang et al. (2021) investigated customers' food purchasing options such as takeout meals and dine-in options and the influence of crowdedness and safety measures employed in restaurants. Dedeoğlu and Boğan (2021) suggested that sociability positively projected customers' intention to dine in fine dining restaurants in Turkey. A study in the USA suggested that hopefulness and dread mediated the relationship between customers' shielding rationales and their food purchase-related intentions (Kim et al., 2021).

Customers often have their own opinions of public health and the observed risks of when dining at a restaurant (de Andrade et al., 2019). Even though safety should be a key factor when customers dine out, many customers are oblivious to health and safety aspects when they select a restaurant (Yost & Cheng 2021). Restaurant customers are frequently more affected by visible components such as the restaurant's menus, dining environment, and hygiene (Kim & Bachman, 2019). Safety has become a priority because of COVID-19, and reasons for dining out must therefore be convincing for an individual to take on the risk to dine out.

In China and Korea, Zhong et al. (2021) evaluated how subjective standards and restaurants' precautionary measures affected the physical and psychological risk perceptions of customers' dining-related activities. Kim et al. (2021) explain that hygiene and safety messages influenced customers' intention to purchase related menu items positively. The cleanliness of a hospitality establishment determines whether customers choose to dine-in or not in Vietnam (Hoang & Suleri, 2021; Song et al., 2021). This is to avoid the risk of food-borne illnesses due to unhygienic and mishandling of food in public eating places (Khuluse & Deen, 2020; 2022). The physical environment is a significant aspect which influences customers' service perceptions and behaviour in the hospitality industry (Hanks & Line, 2018). The cleanliness of the immediate dining environment, well-ventilated air and displayed signs allow customers to feel more at ease when dining in (Park et al., 2016; Yost & Cheng, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). Watanabe and Omori (2020) suggest that older customers are prone to non-compliance regarding safety practices as they are less likely to embrace change. Their study furthermore suggests that customers with high uncertainty gather information that is relevant to dining in during the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the negative consequences of being uncertain. When customers fear that they might contract the COVID-19 virus, they change their behaviour accordingly when dining out. The more terrified customers are of contracting the COVID-19 virus, the more they are prepared to follow all the recommended safety precautions of the hospitality establishment.

Various restaurants' active responses to the pandemic and newly adopted safety measures could greatly enhance consumer trust, which affects their actual dining activities. Customers' dining out intentions are increased when building strong brand trust. Brand trust is built when a

restaurant can supply its customers with quality food and good service. Restaurants also build the confidence of their customers to dine out by highlighting their commitment to customers' health and safety during the pandemic (Wen & Liu-Lastres, 2022).

Restaurant management responds to customers' arising need for trust and loyalty while managing risk to increase and attain a suitably motivated restaurant customer. An optimal way to build trust and loyalty among customers is transparency. Transparency can be described as the visibility of information that may assist customers in making informed decisions (Nguyen et al., 2022). The purpose of transparency is making the whole system visible based on customer demands (Yang et al., 2022). Therefore, restaurant transparency may be accomplished by concentrating on the physical environment, service process, and quality of food. By allowing customers to observe the food-preparing and delivering processes, transparency would be attained (Slack et al., 2021). Previous research suggested that transparency could reduce customers' lopsided perceptions and alleged risks by providing facts about food products and service practices (Salazar & Oerlemans, 2015). Transparency is therefore a significant, trending, and inexpensive tool to improve customer loyalty (Agrawal, 2019).

Another option that restaurants applied successfully was food delivery services as it allowed them to remain operational and maintain social distancing simultaneously. This option facilitates the use of digital contactless options such as hands-free payments, an e-menu QR code, and/or mobile applications that allow for low or no-contact services, which provides customers with ease and security and subsequently builds customer trust and confidence (Hao & Chon, 2021; Jeong et al., 2022). The customers also avoid traveling to a restaurant and waiting for their food order and frees up time for other tasks (Chen et al., 2022). These delivery services occasionally contributed to the risk of receiving cold food. The delivery option is still a popular choice for young adults, even after the pandemic (Buettner et al., 2023).

While the consequences of the pandemic have affected various industries differently prompting suitable solutions for sustainable operations, restaurants were affected in their operating the business and the customers that chose to patronize them. Making the restaurants accountable for providing solutions for themselves as well as their customers, therefore, this study provides insight into the customers' behaviour that can directly assist restaurants in South Africa as we live in the post-pandemic era.

Methodology
Design and Sampling

The study focused on investigating customers' behaviours, particularly amongst restaurant establishments in the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. The study employed a quantitative approach and followed the positivist research paradigm of which an existing questionnaire was adapted to address the research questions of the study. As the study was conducted during the period that the country was adjusting to the new-normal and when the COVID-19 national lockdowns were lifted, respondents were reluctant to spend time to participate especially whilst they were eating or dining out. Therefore, the non-probability sampling method was applied to allow for a stronger response rate. Thus, based on the willingness of the respondents, the study conveniently targeted the customers that dined in ten sit-down restaurants within the Gauteng province, South Africa. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face to customers who just patronized the restaurant establishments, and a total valid sample of 156 questionnaires was completed and achieved.

Instrument and Data Collection

For the data to be collected, the necessary ethical consent was required. Ethical clearance was sought from the Institutional Research Committee (IREC) following the thorough processes, ethical approval was attained (Ethics number UJ - 22STH13). This consent ensured that the names of restaurants visited and the respondents that chose to participate in the study would be kept confidential and anonymous. This study borrowed the relevant questions from the pre-existing questionnaire that was administered from a similar study conducted in Vietnam (Hoang & Suleri, 2021). The most applicable quantitative questions were retained from this instrument,

asking questions about the customers' behaviour towards visiting the restaurant establishment to achieve objective 1) To establish the changes in customer behavior when visiting hospitality establishments in Gauteng during COVID-19 and 2) To determine potentially statistically significant differences in perceptions of customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19 across gender and frequency of visiting a restaurant.

Four additional open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire that addressed objective 3) To determine the willingness of customers to dine at restaurants in terms of their comfort and safety during COVID-19. These open-ended questions probed for potential recommendations for restaurants and establishments in South Africa, as that will directly assist managers and restaurants to adjust their business practice that is more appealing to today's customer.

The first section contained a brief biographical detail of the customers, determining the level income, type of outlet they visited, the frequency of these visits, the utilization of food delivery options, the frequency of using food delivery, and how long did it take to physically dine at a restaurant once lockdown restrictions were eased. The following section was a Likert scale containing 11 items that addressed customers' behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19. These items were measured on a scale on which 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = Unsure, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

Data Analysis

All completed questionnaires were captured and were analysed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Frequencies were performed to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the following multivariate tests were conducted to address the first objective of this study.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted in this study as a dimension reduction technique. Before conducting EFA, the factorability of the data was evaluated using two diagnostic measures, namely the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO). The KMO index value ranges from 0 to 1 with 0.6 considered as the minimum value for exploratory factor analysis to be appropriate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

The Cronbach`s alpha coefficient was utilized to estimate the reliability of the measurement scales and independent t-tests were conducted to potentially identify statistically significant differences in perceptions of customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19 across gender. Additionally, a series of One-Way Analysis of Variance Tests (One-Way ANOVA) were performed in an attempt to reveal possible statistically significant differences in perceptions of customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19 across frequency of visiting the restaurant.

Content analysis was used to analyse the open-ended responses and themes were formulated by the similar answers to meet the second objective of this paper.

Results and Discussions

Results

Table 1 reveals that just more than half of the respondents were male (48.7%) and the remaining respondents were female (51.3%). In terms of ethnicity, the sample was dominated by Black (81.4%) followed by Coloured (9.0%), White (7.0%), and lastly Indian (2.6%).

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Characteristic	Category	n	Percentage
Gender	Male	76	48.7%
	Female	80	51.3%
	Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Ethnicity	Black	127	81.4%
	Indian	4	2.6%
	White	11	7.0%
	Coloured	14	9.0%

Age Group	Younger than 18 years	18	11.5%
	18 – 24 years	71	45.6%
	25-34 years	40	25.6%
	35-44 years	21	13.5%
	Older than 44 years	6	3.8%
Marital status	Single	55	35.3%
	Student	46	29.5%
	Married/living as a couple	44	28.2%
	Divorced/Separated/Widowed	11	7.0%
Level of income	0 – R5000	64	41.0%
	R5001 – R10 000	34	21.8%
	R10 001 – R25 000	33	21.2%
	R25 001 – R35 000	16	10.3%
	R35 001 – R50 000	5	3.1%
	More than R50 000	4	2.6%

The majority age group that chose to participate ranged between 18-24 years (45.6%) followed by 25-34 years (25.6%), 35-44 years (13.5%) and younger than 18 years old (11.5%). The remaining respondents were aged from 44 years and older (3.8%). In terms of marital status, Table 1 reveals that there was a fair split between the respondents with Single (35.3%), Students (29.5%) and Married/Living as a couple (28.2%). The only exception was respondents who were Divorced/Separated/Widowed (7.0%). Majority of the respondents indicated that their level of income was between 0-R5000 (41.0%), followed by 21.8% indicated that their income bracket fell between R5001-R10 000, with 21.2% of respondents indicating that their level of income was between R10 001-R25 000. 10.3% of respondents indicated that they earned between R25 001-R35 000, while 3.1% reported that they earned between R35 001-R50 000 and 2.6% indicated that their income fell in the bracket of over R50 000.

The following section presents the multivariate tests to directly achieve objective 1) To establish the changes in customer behaviour when visiting hospitality establishments in Gauteng during COVID-19 and 2) To determine potentially statistically significant differences in perceptions of customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19 across gender and frequency of visiting a restaurant.

Table 2. Types of outlets visited

		No	Yes	Total
Fast-food Restaurant	n	68	88	156
	%	43.6%	56.4%	100.0%
Fast Casual Restaurant	n	117	39	156
	%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Semi-Fine Dining Restaurant	n	129	27	156
	%	82.7%	17.3%	100.0%
Fine Dining Restaurant	n	133	23	156
	%	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%

Table 2 represents the types of outlets that were visited. Due to the nature of this question, respondents selected more than one answer. Majority of respondents (56.4%) indicated they visited a Fast-food restaurant, followed by a Fast Casual restaurant (25.0%), while 17.3% of respondents indicated they visited a Semi-Fine dining restaurant and 14.7% visited a Fine dining restaurant. It wasn't unexpected that the majority of customers opted for the Fast-food restaurant. Customers were just accustomed to "new normal" and customers preferred the contactless services on offer amid the risk of COVID-19 infections (Watanabe & Omori, 2020).

Table 3. Frequency of restaurants visits

Characteristic	n	Percentage
Frequency of restaurants visited		
Daily	15	9.6%
Once a week	90	57.7%

Twice a week	41	26.3%
Three times a week	10	6.4%
Frequency of using delivery options		
Once or twice a month	67	42.9%
1 – 3 times per week	66	42.3%
More than 3 times per week	23	14.7%
By when you began dining in restaurants post easing of lockdown restrictions		
Immediately	57	36.5%
After a week	21	13.5%
After a month	78	50.0%

Results in Table 3 reveal that a majority of respondents (57.7%) indicated they frequented a restaurant at least once a week, followed by twice a week (26.3%), Daily (9.6%), and three times a week (6.4%). Almost the same number of respondents utilised the delivery option for their food with either once or twice a month (42.9%) and 1 to 3 times per week (42.3%) and the remaining respondents indicated they use this option more than 3 times per week (14.7%). COVID-19 literature stipulates that the impact of this pandemic led to limiting labor costs through reduced working hours, salary cuts, and retrenchments, thus affecting affordability to spend on luxuries (Song et al., 2021). Interestingly, when the respondents were asked by when did they begin to visit restaurants once lockdown restrictions were eased, half (50.0%) of the responses were after a month, followed by 36.5% indicated they immediately started dining out and 13.5% indicated that they began dining at restaurants after a week after lockdown restrictions were eased. Research supports that customers didn't feel comfortable using restaurants after they reopened (Azevedo & Melo, 2021).

The Barlett's test of Sphericity should reach a statistical significance of less than 0.05 for factor analysis to be suitable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). It can be seen from Table 4 that the KMO value was 0.737 and Barlett's test of Sphericity`s p-value<0.001, supporting the factorability of the items.

Table 4. Exploratory and reliability analysis results

Dimension	Item	Factor Loadings	Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Cronbach`s Alpha Coefficient
Delivery service option	B11	0.872			
	B12	0.771			
	B10	0.733			0.727
	B8	0.537			
Hospitality establishment hygiene & cleanliness	B1	0.827			
	B2	0.703	0.737	< 0.001	0.690
	B3	0.655			
Safety measures	B7	0.827			
	B9	0.708			0.630
	B6	0.424			

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed on 11 items assessing customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19. Using the Kaiser`s criterion of 1, three factors were extracted. Factor 1 was labelled "Delivery Service Option" due to high loadings from four items. This factor with an eigenvalue of 3.235 accounted for 32.354% of the total variance. Factor 2 was interpreted as "Hospitality Establishment Hygiene & Cleanliness". This construct with an eigenvalue of 1.541 explained 15.410% of the total variance. Factor 3 was named as "Safety Measures". This dimension with an eigenvalue of 1.200 contributed 12.000% of the total variance. The cumulative variance explained by all three factors was 59.764%, exceeding the threshold value of 60% (Wiid & Diggines, 2015).

As shown in Table 4, the Cronbach's alpha values of the study constructs range from 0.630 to 0.727, well close to the acceptable value of 0.70, considered to represent a measure of good internal consistency (Mehrolia et al., 2021).

Table 5. Independent t-test results

Dimension	Males	Females	
n	76	80	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p-value
Delivery service option	3.72 (0.82)	3.76 (0.85)	0.771
Hospitality establishment hygiene & cleanliness	4.17 (0.70)	4.22 (0.61)	0.637
Safety measures	3.64 (0.80)	3.66 (0.84)	0.918

The results shown in Table 5 revealed no statistically significant differences in customer perceptions on delivery service option (p-value=0.771), hospitality establishment hygiene & cleanliness (p-value=0.637) and safety measures (p-value=0.918) between males and females who participated in the study.

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA results

Dimension	Once or Twice a Month	One to Three Times a Week	More than Three times a Week	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p-value
n	67	66	23	
Delivery service option	3.71 (0.80)	3.88 (0.78)	3.45 (1.01)	0.094
Hospitality establishment hygiene & cleanliness	4.21 (0.56)	4.22 (0.58)	4.07 (1.04)	0.618
Safety measures	3.77 (0.77)	3.52 (0.80)	3.70 (1.00)	0.218

It is evident from Table 6 that no statistically significant difference was found in customer perceptions on delivery service option (p-value = 0.094), hospitality establishment hygiene & cleanliness (p-value = 0.618) and safety measures (p-value = 0.218) across frequency of visiting the restaurant.

To meet the third objective of this paper, the following open-ended questions were asked: 1) How did they feel when they visited a crowded restaurant?; 2) What practices did they want to see being done in a restaurant to make them feel safe and comfortable in a restaurant during COVID-19?; 3) What top three concerns they had when they had to visit dine-in restaurants in the COVID-19 era?; and 4) What circumstances influenced their decision to resume eating out again after the COVID-19 restrictions were eased? The following section presents the themes developed from the open-ended responses.

Theme 1 – Feeling of Being Unsafe

Majority of respondents indicated that on the onset of the pandemic they had to get accustomed to limited visits to restaurants as the fear of contracting the virus still clouded their minds. Thus, being in a crowded restaurant amplified their feeling of being unsafe due to the uncertainty of the other person's COVID-19 status, especially when customers became sluggish in following the social distancing protocols and the set regulations. For example, such responses were received: "*I am uncomfortable and afraid of the unknown.*" (R6). The words "unsafe" and "scared" were repeated by almost all respondents when it came to expressing themselves. Some respondents were explicit in their response: "*I feel uneasy and immediately start getting anx-ious*

as my mind runs wild thinking of all the germs that I easily could come into contact with." (R4); "*I feel so anxious that I don't sit down, I just order and request a takeaway.*" (R8); "*If I see crowds I start to feel intimidated and anxious.*" (R119).

Other respondents expressed concerns of a lack of ventilation, particularly when restaurants are crowded, which further added to their fears and discomforts. For example: "*Lack of ventilation makes me uneasy and uncomfortable*" (R96); "*I don't feel safe because when there are crowds there is insufficient ventilation.*" (R20). Literature suggests that customers are generally influenced by their feelings and can be the deciding factors in a purchasing decision, ultimately resulting in a decision to dine at the restaurant or choose another alternative (Luna, 2020).

Theme 2 – Fear of Contracting The Virus

Fear is one of the most dominant negative emotions that humans can experience, which has undoubtedly augmented with the threat of COVID-19. Recent research advocates that fear is an emotional state that occurs in response to a real or perceived threat and escalates an autonomic escape action (Siddiqi et al., 2022), danger. Majority of respondents indicated that they are fearful of contracting the virus with the following direct responses:
"*I feel scared because of the risk of getting infected with COVID-19.*" (R52)
"*I am afraid of getting the virus and dying.*" (R134)
"*I am so concerned about being infected and infecting others.*" (R138)

Many respondents preferred to stay indoors rather than visit a crowded restaurant as they feared that with more people in one place, the rate of transmission will be higher as COVID is an airborne virus. For example: "*I preferred ordering and having my food delivered compared to personally going to the restaurant.*" (R134). "*I was just too scared to go out.*" (R136). Recent research emphasized that the transmission of COVID-19 can occur through direct and close contact with infected people, thus, setting the fear of being near others (Cerda & Garcia, 2022). Additionally, the fear of infection was augmented when other customers failed to strictly adhere to the safety regulations of being in public, like the wearing of masks incorrectly and failing to sanitize. Almost 100% of respondents mentioned that wearing masks, sanitizing, and social distancing were their primary concerns for them from both the customer and the staff. For example, respondents expressed: "*… restaurants need to ensure the safety of their customers.*" (R80) and "*…owners must be serious in curbing the spread of the virus.*" (R86). Literature states that close contact environments may facilitate transmission from even a small number of cases to many people, especially if hand hygiene was not performed and masks were not used when social distancing was not maintained (Chia et al., 2020).

Theme 3 – Willingness to Return to Restaurants

Considering the ease of restrictions, restaurants had the opportunity to open their doors and resume operations. After several months of hard lockdown, individuals were beginning to feel the effects of isolation, with the additional loss of loved ones during this time. The introduction of the vaccine provided a sense of security that allowed people to venture into public spaces and promoted the willingness of customers to dine out. For example, one respondent indicated: "*I resumed eating out because the vaccine became compulsory.*" (R136). Almost 100% of respondents indicated that the drop in the death toll and infection rate also encouraged customers to return to their favourite eating spots. Some respondents were a little more direct and indicated: "*…only when a cure is found.*" (R67). Whilst other respondents indicated: "*I missed my favourite meal.*" (R39; R120); whilst respondent (R42) expressed: "*I just got tired of cooking and eating at home*". Research supports that even during the pandemic, meal quality, service quality, and the physical environment are key aspects that influence customer behaviours (Hoang & Suleri, 2021).

Discussions

Results reveal that customers' behaviour has radically changed when dining out as a direct result of COVID-19. The original questionnaire that contained 11 items, of which 1 item with a low factor loading below 0.5 was eliminated, and the remaining items were then grouped into three factors. These factors were named accordingly: delivery service option, hospitality establishment hygiene and cleanliness, and safety measures, and can be viewed as the distinctive behaviours that customers were gravitating toward as lockdown restrictions eased, thereby achieving the first objective of this paper. This proves significant as before the pandemic existing literature emulates around the meal experience, the dining experience and food quality (Khalifa, 2015; Saneva & Chortoseva, 2018). It is evident that customers now have different concerns and expectations when they are choosing to dine out. These findings suggest that aspects such as cleanliness, physical environment, and availability of delivery services are more important when it comes to customers' dining in restaurant establishments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gursoy and Chi (2020) highlight that guests are willing to pay more for establishments that took precautions to protect their patrons by practicing all government regulations, frequently sanitizing touchpoints, and conducting staff health and safety training.

Results also reveal that there are no statistically significant differences in customer perceptions on all three factors (delivery service option, hospitality establishment hygiene & cleanliness, safety measures) between males and females. These results establish that these concerns were experienced by all customers regardless of gender and consistent with previous studies, Gursoy and Chi (2020), as well as Gursoy et al. (2021) who found a large portion of individuals are not willing to dine in at a sit-down restaurant as lockdown began to ease. These findings are prevalent for restaurants in South Africa today, as COVID-19 has provided a taste of dependence on delivery service options. Thus, customers may question themselves before deciding to physically dine out, especially if they can order in and have it delivered. Recent research advocates that online food delivery has now become the new normal in the food industry (Bannor & Amponsah, 2024). These researchers conducted a systematic review within African countries, making this study unique because it was an empirical study.

The three main themes that emerged from the qualitative data were a *feeling of being unsafe*, *fear of contracting the virus*, and *willingness to return to restaurants*. The general feel that customers were reluctant to enter public spaces when lockdown restrictions began to ease. Their apprehensions stemmed from their fears of contracting the virus, especially if restaurant establishments did not follow strict protocols and COVID-19 regulations. This is consistent with quantitative findings where only half of the respondents indicated that they would visit restaurants after a month of lockdown. Although it was notable that customers began to tire of being at home and cooking for themselves it was more important to not put themselves at risk.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized that the hospitality industry was not equipped to deal with natural and unforeseen disasters such as a pandemic. The management, revenue, employees, and operations of hospitality establishments depend on customers leaving their homes to visit dine-in restaurant establishments. This study clearly states that customers preferred the delivery option as opposed to putting themselves at risk of contracting the virus even after lockdown restrictions eased. Additionally, as the industry slowly reopened, customers who still visited dine-in establishments had to feel safe to patronize. Thus, restaurant managers had to conjure up strategic plans to ensure the safety of dine-in customers while adhering to safety regulations that complied with the COVID-19 protocols. The enforced travel restrictions curtailed movement within the country, provided an opportunity to all restaurant establishments to have/implement delivery services. Establishments that could not adapt had to shut down whilst others partnered with delivery services such as Uber Eats to stay in business. Furthermore, the continued application of the recommended safety protocols in restaurant establishments such as sanitizing can influence customers' perception of dining in restaurant establishments as opposed to opting for delivery. Although it should be noted that restaurants should not only focus on the hygiene conditions of their establishments, as this study provides empirical evidence that

customers enjoy having the delivery option, thus, sit-down and fine dining restaurants should also explore these options. Those restaurants that partnered with delivery apps out of necessity have now become a way of staying sustainable in the future.

It needs to be noted that this study targeted the customers from the restaurants industry, hence limiting the generalizability to other sectors, for example, hotels and the hospitality industry. Furthermore, this study was carried out within the province of Gauteng, thus replicating this study in parts of South Africa would be useful. Additionally, a questionnaire using convenience sampling was utilised to gather the study's data and may result in a measurement bias. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies can include a qualitative approach that provides an in-depth investigation into the customer's behaviour post-pandemic. Based on the study findings, future studies can include the customer preferences into the delivery of their meals and the dining in of restaurants.

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Travel motivations, preferences, and characteristics of women solo travelers in Bali

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Abstract: This study explores solo women travelers in Bali, focusing on their travel motivations, preferences, and characteristics. The research aims to fill the gap in understanding how solo travel contributes to understanding women's travel in these popular destinations. The study focuses on Big Data analysis. Textual content from TripAdvisor reviews by solo woman travelers is analyzed using the BART Large Zero Shot model. This model classifies text according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Plog's psychographics model, identifying primary travel motivations and distinguishing between allocentric and psychocentric traveler types. The findings reveal that 36.39% of travelers are motivated by self-actualization, seeking personal growth and transformative experiences. Additionally, 83.79% of solo woman travelers prefer allocentric travel experiences, indicating a strong desire for adventure and cultural immersion. These results highlight the empowerment journey of solo woman travelers as they travel to new destinations independently. This research provides valuable insights into the empowerment of solo woman travelers, emphasizing the role of travel in fostering personal development and independence. By examining the specific motivations and preferences of these travelers, the study enriches the discourse on gender roles within modern tourism and offers a nuanced understanding of solo travel.

Keywords: Bali, empowerment, motivations, women solo travelers

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Introduction

The rise of solo women travelers has captured significant attention in recent years, highlighting a trend associated with empowerment, self-discovery, and the pursuit of authentic cultural experiences. As more women choose to explore the world independently, they challenge societal norms and embrace new forms of travel (Ghadban et al., 2023; Khalid et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024; Pécot et al., 2024). Yang et al. (2022) noted a substantial increase in solo woman travelers over the past decade, indicating a shift towards greater independence and self-determination among women.

As a popular destination for solo women travelers, Bali offers unique and enriching experiences. Renowned for its vibrant culture, it is a place where travelers can engage in cultural practices, enjoy serene beaches, and partake in wellness activities such as yoga and meditation (Pitana, 2010; Pitanatri & Wiarti, 2022; Putra & Paturusi, 2017). Critics however, argue that island destinations like Bali may not always provide a safe environment for solo women travelers due to potential safety concerns and cultural differences (Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015; Wantono & McKercher, 2019). Despite being celebrated for its vibrant culture, beautiful beaches, and scenic landscapes, Bali can be overwhelming for solo woman tourists (www.thetravellingwellnessgirl.com, 2025) The bustling streets, crowded

markets, and busy beaches may pose challenges in terms of travelling safely and comfortably (Ali et al., 2021; www.theborderlessmind.com, 2017; www.travelladies.app, 2024) Moreover, the nightlife and party scenes—while appealing to many— can also present situations where solo woman travelers might feel unsafe or targeted.

Despite the growing interest in the experiences of solo women travelers (Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015; Kong & Zhu, 2021; Myers, 2017; Wantono & McKercher, 2019; Zhang et al., 2022), there is a significant research gap in understanding how solo travel specifically impacts women's empowerment in island destinations like Bali. Previous research on solo women travelers in Asia has primarily focused on aspects such as travel constraints, risk perception, and social interactions, neglecting the broader impact on empowerment (Hashem et al., 2022; Nematpour et al., 2024; Wantono & McKercher, 2019). Existing research also has predominantly focused on isolated aspects of solo travel, such as individual experiences and anecdotal narratives (Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Yang et al., 2018). While these studies provide valuable insights into specific elements of solo women travel—such as safety concerns, social interactions, and personal growth—they often overlook the broader context, resulting in a fragmented understanding of this unique traveler segment.

Comprehensive studies that look into the travel motivations, preferences, and characteristics of solo women travelers in island settings are notably scarce. Most existing research has not fully addressed the intricate web of factors that influence these travelers' choices and behaviors (Bernard et al., 2022; Hashem et al., 2022; Wantono & McKercher, 2019). This lack of holistic research leaves a significant gap in our comprehension of the solo women traveler segment, particularly in the context of island destinations that offer distinct cultural, geographical, and social dynamics.

Island destinations present a unique set of attractions and challenges that can significantly influence travel experiences. The secluded beaches, rich cultural heritage, and adventurous activities contrast with potential issues like limited infrastructure, safety concerns, and cultural barriers (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015; Elsrud, 1998; Kong & Zhu, 2021). Understanding how solo women travelers adapt to these dynamics requires a multifaceted research approach that goes beyond isolated case studies. The motivations driving solo women to choose island destinations are complex and multifaceted (Becken, 2007; Cohen et al., 2015; Desforges, 2000; He et al., 2016). While some may seek solitude and self-discovery, others might be drawn by the promise of adventure or the desire to immerse themselves in new cultures (Khalid et al., 2023; Valeri & Katsoni, 2021; Zhang et al., 2024). Preferences for accommodations, activities, and interactions with locals can vary widely, influenced by individual backgrounds, travel experiences, and personal goals (Ghadban et al., 2023; Pitanatri et al., 2024). Without comprehensive research that integrates these diverse elements, our understanding of solo women travelers remains incomplete.

Addressing this gap is crucial not only for enhancing academic knowledge but also for its practical implications for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and the travelers themselves. For ASEAN countries, a thorough exploration of solo women travel in island destinations can inform targeted marketing strategies, improve safety measures, and enhance the overall travel experience. This research can support the growth and empowerment of solo women travelers, providing actionable insights that can transform how destinations within ASEAN cater to this important and growing traveler segment.

Literature Review

Solo Women Travelers and Empowerment

The increasing body of research on solo women travelers highlights the transformative impact of travel on personal growth, self-reliance, and empowerment. Recent studies emphasize that solo travel enables women to transcend traditional gender roles, affording them greater autonomy in decision-making and fostering a heightened sense of agency (Pécot et al., 2024; Pitanatri, 2016). The experience of navigating unfamiliar environments independently enhances self-efficacy, resilience, and adaptability, reinforcing the strong correlation between solo travel and personal development. Furthermore, solo travel serves as a catalyst for

confidence-building, as women develop critical problem-solving skills and adaptability in response to challenges encountered on the road (Pitanatri et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). The empowerment derived from these experiences extends beyond the travel context, often translating into increased self-assurance and assertiveness in personal and professional spheres.

Safety and Risk Perception

A substantial body of literature examines the safety concerns and risk perceptions associated with solo female travel. Empirical studies indicate that safety considerations significantly influence destination choice, with women often prioritizing locations perceived as secure and culturally receptive to solo female travelers (Pitanatri et al., 2022; Rittichainuwat, 2013; World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 1996). The perception of risk is shaped by a combination of sociocultural norms, past experiences, and media representations, all of which inform the precautionary measures that solo female travelers adopt. Research suggests that women employ diverse risk-mitigation strategies, including selecting women-friendly accommodations, avoiding nighttime travel, and leveraging online travel communities to access real-time safety information (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015; Wantono & McKercher, 2019). Additionally, digital technologies, such as mobile safety apps and social media networks, have become integral tools for risk assessment and on-the-go decision-making, further shaping the travel behaviors of solo female adventurers.

Travel Motivations and Psychological Needs

The motivations driving solo women travelers have been extensively analyzed through psychological frameworks, particularly Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Studies indicate that self-actualization is a primary motivator, as women engage in solo travel to seek personal fulfillment, cultivate independence, and experience personal growth (Elsrud, 1998; Myers, 2017). Beyond self-actualization, esteem needs also play a crucial role, as solo travel often provides opportunities for self-validation, confidence-building, and the pursuit of meaningful experiences. The desire for cultural immersion and social belonging further influences travel decisions, with many solo female travelers actively seeking interactions with local communities and like-minded individuals (Ghadban et al., 2023; Laing & Frost, 2017; Wang et al., 2023). In this regard, solo travel serves not only as an avenue for self-exploration but also as a means of fostering cross-cultural connections and deepening one's understanding of global diversity.

Tourist Typologies and Behavioral Patterns

The application of Plog's psychographic model to solo women travelers provides valuable insights into their behavioral patterns and travel preferences. Existing literature suggests that most solo female travelers exhibit allocentric tendencies, favoring unique, immersive, and adventure-driven experiences over conventional, structured itineraries (Cruz-Milan, 2018; Plog, 1974). These travelers often demonstrate a strong inclination toward off-the-beaten-path destinations, cultural authenticity, and self-directed exploration. However, research also acknowledges the presence of psychocentric solo female travelers, who prioritize safety, familiarity, and structured travel experiences (Durko & Stone, 2017; Ghadban et al., 2023; Litvin & Smith, 2016). This diversity within the solo female traveler segment underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of individual travel styles, as preferences may vary based on factors such as prior travel experience, cultural background, and personal comfort levels.

Solo Travel in Island Destinations

Island destinations present a distinctive combination of attractions and challenges for solo women travelers. The allure of pristine natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and adventure-oriented experiences makes islands a popular choice for those seeking solitude and exploration. However, existing research highlights potential constraints, including infrastructural limitations, safety concerns, and gender-specific challenges that may impact the overall travel

experience (Desforges, 2000; Pitanatri et al., 2024)The degree to which these factors influence travel decisions varies, with destination management playing a critical role in shaping the inclusivity and accessibility of island tourism for solo female travelers. Studies emphasize the importance of targeted policy interventions, such as the development of safe transport options, gender-sensitive tourism policies, and the promotion of women-centric hospitality initiatives, to create more accommodating environments (Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024).
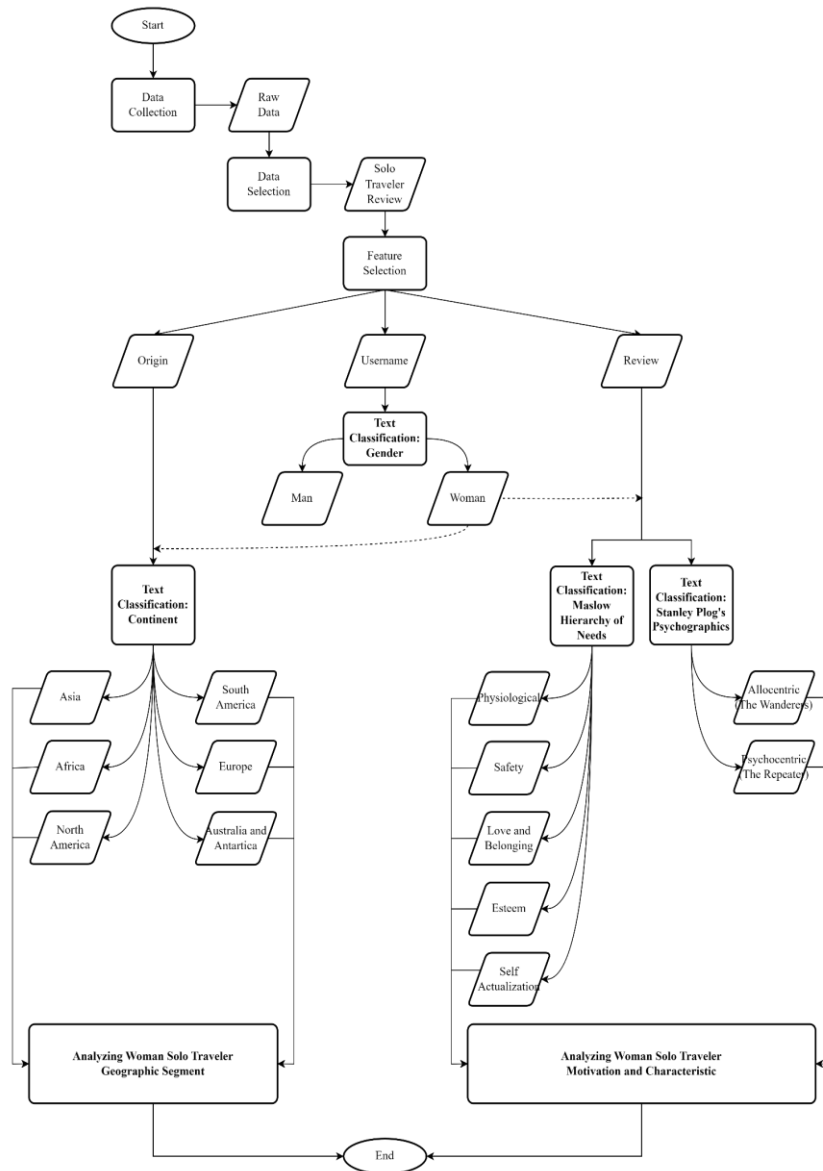
Methodology

The methodology of this research is designed to understand the motivations and characteristics of solo women travelers, with a specific focus on their experiences. The initial step in this comprehensive study involves collecting a dataset from TripAdvisor, which includes customer reviews for the top-rated travel destinations in Bali (50 destinations). Henceforth, this dataset will be referred to as 'raw data'.

The raw data encompasses detailed information such as usernames, dates of visit, dates of review, titles, textual content of reviews, ratings, likes, and the geographical origins of the reviewers. To maintain a clear focus on solo travelers, the study meticulously selects a subset of the raw data, choosing only those reviews left by individuals who traveled alone, thereby excluding entries from families, couples, or groups.

The selection process yields a refined dataset exclusively consisting of reviews from solo travelers. For a more focused analysis, three primary features are identified from the data: the username of the reviewer, their geographic origin, and the textual content of their review. The 'username' feature is analyzed to predict the gender of the reviewer, aiming to classify them into 'Man' and 'Woman' categories. This classification is achieved through a gender classification algorithm, such as the BART Large Zero Shot model, which estimates gender based on the username. This step is crucial for understanding gender-specific travel patterns (Vecchio et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2019).

Following this, the 'origin' feature is examined to understand the diverse backgrounds of the travelers, which can significantly influence travel preferences and behaviors. The analysis narrows down to data from women solo travelers to assess their geographic distribution. The origin data is processed through text classification to categorize the reviewers' origins into continents using the BART Large Zero Shot model. This geographical segmentation analysis aims to reveal patterns in the prevalence of women solo travelers from specific continents.

The textual content of the reviews is conducted to extract insights about the travel motivations and characteristics of solo women travelers. This part of the study focuses solely on data from women solo travelers to analyze their motivations and characteristics. The review texts are classified according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Stanley Plog's psychographics model using the BART Large Zero Shot model (Romão & Neuts, 2017). This dual classification helps identify the underlying motivations of women solo travelers and categorize them into two personality types: allocentric (The Wanderers) and psychocentric (The Repeater). A comprehensive analysis combines findings from both Maslow's hierarchy and Plog's psychographics to create a detailed profile of women solo travelers' motivations and personality characteristics (Bello-Orgaz et al., 2016; Vecchio et al., 2018). Through this methodological approach, the study aims to contribute a nuanced understanding of the motivations and characteristics of solo women travelers, providing valuable insights for the tourism industry and enhancing the body of knowledge on travel behavior. Research flow can be seen in Figure 1.

(Source: Author's Construct, 2024)
Figure 1. Research flow

In executing this data collection methodology, the study adheres to ethical considerations and respects the privacy of the individuals whose reviews are analyzed. The use of publicly available data, such as that on TripAdvisor, aligns with the principles of open research and contributes to the transparency and replicability of the study's findings.

Results and Discussions

Results

Data Collection

The process of data collection for this study involved the systematic extraction of traveler reviews from the TripAdvisor website, utilizing web scraping techniques implemented in the R programming language. The focus was on English-language reviews from the period from January 1, 2020, to September 1, 2023. The dataset comprises reviews for the top 50 most popular tourist destinations in Bali (https://www.tripadvisor.co.id/Attractions-g294226-Activities-oa0-Bali.html), as determined by the volume of reviews. This selection criteria ensures the

inclusion of a wide array of traveler interactions and perspectives. Results in Table 1 are as follow:

Table 1. Data collection

No.	Destinations	Total Reviews
1.	Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary	35,237
2.	Tegalalang Rice Terrace	16,815
3.	Waterbom Bali	16,335
4.	Tanah Lot Temple	11,170
5.	Kuta Beach - Bali	10,497
6.	Uluwatu Temple	10,195
7.	Sanur Beach	8,266
8.	Campuhan Ridge Walk	6,643
9.	Nusa Dua Beach	6,059
10.	Seminyak Beach	5,691
11.	Bali Zoo	4,789
12.	Zahra Spa	4,499
13.	Paon Bali Cooking Class	3,687
14.	Ketut s Bali Cooking Class	2,000
15.	Karsa Spa	1,973
16.	Ubud Traditional Spa	1,558
17.	Zanti The Retreat	1,380
18.	Heavenly Spa by Westin	1,309
19.	Jeding Bali Cooking Class	1,167
20.	Sekar Jagat Spa	1,068
21.	De Nyuh Spa Seminyak	1,050
22.	TSL The Shampoo Lounge Seminyak	1,029
23.	Nusa Bali Spa	927
24.	Lobong Culinary Experience	874
25.	Periuk Bali Cooking Class	870
26.	Kaveri Spa at The Udaya	840
27.	Tamarind Spa at Murni s Houses Ubud Bali	806
28.	Tejas Spa Jembawan	800
29.	Bhava Spa Kuta	790
30.	Bali Manggang Cooking Class	690
31.	De Nyuh Spa Kuta	598
32.	Museum PASIFIKA	595
33.	DaLa Spa	558
34.	Bali Farm Cooking School	557
35.	Canting Bali Cooking Class	550
36.	Glow Spa At Mandira	538
37.	Chef Mudana Cooking Class Sanur	519
38.	I Nyoman Warta Batik Class	453
39.	Svaha SPA Bisma	450

No.	Destinations	Total Reviews
40.	Tejas Spa Unagi	408
41.	Subak Cooking Class	391
42.	Zahra Luxury Spa Nusa Dua	380
43.	Serayu Spa at The Kayon Resort	350
44.	AmrtaSiddhi Ayurvedic Centre	319
45.	J Jireh Spa And Salon	281
46.	Five Arts Studio	277
47.	Lumina Aesthetics Clinic SPA	276
48.	Away Spa at W Bali Seminyak	260
49.	Taro Village Experience	115
50.	Anandinii Organic Garden Kitchen	89
	TOTAL	122,954

## Data Labeling

Traveler reviews were subsequently categorized using the zero-shot classification model bart-large-MNLI, to identify reviews from solo woman travelers. This model is capable of labeling English text into several categories, including gender and travel motivations. The zero-shot classification utilizing the BART-Large-MNLI (Multinomial Likelihood) model refers to the ability of the BART-Large natural language model to perform text classification tasks without the need for prior learning on a specific dataset. This is a significant feature of the model.

The BART-Large-MNLI model has been trained on a variety of natural language understanding (NLU) and natural language processing (NLP) tasks. One of the tasks used in training this model is the MNLI task, which involves understanding the relationship between pairs of sentences, such as the relationship between a premise and a hypothesis. The model can be applied to various NLP tasks, including text classification. "Zero-shot classification" using the BART-Large-MNLI model means that it can perform text classification tasks that it has never seen before without requiring specific training in advance. The model uses the general knowledge it has acquired during training to attempt to understand and classify the given text, even if it is not part of its training tasks. The labels generated by the model were then visualized to provide insights into the travel destination preferences of solo woman travelers visiting Bali. You must include the examples, the use of the BART Large MNLI Model).

Gender Proposition

Using the BART-Large-MNLI model (Figure 2) dataset was classified by gender. Upon analyzing the data, it is observed that 59.63% of the travellers are women, amounting to 73,323 travellers. In contrast, males constitute 40.37% of the dataset, with 49,631 travellers.
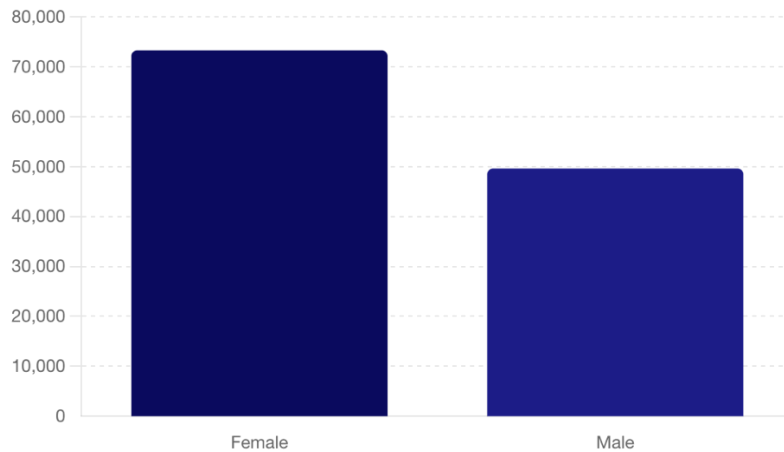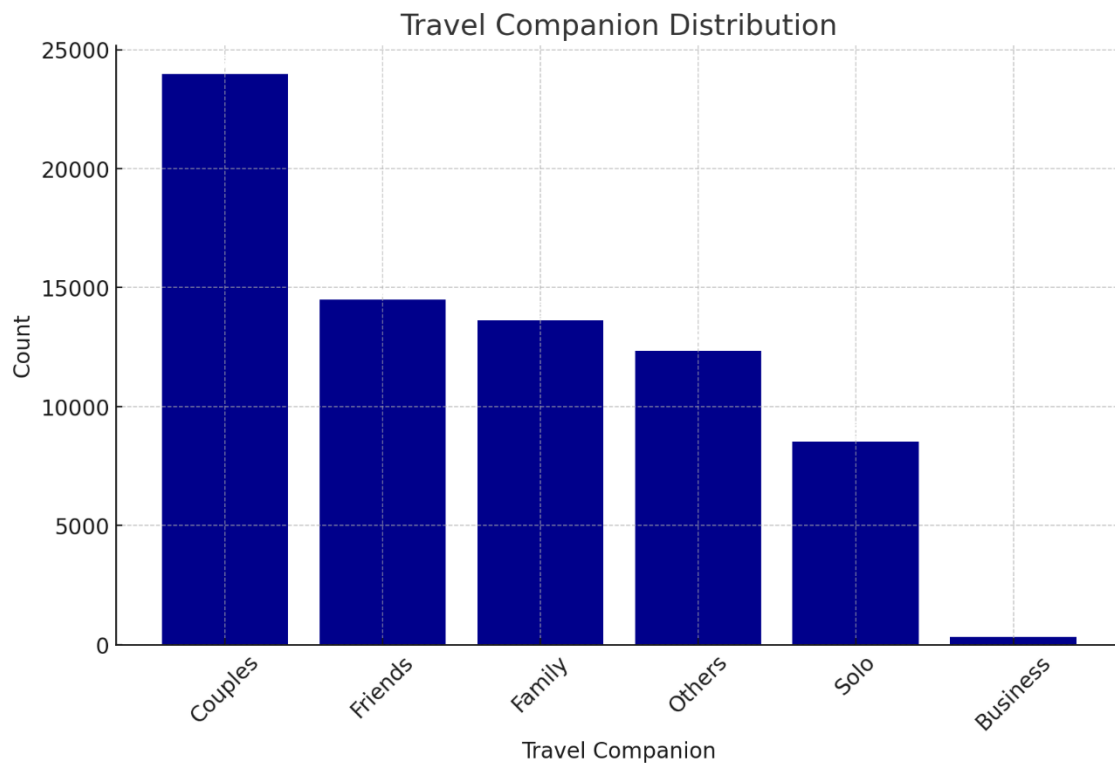
(Source: Research Results, 2024)
Figure 2. Gender proposition

Travel Companion

Woman travelers were then classified into five distinct groups based on their travel companions: couples, friends, family, solo, and business. The results of this classification can be seen in Figure 3.

(Source: Research Results, 2024)
Figure 3. Travel companion

The analysis of the travel companion distribution for women travelers visiting Bali reveals distinct preferences and patterns. The largest segment, 39.33%, visits Bali with their partners. This indicates that Bali is a popular destination for romantic getaways and couples' vacations, with the island's scenic beauty, luxurious resorts, and romantic ambiance making it an ideal choice for couples. Traveling with friends is the second most common choice, accounting for

23.77% of women travelers. This suggests that Bali is also a favored destination for group trips among friends, likely due to its cultural scene, diverse activities, and beautiful landscapes.

**Table 2.** Travel companion woman solo travel to Bali

No.	Travel Companion	Count	Percentage
1.	Couples	23,983	32.71%
2.	Friends	14,498	19.78%
3.	Family	13,631	18.59%
4.	Solo	8,536	11.64%
5	Business	335	0.46%
6.	Others	12,340	16.83%
	Total	73,323	100.00%

Women traveling as couples account for 32.71% (Table 2) of all travelers, reinforcing Bali's reputation as a top honeymoon and romantic getaway destination. The island's picturesque landscapes, luxurious resorts, and vibrant culture make it an attractive choice for couples seeking a romantic escape. Solo female travelers constitute 11.64% of the visits, representing 8,536 travelers. This highlights a significant portion of women who feel confident exploring Bali alone, often seeking self-discovery, adventure, or relaxation. Bali's reputation as a safe and welcoming destination plays a crucial role in attracting solo female travelers.

Women traveling with friends make up 19.78%, showing the island's popularity for group travel and shared experiences. Meanwhile, 18.59% of travelers visit with their families, emphasizing Bali's appeal as a family-friendly destination with activities catering to all age groups. A smaller segment, 0.46%, consists of business travelers, suggesting that while Bali is primarily known for leisure tourism, it also serves as a meeting and conference hub. Lastly, 16.83% fall under the "Others" category, which may include mixed travel groups or alternative travel arrangements. This reflects Bali's diverse tourism appeal, attracting various traveler segments while maintaining a strong reputation for safety, inclusivity, and unique experiences.

Woman Solo Traveller Origin

The analysis of solo woman travelers to Bali based on their continent of origin reveals distinct patterns and preferences. The data highlights Australia and America as the leading sources of solo woman travelers to Bali, with substantial numbers from America and smaller yet significant percentages from Europe, Oceania, Asia, and Africa. Results can be seen in Figure 4.
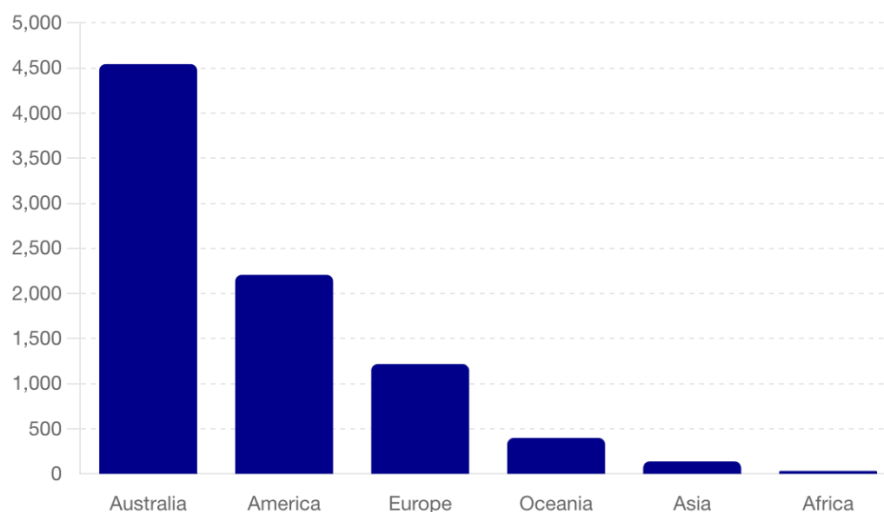
(Source: Research Results, 2024)
Figure 4. Origin proposition

Data shows in Table 3 that the majority of solo woman travelers come from Australia, making up 53.23% of the total. This indicates that Bali is a particularly popular destination for Australian women traveling alone, possibly due to the geographical proximity between the two regions. America follows as the second largest source of solo woman travelers, contributing 25.86% to the total. Based on the data, this substantial figure underscores Bali's appeal also to American women. Europe accounts for 14.26% of solo woman travelers, reflecting Bali's attractiveness as a destination for European women seeking tropical getaways.

Table 3. Origin proposition

No.	Continent	Count	Percentage
1.	Australia	4,544	53.23%
2.	America	2,207	25.86%
3.	Europe	1,217	14.26%
4.	Oceania	398	4.66%
5.	Asia	138	1.62%
6	Africa	32	0.37%
	Total	8,536	100.00%

Oceania, excluding Australia, contributes 4.66% of the solo woman travelers, this significant percentage suggests that other countries in the region, such as New Zealand, also have a strong presence among solo woman tourists in Bali. The lower percentage compared to Oceania and America could be attributed to the longer travel distance and different travel preferences. Asia accounts for 1.62% of the solo woman travelers, indicating a modest but notable interest from neighboring Asian countries. The relatively low percentage might be due to cultural differences or alternative preferred destinations within Asia itself. Africa has the smallest representation, with 0.37% of solo woman travelers. This minimal percentage suggests that Bali is not a primary destination for African women traveling alone, potentially due to travel distance, cost, and other factors.

Woman Solo Traveler: Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Woman solo travelers are primarily motivated by the pursuit of self-actualization, social connections, and safety. It can be seen in Figure 5. Their journeys are shaped by a desire for personal growth, meaningful relationships, and secure environments. Esteem and physiological needs are also important but to a lesser extent. Understanding these motivations can help travel planners, tour operators, and hospitality providers create tailored experiences that cater to the unique needs and preferences of solo woman travelers, ensuring their trips are fulfilling, safe, and enjoyable.
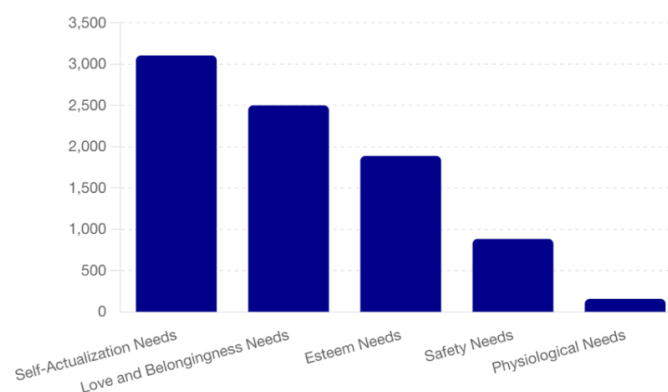
(Source: Research Results, 2024)
Figure 5. Maslow hierarchy of needs

Detail of distribution of needs can be seen in Table 4. Women traveling solo to Bali are proven to have a strong desire for self-actualization. With 36.39% prioritizing these needs, it is evident that a significant number of solo woman travelers are seeking personal growth and self-fulfillment. Traveling alone offers a unique opportunity for women to explore their potential, challenge themselves, and discover new facets of their identities. Destinations that provide rich cultural experiences, adventure activities, and educational opportunities are particularly appealing to this group. Whether it's through attending workshops, participating in retreats, or immersing themselves in different cultures, these travelers are driven by a quest for personal development and enlightenment.

Table 4. Distribution of needs

No.	Needs	Count	Percentage
1.	Self-Actualization Needs	3,106	36.39%
2.	Love and Belongingness Needs	2,501	29.30%
3.	Esteem Needs	1,889	22.13%
4.	Safety Needs	883	10.34%
5.	Physiological Needs	157	1.84%
	Total	8,536	100.00%

Social connections and a sense of belonging are also vital for many women traveling solo, with 29.30% prioritizing love and belongingness needs. For these travelers, solo trips are not just about seeing new places but also about meeting new people and forming meaningful relationships. The desire to connect with others and feel part of a global community drives them to choose destinations known for their friendliness and social opportunities. Staying in hostels, joining group tours, or participating in volunteer programs allows these women to build friendships and create a support network while on the road. The social interactions and bonds formed during their travels enhance their overall experience and satisfaction.

Esteem needs, including the pursuit of recognition and self-respect, are important for 22.13% of solo woman travelers. Traveling alone can be an empowering experience, allowing women to prove their independence and gain confidence. Many seek out challenging activities such as hiking, trekking, or extreme sports to push their limits and achieve personal milestones. Documenting their travels through blogs, social media, or photography also provides a platform for gaining validation and admiration from others. Destinations offering unique and challenging experiences cater to this group's desire for esteem and self-recognition.

Safety is also a paramount concern for solo woman travelers, with 10.34% focusing on safety needs. These women carefully select destinations that are perceived as safe and welcoming for solo travelers. They prioritize destination that has accommodations with security measures, reliable transportation options, and accessible healthcare facilities. Destinations with low crime rates and well-developed infrastructure are particularly attractive, as they offer a sense of security and peace of mind. Planning meticulously and ensuring that safety measures are in place allows these travelers to enjoy their journeys without undue stress or worry.

While physiological needs are less of a focus, comprising 1.84% of the priorities, they still play a role in the travel experiences of some women. These basic needs, including access to food, water, and shelter, are essential for comfort and well-being. Solo woman travelers who prioritize these needs tend to choose destinations with reliable access to necessities and comfortable living conditions. Ensuring that basic survival needs are met allows these travelers to focus more on higher-level goals and enjoy their journeys to the fullest.

Woman Solo Traveler: Plog's model of tourist behavior

The centric distribution among woman solo travelers provides deep insights into their travel preferences and behaviors, highlighting two distinct types of travelers: allocentric and psychocentric, which can be seen in Figure 6.
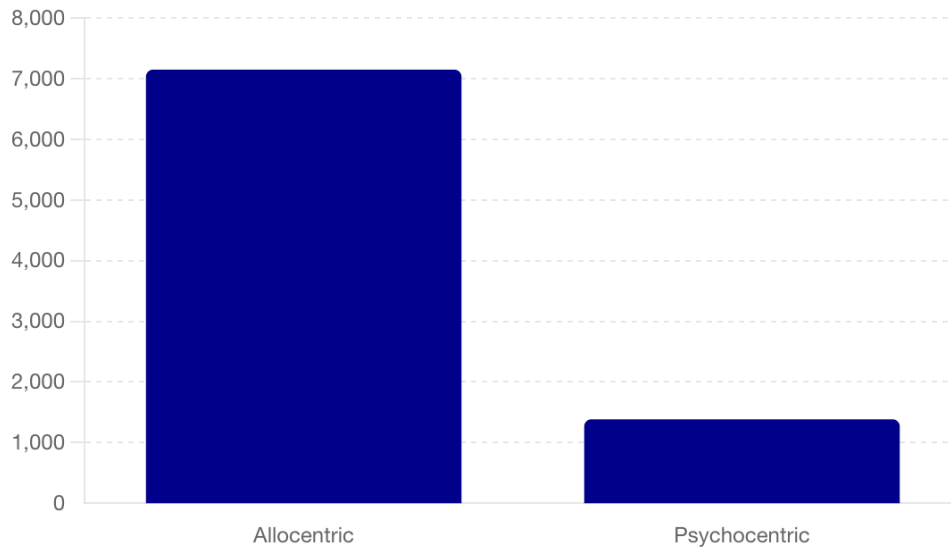
(Source: Research Results, 2024)
Figure 6. Allocentric and psychocentric distribution

Results of allocentric and psychocentric can be seen in Table 5. A significant majority of women solo travelers, representing 83.79% of the dataset, fall into the allocentric category. These women are characterized by their adventurous spirit and a strong desire to explore new and unfamiliar destinations. Allocentric travelers are drawn to unique experiences and cultural immersion, often seeking out locations off the beaten path. They tend to avoid mainstream tourist spots, preferring instead to discover hidden gems and engage deeply with the local culture.

Table 5. Allocentric and psychocentric

No.	Needs	Count	Percentage
1.	Allocentric	7,152	83.79%
2.	Psychocentric	1,384	16.21%
	Total	8,536	100.00%

Allocentric woman solo travelers prioritize destinations known for their authenticity and opportunities for adventure activities. Whether it's hiking in remote mountain ranges, exploring ancient ruins, or participating in local festivals, these travelers are motivated by the desire to broaden their horizons and challenge themselves. Their travel style is typically independent and exploratory, with a focus on personal growth and enriching experiences. These travelers are not just seeking to see new places, but to understand and connect with them on a deeper level, making their journeys profoundly transformative.

In contrast, 16.21% of women solo travelers are psychocentric. These travelers prefer familiar and comfortable destinations where they feel safe and secure. Psychocentric travelers often choose well-known tourist spots and favor organized tours and packaged holidays. Their travel preferences are driven by a need for relaxation and convenience, seeking destinations that offer reliable amenities, structured itineraries, and minimal risk.

Psychocentric woman solo travelers prioritize destinations with a reputation for safety, comfort, and predictability. They are likely to opt for all-inclusive resorts, cruise vacations, and guided tours that provide a well-defined and secure environment (Ho & McKercher, 2015; Litvin & Smith, 2016). For these travelers, the focus is on enjoying their travel experience without the uncertainties and challenges that come with more independent and adventurous travel. They value the assurance that comes with organized and familiar settings, allowing them to relax and enjoy their surroundings comfortably.

The centric distribution among woman solo travelers highlights a dominant preference for allocentric travel, with the majority seeking adventurous, culturally immersive, and novel experiences. These travelers are driven by a desire for personal growth, exploration, and deep cultural engagement. On the other hand, a significant number of psychocentric travelers prefer familiarity, comfort, and structured environments, valuing safety, convenience, and well-organized travel experiences.

Discussions

The data reveals that solo women travelers are not just looking for a holiday; they're seeking transformative experiences that contribute to personal development. This aligns with global trends emphasizing experiential and meaningful travel. Bali's ability to meet these needs not only boosts its tourism market but also supports the broader goal of empowering women through travel. However, the study also hints at underlying challenges such as the need for more targeted services and safety measures that could further enhance the travel experience for women. Addressing these challenges could not only improve the satisfaction of women travelers but also increase Bali's competitiveness as a top travel destination for solo women adventurers.

This study enriches our understanding of the motivations behind solo women travelers choosing Bali as a destination, revealing a significant inclination towards self-actualization and allocentric travel experiences. This echoes findings from broader research, such as those by Yang et al. (2022), which have similarly noted a shift towards more meaningful travel that emphasizes independence and personal growth, particularly among women. By highlighting Bali's unique offerings of cultural richness and safety, this research provides a deeper insight into why these factors resonate so strongly with solo female travelers.

The implications of these insights extend beyond academic circles, offering practical advice for tourism operators in Bali and similar destinations. The clear preference for cultural experiences and secure environments suggests areas where tourism strategies can be refined to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, this study broadens the conversation about the impact of travel on women's empowerment and challenges traditional gender roles within tourism. It suggests that destinations which cater to these needs not only attract more visitors but also play a part in supporting women's empowerment journeys. Future research could explore how these trips influence women's perceptions of independence and self-efficacy and how tourism can be a force for gender equality globally. Thus, the study not only supports existing literature but also opens new pathways for understanding the transformative power of travel for solo women travelers.

Conclusions

These findings highlight the diverse motivations and preferences of solo women travelers to Bali. The prominence of self-actualization and allocentric travel motivations indicates a growing trend where women seek personal growth, adventure, and cultural immersion through solo travel. Bali's wide array of unique experiences, coupled with its safe environment and welcoming culture, significantly contribute to its appeal among this demographic. The travel companion distribution further highlights Bali's versatility as a destination, catering to various types of travelers, including couples, friends, families, and solo adventurers. While many women travelers visit with companions, the significant proportion of solo travelers demonstrates the island's suitability for independent women tourists.

These insights provide valuable information for tourism stakeholders in Bali to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of women travelers. By focusing on the motivations and preferences identified in this study, Bali can enhance its attractiveness as a destination that supports the empowerment and personal development of solo women travelers. It contains an answer or explanation to the problem of research. Moreover, it can also be added to the development prospects of the research and the further application in subsequent studies.

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How do aesthetics drive customer retention in Bali cafes?

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Abstract: In today's competitive food service industry, aesthetics are key to customer retention. The food service landscape is changing as customers want to fulfill more than just their hunger and thirst. Customers now care more about the looks of the place and food to satisfy their hedonistic desire. This research aims to determine the influence of aesthetic attributes on customer retention through customer satisfaction in café businesses in Bali. This research uses the quantitative method, with the data analyzed using the SmartPLS 4 statistical software. Data is collected with Google Forms using a convenience sampling technique. The results show that food aesthetics showed a significant path coefficient of 0.035 with p<0.05 on customer satisfaction. Labor aesthetics showed a significant path coefficient of 0.000 with p<0.05 on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction showed a significant path coefficient of 0.000 with p<0.05 on customer retention. Food and labor aesthetics significantly affected customer retention through customer satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.046<0.05 for food aesthetics and 0.000<0.05 for labor aesthetics. However, the physical environment aesthetics do not significantly influence customer satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.376>0.05 and do not significantly influence customer retention through customer satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.374>0.05. Therefore, the management of the café in Bali should not rely solely on the physical environment aesthetics, instead, they should maintain the food and labor aesthetic. They should also enhance customer satisfaction through the three aesthetic attributes as it will lead to customer retention.

Keywords: café businesses, customer satisfaction, customer retention, food aesthetics, labor aesthetics, physical environment aesthetics

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Introduction

Indonesia's food service industry has been growing rapidly, with its expected CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) growth from 2024 to 2029 at 13.43%. The industry is a very popular business venture in Indonesia due to the country's change in increasingly busy lifestyles and high consumption behavior. Furthermore, its market size is also expected to almost double from 2024's USD 55.25 billion to 2029's projected value of USD 103.76 billion (Kertasunjaya et al., 2020). In addition to the growth in market size and CAGR, the fastest-growing foodservice types in the country are cafes and bars (Meiselman, 2020).

Bali, or known as the Island of the Gods, is the benchmark of tourism activities in Indonesia. It is a tourist destination loved by local and foreign tourists. To support tourism activities, the Horeca industry (hotels, restaurants, and cafes) has grown rapidly yearly. It is proven from the cafes and coffee shops found in every corner of the island, such as in Denpasar City (Susetya & Marhaeni, 2023), Kintamani (Handayani et al., 2022), Canggu (Pramono et al., 2024), etc. The culture of café hopping has become a lifestyle for both local people and tourists.

Based on the data from the Bali Provincial Central Statistics Agency, the number of restaurants and cafes in Bali is 3868 in 2021, 3245 in 2022, and 4429 in 2023. These numbers show a growth of 12.7% from 2021 to 2023 and 26.7% from 2022-2023. The highest number of restaurants and cafes is in the regency of Gianyar. The growth of the restaurants and café businesses in Bali reflects the lifestyle of café hopping for both local people and tourists. The Bali café scene has taken off in recent years due to social media, with cafes vying for the most

beautiful, photo-perfect settings. These cafes, range from cool beachside locations with the natural style, which combines artificial and natural light; the industrialist style, which prioritises concrete and metal elements; and the minimalist style with the natural contemporary design (Susanti et al., 2021). The aesthetic highlights of these cafés are certain to satisfy the desire of customers to enshrine their visits to these cafés.

Since Bali is a tourist center in Indonesia, where most local and foreign tourists come from, each cafe must have its uniqueness to attract them. According to data from BPS (2023) the number of international tourist arrivals in Bali reached 6.27 million in 2019, a slight increase from 6.07 million in 2018. However, the pandemic caused a drastic decline in tourism, with foreign tourist visits dropping by 82.96% in 2020, reaching only 1.07 million visitors. The situation worsened in 2021, when Bali received only 51 international tourists, indicating the severe disruption in the hospitality industry. Despite this sharp downturn, the industry began to recover in 2022, with international arrivals increasing to 4.23 million, reflecting a growth rate of 99.99% from the previous year. As of 2023, Bali has continued its recovery, attracting 5.27 million international tourists, representing a 144.61% increase compared to 2022.
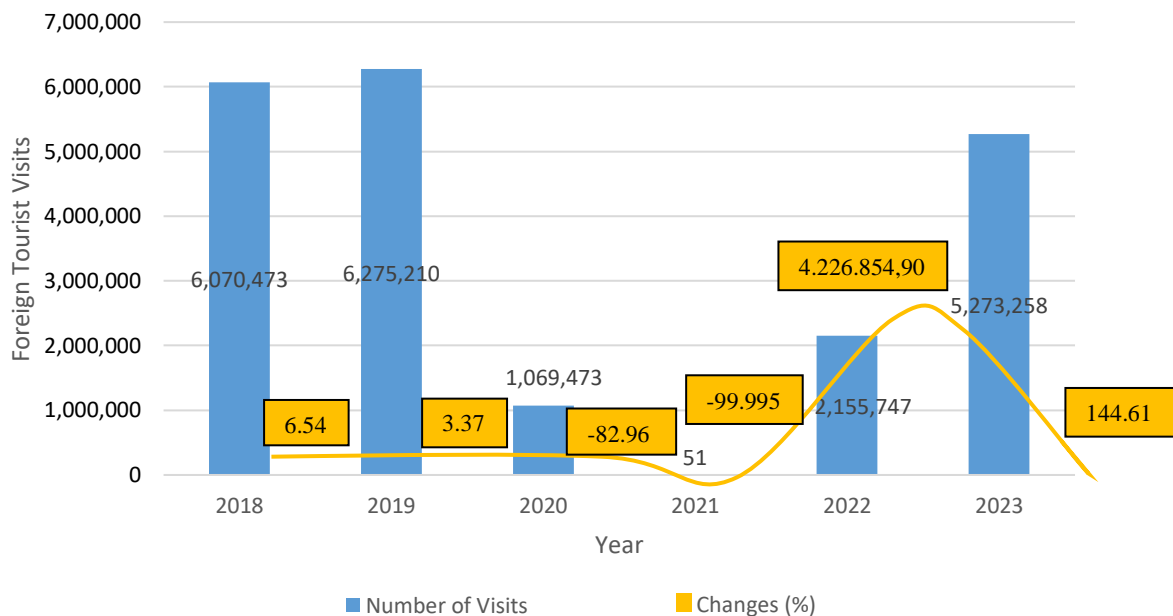
Source: Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Bali (2024)
Figure 1. Growth of international tourist arrival to Bali, 2018-2023

In the past, restaurants and places providing food with service were places to meet the needs of wealthy families. The modern restaurant concept began in France in the 18th century. The restaurants served mostly the wealthy elite since only they could afford expensive meals cooked by talented chefs. The cuisine and dining experiences were designed for individuals who could afford fine dining and service. Restaurants started to become more varied over time, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries. More informal dining alternatives arose as a result of growing urbanization and industrialization, opening restaurants to a wider range of socioeconomic groups (Symons, 2013).

However, it is now obvious that restaurants no longer only provide rudimentary service and food to satisfy the need to eat and drink. Nowadays, customers not only want to meet their eating needs but also want to enjoy a nice atmosphere, have a great time, and feel comfortable (Serçeoğlu & Çetinkaya, 2020). Customers have higher expectations for traditional restaurants and are searching for new experiences. This is where experiential dining comes into play. According to Gusain & Khan (2020), the trend of experiential dining is growing due to restaurateurs' desire to set their restaurants apart from traditional dining establishments.

Experiential dining is now a feature of their businesses' unique selling proposition. The main goal of experiential dining is to surpass the conventional criteria for what constitutes a great restaurant.

This increases people's standards as customer satisfaction is no longer limited to only fulfilling the basic need to eat and drink. According to Sabir et al. (2014), the food and service aspects of restaurants have an impact on customer satisfaction. Regarding the food variable, it includes cost, value, and quality. Regarding the service variable, it includes the quality, conduct, and attitude of the employees. In addition, factors such as the atmosphere and décor of the eateries play an important role. As aesthetics constitute the atmosphere, this emphasizes the role of aesthetic aspects in satisfying the restaurants' customers.

To attract visitors and make them feel satisfied, restaurants must now take into account aesthetics. Nowadays, the taste and price of food are no longer the main priorities. Instead, consumers are looking for new dining experiences that they love to share on their social media accounts, such as the food and the ambiance (Putra et al., 2020).

Customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions are strongly and favorably correlated according to a substantial body of research (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001 in Williams & Naumann, 2011). Repurchase intentions will lead to sales growth and therefore, increased revenue. Since customers support companies that meet their demands, some people also view customer satisfaction as the benchmark for profitable business performance (Jordaan & Badenhorst, 2022).

According to Hult et al. (2004), business performance is related to allocating resources to meet the objectives of profitability, market share, and sales growth to gain a competitive edge. The satisfaction-profit chain model supports Porter's model by describing the anticipated relationship between financial success and customer satisfaction, with the idea that higher customer satisfaction should eventually translate into higher profitability (Anderson & Mittal, 2000). Additionally, Gruca & Rego (2005) discovered that higher customer satisfaction results in higher cash flows and lower risk related to those cash flows.

According to Salama Alketbi et al. (2020), companies that focus strongly on their customer satisfaction will not only build a positive image of their company but also improve loyalty or customer retention. The findings from Christie & Shu (2024) also show that customer satisfaction influences customer revisit intention, which will lead to customer retention. Customer satisfaction also mediates between servicescape and customer revisit intention.

There has been significant research on each of the aesthetic attributes in restaurants and coffee shops. The research on food aesthetics was conducted by Campo et al. (2017), Costales et al. (2022), Putra et al. (2020), etc. The research on the physical environment was conducted by Christie and Shu (2024), Serçeoğlu & Çetinkaya (2020), etc. The research on aesthetic labor was conducted by Genc & Akoglan Kozak (2020), Lee and Choi (2020), Warhurst et al. 2000), etc. There is a rare study on all three aesthetic attributes in the food and beverage businesses. Therefore, this study covers all three aesthetic attributes and their influences on customer retention in the café business in Bali.

Literature Review

According to Horng & Hsu (2020), aesthetics is what gives an object its beauty and the emotions that people experience when they see something beautiful. The physical environment's aspects were categorized as elements including design, social, and atmosphere. Aesthetics are taken into consideration by a design component (Baker, 1987 in Serçeoğlu & Çetinkaya, 2020). The physical environment determines the eating behavior, where, upon entering the restaurant, customers perceive the restaurant as a whole (table, chair, decorations, sound, light, smell), and it creates emotional responses toward their hedonistic satisfaction (Serçeoğlu & Çetinkaya, 2020). Therefore, the physical environment aesthetics can be concluded as the element of design of the physical environment that creates emotional responses that lead to hedonistic satisfaction.

Based on the research from Marković et al. (2021), typically, before deciding on which restaurant to visit, guests will first encounter its physical appearance, starting from the exterior, interior, staff appearance, and finally the food's appearance. This leads to there being 3 main

attributes affecting guests' aesthetic experience: physical environment aesthetics, food aesthetics, and labor aesthetics. These are the measurement dimensions used by Markovic et al. (2021) in their study. Therefore, this study incorporates these dimensions to measure the aesthetic cafe experience.

The precise definition of "physical environment aesthetics" has yet to be created formally because many allude to its meaning as the physical environment being aesthetically pleasing. Through Çetinkaya & Çetinkaya (2020), it is surmised that physical environment aesthetics is the relationship between eating behavior and physical environment where upon entering the restaurant, customers perceive the restaurant as a whole (table, chair, decorations, sound, light, smell) and it creates emotional responses toward their hedonistic satisfaction.

Putra et al. (2020) refer to food presentation or food display, also as food aesthetics, which they define as "the visualization is the art of processing, arranging, and decorating food dishes on a plate to be able to increase the attractiveness". It's been said that the eyes feed before the mouth. Campo et al. (2017) describe food aesthetics as the interplay between taste and appearance influencing consumers' meal choices. Therefore, food aesthetics are the combination of visualization and taste that attract customers to consume the meal. The idea behind food aesthetics is to please and appeal to the senses. Being able to present enticing and mouth-watering cuisine affects the quality of the food being provided because it is rated based on the way it looks (Costales et al., 2022).

Genc & Akoglan Kozak (2020) mentions that "aesthetic labor relates to such employee characteristics as stylishness, sympathy, attractiveness, being cultured, speaking well, showing imagination, using expressive body language and good personal hygiene". According to Warhurst et al. (2000), aesthetic labor is an environmental stimulation where workers demonstrate the abilities and qualities necessary to represent an organization. Therefore, aesthetic labor reflects the employees' good attitude, appearance, and capabilities as the ambassadors of the organization.

Customer satisfaction is "the degree to which service performance meets or exceeds the customer's expectations" (Alketbi et al., 2020). When a customer's assessment of their interaction with a business or brand surpasses their pre-purchase expectations, they are said to be satisfied (Jordaan & Badenhorst, 2022). According to Nazari et al. (2014), the dimensions of customer satisfaction are the expectancy-disconfirmation theory; affective response; perceived value; fulfilling important needs; fulfilling changing and new needs; and overall customer satisfaction. The expectations-disconfirmation technique is most frequently used when defining customer satisfaction. The foundation of this strategy is a comparison between the customer's expectations and actual experiences. This typically indicates that the performance of the product or service is either below or above what the customer expects when making a purchase choice, which can have an impact on the experience.

Customer retention consists of emotional-cognitive retention and behavioral intention constructs. The emotional-cognitive retention constructs include "the customer's liking, identification, commitment, and trust." The behavioral intention constructs include "the willingness to recommend and repurchase intentions" (Stauss et al., 2001 in Alketbi et al., 2020).

Hypotheses Development

The Relationship between Physical Environment Aesthetics and Customer Satisfaction

Serçeoğlu & Çetinkaya (2020) states that physical environment factors of a restaurant, such as its aesthetics, aim to increase their eating experience by satisfying their consumption-related feelings. Additionally, the aesthetic value of a restaurant also affects customer satisfaction (Costales et al., 2022). Therefore, this forms the first hypothesis.

H1: Physical environment aesthetics significantly influence customer satisfaction at aesthetic café in Bali.

The Relationship between Food Aesthetics and Customer Satisfaction

The "art" in food is important in food presentation because it increases appetite and customers' perception of their food meaning that plating and garnishing a meal influences customer satisfaction (Costales et al., 2022). Research findings from Putra et al. (2020) also support that the appearance of food increases customer satisfaction positively. Therefore, this forms the second hypothesis.

H2: Food aesthetics significantly influence customer satisfaction at aesthetic café in Bali.

The Relationship between Labour Aesthetics and Customer Satisfaction

With the prevalence and growth of the food and beverage industry, many businesses are looking to improve their hiring strategies to improve customer satisfaction. One such way they have done so is to hire attractive staff and design attractive uniforms to thrive in this increasingly competitive environment. Having employees with attractive-looking faces can change customer perception by affecting their perception of service quality which then affects their customer satisfaction too. Such as when an attractive employee apologizes for a mistake they made, customers then view the service experience as less negative compared to when a less attractive staff apologizes for their mistake (Lee & Choi, 2020). Therefore, this forms the third hypothesis.

H3: Labor aesthetics significantly influences customer satisfaction at aesthetic café in Bali.

The Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Retention

Customer satisfaction's main goal is to keep customers loyal to the product or company because customer retention will ultimately lead to achieving their business objectives, as it not only increases business value but also lowers the cost of acquiring customers (Parawansa & Anggraece, 2018). Furthermore, companies and businesses that place a strong concern on maintaining and improving their customer satisfaction can improve loyalty along with building a positive image of their companies (Alketbi et al., 2020). Therefore, this forms the fourth hypothesis.

H4: Customer satisfaction significantly influences customer retention at aesthetic café in Bali.

The Influence of Physical Environment Aesthetics on Customer Retention through Customer Satisfaction

By adding the physical aesthetic value of a restaurant, it will offer a more unique and memorable experience to customers which then satisfies their hedonistic value, and improves customer retention by boosting their satisfaction (Costales et al., 2022). Therefore, this forms the fifth hypothesis.

H5: Physical environment aesthetics significantly influence customer retention through customer satisfaction at aesthetics café in Bali.

The Influence of Food Aesthetics on Customer Retention through Customer Satisfaction

Aesthetically pleasing food allows restaurants to give their customers a unique and memorable experience, encouraging them to return and building loyalty. Moreover, their dining satisfaction will influence their loyalty (Costales et al., 2022). Therefore, this forms the sixth hypothesis.

H6: Food aesthetics significantly influence customer retention through customer satisfaction at aesthetic café in Bali.

The Influence of Labor Aesthetics on Customer Retention through Customer Satisfaction

Employees interact daily with consumers on various occasions, and the factor of labor aesthetics becomes crucial to business operations because it influences customer satisfaction (Lee & Choi, 2020). Additionally, Maxham (2000) mentions that customer satisfaction is an important determinant of customer retention. Therefore, this forms the seventh hypothesis.

H7: Labor aesthetics significantly influence customer retention through customer satisfaction at aesthetic café in Bali.
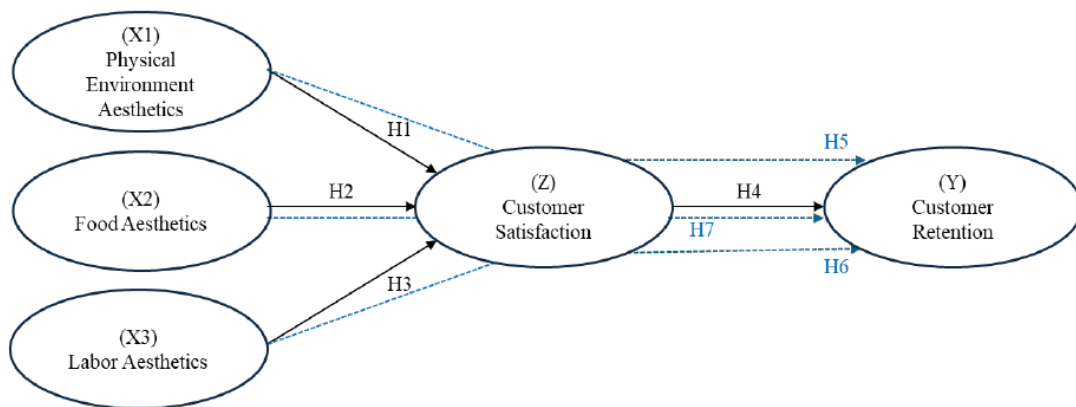
The research model is presented as follows:

Figure 2. The research model

Methodology

This study employs the quantitative method. The data collected from the questionnaire distribution is converted into numerical codes. The codes are then analyzed with PLS-SEM statistical software to produce numerical results. Using this method, the writer seeks to establish a connection between the physical environment, food, and labor aesthetics on customer retention through the mediating variable of customer satisfaction.

The population of this study is the people who have visited the aesthetic café in Bali, whether residents or non-residents. Therefore, the population is unknown since there is no accurate way to track the number of customers of the café. The writers will be using non-probability sampling, specifically convenience sampling. Some drawbacks of this sampling method are the possibility of over-representation of particular demographics, a significant risk of sampling bias, and the difficulty in generalizing results to a larger group. However, on the positive side, this sampling method is usually used due to the geographic closeness of the respondents, availability of the respondents at a specific time, or their readiness to participate in the study. Therefore, convenience sampling is the most accessible form of sampling for participants and researchers (Majid, 2018). The profiles of the samples are male or female, the age more than 50 years old, and residents or non-residents who have visited the aesthetic café in Bali for the past year at least once.

The sample size is calculated using the Lemeshow formula. This formula is suggested by Lemeshow et al. (1990) to establish a study's minimum sample size when working with a large population. Since the population size of customers of the aesthetic café in Bali is hard to know or unknown, it is categorized as a large population. Therefore, the Lemeshow formula is used. According to the formula, the minimum sample size for a large population is 97 respondents. The questionnaire distribution was conducted for a month. From the questionnaire distribution,

the authors received 99 responses (2 responses more than the minimum sample required). Therefore, these will be used as the study sample. Primary data collection is conducted through the distribution of Google forms to the respondents with the above sample profile. Secondary data collection is conducted through a literature review of journal articles relevant to this research topic.

The physical environment aesthetics are measured using 12 items. Food aesthetics are measured using 5 items and labour aesthetics are measured using 7 items. All the measurement items for the aesthetic attributes are taken from Marković et al. (2021). Customer satisfaction is measured with 5 measurement items and customer retention is measured with 8 measurement items. Both measurement items for customer satisfaction and retention are taken from Parawansa & Anggraece (2018). The measurement items used are adapted to the research object of a café to ensure relevance to this research. The results of the questionnaire are then measured with a 5-point Likert scale. The measurement items of each variable are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The operational variables measurement

No.	Variables	Indicators	Scale
1	Physical Environment Aesthetics (X1) (Marković et al., 2021)	The café architecture has an attractive character.	Likert Scale
		The café exterior is visually appealing.	
		The landscape surrounding the café is special and attractive.	
		The café interior décor is attractive.	
		The colors used in interior design create a pleasant atmosphere.	
		The furniture (tables and chairs) are of high quality.	
		The number of tables does not make the café environment difficult to navigate.	
		It is easy to move around the café and find what you are looking for.	
		The overall lighting level in the café is appropriate.	
		The temperature in the café is comfortable.	
		The smell in the café is pleasant.	
		Background music makes the café a more pleasant place.	
2	Food Aesthetics (X2) (Marković et al., 2021)	The food served by the café is delicious.	
		The food in the café is unique.	
		The food in the café is made from fresh ingredients.	
		The food presentation is visually appealing.	
		Portion size is appropriate.	
3	Labor Aesthetics (X3) (Marković et al., 2021)	The Café staff has an attractive appearance.	
		The appearance of the café staff matches the corporate image of the café.	
		Café employees have a refined style of conversation.	
		The café considers the physical appearance of its employees (uniform, hairstyle, makeup).	
		Employees are friendly to guests.	
		Employees treat guests well.	
		The behavior of café staff towards guests is pleasant.	
4	Customer Satisfaction (Z) (Parawansa & Anggraece, 2018)	I am satisfied with the hospitality and courtesy of the employees.	
		I am satisfied with the honesty of the employees.	
		I am satisfied as a customer of the café.	
		I am satisfied with the services of the café so far.	
		I am satisfied with the performance of the café.	
5	Customer Retention (Y) (Parawansa & Anggraece, 2018)	I will continue to use the services of the café because it is favorable.	
		I will continue to use the services of the café for benefits.	

I am faithful to the café.
The café has a personal meaning for me.
I would recommend the café to others.
I will be using the services of the café in the long term.
I agree to continue to use the services of the café.
I will use the café for food service.

Before the questionnaire is distributed, a pre-test of 30 samples outside the main samples is conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire statements so that they are ready to use. The pre-test is conducted using SPSS statistical software. The results show that all the statements of the variables pass the criteria of validity and reliability tests except the third statement of Physical Environment Aesthetics (PEA3). With the degree of freedom being 28 and a significance level of 5%, the value of the R-table is therefore 0.361. The result of the R-count for PEA3 is 0.348 and it is smaller than the R-table (0.361). Therefore the statement is invalid and deleted and the rest of the statements are used for data collection.

The data obtained is then analyzed using the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square Structure Equation Modelling) statistical software version 4.0. The reason for using this statistical software is that it is helpful when investigating new ideas, and handling smaller sample sizes where prediction is the main goal. The samples obtained in this study are quite small, that is 99 samples for an unknown population, therefore, it is appropriate to use the PLS SEM. Furthermore, this statistical software can manage data that is not regularly distributed, strengthening the reason for using it. In the steps of data analysis, the outer model test is first conducted to test the relationships between the observable indicators with the variables. Secondly, the inner-model test is conducted to measure the structural model or the relationship among the variables.

Results and Discussions

Results

The characteristics of the respondents collected are 67.6% female and 32.4% male with the majority (66.7%) in the range of age from 21-30 years old. Most of the respondents are students (44.1%) and the second most (35.3%) are private employees. Most of the respondents (44.1%) have visited the aesthetic café for 2-4 times, and the second most (41.2%) have visited the café for once.

Outer Model Tests

The results show that all data has passed the outer model tests. First, the convergent validity test is conducted through the outer loading and construct validity tests. Figure 1 is the measurement model analysis that depicts the 5 variables and each of their measurements.
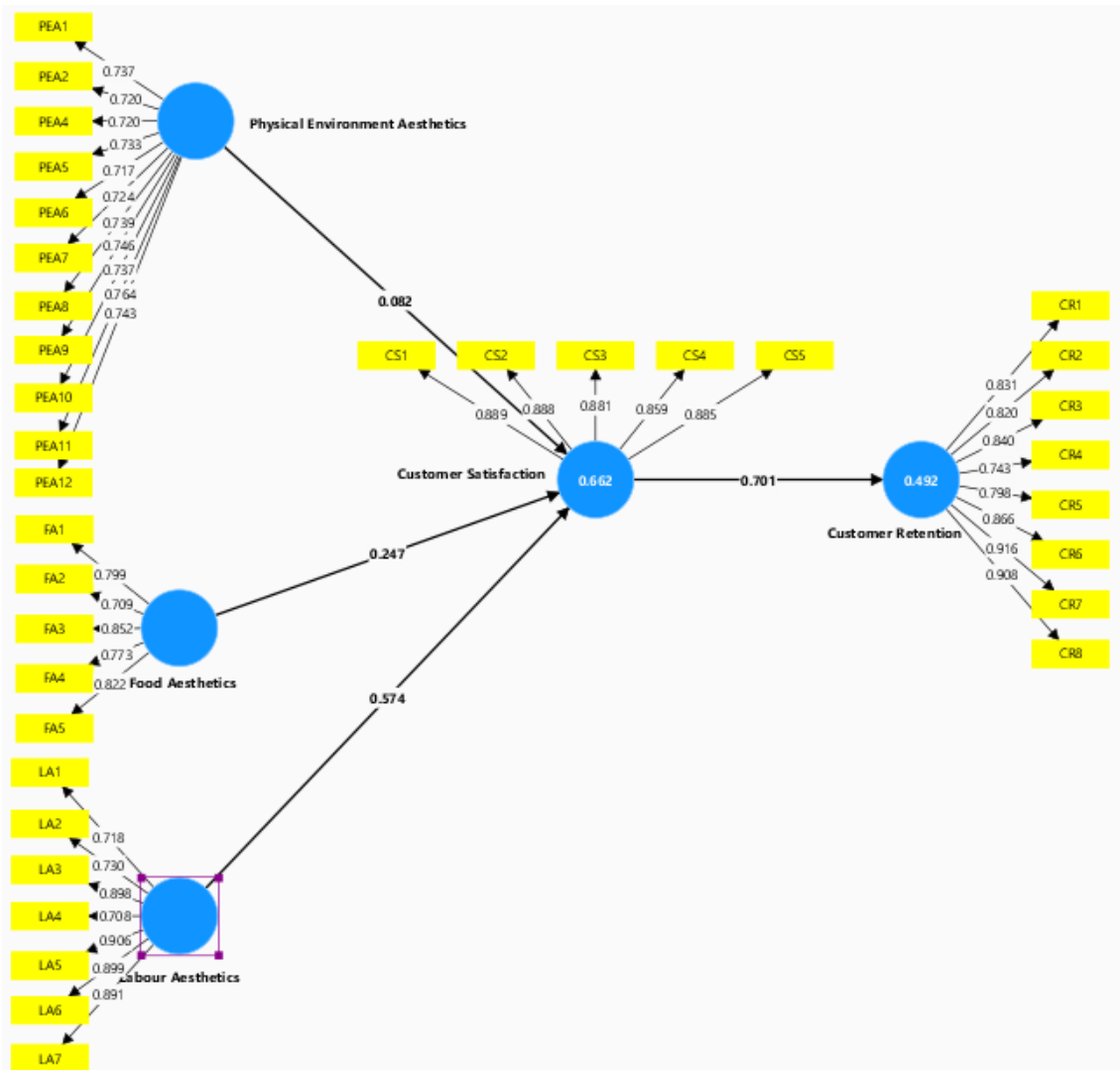
(Source: Prepared by the writers using SmartPLS 4 (2024)
Figure 1. The measurement model analysis

All loading results in this research are higher than 0.7 and therefore, pass the outer loading test (Hair et. al., 2010 in Kamis et al., 2020). All variables and their respective statements pass the cross-loading test as their values exceed 0.7 (Tinungki & Herdiani, 2022). All the AVE values and composite reliability values used to examine convergent validity produced results higher than 0.5 and 0.6 respectively, and therefore, passed the convergent validity test (Tentama & Dyah Anindita, 2020).

The results for the outer loading, cross-loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Outer loading, cross-loading, composite reliability, and average variance extracted

Construct / Item	Loading	Cross loading	CR	AVE
Physical Environment Aesthetics (PEA)			0.928	0.540
PEA1	0.737	0.737		
PEA2	0.720	0.720		
PEA4	0.720	0.720		
PEA5	0.733	0.733		

PEA6	0.717	0.717		
PEA7	0.724	0.724		
PEA8	0.739	0.739		
PEA9	0.746	0.746		
PEA10	0.737	0.737		
PEA11	0.764	0.764		
PEA12	0.743	0.743		
Food Aesthetics (FA)			0.894	0.628
FA1	0.799	0.799		
FA2	0.709	0.709		
FA3	0.852	0.852		
FA4	0.773	0.773		
FA5	0.822	0.822		
Labor Aesthetics (LA)			0.937	0.683
LA1	0.718	0.718		
LA2	0.730	0.730		
LA3	0.898	0.898		
LA4	0.708	0.708		
LA5	0.906	0.906		
LA6	0.899	0.899		
LA7	0.891	0.891		
Customer Satisfaction (CS)			0.945	0.775
CS1	0.889	0.889		
CS2	0.888	0.888		
CS3	0.881	0.881		
CS4	0.859	0.859		
CS5	0.885	0.885		
Customer Retention (CR)			0.951	0.709
CR1	0.831	0.831		
CR2	0.820	0.820		
CR3	0.840	0.840		
CR4	0.743	0.743		
CR5	0.798	0.798		
CR6	0.866	0.866		
CR7	0.916	0.916		
CR8	0.908	0.908		

(Source: Prepared by the writers using SmartPLS 4 (2024)

Besides the cross-loading test, the discriminant validity test comprises the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), and the Fornell Larcker Criterion tests. Table 4 below shows that the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio) values are below 0.85 which indicates there is indeed discriminant validity, proving it is reliable and valid (Rasoolimanesh, 2022).

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio results

Variables	HTMT
CS <-> CR	0.732
FA <-> CS	0.756

LA <-> CS	0.840
PEA <-> CS	0.567

Source: Prepared by writer, SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

The Fornell-Larcker criterion evaluates the square root AVE (average variance extracted) and compares it to the highest correlation value with any other construct variable (Hair et al., 2016 in Kamis et al., 2020). As shown in Table 5, each of the bolded values is higher than the values in the same row and column. Therefore, all of the variables have passed the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variables	CR	CS	FA	LA	PEA
CR	0.842				
CS	0.701	0.881			
FA	0.715	0.680	0.792		
LA	0.608	0.785	0.673	0.826	
PEA	0.448	0.540	0.573	0.551	0.735

Source: Prepared by writer, SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

All variables have also passed the construct reliability test as both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability values exceed 0.7 (Hinkin et al., 1997 in Tentama & Dyah Anindita, 2020). It can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Construct reliability results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)
CR	0.941	0.949
CS	0.928	0.928
FA	0.851	0.860
LA	0.921	0.936
PEA	0.915	0.924

Source: Prepared by writer, SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

Inner Model Tests

Based on the results of the inner model tests, all the variables have significant relationships with each other except the relationships among the variables of the Physical Environment Aesthetics (PEA), Customer Satisfaction (CS), and Customer Retention (CR). The inner model test comprises the R-square, Q-square, the F-square (Effect Size), and the Path Coefficient (Signification). The results of the R-square and Q-square are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. R-square and Q-square results

Construct	R^2	R^2 adjusted	Q^2
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.662	0.652	0.501
Customer Retention (CR)	0.492	0.486	0.317

Source: Prepared by writer, SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

The results of the table above show that PEA, FA, and LA have a 65.2% influence on CS, while CS has a 48.6% influence on CR. To demonstrate how well the structural model predicts the construct, the Q^2 values for each endogenous variable should ideally be greater than zero. Q^2 values larger than 0, 0.25, and 0.5 for the PLS-path model generally denote small, medium, and high predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019). The study shows that the Q^2 value for CS is 0.501 indicating a high predictive relevance by the exogenous variables (PEA, FA, and LA). The Q^2 value for CR is 0.317 indicating a medium predictive relevance by CS. The results of the F-square (Effect Size) are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. F-square results

Relationship	f-square
Physical Environment Aesthetics (PEA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.012
Food Aesthetics (FA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.088
Labor Aesthetics (LA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.493
Customer Satisfaction (CS) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0.967

Source: Prepared by writer, SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

According to Cohen (2013) in Purwanto & Sudargini (2022), values around 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 respectively represent small, medium, and large f-effect sizes. Therefore, based on the results of the table above, physical environment aesthetics (PEA) has a small effect size towards customer satisfaction (CS). Food aesthetics (FA) has a small effect size on customer satisfaction (CS). Labor aesthetics (LA) has a large effect size on customer satisfaction (CS). Customer satisfaction (CS) has a large effect size on customer retention (CR). The results of the Path Coefficient (Signification) are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Path coefficient results

	Path	Original Sample	P values
Direct Effect	Physical Environment Aesthetics (PEA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.082	0.376
	Food Aesthetics (FA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.247	0.035
	Labor Aesthetics (LA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.574	0.000
	Customer Satisfaction (CS) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0.701	0.000
Indirect Effect	Physical Environment Aesthetics (PEA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0.070	0.374
	Food Aesthetics (FA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0.167	0.046
	Labor Aesthetics (LA) -> Customer Satisfaction (CS) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0.404	0.000

Source: Prepared by writer, SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

Based on the above results, it shows positive relationships among the variables. All the relationships are significant except the influence of PEA on CS; and the influence of PEA on CR through CS.

Discussions

The physical environment aesthetics, food aesthetics, and labor aesthetics have a moderate influence (65.2%) on customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the remaining 34.8% indicates the influence of other variables not studied in this research, such as service quality, perceived food safety, perceived value, food quality, price, brand image, etc. Customer satisfaction has a moderate influence (48.6%) on customer retention. Meanwhile, the remaining 51.4% indicates the influence of other variables not studied in this research such as customer empowerment, switching cost, corporate reputation, customer value, customer trust, customer engagement, etc.

The insignificant relations between PEA, CS, and CR are in contrast with the study of Serçeoğlu & Çetinkaya (2020) and Costales et al. (2022), since the aesthetic value of the physical environment does not significantly influence customer satisfaction. This might indicate the aesthetic aspect of the cafes does not increase the eating experience and thus, does not satisfy the consumption-related feelings. Furthermore, the findings of Marković et al. (2021) about surveys of guests in fine-dining restaurants showed that they perceived the landscape to be the least valuable element of aesthetics. Food aesthetics were perceived as the most valuable, followed by labor aesthetics. This could explain the insignificant influence of PEA on CS and CR in aesthetic cafes in Bali.

The significant influence between FA and CS is in line with the research by Costales et al., (2022) and Putra et al. (2020) that the appearance of food increases customer satisfaction positively. Marković et al. (2021a) also, strengthen this finding that the guests of fine dining-restaurant perceived food aesthetics to be the most important element among the other elements of aesthetics. This emphasized the significance of food aesthetics on customer satisfaction.

The path coefficient value shows that labor aesthetics have the most direct influence on customer satisfaction and indirect influence on customer retention; compared to the other element of aesthetics. This is in line with the findings of Lee & Choi (2020) that café staff with an attractive appearance and matching the café image, refined conversation style, and treating guests in a friendly and pleasant manner will lead to a more satisfied customer. The indicators of labor aesthetics used in this study consist of the service quality aspects such as "Employees are friendly to guests", "Employees treat guests well", and "The behavior of café staff towards guests is pleasant". These indicators support the influence of labor aesthetics on customer satisfaction. In addition, the findings of Marković et al. (2021) showed that labor aesthetics are perceived as the second most important element after food aesthetics for the guests at fine dining restaurants.

The study investigates the influences of all three aesthetic attributes (physical, food, and labor) on customer satisfaction and retention. However, in the context of aesthetic café in Bali, the labor aesthetic should be the highlight, followed by the food aesthetic. The physical environment aesthetics should not be the focus of the aesthetics café in Bali due to the unsupported hypothesis. Therefore, it could be eliminated from the conceptual framework in the future.

Customer satisfaction also has a quite strong positive influence on customer retention. This is in line with the findings from Parawansa & Anggraece (2018) and Alketbi et al. (2020). Customer satisfaction with employee courtesy and hospitality, employee honesty, café service, and café performance will increase their likelihood of coming back to the café. The findings contribute to the novelty where customer satisfaction acts as the mediator between food aesthetics and customer retention. This is in line with the research by Costales (2022) that stated aesthetically pleasing food allows restaurants to give their customers a unique and memorable experience, encouraging them to return and building loyalty. Moreover, their dining satisfaction will influence their loyalty.

Customer satisfaction also acts as the mediator between labor aesthetics and customer retention. This is in line with the findings from Lee & Choi (2020). Customer satisfaction as a mediator is important as it explains the process of how labor aesthetics influence customer retention. Most studies investigated the mediation of customer satisfaction between service or product quality and customer retention. Others investigate the mediation of customer satisfaction between servicescape and customer revisit intention. Therefore, these findings advance the existing mediator-based theories in service marketing in the hospitality industry.

Since customer satisfaction does not mediate between the physical environment aesthetics and customer retention, other variables might be suggested as the mediator, such as customer empowerment. The findings of (Aldaihani et al., 2020) show that customer empowerment significantly mediated the impact of social customer relationship management on customer retention. Another variable that could mediate customer retention is "positive switching cost". Research from Ngo et al. (2019) finds that customer satisfaction positively affects customer loyalty through the mediating effects of positive switching costs. Switching

costs are the cost of changing service providers and the sacrifices and penalties that customers face when changing to other providers. Customers may stay with the current service provider to avoid the switching costs.

As the implications of the findings, the aesthetic café in Bali should not rely on the café physical environment aesthetics. Instead, the food and labor aesthetics need to be maintained to increase customer satisfaction and retention. The labor aesthetics can be maintained through training on grooming standards according to the theme of the café and ensuring the hygiene of the employees. Besides physical appearance, labor aesthetics also cover the employees' manner of speaking, their friendliness, and genuineness in serving the guests. Regular monitoring of these areas will ensure the consistency of the labor aesthetics.

The food aesthetics can be maintained by the management of the cafes in Bali by ensuring the standard recipe of the food so that the taste remains consistent. Being innovative in the menu creation is important due to the mushrooming of aesthetic cafes in Bali makes the competition very tight. Creating fusion menus by combining the authentic taste of Balinese food with some International touch will attract locals and foreign tourists to the café. Ensuring the freshness of the ingredients, aesthetic food presentation, and appropriate portion size will also enhance the food aesthetics.

Based on the highest loading factors, physical environment aesthetics have the highest loading factor on the 11th statement (0.764), "The smell in the café is pleasant." Therefore, the management needs to enhance the natural aroma of the cafe's signature dishes to increase customers' appetites. Hygiene standards have to be maintained to prevent bad smells that can cause a loss of appetite. With the insignificant effect of physical environment aesthetics on customer satisfaction and customer retention, the management is suggested to look at cultural preferences which might play a more dominant role in Bali's cafes.

Labor aesthetics have the highest loading factor on the 5th statement (0.906) with the statement "Employees are friendly to guests". The management could conduct a refresher training on the service sequence in the café and the five dimensions of service quality (empathy, warmth, caring, responsiveness, and helpfulness) that reflect the Balinese culture of hospitality. The training results are then evaluated through the guests' feedback forms. This will amplify the customer satisfaction.

Food aesthetics have the highest loading factor on the third statement (0.852), "The food in the café is made from fresh ingredients." Management needs to ensure the quality and freshness of the ingredients by sourcing from trusted suppliers. Management should select the suppliers carefully to supply good quality ingredients. The food presentation and plating should display an attractive color combination reflecting the fresh ingredients.

Customer satisfaction has the highest loading factor on the 1st statement (0.889) with the statement "I am satisfied with the hospitality and courtesy of the employees". Again, this emphasizes the importance of labor aesthetics in providing quality service and experience to the guests. Furthermore, customer satisfaction has the highest path coefficient (0.701) on customer retention and has a high predictive relevance by the physical environment, food, and labor aesthetics. This shows the importance of the three aesthetic attributes contributing to customer satisfaction in the café business in Bali.

Furthermore, the cafes' management could leverage authentic cultural aesthetics of Balinese in the designs of the interior and exterior of the cafes, in the menu variations, and in the appearance and courtesy of the employees. This strategy will attract foreign tourists to the café. Introducing visually appealing food inspired by Balinese art could differentiate cafes and attract social media-savvy tourists. Another strategy is implementing fusion designs in the café, the menus, and employees' grooming standards. Employees should be able to converse in some foreign languages to communicate with the guests. This strategy will work well for both locals and foreign tourists. The locals will experience an International feel for a change and it will relate well with the foreign tourists.

Customer retention has the highest loading factor on the 7th statement (0.916) with the statement "I agree to continue to use the services of the café". This shows a good indication of loyalty and the intention to return to the café in the future. The management needs to maintain

this by ensuring customer satisfaction with the hospitality, quality service, good courtesy, aesthetic food, and physical environment of the café.

Conclusions

Labor aesthetics have the biggest influence on customer satisfaction and retention in the café industry in Bali. This study enriches the existing theories about improving customer satisfaction and retention. Previous theories mostly discuss how employee performance and service quality improve customer satisfaction and retention. Labor aesthetics are the combination of service-oriented employee performance and pleasant appearance. In the hospitality industry, excellent performance is not enough without an attractive appearance, and vice versa. Both elements support each other and should not be separated to achieve customer satisfaction and retention. The concept of labor aesthetics is also very relevant to the Balinese culture as they are naturally hospitable.

This gives insight into the cafe's management in Bali to maintain and improve the aesthetic aspect of their employees. However, the term "aesthetics" is subjective as different customers will have different perspectives on what is considered aesthetic. This study only focuses on the island of Bali and the samples used are quite small. Therefore, these are the limitations of the study. Future studies are encouraged to explore the diverse aesthetic preferences across cultures to further enrich this field of study. Future researchers can conduct a qualitative study to get a more in-depth point of view of what customers from different cultures consider to be aesthetically pleasing for the physical environment, food, and labor. Future research could also explore the societal impact of promoting local culture through aesthetic enhancements.

Acknowledgment

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Utilizing social network analysis for the advancement of rural tourism

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Abstract: Implementing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) can create employment opportunities and enhance regional competitiveness. Economic, social, and environmental conflicts sometimes follow the success of CBT. Social networks can drive the success of CBT, reduce conflict, and promote tourism sustainability. This study aims to analyze social networks to strengthen rural tourism. The research was carried out in the Carocok Tourism destination, a leading Pesisir Selatan Regency tourism destination—data collection through observation and FGD with five experts. Primary data were collected from 39 business units that were selected purposively. The variables observed were tourism asset ownership, asset control, capacity, and benefits. The data was analyzed using the Social network analysis (SNA) approach with Nvivo 12 plus and Gephi 0.9.5 software. The study's findings show that the social network pattern in the Carocok mirrors a triple helix model. This model involves three key stakeholders: the government, the community, and the private sector. Tourism management resembles community-based tourism as it emphasizes the community as the primary stakeholder, with the community owning 89.27% of tourism assets, a more significant share than the government and private ownership. While the community broadly owns these assets, there is still room for more robust control and improvement in the capacity of tourism labor. Conflicts were found in rural tourism activities, such as developing tourism infrastructure that impacted the ecological damage of coastal areas, privatization of public spaces, inconsistencies in tourism product tariffs, illegal levies, and misunderstandings of governance between the government and local communities. Some of the problems are related to the lack of control and capacity owned by the community in the tourism sector. The government and the private sector play significant roles in enhancing capacity building and fostering entrepreneurship. Developing tourism will require media and academic collaboration to improve tourism in the future.

Keywords: community based tourism, rural tourism, social network analysis, triple helix model

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Introduction

One of the efforts aimed at mitigating the development disparity between rural and urban areas is the promotion of tourism. The tourism industry has the potential to stimulate economic development in rural regions, creating jobs and alleviating poverty. (Dang et al., 2024). Community-based tourism (CBT) is a tourism development approach that empowers local communities as the main actors and beneficiaries of tourism activities. (Mtapuri et al., 2022). Implementing CBT is expected to improve the local economy and reduce regional leakage in tourist villages.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is the implementation of sustainable and inclusive tourism that encourages community participation in tourism activities (Sithole et al., 2021). The implementation of CBT has proven to reduce the rural-urban gap, (Wang & Bai, 2023), create jobs, and increase community income. (Aminuddin et al., 2022), empowering the community (Hermawan et al., 2023), increasing regional competitiveness (Mtapuri et al., 2022) and environmentally friendly (Streimikiene et al., 2021). Cross-business linkages managed by local communities can increase linkages in the economy (Rocca & Zielinski, 2022) and have a multiplier impact on the regional economy (Nuryadin & Purwiyanta, 2023).

Optimizing the implementation of CBT can positively impact the community. However, the probability of CBT success in various countries still needs to improve due to inadequate community participation and local infrastructure (Sithole et al., 2021), weak coordination between stakeholders (Sinaga et al., 2021), lack of local community acceptance of tourists (Romeon & Sukmawati, 2021), insufficient supervision and control from local champions (Romeon & Sukmawati, 2021) and inadequate human resources and tourism institutions at the regional level. (Doni & Prasetyo, 2021). In managing Carocok tourism, a conflict has emerged between the government and the local community regarding the governance of the Carocok tourism area. This situation highlights the lack of effective coordination among stakeholders. Additionally, the existence of illegal levies and inconsistencies in entrance ticket prices for tourist areas indicates inadequate supervision of tourism activities.

Implementing rural tourism in multiple countries has led to various social, economic, political, and cultural conflicts. (Zielinski et al., 2021). In China, rural tourism management that does not involve the community ends up triggering land conflicts. (Wang & Yotsumoto, 2019), and social exclusion (Guo & Jordan, 2022). In Vietnam, CBT management is associated with conflicts of interest among stakeholders (Hien & Thanh, 2022). In Portugal, tourism management also triggers conflicts between land use and nature conservation (Almeida et al., 2018). In the Philippines, rural tourism is causing conflicts with non-indigenous stakeholders. (Okazaki, 2008), while some cases in Indonesia indicate that tourism is prone to conflicts of social and cultural interaction (Roestamy et al., 2020) and has only a minimal impact on reducing poverty (Martini et al., 2022).

Many researchers have also utilized CBT in the context of social capital studies. However, in this context, previous research has primarily examined the impact of social capital on sustainable tourism (Jumiati et al., 2024). In Colombia, tourism activities can positively impact the community's economy only when there is sufficient social capital and decentralized governance, given the limited presence of the government. (Rocca & Zielinski, 2022). The CBT approach involves social interaction among various community groups. These groups work together to boost the tourism economy by coordinating their roles. The social network formed through community interaction is crucial to the success of CBT. Social networks refer to the connections or bonds in social relationships between individuals or groups (Can & Alatas, 2019). Strengthening social networks can enhance the success of CBT. In contrast, weak social networks can lead to conflicts and hinder the implementation of CBT (Wibowo et al., 2020). The condition of diverse communities has implications for establishing collaborative networks between different communities (Kieffer & Burgos, 2015). Based on research, social networks are likely to facilitate the movement of tourism actors and the mobilization of resources. The strength of the social network formed in the community will affect the success of CBT implementation. Thus, this study focuses on revealing how social networks are formed in society and their role in strengthening CBT outcomes in rural areas.

Methodology

This research was conducted in the Carocok Tourism Area, Pesisir Selatan Regency, West Sumatra Province. This area is designated as one of the main tourism destinations in the Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARDA) of the Pesisir Selatan Regency for 2015-2025. According to the Pesisir Selatan Tourism, Youth and Sports Office, there are 10 (10) tourist attractions in Pesisir Selatan Regency, and the Carocok Area is the tourist attraction with the highest number of tourists in 2016-2023 and the highest number of tourism business actors in Pesisir Selatan Regency.

The research employs a survey method, including observations and FGDs with various key informants as shown in Table 1. Additionally, relevant agencies are involved in collecting secondary data. The study also gathers primary data from business actors selected purposively, specifically local communities managing business units, with business representation accounted for proportionally. There are a total of 324 tourism business actors in the Carocok area, divided into 184 business owners and 140 workforces. The sample size of respondents is calculated based on the Slovin formula :

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{184}{1 + 184\,(0.02)} = \frac{184}{4,68} = 39,31 = 39\ Business\ owners$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{140}{1 + 140\,(0.02)} = \frac{140}{3,8} = 36,8 = 37\ Workforces$$

Table 1. Respondents of tourism business actors

Respondent Category	Sample Category		Total Unit Business	
	Based on tourism Activities	Type of business	Population (N)	Sample (n)
Unit Business	Attractions	Marine tourism rides	13	3
		Children's play rides	10	2
		Paragliding Attractions	5	1
	Accessibility	Boat	79	16
	Accomodations	Homestay	24	6
	Amenity	Restaurants, cafes	22	5
		Souvenir Shop	16	3
		Documentation Services	5	1
		Hawker	10	2
Total			184	39
Workforces	Attractions	Marine tourism rides	62	16
	Accomodations	Homestay	52	13
	Amenity	Restaurants, cafes	26	8
Total			140	37

The variables observed in the social network analysis in CBT are: 1) ownership of tourism resources, 2) control over resources, 3) utilization of resources, and 4) capacity in resource management. Ownership includes a form of control of tourism resources by local communities. The ownership of tourism resources can be in the form of property rights, use rights, leases, and Ülayat rights. Control of tourism resources is managed based on the authority of the community. The benefits are determined by the economic, social, and environmental impacts felt by the community from tourism activities. Capacity refers to the abilities of local communities to support their involvement in tourism development

Data was collected through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 5 key informants from the Regional Government, Nagari Government, and Pokdarwis. More details about the key informants are provided in Table 2. The data was analyzed using social network analysis (SNA) to map and measure social relationships between individuals or community groups for managing tourism activities. Qualitative data was processed using NVivo 12 Plus software and Gephi 0.9.5 software.

Table 2. Key informants

No	Key informants	Total
1	Head of the Tourism, Youth and Sports Office of Pesisir Selatan Regency	
2	Head of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office	
3	Supervisor of Young Expert Cooperatives at the Cooperatives, MSMEs, and Manpower Office of Pesisir Selatan Regency	3
4	Walinagari	1
5	Chairman of Pokdarwis	1
	Total Key Informants	5

The limitation of research methods such as surveys, observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs) is the potential for biased selection of respondents or research informants. Therefore, this study employs triangulation by gathering data from various sources through interviews with different individuals involved in the development of Carocok tourism. This data will then be compared with tourism documents from the Regional Government.

Results and Discussions

Results

The Carocok tourist area is located 2 km west of Painan, near the Painan market, and approximately 75 km from Padang City. It has the potential for natural, cultural, culinary, and historical tourism. Carocok Beach offers activities for marine tourism with its calm waves. The beach is a prominent tourist destination outlined in the South Coast Regency Tourism Development Master Plan for 2015-2025. Within the Carocok area, there are several tourist attractions located close to each other, including Cingkuak Island, Langkisau Peak, Batu Kereta Island, Portuguese Heritage Fort, and Madame Van Kempen Tomb.

Figure 1. Carocok tourist area, South Nagari Painan

The Carocok area covers 58.11 hectares, including blocks for tourism, facilities, trade, housing, urban space, and public services (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The spatial arrangement of the Carocok tourism area

In this area, there are several business units engaged in tourism activities. The study identified 183 business units involved in attraction activities (such as marine tourism rides, children's game rides, and paragliding attraction services), accessibility (including tourist boats), accommodation (such as homestays), and amenities (restaurants and cafes, craft shops and creative industries, documentation services, and hawker).

The study's findings highlight the sustainability challenges facing Carocok tourism development. These challenges include the privatization of public spaces, instances of thuggery by local community figures, and environmental pollution caused by tourism-related waste. This situation indicates that tourism stakeholders—including the government, the community, and business actors—have not fully grasped the principles of sustainable tourism development.

Community involvement in CBT is a social network pattern formed based on ownership of tourism resources, control over resources, resource management capacity, and resource utilization.

a. Ownership of tourism resources

It was found that there are 205 tourism assets divided into four ownership patterns: 1) Regionally owned resources under the ownership of the Regional Government, such as reclamation areas, Carocok Coastal, and Langkisau Peaks. 2) Property rights under the

ownership of local communities, such as restaurants and cafes, 3) Rights to Ulayat land under the ownership of indigenous peoples, which is used as business land for marine tourism attractions. and 4) The right to use, under the ownership of local and non-local communities..
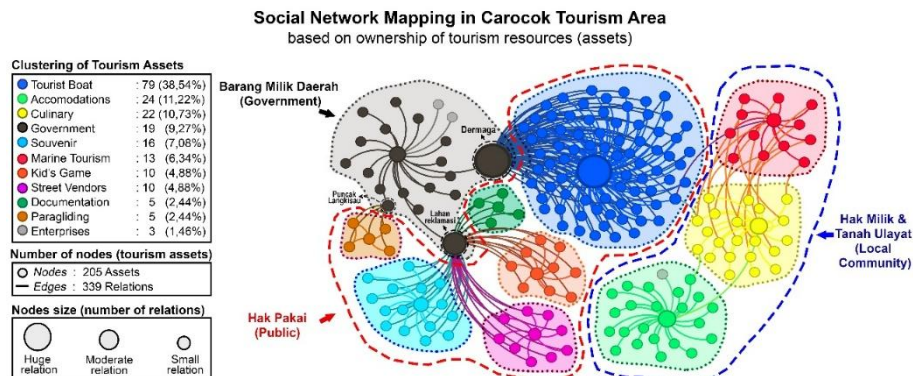

Figure 3. Ownership of tourism assets in the Carocok tourism area

The community dominates the ownership of tourism assets in the Carocok tourist area with a percentage of 89.27%, while the ownership of the Regional Government is 9.26% and the private sector is 1.46%. Strong social network are built among the government, the private sector, and the community in the management of tourism resources. These relationships are established through the collaboration of business entities that operate more than one type of tourism business. For example, an individual may own an attraction, offer boat services, and run restaurants. Social networks are also formed from the relationship of business actors who are members of local tourism organizations, such as tour boat owners forming Carocok tour boat owners organizations that play a role in operational management, ticket levies, and profit-sharing schemes between tour boat owners. In addition, social networks are formed from relationships between business actors utilizing facilities and infrastructure owned by the Regional Government. For example, souvenir traders, creative industry product vendors, children's game ride operators, and documentation service providers utilize the Carocok beach reclamation area as their business land. (Figure 4).
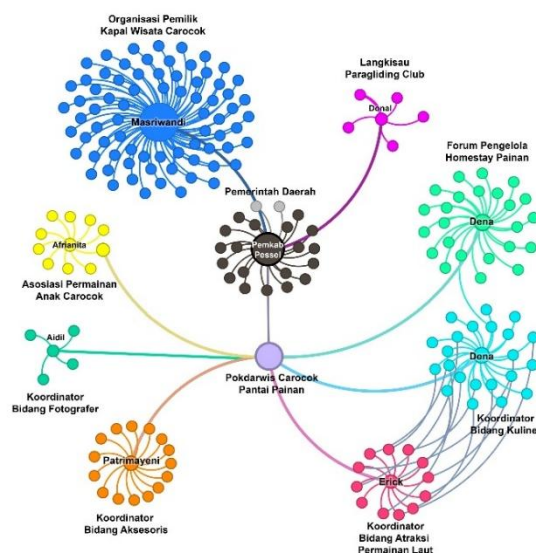

Figure 4. Social network mapping and community-based tourism management

Research findings based on social network analysis show that community involvement is more dominant than the government and the private sector in tourism activities. Social relations can detect the existence of local heroes in each tourism business cluster and determine key

tourism assets that are highly correlated to community needs (Figure 4). The results of social network analysis can be a consideration for stakeholders in formulating community-based tourism development policies. Local heroes can connect the interests of the local government with the community. Key tourism assets with a high relationship with people's lives can be more concerned regarding the supervision and maintenance of assets to sustain tourism activities.

b. Control over tourism resources

Community control over tourism assets is divided into three groups: strong, medium, and weak control. The level of control is determined based on the ownership of tourism resources. Different community groups have varying levels of authority and control based on the form of resource ownership they have. Community groups with property rights tend to have strong authority and control, while those with local ownership and "tanah ulayat" have moderate control. In contrast, community groups with use rights have the weakest control over the resources because it is vulnerable to potential conflicts and government interests related to spatial planning policies and tourism governance. The study results indicate that 68.31% of people have weak control over their resources, while only 17.49% exhibit strong control and 14.21% have medium control (Figure 5).
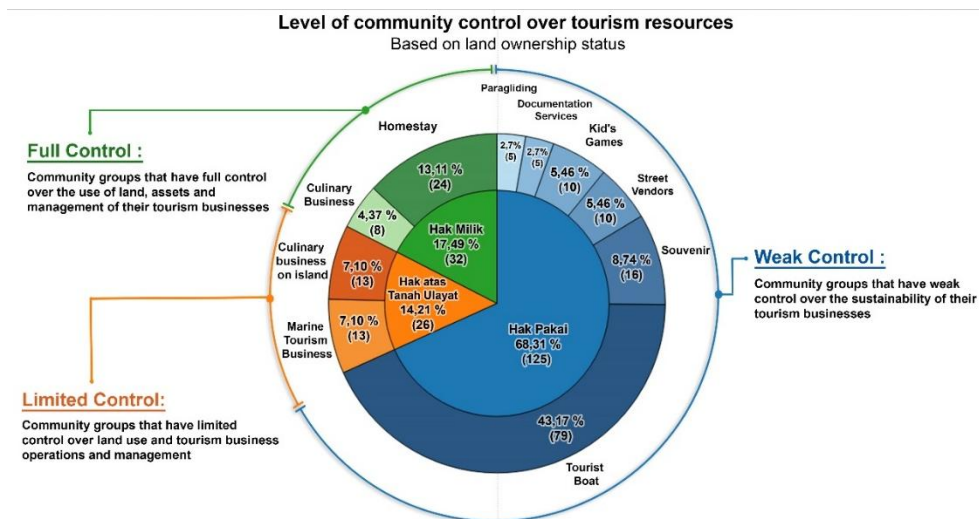

Figure 5. Community control of tourism resources in the Carocok area

Figure 5 shows that the community's dominance over controlling tourism resources is not accompanied by community control—the phenomenon of capital gap between people who already have business land and those who do not. Most of the community has weak control because out of 183 business units managed by the community, as many as 125 businesses (68.31%) only have land use rights. The Regional Government provides business opportunities for local communities who do not have business land by giving them the right to use regionally owned land.

Land use rights often lack strong oversight and are susceptible to conflicts of interest between local communities and governments regarding spatial planning and tourism governance policies. Furthermore, individuals with land use rights typically do not have full control over how tourism land may be utilized in the future.

Policy implications that the Regional Government can carry out to overcome the weak community control in the tourism business, namely: 1) Providing legal certainty through a Memorandum of Understanding regarding rights and obligations, land use periods, and policies to protect local communities in the tourism business; 2) Management of the supply chain of raw materials or services needed by the tourism business, 3) Optimization of tourism supporting facilities and infrastructure. The policy is expected to facilitate business and increase community control in tourism activities in the future.

c. Tourism workforce capacity

The capacity of the community also determines social networks when implementing CBT. Capacity is related to the skills and knowledge of the community that enable them to participate in tourism activities as business actors and workers. The Tourism Office of Pesisir Selatan Regency, a leading force in regional tourism development, has implemented 13 programs over the last 3 years (2021-2023) to enhance the skills of human resources in the tourism sector. The Tourism Awareness Group Training (Pokdarwis) is the most popular program in the community. Additionally, the capacity building program conducted every year includes training on managing culinary businesses, homestays, and tourist villages. At the organizational level, community capacity building is observed through the Pokdarwis Carocok Painan, as well as several tourism associations such as the Langkisau Paragliding Club, the Tourist Boat Owners Organization, the Painan Homestay Management Forum, and the Carocok Children's Game Association. (Figure 6)
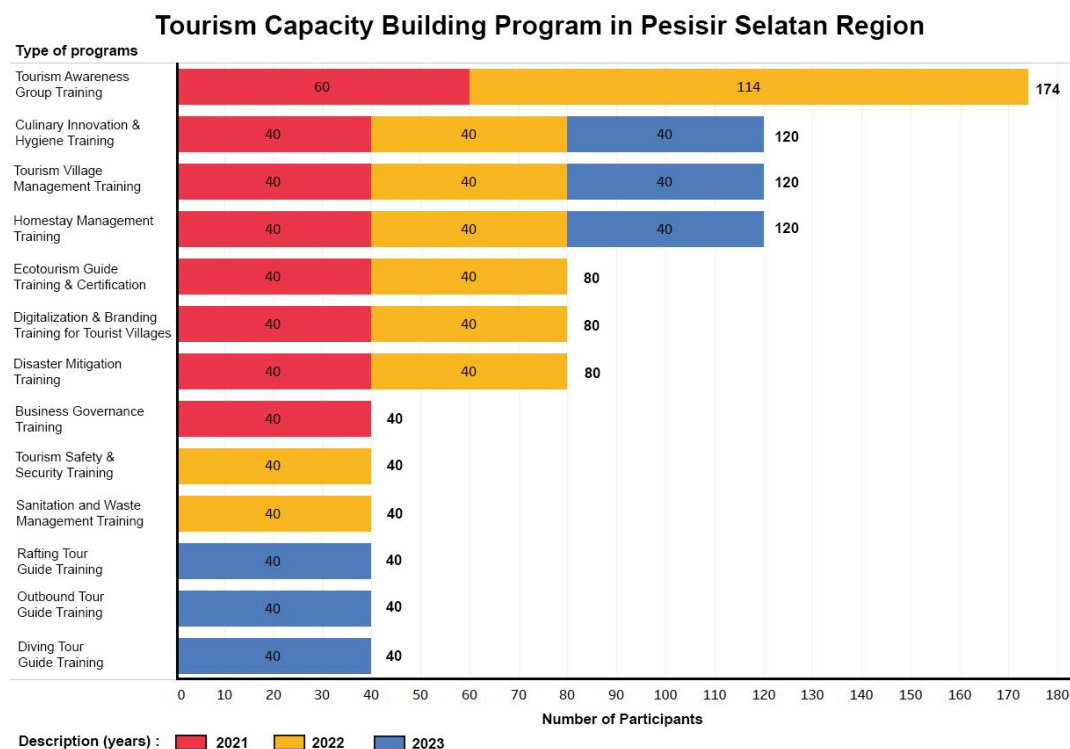

Figure 6. Capacity building program in Pesisir Selatan tourism development

Figure 6 shows that the community involved in the training organized by the Pesisir Selatan Regency Tourism Office for the last 3 (three) years has amounted to 974 participants. In connection with the large number of people involved in the training program, the level of community accessibility in the capacity-building program is further measured, as shown in the survey results in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents of tourism business actors

Respondents	Involvement in Capacity Building Programs		Total
	Participated	Never Participated	
Business Owners (person)	26	13	39
Workforce (person)	9	28	37
Total (person)	35	41	76
Percentage (%)	46 %	54 %	100 %

Based on a survey of 76 respondents consisting of business owners (39) and workers (37) who do business in the Carocok tourist area, it is known that only 35 people (46%) have participated in the tourism human resource capacity building program. This result shows that the

level of community accessibility in the tourism human resource capacity building program organized by the Government is still low.

The low accessibility of the community to community capacity-building programs is because the program tends to prioritize business actors over the workforce. The workforce also has an essential role in serving tourists. The amount of community involvement in the program has implications for the number of business actors and workers with the capabilities, knowledge, and skills needed to develop tourism in the Carocok tourist area. Regarding the problem of limited community capacity, it is proposed to the organizers of capacity-building programs in the tourism sector to prioritize people who have never participated in the program at all, including tourism workers who have an essential role in serving tourists directly

d. Usefulness of tourism activities

The sustainability of tourism is determined by the benefits each stakeholder in social networks receives. These benefits are measured in economic, social, and environmental aspects : 1) The economic aspect is related to the impact of tourism activities on stimulating business opportunities, employment, and community income. 2) The social aspect is related to forming community awareness and skills in tourism, consolidating local communities, and preserving local traditions or culture. 3) The environmental aspect is related to the impact of tourism on the region and the environment (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism activities for local communities

The interviews with key informants indicate that economically, Carocok tourism has the potential to stimulate economic diversification, create new employment opportunities, and the availability of supporting facilities and local infrastructure. Socially, the Carocok tourist area has the potential to enhance social networks within the community, foster unity among community members, preserve local traditions and culture, and boost community capacity. Ecologically, it can also raise awareness and concern for the environment.

Tourism activities in rural areas can negatively impact the social, economic, and environmental aspects of local communities. Issues such as an economic disparities among group members based on capital ownership, the misuse of homestays for prostitution, and increased tourist visits leading to environmental pollution from waste are significant concerns. To address these issues, several strategies can be implemented, including halal tourism policies aligned with local cultural values, economic empowerment programs, and effective systems for sustainable tourism waste management.

The development of the Carocok tourist area involves collaboration among the government, the community, and the private sector. This collaboration forms a triple helix with the community as the leading actor in developing community-based tourism (Figure 8).
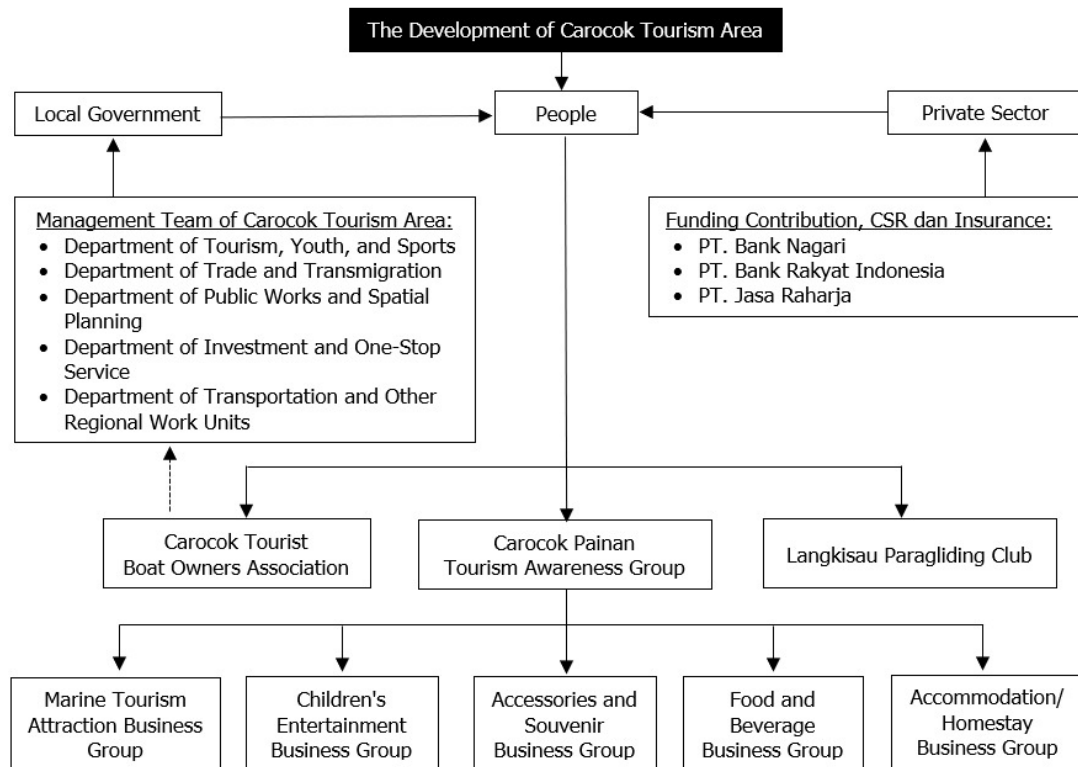
Figure 8. A social network model for the development of the Carocok tourism area

The social network among stakeholders is determined based on their roles, authorities, and responsibilities. According to Decree Number 556/16/Kpts/BPT-PS/2015 from the Regent of Pesisir Selatan, the management of the Carocok Painan tourist area involves coordination and collaboration among several Regional Apparatus Work Units (SKPD) within the Pesisir Selatan Regency Government. The Regional Government has designated specific roles and responsibilities to each SKPD: 1) The Tourism Office serves as the team coordinator and is responsible for managing tourist attractions, tourism marketing, and tourism human resource development. 2) The Trade and Transmigration Office is responsible for regulating and structuring business operators within tourist attractions. 3) The Public Works and Spatial Planning Office is responsible for developing tourism infrastructure. 4) The Transportation Department oversees vehicle traffic, parking, and tourist boats in the Carocok tourist area. 5) The Wali Nagari is in charge of community empowerment and population mobility.

Discussions

In the Carocok tourist area, social network analysis (SNA) involves examining the social interaction between three main stakeholders: the government, the community, and the private sector. This pattern is often referred to as the triple helix model. This model is commonly used to create synergy when developing agro-tourism in Indonesia (Fitriana, 2017), such as in West Nusa Tenggara (Rahmawati et al., 2023), and in South Sulawesi (Attas et al., 2020). This model is also applicable to the development of culture-based tourism, as seen in Saung Angklung Udjo in Bandung (Hani et al., 2013). Developing Carocok tourism requires strong support and dedication from stakeholders to ensure the future sustainability of tourism.

Stakeholders as any person, group or institution that has an interest in a development activity, project or program (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). In the tourism context, stakeholders are individuals and groups who influence or are influenced by local tourism development (Nguyen et al., 2019). According to Stakeholders Theory, the successful development of a tourism destination is dependent on stakeholder engagement where the local destination management organisation should identify and consider all interests of the stakeholders (Mowforth & Munt, 2015).

Stakeholders Theory helps to differentiate stakeholders by their level of salience (Mitchell et al., 1997), which is determined by their power, legitimacy, urgency, and proximity attributes (Nguyen et al., 2019).

The participation of triple helix actors in implementing CBT demonstrates that each stakeholder has roles and functions that complement one another. The main essence of CBT is that local communities can own and manage tourism resources, so the most significant proportion of benefits is in local communities (Sithole et al., 2021). Therefore, CBT defines as "tourism from the community, by the community, and for the community" (Okazaki, 2008). In the context of CBT, the role and contribution of the community are emphasized, as evidenced by the community's ownership of 89.27% of tourism resources. In contrast, the government owns only 9.26%, and private ownership accounts for 1.46%. The community has a strong ownership of tourism resources, with offerings such as tourist boats, restaurants, and cafes. Additionally, tourism activities can contribute to the development of handicraft businesses and creative industries (Fitriana, 2020) including local handicrafts made from shellfish. This creates job opportunities for the local community and has a positive impact on the local economy. The leadership of local leaders and community involvement in tourism activities are the main driving forces behind the development of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in the Carocok Tourism Area. Sapphaya Community in Chai Nat Province, Thailand, demonstrates how local community leadership and ownership models can promote sustainable tourism and foster social entrepreneurship (Thananusak & Suriyankietkaew, 2023).

Based on their roles and interests, stakeholders can be divided into: 1) Key Players as stakeholders who have significant interests and influence; 2) Context setters are stakeholders whose influence is strong but whose importance is low; 3) Subject, namely stakeholders whose interests are high but do not have significant influence. These stakeholders usually have limited capacity to influence a policy; 4) Crowds are stakeholders whose importance and influence are low in decision-making.

The power relationship between the government and the community runs in the context of balanced power. Through the Tourism Office, the government has a claim of power in the form of regulations that allow it to become a key player in the development of CBT. The government bases its power claim on legal rationality, where policies, programs, and the implementation of agency duties and functions refer to regulations. On the other hand, people with a large portion of involvement with a high interest in tourism activities become their position as subjects in the development of CBT.

People who have been given space to access tourism resources have a high interest in obtaining economic benefits from tourism but have little influence in determining tourism policies such as spatial planning and tourism governance. Meanwhile, the government has a high interest in and impact on the implementation of policies and the success of regional tourism development because the legitimacy of the rules in the form of regulations on the implementation of main tasks and organizational functions supports them.

Pokdarwis helps coordinate the community in planning, managing, and evaluating tourism activities. According to the chairperson of Pokdarwis Carocok Pantai Painan (Pokdarwis CPP), having Pokdarwis can unite tourism business actors, such as by establishing price standards for tourism services and other marine tourism attractions. Pokdarwis also strengthens cooperation within the community through activities such as "jumat bersih", "minggu sehat", and family gatherings. Community Based Tourism (CBT) has been proven to enhance the community's social capital (Zhang et al., 2021) and reduce the emergence of social conflicts (Rocca & Zielinski, 2022).

A tourism network is a complex system where nodes (e.g., organisations, groups, and individuals) and ties (e.g., communication, agreements, and relationships) form a system in which different entrepreneurs, through their position, decisions, behaviour, or attitudes, affect each other and the whole network (Hua & Wondirad, 2021).

SNA allows to map stakeholders and explore how they are linked through relational ties in the network (Can & Alatas, 2019). SNA explains the flow of information through direct linkages from one actor to another, and through indirect links via bridging actors. The focus of this study is focusing on the rural tourism networking between the local communities, govornment and enterprise.

The Pesisir Selatan Government is offering land in the reclamation area to provide economic opportunities for the local community. The land will serve as a place of business, and crossing piers will be made available to facilitate the ownership of tourist boats. This initiative aims to make it easier for the community to transport tourists from Carocok Beach to Cingkuak Island. This study demonstrates that the government serves as both a regulator and facilitator for the development of tourism infrastructure (Jailani et al., 2023). The government also actively participates in capacity-building programs. Enhancing community capacity will promote the success and sustainability of CBT. Through capacity building, communities can achieve unity and resilience against manipulation for personal gain (Giampiccoli et al., 2014).

Community capacity building is a process that aims to strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations in developing and maintaining the sustainability of activities in people's lives. Capacity building has 3 (three) levels, namely:
a) Individual level (behavior, motivation, skills, and knowledge),
b) Organizational level (strategy, resource management, cooperation)
c) The level of the broader social community system (framework and institutional).

The effectiveness of government policies aimed at supporting rural tourism through the development of reclaimed areas, capacity-building programs, and the establishment of tourism service tariffs faces several challenges. These challenges create gaps between planning and implementation, including issues such as the improper use of tourism facilities, capacity-building programs that fail to target the right groups, and inconsistencies in the tourism tariffs imposed by operators. These various governance problems in tourism have the potential to lead to prolonged conflicts of interest. Therefore, it is essential for the government to evaluate these issues to bridge the gaps in rural tourism governance.

The private sector offers tourism services that require significant capital investment, such as restaurants and accommodation. Additionally, it sponsors various tourism events in the Pesisir Selatan, including the Rabab Kreasi Festival, the "Baju Kuruang Basiba" Festival, the West Sumatra Culinary Bazaar, and the "Tangkok Itiak" Competition. Furthermore, the private sector promotes the growth of entrepreneurs and contributes to conservation efforts (Fitriana, 2017).

While the triple helix model has been instrumental in the development of tourism in this area, it's important to note that other stakeholders can play a strategic role in further encouraging tourism development. Studies conducted in 88 countries have shown that media development can significantly boost profits and contribute to the growth of the tourism industry (Kwabi et al., 2023). Other research also indicates that Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan, saw an increase in tourists after the video post went viral on social media (Usui et al., 2018). The media can play a role in the quadruple helix tourism model, in line with the new media theory that emphasizes media's ability to facilitate social interaction. In the future, the tourism development model will also involve other stakeholders such as academics and scientists, incorporating the latest research developments.

CBT is closely related to sustainable tourism because both concepts emphasize the benefits of tourism development for local communities, especially economic, socio-cultural, and environmental benefits (Khan et al., 2021). In other words, if people can directly enjoy the benefits of tourism, then they will automatically support tourism development and maintain its sustainability. The correlation between community-based tourism and sustainable development shows that ideal conditions will be achieved if people have awareness and empowerment and participate in destination management. UNWTO states this perfect condition is because sustainable development starts at the level of individuals, communities, or societies (from the bottom). Again, this happens because community-based tourism involves local communities in the decision-making process according to the priorities of the destinations that are being developed.

This opportunity allows all parties of society in an area to have the same involvement and responsibility in a tourism system that will bring economic benefits, socio-cultural sustainability, and sustainability to the destination environment.

Conclusions

The tourism development in the Carocok Tourism Area can be likened to a triple helix model with three key stakeholders: the government, the community, and the private sector. This type of tourism management leads to community-based tourism (CBT), where the community plays a dominant role in tourism activities. It is evident from the community owns 89.27% of tourism resources. However, improvement is still needed in terms of control and community capacity. The government and the private sector both play important roles in capacity-building programs, specifically for those involved in tourism. This involves coordinating with Pokdarwis, as well as in regulating and providing infrastructure. Some challenges the government faces in regulating and facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure include the privatization of public spaces, acts of violence by community members, and environmental pollution due to tourism waste. Tourism activities have been shown to contribute economically by providing jobs and diversifying economic activities. Socially, it can help to strengthen community bonds, social networks, and local traditions and culture. From an environmental perspective, community-based tourism (CBT) can help raise public awareness about maintaining public facilities and the natural environment. Moving forward, tourism development should involve academics and the media to further strengthen its impact.

Acknowledgement

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Planning strategic management for theme park tourism: Evidence from Indonesia

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Abstract: Limited studies discuss parks and tourism. The factors that influence the sustainability of a park have yet to be the concern of academics. Planning based on strategic management is a critical step in managing a park that has experienced a decline in management quality. This study aims to 1) identify the actual condition of park as a tourist attraction; 2) describe the factors supporting and inhibiting the management of park as a tourist attraction from the perspective of residents; 3) evaluate Maccini Park as a tourist attraction for visitors: 4) propose the planning and management of a park as a tourist attraction. This study employed a mixed-methods approach through interviews, observations, and surveys in January 2023. The research utilised primary data from the public and visitors to the park and secondary data through internet data review. The study results show that Maccini Sombala Park became the public's and visitors' primary choice for tourism when it opened in 2003. Covid-19 has had an impact on the unsustainable management of the park. Free entry of visitors and the public and low public awareness in maintaining tourist parks inhibit the park's management. As a result, there are damaged and stolen facilities and irresponsible visits. The park can support urban tourism development due to factors such as strategic location, tourism support facilities, government efforts in managing the park and positive information on the internet media. This research advances the knowledge of strategic planning in park management from the perspective of theme park tourism. Practically, implementing a planning mechanism may overcome the issue of unsustainable management.

Keywords: Maccini Sombala Park, park tourism, strategic management, supporting and inhibiting factors

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Introduction

Parks can be an option for city governments to manage urban areas. Tourism stakeholders in urban areas can offer travel experiences with visits to parks or theme parks. Apart from tourists, residents in an urban area can visit parks, looking for a relaxing atmosphere or other purposes. Parks can be locations for various activities or events that can become opportunities for improving the local community's economy (Darmana et al., 2021; Shaumarli & Nurwitasari, 2024; Suriyadi & Suryasih, 2018; Widyonarso & Hari Mardiansjah, 2020). A park is also a gathering place for community members in which there are participants or visitors to an event. Opportunities for economic transaction processes can occur due to community participation in creating business opportunities (Susanti & Aidar, 2017). Thus, parks can support tourism development through urban and park tourism concepts.

Research on tourism and parks has become the concern of academics by analysing various perspectives on park tourism. Research on tourism and parks uses the term theme park tourism (Cheng et al., 2016; Ong & Jin, 2016; Tasci & Milman, 2019; Tsang et al., 2016). Eagles (2014) analyses research topics related to park tourism. The results showed ten categories of issues or areas of study that required in-depth analysis, including park use monitoring, park economic impact monitoring, park finance, park management competence, public support, visitor satisfaction, licenses and permits in park tourism, pricing policies, management capacity, government and park tourism (Eagles, 2014). The identification results show the limitations of the literature review on parks and tourism. Studies on park tourism still

need to be completed, especially concerning the perceptions of the people who live around tourist parks.

However, few studies discuss parks and tourism. The factors that influence the sustainability of a park have yet to be the concern of academics. Park management tends to be unsustainable, impacting the value of the benefits of the park. Therefore, planning based on strategic management is a critical step in managing a park that has experienced a decline in management quality.

Park management needs to pay attention to the park's existence to the people who live around the park. The community is the leading actor who plays an essential role in maintaining the existence of a park. Communities can also become managers and business actors with economic value for the community. This research fills in the limited literature on community expectations and responses regarding the existence of a park and park management strategies from a tourism perspective. Tourist attraction is one of the important reasons in the management and development of tourism destinations. Tourist attraction is an important factor in the process of marketing and attracting tourist visits (Ram et al., 2016). The increase and decrease in the number of tourist visits is inseparable from how tourist attractions are managed. A tourist attraction needs to be managed because it has an impact on various aspects of human life. The impact of managing a tourist attraction can be classified into three parts, namely, economic, environmental or physical and socio-cultural impacts (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Weidenfeld et al., 2016).

There are types of tourist attractions and the benefits obtained by managing these tourist attractions (Evans, et.al, 2003; Swarbrooke, 1995). The first type is theme park; the benefit is to have fun, enjoy the atmosphere, enjoy a variety of attractions, involve other companies in utilising the park and enjoy a pleasant atmosphere. The second type is the beach; visitors can enjoy sunbathing activities, opportunities to improve the community's economy, and involvement of various parties using the beach. The third type is the cathedral, those who visit get a spiritual experience, historical information, and delight in the architecture of the building. The fourth type is a museum; visitors learn something new, have a nostalgic atmosphere, and buy souvenirs. The fifth type is a recreation centre; visitors can do exercise and physical and recreational activities. Parks can be locations for fun activities that offer a different atmosphere. Parks can offer a pleasant atmosphere and there is a learning process in their management. However, there are several factors that affect the sustainability of the management of tourist attractions, namely, financial problems, marketing, internal factors, external factors of a business or tourist attraction and relationship problems between managers and owners of a business.

Management of a tourist attraction needs to pay attention to the needs of customers who will buy tourism products (Richards & Wilkes, 2008). Four aspects are essential in managing tourist attractions from a customer's point of view: products, people, pricing and marketing. Product relates to what is offered by a tourist attraction. Humans or parties who manage a tourist attraction are significant in the sustainability of a tourist attraction. Therefore, recruiting employees and training to manage human resources are crucial in managing tourist attractions. In the aspect of pricing, it will also impact the desire of tourists to choose the products offered. Finally, in marketing, how can a tourist attraction reach potential customers who will buy the tourism product.

As a tourism destination, Makassar City has tourism potential based on culture, nature and artificial. Maccini Sombala Park is one of the artificial tourist attractions that became a tourism icon for the city of Makassar in 2014. However, along with various conditions, especially those related to Covid-19, the park tends to be abandoned and is no longer a city tourism icon. The authors argue that research on the park's current condition needs to be assessed. The park-based tourist attraction that was once an icon deserves attention so that the surrounding community can benefit from the theme park tourism. Sustainable park management can have an impact on Makassar city's tourism development. This study aims to 1) identify the actual condition of Maccini Sombala Park as a tourist attraction; 2) Evaluating maccini park as a tourist attration for visitors: 3) describe the factors supporting and inhibiting the management of the

park as a tourist attraction from the perspective of residents; 4) propose the planning and management of park as a tourist attraction.

This study adopts the concept of strategic management planning in managing the park as a tourist attraction. This research advances knowledge on strategic management in park management as a tourist attraction. This research provides information or insights regarding the process or mechanism for building and re-managing parks that are experiencing a decline. The authors describe the stages of managing neglected parks so that they can provide benefits to the surrounding community and sustainable park management.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and quantitative method in analysing the actual conditions in Maccini Sombala Park, Makassar City of Indonesia. The authors carried out the research through three stages, including the initial survey or observation; the stage of completion of research administration, data collection and analysis; stage of writing research results. The authors determined research locations based on three considerations. First, Maccini Sombala Park has become a potential tourist location for the people of Makassar City, especially at the start of the park's inauguration. However, these conditions are different from current conditions. Second, the management of Maccini Sombala Park tends to decline, which can impact the sustainable management of the park. Third, the Makassar city government implements various programs to develop tourism. Therefore, managing parks in urban areas can be an opportunity to support urban tourism development.

The authors employed three types of research data collection methods: interviews, direct observation, informants met and willing to fill out feedback by visiting research sites. The authors collected data in January 2023 after going through the research permit administration process from the authors' institution. The authors conducted interviews using three stages: approaching the people living around Maccini Sombala Park; requesting willingness for research interviews; conveying research objectives, and securing consent to participate. Some informants were unwilling to be recorded during the interview, so the authors took notes during the interview. Data collection through field observations utilises field notes related to the condition of Maccini Sombala Park. The interviews' results and the authors' observation notes are the primary research data. Furthermore, the authors obtained secondary data from publications and internet media that provided information about Maccini Sombala Park. Meanwhile, to collect visitor feedback, this research looks at Maccini Park as a attraction by measuring interrelated components, such as attractions, amenities, accessibility, and ancillary services (Ardiansyah, etc., 2023; Bigart, Freimund, & Dalenberg, 2023) as well as Maccini Sombala Park (with its function as a city park that supports social interaction, recreation, and learning processes for the community (Lis & Iwankowski, 2021).

Three key elements are the key to the successful management of a tourist attraction (Martin & Mason, 1993) namely, how to attract new and repeat visitors, set competency standards and monitor the progress of a business, and prepare for and anticipate changes in visitor needs and expectations.

This research employs a strategic planning approach in managing and developing the park (Figure 1). Evans et al. (2003) suggest four approaches in planning and developing a tourism opportunity: a planned/prescriptive approach, an emergent/incremental approach, a competitive positioning approach, and a resource and competency approach. The planned approach is defined as a planning process with a focus on an organisation's strategy and helps evaluate what has been implemented. Planning must always be flexible in an emergent approach, enabling the organisation to learn and adapt to changes. The third approach emphasises the importance of the environment and provides an essential tool for analysing businesses in an industrial context. The fourth approach focuses on the importance of business and helps identify specific sources of a company for competitive advantage.

The focus of this research is to analyse the community's views around the Maccini Sombala Park regarding the actual condition of the park and what their hopes are regarding sustainable management. Furthermore, this research produces a strategic plan based on the

local community's views. Strategic management planning has guided the authors in understanding park tourism as a conceptual framework.
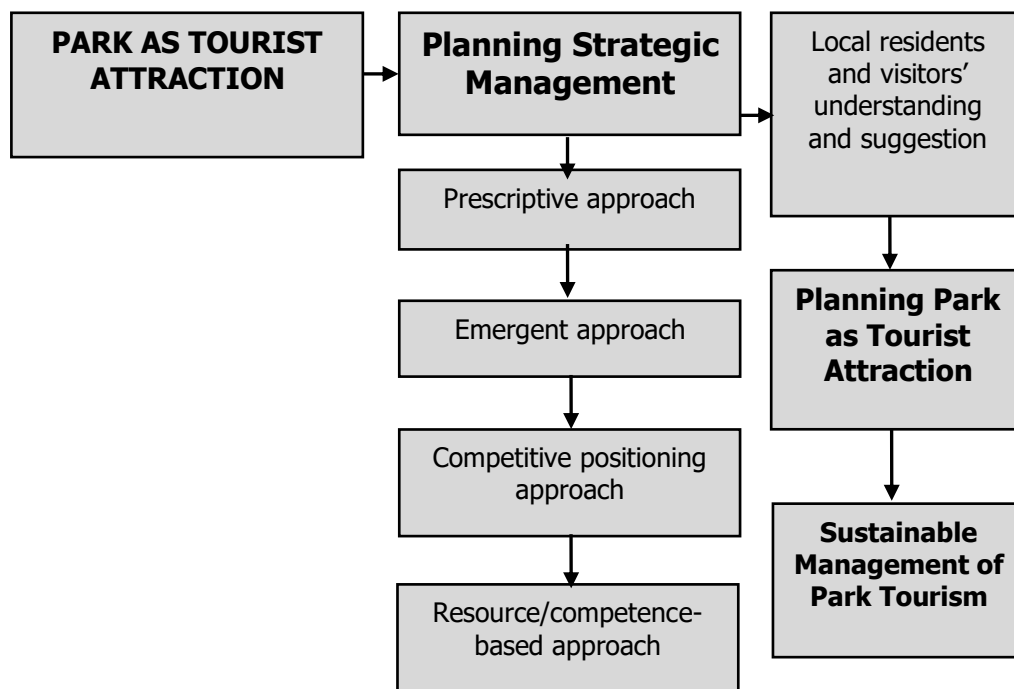
(Source: Adopted from Evans et al. 2003)
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research

There were eleven research informants: two local visitors and nine residents around Maccini Sombala Park. Determination of informants applies the principle of purposive sampling, a method of selecting informants based on research objectives by ascertaining the willingness of informants to be part of the research. There are three criteria for recruiting research informants. First, the informants are the local community who reside around the research sites and are willing to provide information relevant to the research topic. The authors implemented informal interviews to understand whether or not they have an understanding and are interested in providing information. Second, local stakeholders such as academics, government staff, tourism industry employees, and the local community who are interested in tourism and park management are relevant informants for this research. Third, it is essential to approach the visitors to hear their point of view regarding the actual condition of the park. The authors could approach the informants to fill out the questionnaire. The Characteristics of informants can be seen in Table 1.

Furthermore, the authors applied qualitative data analysis based on the principle of data reduction with the stages of information analysis, data presentation and conclusion (Babbie, 2007; Junaid, 2016; Liamputtong, 2009).

Table 1. Characteristics of informants

Category	Male (60%)	Female (40%)	Total (100%)
Gender	60%	40%	100%
Employment Status			
Student/College	60 (75%)	20 (25%)	80 (80%)
Employed	0 (0%)	20 (100%)	20 (20%)
Motivation for Visit			
Recreation/Relaxation	25 (41.67%)	15 (37.5%)	40 (40%)

Sports	30 (50%)	20 (50%)	50 (50%)
Invited by Friends	3 (5%)	2 (5%)	5 (5%)
Photography/Content Creator	2 (3.33%)	3 (7.5%)	5 (5%)

(Source: Authors, January-March 2023)

Results and Discussions

An Overview of Maccini Sombala Park

Makassar city has parks that can be residents' choice to relax, rest or enjoy a break, for example, Tiger Park, Pakui Park, Pattimura Park, Fort Rotterdam Park, Indosat Park, and Reflection Park. Maccini Sombala Park is one of the locations for the residents and tourists to rest, relax and participate in sports activities. Maccini Sombala Park is located in Maccini Sombala Village, Tamalate District, about 15-20 minutes by road from Losari Water Front, the tourism icon of Makassar city. Makassar city residents use Maccini Sombala Park for various activities, sports, recreation, leisure, and even organising events. The use of Maccini Sombala Park by the residents of Makassar city occurred from 2011 to 2015, when the park was still well-managed and with well-maintained facilities.

Maccini Sombala Park is a tourist icon and a choice for Makassar city residents, including tourists for tourism and vacation activities (figure 2). Information on the internet presents the beauty, uniqueness and superiority of Maccini Sombala Park for tourism activities. Positive information about the park is available online, for example, *Celebes.co./taman-maccini-sombala*; *getlost.id/2022/02/14-taman-maccini-sombala-places-sports-favorit-warga-community|*; *atourin.com/destination/Makassar/taman-maccini-sombala*. However, the current condition of Maccini Sombala Park is very different from the positive information available. Various media also provide information about the current condition of Maccini Sombala Park, for example, *celebesmedia.id/celebes/artikel/1003210822/miris-taman-moi-jorok-dan-not-maintained*; *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0hAmg3R4Lw*. This research examines the actual condition of Maccini Sombala Park in 2023 and analyses opportunities for sustainable management and development so that the park can function as an artificial-based tourist attraction and benefit the surrounding community.

At the beginning of the operation of Maccini Sombala Park, stakeholders in the city of Makassar organised various events, for example, world food day events, a week of flori flora event, concerts and events with artistic nuances. The implementation of the events shows the existence of a park which is the choice of Makassar city residents and can become a leading tourist attraction for the city of Makassar. Furthermore, utilising parks by the residents indicates the need for city residents to find unique and pleasant locations to relax. As a result, there is a potential opportunity for Makassar city to attract tourists; one of the agendas is to visit Maccini Sombala Park. Besides, people who live around the park can improve their economy through business.

Maccini Sombala Park has spaces and locations for fishing activities, water tours by going around on small boats, swing activities for children, and enjoying a beautiful garden. There are supporting facilities, such as toilets, a praying room, resting places, and jogging tracks. However, these conditions are different since Covid-19 has affected tourism in Indonesia. The facilities have started to break down, and the ignorance seems to represent the park's current condition (Figure 3). People in Makassar city still visit Maccini Sombala Park in minimal numbers and for different purposes. Some visitors exercise, relax, fish and for study purposes. Compared to the initial operation, the current condition requires priority attention and proper management.

(Source: Dok.Google Maps/Idhol Abdullah (https://getlost.id/2022/02/14/taman-maccini-sombala-tempat-olahraga-favorit-warga-makassar/)
Figure 2. Maccini Sombala Park in Makassar city

(Source: Authors, 2023)
Figure 3. Facility at Maccini Sombala Park.

Analysis of Visitor Responses to Maccini Sombala Park as a Tourist Attraction

Taman Maccini Sombala is one of the public parks in Makassar that serves as a recreational and social space for both residents and visitors. However, despite its potential, the park has faced challenges regarding its maintenance, facilities, and accessibility. Table 2 presents an evaluation of community perceptions regarding various components of the park, including its attractions, amenities, accessibility, and additional services. It reflects both positive and negative feedback from respondents, offering insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the park as a public space.

Table. 2 Evaluation of visitor's perceptions on Taman Maccini Sombala's attractions, facilities, and management

Component / Criteria	Aspect Evaluated	Positive Responses (%)	Negative Responses (%)	Comments	Score
Attraction	Park appeal (vegetation condition, activities)	35%	65%	The community finds the park unattractive due to poorly maintained vegetation and lack of interesting activities.	2/5
Amenities	Quality of facilities (seating, cleanliness)	40%	60%	Facilities are limited and often not well-maintained.	2.5/5
Accessibility	Ease of access (public transportation, roads)	25%	75%	The park's remote location and poor access via public transportation are major barriers.	1/5
Ancillary Service	Additional services (park staff, information)	30%	70%	There is a lack of additional services such as park staff and visitor information.	2/5
Social Interaction	Use of the park as a social space (gathering, socializing)	28%	72%	The community rarely uses the park for social gatherings or socializing due to poor park quality and limited facilities.	2/5
Recreation	Use of the park for recreational activities (walking, relaxing)	33%	67%	Recreational activities are scarce, such as the lack of play areas or organized events.	2/5
Learning	Use of the park for educational activities (nature, history)	20%	80%	The park does not offer any educational programs or facilities that engage visitors in learning activities.	1/5
Modern Facilities	Availability of modern facilities (seating, play areas, etc.)	40%	60%	Despite the availability of modern facilities, poor maintenance reduces visitors' comfort.	2.5/5
Vegetation Maintenance	Care of park vegetation (trees, plants)	25%	75%	Poorly maintained vegetation reduces the park's appeal and visitors' comfort.	1/5
Cleanliness	Park cleanliness (litter, cleanliness facilities)	30%	70%	The presence of litter and insufficient cleanliness reduces the quality of the park.	2/5
Accessibility	Park access (difficulty with public transportation, steep roads)	15%	85%	The park's remote location and access difficulties via public transport are the main obstacles.	01/5

Community Participation	Community involvement in park management	50%	50%	The community shows interest in getting more involved in park management, but there are no clear platforms or opportunities.	03/5

(Source: Authors' data, 2023)

Based on Table 2, the evaluation of Taman Maccini Sombala highlights several interconnected issues, particularly related to attractions, accessibility, and vegetation maintenance. Poor accessibility due to the park's remote location and lack of public transportation significantly impacts its ability to attract visitors. This in turn diminishes the park's appeal and the quality of its attractions, such as under-maintained vegetation. These factors create a cycle where low visitation leads to further neglect, exacerbating the park's decline. Despite these challenges, the balanced response on community participation (50% positive, 50% negative) shows potential for improvement. If the community is given more structured opportunities to participate in park management, such as volunteer programs or workshops, it could foster a sense of ownership and help address issues like vegetation maintenance. However, increased involvement would still require better accessibility and enhanced attractions for it to have a meaningful impact. Au-Yong et al. (2023) affirm that park maintenance is essential to improving the quality of the experience and the number of tourists who visit the park. Good maintenance encourages the sustainable management of the park as a tourist attraction. Similarly, findings in this research affirm that the quality of management of Taman Maccini Sombala is essential to encouraging the number of tourists. Tourists require good transportation and easy access to tourist attractions, enabling them to visit the parks for different purposes.

To address these issues, management strategies should focus on improving transportation access, enhancing attractions through better facilities and activities, and fostering community engagement. Drawing insights from successful case studies could guide the park's revitalization process. By addressing these root causes and fostering collaboration, Taman Maccini Sombala could transform into a vibrant, sustainable public space that serves both residents and visitors effectively.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Managing Maccini Sombala Park

Different stakeholders have given concerns about the management of Maccini Sombala Park, looking at the opportunities as a tourism attraction and the park's current condition. Currently, there is a re-construction process in Maccini Sombala Park. This development is an effort to re-manage the potential and facilities to attract visitors to the park. At the time of conducting the research, the authors recorded various facilities that were in the process of development. The construction person suggested the authors not go inside the park as it is under construction. However, the authors noted the various steps and efforts that the government has made in managing the Maccini Sombala Park, as well as obtained relevant information about the park before and during its construction.

Informants argued that the first time of operating Maccini Sombala Park, there was high interest and attention by the residents and tourists to visit the park. Various activities are the goals of people visiting the park; for example, many use the park for jogging and sports. The canal area surrounding the park is one of the main spots for fishing activities for visitors. The informants revealed that park management declined when Covid-19 began to attack Indonesia. Covid-19 has forced the organiser of the park to dismiss some employees.

The authors identified data regarding supporting and inhibiting factors for managing Maccini Sombala Park through observation and interviews with residents and visitors. Maccini Sombala Park has the potential and opportunities to support the park's existence as a tourism icon for the city of Makassar. The first factor is the strategic location in the middle of Makassar

city. The park is close to the tourist centre of Makassar city. The starting point for exploration of the city of Makassar is around the Losari Water Front with various Makassar city tourism icons, for example, Fort Rotterdam, Losari Water Front, Citra Land City Makassar, accommodation/hospitality centres, Local Culinary Delights and the Centre Point of Indonesia. Tourists can access Maccini Sombala Park from the Losari Beach waterfront for about 15 minutes using private vehicles. Several tourist icons can be additional visits for tourists when visiting Maccini Sombala Park, for example, the flower sales centre, the Cheng Ho mosque, and the lake on Jalan Metro Tanjung Bunga. Access to Tanjung Bunga and supporting tourist spots are supporting factors for Maccini Sombala as park tourism.

The second supporting factor is the availability of facilities where visitors can take advantage of these facilities. Visitors who use the park for relaxing or other purposes need facilities. The utilisation of gazebos, toilets, seats and a comfortable environment can be reasons for tourists to stay and enjoy the facilities. The third supporting factor is the government's efforts to re-manage Maccini Sombala Park. The condition of Maccini Sombala Park is yet to be feasible to become a representative tourist location because it is under construction. Efforts to rebuild can be an opportunity for the community to take a role in managing a tourist park.

The fourth supporting factor is the existence of online digital information about Maccini Sombala Park. Positive information about the park is still available on the internet in various types of information, for example, websites, blogs and news. Indeed, information about current conditions regarding poor management and damaged facilities is a challenge for managers who will build the park. Furthermore, available digital information can influence tourist decisions and impact the image of a tourist attraction (Kim et al., 2017). Therefore, positive information is a supporting factor, although it takes maximum effort from the park manager to change views about the park. Finally, the fifth factor is the community's wish to participate in park management. Communities living around the park are an opportunity if they support the development of the park. However, the community can also become an obstacle if they must be made aware of the importance of preserving the environment and maintaining the park.

However, there are inhibiting factors in the management of parks. The authors noted and analysed qualitative data about the condition of Maccini Sombala Park. The first factor that needs attention is the need for more public awareness in paying attention to the existing condition of the park. Informants in this study revealed that the people who live around the park carry out activities that have an impact on decreasing the environmental quality of the park. The first activity is local people who use or install nets to catch fish in the canal area. Fishing activity in Maccini Sombala Park is a park tourism offer. However, net fishing impacts massive fishing without considering the sustainability of fish habitat. There is much trash in the park and its surroundings due to low public awareness of maintaining the park. Garbage is not only from low public awareness but visitors who come and dispose of garbage irresponsibly. The second activity is the community and visitors who can freely enter and leave the park. Covid-19 has impacted the neglect of the park as an essential asset. Irresponsible entry and exit of people and visitors impacted the damage to park facilities. The absence of managers who organise visits to the park is one of the reasons for the damage to the facilities at the park.

The second inhibiting factor is park management which tends to be slow. Slow management can occur due to various factors, for example, limited funding and the clarity of the management model. This study does not aim to identify why development is slow. However, informants said that the reconstruction of Maccini Sombala Park seemed slow. An informant stated, "the construction took a long time and has not finished" (interview, January 2023). The government has paid attention to the management of Maccini Sombala Park. However, development requires a process with much funding.

The third inhibiting factor is using Maccini Sombala Park for irresponsible activities. No manager controls the entry and exit of visitors to Maccini Sombala Park, which impacts the park's function, which is different from its purpose. According to locals, some young men and women use the park for irresponsible purposes. Consequently, it gives a negative impression of the existence of the park. This condition requires that there is a manager who can arrange

visits to Maccini Sombala Park. Figure 4 illustrates the supporting and inhibiting factors in managing Maccini Sombala Park.

Such findings indicate that visitors' behavior affects the condition of the park as a tourist attraction. For this reason, it is essential to manage visitors for sustainable park management. Melo et al. (2022) found that efforts and practices by the local community and practitioners for sustainable tourism help achieve the goals of sustainable park tourism. However, challenges may exist for park management as they face people who come with different behaviour. Furthermore, Chebli et al. (2024) affirm that inappropriate tourist behaviors such as dishonesty, noise, pollution, and waste create consequences for the management of national parks. Such impacts encourage the necessity of managing parks under the principle of visitor management, a strategy to manage tourists' visitation for sustainable park management.
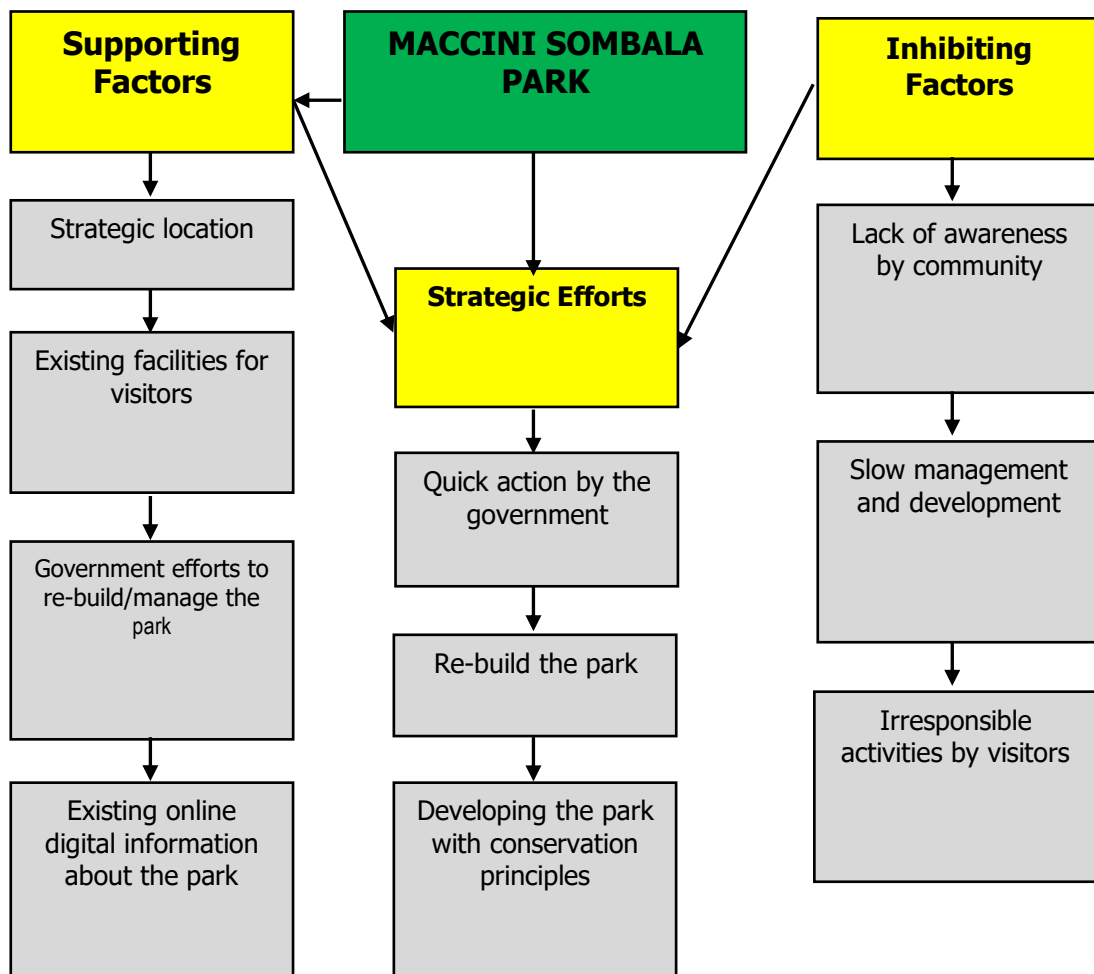
(Source: Authors, 2023)

Figure 4. Supporting and inhibiting factors for managing Maccini Sombala Park

This study proposes four important steps in following up on the current condition of Maccini Sombala Park. The community and visitors propose steps so that Maccini Sombala Park can provide valuable benefits to the community and support Makassar city tourism as follows;
1. The government took quick steps to re-manage Maccini Sombala Park.
2. The government is rebuilding the park, returning the existence of the park to the way it was at the beginning of park management.
3. Accelerate the development process so that the existing facilities may be helpful for sustainable use.

4. Management and rebuilding by implementing conservation principles, the development process by sterilising the park, needs to be justified in carrying out activities during the development process.

Planning and Management of Park as Tourist Attraction

By implementing sustainable management, Maccini Sombala Park can become a tourism icon for Makassar. The government's attention to re-managing Maccini Sombala Park is the first step to taking advantage of the park's facilities and potential, which still need attention. The people who became research informants responded positively to efforts to re-manage the park. Sustainable management is essential because the community can participate in opening up business opportunities to improve the economy (Junaid & Mat Som, 2019; Widhianthini, 2017). Management of the park as a tourist attraction should go through a planning process. This study proposes planning and management so that the park provides value for the surrounding community and impacts the positive image of Makassar city tourism.

Strategic planning is an important step in managing a park. The purpose of strategic planning is to ensure that park management is not solely for the benefit of managers and tourists who will visit but for sustainable maintenance of facilities and the community as the primary manager of the park. There are many residents living around Maccini Sombala Park. Therefore, the local community's expectations can be essential for managing the park as a tourist attraction. This study adopts the concept of strategic management planning as proposed by Evans et al. (2003). Strategic management is managing a product that includes various interrelated aspects to optimise achieving organisational goals (Morden, 2007).

The prescriptive approach is the initial stage for the re-management Maccini Sombala Park. At this stage, there are three processes that stakeholders may execute. First, the local government clarifies the clarity of park management. At this stage, the local government has gone through the process of determining the person in charge of managing Maccini Sombala Park. City or provincial governments have authority in the process of determining park managers. The facilities in Maccini Sombala Park are owned by the government, including the park's land. The park manager coordinates with the government as a form of responsibility for reporting and managing the park under government coordination. The second stage is the process of consultation and coordination with relevant stakeholders. The consultation and coordination process needs to involve the community around the park. Involving community representatives participating in the consultation and coordination process can build community trust in administrators and the government. The community is an important figure in managing and caring for the existence of the park as a tourist attraction. In the third stage, the manager develops the park by coordinating and communicating with the government.

The second approach to the planning process is flexibility in planning and managing Maccini Sombala Park. The ability and desire of managers to receive various inputs and suggestions in managing and developing tourist parks are the implementations of flexibility. In rebuilding the park, managers can coordinate with various parties to listen to suggestions for developing the park. The impact of Covid-19 on the management of tourist attractions is an example of how managers should be flexible in planning and managing the park. Tourist attraction managers must plan and implement various efforts to recover from the impact of Covid-19, for example, innovation programs and provision of infrastructure that supports tourism (Hussin et al., 2022; Yeh, 2021). Flexibility means managers' efforts in adapting to various possibilities that can affect the park's management.

The third planning process for tourism park management is environmental preservation and opportunities for relevant stakeholders to plan and run tourism businesses. The park's tourist attraction manager needs to pay attention to the competition that might occur. Environmental preservation is essential in managing tourist attractions (Han, 2021). A well-maintained environment can be a marketing tool for the sustainable management of park tourism to impact its competitiveness (Elghonaimy & Alsaeed, 2021). Tourist parks are in an environment with people and habitats for living things. Park management must look at the natural environment, which is maintained, avoiding environmental damage. For example, Maccini Sombala Park has a canal that has the potential to suffer environmental degradation

due to irresponsible visitor behaviour. Visitors who throw garbage in the canal can impact the accumulation of garbage that damages environmental sustainability. Maccini Sombala Park has plants that require preservation to green the environment. Sustainable park planning makes environmental sustainability a priority.

Planning a tourist park also requires the active participation of the community around the park. In the third planning phase, the community becomes the leading actor in the planning process related to business management and development opportunities. Community participation is a tool to support sustainable tourism development (Junaid & Nur Fauziah, 2019; Mohd Rasdi et al., 2022; Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019). Community participation as a business provider is an opportunity to attract the public's interest and visitors to the park. The community around Maccini Sombala Park hopes there will be an opportunity for them to sell business products as part of an effort to take advantage of the park's existence. Businesses in the economic sector can be the community's choice around the park, for example, food and beverage businesses, rental businesses for tourism support facilities, souvenir-based creative businesses and various businesses that can support the community's economy. The authors propose two ways for community participation in the management and development of the park, including community members who become park staff and the community around the park who open businesses. Such a way enables the community and related stakeholders to benefit from the park's existence.

The people around the park need jobs that will enable them to support their families. An informant states,

"When there are media like this (refers to the park), local people may be helped for job employment. For good management and employment for the local people, why not. We (the local government) would be pleased if our people could work. If we see the situation here, many people are unemployed. From the park activities, the local community can enjoy the park's existence, particularly in recruiting jobs" (Translated from the interview, January 2023).

The informant argues the importance of park management in supporting job creation. The current need of residents is the availability of jobs for those unemployed. Hence, managing the park as a tourist attraction allows the surrounding community to preserve the park. In other words, the park provides a positive value for the surrounding community.
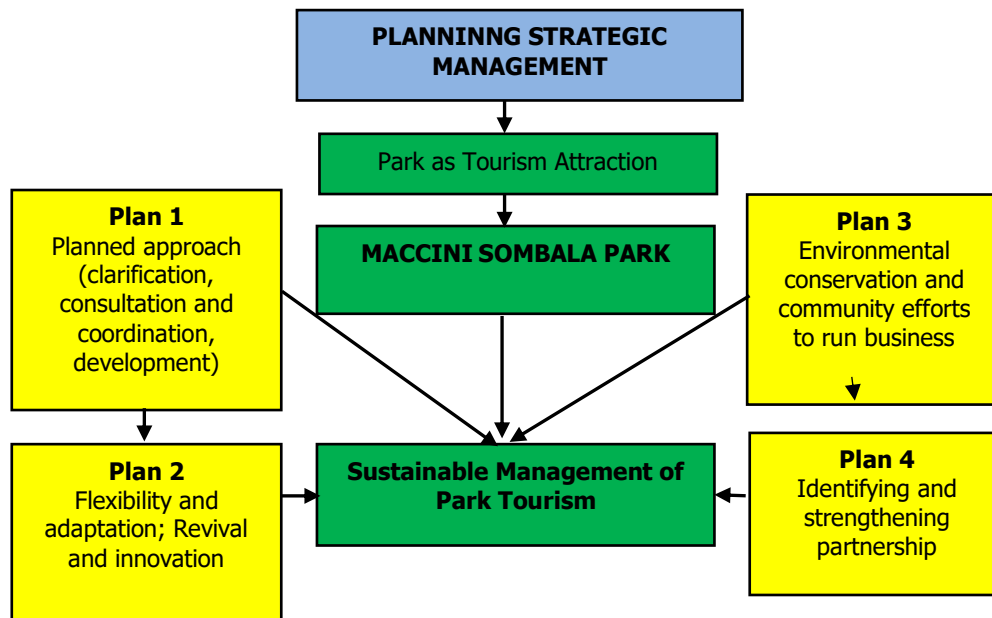
(Source: Authors, 2023)

Figure 5. Supporting and inhibiting factors for managing Maccini Sombala Park

The fourth plan for managing and developing tourist parks is identifying opportunities to establish partners between park managers and related stakeholders. Planning in the first stage indicates the importance of clarity for park management. The fourth planning stage encourages managers to improve partnership programs with related parties. Partnership programs can provide opportunities for park managers to implement programs. Implementation of various programs in tourist parks can support the quality of tourist experience while visiting tourist parks (Lee et al., 2019; Milman, 2009). Planning at this stage aims to ensure the ability of competent staff or managers to manage the park with its various facilities. Partnerships are an essential step to improving the ability or human resources of managers of tourist attractions (Darwis & Junaid, 2016; Saputra et al., 2019). Communities and park managers need to improve human resources to support park management.

The government is the leading partner of the manager of Maccini Sombala Park. Furthermore, park managers can strengthen institutional partners with various industries. Potential partners for tourist parks are event organisers who directly plan and carry out events or activities at national and international levels. At the beginning of the inauguration of Maccini Sombala Park in 2011, managers, government and event organisers had chosen the park to hold the event. Therefore, the partnership between the manager and the event organiser is a strategy for sustainably managing the tourism park.

Managers can establish partners with the tourism industry in the travel, accommodation, and tourist attraction businesses. Travel industry players, accommodation businesses and tourist attractions make Maccini Sombala Park one of the visiting locations for tourism industry customers. The partnership between the park management and the tourism industry is an opportunity to encourage tourist visits. Furthermore, park managers can form partners with educational institutions in order to improve the human resources of park managers. The development of human resources in tourism is inseparable from the role of educational institutions in assisting development programs. Park staff and managers need assistance in park management and development. Partnerships are essential for tourist attraction managers to ensure sustainable management (Valente et al., 2015). The fourth approach emphasises the importance of increasing the human resources of park managers (figure 5).

Conclusions

Parks are not only a location for residents to carry out recreational activities but also support the tourism development of a destination. In addition to being a recreation centre, parks can offer facilities and an atmosphere that can be an opportunity for tourism-related activities. Furthermore, organising events at tourist parks can encourage economic improvement in local communities. This study depicts the management of the Maccini Sombala Park, the supporting and inhibiting factors for managing and the local community's views regarding the park's strategic management planning mechanism. Informants in this study admit that Maccini Sombala Park has the opportunity to support the development of urban tourism. However, current conditions require effort and hard work in rebuilding the park to benefit the community. At the beginning of park management, local people participated in park maintenance. However, existing conditions show that the park demands special attention so that the facilities are not damaged.

Maccini Sombala Park is evidence of unsustainable park management due to Covid-19. Factors such as the weak awareness of the surrounding community in maintaining the park, slow management and development and irresponsible activities by residents and visitors are challenges to park management. Park management can become a city's tourism icon if stakeholders firmly commit to re-managing parks experiencing setbacks. Some supporting factors can become strengths in managing Maccini Sombala Park as a tourist icon, namely, strategic location, availability of facilities, government efforts to rebuild the park and availability of digital information on the internet regarding the advantages of the park.

Quantitative data reveal an opportunity for the park to be one of the tourism icons in Makassar city. Visitors require a recreational or tourism space that offers better facilities and activities. The participation of the local community as the organizer may encourage the implementation of sustainable park management. Visitor management is also essential for the

park's management. Revitalization is essential to encourage sustainable park management and provide the opportunity for the local community to obtain economic benefits from the park's management as a tourism attraction.

Strategic management planning is an essential step in restoring the neglected park. This study suggests four mechanisms for planning sustainable park management. Identification, clarification, consultation and coordination with various parties is the initial stage in planning a tourist park. For the second stage, the park manager needs to ensure the implementation of the principle of flexibility, adapting to various conditions that may occur. The manager needs to accept input in the framework of park management and relevant programs to involve the community around the park. In the third stage, environmental preservation and opportunities for local communities to open businesses are priorities in strategic management planning. The role of the community is essential in managing parks, managing businesses that can support the community's economy. In the final stage, partnership in strategic management is essential for park management as a tourist attraction. This research strengthens the concept of strategic management planning in park management. Related stakeholders may implement a planning mechanism for unsustainable park management.

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