

THE SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM FROM THE TOURIST PERSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Ine Rahmadania Saldianovitta

iners0203@student.ub.ac.id

Risna Wijayanti

Nur Prima Waluyowati

Magister Manajemen, Universitas Brawijaya

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengkaji aspek daya saing destinasi wisata alam meliputi eco-destination image, ecotourism experience serta destination quality, sehingga dapat berkontribusi pada upaya pelestarian lingkungan, pemanfaatan sumber daya alam secara berkelanjutan sekaligus sebagai penentu strategi bagi pengelola destinasi wisata alam untuk dapat meningkatkan kualitas dan daya tarik destinasi wisata yang dikelolanya. Metode penelitian kuantitatif melalui kajian empiris untuk mengumpulkan, menganalisa, dan menampilkan data dalam bentuk numerik digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Survei melalui kuesioner dengan pertanyaan tertutup dilakukan pada 3 destinasi wisata alam di Kota Batu, yaitu Wisata Selecta, Jatim Park II dan Batu Love Garden. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pada baik pada variabel eco-destination experience, Eco-destination image, maupun pada variabel Destination Quality, secara umum responden mendapatkan ekspektasi yang baik terhadap destinasi tujuan wisata di Kota Batu. Namun, pada variabel Destination Quality indikator amenities mayoritas responden tidak sepenuhnya setuju terhadap adanya akses untuk disabilitas dan perempuan hamil serta fasilitas medis di sekitar destinasi wisata. Sehingga, hasil penelitian ini dapat menjadi peninjauan dan evaluasi bagi pengelola destinasi wisata dan pemerintah daerah terhadap fasilitas-fasilitas tersebut.

Kata kunci: daya saing berkelanjutan, wisata alam, sudut pandang wisatawan.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine aspects of the competitiveness of natural tourist destinations, including eco-destination image, ecotourism experience, and destination quality so that they can contribute to environmental conservation efforts, sustainable use of natural resources, and determining strategies for managers of natural tourist destinations to improve quality. Moreover, the attractiveness of the tourist destinations it manages. Quantitative research collects, analyzes, and displays data numerically using empirical studies. Used in this research. A survey via questionnaire with closed questions was conducted at three natural tourist destinations in Batu City, namely Selecta Tourism, Jatim Park II, and Batu Love Garden. As a result, the respondents generally have good expectations for tourist destinations in Batu City regarding the eco-destination experience, image variables, and destination quality variables. However, in the Destination Quality variable, the amenities indicator, most respondents do not fully agree with access for people with disabilities and pregnant women and medical facilities around tourist destinations. So, the results of this research can be used as a review and evaluation for tourist destination managers and local governments regarding these facilities.

Key words: sustainable competitiveness, natural tourism, tourist perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism are among the largest contributors to the world's gross domestic product (GDP). Based on data from Statista (2023), it was found that the market

size of the tourism sector continues to increase every year, and it is predicted that by the end of 2023, it will reach 2285 billion USD. WTTC (World Travel & Tourism Council) data shows that over the last two

decades, the travel and tourism sector contributed an average of more than 10% of world GDP (WTTC, 2015). The travel and tourism GDP percentage of 10% is very large, considering that the average GDP percentage for all industries is 27%, so the tourism and travel industry has a share of more than a third of the entire industrial sector (Statista, 2023).

Competitiveness has become the main focus of various studies and various sectors. In 2009, researchers began to focus on the competitiveness of the tourism sector, which includes how a tourist destination can build, maintain, protect, and also strengthen tourist destinations and their position in competitive and global markets (Tsai et al., 2009; Blanco-Cerradelo et al., 2018). These big challenges are very relevant to the tourism industry, which focuses on a microeconomic perspective.

Competitiveness focuses on a company's ability to meet customer needs and remain profitable at the same time when viewed from a microeconomic perspective. A tourist destination needs to create integrated added value in the tourism product, where the product can maintain the resources it has along with being able to maintain its position in the market compared to competitors and convey tourism experiences to tourists (Hassan, 2000; Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Beldona et al., 2019).

Assessment of the competitiveness of tourist destinations is holistic, which can be done based on the perspective of tourists, residents, and other stakeholders such as tourist destination managers and the government (Nadalipour et al., 2019). The difficulty of obtaining a holistic assessment makes researchers such as Andrades and Dimanche (2017) and Abreu Novais et al. (2018) only focus on the side of tourist destination managers and the government. The competitiveness model of Ritchie and Crouch (2003). Dwyer and Kim (2003) also focus more on the tourism destination management side (supply side) so that it only considers potential customers on the demand side. May have different perceptions from tourism

managers and stakeholders. Understanding visitors' perspectives is very important for tourist destinations because the tourism industry is constantly changing, requiring competition to survive (Algieri et al., 2018). Therefore, the competitiveness of tourist destinations based on tourists' perspectives is very important.

The concept of measuring tourism competitiveness continues to evolve and has moved from a market share orientation to a sustainability orientation (Mendola and Volo, 2017). Uncertain economic conditions mean that all industries, especially tourism, must not only be competitive but must be able to implement strategies to sustain their competitiveness. Viewed from the customer's perspective, a tourist destination's quality and image should satisfy customer needs and make customers loyal to visit the destination (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017).

Nature-based destinations, or ecotourism destinations, are tourist destinations that need a sustainable competitiveness assessment (Nadalipour et al., 2019; Pham and Khanh, 2021). Ecotourism refers to all forms of nature-based tourism with educational and interpretive features, creating positive effects on the natural and socio-cultural environment and supporting the maintenance of natural areas (Thi Khanh and Phong, 2020). Apart from that, ecotourism is a form of tourism that focuses on natural and cultural experiences that are responsible and sustainable, preserve the environment, and support local welfare, which emphasizes environmental conservation and sustainability efforts as well as the welfare of local communities (UNWTO).

Nekmahmud et al. (2022) revealed that the value and perception of being environmentally friendly from natural tourist attractions will impact sustainable consumption, image, and the special experience provided by these natural tourist attractions.

Ecotourism will also impact the competitiveness of nature-based destinations. Meanwhile, Khan Chi and Pham (2022) and Pham and Khanh (2021) specifically

describe the destination image of nature-based tourist destinations and call it the eco-destination image. The eco-destination image has been empirically proven to strengthen tourists' desire to return to a tourist destination.

Batu City has a strong image for tourists. It is famous for its coolness, tourist attractions, and various natural beauties, which make tourists not reluctant to visit Batu City again.

On the other hand, the quality of a tourist destination influences customer satisfaction, apart from experience and image (Joo et al., 2020; Koch et al., 2020). Research conducted by Añaña et al. (2018) formed a model for measuring the competitiveness of tourist destinations using competitive performance. Competitive performance is defined as a visitor's assessment of the quality of infrastructure, accessibility, and macrostructure, which will shape visitors' perceptions of the attractiveness and friendliness of a tourist destination.

Assessment of the sustainability of a tourist destination's competitiveness can be useful for seeing the competitive position of a tourist destination in the tourism market and the advantages and disadvantages compared to other tourist destinations. Estevão et al. (2015), in assessing the sustainability of the competitiveness of tourist destinations, the construction of competitiveness dimensions is required, one of which is the competitiveness dimension using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Añaña et al. (2018) added that the strengths and weaknesses of a tourist destination after a measurement concept has been determined, an evaluation can be carried out with Importance and Performance Mapping Analysis (IPMA) to evaluate indicators that can be categorized as superior indicators. Moreover, weak indicators that require improvement.

One tool that is accurate in mapping competition between tourist destinations is correspondence analysis, a statistical ana-

lysis for mapping several objects based on certain attributes.

Given the complex and multi-perspective nature of tourism destination competitiveness, the development of competitiveness models continues, especially competitiveness based on tourist perspectives. A research gap in destination competitiveness research is the lack of literature that specifically forms competitiveness assessments from the tourist perspective.

Thus, the uniqueness of this type of tourist destination requires different assessment dimensions. In the context of ecotourism, more specific assessment dimensions are needed, including eco-destination image, ecotourism experience, and destination quality, which form dimensions of tourist destination competitiveness, where all these assessments need to be tested for their validity through the perceptions of tourists who visit nature-based tourist destinations in Batu City so that the sustainability of the competitiveness of these destinations can be known.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The importance of tourism destination competitiveness has attracted various scientists and management practitioners to develop the tourism destination competitiveness assessment model. Competitiveness assessments can help determine the competitive position of tourist destinations in the tourism industry and their strengths and weaknesses compared to other tourist destinations. According to Mira et al. (2016) and Luštický and Štumpf (2021), assessing the competitiveness of tourist destinations is complex and multidimensional, so there are differences between researchers in evaluating competitive tourist destinations. Therefore, this research seeks to reveal a model for assessing the competitiveness of tourist destinations based on the tourist's perspective. Campón-Cerro et al. (2017) explained that tourist satisfaction is the most important element that measures the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

Furthermore, Chen et al. (2016) also revealed that assessing the competitiveness of tourist destinations could be done by looking at tourists' perceptions and satisfaction while visiting tourist destinations.

Based on research by Campón-Cerro et al. (2017) and Chen et al. (2016), it can be concluded that, from the tourist's point of view, all attributes, including the quality of the tourist destination, the image of the tourist destination, and the experience of traveling, must be able to satisfy tourists, which leads to the emergence of tourist loyalty as tourists' desire to continue visiting tourist destinations.

Sustainable Competitiveness in Tourism Destinations

Destination competitiveness and loyalty are interconnected concepts in the tourism industry. The quality of tourism services, destination image, and tourist satisfaction are important in forming destination loyalty (Li et al., 2021).

Destination loyalty refers to tourists' intention to revisit a destination and recommend it to others based on their positive experiences (Jeong and Kim, 2019). On the other hand, destination competitiveness refers to a destination's ability to attract and satisfy visitors, differentiate itself from competitors, and achieve sustainable growth (Jeong and Kim, 2019).

The relationship between tourist loyalty and destination competitiveness is important for sustainable destination development. Destinations that can foster visitor loyalty have a greater opportunity to achieve long-term success and competitiveness in the tourism industry (Jeong and Kim, 2019).

In qualitative research, Luštický and Štumpf (2021) explained that one important element that is often forgotten in assessing the competitiveness of a tourist destination is demand-condition, namely assessing competitiveness based on the tourist's point of view. Based on demand conditions, customer preferences, destination awareness, image, and reputation are important indica-

tors that can influence. This research concludes that tourist destinations with sustainable competitiveness from a customer perspective are tourist destinations that succeed in providing a positive image for tourists who visit them.

Other research that specifically discusses assessing the competitiveness of tourist destinations based on destination image is Khan Chi and Pham (2022) and Pham and Khanh (2021). These two studies specifically describe the destination image of nature-based tourist destinations and call it the eco-destination image. Khan Chi and Pham (2022) used destination image as the main variable that can strengthen the influence of tourists' motivation on their intention to return to nature-based tourism destinations. In this research, tourist motivation is also included to see the differences in the influence of destination image on tourist motivation to visit, namely self-development, seeking knowledge, socialization, escape, and excitement.

Assessment of tourism competitiveness using a tourist's perspective does not only focus on the image of the tourist destination as an important indicator of the destination's competitiveness. Mei (2014) explains the "destination tourism experience" as a part of tourism that plays an important role in the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Mei (2014) stated that efforts to provide tourists with a "destination tourism experience" are much more important than the tourism product itself.

Farmaki (2017) explains the importance of "experience," which provides a feeling of joy that has been awaited for a long time and remains in the memory. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) states that tourists are willing to spend as much money as usual to carry out tourist activities to gain "experience" and beautiful memories and impressions during tourist visits. Lim and Ok (2021) define the "tourism destination experience" as an important impression for individuals who make a tourist visit that is subjective, effective, and long-lasting.

Destination image and experience are competitive advantages of tourist destinations that shape competitiveness (Hassan, 2000).

Chen et al. (2016) research revealed that assessing a tourist destination's competitiveness can be done by examining tourists' perceptions of its quality.

The competitiveness indicators used by Chen et al. (2016) include tourists' perceptions of the main attributes of tourist destinations, namely: 1) inherited resources, which include natural beauty, flora and fauna, climate, customs, and culture; 2) created resources include tourist accessibility to tourist destinations, casinos, fitness and therapy centers, and other tourist facilities; 3) additional resources (accessories resources) which include traditional houses typical of tourist areas, residents' expertise, as well as other resources that do not include heritage and artificial resources; and 4) supporting factors include cheap accommodation costs, low visiting costs, the availability of various and interesting souvenirs, and the welfare of the community around the tourist destination.

Research by Chen et al. (2016) also shows that of the four attributes, supporting factors are the attributes that are most attractive to tourists compared to other attributes. The overall competitiveness attributes of tourist destinations are considered to attract tourists and provide satisfaction during their visit. However, according to them, heritage resources, especially customs and culture, could be more visible, so they do not provide higher attraction and satisfaction than other attributes.

Añaña et al. (2018) are in line with research by Chen et al. (2016), which explains the competitiveness of tourist destinations using the comparative performance of tourist destinations as assessed by infrastructure, accessibility, comfort/conviviality, and macrostructure (supporting elements).

The next research that uses quality as a measure of the competitiveness of tourist destinations is by Mandić et al. (2020). This

research specifically discusses the competitiveness of tourist destinations based on assessments of the quality of tourist destinations in Tripadvisor reviews. This research uses four elements of quality assessment, namely enabling environment (the environment around the tourist destination), natural and cultural resources (natural and cultural resources around the tourist destination), enabling conditions (price competition and government support), and infrastructure. The results of this research show that based on several assessment indicators, there are five elements that most influence the competitiveness of tourist destinations based on the online reputation they build: food, service quality, quality-to-price ratio, and the environment around the tourist destination.

Ecotourism Destination

Fennell (2015) said ecotourism can be defined as traveling to a natural place and relatively undisturbed from economic or other social activities to have fun.

According to UNWTO, ecotourism is a form of tourism that focuses on natural and cultural experiences that are responsible, sustainable, preserve the environment, and support local welfare.

Ramírez and Santana (in Mason, 2020) explain that, more specifically, an ecotourism destination is an area or place that is developed or arranged in such a way as to offer a tourism experience that focuses on preserving nature and culture while providing economic and social benefits to the local community.

According to Fennell (2015), a destination can be declared an ecotourism destination if it meets the following criteria: the ecotourism destination must have a clear commitment and efforts to protect and preserve biodiversity and natural ecosystems; Ecotourism destinations must provide education and awareness to tourists about the importance of preserving nature and culture; ecotourism destinations must involve and provide economic, social and cultural benefits to local communities; provide a

responsible tourism experience by paying attention to the safety, comfort and welfare of tourists, and not damaging or disturbing existing natural and cultural ecosystems; Ecotourism destinations can achieve success by involving collaboration and partnerships between government, the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organizations.

Destination Competitiveness

Abbasi et al. (2021) explain that destination competitiveness can be defined from a macro or micro perspective. From a macro perspective, competitiveness is a national concern with the main goal of increasing people's real income. From a macro perspective, competitiveness is a broad entity that includes all social, cultural, and economic variables that influence a nation's performance in the international world.

Scott and Lodge (1985) state that competitiveness can be defined as a country's ability to produce and distribute products and services in world trade and maintain and improve its resources. According to Fesenmaier (2014), the resources referred to include resources (natural and human), organizational structure, competitive atmosphere, and a country's policies.

Ritchie and Crouch (2003) state that, from a macro perspective, competitiveness is closely related to society's welfare, so a country is declared to have good competitiveness as assessed by how prosperous its people are.

According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003), a tourism destination is truly competitive if it can increase tourism income and visitor interest, provide them with satisfying, unforgettable experiences to make a profit, improve the welfare of residents around the tourist destination area, and maintain natural resources at tourist destinations for future generations. Competitiveness can then be a benchmark for tourist destinations to determine their ability to compete with other tourist destinations in the tourism market.

Destination Image

Image begins with concrete belief values given individually and is a view or perception. The process of accumulation and trust that these individuals have given will undergo a process sooner or later to form wider public opinion, which is often referred to as image (Rejikumar et al., 2021).

According to Kaur et al. (2016), assessing the image of tourist destinations is very important for several reasons, namely: assessing how tourists currently see tourist destinations; describing the perceptions that tourists will feel when visiting tourist destinations; developing and implementing marketing actions to modify the image of tourist destinations; and checking whether there has been a change in the image of the tourist destination.

According to Go and Govers (2000), assessing a tourist destination's image is important because it is one of the benchmarks for whether a destination can be said to be competitive.

Konecnik (2002) and Cvelbar et al. (2016) argue that a tourist destination's image plays a big role in determining its competitive advantage over other tourist destinations. Natural and artificial resources, like tourism resources, will only be meaningful in attracting visitors, and no positive image is attached to the destination.

Experience a Tourist Destination

The concept of experience explains that experience is a new resource in the supply of the economy after raw materials, manufactured goods, and services, which until then had not been or had not even been realized. According to Mei (2014), experience is a source of competitive advantage that is not easily imitated but can survive over a long period.

According to Abrahams (1986), experience is divided into two: ordinary experience, which is obtained from daily activities and most of it is unplanned, and extraordinary experience, which does not originate from everyday life and arises from

certain events, most of which are a process. Getting that experience was planned. The context of experiences that then develop, including tourist experiences, is interpreted as an extraordinary experience.

Lim and Ok (2021) have the same opinion, namely that tourist experiences are subjective, where the impression that arises is an individual's subjective assessment that is effective and long-lasting, starting from before, during and after the experience. Visits to tourist destinations.

According to Musa et al. (2017), the subjective nature of the tourist experience is closely related to tourists' emotions; emotions are an important attribute that shapes the tourist experience (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2014). Tourists' emotions can be happiness, interest, fear, and worry, which shape the travel experience.

Destination Quality

Ritchie and Crouch (2003) explained that tourist destination quality can be defined as tourists' overall assessment or perception of a destination's performance or superiority in meeting their expectations.

Ali et al. (2021) stated that the quality of tourist destinations is one of the important aspects that tourist destinations must have to compete with other tourist destinations.

Añaña et al. (2018) measure the quality of tourist destinations through various indicators: service quality, safety and cleanliness, availability of facilities and infrastructure, environmental sustainability, accessibility, uniqueness, and diversity of attractions.

Mandić et al. (2020) further explained that all indicators of a tourist destination's quality must satisfy tourists to add value and survive in competition with other tourist destinations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a quantitative research design. Quantitative research is a plan that usually attempts to measure research data quantitatively by applying several types of statistical analysis. Robert Donmoyer in

Vinyals-Mirabent (2019) adds that a quantitative approach is an approach to empirical studies that collects, analyzes, and displays data in numerical form. The method used in this research is a survey method using a questionnaire as the main instrument to collect data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

This research was carried out in Batu City, one of the cities that is one of the main alternatives for traveling in East Java. Moreover 2019, Batu City won the 2019 Indonesia Attractiveness Award as Platinum Winner for Small Cities in the Tourism Category (Rachmawati et al., 2021).

The population in this study is all tourists who visit tourist destinations with an ecotourism theme managed by the private sector in Batu City, namely Selecta Recreation Park, Jatim Park 2, and Batu Love Garden. The three tourist attractions chosen in this research are based on ecotourism, which is a favorite tourist spot.

The total population of visitors to the three nature-based tourist destinations in Batu City cannot be known with certainty, so the population in this study is unknown or cannot be known. The sample size in this study was determined by referring to the opinion of Hair et al. (2015) regarding the sample size. If the population is not known with certainty, you can use the following formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2_{(\alpha)}P(1 - P)}{\varepsilon^2}$$

Where:

n = minimum sample size

$Z^2_{(\alpha)}$ = value obtained from the Z table at a certain degree of error (the error rate for management and business research usually uses a 5% error rate)

The data collection techniques used to obtain the data needed in this research include:

The literature study used to collect phenomena and data related to research objects includes the number of tourist visits in the last year and data related to nature-based tourist destinations in Batu City.

The questionnaire used in this research is a closed statement in which tourists are provided with a questionnaire with answers provided by the researcher. The questionnaire preparation in this research was based on a literature study and previous research. The questionnaires were distributed to tourists visiting nature-based tourist destinations managed by the private sector in Batu City. Filling out the questionnaire is done by asking structured questions regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists, their perceptions of the eco-destination image, ecotourism experience, and destination quality during tourist visits to nature-based tourist destinations in Batu City, as well as their loyalty to the tourist destinations they visit.

This research uses an instrument in the form of a list of statements. The respondents provide answers to the statements submitted by being limited to the options provided by the researcher. Statements are given a score referring to the research variables, described as indicator statement items in the research variables. To analyze the scored statements, researchers used a Likert scale to determine scores. In this study, all questionnaire items will be measured using a Likert scale with seven scales, where the lower the score on the Likert scale indicates that the respondent strongly disagrees with the statement given in the questionnaire; conversely, the higher the score on the Likert scale indicates that the respondent strongly agrees to the statements given in the questionnaire.

This research uses descriptive statistics to determine the extent of respondents' responses/perceptions of the variables studied. In this study, descriptive statistics are presented in the form of a frequency distribution table, which explains the distribution of respondents' answers to each alternative answer given by the researcher and also the average score of the answers given for each question item on eco-destination image, ecotourism experience, destination

quality, and sustainability. Consumption (Cimbaljević et al., 2018).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The description of respondents' answers is a descriptive analysis used to describe respondents' answers to question items asked by researchers using the average score of respondents' answers to question items in the questionnaire.

This research uses three variables: eco-destination experience, eco-destination image, and destination quality. Each variable will be analyzed using descriptive analysis to describe the respondent's answers to each question item.

Eco-Destination Experience

The Eco-destination experience variable consists of five dimensions: fun learning, immersion, acting, relating, and emotional. Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of the eco-destination experience variable.

Table 1 shows that for each statement item on the fun learning indicator, most respondents chose "strongly agree." The tourist destinations in Batu City have provided good education for visitors, provided an experience of being one with nature, and provided new knowledge. Visitors enjoy activities while traveling in Batu City because of many interesting tourist activities. The total average of respondents' answers to the fun learning indicator is 4.48, which means that respondents strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have fun learning elements.

Immersion refers to how deeply a person is involved with the environment visited, in this case, the tourist destination in Batu City. Table 2 shows that most respondents answered "Agree" to each statement item. So, tourist destinations in Batu City make respondents feel like they are in a different place from where they live, can forget about their daily activities and can pamper all their senses, such as through the views presented or the activities they enjoy.

Table 1
Average Score of Respondents' Answers on Eco-Destination Experience

	STS	TS	R	S	SS	Average
<i>Fun Learning</i>						
Educational.	1	3	14	88	167	4,54
Harmony.	1	0	17	115	140	4,44
Curiosity to Learn &	1	5	27	82	158	4,40
Enjoyable	0	2	7	101	163	4,55
Amusing Activity	3	1	16	111	142	4,45
Total Average						4,48
<i>Immersion</i>						
Living in a very different time.	0	11	23	144	95	4,16
Escapist	1	5	27	143	97	4,16
Appealed to all sense	2	3	22	133	113	4,27
Total Average						4,20
<i>Acting</i>						
Action Oriented Destination.	2	9	27	123	112	4,24
Engaged in Physical Activities	2	9	36	135	91	4,08
Visually Interesting	1	1	13	122	136	4,43
Total Average						4,25
<i>Relating</i>						
Relate with People with the Same Interest.	1	6	41	134	91	4,15
Remind of Social Rule.	0	3	10	94	166	4,55
Think about nature	1	1	14	85	172	4,58
Total Average						4,43
<i>Emotional</i>						
Positive Mood.	1	0	13	123	136	4,43
Respond in an Emotional Way	1	4	22	129	117	4,31
Appealed to Feeling	1	5	17	130	120	4,29
Total Average						4,34

Sources: Data Analysis.

Table 2
Average Score of Respondents' Answers on Eco-Destination Image

	STS	TS	R	S	SS	Average
<i>Attribute-based destination image</i>						
Attractive Ecotourism Site.	2	1	12	110	148	4,49
Balancing nature and infrastructure.	0	1	16	145	111	4,36
Beautiful Landscape.	1	2	22	145	103	4,30
Unpolluted natural environment	1	4	17	93	158	4,50
Total Average						4,41
<i>Holistic destination image</i>						
Exciting ecotourism site.	0	2	14	124	133	4,41
Pleasant ecotourism site	0	2	14	111	146	4,45
Make people relax	0	2	58	111	102	4,12
Good quality ecotourism experience	1	2	13	112	145	4,46
Unforgettable ecotourism.	2	2	26	110	133	4,36
Total Average						4,36

Sources: Data Analysis

The total average of respondents' answers to the immersion indicator was 4.20. Even though the majority of respondents answered "Agree," the average calculation shows that respondents tend to strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have an element of immersion where they can forget all their daily activities by traveling to the ecotourism destination City in Batu City.

Table 1 shows that most respondents answered "Agree" to each statement item on the acting indicator. While visiting tourist destinations in Batu City, respondents felt they could do much physical activity and gain visually interesting experiences such as presenting interesting objects, a natural atmosphere, and other things that attracted their interest. The total average of respondents' answers to the acting indicator is 4.25, which means that respondents tend to strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have acting elements that provide various activities for visitors to tourist destinations.

For each statement item on the related indicator, the majority of respondents stated, "Strongly agree." The total average of respondents' answers to the relating indicator is 4.43, which means that respondents tend to strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have relating elements.

This indicates that visiting tourist destinations in Batu City allows respondents to meet others with the same interests. Apart from that, traveling in Batu City can remind you of the importance of protecting nature and make respondents reflect on the beauty of nature while traveling.

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents answered "agree" and "strongly agree" to each statement item on the emotional indicator, with a total average of answers of 4.34. This means that respondents tend to strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have an emotional element. So, visiting tourist destinations in Batu City can give respondents positive feelings and emotional experiences.

The attribute-based destination image indicator reflects respondents' perceptions or images of tourist destinations based on the objects found in tourist destinations in Batu City (Musa et al., 2017). In Table 2, most respondents stated "agree" and "strongly agree" with each statement. No respondents answered "strongly disagree" with the statement "this tourist destination gives a balanced impression between nature and the artificial infrastructure presented." The total average of respondents' answers to the attribute-based image indicators is 4.41, which means that respondents tend to strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have good attribute-based image indicators. Based on this average value, the tourist destination in Batu City gives an attractive impression as an ecotourism site and gives the impression of a balance between nature and artificial infrastructure. The layout is good, and the natural environment has minimal pollution.

In Table 2, it can be seen that most respondents answered "agree" and "strongly agree" to each statement given on the holistic destination image indicator. No respondents stated "strongly disagree" on items 1, 2, and 3. In addition, the total average value of respondents' answers was 4.36, which means that respondents strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have indicators of a holistic destination image. This value can mean that tourist destinations in Batu City give an exciting and pleasant impression and give the impression of good quality ecotourism. Respondents felt they could relax and get unforgettable impressions while traveling in Batu City.

The support indicator contains several aspects of the services provided by tourist destinations in Batu City. These aspects can be seen in Table 3, which consists of 3 statement items. Most respondents stated that they "agree" with each statement item in the support indicator, with an average of respondents' answers of 4.11.

Table 3
Average Score of Respondents' Answers on Destination Quality

	STS	TS	R	S	SS	Average
Support						
Helpful Staff.	2	4	25	164	78	4,11
Easy to locate information center.	3	3	29	151	87	4,16
Good service quality of destination operator.	0	1	34	175	63	4,06
Total Average						4,11
Access						
Easy to reach tourist locations.	0	1	14	91	167	4,57
Good telecommunity network.	4	14	28	133	94	4,01
Conveniently located.	0	1	11	83	178	4,63
Total Average						4,40
Amenities						
Accommodation around destination	8	9	68	87	101	4,02
Wide network of bank	9	24	74	116	50	3,67
special access for pregnant women and people with disabilities.	8	41	114	66	44	3,31
Adequate medical facility	9	35	136	56	37	3,26
Total Average						3,57
Attraction						
Propose various tourism activities.	0	1	10	115	147	4,49
Historical attraction.	2	12	44	96	119	4,17
Appealing nature environment	0	2	11	97	163	4,55
Total Average						4,40

Sources: Data analysis

This value means that respondents strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have support indicators. These indicators are expressed in the services provided, such as workers at tourist destinations who are very helpful, an information center, and good service by tourist destination managers.

The access indicator explains the existing access in the Batu City tourist destination. The descriptive statistics results in Table 3 show that many respondents stated "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement. The total average of respondents' answers was 4.40, which indicates that respondents strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have access indicators. The tourist destinations in Batu City are easy to find. Communication signals at tourist destinations are easy to get, and the location

of the destination is comfortable (Fuchs and Weiermair, 2004; Musa et al., 2017).

The amenities indicator explains the facilities available around the tourist destination. The respondents' answers to each statement item in the amenities indicator can be seen in Table 3. The results of descriptive statistics show that most respondents strongly agree that there is much accommodation around tourist destinations and that it is easy to find ATMs. However, paying attention to the third and fourth items is important, which most respondents answered in doubt. The respondents do not fully agree with the existence of access for people with disabilities and pregnant women, as well as the existence of medical facilities around tourist destinations. The overall average of the total answers was 3.57, which is different from other indicators, which state that respondents strongly agree with the given indi-

cators. So, reviewing and evaluating these facilities at tourist destinations in Batu City is necessary.

The attraction indicator measures the attractiveness of tourist destinations in Batu City. The results of descriptive statistics in Table 4.4 show that most respondents answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to each statement item. The total average of respondents' answers was 4.40, which means that respondents strongly agree that tourist destinations in Batu City have attraction indicators. Apart from that, tourist destinations in Batu City have provided various tourist activities that can be enjoyed, have a good history, and have an attractive natural environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Eco-destination variable shows that respondents who travel to nature-based tourist destinations in Batu City gain experience, environmental education, and great satisfaction. This study allows respondents to better understand natural heritage, attach more importance to the natural environment, and tend to have stronger intentions to revisit and be loyal to natural tourism.

Meanwhile, in the Eco-destination image variable, it was concluded that respondents were very impressed with the tourist destinations they visited because these nature-based destinations were natural and relatively well maintained and not disturbed by non-tourism activities.

The Destination quality variable reveals that respondents generally have good expectations of tourist destinations, including ease of access, availability of tourism-supporting factors, facilities, and attractiveness of tourist destinations. However, for the third item of the amenities indicator, the overall average of the total answers was 3.57. Therefore, the majority of respondents do not fully agree with the existence of access for disabled and pregnant women as well as medical facilities around tourist destinations. The results of this research can be used as a review and evaluation for tourist destination managers

and local governments regarding these facilities.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, G. A., J. Kumaravelu, Y. N. Goh, and K. S. D. Singh. 2021. Understanding the Intention to Revisit a Destination by Expanding the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC* 25(2): 282–311. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-12-2019-0109>.
- Abrahams, R. D. 1986. *Ordinary and Extraordinary Experience*. In *The Anthropology of Experience*. University of Illinois Press, 45–72.
- Abreu Novais, M., L. Ruhanen, and C. Arcodia. 2018. Destination Competitiveness: a Phenomenographic Study. *Tourism Management* 64: 324–334. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.08.014>.
- Algieri, B., A. Aquino, and M. Succurro. 2018. International Competitive Advantages in Tourism: an Eclectic View. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 25: 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.11.003>.
- Ali, F., O. Ciftci, L. Nanu, C. Cobanoglu, and K. Ryu. 2021. Response Rates in Hospitality Research: an Overview of Current Practice and Suggestions for Future Research. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* 62(1): 105–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965520943094>.
- Añaña, E. D. S., R. C. Rodrigues, and L. D. D. S. Flores. 2018. Competitive Performance as a Substitute for Competitiveness Measurement in Tourism Destinations: an Integrative Study. *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 4(2): 207–219. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-07-2017-0035>.
- Andrades, L. and F. Dimanche. 2017. Destination Competitiveness and Tourism Development in Russia: Issues and Challenges. *Tourism Management* 62: 360–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.05.008>.

- Beldona, S., H. V. Kher, and S. Bernard. 2019. Do Personal Values Affect Perceptions of the Hospitality Performance? *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 87: 102384. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102384>.
- Blanco-Cerradelo, L., A. Gueimonde-Canto, J. A. Fraiz-Brea, and M. I. Diéguez-Castrillón. 2018. Dimensions of Destination Competitiveness: Analyses of Protected Areas in Spain. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 177: 782–794. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.12.242>.
- Campón-Cerro, A. M., J. M. Hernández-Mogollón, and H. Alves. 2017. Sustainable Improvement of Competitiveness in Rural Tourism Destinations: The Quest for Tourist Loyalty in Spain. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* 6(3): 252–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2016.04.005>.
- Chen, C. M., S. H. Chen, H. T. Lee, and T. H. Tsai. 2016. Exploring Destination Resources and Competitiveness—A Comparative Analysis of Tourists' Perceptions and Satisfaction toward an Island of Taiwan. *Ocean & Coastal Management* 119: 58–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2015.09.013>.
- Creswell, J. W. and J. W. Creswell. 2018. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Fifth Edition. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Khan Chi, N. T. and H. Pham. 2022. The Moderating Role of Eco-Destination Image in the Travel Motivations and Ecotourism Intention Nexus. *Journal of Tourism Futures*: 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-01-2022-0014>.
- Cimbaljević, M., U. Stankov, and V. Pavluković. 2018. Going Beyond the Traditional Destination Competitiveness – Reflections on a Smart Destination in the Current Research. *Current Issues in Tourism*: 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2015.09.013>.
- Cvelbar, L., L. Dwyer, M. Koman, and T. Mihalič. 2016. Drivers of Destination Competitiveness in Tourism. *Journal of Travel Research* 8(55): 1041–1050. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287515617299>.
- Dwyer, L. and C. W. Kim. 2003. Destination Competitiveness: Determinants and Indicators. *Current Issues in Tourism* 6(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500308667962>.
- Estevão, C., J. Ferreira, and S. Nunes. 2015. Determinants of Tourism Destination Competitiveness: A SEM Approach. *Marketing Places and Spaces (Advances in Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Vol. 10)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Leeds: 121–139. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1871-317320150000010009>.
- Farmaki, A. 2017. The Tourism and Peace Nexus. *Tourism Management* 59: 528–540. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.09.012>.
- Fennell, D. A. 2015. *Ecotourism*. Routledge.
- Fuchs, M. and K. Weiermair. 2004. Destination Benchmarking: an Indicator-System's Potential for Exploring Guest Satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research* 42(3): 212–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287503258827>.
- Go, F. M. and R. Govers. 2000. Integrated Quality Management for Tourist Destinations: A European Perspective on Achieving Competitiveness. *Tourism Management* 21(1): 79–88. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00098-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00098-9).
- Hair, J. F., M. Wonfinbarger, A. H. Money, P. Samuel, and M. J. Page. 2015. *Essentials of Business Research Methods*. 2nd Edition. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315704562>.
- Hassan, S. S. 2000. Determinants of Market Competitiveness in an Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Industry. *Journal of Travel Research* 38(3): 239–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728750003800305>.
- Jeong, Y. and S. Kim. 2019. A Study of Event Quality, Destination Image, Perceived Value, Tourist Satisfaction, and Destination Loyalty among Sport Tourists. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 32: 940–960. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-02-2019-0101>.

- Joo, D., K. M. Woosnam, S. Lee, and C. K. Lee. 2020. Destination Loyalty is Explained through Self-Congruity, Emotional Solidarity, and Travel Satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 45: 338–347. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.06.017>.
- Kaur, A., A. Chauhan, and Y. Medury. 2016. Destination Image of Indian Tourism Destinations: An Evaluation using Correspondence Analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 28(3): 499–524. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-05-2015-0074>.
- Kim, J. and D. R. Fesenmaier. 2014. Measuring Emotions in Real Time: Implications for Tourism Experience Design. *Journal of Travel Research* 54(4): 419–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514550100>.
- Koch, J., S. O. Gerdt, and G. Schewe. 2020. Determinants of Sustainable Behavior of Firms and the Consequences for Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 89: 102515. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102515>.
- Konecnik, M. 2002. The Image as a Possible Source of Competitive Advantage of the Destination-The Case of Slovenia. *Tourism Review* 57(1/2): 6–12. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb058373>.
- Li, T., F. Liu, and G. N. Soutar. 2021. Experiences, Post-Trip Destination Image, Satisfaction, and Loyalty: A Study in an Ecotourism Context. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 19: 100547. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100547>.
- Lim, S. and C. M. Ok. 2021. A Meta-Analytic Review of Antecedents of Hospitality and Tourism Firms' Performance: A Cross-Cultural Comparison. *Tourism Management* 86: 104325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104325>.
- Luštický, M. and P. Štumpf. 2021. Leverage Points of Tourism Destination Competitiveness Dynamics. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 38: 100792. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100792>.
- Mandić, A., S. Pivčević, and L. Petrić. 2020. Restaurant Online Reputation and Destination Competitiveness: Insight into TripAdvisor Data. *Gastronomy for Tourism Development*: 155–184. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78973-755-420201011>.
- Mason, P. H. 2020. Environmental Education and Ecotourism - Fernando Ramírez and Josefina Santana, (2019). Environmental Education and Ecotourism. Springer. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* 36(3): 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ae.2020.2>.
- Mei, X. Y. 2014. Boring and Expensive: The Challenge of Developing Experience-Based Tourism in the Inland Region, Norway. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 12: 71–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.09.003>.
- Mendola, D. and S. Volo. 2017. Building Composite Indicators in Tourism Studies: Measurements and Applications in Tourism Destination Competitiveness. *Tourism Management* 59: 541–553. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.08.011>.
- Mira, M. R., A. Moura, and Z. Breda. 2016. Destination Competitiveness and Competitiveness Indicators: Illustration of the Portuguese Reality. *Tékhne* 14(2): 90–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tekhne.2016.06.002>.
- Musa, G., S. Najmin, T. Thirumoorthi, and A. Z. Taha. 2017. Examining Visitors' Experience with Batu Cave, using the Four Realm Experiential Theory. *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 3(2): 105–120. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-10-2016-0037>.
- Nadalipour, Z., M. H. I. Khoshkhoo, and A. R. Eftekhari. 2019. An Integrated Model of Destination Sustainable Competitiveness. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal* 29(4): 314–335. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cr-12-2017-0086>.

- Nekmahmud, M., H. Ramkissoon, and M. Fekete-Farkas. 2022. Green Purchase and Sustainable Consumption: A Comparative Study between European and non-European Tourists. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 43: 100980. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100980>.
- Pham, H. S. and C. N. Khanh. 2021. Eco tourism Intention: The Roles of Environmental Concern, Time Perspective and Destination Image. *Tourism Review* 76(5): 1141-1153. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-09-2019-0363>.
- Rachmawati, E., J. Fountain, and M. Mackay. 2021. Factors Influencing Economic Empowerment in Tourism Development. *Economics and Finance in Indonesia* 67(2): 223-234. <https://doi.org/10.47291/efi.v67i2.917>.
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., J. L. Roldan, M. Jaafar, and T. Ramayah. 2017. Factors Influencing Residents' Perceptions toward Tourism Development: Differences across Rural and Urban World Heritage Sites. *Journal of Travel Research* 56(6): 760-775. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287516662354>.
- Rejikumar, G., A. A. Ajitha, A. Jose, and S. Mathew. 2021. Strategic Positioning of Tourist Destinations-Analyzing the Role of Perceived Meaningfulness. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 49: 140-151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.08.025>.
- Ritchie, J. R. B. and G. I. Crouch. 2003. The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective. *Tourism Management* 21(1): 1-7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1079/9780851996646.0000>.
- Scott B. R. and G. C. Lodge. 1985. *US Competitiveness in the World Economy*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Statista. 2023. Market Size of the Tourism Sector Worldwide from 2010 to 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1220218/tourism-industry-market-size-global/#:~:text=How%20big%20is%20the%20to%20urism%20industry%3F%20In%202023%2C,under%20three%20trillion%20U.S.%20dollars%2C%20surpassing%20pre-pandemic%20levels>.
- Thi Khanh, C. N. and L. T. Phong. 2020. Impact of Environmental Belief and Nature-Based Destination Image on Ecotourism Attitude. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights* 3(4): 489-505. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-03-2020-0027>.
- Tsai, H., H. Song, and K. K. Wong. 2009. Tourism and Hotel Competitiveness Research. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 26(5-6): 522-546. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548400903163079>.
- Vinyals-Mirabent, S. 2019. European Urban Destinations' Attractors at the Frontier between Competitiveness and a Unique Destination Image. A Benchmark Study of Communication Practices. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 12: 37-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2019.02.006>.
- WTTC. 2015. *Travel & Tourism, Economic Impact 2015*. World Travel & Tourism Council. London.