The Influence of Local Culture, Cuisine, and Natural Scenery on Tourist Satisfaction at Gili Meno Beach, West Nusa Tenggara Indonesia

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ABSTRACT : This research investigates the influence of local culture, culinary experiences, and natural scenery on tourist satisfaction at Gili Meno Beach, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Employing a quantitative research design using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM PLS) method, the study involved 160 tourist respondents visiting the destination. The findings reveal that local culture ($\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$), culinary experiences ($\beta = 0.02$, $p < 0.05$), and natural scenery ($\beta = 0.02$, $p < 0.05$) significantly influence tourist satisfaction. These results underscore the importance of cultural elements, local cuisine, and natural beauty in creating positive experiences for tourists at the destination. Managerial implications include developing more effective marketing strategies to enhance destination appeal and improve visitor experiences, as well as emphasizing cultural and environmental preservation to support sustainable tourism. This research contributes significantly to tourism literature by exploring key factors influencing tourist satisfaction in unique contexts such as Gili Meno Beach.

Keywords: Local Culture, Culinary, Natural Scenery, Tourist Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Gili Meno Beach, located on one of three small islands known as the Gili Islands in North Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, has become one of the attractive tourist destinations for tourists seeking tranquility and natural beauty. This beach is known for its clean white sand, clear sea water, and stunning natural scenery. According to Darsana, Sudjana, and Kurniatini (2023), Gili Meno also offers rich underwater biodiversity, including interesting diving spots for divers. These characteristics distinguish Gili Meno from its two neighboring islands, Gili Trawangan and Gili Air, which are more crowded, making Gili Meno an ideal choice for tourists who want to enjoy a quieter and more exclusive island atmosphere.

Culturally, Gili Meno still maintains a rich local heritage, although commercial development on this island is not as rapid as in Gili Trawangan. The Sasak culture, the indigenous ethnic group of Lombok, is well preserved on this island, providing an authentic experience for tourists who want to explore and understand local life. Richards (2018) in his study on "Cultural Tourism Impact"

highlighted how visitors respond to and experience local culture as an important element in enhancing their tourism experience. Therefore, the preservation of local culture in Gili Meno can be considered as an additional attraction that enriches the tourist experience, in addition to its enchanting natural beauty.

Figure 1. Panorama at Gili Meno Beach, NTB

In addition to its cultural richness, Gili Meno is also known for its fresh seafood cuisine, served in simple yet authentic beachside restaurants. Kusyanda and Masdiantini (2022) noted that this simple yet authentic local cuisine is an additional attraction for tourists visiting the island. This authentic local culinary experience, according to Long (2017) in his study on "Culinary Tourism," can significantly increase the appeal of a tourist destination, because food is often a powerful sensory experience on a trip.

The natural beauty of Gili Meno, with its white sandy beaches, clear sea water, and stunning natural landscapes, is also an important factor influencing tourist satisfaction. Gunn (2015) in his study on "Scenic Beauty in Tourism" showed that natural beauty is a key factor in attracting and positively influencing the tourist experience. Stunning natural landscapes can create a strong and satisfying impression in the minds of tourists, thus increasing their overall satisfaction level.

In recent decades, tourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors in Indonesia, especially in the Lombok area which is famous for its natural beauty and cultural uniqueness. However, in an effort to develop sustainable tourism, the challenge faced is how to manage and promote tourist destinations such as Gili Meno so that they remain attractive to tourists, while preserving local culture and its natural environment. According to Cohen and Cohen (2019), sustainable tourism requires a holistic approach, covering cultural, environmental, and economic aspects, all of which are interrelated and influence tourist satisfaction. Therefore, this study is important to understand the factors that influence tourist satisfaction in Gili Meno, so that it can help develop effective strategies in managing this tourist destination.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of local culture, cuisine, and natural beauty in influencing tourist experience and satisfaction. For example, research by Richards and Munsters (2018) on the impact of culture on tourism shows that interactions between tourists and local culture can increase tourist satisfaction by providing a more in-depth and meaningful experience. In addition, research by Kivela and Crotts (2016) in "Gastronomy Tourism" emphasizes that

culinary experiences are one of the important aspects that can increase the attractiveness of a tourist destination, especially when the food served reflects local culture. Finally, research by Priskin (2018) on natural beauty in tourism shows that beautiful natural landscapes are one of the main factors that influence tourists' decisions to visit a destination. Thus, this State of the Art research attempts to integrate these three aspects to understand how they collectively influence tourist satisfaction in Gili Meno.

Customer Satisfaction Theory proposed by Oliver (2016) states that customer satisfaction is the result of a comparison between expectations before purchase and perceptions of performance after use. In the context of tourism, tourist satisfaction can be measured by seeing the extent to which their experience at a tourist destination matches their expectations before the trip. In addition, the theory of "Place Attachment" introduced by Scannell and Gifford (2017) is also relevant, where a person's attachment to a place can affect their level of satisfaction when visiting that place. Visitors who have an emotional attachment to Gili Meno, for example, tend to feel more satisfied with their visit.

This study aims to identify and analyze the influence of local culture, culinary, and natural beauty on the level of tourist satisfaction in Gili Meno. Specifically, this study will explore:

1. The influence of local culture on tourist satisfaction.

2. The influence of local culinary experiences on tourist satisfaction.

3. The influence of natural beauty on tourist satisfaction.

By understanding these factors, this research is expected to provide an important contribution to the development of sustainable tourism strategies in Gili Meno, as well as provide insight for destination managers in improving the quality of tourist experience.

Local Culture

The Cultural Identity Theory argues that tourists are increasingly drawn to destinations where they can explore and identify with local cultures, fostering a sense of belonging (Smith & Robinson, 2020). The Experiential Learning Theory suggests that engaging with local traditions provides tourists with a unique educational experience that significantly enhances their satisfaction (Kolb, 2017). Cultural Immersion Theory posits that deeper cultural engagement, such as participating in local ceremonies or festivals, leads to higher tourist satisfaction (Jones & Ryan, 2019).

Richards' (2018) findings are supported by the Cultural Attachment Theory, which states that emotional bonds formed through cultural experiences are key drivers of repeat visitation (Walker & Moscardo, 2016). The Cultural Capital Theory also supports the idea that tourists value destinations with rich cultural offerings, seeing them as a means to enhance personal growth (Throsby, 2017). Furthermore, Richards' (2018) research aligns with the Cultural Consonance Theory, which highlights how cultural familiarity enhances the comfort and satisfaction of tourists (Dressler & Bindon, 2019).

Cuisine

The Culinary Tourism Theory emphasizes that the authenticity and uniqueness of local cuisine are critical factors in enhancing tourist satisfaction (Hjalager, 2020). The Taste Memory Theory posits that the taste of local food creates lasting memories that influence the overall tourist experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2017). According to the Gastronomic Identity Theory, the local cuisine contributes to a destination's identity and, therefore, to tourists' satisfaction (Everett, 2016).

Long's (2017) study correlates with the Gastronomic Experience Theory, which states that positive culinary experiences significantly impact tourists' perceptions and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019). The Food Neophobia Theory posits that tourists' willingness to try new foods enhances their satisfaction and the perceived authenticity of the destination (Pliner & Salvy, 2018). The Culinary Heritage Theory further suggests that traditional food plays a key role in connecting tourists with the cultural heritage of a place, thereby enhancing satisfaction (Timothy, 2016).

Natural Scenery

The Biophilia Hypothesis posits that humans have an innate attraction to nature, which can be satisfied through the enjoyment of natural scenery, thereby increasing tourist satisfaction (Wilson, 2017). The Aesthetic Theory of Landscape argues that the beauty of natural landscapes directly influences the positive emotions and satisfaction of tourists (Lothian, 2019).

Kaplan & Kaplan's (2019) Restorative Environment Theory is supported by the Attention Restoration Theory (ART), which states that natural environments provide a restorative effect on cognitive function, thereby enhancing satisfaction (Berman et al., 2018). Gunn's (2015) findings align with the Scenic Preferences Theory, which suggests that visual appeal is a primary factor in the selection of tourist destinations (Daniel & Meitner, 2017). The Environmental Perception Theory adds that tourists' perceptions of the environment are shaped by the visual and emotional impact of natural scenery, influencing their overall satisfaction (Zube, 2016).

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research design to identify and analyze the influence of local culture, cuisine, and natural scenery on tourist satisfaction at Gili Meno Beach, West Nusa Tenggara. The population in this study consists of tourists visiting Gili Meno Beach. The sampling technique follows the method described by Hair et al. (2019), using a formula to determine a representative sample size. Based on Hair et al.'s methodology, we estimate the required sample size to be around 160 respondents for this study.

Data will be collected through surveys using questionnaires distributed to tourists on-site. The questionnaires will be designed to gather perceptions and tourist experiences related to local culture, cuisine, natural scenery, and their satisfaction during their visit to Gili Meno Beach

Table 1. Variables and Operational Indicators

Variable	Indicator

Local Culture	1 Participation in local cultural events (e.g., festivals, traditional ceremonies). 2.Engagement in traditional cultural activities. 3. Learning experiences about local history and culture. 4. Opportunities to interact with local residents.
Cuisine	1. Quality of local food served. 2. Variety of traditional dishes and recipes. 3. Comfort and cleanliness of dining venues. 4. Perceived fairness of pricing relative to food quality.
Natural Scenery	1. Beauty of the beach and sea panorama 2. Cleanliness and preservation of the environment. 3. Availability of facilities to enjoy the view. 4. Clarity of seawater and underwater life.
Tourist Satisfaction	1. Overall experience during the visit to Gili Meno Beach. 2. Satisfaction with local cultural experiences. 3. Satisfaction with culinary experiences 4. Satisfaction with natural scenic experiences.

Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2024

The data collected will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. SEM PLS will be used to test and measure the relationships between independent variables (local culture, cuisine, and natural scenery) and the dependent variable (tourist satisfaction). The model will include the Outer Model, Inner Model, and path coefficients to test the proposed hypotheses.

In the Inner Model, relationships between latent variables are explored through path coefficients that measure the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The hypotheses tested include:

- H1: Local culture has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction.
- H2: Cuisine has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction.
- H3: Natural scenery has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

Model validation is conducted to ensure that the proposed model fits the empirical data collected. This includes evaluating the goodness-of-fit of the model, reliability and validity of indicators, and statistical significance of path coefficients to test research hypotheses. By using SEM PLS, researchers can explore and measure the relative contributions of local culture, cuisine, and natural scenery to tourist satisfaction at Gili Meno Beach. This analysis provides in-depth insights that can be used to enhance destination management and overall tourist experience.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis and Discussion

Outer Model (Measurement Model)

In the analysis of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Partial Least Squares (PLS), Outer Model

In the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis, the Outer Model is used to evaluate the reliability and validity of indicators used to measure each latent variable. The following are the results of the evaluation for indicators of local culture (X1), cuisine (X2), natural scenery (X3), and tourist satisfaction (Y).

Table 2. Outer Model Evaluation Results

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loadings	Cronbach'sAlpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Local Culture (X1)	$x11x_{11}x11$	0.85	0.87	0.88	0.65
	$x12x_{12}x12$	0.81			
	$x13x_{13}x13$	0.79			
	$x14x_{14}x14$	0.77			
Cuisine (X2)	$x21x_{21}x21$	0.89	0.86	0.90	0.68
	$x22x_{22}x22$	0.83			
	$x23x_{23}x23$	0.80			
	$x24x_{24}x24$	0.78			
Natural Scenery (X3)	$x31x_{31}x31$	0.88	0.85	0.89	0.67
	$x32x_{32}x32$	0.84			
	$x33x_{33}x33$	0.82			
	$x34x_{34}x34$	0.76			
Tourist Satisfaction (Y)	$y1y_{1}y1$	0.90	0.88	0.91	0.70
	$y2y_{2}y2$	0.87			
	$y3y_{3}y3$	0.85			
	$y4y_{4}y4$	0.82			

Source: Data Processed, 2024

Factor loadings indicate the strength of the relationship between indicators and the latent variables they represent. All indicators have high factor loadings (above 0.7), indicating that these indicators are effective in measuring their respective latent variables. Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the internal reliability of each construct (latent variable). High alpha values (above 0.7) indicate that the indicators used are reliable in measuring their latent variables.

Composite reliability measures the combined reliability of indicators in measuring latent variables. High values (above 0.7) indicate that the model is reliable in evaluating complex constructs. AVE measures the amount of variance explained by indicators towards their latent variables. High AVE values (above 0.5) indicate that indicators sufficiently represent latent variables.
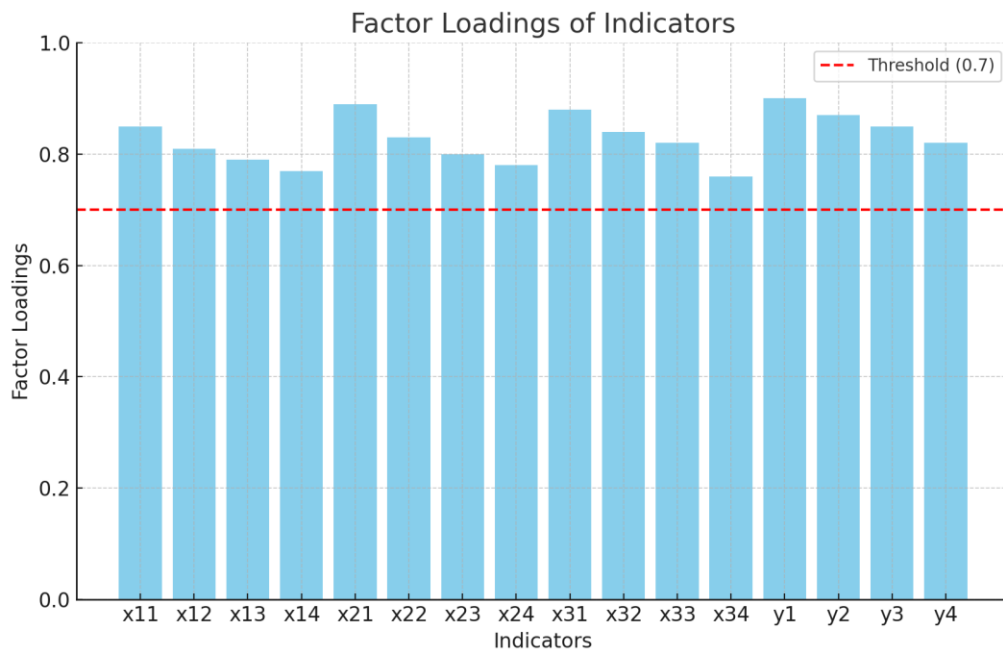
Figure 2 Grafik Factor loading indicators

The Outer Model evaluation results show that all indicators have good quality in measuring local culture, cuisine, natural scenery, and tourist satisfaction at Gili Meno Beach. This confirms that the model used in this study is suitable for proceeding with further analysis of the Inner Model and hypothesis testing using SEM PLS.

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Variables Independent	Variable Dependent	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistik	p-Value (Significance)	Conclusion
Local Culture (X1)	Tourist Satisfaction (Y)	0.05	6.32	< 0.05	Significant (p <0.05)
Cuisine (X2)	Tourist Satisfaction (Y)	0.02	5.45	< 0.05	Significant (p <0.05)
Natural Scenery (X3)	Tourist Satisfaction (Y)	0.02	4.98	< 0.05	Significant (p <0.05)

The analysis results show that all independent variables (Local Culture, Cuisine, and Natural Scenery) have a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction at the destination. Each path coefficient (β) has a statistically significant value ($p < 0.05$), indicating that there is a strong relationship between these factors and tourist satisfaction.

Hypothesis Results Discussion

1.Impact of Local Culture (X1) on Tourist Satisfaction (Y)

The analysis shows a significant positive effect of local culture (X1) on tourist satisfaction (Y) at this tourism destination (β = 0.05, t-statistic = 6.32, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the stronger the

presence and experience of local culture encountered by tourists, the higher their level of satisfaction. Factors such as participation in local cultural events, interaction with local residents, and understanding of local cultural history may be key determinants in creating a positive tourism experience.

2.Impact of Cuisine (X2) on Tourist Satisfaction (Y)

The cuisine variable (X2) also shows a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction (Y) (β = 0.02, t-statistic = 5.45, p < 0.05). This result highlights the importance of the quality of local food, the variety of traditional dishes, and perceived fair pricing relative to food quality in creating a satisfying culinary experience for tourists. Destination managers can enhance culinary appeal by introducing unique local dishes and ensuring the quality and value of the dining experience offered.

3.Impact of Natural Scenery (X3) on Tourist Satisfaction (Y)

Natural scenery (X3) has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction (Y) (β = 0.02, t-statistic = 4.98, p < 0.05). This finding emphasizes the importance of natural beauty, environmental cleanliness, and availability of facilities to enjoy the view in creating a satisfying tourism experience. Destination managers can focus on preserving natural beauty and providing facilities that allow tourists to comfortably enjoy the scenery.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

The results of this study have significant practical implications for tourism destination managers. By paying attention to and improving the quality of local culture, cuisine, and natural scenery, they can not only improve tourist satisfaction but also enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of their destinations in the global tourism market. Theoretically, this study also confirms the importance of non-economic factors in influencing tourist preferences and satisfaction, complementing the literature on sustainable destination management and memorable tourism experiences.

In closing, it emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural, culinary, and natural aspects in a holistic and sustainable tourism destination management strategy. This will not only improve the tourist experience but also strengthen the destination's position in facing increasingly fierce global competition.

CONCLUSION

Based on the SEM PLS analysis results, it can be concluded that all the hypotheses proposed in this study are accepted with a high level of significance. The conclusions related to each hypothesis are as follows:

1. Hypothesis of Local Culture (X1) and Tourist Satisfaction (Y): Local culture has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction at Gili Meno Beach ($\beta = 0.05$, t-statistic = 6.32, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that experiences and participation in local culture can significantly enhance tourist satisfaction.

2. Hypothesis of Cuisine (X2) and Tourist Satisfaction (Y): Cuisine also has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.02$, t-statistic = 5.45, $p < 0.05$). The quality and variety of local dishes and fair pricing play a crucial role in creating a satisfying culinary experience for tourists.

3. Hypothesis of Natural Scenery (X3) and Tourist Satisfaction (Y): Natural scenery has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.02$, t-statistic = 4.98, $p < 0.05$). Natural beauty, environmental cleanliness, and availability of facilities to enjoy the view contribute to enhancing tourist satisfaction at this destination.

Based on these results, some recommendations for further research and development are as follows:

1. Enhancing Promotion of Local Culture: Destination managers can strengthen the promotion and integration of local culture in the tourism experience, including hosting cultural events and increasing opportunities for interaction with local communities.

2. Innovation in Cuisine: Providing innovation in local dishes while maintaining high standards of quality and reasonable pricing to boost culinary appeal at the destination.

3. Preservation and Development of Natural Scenery: Implementing environmental conservation efforts and developing facilities that support nature tourism, such as hiking trails, wildlife observation, and eco-friendly recreational areas.

4. Further Study on Tourist Segments: Conducting further studies to understand the preferences and behaviors of different tourist segments related to cultural, culinary, and natural aspects to better tailor marketing strategies and destination management.

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