

The Role of Tourist Satisfaction and Price Sensitivity in Driving Competitive Sustainability for SMEs in the Indonesia Tourism Sector



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ABSTRACT: Tourism have a significant role in global economic development and is a key driver of sustainable development, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia. This study examines the relationship between tourist satisfaction, price sensitivity, and competitive sustainability within the context of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia's tourism villages. Using a quantitative approach and structural equation modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS, the study analyzes data from SME actors in tourism villages. The findings reveal that tourist satisfaction positively influences competitive sustainability by fostering loyalty and repeat visits, which enhance the long-term viability of tourism destinations. Similarly, price sensitivity significantly impacts competitive sustainability, emphasizing the importance of strategic pricing in fostering competitiveness in the tourism sector. These results underscore the necessity for SMEs to prioritize service quality and adopt effective pricing strategies to remain competitive and sustainable in the evolving tourism industry. The study contributes to the literature by highlighting the interconnected roles of satisfaction and pricing in achieving sustainable competitive advantage for tourism SMEs.

KEYWORDS: Competitive Sustainability; Tourist Satisfaction; Price Sensitivity; Indonesia Tourism Village; SMEs

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2015, tourism was the world's third largest export earner, accounting for around 10% of global GDP, 30% of service exports, and one out of every ten employment worldwide. (UNWTO, 2024). Tourism has the ability to make a direct and indirect contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN approved the Global Goals in 2015 as a worldwide call to action to end poverty, safeguard the environment, and ensure that by 2030, all people live in peace and prosperity. (UNDP, 2024). Tourism is specifically included in SDG Goals 8, 12, and 14 regarding inclusive sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable use of oceans and aquatic resources. (UNWTO, 2024).

Tourism Village, as part of sustainable tourism development, is one of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia's plans projected to stimulate economic growth. (Kemendparekaf, 2021). In general, residents gain from tourism operations in tourism villages via SMEs. SMEs are an important sector for economic performance in underdeveloped nations (Amoah et al., 2023). SMEs are also viewed as economic engines due to their significant contribution to economic growth in most countries (Ali Abbasi et al., 2022; Qalati et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, SMEs have a significant impact on the economy. This influence is seen in the development of jobs, both in terms of employment prospects and absorption. Other implications include the establishment of security for low-income groups, growth in GDP, and export contributions, according to the Indonesian Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. (Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2020).

SMEs have absorbed over 97% of the workforce in Indonesia, hence it can be claimed that they play a crucial role in economic growth in Indonesia. (Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2020). Furthermore, SMEs contribute significantly to the Indonesian economy, accounting for 61.07% of GDP, 14.37% of non-oil and gas exports, and 60.42% of fixed capital creation and investment. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) absorb 116.97 million individuals, or 97% of the total workforce of 120.598 million people. (Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2020).

Research related to tourism SMEs in Indonesia was conducted by Hulu et al., (2021). Hulu et al. (2021) found that SMEs in Indonesia, notably in the city of Palembang, Indonesia, are constrained in terms of human resource skills, consistency of product quality, legal elements of business operations, marketing factors, and, especially, capital constraints. Furthermore, many tourists are unsatisfied with the products supplied by SMEs due to variable quality. (Hulu et al., 2021). Moreover, Hulu et al. (2021) explained

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that the existing limitations make it difficult for SMEs to compete with professional players in the industry. In line with that, Asthana, (2022) stated that there are still many SMEs that do not have competitiveness or competitive sustainability.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Competitive Sustainability

Sul et al. (2020) concluded that the tools to increasing tourism is competitive sustainability. According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP, 2015), competitive sustainability refers to tourism that considers the needs of visitors, industry, the environment, and host communities while also taking into account present and future economic, social, and environmental ramifications.. Achieving competitive sustainability in tourism pushes tour operators to be more proactive in today's competitive climate (Christofi et al., 2022).

According to (Michael et al., 2019), by interacting with the community, offering customer-focused services, and being creative, tourism service providers can obtain a sustainable competitive edge. Santos et al., (2022) noted that the tourist sector can attain competitive sustainability through appropriate destination policies and management. Furthermore, a study conducted by Bazargani & Kiliç (2021) found that infrastructure development, a supportive atmosphere, and local community participation all have an impact on tourism success. Previous research has also shown that competitiveness has a favorable impact on tourism competitive sustainability (Amoah et al., 2023).

Moreover, Amoah et al. (2023) examined competitive sustainability using indicators such as environmental sustainability, security, accessibility, and government policies. The study focused on tourism SMEs in Ghana, a developing African country.

Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is described as a feeling of pleasure or dissatisfaction caused by a comparison of the impression of performance (results) of a product and service (Lee & Xue, 2020). According to Cunha et al. (2020), tourist satisfaction is an important factor in the competitive sustainability of tourism. Tourist Satisfaction promotes travelers to communicate their interest in a destination and its offerings (Amoah et al., 2023).

Del Baldo & Demartini, (2016) stated that Satisfied tourists make money and are more likely to return. Furthermore, Preko et al. (2019) conducted a study on the push and pull factors of Tourist Satisfaction. The motivation, contentment, and behavioral intention of tourists were then evaluated further in the study. The findings indicated that push and pull factors had a significant and favorable impact on tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intention. (Preko et al., 2019). According to their research, happy customers are more likely to make additional purchases, which boosts the competitive sustainability of tourism. (Preko et al., 2019).

In line with what was stated by Preko et al. (2019), (Anabila et al., 2022) stated that the foundation of long-term tourism development is satisfied customers and high-quality services. Additionally, a positive correlation between tourism competitiveness and visitor satisfaction was discovered. Furthermore, a study conducted by Owusu-Frimpong et al., (2013) concluded that effective strategic strategies aimed at cities, urban areas, and local communities can help tourism service providers draw visitors and remain competitive. To ensure competitive sustainability, SMEs must place a high priority on networking among key stakeholders and community participation. (Amoah et al., 2023; Fransen et al., 2022; Sung, 2022).

Price Sensitivity

Göral (2016) outlined how market competition is determined by price. Amoah et al. (2021) shown from tourism side that one of the things that drives travelers is price. Because the price includes lodging, transportation expenses, and tolls and other services, it is a significant factor in the decision-making process when selecting a tourist location.

From the same perspective, Forsyth & Dwyer (2009) stated that it's critical to comprehend and specify the costs of goods and services that visitors buy. Additionally, research indicates that price affects the tourism industry's ability to remain competitive. (Amoah et al., 2023). Research conducted by (Richards, 2014) found that The costs of tickets, lodging, reasonably priced daily rates, transportation, and other services are all included in tourism pricing plans.

In a study on pricing strategies for tourism, Elgarhy (2023) discovered that price policies had a strong and significant impact on the competitiveness of tourism enterprises in Egypt's travel agency market. Additionally, this study found that pricing tactics for tourism have a positive impact on travelers' destination choices. He et al. (2019) carried out a similar analysis and discovered a favorable correlation between pricing strategy and the competitive sustainability of tourism. According to Ahmadi & Ghasemi (2022), price policy helps to increase the competitive sustainability of tourism, as Amoah et al. (2023) pointed out.

When the impression of performance of a product and service is compared, the sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that arises is known as tourist satisfaction. (Lee & Xue, 2020). Cunha et al. (2020) stated that One of the key components of the competitive sustainability of tourism is visitor satisfaction. Del Baldo & Demartini (2016) stated that Satisfied tourists are more likely to make money and plan to return. Regarding tourism, visitor satisfaction motivates travelers to communicate their interest in the location and its amenities. (Amoah et al., 2023). Tourists' decisions will be influenced by their positive emotions or sense of fulfillment. One stakeholder that is mentioned as having to be pleased in order to get a competitive edge is tourists.. Anabila et al. (2022) stated that

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long-term tourism development is based on satisfied customers and high-quality services.. H1: Tourist Satisfaction has a positive effect on competitive sustainability

Price is a determining factor in market competition (Göral, 2016). Amoah et al. (2021) stated that One of the things that drives tourists is price. Tourists' prices play a significant part in their decision-making process. (Elgarhy, 2023). Furthermore, additionally, it was discovered that price significantly and strongly affected how competitive tourism-related enterprises were. A study by He et al., (2019) found pricing policy and the competitive sustainability of tourism are positively correlated.. H2: Price Sensitivity has a positive effect on competitive sustainability

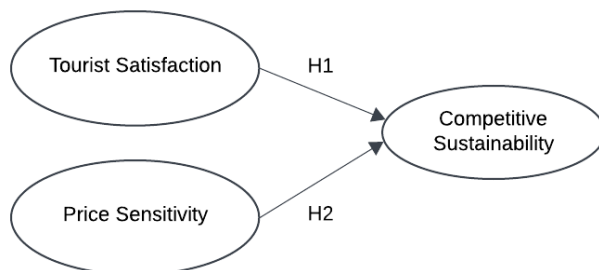


Figure 1. Research Model
Source: Authors Data (2024)

III. METHODOLOGY

This study will use a Quantitative approach through hypothesis testing. (Ghozali, 2018) states that After providing a descriptive statistical description to describe the sample data profile, the descriptive quantitative technique uses statistical analytic tools to test hypotheses and ascertain the impact of the relationship between variables. The statistical analysis tool used for this study is SmartPLS version 4.0. The data collected was obtained from research subjects of SMEs actors in tourism villages in Indonesia, within a cross-sectional period with a predetermined time.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Instrument testing is carried out using the Outer Model (Measurement Model) step to ensure the feasibility of the measurements in this study, that is, they are valid and reliable, and to determine the relationship between variables and their indicators.

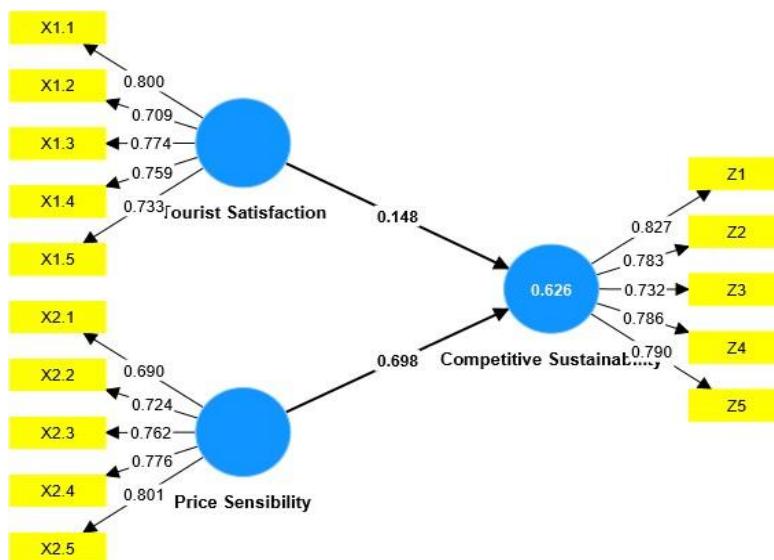


Figure 2. Outer Model
Source: Authors Data (2024)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a value that explains the ability of a variable to measure the diversity of variants in existing indicators, or AVE can be used to measure the many variants that can be captured by the construct, the AVE value must be > 0.5 to be declared valid (Ghozali, 2018). The AVE value of each variable in this study can be seen in the table 1 below.

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Table 1. Average Variance Extracted

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Competitive Sustainability	0,615
Price Sensibility	0,565
Tourist Satisfaction	0,571

Source: Authors Data (2024)

Discriminant validity assessment is carried out by assessing the fornell-larcker criterion and cross-loading. Discriminant Validity is carried out to ensure that each concept in each variable is different from other variables. Testing is carried out to determine the accuracy of the measuring instrument in carrying out its measurement function.

Table 2. Fornell-larcker Criterion Value

	Competitive Sustainability	Price Sensibility	Tourist Satisfaction
Competitive Sustainability	0,784		
Price Sensibility	0,732	0,752	
Tourist Satisfaction	0,545	0,569	0,756

Source: Authors Data (2024)

From the table 3, it is known that the cross loadings value of each item indicator per variable has a higher or greater value/loading compared to the loading value to other constructs. So from these results it can be concluded that discriminant validity with the cross loading approach is met.

Table 3. Cross Loading Value

	Competitive Sustainability	Price Sensitivity	Tourist Satisfaction
X1.1	0,411	0,42	0,8
X1.2	0,319	0,327	0,709
X1.3	0,411	0,396	0,774
X1.4	0,417	0,445	0,759
X1.5	0,472	0,526	0,733
X2.1	0,526	0,69	0,581
X2.2	0,62	0,724	0,299
X2.3	0,505	0,762	0,531
X2.4	0,611	0,776	0,404
X2.5	0,653	0,801	0,372
Z1	0,827	0,653	0,463
Z2	0,783	0,629	0,445
Z3	0,732	0,574	0,433
Z4	0,786	0,581	0,352
Z5	0,79	0,624	0,437

Source: Authors Data (2024)

To ascertain how well and consistently the tool utilized in this research model captures and discloses the true state of the item under study, a reliability test is carried out. Tested and trustworthy measurement findings can be obtained from measurements with high dependability. The Cronbach's Alpha value, which shows a connection between two items, is examined in order to do the analysis. Cronbach's alpha is a number between 0 and 1, and the closer the result is to 1 (one), the more reliable the measurement

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device. In addition to Cronbach's alpha, both values need to be above 0.70 in order for the Composite Reliability rating to be considered reliable.

Table 4. Construct Reliability & Validity Value

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Competitive Sustainability	0,843	0,845
Price Sensibility	0,807	0,812
Tourist Satisfaction	0,813	0,817

Source: Authors Data (2024)

The structural model defines the relationship between latent constructs by examining the results of parameter coefficient estimation and significance levels. Evaluating the structural model will explain the R-Square results and the results of the hypothesis test.

Table 5. R-square Value

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Competitive Sustainability	0,626	0,624

Source: Authors Data (2024)

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Significance
Price Sensibility -> Competitive Sustainability	0,698	0,693	0,059	11,913	0	Significance
Tourist Satisfaction -> Competitive Sustainability	0,148	0,159	0,081	2,67	0,029	Significance

Source: Authors Data (2024)

Based on the data from the hypothesis test results with reference to the T statistics value with a threshold value of 1.96, then:

H1: Tourist Satisfaction has a positive effect on competitive sustainability is accepted.

H2: Price Sensitivity has a positive effect on competitive sustainability is accepted.

The relationship between tourist satisfaction and competitive sustainability and the impact of price sensitivity on competitive sustainability is a critical area of inquiry in tourism studies. This discussion will explore the hypotheses that tourist satisfaction positively affects competitive sustainability (H1) and that price sensitivity also positively affects competitive sustainability (H2).

The hypothesis test results revealed that the visitor satisfaction variable influences competitive sustainability. The results of this test are consistent with prior research by Amoah et al. (2023), which stated that tourist satisfaction stimulates tourists to indicate interest in destinations, particularly destination-related offerings. Satisfaction is an indicator of the propensity to return.

Tourist satisfaction is widely acknowledged as a critical aspect in improving tourism destinations' competitiveness and sustainability. According to research, when tourists feel high levels of pleasure, they are more likely to be loyal to the place, promoting a sustainable tourism ecosystem. According to Guizzardi et al., perceived sustainability is becoming a significant driver of tourism competitiveness, as satisfied tourists are more willing to pay a premium for sustainable practices, increasing the economic viability of tourism destinations. This relationship is further confirmed by Alsiehem, who underlines that service quality has a substantial impact on tourist satisfaction, which in turn affects tourism sustainability (Alsiehem, 2023).

Furthermore, the importance of emotional participation in influencing tourist satisfaction cannot be underestimated. Biswas et al. demonstrate that emotional involvement significantly mediates the association between location features and tourist satisfaction,

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implying that stronger emotional connections can boost overall satisfaction and loyalty (Biswas et al., 2020). This emotional aspect is critical because it can lead to repeat visits and prolonged interest in the place, so ensuring its competitive sustainability.

The test results that showed how price sensitivity affects competitive sustainability align with the results of a research conducted by Amoah et al. (2023), research discovered that, among other factors, price sensitivity significantly affects competitive sustainability. These findings confirm Göral's (2016) claim that One element that determines market competitiveness is price. Additionally, the results of this study add to the corpus of research highlighting the significance of pricing in market rivalry. SME actors should constantly assess the cost of the goods or services they offer, as Elgarhy (2023) indicated that the competitiveness of the tourism industry will be impacted by the pricing strategy used.

Price sensitivity is very important in determining competitive viability in the tourism industry. According to Dethan et al., the marketing mix, particularly price methods, has a substantial impact on tourist satisfaction, which can then influence loyalty and propensity to return (Dethan, 2020). Tourists who perceive good value for money are more likely to be satisfied, which can boost the destination's competitiveness. This is especially essential in a market where consumers are becoming more price-conscious, and their views of value might influence their travel decisions. Furthermore, Teixeira et al. found that understanding price sensitivity is critical for building competitive tourism offerings that match tourists' expectations.

CONCLUSIONS

Price sensitivity and visitor happiness are essential to the competitive viability of Tourism SMEs. The evidence demonstrates that improving tourist happiness through excellent experiences and smart pricing methods can result in increased loyalty and advocacy, which is critical for long-term sustainability. As the tourist industry evolves, recognizing and harnessing these factors will be important for locations looking to thrive in a competitive climate.

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