



TOURISM DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS MODEL FOR THE CITY OF SOLO

MODEL DAYA SAING DESTINASI PARIWISATA KOTA SOLO

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the main factors that affect the competitiveness of tourist destinations in the city of Solo, involving an analysis of aspects of cultural uniqueness, service standards, and tourism infrastructure. This study used the descriptive-qualitative method. The results show First, the cultural uniqueness and heritage of the City of Solo appear to be major factors in attracting tourists. Traditional art, local cuisine, classic architecture, and cultural celebrations are the main attractions that set this destination apart. Second, superior service quality is proven to have a key role in creating a positive experience for tourists. Being responsive to their needs creates an emotional bond that encourages return visits and recommendations to others. Third, the influence of technology and social media in the paradigm of seeking information and planning travel has undergone changes. The use of technology, such as an augmented reality-based guide application, creates an interactive experience that enriches the visit.

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INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
<p>Koresponden</p> <p>Dian Deliana <i>delianadian@gmail.com</i></p> <p>Kata kunci: kebudayaan, daya saing, destinasi wisata, Solo</p> <p>Website: <i>https://idm.or.id/JSER/index.php/JSER</i></p> <p>Hal: 840 - 851</p>	<p>Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor utama yang memengaruhi daya saing destinasi wisata di kota Solo, melibatkan analisis terhadap aspek keunikan budaya, standar pelayanan, dan infrastruktur pariwisata. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif. Hasilnya menunjukkan Pertama, keunikan budaya dan warisan Kota Solo terbukti menjadi faktor utama dalam menarik wisatawan. Seni tradisional, kuliner lokal, arsitektur klasik, dan perayaan budaya merupakan daya tarik utama yang membedakan destinasi ini. Kedua, kualitas pelayanan yang unggul terbukti memiliki peran kunci dalam menciptakan pengalaman positif bagi wisatawan. Responsif terhadap kebutuhan mereka menciptakan ikatan emosional yang mendorong kunjungan kembali dan rekomendasi kepada orang lain. Ketiga, pengaruh teknologi dan media sosial dalam paradigma mencari informasi dan merencanakan perjalanan telah mengalami perubahan. Penggunaan teknologi, seperti aplikasi berbasis tourism, menciptakan pengalaman interaktif yang memperkaya kunjungan.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Copyright © 2023 JSER. All rights reserved.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as a very important economic sector in driving the economic growth of a region (Elsa, 2017). This phenomenon is not only happening in Indonesia but also throughout the world. Tourist destinations that have unique attractions and strong competitiveness have the potential to attract tourists from various places, both locally and internationally (Puspitasari & Rahmawati, 2022). Through these visits, these destinations can contribute to income and employment in the area. In this way, the tourism sector plays a role in shaping a sustainable and diverse economy and provides opportunities for the development of better infrastructure and public facilities. (Wahyudi, 2014).

One of the cities in Indonesia that has rich tourism potential is Solo City. The city not only has a rich cultural heritage but also unique traditional arts and interesting historical attractions (Pandansari et al., 2020). Cultural heritage such as traditional handicrafts, dances, and traditional ceremonies has become an integral part of the identity of the city of Solo. Traditional arts such as batik and gamelan are also a unique attraction for tourists who want to experience the richness of Indonesian culture. In addition, historical attractions such as palaces and historical sites allow tourists to experience the precious stories of the past. All of these elements create a solid foundation for attracting and retaining tourist interest.

Table 1. Data on Tourist Visits for the City of Solo 2021-2022

No	Tourism site	Number of Visits 2021	Number of Visits 2022
1	Pura Mangkunegaran	3.727	40.168
2	Taman Satwa Taru Jurug	157.529	357.123
3	Museum Radya Pustaka	3.553	18.979
4	Taman Balekambang	201.356	451.702
5	Museum Lokananta	Data Not Available	Data Not Available
6	Museum Keris	Data Not Available	Data Not Available
7	Bakdan Neng Solo	Data Not Available	Data Not Available
8	Lainnya	Data Not Available	Data Not Available
9	Haul Habib Ali	Data Not Available	Data Not Available
Total Domestic Tourism		379.029	1.119.006
International Tourism		73	3.164
Total		379.102	1.122.170

Source: Solo City BPS data

Apart from BPS data, several major events that have been observed bringing tourists to Solo throughout 2022 include the Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah Conferences, the ASEAN Para Games, and the Dream Theater concert. (Malinda, 2023)

The table above clearly illustrates the tremendous potential of Solo City as a tourist destination. However, this potential certainly requires a careful approach to management, planning, and promotion. With attractions ranging from cultural destinations such as the Mangkunegaran Temple and the Radya Pustaka Museum to natural attractions such as the Taru Jurug Animal Park and Balekambang Park, Solo has something to appeal to every type of traveler. In addition, major events such as Mukhtar Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah, the ASEAN Para Games, and the Dream Theater concert have proven Solo's potential as a venue for international-scale events. With careful planning and promotion, Solo can become the top choice for tourists, both local and foreign, who want to enjoy the city's unique beauty, culture, and hospitality.



Source: BPS Statistics Surakarta No 17/08/3372/Th.XX, 1 August 2023

Figure 1. Air Transportation Statistics for Adi Sumarno June 2023

The room occupancy rate (TPK) for star hotels in Surakarta City in June 2023 was recorded at 59.49 percent, an increase of 4.03 points compared to the TPK in May 2023, which was recorded at 55.46 percent. The average length of stay (RLM) for all star hotel guests in June 2023 was recorded at 1.34 days, a decrease of 0.09 points compared to May 2023, which was recorded at 1.43 days. The number of commercial airplane passengers arriving through Adi Sumarmo airport in June 2023 totaled 50,868 people, all of whom were domestic flight passengers. This figure decreased by 3.86 percent compared to the previous month, which was recorded at 52,910 people. Passengers departing from Adi Sumarmo airport in June 2023 totaled 78,064 people, consisting of 50,657 passengers on domestic flights and 27,407 passengers on international flights. This figure has increased by 18.49 percent compared to the previous month, which was recorded at 65,884 people. (BPS, 2023)

To ensure that the city of Solo remains an attractive tourist destination, it is necessary to develop strategies and models for the competitiveness of sustainable tourist destinations. This involves investing in the promotion and development of tourism infrastructure and the protection of cultural heritage and the natural environment. By strengthening the existing attractions and promoting them wisely, the city can maintain its popularity among tourists. In addition, efforts to provide unique and authentic experiences to visitors can make a positive contribution to the image of Solo City as a unique and alluring tourist destination. By maintaining a balance between economic development and cultural preservation, Solo City can continue to grow as a profitable tourist destination for all parties involved. (Suprpto, 2005) Optimizing the competitiveness of a tourist destination cannot only be based on an intuitive approach but also requires a comprehensive and scientific approach (Arida & Sunarta, 2017). This approach involves an analysis of the various factors that contribute to the attractiveness of a destination, the satisfaction of tourists who visit it, and the resulting economic impact. By combining valid research data and methodologies, we can understand the complex dynamics behind the popularity of a tourist destination. It also enables decision-makers and stakeholders to take more informed steps in developing strategies to increase the competitiveness of the destination.

This study aims to identify the main factors that affect the competitiveness of tourist destinations in the city of Solo, involving an analysis of aspects of cultural uniqueness, service standards, and tourism infrastructure. The resulting model will provide strategic guidance for successful and sustainable tourism development in the city. The importance of this research is illustrated by several factors. First, intense competition between tourist destinations requires the City of Solo to have a unique appeal in order to remain competitive. Second, digital transformation and social media influence the way tourists interact with destinations, driving the need for appropriate marketing strategies. Third, the economic impact of tourism and infrastructure has an impact on regional development. Finally, cultural and heritage preservation is of the essence, with the competitiveness model playing a role in preserving the city's characteristics while attracting today's tourists.

A previous study by (Rini & Maruf, 2017) focused on analyzing the competitiveness of the Yogyakarta Special Region tourism sector, finding fast growth and good competitiveness compared to other provinces. (Agustina, 2019) identified a significant factor in local revenue for the tourism sector in Batu Tourism City, with

the number of restaurants being the influential variable. Meanwhile, research by (Rheeders, 2022) concluded that the key factors in the competitiveness of tourist destinations include natural resources, safety, accommodation, cultural heritage, and transportation. These studies provide an in-depth look at the factors influencing the competitiveness of tourist destinations and provide direction for the development of strategies in the tourism sector.

This research has an advantage compared to previous studies due to its comprehensive focus on combining the analysis of key factors affecting the competitiveness of Solo City tourist destinations with an understanding of changes in the global context such as technology and social media. This approach allows this research to provide a more holistic and up-to-date insight into how the city of Solo can maintain its attractiveness in the face of increasingly fierce competition while still paying attention to the economic impact, sustainable development, and cultural preservation that are at the core of the city's identity.

Through this research, it is hoped that a model will be developed that describes the key factors that influence the competitiveness of tourist destinations in the city of Solo. This model can serve as a guide for governments, destination managers, and other related parties to design strategies that focus on improving the attractiveness, service, and experience of tourists. Thus, the City of Solo can be a successful example of developing highly competitive tourist destinations that provide economic and social benefits to its people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with various approaches such as case studies, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and content analysis (Rahardjo, 2013). This approach was chosen based on the research objectives and the characteristics of the phenomenon studied. Participants were selected purposefully, focusing on individuals or groups with relevant experience with the phenomenon. Sample size is determined by the required depth of information, not statistics. Data collection involved interviews, observations, document analysis, and field notes, which were then processed using an inductive analysis approach to identify emerging patterns and themes.

Data credibility is maintained through triangulation and member-checking and strengthened by peer debriefing (Roosinda *et al.*, 2021). The research results are presented in an in-depth narrative form, including excerpts from the interviews and findings from the data analysis. The researcher also summarizes the results in the context of personal reflection to provide a deeper understanding of their influence and subjectivity in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Key Factors in the Competitiveness of Solo City Tourism Destinations

The tourist destination of Solo City (Surakarta) has a number of key factors that play a role in increasing its competitiveness. These factors not only help to intrigue tourists but also encourage them to return and recommend these destinations to others. Three key factors affecting the competitiveness of Solo City's tourist destinations are the uniqueness of culture and heritage as the main attraction, service quality, and positive

experience for tourists, as well as the role of tourism infrastructure in increasing visitor comfort.

The city has a rich cultural heritage, such as traditional arts, crafts, dances, and unique indigenous rituals. The Mangkunegaran Palace and Surakarta Sunanate are examples of historical monuments that enrich the city's cultural heritage (Nugroho, 2002). Tourists can experience the authentic nuances of Javanese culture here, get to know local traditions, and interact with local people.



Figure 2. Surakarta Kasunanan Palace, Solo

Friendly service, accurate information, and adequate facilities are important elements in creating a positive experience for tourists. Hotels, restaurants, and other service providers need to maintain quality standards to ensure tourists feel comfortable and satisfied while visiting this city. This positive experience will create a lasting impression and encourage them to come back.

The role of tourism infrastructure also plays an important role in increasing the comfort of visitors in the city of Solo. Good accessibility, such as smooth transportation, the nearest international airport, and a quality road network, make it easier for tourists to reach this destination. Adequate accommodation infrastructure and public facilities also contribute to increasing the level of comfort and satisfaction of tourists during their visit.

In addition, effective promotion and marketing are also key factors in the competitiveness of tourist destinations in the city of Solo. Efforts to promote cultural attractions, special events, and unique tour packages through various media channels will help attract potential tourists. Collaboration with travel agents and industry partners will also increase the visibility of Solo City in the tourism market.

The development of sustainable tourism activities plays a central role in increasing the competitiveness of the city of Solo. These efforts include sustainable environmental management, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the promotion of awareness regarding social responsibility in the context of tourism (Indriani et al., 2020). Through this approach, this tourist destination is able to maintain its attractiveness and strengthen its position in the long term.

The active participation of the local community has a significant positive impact on increasing the competitiveness of the City of Solo in the tourism industry. Involving communities in decision-making processes related to tourism development and management, providing training to improve skills related to the tourism industry, and encouraging participation in local cultural or artistic events can create stronger engagement and deeper emotional bonds between tourists and destinations. This

results in a more authentic and fulfilling experience for tourists and contributes positively to the image and attractiveness of Solo City.

In an effort to increase competitiveness, tourism product diversification is a crucial strategy. Apart from focusing on culture and heritage, the development of other activities such as local culinary arts, performing arts, cultural festivals, and ecotourism can help the city of Solo attract different segments of tourists who have diverse interests and preferences. This diversification enriches the tourist experience and widens the range of attractions for the City of Solo, having a positive impact on maintaining the competitiveness of this tourist destination in an increasingly competitive market.

The use of technology has a crucial role in increasing the competitiveness of the City of Solo as a tourist destination. Technology can be used to create immersive interactive experiences, such as augmented reality-based travel guide apps, which not only enhance traveler engagement but also enrich and personalize their experience during a visit. With this technology, travelers can interact deeply with destinations, explore additional information, and experience a touch of modernity in a rich cultural setting.

In addition, cross-sectoral and cross-government cooperation is also an important factor in building and maintaining the competitiveness of tourist destinations. The synergy between the tourism, education, culture, and business sectors has the potential to produce innovative programs that embrace the diversity of tourist destinations. This collaboration can also strengthen human resource development in the tourism sector and ensure integrated destination management, which in turn enhances the competitiveness of Solo City as an attractive and sustainable tourist destination.

The Influence of Technology and Social Media on the Competitiveness of Tourist Destinations

The development of technology and social media has changed the paradigm for seeking information about tourist destinations. Previously, people tended to rely on guidebooks, brochures, or other written references to plan trips. However, with technology and easy access to the internet, tourists can now quickly find information through online platforms. Tourism websites, travel apps, and social media platforms are becoming the main sources of information, enabling travelers to compare destinations, access reviews of other people's experiences, and select destinations that match their interests and preferences.

Social media has become a major force in influencing tourists' decisions when choosing destinations. Posts, reviews, photos, and videos shared by social media users can create a strong image of a particular destination. Engaging and authentic content on social media can spark traveler interest and inspiration to explore new places. Live testimonials from other users also provide a realistic view of the experience at a particular destination, which influences the choice of destination by tourists.

The competitiveness of tourist destinations does not only rely on the use of technology but is also responsive to its development. Destinations that want to stay competitive must adopt the latest technology to increase interaction with tourists.

Mobile applications, online bookings, GPS-based guides, and augmented reality technologies are part of the destination's strategy to provide a more engaging and efficient experience for tourists. This engagement with advanced technology can create additional attractions and enhance travelers' comfort during their trip.

In the era of social media, visual content has a big impact on strengthening the image of a tourist destination. Interesting photos and videos that showcase the natural beauty, culture, and unique experiences of a destination can attract the attention of potential tourists. A destination that is able to produce and maintain high-quality, attractive visual content can attract more visitors because the images give a first-hand sense of what travelers can expect in that place.

Social media is not only a promotional platform but also a means of direct interaction with tourists. Many tourist destinations actively communicate with tourists via social media platforms, responding to inquiries, providing recommendations, and providing updates on special events or offers. Interactions like these create bonds between destinations and tourists, increasing satisfaction and building loyalty to those destinations.

Technology and social media provide opportunities for tourists to become creative content creators. Travelers can share their experiences in unique ways through photos, videos, blogs, or vlogs. Travel destinations that encourage travelers to contribute to creating content can gain greater visibility on multiple online platforms. It also creates a more personal relationship between destinations and travelers, inviting active participation and loyalty.

One of the advantages of technology and social media is the ability to measure the impact and effectiveness of digital campaigns. A travel destination can track statistics such as the number of website visitors, engagement rates on social media, or online booking conversion rates. This data provides valuable insight into how effective digital efforts are at attracting tourists and formulates further strategies.

Collaboration with digital influencers and collaborators in the tourism industry can also increase the competitiveness of destinations. Influencers have large and engaged audiences, which can provide a destination with significant exposure. Forming a partnership with them can expand your promotion's reach and impact while bringing fresh perspectives and content.

Online reputation and user reviews on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, or other social media platforms greatly influence travelers' perceptions of destinations. Good online reputation management involves responding to reviews, both positive and negative. Responsive and professional responses can build a positive image, while negative responses can be overcome with good solutions. A good reputation online helps build tourist trust and strengthens the competitiveness.

Preservation of Culture and Role in Increasing Competitiveness

Preservation of culture and heritage has a central role in shaping the unique identity of a destination. Local culture, traditions, art, architecture, and historical heritage are elements that give a destination its identity. Recognizing and nurturing these elements allows a destination to articulate a story like no other, attracting travelers seeking authentic and immersive experiences. A strong identity helps destinations

build a positive image and present a unique appeal in a competitive global marketplace.

Tourists are increasingly aware of the importance of cultural preservation when they travel. Tourists tend to seek experiences that are meaningful and empowering, including interaction with local cultures. Destinations that have a strong commitment to cultural preservation are able to attract the attention of tourists who want to contribute positively to the communities they visit. When tourists see that destinations respect and preserve their cultural heritage, they are more likely to appreciate and support those efforts through visits and participation.

Cultural preservation is not only about preserving the past but also creating an interesting and relevant tourism experience. A smart destination combines cultural preservation with activities and events that invite tourist participation. Cultural festivals, traditional performances, craft workshops, or local culinary delights can provide an interactive way for tourists to experience local culture in depth. Delivering these memorable experiences provides opportunities for travelers to learn, experience, and interact with local communities, create meaningful memories, and add to the appeal of destinations.

Cultural preservation also has a significant economic impact. Local economic sustainability is often connected with cultural preservation. Traditional handicrafts, arts, performances, and culinary heritage are sources of livelihood for the local people. By developing tourism that focuses on cultural preservation, destinations can help support the local economy, create jobs, and improve people's well-being.

Cultural preservation also creates opportunities for deeper engagement with local communities. Collaboration with communities in the preservation and presentation of local culture builds meaningful relationships. It's not just about maintaining tradition but also respecting and valuing local knowledge. Involving the community in the development of cultural programs and events can result in a more authentic experience and strengthen the bond between travelers and their destinations.

Cultural preservation also provides opportunities for education and cultural awareness. Tourists can learn about local history, traditions, and values, resulting in a greater appreciation of the world's cultural diversity. Destinations that integrate educational elements into the tourist experience build broader cross-cultural understanding, reduce stereotypes, and promote tolerance.

Cultural heritage is a sustainable asset for tourist destinations. In contrast to physical infrastructure that is subject to change, cultural heritage can become an enduring attraction that attracts tourists of all generations. With wise planning and sustainable management, destinations can maintain and utilize their rich cultural heritage for the long term.

Preservation of culture does not mean being isolated from modern developments. Conversely, destinations that successfully integrate cultural heritage with modern experiences create an attractive harmony for tourists. The use of technology and innovation in presenting local culture can provide an additional dimension to tourism travel, combining traditional values with modern conveniences and practicalities.

Formulating a competitiveness model for Solo City involves integrating the key factors that have been identified in this study. Factors such as cultural and heritage uniqueness, service quality, and tourism infrastructure must be comprehensively integrated into this model. This approach enables holistic and informed decision-making in the tourism development of Solo City. Each factor plays a complementary role and contributes to the destination's overall attractiveness and competitiveness. This integration also enables prioritization, effective allocation of resources, and the development of strategies that focus on the unique strengths of the City of Solo.

The Solo City competitiveness model must include a marketing strategy that promotes cultural uniqueness, heritage, and service quality as salient points of the destination. Marketing materials should highlight the elements that make Solo different from other destinations, such as traditional arts, local cuisine, and architectural heritage. Marketing must also emphasize superior service quality, ensuring a positive experience for tourists. In a digital and social media environment, powerful visual content and emotional stories can be used to convey a message about the uniqueness and quality of Solo to potential tourists.

Technology has a central role in the competitiveness model of the City of Solo, especially in the context of promoting sustainable tourist destinations. The use of technology can create interactive experiences for tourists, such as augmented reality-based guide applications that combine historical and cultural information with real experiences. In addition, technology can also be used to communicate Solo's commitment to cultural and environmental preservation. Social media platforms, blogs, and destination websites can be used to disseminate information about conservation efforts and the positive impacts they generate.

The competitiveness model also needs to include the development of a collaborative ecosystem involving multiple stakeholders. This involves collaboration between the government, tourism industry players, local communities, and educational institutions. This collaboration can result in innovative programs, skills training to improve services, and the development of attractive tourism products. Cross-sector collaboration can also create an enabling environment for investments in infrastructure and human resource development needed to increase the competitiveness of the City of Solo.

The competitiveness model needs to be supplemented by regular performance measurement and monitoring. Relevant performance indicators, such as the number of tourists, level of tourist satisfaction, economic impact, and social effects, must be measured to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies and actions. This data provides a basis for making improvements and adjustments according to changing conditions and market needs.

A competitiveness model can include a strategy of active engagement with tourists. Through surveys, feedback, and direct interaction, destinations can gather valuable information about traveler experiences, their expectations, and areas where improvement may be needed. Traveler engagement can help destinations stay responsive to changing trends and preferences and build stronger bonds with customers.

Education and training are important elements of the competitiveness model. Developing competent and knowledgeable human resources is the key to providing superior service to tourists. Training programs can include understanding local culture, developing service skills, improving foreign language skills, and using the latest technology. Investment in developing quality human resources will support long-term competitiveness and create the foundation for sustainable growth.

The competitiveness model needs to be flexible and continually evaluated. Changes in the business environment, markets, technologies, and tourism trends must be accommodated with appropriate adjustments in the models. Continuous evaluation and adjustment enable destinations to remain relevant, responsive, and competitive in the face of inevitable change. The key to the competitiveness model is the consistent and coordinated implementation of the formulated strategies and actions. All stakeholders need to commit to executing this strategy with harmony and passion. Good coordination between the government, industry, community, and related institutions will ensure that this joint effort succeeds in increasing the competitiveness of the City of Solo as a prominent and sustainable tourist destination.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals a number of findings related to the competitiveness of tourist destinations in the city of Solo. First, the unique culture and heritage of the City of Solo appear to be a major factor in attracting tourists. Traditional art, local cuisine, classic architecture, and cultural celebrations are the main attractions that set this destination apart. Second, superior service quality is proven to have a key role in creating a positive experience for tourists. Being responsive to their needs creates an emotional bond that encourages return visits and recommendations to others. Third, the influence of technology and social media in the paradigm of seeking information and planning travel has undergone changes. The use of technology, such as an augmented reality-based guide application, creates an interactive experience that enriches the visit.

In addition, this study found that cultural preservation has an important role in increasing the competitiveness of Solo City. The existence of culture and heritage not only forms a destination's identity but also becomes a strong differentiator in competition with other destinations. When tourists become increasingly aware of the importance of cultural preservation, the combination of cultural preservation and an attractive tourist experience becomes a determining factor in creating a sustainable attraction. Finally, the development of a competitiveness model for Solo City includes the integration of key factors such as cultural uniqueness, service quality, and the role of technology. This model also encourages marketing strategies that highlight these points and gives cultural preservation an important role in destination development. With cross-sector collaboration and continuous performance measurement, this model is expected to lead the City of Solo towards sustainable competitiveness and success in the tourism industry.

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