



# Tourism Destination Competitiveness: Conceptual Analysis and Determinant Factors in a Literature Review

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## ABSTRAK

Daya saing destinasi pariwisata merupakan konsep penting dalam memahami bagaimana suatu destinasi mampu menarik wisatawan, menghasilkan manfaat ekonomi, dan mempertahankan pembangunan pariwisata jangka panjang di tengah persaingan global yang semakin ketat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kerangka konseptual serta faktor-faktor determinan yang mempengaruhi daya saing destinasi pariwisata melalui pendekatan kajian literatur. Publikasi akademik yang relevan pada periode 2018–2023 dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi perspektif teoritis dan temuan empiris terkait daya saing destinasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa daya saing destinasi pariwisata merupakan konstruksi multidimensional yang dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor utama, yaitu sumber daya dan atraksi wisata, infrastruktur dan aksesibilitas, teknologi digital dan inovasi, serta tata kelola dan kebijakan pariwisata. Atraksi alam dan budaya menjadi faktor utama yang menarik wisatawan, sementara infrastruktur dan aksesibilitas meningkatkan kenyamanan serta pengalaman wisatawan. Selain itu, perkembangan teknologi digital berperan penting dalam memperkuat pemasaran destinasi, layanan pariwisata, dan pengambilan keputusan berbasis data. Dengan demikian, strategi pengembangan pariwisata yang terintegrasi menjadi kunci dalam meningkatkan daya saing destinasi secara berkelanjutan.

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

tourism destination

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*Tourism destination competitiveness has become an important concept in understanding how destinations attract tourists, generate economic benefits, and sustain long-term tourism development in an increasingly competitive global tourism market. This study aims to analyze the conceptual framework and determinant factors influencing tourism destination competitiveness through a literature review approach. Relevant academic publications published between 2018 and 2023 were reviewed to identify key theoretical perspectives and empirical findings related to destination competitiveness. The results indicate that tourism destination competitiveness is a multidimensional construct influenced by several interrelated factors, including core tourism resources and attractions, infrastructure and accessibility, digital technology and innovation, and governance and policy frameworks. Natural and cultural attractions serve as the fundamental drivers that attract tourists, while infrastructure and accessibility facilitate mobility and improve visitor experiences. Furthermore, digital technologies play an increasingly important role in enhancing destination marketing, tourism services, and data-driven decision-making. Effective governance and collaborative stakeholder engagement are also essential for ensuring sustainable tourism development and long-term competitiveness. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of integrated strategies combining resource management, infrastructure development, technological innovation, and policy support to strengthen the competitiveness of tourism destinations.*



## 1. Introduction

The global tourism industry has evolved into one of the most strategic sectors in the world economy, contributing significantly to gross domestic product (GDP), employment creation, and cultural and technological exchange among countries. Many nations consider tourism a key driver of regional and national economic development due to its ability to generate value through service exports, regional income growth, and the expansion of supporting industries such as transportation, hospitality, and the creative economy. However, the dynamics of the tourism industry are highly influenced by external factors, including security and political stability, global health conditions, technological developments, and public policies that support the development of competitive and sustainable (Ahmed, 2022; Ernawati, 2019; Islam & Hossain, 2023) tourism destinations (Kyrlyov et al., 2023; Thành et al., 2022). Consequently, understanding the evolving dynamics of the tourism sector is essential for designing effective destination management strategies amid increasing global competition.

Despite its long-term growth trajectory, the tourism sector remains highly vulnerable to global disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, caused a dramatic decline in international tourist arrivals and tourism revenues across many countries (Chen, 2022; Mrozek, 2022; Thành et al., 2022). These disruptions have encouraged governments and tourism stakeholders to adopt various recovery strategies, including strengthening domestic tourism, diversifying tourism products, and implementing adaptive travel policies in response to crisis conditions (Ahmed, 2022; Z. Li et al., 2022). In this context, the resilience of the tourism industry largely depends on the ability of destinations to adapt to global environmental changes while simultaneously enhancing their competitiveness through innovation, cross-sector collaboration, and improved governance in tourism development.

One of the most significant trends in the development of global tourism is the growing role of digital technology in destination management and tourist experiences. Digital transformation enables the use of information and communication technologies to enhance service quality, facilitate access to tourism information, and strengthen destination promotion strategies through various digital platforms (Li & Mahamood, 2022; Liubokhynets, 2020). In addition, innovative technologies such as data analytics, artificial intelligence, and tourism information systems contribute to improving the efficiency of destination management and support data-driven decision-making processes (Chen, 2022; Li et al., 2022). Digitalization also enhances tourism marketing communication through social media and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which play a critical role in shaping destination image and influencing tourists' travel decisions (Bachri & Lonik, 2023).

Beyond technological advancements, transportation infrastructure and connectivity also play a crucial role in strengthening tourism growth and destination competitiveness. Efficient transportation systems, including air, land, and maritime networks, improve accessibility to tourism destinations and facilitate visitor mobility, thereby increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations (Abdullah et al., 2023; Florido-Benítez, 2023). Studies indicate that improved air connectivity and proximity to major airports significantly support the development of cultural tourism and urban tourism economies, particularly in destinations that rely on cultural attractions and heritage assets (Florido-Benítez, 2023). Therefore, investment in transportation infrastructure has become an essential component of national and regional tourism development strategies.

Within this dynamic context, the concept of destination competitiveness has gained increasing attention in tourism studies, as it explains why certain destinations outperform others in attracting tourists, generating economic value, and sustaining long-term tourism growth. Destination competitiveness is widely understood as a multidimensional construct influenced by various factors such as tourism attractions, infrastructure quality, destination image, governance, and the integration of tourism with cultural industries (Shariffuddin et al., 2022; Shen, 2023). Moreover, the literature highlights the importance of strengthening destination image, leveraging digital technologies, and implementing strategic branding and cultural-based promotion to enhance competitive advantage at both regional and global levels (Atmaja, 2023; Kuswardani & Wibisono, 2021; Yuliarti et al., 2021). Based on this background, this study aims to conduct a conceptual analysis of tourism destination competitiveness and identify its determinant factors through a comprehensive literature review.

## 2. Method

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach to analyze the conceptual development and determinant factors of tourism destination competitiveness. The literature review method was chosen to synthesize and critically evaluate existing academic studies related to tourism competitiveness, destination management, and tourism development. Relevant publications were identified through major academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals, and other peer-reviewed sources published between 2018 and 2023 to ensure the inclusion of recent scholarly discussions. The selection process focused on articles addressing key themes such as destination competitiveness frameworks, tourism policy, infrastructure development, digitalization in tourism, and destination branding. Only peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable academic sources written in English were included to maintain the quality and credibility of the reviewed literature.

The collected literature was analyzed using a thematic analysis technique to identify recurring concepts, theoretical perspectives, and determinant factors influencing tourism destination competitiveness. The analysis involved several stages, including literature screening, categorization of themes, and synthesis of findings across studies. Key themes such as tourism resources and attractions, infrastructure and accessibility, destination management, technological innovation, and socio-economic and cultural factors were systematically examined to understand how they contribute to destination competitiveness. Through this analytical process, the study aims to develop a conceptual synthesis of the determinants of tourism destination competitiveness and provide a comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact in shaping the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### a. Overview of Tourism Destination Competitiveness in Recent Literature

The concept of tourism destination competitiveness has received significant attention in tourism research over the past decade. Scholars have increasingly recognized that tourism destinations operate in a competitive global market where destinations compete to attract visitors, investment, and tourism-related economic benefits. In this context, destination competitiveness is often defined as the ability of a destination to create and deliver products and services that perform better than other destinations while ensuring sustainability and long-term development (Shariffuddin et al. (2022)). The growing importance of this concept is linked to the rapid expansion of international tourism, digital transformation in tourism services, and the need for sustainable tourism development strategies.

Recent studies highlight that destination competitiveness is a multidimensional concept that encompasses economic, social, environmental, and institutional dimensions. For example, Chin et al (2022) argue that competitiveness should not only be measured through tourism performance indicators such as tourist arrivals or revenues but also through governance quality, environmental sustainability, and stakeholder collaboration. Similarly, Paunović et al (2020) emphasize that governance structures and destination life-cycle stages influence the ability of destinations to remain competitive in the long term. These perspectives demonstrate that tourism competitiveness cannot be understood solely through infrastructure or attractions, but must also consider institutional capacity and strategic destination management.

The increasing complexity of tourism markets has also led to the development of various models and measurement frameworks for destination competitiveness. One widely referenced framework is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), which evaluates national tourism competitiveness based on indicators such as infrastructure, ICT readiness, safety, and environmental sustainability. However, recent studies have criticized the limitations of relying solely on aggregated indices. Epoh et al (2023), for example, propose a data-driven weighting approach for TTCI indicators to better reflect tourism inflows and real performance outcomes. Their findings suggest that contextual factors and regional characteristics must be incorporated into competitiveness measurement models.

In addition, empirical studies conducted in different regional contexts demonstrate the importance of adapting competitiveness frameworks to local conditions. For instance, Bire et al (2021) developed a regional tourism competitiveness model for East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, identifying six major factors and twenty-three indicators that influence regional tourism performance. Their findings highlight the role of government policy, natural attractions, and supporting infrastructure as critical determinants of destination competitiveness. These findings confirm that competitiveness frameworks should be flexible and context-sensitive, reflecting the unique characteristics of each destination.

Overall, the literature indicates that tourism destination competitiveness is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including core tourism resources, infrastructure, governance, technology, and destination image. The following sections discuss these determinant factors in greater detail based on a synthesis of recent studies published between 2018 and 2023.

**Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies on Tourism Destination Competitiveness (2018–2023)**

Author	Research Focus	Method	Key Findings
Shariffuddin et al (2022)	Destination competitiveness framework	Literature review	Competitiveness is multidimensional involving image, experience, and loyalty
Chin et al (2022)	Tourism competitiveness indicators	Comparative analysis	Governance and sustainability significantly influence destination competitiveness
Epoh et al (2023)	TTCI indicator weighting	Quantitative modeling	Data-driven weighting improves prediction of tourism inflows
Bire et al (2021)	Regional tourism competitiveness in Indonesia	DEMATEL & TOPSIS	Regional policy and natural attractions are dominant determinants
Milutinović et al (2021)	Stakeholder perception of competitiveness	Survey research	Core attractions and safety strongly influence tourism attractiveness

Paunović et al (2020)	Governance and competitiveness	Policy analysis	Governance structures shape long-term destination competitiveness
Zhu et al (2020)	Environmental competitiveness	Econometric analysis	Environmental quality affects tourism competitiveness
Atmaja (2023)	Digital tourism competitiveness	Empirical study	Digital promotion strengthens destination branding
Kuswardani & Wibisono (2021)	Destination image and competitiveness	Structural model	Destination image influences competitiveness through mediation

Table 1 summarizes several important studies published between 2018 and 2023 that examine tourism destination competitiveness from various perspectives. The table shows that research on tourism competitiveness spans multiple methodological approaches, including literature reviews, quantitative modeling, econometric analysis, and survey-based studies. Despite methodological differences, most studies converge on the conclusion that tourism competitiveness is shaped by a combination of factors such as destination resources, governance quality, infrastructure, sustainability, and digital innovation. This synthesis highlights the complexity of destination competitiveness and underscores the need for integrated frameworks that combine economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

**b. Core Tourism Resources and Attractions**

Core tourism resources represent one of the most fundamental determinants of destination competitiveness. These resources include natural landscapes, cultural heritage, historical sites, and tourism attractions that create unique visitor experiences. According to Milutinović et al (2021), core attractions are consistently identified as the strongest indicators of destination competitiveness because they directly influence tourists’ travel motivations and satisfaction levels.

Natural attractions, such as beaches, mountains, and biodiversity-rich ecosystems, often form the foundation of tourism development in many destinations. In addition, cultural and heritage resources contribute significantly to destination differentiation and identity. Research by Shen (2023) demonstrates that integrating cultural heritage into tourism products can enhance destination attractiveness and create unique tourism experiences that cannot be easily replicated by competing destinations. Cultural tourism also supports local economies by promoting traditional crafts, festivals, and cultural events.

In many regions, tourism competitiveness also depends on the effective management and preservation of tourism resources. Sustainable resource management is essential to prevent environmental degradation and maintain the long-term attractiveness of destinations. Zhu et al (2020) found that environmental quality has a significant impact on tourism competitiveness, particularly in developed destinations where environmental sustainability has become a major factor influencing tourists’ destination choices.

Furthermore, the diversification of tourism products has become increasingly important in strengthening destination competitiveness. Destinations that offer a variety of tourism experiences, such as eco-tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and wellness tourism, are better positioned to attract diverse tourist segments. This diversification strategy helps reduce dependency on a single tourism product and enhances destination resilience in the face of market fluctuations. Overall, the literature indicates that core tourism resources remain the primary foundation of destination competitiveness. However, the effectiveness of these resources in generating tourism demand depends largely on complementary factors such as infrastructure, destination management, and marketing strategies.



### c. **Infrastructure and Accessibility**

Infrastructure development plays a crucial role in enhancing tourism destination competitiveness. Tourism infrastructure includes transportation systems, accommodation facilities, communication networks, and supporting services that enable tourists to access and enjoy tourism destinations. According to Abdullah et al (2023), accessibility is one of the most critical determinants of tourism growth because it directly influences travel convenience and destination attractiveness.

Air transportation infrastructure is particularly important for international tourism. Studies show that destinations with well-connected airports and efficient transportation networks tend to experience higher tourist arrivals. Florido-Benítez (2023) found that the proximity of airports to major tourism attractions significantly improves destination accessibility and enhances tourism flows.

Road infrastructure and public transportation systems also play an essential role in supporting tourism mobility within destinations. Efficient transportation networks enable tourists to explore multiple attractions within a destination, thereby increasing tourism spending and length of stay. Moreover, infrastructure investments can stimulate broader economic development by improving connectivity between tourism destinations and surrounding communities.

Accommodation infrastructure is another critical component of tourism competitiveness. The availability of diverse accommodation options, ranging from luxury hotels to budget accommodations and community-based homestays, allows destinations to cater to different tourist segments. Studies suggest that high-quality accommodation facilities contribute to positive tourist experiences and increase the likelihood of repeat visits.

In addition to physical infrastructure, digital infrastructure has emerged as an important element of tourism competitiveness. The availability of high-speed internet, smart tourism systems, and digital platforms for booking and information access enhances the overall tourist experience. Consequently, many destinations are increasingly investing in smart tourism technologies to strengthen their competitive position in the global tourism market.

### d. **Digital Technology and Tourism Innovation**

Digital technology has become one of the most transformative forces shaping the tourism industry in recent years. The rapid development of information and communication technologies has significantly changed how tourists search for information, plan their trips, and share their travel experiences. According to Li et al (2022), digital innovation has accelerated tourism recovery in the post-pandemic era by enabling contactless services, online booking systems, and data-driven tourism management.

One of the most significant impacts of digital technology is the emergence of digital tourism marketing. Social media platforms, travel websites, and online review systems allow destinations to reach global audiences more effectively than traditional marketing channels. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), in particular, has become a powerful tool for influencing tourists' perceptions and travel decisions.

Digital technologies also enhance tourism management through data analytics and smart tourism systems. Destination management organizations can use big data analytics to analyze tourist behavior, predict travel trends, and optimize tourism services. These technologies support more efficient resource allocation and improve the overall quality of tourism services.

Furthermore, immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are increasingly used to enrich tourist experiences. These technologies enable tourists to explore destinations virtually before visiting them, which can stimulate travel interest and

enhance destination promotion. As a result, destinations that successfully adopt digital technologies are more likely to gain a competitive advantage in the global tourism market.

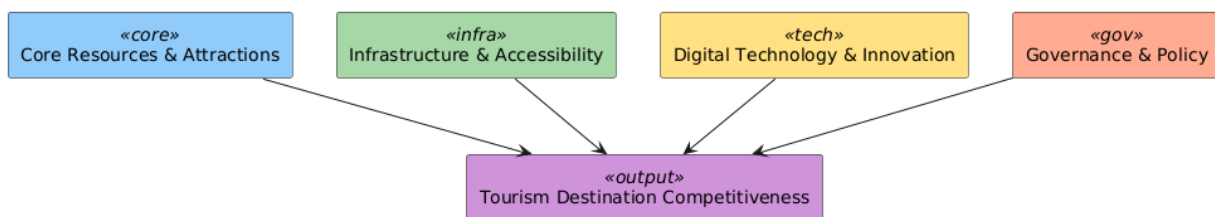
#### e. Destination Governance and Policy

Effective governance is another critical determinant of tourism destination competitiveness. Governance refers to the institutional structures, policies, and collaborative mechanisms that guide tourism development and management. According to (aunović et al (2020), governance quality influences the ability of destinations to coordinate stakeholders, implement sustainable tourism policies, and respond to market changes.

Government policies play a central role in shaping tourism competitiveness through infrastructure investment, regulatory frameworks, and destination promotion strategies. For example, national tourism policies often include initiatives aimed at improving destination accessibility, enhancing service quality, and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

Public-private partnerships are also important in destination governance. Collaboration between government agencies, tourism businesses, and local communities helps ensure that tourism development benefits multiple stakeholders. Such partnerships facilitate investment in tourism infrastructure, marketing campaigns, and human resource development.

Additionally, governance frameworks are essential for ensuring environmental sustainability in tourism development. Many destinations have introduced policies aimed at protecting natural resources, managing visitor flows, and promoting responsible tourism practices. These policies help maintain the long-term attractiveness of destinations while minimizing negative environmental impacts.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Diagram**

The diagram illustrates the conceptual framework of tourism destination competitiveness derived from the literature review. The framework highlights four primary determinants: core tourism resources and attractions, infrastructure and accessibility, digital technology and innovation, and governance and policy. These factors interact to influence the overall competitiveness of tourism destinations. Core resources provide the fundamental attractions that motivate travel, while infrastructure and accessibility facilitate tourist mobility and convenience. Digital technologies enhance marketing and service efficiency, and governance frameworks ensure coordinated and sustainable tourism development. Together, these elements shape the ability of destinations to compete effectively in the global tourism market.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study highlights that tourism destination competitiveness is a multidimensional concept influenced by the interaction of various structural and managerial factors. Based on the literature review conducted, the competitiveness of tourism destinations is primarily shaped by core tourism resources and attractions, infrastructure and accessibility, digital technology and innovation, as well as governance and policy frameworks. Natural and cultural attractions remain the fundamental drivers that attract tourists, while supporting infrastructure and accessibility

enhance the convenience and overall travel experience. In addition, the rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed tourism promotion, destination management, and tourist engagement through digital marketing, information systems, and data-driven decision-making. These elements collectively determine the ability of a destination to compete in an increasingly dynamic and competitive global tourism market.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize that sustainable destination competitiveness requires integrated governance and collaborative stakeholder engagement. Effective public policies, strategic destination management, and cross-sector collaboration between government, tourism businesses, and local communities play a crucial role in maintaining long-term tourism growth. The literature also indicates that the integration of sustainability principles, technological innovation, and cultural resource management can strengthen the resilience of tourism destinations in the face of global challenges such as economic uncertainty and health crises. Therefore, future tourism development strategies should prioritize integrated planning, sustainable resource management, and digital transformation to enhance destination competitiveness while ensuring balanced economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

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