

What is the impact of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation on tourist satisfaction in Bali?

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation on tourist satisfaction in Bali, a premier global tourist destination. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 150 tourists using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5). Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25, involving descriptive, reliability, and regression analyses. Results reveal that both tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation significantly and positively influence tourist satisfaction, with tour guide quality exhibiting a stronger impact. The findings highlight the critical role of professional, knowledgeable guides and innovative recreational offerings in shaping memorable tourist experiences. This study provides actionable insights for tourism stakeholders in Bali, emphasizing the importance of investing in guide training programs and creative outdoor activities to sustain and enhance tourist satisfaction in a competitive global market.

Keywords: *Tour Guide Quality, Outdoor Activity Innovation, Tourist Satisfaction, Bali Tourism, Innovation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the global economy, significantly contributing to employment, cultural exchange, and regional development. In Indonesia, Bali stands out as a premier tourist destination, renowned for its cultural richness, natural beauty, and diverse outdoor activities. Despite Bali's sustained popularity, the competitive nature of global tourism necessitates continual enhancements to ensure visitor satisfaction. Tourism is a cornerstone of Bali's economy, accounting for over 31% of its economic activity by 2014 and employing a significant portion of the workforce [1]. Nationally, tourism is a major source of foreign exchange and plays a strategic role in economic development by reducing unemployment and boosting productivity [2]. To maintain its competitive edge, Bali must focus on enhancing the quality of tour guides and innovating its outdoor tourism offerings. Improving the skills of local populations, including tour guides, is essential for expanding employment and elevating visitor experiences [3]. High-quality tour guides not only improve service delivery but also enrich tourists' understanding of Bali's cultural and natural heritage [4]. Furthermore, Bali's abundant natural resources present substantial opportunities for innovative outdoor activities, which can attract more visitors and diversify tourism experiences. The integration of digital technologies and sustainable practices into these activities can further enhance Bali's global appeal as a leading tourist destination [5].

Tour guides serve as cultural ambassadors and facilitators of memorable experiences, bridging the gap between local traditions and tourists' expectations. Their ability to effectively communicate, exhibit professionalism, and adapt to diverse visitor needs greatly influences the overall satisfaction of travelers and the image of the destination [5]. Acting as destination representatives and intercultural mediators, tour guides help tourists understand and appreciate local cultures, thereby enhancing tourist satisfaction and fostering positive word-of-mouth

promotion [6]. The evolving role of tour guides has transformed them from mere communicators into experience co-creators who facilitate access, empathy, and deeper cultural understanding [7]. This shift is particularly significant as global tourists increasingly seek unique and engaging experiences. In countries like Portugal, effective tour guiding has been shown to positively influence tourist perceptions of local monuments, gastronomy, and landscapes [6]. The professional competence of tour guides, including their adaptability, is thus critical in shaping the overall tourist experience. Parallel to this, innovation in outdoor activities has become essential in catering to the evolving preferences of tourists. Destinations are prompted to continuously develop novel recreational offerings to maintain their attractiveness and competitive edge [8]. These innovations not only respond to changing tourist demands but also contribute to building a stronger and more appealing destination image [8].

While numerous studies have explored elements of tourist satisfaction, limited research specifically examines the combined impact of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation in the context of Bali's tourism industry. Given the importance of these factors, this study aims to fill this research gap by investigating their influence on tourist satisfaction. The findings of this study are expected to provide actionable insights for tourism stakeholders, helping them to prioritize investments in human resource development and activity innovation. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the enhancement of Bali's tourism offerings, ensuring sustained satisfaction among its diverse and ever-growing visitor base.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Tourist Satisfaction*

Tourist satisfaction is a critical metric in assessing the success and sustainability of a tourism destination. Defined as the overall contentment of tourists with their travel experiences, satisfaction influences repeat visits, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and overall loyalty to a destination [9]–[11]. According to [12], [13] expectancy-disconfirmation theory, satisfaction arises when the perceived performance of a service or experience meets or exceeds the expectations of the consumer. In the tourism context, this theory underscores the need for continuous improvement in service quality and the creation of unique experiences to maintain competitiveness.

2.2 *Role of Tour Guide Quality*

Tour guides act as key intermediaries in shaping tourists' perceptions of a destination, with their professionalism, knowledge, communication skills, and adaptability playing a significant role in enhancing tourist satisfaction [14]–[16]. High-quality tour guides foster stronger cultural and emotional connections between tourists and the destination by offering meaningful insights into local traditions, history, and attractions, whereas poor guide performance can result in dissatisfaction and a diminished perception of the tourism experience. In the context of Bali, tour guides are expected not only to have a profound understanding of the island's distinctive culture but also to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and multilingual competence to effectively serve a diverse range of international visitors. Research by [17], [18] underscores the need for continuous training and professional development programs to uphold the standards and competitiveness of tour guides within Bali's vibrant tourism industry.

2.3 Outdoor Activity Innovation

Outdoor activity innovation is another pivotal factor influencing tourist satisfaction, as it involves the introduction of new, creative, and engaging experiences that enrich the overall tourism offering. According to [19], [20] concept of the "experience economy," modern tourists increasingly seek immersive, memorable, and personalized experiences, making innovation a key differentiator for destinations like Bali in the competitive global tourism market. Innovative outdoor activities—such as eco-tours, adventure sports, cultural workshops, and interactive nature experiences—not only draw in new visitors but also foster repeat tourism by offering fresh and meaningful engagements. [19], [20] emphasize that these innovations align with the shifting preferences of today's tourists, who value authenticity, sustainability, and distinctive encounters over conventional sightseeing options.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the expectancy-disconfirmation theory, which posits that satisfaction arises from the alignment between expectations and perceived performance, where any disconfirmation—positive or negative—affects the level of satisfaction experienced. Within this framework, the quality of tour guides and the novelty of outdoor activities are viewed as key dimensions of perceived performance that directly influence tourist satisfaction. Accordingly, the conceptual model positions tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation as independent variables, with tourist satisfaction serving as the dependent variable. Building on insights from existing literature, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence of these relationships and offer practical recommendations for Bali's tourism stakeholders to enhance the island's competitive advantage in an increasingly demanding global tourism market.

3. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation on tourist satisfaction in Bali. A cross-sectional approach was adopted, enabling data collection at a single point in time to identify relationships among the variables. Primary data were gathered using a structured, self-administered questionnaire targeting domestic and international tourists who had participated in guided tours and outdoor activities in Bali. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure the relevance of respondents' experiences, with a total sample of 150 tourists selected based on statistical recommendations for reliability and representation. Data were collected over one month across popular destinations including Ubud, Kuta, and Nusa Dua. The questionnaire, written in English, comprised three sections: (1) demographic information such as age, gender, nationality, and visit purpose; (2) independent variables—tour guide quality (measured by professionalism, knowledge, communication, and cultural sensitivity) and outdoor activity innovation (measured by creativity, novelty, and uniqueness); and (3) the dependent variable—tourist satisfaction (measured by overall satisfaction, expectation fulfillment, and recommendation willingness). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, and the instrument was pre-tested with 10 respondents to ensure clarity and reliability.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25 through several analytical steps. Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' demographics and data distributions. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha assessed the internal consistency of each construct, with acceptable thresholds set at values above 0.7. Correlation analysis was employed to explore the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Finally, multiple regression analysis determined the

influence of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation on tourist satisfaction. The results were interpreted using standardized coefficients and significance levels ($p < 0.05$), providing empirical insights into the key drivers of tourist satisfaction in Bali's tourism industry.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 150 respondents are summarized in Table 1. Among the participants, 54% were female and 46% male. The majority of respondents (60%) were international tourists, with the remaining 40% being domestic travelers. In terms of age, 45% were aged 25–34, followed by 30% aged 35–44, and 25% aged 18–24. Most respondents cited leisure as their primary purpose for visiting Bali (70%), followed by cultural exploration (20%) and adventure activities (10%).

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, with values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Tour Guide Quality: 0.892; Outdoor Activity Innovation: 0.875; Tourist Satisfaction: 0.912).

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis revealed positive and significant relationships among all variables. Tour guide quality was strongly correlated with tourist satisfaction ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.01$), and outdoor activity innovation also exhibited a significant positive correlation with tourist satisfaction ($r = 0.685$, $p < 0.01$).

4.4 Regression Analysis

The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that both independent variables—tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation—significantly predict tourist satisfaction, with tour guide quality showing a stronger effect ($\beta = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$) compared to outdoor activity innovation ($\beta = 0.435$, $p < 0.01$). The overall model demonstrated a high explanatory power, accounting for 65% of the variance in tourist satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.65$), which highlights the strong predictive ability of these factors in shaping the overall tourism experience in Bali.

Discussion

1) Impact of Tour Guide Quality on Tourist Satisfaction

The findings confirm the significant role of tour guide quality in enhancing tourist satisfaction. High-quality guides who exhibit professionalism, cultural knowledge, and effective communication contribute to creating memorable experiences for tourists. These results align with prior studies [19], [20], which emphasize the importance of guide expertise in fostering positive tourist perceptions. In the context of Bali, this highlights the need for continuous training programs for tour guides to maintain their competitive edge in the tourism market.

2) Impact of Outdoor Activity Innovation on Tourist Satisfaction

Outdoor activity innovation also emerged as a significant determinant of tourist satisfaction. Tourists increasingly seek unique and engaging experiences, and innovative activities meet these expectations by providing opportunities for adventure, cultural immersion, and personalized recreation. These findings resonate with [19], [20] experience economy framework, which underscores the value of novel and immersive experiences in enhancing customer satisfaction.

3) Combined Influence of Tour Guide Quality and Outdoor Activity Innovation

The strong combined influence of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation suggests a synergistic relationship between these factors. High-quality guides enhance the delivery and enjoyment of innovative activities, while innovative activities provide a platform for guides to showcase their expertise. This interplay amplifies the overall satisfaction of tourists, as evidenced by the high variance explained by the regression model.

4) Implications for Bali's Tourism Industry

The findings offer actionable insights for tourism stakeholders in Bali. Investments in guide training programs and the development of innovative activities should be prioritized to sustain and enhance tourist satisfaction. For instance, integrating eco-friendly and culturally authentic outdoor activities can appeal to environmentally conscious and experience-driven tourists. Moreover, collaboration between tour operators and local communities can foster the creation of unique offerings that reflect Bali's rich cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study highlight the importance of tour guide quality and outdoor activity innovation in enhancing tourist satisfaction in Bali. Tour guide quality emerged as the most significant predictor, emphasizing the critical role of professionalism, cultural knowledge, and effective communication in shaping positive tourist experiences. Meanwhile, outdoor activity innovation contributes meaningfully by offering unique and engaging experiences that cater to the evolving preferences of modern travelers who seek authenticity, excitement, and personal enrichment.

The combined influence of these factors underscores the necessity for a holistic approach to tourism service management. Investments in continuous professional development for tour guides and the strategic development of innovative, eco-friendly, and culturally authentic outdoor activities are essential to sustaining Bali's competitive position as a top global destination. These findings offer practical implications for tourism stakeholders—including tour operators, local governments, and community organizations—in designing strategies to improve tourist satisfaction and strengthen the tourism sector's sustainability. Future research could investigate additional mediating variables, such as cultural sensitivity or environmental awareness, to deepen the understanding of the mechanisms driving tourist satisfaction.

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