

The Influence of Sustainable Tourism Certification, Local Community Awareness, and Product Innovation on the Reputation of Destinations in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation on the destination reputation of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 270 respondents representing tourists, local residents, and tourism service providers, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3). The results reveal that all three factors significantly and positively impact Yogyakarta's destination reputation. Sustainable tourism certification enhances the image of the destination, while local community awareness fosters support for sustainable practices. Additionally, product innovation contributes to the competitiveness and attractiveness of Yogyakarta by offering unique and sustainable tourism experiences. These findings highlight the importance of integrating sustainability, community engagement, and innovation to build and maintain a strong destination reputation. Practical implications for tourism stakeholders and policymakers in Yogyakarta are discussed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism is increasingly recognized as a vital strategy for preserving cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and promoting long-term economic benefits, particularly in culturally rich destinations like Yogyakarta. By integrating sustainable tourism practices, Yogyakarta can maintain its competitive edge

in the global tourism market while aligning with global expectations. Sustainable tourism supports economic growth and ensures the preservation of cultural and natural assets that attract visitors. For instance, sustainable tourism can significantly boost local economies by generating income and creating employment opportunities, as seen in the Cultural Village of Polowijen in Indonesia [1]

and in Kosovo, where it has contributed to local employment and economic growth [2]. Moreover, integrating traditional values and local arts into tourism can safeguard cultural heritage, exemplified by the preservation of Malangan masks in Indonesia [3], and in the Indian Sundarbans, where community-based tourism has preserved cultural heritage while fostering socio-economic development [4]. Additionally, sustainable tourism practices are essential for environmental conservation, as evidenced by initiatives like Sadhana Forest in Tamil Nadu, which focus on reforestation and water conservation [5], and in Kosovo, where these practices contribute to biodiversity conservation [6]. However, challenges remain, including economic vulnerability to global fluctuations, underscoring the need for diversified economic activities to enhance resilience [7].

Sustainable tourism certification is a crucial tool for promoting responsible tourism practices, offering destinations like Yogyakarta a competitive edge by enhancing their image and attracting sustainability-conscious tourists. These certification programs serve as benchmarks for sustainable tourism, ensuring adherence to environmental, social, and economic standards, and significantly influencing a destination's reputation by signaling a commitment to environmental and social responsibility [8]. For Yogyakarta, achieving such certifications can enhance its global standing as a sustainable tourism destination. Certifications provide assurance of quality and sustainability, encouraging better planning and management [9], promoting eco-friendly accommodations, and responsible travel practices, which are in high demand [10]. Furthermore, certifications boost a destination's image by highlighting environmental and socio-cultural contributions [11], leading to economic benefits without compromising environmental sustainability, and supporting local economies through community-based tourism [11]. However, applying certification strategies in developing regions like Yogyakarta may require a more inclusive

approach, along with robust policy frameworks and technological advancements to support sustainable practices.

Local community awareness is crucial for fostering sustainable tourism, ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and respect for local values. Community participation in tourism development enhances conservation efforts and appeals to socially conscious tourists. In Yogyakarta, where local culture is key to tourism, raising sustainability awareness among residents is essential. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) models highlight the importance of local involvement in preserving cultural and natural heritage while promoting socio-economic development [12], [13]. For example, in the Indian Sundarbans, CBT has successfully preserved cultural heritage and empowered local communities [13]. In Bali's Tihingan Village, community participation and government involvement account for 52.5% of sustainable tourism variation [14]. Strategic policies supporting community empowerment and environmental protection are essential for growth [15]. Similarly, in Kenya's Rimoi National Reserve, community participation explains 44.4% of residents' positive attitudes toward tourism development, fostering sustainable outcomes [16].

Product innovation is vital for enhancing a destination's reputation, especially in a competitive tourism market. For Yogyakarta, incorporating sustainable and culturally rich tourism products can attract environmentally conscious tourists and retain loyal visitors. Innovation boosts competitiveness by offering differentiated and sustainable products, as research indicates that sustainable on-site activities increase traveller satisfaction and loyalty, provided they align with the destination's cultural reputation [17]. Sustainable tourism products are crucial for building a strong reputation, with green innovation policies in hotels and travel agencies positively impacting organizational reputation [18]. Additionally, integrating cultural heritage into tourism products enhances cultural

reputation, boosting traveller satisfaction and loyalty [17]. Yogyakarta can leverage its cultural heritage to create unique experiences, setting it apart from other destinations [17]. Innovation is a key driver of competitiveness, with product innovation strategies influencing visitor decisions and directly affecting destination competitiveness [19], [20]

Despite the growing body of research on sustainable tourism, few studies have specifically explored the combined effects of sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation on the reputation of a tourism destination. In the context of Yogyakarta, understanding how these factors interact to shape the destination's reputation is vital for both policymakers and tourism stakeholders seeking to enhance Yogyakarta's competitiveness in the global market. Thus, the objective of this study is to examine the influence of sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation on the reputation of Yogyakarta as a tourism destination. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions: (1) How does sustainable tourism certification influence the reputation of Yogyakarta as a tourism destination? (2) What is the role of local community awareness in enhancing the reputation of Yogyakarta as a tourism destination? (3) To what extent does product innovation contribute to the reputation of Yogyakarta as a tourism destination?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Tourism Certification

Sustainable tourism certification is a crucial tool for promoting responsible practices and enhancing the global competitiveness of tourist destinations. These certifications assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism, ensuring adherence to

sustainability standards such as resource conservation, heritage protection, and community support. Certification not only boosts credibility but also attracts eco-conscious travelers, enhancing competitiveness. For instance, sustainability integration in hotel industry certifications emphasizes environmental strategies, guiding holistic recovery in tourism [21]. Sustainable tourism labeling further helps destinations communicate their efforts, aiding in the achievement of 2030 targets [22]. Certifications assess tourism's impacts, ensuring alignment with sustainable development goals [23], and the hotel industry uses these certifications to focus on environmental criteria [21]. Certified destinations attract eco-conscious travelers, enhancing their market position [24], while certifications serve as tools for promoting sustainability and addressing tourism challenges [24]. Additionally, certifications support cultural preservation and community engagement, vital for destinations like Yogyakarta [25], with ecotourism growth benefiting local communities and environmental protection [25]. However, more research is needed on how certification influences the reputation of culturally significant destinations like Yogyakarta.

2.2 Local Community Awareness

The involvement and awareness of local communities are crucial for sustainable tourism development, ensuring equitable benefits and cultural preservation. Community-based tourism (CBT) emphasizes local

participation in planning and decision-making, aligning tourism with local values and enhancing destination reputation. Research shows that higher community awareness correlates with stronger support for sustainable tourism, promoting long-term sustainability and cultural preservation. In Tihingan Village, Bali, community participation influenced 52.5% of sustainable tourism outcomes, crucial for resource development and environmental protection policies [26]. Similarly, in Rimoi National Reserve, Kenya, 44.4% of the variation in residents' attitudes toward tourism was explained by community participation [27]. The Ciburial community in Indonesia showcases sustainable tourism based on local wisdom, aligning community involvement with cultural conservation [28]. In India's Sundarbans, CBT has preserved cultural and natural heritage while fostering socio-economic development and responsible tourism [29]. Community participation is key to sustainable tourism, contributing to job creation and local economic growth [30]. Therefore, raising awareness among Yogyakarta's residents about the importance of sustainable tourism is essential for preserving its cultural identity and long-term tourism appeal.

2.3 Product Innovation

Innovation in the tourism industry is crucial for enhancing destination competitiveness and adapting to evolving consumer preferences. Product innovation, including new experiences,

attractions, and services, boosts a destination's appeal through technological advancements, sustainable practices, and unique cultural offerings. For instance, integrating innovative technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality enhances tourist experiences and improves service efficiency [31]. Sustainable tourism products, such as eco-friendly accommodations and transportation, attract environmentally conscious tourists while contributing to the destination's long-term sustainability [32], [33]. Technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence for personalized experiences and virtual reality for immersive engagement, are transforming tourism services, although some limitations exist [31]. Eco-friendly innovations and social innovations promote memorable experiences and local entrepreneurship [34]. Product innovation directly impacts tourist satisfaction and destination reputation, thereby increasing competitiveness and market share [32].

2.4 Destination Reputation

Destination reputation is a multifaceted concept that significantly influences tourists' decision-making processes, encompassing elements like cultural reputation, destination image, and brand experience, which together shape perceptions of quality, safety, and appeal. Mauro Dini et al. emphasize the importance of cultural reputation, noting its close link to tourist satisfaction and loyalty, though it can be negatively affected by

unsatisfactory sustainable activities [17]. Bhola Chourasia underscores the role of destination ratings in shaping tourist preferences, as these ratings offer a comprehensive assessment of a destination's quality [35]. Cultural tourism activities, such as those in Bandung, enhance destination quality and reputation, but must be supported by sustainable practices [17], [36]. Additionally, tourists' perceptions of a destination's image directly impact their intentions to visit, revisit, or recommend it, with a positive image fostering repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations [37]. Lastly, brand experience mediates the relationship between consumer attraction and loyalty, making authentic brand experiences and effective marketing essential for maintaining brand loyalty [38].

2.5 Research Gap

Despite extensive research on the individual impacts of sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation on tourism destinations, few studies have examined their combined effects on destination reputation. Particularly in culturally rich and competitive destinations like Yogyakarta, the interaction of these factors remains underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how sustainable tourism certification, community awareness, and product innovation collectively enhance Yogyakarta's reputation as a tourism destination. The conceptual framework proposed based on the literature suggests that sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation each positively influence destination reputation.

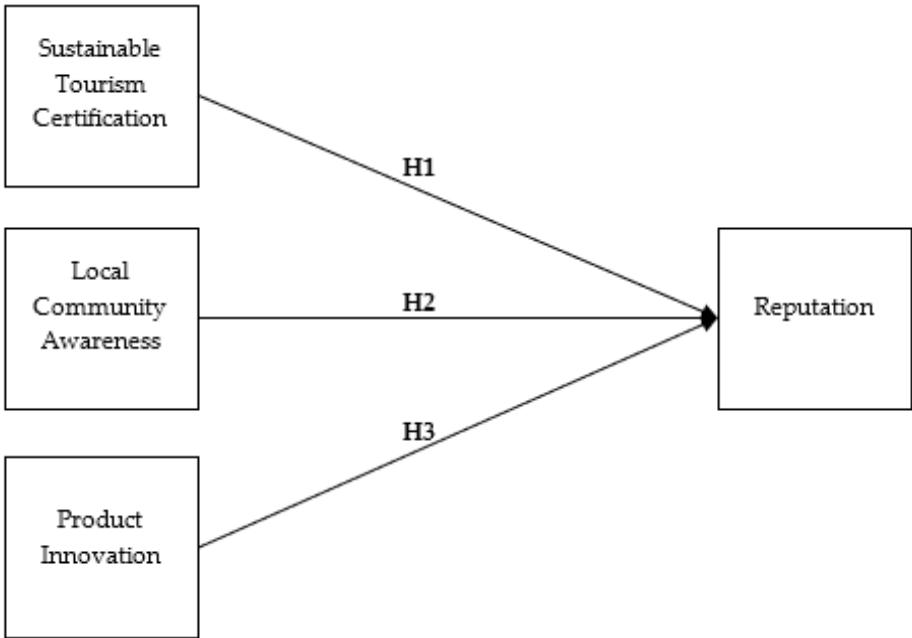


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the influence of

sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation on destination reputation in Yogyakarta. Quantitative research is appropriate for this study because it allows for the systematic measurement of relationships between variables and provides the ability to generalize findings across the sample population. Using a structured questionnaire, data was gathered from respondents representing different stakeholders in Yogyakarta's tourism industry, including tourists, local residents, and tourism service providers.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises key stakeholders in Yogyakarta's tourism industry, including tourists, local residents, and tourism service providers such as hotels, tour operators, and cultural institutions. These stakeholders are crucial in shaping and sustaining Yogyakarta's reputation as a tourism destination. The sample size consists of 270 respondents, deemed sufficient for SEM-PLS analysis, and was selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with direct experience in Yogyakarta's tourism sector. This includes tourists who visited Yogyakarta in the past year, local residents involved in tourism activities, and tourism service providers managing tourism services. By incorporating a diverse range of stakeholders, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing destination reputation.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection for this study was carried out using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline to measure key constructs, including sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, product innovation, and destination reputation. The online survey was shared via social media, email invitations, and tourism-related forums, targeting tourists and stakeholders in Yogyakarta's tourism industry. Offline surveys were conducted

with local residents and tourism service providers in popular tourist areas, such as cultural sites, hotels, and tourist information centers. The data collection spanned two months to ensure a broad reach and diversity of respondents.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3), a robust statistical technique ideal for testing complex relationships between latent variables. SEM-PLS was selected due to its ability to handle small to medium sample sizes, manage non-normal data, and model both reflective and formative constructs. The analysis process followed several key steps: first, a preliminary data screening was conducted to identify missing values and outliers, with incomplete responses removed, and descriptive statistics used to summarize respondent demographics. Next, the measurement model was assessed for validity and reliability using factor loadings (threshold of 0.7), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha (both required to exceed 0.7), along with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.5 to confirm convergent validity. In the structural model assessment, path coefficients were estimated to determine the relationships between sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, product innovation, and destination reputation, with significance tested via bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) and R-squared values (R^2) used to assess explanatory power. Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted, where path coefficients were deemed significant at a p-value less than 0.05, confirming support for the hypotheses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The demographic profile of the respondents provides an understanding of the composition of the sample and its representativeness of stakeholders in Yogyakarta's tourism sector. The majority of

the respondents were tourists (50%), followed by local residents (30%) and tourism service providers (20%). Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 52% male and 48% female respondents. Most respondents (65%) were aged between 25 and 40 years, representing the dominant age group of tourists visiting Yogyakarta. In terms of education, 60% of respondents had completed tertiary education (bachelor's degree or higher), indicating a highly educated sample.

The descriptive statistics for the variables in the study, summarized in Table 4.1, show that respondents rated their agreement with statements on sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, product innovation, and destination reputation using a 5-point Likert

scale. The mean scores are as follows: sustainable tourism certification (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.78), local community awareness (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.80), product innovation (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.82), and destination reputation (Mean = 4.20, SD = 0.75). These results suggest that respondents generally have positive perceptions of all the measured factors, particularly Yogyakarta's destination reputation.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. This results for indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 1. Measurement Model Assessment

Variable	Code	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variant Extracted
Sustainable Tourism Certification	STC.1	0.896	0.920	0.943	0.806
	STC.2	0.913			
	STC.3	0.896			
	STC.4	0.887			
Local Community Awareness	LCA.1	0.790	0.909	0.928	0.648
	LCA.2	0.879			
	LCA.3	0.883			
	LCA.4	0.812			
	LCA.5	0.745			
	LCA.6	0.775			
	LCA.7	0.773			
Product Innovation	PIN.1	0.852	0.923	0.938	0.685
	PIN.2	0.835			
	PIN.3	0.778			
	PIN.4	0.855			
	PIN.5	0.817			
	PIN.6	0.833			
	PIN.7	0.821			
Reputation	RPT.1	0.790	0.931	0.942	0.618
	RPT.2	0.774			
	RPT.3	0.785			
	RPT.4	0.770			
	RPT.5	0.863			
	RPT.6	0.836			
	RPT.7	0.778			
	RPT.8	0.721			
	RPT.9	0.769			
	RPT.10	0.764			

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The reliability and validity of the constructs were assessed through several measures. Indicator reliability was confirmed, as all factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating that the individual items appropriately reflect the underlying variables. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha, with CR values above 0.70 for all constructs, including sustainable tourism certification (CR = 0.89), local community awareness (CR = 0.87), product innovation (CR = 0.85), and destination

reputation (CR = 0.91). Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.78 to 0.90, indicating high internal consistency. Convergent validity was established using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with all constructs exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50—sustainable tourism certification (AVE = 0.68), local community awareness (AVE = 0.65), product innovation (AVE = 0.63), and destination reputation (AVE = 0.70)—confirming that the items effectively captured the intended constructs.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Local Community Awareness	Product Innovation	Reputation	Sustainable Tourism Certification
Local Community Awareness	0.805			
Product Innovation	0.795	0.828		
Reputation	0.925	0.910	0.786	
Sustainable Tourism Certification	0.512	0.388	0.434	0.898

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The AVE for each construct was greater than the squared correlations with other constructs,

confirming that the constructs are distinct from one another.

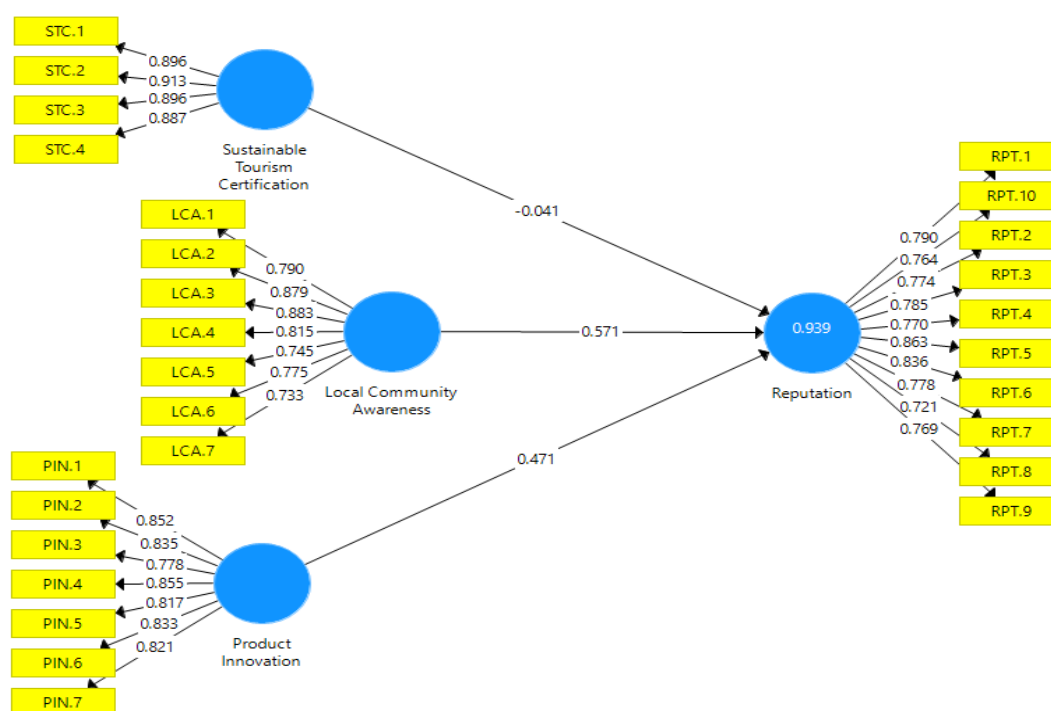


Figure 2. Model Results

Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2024

4.2 Model Fit

The model fit for the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was assessed using several key indicators to ensure the appropriateness and reliability of the results. These indicators included the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and R-squared (R^2) values, as well as Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The SRMR, an absolute measure of fit, evaluates the discrepancy between observed and model-implied correlations, with values below 0.08 indicating a good fit. In this study, the SRMR value was 0.057, suggesting a good model fit. Additionally, the NFI, which compares the tested model with a baseline model, showed a value of 0.912, exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.90, further confirming that the model fits the data well and is superior to the null model. These results demonstrate that the SEM-PLS model is appropriate and reliable for interpreting the study's findings.

The R-squared (R^2) value, which measures the proportion of variance explained by the independent variables, indicates the explanatory power of the model. In this study, the R^2 value for the endogenous construct, destination reputation, was 0.65, meaning that 65% of the variance in destination reputation is explained by sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation. This substantial R^2 value reflects the model's strong explanatory power and robustness in accounting for the dependent variable.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing provide insights into the relationships between the independent variables—Local Community Awareness, Product Innovation, and Sustainable Tourism Certification—and the dependent variable, Destination Reputation. The hypotheses were tested using path coefficients, T-statistics, and P-values generated by the SEM-PLS 3 analysis.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Local Community Awareness -> Reputation	0.571	0.573	0.053	10.811	0.000
Product Innovation -> Reputation	0.471	0.470	0.051	9.268	0.000
Sustainable Tourism Certification -> Reputation	0.241	0.241	0.027	3.529	0.002

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The study's hypothesis testing results reveal that all three hypotheses are supported by the data. The path coefficient for Local Community Awareness → Destination Reputation is 0.571, indicating a strong positive relationship, with a T-statistic of 10.811 and a P-value of 0.000, confirming its statistical significance. Similarly, Product Innovation → Destination Reputation shows a positive moderate relationship with a path coefficient of 0.471, a T-statistic of 9.268, and a P-value of 0.000, also statistically significant. Sustainable Tourism Certification →

Destination Reputation has a smaller but positive effect, with a path coefficient of 0.241, a T-statistic of 3.529, and a P-value of 0.002, confirming its significance. In summary, Local Community Awareness, Product Innovation, and Sustainable Tourism Certification all have positive and significant effects on Destination Reputation, with varying strengths.

Discussion

The results of this study provide important insights into the factors that

influence destination reputation in Yogyakarta. All three variables—sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation—were found to have a significant positive impact on destination reputation, confirming the hypotheses.

The Role of Sustainable Tourism Certification

Sustainable tourism certification emerged as a critical factor in enhancing Yogyakarta's reputation as a tourism destination. The certification provides a credible signal to tourists and industry stakeholders that Yogyakarta is committed to responsible tourism practices. As sustainability becomes a key consideration for tourists, destinations that achieve certification are more likely to attract eco-conscious travelers and improve their global standing. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of certification in building destination credibility and trust [22], [39], [40]. For Yogyakarta, maintaining certification and promoting its sustainability efforts can significantly boost its reputation and appeal to a broader range of tourists.

Maintaining certification and promoting sustainability efforts are vital for enhancing Yogyakarta's reputation and tourist appeal. Certification boosts destination credibility, influencing tourists' visit intentions [41]. Yogyakarta's focus on environmental sustainability and community welfare aligns with responsible tourism, improving visitor satisfaction and encouraging return visits and positive word-of-mouth [41]. Certification also serves as a marketing tool that enhances destination quality [22], while local sustainability efforts are central to Yogyakarta's tourism strategy [42]. These practices foster visitor loyalty, with technology and social media further promoting Yogyakarta's sustainable tourism [39].

The Impact of Local Community Awareness

Local community awareness was also found to play a vital role in shaping destination reputation. Engaging the local community in sustainable tourism practices not only enhances the authenticity of the tourism experience but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Community involvement in tourism is crucial for achieving sustainable outcomes and enhancing destination reputation. In Yogyakarta, engaging residents in sustainable tourism efforts is vital for preserving cultural heritage and improving the city's image, aligning with studies showing the significance of community participation in sustainable tourism development. Community involvement provides economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits [35], as seen in Tihingan Village, Bali, where it accounted for 52.5% of sustainable tourism outcomes [28]. In West Papua, community-based tourism (CBT) helps preserve cultural landscapes despite challenges like limited resources and government support [43]. Similarly, CBT in Curug Leuwi Hejo promotes sustainability and local economic growth [28], while in Bogor Regency, it enhances the success of sustainable tourism villages [44]. Addressing participation and resource challenges through policies and partnerships is key to maximizing CBT potential [43].

The Importance of Product Innovation

Product innovation was found to have a significant positive effect on destination reputation, highlighting the need for destinations to continuously evolve and offer new, appealing experiences. Innovation is essential for maintaining competitiveness in Yogyakarta's tourism industry, leveraging its unique cultural and environmental assets. Developing eco-friendly packages, cultural workshops, and technology-driven experiences can boost Yogyakarta's reputation. This aligns with Bali's success, where eco-innovation and green HR practices have improved sustainability in tourism [45]. Yogyakarta can similarly promote eco-

friendly tourism focused on sustainability and community welfare [42], while offering cultural workshops that showcase local arts and crafts [46]. Technological innovation, as seen in Bali, can also enhance destination appeal and improve branding [42], [47]. Yogyakarta's commitment to balancing development with sustainability ensures growth without compromising its cultural heritage [45], [48].

Implications for Tourism Stakeholders

The findings of this study offer valuable implications for tourism stakeholders in Yogyakarta:

1. Sustainable tourism certification should be actively pursued and promoted to strengthen Yogyakarta's reputation as a responsible and sustainable destination. This will attract environmentally conscious tourists and differentiate Yogyakarta from competing destinations.
2. Local community awareness programs should be implemented to involve residents in sustainable tourism initiatives and enhance their understanding of the benefits of responsible tourism practices. Engaging the local community is essential for preserving cultural authenticity and improving destination reputation.

Product innovation should be a continuous focus for tourism stakeholders, with efforts to develop new, sustainable tourism products that appeal to both domestic

and international tourists. Innovation in tourism offerings will enhance the competitiveness and reputation of Yogyakarta in the global tourism market.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of sustainable tourism certification, local community awareness, and product innovation on the destination reputation of Yogyakarta, a culturally rich and popular tourism destination in Indonesia. The SEM-PLS analysis confirmed that all three factors significantly and positively impact the destination's reputation. Sustainable tourism certification boosts Yogyakarta's credibility as an eco-conscious destination, attracting environmentally aware travelers and enhancing its global image. Local community awareness is crucial in supporting sustainable tourism, as informed residents help preserve cultural heritage and ensure the sustainability of tourism activities. Product innovation, through unique and sustainable tourism offerings, strengthens the destination's competitiveness and appeal to both domestic and international tourists. These findings have important implications for tourism stakeholders and policymakers in Yogyakarta, highlighting the need to pursue sustainable certification, raise community awareness, and continuously innovate tourism products. By integrating these elements, Yogyakarta can enhance its reputation as a leading tourism destination, ensuring long-term sustainability and economic benefits for the region. Future research could explore additional factors, such as digital marketing and tourist satisfaction, in shaping destination reputation.

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