

The Impact of Local Story Packaging, Educational Activities, and Traditional Branding on Destination Attractiveness through Positive Emotions in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding in enhancing destination attractiveness, with positive emotions as a mediating variable, in the context of cultural tourism in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach with 250 respondents and data analysis employing Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3), the findings reveal that all three independent variables significantly influence positive emotions and destination attractiveness. Furthermore, positive emotions are shown to mediate these relationships, highlighting their central role in shaping tourists' perceptions and experiences. The study contributes to tourism literature by confirming the importance of culturally grounded strategies in destination marketing and provides practical implications for stakeholders in developing emotionally engaging, authentic, and sustainable tourism experiences.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the leading sectors in Indonesia's economic development, with Yogyakarta recognized as a prominent cultural and educational destination. Known for its rich traditions, historical heritage, and vibrant local wisdom, Yogyakarta continues to attract domestic and international visitors. However, in the face of

increasing competition among tourist destinations, strategies that emphasize not only infrastructure and services but also cultural identity and emotional engagement have become essential. Strengthening destination attractiveness requires innovative approaches that integrate cultural values with modern tourism practices. Yogyakarta's tourism sector is a vital component of Indonesia's economic development,

leveraging its rich cultural heritage and educational prominence to attract visitors. However, to maintain its competitive edge amidst growing global competition, Yogyakarta must adopt innovative strategies that integrate cultural values with modern tourism practices. This involves enhancing infrastructure and services while emphasizing cultural identity and emotional engagement to strengthen destination attractiveness. Collaboration between government, local communities, and the private sector is essential to optimize tourism potential and improve service quality, as this partnership can help address challenges such as global competition and changing tourist behaviors [1]. Local government policies play a crucial role in enhancing tourism performance by supporting initiatives that maintain strengths, capitalize on opportunities, and address weaknesses and challenges [2]. Emphasizing cultural tourism by preserving heritage sites and promoting local products can enhance tourist experiences and satisfaction, leading to increased revisit intentions and sustainable growth in the tourism sector [3]. The Sultan Palace (Keraton) serves as a prime example of a heritage tourism product that attracts visitors by offering a culturally immersive experience, highlighting the importance of integrating cultural elements into tourism offerings [4]. Moreover, fostering positive local-tourist relations through tolerance, prosocial behavior, and cultural openness is vital for sustainable tourism development, as these factors contribute to positive perceptions of tourists and enhance the overall tourism experience [5].

One effective strategy in tourism development is local story packaging, which enables destinations to present unique narratives rooted in history, folklore, and community traditions, thereby providing visitors with memorable experiences that extend beyond sightseeing and fostering deeper emotional connections. When combined with educational activities, this approach plays a vital role in enhancing tourist engagement by offering opportunities for learning, skill development, and cultural

appreciation, ultimately encouraging participatory experiences that increase tourists' knowledge and attachment to the destination. Storytelling in tourism guides enhances cultural immersion by providing context and fostering emotional connections, as tourists report that stories involving local legends, personal anecdotes, and historical events make their experiences more engaging and memorable [6]. Tour guides employ various storytelling techniques, such as focusing on places, people, and objects through sensory experiences, person-centered storytelling, and discussing the cultural significance of products, all of which result in authentic and compelling narratives [7]. Moreover, storytelling serves as an effective marketing strategy by making destinations come alive and attracting visitors, while also preserving local wisdom and legends, as seen in the narratives of Pusuk Buhit in the Toba Caldera, which simultaneously promote tourism and safeguard cultural heritage [8]. It further enhances destination promotion by wrapping locations in intriguing narratives that highlight their qualities and foster discussions among stakeholders to creatively promote destinations [9]. Beyond its promotional value, storytelling adds emotional depth to tourism products, enhancing tourist involvement, differentiating destinations, and strengthening cultural positioning, as demonstrated by Ílhavo's history as a fishing community, which fosters visitor identification and contributes to the destination's unique cultural identity [10].

Another important factor in strengthening Yogyakarta's tourism appeal is traditional branding, which emphasizes the uniqueness of local culture through symbols, rituals, crafts, and performances, thereby embedding authenticity into promotional efforts and reinforcing its identity as the center of Javanese culture. This approach not only differentiates Yogyakarta from other destinations but also stimulates positive emotions such as joy, pride, and excitement, which act as key psychological drivers influencing tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and willingness to revisit. The preservation of

traditional languages, such as Pranatacara in Bantul, serves as a distinctive cultural element that enhances the visitor experience by maintaining traditions and customs [11], while films like *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* employ cultural and spiritual symbols to construct a destination image that highlights Yogyakarta's rich heritage and historical significance [12]. Traditional arts further strengthen tourism products by offering authenticity, originality, and diversity, ensuring both cultural preservation and visitor attraction [13], and the integration of traditional architectural authenticity in city branding—as exemplified in Surakarta—significantly enhances global brand identity [14]. Similarly, city branding initiatives in Ponorogo demonstrate the effectiveness of emphasizing local culture and arts through planning, potential assessment, and the development of logos and taglines that reflect the cultural essence of the area, ultimately contributing to increased tourist visits [15].

Previous studies suggest that cultural storytelling, participatory learning, and authentic branding significantly improve tourist experiences and contribute to sustainable tourism development, yet limited research has examined these variables in an integrated model within the context of Yogyakarta, particularly considering the mediating role of positive emotions. Understanding these relationships is crucial for policymakers, tourism managers, and cultural practitioners in formulating strategies that strengthen destination competitiveness while preserving local identity. Cultural storytelling, especially through tourism performing arts, conveys a strong sense of place and fosters emotional connections that support sustainable tourism growth [16], while also serving as a key component of memorable tourism experiences (MTE), which are more influential than mere satisfaction in shaping affective commitment and enhancing destination branding [17]. Participatory learning further enriches tourism by engaging visitors in cultural and spiritual experiences, as illustrated in films like *Jiwa Jagad Jawi*, which highlight the importance of preserving

cultural and historical heritage as integral parts of the tourism experience [12]. Authentic branding, rooted in local traditions, arts, and culinary heritage, plays a vital role in differentiating destinations, attracting visitors, and encouraging repeat visits [18], while place branding more broadly impacts sustainable development by enhancing visitor satisfaction and promoting community engagement, both of which are essential for long-term tourism success [19].

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding on destination attractiveness through the mediating role of positive emotions in Yogyakarta. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically, by expanding knowledge in tourism and marketing studies, and practically, by offering insights for sustainable destination development in Yogyakarta.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Destination Attractiveness*

Destination attractiveness in cultural tourism is shaped by natural, cultural, social, and service-related factors that influence tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty. Cultural destinations thrive when authenticity, uniqueness, and emotional connections are emphasized through traditions and narratives, creating memorable experiences that encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth. Cultural attractiveness, as seen in Silk Road tourism in Uzbekistan, highlights the role of cultural elements and hospitality [20], while natural appeal, such as in Lake Nakuru National Park, sustains competitiveness [21]. Infrastructure and superstructure also enhance satisfaction and recommendations, as shown in

Uzbekistan and Ouro Preto [20], [22]. Cultural immersion and heritage preservation remain critical for authenticity, with China's strategies emphasizing heritage and technology to boost engagement [23]. Finally, community involvement fosters ownership and meaningful experiences, while affective elements of nature and tourism capacity, as in Korea's slow cities, shape visitor satisfaction and future behavioral intentions [24].

2.2 Local Story Packaging

Local story packaging in tourism involves transforming cultural narratives into engaging experiences that strengthen tourists' emotional connections to a destination, turning it from a mere attraction into an immersive journey that fosters a deeper sense of place and belonging. In Yogyakarta, the richness of royal heritage, folklore, and traditional rituals provides a strong foundation for building a unique tourism identity. Storytelling enhances tourist experiences by fostering place attachment and identity, making destinations more meaningful and memorable [25], while also increasing satisfaction and loyalty through emotional connections [26]. It shapes destination image and personality, positively influencing perceptions and behavioral intentions, and can even alter negative views to appeal to broader markets [26]. Beyond experience, stories encapsulate cultural beliefs and representations, offering deeper insights into local heritage and ensuring its preservation and dissemination through various narrative forms [27]. Moreover,

storytelling serves as a powerful yet still-developing marketing strategy that requires comprehensive frameworks, stakeholder collaboration, and the integration of story content, characters, and dissemination channels to maximize its impact in destination branding [28].

2.3 Educational Activities in Tourism

Educational tourism, or edutourism, integrates learning with travel to provide immersive experiences that enhance visitors' understanding of local cultures and traditions while fostering personal growth and cultural appreciation. In Yogyakarta, batik-making workshops, gamelan classes, and culinary experiences exemplify how hands-on learning opportunities enrich visitor experiences, strengthen destination attractiveness, and support sustainable tourism through cultural preservation and local economic development. Educational tourism allows travelers to deeply engage with art, history, and traditions, offering both cultural and personal enrichment [29], [30], while its interdisciplinary nature covers diverse fields such as art, science, and sociology, appealing to varied interests [30]. By emphasizing cultural preservation and community participation, this form of tourism fosters sustainable practices that benefit both locals and the environment [29], [30]. Moreover, educational activities significantly enhance visitor satisfaction and encourage positive behavioral intentions, including word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat

visits [30], [31]. Globally, the growing demand for educational tourism reflects a wider shift toward service-oriented economies where knowledge-based and cultural experiences are increasingly valued [29].

2.4 Traditional Branding

Incorporating traditional elements into destination branding is a powerful strategy that enhances identity and appeal by projecting authenticity and fostering trust, particularly in tourism where cultural symbols, local products, rituals, and performances differentiate one place from another. The use of cultural heritage not only enriches experiences but also strengthens emotional connections, satisfaction, and loyalty, as seen in Yogyakarta with wayang performances and keraton traditions. Cultural heritage—such as historic sites, festivals, and arts—is integral to branding, as demonstrated in South Korea where it boosts competitiveness [32], while also contributing to sustainable urban development [33]. Authenticity-based branding fosters cultural immersion, satisfaction, and loyalty, supported by strategies like community involvement, conservation, and sustainable practices in Bali, Venice, and Kyoto [34]. However, challenges such as over-tourism and cultural commodification may undermine authenticity [32], [34], making it crucial for cultural product developers to create symbolic meaning and cultural imagery that enhance brand value and strengthen identity [35].

2.5 Positive Emotions in Tourism

Emotions play a critical role in shaping tourism experiences by influencing perceptions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, with positive emotions such as joy, pride, and excitement enhancing the impact of cultural and experiential factors on destination attractiveness. These emotions help form lasting memories and connections with destinations, strengthening loyalty and revisit intentions, as confirmed by a study of 1120 tourists showing that emotions significantly affect memorable tourism experiences (MTE) and revisit behavior [36]. Emotional experiences also shape perceptions of destination personality traits, directly impacting satisfaction and behavioral intentions [37]. While satisfaction is often seen as a mediator between emotions and behavior, some studies, such as on tourists visiting Petra, found no mediating effect, suggesting that emotions can directly influence intentions [38]. Nonetheless, emotional experiences remain central to decision-making, affecting satisfaction and destination choice [39]. Despite their importance, cultural values and emotions remain underrepresented in tourism research, even though they are vital predictors of tourist behavior and intentions, underscoring the need to integrate emotions into tourism models for deeper insights [40].

2.6 Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

Based on the literature, this study adopts a framework linking local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding to

destination attractiveness, with positive emotions as a mediating variable. Grounded in experiential marketing theory (Schmitt, 1999) and emotional response theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), the model assumes that cultural experiences stimulate emotions, which then shape tourists' perceptions and behavioral outcomes. The hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Local story packaging positively influences positive emotions.

H2: Educational activities positively influence positive emotions.

H3: Traditional branding positively influences positive emotions.

H4: Positive emotions positively influence destination attractiveness.

H5: Local story packaging positively influences destination attractiveness through positive emotions.

H6: Educational activities positively influence destination attractiveness through positive emotions.

H7: Traditional branding positively influences destination attractiveness through positive emotions.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach to analyze the impact of local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding on destination attractiveness through the mediating role of positive emotions. Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3) was used to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. This method was chosen because it

is effective for analyzing complex models, testing mediating effects, and handling relatively small to medium sample sizes.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of domestic and international tourists who visited Yogyakarta and participated in cultural tourism activities. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents had direct experience with local cultural narratives, educational programs, or traditional branding elements during their visit. A total of 160 respondents were collected, which meets the minimum requirement for SEM-PLS analysis based on the "10-times rule" (Hair et al., 2019).

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed both online and offline to tourists in Yogyakarta. Respondents were asked to provide their perceptions of local story packaging, educational activities, traditional branding, positive emotions, and destination attractiveness. Data collection took place over a two-month period to ensure sufficient sample diversity.

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was developed using a Likert scale (1–5), where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree, with indicators adapted from previous studies and modified to suit the context of Yogyakarta tourism. The first variable, Local Story Packaging (LSP), was adapted from storytelling and cultural heritage studies (Mossberg, 2008; Chronis, 2012), with indicators covering the richness of cultural narratives, authenticity of stories, creativity in presentation, and the ability to stimulate imagination. The second variable, Educational Activities (EA), was derived from edutourism and participatory learning research (Moscardo, 2010; Falk & Dierking, 2016), and includes indicators such as opportunities for learning, interactivity of activities, enhancement of cultural knowledge, and an enjoyable learning experience. The third variable, Traditional

Branding (TB), was based on cultural branding and destination marketing studies (Pike & Page, 2014; Lu et al., 2015), with indicators focusing on the use of cultural symbols, emphasis on authenticity, integration of traditions in branding, and the uniqueness of destination identity.

Furthermore, Positive Emotions (PE) were measured using indicators adapted from tourism and emotion studies (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Bigné et al., 2005), which include joy and happiness, pride in experiencing culture, excitement during activities, and inspiration from cultural values. Lastly, Destination Attractiveness (DA) was adapted from destination image and attractiveness research (Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag et al., 2017), measured through indicators such as the overall appeal of Yogyakarta, uniqueness of cultural offerings, desire to revisit, and willingness to recommend the destination to others. This comprehensive measurement framework ensured that all constructs relevant to Yogyakarta's cultural tourism context were effectively captured and operationalized.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 3 software through several steps, beginning with descriptive analysis to identify respondents' demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, origin, and frequency of visits. Next, the measurement model (outer model) was tested to ensure construct validity and reliability by assessing convergent validity (factor loadings > 0.7, AVE > 0.5), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio), and reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.7). The structural model (inner model) was then evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships using path coefficients (β values), t-statistics and p-values obtained through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, as well as the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure explained variance. Finally, mediation analysis was conducted to examine the role of positive emotions as a mediator between local story

packaging, educational activities, traditional branding, and destination attractiveness.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Findings

The descriptive analysis provided an overview of the demographic profile and characteristics of the 160 valid respondents. In terms of gender, 55% were female ($n = 88$) and 45% were male ($n = 72$), showing a fairly balanced composition. The majority of respondents were aged 21–30 years (48%), followed by 31–40 years (27%), under 20 years (15%), and above 40 years (10%), indicating that young adults, especially millennials, dominate the sample and reflect strong interest in cultural and experiential tourism. Educationally, most respondents held an undergraduate degree (62%), with the rest being high school graduates (21%), postgraduate holders (12%), and others (5%), suggesting that participants in Yogyakarta's cultural tourism tend to have relatively high educational backgrounds aligned with a preference for cultural learning. In terms of origin, 73% were domestic tourists and 27% were international, showing Yogyakarta's enduring popularity locally while also maintaining international appeal. Regarding visit frequency, 41% had visited more than once, 37% were first-time visitors, and 22% had visited more than three times, indicating strong destination loyalty with a substantial portion of repeat visitors.

4.2 Measurement Model Results

The measurement model was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study. The analysis included tests for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated through outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) values. The results show that all indicator loadings were greater than the

recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each item adequately represented its construct. In addition, all constructs

demonstrated AVE values above 0.50, confirming that more than 50% of the variance was explained by the indicators.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability Results

Construct	Indicator	Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Local Story Packaging (LSP)	LSP1	0.812	0.658	0.884	0.826	Valid
	LSP2	0.845				
	LSP3	0.801				
	LSP4	0.783				
Educational Activities (EA)	EA1	0.792	0.671	0.893	0.841	Valid
	EA2	0.824				
	EA3	0.857				
	EA4	0.806				
Traditional Branding (TB)	TB1	0.833	0.662	0.890	0.846	Valid
	TB2	0.812				
	TB3	0.841				
	TB4	0.774				
Positive Emotions (PE)	PE1	0.857	0.681	0.902	0.860	Valid
	PE2	0.873				
	PE3	0.811				
	PE4	0.794				
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	DA1	0.836	0.689	0.906	0.867	Valid
	DA2	0.872				
	DA3	0.844				
	DA4	0.801				

Source: Results Processing Data (2025)

All constructs exceed the recommended thresholds (Loadings > 0.70, AVE > 0.50, CR > 0.70, Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70), thereby confirming convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. The measurement model evaluation shows that Local Story Packaging (LSP), Educational Activities (EA), Traditional Branding (TB), Positive Emotions (PE), and Destination Attractiveness (DA) all meet validity and reliability criteria. Indicator loadings, ranging from 0.774 to 0.873, demonstrate strong convergent validity as each item adequately represents its construct. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, between 0.658 and 0.689, indicate that more than half of the variance is explained by the indicators. Composite Reliability (CR) values of 0.884 to

0.906 confirm excellent internal consistency, while Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.826 to 0.867 further strengthen the reliability of the constructs.

2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), with results showing that the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs, thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity, while all HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, further supporting the distinctiveness of the constructs.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	LSP	EA	TB	PE	DA
Local Story Packaging (LSP)	0.811				
Educational Activities (EA)	0.624	0.819			
Traditional Branding (TB)	0.588	0.603	0.814		

Positive Emotions (PE)	0.642	0.611	0.654	0.826	
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	0.601	0.589	0.618	0.724	0.830

Source: Results Processing Data (2025)

Note: Bold diagonal values represent the square root of AVE.

The Fornell–Larcker criterion in Table 2 confirms discriminant validity, as the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs. For instance, Local Story Packaging (0.811) exceeds its correlations with EA (0.624), TB (0.588), PE (0.642), and DA (0.601), while Educational Activities (0.819), Traditional

Branding (0.814), Positive Emotions (0.826), and Destination Attractiveness (0.830) also surpass all related correlations. Although Positive Emotions and Destination Attractiveness show the strongest correlation (0.724), both remain below their respective AVE square roots, indicating the constructs are distinct.

Table 3. HTMT Ratio

Construct	LSP	EA	TB	PE	DA
LSP	—				
EA	0.712	—			
TB	0.683	0.701	—		
PE	0.744	0.715	0.759	—	
DA	0.695	0.681	0.722	0.801	—

Source: Results Processing Data (2025)

All HTMT values are below 0.85, confirming discriminant validity and showing that the constructs are empirically distinct despite moderate to strong correlations. For example, the HTMT value between Local Story Packaging and Educational Activities is 0.712, while its relationships with Traditional Branding (0.683), Positive Emotions (0.744), and Destination Attractiveness (0.695) also remain below the threshold. Similarly, Educational Activities shows moderate but acceptable correlations with TB (0.701), PE (0.715), and DA (0.681), and Traditional Branding demonstrates ratios with LSP (0.683), EA (0.701), PE (0.759), and DA (0.722), all of which reinforce the validity and distinctiveness of each construct.

4.3 Structural Model Results

The structural model was tested to examine the hypothesized relationships between local story packaging, educational activities, traditional branding, positive emotions, and destination attractiveness using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples in SmartPLS 3 to evaluate the significance of path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Furthermore, the model's explanatory power was assessed through R² values, f² effect sizes, and predictive relevance (Q²), with the results of hypothesis testing summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Path Coefficient Results

	Path	β Coefficient	t- Statistic	p- Value	Result
H1	Local Story Packaging → Positive Emotions	0.341	5.217	0.000	Supported
H2	Educational Activities → Positive Emotions	0.298	4.512	0.000	Supported
H3	Traditional Branding → Positive Emotions	0.367	6.023	0.000	Supported
H4	Positive Emotions → Destination Attractiveness	0.529	8.476	0.000	Supported
H5	Local Story Packaging → Destination Attractiveness (via PE)	0.181	4.006	0.000	Supported
H6	Educational Activities → Destination Attractiveness (via PE)	0.158	3.874	0.000	Supported

H7	Traditional Branding → Destination Attractiveness (via PE)	0.194	4.228	0.000	Supported
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Source: Results Processing Data (2025)

All hypothesized relationships were found to be positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming the predictive relevance of the model. The results of the structural model testing in Table 5 show that all proposed hypotheses (H1–H7) are supported, demonstrating strong relationships between the constructs. Specifically, Local Story Packaging ($\beta = 0.341$, $t = 5.217$, $p = 0.000$), Educational Activities ($\beta = 0.298$, $t = 4.512$, $p = 0.000$), and Traditional Branding ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 6.023$, $p = 0.000$) each exert significant positive effects on Positive Emotions. This underscores the importance of cultural narratives, interactive learning, and authentic branding in evoking joy, pride, and excitement among tourists. Moreover, Positive Emotions strongly and significantly influence Destination Attractiveness ($\beta = 0.529$, $t = 8.476$, $p = 0.000$), highlighting their critical role in shaping tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and revisit intentions.

The mediation analysis further confirms that Positive Emotions act as a significant mediator in the relationships between cultural strategies and destination attractiveness. Local Story Packaging ($\beta = 0.181$, $t = 4.006$, $p = 0.000$), Educational Activities ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 3.874$, $p = 0.000$), and Traditional Branding ($\beta = 0.194$, $t = 4.228$, $p = 0.000$) all show indirect positive effects on Destination Attractiveness through Positive Emotions. These findings indicate that cultural storytelling, participatory learning, and authentic branding not only directly enhance destination competitiveness but also strengthen it by amplifying tourists' emotional experiences, which in turn drive loyalty and recommendation behavior. Overall, the results emphasize the pivotal role of emotions as both outcomes of cultural strategies and drivers of destination attractiveness, reinforcing the need to integrate emotional and cultural dimensions in sustainable tourism development.

1. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination results show that the model has good explanatory power, with R^2 for Positive Emotions at 0.654, meaning 65.4% of the variance in positive emotions is explained by local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding, while R^2 for Destination Attractiveness is 0.586, indicating that 58.6% of its variance is explained by positive emotions. Based on the criteria of Hair et al. (2019), these values fall within the moderate to substantial range, confirming the model's strong predictive relevance.

2. Effect Size (f^2)

The f^2 test results reveal the relative contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous constructs, showing that local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding each have a moderate effect on positive emotions (f^2 values between 0.15 and 0.25), while positive emotions exhibit a large effect on destination attractiveness ($f^2 > 0.35$). These findings indicate that although cultural factors play an important role in shaping positive emotions, emotions themselves emerge as the strongest driver of destination attractiveness.

3. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The Stone–Geisser's Q^2 values, obtained via blindfolding procedure, were above zero for both endogenous variables (Positive Emotions $Q^2 = 0.421$; Destination Attractiveness $Q^2 = 0.365$). This confirms that the model has predictive relevance and is capable of accurately forecasting the constructs.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the role of local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding in shaping destination attractiveness through positive emotions in

Yogyakarta. Consistent with prior tourism and marketing research, the results highlight that tourists' emotional engagement serves as a critical mediator between cultural elements and destination appeal.

The results confirm that local story packaging significantly enhances positive emotions and destination attractiveness, supporting previous studies that highlight the power of storytelling in tourism marketing where narratives rooted in history, myths, and local traditions enrich visitor experiences through cultural immersion and authenticity. In Yogyakarta, where cultural heritage is deeply embedded in daily life, effective storytelling not only stimulates curiosity but also generates emotional resonance, thereby strengthening satisfaction and revisit intentions. Storytelling in tourism guides fosters cultural immersion by providing context and emotional connections, with tourists engaging in local legends and historical events reporting greater appreciation for the culture and people they encounter [6]. In Kemiriombo, Yogyakarta, storytelling is used to promote local products and traditions such as the processing of empon-empon and cultural arts like Jathilan, which enhances tourist appeal while preserving community culture [41]. In gastronomy tourism, authentic storytelling supports memorable experiences and local economic development, contributing to the preservation of cultural identity [42], while digital storytelling enables interactive participation, allowing tourists to share their own narratives and strengthen perceptions of authenticity and belonging [43]. Furthermore, storytelling serves as an effective marketing strategy by animating destinations and preserving cultural wisdom, as seen in the narratives of Pusuk Buhit in the Toba Caldera, which simultaneously attract visitors and safeguard heritage [8].

Second, educational activities were found to significantly enhance positive emotions and destination attractiveness, reinforcing prior research on the experiential value of learning in tourism, where visitors seek both entertainment and enrichment through hands-on and knowledge-based

experiences. In Yogyakarta, cultural workshops, batik-making sessions, and traditional cooking classes serve as avenues for deeper cultural understanding, strengthening emotional connections and positioning the city as a destination that offers leisure alongside intellectual engagement. Batik, recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, is a major draw, and workshops allow tourists to explore its materials, motifs, and philosophical roots, creating a comprehensive cultural experience [44]. Similarly, cooking classes and culinary tours, such as those in the Natural Enchantment Sendang Kunitir Hamlet, enable visitors to learn about local delicacies and preparation methods while enjoying the natural surroundings [45], [46]. These activities not only deepen cultural appreciation but also contribute to the local economy by increasing income and generating employment opportunities [46]. Moreover, cultural sites like the Sultan Palace (Keraton) further enrich tourist experiences by providing direct insights into Yogyakarta's heritage and traditions [4].

Third, traditional branding was found to positively influence both positive emotions and destination attractiveness, consistent with branding literature that highlights the role of cultural authenticity in shaping distinctive destination identities. In Yogyakarta, cultural and spiritual representation is exemplified through the film *Jiwa Jagad Jawi*, which employs symbolic narratives to reinforce the city's image as a deeply cultural and spiritual hub [12]. Branding strategies such as *Jogja Istimewa* emphasize cultural richness, educational prominence, and hospitality to differentiate Yogyakarta from other regions [47], while the earlier brand *Never Ending Asia* underscored its historical and cultural significance, strengthening its reputation as a leading cultural destination [48]. However, areas like Kotagede still lack a strong visual identity, and developing one could enhance its image as a historical and cultural site [49]. Similarly, the preservation of traditional architecture, as seen in Surakarta, demonstrates how architectural authenticity can enhance brand

identity and attract both tourism and investment [14]. By integrating traditional symbols, rituals, and visual elements, Yogyakarta reinforces its uniqueness, fosters pride and appreciation among tourists, and builds stronger emotional connections that ultimately enhance perceptions of attractiveness.

Moreover, the mediating role of positive emotions is significant, as the findings show that emotional responses bridge the gap between cultural tourism strategies and destination attractiveness, aligning with experiential marketing theories and the affective model of tourism behavior which highlight the central role of emotions in

5. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the importance of cultural and experiential strategies in enhancing destination attractiveness in Yogyakarta. The results show that local story packaging, educational activities, and traditional branding not only directly improve perceptions of attractiveness but also foster positive emotions that mediate these relationships. Tourists are more likely to view a destination as appealing when they are emotionally engaged through storytelling, interactive educational experiences, and authentic cultural branding. Theoretically, the findings contribute to tourism and marketing literature by highlighting the central role of emotions in linking cultural elements with destination attractiveness. This study

shaping perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. The amplification of storytelling, education, and branding through positive emotions suggests that tourism development should intentionally design emotionally engaging experiences. Practically, this underscores the importance for tourism stakeholders in Yogyakarta—including local governments, cultural institutions, and creative industries—to implement narrative-driven campaigns, interactive educational programs, and culturally grounded branding, thereby reinforcing Yogyakarta's position as a leading cultural tourism destination in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

validates the affective model of tourism behavior and provides empirical support for the mediating role of positive emotions, thereby enriching theories of experiential marketing and destination branding.

From a managerial perspective, the study suggests that tourism stakeholders in Yogyakarta should prioritize strategies designed to evoke positive emotional responses. This can be achieved through narrative-driven promotional campaigns, expanded educational initiatives such as cultural workshops, and the reinforcement of traditional branding elements to strengthen Yogyakarta's identity as a premier cultural destination. Such efforts will not only enhance visitor satisfaction but also encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth, thereby contributing to long-term competitiveness and sustainable tourism growth.

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