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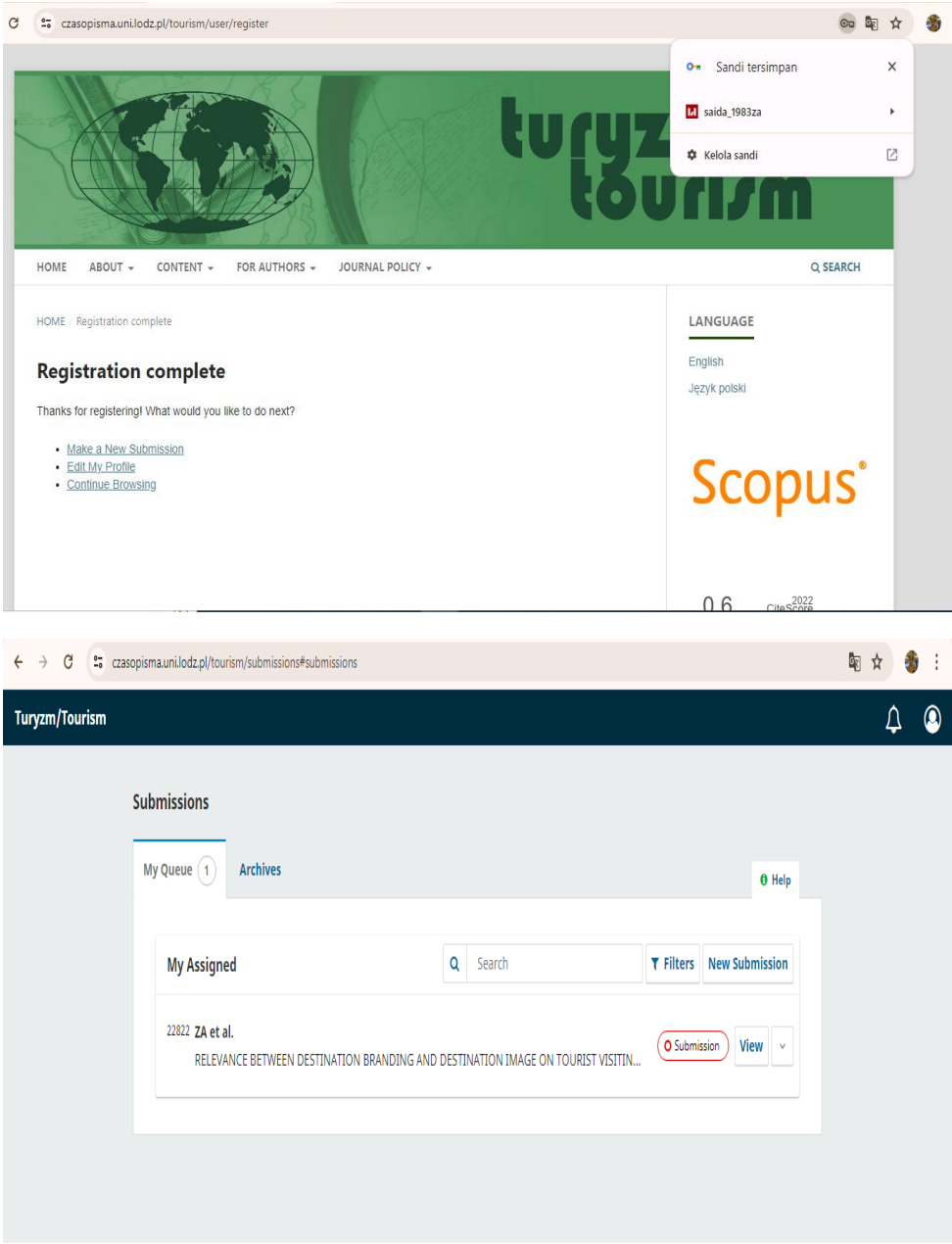
1) Profil artikel & kepengarangan

Judul artikel : Relevance between destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions: Case from Lariti Beach–Bima Regency
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 No. halaman : pp. 111–121
 Nama penulis : Saida Zainurossalamia ZA, Irsan Tricahyadinata
 Corresponding : Saida Zainurossalamia ZA
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2) Riwayat/kronologi penerbitan

<i>Tahapan</i>	<i>Tanggal – Bulan – Tahun</i>	<i>Alur</i>
Tahap 1	19 Maret 2024	Registrasi dan pengiriman artikel
Tahap 2	9 Mei 2024	Status artikel diproses untuk diulas
Tahap 3	18 September 2024	Notifikasi hasil ulasan
Tahap 4	20 September 2024	Penyerahan revisi artikel
Tahap 5	2 Oktober 2024	Penerimaan revisi artikel oleh editorial
Tahap 6	8 Mei 2025	Proofreading dan editing artikel
Tahap 7	9 Mei 2025	Koreksi artikel terbaru
Tahap 8	16 Mei 2025	Koreksi artikel lanjutan
Tahap 9	18 Mei 2025	Melengkapi keterbacaan artikel
Tahap 10	19 Mei 2025	Persetujuan hak cipta kepengarangan
Tahap 11	20 Mei 2025	Pemberian Letter of Acceptance (LoA)
Tahap 12	5 s.d 6 Juni 2025	Konfirmasi kelengkapan artikel (pra-cetak)
Tahap 13	23 Juni 2025	Pengumuman akhir penerbitan artikel

Tahap 1: 19 Maret 2024 (Registrasi dan pengiriman artikel)



Tahap 2: 9 Mei 2024 (Status artikel diproses untuk diulas)

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Kam, 9 Mei 2024, 17.26

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Relevance between destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions (2024).docx

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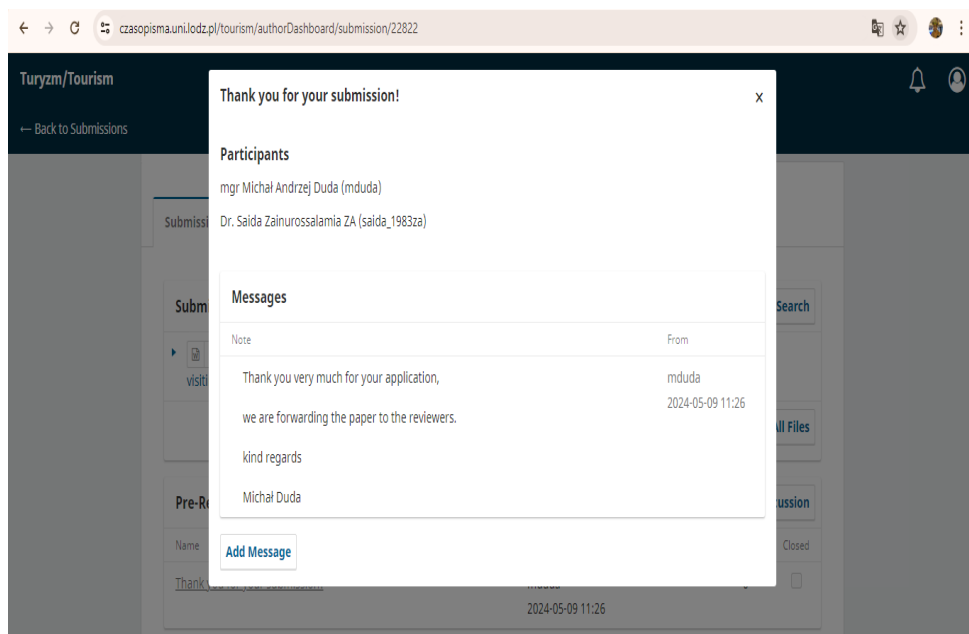
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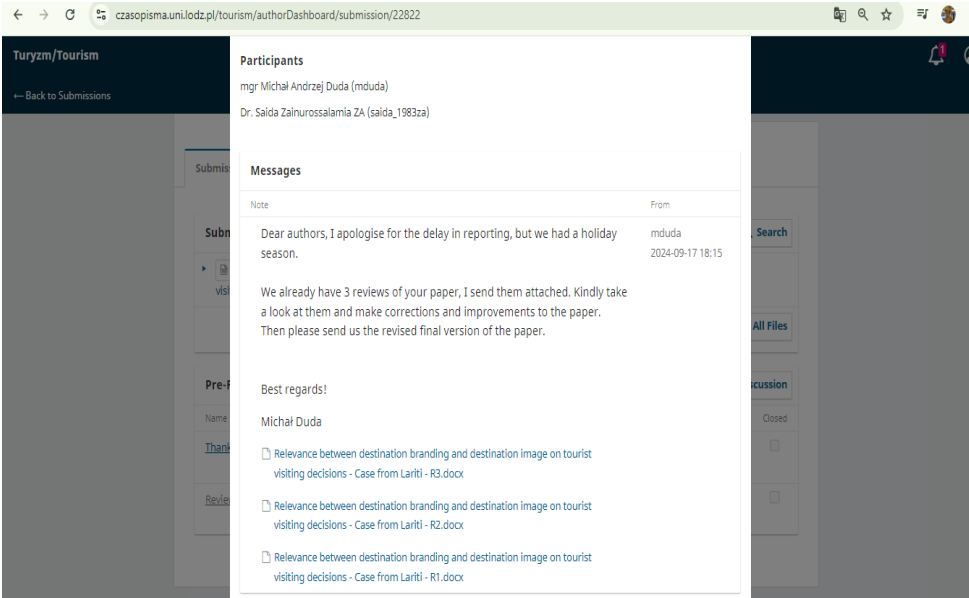
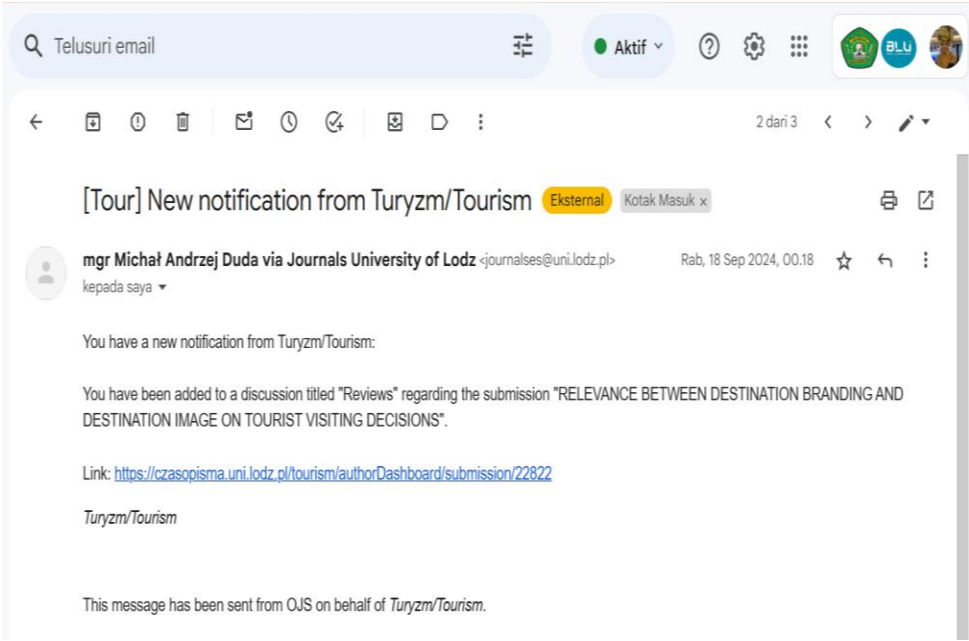
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Tahap 3: 18 September 2024 (Notifikasi hasil ulasan)



Tahap 4: 20 September 2024 (Penyerahan revisi artikel)

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Thank

Review

Relevance between destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions - Case from Lariti - R1.docx

Dear Editor,

We appreciate your decision and positive response to this paper. Also, the authors responded positively to the directions, recommendations and suggestions provided by the review team. Overall, we agree with and follow the reviewers' comments regarding the weaknesses of the current paper. Therefore, we followed up by carrying out optimal revisions. Corrected points (attached). The latest post-revision files are made visible with the version track change. Waiting for a further reply from you.

Thank you,

Dr. Saïda Zainurossalamia ZA

Relevance between destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions (2024).REV.docx

Many thanks for the corrections, we are forwarding the paper to the publisher and the typesetting work.

saïda_1983za
2024-09-20 13:36

mduda
2024-10-02 11:37

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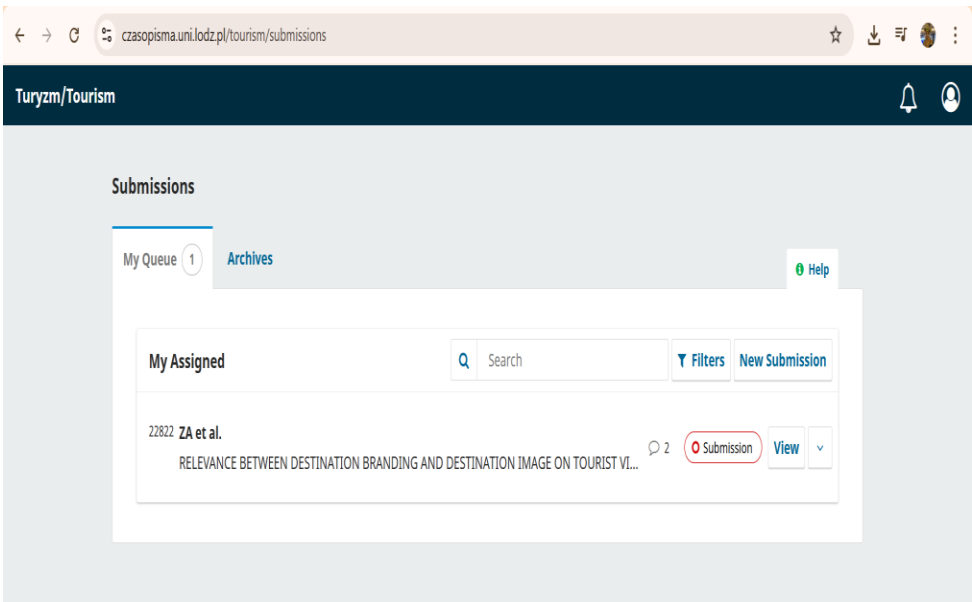
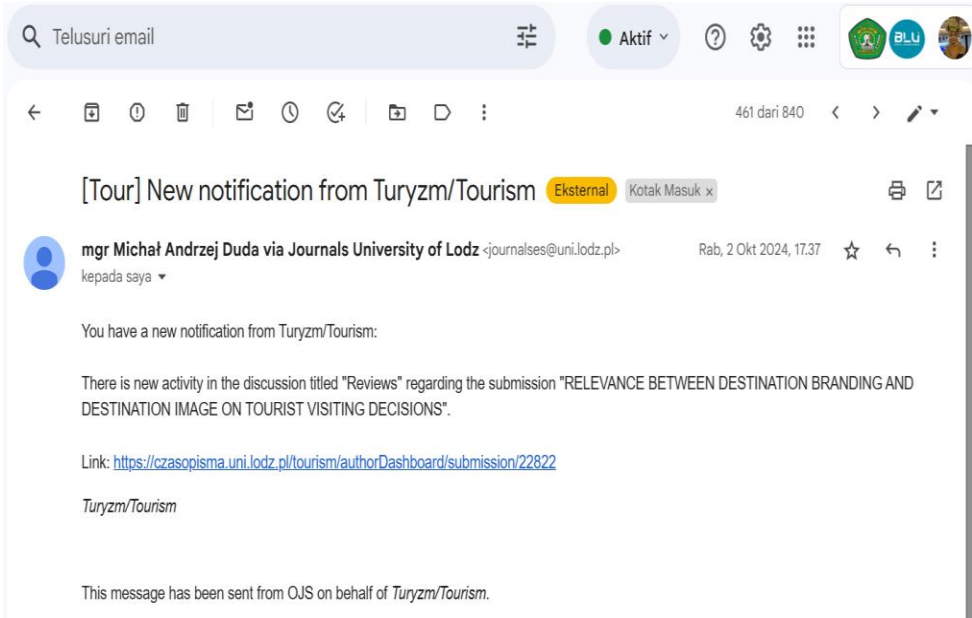
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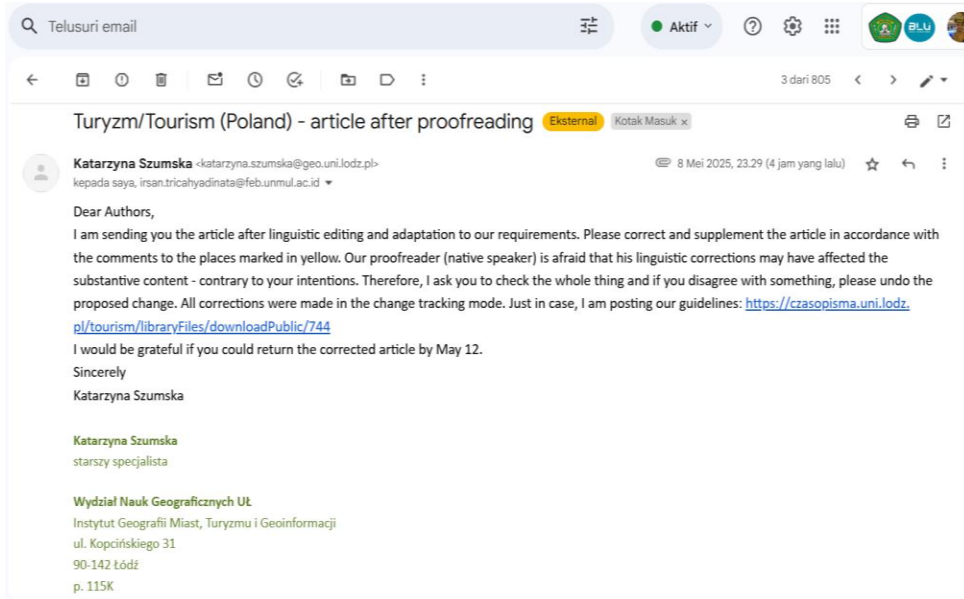
Discussion

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Tahap 5: 2 Oktober 2024 (Penerimaan revisi artikel oleh editorial)



Tahap 6: 8 Mei 2025 (Proofreading dan editing artikel)



Tahap 7: 9 Mei 2025 (Koreksi artikel terbaru)

Telusuri email

Aktif

14 dari 806

Saida Zainurossalamia ZA <saida.zainurossalamia.za@feb.unmul.ac.id>
kepada Katarzyna

Jum, 9 Mei, 13.04 (4 hari yang lalu)

Dear Editor,

Sorry for just replying to your message. Basically, the authors agree to all the points recommended and directed by the reviewers and editors. Here we reattach the article file (after revision). Does this file need to be sent to OJS as well? Once again, we thank you.

Best wishes,
Dr. Saida Zainurossalamia ZA

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Katarzyna Szumska
kepada saya

9 Mei 2025, 13.41 (4 hari yang lalu)

Dear Dr. Saida Zainurossalamia ZA,

Thank you for your quick response. The article was supposed to be sent only to me - please do not upload it to the OJS. We will carry out a final round of proofreading before typesetting, and if everything is in order, I will forward your article for typesetting after the editor-in-chief gives their approval. Once I receive the PDF of your article from the publisher, I will send it to you for review before it is published on our journal's website.

Best regards,
Katarzyna Szumska

Katarzyna Szumska
starszy specjalista

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Saida Zainurossalamia ZA <saida.zainurossalamia.za@feb.unmul.ac.id>

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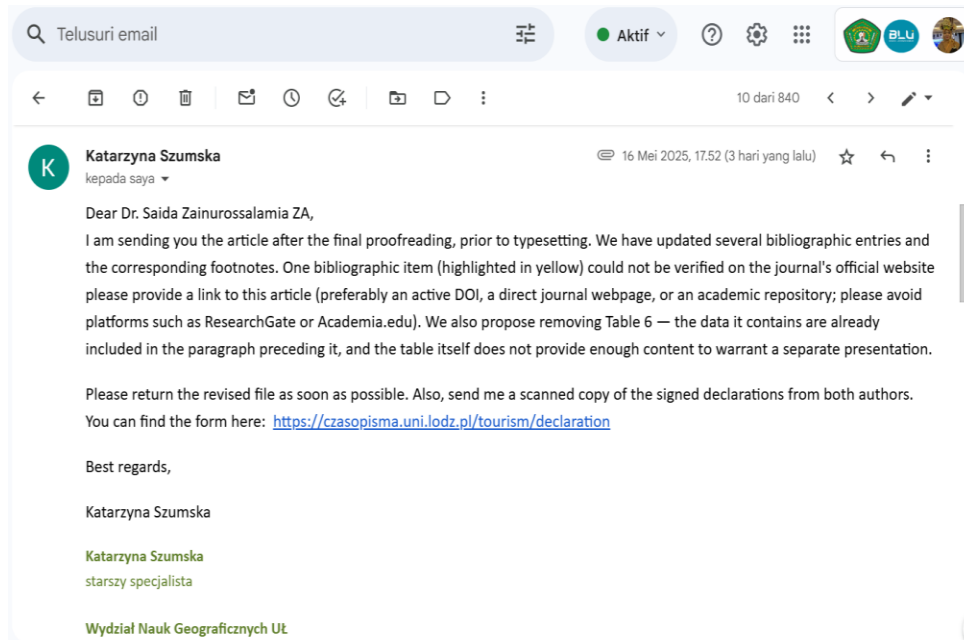
Thank you. We have not sent the latest article file (revised version) to OJS. Only through this email.

Regards,
Dr. Saida Zainurossalamia ZA

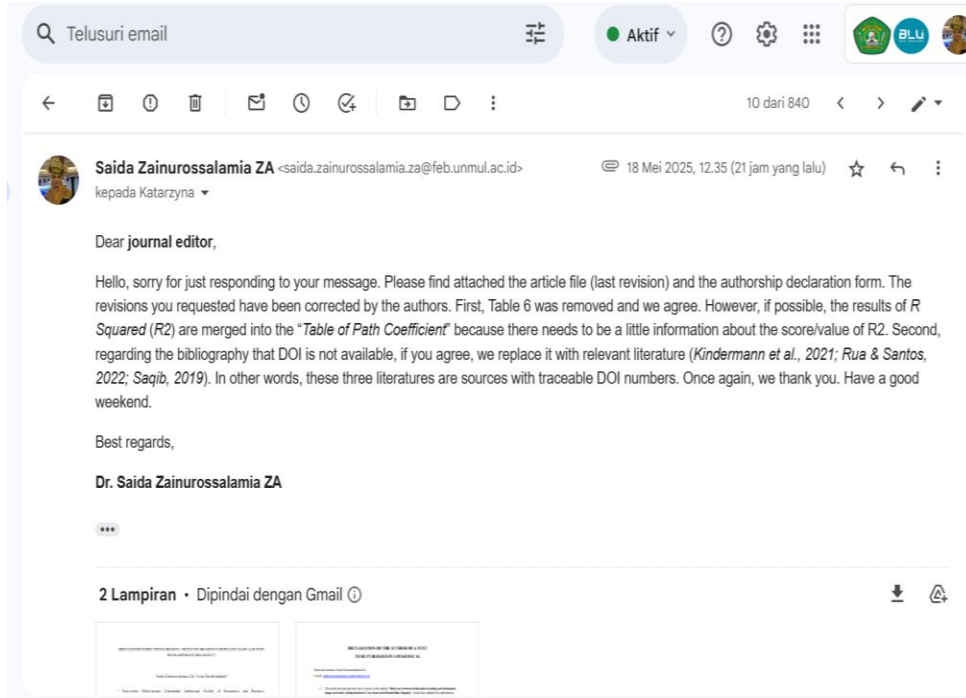
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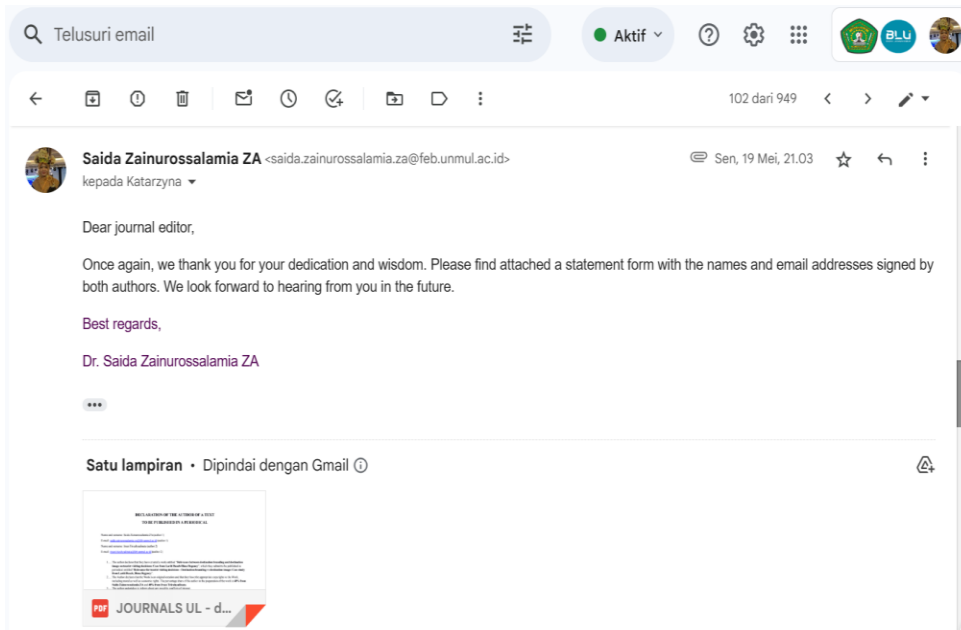
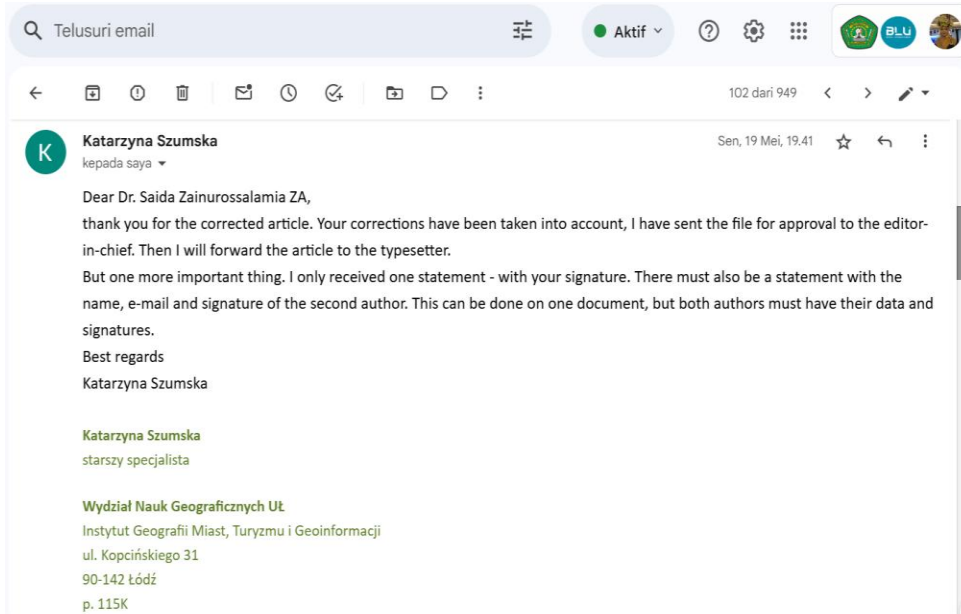
Tahap 8: 16 Mei 2025 (Koreksi artikel lanjutan)

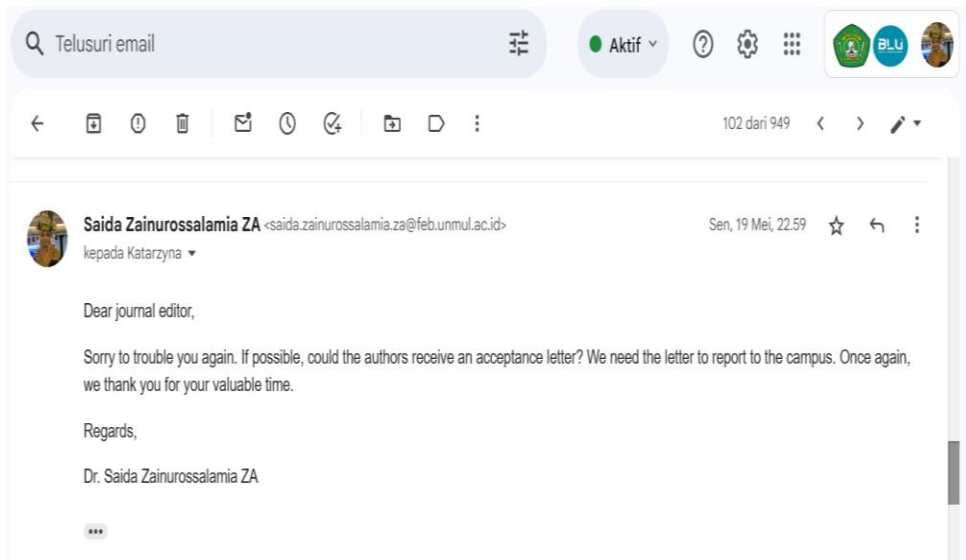


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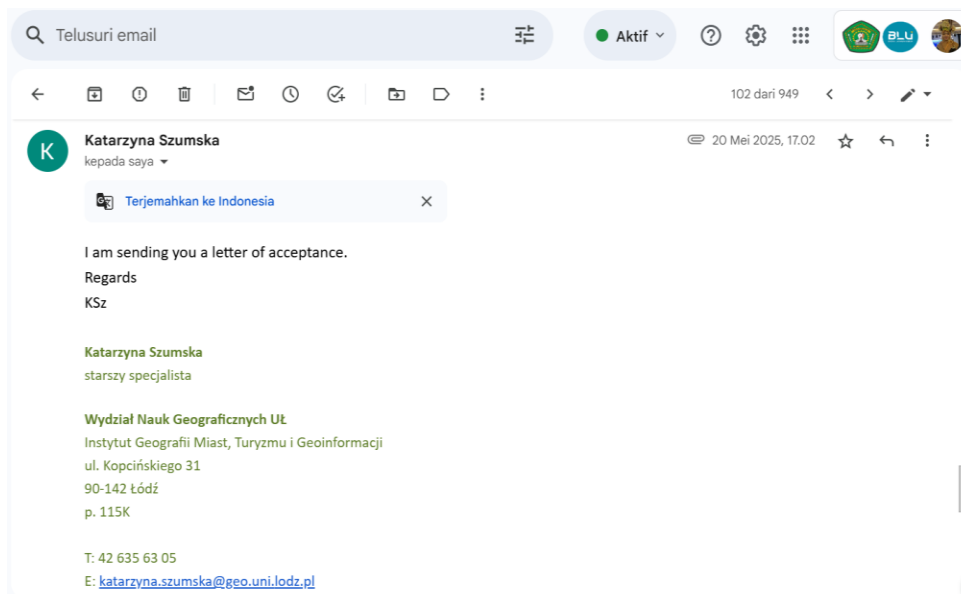
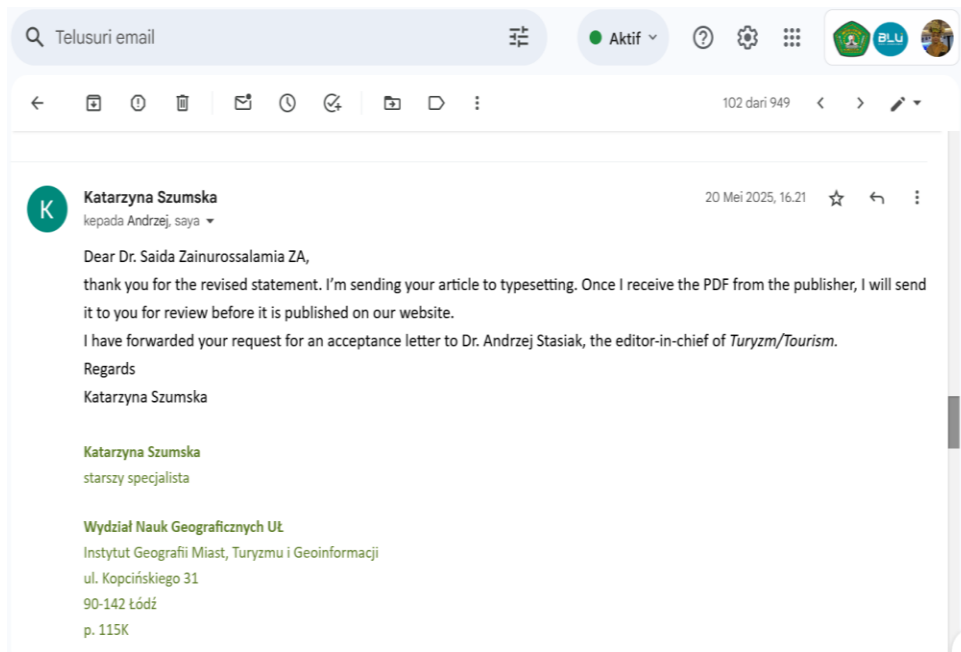


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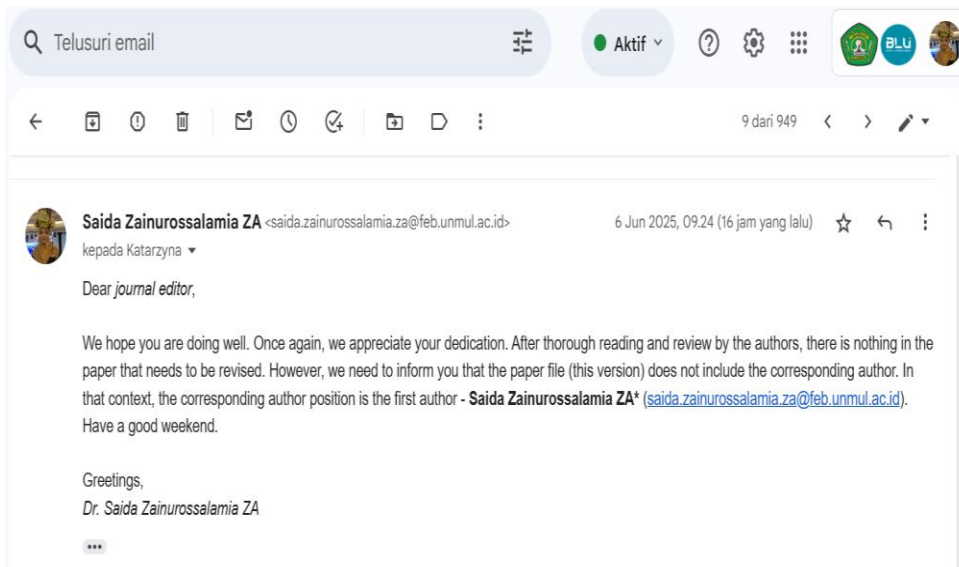
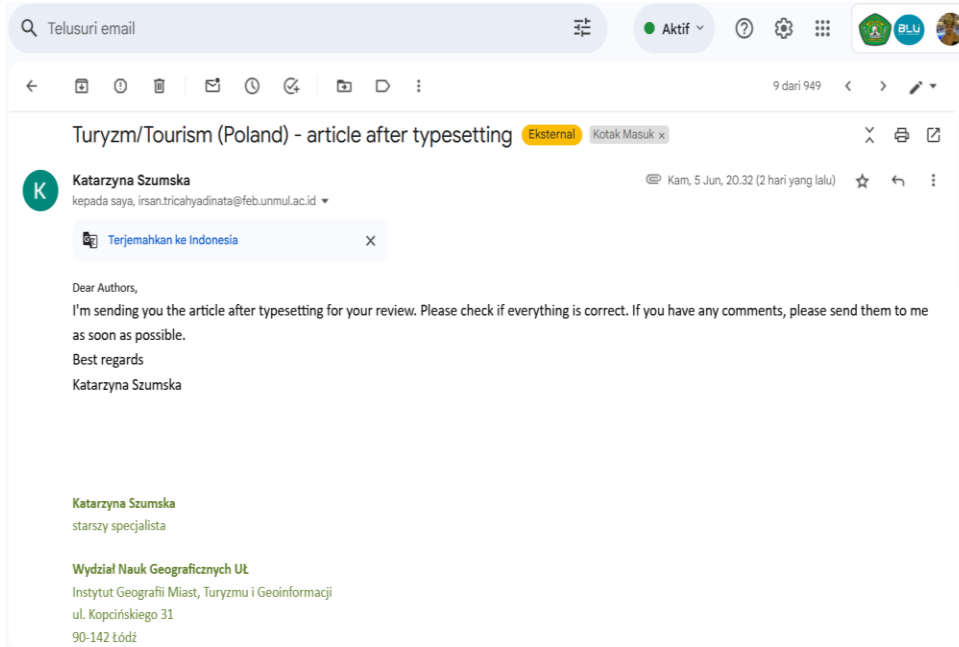




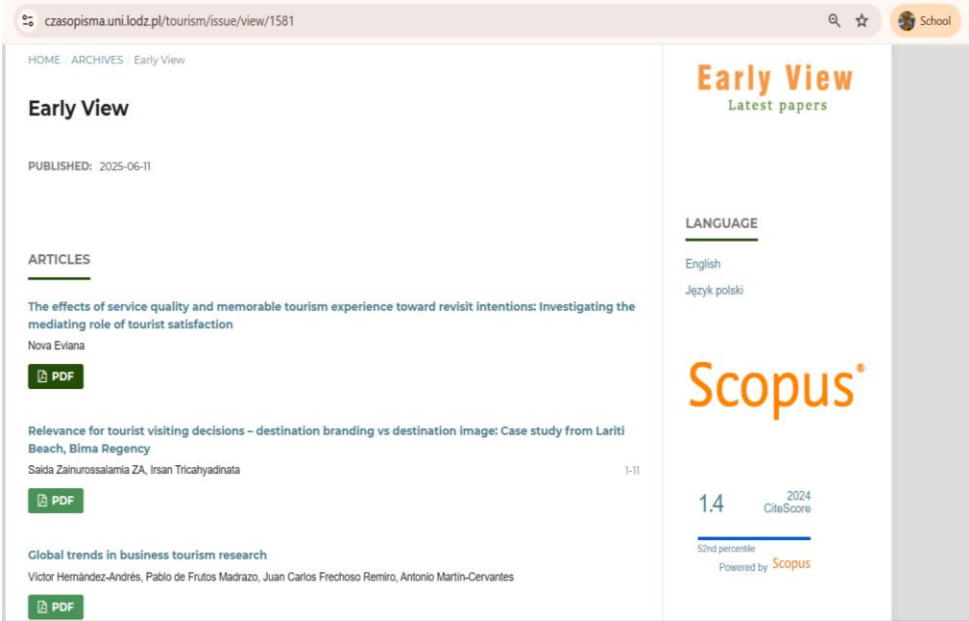
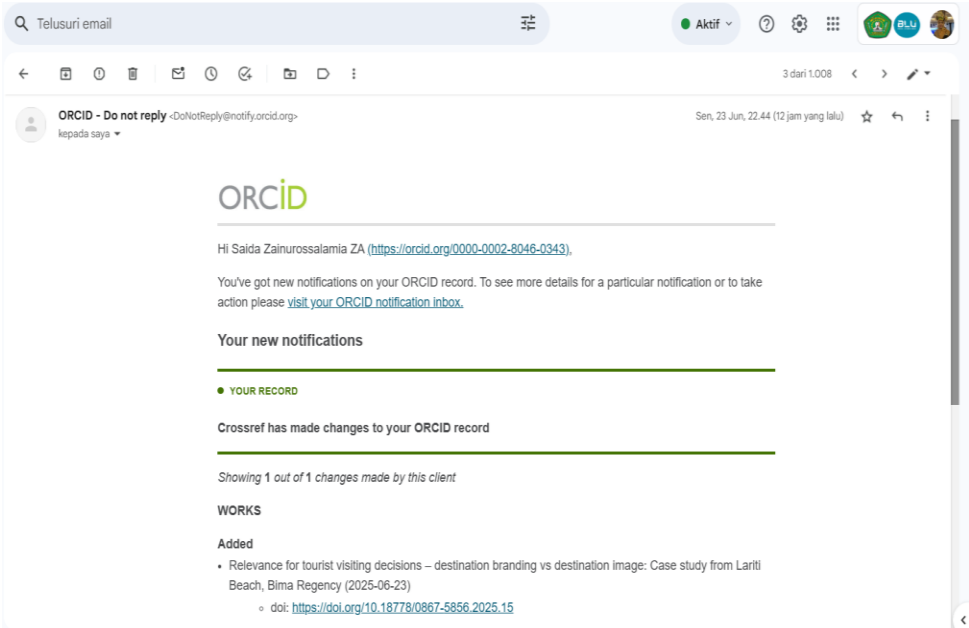
Tahap 11: 20 Mei 2025 (Pemberian Letter of Acceptance/LoA)



Tahap 12: 5 s.d 6 Juni 2025 (Konfirmasi kelengkapan artikel/pracetak)



Tahap 13: 23 Juni 2025 (Pengumuman akhir penerbitan artikel)



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Relevance for tourist visiting decisions – destination branding vs destination image: Case study from Lariti Beach, Bima Regency

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/0867-5856.2025.15>

Keywords: destination branding, destination image, visiting decisions, partial least squares, PLS, Lariti Beach

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ABSTRACT

Today, there are disciplines that concentrate on tourism, some of which highlight a tourist's visiting decision; this is not only associated with the brand or reputation of a destination but also its image. From this premise, this study aims to find the relationship between destination branding and destination image on tourists' visiting decisions. With a focus on tourists visiting Lariti Beach, Bima Regency (Indonesia), data collection via interviews based on non-probability sampling techniques were made. Using the partial least squares (PLS) method, the results of the study reveal that both destination branding and destination image affect tourists' visiting decisions systematically. When compared, destination branding is the more important instrument for increasing visiting decisions compared to image. Therefore, this research opens space and attention for further studies to consider destination image as a critical function in stimulating visiting decisions. Future implications include tourism policies that lead to optimal branding and image.

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3) Komentar pengulas 1



Article review

Title:	<i>Relevance between destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions: case from lariti beach-bima regency</i>
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Information for reviewers

This form is to facilitate the preparation of a concise assessment report regarding an article submitted for publication in the "Turyzm/Tourism" journal. The reviewer's comments and suggestions should be useful for both the editor and the author. Please remember that not all the questions may apply to the reviewed article (in which case, they should be simply ignored)

The review form consists of three parts. Part I includes questions constituting the general assessment of the article, part II contains detailed comments and suggestions for the author, while part III is the final recommendation for the editors.

The reviewers are obliged to keep the manuscript which they are reviewing confidential. The review must be double-blind. If you suspect who the author of the article is or see any conflict of interest, please inform the Editor about this fact immediately.

I. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF AN ARTICLE (from 1 = very poor to 5 = very good)

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Are the issues presented in the article scientifically relevant?				X	
Does the article contribute new content to the literature on the subject?		X			
Does the content of the article correspond to its title?					X
Is the abstract appropriate (including the objectives, methods and results)?		X			X
Do the key words refer to the content of the article?					
Is the article clear, coherent and logical?		X			
Have the purpose of the article been clearly defined and achieved?			X		
Are the research and analytical methods used in the work appropriate?					X
Has the article been sufficiently documented?				X	
Do the conclusions follow the content of the article?			X		
Are the tables and graphs properly constructed and clear?				X	
Have the references quoted in the article been chosen appropriately?				X	

II. DETAILED ARTICLE ASSESSMENT

Aspect	Reviewer's detailed comments/recommendations for the author	Author's response
The subject of the article / research problem	There is a good background about city branding and Indonesia, but it would help to relate that background information to the research problem.	The main problems underlying the research objectives are included in the Introduction Chapter.
Article objective / research approach	The objective is not clear – the research approach – to be a quantitative study there is a certain	Actually it has been written in the Materials and Methods Chapter

Source materials / literature on the subject	<p>methodology that does not go hand in hand – such as the sampling technique, the way of collecting the information (google forms vs. face-to-face)</p> <p>There is a lack of relevant literature in the area. Operational definitions are not included and would be necessary. Differentiation between image and branding is not clear.</p>	<p>(Sub-chapter: Participants and Data), but the authors need to explain it again in the Introduction Chapter with the aim of providing confirmation of the research approach and data sources. We realize that there are weaknesses and limitations in the literature in distinguishing destination branding from image branding. Therefore, we detail the conceptual differences between the two operationally in the Literature Review Chapter (Sub-chapter 2.1 and 2.2).</p>
Research methods	The validation analysis is present and adequate but the post-validation steps are not clear.	The post-validation step is verification and justification of the findings in the field with empirical literature from relevant similar studies. The authors added this one sentence in the last paragraph of the Materials and Methods Chapter (Sub-chapter: Variables and Data Processing).
Research results analysis	Analysis of the results – it is suitable.	Clear.
Factual value of the discussion	The discussion is poor, it is not clear; tends to be misleading or confusing.	As is known, there is not much research that links destination branding and destination image to the decision to visit simultaneously. To make it more interesting, we expand the discussion through the relationship between the two variables above and the decision to visit separately with case studies in other places. Otherwise, you can review the new changes in the Discussion Chapter.
Accuracy of conclusions	There is no accuracy of conclusion. – Since the objectives are not clear; it is difficult to assess whether the conclusions are related.	In accordance with the main aim of this research, it is to investigate the relationship between destination branding and destination image on tourists' decisions to visit Lariti Beach. Thus, even though the results were found to be significant, the implications, contributions and practical recommendations were directed based on the strength of the model because there were invalid indicators/variable dimensions.

Additional comments (please point out both, the strengths and weaknesses of the article)	Author's response

Small corrections (if needed, please add more rows to the table or attach a file with comments in the text).

Page/line	Text	Comments/suggested changes	Author's response

III. FINAL RECOMMENDATION (mark the selected recommendation with "x")

Accept	The article can be published in the version proposed by the authors.	
Minor revision	The article can be published after considering the reviewer's comments.	X
Major revision	The article can be published only after introducing substantial changes suggested by the reviewer and after a repeated review.	
Reject	The article cannot be published in the version proposed by the authors.	

Komentar pengulas 2



Article review

Title:	<i>RELEVANCE BETWEEN DESTINATION BRANDING AND DESTINATION IMAGE ON TOURIST VISITING DECISIONS: CASE FROM LARITI BEACH–BIMA REGENCY</i>
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Information for reviewers

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The review form consists of three parts. Part I includes questions constituting the general assessment of the article, part II contains detailed comments and suggestions for the author, while part III is the final recommendation for the editors.

The reviewers are obliged to keep the manuscript which they are reviewing confidential. The review must be double-blind. If you suspect who the author of the article is or see any conflict of interest, please inform the Editor about this fact immediately.

I. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF AN ARTICLE (from 1 = very poor to 5 = very good)

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Are the issues presented in the article scientifically relevant?					5
Does the article contribute new content to the literature on the subject?				4	
Does the content of the article correspond to its title?					5
Is the abstract appropriate (including the objectives, methods and results)?					
Do the key words refer to the content of the article?					
Is the article clear, coherent and logical?					5
Have the purpose of the article been clearly defined and achieved?				4	
Are the research and analytical methods used in the work appropriate?					5
Has the article been sufficiently documented?					5
Do the conclusions follow the content of the article?					5
Are the tables and graphs properly constructed and clear?					5
Have the references quoted in the article been chosen appropriately?					5

II. DETAILED ARTICLE ASSESSMENT

Aspect	Reviewer’s detailed comments/recommendations for the author	Author’s response
The subject of the article / research problem	The subject of the article is important.	Clear
Article objective / research approach	Research approach is correctly. The goal must be clearly formulated.	Similar to other reviewers' comments, in addition to the subject, research objectivity is

		also included in the introduction.
Source materials / literature on the subject	Correctly	Clear
Research methods	Correctly	Clear
Research results analysis	Correctly	Clear
Factual value of the discussion	Significant	Clear
Accuracy of conclusions	Correctly	Clear

Additional comments (please point out both, the strengths and weaknesses of the article)	Author's response
The subject area discussed in the paper should be considered important. The reviewed paper is of scientific nature. The research procedure has complex character. The structure of the paper is clear.	The subject area discussed, research procedures, and paper structure are developed into paragraphs 6 and 7 in the Introduction Chapter.
To improve the quality of the paper I would suggest to: - develop the description of the research limitations and future research.	Actually, the weaknesses of the study are described in the Conclusion Chapter (last paragraph). However, unfortunately, we also see that the sample size is currently a limitation, thus creating a gap for the development of other studies in the future.

Small corrections (if needed, please add more rows to the table or attach a file with comments in the text).

Page/line	Text	Comments/suggested changes	Author's response
	The abstract should be added to the article.		Contributions to the development of further studies are mentioned in the abstract, but the authors add implications for practical policy in the tourism sector.

III. FINAL RECOMMENDATION (mark the selected recommendation with "x")

Accept	The article can be published in the version proposed by the authors.	
Minor revision	The article can be published after considering the reviewer's comments.	X
Major revision	The article can be published only after introducing substantial changes suggested by the reviewer and after a repeated review.	
Reject	The article cannot be published in the version proposed by the authors.	

Komentar pengulas 3



Article review

Title:	RELEVANCE BETWEEN DESTINATION BRANDING AND DESTINATION IMAGE ON TOURIST VISITING DECISIONS: CASE FROM LARITI BEACH-BIMA REGENCY
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Information for reviewers

This form is to facilitate the preparation of a concise assessment report regarding an article submitted for publication in the “Turyzm/Tourism” journal. The reviewer’s comments and suggestions should be useful for both the editor and the author. Please remember that not all the questions may apply to the reviewed article (in which case, they should be simply ignored)

The review form consists of three parts. Part I includes questions constituting the general assessment of the article, part II contains detailed comments and suggestions for the author, while part III is the final recommendation for the editors.

The reviewers are obliged to keep the manuscript which they are reviewing confidential. The review must be double-blind. If you suspect who the author of the article is or see any conflict of interest, please inform the Editor about this fact immediately.

I. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF AN ARTICLE (from 1 = very poor to 5 = very good)

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Are the issues presented in the article scientifically relevant?			x		
Does the article contribute new content to the literature on the subject?			x		
Does the content of the article correspond to its title?				x	
Is the abstract appropriate (including the objectives, methods and results)?	x				
Do the key words refer to the content of the article?	x				
Is the article clear, coherent and logical?			x		
Have the purpose of the article been clearly defined and achieved?			x		
Are the research and analytical methods used in the work appropriate?			x		
Has the article been sufficiently documented?			x		
Do the conclusions follow the content of the article?			x		
Are the tables and graphs properly constructed and clear?			x		
Have the references quoted in the article been chosen appropriately?				x	

II. DETAILED ARTICLE ASSESSMENT

Aspect	Reviewer’s detailed comments/recommendations for the author	Author’s response
The subject of the article / research problem	The topic undertaken is not innovative. The research problem is understandable, although not accurate.	The research problem is detailed in a new paragraph (6 th paragraph) in the Introduction Chapter.
Article objective / research approach	The research approach in the context of the formulated hypotheses is unsatisfactory, and the	In the context of the hypothesis, in particular the relationship between

	<p>lack of verification of the hypotheses underlines the deficiencies revealed in this area. More extensively in the following sections.</p>	<p>destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions has been developed based on the limitations of clear operational definitions of destination branding or destination image. We appreciate your opinion.</p>
Source materials / literature on the subject	I raise no objections	
Research methods	Research methods are appropriate.	Thank you.
Research results analysis	<p>Analyses are generally conducted correctly. I have reservations about the results in the area of hypothesis verification. Two hypotheses were formulated: H1. There is a strong connection between destination branding and visiting decisions. H2. There is a strong connection between destination image and visiting decisions. No answer was given as to whether the hypotheses were confirmed or rejected, especially since the Author writes on p. 7 "With the linkage of the two variables to visiting decisions, the correlation is relatively strong." So I ask the question whether the relationship described in the hypotheses is strong or relatively strong?</p> <p>The situation is a consequence of building fuzzy hypotheses.</p>	<p>The authors need to clarify and revise the formulation of the hypothesis, where there are errors that need to be corrected, in which case words like "there is a strong connection between..." become "there is a partial connection between...". Changes in the wording of the two proposed hypotheses above because they relate to hypothesis testing. In PLS, hypothesis testing is based on significance (probability) values. The significance values listed in Table 8 are answers to the objectives and proposed hypotheses. In addition, the relationship between variables is tested partially, whether it is acceptable or otherwise, Now, you can see the additional sentence in the 2nd paragraph in Sub-chapter 4.3 which confirms and verifies that the two hypotheses constructed are acceptable.</p> <p>In connection with the justification above, analysis of the coefficient of determination is not a method of partial testing, but rather looks at the strength of the model being developed. Then, we also admit that there are errors in explanation (such as the analysis of the coefficient of determination in Table 7). The written interpretation is "With the linkage of the two variables to visiting decisions, the correlation is relatively strong", but it should be "With the linkage of the two variables to visiting decisions, the determination is within the relatively high criteria". The words "correlation" and "strong" are incorrect because they describe correlation analysis and not determination analysis. For</p>

Factual value of the discussion	I raise no objections	determination analysis, the correct interpretation is based on the five classifications in the coefficient model, so the authors need to provide additional explanations in paragraph 1 (Sub-chapter 4.3). We appreciate your argument.
Accuracy of conclusions	Given the lack of references to verify the formulated hypotheses, which are the premise of the research undertaken - Accuracy of conclusions I assess low.	In accordance with the appearance of the revised paper, the authors have followed the reviewers' directions and followed up by making several improvements, including expanding references from literature relevant to hypothesis development. Thus, the conclusion is the final part to explain the overall findings. To make it easier to track which points have been corrected, you can view the latest version of the manuscript (post revision) in "track changes" mode.

Additional comments (please point out both, the strengths and weaknesses of the article)	Author's response
The abstract/key words are missing.	To the best of the authors' knowledge, this paper was submitted in full to the editorial board via OJS, including including the abstract and keywords in 1 complete file simultaneously.
A weakness of the work is the language. The following comments are related to this issue:	We understand that this article was written in some language that may give rise to multiple interpretations. However, we try to make complete corrections by including additional descriptions, especially on paragraphs or sentences that are less clear.
The text in the Introduction section reads badly, in my opinion it has no purpose.	It is the same as your previous input, that the Introduction Chapter requires revision, for example the research objectives have not been expressed in a complex way. Therefore, the authors responded by exploring more deeply the issues surrounding destination branding, image branding, and tourist decisions to visit Lariti Beach based on phenomena in the field and empirical literature.
Why, in the sentence „Basically, the visiting decisions is an alternative that is taken by individuals before traveling to an area by considering several criteria”	Revision of the articulation regarding the decision to visit. There is a double interpretation of the word

The decision to visit is an alternative? I understand “considering several criteria”, but the alternative is not.	“alternative”, so the authors replace it with “desire”.
In the sentence “With population volume referring to visiting moments tabulated in 2023” there is confusion. What table number are you referring to? Incidentally, there is no table 1 in the text. When were the surveys done - I guess in 2023, but it is not clear.	We agree with your opinion regarding the ambiguous sentence explaining the sample, namely "Sample units are selected and taken based on the population or level of tourist visits in 2023", so it has been changed to "Sample units are selected and taken based on the population or level of tourist visits in 2023". In other words, the survey was conducted in 2023. Also, the authors admit that there are parts left out ie. Table 1, so this is entered in the text. The changes referred to can be seen in Sub-chapter 3.1 (Participants and data).
Table 3 lacks data on the structure of respondents by age.	The structure of respondents based on less age groups is added in Table 3, including visit level data.
I wonder if research was needed for the statement „This study ensures that by involving two important instruments in tourism, such as destination branding and destination image, it can have an impact on visiting decisions”.	Yes, it is clear, even though the empirical results found that destination branding and destination image influence the decision to visit, the research statement was still made because it was necessary to ascertain whether destination branding and destination image were able to encourage tourists' decision to visit Lariti Beach. Apart from that, even though both have a significant influence on the decision to visit, it is also important for tourism stakeholders to maintain it while looking for other alternatives outside the current model that allow or determine the decision variables to visit.

Small corrections (if needed, please add more rows to the table or attach a file with comments in the text).

Page/line	Text	Comments/suggested changes	Author's response

III. FINAL RECOMMENDATION (mark the selected recommendation with "x")

Accept	The article can be published in the version proposed by the authors.	
Minor revision	The article can be published after considering the reviewer's comments.	
Major revision	The article can be published only after introducing substantial changes suggested by the reviewer and after a repeated review.	x
Reject	The article cannot be published in the version proposed by the authors.	

⁴⁾ **Bukti Penerimaan Artikel**



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C o n f i r m a t i o n

I confirm that the paper titled "Relevance between destination branding and destination image on tourist visiting decisions: Case from Lariti Beach – Bima regency" by Saida Zainurossalamia ZA and Irsan Tricahyadinata has been accepted for publication in "Turyzm/Tourism" and will be published in the next following issue of the journal (vol. 35, no 1). Planned publication: until 30 June 2025.


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6) Perbaikan pertama

RELEVANCE BETWEEN DESTINATION BRANDING AND DESTINATION IMAGE ON TOURIST VISITING DECISIONS: CASE FROM LARITI BEACH–BIMA REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Today, there are disciplines of study that concentrate on tourism, some of which highlight the decision to visit a tourist, which is not only associated with the brand or reputation of a destination but also the image of destinations. From this premise, this study aims to find the relationship between destination branding and destination image on tourists' visiting decisions. With a focus on tourists visiting Lariti Beach–Bima Regency (Indonesia), data collection via interviews was formed based on non-probability sampling techniques. Using the PLS method, the results of the study reveal that destination branding and destination image affect tourists' visiting decisions systematically. When compared between the two, destination branding is the most important instrument for increasing visiting decisions compared to destination image. Therefore, this research opens space and attention for further studies to consider destination image as a crucial function in stimulating visiting decisions. [Future implications include tourism policies that lead to optimal branding and image.](#)

KEYWORDS

destination branding, destination image, visiting decisions, PLS, Lariti Beach

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the modernization of the era, a brand is not only owned by a product but also by a city that drives progress in various aspects and is commonly labeled as place branding or city branding. In principle, the premise of city branding pioneered the term destination branding. According to Ilmi et al. (2022) and Kasapi & Cela (2017), destination branding describes the image management of a destination through innovation and coordination of social, economic, commercial, cultural, and government regulations. Destination branding can be linked as a strategy from a particular country or region to create a strong positioning in the minds of tourism actors (Insch, 2014). Like the positioning of a service or product, its orientation is that it can be widely recognized throughout the world (Donner & Fort, 2018; Jojic, 2018; Oliva et al., 2022).

In destination development, the above perspective is in line with the arguments expressed by Audouin (2022) and Setianti et al. (2018), which state that destination branding is one of the solutions to supporting the image management of a destination through government regulations. Shirvani Dastgerdi & De Luca (2019) define a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of all that is elaborated to identify a tourism product. With the status of "destination branding", can distinguish the characteristics of competitors' products.

Technically, several cities in Indonesia have focused their attention on issuing city branding to explore potential, local wisdom, and advantages related to regional identity. Such is the case in Java, where Solo, as a pioneer city synonymous with the "spirit of Java," is considered a city that has succeeded in popularizing city branding. Apart from these areas, Batu City has also had dedicated

destination branding with the tagline "shining Batu" since it was launched in May 2013, which coincided with the celebration of National Awakening Day. Previously, Batu City had also introduced the nickname "Batu Tourism City" (KWB). The change of symbol from KWB to "shining Batu" was triggered by a strong meaning philosophically covering the foundations of Batu community life according to the current logo (Panjaitan, 2020; Zahrah, 2023).

At the same time, West Nusa Tenggara is one of the provinces in Indonesia with an extensive tourism market segmentation, where one of the most stunning destinations is Lariti Beach. This maritime tourism is located in Soro Village, Lambu District, Bima Regency. Lariti Beach has made a breakthrough through its own advantages and uniqueness compared to other beaches. In addition to the natural panorama that is still sustainable and a beautiful atmosphere, Panrai Lariti is supported by management skills in serving tourists. Every year, Lariti Beach is always visited by foreign and domestic tourists, and it has experienced an increase in visits from time to time. When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in early 2020, the majority of open-air destinations that triggered crowds of visitors were closed, including Lariti Beach, which experienced a crucial decline. In 2021, the level of decline in visits detected was 487,560 from domestic tourists and 5,069 from foreign tourists. In its operation, Lariti Beach, which has a natural beauty with a unique beach that is split in two, is highlighted, so that it is made one of the top priority beach destinations for tourists. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, especially during 2016–2019, there was progress in increasing tourists for holidays, festival agendas, and religious celebrations. Therefore, tourism management for Lariti Beach promotes and booms this destination with the term "Pantai ~~kekiniian~~Kekinian".

From a holistic viewpoint, tourism is an activity that distributes accommodation services, food transportation, recreation, and other services regarding the tourism trade, which allows the involvement of various dimensions including social, cultural, economic, environmental, security, and the exchange of insights that contribute to tourism affairs (Capineri & Romano, 2021; Chuang, 2023; Rodríguez Rangel et al., 2020). So far, tourism is one of the sectors that supports the economy in several countries (Holik, 2016; Manzoor et al., 2019; Naseem, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021). The position of the tourism sector can be for the welfare of local residents, especially with growing income from entrance fees to tourist destinations, parking fees, hotel rentals, and other things that enable transactions in the tourism economy. In its role as a favorite destination in Bima Regency, Lariti Beach has an attraction that is integrated into one of the marine tourism assets in Bima Regency that must be protected.

As is known, although Lariti Beach is growing and existing among tourists, it is not yet fully popular compared to similar destinations with a big reputation located in Bima Regency, such as Pink Beach and Lawata Beach. The area or subject discussed in this paper is Lariti Beach. To get to Lariti Beach, visitors need a time allocation of around 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours from the Regency center (Woha District) via the land route called "Raba-Sape" using four-wheeled or two-wheeled vehicles. The main obstacle that is the reason why Laritini Beach is not well known is because promotional techniques are less than optimal (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2023). Ideally, by promoting through certain attractions, festivals and events, a tourist destination can have strong branding (Khairunnisah, 2022; Purwadi et al., 2023). With beautiful natural panoramas, it is hoped that Lariti Beach can take advantage of this prospect through strengthening branding. The study approach is based on the direct interview method, where the sampling technique is operated by collecting information face to face. Next, the interview data was tested using PLS.

The motivation of this paper is to identify the effects of destination branding and destination image on tourists' visiting decisions at Lariti Beach. The output of the investigation is useful in determining direction and accommodating accurate policies to strengthen destination branding and destination image in the future. In addition, it will be evaluated which factors indicate success in blending tourist interest in Lariti Beach. The structure of the paper is divided into five procedures. First, the introduction reviews the phenomenon, background, motivation, and contribution. Second, the

literature review contains the theoretical basis for developing proposed hypotheses. Third, materials and methods contain data classification, sample determination criteria, variables, and data analysis stages. Fourth, detail the findings based on objectives and hypotheses. Fifth, the discussion justifies the study results based on the existing situation with a comparison of empirical literature. Sixth, the conclusion summarizes the identification results, implications, policy suggestions, and states the study's weaknesses as follow-up preferences for the direction of future study development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Destination branding

In essence, city branding is used to market the region by providing branding to make it more well-known. In its interactions, destination branding can generate tourist interest by highlighting uniqueness that is different from other cities, thus reflecting the branding and tagline attached to each city. The concept of city branding has similarities with destination branding. The two are interrelated and cannot be separated. Most striking is the memory of the brand of a place. With a brand that is conducive to a city, it gives positive perceptions and enthusiasm and influences visiting decisions (Castillo-Villar, 2018; Chan et al., 2021; Mišič & Podnar, 2019; Mujihestia et al., 2018; Purwanto & Soliha, 2017; Putra et al., 2019). Operationally, there is a difference between destination branding and destination image. According to Kavaratzis & Hatch (2013), destination branding is realized by complex efforts that go beyond just building symbols and slogans, but also creating a destination with multidimensional strategies to develop relational, emotional and functional. Another goal of destination branding is to form a parallel network of unique associations in the minds of consumers (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020).

In the marketing context, a brand is a sign in the form of an image, name, word, letters, numbers, color arrangement, or a combination of these elements that has distinguishing features and is applied to the routine trading of goods and services (Avis & Henderson, 2022). Rita et al. (2019) and Zhimin (2007) analogize a brand as more than just quality assurance, because it includes the following six pillars: (1) Artibut; (2) Benefits; (3) Value; (4) Culture; (5) Personality; and (6) Usage. Based on these premises, the following first hypothesis is formulated:

H₁. There is a ~~strong~~ partial connection between destination branding and visiting decisions.

2.2. Destination image

Işoraité (2018), Kaur & Kaur (2019), and Stern et al. (2021) articulate brand image as a form of trust embedded in the minds of consumers towards associations that last in memory. Theoretically, the image represents the accumulation of exposure, knowledge, and experience in an individual's mind towards certain entities, such as objects, tourism, or places. Broadly speaking, destination image is a derivative of city image to learn about how individuals perceive and navigate the urban landscape constructively (Avraham, 2004; Badami, 2022; Hu & Gong, 2021; Huang et al., 2021; Su et al., 2023). Specifically, Balmer & Gray (2000), Balmer & Yen (2016), Melewar et al. (2017), and Zenker & Braun (2017) divide the destination image into three different stages of communication, including: (1) Primary communication, related to communication channels from all tourism corridors; (2) Secondary communication, which aims to calibrate formal and planned communications; and (3) Tertiary communication, related to word of mouth (WoM) affiliated with communication media and competitors.

In its terminology, destination image is the point of view that tourists have in making decisions before traveling to a particular destination. Destination is a key pillar that describes tourist loyalty to a destination. Lopes (2011) represents destination image as an expression of emotional thoughts,

imagination, prejudice, and objective knowledge held by individuals or groups about certain locations. In the tourism sphere, destination image consists of a combination of feelings, impressions, ideas and beliefs about tourist objects that come from direct and indirect information (Jebbouri et al., 2022).

The key to implementing a brand strategy in city image communication is to increase market share (Ma et al., 2021; Mohamad et al., 2022; Prilenska, 2012; Primorac, 2018). The most rational reason is that if a city has a shining brand foundation, it can change the perception of the city, which was originally isolated by a bad image among internal and external constituents. With a strong brand, it can form a model or vision for the future for city residents and stakeholders in a sustainable manner. Then, by triggering a consistent representation of the city and helping a harmonious bond through increasing awareness of the city's position at the regional, national, and global levels. Finally, it can eliminate stereotypes that are detrimental to the destination and replace them with a higher degree. To that end, it makes sense to construct a second hypothesis as follows:

H2. There is a strong-partial connection between destination image and visiting decisions.

2.3. Visiting decision

From the main literature, visiting decisions are similar to purchasing decisions, which reflect consumer behavior after the process of obtaining information about a desired product and tools for conducting assessments and making decisions by setting one option that is considered the most profitable (Tao et al., 2022). Nuraeni et al. (2015) and Saito & Strehlau (2018) investigated the fact that the decision to visit is an option that tourists choose before visiting a place. Based on these preferences, buying decisions can also be practiced with visiting decisions (Cai et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2022; Hanaysha, 2018). Basically, the visiting decisions is an alternative-desire that is taken by individuals before traveling to an area by considering several criteria (Perdue & Meng, 2006). Dahiya & Batra (2016), Do & Shih (2016), Kim et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2020), and Orden-Mejía et al. (2022) describe the decision to visit as a tourist insight in selecting the most preferred travel pattern.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

3.1. Participants and data

In the existing scheme, the objectivity of the sample invited is all tourists visiting Lariti Beach (Bima Regency). With a non-probability approach, the study is directed to provide equal opportunities for each respondent to be selected as a sample. Then, the tools for classifying the sample were set via purposive sampling. This method can verify the compiled material to serve as a data source. With population volume referring to visiting moments tabulated in 2023, the sample unit is calculated from the number of touristsSample units are selected and taken based on the population or level of tourist visits in 2023. Overall, there were 541 visits during the period. In other words, the number of respondents is 541, which is a combination of foreign and domestic visits. The cluster of respondents interviewed has two basic categories: respondents who have visited Lariti Beach (minimum twice) and respondents with an age limit (minimum 18 years and maximum 57 years), with the assumption that the age threshold is considered mature to make decisions that affect return visits.

The characteristics of the data collected are primary data, where this data is obtained directly from informants without intermediaries. Data collection was done by distributing questionnaires to the end of Lariti Beach. To facilitate data documentation, an online-offline questionnaire via Google Formface-to-face was also implemented. The questionnaire model is in a closed format, where respondents are only allowed to answer or give opinions based on the answer choices provided by the enumerator. Table 1 displays the instrument used in filtering the data according to the Likert scale guide, where each answer choice has its own rating.

Table 1. Variable description

Response	Abbreviation	Notation
Strongly disagree	SD _A	1 _A
Don't agree	DA _A	2 _A
Neutral	N _A	3 _A
Agree	A _A	4 _A
Strongly agree	SA _A	5 _A

Based on the list of questionnaire scores above, the scale range is estimated as follows:

$$SR = \frac{m-n}{b} \quad (1)$$

$$SR = \frac{5-1}{3} \quad (2)$$

$$SR = 1.33 \quad (3)$$

where: SR = scale range; m = maximum value of the questionnaire scale points; n = minimum value of the questionnaire scale points; and b = number of points on the questionnaire scale.

From the statistical guidelines above, the scale range score is 1.33. The lowest rating is $1 + 1.33 = 2.33$, while $2.34 + 1.33 = 3.67$ for the medium rating, and the highest rating is calculated from $3.68 + 1.33 = 5.01$ or rounded up to 5.

3.2. Variables and data processing

The key variables that become attributes in this study include visiting decisions (dependent variable) and city branding and destination image (independent variables). Within the theoretical scope, each variable has limitations, which are summarized in Table 2. In this case, the total indicators of the three variables are fourteen constructs. In substance, the visiting decision variable consists of five indicators, while destination branding and destination image have the same number of indicators, i.e., four indicators.

Table 2. Variable description

Variable name	Code	Indicators	Adopted from
Visiting Decisions	VD	Service (VD.1), Travel Agent (VD.2), Type of Trip (VD.3) Cost and Time (VD.4), and Destination Area (VD.5)	El Fikri et al. (2020) and Lutfie & Marcelino (2020)
Destination Branding	DB	Place (DB.1), Tourists (DB.2), Awareness (DB.3), and Potential (DB.4)	Herezniak, M & Anders-Morawska (2015), Herezniak et al. (2018), Soleimani Sheijani et al. (2023), and Vahabian et al. (2021)
Destination Image	DI	Presence (DI.1), Behavior (DI.2), Affective (DI.3), and Cognitive (DI.4)	Asnawi et al. (2018), Mohamed Thabet (2022), and Su et al. (2023)

In the processing phase, the data is tested with Partial Least Squares (PLS) media. The function of PLS is to analyze the link between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. To confirm the closeness of the relationship between variables, an evaluation of the outer model and inner model is carried out. First, the outer model reviews convergent validity, discriminant validity of indicators, and reliability. Second, the inner model follows up on the proposed hypothesis through the R-squared and partial test. Finally, after statistical analysis of the data is carried out, the next step is verification and justification of the findings in the field.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Respondent demographics

Table 3 describes the characteristics of the respondents who visited Lariti Beach. Based on tourist status, the respondents who were female were 45.1% and 54.9% male tourists. According to national status, 62.5% of them are domestic tourists, while 37.5% are foreign tourists. Another fact is that the professional backgrounds of the respondents varied greatly: 29.9% (university students), 22% (private employees), 16.5% (high school students), 14.8% (self-employed), 12% (government apparatus), and 4.8% (entrepreneurs). In terms of age, 34% of tourists are aged 42–49 years, 27.9% are aged 18–25 years, 23.1% are aged 34–41 years, 8.7% are aged 26–33 years, and 6.3% are aged 50–57 years.

Table 3. Profile of respondents, *obs.* = 541

Profile	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Man	297	54.9%
	Female	244	45.1%
Nationality	Foreign	203	37.5%
	Domestic	338	62.5%
Profession	Government apparatus	65	12%
	Private employees	119	22%
	Self-employed	80	14.8%
	Entrepreneurs	26	4.8%
	University students	162	29.9%
	High school students	89	16.5%
Age	18–25	151	27.9%
	26–33	47	8.7%
	34–41	125	23.1%
	42–49	184	34%
	50–57	34	6.3%
Visit intensity	2 times	218	40.3%
	3 times	200	37%
	4 times	79	14.6%
	> 4 times	44	8.1%

In 2023, 40.3% of respondents had experience with Lariti Beach after two visits. On the one hand, 37% of respondents claimed to have visited this destination three times, 14.6% of respondents visited it four times, and the rest visited it more than four times, was 8.1% of respondents.

4.2. Evaluation of outer model

In testing the outer model via convergent validity, variable indicators are assessed based on scores from the Outer Loading (OL) weights. In its interpretation, the correlation score is calculated through the components of the model construct measurement (see Table 4). The requirement for an OL score is more than 0.7. Quantitatively, of the seventeen indicators evaluated, it was explained that only three were invalid, or each variable had one invalid indicator, including: VD.2 ($OL = 0.633$), DB.2 ($OL = 0.524$), and DI.4 ($OL = 0.606$). Interestingly, fourteen indicators met the established mechanism ($OL > 0.7$). In parallel, the convergent validity score with the highest performance of the visiting decision variable was VD.3 ($OL = 0.919$). Then, looking at the other two variables (destination branding and city branding), it is evident that the highest are DB.3 ($OL = 0.893$) and DI.2 ($OL = 0.939$).

Table 4. Convergent validity

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Variable	Indicators & questions	OL	Remarks	
			Valid	Not valid
Visiting Decisions	VD.1: Services provided according to speculation	0.905	√	
	VD. 2: Travel agents have ideal standards	0.633		√
	VD. 3: Travel type accessible to tourists	0.919	√	
	VD.4: Cost and time to the destination according to the estimated route	0.892	√	
	VD.5: Strategic destination areas are easy to reach	0.915	√	
Destination Branding	DB.1: The places I've visited have changed significantly	0.841	√	
	DB.2: Tourists are presented with stunning attractions	0.524		√
	DB.3: I realize that the destinations visited correspond to reality	0.893	√	
	DB.4: This tourism has the potential to be developed	0.884	√	
Destination Image	DI1: The presence of this destination gives me new enthusiasm	0.916	√	
	DI.2: Friendly behavior from destination managers and local residents in welcoming tourists	0.939	√	
	AT.3: I feel that this destination presents beautiful nature	0.905	√	
	DI.4: The condition of this tour is better managed than before	0.606		√

In addition to measuring validity based on the OL score, the indicator validity test can also be identified by Cross Loading (CL). CL values are converted to Average Variance Extracted (AVE). This model is an alternative series to improve and evaluate invalid indicators based on convergent validity. In actualization, the indicator is assumed to be valid if the AVE score is higher than 0.5.

Table 5. Discriminant validity

Variable	Indicators & questions	AVE	Remarks	
			Valid	Not valid
Visiting Decisions	VD.1: Services provided according to speculation	0.792	√	
	VD. 2: Travel agents have ideal standards	0.728	√	
	VD. 3: Travel type accessible to tourists	0.860	√	
	VD.4: Cost and time to the destination according to the estimated route	0.813	√	
	VD.5: Strategic destination areas are easy to reach	0.746	√	
Destination Branding	DB.1: The places I've visited have changed significantly	0.893	√	
	DB.2: Tourists are presented with stunning attractions	0.884	√	
	DB.3: I realize that the destinations visited correspond to reality	0.416		√
	DB.4: This tourism has the potential to be developed	0.939	√	
Destination Image	DI1: The presence of this destination gives me new enthusiasm	0.905	√	
	DI.2: Friendly behavior from destination managers and local residents in welcoming tourists	0.943	√	

	AT.3: I feel that this destination presents beautiful nature	0.345		√
	DI.4: The condition of this tour is better managed than before	0.906	√	

Through the discriminant validity parameter, only the visiting decision variable has valid indicators, while there is one indicator on destination branding or destination image whose indicator is not valid. Surprisingly, there was a shift in the indicator from the previously valid OL value to invalid, referring to the AVE calculation. The two indicators are DB.3 ($AVE = 0.416$) and DI.3 ($AVE = 0.345$). Even so, the AVE score is slightly better than the OL because fifteen indicators match expectations ($AVE > 0.5$). Table 5 ensures that there are contradictions in the respondents' reactions to understanding the questionnaire. Based on the second scenario using AVE per indicator, Table 5 above presents VD.3 ($AVE = 0.860$) as the largest indicator representing the visiting decision variable. The two indicators (DB.4 and DI.2) which are the constructs of destination branding and destination branding, have the highest AVE scores, reaching 0.939 and 0.943 .

Table 6. Reliability test

Variables	CA	CR	Remarks	
			Reliable	Not reliable
Visiting Decisions	0.952	0.933	√	
Destination Branding	0.950	0.929	√	
Destination Image	0.956	0.944	√	

Table 6 describes the reliability results supported by two parameters. First, for Composite Reliability (CR), the criteria use a minimum standard above 0.6 . Second, for Cronbach's Alpha (CA), the minimum requirement is more than 0.7 . Thus, of the three variables, both the visiting decisions, destination branding, or destination image have CR (> 0.6) and CA (> 0.7) values that exceed the threshold or are concluded to be reliable. When compared based on the acquisition of each score on both parameters, destination image is the more dominant variable for CR and CA results than the other two variables, where the statistical output shows scores of 0.956 and 0.944 .

4.3. Evaluation of inner model

In the scope of the strength of the relationship, which is clarified using the coefficient of determination (R^2), it is concluded that the visiting decisions is influenced by destination branding and destination image, reaching 0.799 . With the linkage of the two variables to visiting decisions, the correlation determination is within the relatively stronghigh criteria, indicating that destination branding and destination image are reliable measures, although there is a coefficient value of 0.201 that is outside the study model (see Table 7). Kurniawan et al. (2023) states that there are five classifications in determination, where 0–0.20 indicates a very low coefficient, 0.21–0.40 indicates a low coefficient, 0.41–0.60 indicates a moderate coefficient, 0.61–0.80 indicates a high coefficient, and 0.81–1 indicates a very high coefficient.

Table 7. R-square test

Variable	R^2
Visiting Decisions	0.799

Based on Table 8, it was found that the two hypotheses offered were in line with the partial significance. The calculation of significance uses the T-statistic value (minimum requirement is 1.96).

In smart PLS, each hypothesized relationship is simulated by bootstrapping the sample data. Testing bootstrapping is also intended to minimize the problem of abnormalities in observations. As a result, there is a positive causality between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. In particular, although the two variables both obtained T-statistics above the provisions (> 1.96), destination branding ($T\text{-statistic} = 35.998$) and destination image ($T\text{-statistic} = 13.922$), the most dominating structure was the relationship between destination branding on visiting decisions. Table 8 also verifies that both destination branding and destination image have a significant impact on the decision to visit. Overall, the first hypothesis and second hypothesis are accepted.

Table 8. Path coefficient

Linkages	Original sample	Sample mean	Standar deviation	T-statistic	p-value
Destination Branding → Visting Decisions	0.894	0.895	0.025	35.998	0.000
Destination Image → Visiting Decisions	0.874	0.876	0.063	13.922	0.000

5. DISCUSSION

This study ensures that by involving two important instruments in tourism, such as destination branding and destination image, it can have an impact on visiting decisions. Narratively, tourists who have confidence in a choice directly have full awareness of making the right decision. In this case, a destination with a positive record will affect perceptions that relatively lead to positive emotional ties. Conversely, a bad reputation for a destination will have a negative effect on tourist interest.

A series of studies links causality between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. To strengthen the decision to visit, a relevant program is needed. Take, for example, destination branding. Competent tourism relies on attractive destinations to reform the situation in the eyes of tourists (Baloch et al., 2022; Caprioli et al., 2021; Chiang & Chen, 2023; Dakwah et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2022; Roostika, 2012; Srivastava et al., 2022). The experience during the visit will be a positive benchmark mediated by WoM. Often, the increasing level of tourist satisfaction further increases the loyalty of tourists who enjoy traveling from several developing markets: the District of Swat–Pakistan, "hygge style" in Denmark and "fika phenomena" from Sweden, Pier-2 Art Center–Taiwan, Lombok Island–Indonesia, Prambanan Temple (Yogyakarta–Indonesia), and India.

Another justification by Al-Kwafi (2015), Fatmawati et al. (2023), Moustaka & Constantoglou (2021), and Susanti et al. (2023) relies on strengthening the destination image to increase visiting decisions through experiments in Doha–Qatar, natural destinations in Yogyakarta–Indonesia, Mountainous City destinations–Greece, or tourists who are domiciled in East Java–Indonesia. What's more, with the presence of social media, millennial tourists can make it easier to plan, get to know, selecting, and compare the types of tourism they will choose before deciding on one of these destinations. Also, the advantage of e-WoM is that it can track feedback based on the comments of previous tourists who have visited certain places.

From various other empirical literature, destination branding has a crucial impact on visiting decisions. This allows tourists to make decisions, increase their interest in visiting, give more value to a destination compared to similar destinations, and helps them to look for differences between one destination and another (Damarwulan, 2021; Guo et al., 2024; Marchat & Camelis, 2017; Widayati et al., 2020). With an attractive tagline and design, destination branding will become the foundation for various marketing patterns to promote destinations and attract new visitors. Furthermore, Yadindrima et al. (2021) stated that destination image influences tourist behavior in making decisions about which

destination to choose. In turn, destination image is also integrated into the desire to revisit and increase satisfaction (Al-Kwafi, 2015; Noviana et al., 2022; Satyarini et al., 2017).

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study is committed to examining the link between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions targeted at cross-tourists at Lariti Beach during 2023. Using the PLS method, it is concluded that:

1. Destination branding and destination image have a significant impact on visiting decisions.
2. Destination branding and destination image, which are growing, are increasingly increasing tourists' visiting decisions.
3. The implication shows that by providing a comprehensive destination branding and destination image system at Lariti Beach, it has facilitated tourist interest, which has a positive synergy with the visiting decisions.

Despite these positive results, the barriers that are the weaknesses of each indicator trigger disruptions in travel that need to be solved. First, the roots of the problem, based on the convergent validity assessment, are travel agents, attractions, and tourist conditions. Second, the obstacles that result in uncertainty in visiting decisions based on discriminant validity parameters are tourist awareness and affective factors. By looking at these six issues, the main recommendation is directed to destination managers to conduct more fragmented dissemination on marketing aspects. Post-pandemic economic recovery, especially in the business sector, is not easy. However, managerial parties need to rearrange marketing strategies that can transition according to trending patterns. Also, further suggestions to the local government as a bureaucratic actor can consider regulations that make it easier for visitors. In that context, this includes reducing the tightening of entry routes to Bima Regency without ignoring health protocols. With good control in the tourism development plan, it will automatically open up a wide tourist network. It also gives an appreciation of the interest of tourists who are planning to take a tour.

For the long-term sustainability of tourism, the distribution of information that prioritizes transparency regarding the situation of destinations must also be implemented, thereby reducing discriminatory actions. Diving into the existing findings, there are still weaknesses in this work, such as testing with three variables that are considered limited. Therefore, research has hopes for the future to pay attention to the composition of variables referring to booming issues with the aim of surpassing the empirical results of this paper. Another limitation of the current study is the sample size. Further studies need to consider broader sample characteristics.

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7) Perbaikan kedua

RELEVANCE FOR TOURIST VISITING DECISIONS – DESTINATION BRANDING VS DESTINATION IMAGE: CASE
STUDY FROM LARITI BEACH, BIMA REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Today, there are disciplines that concentrate on tourism, some of which highlight a tourist's visiting decision; this is not only associated with the brand or reputation of a destination but also its image. From this premise, this study aims to find the relationship between destination branding and destination image on tourists' visiting decisions. With a focus on tourists visiting Lariti Beach, Bima Regency (Indonesia), data collection via interviews based on non-probability sampling techniques were made. Using the partial least squares (PLS) method, the results of the study reveal that both destination branding and destination image affect tourists' visiting decisions systematically. When compared, destination branding is the more important instrument for increasing visiting decisions compared to image. Therefore, this research opens space and attention for further studies to consider destination image as a critical function in stimulating visiting decisions. Future implications include tourism policies that lead to optimal branding and image.

KEYWORDS

destination branding, destination image, visiting decisions, partial least squares, PLS, Lariti Beach

Commented [KSz1]: Is this the correct spelling for citing your names?

Commented [uu2R1]: The correct one is written in capital letters as "ZA" and not "Za". The abbreviation of ZA is Zainal Airifn. However, this naming is in accordance with the national identity card.

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the modernization of the era, a brand can not only be owned by a product but also by a city, commonly labeled as ‘place branding’ or ‘city branding’, and this leads to progress in various directions. In principle, the premise of city branding has pioneered the term ‘destination branding’. According to Ilmi et al. (2022) and Kasapi and Cela (2017), destination branding describes the image management of a destination through innovation and coordination of social, economic, commercial, cultural and government regulations. Destination branding can be linked as a strategy from a particular country or region to create a strong position in the minds of tourism actors (Insch, 2014). Like the positioning of a service or product, its orientation needs to be widely recognized throughout the world (Donner & Fort, 2018; Jojic, 2018; Oliva et al., 2022).

In destination development, the above perspective is in line with the arguments expressed by Audouin (2022) and Setianti et al. (2018), which state that destination branding is one of the solutions for supporting the image management of a destination through government regulations. Shirvani Dastgerdi and De Luca (2019) define a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of all of them to identify a tourism product. The status of ‘destination branding’ means that the characteristics of competitors’ products can be distinguished.

Technically, several cities in Indonesia have focused their attention on branding to explore their potential, use local wisdom, and take advantage of regional identity. Such is the case in Java, where Solo, as a pioneer city synonymous with the ‘spirit of Java’, is considered one that has succeeded in popularizing city branding. Apart from these areas, Batu has also had dedicated destination branding with the tag ‘shining Batu’ since it was launched in May 2013, when it coincided with the celebration of National Awakening Day. Previously, Batu had also introduced the tag ‘Batu Tourism City/Kota Wisata Batu’ (KWB) and the change of from KWB to ‘shining Batu’ was triggered by its strong meaning covering the foundations of Batu community life (Panjaitan, 2020; Zahrah, 2023).

At the same time, West Nusa Tenggara is one of the provinces in Indonesia with extensive tourism market segmentation, and where one of the most stunning destinations is Lariti Beach. This coastal tourism site is located in Soro Village, Lambu District, Bima Regency. Lariti Beach has made a breakthrough because of its own advantages and uniqueness compared to other beaches. In addition to a natural panorama that is still sustainable and a beautiful atmosphere, Panrai Lariti is supported by management skills in serving tourists. Every year, Lariti Beach is visited by foreign and domestic tourists, and it has experienced an increase in visits over time. When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in early 2020, the majority of open-air destinations that triggered crowds of visitors were closed,

Commented [KSz3]: What is KWB? Kota Wisata Batu?

Commented [uu4R3]: Yes, that's right, KWB is an abbreviation for "Batu Tourism City/ Kota Wisata Batu". This city is one of the most popular destination areas in Indonesia.

including Lariti Beach, and it experienced a critical decline. In 2021, the level of decline detected amounted to 487,560 domestic and 5,069 foreign tourists. Lariti Beach, which has a natural beauty with a unique beach that is split into two, is highlighted, so that it is made one of the top priority beach destinations for tourists. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, especially during 2016–2019, there was progress in increasing tourists for holidays, festivals and religious celebrations. Therefore, the tourism management for Lariti Beach promotes and boasts this destination with the term ‘Pantai Kekinian’.

From a holistic viewpoint, tourism is an activity that distributes accommodation, food, transportation, recreation and other services concerning the tourism trade, which allows for the involvement of various dimensions including social, cultural, economic, environmental, security and the exchange of insights that contribute to tourism affairs (Capineri & Romano, 2021; Chuang, 2023; Rodríguez Rangel et al., 2020). Tourism has been one of the sectors that supports the economy in several countries (Holik, 2016; Manzoor et al., 2019; Naseem, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021). The position of the tourism sector can contribute to the welfare of local residents, especially with growing income from entrance fees to tourist sites, parking fees, hotel rentals and other aspects that enable transactions in the tourism economy. In its role as a favorite destination in Bima Regency, Lariti Beach has the attraction that it is integrated into the coastal tourism assets in Bima Regency and must be protected.

It is known that although Lariti Beach is growing as a destination, it is not yet fully popular compared to similar destinations with great reputations located in Bima Regency, such as Pink Beach and Lawata Beach. The area discussed in this paper however is Lariti Beach. To get there, visitors need a time allocation of from 75 minutes to two hours from the Regency center (Woha District) via the land route called ‘Raba–Sape’ using four-wheeled or two-wheeled vehicles. The main obstacle to Lariti Beach not being better known is because promotional techniques are less than optimal (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2023). Ideally, by promoting through certain attractions, festivals and events, a tourist destination can have strong branding (Khairunnisah, 2022; Purwadi et al., 2023). With beautiful natural panoramas, it is hoped that Lariti Beach can take advantage of this prospect through strengthening its branding.

The study approach here is based on the direct interview method, where the sampling technique is operated by collecting information face to face. The interview data was then tested using PLS.

The motivation for this paper is to identify the effects of destination branding and destination image on tourists’ decisions to visit Lariti Beach. The results of the investigation are useful in determining the direction of policies to strengthen destination branding and destination image in the future. In addition, it will evaluate which factors indicate success in accommodating tourist interests at Lariti Beach. The article is divided into six parts. First, the introduction reviews the issue, background,

motivation and contribution. Second, a literature review contains the theoretical basis for developing proposed hypotheses. Third, materials and methods contain data classification, sample determination criteria, variables and data analysis. Fourth, details of the findings are given based on objectives and hypotheses. Fifth, the discussion justifies the study results based on the existing situation with a comparison of empirical literature. Sixth, the conclusion summarizes the results, implications and policy suggestions, and states the study's weaknesses as follow-up preferences for the direction of future work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. DESTINATION BRANDING

In essence, city branding is used to market a region by providing branding to make it better known. In its interactions, destination branding can generate tourist interest by highlighting a uniqueness that is different from other cities, thus reflecting the branding and tagline attached to each city. The concept of city branding has similarities with destination branding and the two are in fact interrelated and cannot be separated. Most striking is the memorability of the brand. With a brand that is appropriate to a city, positive perceptions and enthusiasm are given and influences visiting decisions (Castillo-Villar, 2018; Chan et al., 2021; Mišič & Podnar, 2019; Mujihestia et al., 2018; Purwanto & Soliha, 2017; Putra et al., 2019). Operationally, there is a difference between destination branding and destination image. According to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013), destination branding is realized by complex efforts that go beyond just building symbols and slogans, but also creating a destination with multidimensional strategies to develop relationally, emotionally and functionally. Another goal of destination branding is to form a parallel network of unique associations in the minds of consumers (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). In the marketing context, a brand is a sign in the form of an image, name, word, letters, numbers, color arrangement or any combination of these elements that has distinguishing features and is applied to the routine trading of goods and services (Avis & Henderson, 2022). Rita et al. (2019) and Zhimin (2007) consider a brand as more than just quality assurance because it includes the following six pillars: (a) attributes; (b) benefits; (c) value; (d) culture; (e) personality and (f) usage. Based on these premises, the first hypothesis is formulated:

H₁: There is a partial connection between destination branding and visiting decisions.

2.2. DESTINATION IMAGE

Işoraité (2018), Kaur and Kaur (2019) and Stern et al. (2001) articulate brand image as a form of trust embedded in the minds of consumers towards associations that last in the memory. Theoretically, the image represents the accumulation of exposure, knowledge and experience in an individual's mind towards certain entities, such as sites or places. Broadly speaking, destination image is a derivative of city image which is how individuals perceive and navigate the urban landscape (Avraham, 2004; Badami, 2022; Hu & Gong, 2021; Huang et al., 2021; Su et al., 2023). Specifically, Balmer and Gray (2000), Balmer and Yen (2016), Melewar et al. (2017) and Zenker and Braun (2017) divide destination image into three different stages of communication: (a) primary, related to communication channels from all tourism sectors; (b) secondary, which aims to calibrate formal and planned communications; and (c) tertiary, related to word of mouth (WoM) in connection with communication media and competitors.

In its terminology, destination image is the perspective through which tourists make decisions before traveling to a particular destination, a key pillar of which is tourist loyalty. Lopes (2011) represents destination image as an expression of the emotional thoughts, imagination, prejudice and objective knowledge held by individuals or groups about certain locations. In the tourism sphere, destination image consists of a combination of feelings, impressions, ideas and beliefs about tourist sites that come from direct and indirect information (Jebbouri et al., 2022).

The key to implementing a brand strategy in city image communication is to increase market share (Ma et al., 2021; Mohamad et al., 2022; Prilenska, 2012; Primorac, 2018). The most rational reason is that if a city has a brand foundation, it can change how it is perceived as it may have been originally identified by a poor image both internally and externally. With a strong brand, it can form a model or vision for the future for city residents and stakeholders in a sustainable manner. Then, by triggering a consistent representation and helping to create a bond through increasing awareness of the city's position at regional, national and global levels. Finally, it can eliminate and replace stereotypes that are detrimental to the destination. To that end, it makes sense to construct a second hypothesis as follows:

H₂: There is a partial connection between destination image and visiting decisions.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/147059310100100203>

2.3. VISITING DECISIONS

From the main literature, visiting decisions are similar to purchasing decisions which reflect consumer behavior after the process of obtaining information about a desired product, and tools for conducting assessments and making decisions by choosing the option that is considered the best (Tao et al., 2022). Nuraeni et al. (2015) and Saito and Strehlau (2018) investigated the fact that the decision to visit is an option that tourists choose before visiting a place. Based on these preferences, buying decisions can also be compared with visiting decisions (Cai et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2022; Hanaysha, 2018). Basically, the visiting decision is a desire by individuals before traveling to an area by considering several criteria (Perdue & Meng, 2006). Dahiya and Batra (2016), Do and Shih (2016), Kim et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2020) and Orden-Mejía et al. (2022) describe the decision to visit as tourist insights into selecting the most preferred travel pattern.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

3.1. PARTICIPANTS AND DATA

In the existing scheme, the sample is drawn from all tourists visiting Lariti Beach (Bima Regency). With a non-probability approach, the study provides an equal opportunity for each respondent to be selected as part of a sample. The tools for classifying the sample were set via purposive sampling which can verify the compiled material to serve as a data source (Tricahyadinata et al., 2020). The sample was selected based on the population of tourist visits in 2023 and the number of respondents was 541, which is a combination of foreign and domestic visitors. The respondents interviewed form two basic categories: respondents who have visited Lariti Beach (minimum twice) and respondents within age limits (minimum 18 years and maximum 57), with the assumption that the age thresholds contain those considered mature enough to make decisions that affect return visits.

The data collected is primary, obtained directly from informants without intermediaries. Data collection was done by distributing questionnaires at Lariti Beach. To facilitate data documentation, an offline face-to-face questionnaire was also implemented. The questionnaire model is in a closed format where respondents are only allowed to answer or give opinions based on the answer choices provided. The instrument used in filtering the data according to the Likert scale guide, where each answer choice has its own rating with the following details: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = don't agree, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5 (ZA et al., 2021).

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Based on the list of questionnaire scores, the scale range is estimated as follows:

$$SR = \frac{m-n}{b} \quad (1)$$

$$SR = \frac{5-1}{3} = 1.33 \quad (2)$$

where: SR – scale range; m – maximum value of the questionnaire scale points; n – minimum value of the questionnaire scale points; and b – number of points on the questionnaire scale.

From the statistical guidelines above, the scale range score is 1.33. The lowest rating is $1 + 1.33 = 2.33$, while $2.34 + 1.33 = 3.67$ forms the medium rating, and the highest is calculated as $3.68 + 1.33 = 5.01$ or rounded down to 5.

3.2. VARIABLES AND DATA PROCESSING

The key variables that become attributes in this study include visiting decisions (dependent variable) and city branding and destination image (independent variables). Within the theoretical scope, each variable has limitations, which are summarized in Table 1. In this case, the total number of indicators of the three variables is fourteen. In substance, the visiting decision variable consists of five indicators, while destination branding and destination image each have four.

Table 1. Variable description

Variable name (code)	Indicators		Adopted from
Visiting decisions	VD.1	Service	El Fikri et al. (2020), Lutfie and Marcelino (2020)
	VD.2	Travel agent	
	VD.3	Type of trip	
	VD.4	Cost and time	
	VD.5	Destination area	
Destination branding	DB.1	Place	Herežniak and Anders-Morawska (2015), Herežniak et al. (2018), Soleimani Sheijani et al. (2023), Vahabian et al. (2021)
	DB.2	Tourists	
	DB.3	Awareness	
	DB.4	Potential	
Destination image	DI.1	Presence	Asnawi et al. (2018), Mohamed Thabet (2022), Su et al. (2023)
	DI.2	Behavior	
	DI.3	Affective	
	DI.4	Cognitive	

Source: authors.

In the processing phase, the data is tested with partial least squares (PLS) whose function is to analyze the link between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. To confirm the closeness of the relationship between variables, an evaluation of the outer and inner models is carried out. First, the outer model reviews convergent validity, the discriminant validity of indicators and reliability. Second, the inner model follows up on the proposed hypothesis through the *R*-squared and partial test. Finally, after statistical analysis of the data has been carried out, the next step is verification and justification of the findings from the field.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2 describes the characteristics of the respondents who visited Lariti Beach: 45.1% were female and 54.9% male. According to nationality, 62.5% of them were domestic, while 37.5% were foreign. The professional backgrounds of the respondents varied greatly: 29.9% (university students), 22% (private employees), 16.5% (high school students), 14.8% (self-employed), 12% (state employees) and 4.8% (entrepreneurs). In terms of age, 34% were 42–49, 27.9% – 18–25, 23.1% – 34–41, 8.7% – 26–33 years, and 6.3% – 50–57 years.

Table 2. Profile of respondents, *N* = 541

Profile	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Man	297	54.9
	Female	244	45.1
Nationality	Foreign	203	37.5
	Domestic	338	62.5
Profession	State employees	65	12.0
	Private employees	119	22.0
	Self-employed	80	14.8
	Entrepreneurs	26	4.8
	University students	162	29.9
	High school students	89	16.5
Age	18–25	151	27.9
	26–33	47	8.7
	34–41	125	23.1
	42–49	184	34.0
	50–57	34	6.3
Visit repetition	2 times	218	40.3
	3 times	200	37.0
	4 times	79	14.6

	>4 times	44	8.1
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Source: authors.

In 2023, 40.3% of respondents had visited Lariti Beach at least twice, 37% of respondents claimed to have visited three times, 14.6% four times, and the rest (8.1%) more than four times.

4.2. EVALUATION OF THE OUTER MODEL

In testing the outer model via convergent validity, variable indicators are assessed based on scores from the outer loading (*OL*) weights. In its interpretation, the correlation score is calculated through the components of the model construct measurement (see [Table 3](#)). The requirement for an *OL* score is more than 0.7. Quantitatively, of the seventeen indicators evaluated, only three were invalid with each variable having one invalid indicator: VD.2 (*OL* = 0.633), DB.2 (*OL* = 0.524) and DI.4 (*OL* = 0.606). Interestingly, all fourteen other indicators met the required figure (*OL* > 0.7). The convergent validity score with the highest performance for the visiting decision variable was VD.3 (*OL* = 0.919). Then, looking at the other two variables (destination branding and destination image), it is evident that the highest are DB.3 (*OL* = 0.893) and DI.2 (*OL* = 0.939).

Table 3. Convergent validity

Variable	Indicators and questions		Outer loading (<i>OL</i>)	Remarks	
				Valid	Not valid
Visiting decisions	VD.1	Services provided according to speculation	0.905	+	
	VD.2	Travel agents have ideal standards	0.633		+
	VD.3	Travel type accessible to tourists	0.919	+	
	VD.4	Cost and time to the destination according to the estimated route	0.892	+	
	VD.5	Strategic destination areas are easy to reach	0.915	+	
Destination branding	DB.1	The places I've visited have changed significantly	0.841	+	
	DB.2	Tourists are presented with stunning attractions	0.524		+
	DB.3	I realize that the destinations visited correspond to reality	0.893	+	
	DB.4	This tourism has the potential to be developed	0.884	+	
Destination image	DI.1	The presence of this destination gives me new enthusiasm	0.916	+	
	DI.2	Friendly behavior from destination managers and local residents in	0.939	+	

		welcoming tourists			
	DI.3	I feel that this destination presents beautiful nature	0.905	+	
	DI.4	The condition of this tour is better managed than before	0.606		+

Source: authors.

In addition to measuring validity based on the *OL* score, the indicator validity test can also be identified by cross loading (*CL*). Cross loading values are converted to average variance extracted (AVE). This model is an alternative series to improve and evaluate invalid indicators based on convergent validity. In reality, the indicator is assumed to be valid if the AVE score is higher than 0.5.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

Variable	Indicators questions		Average variance extracted (AVE)	Remarks	
				Valid	Not valid
Visiting decisions	VD.1	Services provided according to speculation	0.792	+	
	VD.2	Travel agents have ideal standards	0.728	+	
	VD.3	Travel type accessible to tourists	0.860	+	
	VD.4	Cost and time to the destination according to the estimated route	0.813	+	
	VD.5	Strategic destination areas are easy to reach	0.746	+	
Destination branding	DB.1	The places I've visited have changed significantly	0.893	+	
	DB.2	Tourists are presented with stunning attractions	0.884	+	
	DB.3	I realize that the destinations visited correspond to reality	0.416		+
	DB.4	This tourism has the potential to be developed	0.939	+	
Destination image	DI.1	The presence of this destination gives me new enthusiasm	0.905	+	
	DI.2	Friendly behavior from destination managers and local residents in welcoming tourists	0.943	+	
	DI.3	I feel that this destination presents beautiful nature	0.345		+
	DI.4	The condition of this tour is better managed than before	0.906	+	

Source: authors.

Through the discriminant validity parameter, only the visiting decision variable has valid indicators, while there is one indicator for both destination branding and destination image which is not valid.

Surprisingly, there was a shift in the indicators from the previously valid *OL* values to invalid, based on the AVE calculation. The two indicators are DB.3 (AVE = 0.416) and DI.3 (AVE = 0.345). Even so, the AVE score is slightly better than the *OL* because fifteen indicators matched expectations (AVE > 0.5). Table 4 ensures that there are no contradictions in the respondents' reactions to understanding the questionnaire. Based on the second scenario using AVE per indicator, Table 4 above presents VD.3 (AVE = 0.860) as the largest indicator representing the visiting decision variable. The two indicators (DB.4 and DI.2) which are the constructs of destination branding and destination image, have the highest AVE scores, reaching 0.939 and 0.943.

Table 5. Reliability test

Variables	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Composite reliability (<i>CR</i>)		
			+++	
Visiting decisions	0.952	0.933	++	
Destination branding	0.950	0.929	+	
Destination image	0.956	0.944		

Note: all values are reliable

Source: authors.

Table 5 describes the reliability results supported by two parameters. Firstly, for composite reliability (*CR*), the criteria use a minimum standard above 0.6. Second, for Cronbach's alpha (α), the minimum requirement is more than 0.7. Thus, of the three variables destination branding and destination image have *CR* (>0.6) and Cronbach's alpha (>0.7) values that exceed the threshold and are thus concluded to be reliable. When compared, based on the acquisition of each score on both parameters, destination image is the more dominant variable for *CR* and α than the other two where the statistical output shows scores of 0.956 and 0.944.

4.3. EVALUATION OF THE INNER MODEL

Concerning the strength of the relationship, which is clarified using the coefficient of determination (R^2) which reaches 0.799, it is concluded that the visiting decisions is influenced by destination branding and destination image. Linking the two variables to visiting decisions, the figures lie within the higher criteria, indicating that destination branding and destination image are reliable measures, although there is a coefficient value of 0.201 that is outside the study model (see Table 6). Kurniawan et al. (2023) states that there are five classifications where 0–0.20 indicates a very low coefficient,

0.21–0.40 a low coefficient, 0.41–0.60 a moderate coefficient, 0.61–0.80 a high coefficient and 0.81–1 a very high coefficient.

Table 6. *R*-square test

Variable	<i>R</i> ²
Visiting decisions	0.799

Source: authors.

Based on **Table 7**, it was found that the two hypotheses offered were in line with partial significance. The calculation of significance uses the *t*-statistic value (minimum requirement is 1.96). In **SmartPLS**, each hypothesized relationship is simulated by bootstrapping the sample data. Testing bootstrapping is also intended to minimize the problem of abnormalities in observations. As a result, there is a positive causality between both destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions: destination branding (*t*-statistic = 35.998) and destination image (*t*-statistic = 13.922), the most dominating was the relationship between destination branding and visiting decisions. **Table 7** also verifies that both destination branding and destination image have a significant impact however on the decision to visit. Overall, both first and second hypotheses are accepted.

Table 7. Path coefficient

Linkages	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	<i>t</i> -statistic	<i>p</i> -value
Destination branding → visiting decisions	0.894	0.895	0.025	35.998	0.000
Destination image → visiting decisions	0.874	0.876	0.063	13.922	0.000

Source: authors.

5. DISCUSSION

This study ensures that by involving two important instruments in tourism such as destination branding and destination image, an impact on visiting decisions can be made. Tourists who have confidence in a choice directly have full awareness of making the right decision. In this case, a destination with a positive record will affect perceptions that lead to positive emotional ties. Conversely, a bad reputation for a destination will have a negative effect on tourist interest.

A series of studies link causality between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. To strengthen the decision to visit, a relevant program is needed. Take, for example,

Commented [KSz9]: Is this the name of the program? If so, shouldn't it be SmartPLS?

Commented [uu10R9]: Yes, we agree with your recommendation. SmartPLS is the name of a statistical program in the PLS method.

destination branding. Successful tourism destinations rely on being attractive in the eyes of tourists (Baloch et al., 2022; Caprioli et al., 2021; Chiang & Chen, 2023; Dakwah et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2022; Roostika, 2012; Srivastava et al., 2022). The experience during the visit will be a positive benchmark mediated by WoM. Often, the increasing level of tourist satisfaction further increases the loyalty of tourists who enjoy traveling to several developing markets: Swat District (Pakistan), 'hygge style' in Denmark and 'Fika phenomena' from Sweden, Pier-2 Art Center (Taiwan), Lombok Island (Indonesia), Prambanan Temple (Yogyakarta, Indonesia) and India.

Another justification put forward by Al-Kwafi (2015), Fatmawati et al. (2023), Moustaka and Constantoglou (2021) and Susanti et al. (2023) relies on strengthening the destination image to increase visiting decisions through experiments in Doha (Qatar), natural destinations in Yogyakarta (Indonesia), mountainous city destinations (Greece), or tourists who are domiciled in East Java (Indonesia). What is more, the presence of social media can make it easier for millennial tourists to plan, get to know, select and compare types of tourism before deciding on a destinations. Also, the advantage of electronic WoM is that it can track feedback based on the comments of previous tourists who have visited certain places.

From various other empirical examples, destination branding has a crucial impact by allowing tourists to make decisions, increase their interest in visiting, give more value to a destination compared to similar ones, and help them to look for differences between one destination and another (Damarwulan, 2021; Guo et al., 2024; Marchat & Camelis, 2017; Widayati et al., 2020). With an attractive tagline and design, destination branding will become the foundation for various marketing patterns to promote destinations and attract new visitors. Furthermore, Yadindrima et al. (2021) has stated that destination image influences tourist behavior in making decisions about which destination to choose. In turn, destination image is also integrated into the desire to revisit and increase satisfaction (Al-Kwafi, 2015; Noviana et al., 2022; Satyarini et al., 2017).

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study is committed to examining the link between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions targeted at tourists at Lariti Beach during 2023. Using the PLS method, it is concluded that:

1. Destination branding and destination image have a significant impact on visiting decisions.

Commented [KSz11]: fika phenomenon?

Commented [uu12R11]: Yes, "Fika" is a Swedish tradition of taking a break, usually over coffee and snacks, while socializing with others. It's not just about taking a coffee break, it's about appreciating the little moments and relaxing. Fika is an important part of Swedish culture and is seen as a way to improve well-being and productivity.

2. Destination branding and destination image, which are growing, are increasingly influencing tourists' visiting decisions.
3. The implication shows that by providing a comprehensive destination branding and destination image system at Lariti Beach, it has facilitated tourist interest, and this has a positive synergy with visiting decisions.

Despite these positive results, the barriers that are the weaknesses for each indicator trigger disruptions in travel that need to be solved. First, the roots of the problem, based on convergent validity assessment, are travel agents, attractions and tourist conditions. Second, the obstacles that result in uncertainty in visiting decisions based on discriminant validity parameters are tourist awareness and affective factors. By looking at these six issues, the main recommendation is directed to destination managers to conduct more detailed dissemination on marketing aspects. Post-pandemic economic recovery, especially in the business sector, is not easy. However, managers need to rearrange marketing strategies that can transition according to trending patterns. Also, further suggestions to the local government as a bureaucratic actor can consider regulations that make it easier for visitors. In that context, this includes reducing restrictions on entry routes to Bima Regency without ignoring health protocols. With careful control in the tourism development plan, it will automatically open up a wide tourist network. It also appreciates the interests of tourists who are planning to visit.

For the long-term sustainability of tourism, the distribution of information that prioritizes transparency regarding the situation of destinations must also be implemented, thereby reducing discriminatory actions. Considering the present findings, there are still weaknesses in this work, such as testing with three variables that are considered limited. Therefore, there are hopes that in the future attention will be paid to the composition of variables referring to issues with the aim of surpassing the empirical results of this article. Another limitation of the current study is the sample size while further studies need to consider broader sample characteristics.

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8) Perbaikan ketiga

RELEVANCE FOR TOURIST VISITING DECISIONS – DESTINATION BRANDING VS DESTINATION IMAGE: CASE
STUDY FROM LARITI BEACH, BIMA REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Today, there are disciplines that concentrate on tourism, some of which highlight a tourist's visiting decision; this is not only associated with the brand or reputation of a destination but also its image. From this premise, this study aims to find the relationship between destination branding and destination image on tourists' visiting decisions. With a focus on tourists visiting Lariti Beach, Bima Regency (Indonesia), data collection via interviews based on non-probability sampling techniques were made. Using the partial least squares (PLS) method, the results of the study reveal that both

destination branding and destination image affect tourists' visiting decisions systematically. When compared, destination branding is the more important instrument for increasing visiting decisions compared to image. Therefore, this research opens space and attention for further studies to consider destination image as a critical function in stimulating visiting decisions. Future implications include tourism policies that lead to optimal branding and image.

KEYWORDS

destination branding, destination image, visiting decisions, partial least squares, PLS, Lariti Beach

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the modernization of the era, a brand can not only be owned by a product but also by a city, commonly labeled as 'place branding' or 'city branding', and this leads to progress in various directions. In principle, the premise of city branding has pioneered the term 'destination branding'. According to Ilmi et al. (2022) and Kasapi and Cela (2017), destination branding describes the image management of a destination through innovation and coordination of social, economic, commercial, cultural and government regulations. Destination branding can be linked as a strategy from a particular country or region to create a strong position in the minds of tourism actors (Insch, 2014). Like the positioning of a service or product, its orientation needs to be widely recognized throughout the world (Donner & Fort, 2018; Kindermann et al., 2021; Oliva et al., 2022; Rua & Santos, 2022; Saqib, 2019).

In destination development, the above perspective is in line with the arguments expressed by Audouin (2022) and Setianti et al. (2018), which state that destination branding is one of the solutions for supporting the image management of a destination through government regulations. Shirvani Dastgerdi and De Luca (2019) define a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of all of them to identify a tourism product. The status of 'destination branding' means that the characteristics of competitors' products can be distinguished.

Technically, several cities in Indonesia have focused their attention on branding to explore their potential, use local wisdom, and take advantage of regional identity. Such is the case in Java, where Solo, as a pioneer city synonymous with the 'spirit of Java', is considered one that has succeeded in popularizing city branding. Apart from these areas, Batu has also had dedicated destination branding with the tag 'shining Batu' since it was launched in May 2013, when it coincided with the celebration

of National Awakening Day. Previously, Batu had also introduced the tag ‘Batu Tourism City / Kota Wisata Batu’ (KWB) and the change of from KWB to ‘shining Batu’ was triggered by its strong meaning covering the foundations of Batu community life (Panjaitan, 2020; Zahrah, 2023).

At the same time, West Nusa Tenggara is one of the provinces in Indonesia with extensive tourism market segmentation, and where one of the most stunning destinations is Lariti Beach. This coastal tourism site is located in Soro Village, Lambu District, Bima Regency. Lariti Beach has made a breakthrough because of its own advantages and uniqueness compared to other beaches. In addition to a natural panorama that is still sustainable and a beautiful atmosphere, Panrai Lariti is supported by management skills in serving tourists. Every year, Lariti Beach is visited by foreign and domestic tourists, and it has experienced an increase in visits over time. When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in early 2020, the majority of open-air destinations that triggered crowds of visitors were closed, including Lariti Beach, and it experienced a critical decline. In 2021, the level of decline detected amounted to 487,560 domestic and 5,069 foreign tourists. Lariti Beach, which has a natural beauty with a unique beach that is split into two, is highlighted, so that it is made one of the top priority beach destinations for tourists. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, especially during 2016–2019, there was progress in increasing tourists for holidays, festivals and religious celebrations. Therefore, the tourism management for Lariti Beach promotes and boasts this destination with the term ‘Pantai Kekinian’.

From a holistic viewpoint, tourism is an activity that distributes accommodation, food, transportation, recreation and other services concerning the tourism trade, which allows for the involvement of various dimensions including social, cultural, economic, environmental, security and the exchange of insights that contribute to tourism affairs (Capineri & Romano, 2021; Chuang, 2023; Rodríguez Rangel et al., 2020). Tourism has been one of the sectors that supports the economy in several countries (Holik, 2016; Manzoor et al., 2019; Naseem, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021). The position of the tourism sector can contribute to the welfare of local residents, especially with growing income from entrance fees to tourist sites, parking fees, hotel rentals and other aspects that enable transactions in the tourism economy. In its role as a favorite destination in Bima Regency, Lariti Beach has the attraction that it is integrated into the coastal tourism assets in Bima Regency and must be protected.

It is known that although Lariti Beach is growing as a destination, it is not yet fully popular compared to similar destinations with great reputations located in Bima Regency, such as Pink Beach and Lawata Beach. The area discussed in this paper however is Lariti Beach. To get there, visitors need a time allocation of from 75 minutes to two hours from the Regency center (Woha District) via the land route called ‘Raba–Sape’ using four-wheeled or two-wheeled vehicles. The main obstacle to Lariti Beach not being better known is because promotional techniques are less than optimal

(Taufiqurrahman et al., 2023). Ideally, by promoting through certain attractions, festivals and events, a tourist destination can have strong branding (Khairunnisah, 2022; Purwadi et al., 2023). With beautiful natural panoramas, it is hoped that Lariti Beach can take advantage of this prospect through strengthening its branding.

The study approach here is based on the direct interview method, where the sampling technique is operated by collecting information face to face. The interview data was then tested using PLS.

The motivation for this paper is to identify the effects of destination branding and destination image on tourists' decisions to visit Lariti Beach. The results of the investigation are useful in determining the direction of policies to strengthen destination branding and destination image in the future. In addition, it will evaluate which factors indicate success in accommodating tourist interests at Lariti Beach. The article is divided into six parts. First, the introduction reviews the issue, background, motivation and contribution. Second, a literature review contains the theoretical basis for developing proposed hypotheses. Third, materials and methods contain data classification, sample determination criteria, variables and data analysis. Fourth, details of the findings are given based on objectives and hypotheses. Fifth, the discussion justifies the study results based on the existing situation with a comparison of empirical literature. Sixth, the conclusion summarizes the results, implications and policy suggestions, and states the study's weaknesses as follow-up preferences for the direction of future work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. DESTINATION BRANDING

In essence, city branding is used to market a region by providing branding to make it better known. In its interactions, destination branding can generate tourist interest by highlighting a uniqueness that is different from other cities, thus reflecting the branding and tagline attached to each city. The concept of city branding has similarities with destination branding and the two are in fact interrelated and cannot be separated. Most striking is the memorability of the brand. With a brand that is appropriate to a city, positive perceptions and enthusiasm are given and influences visiting decisions (Castillo-Villar, 2018; Chan et al., 2021; Mišić & Podnar, 2019; Mujihestia et al., 2018; Purwanto & Soliha, 2017; Putra et al., 2019). Operationally, there is a difference between destination branding and destination image. According to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013), destination branding is realized by complex efforts that go beyond just building symbols and slogans, but also creating a destination with multidimensional strategies to develop relationally, emotionally and functionally. Another goal of

destination branding is to form a parallel network of unique associations in the minds of consumers (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). In the marketing context, a brand is a sign in the form of an image, name, word, letters, numbers, color arrangement or any combination of these elements that has distinguishing features and is applied to the routine trading of goods and services (Avis & Henderson, 2022). Rita et al. (2019) and Zhimin (2007) consider a brand as more than just quality assurance because it includes the following six pillars: (a) attributes; (b) benefits; (c) value; (d) culture; (e) personality and (f) usage. Based on these premises, the first hypothesis is formulated:

H₁: There is a partial connection between destination branding and visiting decisions.

2.2. DESTINATION IMAGE

Işoraité (2018), Kaur and Kaur (2019) and Stern et al. (2001) articulate brand image as a form of trust embedded in the minds of consumers towards associations that last in the memory. Theoretically, the image represents the accumulation of exposure, knowledge and experience in an individual's mind towards certain entities, such as sites or places. Broadly speaking, destination image is a derivative of city image which is how individuals perceive and navigate the urban landscape (Avraham, 2004; Badami, 2025; Hu & Gong, 2021; Huang et al., 2021; Su et al., 2023). Specifically, Balmer and Gray (2000), Balmer and Yen (2017), Melewar et al. (2017) and Zenker and Braun (2017) divide destination image into three different stages of communication: (a) primary, related to communication channels from all tourism sectors; (b) secondary, which aims to calibrate formal and planned communications; and (c) tertiary, related to word of mouth (WoM) in connection with communication media and competitors.

In its terminology, destination image is the perspective through which tourists make decisions before traveling to a particular destination, a key pillar of which is tourist loyalty. Lopes (2011) represents destination image as an expression of the emotional thoughts, imagination, prejudice and objective knowledge held by individuals or groups about certain locations. In the tourism sphere, destination image consists of a combination of feelings, impressions, ideas and beliefs about tourist sites that come from direct and indirect information (Jebbouri et al., 2022).

The key to implementing a brand strategy in city image communication is to increase market share (Ma et al., 2021; Mohamad et al., 2022; Prilenska, 2012; Primorac, 2018). The most rational reason is that if a city has a brand foundation, it can change how it is perceived as it may have been originally identified by a poor image both internally and externally. With a strong brand, it can form a model or vision for the future for city residents and stakeholders in a sustainable manner. Then, by triggering a

consistent representation and helping a create a bond through increasing awareness of the city's position at regional, national and global levels. Finally, it can eliminate and replace stereotypes that are detrimental to the destination. To that end, it makes sense to construct a second hypothesis as follows:

H₂: There is a partial connection between destination image and visiting decisions.

2.3. VISITING DECISIONS

From the main literature, visiting decisions are similar to purchasing decisions which reflect consumer behavior after the process of obtaining information about a desired product, and tools for conducting assessments and making decisions by choosing the option that is considered the best (Tao et al., 2022). Nuraeni et al. (2015) and Saito and Strehlau (2018) investigated the fact that the decision to visit is an option that tourists choose before visiting a place. Based on these preferences, buying decisions can also be compared with visiting decisions (Cai et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2022; Hanaysha, 2018). Basically, the visiting decision is a desire by individuals before traveling to an area by considering several criteria (Perdue & Meng, 2006). Dahiya and Batra (2016), Do and Shih (2016), Kim et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2020) and Orden-Mejía et al. (2022) describe the decision to visit as tourist insights into selecting the most preferred travel pattern.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

3.1. PARTICIPANTS AND DATA

In the existing scheme, the sample is drawn from all tourists visiting Lariti Beach (Bima Regency). With a non-probability approach, the study provides an equal opportunity for each respondent to be selected as part of a sample. The tools for classifying the sample were set via purposive sampling which can verify the compiled material to serve as a data source (Tricahyadinata et al., 2020). The sample was selected based on the population of tourist visits in 2023 and the number of respondents was 541, which is a combination of foreign and domestic visitors. The respondents interviewed form two basic categories: respondents who have visited Lariti Beach (minimum twice) and respondents within age limits (minimum 18 years and maximum 57), with the assumption that the age thresholds contain those considered mature enough to make decisions that affect return visits.

The data collected is primary, obtained directly from informants without intermediaries. Data collection was done by distributing questionnaires at Lariti Beach. To facilitate data documentation, an offline face-to-face questionnaire was also implemented. The questionnaire model is in a closed format where respondents are only allowed to answer or give opinions based on the answer choices provided. The instrument used in filtering the data according to the Likert scale guide, where each answer choice has its own rating with the following details: 1 – *strongly disagree*, 2 – *don't agree*, 3 – *neutral*, 4 – *agree*, and 5 – *strongly agree* (ZA et al., 2021).

Based on the list of questionnaire scores, the scale range is estimated as follows:

$$SR = \frac{m-n}{b} \quad (1)$$

$$SR = \frac{5-1}{3} = 1.33 \quad (2)$$

where: SR – scale range; m – maximum value of the questionnaire scale points; n – minimum value of the questionnaire scale points; and b – number of points on the questionnaire scale.

From the statistical guidelines above, the scale range score is 1.33. The lowest rating is $1 + 1.33 = 2.33$, while $2.34 + 1.33 = 3.67$ forms the medium rating, and the highest is calculated as $3.68 + 1.33 = 5.01$ or rounded down to 5.

3.2. VARIABLES AND DATA PROCESSING

The key variables that become attributes in this study include visiting decisions (dependent variable) and city branding and destination image (independent variables). Within the theoretical scope, each variable has limitations, which are summarized in Table 1. In this case, the total number of indicators of the three variables is fourteen. In substance, the visiting decision variable consists of five indicators, while destination branding and destination image each have four.

Table 1. Variable description

Variable name (code)	Indicators		Adopted from
Visiting decisions	VD.1	Service	El Fikri et al. (2020), Lutfie and Marcelino (2020)
	VD.2	Travel agent	
	VD.3	Type of trip	
	VD.4	Cost and time	
	VD.5	Destination area	
Destination	DB.1	Place	Hereźniak and Anders-

branding	DB.2	Tourists	Morawska (2015), Hereźniak et al. (2018), Soleimani Sheijani et al. (2023), Vahabian et al. (2021)
	DB.3	Awareness	
	DB.4	Potential	
Destination image	DI.1	Presence	Asnawi et al. (2018), Mohamed Thabet (2022), Su et al. (2023)
	DI.2	Behavior	
	DI.3	Affective	
	DI.4	Cognitive	

Source: authors.

In the processing phase, the data is tested with partial least squares (PLS) whose function is to analyze the link between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. To confirm the closeness of the relationship between variables, an evaluation of the outer and inner models is carried out. First, the outer model reviews convergent validity, the discriminant validity of indicators and reliability. Second, the inner model follows up on the proposed hypothesis through the *R*-squared and partial test. Finally, after statistical analysis of the data has been carried out, the next step is verification and justification of the findings from the field.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2 describes the characteristics of the respondents who visited Lariti Beach: 45.1% were female and 54.9% male. According to nationality, 62.5% of them were domestic, while 37.5% were foreign. The professional backgrounds of the respondents varied greatly: 29.9% (university students), 22% (private employees), 16.5% (high school students), 14.8% (self-employed), 12% (state employees) and 4.8% (entrepreneurs). In terms of age, 34% were 42–49, 27.9% – 18–25, 23.1% – 34–41, 8.7% – 26–33 years, and 6.3% – 50–57 years.

Table 2. Profile of respondents (*N* = 541)

Profile	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Man	297	54.9
	Female	244	45.1
Nationality	Foreign	203	37.5
	Domestic	338	62.5
Profession	State employees	65	12.0
	Private employees	119	22.0
	Self-employed	80	14.8

	Entrepreneurs	26	4.8
	University students	162	29.9
	High school students	89	16.5
Age	18–25	151	27.9
	26–33	47	8.7
	34–41	125	23.1
	42–49	184	34.0
	50–57	34	6.3
Visit repetition	2 times	218	40.3
	3 times	200	37.0
	4 times	79	14.6
	>4 times	44	8.1

Source: authors.

In 2023, 40.3% of respondents had visited Lariti Beach at least twice, 37% of respondents claimed to have visited three times, 14.6% four times, and the rest (8.1%) more than four times.

4.2. EVALUATION OF THE OUTER MODEL

In testing the outer model via convergent validity, variable indicators are assessed based on scores from the outer loading (*OL*) weights. In its interpretation, the correlation score is calculated through the components of the model construct measurement (see Table 3). The requirement for an *OL* score is more than 0.7. Quantitatively, of the seventeen indicators evaluated, only three were invalid with each variable having one invalid indicator: VD.2 (*OL* = 0.633), DB.2 (*OL* = 0.524) and DI.4 (*OL* = 0.606). Interestingly, all fourteen other indicators met the required figure (*OL* > 0.7). The convergent validity score with the highest performance for the visiting decision variable was VD.3 (*OL* = 0.919). Then, looking at the other two variables (destination branding and destination image), it is evident that the highest are DB.3 (*OL* = 0.893) and DI.2 (*OL* = 0.939).

Table 3. Convergent validity

Variable	Indicators and questions		Outer loading (<i>OL</i>)	Remarks	
				Valid	Not valid
Visiting decisions	VD.1	Services provided according to speculation	0.905	+	
	VD.2	Travel agents have ideal standards	0.633		+
	VD.3	Travel type accessible to tourists	0.919	+	
	VD.4	Cost and time to the destination according to the estimated route	0.892	+	
	VD.5	Strategic destination areas are easy to	0.915	+	

		reach			
Destination branding	DB.1	The places I've visited have changed significantly	0.841	+	
	DB.2	Tourists are presented with stunning attractions	0.524		+
	DB.3	I realize that the destinations visited correspond to reality	0.893	+	
	DB.4	This tourism has the potential to be developed	0.884	+	
Destination image	DI.1	The presence of this destination gives me new enthusiasm	0.916	+	
	DI.2	Friendly behavior from destination managers and local residents in welcoming tourists	0.939	+	
	DI.3	I feel that this destination presents beautiful nature	0.905	+	
	DI.4	The condition of this tour is better managed than before	0.606		+

Source: authors.

In addition to measuring validity based on the *OL* score, the indicator validity test can also be identified by cross loading (*CL*). Cross loading values are converted to average variance extracted (*AVE*). This model is an alternative series to improve and evaluate invalid indicators based on convergent validity. In reality, the indicator is assumed to be valid if the *AVE* score is higher than 0.5.

Through the discriminant validity parameter, only the visiting decision variable has valid indicators, while there is one indicator for both destination branding and destination image which is not valid. Surprisingly, there was a shift in the indicators from the previously valid *OL* values to invalid, based on the *AVE* calculation. The two indicators are DB.3 (*AVE* = 0.416) and DI.3 (*AVE* = 0.345). Even so, the *AVE* score is slightly better than the *OL* because fifteen indicators matched expectations (*AVE* > 0.5). Table 4 ensures that there are no contradictions in the respondents' reactions to understanding the questionnaire. Based on the second scenario using *AVE* per indicator, Table 4 above presents VD.3 (*AVE* = 0.860) as the largest indicator representing the visiting decision variable. The two indicators (DB.4 and DI.2) which are the constructs of destination branding and destination image, have the highest *AVE* scores, reaching 0.939 and 0.943.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

Variable	Indicators questions	Average variance extracted (<i>AVE</i>)	Remarks	
			Valid	Not valid
Visiting decisions	VD.1	Services provided according to speculation	+	
	VD.2	Travel agents have ideal	+	

		standards			
	VD.3	Travel type accessible to tourists	0.860	+	
	VD.4	Cost and time to the destination according to the estimated route	0.813	+	
	VD.5	Strategic destination areas are easy to reach	0.746	+	
Destination branding	DB.1	The places I've visited have changed significantly	0.893	+	
	DB.2	Tourists are presented with stunning attractions	0.884	+	
	DB.3	I realize that the destinations visited correspond to reality	0.416		+
	DB.4	This tourism has the potential to be developed	0.939	+	
Destination image	DI.1	The presence of this destination gives me new enthusiasm	0.905	+	
	DI.2	Friendly behavior from destination managers and local residents in welcoming tourists	0.943	+	
	DI.3	I feel that this destination presents beautiful nature	0.345		+
	DI.4	The condition of this tour is better managed than before	0.906	+	

Source: authors.

Table 5 describes the reliability results supported by two parameters. Firstly, for composite reliability (CR), the criteria use a minimum standard above 0.6. Second, for Cronbach's alpha (α), the minimum requirement is more than 0.7. Thus, of the three variables destination branding and destination image have CR (>0.6) and Cronbach's alpha (>0.7) values that exceed the threshold and are thus concluded to be reliable. When compared, based on the acquisition of each score on both parameters, destination image is the more dominant variable for CR and α than the other two where the statistical output shows scores of 0.956 and 0.944.

Table 5. Reliability test

Variables	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Composite reliability (CR)
Visiting decisions	0.952	0.933
Destination branding	0.950	0.929
Destination image	0.956	0.944

Note: all values are reliable.

Source: authors.

4.3. EVALUATION OF THE INNER MODEL

Concerning the strength of the relationship, which is clarified using the coefficient of determination (R^2) which reaches 0.799, it is concluded that the visiting decisions is influenced by destination branding and destination image. Linking the two variables to visiting decisions, the figures lie within the higher criteria, indicating that destination branding and destination image are reliable measures, although there is a coefficient value of 0.201 that is outside the study model (see Table 6).. Kurniawan et al. (2023) states that there are five classifications where 0–0.20 indicates a very low coefficient, 0.21–0.40 a low coefficient, 0.41–0.60 a moderate coefficient, 0.61–0.80 a high coefficient and 0.81–1 a very high coefficient.

Based on Table 6, it was found that the two hypotheses offered were in line with partial significance. The calculation of significance uses the t -statistic value (minimum requirement is 1.96). In SmartPLS, each hypothesized relationship is simulated by bootstrapping the sample data. Testing bootstrapping is also intended to minimize the problem of abnormalities in observations. As a result, there is a positive causality between both destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions: destination branding (t -statistic = 35.998) and destination image (t -statistic = 13.922), the most dominating was the relationship between destination branding and visiting decisions. Table 6 also verifies that both destination branding and destination image have a significant impact however on the decision to visit. Overall, both first and second hypotheses are accepted.

Table 6. Path coefficient

Linkages	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	t -statistic	p -value	R Squared
Destination branding → visiting decisions	0.894	0.895	0.025	35.998	0.000	0.799
Destination image → visiting decisions	0.874	0.876	0.063	13.922	0.000	

Source: authors.

Commented [KS17]: This paragraph contains all the information presented in Table 6. Therefore, we propose removing the table, as it lacks sufficient content to justify presenting the data in this format.

Commented [uu18R17]: Dear authors, we agree to remove Table 6. However, if possible, we suggest to include the R Squared results in the "Table of Coefficients". At least, there is information about the determination test.

5. DISCUSSION

This study ensures that by involving two important instruments in tourism such as destination branding and destination image, an impact on visiting decisions can be made. Tourists who have confidence in a choice directly have full awareness of making the right decision. In this case, a destination with a positive record will affect perceptions that lead to positive emotional ties. Conversely, a bad reputation for a destination will have a negative effect on tourist interest.

A series of studies link causality between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions. To strengthen the decision to visit, a relevant program is needed. Take, for example, destination branding. Successful tourism destinations rely on being attractive in the eyes of tourists (Baloch et al., 2022; Caprioli et al., 2021; Chiang & Chen, 2023; Dakwah et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2024; Roostika, 2012; Srivastava et al., 2022). The experience during the visit will be a positive benchmark mediated by WoM. Often, the increasing level of tourist satisfaction further increases the loyalty of tourists who enjoy traveling to several developing markets: Swat District (Pakistan), *hygge* style in Denmark and *fika* phenomenon from Sweden, Pier-2 Art Center (Taiwan), Lombok Island (Indonesia), Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta (Indonesia) and India.

Another justification put forward by Al-Kwafi (2015), Fatmawati et al. (2023), Moustaka and Constantoglou (2021) and Susanti et al. (2023) relies on strengthening the destination image to increase visiting decisions through experiments in Doha (Qatar), natural destinations in Yogyakarta (Indonesia), mountainous city destinations (Greece), or tourists who are domiciled in East Java (Indonesia). What is more, the presence of social media can make it easier for millennial tourists to plan, get to know, select and compare types of tourism before deciding on a destinations. Also, the advantage of electronic WoM is that it can track feedback based on the comments of previous tourists who have visited certain places.

From various other empirical examples, destination branding has a crucial impact by allowing tourists to make decisions, increase their interest in visiting, give more value to a destination compared to similar ones, and help them to look for differences between one destination and another (Damarwulan, 2021; Guo et al., 2024; Marchat & Camelis, 2017; Widayati et al., 2020). With an attractive tagline and design, destination branding will become the foundation for various marketing patterns to promote destinations and attract new visitors. Furthermore, Yadindrana et al. (2021) has stated that destination image influences tourist behavior in making decisions about which destination to choose. In turn, destination image is also integrated into the desire to revisit and increase satisfaction (Al-Kwafi, 2015; Noviana et al., 2022; Satyarini et al., 2017).

Commented [KSz19]: fika phenomenon?

Commented [uu20R19]: Yes, "Fika" is a Swedish tradition of taking a break, usually over coffee and snacks, while socializing with others. It's not just about taking a coffee break, it's about appreciating the little moments and relaxing. Fika is an important part of Swedish culture and is seen as a way to improve well-being and productivity.

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6. CONCLUSIONS

This study is committed to examining the link between destination branding and destination image on visiting decisions targeted at tourists at Lariti Beach during 2023. Using the PLS method, it is concluded that:

4. Destination branding and destination image have a significant impact on visiting decisions.
5. Destination branding and destination image, which are growing, are increasingly influencing tourists' visiting decisions.
6. The implication shows that by providing a comprehensive destination branding and destination image system at Lariti Beach, it has facilitated tourist interest, and this has a positive synergy with visiting decisions.

Despite these positive results, the barriers that are the weaknesses for each indicator trigger disruptions in travel that need to be solved. First, the roots of the problem, based on convergent validity assessment, are travel agents, attractions and tourist conditions. Second, the obstacles that result in uncertainty in visiting decisions based on discriminant validity parameters are tourist awareness and affective factors. By looking at these six issues, the main recommendation is directed to destination managers to conduct more detailed dissemination on marketing aspects. Post-pandemic economic recovery, especially in the business sector, is not easy. However, managers need to rearrange marketing strategies that can transition according to trending patterns. Also, further suggestions to the local government as a bureaucratic actor can consider regulations that make it easier for visitors. In that context, this includes reducing restrictionx on entry routes to Bima Regency without ignoring health protocols. With careful control in the tourism development plan, it will automatically open up a wide tourist network. It also appreciates the interests of tourists who are planning to visit.

For the long-term sustainability of tourism, the distribution of information that prioritizes transparency regarding the situation of destinations must also be implemented, thereby reducing discriminatory actions. Considering the present findings, there are still weaknesses in this work, such as testing with three variables that are considered limited. Therefore, there are hopes that in the future attention will be paid to the composition of variables referring to issues with the aim of surpassing the empirical results of this article. Another limitation of the current study is the sample size while further studies need to consider broader sample characteristics.

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