

Qualitative Analysis of Attraction, Amenities, and Promotional Elements in North Musi Rawas

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Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana wisatawan menilai nilai suatu destinasi berdasarkan faktor atraksi, fasilitas, promosi, dan dukungan masyarakat setempat di Kabupaten Musi Rawas Utara, Sumatera Selatan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi partisipatif, penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang bagaimana atraksi budaya dan alam, infrastruktur pariwisata, strategi promosi, dan partisipasi masyarakat setempat membentuk nilai yang dirasakan wisatawan. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pengalaman budaya yang autentik, fasilitas yang memadai, dan interaksi yang bermakna dengan masyarakat secara signifikan meningkatkan kepuasan dan loyalitas wisatawan. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi dasar strategi pengembangan pariwisata berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: Nilai yang Dirasakan Wisatawan; Daya Tarik; Fasilitas; Dukungan Lokal.

Abstract. This study aims to explore how tourists perceive the value of a destination based on the factors of attractions, facilities, promotion, and local community support in North Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra. Using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how cultural and natural attractions, tourism infrastructure, promotional strategies, and local participation shape tourists' perceived value. The study finds that authentic cultural experiences, adequate facilities, and meaningful interaction with the community significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The findings are expected to inform sustainable tourism development strategies.

Keywords: Tourist Perceived Value; Attractions; Facilities; Local Support.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the important sectors in the economy of a region, including North Musi Rawas Regency. According to Sihombing (2024) A tourism sector will not be able to develop by itself without the help and support of various components, for example Transportation, Accessibility, Accommodation, Promotion, Tourist Attractions, and support from the Tourism community in the Tourism destination environment. This tourism sector not only contributes to regional income, but also creates jobs, improves infrastructure, and advances local culture. Tourism is also one of the important sectors in economic growth, both at the national level and in remote areas. In Indonesia itself, the tourism sector plays a very important role in economic turnover. In this context, North Musi Rawas Regency has a great opportunity to increase the perception of tourist value through strengthening infrastructure, improving service quality, preserving local culture, and actively involving the community in tourism activities.

If this potential is managed strategically, tourism in Muratara can be a driving force for regional economic development and strengthen the cultural identity of the local community. North Musi Rawas Regency (Muratara) is one of the youngest regencies in South Sumatra Province, administratively this Regency was officially formed on June 10, 2013, the struggle to expand this area into its own Regency began in the 1960s. The people of North Musi Rawas Regency wanted a government that was closer and more responsive to local needs. The process of this expansion struggle was marked by various large-scale actions and demonstrations that showed the strong determination of the North Musi Rawas community to have their own regional government. After going through various political and administrative matters, in 2013 the Indonesian government finally ratified the formation of North Musi Rawas Regency. This Regency has seven sub-districts and 82 villages. North Musi Rawas Regency is located in the western part of South Sumatra Province, directly bordering Jambi Province. The area of North Musi Rawas Regency has an area of

around 6,008 Km² and has 199,000 people. As a new regency in South Sumatra Province, North Musi Rawas Regency has great potential in developing the tourism sector. Although relatively young administratively, this region has very interesting natural and cultural wealth, ranging from lakes, rivers, hills, to cultural heritage such as customs, culinary specialties, and traditional attractions that are still preserved. This potential is in accordance with current tourism trends that emphasize authentic experiences and sustainable tourism, as emphasized by UNWTO, (2023), where today's tourists are more interested in destinations that offer unique and sustainable local experiences. Furthermore, (Kim *et al.*, 2020) stated that the value of a destination in the eyes of tourists is formed from a combination of the quality of tourist attractions, services, local community involvement, and effective promotion. In other words, Furthermore, Aslam, (2024) revealed that the quality of promotion and destination branding also plays a major role in shaping tourist perceptions. Although North Musi Rawas Regency has enormous potential, inadequate promotion can limit the ability of this destination to compete with more established tourist destinations.

Therefore, the role of effective promotion is key in attracting tourists and introducing the cultural and natural wealth in the area. In Wulandari, (2022) the perception of tourist value is not only formed by natural beauty alone, but also by the extent to which tourists feel appreciated, accepted, and have meaningful experiences during their travels. Emotional factors and authentic experiences have a major contribution in forming tourist loyalty to a destination, as well as increasing the potential for repeat visits (Nguyen-Viet & Van Nguyen, 2023) (Juliana *et al.* 2022; Lemy *et al.* 2022). North Musi Rawas Regency has a variety of beauty and charm, ranging from nature, lakes, tribes, food, traditions, customs and other cultural attractions. Sthapit *et al.*, (2019) also emphasized that authentic experiences that can be found in local tourist destinations, such as those owned by North Musi Rawas Regency, play an important role in attracting tourists who are looking for a more personal and meaningful experience. This is very relevant to the current conditions, where tourists increasingly want a

sustainable and immersive experience, both in terms of social interaction and cultural experiences that can be felt directly. Research on tourists' perception of value generally still focuses on major tourism destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta, or Lombok. Meanwhile, areas such as North Musi Rawas Regency which have rich natural and cultural potential have not received much attention in academic studies. This creates an important gap that needs to be explored further, especially in the context of tourists' perceptions of tourist destinations that are still in the development stage. In addition, most previous studies tend to examine factors such as facilities, attractions, and promotions separately without considering the strategic role of local communities in shaping meaningful tourism experiences. The lack of research that places local community support as a mediating variable between destination elements and tourist perceptions is a theoretical gap that is worth exploring.

This research offers novelty from several key aspects. First, it focuses on Musi Rawas Utara Regency as the object of study, presenting a significant contribution to tourism literature, especially since this region despite its rich and diverse tourism potential has rarely been explored in academic research. Second, the research model integrates several essential variables facilities, attractions, promotion, and local community support as a mediating variable influencing tourists' perceived value. This approach remains underutilized in similar studies, thereby contributing theoretically to the development of conceptual models in tourism research. Third, the study adopts a practical perspective by emphasizing the critical role of local communities in fostering positive tourist experiences. The findings are expected to serve as a foundation for local governments and tourism stakeholders in formulating inclusive, sustainable, and culturally aligned destination development strategies. In Pamungkas & Indratno, (2021) Understanding the perception of tourist value is very important in order to know what tourists think and feel, in order to reduce misunderstandings in interventions. However, in its sustainability, sometimes the perception of tourists towards a destination varies greatly, starting from the

factors received, personal experiences, promotions that are not conveyed properly, boredom, and social interactions which in this case can influence the attitudes and views of tourists towards destinations in North Musi Rawas Regency.

Research Method

This research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore tourists' perceptions of value towards tourist destinations in North Musi Rawas Regency. The main focus of the study is to understand the subjective experiences of tourists in interacting with destination elements, namely facilities, attractions, promotions, and local community support. Bryman,(2016) argue that qualitative approaches are particularly useful for understanding the "social reality" that is shaped by the interaction between tourists and destinations, as well as the cultural, social, and emotional factors that shape their experiences. For example, interactions with local communities and authentic cultural elements are integral to the tourist experience that are not easily measured by quantitative approaches. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore phenomena in greater depth, paying particular attention to the meanings and social contexts that lie behind individual experiences.

In the context of tourism, this method is particularly useful for understanding tourists' perceptions of a destination, which depend not only on statistical data, but also on the context and subjective experiences they experience. (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). Overall, scholars agree that a qualitative approach in tourism research is essential, as it allows researchers to explore deeper dimensions of the tourist experience, including emotions, motivations, and the connection with local culture and communities. This approach is particularly valuable for investigating issues that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative data, such as perceived value, satisfaction, and the desire for authentic experiences. Data analysis in this study employs a thematic analysis approach, which includes the following stages: (1) transcribing interviews, (2) reducing data to

identify categories, (3) grouping themes, and (4) drawing conclusions based on emerging patterns. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation and participant checks (member checking) to verify the accuracy of interpretations. This approach is chosen to gain

a comprehensive understanding of how tourists evaluate a destination not only through its physical attributes but also through the social and cultural values they encounter during their visit.

Table 1. Data Analysis

No.	Aspect	Interview Question
1	Purpose of Visit	What is the purpose of your visit to Musi Rawas Utara Regency?
2	Tourist Expectations	What do you expect most from your visit to this destination?
3	Tourist Attractions	Which attraction impressed you the most during your stay in Muratara?
4	Authentic Attractions	How do you assess the authenticity of that attraction?
5	Authentic Experience	Did the attraction provide you with an authentic experience? Why or why not?
6	Tourism Facilities	How do you evaluate the condition of public facilities at the tourist sites?
7	Facility Comfort	Were the existing facilities sufficient to support your comfort?
8	Facility Recommendations	Which facilities do you think need improvement?
9	Information Sources	Where did you hear about this destination?
10	Destination Promotion	Do you think the destination's promotion effectively reaches the wider public?
11	Promotion Strategy	What kind of promotion do you think would be effective?
12	Social Interaction	How did you feel about your interaction with the local community?
13	Social Influence	Did the locals' hospitality influence your overall experience?
14	Emotional Connection	Did you feel more emotionally connected to this destination?
15	Main Impression	What was the most memorable part of your visit?
16	Revisit Interest	Would you be interested in visiting again?
17	Suggestions	What suggestions do you have for the tourism managers in Muratara?

Results and Discussion

Results

The interview results showed that tourists highly value the authenticity of cultural tourism attractions such as Sedekah Rame and Mandi Darah. In addition, facilities such as road access, rest areas, and cleanliness are important concerns. Promotion through social media is still considered less than optimal, and tourists stated that they know more about destination

information from word of mouth. The involvement of local communities is considered to greatly influence the comfort and value of the tourism experience, especially in terms of friendliness and informal services such as homestays and local cuisine. These findings reinforce the importance of a community-based tourism approach in building positive perceptions and tourist loyalty.

Tabel 2. Interview

Key Question	Informant 1 (RT, 28)	Informant 2 (AMP, 23)	Informant 3 (ZA, 50)
Purpose of Visit	Exploring nature and cultural tourism	Witnessing the Sedekah Rame ceremony	Trying local cuisine and experiencing village life

Most Impressive Attraction	Sedekah Rame	Bukit Layang	Mandi Darah ritual
Authenticity of Attraction	Very authentic and traditional	A living and strong tradition	A local heritage untouched by modification
Authentic Experience? Why?	Welcomed and participated in the ceremony	Invited to dine with the locals	Direct interaction created a deep impression
Condition of Tourist Facilities	Road access is still difficult	Lack of toilets and seating areas	Basic facilities but clean
Facilities Needing Improvement	Roads and signage	Toilets and trash bins	Parking area and shelter
Source of Destination Information	University friends	Friend's Instagram	Family stories
Promotion Assessment	Has not reached the wider public	Almost no official promotion	Very minimal despite great potential
Effective Promotion Ideas	Short videos on TikTok, YouTube	Local influencers	Culture and experience-based campaign
Interaction with Local Community	Friendly and welcoming	Welcomed like family	Many locals helped without being asked
Effect of Community Hospitality	Increased feeling of safety and appreciation	The most memorable part of the experience	Made the experience more meaningful
Most Memorable Impression	Sedekah Rame and local hospitality	Beautiful nature and authentic culture	Mandi Darah tradition and sense of togetherness
Interest in Revisit	Yes, during another festival	Yes, want to bring family	Yes, if facilities improve
Suggestions for Tourism Managers	Improve access and involve younger locals	Enhance promotion and basic facilities	Create a regular tourism calendar

This study explores tourists' perceptions of value towards tourist destinations in North Musi Rawas Regency through in-depth interviews with three informants who have visited leading destinations in the region. Thematic analysis produced four main themes that shape the perception of value, namely: facilities, attractions, promotions, and local community support. Each theme is explored in depth based on the informants' experiences.

Tourist Facilities: Comfortable, but Still Limited

Most informants said that the availability of public facilities in tourist destinations such as Rayo Lake and Napal Licin Cave is still limited, especially in terms of sanitation, road access, and rest facilities. Although inadequate infrastructure is a negative note, tourists tend to understand the condition if the attractions

offered have uniqueness and strong cultural values. This shows that facilities are important as a minimum requirement for comfort, but not the only factor in forming value perceptions.

Cultural and Natural Attractions: Key Drivers of Authentic Experiences

Attractions are the most appreciated aspect by tourists. Natural attractions such as Rayo Lake and Layang Hill are considered stunning, while cultural attractions such as the Mapak and Sedekah Ramo traditions provide experiences that are hard to find elsewhere. Promotion: Still Less Integrated and Not Widely Reached

Promotion: Still Not Integrated and Not Widely Reached

All informants stated that they learned about the tourist destination through recommendations from friends or personal

social media, not from official local government campaigns. The lack of formal promotion and consistency in branding makes tourists hesitate to make Muratara their main destination. This condition shows the importance of digital-based promotion strategies and local narratives to strengthen the destination's positioning in the minds of tourists.

Local Community Support: A Determining Factor of Authenticity and Comfort

Interaction with local communities is the most memorable experience for tourists. Friendliness, openness, and involvement of residents in tourism activities create strong emotional bonds. The role of local communities is not only as a complement to attractions, but as the main actor in forming a positive impression of the destination. Local community support creates a friendly, inclusive atmosphere and strengthens cultural values. The results of this study strengthen the theory that tourists' perceptions of value are formed from the integration of tangible elements (such as facilities) and intangible elements (such as culture and social relations). This finding is consistent with the opinion Zhang *et al.*, (2024) and Nguyen-Viet & Van Nguyen, (2023) (Juliana *et al.* 2024; Juliana *et al.*, 2022) which emphasizes the importance of emotional connection and authentic experiences in shaping tourist loyalty. In addition, the findings show that tourists do not only judge in terms of “what is there”, but “how they feel when experiencing it” – emphasizing the importance of a humanist approach in destination development. Therefore, tourism development strategies in Muratara need to prioritize community empowerment and local identity-based promotion to create long-term sustainability.

Discussion

The study revealed that tourists' perception of the value of destinations in North Musi Rawas Regency is formed from the interaction of tangible elements such as facilities and promotions and intangible elements such as cultural attractions and local community support. Based on thematic analysis of interviews with three informants, facilities at

destinations such as Lake Rayo and Gua Napal Licin were considered limited, especially road access, sanitation, and rest areas, but these limitations were accepted if the attractions offered cultural uniqueness, such as Sedekah Rame and Mandi Darah, which were considered authentic because they involved direct participation, such as eating with residents or participating in traditional rituals (Sthapit *et al.*, 2019). Natural attractions such as Bukit Layang are also stunning, but their added value lies in social interaction, which is in line with sustainable tourism trends that prioritize unique experiences (UNWTO, 2023). However, destination promotion is still minimal, relying on informal recommendations such as stories from friends or personal social media, not official campaigns, thus hampering competitiveness, as emphasized by Aslam (2024) regarding the importance of digital promotion and consistent branding. Informants suggested the use of platforms such as TikTok and collaboration with local influencers to expand reach.

Interaction with local communities, through hospitality and informal services such as homestays or local cuisine, is the most memorable experience, creating an emotional bond that supports tourist loyalty, as expressed by Nguyen-Viet and Van Nguyen (2023) and Juliana *et al.* (2022). The findings show that the balance of tangible and intangible elements, with an emphasis on community involvement, is a determinant of satisfaction and loyalty, thus recommending the development of basic infrastructure without sacrificing cultural identity, local narrative-based promotion, and community empowerment to ensure the sustainability of inclusive and authentic tourism (Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

Conclusion

This study reveals that tourists' value perceptions of a destination are shaped by a complex interaction between tangible and intangible elements. In the context of North Musi Rawas Regency, tourists do not judge a destination solely based on the availability of facilities or promotional materials, but rather

how these aspects are experienced through the lens of authenticity, emotional connectedness, and local community involvement. The findings suggest that authentic cultural attractions such as local traditions and rituals, as well as direct interaction with friendly communities, significantly enrich the tourist experience. Although the region still faces challenges in terms of infrastructure and promotion, active involvement of local communities emerges as a key asset in creating meaningful tourism experiences.

Through a qualitative approach, this study provides an in-depth understanding of how destinations such as Muratara can strengthen their tourism appeal not only through physical development, but also by maintaining local identity and facilitating authentic human connections. This study encourages tourism stakeholders to adopt community-based and culturally sensitive strategies to ensure long-term sustainability and visitor satisfaction. Future efforts should focus on integrating local narratives into promotional strategies, improving basic infrastructure without compromising cultural integrity, and continuously involving communities in the planning and implementation of tourism experiences.

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