

The Role of Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom in Shaping Destination Image and Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention toward Cultural Tourism Destinations in Madura

Raden Khaeru Ahmadi^{1*}, Martaleni², Dwi Orbaningsih³, M. Jamal Abdul Nasir⁴

¹KH. Bahaudin Mudhary University of Madura

^{2,3,4}Gajayana University, Malang

Corresponding Author: Raden Khaeru Ahmadi;

khaeru.ahmadi@unibamadura.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of perceived authenticity of local wisdom on destination image and travel intention among prospective tourists toward cultural tourism destinations in Madura and to examine the mediating role of destination image in this relationship. A quantitative approach with a survey design was employed involving prospective tourists from outside Madura who had never visited tourism destinations in the region. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that perceived authenticity of local wisdom has no significant effect on either travel intention or destination image. In contrast, destination image has a positive and significant effect on prospective tourists' travel intention. Furthermore, destination image does not mediate the relationship between perceived authenticity of local wisdom and travel intention. These findings suggest that the cultural authenticity of Madura has not yet been effectively transformed into a strong destination image capable of stimulating tourists' intention to visit. Therefore, strengthening destination branding, digital storytelling, and experience-based cultural tourism development is essential to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of cultural tourism destinations in Madura

INTRODUCTION

The development of global tourism has demonstrated a significant shift in tourist preferences from mass tourism toward more authentic, personalized, and meaningful travel experiences. Contemporary tourists are no longer solely attracted to the physical beauty of destinations; they increasingly seek experiences that enable them to understand local cultures, traditions, and the values embedded within host communities. This phenomenon has drawn considerable scholarly attention to the concept of *perceived authenticity* as a critical determinant of tourist behavior, particularly in cultural tourism destinations. Previous studies have demonstrated that perceptions of cultural authenticity influence destination image, tourism experiences, tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and travel intention (Carreira et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2023; Kovacić et al., 2023). In the context of cultural tourism, *perceived authenticity* refers to tourists' perceptions of the genuineness of local traditions, customs, cultural arts, rituals, and values represented within a destination. Destinations perceived as preserving their cultural identity tend to receive more favorable evaluations than those experiencing excessive commercialization. Carreira et al. (2022) found that perceived authenticity has a strong relationship with destination image and tourists' behavioral intentions. Consequently, cultural authenticity has become an important source of competitive advantage in the development of cultural tourism destinations.

Madura Raya, comprising the regencies of Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep, is one of Indonesia's regions that possesses rich cultural heritage and local wisdom that remain well preserved. Traditional practices such as *Karapan Sapi* (bull racing), *Petik Laut*, *Rokat Tase'*, *Saronen* music, Madurese batik, Islamic boarding school traditions, and various cultural and religious rituals represent forms of local wisdom that constitute the cultural identity of the Madurese people. The existence of this living culture indicates that Madura possesses a high degree of cultural authenticity and considerable potential as a leading cultural tourism destination based on local wisdom. Despite its rich cultural resources, Madura has not yet succeeded in transforming its cultural potential into a strong destination image at either the national or international level. Based on domestic tourist travel statistics across regencies and municipalities in East Java Province from 2023 to 2025, Madura Raya continues to record relatively lower tourist arrivals compared to major tourism destinations such as Surabaya, Malang, and Batu. Although Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep have experienced fluctuations in tourist visits, their overall contribution remains relatively small compared to East Java's primary tourism destinations. This condition reflects a gap between Madura's cultural potential and tourists' perceptions and intentions to visit its cultural tourism destinations.

This phenomenon suggests that the cultural richness and local wisdom of Madura have not yet been fully internalized in tourists' perceptions as an attractive cultural tourism destination. From a destination marketing perspective, this issue is closely related to the formation of *destination image*. Destination image refers to the set of perceptions, beliefs, and impressions that

tourists hold regarding a destination, which ultimately influences travel decisions and visitation intentions. Previous studies have shown that perceptions of cultural authenticity can contribute to the formation of a positive destination image, which subsequently enhances tourists' intention to visit (Atasoy & Eren, 2023; Kovaci' et al., 2023). Although the relationships among *perceived authenticity*, *destination image*, and *travel intention* have been extensively examined in cultural and heritage tourism settings across China, Turkey, Spain, and several European countries, most studies have focused on well-established destinations with strong international reputations. Furthermore, authenticity has generally been measured through tangible cultural heritage attributes such as historical buildings, museums, and heritage sites. Research examining the authenticity of local wisdom (*local wisdom authenticity*) within emerging cultural tourism destinations remains limited, particularly in the context of Madura Raya.

Based on these circumstances, the novelty of this study lies in the development of a model that examines the relationships among *Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom*, *Destination Image*, and *Travel Intention* within the context of Madura's cultural tourism. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on the authenticity of heritage objects, this research measures authenticity based on tourists' perceptions of Madurese local wisdom, reflected in cultural traditions such as *Karapan Sapi*, *Petik Laut*, *Rokat Tase'*, *Saronen* music, Madurese batik, and the strong religious values of the local community. In addition, this study focuses on prospective tourists as respondents, enabling a deeper understanding of how destination image and travel intention are formed before actual travel decisions are made. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the advancement of authenticity theory in cultural tourism while providing a contextualized empirical model for the development of local wisdom-based cultural tourism destinations in Madura. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the influence of the perceived authenticity of local wisdom on destination image and prospective tourists' travel intention, as well as to examine the mediating role of destination image in the relationship between perceived authenticity of local wisdom and travel intention toward cultural tourism destinations in Madura.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom

Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom refers to tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of cultural values, traditions, social norms, rituals, local knowledge, and community practices that have been preserved and transmitted across generations. This concept is rooted in authenticity theory, which suggests that tourists increasingly seek authentic experiences as part of meaningful travel experiences (Wang, 1999). In the context of cultural tourism, authenticity extends beyond the genuineness of cultural objects and encompasses tourists' subjective experiences when interacting with local culture and community life. Meanwhile, local wisdom represents a set of values, knowledge, and cultural practices developed within a community that serves as guidance for social life and human-environment relationships (Didipu & Salam, 2019; Jaelani et al., 2023).

Accordingly, perceived authenticity of local wisdom can be understood as tourists' evaluation of the extent to which the local cultural values presented by a destination are perceived as genuine, unique, and reflective of the identity of the host community. A higher level of perceived authenticity is expected to foster more favorable perceptions of a tourism destination because tourists experience cultural elements that are distinctive, meaningful, and different from those found in other destinations (Kanwel et al., 2019; Kovacić et al., 2023). Therefore, authenticity has become an essential element in enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of cultural tourism destinations.

Local wisdom itself constitutes indigenous knowledge that evolves within society and serves as a foundation for social, cultural, and environmental interactions (Didipu & Salam, 2019). It reflects cultural values inherited across generations and forms a unique identity for a particular region (Jaelani et al., 2023). In the context of Madura, the perceived authenticity of local wisdom is reflected in various cultural traditions, including *Karapan Sapi* (bull racing), *Petik Laut*, *Rokat Tase'*, *Saronen* music, Madurese batik, strong religious traditions, and other social practices that continue to be maintained by local communities.

According to (Wang, 1999), tourists who perceive a culture as authentic are more likely to develop positive perceptions of the destination. Previous studies have demonstrated that perceived authenticity positively influences tourists' behavioral intentions and visitation intentions in heritage tourism destinations. Kanwel et al. (2019); Zhou et al. (2022) found that authenticity plays a significant role in shaping tourists' perceptions and evaluations of cultural tourism destinations. Similarly, Kovacić et al. (2023) since authenticity contributes to tourists' cognitive and emotional assessments of a destination, it is likely to influence the formation of destination image as well as travel intention.

H1: Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom has a positive and significant effect on Destination Image.

H2: Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom has a positive and significant effect on Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention.

Destination Image

Destination Image refers to the set of beliefs, perceptions, knowledge, and impressions that tourists hold regarding a tourism destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Destination image is formed through a process of information evaluation obtained from various sources, either through direct experience or indirect exposure. According to (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), destination image consists of cognitive and affective components that jointly influence tourists' evaluations of a destination.

In the context of cultural tourism, destination image is developed through tourists' perceptions of cultural uniqueness, historical heritage, local traditions, community hospitality, and the overall experiences offered by the destination. A more favorable destination image increases the likelihood that tourists will select and visit a particular destination.

Marques et al. (2021) argued that destination image influences tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and travel decisions. Similarly, Assaker dan Peter O'Connor (2021) and (Kanwel et al., 2019) found that a positive destination image enhances tourists' visitation intentions by reducing perceived risks and increasing

confidence in the quality of the expected tourism experience. Furthermore, (Widarmanti & Rakha, 2023) emphasized that destination image functions as a mental representation that serves as the basis for tourists' evaluation of a destination's attractiveness and suitability for visitation.

Given that destination image represents tourists' overall perceptions and evaluations of a destination, it is expected to play a significant role in shaping travel intention toward cultural tourism destinations.

H3: Destination Image has a positive and significant effect on Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention.

Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention

Travel Intention refers to an individual's psychological tendency or willingness to visit a tourism destination in the future. This concept originates from the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991a), which posits that intention is the most immediate predictor of actual behavior. In tourism research, travel intention reflects the degree of willingness, interest, and commitment of prospective tourists to visit a particular destination. According (Kotler & Keller, 2021), intention represents an internal motivation arising from a positive evaluation of an object or experience. In the context of cultural tourism, travel intention is influenced by tourists' perceptions of cultural uniqueness, expected tourism experiences, and the destination image formed prior to visitation. Previous studies have demonstrated that destination image is one of the primary determinants of tourists' travel intention. Ferdiansyah and Pratomo (2023) and Dafit and Ismail (2025) found that a more positive destination image significantly increases tourists' intention to visit a destination. Consequently, understanding the factors that contribute to the formation of a favorable destination image is essential for enhancing tourists' visitation intentions.

The Mediating Role of Destination Image

The mediating role of destination image can be explained through the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory proposed by (Mehrabian, A., & Russell, 1974). According to this framework, the perceived authenticity of local wisdom functions as a stimulus received by prospective tourists. This stimulus is cognitively and affectively processed, resulting in the formation of destination image as an internal response (organism). Subsequently, destination image influences travel intention as a behavioral response. Within cultural tourism settings, tourists who perceive local cultural values as authentic are more likely to develop favorable perceptions of the destination. These positive perceptions are then expected to encourage stronger intentions to visit the destination. Therefore, destination image serves as an important psychological mechanism linking perceptions of cultural authenticity to behavioral intentions.

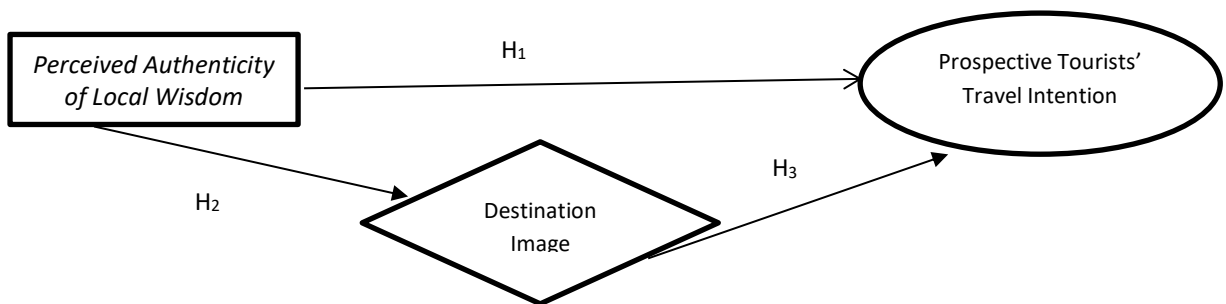
Empirical evidence supports this proposition. Atasoy and Eren (2023) found that destination image acts as a mediator in explaining how perceived authenticity influences tourists' behavioral intentions. Their findings suggest that tourists' perceptions of cultural authenticity do not always directly affect travel intention; instead, authenticity first contributes to the formation of a positive destination image, which subsequently enhances tourists' intention to

visit. Based on the theoretical and empirical arguments presented above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Destination Image mediates the relationship between Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom and Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention.

Conceptual Framework

The proposed research model explains that the Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom influences Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention both directly and indirectly through Destination Image as a mediating variable. The model assumes that tourists who perceive the local wisdom of Madura as authentic are more likely to develop positive evaluations of the destination. These positive perceptions subsequently contribute to the formation of a favorable destination image, which in turn enhances their intention to visit cultural tourism destinations in Madura. Therefore, destination image serves as an important psychological mechanism that links the perceived authenticity of local wisdom to tourists' behavioral intentions.



Picture 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey design to examine the relationships among Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom, Destination Image, and Travel Intention toward cultural tourism destinations in Madura Raya. The target population consisted of prospective tourists residing outside Madura Raya (Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep Regencies) who had never visited the region but had prior knowledge of its cultural tourism attractions.

A non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique was applied to select respondents who met the research criteria. Following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2019) for PLS-SEM analysis, the minimum sample size was determined based on ten observations per indicator. With 24 measurement indicators, a minimum of 240 respondents was required.

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms through social media platforms and tourism-related communities. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom was measured based on respondents' perceptions of Madurese cultural authenticity, including *Karapan Sapi*, *Petik Laut*, *Rokat Tase'*, *Saronen* music, Madurese batik, and local religious values. Destination Image was assessed through tourists' perceptions and impressions of Madura as a cultural

tourism destination, while Travel Intention reflected respondents' willingness and intention to visit Madura in the future.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The analysis included the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) through convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha tests. The structural model (inner model) was assessed using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapping procedures for hypothesis testing. Furthermore, mediation analysis was performed to examine the mediating role of Destination Image in the relationship between Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom and Travel Intention.

RESULTS

Evaluasi Model Pengukuran (Outer Model)

The measurement model evaluation was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the research constructs. One of the indicators used to evaluate convergent validity was the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is considered to demonstrate adequate convergent validity when its AVE value exceeds 0.50. An AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators, suggesting that the indicators adequately represent the underlying latent construct. Table 1 presents the AVE values for all constructs included in the study. The results show that the AVE values of Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom, Destination Image, and Travel Intention are above the recommended threshold of 0.50. Therefore, all constructs meet the criterion for convergent validity and can be considered valid measures of their respective latent variables.

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variabel	AVE
Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom (X)	0.629
Destination Image (Z)	0.688
Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention (Y)	0.717

Based on Table 1, all constructs have AVE values ranging from 0.629 to 0.717, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50. These findings confirm that the indicators have satisfactory convergent validity and adequately represent their respective constructs.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model evaluation was conducted by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the predictive power of the proposed research model. The R^2 value indicates the extent to which the variance of an endogenous construct can be explained by its predictor variables. According to Hair et al. (2022), higher R^2 values indicate greater explanatory power of the

model, whereas lower values suggest that other factors outside the model may contribute to explaining the endogenous variables.

Table 2 presents the R² values for the endogenous constructs. The results show that **Destination Image** has an R² value of 0.731, indicating that 73.1% of its variance is explained by **Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom**. Meanwhile, **Travel Intention** has an R² value of 0.735, suggesting that 73.5% of its variance is explained by **Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom** and **Destination Image**. These findings demonstrate that the proposed model has substantial explanatory power in predicting both destination image and prospective tourists' travel intention.

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Endogenous Construct	R-Square
Destination Image (Z)	0.731
Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention (Y)	0.735

Based on the results, both endogenous constructs exhibit strong explanatory power, as their R² values exceed 0.67, indicating a substantial level of predictive accuracy according to the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2021).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the **bootstrapping procedure** in SmartPLS to examine the significance of the relationships among the constructs in the proposed model. The significance of each path coefficient was evaluated based on the t-statistics and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping results. Following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2022), a hypothesis is accepted when the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 at a 95% confidence level.

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 3. The findings indicate that not all proposed relationships are statistically significant. Specifically, the effects of Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom on Travel Intention and Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom on Destination Image were found to be insignificant. In contrast, Destination Image has a positive and significant effect on Travel Intention. Furthermore, the mediating effect of Destination Image on the relationship between Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom and Travel Intention was not supported.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hipotesis	Hubungan Antar Variabel	Koefisien Jalur	T-Statistic	P-Value	Keputusan
H1	Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom → Destination Image	0.122	1.821	0.069	Rejected
H2	Citra Destinasi → Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention	0.540	6.193	0.000	Accepted

H3	Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom → Destination Image	0.159	1.855	0.064	Rejected
H4	Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom → Destination Image → Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention	0.086	1.733	0.083	Rejected

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom on Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention

The results indicate that **Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom** does not have a significant effect on prospective tourists' travel intention. The path coefficient of 0.122, with a t-statistic of 1.821 and a p-value of 0.069, suggests that the proposed hypothesis is not supported. This finding indicates that prospective tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of Madurese culture are not sufficient to directly stimulate their intention to visit cultural tourism destinations in Madura.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that the existence of authentic cultural resources does not necessarily serve as the primary determinant of travel intention. According to the **Theory of Planned Behavior** (Ajzen, 1991b), travel intention is influenced by various rational and emotional considerations, including perceived benefits, accessibility, safety, facilities, and expected travel experiences. Therefore, although prospective tourists perceive Madurese culture as authentic, such perceptions alone may not be strong enough to influence travel decisions without support from other destination attributes considered more relevant to contemporary tourists.

The findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Zhou et al. (2022) and Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) which revealed that authenticity does not always exert a direct influence on behavioral intention. Instead, its effects are often mediated through psychological constructs such as destination image, perceived value, and tourist experience. In the context of Madura, this result may be explained by the relatively limited exposure of Madurese cultural heritage to prospective tourists outside the region. Cultural traditions such as *Karapan Sapi*, *Rokat Tase'*, *Petik Laut*, *Saronen* music, and Madurese batik possess a high degree of authenticity; however, they have not yet been fully recognized as attractive and relevant tourism experiences by potential visitors.

Furthermore, contemporary tourists increasingly seek experiences that are visually appealing, emotionally engaging, and easily shared through social media platforms. When local culture is presented merely as a symbolic cultural asset rather than as an interactive and participatory tourism experience, its influence on travel intention becomes limited. Therefore, cultural authenticity should be transformed into experiential tourism products that provide meaningful, memorable, and engaging experiences for tourists. Such an

approach may strengthen the role of local wisdom authenticity in stimulating visitation intentions toward cultural tourism destinations in Madura.

The Effect of Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom on Destination Image

The findings reveal that Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom does not have a significant effect on Destination Image. The path coefficient of 0.159, with a t-statistic of 1.855 and a p-value of 0.064, indicates that prospective tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of Madurese culture are not sufficient to create a strong destination image. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is not supported. This finding suggests the existence of a gap between Madura's rich cultural potential and tourists' perceptions of the destination. Conceptually, destination image is formed through the accumulation of information, indirect experiences, marketing communications, and visual representations received by tourists (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Consequently, the presence of authentic cultural resources does not automatically generate a favorable destination image unless such resources are effectively communicated and interpreted for potential visitors.

In the context of Madura, local cultural traditions are often perceived primarily as elements of social and cultural identity rather than as tourism assets that contribute to destination branding. For instance, *Karapan Sapi* is widely recognized as a distinctive Madurese cultural tradition; however, it is not yet strongly associated with Madura as a cultural tourism destination. This condition indicates that the authenticity of Madurese culture has not been fully transformed into a destination identity capable of shaping positive perceptions among prospective tourists. The findings support the argument that authenticity should be viewed as a cultural resource that requires strategic transformation through storytelling, digital marketing, and experiential tourism before it can effectively contribute to destination image formation. In other words, tourists do not merely seek authentic cultural elements; they also require meaningful narratives and immersive experiences that enable them to understand and appreciate the cultural significance behind those elements.

Furthermore, the increasing influence of digital media has changed the way destination images are formed. Prospective tourists often rely on online content, social media platforms, and user-generated experiences when evaluating destinations. Therefore, cultural authenticity that lacks strong digital representation may have limited influence on destination image formation. To strengthen Madura's destination image, local cultural assets should be integrated into comprehensive branding strategies, supported by digital storytelling, visual content creation, and community-based tourism experiences that allow visitors to engage directly with local traditions and cultural practices.

The Effect of Destination Image on Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention

The results indicate that Destination Image has a positive and significant effect on Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention. The path coefficient of 0.540, with a t-statistic of 6.193 and a p-value of 0.000, demonstrates that destination image is a critical determinant of tourists' intention to visit cultural tourism destinations in Madura. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is supported.

This finding confirms the Destination Image Theory, which suggests that tourists' perceptions of a destination serve as one of the most important predictors of travel behavior. A more favorable destination image increases the likelihood that tourists will select the destination as a future travel choice. Destination image functions as a mental representation that helps tourists evaluate the attractiveness, quality, and expected benefits of a destination before making travel decisions.

For prospective tourists who have never visited Madura, destination image plays an especially important role because their perceptions are primarily formed through information obtained from media, online platforms, recommendations, and other indirect sources rather than through personal experience. As a result, visitation decisions are influenced more by how tourists perceive Madura than by the objective characteristics of the destination itself. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Marques et al. (2021) and Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020), which identified destination image as a dominant factor influencing tourists' travel intentions and destination choice behavior. From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the notion that destination image serves as a cognitive and affective mechanism through which tourists evaluate tourism destinations. A positive image reduces uncertainty and perceived risk while increasing confidence in the expected tourism experience. Consequently, tourists are more likely to develop favorable behavioral intentions toward destinations that possess a strong and attractive image.

In the context of Madura, these findings highlight the importance of strengthening destination image as a strategic priority for cultural tourism development. Although Madura possesses rich cultural resources and unique local traditions, their potential will not be fully realized unless they are effectively communicated to prospective tourists. Therefore, tourism stakeholders should focus on developing consistent destination branding strategies, promoting cultural attractions through digital storytelling, and creating authentic and memorable tourism experiences. Such efforts can enhance the visibility, attractiveness, and competitiveness of Madura as a cultural tourism destination while increasing prospective tourists' intention to visit.

The Mediating Role of Destination Image in the Relationship between Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom and Travel Intention

The results reveal that Destination Image does not significantly mediate the relationship between Perceived Authenticity of Local Wisdom and Prospective Tourists' Travel Intention. The bootstrapping analysis shows a t-statistic of 1.733 and a p-value of 0.083, indicating that the indirect effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, the proposed mediating hypothesis is not supported.

This finding suggests that prospective tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of Madurese culture are not sufficiently strong to shape a favorable destination image that subsequently encourages visitation intention. In other words, although Madura possesses rich and authentic cultural resources, these cultural assets have not yet been effectively translated into a compelling destination image capable of influencing prospective tourists' travel decisions.

This result is particularly noteworthy because it differs from the findings of many previous studies on authenticity in heritage tourism, which have reported a significant mediating role of destination image between authenticity and behavioral intention. A possible explanation for this discrepancy lies in the characteristics of Madura as an emerging cultural tourism destination that is still in the process of establishing its tourism identity. In well-established cultural and heritage destinations, authenticity is often deeply integrated into destination branding and promotional strategies, enabling it to influence tourists' perceptions and behavioral intentions. In contrast, such integration appears to be less developed in the case of Madura.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings suggest that cultural authenticity alone may not be sufficient to influence tourists' behavioral intentions unless it is effectively communicated and embedded within the destination image. The results also imply that the relationship between authenticity and travel intention may be influenced by other mediating variables, such as perceived value, tourist experience, destination trust, or electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which were not included in the present study.

Practically, the findings highlight the need for tourism stakeholders to strengthen strategies that transform local cultural authenticity into tourism experiences that are understandable, attractive, and relevant to contemporary tourists. Initiatives such as digital storytelling, participatory cultural festivals, interactive cultural tourism programs, and collaborations with content creators and tourism influencers may help increase the visibility and attractiveness of Madurese culture. Through these efforts, cultural authenticity can evolve beyond its role as a social and cultural identity and become a strategic competitive advantage capable of strengthening destination image and enhancing tourists' intention to visit cultural tourism destinations in Madura.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the role of perceived authenticity of local wisdom in shaping destination image and travel intention toward cultural tourism destinations in Madura. The findings reveal that perceived authenticity of local wisdom does not significantly influence destination image or travel intention. In contrast, destination image has a positive and significant effect on prospective tourists' travel intention, indicating that tourists' perceptions of a destination play a crucial role in influencing visitation decisions. Furthermore, destination image does not mediate the relationship between perceived authenticity of local wisdom and travel intention.

These findings suggest that the rich cultural heritage of Madura has not yet been effectively transformed into a strong destination image capable of attracting prospective tourists. Theoretically, this study contributes to the cultural tourism literature by extending authenticity research within the context of an emerging cultural tourism destination. Practically, the results emphasize the importance of strengthening destination branding, digital storytelling, and experience-based cultural tourism development. Integrating local cultural values

into attractive and interactive tourism experiences may enhance destination image and increase tourists' intention to visit Madura in the future.

Recommendations

The findings suggest that tourism stakeholders should strengthen destination branding by transforming Madura's local wisdom into attractive and experience-based tourism products. Greater emphasis should be placed on digital storytelling, social media promotion, and community-based cultural tourism to enhance destination image and increase tourists' visitation intention. Integrating cultural festivals, traditional arts, local cuisine, and interactive cultural experiences into tourism programs may help create stronger emotional connections with prospective visitors. For future research, additional variables such as tourist experience, destination trust, perceived value, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and social media engagement should be incorporated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior. Comparative studies across different cultural tourism destinations are also recommended to further examine the role of cultural authenticity in shaping destination image and travel intention.

FURTHER STUDY

This study is subject to several limitations. First, it only examines the relationships among perceived authenticity of local wisdom, destination image, and travel intention, excluding other potential determinants of tourist behavior. Second, the respondents were limited to prospective tourists who had never visited Madura, meaning that the findings reflect perceptions based on indirect information rather than actual travel experiences. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate additional variables such as tourist experience, destination trust, perceived value, social media engagement, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Comparative research involving both prospective and actual tourists, as well as studies conducted in other cultural tourism destinations, would provide a broader understanding of how cultural authenticity influences destination image and travel intention.

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