



BUILDING TOURIST LOYALTY THROUGH A WELLNESS TOURISM APPROACH IN NORTH LOMBOK REGENCY

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the role of wellness tourism in fostering tourist loyalty in North Lombok Regency. Wellness tourism has emerged as a growing tourism trend that emphasizes tourists' physical, mental, and spiritual well-being through various activities such as yoga, meditation, spa treatments, and nature-based therapies. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving 10 informants consisting of tourism business actors, government representatives, tourists, and local community members. The findings indicate that North Lombok Regency possesses significant potential for the development of wellness tourism based on its natural resources and local cultural heritage. Holistic tourism experiences were found to enhance tourist satisfaction and emotional attachment, which in turn contribute to tourist loyalty and revisit intention. Furthermore, collaboration among stakeholders, service quality improvement, and the implementation of sustainability principles were identified as key factors in strengthening tourist loyalty. This study provides practical implications for the development of sustainable and competitive wellness tourism destinations.

Keywords : Wellness Tourism, Tourist Loyalty, Sustainable Tourism, North Lombok

INTRODUCTION

The development of the global tourism industry over the past few decades has demonstrated a significant shift from mass tourism toward forms of tourism that emphasize the quality of experience and individual well-being. One notable manifestation of this transformation is the emergence of wellness tourism, which focuses on achieving a balance between physical, mental, and spiritual health through tourism-related activities. This trend has expanded not only in developed countries but has also become an important area of destination development in developing nations, including Indonesia. The increasing public awareness of healthy lifestyles, particularly in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, has encouraged tourists to seek more meaningful travel experiences, such as relaxation, meditation, yoga, and nature-based therapies. In this context, wellness tourism is no longer viewed as a niche market segment but rather as a strategic approach to enhancing destination competitiveness in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, wellness-oriented tourists tend to have higher spending levels compared to conventional tourists, thereby generating significant economic benefits for destinations.

North Lombok Regency, as one of the leading tourism destinations in West Nusa Tenggara Province, possesses substantial potential for the development of wellness tourism. The region is renowned for its abundant natural resources, including exotic beaches, natural waterfalls, mountainous



landscapes, and relatively pristine environments that have not experienced extensive degradation. In addition, North Lombok is rich in the cultural heritage of the Sasak community, which reflects local wisdom in maintaining balance in life, including traditional healing practices, the use of herbal plants, and cultural rituals oriented toward health and spirituality. This potential is further strengthened by various tourism activities that can be developed into wellness tourism products, such as trekking in customary forest areas, open-air meditation, traditional spa treatments, and healthy culinary tourism based on local organic ingredients. However, this potential has not yet been optimally utilized due to limitations in destination management, supporting infrastructure, and human resource capacity in the wellness tourism sector.

On the other hand, the success of a tourism destination is not solely determined by the number of tourist arrivals but also by the level of tourist loyalty. Tourist loyalty serves as an important indicator of destination sustainability, as loyal tourists are more likely to revisit and provide positive recommendations to potential visitors through word-of-mouth communication. In the context of wellness tourism, tourist loyalty is strongly influenced by the holistic experiences gained during the visit, including service quality, cultural authenticity, and the emotional engagement established between tourists and the destination. Transformational experiences, such as improved health, mental relaxation, and a stronger connection with nature, can generate significant emotional value that fosters long-term loyalty. Therefore, it is essential to examine how wellness tourism can be strategically utilized to build tourist loyalty in North Lombok.

Although numerous studies have explored the potential and development of wellness tourism, most have primarily focused on economic and marketing aspects, while studies linking wellness tourism to tourist loyalty remain relatively limited, particularly within the context of nature- and culture-based destinations such as North Lombok. Moreover, there remains a research gap concerning the role of stakeholders in creating high-quality and sustainable wellness experiences. The involvement of government institutions, tourism businesses, and local communities is crucial to ensuring that wellness tourism development is not solely profit-oriented but also addresses social and environmental considerations. Without effective collaboration among stakeholders, the significant potential of North Lombok may not be fully realized.

Furthermore, the development of wellness tourism is closely aligned with the concept of sustainable development, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Wellness tourism can contribute to several SDGs, including good health and well-being (Goal 3), inclusive economic growth (Goal 8), responsible consumption and production (Goal 12), and environmental conservation (Goal 15). In the context of North Lombok, the integration of wellness tourism and sustainability principles is highly relevant, considering that the region continues to rely heavily on natural and cultural resources as its primary tourism attractions. Therefore, a holistic and sustainable approach is necessary to ensure that wellness tourism development generates not only short-

term benefits but also long-term destination sustainability.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze how wellness tourism can serve as a strategic approach to building tourist loyalty in North Lombok Regency. This study also examines the destination's existing potential, the role of stakeholders, and the relationship between wellness experiences, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty. By employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the growing body of literature on wellness tourism and practically to destination managers and policymakers in designing sustainable and highly competitive tourism development strategies. Additionally, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for developing a well-being-based tourism model that not only benefits tourists but also provides tangible advantages for local communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method to analyze the impact of the 2026 United States and Iran conflict on tourist arrivals to Lombok. A qualitative approach was selected because this research focuses on developing an in depth understanding of the relationship between global geopolitical dynamics and changes in international tourist mobility, particularly their implications for the tourism sector in Lombok. This approach enables the researcher to interpret various social, political, and economic phenomena related to international conflict and their influence on tourist behavior and tourism industry development. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is used to understand and explore the meaning of social phenomena through the interpretation of various relevant data sources.

The research method applied in this study is library research, which relies on literature as the primary source of research data. This study was not conducted through direct field observation, but rather through the review and analysis of various documents, scientific journals, international reports, statistical data, and official publications related to geopolitical conflict and international tourism. This method was chosen because the study aims to examine a global phenomenon that requires conceptual and interpretative analysis based on academic references and credible secondary data. According to Zed (2008), library research is a research technique conducted by collecting and analyzing various literature sources to obtain data and information relevant to the research focus.

The data sources in this study consist entirely of secondary data obtained from literature and documents relevant to the research topic. These include scientific journals on geopolitical conflict, international tourism, and tourist risk perception, academic books discussing tourism theory and international relations, reports from international organizations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), International Air Transport Association (IATA), and International Monetary Fund (IMF), tourism statistics from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) and the Ministry of Tourism, as well as international news reports covering developments in the 2026 United States and Iran conflict. The

use of these diverse sources aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between geopolitical conflict and the dynamics of international tourist arrivals.

Data collection was conducted through documentation study and literature review. In the initial stage, the researcher identified various sources relevant to the research focus, followed by the selection of sources based on credibility and relevance to the study topic. Subsequently, the collected data and information were classified according to specific themes, such as the impact of conflict on the global economy, disruptions in international transportation, tourist risk perception, and their influence on tourist arrivals to Lombok. The data collection process was conducted systematically to ensure that the information used aligned with the research objectives and supported in depth analysis.

The data analysis technique employed in this study is descriptive qualitative analysis. The collected data were analyzed by comparing, interpreting, and synthesizing information obtained from the selected literature sources. The analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between the 2026 United States and Iran conflict and changes in international tourist mobility, as well as its implications for tourist arrivals to Lombok. In the analytical process, the researcher also adopted a comparative approach to previous studies in order to identify similarities, differences, and emerging patterns regarding the impact of geopolitical conflict on the tourism sector. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis consists of three main stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing conducted continuously throughout the research process.

To strengthen data validity, this study applies source triangulation by comparing information obtained from various references and documents. This technique was used to ensure a high level of consistency and credibility in the data and information utilized. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of the 2026 United States and Iran conflict on global tourism dynamics and its implications for tourist arrivals to Lombok.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Wellness Tourism Potential in North Lombok Regency

The findings of this study indicate that North Lombok Regency possesses significant potential for the development of wellness tourism. This potential is supported by abundant natural resources, including beaches, waterfalls, tropical forests, and mountainous areas that remain largely unspoiled. The relatively peaceful environment and low levels of pollution serve as major attractions for tourists seeking tranquility and relaxation. In addition, the rich local culture of the Sasak community, including herbal healing traditions, spiritual rituals, and a lifestyle that is closely aligned with nature, further enhances the appeal of wellness tourism in the region. This finding is consistent with Liu et al. (2023), who argue that destinations combining natural and cultural resources possess a

competitive advantage in the development of health and wellness based tourism.

Furthermore, several activities in North Lombok have strong potential to be developed as wellness tourism products, including yoga and meditation in natural settings, traditional spa treatments using natural ingredients, herbal therapy, and nature based tourism activities such as trekking and forest bathing. These activities provide experiences that are not only recreational but also therapeutic. According to Koerniawaty and Sudjana (2022), tourism experiences that provide direct health benefits can increase destination value and tourist attractiveness. Therefore, the existing potential in North Lombok can be developed into highly competitive flagship wellness tourism products.

Wellness Experience and Tourist Satisfaction

The interview findings indicate that tourists visiting North Lombok experience something distinct compared to other tourism destinations. These experiences are not limited to recreational aspects but also include mental relaxation, physical rejuvenation, and a stronger connection with nature. Tourists reported that the peaceful atmosphere, clean air, and interactions with local communities had positive effects on their psychological well being. This suggests that wellness tourism experiences have a direct impact on tourist satisfaction.

According to Lee and Kim (2023), tourist satisfaction is a primary factor in determining post visit behavior, including the intention to revisit. In this context, holistic wellness experiences are capable of enhancing tourist satisfaction because they fulfill emotional and psychological needs. In addition, personal and authentic experiences create lasting impressions that are difficult to forget. He et al. (2023) emphasize that experiences with strong emotional value create a powerful bond between tourists and destinations. Therefore, the quality of wellness experiences is a key factor in enhancing tourist satisfaction in North Lombok.

Tourist Loyalty from the Perspective of Wellness Tourism

Tourist loyalty in this study is reflected through revisit intention and the willingness to recommend the destination to others. The findings indicate that tourists who experience the benefits of wellness activities tend to demonstrate higher levels of loyalty compared to conventional tourists. This is due to the transformational experiences they perceive, including improved health, peace of mind, and profound spiritual experiences.

Liu et al. (2023) state that positive wellness experiences can enhance tourist satisfaction and emotional attachment, which ultimately influence loyalty. Emotional attachment is an important factor in building long term relationships between tourists and destinations. In addition, satisfied tourists are more likely to engage in indirect promotion through word of mouth, which represents one of the most effective forms of loyalty in the tourism industry. Therefore, wellness tourism can be utilized as a strategic approach to increasing tourist loyalty in North Lombok.

The Role of Stakeholders in Wellness Tourism Development

The findings indicate that the development of wellness tourism in North

Lombok involves multiple stakeholders, including government institutions, tourism business operators, local communities, and tourists. The government plays a role in providing policies, regulations, and supporting infrastructure. Tourism businesses are responsible for delivering high quality services and tourism products, while local communities contribute by preserving cultural authenticity and environmental sustainability. Tourists themselves also play a role in maintaining destination sustainability through responsible behavior.

However, the findings also reveal that collaboration among stakeholders remains suboptimal. Several challenges include limited coordination, insufficient human resource capacity, and the absence of specific standards for wellness tourism management. According to Hörisch et al. (2014), the success of any program largely depends on synergy among the involved stakeholders. Therefore, greater efforts are required to strengthen coordination and collaboration in support of sustainable wellness tourism development.

The Contribution of Wellness Tourism to Sustainable Development

The development of wellness tourism in North Lombok makes a significant contribution to sustainable development. From an economic perspective, wellness tourism creates employment opportunities and increases local community income. From a social perspective, it encourages the preservation of local culture and enhances community participation in tourism activities. From an environmental perspective, wellness tourism promotes the responsible use of natural resources and increases awareness of environmental conservation.

This aligns with the concept of the Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasize the importance of balancing economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020). Glyptou (2024) also argues that wellness tourism has substantial potential to support the achievement of sustainable development goals, particularly in relation to health and well being. Therefore, the development of wellness tourism in North Lombok provides not only short term benefits but also positive long term impacts on destination sustainability.

Model of the Relationship Between Wellness Tourism and Tourist Loyalty

Based on the findings, a conceptual relationship between wellness tourism and tourist loyalty can be formulated as follows: high quality wellness experiences enhance tourist satisfaction, which then creates emotional attachment to the destination, ultimately leading to tourist loyalty. This model demonstrates that loyalty is not formed directly, but rather through a process involving tourist experiences and satisfaction.

These findings reinforce the theory proposed by Lee and Kim (2023), which states that satisfaction and experience are primary determinants of tourist loyalty. In this context, wellness tourism functions as a variable that influences the overall quality of tourist experiences. Therefore, the development of high quality wellness products and services represents an important strategy for enhancing tourist loyalty and strengthening the competitiveness of North Lombok as a tourism destination.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this study entitled Building Tourist Loyalty through a Wellness Tourism Approach in North Lombok Regency, it can be concluded that North Lombok Regency possesses substantial potential for the development of wellness tourism, supported by its rich natural resources, well preserved environment, and the local culture of the Sasak community, which reflects values of balance, health, and harmony with nature. Holistic wellness tourism experiences encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions have been shown to enhance tourist satisfaction by providing direct benefits to visitors' well being. Tourist loyalty is formed through a process that begins with high quality tourism experiences, leading to satisfaction and emotional attachment, which ultimately encourage revisit intention and positive recommendations to other potential visitors. The findings also indicate that the successful development of wellness tourism is highly dependent on the role of multiple stakeholders, including government institutions, tourism businesses, local communities, and tourists, although collaboration among these stakeholders still requires improvement to achieve more integrated and sustainable destination management. Furthermore, wellness tourism contributes positively to sustainable development through economic benefits, social empowerment, and environmental conservation. Therefore, wellness tourism can be considered an effective strategic approach for enhancing tourist loyalty while simultaneously strengthening the competitiveness and long term sustainability of tourism destinations in North Lombok Regency.

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