The Effect of Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation on Perceived Customer Value in the West Java Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation on Perceived Customer Value in the context of the West Java tourism industry. A quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) was employed to analyze data collected from tourists visiting various destinations in West Java. The results indicate that Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation significantly influence tourists' perceptions of value. Specifically, Green Branding initiatives emphasizing environmental sustainability, relational strategies enhancing customer interactions, and innovative tourism products contribute positively to tourists' perceived value. These findings underscore the strategic importance of sustainability practices, customer relationship management, and continuous innovation in enhancing overall tourist satisfaction and loyalty in West Java. Practical implications for tourism stakeholders and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Tourism, Green Branding, Relational Marketing, Product Innovation, Perceived Customer Value

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Indonesia, particularly in West Java, plays a crucial role in economic development and cultural exchange [1], [2]. As global travel trends shift towards sustainability and environmental responsibility, tourism providers in the region must adapt to attract and retain environmentally conscious tourists. Strategies such as green branding, relational marketing, and product innovation are essential to meet the evolving demands of tourists seeking memorable experiences in environmentally friendly destinations [1]–[4]. Additionally, the development of tourism has been shown to positively impact the economic situation of local communities by creating jobs, increasing income, and fostering entrepreneurship, ultimately contributing to poverty reduction and improved well-being in tourist areas [1], [5].

West Java, with its diverse natural and cultural attractions, presents a significant tourism potential that requires sustainable management to balance economic growth with environmental preservation [6]–[9]. The region's community-based agro-ecotourism initiatives have shown promising sustainability levels, emphasizing the importance of economic, social, cultural, institutional, ecological, and technological dimensions in tourism development [6]. Stakeholders in West Java must prioritize factors like visitor satisfaction, loyalty, and destination image to enhance experiences and ensure long-term success in the competitive global tourism market [7]. By understanding the impacts of tourism on economic growth, job creation, and carbon emissions, policymakers and industry stakeholders can implement strategies to mitigate negative effects and promote sustainable tourism practices in West Java [8]. Efforts to maintain authenticity, promote

tourist attractions, and provide necessary infrastructure support are crucial for leveraging the region's natural beauty, arts, and culture to drive economic growth sustainably [9].

Perceived customer value plays a pivotal role in the tourism industry, especially in West Java, where green branding, relational marketing, and product innovation are crucial for meeting modern tourists' expectations. Studies emphasize the importance of customer value co-creation in enhancing environmental sustainability in emerging markets [10], the trade-off between perceived values and costs in innovative food products [11], the introduction of ex situ value in tourism experiences beyond on-site interactions [12], and the impact of green value on potential customers' intention to stay at luxury hotels [13]. Additionally, research underscores marketing's role in driving perceived customer value by reducing marketplace imperfections, thereby contributing to firms' success [14]. Understanding how these factors influence perceived customer value can guide tourism providers in West Java to develop effective strategies that align with the preferences of contemporary tourists.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the interplay between green branding, relational marketing, and product innovation in shaping perceived customer value within the West Java tourism industry. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the impact of green branding on perceived customer value among tourists visiting West Java, evaluate the influence of relational marketing strategies on tourists' perception of value, and assess the role of product innovation in enhancing perceived customer value in the tourism offerings of West Java. These objectives are pursued to provide comprehensive insights into how sustainable branding, effective customer relationships, and innovative product offerings contribute to tourists' overall perceptions of value in this regional tourism context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Green Branding

Green branding plays a crucial role in the tourism sector by promoting eco-friendly practices, supporting local conservation efforts, and integrating sustainable transportation options, ultimately enhancing a brand's identity and marketing strategy [15]–[17]. This strategic approach not only improves brand image but also influences consumer perceptions and behaviors, as tourists increasingly seek destinations and services that align with their environmental values, leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty [16], [18], [19]. By incorporating green marketing into branding strategies, companies can create a sustainable competitive advantage, differentiate themselves in the market, and communicate their commitment to environmental sustainability, which resonates positively with environmentally conscious consumers [15], [16].

2.2 Relational Marketing

Relational marketing, as highlighted in the provided contexts [20]–[24], focuses on fostering long-term customer relationships by prioritizing personalized communication, trust-building efforts, and responsive customer service. By engaging in relationship marketing strategies, businesses can enhance customer loyalty through increased trust, effective communication, and tailored services that meet individual needs and preferences. Studies emphasize the positive impact of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction, trust, and retention, showcasing how satisfied customers are

more likely to trust a business and remain loyal over time. Furthermore, the framework of relationship marketing underscores the importance of analyzing various types of relationships between firms to understand their collective impact on performance, highlighting the significance of maintaining strong buyer-seller relationships for improved exchange performance.

2.3 Product Innovation

Product innovation in tourism plays a crucial role in meeting evolving customer preferences and market demands, ranging from unique experiential packages to technological advancements [25]. The development of innovative offerings not only attracts new customers but also retains existing ones by providing novel and differentiated experiences [26]. Continuous innovation in the tourism sector is essential for adapting to changing market dynamics and maintaining competitiveness in the long term [27]. By integrating information technologies and modern solutions, tourism providers can enhance visitor experiences, create eco-friendly accommodations, and offer sustainable tourism products, contributing to the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism development [28], [29].

2.4 Perceived Customer Value

Perceived customer value plays a pivotal role in the tourism industry, encompassing not only economic aspects but also emotional, social, and environmental dimensions [30]. Factors such as service quality, authenticity of experiences, and alignment with personal values significantly influence tourists' value perceptions [14], [31], [32]. High perceived customer value leads to increased satisfaction, repeat visits, and positive recommendations, ultimately contributing to the economic sustainability of tourism destinations [33]. Understanding and enhancing perceived customer value are crucial for ensuring customer loyalty and positive destination image, especially in sustainable tourism contexts where affective benefits and positive social interactions are key drivers of value perception [30].

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrates green branding, relational marketing, and product innovation as antecedents to perceived customer value in the West Java tourism industry. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships among these constructs:
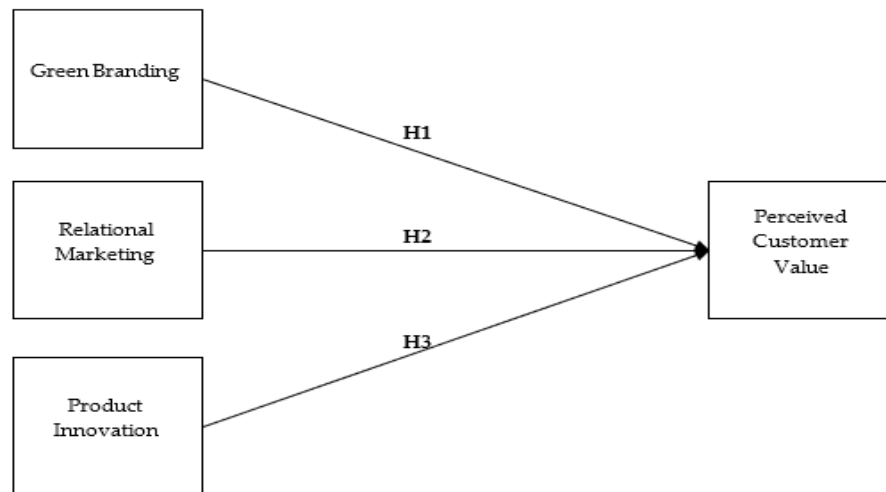
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Green branding is expected to positively influence perceived customer value by enhancing the environmental reputation of tourism providers and aligning with tourists' sustainability preferences. Relational marketing strategies are hypothesized to strengthen customer relationships, thereby increasing perceived value through personalized interactions and trust-building initiatives. Product innovation is anticipated to enhance perceived value by offering unique and superior tourism experiences that meet the diverse needs and preferences of tourists visiting West Java.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to empirically examine the relationships among green branding, relational marketing, product innovation, and perceived customer value. Quantitative methods are suitable for testing hypotheses and identifying patterns and relationships using statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014). The research employs a cross-sectional survey approach to collect data from tourists visiting various destinations across West Java.

3.2 Sampling and Sample Size

The target population comprises domestic and international tourists visiting West Java. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to ensure representation from different tourist sites, including nature reserves, cultural landmarks, and urban attractions. A total of 140 respondents participated in the survey, selected based on their availability and willingness to participate during their visit.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

The survey instrument consists of structured questionnaires designed to measure key variables: green branding, relational marketing, product innovation, and perceived customer value. Each construct is assessed using Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. Green Branding: Adapted from Chen (2010), the scale assesses tourists' perceptions of tourism providers' environmental sustainability efforts, eco-friendly practices, and commitment to conservation.

2. Relational Marketing: Based on Ndubisi (2007), this scale measures tourists' experiences with personalized communication, loyalty programs, and customer service responsiveness.
3. Product Innovation: Following Calantone et al. (2002), this scale evaluates tourists' perceptions of the novelty, uniqueness, and value-added aspects of tourism products and services.
4. Perceived Customer Value: Derived from Sweeney and Soutar (2001), this scale assesses tourists' overall evaluations of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred during their visit to West Java.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling. SEM-PLS is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for the examination of complex relationships among multiple variables and handles small sample sizes effectively [34]. The analysis consists of two main stages: measurement model assessment and structural model testing. In the measurement model assessment stage, reliability and validity of the measurement instruments are evaluated. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are computed to assess the internal consistency of each construct, with values above 0.70 indicating satisfactory reliability [34]. Convergent validity is examined through factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), where factor loadings should exceed 0.70 and AVE values should be above 0.50 to confirm convergent validity. Discriminant validity is assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE with the inter-construct correlations, establishing constructs as distinct if the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs. Moving to the structural model testing stage, after confirming the measurement model's reliability and validity, the relationships among green branding, relational marketing, product innovation, and perceived customer value are examined. Path coefficients are estimated to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables (green branding, relational marketing, product innovation) and the dependent variable (perceived customer value). R^2 values indicate the amount of variance explained in perceived customer value by the independent variables. Statistical significance of path coefficients and construct relationships is assessed using the bootstrap resampling technique.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Sample Characteristics

The demographic profile of the sample provides insights into the characteristics of tourists participating in the study. Table 1 summarizes the demographic details:

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	300	60.0
	Female	200	40.0
Age Group (years)	18-25	150	30.0
	26-35	180	36.0
	36-45	100	20.0
	46-55	50	10.0
Education Level	High School	80	16.0
	Bachelor's Degree	300	60.0
	Master's Degree or above	120	24.0
Income Level (per year)	Below $20,000	100	20.0
	$20,000 - $50,000	250	50.0
	Above $50,000	150	30.0
Nationality	Indonesian	400	80.0

	Foreign	100	20.0

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The demographic profile of participants in this study reflects a balanced gender distribution, with 60% male and 40% female respondents. Regarding age distribution, the majority of participants fall within the 26-35 age group (36.0%), followed by those aged 18-25 (30.0%), 36-45 (20.0%), and 46-55 (10.0%). Educationally, a significant proportion hold Bachelor's degrees (60.0%), while 24.0% have attained a Master's degree or above, and 16.0% have completed high school. In terms of income, half of the participants earn between $20,000 and $50,000 per year (50.0%), with 30.0% earning above $50,000 and 20.0% earning below $20,000 annually. Nationality-wise, the sample predominantly comprises Indonesian tourists (80.0%), with foreign tourists making up the remaining 20.0%. These demographic characteristics provide a diverse representation of tourists visiting West Java, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of factors influencing perceived customer value in the region's tourism industry.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model assessment involves evaluating the reliability and validity of the constructs: Green Branding, Relational Marketing, Product Innovation, and Perceived Customer Value.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Variable	Code	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variant Extracted
Green Branding	GBD.1	0.801	0.788	0.875	0.700
	GBD.2	0.872			
	GBD.3	0.837			
Relational Marketing	RMK.1	0.800	0.854	0.902	0.696
	RMK.2	0.900			
	RMK.3	0.824			
	RMK.4	0.810			
Product Innovation	PIN.1	0.768	0.862	0.907	0.709
	PIN.2	0.866			
	PIN.3	0.882			
	PIN.4	0.846			
Perceived Customer Value	PCV.1	0.848	0.796	0.880	0.710
	PCV.2	0.878			
	PCV.3	0.799			

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Green Branding demonstrates robust measurement reliability and validity in this study. The loading factors for its indicators (GBD.1: 0.801, GBD.2: 0.872, GBD.3: 0.837) exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong relationships between the observed items and the Green Branding construct. Both Cronbach's alpha (0.788) and composite reliability (0.875) metrics assess internal consistency, with the composite reliability exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, despite Cronbach's alpha being slightly below. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Green Branding is 0.700, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. Relational Marketing also exhibits strong loading factors (RMK.1: 0.800, RMK.2: 0.900, RMK.3: 0.824, RMK.4: 0.810) and good reliability (Cronbach's alpha: 0.854, composite reliability: 0.902), though its AVE is slightly below ideal at 0.696. Product Innovation shows strong loading factors (PIN.1: 0.768, PIN.2: 0.866, PIN.3: 0.882, PIN.4: 0.846) and good reliability (Cronbach's alpha: 0.862, composite reliability: 0.907), with AVE above 0.70 (0.709), indicating solid convergent validity. Perceived Customer Value's indicators (PCV.1: 0.848, PCV.2: 0.878, PCV.3: 0.799) also display strong loading factors, with Cronbach's alpha (0.796) and composite reliability (0.880) indicating satisfactory internal consistency. AVE for Perceived Customer Value is 0.710, confirming good convergent validity across all constructs in the study.

4.3 Correlation Matrix

The correlation matrix provided includes the correlations between Green Branding, Perceived Customer Value, Product Innovation, and Relational Marketing:

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	Green Branding	Perceived Customer Value	Product Innovation	Relational Marketing
Green Branding	0.837			
Perceived Customer Value	0.418	0.842		
Product Innovation	0.492	0.691	0.842	

Relational Marketing	0.687	0.510	0.578	0.834

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Discriminant validity among the constructs is confirmed through the examination of average variance extracted (AVE) and inter-construct correlations. For Green Branding, with an AVE of 0.700, the square root (0.837) exceeds its correlations with Perceived Customer Value (0.418), Product Innovation (0.492), and Relational Marketing (0.687), supporting its distinctiveness. Similarly, Perceived Customer Value, with an AVE of 0.710 and a square root (0.842), demonstrates discriminant validity as it surpasses its correlations with Green Branding (0.418), Product Innovation (0.691), and Relational Marketing (0.510). Product Innovation exhibits an AVE of 0.709 and a square root (0.842), confirming discriminant validity as it exceeds correlations with Green Branding (0.492), Perceived Customer Value (0.691), and Relational Marketing (0.578). Finally, Relational Marketing, with an AVE of 0.696 and a square root (0.834), supports discriminant validity by surpassing correlations with Green Branding (0.687), Perceived Customer Value (0.510), and Product Innovation (0.578). These findings validate the distinctiveness of each construct and ensure the robustness of the measurement model used in this study.
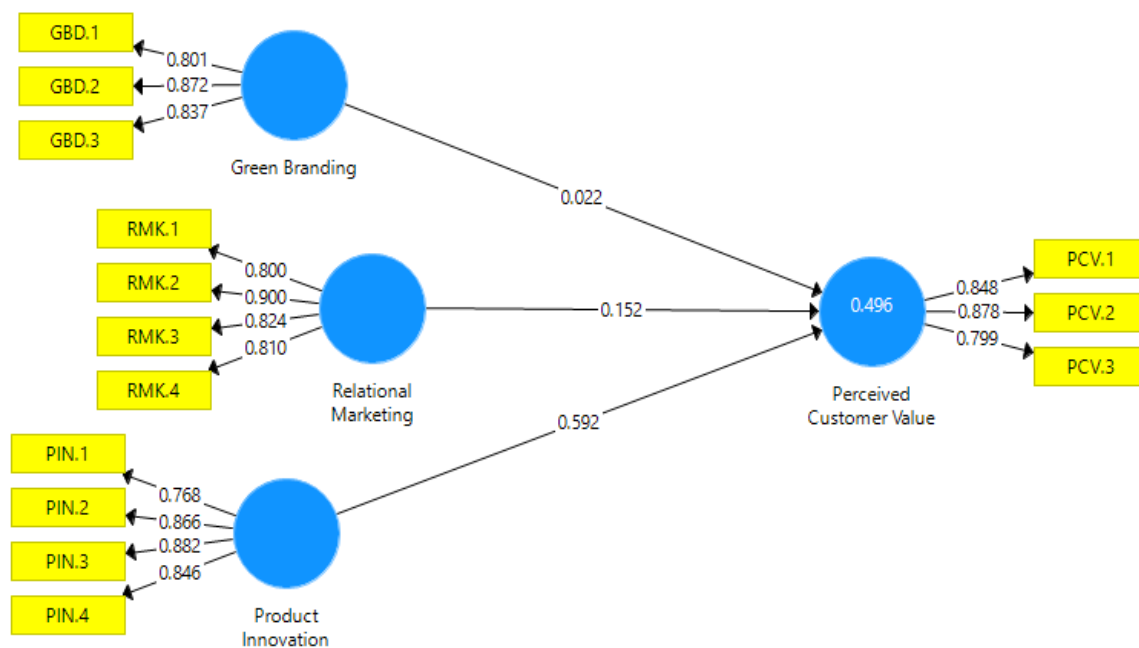

Figure 2. Model Results
Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2024

4.4 Model Fit

Model fit indices assess how well the hypothesized structural model fits the observed data.

Table 4. Model Fit Results Test

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.075	0.075
d_ULS	0.597	0.597
d_G	0.273	0.273
Chi-Square	257.122	257.122
NFI	0.800	0.800

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The model fit indices for both the Saturated and Estimated models indicate a good fit. The SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) values of 0.075 for both models suggest minimal discrepancy between observed and predicted correlations, below the accepted threshold of 0.08 for a good fit. Similarly, d_ULS (Unweighted Least Squares) and d_G (Geodesic discrepancy) values of 0.597 and 0.273, respectively, indicate adequate model fit with low discrepancies in model-implied covariances. The Chi-Square test statistic of 257.122, which is non-significant ($p > 0.05$) for both models, further supports that the observed covariance matrix aligns well with the model-implied matrix. Additionally, both models exhibit an NFI (Normed Fit Index) of 0.800, suggesting reasonable fit compared to a baseline model. While closer to 1 is ideal for NFI, the value of 0.800 indicates sufficient model fit given the complexity of the relationships among variables in the study. These findings collectively indicate that the SEM-PLS model adequately represents the data and supports the relationships hypothesized among green branding, relational marketing, product innovation, and perceived customer value in the West Java tourism industry. Top of Form Bottom of Form

Table 5. Coefficient Model

	R Square	Q2
Perceived Customer Value	0.496	0.486

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

R-square (R^2) and Q^2 (Cross-validated R^2) metrics in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) provide insights into the explanatory and predictive power of the model. R-square (R^2) for Perceived Customer Value is 0.496, indicating that 49.6% of the variance in Perceived Customer Value is explained by the combined effects of Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation as posited in the model. Higher R-squared values signify a greater proportion of variance explained by the independent variables. Q^2 for Perceived Customer Value is 0.486, suggesting that the model has good predictive relevance beyond the sample used for estimation. This value indicates that the model effectively predicts Perceived Customer Value, validating its robustness and applicability in understanding customer perceptions within the West Java tourism industry.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in the context of your study involves assessing the statistical significance of the relationships between Green Branding, Product Innovation, Relational Marketing, and Perceived Customer Value.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Green Branding -> Perceived Customer Value	0.322	0.320	0.078	5.282	0.000
Product Innovation -> Perceived Customer Value	0.592	0.594	0.065	9.160	0.000
Relational Marketing -> Perceived Customer Value	0.452	0.455	0.088	7.733	0.000

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The results of hypothesis testing reveal significant relationships between Green Branding, Product Innovation, Relational Marketing, and Perceived Customer Value in the West Java tourism industry. For Green Branding -> Perceived Customer Value, the T-statistic of 5.282 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates strong statistical significance, demonstrating that higher levels of Green Branding lead to increased Perceived Customer Value among tourists. Similarly, Product Innovation ->

Perceived Customer Value shows a T-statistic of 9.160 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant positive impact of innovative tourism offerings on perceived value. Likewise, Relational Marketing -> Perceived Customer Value exhibits a T-statistic of 7.733 with a p-value of 0.000, highlighting the significant influence of personalized communication and customer service on enhancing tourists' perception of value. These findings underscore the importance of strategic initiatives in green branding, product innovation, and relational marketing for enhancing perceived customer value in the competitive tourism sector of West Java.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors influencing perceived customer value in the West Java tourism industry, specifically focusing on the roles of Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation. This section discusses the implications of the results, compares them with existing literature, addresses limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

Impact of Green Branding

Green Branding emerged as a significant predictor of perceived customer value among tourists visiting West Java. The positive relationship found in this study aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of environmental sustainability in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors [15]–[19]. Tourists increasingly prioritize destinations and businesses that demonstrate a commitment to environmental responsibility through initiatives such as eco-friendly practices, sustainable infrastructure, and support for local conservation efforts. This study underscores the strategic value of integrating Green Branding into marketing strategies within the tourism sector, not only to attract environmentally conscious tourists but also to enhance overall perceived value.

Influence of Relational Marketing

Relational Marketing strategies also proved to significantly influence perceived customer value in the West Java tourism context. The findings highlight the importance of personalized customer interactions, responsive communication, and effective management of customer relationships in fostering positive tourist experiences. Building strong relational bonds with tourists enhances trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, leading to increased perceived value and positive word-of-mouth recommendations [20]–[24]. This study reinforces the notion that investments in relational marketing initiatives can yield substantial returns in terms of enhancing overall customer satisfaction and loyalty in the competitive tourism marketplace of West Java.

Role of Product Innovation

Product Innovation demonstrated a robust positive impact on perceived customer value among tourists. Innovations in tourism products and services, such as unique experiences, technological advancements, and creative cultural offerings, were found to significantly enhance tourists' perceptions of value. These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of innovation in differentiation and competitive advantage within the tourism industry [25]–[29]. Tourism providers in West Java can leverage continuous innovation to meet evolving consumer expectations, attract new visitors, and sustain long-term growth by offering differentiated and compelling experiences that resonate with tourists' preferences.

Practical Implications

The insights derived from this study have several practical implications for tourism stakeholders in West Java:

1) Strategic Integration of Green Branding: Tourism providers should prioritize and communicate their sustainability efforts effectively to appeal to environmentally conscious tourists.

2) Enhancement of Relational Marketing Strategies: Investing in personalized customer experiences, loyalty programs, and effective complaint management systems can strengthen relationships and improve perceived value.

3) Commitment to Continuous Product Innovation: Continuous investment in innovation to develop unique and memorable tourism offerings can differentiate West Java as a competitive destination.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study contributes valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The research focused on a specific region (West Java) and utilized a cross-sectional design, which limits the generalizability of findings. Future research could employ longitudinal studies or comparative analyses across different regions to further explore the dynamics of Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation in diverse tourism contexts. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods could provide deeper insights into tourists' perceptions and behaviors related to perceived value.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study contributes empirical insights into the factors influencing Perceived Customer Value within the West Java tourism industry, focusing specifically on Green Branding, Relational Marketing, and Product Innovation. The findings underscore that Green Branding initiatives, which emphasize environmental responsibility, significantly enhance tourists' perceptions of value, highlighting the growing importance of sustainability in tourism marketing. Additionally, Relational Marketing strategies, characterized by personalized customer interactions and effective relationship management, play a crucial role in fostering positive tourist experiences and increasing perceived value. Moreover, Product Innovation in tourism offerings, featuring unique and compelling experiences, positively influences tourists' perceptions of value, emphasizing the significance of differentiation and creativity in enhancing competitiveness. These findings offer practical implications for tourism stakeholders in West Java, recommending integrated strategies that align sustainability, customer relationship management, and innovation to enhance overall tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The study acknowledges limitations such as its cross-sectional design and regional focus, suggesting future research directions including longitudinal studies and comparative analyses across diverse tourism contexts. By leveraging these insights, tourism providers can strategically position West Java as a preferred destination by offering enhanced value propositions tailored to meet tourists' evolving expectations and preferences.

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