

Assessing the Moderating Effects of Government Role and Support on Development of Agricultural and Cultural Heritage Tourism

Irany Windhyastiti^{1,*}, Shallya Yudha Tama¹, Umu Khourh¹, Sri Wahyu Lelly Hana Setyanti², Christina Sri Ratnaningsih¹

¹ Universitas Merdeka Malang, Indonesia

² Universitas Jember, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: irani.windhyastiti@unmer.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The integration of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism has emerged as an important strategy for promoting sustainable rural development and community welfare. This study examines the interplay of attraction and promotion in enhancing agricultural and cultural heritage tourism. Furthermore, it investigates the moderating role of government support in the relationships between key tourism determinants and tourism development. A quantitative approach was employed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze data collected from 373 respondents in a rural tourism destination. The results reveal that cultural heritage and agricultural attractions and government support have significant positive effects on tourism development. Furthermore, government support acts as a moderating factor, strengthening the influence of image and promotion on tourism development.

Keywords: *Attraction, Government Role and Support, Promotion, Tourism*

1. INTRODUCTION

Situs Sekaran located in Sekarpuro Village, Malang Regency, has an area of 200 hectares and has a unique duality of resources in the form of a productive agricultural landscape and cultural heritage (archaeology discovered in 2018). The average income of Sekarpuro Village residents remains relatively low, while poverty reaches 2,344 people (20%), more than the open poverty rate (TPT) in Malang Regency, which was only 5.13% in 2023 (BPS Kabupaten Malang, 2023). Therefore, to increase the potential for community welfare from the tourism sector, the village government has initiated several infrastructure development programs, including greenhouses, photo spots, culinary centers, and other supporting facilities. This aims to increase the number of tourists, where an increase in tourist numbers can create opportunities to accelerate some and restore ancient heritage sites, thereby strengthening the village's appeal and positioning it as a potential national tourist destination.

Despite the growing interest in rural tourism, agritourism, and heritage tourism, previous studies have generally examined these tourism forms separately. Agritourism research mainly focuses on agricultural experiences, while heritage tourism studies emphasize cultural and historical attractions. In addition, most tourism development studies have concentrated on the direct effects of attractions, facilities, and promotion on destination performance, with limited attention given to the institutional mechanisms that enable tourism resources to generate sustainable development outcomes. Addressing these gaps, this study proposes an integrated agricultural heritage educational tourism framework that combines agricultural landscapes and cultural heritage into a unified rural tourism model. The study also introduces a moderator perspective in which government support strengthens the influence of image and promotion on tourism development. The findings highlight the importance of aligning promotional strategies, destination readiness, and institutional support to enhance sustainable rural tourism development while reinforcing and extending existing tourism theories.

1.1. Literature Review

A tourism system can be understood as a network of interrelated and integrated components, including attractions, transportation, and entertainment facilities (Var & Gunn, 2020). Meanwhile, destination marketing involves a series of strategic activities designed to position a destination competitively, where the uniqueness of the destination is promoted through its brand image and identity to attract visitors (Pike, 2012; Avraham & Ketter, 2017; Ketter &

Avraham, 2021). Tourist attractions have exerted a magnetic attraction on people since classical times (Var & Gunn, 2020). This attraction involves not only the preferences and interests of tourists, but also the quality reflected in its design, development, and management. Tourist attractions also reflect the growing importance of leisure experiences within contemporary tourism consumption and the modern leisure class (MacCannell, 2016; Nikolakakis, 2025). Tourist attractions can be understood as an empirical interaction between tourists, the object or sight, and the “signifiers.” This perspective implies that attractions are experienced through tourism activities, although they may also exist independently of prominent sights. To broaden this perspective, Leiper proposed a comprehensive tourist attraction system consisting of three interrelated components: the tourist, the nucleus, and the marker element (Leiper, 1990; J. Li & Yu, 2023). A survey involving more than 6,000 visitors to cultural attractions revealed substantial support for the overall structure of the model, highlighting that tourists are primarily motivated in their decision to visit. Previous studies indicate that tourist visitation is influenced by visitor motivations, attraction markers, media utilization, and travel characteristics (Leiper, 1990; Richards, 2018; Boivin & Tanguay, 2019). Cultural heritage and local attractions are closely interconnected. Tourists are generally motivated to explore and appreciate distinctive cultural expressions, while local communities recognize the symbolic meaning of their heritage, fostering pride and a sense of identity. In addition, cultural tourism plays a significant role in strengthening the local economy and providing resources to sustain the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage (Cerisola & Panzera, 2024). Destinations can strategically utilize their cultural assets to enhance brand awareness and benefit tourism-related businesses, as evidenced by empirical application (Kim & Nicolau, 2025)

The value of physical attributes can also be linked to destination branding, where branding has also been proven to be needed to attract tourist visits to a tourist destination (Alvianna et al., 2022). Another study found that tourism promotion strategies have a positive influence on a city's image and tourists' intention to visit. Furthermore, tourism experience plays a role in shaping the relationship between promotion strategies and both city image and visitor intentions. Tourism experience plays a role in shaping the relationship between promotion strategies and both city image and visitor intentions, which is a moderating variable (Zhou et al., 2024) .

Coercive power is considered the force capable of generating remarkable outcomes. In this context, government authority functions as a driving force for the tourism industry, expected to mobilize all stakeholders involved. The government's role in economic development encompasses planning, policymaking, regulation, and the provision of public facilities to strengthen tourism. Evidence from Kulonprogo illustrates this role through the development of destination facilities, tourism marketing, industry support, institutional integration, and the formulation of regulations for five strategic tourism areas in the region. (Rahajeng, 2017) . This research is in line with research in Batu City where the progress of the tourism industry is inseparable from the role of the government, which when the tourism industry "slumped" used "power" to force investors to stay in Batu City and encouraged the opening of various tourist attractions (Windhyastiti & Diah, 2016) . Research in the Mediterranean region also shows that the active role of government is important in attracting and controlling investment demand in the tourism sector in developed countries in the Mediterranean (Kunst, 2011) . The government also has an interest in supporting tourism development such as foreign exchange earnings, contributions to government revenues, job creation and regional development stimulus (Jenkins, 2020) .

1.2. Hypotheses

Based on previous studies and the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Cultural and agricultural attractions have a significant positive effect on the development of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism.

H2: Image and promotion have a significant positive effect on the development of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism.

H3: Government role and support strengthen the influence of cultural and agricultural attractions on the development of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism.

H4: Government role and support strengthen the influence of image and promotion on the development of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism.

Based on the theoretical foundation and previous studies, the conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1.

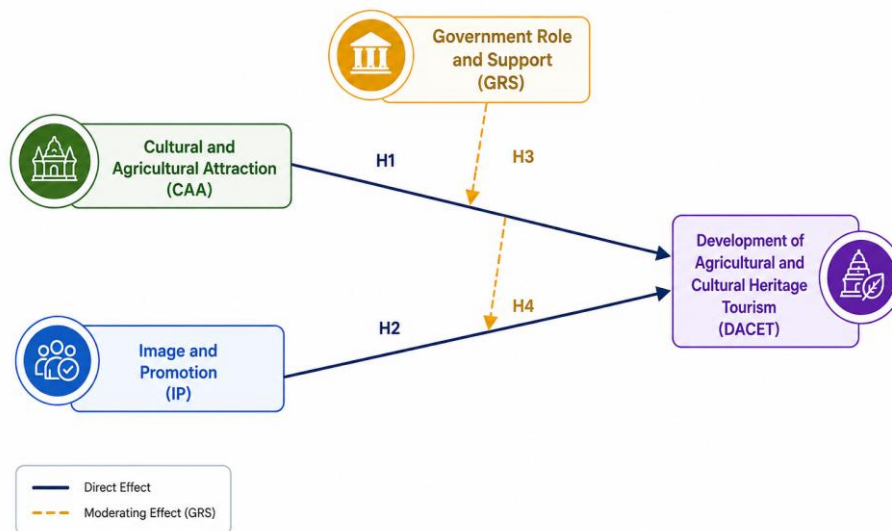


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the factors influencing the development of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism. The study population consisted of 3,845 households in Sekarpuro Village, and the sample size was determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) recommendation for finite populations, requiring a minimum of 350 respondents (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). A total of 373 local community members were selected through random sampling, which also exceeded the minimum sample requirement for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as recommended by Hair et al (2022). Local residents were chosen as respondents because they represent key stakeholders whose perceptions, participation, and involvement are essential for sustainable tourism destination development. The collected data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS software. The list of indicators used in this study can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Variable Indicator

Variable	Indicator
Agriculture and Heritage Attraction (Middleton & Clarke, 2012)	Sekaran Site, History of Sekaran Site; Local Culture; View of rice fields/farms; Agriculture education
Branding and Promotion (Aaker, 2009)	The identity and uniqueness; A catchy slogan; Promotion by social media; A digital brochure; Accessibility of Information
Government Support (Rahajeng , 2017) (Kunst, 2011) (Jenkins, 2020)	Support of development; Support of regulations and policies; Support of infrastructure; Support of training programs; Supported by promotion
Development of Tourism Destination (Haugland et al., 2011; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015)	Tourism potential; Integrated agro-cultural tourism feasibility; Agro-cultural tourism as village identity; Economic benefits for local community

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics of some respondents 54.16% are female, aged 41-60 years are 45.04%, 42.63% education of respondents is senior high school and 27.08% the occupation of respondents is entrepreneur. Figure 2 presents the structural model estimation results, including the direct and moderating relationships among the research variables.

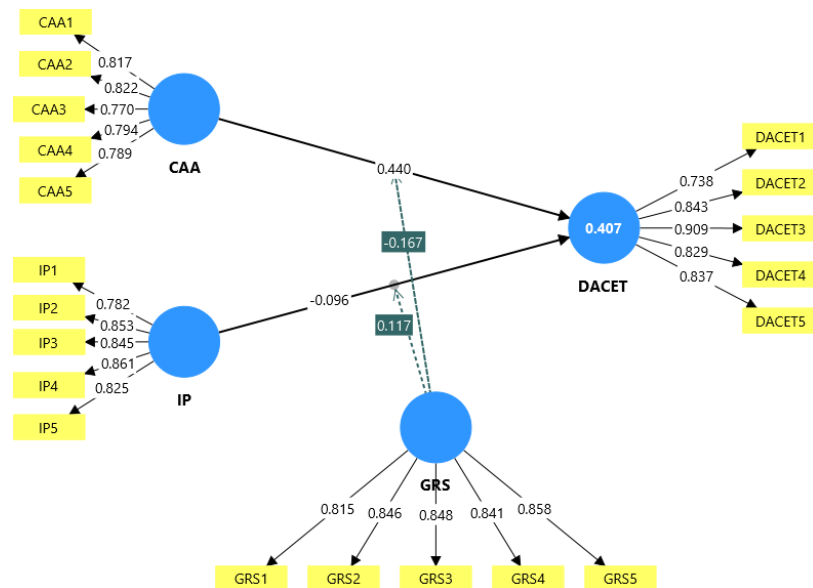


Figure 2. Structural Model Estimation Results

Table 2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Hypothesis Result
CAA -> DACET	0,440	0,440	0,050	8,836	0,000	Supported
IP -> DACET	-0,096	-0,096	0,053	1,826	0,068	Not supported
GRS -> DACET	0,427	0,428	0,063	6,813	0,000	Supported
GRS x CAA -> DACET	-0,167	-0,164	0,045	3,690	0,000	Not supported
GRS x IP -> DACET	0,117	0,114	0,039	2,986	0,003	Supported

CAA : Cultural & Agricultural Attraction

IP : Image & Promotion

GRS : Government Role & Support

DACET : Development of Agricultural & Cultural Heritage Tourism

Based on Table 2, the results of hypothesis testing indicate that: (1) Cultural and Agricultural Attraction (CAA) has a significant positive effect on Development of Agricultural and Cultural Heritage Tourism (DACET) ($\beta = 0.440$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that stronger cultural and agricultural attractions enhance tourism development. Therefore, H1 is supported; (2) Image and Promotion (IP) has no significant effect on DACET ($\beta = -0.096$, $p = 0.068$), indicating that current promotional efforts may not effectively support destination development. Therefore, H2 is not supported; (3) Government Role and Support (GRS) has a significant positive effect on DACET ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its direct contribution to tourism development.

Regarding the moderating effects, the hypothesis testing indicates that: (1) GRS significantly moderates the relationship between CAA and DACET, with a negative interaction coefficient ($\beta = -0.167$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher government role and support weakens the influence of CAA on DACET. Since the moderating effect is significant but in the opposite direction from the proposed hypothesis, H3 is not supported; (2) GRS significantly strengthens the relationship between IP and DACET ($\beta = 0.117$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that stronger government support enhances the contribution of image and promotion to tourism development. Therefore, H4 is supported.

3.1. The Influence of Cultural and Agricultural Attractions on The Development of Agricultural and Cultural Heritage Tourism.

Cultural and agricultural attractions positively and significantly influence the development of agricultural and cultural heritage tourism. The attractiveness of Sekarpuro Village is strongly supported by several key elements, including the Sekaran Site, local history, cultural attractions, rice field landscapes, and agricultural education. Most respondents perceived the combination of historical heritage and natural scenery as the primary attraction of the destination. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that tourist attractions are among the most important determinants influencing tourists' decisions to visit a destination (Middleton & Clarke, 2012; Weidenfeld et al., 2010). Tourist attractions not only fulfill visitors' interests but also provide unique experiences connected to local identity and authenticity (MacCannell, 2016; Nikolakakis, 2025).

The findings also support studies indicating that tourism attractions contribute significantly to tourism and economic development (Zhang & Zhang, 2023). In the context of Sekarpuro Village, the integration of cultural heritage and agricultural activities creates an authentic educational tourism experience that distinguishes the destination from other tourism sites focusing mainly on modern entertainment. Visitors are attracted not only by the historical value of the Sekaran Site but also by opportunities to directly observe agricultural activities and learn about sustainable farming practices. Therefore, cultural and agricultural attractions become the main driving factors supporting the development of educational tourism in the area.

3.2. The Influence of Image and Promotion on The Development of Agricultural and Cultural Heritage Tourism.

Branding has also been proven to play an important role in attracting tourist visits to a destination (Alvianna et al., 2022). Another study revealed that tourism promotion methods positively influence city image and visiting intentions, while city image mediates the relationship between tourism promotion and tourists' intention to visit. Furthermore, tourism experience moderates the relationship between promotion methods, city image, and visiting intentions (Zhou et al., 2024).

However, this study found that image and promotion have no significant influence on tourism destination development. This finding aligns with several previous studies suggesting that destination image and promotional activities alone are insufficient to directly encourage tourism development. Other factors, such as tourist experience, infrastructure quality, accessibility, community participation, service quality, and word-of-mouth communication, often play a more dominant role (Echtner, 2003) (Govers & Go, 2009) (Pike, 2012). In the context of the research site, this result may occur because the destination is still in the early stage of development and promotional activities remain limited. In addition, many people living around the area are still unaware of the existence of the tourism site, causing destination image and promotion to be less effective in encouraging tourism development.

3.3. The Role and Support of Government as Moderator

This study also found that government role and support significantly influence tourism development. In Sekarpuro Village, the local government allocated part of the Village Treasury Land for tourism development managed by the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). The government has also developed supporting facilities such as greenhouses, jogging tracks, scenic bridges, and culinary centers around the heritage area.

The findings indicate that government support strengthens the influence of image and promotion on tourism development. Previous studies explained that government policies, infrastructure provision, governance coordination, and promotional support are essential in increasing the effectiveness of tourism promotion and destination branding (Kasmawati et al., 2024; Zhou & He, 2023). Government involvement also helps create a supportive environment for tourism stakeholders and increases destination competitiveness. However, this study also identified that excessive or less optimal government intervention may weaken the contribution of cultural and agricultural attractions to tourism development. This may occur because tourism development requires a balance between institutional support and community participation. Previous studies highlighted that collaborative and participatory governance is more effective in supporting sustainable tourism development than overly centralized approaches (Nunkoo, 2017; Scheyvens, 1999). Therefore, the government should adopt a facilitative role by empowering local communities, encouraging innovation, and strengthening cultural preservation efforts.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating cultural heritage, agriculture, government support, and community participation in developing sustainable tourism destinations. The agricultural heritage tourism model

proposed in this study may serve as an alternative framework for promoting educational tourism, cultural preservation, agricultural sustainability, and inclusive rural economic development.

4. CONCLUSION

This purpose of this study is to examine the interplay of attraction and promotion in enhancing agricultural and cultural heritage tourism and investigate the moderating role of government support in the relationships between key tourism determinants and tourism development. The results reveal that cultural heritage and agricultural attractions and government support have significant positive effects on tourism development. Furthermore, government support acts as a moderating factor, strengthening the influence of image and promotion on tourism development. The moderating analysis further reveals the complex role of government support in tourism development. While government support strengthens the influence of promotion on tourism development, it weakens the relationship between attractions and tourism development, indicating the possibility of over-intervention, excessive bureaucracy, or policy inefficiencies.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the tourism literature by proposing an integrated model of cultural heritage and agricultural tourism development that incorporates institutional roles. Practically, the findings suggest that policymakers should prioritize the preservation of cultural and agricultural attractions, strengthen collaborative tourism governance, improve destination readiness, and redesign promotional strategies based on authenticity and sustainability principles. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single rural tourism destination, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other tourism contexts. In addition, this study focused primarily on local community perceptions rather than tourist perspectives. Future research may therefore expand the model by incorporating tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, digital tourism marketing, or sustainable tourism performance across different tourism destinations and regional contexts.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (2009). *Managing Brand Equity*. Free Press. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=r_TSY5sxnO8C
- Alvianna, S., Hidayatullah, S., ; Pratama, S. A., Aristanto, E., & Waris, A. (2022). City Branding: Pengaruhnya Terhadap Keputusan Berkunjung wisatawan Ke Kota Batu Melalui City Image Sebagai Variabel Moderating. *Jurnal Studi Manajemen Dan Bisnis*, 9(1), 52–58.
- Avraham, E., & Ketner, E. (2017). Destination image repair while combatting crises: tourism marketing in Africa. *Tourism Geographies*, 19, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2017.1357140>
- Boivin, M., & Tanguay, G. A. (2019). Analysis of the determinants of urban tourism attractiveness: The case of Québec City and Bordeaux. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 11, 67–79.
- BPS Kabupaten Malang. (2023). *Keadaan Ketenagakerjaan Kabupaten Malang Agustus 2023*. 17.
- Cerisola, S., & Panzera, E. (2024). Heritage tourism and local prosperity: An empirical investigation of their controversial relationship. *Tourism Economics*, 0(0), 13548166241234100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548166241234099>
- Echtner, C. (2003). *The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image*.
- Govers, R., & Go, F. (2009). Place Branding: Glocal, Virtual and Physical Identities, Constructed, Imagined and Experienced. In *Place Branding: Glocal, Virtual and Physical Identities, Constructed, Imagined and Experienced*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-24559-4>
- Hair, J. F., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Black, W. C. (2022). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Cengage Learning. <https://books.google.com.my/books?id=PONXEAAAQBAJ>
- Haugland, S. A., Ness, H., Grønseth, B.-O., & Aarstad, J. (2011). Development of tourism destinations: An Integrated Multilevel Perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(1), 268–290. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2010.08.008>
- Jenkins, C. L. (2020). The role of government in the tourism sector in developing countries: a perspective article. *Tourism Review*, 75(1), 203–206. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-04-2019-0142>
- Kasmawati, Suhardi M Anwar, Ilham Tahier, & Hadi Pajarianto. (2024). THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN THE AGRO-TOURISM SECTOR ON INCREASING THE PROMOTION OF GRAPE FARMERS' SALES WITH INFRASTRUCTURE AS A MODERATION VARIABLE. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW, GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNICATION (IJLGC)*, 9(38 SE-Articles). <https://doi.org/10.35631/IJLGC.938012>
- Ketner, E., & Avraham, E. (2021). # StayHome today so we can# TravelTomorrow: tourism destinations' digital marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 38(8), 819–832.
- Kim, Y. (Erin), & Nicolau, J. L. (2025). Effect of popular culture on tourism firms' market value:A destination brand equity perspective. *Tourism Management*, 107, 105060. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2024.105060>

- Krejcie, Robert V, & Morgan, Daryle W. (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308>
- Kunst, I. (2011). The Role of the Government in Promoting Tourism Investment in Selected Mediterranean Countries - Implications for the Republic of Croatia. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.11.1.9>
- Leiper, N. (1990). Tourist attraction systems. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 17(3), 367–384.
- Li, J., & Yu, G. (2023). Constructing the festival tourist attraction from the perspective of Peircean semiotics: The case of Guangzhou, China. *Plos One*, 18(2), e0282102.
- MacCannell, D. (2016). The tourist and the local. In *Tourist Studies* (Vol. 16, Issue 4, pp. 343–350). Sage Publications Sage UK: London, England.
- Middleton, V. T. C., & Clarke, J. R. (2012). *Marketing in travel and tourism*. Routledge.
- Nikolakakis, M. (2025). On Dean MacCannell's shrouded sociology of tourism. *Tourist Studies*, 25(3), 237–252.
- Nunkoo, R. (2017). Governance and sustainable tourism: What is the role of trust, power and social capital? *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(4), 277–285. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.10.003>
- Pike, S. (2012). *Destination marketing*. Routledge.
- Rahajeng, A. (2017). The Roles of Kulonprogo Regional Government in Developing Tourism Economy: Nature-Based Tourism. *JKAP (Jurnal Kebijakan Dan Administrasi Publik)*, 20(2), 50. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jkap.16592>
- Richards, G. (2018). Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 36, 12–21.
- Scheyvens, R. (1999). Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities. *Tourism Management*, 20(2), 245–249. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00069-7](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00069-7)
- Sinclair-Maragh, G., Gursoy, D., & Vieregge, M. (2015). Residents' perceptions toward tourism development: A factor-cluster approach. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 4(1), 36–45. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2014.10.001>
- Var, T., & Gunn, C. (2020). *Tourism planning: Basics, concepts, cases*. Routledge.
- Weidenfeld, A., Butler, R. W., & Williams, A. M. (2010). Clustering and compatibility between tourism attractions. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(1), 1–16.
- Windhyastiti, I., & Diah, W. (2016). Pentingnya Aspek Government Power Dalam Pengembangan Industri Pariwisata Daerah. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Kewirausahaan*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.26905/jmdk.v4i1.405>
- Zhang, Y., & Zhang, J. (2023). Tourist Attractions and Economic Growth in China: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis. In *Sustainability* (Vol. 15, Issue 7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15075649>
- Zhou, J., & He, W. (2023). Local government media promotion to city image and travel intention: the moderating effect of tourism experience. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 14(1), 70–90. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTP.2024.135437>
- Zhou, J., Ho, H.-W., & Mieiro, S. (2024). Government promotion and city image: visitor intentions in Macao. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 10(3), 1124–1144. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-05-2024-0108>