Article

Revealing Tourist Satisfaction and Its Influencing Dimensions—The Context of IKN Destination

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Abstract: The new National Capital City/Ibu Kota Negara (IKN), named "Nusantara," is part of Indonesia's strategy to reduce developmental inequality across various sectors. The relocation of the IKN from Jakarta to Nusantara signifies not only an administrative transition but also a governmental initiative aimed at fostering a sustainable tourism sector. Concurrently, the government is positioning tourist destinations in IKN as national icons. This study specifically aims to explore two things. First, it examines the causal among infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort in relation to tourist satisfaction. Second, it investigates how the interaction between these dimensions, along with the perception of local culture and social media, influences tourist satisfaction. In 2024, a total of 72,108 tourists visited IKN destinations, and 382 of them were surveyed using a questionnaire. Technically, offline structured surveys are conducted using a predetermined set of questions presented in the form of a questionnaire. The data collected from the questionnaire were processed using Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The authors identified the following four points: (1) infrastructure quality has a negative-not significant impact on tourist satisfaction; (2) promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort have a positive-significant impact on tourist satisfaction; (3) infrastructure quality, when moderated by perception of local culture and social media, has a negative-not significant impact on tourist satisfaction; and (4) promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort, when moderated by perception of local culture and social media, have a positive-significant impact on tourist satisfaction. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable academic insights and practical policy recommendations for the future.

Keywords: tourist satisfaction; tourist destinations; IKN; MRA method

1. Introduction

Until now, the majority of development in Indonesia has not been fully optimized (Mulyadi et al., 2024). To promote integrated development, Indonesia must reduce inequality by enhancing the quality of life for all segments of society. The government has made concrete efforts to alleviate the burden on Jakarta by relocating the capital city, thereby providing opportunities for strategic areas outside Jakarta to concentrate on stimulating development. Law No. 3 of 2022, concerning the IKN Nusantara, governs the transfer of the Indonesian government center from Jakarta to IKN Nusantara (Jiuhardi et al., 2024). IKN is located in Penajam Paser Utara (PPU), which is one of the districts in East Kalimantan Province (Putri et al., 2023). This regulation was enacted on February 15, 2022, and serves as the legal foundation for the capital's

relocation, which aims to alleviate the pressures on Jakarta as the former center of government and to support equitable development throughout Indonesia. The Indonesian government's goal in drafting and enacting Law No. 3 of 2022 was to achieve a significant advancement in infrastructure development, socio-economic growth, governance, and the prioritization of environmental sustainability to preserve biodiversity and mitigate climate change. The relocation of the capital is anticipated to foster a balance among economic, social, and environmental factors, particularly as a symbol of the nation's progress (Nurjanana et al., 2025).

To achieve a balance in socio-economic development, it is essential to prioritize the principle of driving inclusive economic growth. This can be accomplished through a combination of empowering local communities, providing quality infrastructure, and enhancing the quality of health, education, and skills, all while ensuring environmental sustainability. One critical area that requires improvement is tourism. The tourism sector plays a vital role in economic growth (Li et al., 2018; Naseem, 2021; Sun et al., 2025). This is particularly true for Indonesia and East Kalimantan during the period from 2019 to 2022. Fitriadi et al. (2023) reported that the average growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the tourism sector in Indonesia was 4.52%, while the average growth rate of the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) for East Kalimantan reached 2.92%. Although all countries, including the tourism sector, were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 to 2021, tourism activities began to revive as the impact of the virus gradually diminished. At the same time, the IKN project, marked by the establishment of several monuments such as Titik Nol Nusantara, Taman Kesuma Bangsa, and Memorial Park, emerged as a popular new destination within the community. IKN tourist destinations are classified as artificial tourism clusters. According to the BPS-Statistics of Penajam Paser Utara Regency (2025), there was a significant increase in visitors to IKN destinations from 2022 to 2024. In 2022, there were 36,002 tourists; in 2023, the number rose to 53,563; and in 2024, it reached 72,108. Consequently, the average tourist visit rate to IKN over these three years was 41.7%. The total number of visits to IKN comprises both domestic and international tourists.

The tourism sector in IKN holds promising prospects from a macroeconomic standpoint. However, from a microeconomic perspective—encompassing business, management, and finance—the sector has not demonstrated significant productivity. The lack of productivity in IKN's tourism sector is primarily attributed to inadequate governance. According to Fitriadi et al. (2023), Nurjanana et al. (2024), Priyagus et al. (2024), and Rahmawati et al. (2023), the management of tourist destinations in IKN faces challenges due to limited infrastructure, ineffective branding and reputation, insufficient government policy support, and instability. Poor governance performance significantly hampers the development of tourism in the region.

As an example, regarding government support, the regulations governing tourism in IKN are not yet fully developed, as the construction of IKN Nusantara remains in the planning and integration phase. Based on the development concepts outlined in Law No. 3 of 2022 and various related planning documents, there are eight aspects that can influence tourism regulations in IKN Nusantara: (1) sustainable tourism development, (2) modern tourism infrastructure, (3) preservation of local culture, (4) tourism licensing and management, (5) partnerships between the government and the

private sector, (6) human resources and training, (7) tourism promotion and marketing, and (8) environmental control in tourism.

Of the eight aspects mentioned, four—namely, infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policies, and safety and comfort while traveling—significantly influence tourist satisfaction. This argument is reinforced by empirical arguments from Alam et al. (2022), Jama et al. (2024), Munir et al. (2025), and Sufa et al. (2024), which provide deep insights into how these four aspects contribute to tourist satisfaction. It is essential to review these four aspects, as they are concrete elements in shaping tourist experiences that directly influence the sustainability and competitiveness of tourist destinations, particularly concerning tourist satisfaction. The four foundational concepts underlying the examination of tourism satisfaction are constructed based on infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort. First, infrastructure serves as the physical foundation of tourism. This study assesses the extent to which infrastructure contributes to tourist satisfaction, thereby forming a basis for development planning. Second, promotion and marketing enhance a destination's attractiveness. Effective marketing and promotion strategies shape how a destination's image is perceived by potential tourists. By formulating targeted marketing and promotion strategies, it becomes easier to measure tourist expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction. Third, government policy plays a crucial role in determining the direction of tourism development. The scenarios presented in this study will help evaluate the influence of policy interventions on tourist experiences and their overall effectiveness. Fourth, safety and comfort significantly impact tourists' decisions. By addressing these aspects, managers can identify factors that inhibit the creation of a welcoming and safe destination, which directly affects tourist satisfaction. In synthesis, both infrastructure, promotion and marketing, government policies, and safety and comfort are identified as the main components that shape the entire tourist experience from beginning to end. These four aspects also serve as the main theories in service quality (SERVQUAL), tourism destination competitiveness (TDC), and the tourism area life cycle (TALC), which emphasize the processes, evaluations, and outcomes associated with each stage: pre-visit (promotion and marketing), during the visit (infrastructure quality, government policies, and safety and comfort), and post-visit (tourist satisfaction). Nevertheless, these four aspects are somewhat limited in their ability to influence tourist satisfaction. Therefore, the authors propose the inclusion of two additional relevant aspects: social media and perceptions of local culture, which must be considered to enhance tourist satisfaction. In addition to these four factors, perception of local culture and the impact of social media also play a role in enhancing tourist satisfaction. While perception of local culture and social media do not directly affect tourist satisfaction, they serve as intermediaries. The effectiveness of infrastructure, promotion and marketing, government policies, and safety and comfort in increasing tourist satisfaction is contingent upon how tourists perceive local culture and engage with social media. This affirmation not only transforms individual perspectives but also shapes collective viewpoints through responses, comments, reviews, and ratings from others.

Broadly speaking, there is a positive linear relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and the safety and comfort experienced by tourists, all of which contribute to tourist satisfaction (Hussain et al.,

2023; Kubickova, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2025; Sharafuddin et al., 2024). Even farther, other studies indicate that perception of local culture and the influence of social media are significant factors in the relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policies, and the safety and comfort of tourists, which ultimately affect tourist satisfaction (Chen et al., 2016; Ding & Wu, 2022; Martins et al., 2025; Tang et al., 2024; Tran, 2025; Wang & Yan, 2022; Weng et al., 2023). So far, there has been limited research article that specifically addresses tourist complaints regarding infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policies, and safety and comfort within the IKN destination. During field observations, the authors noted numerous complaints from tourists concerning the aforementioned aspects. These four aspects are identified as significant issues that warrant further investigation, as they play a crucial role in enhancing tourist satisfaction. This assertion is confirmed by various online media sources, which indicate that the infrastructure quality in the IKN destination area remains inadequate, particularly in terms of accommodation and services, road and environmental conditions, and health services (Cakti & Ratnawati, 2024; Chaniago & Prasetya, 2023; Pandu, 2025). Although the number of tourist arrivals has increased over the past three years, this growth is not reflected in their satisfaction levels. In addition to concerns about infrastructure quality, tourists have also expressed dissatisfaction regarding safety and comfort. To ensure safety and comfort in accordance with established procedures, it is essential to have government policy support. Infrastructure quality, government policies, and safety and comfort are indicative of effective management, which in turn influences the branding and image of a destination. To optimize tourist market segmentation, ongoing promotion and marketing efforts must be complemented by enhancements in infrastructure quality, supportive government policies, and the establishment of safety and comfort that can be reliably assured. Given that tourist complaints are closely linked to satisfaction levels, it is essential to implement mechanisms that facilitate optimal increases in tourist satisfaction. Achieving tourist satisfaction encompasses not only infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, as well as safety and comfort, but also the role of social media. Social media serves as a vital tool in enhancing tourist satisfaction. Then, positive social interactions during travel can significantly shape perceptions of local culture. Two avenues for further exploration include examining the impact of social media and perceptions of local culture as moderating variables in an indirect relation to tourist satisfaction.

Based on these phenomena, facts, and foundational synthesis, this study aims to examine tourist satisfaction and its influencing dimensions, with a particular focus on tourist destinations in IKN. Essentially, this study seeks to elucidate the connections between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, as well as safety and comfort. Also, it examines how these factors relate to tourist satisfaction, with perception of local culture and social media serving as moderating variables. The motivation behind this research is to identify gaps in the existing literature, particularly those that have not been thoroughly explored across different dimensions affecting tourist satisfaction. By adopting a holistic approach to the challenges faced by IKN destinations, this study is expected to provide valuable breakthroughs for stakeholders,

aiding them in making informed decisions regarding planning, programs, and implementation in the tourism sector.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction refers to the positive feelings or evaluations experienced by travelers after visiting a tourist destination (Adinegara et al., 2021). This sense of satisfaction arises when tourists' expectations regarding the services, facilities, or experiences encountered during their visit are met or even surpassed. Tourist satisfaction is typically assessed based on various factors, including service quality, comfort, reasonable pricing, natural beauty, local culture, and overall experience. Generally, tourist satisfaction can influence tourists' decisions to return, recommend destinations to others, or even engage in the promotion of these tourist locations (Auliya & Prianti, 2022; Hung et al., 2021; Huu et al., 2024). Tourist satisfaction is also closely linked to the level of loyalty tourists exhibit toward a destination (Qiu et al., 2024). In relation to this study, de Sousa Saldanha and da Silva (2024), Dewi et al. (2024), Hermawan et al. (2019), Ismail and Imran (2024), Jumadi et al. (2024), Jusoh et al. (2013), and Tang and Watt (2024) reveal that tourist satisfaction can be assessed through various factors, including infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policies, as well as safety and comfort. These factors can influence satisfaction either directly or indirectly through perceptions of local culture and social media.

2.2. Infrastructure Quality

Infrastructure quality refers to the effectiveness of physical facilities and systems in supporting social, economic, and operational activities within a given area. Essential elements of infrastructure include transportation, utilities (such as water, electricity, and sewage), communications (including internet and telephone services), and other public facilities (such as hospitals, schools, and markets). In the study of tourism, Nguyen (2021) articulates infrastructure quality as the facilities and amenities available at a tourist destination that enhance visitor comfort, safety, and overall experience. Sufficient infrastructure in the tourism sector can enhance a destination's appeal, facilitate travel for tourists, and increase their satisfaction during their stay (Munir et al., 2025). Contextually, Khadaroo and Seetanah (2008), Kusumaningrum et al. (2023), Sufa et al. (2024), and Sugiama et al. (2022) explain that the quality of tourism infrastructure—including facilities, accessibility, and services—significantly influences tourist satisfaction, which, in turn, can affect loyalty and intentions to return. The first hypothesis is structured as follows:

H1. *Infrastructure quality has an impact on tourist satisfaction.*

2.3. Promotion and Marketing

In the business world, promotion and marketing are two interrelated premises that have slightly different targets (Wichmann et al., 2022). Promotion is a subset of marketing that focuses primarily on activities designed to boost short-term sales,

whereas marketing encompasses a broader strategy aimed at understanding and fulfilling comprehensive consumer needs while building long-term relationships within the market. In summary, marketing emphasizes long-term strategies that foster a deeper understanding of the market and cultivate lasting relationships with consumers, while promotion involves the application of specific techniques to attract attention and drive sales in a short timeframe.

In the realm of tourism, Mohammed (2024) defines promotion and marketing as efforts aimed at attracting tourists to a destination, maximizing its visibility, and enhancing the overall tourist experience. Although these two theories are interrelated, they differ in focus, approach, and timeframe, as previously explained. First, tourism promotion encompasses a series of activities designed to raise awareness and capture the attention of potential visitors to a specific destination or product (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2022). The urgency of promotional activities is to generate interest or desire among tourists to visit a location, whether for leisure, business, or other purposes. These promotions are typically contemporary and primarily focused on attracting tourist visits. Second, tourism marketing is associated with a strategic process aimed at understanding the tourist market, developing products or services that meet the needs of travelers, and efficiently distributing these offerings (Sofronov, 2019). Marketing in tourism is oriented towards a comprehensive long-term strategy aimed at building a destination's image and fostering tourist loyalty. These elements complement each other as key attributes that stimulate tourist visits and support the transformation of the tourism industry (Magatef, 2015; Sharafuddin et al., 2024; Thai & Sinh, 2025). The second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2. *Promotion and marketing have an impact on tourist satisfaction.*

2.4. Government Policy

Government policies are defined as decisions or actions taken by the government to achieve certain goals for the benefit of society or the state. These policies can manifest as regulations, schemes, and initiatives implemented by government officials to organize various aspects of social, economic, political, and cultural life (Adeniran et al., 2023). Overall, government policies play a fundamental role in facilitating a country's transition and progress (Sarabdeen, 2024). Government policies can be categorized as either short-term or long-term, depending on the specific issues being addressed and the goals to be achieved. In the topic of tourism, government policies are applied to develop, manage, and promote the tourism sector (Nugraha et al., 2024; Schönherr et al., 2023; Verduzco Villaseñor et al., 2023). Tourism policy serves as a crucial tool for enhancing the appeal of tourist destinations, bolstering the national economy, and ensuring the preservation of the natural and cultural resources that attract visitors. Ke (2024) mentioned several examples of government policies in the tourism sector, including: (1) the development and renovation of tourism infrastructure, (2) the promotion and marketing of tourist destinations, (3) regulations and policies for destination management, (4) the development of sustainable tourism, (5) visa and licensing access, (6) the empowerment of human resources, (7) the creation of policies for tourist safety and comfort, (8) attention to local tourism and tourist villages, (9) the establishment of tourism tariffs and taxes, and (10) crisis management.

Furthermore, the link between government policies and tourist satisfaction is significant, as policies actualized by the government automatically affect tourists' perceptions of the destinations they visit (Asmelash et al., 2019; García-Buades et al., 2022; Jumadi et al., 2024; Tran et al., 2018). Well-designed policies can enhance positive experiences and, in turn, contribute to increased tourist satisfaction. Conversely, poorly conceived policies can result in dissatisfaction. Government policies in the tourism sector that fail to create a conducive environment for tourists—particularly regarding safety, comfort, service quality, and environmental conservation—can lead to discontent. Consequently, such dynamics may diminish tourists' interest in visiting certain destinations. Therefore, tourism policies that focus on enriching experiences are likely to significantly enhance tourist satisfaction. The third hypothesis is projected as follows:

H3. *Government policies have an impact on tourist satisfaction.*

2.5. Safety and Comfort

Safety and comfort are two critical pillars in many settings, including tourism. In tourism mechanisms, for instance, they serve as the driving force behind creating a positive experience for travelers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). Safety refers to the protection of individuals from physical, emotional, or psychological threats or harm (Veale et al., 2023; Vandeskog, 2024). In the affairs of tourism, comfort pertains to how individuals feel comfortable, calm, and free from disturbances or tension (Tian, 2023). Comfort in tourism encompasses: (1) adequate facilities, (2) friendly and efficient services, (3) a pleasant environment, and (4) accessibility. Substantively, safety and comfort are closely interconnected (Gill et al., 2022). When tourists feel safe, they are more likely to experience comfort. On the other hand, if they feel unsafe, their comfort may be compromised. For example, concerns about crime or health can render the travel experience uncomfortable, even if the physical facilities or accommodations at the destination are exceptional.

In the tourism sector, safety and comfort are key for attracting travelers and creating valuable experiences that encourage repeat visits. Travelers who feel secure and at ease are more likely to leave positive reviews, recommend the destination to others, and become loyal customers (Apriyanti et al., 2024). Technically, the government and the tourism industry must collaborate to ensure that tourist destinations have a robust ecosystem that maintains both physical and digital safety while providing comfort for visitors. This collaboration is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to enjoying vacation time. Safety and comfort are not only benchmarks in the travel experience but also basic points that foster trust and enhance tourist satisfaction with the chosen destination or service (Dai et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2020; Si et al., 2024). The fourth hypothesis is assumed as follows:

H4. *Safety and comfort have an impact on tourist satisfaction.*

2.6. Perception of Local Culture

Fan et al. (2023) and Linderová et al. (2021) suggest that perceptions of culture influence how tourists interact with local communities and, conversely, how local communities respond to the presence of tourists. In tourism terminology, the

perception of culture is shaped by two things: (1) the perspective of tourists and (2) the perspective of local communities. First, from the perspective of tourists. Many tourists perceive local culture as exotic and intriguing. They seek to experience the "authenticity" of local traditions, including food, dance, clothing, and customs. Local culture is sometimes oversimplified or misunderstood. For example, Balinese culture is often reduced to its dances and temples, despite its much greater complexity. Many modern travelers, especially those interested in ecotourism or culture-based tourism, value direct interaction with communities and the preservation of traditional cultural practices. Second, from the perspective of local communities, tourism can foster a sense of pride in their culture as it garners attention and appreciation from outsiders. Nevertheless, there is concern that culture may become a "commodity," adapted or commercialized to cater to tourists' preferences, which can dilute its original significance. The influx of tourists can impact the values, lifestyles, and languages of local communities, both positively and negatively (Alamineh et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2023; Surata et al., 2024).

Satrya et al. (2024) revealed that local culture plays a vital role, as tourists often seek authentic experiences and engage with local values. This is where the perception of local culture becomes significant. Travelers who have a positive perception of local culture are likely to be more tolerant of infrastructure deficiencies, and vice versa (Angelin et al., 2020; Marlina et al., 2024). Adequate infrastructure facilitates a seamless travel experience, allowing tourists to enjoy their journeys without logistical obstacles. For instance, consider two travelers who have similar experiences with local infrastructure. One traveler perceives the local culture as unique and welcoming, while the other does not share this view. Those who appreciate the local culture may feel more satisfied overall due to positive emotional and cultural experiences, which can make infrastructure deficiencies more infrastructure enables tourists to travel without encountering logistical challenges (Rizaldi et al., 2024).

Tourism promotion and marketing play a crucial role in attracting visitors to a destination. Yet, the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists after their visit can depend on the alignment between their expectations—shaped by promotional efforts—and the reality they encounter, particularly regarding local culture. When tourists hold a positive perception of local culture, marketing campaigns that emphasize the potential of these cultural experiences are more likely to enhance overall satisfaction (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). The information conveyed through promotional materials sets expectations; when these expectations align with reality, tourists tend to feel satisfied. For instance, promotions often promise local cultural experiences. Tourists who genuinely appreciate and value local culture are likely to feel satisfied when these expectations are fulfilled, whereas those who are indifferent to cultural aspects may not be significantly impacted by such elements (Marlina et al., 2024).

Government policies in the tourism sector—such as destination management, regulation, infrastructure investment, and cultural preservation programs—have major implications for shaping the tourist experience. Moreover, the policy implementation of these policies does not automatically ensure tourist satisfaction. This is where the perception of local culture becomes crucial. Travelers who believe that the local culture is preserved, respected, and integrated into policies tend to be more satisfied,

as they seek not only to enjoy the physical beauty of a destination but also to engage in enriching cultural experiences (Ji et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2019). Public policies determine a destination's facilities, safety, accessibility, and convenience, all of which directly affect tourist satisfaction. Two destinations with similar policy landscapes can yield different levels of satisfaction based on how tourists perceive the local culture. If the local culture is viewed as attractive, respected, and preserved, the impact of policy is more profoundly felt.

In travel, safety and comfort are fundamental needs for tourists. Without a sense of safety or comfort, tourists are likely to feel dissatisfied, even if the destination is visually appealing (Smith, 2015; Smith & Puczko, 2008). The perception of local culture can significantly influence this satisfaction, either strengthening or undermining it. When tourists perceive the local culture as welcoming, open, and engaging, they may feel more at ease, even in less-than-ideal conditions. If tourists feel safe, relaxed, and supported by available facilities, they are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction (Mouratidis et al., 2023; Zou & Yu, 2022). Positive perception of local culture can serve as either a buffer or a booster (Wardekker et al., 2023). Even when safety and comfort are not optimal, strong and cherished cultural values can still leave a favorable impression (Cooper, 2001).

This study attempts to connect infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort to tourist satisfaction, with the perception of local culture serving as a moderating factor. The scenario for hypothesis five is written as follows:

H5a. *Perception of local culture moderates the relationship between infrastructure quality on tourist satisfaction.*

H5b. *Perception of local culture moderates the relationship between promotion and marketing on tourist satisfaction.*

H5c. *Perception of local culture moderates the relationship between government policy on tourist satisfaction.*

H5d. *Perception of local culture moderates the relationship between safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction.*

2.7. Social Media

Social media refers to internet-based platforms or services that enable users to create, share, and interact with content while communicating with other users online (Aichner et al., 2021). It facilitates the exchange of information, ideas, personal interests, and various forms of self-expression, including text, images, video, and audio. In the context of tourism, social media has emerged as a contemporary theme, where tourists not only travel but also scroll, post, and share their experiences. Elnur and Akgün (2024) explain that social media has become a significant aspect of the travel experience itself. According to Aftab and Khan (2019), there are five primary functions of social media in tourism. First, it serves as a source of inspiration and information. Many individuals seek destination ideas from platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and travel blogs. Second, social media acts as a promotional tool for destinations. Governments, travel agencies, and local entrepreneurs actively promote their offerings through visual content, and promotional

strategies involving influencers have proven to be effective. Third, it provides review and evaluation platforms. Travelers often consider the experiences of others and typically consult reviews on various social media platforms before making decisions. Fourth, social media plays a crucial role in building destination branding. The popularity and image of a tourist spot can be enhanced through viral content. Fifth, it fosters direct interaction and engagement. Social media enables two-way communication that is more interactive, allowing travelers to share their experiences, which helps others verify the authenticity and accuracy of those experiences for guidance.

According to Wilopo and Nuralam (2025), tourist satisfaction is influenced by the integration of physical aspects, such as infrastructure, and digital aspects, such as social media. Tourist satisfaction is closely linked to the perceptions and experiences of contemporary travelers. The quality of infrastructure—including roads, transportation, public facilities, and services—plays a crucial role in determining the level of comfort and overall satisfaction of tourists (Munir et al., 2025). In the digital age, social media also significantly shapes tourists' perceptions and experiences, often even before they arrive at a destination (Sharma, 2022). Various discussions indicate that social media can reinforce or even alter how tourists perceive the infrastructure quality (Song & Wondirad, 2023; Wang & Yan, 2022). For instance, when there is a substantial amount of positive content about a location on social media, tourists may feel satisfied even if the infrastructure is not flawless, as their expectations have been content. High-quality infrastructure provides comfort and safety, which directly impacts tourist satisfaction (Eliza et al., 2023; Qin et al., 2025). To mitigate uncertainty, tourists often turn to social media to compare options, explore destinations, and better manage their expectations. Positive reviews can enhance tourist satisfaction, even when the infrastructure quality is merely average.

Today, promotion and marketing are essential components in attracting the attention of potential tourists and shaping their expectations of a destination. In short, social media has emerged as a key channel for disseminating promotional messages (Kujala et al., 2017). The effectiveness of these promotions is often heavily influenced by how travelers engage with and interpret social media—whether they access reviews, visual content, influencers, or interact with destinations through these platforms (Hossain et al., 2024). Even if a promotional strategy is well-crafted, its impact on tourist satisfaction can be affected by the role of social media as a bridge between expectations and actual experiences. Informative and appealing promotions can create positive expectations. If these expectations are exceeded, tourists are likely to feel satisfied. Travelers who are active on social media often seek out reviews, testimonials, or visuals that can shape their decisions and expectations. Thus, promotions supported by social media can have a more substantial impact on overall satisfaction.

The spillover effects of government policies in the tourism sector are frequently observed, interpreted, and disseminated through social media. Social media serves as a communication bridge between the government and tourists, functioning both as an information tool and as a platform for assessing and expressing opinions on policies. This indicates that social media can either enhance or diminish the impact of policies on tourist satisfaction, depending on how these policies are communicated and perceived in the digital realm. Policies that favor tourists are likely to enhance their

experiences and satisfaction (Velmurugan et al., 2021). When social media portrays positive narratives about policy implementation, tourists tend to feel satisfied and confident, but if negative narratives arise—such as unfavorable comments from netizens or viral videos highlighting complaints—the positive effects of the policy may diminish or go unrecognized.

Safety and comfort are two critical reasons that shape positive traveler experiences (Velmurugan et al., 2021; Wong & Lai, 2022). In today's digital age, perceptions of safety and comfort are increasingly shaped and disseminated through social media. Many travelers seek destination information from reviews, video content, and testimonials on these platforms before making their travel decisions. Social media can enhance or even alter the relationship between actual experiences (safety and comfort) and travelers' overall satisfaction. Travelers who feel safe and comfortable during their trips are more likely to report high levels of satisfaction, as they perceive their basic needs to be met (Hussain et al., 2024). Positive content, such as numerous favorable reviews and testimonials highlighting comfort and safety, reinforces tourist satisfaction. Conversely, negative content can diminish perceptions, even if the actual experience was relatively positive. Travelers who frequently rely on social media as a reference point tend to be more influenced by digital portrayals than by real-life experiences (Rahjasa et al., 2024).

This study examines the relevance of tourist satisfaction and factors such as infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policies, and safety and comfort, with social media serving as a moderating variable. The sixth hypothesis is proposed below:

H6a. *Social media moderates the relationship between infrastructure quality on tourist satisfaction.*

H6b. *Social media moderates the relationship between promotion and marketing on tourist satisfaction.*

H6c. *Social media moderates the relationship between government policy on tourist satisfaction.*

H6d. *Social media moderates the relationship between safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction.*

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Framework and Variables

For the record, four variables—namely, (1) infrastructure quality, (2) promotion and marketing, (3) government policy, and (4) safety and comfort—are classified as independent variables. Additionally, two variables—(1) perception of local culture and (2) social media—have been redefined as moderating variables within the interaction relationship. Tourist satisfaction serves as the dependent variable.

This study is set to predict the variables that are relevant to tourist satisfaction in IKN and to explore how the relationships between these variables can be moderated. Based on the majority of the articles reviewed in the literature, tourist satisfaction is influenced by factors such as infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort. Then, the articles examine the interactions between independent variables (infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing,

government policy, and safety and comfort) and moderating variables (perception of local culture and social media) in their impact on the dependent variable (tourist satisfaction). The framework is illustrated in Figure 1.
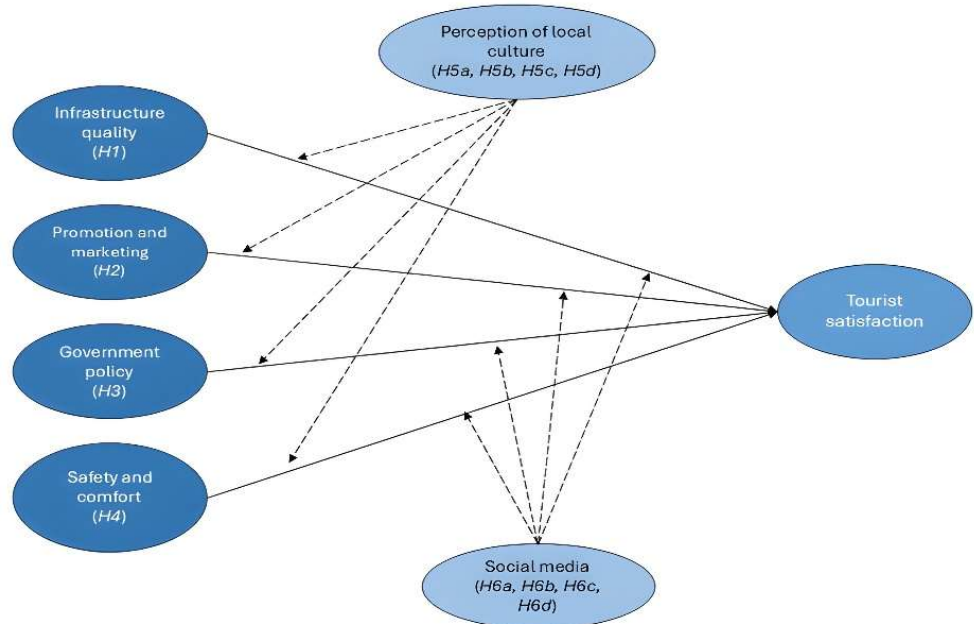
Figure 1. Study framework.

Operationally, the seven variables mentioned above have distinct interpretations. First, infrastructure quality pertains to the condition of roads, public transportation, accommodation facilities, and tourist attractions. Second, promotion and marketing encompass various promotional activities, including advertising campaigns, special events, and collaborative programs with travel agents (Florido-Benítez, 2024; Hecan, 2023; Soualah et al., 2021). Third, government policies refer to regulations that support tourism, such as standardization, subsidy initiatives, and cultural preservation efforts (Musliha & Adinugraha, 2022). Fourth, safety and comfort relate to the level of safety at the destination, which includes social security, political stability, and the overall comfort of daily activities in the area (Wretstrand et al., 2014). Fifth, the perception of local culture is defined as the tourists' connection to the local culture, which encourages them to visit for longer durations or more frequently (Cicerchia, 2022; Machzumy et al., 2024). Sixth, social media serves as a powerful tool that influences how information about destinations is disseminated and received by tourists (de Oliveira & Baracho, 2018). Seventh, tourist satisfaction assesses the level of contentment experienced by visitors regarding local services, infrastructure, and culture at the destination (Cossío-Silva et al., 2019; Meng et al., 2008). The variables, indicators, and statement units examined are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Study variables.

Variables	Indicators (code)	Statements
Infrastructure quality	Conditions of roads (IQ1)	Access roads to tourist destinations are well built.

	Public transportation (IQ2)	Public transportation services to tourist destinations are accessible.
	Accommodation facilities (IQ3)	Tourist accommodation facilities such as hotels, motels, homestays, and the like can be found.
	Supporting accommodation (IQ4)	Supporting accommodations include adequate restaurants, cafés, guides, tour operators, and tour package services.
	Tourist attractions (IQ5)	For me, tourist attractions are able to present a festive atmosphere.
Promotion and marketing	Advertisement (PM1)	I am influenced by the advertisements offered.
	Website (PM2)	The website about tourist destinations is clearly illustrated.
	Event (PM3)	Professionalism of tour operators in planning, organizing, and actualizing cultural festivals, arts and performances, music, culinary, and exhibitions.
	Destination branding (PM4)	This destination branding has a unique and consistent appeal online. promotion and on-the-ground experience
Government policy	Standardization (GP1)	Tourism destinations have protocols in accordance with CHSE (Clean, Health, Safety, and Environment) certification
	Subsidies (GP2)	The government provides transportation subsidies (tour voucher, entry pass, and other discounted transportation fares) to tourist destinations.
	Culture preservation (GP3)	Tourism community involvement in destination development.
Safety and comfort	Physical safety (SC1)	Supervision of traffic arrangements, emergency facilities, natural disasters, and violence.
	Legal security (SC2)	Involves legal safeguards that ensure that travelers' rights can be respected.
	Health safety (SC3)	Create adequate medical facilities for handling health threats.
	Digital security (SC4)	Involves the protection of personal data and sensitive information (traveler privacy).
	Clarity of instructions and service friendliness (SC5)	Hospitality of staff at tourist destinations during check-in, check-out, and prioritizing intense customer service.
	Pleasant environment (SC6)	Tourist destinations are located in areas that are quiet, clean, free from pollution, noise, and excessive crowds.
	Accessibility (SC7)	Easy access to transportation and other services (including for disabled travelers).

Perception of local culture	Exoticism and attraction (PLC1)	I find the local culture (food, dance, clothing and customs) exotic and interesting.
	Cultural originality (PLC2)	Value direct interaction with indigenous people and cultural practices through authentic experiences.
	Friendliness of local people (PLC3)	Openness of the community to accept and respect differences in culture, language, and dress of tourists.
Social media	Access to information (SM1)	I use various social media to search for destination information.
	Tourism content attraction (SM2)	Visual aesthetics and storytelling of attractive tourist destination content
	Affirmation (SM3)	Confidence in the recommendation of tourism celebrities (influencers and travel vloggers).
	Literacy sources (SM4)	I rely on social media for trip planning.
	Destination brand awareness (SM5)	Social media helps introduce the identity of tourist destinations.
	Expectation alignment (SM6)	There is a match between expectations and experiences when traveling.
Tourist satisfaction	Service readiness (TS1)	Service of officers, tour guides, and the surrounding community with a friendly, informative, and professional attitude.
	Information received (TS2)	Information on admission prices, food, souvenirs, and other services with the quality received is quite appropriate.
	Intentions and recommendations (TS3)	I would like to revisit this destination in the future and recommend it to friends and family.

According to the operational definition, seven observed variables were delineated. The total number of indicators consists of thirty-one items. The infrastructure quality variable includes five indicators, the promotion and marketing variable contains four items, the government policy variable consists of three indicators, the safety and comfort variable encompasses seven indicators, the perception of local culture variable has three indicators, the social media variable comprises five indicators, and the tourist satisfaction variable is derived from four indicators.

3.2. Data Collection and Participants

Primary data were collected through face-to-face surveys. The surveys involved distributing questionnaires to participants. The data collection period for the questionnaires was at the end of December 2024. The survey questionnaire comprised of closed-ended statements pertaining to variable indicators. Closed questions were chosen to maintain the confidentiality of the responses, including the identities of the participants. In other words, not all parties have access to the survey questions, as the

information provided by participants is private. Also, surveys that include closed-ended questions can enable participants to articulate the reasons behind their choices while upholding their rights and adhering to ethical approval. Responses were measured using a Likert scale, which categorized attitudes into five options: 5 - completely agree, 4 - agree, 3 - neutral, 2 - disagree, and 1 - completely disagree. The sample was determined using simple random sampling (SRS), ensuring that each participant had an equal chance of being selected. SRS is utilized in survey data collection to ensure that every participant in the population has an equal chance of being selected. This method reduces potential bias and enhances the representativeness of the sample. According to Bhardwaj (2019) and Noor et al. (2022), SRS is particularly appropriate when the population under study exhibits relatively homogeneous characteristics, allowing for the application of valid inferential statistical analyses. The methodology for approaching respondents in SRS-based surveys follows a systematic sequence that includes: (1) establishing a clear and comprehensive population list (sampling frame), (2) conducting random sample selection, (3) compiling a list of selected respondents, (4) conducting interviews in person (face-to-face), and (5) prioritizing ethical considerations in participation. The Finite Population Correction (FPC) formula was employed in this tourism management research (Beaman et al., 2024). The FPC formula is expressed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N * Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{E^2 * (N-1) + Z^2 * p * (1 - p)} \tag{1}$$

where; n = sample size, N = population size, Z = 95% confidence level with Z score = 1.96, p = proportion in the population (0.5), and E = acceptable margin of error (0.05).

The population data indicates that there are 72,108 tourists visiting IKN destinations. Given this population size, the sample is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{72,108 * (1.96)^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2 * (72,108 - 1) + (1.96)^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)} \tag{2}$$

$$n = \frac{72,108 * (3.841 * 0.05 * 0.05)}{(0.0025 * 72,107) + (3.841 * 0.5 * 0.5)} \tag{3}$$

$$n = \frac{72,108 * 0.960}{180.267 + 0.960} \tag{4}$$

$$n = \frac{69,223.68}{181.267} \tag{5}$$

$$n = 381.89 \tag{6}$$

The participants comprised tourists visiting three IKN destination locations: (1) Titik Nol Nusantara, (2) Taman Kesuma Bangsa, and (3) Memorial Park. The sample included 382 tourists (rounded up). As is well known, these three destinations are intact and form a cohesive unit due to their proximity. Both the Titik Nol Nusantara, Taman Kesuma Bangsa, and Memorial Park comprise a comprehensive tour package organized by the tour manager. The satisfaction levels of 382 tourists surveyed regarding the factors influencing their experience were assessed in a single location. The criteria for the sample targeted domestic tourists from various age groups, including Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), Generation Millennials (Gen Y), and Generation Zoomers (Gen Z).

3.3. Analysis Method

This study employs a quantitative method known as Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The MRA technique utilizes the PROCESS Macro within SPSS

software to extract and tabulate primary data. The basic equation for the MRA method is expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 (X * M) + \varepsilon \tag{7}$$

where; Y = dependent variable, X = independent variable, M = moderator variable, β_0 = intercept, β_1 = coefficient of direct effect of X on Y, β_2 = coefficient of M, β_3 = interaction coefficient (moderation effect), $X * M$ = interaction between X and M, and ε = residual.

The MRA method was employed to examine two linkages: the partial relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort in relation to tourist satisfaction. The first equation representing the partial relationship among these variables is organized as follows:

$$TS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IQ + \beta_2 PM + \beta_3 GP + \beta_4 SC + \varepsilon_1 \tag{8}$$

where; TS = tourist satisfaction, IQ = infrastructure quality, PM = promotion and marketing, GP = government policy, SC = safety and comfort, β_0 = intercept, β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4 = coefficient of direct effect of IQ, PM, GP, and SC on TS, and ε_1 = residuals in the first model.

Furthermore, the relationship between perception of local culture and social media serves as a moderating variable in the connection between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policies, and the safety and comfort to tourist satisfaction. The following equation outlines the moderating relationship among these variables:

$$TS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IQ + \beta_5 PLC + \beta_6 (IQ * PLC) + \beta_2 PM + \beta_5 PLC + \beta_7 (PM * PLC) +$$
$$\beta_3 GP + \beta_5 PLC + \beta_8 (GP * PLC) + \beta_4 SC + \beta_5 PLC + \beta_9 (SC * PLC) + \varepsilon_2 \tag{9}$$

where; TS = tourist satisfaction, IQ = infrastructure quality, PM = promotion and marketing, GP = government policy, SC = safety and comfort, PLC = perception of local culture, β_0 = intercept, β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4 = coefficient of direct effect of IQ, PM, GP, and SC on TS, β_5 = regression coefficient of PLC, β_6, β_7, β_8, β_9 = coefficient between IQ, PM, GP, and SC with PLC, and ε_2 = residuals in the second model.

$$TS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IQ + \beta_{10} SM + \beta_{11} (IQ * SM) + \beta_2 PM + \beta_{10} SM + \beta_{12} (PM * SM) +$$
$$\beta_3 GP + \beta_{10} SM + \beta_{13} (GP * SM) + \beta_4 SC + \beta_{10} SM + \beta_{14} (SC * SM) + \varepsilon_3 \tag{10}$$

where; TS = tourist satisfaction, IQ = infrastructure quality, PM = promotion and marketing, GP = government policy, SC = safety and comfort, SM = social media, β_0 = intercept, β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4 = coefficient of direct effect of IQ, PM, GP, and SC on TS, β_{10} = regression coefficient of SM, β_{10}, β_{11}, β_{12}, β_{13} = interaction coefficient between IQ, PM, GP, and SC with SM, and ε_3 = residuals in the third model.

Two outputs of the MRA method are the questionnaire data feasibility test and hypothesis testing. First, the data feasibility test refers to the validity test, reliability test, and relationship strength test. The validity test is determined using the corrected item-total correlation (r_{it}). The r_{it} value is compared to the *r-table* value of 0.132. If the r_{it} is greater than the *r-table*, the questionnaire data is considered valid; conversely, if it is less, the data is deemed invalid. Next, the reliability test is verified using Cronbach's Alpha (α). To detect whether the questionnaire data is reliable, it is compared to a threshold value of α set at 0.7. If the α value exceeds 0.7, it is concluded that the reliability of the questionnaire data is consistent; otherwise, it is not. The power test evaluates the extent of influence that the independent and moderating

variables have on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to assess the strength of the relationship between variables. The five parameters and their interpretations for R^2 are described below: (1) 0–0.19 = the model barely explains the dependent variable; (2) 0.2–0.39 = low explanation/small effect; (3) 0.4–0.59 = moderate explanation/adequate model; (4) 0.6–0.79 = the model explains most of the variation in the dependent variable; and (5) 0.8–1 = an excellent model that effectively explains the dependent variable. Second, hypothesis testing relies on critical values. The comparison of hypotheses involves the beta coefficient (β) and the evaluation of *t-statistics* against the *t-distribution table* (*t-critical* = 1.96). The procedure for generating hypotheses is as follows:

- If β is positive and the *t-statistics* > *t-critical*, then the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted;
- If β is negative and the *t-statistics* < *t-critical*, then the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Profile

In this session, the demographic profile of participants, specifically tourists, is based on gender, age, marital status, educational background, occupation, average monthly income, place of residence, and frequency of visits. The study focused on 382 tourists who visited IKN destinations in 2024. There are various characteristics based on tourist demographics. Referring to Figure 2, the majority of tourists are female, comprising 55% (n = 209), while male tourists account for 45% (n = 173). Tourists' ages are classified into four generations: Baby Boomers (born approximately 1946–1964), Gen X (born approximately 1965–1980), Gen Y (born approximately 1981–1996), and Gen Z (born approximately 1997–2012). Figure 3 shows that the majority of tourists belong to Gen Y, representing 51% (n = 195), while 27% are from Gen X (n = 102), 16% are Baby Boomers (n = 61), and 6% are from Gen Z (n = 24).

Visually, Figure 4 illustrates the characteristics of tourists based on marital status. A total of 56% of tourists are single (n = 214), 36% are married (n = 136), and 8% are divorced (n = 32). Figure 5 describes the identities of tourists based on their educational backgrounds. The education referenced pertains to certified formal education. University graduates include those with diplomas, master's degrees, and doctorates. Among the 382 tourists surveyed, 49% were high school graduates (n = 185), 41% were university graduates (n = 157), 8% were junior high school graduates (n = 31), and 2% were elementary school graduates (n = 9).
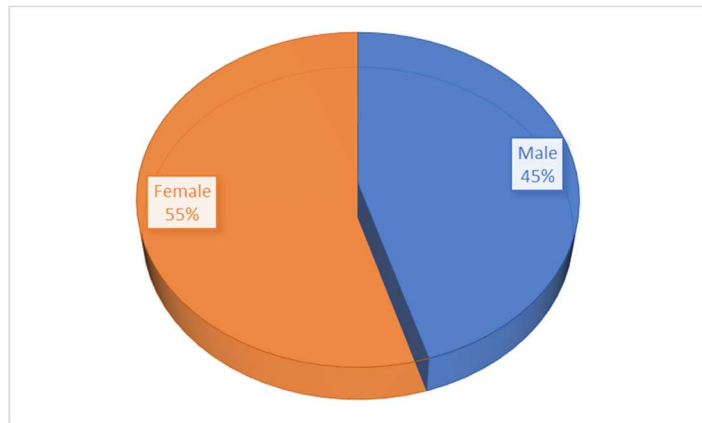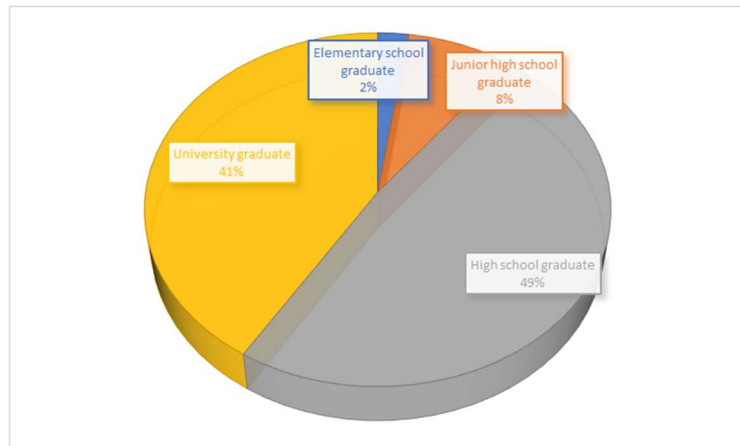
Figure 2. Tourist characteristics by gender.
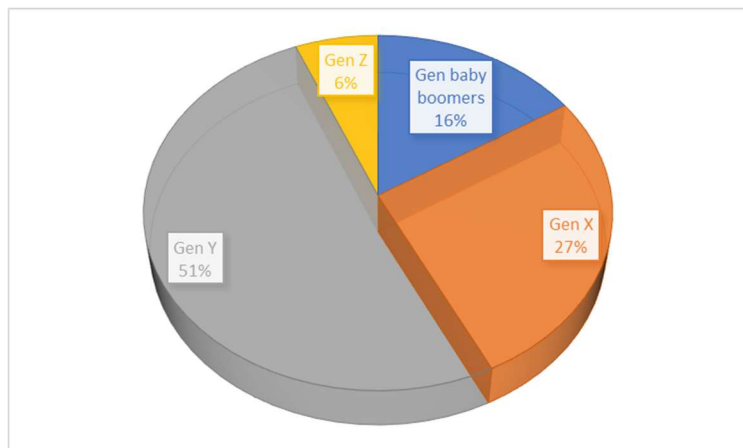
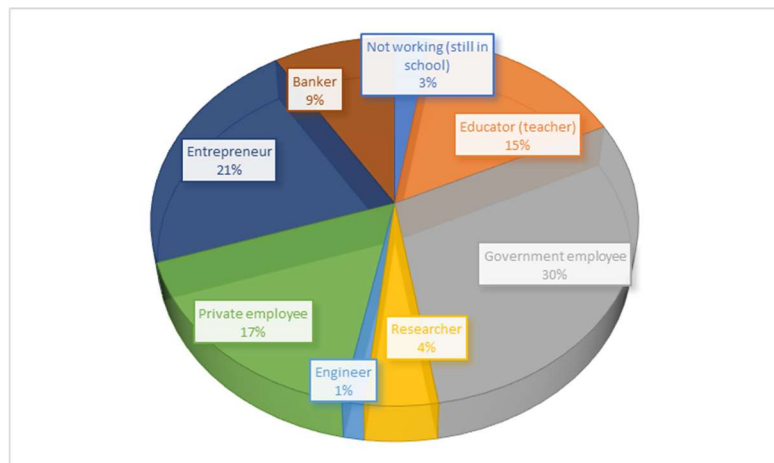**Figure 3.** Tourist characteristics by age.
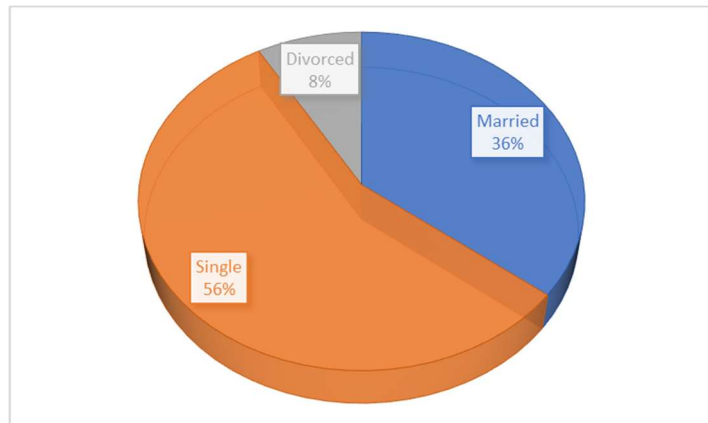
Figure 4. Tourist characteristics based on marital status.

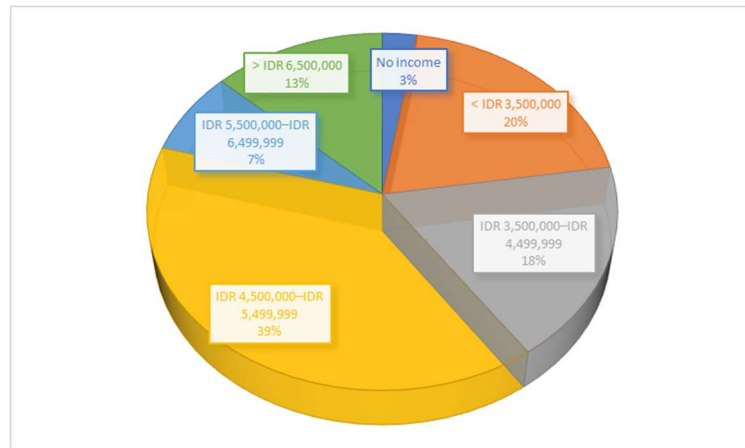**Figure 5.** Tourist characteristics based on education background.

Figure 6 confirms that 30% of tourists are government employees ($n = 113$), 24% are entrepreneurs ($n = 81$), 17% are private employees ($n = 64$), 15% are educators ($n = 58$), 9% are bankers ($n = 34$), 4% are researchers ($n = 17$), 3% are not yet working or are still in school ($n = 10$), and 1% are engineers ($n = 5$). Average monthly income is measured in Indonesian Rupiah (IDR). Figure 7 highlights the nominal average monthly income of tourists, showing that 39% have an average income between IDR 4,500,000–IDR 5,499,999 ($n = 149$), 20% earn less than IDR 3,500,000 ($n = 76$), 18% have an average income between IDR 3,500,000–IDR 4,499,999 ($n = 68$), 13% earn more than IDR 6,500,000 ($n = 50$), 7% have an average income between IDR 5,500,000–IDR 6,499,999 ($n = 29$), and 3% have no income because they are still students ($n = 10$).
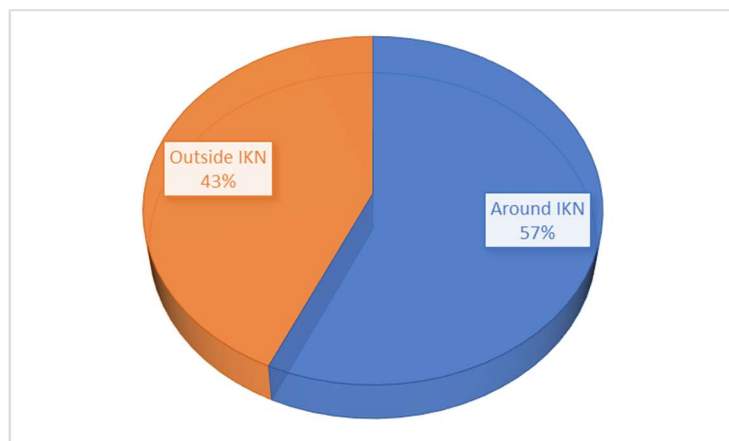

Figure 6. Tourist characteristics based on occupation.

The tourists surveyed were domestic travelers, specifically Indonesian tourists. For the purposes of this study, the participants are categorized into two groups: those residing in the vicinity of IKN (Kalimantan Island) and those living outside IKN (including Papua, Maluku, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, Java, and Sumatra). Figure 8 informs that 57% of the tourists originated from the IKN region and its surroundings ($n = 217$), while 43% came from outside IKN ($n = 165$). The frequency of visits is reflected by the arrival rate to IKN destinations throughout 2024 (see Figure 9). More

than half of the tourists, or 56%, reported having visited IKN destinations twice (*n* = 213). A quarter of the participants, or 25%, made a single visit (*n* = 97), and 19% of tourists indicated that they had visited IKN destinations three times (*n* = 72). This suggests that the frequency of visits to IKN destinations is still predominantly influenced by regional tourist arrivals in 2024.

Figure 7. Tourist characteristics based on income.

Figure 8. Tourist characteristics based on residence.
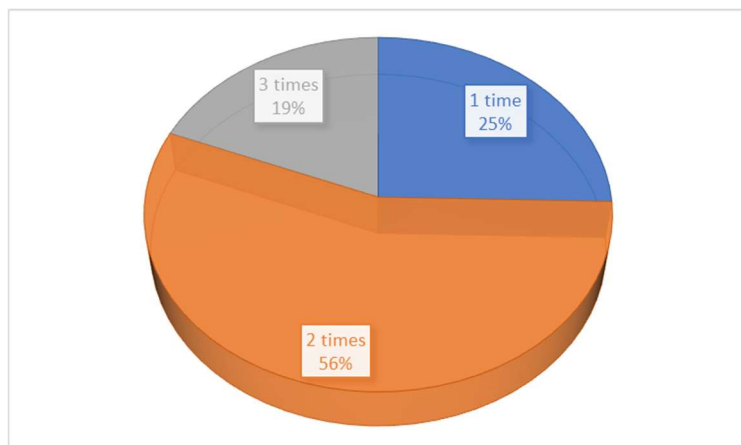
Figure 9. Tourist characteristics based on frequency of visits.

4.2. Data Eligibility Test

The feasibility of questionnaire data is assessed through three key steps: (1) validity testing, (2) reliability testing, and (3) relationship strength testing. The process begins with validity testing for all variable indicators, utilizing corrected item-total correlation. The minimum standard for validity is based on an *r-table* (*r-table* = 0.132). Next, reliability is evaluated for each variable using Cronbach's Alpha, with a standard threshold of 0.7 ($\alpha = 0.7$). Finally, the strength of the relationships within the study model is examined using the coefficient of determination (R^2). The results of these three tests assessing the feasibility of the questionnaire data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity, reliability, and strength of relationship.

Variables	Indicators	Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha	R^2
Infrastructure quality	IQ1	0.413		
	IQ2	0.448		
	IQ3	0.410	0.783	
	IQ4	0.413		
	IQ5	0.450		
Promotion and marketing	PM1	0.631		
	PM2	0.720		
	PM3	0.619	0.867	
	PM4	0.566		
Government policy	GP1	0.705		
	GP2	0.686	0.911	
	GP3	0.713		
Safety and comfort	SC1	0.619		
	SC2	0.572		
	SC3	0.558		
	SC4	0.742	0.865	
	SC5	0.683		
	SC6	0.618		
	SC7	0.440		
Perception of local culture	PLC1	0.426		
	PLC2	0.399	0.758	0.893
	PLC3	0.447		
Social media	SM1	0.515		
	SM2	0.514		
	SM3	0.521		
	SM4	0.681	0.841	0.929
	SM5	0.521		
	SM6	0.458		
Tourist satisfaction	TS1	0.709		
	TS2	0.762	0.902	0.746
	TS3	0.671		

From Table 2 above, all indicators for each variable are deemed valid ($r_{it} > 0.132$). The following is a comparison of the highest and lowest r_{it} values, organized by variable. First, in the category of infrastructure quality, IQ5 ($r_{it} = 0.450$) is the indicator with the highest correlation score, while IQ3 ($r_{it} = 0.410$) has the lowest score. Second, for promotion and marketing, PM2 ($r_{it} = 0.720$) is the indicator with the highest correlation score, whereas PM4 ($r_{it} = 0.566$) has the lowest correlation score. Third, government policy, GP3 ($r_{it} = 0.713$) is the indicator with the highest correlation score,

while GP2 (r_{it} = 0.686) has the lowest correlation score. Fourth, regarding safety and comfort, SC4 (r_{it} = 0.742) is the indicator with the highest correlation score, and SC7 (r_{it} = 0.440) is the indicator with the lowest correlation score. Fifth, in terms of perception of local culture, PLC3 (r_{it} = 0.447) is the indicator with the highest correlation score, while PLC2 (r_{it} = 0.399) has the lowest correlation score. Sixth, social media, SM4 (r_{it} = 0.681) is the indicator with the highest correlation score, whereas SM6 (r_{it} = 0.458) has the lowest correlation score. Seventh, tourist satisfaction, TS2 (r_{it} = 0.762) is the indicator with the highest correlation score, while TS3 (r_{it} = 0.671) has the lowest correlation score.

Statistically, there is internal consistency (homogeneity) among the indicators used to form the variables. The analyzed variables are deemed reliable, as the Cronbach's Alpha values exceed the acceptable threshold ($\alpha > 0.7$). Below is the ranking of Cronbach's Alpha values from highest to lowest for each variable: government policy (α = 0.911), tourist satisfaction (α = 0.902), promotion and marketing (α = 0.867), safety and comfort (α = 0.865), social media (α = 0.841), infrastructure quality (α = 0.783), and perception of local culture (α = 0.758).

The strength of the relationships among variables is assessed using the R^2 to evaluate both direct relationships (without moderation) and those that include moderation effects. In the first model, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.746) indicates that 74.6% of tourist satisfaction is formed by infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort. This means that variations in these factors account for 74.6% of the variance in tourist satisfaction, while the remaining 25.4% is attributed to other factors not included in the model. In the second model, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.893) reveals that tourist satisfaction is significantly influenced by infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort, with the added moderation of perception of local culture. The variation in the tourist satisfaction model, moderated by perception of local culture, reaches 89.3%, highlighting an additional dimension not emphasized in the second model. In accordance with the second model, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.929) in the third model indicates that tourist satisfaction is formed by infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort, with social media acting as a moderating factor. This implies that 92.9% of the variability in tourist satisfaction can be attributed to these factors, demonstrating the strong predictive power of the third model. Contrarily, 7.1% of the variability remains unexplained by the aforementioned factors, even with social media's moderation, indicating that the third model possesses very good predictive power. The remaining 7.1% represents the unexplained variance that cannot be accounted for by infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort, even when moderated by social media.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

This study aims to conduct hypothesis testing to examine the direct influence of infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction. Additionally, it seeks to investigate the interaction effects of these variables, moderated by perception of local culture and social media,

on tourist satisfaction. The steps in hypothesis testing are evaluated using β and *t-statistics*. Specifically, the t-statistics in hypothesis testing are compared to a *t-critical* value of 1.96. The results of the hypothesis testing for both direct effects and interaction effects are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Direct influence between variables.

Hypotheses (lingkages)		Beta	t	Sig. (*p*)	Std. error	Supported
H1	IQ → TS	−0.060	−1.682	0.105	0.856	No
H2	PM → TS	0.375	2.494	0.000	0.047	Yes
H3	GP → TS	0.388	3.238	0.006	0.096	Yes
H4	SC → TS	0.133	2.332	0.022	0.051	Yes

Empirical results regarding partial relationships reveal four findings. First, infrastructure quality has a negative-not significant effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = -0.060$; $t = -1.682$). Second, promotion and marketing exert a positive-significant effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.375$; $t = 2.494$). Third, government policy has a positive-significant effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.388$; $t = 3.238$). Fourth, safety and comfort also have a positive-significant effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.133$; $t = 2.332$).

Table 4. Effect of interaction between variables.

Hypotheses (lingkages)		Beta	*t*	Sig. (*p*)	Std. error	Supported
H5a	IQ * PLC → TS	−0.028	−0.071	0.944	0.396	No
H5b	PM * PLC → TS	0.164	3.545	0.000	0.049	Yes
H5c	GP * PLC → TS	0.169	2.827	0.005	0.063	Yes
H5d	SC * PLC → TS	0.058	2.177	0.029	0.028	Yes
H6a	IQ * SM → TS	−0.019	−0.070	0.944	0.269	No
H6b	PM * SM → TS	0.117	3.320	0.001	0.035	Yes
H6c	GP * SM → TS	0.122	2.709	0.006	0.044	Yes
H6d	SC * SM → TS	0.041	2.122	0.033	0.019	Yes

As a side note, empirical results regarding the first moderation relationship revealed several findings. First, the infrastructure quality, when moderated by perception of local culture, has a negative-not significant effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = -0.028$; $t = -0.071$). Second, perception of local culture positively-significantly moderates the relationship between promotion and marketing on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.164$; $t = 3.545$). Third, perception of local culture also positively-significantly moderates the relationship between government policy on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.169$; $t = 2.827$). Fourth, perception of local culture positively-significantly moderates the relationship between safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.058$; $t = 2.177$).

Meanwhile, in other moderation relationships, four key findings emerged. First, the infrastructure quality, when moderated by social media, has a negative-not significant effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = -0.019$; $t = -0.070$). Second, social media positively-significantly moderates the relationship between promotion and marketing on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.117$; $t = 3.320$). Third, social media positively-significantly moderates the relationship between government policy on tourist

satisfaction (β = 0.122; t = 2.709). Fourth, social media positively-significantly moderates the relationship between safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction (β = 0.041; t = 2.122).

5. Discussion

Based on statistical case studies, it can be inferred that promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort can enhance tourist satisfaction by 37.5%, 38.8%, and 13.3%, respectively. Nonetheless, the infrastructure quality reduces tourist satisfaction by 6%. In the scope of tourism, the relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction, as evidenced by numerous scientific works from across objects. This investigation highlights the interconnectedness of these factors. Sugiama et al. (2022) demonstrated that the quality of tourism infrastructure—reflected in accommodation, accessibility, and amenities—positively correlates with tourist satisfaction in forest tourism in Tasikmalaya Regency, Indonesia. Blazeska et al. (2018) underlined that the continuous enhancement of tourism infrastructure can elevate tourist satisfaction in Ohrid City, Republic of Macedonia. Munir et al. (2025) identified that reliable infrastructure positively impacts tourist satisfaction in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan. These three findings contradict the results of this study, which demonstrate that infrastructure quality negatively impacts tourist satisfaction. In other words, the H1 is rejected.

In the case of Valencia City, Philippines, effective marketing strategies, including promotions, have been shown to enhance tourist satisfaction and encourage visitors to advocate for the destination (Aranas et al., 2024). Rahayu et al. (2024) found that promotional activities positively influence tourist satisfaction at historical attractions in South Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Elements of the marketing mix and the destination image significantly affect tourist satisfaction at Galunggung Shelter, Indonesia (Alam et al., 2025). The three bodies of literature that connect the relationship between promotion and marketing to tourist satisfaction align with H2.

Cárdenas-García et al. (2016) examined the extent to which tourist satisfaction impacts tourism expenditure in emerging destinations in Andalusia, Spain. The results indicated a correlation between tourist satisfaction and tourism expenditure at the destination. Through a multiperspective approach, Nguyen et al. (2023) discovered that interaction and service quality collectively impact international tourist satisfaction in Vietnam. Both references also support the H3.

Research by Li and Nuangjamnong (2023) showed that tourists' perceptions of safety measures significantly influence their satisfaction and likelihood of revisiting tourist destinations in Thailand. Security and safety measures, including health and traffic safety, positively affect tourist satisfaction in Erbil, Iraq (Saleh & Mahmood, 2024). From these two research cases, it has been demonstrated that safety and comfort significantly influence tourist satisfaction, leading to the acceptance of the H4.

The statistical results indicate that infrastructure quality, when moderated by perceptions of local culture, actually reduces tourist satisfaction by 2.8%. In contrast, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort—also moderated by perceptions of local culture—can enhance tourist satisfaction by 16.4%,

16.9%, and 5.8%, respectively. For comparison, there are both similarities and differences in previous papers regarding the interaction between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort, as they relate to the perception of local culture in influencing tourist satisfaction. In their paper, Weng et al. (2023) discuss how the quality of public services, which encompasses infrastructure and cultural services, affects tourist satisfaction in Nanjing, China. Although it does not explicitly mention the moderation of perception of local culture, the concepts of perceived value and expectancy dissonance illustrate how local culture can influence tourists' evaluations of the services provided. The paper emphasizes that the role of infrastructure can influence tourists' perceptions of local culture, which, in turn, enhances their satisfaction. Therefore, this finding contradicts the empirical results of the study, leading to the rejection of H5a.

Two additional publications emphasize the importance of local cultural perception in enhancing promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort, which in turn increases tourist satisfaction. In this condition, local culture perception can be reflected in factors such as destination trust, advertising effectiveness, differentiation strategies, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, and social interaction. Tam et al. (2024) revealed that marketing through social media, moderated by destination trust, has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction in Vietnam. Setegn and Japee (2025) navigated the importance of promotional elements, such as advertising sales, in enhancing tourist satisfaction, with public relations serving as a mediator in the context of tourist destinations in Ethiopia. These two publications are consistent with the earlier hypothesis proposal that promotion and marketing, moderated by perceptions of local culture, can influence tourist satisfaction and H5b is accepted.

Sukawati et al. (2021) proposed that local cultural wisdom functions as a systematic moderator in differentiation strategies aimed at increasing tourist satisfaction in the Ubud area of Bali, Indonesia. The differentiation strategy in government policy seeks to create uniqueness by incorporating aspects of infrastructure and facilities. The study confirmed that H5c was also accepted.

Huang and Crotts (2019) investigated the relationship between the dimensions of individualism, power distance, and uncertainty as defined by Hofstede's cultural framework, which normatively correlates positively with tourist satisfaction across various countries. Zou and Yu (2022) emphasized how travelers' perceptions of security are influenced by social interactions at different stages of their journey. Perceived safety significantly impacts the satisfaction of international tourists visiting destinations in China. These two studies align with the previously proposed hypothesis, which states that safety and comfort, moderated by perceptions of local culture, can influence tourist satisfaction, so H5d is accepted.

Quantitatively, both promotion and marketing, government policy, and the safety and comfort moderated by social media can strengthen tourist satisfaction by 11.7%, 12.2%, and 4.1%, respectively. This reality contradicts other empirical results, which indicate that infrastructure quality actually diminishes tourist satisfaction by 1.9%. Articles discussing the relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort—moderated by social media—on tourist satisfaction are also examined. Kalnaovakul et al. (2025) investigated the

dimensions of hotel service quality in renowned beach destinations in Thailand, as well as the relationship between the sentiment of online review texts and satisfaction ratings. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between review text sentiment and satisfaction, highlighting the moderating roles of reviewer experience and brand affiliation in this relationship. This paper contradicts the hypothesis that the infrastructure quality, moderated by social media, can influence tourist satisfaction; therefore, H6a is rejected.

Arasli et al. (2021) explored the impact of social media on destination marketing for a sustainable cultural heritage festival in Badagry, Nigeria. Their findings indicated that both social media and festival quality significantly influence tourist satisfaction. Research conducted by Arasli et al. (2021) aligns well with the proposed hypothesis, leading to the acceptance of H6b.

The study identified the role of social media as a moderating variable in the government's tourism strategy, along with the contributions of local youth in advancing regional tourism in Karo Regency, Indonesia. Amanda et al. (2023) showed that social media enhances the effectiveness of government tourism strategies and amplifies the involvement of local youth in tourism progress. By utilizing social media, a positive connection is established between the government and local youth, fostering tourism growth. Social media has proven to be a valuable tool, attracting the attention of visitors from outside the region and encouraging foreign residents to explore local tourist attractions. The scientific work presented above refines H6c, demonstrating that government policies, when moderated by social media, can significantly influence tourist satisfaction.

Nguyen et al. (2024) provided insights into the relationship between social media communication, safety and comfort, and tourist satisfaction in Da Nang City, Vietnam. Social media plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions of safety and comfort at the destination, which, in turn, affects their overall satisfaction. Tourists' engagement in on-site activities and through social media can influence their satisfaction and sense of belonging to a cultural destination, such as Urbino City, Italy. The study by Dini et al. (2023) suggests that social media acts as a moderating factor that strengthens the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and their sense of belonging to the destination. In practice, H6d is accepted and in line with the manuscripts presented by Dini et al. (2023) and Nguyen et al. (2024).

6. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction. Then, the study seeks to analyze the interaction between these dimensions and the perception of local culture and social media as moderating variables influencing tourist satisfaction. The findings indicate that: (1) infrastructure quality has a negative-not significant effect on tourist satisfaction; (2) promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort have a positive-significant effect on tourist satisfaction; (3) the positive-significant relationship between promotion and marketing, government policy, and safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction is highly dependent on the perception of local culture and social media;

and (4) neither the perception of local culture nor social media moderates the relationship between infrastructure quality and tourist satisfaction, as this relationship is statistically proven to be negative-not significant. Other empirical evidence indicates that the level of tourist satisfaction with IKN destinations is currently classified as moderate.

In essence, this study serves as a pioneering exploration of tourist satisfaction and the variables that influence it, incorporating perception of local culture and social media as moderating factors. The study's model not only encompasses business dimensions and communication strategies (such as promotion and marketing) but also includes additional dimensions such as infrastructure quality (development of facilities and infrastructure), government policies (support for tourism), and safety and comfort (services and physical environment). These elements are moderated by the perception of local culture (both cognitive and experiential) and social media (technology and digital networks). Hence, calls for future research are discussed. This study has not fully dissected the moderating role of local cultural perceptions and social media in either strengthening or weakening the relationship between infrastructure quality, promotion and marketing, government policy, and the safety and comfort on tourist satisfaction. Limitations in data and the subjective nature of measures related to local cultural perceptions and social media usage may restrict the generalizability of the findings, so a qualitative or mixed-methods approach is necessary to enhance understanding. Future research should aim to develop and replicate a more comprehensive structural model by developing sociocultural and digital dimensions to capture the dynamics of tourist interactions within the local scope, which are increasingly influenced by advancements in communication technology.

The infrastructure quality in IKN presents a significant irony. If comprehensive improvements are not implemented, various paths will be adversely affected. The physical and non-physical development of IKN, including its tourist destinations, must synergize with sustainable tourism governance. To date, the appeal of IKN's destinations is evident in the steadily increasing volume of visitors. However, the demands from various stakeholders, particularly tourists, for enhanced infrastructure and supporting services must be prioritized. IKN destinations have the potential to accommodate a large number of tourists if they are backed by adequate infrastructure. Ultimately, the findings of this study are intended to serve as a valuable resource for formulating policies in the tourism industry, particularly those addressing the issues discussed. In addition to improving infrastructure quality, it is recommended that IKN destination managers also focus on promotion and marketing, government policy, and ensuring safety and comfort. Furthermore, incorporating local cultural perceptions and leveraging social media into tourism business patterns can significantly enhance tourist satisfaction.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, D.C.D., R.R. and S.Y.; methodology, L.A.W. and A.S.; software, P.P.; validation, D.C.D., P.P. and S.Y.; formal analysis, A.S.; investigation, L.A.W. and P.P.; resources, R.R.; data curation, L.A.W.; writing—original draft preparation, D.C.D. and P.P.; writing—review and editing, RR, L.A.W. and A.S.; visualization, S.Y.; supervision, R..R, P.P., S.Y. and A.S.; project

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