

Tourist Preferences for Hotels and Accommodation in Samosir Regency Based on Online Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to uncover tourist preferences for various accommodation types, including hotels in Samosir Regency. These preferences include attractiveness, facilities, and hospitality.

Research methods: This study uses a qualitative approach through secondary research with data collection from online reviews. The sample consists of 50 accommodations in Samosir Regency based on Google Reviews with ratings > 3.0 and more than 30 reviewers. Data was collected by searching on google.com/travel with a total search result or population of 118 items, and a sample of 50 was obtained using the purposive method with the provisions of the Google Review Summary where the Rating Review was > 3.0; and the Number of Reviews >30 reviewers. Data were analyzed based on the Component Review using a Likert scale for 3 elements of the tourism industry, namely (1) Attraction that consists of atmosphere, location, and property; (2) Facilities consisting of Amenities, Bathrooms, and Bedroom; and (3) Hospitality which consists of Service, Cleanliness, and Food.

Result and discussion: The analysis result revealed that the element of attraction shows a very satisfying preference from tourists. In second place is a satisfying preference for hospitality elements. Meanwhile, the facilities element shows the lowest preference or is unsatisfactory. This description of preferences shows that among the elements of tourism, improving the quality of hotel/accommodation facilities can be the biggest priority in efforts to develop tourism in Samosir Regency in providing high satisfaction and return visits.

Implication: As a tourist destination, Samosir Regency, which relies on the Lake Toba area, has experienced an increase in tourist visits from year to year, both foreign and local tourists. This is facilitated by the general public's access to information and locations using information technology and the Internet.

Keywords: Tourist Preferences, Accommodation, Samosir Regency, Online Review.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the development sectors currently being developed by the government because it has a vital role in Indonesia's development, especially as one of the regional and state revenue sectors. Tourism in Indonesia is one of the drivers of national economic growth. Aside from being an economic driving engine, tourism is considered capable of reducing unemployment rates (Yakup & Haryanto, 2019).

The tourism sector is a source of foreign exchange earnings. One of the development planning programs that are of concern to the regional government is the development of the tourism sector because this is a strategic sector in developing the regional economy (Aliansyah & Hermawan, 2019). The tourism sector has a vast impact on society, especially people who are in areas of tourist destinations. Thus, the government of Samosir Regency made a continuous effort to explore and develop all the natural resource potentials to support tourism (UU No. 23 Tahun 2014).

One indicator of Samosir Regency's tourism potential was figured out from data on tourist visits to the Region. The number of tourists visiting the Samosir district from 2016 to 2018 shows an increasing trend. In 2016, the total number of tourists was 190,728, of which 35,823 were foreign tourists. In 2017, the number of tourists was 278,059, of which 55,771 were foreign tourists. Whereas in 2018, the number of tourists was 378,649, of which 65,724 were foreign tourists (Badan et al., 2023).

However, at the end of 2019, there was a COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of tourists that year was 418,271, of which 50,000 were foreign tourists. In 2020, tourists decreased to 405,203 due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Even though data for 2021-2022 is not available comprehensively, several media have reported a trend of growth in post-pandemic tourist arrivals (Harianbatakpos.com, 2021; Mimbarumum.co.id, 2022).

With the trend of increasing visits to tourist areas in Samosir Regency, adequate support for tourism accommodation is needed to provide for the needs of tourists so that mutual benefits are obtained on an ongoing basis, both by visitors and the local community and local government. Tourism is a mainstay commodity for the Samosir district because of the intertwin effect of tourism on economic activities (Simandjorang et al., 2023). Tourism development is crucial to increase both quantity and quality. This study aims to provide an overview of tourist preferences for the quality of hotels and tourist accommodations in Samosir Regency and the use of the official website to promote. Those preferences can be one consideration in identifying what aspects should be improved in tourism development in Samosir Regency.

Tourism is a series of travel activities carried out by a person, both individually and in groups, to a specific location to seek entertainment or recreation. Nowadays, the Indonesian tourism industry is experiencing very rapid progress. The considerable tourism potential in Indonesia indicates this. The tourism sector is one of the populist economic potentials in a country that improves the welfare of the community and the region because this sector can be used as an alternative source of income for a country (Setiyanti, 2011).

Tourism elements

According to Spillane (Budi & Santosa, 2013), the tourism industry has five essential elements: attraction, facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and hospitality.

Attractions can be classified into site attractions and event attractions. Site attractions are permanent physical attractions with fixed locations, namely tourist attractions in tourist destinations such as beaches, zoos, palaces, and museums. Meanwhile, event attractions are temporary attractions, and their location can be changed or moved easily, such as festivals, exhibitions, or regional art performances.

Facilities should be close to the market. During their stay at tourist destinations, tourists need to sleep, eat, and drink; thus, accommodations are needed. In addition, Support Industries, namely souvenir shops, laundry shops, guides, festival areas, and recreational facilities, are needed.

The infrastructure easily achieves attractions and facilities. An area's infrastructure development is enjoyed by both tourists and residents. The fulfillment of infrastructure is a way to create an atmosphere suitable for the development of tourism.

Transportation plays a vital role in the movement of goods and people. Without it, there would be no travel and tourism industry, and people would not have the means to get to other places they want to see. Therefore, the development of transportation is closely related to the development of tourism. The more choices of transportation types to reach tourist destinations, the better for tourism development (Dinu, 2018).

Tourists need security assurance, especially foreign tourists who need an overview of the tourist destinations they will visit. Security and protection should be provided for tourists. Hospitality should be improved to maintain a safe and comfortable experience during their tour (Desliana & Andari, 2012).

Collaboration between the government's tourism development program and stakeholders, including local communities and business people, can realize these five elements of tourism.

Tourism Role

According to Law Number 10 of 2009, tourism development is needed to encourage the equal distribution of business opportunities, gain benefits, and face the challenges of changing local, national, and global life. Tourism development should be carried out by developing and utilizing existing tourism resources and the potential to become a source of income for local communities and the government.

Directly and indirectly, tourism development causes household and government income growth through a multiplier effect. The tourism sector can open up various jobs that reduce unemployment. It also has a good influence on community welfare around the tourism destination. It also provides opportunities for small and medium entrepreneurs to grow because they absorb various jobs, including lodging services, transportation, guides, restaurants or restaurants, ticketing, and others (Mumu et al., 2020).

Samosir Regency Tourism

Lake Toba is the largest freshwater reservoir in Southeast Asia, with a broad tropical mountain range and a maximum depth of approximately 450

meters. It is situated at the top of the Toba volcano, 905 meters above sea level. There are seven regencies surrounding Lake Toba: Simalungun, Toba Samosir, North Tapanuli, Humbang Hasundutan, Dairi, Karo, and Samosir. As one of the local governments managing Lake Toba tourism, Samosir Regency has a vision of making Lake Toba a Tourism City. The Samosir Regency government continues to tread strategic steps for tourism development, including information technology-based tourism marketing, implementing tourism events, increasing the quality and quantity of facilities, increasing human resource capacity and empowering the community's role in tourism development, and increasing tourism licensing facilities (Simandjorang et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

According to Spillane, this research was conducted as a desk study of hotel/accommodation reviews in Samosir Regency. Data were collected digitally through a search on google.com with the keyword 'hotels in Samosir Regency.' The total number of relevant or population search results is 118 items. The sample is determined based on the purposive method with the provisions of the Google Review Summary where the Rating Review is > 3.0 and the Number of Reviews >30 reviewers. The search results were set up to 50 samples of the total population. Then, the data is collected based on the availability of the Review Component and the Official Website.

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure key indicators such as tourist attractions, facilities, and hospitality. The review components discussed in this study are only 3 of the five elements of the tourism industry, namely (1) Attraction, which consists of Atmosphere, Location, and Property; (2) Facilities consisting of Amenities, Bathrooms, and Bedrooms; and (3) Hospitality which consists of Service, Cleanliness, and Food. The data collected is in the form of historical, descriptive, and quantitative data. The data was presented in tables and graphs accompanied by a description. The tabulation of the tourism components was based on a 5 Likert scale, where 0-20% is very unsatisfactory, 21-40% is unsatisfactory, 40-60% is entirely satisfactory, 61-80% is satisfactory, and 81-100% is very satisfactory. Based on the data presented, a description of Samosir Regency tourism accommodation is provided based on user reviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on a search for hotels and accommodations in Samosir Regency on google.com/travel, 118 relevant search results were obtained. Where is the summary review that meets the requirements for a review rating > 3 with a total of 50 items with a rating range of 3.2 to 4.9 with a total of 17,841 reviews? The distribution of rating reviews is as follows:

1. Rating and Number of Reviews

Table 1. Distribution of Hotels/Accommodations by Rating and Number of Reviews

Rating	Total Hotels/ Accommodation	Total Reviewers
3,0 - 3,2	1	87
3,3 - 3,5	1	134
3,6 - 3,8	5	872
3,9 - 4,1	13	4066
4,2 - 4,4	17	8972
4,5 - 4,7	11	3474
4,8 - 5,0	2	236
Average 4,2	50	17841

[Source: Data Analysis, 2024]

Table 1 shows that most tourism hotels/accommodations in Samosir Regency have a review rating of 4.2 to 4.4, namely 17 hotels/accommodations with a total number of 8,972 reviewers. Meanwhile, there are only two hotels/accommodations with a rating of 3.0 to 3.5. Likewise, the highest interval rating of 4.8 to 5.0 was found in two hotels/accommodations. The average reviewer rating is 4.2.

Table 2 Review Components

	Attraction		Facilities				Hospitality		
	Atmosp here	Locati on	Prope rty	Bathro om	Ameni ties	Bedro om	Servi ce	Cleanli ness	Restauran t/ Food
Review er	3132	2994	3492	1449	2779	1357	3025	3124	21,35
Percen tage	89,49	74,85	71,27	36,23	63,16	42,41	67,2 2	62,48	68,87

[Source: Data Analysis, 2024]

Attraction

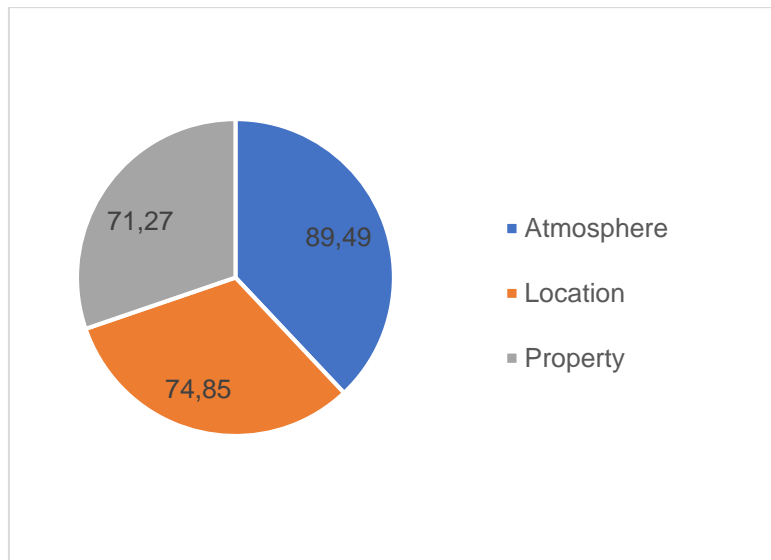


Figure 1. Reviewers' Preference On Attraction

Figure 1 shows the attraction component: Of the 50 total hotels/accommodations in Samosir Regency, 71.27% of reviewers feel positive about the condition of the property, 74.85% feel positive about the location, and 89.49% feel positive about the atmosphere.

Facilities

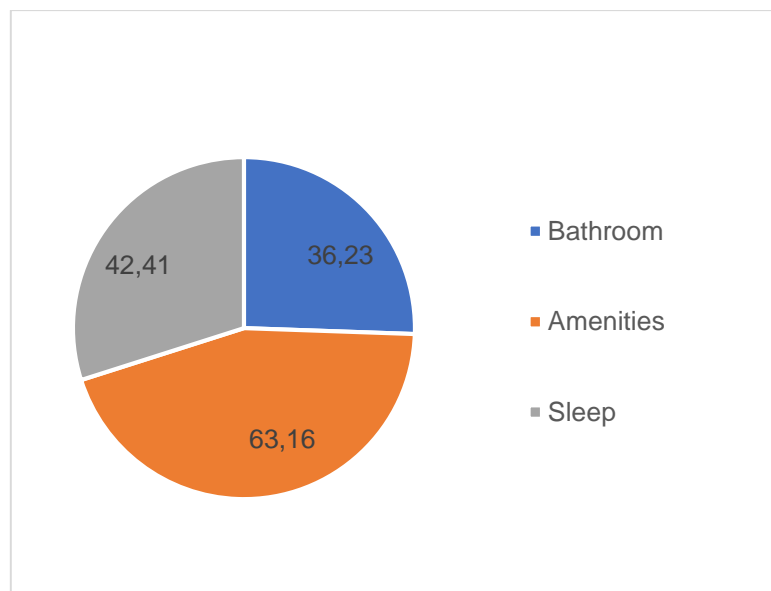


Figure 2. Reviewers Preference For Facilities

Figure 2 shows the reviewer's assessment of the facilities. Of 50 hotels/accommodations in Samosir Regency, 36.23% of reviewers felt optimistic about bathroom conditions, 42.41% felt positive about bedroom comfort, and 63.16% felt optimistic about amenities.

Hospitality

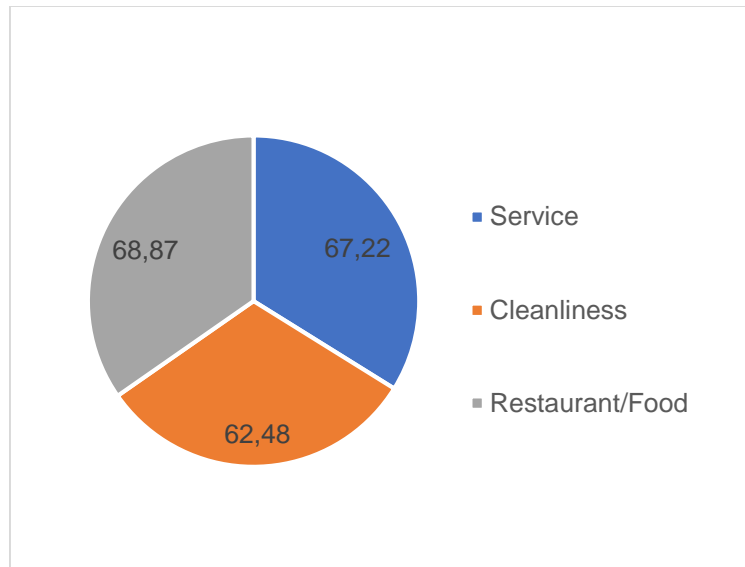


Figure 3. Reviewers' preference for Hospitality

Figure 3 shows the reviewer's assessment of Hospitality. Of 50 hotels/accommodations in Samosir Regency, 62.48% of reviewers felt positive about the cleanliness, 67.22% about the service, and 68.87% about the restaurant/food.

2. Personal Websites

Of the 50 hotels/accommodations studied, only ten hotels/accommodations have official websites both in English and Indonesian. In addition, six hotels/accommodations use a free website in Indonesian.

Discussion

The average reviewer rating of 50 hotels/accommodations in Samosir Regency has a 4.2 stars rating, which means the average rating was categorized as positive. However, in detail, the assessment of the three elements of attraction, facilities, and hospitality describes something more specific.

Assessment of attraction shows higher satisfaction than other elements. Attraction is anything that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of a diversity of natural, cultural, and man-made assets that are the target or destination of tourist visits. The components of attraction, ranking from highest to lowest, are atmosphere, location, and property.

The destination atmosphere referred to here is the atmosphere in a tourist destination that can shape the emotional experience of tourists through emotional transmission (Kucukergin & Dedeoglu, 2019). It was revealed that the tourist assessment of the tourism atmosphere of Samosir Regency is very satisfactory. In addition, tourist ratings are also satisfactory for the location and property of the hotel/accommodation. These three things are interrelated in forming an assessment of the tourism attraction elements in Samosir Regency.

Tourist facilities are a complement to tourist destinations that are needed to meet the needs of tourists who are enjoying a tour. Tourism facilities directly or indirectly provide services to tourists (Abdulhaji & Yusuf, 2017). The components of the facilities ranking from highest to lowest are amenities, bedrooms, and bathrooms. Amenities are part of hotel hotel rooms/accommodations deliberately provided for tourist convenience and experience. It was revealed that the rating of tourists is satisfactory for the amenities. However, tourists' assessment of bedrooms shows lower satisfaction. The level of tourist satisfaction with accommodation bathrooms in Samosir Regency (ex: The review's result of bathrooms accommodation in Samosir Regency) showed the lowest preference (point), namely unsatisfactory, where only 36.23% of tourists had a favorable preference for bathroom facilities in Samosir Regency.

In the tourism industry, hospitality is the spirit, soul, and spirit of tourism. Without hospitality in tourism, all products offered in tourism itself are like inanimate objects with no value to sell. Creating a good impression by fulfilling tourists' needs provides comfort and satisfaction for hospitality. The hospitality components with the highest to lowest ratings are Restaurant/Food, Service, and Cleanliness. The elemental tourist hospitality assessment is satisfactory, ranging from 61% to 80%. Of the three hospitality elements, tourists' cleanliness assessment shows the lowest satisfaction, close to unsatisfactory. However, this element is essential in fostering tourists' desire to return to visit.

In tourism, information technology and the internet are the main ways of finding information for prospective tourists. This information includes areas to be visited, places of interest, places to stay, and the price (Tirtayasa & Paturusi, 2016). Even though various booking promotion sites are online, having an official website for accommodation is essential. The official website can be a more flexible promotional medium because it can contain more complete features and can be easily customized by the hotel regarding language choices and the amount of content loaded.

CONCLUSION

Tourist preferences for accommodations in Samosir Regency obtained through Google Reviews illustrate that the highest tourist satisfaction is in the element of attraction followed by hospitality. However, the quality of facilities is still relatively low. Thus, a more significant quality development was required for hotel/accommodation facilities in Samosir Regency. The low level of satisfaction with these facilities is an overview of poor management of facilities. Therefore, serious improvement efforts must be made by accommodation owners and the Lake Toba tourism area community. However, improvements to the five elements of tourism can be carried out simultaneously with a greater priority on facilities. Apart from that, the ownership element of the official website also needs to be improved, which is an essential means of promoting digitally. Improvements to these aspects can contribute to the development of Samosir Regency as a tourist destination with high satisfaction.

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