
Analysis of Tourist Motivation and Return Visit Intention to the Bendhung Lepen Tourism in Yogyakarta

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Abstract: This research aims to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of visitors, the purpose of their visit, the number of visits, and tourist motivation and revisit intention in Bendung Lepen, Yogyakarta. The research used a survey method with a sample size of 60 tourists. The data were analysed using a quantitative descriptive approach. The results of the research show that visitors to Bendung Lepen are, on average, young and adults in the range of 15-42 years with an average length of education of 7-12 years, have no dependents, and an income of IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 2,000,000. Most tourists visit for recreational purposes, with an average frequency of 1-2 visits per year. The motivation for tourists to visit Bendung Lepen is due to the beautiful views (physical motivation), being invited by friends/family (social motivation), and other factors such as proximity, educational activities, and the availability of public facilities. As many as 91.67% of visitors expressed interest in returning because it was conveniently located near their homes, offered affordable recreational activities, was a beautiful and exciting place, and was child-friendly.

Keywords: Revisit Intention, Tourist Destinations, Tourist Motivation

Article info:

Submitted: July 15, 2025 | **Revised:** February 11, 2026 | **Accepted:** February 26, 2026

How to cite:

Aminda, F. R., Aisyah, D. D., & Lisan, A. R. K. (2026). Analysis of Tourist Motivation and Return Visit Intention to the Bendhung Lepen Tourism in Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Sains Terapan Pariwisata*, 11(1), 100–110. <https://doi.org/10.56743/jstp.v11i1>

INTRODUCTION

The Special Region of Yogyakarta boasts a diverse tourism potential, making it a popular destination for both domestic and international tourists. Beyond natural attractions, urban tourism, which offers a diverse range of unique features, is also a must-see destination. Following the COVID-19 pandemic's impact, which resulted in a 71.78% decline in tourist visits to Yogyakarta, the tourism sector began to recover, exhibiting significant growth the following year. In 2021, domestic and international tourist visits to the Special Region of Yogyakarta increased by 132.3% (Dinas Pariwisata Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2022). The tourism sector continues to adapt to the post-COVID-19 recovery, allowing for the transformation of any area into a tourist destination based on evolving tourism trends (Sinambela, 2021). This is seen as a promising opportunity, particularly for developing the local economy. As tourism develops, understanding the motivations of returning tourists is crucial for continuously improving the performance of tourist destinations. Tourists consider various factors when deciding to revisit a destination, including their motivations for returning. (Sayangbatti & Baiquni, 2013) Understanding motives serves as a guide for tourism stakeholders, including the government, tourism service providers, and tourism site managers, in determining policies and decisions that align with tourist preferences. This is known as a *market-driven approach*. When tourists have specific motivations for traveling, it can be assumed that they intend to return (Sinambela, 2021).

Kumbara et al. (2020) stated that the experience during a visit provides insight into the performance of the tourism attraction in a particular area. Additionally, the visit will also leave a lasting impression in the form of memories for visitors. If the experience gained is commensurate with the costs incurred, it will certainly influence visitor satisfaction with a destination. (Viet et al., 2020) revealed that consumer satisfaction will directly influence the intention to visit again. Bendhung Lepen, as a tourist destination located in the midst of an urban area undergoing development, requires information related to the motivation of tourists to visit. This will help managers make decisions related to developing the attraction of Bendhung Lepen itself, thereby arousing interest in visiting again among tourists. Until now, the number of studies related to the motivation to visit tourist destinations located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is still limited, therefore, this study aims to (1) determine the socio-economic characteristics of visitors, (2) Determine the purpose of visiting and the number of visits, and (3) Analyse tourist motivation and intention to visit again.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach, utilising a survey method, to investigate tourist motivations and their desire to return to the Bendhung Lepen tourist attraction in Yogyakarta. The population of this study was all tourists visiting the Bendhung Lepen tourist attraction in Yogyakarta. The sampling technique employed a purposive sampling method, with the criteria for respondents being at least 17 years old and having either participated in or currently engaged in tourist activities at the research location. The study included 60 tourists as samples. According to Roscoe's (1975) guidelines, a sample size of more than 30 to 500, as cited by Memon et al. (2020), is suitable for most behavioural studies. The data collection technique used an interview method using a structured questionnaire. This study used a quantitative descriptive analysis based on socio-economic characteristics, purpose of visit, number of visits, tourist motivation, and desire to return.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Bendhung Lepen Visitors

Bendhung Lepen is a nature-based and urban ecotourism destination that utilises managed irrigation channels as a water tourism area, offering recreational activities such as fish feeding, fishing, walking, jogging, and enjoying the scenery. As a developing tourist destination located in urban Yogyakarta, Bendhung Lepen offers affordable entertainment with easy access. These characteristics make Bendhung Lepen popular among students and people with lower-middle incomes who seek simple, family-friendly, and affordable recreation. The socio-economic characteristics of visitors to Bendhung Lepen are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents visiting Bendhung Lepen tourism

Variables	Category	Percentage
Age (years)	18-24	36.67
	25-31	18.33
	32-38	21.67
	39-45	13.33
	46-52	3.33
	53-59	5.00
	60-62	1.67
Length of Education (years)	<7	5.00
	7-12	51.67
	>12	43.33
Number of family dependents (people)	0	43.33
	1	18.33
	2	23.33
	3	10.00
	4	3.33
	>4	1.67
Income (Rp/month)	< 1,000,000	10.00
	1,000,000 - 2,000,000	41.67
	2,000,001 - 3,000,000	21.67
	3,000,001 - 4,000,000	13.33
	4,000,001 - 5,000,000	5.00
	> 5,000,000	8.33

Source: Primary data analysis (2024)

Based on Table 1, the socio-economic characteristics of visitors to Bendhung Lepen consist of age, length of education, number of dependents, and income. The majority of visitors are between the ages of 18 and 24, or 36.67% followed by the age group 32-38 years (21.67%) and 25-31 years (18.33%). Meanwhile, the number of visitors decreased drastically in the 57-63 year age group (1.67%). This indicates that Bendhung Lepen tourism tends to attract younger visitors, with the proportion of older visitors being relatively small. According to Sudarsono et al. (2020), age is a determining factor in the choice of tourist attractions, where young people and early adults, aged 17-38 years, prefer tourist destinations with special attractions. Bendhung Lepen offers recreational experiences, including feeding fish, fishing, walking, and jogging, as well as beautiful views perfect for photography and sharing on social media. Wahyuni & Tamami (2021) found that most tourists are young and early adults, as they have more stamina and good health, which makes them prefer to travel.

The majority of respondents had between 7 and 12 years of education (51.67%), which can be assumed to be equivalent to secondary education (SMP and SMA/SMK). Respondents with more than 12 years of education were 43.33%, who were assumed to have completed high school. Only 5% of respondents had less than 7 years of education. This suggests that the majority of visitors are individuals with access to secondary education or higher. This data suggests that this tourist destination is particularly attractive to individuals with secondary and higher education. Higher levels of education often correlate with a greater propensity to travel, as educated individuals tend to seek diverse experiences and engage in cultural activities (Suttikun et al., 2018). Furthermore, Sudarsono et al. (2020) found that tourists with a final education of SMP and SMA/SMK prefer tourist destinations based on nature and culture. In contrast, those with a final education of Diploma and Bachelor's degree prefer visiting special-interest tourist destinations. Bendhung Lepen, in addition to

offering recreational tourism that provides interesting experiences, also offers stunning natural views overlooking the Gajah Wong River.

The majority of respondents (43.33%) reported no family responsibilities. This is related to the large percentage of respondents who were still students (30%), so it is assumed that they were unmarried and childless. The proportion of visitors was also greater in the younger age group, with the largest number of family responsibilities falling into categories 1 (18.33%) and 2 (23.33%), indicating that there were visitors who were married but did not have many family responsibilities. Only a few had more than three responsibilities (1.67%), indicating that visitors with large families were rare at this place. Most young adult visitors went on vacation with their families, bringing their toddlers to educate and entertain them, or simply to unwind. The number of responsibilities in a family can influence travel choices, as families with more children tend to prioritise budget-friendly destinations or those offering family-oriented activities (Begashe et al., 2024).

Income also plays a significant role in determining tourist behavior. Research has shown that as income levels increase, the likelihood of traveling also increases, especially to destinations that offer unique attractions or experiences. In terms of income, most respondents had incomes between IDR 1,000,000 and IDR 2,000,000 (41.67%), which can be categorised as low to middle income. This is related to the respondents' employment status, as many as 30% of respondents were students and 25% were housewives. The income range of IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000 was also quite significant (21.67%), followed by the income group of IDR 3,000,001 to IDR 4,000,000 (13.33%). However, only a few respondents had incomes above IDR 5,000,000 (8.33%), indicating that the majority of visitors come from the lower-middle economic class. The study by Sukardi et al. (2022) shows that respondents in the lower-middle-income category prefer hedonic and economical tourism, with relaxation being one of the activities. Furthermore, Lei & Yang (2024) note that lower-income groups prioritise affordable activities and seek out those that offer more value on a budget. Meanwhile, those with higher incomes are more likely to choose exclusive destinations or unique experiences. This may explain why visitors to the Bendhung Lepen are predominantly from the lower-middle economic class.

Purpose of visit and number of visits

Most visitors to Bendhung Lepen come for recreational purposes (Figure 1). This suggests that the destination is better known for its refreshing natural beauty, making it an attractive spot for individuals and families to spend time relaxing and enjoying the environment. Yildirim et al. (2024) Research shows that natural environments can encourage environmentally friendly tourist behaviour, improve emotional well-being, and support sustainable tourism practices. Bendhung Lepen tourism offers experiences that can reduce stress and improve quality of life, in line with findings by Bhattarai et al. (2024), highlighting the potential of ecotourism that combines recreation with emotional benefits. Dwyer (2024) Research also highlights the positive impact of nature tourism on visitor well-being, where natural tourist destinations, such as Bendhung Lepen, provide a more calming experience and can improve mental health.

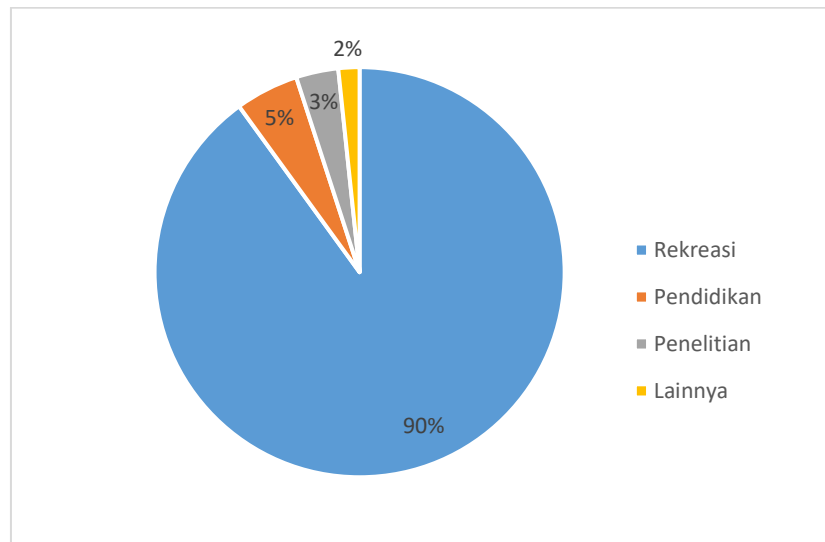


Figure 1. Distribution of Bendhung Lepen tourist visitors based on the purpose of their visit
 Source: Author (2024)

Only 5% of visitors come for educational purposes. This indicates an opportunity to enhance the educational aspect of Bendhung Lepen. Educational tourism is a high-potential tourism segment, especially when the attraction is linked to nature, environmental, or cultural learning programs. Educational tourism has significant potential to increase visitor engagement in nature and environmental learning, especially in destinations like Bendhung Lepen. Lin (2024) suggests that education through tourism can be a means to develop a deeper understanding of local natural and cultural heritage, thereby helping to protect and promote important aspects of cultural and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, Tomasi et al. (2020) suggest that educational tourism, which incorporates local elements, both cultural and natural, can support sustainability and deeper visitor engagement, especially when supported by institutions such as universities that bridge the gap between tourism and educational objectives.

The distribution of visitors based on the number of visits is shown in Figure 2. Based on this figure, it can be seen that the majority of visitors come 1-2 times (51.67%), followed by visits of more than 10 times with a percentage of 11.67%. The highest number of visits was in the 1-2 times category. This suggests that Bendhung Lepen attracts new visitors; however, most visitors have not made repeat visits or are still in the initial exploration stage. In the context of tourism, this may indicate that there is sufficient attraction for new visitors, but the retention rate (return visit rate) is relatively low. Conversely, 11.67% of visitors made more than 10 visits, indicating the presence of a loyal visitor group. The primary factors influencing tourist loyalty are satisfaction, motivation, perceived value, quality, and the overall quality of the experience (Wang & Li, 2023). In addition, Zhang et al. (2024), shows that a good quality tourism experience not only encourages loyalty but also strengthens emotional attachment to the place, which in turn increases pro-environmental behaviour and a sense of responsibility for maintaining the sustainability of the destination.

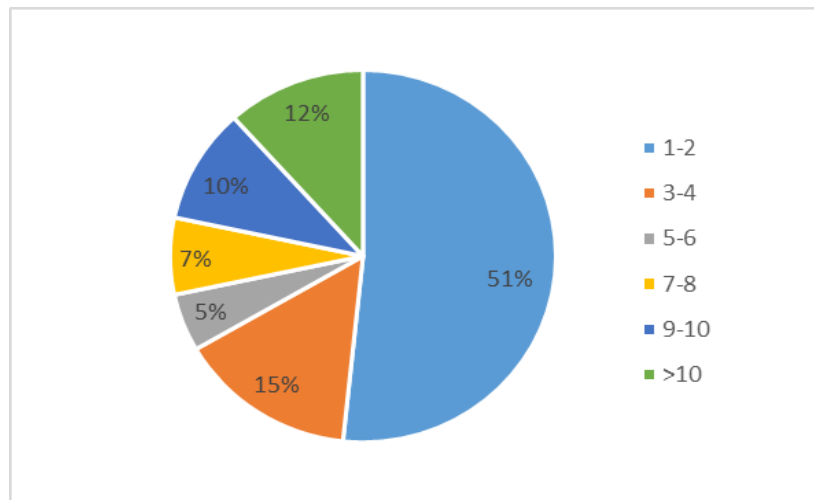


Figure 2. Distribution of visitors to Bendhung Lepen based on the number of visits per year
Source: Author (2024)

Based on tourism studies, the frequency of visits is often influenced by factors such as tourist attractions, accessibility, and Visitor experience. Several studies have shown that tourist destinations that are easily accessible and have adequate facilities tend to be visited more frequently and maintain repeat visits. Accessibility, as noted by Dumitraşcu et al. (2023), significantly influences tourist satisfaction and the desire to revisit. Tourists who perceive a destination as easily accessible and whose facilities meet their expectations tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction, which in turn increases their likelihood of making repeat visits. Tourist attractions, including natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, and the quality of attractions, are often the primary reason tourists choose a destination.

Tourist motivation and desire to return

In general, this study categorises tourist motivation into two main categories: Physical Motivation and Social Motivation. The distribution of Bendhung Lepen visitors based on their motivation is presented in Table 2. In the context of social motivation, many tourists are driven to visit a destination not only by its beauty or facilities, but also by social factors, such as invitations from friends or family, and the often lively atmosphere. In terms of social motivation, 27.03% of tourists were motivated by social factors, such as being invited by friends or family, and 16.22% of tourists were attracted to visit because of the lively atmosphere and large number of visitors. This social motivation indicates that tourism is not only about enjoying the destination itself, but also as a means to strengthen social relationships. Travelling with a social group can provide a more enjoyable experience due to the social interaction and deeper emotional connections that form. This phenomenon shows that tourism is not only about exploring a destination or gaining personal experiences, but also about strengthening social bonds with groups or those closest to them (Chavez et al., 2020).

Table 2. Distribution of visitors to Bendhung Lepen based on tourist motivation

Tourist Motivation		Percentage
Physical motivation	Cool air	2.70
	Beautiful scenery	20.27
Social motivation	Invited by friends/family	27.03
	Crowded and Many Visitors	16.22
	Other	33.78
Total		100.00

Source: Primary data analysis (2024)

A total of 25 tourists (33.78%) cited other reasons for choosing Bendhung Lepen as a tourist destination. This category encompasses various factors such as practical reasons (proximity), the availability of facilities, or special events taking place at the destination. Several respondents also stated that they visited for educational reasons. Bendhung Lepen is often visited for educational activities, including research and others. Given the significant proportion in this category, tourism managers need to explore the other reasons that drive visitors to Bendhung Lepen, as this can provide further insight into tourist preferences and needs. Understanding the deeper motivations of tourists can help tourism managers in Bendhung Lepen design effective marketing strategies and enhance existing facilities to make them more relevant to tourists. Research indicates that developing suitable facilities and meeting tourist expectations can increase satisfaction, which in turn has a positive impact on the destination's image and encourages repeat visits (Ćulić et al., 2021; Mihai et al., 2023).

In terms of physical motivation, two tourists (2.70%) chose Bendhung Lepen Tourism because of the cool air. This suggests that although cool air is one of the natural attractions, it is not the primary reason driving tourists to choose this location. Natural tourism in cool climates often attracts people seeking tranquillity or an escape from the heat in urban areas. Good environmental quality and a friendly social atmosphere can significantly enhance tourists' impressions of a destination, making it essential to maintain or improve the quality of this environment (Lin, 2024). However, several studies have shown that social and technological factors particularly the use of social media, play a significant role in tourists' decisions. Tourists are increasingly influenced by the popularity and reviews of destinations on social media, which shape their perceptions of the location's attractiveness, both in terms of experience and social responses in online media (Aldao & Mihalic, 2020).

Bendhung Lepen offers a scenic attraction, offering a stretch of fish farming along the irrigation canal. Fifteen tourists (20.27%) came to Bendhung Lepen because the beautiful scenery attracted them. Visual beauty in natural tourist attractions is an important factor in attracting tourists. This aligns with findings by Alkhair & Budiman (2019) that location appeal is a factor influencing tourist motivation. The feeling of pleasure generated by the attractions provided is what attracts visitors.



Figure 3. The Scenic Atmosphere as a Tourist Attraction of Bendhung Lepen
Source: Author (2024)

According to Jia et al. (2024), emotionally engaging visual experiences significantly impact visitors' satisfaction and perceptions, particularly in destinations rich in cultural values and natural beauty. Tourist perceptions and motivations can be significantly influenced by visual elements and aesthetic experiences, particularly in destinations that offer cultural values or natural attractions. (Herman et al., 2024). Tourists are often drawn to visual elements that evoke a sense of calm, natural appeal, and the opportunity to experience something different from their daily lives. A deep

understanding of these visual preferences allows tourism managers to enhance attractions and create more satisfying experiences for visitors.

Strong motivation and positive experiences at a tourist destination can generate visitor loyalty, reflected in the intention to return. Table 3 shows that 90% of visitors intend to revisit the Bendhung Lepen tourist attraction. Physical motivations, such as beautiful views and being invited by friends and family, are the primary motivators for visitors choosing Bendhung Lepen as a tourist destination. Reasons for revisiting are largely influenced by affordable recreation costs (26.53%) and proximity to their homes (21.43%). Affordable costs not only influence the initial decision to visit but also increase the likelihood of visitors returning. Furthermore, destinations close to tourists' homes provide easy access and affordability, which play a significant role in the decision to return. The findings of Kartika et al. (2017) and Facrureza (2020) also suggest that good accessibility and accessibility by various modes of transportation increase tourists' attractiveness to revisit. Enjoyable recreational experiences provided by a tourist destination will encourage the desire to revisit, and tourists will even promote the destination to others (Lin, 2024).

Table 3. Distribution of intention to revisit and reasons for revisiting the Bendhung Lepen tourist attraction

Variables	Category	Percentage
Intention to visit again	Yes	91.67
	No	8.33
Reasons to revisit	Location close to residence	21.43
	Cheap recreation costs	26.53
	Beautiful and interesting place	21.43
	Child friendly	25.51
	There is no other place	1.02

Source: Primary data analysis (2024)

Understanding tourist motivation patterns and the likelihood of revisiting has strategic implications for destination managers, such as Bendhung Lepen. To increase repeat visits, managers can maintain and enhance the visual appeal and comfort of the destination, providing facilities that support social motivation, such as gathering areas for family and friends. Location attractiveness is one factor.

Facilities and services are among the essential aspects that influence tourists' interest in visiting (Mawati & Hanif, 2025; Prakoso et al., 2025). A management concept that diverges from the daily routine, related to nature, and encourages socialisation among tourists or local residents can be an alternative development approach (Franco et al., 2022). In addition, keeping ticket prices (Adveni & Samar, 2024) or services affordable, and developing promotional programs, especially targeting family visitors and social groups, is necessary because this motivation is one of the important factors in increasing visitor loyalty. Media plays a significant role in increasing the intention to revisit, and it can also serve as a provider of real-time information about a destination (Susanto et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Bendhung Lepen attracts visitors of all ages, primarily due to its natural attractions and enjoyable, affordable recreational experiences. Most visitors come for recreation, either individually or with families, and have expressed interest in returning. The natural beauty and social influence of friends and family drive motivation for visits. Positive experiences and accessibility also drive return intentions. This research was limited to visitors present at the time of the survey, so it does not represent the entire visitor profile over time. Furthermore, the quantitative approach failed to delve deeply into the emotional and perceptual aspects of visitors. It is recommended that management

enhance facilities for visitors of all ages, prioritise child-friendly aspects, and regularly assess visitor satisfaction through surveys and feedback to maintain service quality and foster visitor loyalty.

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