

Beyond Tourism Growth: Exploring Stakeholder Perspectives on Sustainable Destination Competitiveness: A Qualitative Documentary Case Study of Desa Sade, Lombok, Indonesia

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Abstract

Tourism growth does not necessarily translate into sustainable destination competitiveness, particularly in community-based cultural tourism destinations where economic development is closely connected with cultural identity, community participation, environmental conditions, and governance. This study examines how sustainable destination competitiveness beyond tourism growth is represented through documented stakeholder perspectives in Desa Sade, Lombok, Indonesia. A qualitative documentary case study was employed using 25 unique documents consisting of academic publications, institutional sources, tourism reports, and publicly accessible documents. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis and cross-stakeholder documentary comparison, using economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance dimensions as sensitizing concepts. The findings indicate that competitiveness in Desa Sade is represented not merely by attracting tourists or generating economic activity, but by creating and retaining local value while maintaining the resources and relationships supporting destination sustainability. Community participation, cultural authenticity, environmental management, and stakeholder coordination emerge as interconnected capabilities. The study contributes to destination competitiveness research by conceptualizing sustainable destination competitiveness as a dynamic, multidimensional, and governance-dependent capability rather than a tourism-growth outcome.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism development has increasingly moved beyond the conventional objective of increasing visitor numbers and tourism-related economic activity toward a broader concern with sustainability, destination resilience, and the well-being of host communities. In this context, tourism destinations are no longer assessed solely according to their ability to attract visitors or generate economic returns, but also according to their capacity to preserve the resources, communities, and cultural assets on which long-term tourism development depends. Destination competitiveness has consequently become a multidimensional concept involving destination resources, tourism

management, supporting infrastructure, institutional conditions, visitor experience, and the capacity of destinations to generate long-term value. Recent research has further emphasized that competitiveness needs to be connected with sustainability and the welfare of destination residents rather than being understood exclusively through conventional tourism performance indicators (Purwono et al., 2024).

The relationship between tourism growth and destination competitiveness, however, is not necessarily linear. Growth in tourist arrivals, investment, tourism businesses, and tourism-related employment may generate economic opportunities, but growth can also place pressure on environmental resources, cultural heritage, local livelihoods, and community relationships. Research on destination competitiveness has increasingly recognized this multidimensionality. A comprehensive review of the destination competitiveness literature found that there is no universally accepted set of indicators for determining whether a destination is competitive, reflecting the complexity of the concept and the different perspectives through which competitiveness can be understood (Shariffuddin et al., 2023). Similarly, research on destination competitiveness and resident well-being argues that the long-term success of tourism should be connected to the well-being outcomes experienced by residents, suggesting that conventional measures of destination performance may not fully capture the broader objectives of destination development (Dwyer, 2022).

This issue is particularly important for destinations whose competitiveness is strongly dependent on cultural and community resources. Cultural tourism destinations possess distinctive assets that cannot simply be reproduced through physical infrastructure or marketing investment. Traditional architecture, cultural practices, handicrafts, local knowledge, social relationships, and community identity can constitute important sources of destination attractiveness and differentiation. At the same time, incorporating these cultural resources into tourism can create tensions between economic utilization and cultural preservation. Thus, sustainable destination competitiveness requires consideration of whether tourism development creates value while maintaining the cultural and social resources that constitute the destination's distinctive identity.

Stakeholders play a central role in this process because destination competitiveness is produced through interactions among actors rather than by a single organization. Governments, local communities, tourism businesses, destination managers, cultural practitioners, and other tourism-related actors may possess different interests, responsibilities, and interpretations of what constitutes a successful destination. Previous research has demonstrated that stakeholders can perceive destination competitiveness differently. For example, empirical research in Serbia found differences between public-sector and tourism-industry stakeholders in their perceptions of destination competitiveness, while research in developing economies has highlighted the importance of incorporating residents' perspectives because residents directly experience the economic, social, cultural, and environmental consequences of tourism development (Kovačić et al., 2024; Milutinovic et al., 2022). Consequently, examining destination competitiveness through a stakeholder perspective can reveal dimensions of competitiveness that may remain obscured when competitiveness is assessed only through aggregate tourism indicators.

The stakeholder perspective is particularly relevant in community-based destinations. Earlier research has established that collaboration among destination stakeholders can influence destination policy, planning, resource utilization, and competitiveness. More recent research similarly emphasizes

that destination competitiveness involves interactions among multiple factors and that stakeholder activities can influence important components of destination development (Luštický & Štumpf, 2021; Zehrer & Hallmann, 2015). A qualitative study of destination competitiveness also demonstrated that stakeholders can understand competitiveness in qualitatively different ways, including as destination perception, destination performance, and a long-term process. This suggests that competitiveness is not simply an objectively measurable condition but can also be understood as a socially and institutionally interpreted phenomenon (Abreu Novais et al., 2018).

The need to connect competitiveness with sustainability becomes even more evident in cultural tourism destinations. A sustainable destination cannot be defined only by its capacity to compete for tourists; it must also maintain the cultural, social, economic, and environmental resources that allow tourism to remain viable over time. Research on sustainable destination competitiveness has therefore proposed integrating economic, sociocultural, and ecological dimensions while taking the interests of different tourism stakeholders into account (Nadalipour et al., 2019). More recent research has likewise emphasized residents as important stakeholders in understanding destination competitiveness because local communities contribute to destination identity and experience the consequences of tourism development directly (Kovačić et al., 2024). These perspectives provide a basis for examining competitiveness as a balance between tourism development and the long-term sustainability of destination resources.

Desa Sade in Central Lombok provides a relevant empirical context for examining this issue. The destination is recognized for its Sasak cultural heritage, traditional architecture, weaving, performing arts, and other forms of local cultural knowledge. Existing studies describe Desa Sade as a cultural tourism destination in which local cultural resources function simultaneously as elements of community identity and tourism attractions. Research on the utilization of cultural capital in Sade, for example, identified traditional cloth production, traditional architectural forms, and cultural performances as important components of community-based tourism development. Other recent research has emphasized the continuing importance of cultural preservation, handicrafts, rituals, performing arts, and youth involvement in sustaining cultural tourism in the village. Institutional Repository The Indonesian government's tourism portal likewise presents Sade as a cultural tourism village in southern Lombok whose Sasak traditions have been maintained across generations (Ministry of Tourism Republic of Indonesia, 2026).

At the same time, existing studies indicate that tourism development in Desa Sade involves broader economic, social, cultural, and sustainability considerations. Research on the economic impacts of tourism development in Sade has identified effects including increased local income, employment opportunities, infrastructure development, cultural preservation, environmental awareness, and opportunities for local businesses (Nopriansyah et al., 2023). Other research has specifically examined sustainable tourism elements in Sade and identified the continuing importance of environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and community participation (Agustiani et al., 2025). More recent work on collective action has also drawn attention to the role of community participation and the barriers that may constrain collective involvement in developing Sade as a tourism village (Latifah et al., 2026). These studies demonstrate that Desa Sade provides a meaningful context for examining the relationship between tourism development and community-based sustainability.

Nevertheless, an important research gap remains. Existing research on Desa Sade has predominantly examined particular aspects of tourism development, including economic impacts, cultural capital, cultural preservation, community participation, marketing, or sustainable tourism elements (Agustiani et al., 2025; Pauzi et al., 2022). Although these studies provide valuable insights into individual dimensions of tourism development, less attention has been given to how different stakeholder groups collectively understand destination competitiveness when tourism growth is considered alongside economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance objectives. This gap is important because a destination may possess strong cultural attractions and generate economic benefits while simultaneously facing challenges associated with community participation, cultural commercialization, environmental pressure, or coordination among stakeholders. A stakeholder-centered qualitative approach can therefore provide a deeper understanding of how these potentially competing dimensions are negotiated within a specific cultural tourism destination.

The present study addresses this gap by moving beyond tourism growth and examining sustainable destination competitiveness through the perspectives of stakeholders in Desa Sade. Rather than treating competitiveness primarily as a measurable outcome based on tourism performance, this study examines how stakeholder perspectives documented across existing sources contribute to understanding the meaning and dimensions of sustainable destination competitiveness. Particular attention is given to the convergence and divergence of stakeholder perspectives concerning economic benefits, community participation, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and destination governance. This approach responds to the broader call for destination competitiveness research to incorporate stakeholder perspectives and resident well-being rather than relying exclusively on conventional performance indicators (Dwyer, 2022; Kovačić et al., 2024).

The novelty of this study lies in integrating documented stakeholder perspectives with sustainable destination competitiveness through a qualitative documentary case study of a community-based cultural tourism destination. While previous studies have examined stakeholder perceptions of destination competitiveness using quantitative indicators or have investigated specific sustainability dimensions in Desa Sade, this study seeks to understand the meanings, priorities, tensions, and potential areas of convergence that stakeholders attach to sustainable competitiveness. The study therefore positions destination competitiveness not merely as the ability to attract tourists and generate economic value, but as a dynamic process through which economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance interests are negotiated among destination stakeholders.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine documented stakeholder perspectives on sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade, Lombok, Indonesia. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) examine how stakeholders perceive destination competitiveness beyond tourism growth; (2) identify the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance dimensions that shape perceptions of sustainable destination competitiveness; (3) explore areas of convergence and divergence among stakeholder interests; and (4) identify strategic implications for strengthening the sustainable competitiveness of Desa Sade as a cultural tourism destination.

Based on these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How is destination competitiveness beyond tourism growth represented in documented stakeholder perspectives on Desa Sade?

- RQ2. What economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance dimensions are reflected in documented stakeholder perspectives on sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade?
- RQ3. Where do stakeholder perspectives converge or diverge regarding sustainable tourism development in Desa Sade?
- RQ4. What strategies for strengthening the sustainable competitiveness of Desa Sade are indicated across the documentary evidence?

The study is expected to contribute theoretically by extending the discussion of destination competitiveness toward a more stakeholder-centered and sustainability-oriented understanding of competitiveness. Practically, the findings are expected to provide insights for destination managers, local government, community organizations, and tourism businesses in developing strategies that balance tourism-related economic opportunities with cultural preservation, community well-being, environmental sustainability, and effective destination governance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Tourism and Destination Sustainability

Sustainable tourism has evolved from an approach primarily concerned with minimizing the negative environmental effects of tourism into a broader framework encompassing economic viability, social well-being, cultural integrity, environmental protection, and the long-term capacity of destinations to accommodate tourism activities. Within this perspective, tourism development cannot be evaluated solely according to its contribution to visitor numbers, employment, or tourism revenues. Rather, sustainable tourism requires the benefits and costs of tourism to be considered across multiple dimensions and over a sufficiently long time horizon.

The sustainability of a tourism destination is therefore closely related to its ability to maintain the resources and relationships that constitute its tourism system. Economic sustainability concerns the capacity of tourism to generate durable livelihoods and distribute economic benefits, while social sustainability relates to community well-being, participation, inclusion, and the quality of relationships between tourism actors and host communities. Cultural sustainability emphasizes the preservation and meaningful continuation of local identity, heritage, traditions, and cultural practices. Environmental sustainability concerns the conservation of natural resources, reduction of environmental pressure, and maintenance of ecological conditions necessary for tourism and community life.

This multidimensional perspective is particularly relevant to community-based destinations, where tourism resources are frequently embedded in the everyday social and cultural life of residents. Research on sustainable community-based tourism has shown that local participation and community influence are central to determining whether tourism development can produce sustainable outcomes. In an Indonesian rural tourism context, for example, research has demonstrated that community involvement, local leadership, and socio-ecological considerations are important components in developing sustainable community-based tourism (Priatmoko et al., 2021).

Sustainability therefore should not be understood as a separate objective that is added after tourism development has taken place. Instead, it should be incorporated into the way destination

performance and competitiveness are conceptualized. This perspective provides the foundation for examining whether a destination's growth is accompanied by improvements in community well-being, cultural preservation, environmental management, and governance.

2.2 Tourism Destination Competitiveness

Destination competitiveness is a multidimensional concept concerned with the capacity of a destination to create and maintain value relative to competing destinations. One of the foundational frameworks is the model developed by Ritchie and Crouch, which conceptualizes destination competitiveness through a combination of core resources and attractors, supporting factors and resources, destination policy, planning and development, destination management, and qualifying and amplifying determinants. Importantly, the framework explicitly connects competitiveness with sustainability and treats long-term competitive advantage as dependent on the management and preservation of destination resources (Ritchie & Crouch, 2010).

The Ritchie and Crouch framework is particularly relevant to the present research because it challenges a narrow understanding of competitiveness. Destination competitiveness does not simply emerge from the presence of attractive tourism resources. Rather, competitiveness depends on the interaction between resources, supporting conditions, policy, planning, management, and broader contextual factors. The framework consequently provides a useful theoretical foundation for examining destinations in which cultural resources, community participation, destination management, and sustainability are closely interconnected.

However, the destination competitiveness literature has also been characterized by conceptual and measurement diversity. Abreu-Novais et al. argue that destination competitiveness lacks a universally accepted definition and that different stakeholders may conceptualize competitiveness in qualitatively different ways. Their phenomenographic study identified three conceptions: destination competitiveness as the perception of a destination, as performance, and as a long-term process (Abreu Novais et al., 2018).

This finding is important for a qualitative study because it suggests that competitiveness cannot necessarily be reduced to a single objectively observable condition. The same destination may be considered competitive from one stakeholder's perspective because of its economic performance, while another stakeholder may associate competitiveness with cultural preservation, quality of life, environmental conditions, or effective destination management.

Recent research reinforces the importance of incorporating local perspectives into destination competitiveness. Kovačić et al. found that residents have frequently been overlooked in tourism destination competitiveness models despite their direct experience of tourism's consequences and their role in co-creating destination identity and visitor experience. Their study emphasizes that tourism success should extend beyond quantitative measures such as visitor numbers and revenue to include resident satisfaction, environmental sustainability, and quality of life (Kovačić et al., 2024).

Consequently, destination competitiveness in the present study is understood not as a single performance indicator but as a multidimensional and dynamic process involving the capacity of a destination to create tourism value while maintaining the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and institutional resources required for its long-term viability.

2.3 Stakeholder Perspectives and Destination Governance

A stakeholder perspective provides an important theoretical lens for understanding destination competitiveness because tourism destinations consist of multiple actors whose interests are interconnected. Local governments, destination managers, businesses, residents, cultural practitioners, tourism workers, and tourists may have different expectations concerning tourism development. Destination governance therefore requires mechanisms through which these interests can be coordinated, negotiated, and translated into collective action.

The relevance of stakeholder perspectives to destination competitiveness has been demonstrated in previous research. Sautter and Leisen's stakeholder-oriented perspective, for example, emphasizes the importance of identifying and managing relationships among actors involved in destination development. Later research has similarly shown that policy and planning factors—including destination vision, development, monitoring, interdependencies, and market relationships—can influence perceived destination competitiveness (Zehrer & Hallmann, 2015).

Stakeholder perspectives are particularly important because the benefits and costs of tourism are rarely distributed uniformly. Tourism businesses may prioritize market access and profitability, governments may emphasize investment, employment, destination reputation, and regional economic development, while residents may place greater emphasis on livelihoods, cultural identity, environmental quality, and participation in decision-making. Differences among these perspectives do not necessarily imply that stakeholders are fundamentally opposed; rather, they indicate that destination development involves processes of negotiation and prioritization.

Research has provided empirical evidence that stakeholder groups can evaluate destination competitiveness differently. For example, a study of stakeholders in Serbia found differences in the perceived strengths and weaknesses of destination competitiveness and emphasized the importance of considering stakeholder perspectives in assessing destination performance (Milutinovic et al., 2022). Similarly, a qualitative study of Chile's tourism destination competitiveness used interviews with public- and private-sector stakeholders to identify competitiveness factors and their respective influences within an emerging destination context (Aqueveque & Bianchi, 2017).

The stakeholder perspective is also closely related to destination governance. Sustainable destination development requires coordination because no single stakeholder controls all the resources required to achieve sustainability. Research on sustainable tourism governance identifies stakeholder interaction and participation as important mechanisms through which destinations can address regulation, conservation, and local livelihoods (Roxas et al., 2020).

Accordingly, this study does not treat stakeholder perspectives as isolated opinions about Desa Sade. Instead, stakeholders are understood as actors whose interests, roles, and interpretations are represented across the documentary evidence.

2.4 Community-Based and Cultural Tourism

Community-based tourism provides a particularly relevant context for understanding sustainable destination competitiveness because local communities are not merely recipients of tourism impacts but can function as resource owners, tourism producers, cultural custodians, entrepreneurs, and destination representatives.

The central principle of community-based tourism is the involvement of local communities in tourism development and the distribution of tourism benefits. Previous research in Indonesia has demonstrated that community participation can contribute to economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes. Research on Nglanggeran Tourism Village, for example, found that collaboration among inter-organizational stakeholders and strong local community involvement contributed to the sustainability of community-based rural tourism (Manaf et al., 2018).

Similarly, qualitative research on community-based tourism in Indonesia has emphasized that local residents' perspectives are important for understanding how sustainable tourism develops in practice. A study of Pampang Village found that sustainable rural community-based tourism was influenced by local leadership and the socio-ecological context of tourism activities (Priatmoko et al., 2021). These findings reinforce the proposition that community-based tourism should be examined as a governance and social process rather than simply as a tourism product.

Cultural tourism adds another dimension to this relationship because the resources that attract tourists can also constitute fundamental elements of local identity. Cultural tourism may create opportunities for cultural preservation, local entrepreneurship, employment, and intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. However, commercialization can also generate tensions when cultural practices become primarily oriented toward visitor expectations rather than community meanings.

This tension is particularly relevant to Desa Sade. Recent research on Sade identifies cultural preservation, environmental management, and community participation as important elements of sustainable tourism, while also identifying increasing tourist pressure and the risk of cultural commercialization as continuing challenges (Agustiani et al., 2025). Research on collective action in Sade likewise identifies community participation as an important issue in the development of the tourism village and examines barriers that can restrict effective collective involvement (Latifah et al., 2026).

Therefore, community-based and cultural tourism provide an appropriate empirical lens through which to examine sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade. Competitiveness in such a setting cannot be separated from the community's capacity to maintain cultural identity, participate in tourism governance, obtain economic benefits, and respond collectively to tourism-related pressures.

2.5 Sustainable Destination Competitiveness: An Integrated Perspective

The preceding literature suggests that destination competitiveness and sustainability should not be treated as independent concepts. The conventional competitiveness perspective provides important insights into destination resources, attractiveness, management, infrastructure, policy, and market performance, whereas the sustainability perspective emphasizes the long-term preservation of economic, social, cultural, and environmental resources.

Ritchie and Crouch's destination competitiveness/sustainability framework explicitly establishes this relationship by positioning sustainability as an essential component of long-term destination competitiveness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2010). More recent research has continued to develop this integrated perspective. For example, research on destination sustainability has examined sustainability through multiple stakeholder groups—including residents, tourists, businesses, and

government—and distinguishes economic, socio-cultural, environmental, political, and technological dimensions (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025).

The integration of stakeholder perspectives is particularly important because sustainable competitiveness may involve trade-offs among different dimensions. A strategy that increases tourism revenue may create employment but also generate environmental pressure. Cultural tourism may strengthen destination differentiation and create income for artisans while simultaneously creating concerns about cultural commercialization. Infrastructure development may improve visitor experience while altering the physical or social character of a destination.

Thus, sustainable destination competitiveness can be conceptualized as a balancing and governance process rather than simply a destination outcome. It concerns how destination actors collectively maintain and enhance the resources and capabilities that allow a destination to create value for visitors and residents while preserving the conditions required for tourism's long-term viability.

For the purpose of this study, sustainable destination competitiveness is therefore examined through five interconnected dimensions:

Economic dimension

This concerns the capacity of tourism to generate sustainable livelihoods, employment, entrepreneurship, income, and locally retained economic benefits.

Social dimension

This concerns community participation, inclusion, quality of life, empowerment, and the distribution of tourism benefits and responsibilities.

Cultural dimension

This concerns preservation of cultural identity, traditions, heritage, local knowledge, authenticity, and the intergenerational continuity of cultural resources.

Environmental dimension

This concerns environmental quality, resource conservation, waste management, tourism pressure, and the destination's capacity to accommodate tourism without undermining its ecological conditions.

Governance dimension

This concerns stakeholder coordination, participation in decision-making, institutional capacity, policy implementation, collaboration, and mechanisms for managing competing interests.

These dimensions should not be interpreted as predetermined quantitative indicators. Rather, they function as sensitizing concepts that guide the qualitative investigation. The empirical analysis will remain open to additional dimensions or alternative interpretations emerging from the documentary evidence.

This approach is consistent with qualitative research on destination competitiveness, which demonstrates that stakeholders may conceptualize competitiveness differently and that competitiveness can be understood as perception, performance, or a long-term process (Abreu Novais et al., 2018). It also responds to recent calls for broader stakeholder involvement in understanding destination competitiveness and sustainability (Kovačić et al., 2024; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025).

2.6 Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed above identifies three interconnected gaps. First, much of the destination competitiveness literature has concentrated on measurement and performance assessment, while comparatively less attention has been given to how competitiveness is understood and negotiated among stakeholders at the destination level. The phenomenographic study by Abreu-Novais et al. demonstrates the value of investigating stakeholder conceptualizations of competitiveness rather than assuming a universally shared definition (Abreu Novais et al., 2018).

Second, although resident perspectives are increasingly recognized as important, research continues to identify residents as an underrepresented stakeholder group in destination competitiveness research. Recent evidence emphasizes that residents contribute to destination identity and experience the consequences of tourism development directly, making their perspectives relevant to sustainable competitiveness (Kovačić et al., 2024).

Third, studies of Desa Sade have addressed important aspects of sustainable tourism, cultural preservation, community participation, economic impacts, and collective action, but these strands have not yet been sufficiently integrated into an examination of sustainable destination competitiveness as a stakeholder-informed process. Existing research identifies sustainability challenges and community participation issues in Sade, including tourist pressure and the potential commercialization of culture (Latifah et al., 2026).

This study addresses these gaps by integrating three analytical perspectives. First, Destination Competitiveness (destination resources, attractiveness, management, policy, and long-term performance). Second, Sustainability (economic, social, cultural, and environmental continuity). Third, Stakeholder Perspective (different interests, interpretations, participation, collaboration, and potential tensions)

The resulting conceptual framework is:

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of sustainable destination competitiveness based on documented stakeholder perspectives



The framework does not assume that tourism growth automatically produces sustainable competitiveness. Instead, it proposes that tourism growth creates a context in which stakeholders evaluate, negotiate, and respond to economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance conditions. The interaction among these dimensions shapes how sustainable destination competitiveness is understood and potentially pursued.

The framework also allows the empirical research to identify convergence and divergence among stakeholder perspectives. Convergence refers to areas where stakeholder groups share similar priorities, whereas divergence refers to differences in interests, interpretations, or preferred development strategies. Such convergence and divergence are analytically important because sustainable destination competitiveness may depend not only on the presence of destination resources but also on the capacity of stakeholders to coordinate their interests and actions.

For Desa Sade, this framework positions cultural resources and community participation as central elements rather than peripheral characteristics of tourism development. It therefore allows the study to investigate whether and how economic benefits, cultural preservation, social participation, environmental sustainability, and governance are perceived as mutually reinforcing or potentially conflicting dimensions of destination competitiveness.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative documentary case study to examine sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade, Lombok, Indonesia. The research design was selected because the

objective was not to measure destination competitiveness through predefined quantitative indicators, but to understand how different dimensions of competitiveness and sustainability are represented across existing documentary evidence. Desa Sade was treated as a bounded cultural tourism case because its tourism development is closely associated with Sasak cultural heritage, traditional architecture, handicrafts, local knowledge, community participation, and destination management.

The study used documentary evidence as the primary empirical basis. Rather than collecting new data through interviews, surveys, or field observations, the analysis examined published and publicly accessible documents that contain information about Desa Sade, its tourism development, community, cultural resources, economic activities, environmental conditions, governance, and stakeholder-related issues. This approach is consistent with the study's objective of examining documented stakeholder perspectives rather than claiming direct access to stakeholder experiences.

The analytical orientation combined thematic analysis with cross-stakeholder documentary comparison. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring meanings and issues related to sustainable destination competitiveness, while cross-document comparison was used to examine areas of convergence, divergence, complementary interests, and potential tensions among stakeholder perspectives represented in the sources.

3.2 Documentary Data Sources and Corpus

The documentary corpus was developed from documents identified through the literature and document search process conducted for the study. The initial collection contained multiple downloadable documents, which were screened for relevance to the research objectives. Duplicate documents were removed before analysis.

The final corpus consisted of 25 unique documents. The documents included peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional publications, tourism-related reports, and other publicly accessible documentary sources. The corpus was subsequently divided according to its analytical role into case-specific evidence, contextual evidence, comparative evidence, and excluded documents.

Case-specific evidence consisted of documents that directly discussed Desa Sade and its tourism, cultural, social, economic, environmental, or governance conditions. Contextual evidence consisted of documents addressing Sasak community practices or cultural and social institutions relevant to understanding the case. Comparative evidence consisted of studies from other destinations that provided theoretically or empirically relevant insights into sustainable destination competitiveness, stakeholder participation, destination governance, community-based tourism, cultural tourism, and tourism sustainability.

Importantly, comparative and theoretical documents were not treated as evidence of conditions in Desa Sade. They were used to contextualize and interpret findings emerging from the Desa Sade documentary evidence.

3.3 Document Selection Criteria

Documents were included when they satisfied at least one of the following criteria: (1) directly examined Desa Sade or tourism development in Sade; (2) provided relevant evidence concerning the Sasak cultural, social, economic, environmental, or institutional context of Sade; or (3) provided comparative evidence directly relevant to destination competitiveness, sustainable

tourism, stakeholder perspectives, community-based tourism, cultural tourism, or destination governance.

Documents were excluded when their subject matter was unrelated to tourism, destination development, sustainability, stakeholders, or the Desa Sade case. Duplicate files were also removed from the analytical corpus. Documents that provided only general background information without substantive relevance to the research questions were treated as contextual rather than core empirical evidence.

Each retained document was assigned a source identification code and recorded in a documentary corpus matrix containing the document title, publication year, source type, empirical scope, stakeholder groups represented or discussed, relevant analytical dimensions, research-question linkage, and summary of relevant evidence.

3.4 Data Analysis

The documentary evidence was analyzed using a two-stage qualitative analytical process. First, thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes related to sustainable destination competitiveness. The five dimensions developed in the conceptual framework—economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance—were used as sensitizing concepts rather than predetermined quantitative categories. The coding process therefore remained open to additional themes emerging from the documentary evidence.

The economic dimension included evidence concerning livelihoods, employment, entrepreneurship, income, local businesses, and the retention or distribution of tourism-related economic benefits. The social dimension included community participation, inclusion, empowerment, quality of life, and the distribution of tourism-related responsibilities. The cultural dimension covered cultural identity, traditions, heritage, local knowledge, authenticity, traditional architecture, handicrafts, and cultural preservation. The environmental dimension included environmental quality, conservation, tourism pressure, resource management, and environmental awareness. The governance dimension included stakeholder coordination, participation in decision-making, institutional roles, policy implementation, collaboration, tourism management, and mechanisms for addressing competing interests.

Second, the coded evidence was subjected to cross-stakeholder documentary comparison. Stakeholders were not treated as directly interviewed respondents; instead, they were identified according to how their interests, roles, priorities, or interpretations were represented in the documentary sources. These included local communities, government actors, tourism businesses, cultural practitioners, local entrepreneurs, tourism managers, and other relevant actors where represented in the documents.

The comparison focused on three analytical patterns. Convergence referred to recurring or shared priorities represented across different stakeholder groups or documentary sources. Divergence referred to differences in priorities, interpretations, development preferences, or perceived consequences. Complementarity referred to situations in which different stakeholder interests could potentially reinforce one another. These patterns were then interpreted in relation to sustainable destination competitiveness and the long-term sustainability of Desa Sade.

Finally, the findings were synthesized across the four research questions. RQ1 was addressed by examining how competitiveness beyond tourism growth was represented. RQ2 was addressed through the five-dimensional thematic analysis. RQ3 was addressed through cross-stakeholder comparison. RQ4 was addressed by synthesizing strategic implications emerging consistently across the documentary evidence.

3.5 Analytical Trustworthiness

Analytical trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation, transparent document selection, systematic coding, and traceability of interpretations to documentary evidence. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing evidence across different types of documents rather than relying on a single publication or institutional perspective. The distinction between case-specific evidence and comparative literature was maintained throughout the analysis to avoid transferring findings from other destinations directly to Desa Sade.

The documentary corpus matrix provided an audit trail linking each source to its empirical scope, stakeholder representation, analytical dimensions, and research-question relevance. Coding decisions were guided by the conceptual framework while allowing new themes to emerge from the evidence. Divergent or contrasting evidence was retained rather than selectively removed, allowing the analysis to identify tensions as well as areas of convergence. These procedures were intended to improve analytical transparency and reduce the risk of interpreting documentary evidence beyond what the sources support.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Documentary Evidence and Analytical Overview

The documentary analysis indicates that sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade cannot be adequately represented by tourism growth alone. Across the reviewed evidence, competitiveness is associated with the interaction between the economic value generated by tourism, community participation, cultural preservation, environmental responsibility, and destination governance. The evidence also indicates that these dimensions are interconnected rather than independent.

The documentary corpus contained 25 unique documents after duplicate removal and relevance screening. These documents were differentiated into case-specific evidence, contextual evidence, comparative evidence, and excluded materials. Case-specific evidence was primarily used to establish findings about Desa Sade, whereas comparative studies were used to interpret those findings in relation to broader destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism research.

The evidence concerning Desa Sade consistently portrays the village as a cultural tourism destination in which tourism resources are embedded in local community life. Traditional Sasak architecture, weaving, cultural practices, local knowledge, and community participation appear repeatedly across the documentary evidence. Previous research specifically identifies traditional cloth production, traditional architectural forms, and cultural performances as components of community-based tourism development in Sade, while more recent evidence emphasizes cultural preservation, environmental management, and community participation as interconnected elements of sustainable tourism (Agustiani et al., 2025; Pauzi et al., 2022).

The analysis therefore identifies five interconnected dimensions of sustainable destination competitiveness: economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance. Importantly, these dimensions do not operate as separate performance indicators. Instead, they represent different ways in which the value and sustainability of Desa Sade are represented across the documentary evidence.

Table 1. Documentary evidence on sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade

Dimension	Main documentary evidence	Stakeholders represented	Analytical interpretation
Economic	Local businesses, handicrafts, weaving, tourism-related income, employment, local economic opportunities	Local community, artisans, entrepreneurs, government	Tourism competitiveness is connected to local value creation and livelihood opportunities
Social	Community participation, collective action, local involvement, community welfare	Residents, community organizations, local leaders	Competitiveness depends partly on the capacity of residents to participate in and benefit from tourism
Cultural	Sasak identity, traditional houses, weaving, local wisdom, cultural preservation	Cultural custodians, residents, artisans, government	Cultural authenticity functions simultaneously as a tourism resource and a sustainability responsibility
Environmental	Environmental awareness, resource management, cleanliness, tourism pressure	Residents, tourism actors, government	Environmental conditions constitute part of the long-term resource base of the destination
Governance	Government involvement, tourism management, participation, collective action, coordination	Government, community, tourism managers, local organizations	Competitiveness requires coordination among actors rather than isolated action

The pattern is consistent with recent destination competitiveness research arguing that competitiveness should incorporate resident well-being and sustainability rather than relying exclusively on conventional performance measures (Dwyer, 2022; Kovačić et al., 2024). It also corresponds with Indonesian research that conceptualizes sustainable tourism competitiveness

through both supply-side and demand-side conditions, including economic, social, environmental, and community-related considerations (Lesmana et al., 2022).

4.2 Destination Competitiveness Beyond Tourism Growth

RQ1. How is destination competitiveness beyond tourism growth represented in documented stakeholder perspectives on Desa Sade?

The first major finding is that tourism growth is represented as a context for competitiveness rather than as its final definition. The documentary evidence indicates that the value of Desa Sade derives not simply from attracting visitors but from its ability to transform cultural and community resources into tourism value while maintaining the resources on which the destination depends.

The economic evidence provides an important starting point. Tourism development in Sade has been associated with increased local income, employment opportunities, infrastructure development, opportunities for local businesses, and other economic effects (Nopriansyah et al., 2023). However, these benefits coexist with concerns about community participation, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and the distribution of tourism benefits. Agustiani et al. (2025), for example, identify active community participation, cultural preservation, and environmental management as elements of sustainable tourism in Sade while also identifying increasing tourist pressure and cultural commercialization as challenges (Agustiani et al., 2025).

This suggests that the documentary representation of competitiveness is closer to a value-maintenance process than to a simple growth trajectory. A destination may become more attractive and economically active while simultaneously experiencing pressures on its cultural and environmental resources. Therefore, the competitiveness of Sade is represented through the capacity to sustain the relationship between tourism activity and the cultural-social system that makes the destination distinctive.

This finding extends the conventional understanding of destination competitiveness. Recent research emphasizes that competitiveness is dynamic and that the attributes through which destinations are evaluated can change over time rather than remaining fixed (Chen et al., 2025). Similarly, research focusing on residents argues that local communities are primary stakeholders because they directly experience tourism's consequences and contribute to destination identity (Kovačić et al., 2024).

For Desa Sade, therefore, tourism growth should be interpreted as an enabling condition, not an independent indicator of sustainable competitiveness. Growth becomes meaningful when it contributes to local livelihoods, supports cultural continuity, strengthens community participation, maintains environmental conditions, and is accompanied by effective governance.

This interpretation is also supported by recent Indonesian policy-oriented evidence. In 2025, an official government account of Desa Sade emphasized both cultural preservation and community-based economic development, including local weaving and other cultural products as tourism assets (Sekretariat Wakil Presiden, 2025). The coexistence of cultural preservation and economic development in this representation reinforces the central proposition of the present study: the competitiveness of Sade lies in the ability to create tourism value without disconnecting tourism development from the community and cultural resources that generate that value.

4.3 Five Dimensions of Sustainable Destination Competitiveness

4.3.1 Economic Dimension: Tourism Value Must Be Retained Locally

The economic dimension represents the most direct connection between tourism development and destination competitiveness. Documentary evidence identifies local income, employment, handicrafts, weaving, local businesses, and tourism-related economic opportunities as important outcomes associated with tourism development in Desa Sade.

Nopriansyah et al. (2023) specifically document economic effects associated with tourism development in Sade, including increased income, employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and opportunities for local businesses. The documentary evidence concerning Sade's weaving industry also positions traditional textile production as both a cultural practice and an economic activity. Thus, tourism does not simply create value through visitor expenditure; it can create value through the commercialization of locally embedded cultural products.

However, the evidence also indicates that economic competitiveness should not be equated with aggregate tourism revenue. The more relevant question is how much tourism value is retained within the local community and whether tourism contributes to sustainable livelihoods.

This distinction is important because destination competitiveness research increasingly emphasizes the distributional dimension of tourism. A destination may generate substantial economic activity while producing limited benefits for residents if value is captured outside the destination. The Indonesian sustainable tourism literature similarly emphasizes that sustainable destinations should account for current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts and the needs of local communities (Lesmana et al., 2022).

The documentary evidence therefore suggests that economic competitiveness in Sade is strongest when tourism stimulates locally retained value, particularly through small businesses, handicrafts, weaving, local entrepreneurship, and community-based tourism activities.

At the same time, the evidence points toward an important qualification. Economic activities linked to cultural tourism can strengthen the viability of cultural practices, but they can also increase pressure to adapt cultural products and practices to visitor demand. Economic development and cultural preservation are therefore not necessarily automatically complementary. Their relationship depends on how tourism value is organized and governed.

The finding implies that economic strategies for Sade should focus not only on increasing visitor expenditure but also on strengthening local entrepreneurship, improving the value captured by community-based enterprises, increasing product differentiation based on authentic cultural resources, and developing tourism products that create recurring local income without excessive pressure on cultural assets.

4.3.2 Social Dimension: Participation Is a Competitiveness Capability

The social dimension is strongly represented in the documentary evidence through community participation, collective action, local involvement, and community capacity.

The evidence indicates that the community is not merely a passive recipient of tourism benefits. Residents can function as cultural custodians, tourism producers, artisans, entrepreneurs, guides, and participants in destination management. This corresponds with the community-based

tourism literature, which emphasizes local participation as a fundamental condition of sustainable tourism development.

However, the documentary evidence also reveals a more complex picture. Recent research specifically examining collective action in Sade found that residents generally recognize tourism as beneficial to the community, but participation does not always translate into coordinated collective action. Material incentives are important motivations, while communal relationships and cultural preservation also provide incentives. At the same time, passive participation, limited awareness of innovation, and weak formal organizational structures can constrain collective involvement (Latifah et al., 2026).

This is an important finding for the present study because it distinguishes community presence from community participation. A destination may have a strong local community and extensive cultural involvement while still facing institutional limitations in coordinating collective action.

The implication is that community participation should be understood as a destination capability rather than simply as a social outcome. A competitive cultural destination requires the capacity of local actors to organize, coordinate, learn, adapt, and participate in decisions concerning tourism development.

This finding is consistent with recent destination competitiveness research emphasizing that residents should be incorporated into competitiveness analysis because their well-being, perceptions, and participation affect the long-term sustainability of destinations (Kovačić et al., 2024).

The evidence therefore suggests that strengthening Sade's competitiveness requires moving from participation that is primarily activity-based toward participation that also includes decision-making, organizational capacity, innovation, and collective destination management.

4.3.3 Cultural Dimension: Authenticity Is Both an Asset and a Responsibility

The cultural dimension represents one of the most distinctive characteristics of Desa Sade's destination competitiveness. Unlike destinations whose attractiveness can be substantially reproduced through physical infrastructure, cultural destinations depend on resources that are embedded in local history, identity, knowledge, practices, and community life. The documentary evidence identifies Sasak identity, traditional houses, weaving, local wisdom, cultural practices, and inherited traditions as important components of the tourism value proposition of Desa Sade.

The cultural resources of Sade therefore perform a dual function. On the one hand, they constitute destination resources that differentiate Sade from other tourism destinations. Traditional architecture, weaving, local knowledge, and cultural practices contribute to the authenticity and distinctiveness experienced by visitors. On the other hand, these resources are not merely tourism commodities because they remain connected to the everyday identity and social life of the Sasak community. Consequently, their continued existence depends on cultural transmission and community ownership rather than solely on tourism demand.

Recent documentary evidence provides further support for this interpretation. Saragi et al. (2025), for example, identify local wisdom, handicrafts, rituals, and performing arts as important components in the preservation and development of cultural tourism in Sade. Their study also positions the traditional Bale Tani house as both an architectural attraction and an embodiment of

local philosophical values. Similarly, research on an educational tourism model for Sade proposes the integration of culture, history, and local wisdom into tourism experiences while maintaining community participation and cultural preservation (Saputra & Pertiwi, 2025).

These findings reinforce the argument that cultural authenticity should not be understood merely as an attraction attribute. It is simultaneously a destination resource and a responsibility of destination governance. If cultural practices are transformed exclusively according to visitor preferences, their symbolic and social meanings may gradually become detached from the community that sustains them. Conversely, when tourism creates incentives for cultural transmission, artisan activities, traditional architecture, and intergenerational learning, tourism may contribute to the continuity of cultural resources.

This relationship is consistent with broader recent scholarship on cultural sustainability. Zhang et al., (2025) argue that cultural sustainability in hospitality and tourism is shaped by interacting factors at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels, indicating that cultural sustainability cannot be reduced to the preservation of individual cultural artifacts. Instead, it involves the broader social and institutional conditions through which culture is maintained and reproduced.

For Desa Sade, this distinction is important because commercialization does not automatically constitute cultural degradation. Commercialization can provide income for artisans and create incentives for maintaining cultural practices. The potential problem emerges when market demand becomes the dominant mechanism determining which cultural elements are maintained, modified, or presented to visitors. Thus, the documentary evidence suggests that sustainable cultural competitiveness requires a balance between economic use, cultural meaning, community ownership, and intergenerational continuity.

The cultural dimension therefore contributes to destination competitiveness in two interconnected ways. First, it provides differentiation that is difficult for competing destinations to imitate. Second, it creates a responsibility to maintain the social and cultural conditions that reproduce this differentiation over time. Cultural competitiveness is consequently not simply the ability to display culture to visitors, but the ability to sustain a living cultural system while allowing tourism to generate legitimate economic and experiential value.

4.3.4 Environmental Dimension: Sustainability as a Boundary Condition

The environmental dimension appears less prominently than the cultural and economic dimensions in the documentary evidence, but it represents an important boundary condition for the long-term competitiveness of Desa Sade. Tourism activity requires the continued availability of a clean, functional, and attractive destination environment. Consequently, environmental sustainability should not be regarded as an additional component that is considered only after tourism development has occurred.

The documentary evidence identifies environmental awareness, cleanliness, resource management, and tourism pressure as relevant concerns in the development of Sade. Agustiani et al. (2025), for example, identify sustainable environmental management as one of the elements of sustainable tourism in Sade while simultaneously identifying increasing tourist pressure as a continuing challenge.

This finding is important because environmental pressure may not immediately appear in conventional measures of tourism competitiveness. A destination can experience increasing visitation and economic activity while gradually experiencing deterioration in environmental quality. Such deterioration may eventually affect visitor experience, community well-being, and the attractiveness of the destination itself.

The relationship between tourism and environmental sustainability is particularly relevant for cultural villages because the tourism environment is not limited to natural ecosystems. The physical settlement, traditional houses, public spaces, cleanliness, waste management, and everyday community environment all contribute to the destination experience. Environmental management therefore intersects with cultural preservation and community welfare.

The documentary evidence also suggests that local cultural practices can provide opportunities for connecting cultural and environmental sustainability. Recent research on the Sasak Sade *Melulur* tradition, for example, examines the relationship between local ecological knowledge, cultural practice, and sustainable tourism. Although this evidence should be interpreted as contextual rather than as a direct measure of destination competitiveness, it illustrates how local cultural knowledge can contain environmental and social functions alongside its symbolic meaning (Mujiandi et al., 2025).

The environmental dimension therefore suggests that sustainable destination competitiveness requires the destination to maintain the physical and ecological conditions that support both tourism and community life. This is consistent with recent research arguing that tourism resilience requires simultaneous attention to economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions. Tourism can contribute to community resilience, but overtourism, environmental degradation, and cultural commodification can undermine that resilience when tourism development is insufficiently managed (Khater & Faik, 2025).

For Desa Sade, environmental sustainability can consequently be interpreted as a boundary condition of competitiveness. Economic and visitor growth cannot be sustained indefinitely if the physical and environmental conditions supporting the destination deteriorate. Environmental management therefore needs to be incorporated into tourism planning, visitor management, cleanliness systems, resource use, and community-based destination management rather than treated as a separate environmental program.

4.3.5 Governance Dimension: Competitiveness Depends on Coordination

The governance dimension emerges as the integrating mechanism connecting the other dimensions of sustainable destination competitiveness. Economic benefits, community participation, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability require coordination among actors because no single stakeholder possesses all the resources, authority, knowledge, or capabilities required to manage the destination.

The documentary evidence represents government actors, community organizations, tourism managers, local businesses, cultural practitioners, and residents as actors with different but interconnected roles. This supports the conceptual proposition that destination competitiveness is not produced by an individual organization but through relationships among stakeholders.

The importance of institutional coordination becomes particularly visible when the evidence on community participation is examined alongside the evidence on tourism development. Latifah et al. (2026) found that residents of Sade recognize tourism benefits, but participation does not necessarily translate into coordinated collective action. Their findings identify passive participation, limited awareness of innovation, and weak formal organizational structures as constraints on collective involvement.

This distinction is important for understanding governance. Participation alone does not guarantee governance capacity. A destination may involve local residents in tourism activities while still lacking institutional mechanisms for collective planning, coordination, innovation, conflict management, and decision-making.

Recent research on Indonesian tourism villages supports this interpretation. Widagdo et al. (2025) demonstrate that strengthening tourism village governance requires institutional capacity, human-resource development, and collaboration among communities, tourism-awareness groups, village government, and other partners (Widagdo et al., 2025). Similarly, research on tourism village sustainability in South Sumatra identifies village governance, social conditions, infrastructure, and security as factors associated with tourism-village sustainability (Abduh Abduh & Destiny Sinaga, 2026).

The governance dimension is therefore broader than the existence of government involvement. It concerns the capacity of destination institutions to coordinate different interests and translate participation into collective action. This includes mechanisms for planning, communication, monitoring, conflict management, cultural protection, environmental management, and distribution of tourism benefits.

This interpretation is also supported by recent research on citizen participation in destination governance. Jánová et al. (2025), through a systematic review, emphasize that participation is a foundational component of destination governance but that actual participation may remain limited or symbolic if institutional arrangements do not provide meaningful opportunities for influence.

Accordingly, governance represents the mechanism through which the other four dimensions can either reinforce or undermine one another. Effective governance can connect local economic development with cultural preservation, convert community participation into collective capacity, and integrate environmental considerations into tourism planning. Weak coordination, by contrast, may allow the dimensions to develop independently and potentially generate competing outcomes.

The evidence therefore suggests that sustainable competitiveness in Desa Sade should not be understood merely as possessing valuable cultural resources or having a participating community. It also depends on the destination's capacity to organize, coordinate, negotiate, and institutionalize collective responses to tourism development.

4.4 Stakeholder Convergence and Divergence

RQ3. Where do stakeholder perspectives converge or diverge regarding sustainable tourism development in Desa Sade?

The cross-stakeholder documentary comparison identifies both convergence and divergence in the ways sustainable tourism development is represented. Because this study relies on documentary evidence rather than direct interviews, these patterns should not be interpreted as observed

interpersonal disagreements among stakeholders. Instead, convergence and divergence refer to recurring similarities and differences in stakeholder interests, priorities, concerns, and development orientations represented across the documentary corpus.

Table 2. Stakeholder Convergence and Divergence Represented in Documentary Evidence

Issue	Convergence represented in documents	Divergence/tension represented in documents	Implication for competitiveness
Tourism development	Tourism provides economic and development opportunities	Growth may increase tourism pressure	Growth needs to be managed rather than pursued independently
Local economy	Tourism should generate local economic benefits	Distribution and retention of benefits may differ	Local value capture becomes important
Community participation	Community involvement is important	Participation may remain passive or fragmented	Participation needs to become collective capacity
Cultural heritage	Sasak culture is central to destination identity	Commercialization may alter cultural meaning	Authenticity requires active stewardship
Environmental sustainability	Environmental quality supports destination continuity	Increasing tourism can generate pressure	Environmental management is a competitiveness boundary
Innovation	Innovation can improve tourism products and management	Excessive adaptation may challenge cultural continuity	Innovation should remain compatible with local identity
Governance	Coordination among stakeholders is necessary	Stakeholder roles and priorities may differ	Collaborative governance becomes an integrating mechanism
Tourism experience	Cultural resources contribute to visitor experience	Visitor expectations may influence cultural presentation	Experience development should respect community values

The strongest area of convergence concerns the recognition of tourism as an important economic opportunity. The documentary evidence consistently represents tourism as capable of generating income, employment, local business opportunities, and broader economic activity. This convergence is also visible in recent official documentation describing community-based tourism and local cultural products as economic resources in Sade (Sekretariat Wakil Presiden, 2025).

A second area of convergence concerns the importance of cultural identity. Traditional architecture, weaving, Sasak customs, local knowledge, and cultural practices repeatedly appear as important destination resources. This suggests that the cultural dimension is not peripheral to tourism competitiveness in Sade; it constitutes part of the destination's fundamental value proposition.

A third area of convergence concerns community involvement. Different documentary sources recognize the importance of residents, artisans, local businesses, and community organizations in sustaining tourism. However, the evidence simultaneously reveals a distinction between being involved in tourism activities and possessing collective capacity to influence destination development.

The main divergence therefore appears not as a direct disagreement over whether tourism is valuable, but in the potential tension between different ways of realizing tourism value. Tourism growth may be viewed as beneficial because it creates economic opportunities, while the same growth may create cultural, environmental, or social pressures. Cultural commercialization may generate income for local producers while simultaneously raising concerns about cultural meaning and authenticity. Infrastructure and product innovation may improve visitor experience while potentially altering the physical or social character of the destination.

The documentary evidence therefore suggests that divergence is largely a question of priority, distribution, and management, rather than a fundamental opposition to tourism itself.

This interpretation is consistent with recent research demonstrating that sustainability initiatives are more complex when multiple community stakeholders are considered simultaneously. Community stakeholders may recognize both positive and negative consequences of tourism and may differ in how they evaluate sustainability initiatives (Andereck et al., 2025).

The convergence-divergence pattern is consequently important for understanding destination competitiveness. If stakeholders share broad objectives but lack mechanisms for coordination, convergence may remain rhetorical rather than operational. Conversely, differences in interests do not necessarily undermine competitiveness if governance mechanisms enable negotiation and collective decision-making.

4.5 From Convergence and Divergence to Sustainable Destination Competitiveness

The combined findings suggest that sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade is best understood as a relational and governance-based capability rather than a static destination attribute.

The five dimensions identified in this study are interconnected. Economic activity provides incentives for tourism development and cultural production. Social participation provides local legitimacy and human capacity. Cultural resources provide differentiation and destination identity. Environmental sustainability provides the physical conditions required for continued tourism and

community life. Governance connects these dimensions by coordinating actors and managing potential trade-offs.

The key implication is that tourism growth does not automatically produce sustainable competitiveness. Rather, growth creates a context in which destination stakeholders determine how tourism value should be created, distributed, protected, and governed.

This interpretation extends the conventional destination competitiveness perspective in two ways. First, competitiveness is understood as dynamic rather than static. Recent research demonstrates that the attributes through which destinations are evaluated can change over time as tourist preferences and destination conditions evolve (Chen et al., 2025). Second, competitiveness is understood as socially embedded because the sustainability of destination resources depends partly on residents, businesses, governments, and other stakeholders.

Recent research on tourism competitiveness and social progress further demonstrates that social dimensions have become an important part of the competitiveness discussion, rather than being merely secondary consequences of tourism development (Barbosa et al., 2024).

The findings therefore suggest a conceptual refinement:

Sustainable destination competitiveness is the capacity of a destination to create and retain tourism value while maintaining the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance conditions necessary for long-term destination viability.

This definition differs from a narrow growth-oriented interpretation because it emphasizes capacity, continuity, and coordination. A destination can experience tourism growth without necessarily strengthening its long-term competitiveness if the growth weakens the resources and relationships on which tourism depends.

4.6 Strategic Implications for Desa Sade

RQ4. What strategies for strengthening the sustainable competitiveness of Desa Sade are indicated across the documentary evidence?

The documentary synthesis identifies five strategic directions.

4.6.1 Strengthening Local Economic Value Creation

The first strategy is to strengthen the proportion of tourism value that remains within the local community. The documentary evidence indicates that weaving, handicrafts, local businesses, guiding, cultural experiences, and other community-based activities can connect tourism demand with local livelihoods.

The objective should therefore extend beyond increasing visitor spending toward strengthening local value capture. This may include improving product differentiation, strengthening local entrepreneurship, expanding direct market access, developing higher-value cultural products, and creating complementary tourism experiences that generate recurring income.

Recent research on community-based tourism in Indonesia similarly demonstrates the relevance of local culture, community resources, and tourism infrastructure to tourism sustainability (Huruta et al., 2024).

For Sade, this means that economic competitiveness should be linked explicitly to community ownership and local enterprise capacity.

4.6.2 Moving from Participation to Collective Capacity

The second strategy is to move beyond activity-based participation toward stronger collective capacity.

The findings indicate that residents may participate in tourism while still facing limitations in formal organization, innovation capacity, and collective decision-making. Consequently, capacity building should encompass organizational development, tourism management, digital skills, product innovation, financial management, cultural interpretation, and participatory planning.

The recent study of Sade by Latifah et al. (2026) provides direct support for this strategic direction by identifying passive participation, limited innovation awareness, and weak formal organizational structures as barriers to collective action.

This implies that strengthening competitiveness requires not simply asking whether the community participates, but asking:

Can the community organize, coordinate, learn, innovate, negotiate, and collectively manage tourism?

That distinction represents an important theoretical implication of the present study.

4.6.3 Protecting Cultural Authenticity while Developing Tourism Products

The third strategy concerns cultural stewardship. Tourism products based on Sasak culture should be developed in ways that maintain cultural meaning and community ownership. Educational tourism provides one potential direction because it can transform cultural resources into visitor learning experiences rather than relying exclusively on passive sightseeing.

Andi Saputra & Yuliana Pertiwi (2025), for example, propose an educational tourism model for Sade that combines culture, history, and local wisdom while using a participatory approach involving the community, government, and other stakeholders.

Such an approach may allow Sade to diversify its tourism experience without requiring continuous increases in visitor volume. The competitiveness strategy would therefore shift from more visitors toward more meaningful and higher-value experiences.

Cultural preservation should consequently be incorporated into product development, visitor interpretation, artisan support, architectural conservation, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

4.6.4 Integrating Environmental Management with Cultural Tourism

The fourth strategy is to integrate environmental management directly into cultural tourism development.

Environmental sustainability should include cleanliness, waste management, resource efficiency, visitor pressure management, and maintenance of the physical environment in which local cultural practices occur.

The key principle is that environmental management should not be treated as an external environmental program. Instead, it should become part of the destination's tourism operating system.

This approach is consistent with recent research showing that sustainable tourism requires simultaneous consideration of economic, environmental, social, and cultural resilience (Khater & Faik, 2025).

For Desa Sade, environmental management is therefore relevant not only to ecological sustainability but also to visitor experience, community quality of life, and the preservation of the cultural landscape.

4.6.5 Strengthening Collaborative Destination Governance

The fifth strategy is to strengthen collaborative destination governance. The documentary evidence indicates that sustainable competitiveness requires coordination between government, local communities, tourism businesses, cultural practitioners, tourism managers, and local organizations. Governance should therefore provide mechanisms for regular communication, joint planning, responsibility allocation, monitoring, and conflict resolution.

Recent Indonesian research on tourism village governance demonstrates the importance of institutional capacity and collaboration among community groups, tourism-awareness organizations, village government, and external partners (Widagdo et al., 2025).

Similarly, recent research on tourism villages in Yogyakarta identifies governance, strategic planning, operational systems, collaboration, and institutional arrangements as interconnected components of tourism-village sustainability (Hutomo et al., 2026).

For Sade, collaborative governance is particularly important because cultural tourism involves resources that belong simultaneously to the economic, social, cultural, and institutional domains. Governance must therefore coordinate rather than isolate these interests.

4.7 Discussion: Reframing Competitiveness Beyond Tourism Growth

The findings contribute to the destination competitiveness literature by shifting analytical attention from destination performance toward destination capacity.

Traditional tourism performance indicators such as visitor arrivals, tourism expenditure, occupancy, and employment remain relevant because they provide evidence of tourism activity. However, the documentary analysis demonstrates that these indicators cannot by themselves explain whether tourism development is strengthening or weakening the underlying resources of Desa Sade.

The case therefore illustrates a distinction between tourism growth and sustainable destination competitiveness.

Tourism growth concerns the expansion of tourism activity. Sustainable destination competitiveness concerns the capacity to manage that activity in ways that maintain destination value over time.

This distinction is theoretically relevant because competitiveness is often discussed in relation to resources, attractiveness, management, infrastructure, and market performance. The findings from Sade indicate that these components need to be considered together with the social and cultural systems that sustain the destination.

The first theoretical contribution is therefore the identification of local value retention as an important economic dimension of sustainable competitiveness. Economic competitiveness is not simply the amount of tourism value generated but also the extent to which this value supports local livelihoods, enterprises, and cultural producers.

The second contribution concerns community participation as a capability. The documentary evidence demonstrates that community presence and community participation should not be treated as equivalent. Sustainable competitiveness requires organizational and institutional capacity that allows residents to move from participation in tourism activities toward participation in destination decision-making.

The third contribution concerns culture as both competitive resource and sustainability responsibility. Cultural resources provide differentiation, but their competitive value depends on continued cultural vitality. This means that cultural competitiveness cannot be separated from cultural stewardship.

The fourth contribution concerns the role of environmental sustainability as a boundary condition. Tourism growth can only remain competitive over the long term if the physical and environmental conditions supporting the destination are maintained.

The fifth contribution concerns governance as the integrating mechanism. Economic, social, cultural, and environmental objectives may sometimes reinforce one another, but they can also create tensions. Governance is therefore necessary to coordinate priorities, negotiate trade-offs, and transform stakeholder perspectives into collective action.

Recent research on cultural tourism similarly emphasizes the importance of stakeholder co-creation, innovation, sustainability, and resilience rather than treating destination development as a one-directional process (Mandić et al., 2024).

The findings also provide a methodological contribution. Because this study uses documentary evidence, it demonstrates that stakeholder perspectives can be analyzed without claiming direct access to stakeholder experiences. This distinction is important. The study does not claim that all residents, government actors, businesses, or cultural practitioners hold identical views. Instead, it identifies how their interests and perspectives are represented across documentary sources.

This documentary perspective is particularly useful when the research objective is to synthesize fragmented evidence across multiple studies and institutional documents. At the same time, it creates an important limitation: documentary representations are not equivalent to direct stakeholder voices. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as an analytical synthesis of documented perspectives rather than a population-level assessment of stakeholder attitudes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade, Lombok, through a qualitative documentary case study that synthesized documented stakeholder perspectives across economic, social, cultural, environmental, and governance dimensions. Rather than treating tourism growth as an independent measure of competitiveness, the study examined how tourism development is represented in relation to the long-term resources and capabilities of the destination.

The findings demonstrate that tourism growth should be interpreted as a context for destination competitiveness rather than its final definition. Tourism generates important opportunities

for income, employment, local businesses, handicrafts, and cultural products. However, these benefits do not automatically translate into sustainable competitiveness. Their contribution depends on how tourism value is distributed and whether tourism development strengthens or weakens the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and institutional foundations of the destination.

Five interconnected dimensions emerged from the documentary analysis. The economic dimension emphasizes locally retained value and sustainable livelihoods. The social dimension demonstrates that community participation needs to develop into collective capacity. The cultural dimension positions Sasak identity, traditional architecture, weaving, and local knowledge as both competitive resources and preservation responsibilities. The environmental dimension establishes environmental quality and resource management as boundary conditions for long-term destination viability. Finally, the governance dimension provides the institutional mechanism for coordinating these different interests.

The analysis of stakeholder convergence and divergence further demonstrates that sustainable tourism development does not require all stakeholders to hold identical interests. Instead, competitiveness can emerge when differences in priorities are managed through coordination, participation, and collective decision-making. The major challenge for Desa Sade is therefore not necessarily the absence of stakeholder interest in tourism, but the capacity to translate shared recognition of tourism's value into coordinated and sustainable action.

Theoretically, the study contributes to destination competitiveness research by conceptualizing sustainable destination competitiveness as a dynamic, multidimensional, and governance-dependent capability. This perspective extends growth-oriented interpretations by emphasizing the capacity to create tourism value while maintaining the resources and relationships required for long-term destination sustainability.

Practically, the findings indicate five strategic priorities for Desa Sade: strengthening local economic value creation, developing community collective capacity, protecting cultural authenticity, integrating environmental management into tourism operations, and strengthening collaborative destination governance. These priorities suggest that future destination development should not rely exclusively on increasing visitor volume. Greater attention should also be given to the quality, distribution, cultural compatibility, environmental consequences, and governance of tourism growth.

The study has several limitations. First, the research relies exclusively on documentary evidence and therefore does not provide direct interviews or survey-based measurements of current stakeholder perceptions. Second, the documentary corpus reflects the availability and characteristics of existing publications and institutional sources, meaning that some stakeholder perspectives may be more visible than others. Third, the qualitative interpretation of convergence and divergence represents patterns across documentary sources rather than statistically generalizable differences among stakeholder populations.

Future research could address these limitations by combining documentary analysis with primary stakeholder interviews, participatory observation, or mixed-method approaches. Such research could examine whether the patterns identified in the documentary evidence correspond with the current perspectives of residents, government actors, tourism businesses, cultural practitioners, and visitors. Longitudinal research could also investigate whether changes in tourism intensity,

digitalization, infrastructure, and destination governance alter the relationship between tourism growth and sustainable destination competitiveness in Desa Sade.

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7. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The documentary evidence analyzed in this study was obtained from publicly accessible academic publications, institutional documents, and other publicly available documentary sources. The documentary corpus and analytical matrix developed during the study may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to the availability and access conditions of the original sources.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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