Research Article

Informants' Perceptions of Brand Awareness in Supporting the Sustainability of Balkondes in the Borobudur National Tourism Strategic Area

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Abstract

This study examines informants' perceptions of brand awareness in supporting the sustainability of the Village Economic Centers (Balkondes) in the Borobudur area, Magelang Regency. Balkondes were established by the government and state-owned enterprises to support the Borobudur National Tourism Strategic Area (KSPN) as an alternative tourist attraction, cultural activity center, and lodging place for tourists. However, of the 20 Balkondes built, 6 are stagnating, physically still standing but no longer carrying out daily operational activities. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, through field observations at eight Balkondes, in-depth interviews with 14 informants selected by purposive sampling (Balkondes managers, surrounding residents, visitors, and tourism actors and observers), and direct observation of social media content and reviews related to Balkondes. The results show that informants associate the sustainability of Balkondes with six main factors related to the theory of brand awareness, namely the quality of human resources of the managers, uniqueness and characteristics, the role of influencers, social media management, promotional events, and location access. According to the informants, Balkondes with competent managers, unique tourism products, active promotion, and easy access are more likely to maintain their economic activities and attract tourist visits, while those that lack these factors are at risk of stagnation. It can be concluded that the sustainability of Balkondes depends on competent human resources, product differentiation, digital promotion, collaboration with local communities, promotional events, and good accessibility in strengthening brand awareness among tourists.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Balkondes, Tourism, Borobudur, Perceptions

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1. Introduction

Tourism has become one of the major sectors driving economic growth worldwide. The sector has expanded considerably due to technological advances, improved transportation, and changing lifestyles in which people increasingly prioritize experiences. Tourism offers more than entertainment; it also contributes to cultural preservation, job creation, and regional economic growth. Many countries continue to develop their tourist destinations to compete in attracting domestic and international visitors. In addition, tourism can directly and indirectly affect the economy by stimulating infrastructure investment, encouraging the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and fostering innovation across related industries. Advances in digital technology, easier transportation, and changing preferences for travel experiences have also intensified competition among destinations (Jokom et al., 2025). Under these conditions, the success of a destination depends on more than its physical attractions and available facilities: it also depends on the ability to establish an identity that tourists can easily recognize and remember. Destination management therefore requires marketing strategies that connect local potential with market needs and perceptions (Sustacha et al., 2023).

Tourism is an important contributor to Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP). According to

Badan Pusat Statistik (2024), international tourist arrivals in Indonesia reached 11.68 million in 2023, an increase of 98.30% compared with approximately 5.89 million visits in 2022. Central Java has considerable tourism potential, particularly Magelang Regency, home to Borobudur Temple. Borobudur Temple has been designated a Super Priority Destination by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. It is also part of the National Tourism Strategic Area (KSPN) program (Pramisti et al., 2026). According to data from the Magelang Regency Department of Tourism, Youth, and Sports, there were 97 natural tourist attractions in 2023, up from 89 in the previous year (Dinas Pariwisata, Kepemudaan dan Olahraga Kabupaten Magelang, n.d.). This increase indicates strong momentum for local tourism development and support for various government programs (Achsa et al., 2022).

The government and state-owned enterprises initiated an economic development program in the Borobudur area through Village Economic Centers (Balai Ekonomi Desa, or Balkondes) to support the Borobudur KSPN. Balkondes were established to support a community-based tourism ecosystem and function as alternative tourist attractions, cultural activity centers, and accommodation for visitors (Novitaningtyas et al., 2022). They were expected to extend tourists' length of stay in the Borobudur area. However, many Balkondes have failed to achieve their objectives, creating a number of problems. Based on the authors' field observations and data collection, six of the 20 Balkondes established are in a state of stagnation: their physical structures, such as pavilions and other buildings, remain standing, but their day-to-day operations have ceased. This situation is partly attributed to limited human resource capacity and insufficient support from the government and private sector.

From another perspective, the low sustainability of Balkondes may be caused by the limited knowledge of local communities and tourists about the concept and existence of these facilities (Susanto et al., 2020). The extent to which customers identify, remember, and consider a brand when making decisions is referred to as brand knowledge (Keller, 2003). According to Keller (2003), the four main indicators of brand knowledge are recall (the ability to name a brand spontaneously), recognition (the ability to identify a brand when seeing or hearing it), purchase consideration (considering a brand when making a travel decision), and consumption (the actual use of or access to the brand). In the context of Balkondes, low levels of recall and recognition mean that they are less familiar to tourists (Hidayah & Agustinah, 2019). Consequently, tourists rarely consider Balkondes as their primary choice when selecting a destination, resulting in low consumption of the services offered. Therefore, strengthening brand awareness through innovative marketing strategies, social media campaigns, appealing visual promotions, and collaboration with local communities is important to make Balkondes more competitive and attractive as leading tourist destinations (Hardiyanti & Purnaweni, 2022).

In this study, sustainability is understood operationally, not merely as the physical existence of buildings, but as the continuity of Balkondes activities and operations in fulfilling their tourism and village economic functions. Meanwhile, brand awareness refers to brand recognition and recall, rather than the entirety of brand knowledge or brand image.

In light of this distinction, this study adopts a qualitative approach to explore the role of brand awareness in the context of Balkondes sustainability. This approach enables the researchers to understand management experiences, perspectives, and conditions based on data obtained from informants and other relevant research sources. The study does not seek to statistically test a causal effect of brand awareness on Balkondes sustainability; rather, it aims to understand how brand recognition is interpreted in destination management and how this aspect relates to challenges in maintaining operational continuity.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer three main questions. First, how is Balkondes brand awareness understood and developed in the context of community-based tourism destination management in the Borobudur area? Second, what factors are associated with efforts by Balkondes to maintain their sustainability as part of tourism development and the village economy? Third, how can the role of brand-recognition strategies in supporting the continuity of Balkondes be understood from the informants' perspectives?

Based on these issues, this study is relevant to exploring informants' perceptions of the role of brand awareness in the sustainability of Balkondes in the Borobudur area. It is expected to offer new insights into the importance of brand awareness in community-based tourism and to help the government,

state-owned enterprises, and local managers formulate effective policies and strategies. It also offers practical recommendations for managing Balkondes in line with their original purpose of driving village economic activity and supporting tourism in the Borobudur area, and for helping them respond better to market needs and attract more visitors. In this way, Balkondes can benefit local communities while strengthening the Borobudur area as one of Indonesia's leading tourist destinations.

The novelty of this study lies in combining the concepts of destination brand awareness and community-based tourism to understand the sustainability of Balkondes. Unlike studies that focus solely on marketing, community participation, or business sustainability, this study examines the relationship between how tourists recognize and remember a destination, how its identity is created through the involvement of surrounding communities, and how these processes relate to the dynamics of sustainable Balkondes management. Through a qualitative case study approach, this research is expected to generate an understanding of the role of brand awareness in the development of community-based tourism villages in the Borobudur area.

1.1. Research Gap

Promotion through various media and the involvement of multiple stakeholders are important elements in introducing tourist destinations and increasing visitor numbers. However, the success of promoting a major tourist destination is determined not only by short-term promotional activities, but also by how the destination builds brand awareness and sustains its operations. The development of digital media offers new opportunities for promotion, brand recognition, and visit consideration, all of which are relevant to the sustainability of individual Balkondes. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining how brand awareness is developed through social media management, destination uniqueness, human resource quality, and accessibility, and how these factors relate to Balkondes sustainability. The study is expected to provide an understanding of the dynamics of brand-awareness formation in community-based tourist destinations amid the dominance of major tourism attractions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness relates to the strength of a brand in consumers' minds and can be measured by consumers' ability to identify the brand under various conditions (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Kotler and Armstrong (2012) state that companies must manage their product brands effectively. Marketers of major brands often spend substantial amounts on advertising to create brand awareness and brand loyalty. Advertising campaigns can help establish brand recognition, brand knowledge, and brand preference. In practice, however, brands are not managed through advertising alone, but through customers' brand experiences (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

Today, customers become familiar with brands through various media, including advertising, as well as through personal experiences with brands, word of mouth, company webpages, and many other channels. The use of social media enables companies to increase brand awareness. Social media enhances a brand's appeal and strengthens consumers' sense of closeness to it. Consequently, many companies now implement strategies to influence the level of consumer-to-consumer brand communication and engagement. In this way, they create brand appeal and consumers' desire to purchase the product. Social media also enables companies to gather consumers' opinions about the products or services they offer, ranging from consumer preferences to product strengths and weaknesses (Fitrianna & Aurinawati, 2020).

2.2. Destination Brand Awareness

Destination brand awareness refers to tourists' awareness of a destination brand, reflected in their ability to recognize (brand recognition) or recall (brand recall) the destination. In tourism marketing, such awareness helps explain whether a destination is present in potential tourists' minds when they search for and consider travel options. Studies of destination brand equity also identify brand awareness as an important dimension related to tourists' images of and evaluations of a destination (Konečnik & Gartner, 2007).

In research on Balkondes, this concept can be used to analyze how tourists become familiar with a particular Balkondes, what information they remember, and which channels introduce it to them. The analysis can be conducted through interviews with visitors and, where available, potential visitors, observations of social media content, and documentation of digital reviews. It is important to note that a high number of posts or social media followers does not automatically indicate high brand awareness. Evidence of tourists' recognition and recall must still be obtained from the research data.

2.3. Community-Based Tourism

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is an approach to tourism development that positions local communities as the primary actors in planning, managing, implementing, and evaluating tourism activities (Okazaki, 2008). This approach emerged in response to conventional tourism models, which often place greater emphasis on increasing tourist numbers and economic profit than on the distribution of benefits, community participation (Tosun, 2000), and the preservation of local resources. Research on community-based tourism also examines why such initiatives stagnate (Ahsani & Keban, 2025).

According to Murphy (1985/2013), tourism development needs to be understood in relation to the communities and environments in which tourism activities take place. This means that destination success is determined not only by its tourist attractions, but also by the management's ability to accommodate the needs, interests, and characteristics of the local community.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. A case study is appropriate for examining situations that are still ongoing and issues that continue to develop, particularly when theory is needed to guide the direction of the study (Creswell, 1998).

3.1. Research Sites

The study was conducted at eight Balkondes in the Borobudur area: five active Balkondes (Borobudur, Tuksongo, Wringinputih, Karanganyar, and Wanurejo) and three inactive Balkondes (Sakapitu, Majaksingi, and Giripurno). In this study, inactive status is understood to be equivalent to stagnation.

3.2. Informant Selection

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, namely, deliberate selection based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in the management or use of Balkondes. This technique is appropriate for qualitative research because informants are selected based on their ability to provide in-depth information relevant to the research questions. The informants comprised four groups, with the following criteria:

- **Balkondes managers:** directly involved in the management or operation of a Balkondes and knowledgeable about its promotional activities and operational conditions.
- **Local residents:** living near a Balkondes, familiar with its existence and activities, and willing to explain community participation and the benefits experienced by residents.
- **Visitors:** having personally visited the Balkondes under study and being able to explain their information sources, experiences, and reasons for visiting.
- **Tourism practitioners and observers:** operating tourism businesses around Balkondes or possessing knowledge of tourism development in the Borobudur area.

3.3. Research Period and Stages

The research was conducted over a three-month period, from April to July 2026.

The first stage involved field observations. At this stage, the researchers examined existing problems through interviews and direct observations. Interviews were conducted with Balkondes managers,

residents living near Balkondes, visitors, and tourism practitioners. The researchers also directly observed social media content and reviews relating to Balkondes. These interviews and observations were conducted to obtain data and information relevant to the study.

The next stage involved processing the data collected. This stage included data processing and validation of the information obtained. If the data were considered insufficient, further observations and data processing were carried out. The information was then analyzed in relation to relevant theories and previous research findings.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide presented in Appendix 1.

3.4. Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning emerging from interviews, observations, documentation, social media content, and visitor reviews of Balkondes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5. Data Validity

Data validity was assessed through source triangulation and methodological triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from different informant groups: Balkondes managers, local residents, visitors, and tourism practitioners and observers. This comparison aimed to identify similarities and differences in perspectives concerning Balkondes brand recognition, promotional strategies, community involvement, local economic benefits, and efforts to maintain destination sustainability. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing data from in-depth interviews, field observations, documentation, social media content, and visitor reviews on digital platforms.

3.6. Research Ethics

Before each interview, the researchers explained the purpose of the study to the informant, who then provided verbal consent to participate voluntarily (informed consent). The identities of informants in this manuscript are anonymized using codes.

3.7. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.

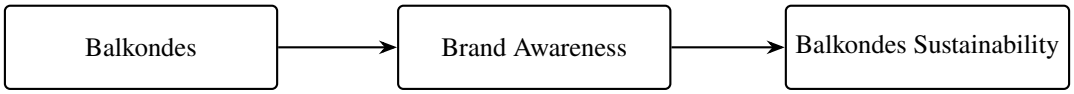


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the premise that the existence of Balkondes needs to be accompanied by strong brand awareness so that people not only know that they exist, but are also able to recognize and remember them. Brand recognition indicates whether people can identify a Balkondes when given a prompt, whereas brand recall indicates whether Balkondes come to mind spontaneously (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). This awareness can then be examined in relation to Balkondes sustainability, for example through public visibility, consideration of a visit, and the continuity of its activities.

4. Results

The research data were obtained through interviews and direct observations conducted by the research team with various involved parties. The informants were considered knowledgeable about the conditions of several Balkondes in Borobudur, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informants

Code	Informant category	Interview summary
T1	Tourism Practitioner	Limited use of social media to promote Balkondes; the Balkondes location is far from busy areas.
P1	Balkondes Manager	Managers' human resource competencies are inadequate; no one is assigned to manage social media promotion.
P2	Balkondes Manager	Limited supporting facilities and infrastructure at the Balkondes; promotion through social media.
P3	Balkondes Manager	No innovation to attract tourists; active on social media; an influencer once visited and made a video.
O1	Tourism Observer	The manager and village government care about the existence of Balkondes; intensive event promotion; active media management; cooperation with various institutions; featured in TikTok creators' content.
P4	Balkondes Manager	Narrow access road; no distinctive Balkondes features; managers lack the necessary competencies.
W1	Local Resident	Lack of community support; no distinctive features; inadequate social media management; managers lack the necessary competencies.
V1	Visitor	Unique Balkondes are more attractive; difficult road access is a factor in the decision to visit.
W2	Local Resident	Balkondes managers lack the necessary competencies; media management remains inadequate.
V2	Visitor	Searches for Balkondes information through social media; looks for Balkondes with distinctive features.
V3	Visitor	Difficult access to the site; large vehicles have difficulty entering; insufficient parking when events are held.
V4	Visitor	Narrow road to the site; attractive distinctive features; village atmosphere is still evident.
V5	Visitor	The location is too far away; learned about Balkondes because an event had been held there.
V6	Visitor	Balkondes is unattractive because it lacks distinctive features; service is not sufficiently prompt.

A tourism observer explained that Balkondes were originally established to support the government's Borobudur Priority Area program and to improve the livelihoods of communities around Borobudur Temple. As one of the priority tourism areas in Central Java, Borobudur was expected to attract more tourists and therefore required accommodation and supporting tourist attractions. The informant also expressed the hope that supporting tourist destinations would improve the welfare of communities throughout Borobudur, not only those living around the temple. Consequently, Balkondes were established in villages across Borobudur in collaboration with corporate partners through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.

Over time, however, many Balkondes in Borobudur have appeared to retain only their physical structures, with little or no daily economic activity. Based on interviews with Balkondes managers, these facilities were very busy when they first opened, and local residents competed to visit them. After several years, however, Balkondes began to be abandoned for various reasons, including damaged or narrow access roads, a lack of distinctive attractions, locations far from the center of Borobudur, and unprofessional human resource management.

5. Discussion

5.1. Quality of Human Resources Managing Balkondes

The quality of human resources managing Balkondes is a key driver of their activities. When managers have the competencies required to manage a Balkondes effectively, its operations are more likely to continue. This is illustrated by the management of Balkondes Wringinputih. With a well-functioning management team possessing managerial, financial management, service, and marketing competencies,

as well as specialized skills in areas such as cooking and hospitality, Balkondes Wringinputih remains operational today.

In contrast, many Balkondes have become dormant because their human resources are insufficiently trained and do not fully understand the objectives of Balkondes or their potential to drive the local economy. Managers merely wait for visitors to arrive instead of proactively attracting them through various promotional strategies. This situation is caused by the lack of competent personnel to manage Balkondes, both in developing social media content and in providing visitor services.

From a brand-awareness perspective, the quality and competence of human resources help shape a positive image among consumers. When staff members have competencies relevant to their business activities, consumers are more likely to remember the service they receive from the managers than the products offered by the Balkondes itself. It is therefore essential to develop the quality of management personnel in line with the needs of the business and the competencies they are expected to possess.

Brand recall relates to tourists' ability to remember Balkondes when searching for tourist destinations, which can be strengthened through quality service and positive experiences (Keller, 2003). Brand recognition is reflected in tourists' ability to identify Balkondes through their identity, reputation, and service characteristics. Purchase consideration indicates the extent to which Balkondes are included in tourists' considerations when choosing a destination, which may be influenced by the quality of promotional information, trust, and service image. Consumption relates to tourists' actual experiences of the products and services offered by Balkondes, which determine satisfaction and may encourage repeat visits and recommendations. These four indicators show that human resource competence matters for service delivery and for building brand awareness through effective marketing communication and memorable tourism experiences. Therefore, improving human resource capacity in operations, service, and digital marketing should be a priority so that brand awareness can develop sustainably and contribute to competitiveness and the sustainability of Balkondes.

5.2. Uniqueness and Distinctive Characteristics of Balkondes

The continuity of Balkondes depends on their uniqueness. Tourists tend to be more interested in Balkondes that offer distinctive attractions, such as Javanese buffet meals, panoramic views from mountain peaks overlooking the Menoreh Hills, or child-friendly village accommodation. One example is Balkondes Borobudur, which is known for its classical architecture and pleasant, green surroundings, both of which are major attractions for visitors. Visitors are more interested in unique experiences that are difficult to find elsewhere.

Uniqueness is another component of brand awareness. Tourists are more likely to remember and recommend places that offer different experiences. This is consistent with research showing that distinctive features of a place can make it more appealing to tourists (Aditya & Suyanto, 2021). For example, Balkondes Wringinputih draws on local wisdom to attract tourists and market the village's leading products.

Conversely, Balkondes without distinctive characteristics risk losing their competitiveness. Visitors favor other destinations because they offer new experiences or added value. This indicates that innovation and differentiation are essential to maintaining the relevance and appeal of Balkondes amid intense competition in the tourism industry (Verawati et al., 2021). Managers must therefore continue exploring local potential to create new offerings.

Uniqueness can strengthen the local economy. By offering distinctive experiences, Balkondes can attract domestic and international tourists and thereby increase local income. Such uniqueness can also reinforce local cultural identity, which is a core value of rural tourism. Balkondes managers should therefore focus on exploring the potential of each destination. According to Verawati et al. (2021), this strategy strengthens the image of national tourism, increases tourist appeal, and supports local economic sustainability.

Brand recall is reflected in tourists' ability to remember Balkondes when searching for destinations based on particular attractions, such as traditional Javanese food, views of the Menoreh Hills, or the atmosphere of village accommodation. Brand recognition is evident in tourists' ability to identify Balkondes

through their visual identity, building architecture, surroundings, and local characteristics that distinguish them from other destinations. Purchase consideration indicates the extent to which these unique features lead tourists to consider Balkondes when choosing a destination, while consumption relates to tourists' experiences of the products and services offered, such as local cuisine, accommodation, and tourism activities based on local wisdom. Uniqueness that is managed consistently can strengthen brand recall and recognition, increase the likelihood that Balkondes will be considered as tourist destinations, and create positive visitor experiences. Conversely, Balkondes without distinctive characteristics risk losing competitiveness because they are difficult to distinguish from other destinations. Therefore, innovation and differentiation based on local potential are important strategies for strengthening brand awareness, increasing visitor appeal, and supporting the sustainability of the local economy and Balkondes.

5.3. The Role of Influencers

In the interview data (Table 1), informant P3 (a manager) mentioned that an influencer had once visited and made a video, while informant O1 (a tourism observer) referred to Balkondes Wringinputih being featured in TikTok creators' content. Strategic suggestions for collaborating with influencers are presented in the Recommendations section.

Having Balkondes featured on TikTok video channels can be one digital marketing strategy for increasing destination brand awareness, namely public awareness of the existence and identity of Balkondes as community-based tourist destinations in the Borobudur area.

5.4. Social Media Management

One of the main ways to support the sustainability of Balkondes in the internet era is through the effective use of social media. Tourists now use social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to find information about tourist attractions. Balkondes that manage their social media accounts consistently are more likely to be discovered by visitors who are not yet familiar with them.

Successful social media management depends on relevant and consistent content. According to Verawati et al. (2021), a clear organizational structure is essential for social media management because marketing responsibilities include promotion and collaboration on relevant events. Balkondes can attract a wider audience by posting appealing photographs and videos of tourism activities. Frequently updated social media accounts convey the impression that a tourist destination is active, which can increase visitors' confidence. In addition, Balkondes can use social media strategies to promote safe tourism practices. Social media technology enables low-cost and effective promotion to reach various market segments.

However, the main challenge in social media management is the lack of qualified human resources. It is therefore important for managers to receive specialized digital marketing training so that they can maximize the potential of online platforms. By using analytics tools, managers can better understand audience preferences and develop appropriate content strategies.

Social media supports promotion and interaction with visitors. By actively responding to tourists' questions and comments, Balkondes can build good relationships and increase public trust in the destination. Such interactions also provide information about visitors' needs, which can be used to improve service quality (Susanto et al., 2020).

To implement an effective social media strategy, managers should also collaborate with influencers or local partners. By creating innovative content that attracts specific audiences, influencers can help extend promotional reach. Such collaboration increases visibility and can improve public perceptions of Balkondes. By optimizing their social media strategies, Balkondes can significantly expand their market reach, increase visitor numbers, and improve their reputation among the public. Managers should continue developing their content to ensure that it remains relevant and appealing to an evolving audience.

In terms of brand recognition, content such as photographs, videos, logos, visual identity, facility information, and tourism activities on Instagram and TikTok can help audiences recognize Balkondes when they encounter the name or visual appearance again on social media. Brand recall, meanwhile, relates to the audience's ability to remember Balkondes when searching for tourist destinations in the Borobudur or Magelang area. This can be strengthened through consistent content that has distinctive

characteristics and highlights local potential. Purchase consideration is reflected in the ability of social media content to encourage audiences to consider Balkondes as a destination by presenting information about attractions, facilities, prices, and experiences. Consumption relates to tourists' actual experiences of Balkondes services and tourism activities after obtaining information through social media. Satisfactory experiences may encourage repeat visits and recommendations to others.

5.5. Promotional Events

In the interview data (Table 1), informant O1 (a tourism observer) mentioned intensive event promotion at Balkondes Karanganyar and Wringinputih; informant V5 (a visitor) learned about Balkondes because an event had previously been held there; and informant V3 (a visitor) stated that access became difficult during events. This is evident at Balkondes Wanurejo, which is frequently used for wedding receptions but has insufficient parking space, forcing vehicles to park along the roadside some distance from the Balkondes. The road to the site is also damaged and narrow, with space for only one car at a time. Strategic suggestions for promotional events are presented in the Recommendations section.

5.6. Access to Balkondes Locations

Tourist destinations such as Balkondes depend heavily on location accessibility. When a destination has good road infrastructure and is easy to reach, the journey becomes more convenient. Conversely, poor access may discourage visitors from returning, even when the destination offers many attractions. Balkondes Borobudur has a geographical advantage because it is located near Borobudur Temple, an internationally recognized tourism icon of Central Java. Other locations, however, may require better infrastructure to improve access for private vehicles and public transportation. Accessibility is crucial because it affects tourists' visitation decisions and their overall experiences at the destination.

Accessibility also influences tourists' overall experiences. Tourists tend to recommend destinations to friends and family, as well as through online reviews and word of mouth (Verawati et al., 2021). Managers should therefore provide visitors with clear route information and ensure that roads leading to Balkondes remain in good condition. Research by Verawati et al. (2021) recommends that Balkondes improve access by drawing on support from local communities and management teams and by collaborating with various parties, such as travel agents. Cooperation among multiple parties can make destinations easier to reach.

Good location access also facilitates the organization of large events at Balkondes, such as concerts and cultural festivals. With adequate infrastructure, event participants can reach the site easily, increasing participation and the likelihood of a successful event. Managers can increase visitor numbers and create positive experiences by ensuring that access remains suitable and comfortable for all types of tourists. In addition, good accessibility enables integration among various tourist destinations in the Magelang area, creating more attractive travel packages for domestic and international tourists. This strategy supports regional tourism growth while strengthening the position of Balkondes as an important part of the national tourism ecosystem.

Brand recognition is reflected in the public's ability to identify Balkondes through address information, digital maps, directional signs, travel routes, and distances from well-known tourist attractions such as Borobudur Temple. Brand recall relates to tourists' ability to remember Balkondes when planning a trip or searching for alternative destinations in the Magelang area. Purchase consideration is reflected in the extent to which ease of access, clear location information, transport availability, and travel convenience encourage tourists to consider Balkondes as a destination. Consumption relates to tourists' actual visits and experiences of Balkondes services, which may be affected by road conditions, ease of reaching the location, and integration with other tourist destinations. An easy and pleasant journey can increase satisfaction, repeat visits, and recommendations through online reviews and word of mouth.

5.7. Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the data were obtained from 14 informants at eight Balkondes in the Borobudur area; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Balkondes. Second, the study does not provide a systematic comparative dataset between active and inactive Balkondes, making the

findings exploratory. Third, brand awareness was not measured directly among tourists, but was examined through informants' perceptions, with a limited number of visitor informants (six people). Future research is recommended to increase the number of visitor informants across all Balkondes in Borobudur District to strengthen the evidence base and to add indicators of successful Balkondes sustainability in Magelang Regency.

6. Conclusion

Based on the interviews, informants perceived that the sustainability of Balkondes in Borobudur is related not only to their physical existence or proximity to the main attraction of Borobudur Temple, but also to their ability to build and maintain brand awareness among tourists. Balkondes that provide unique experiences, are managed by competent personnel, actively promote their offerings, and are easily accessible are considered more capable of maintaining economic activities and attracting tourist visits.

This study identified six main factors that informants perceived as being associated with Balkondes sustainability: human resource quality, uniqueness and distinctive characteristics, the role of influencers, social media management, promotional events, and location access. Human resource quality is considered foundational because managers with managerial, service, financial, and marketing capabilities, as well as specialized skills, can keep Balkondes operating sustainably. Meanwhile, uniqueness is considered a differentiating factor that makes it easier for tourists to remember and recommend a particular Balkondes.

In addition, social media and influencers play an important role in increasing brand awareness, particularly because tourists increasingly rely on digital platforms to search for destination information. Consistent social media management, engaging content, and collaboration with local influencers can serve as relatively effective promotional strategies. Promotional events can also strengthen sustainability by creating direct experiences while involving local communities and local potential.

Thus, Balkondes that rely solely on their physical presence without sustainable management and marketing strategies risk stagnation or even becoming dormant. Conversely, Balkondes sustainability requires the integration of competent human resources, tourism product differentiation, digital promotion, collaboration, promotional activities, and good accessibility. Location access is an important supporting factor because ease of travel directly affects tourists' decisions and experiences.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Human Resource Quality

Given the finding that managers' competencies are considered inadequate (informants P1, P4, W1, W2, and V6), the central government, through village governments and partner state-owned enterprises, should provide training for Balkondes managers in destination management. Such training may include food service, reception, housekeeping, public speaking, and marketing, so that managers develop the competencies needed to support operations and visitor comfort.

7.2. Balkondes Uniqueness

Given the finding that uniqueness is an important consideration for visitors and that some Balkondes are perceived to lack distinctive features (informants P3, P4, W1, V1, V2, V4, and V6), the government, state-owned enterprises, managers, and residents should work together to develop each Balkondes' distinctive appeal, such as its scenery, local food, photo spots, or attractive architectural design.

7.3. Social Media Management

Given the finding that social media has not been used or managed adequately (informants T1, P1, W1, and W2), while visitors search for Balkondes information through social media (informant V2), the central government, through village governments and state-owned enterprises, should collaborate with academics to provide managers and local residents with training in content creation and social media management tailored to each Balkondes' target segment. This would enable managers and residents to promote Balkondes together through social media in line with changing trends.

7.4. Location Access

Given the finding that roads leading to the sites are narrow and difficult to navigate, particularly for large vehicles (informants P4, V1, V3, and V4), the government, state-owned enterprises, and residents should work together to develop adequate road infrastructure, including road widening, road surfacing, and the installation of traffic signs, so that visitors can reach Balkondes more easily and comfortably.

7.5. Promotional Events

One of the best ways to attract public attention to Balkondes is to organize promotional events. Events such as mini-concerts, community launches, or cultural performances introduce Balkondes facilities and services to a wider audience while providing participants with memorable experiences. In addition to increasing consumers' understanding of the brand, these events create lasting memories. In this study, Balkondes also promoted their offerings through collaboration with various parties, such as travel agents, tour communities, and hobby communities. Working with multiple partners can make promotion broader and more effective.

However, the main obstacle to organizing events is the availability of operating funds. Many Balkondes depend on sponsorship to conduct regular promotional activities. Promotion may be hindered when funding is unavailable or inconsistent. It is therefore essential for managers to plan budgets carefully and seek alternative funding sources.

To share costs and expand their audiences, managers can address this challenge by forming strategic partnerships with local communities or other organizations. Events based on local culture can provide an additional attraction for international tourists. By involving local residents in event organization, Balkondes can strengthen a sense of ownership and increase community participation (Aditya & Suyanto, 2021).

Besides serving as marketing tools, promotional events help build good relationships with surrounding communities. By consistently holding high-quality events, Balkondes can strengthen their sustainability amid intense competition in the tourism industry. This can positively affect the image of Balkondes as active and attractive tourist destinations.

Promotional events also provide opportunities to introduce leading local products, such as handicrafts and regional culinary specialties, to event participants. This strategy supports the local economy and strengthens the destination's cultural identity. By maximizing the potential of promotional events as strategic marketing tools, Balkondes can expand their market reach while creating unique experiences for visitors. This strategy can increase visitor numbers, support local economic sustainability, and strengthen the image of national tourism.

7.6. Collaboration with Influencers

To strengthen their sustainability, Balkondes can collaborate with influencers. Influencers can reach broad audiences through social media platforms. They can increase Balkondes brand awareness and influence their followers' lifestyles. For example, influencer promotions can attract tourists' attention by showcasing the natural beauty or unique experiences available at Balkondes.

However, the main obstacle to collaborating with influencers is the high cost. Not all Balkondes have sufficient funds to pay well-known influencers for marketing campaigns. Managers can also collaborate with local influencers or micro-influencers, who charge less while still reaching specific market segments (Aditya & Suyanto, 2021). Through this strategy, Balkondes can continue to benefit from digital promotion without spending large amounts.

In addition, influencer collaborations should be planned strategically to ensure that promotional messages align with the values and authentic identity of Balkondes. For example, promotions can focus on local traditions or environmentally friendly activities that characterize the destination. This approach makes promotional content both engaging and relevant to the target audience. By making effective use of influencers, Balkondes can increase their visibility on social media and attract more visitors. This demonstrates how influencers and the tourism sector can work together to support business sustainability and local economic growth (Susanto et al., 2020).

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Appendix 1. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The guide below was used as a reference; follow-up (probing) questions were adapted to informants' responses. The guide was developed with reference to Ahsani and Keban (2025).

A. Balkondes managers

1. Please describe your background and your role in managing this Balkondes.
2. In your opinion, what is the distinctive feature or uniqueness of this Balkondes compared with other tourist destinations?
3. How do the managers introduce the name and identity of the Balkondes to prospective visitors?
4. Which promotional media and channels are used, and how are they managed?
5. How do the managers use social media and visitor reviews to increase recognition of the Balkondes?
6. How do the managers collaborate with influencers, communities, or other parties, and organize promotional events?
7. How do the managers' competencies and the condition of access to the site affect the operation of the Balkondes?
8. What are the main challenges in maintaining the operational sustainability and appeal of the Balkondes?

B. Local residents

1. Since when, and how, have you known this Balkondes?
2. In your opinion, what is this Balkondes best known for, or what distinguishes it?
3. How are local residents involved in Balkondes activities?
4. What benefits and problems do residents experience because of the tourism activities at the Balkondes?
5. How do you assess the current management and promotion of the Balkondes?
6. In your opinion, what needs to be done so that the Balkondes remains well known and can survive in the long term?

C. Visitors

1. Where did you first hear about this Balkondes?
2. Before visiting, what did you know about this Balkondes?
3. What is the first thing you remember when you hear the name of this Balkondes?
4. How do you recognize this Balkondes compared with other destinations around Borobudur?
5. Have you seen content about this Balkondes on social media or other digital platforms? What was the content like?
6. What was your main reason for choosing to visit this Balkondes?
7. What was your experience during your visit (attractions, service, cleanliness, and access to the site)?
8. Are you interested in visiting again or recommending this Balkondes to others? Why?
9. In your opinion, what needs to be improved so that this Balkondes becomes better known and can survive?

D. Tourism practitioners and observers

1. Please describe the type of business or your role in tourism, and your relationship with Balkondes.
2. How does the presence of Balkondes affect businesses or tourism development in this area?
3. In your opinion, how well known is this Balkondes among prospective visitors? What is the basis for this assessment?
4. How does the Balkondes use social media, influencers, and events to promote itself?
5. In your opinion, what factors determine whether a Balkondes keeps operating or stops operating?
6. What are the main challenges faced, and what needs to be done so that Balkondes become better known and provide sustainable benefits?