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Rebranding museum tourism in Bali: A strategic destination branding model for engaging gen Z tourists

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Abstract

This study examined the declining visitation rates at museums in Bali and proposed a strategic destination branding model to engage Gen Z tourists. Grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, the research synthesized the theoretical lenses of the tourist gaze, storynomics tourism, and event tourism to develop its inquiries and strategic framework. Employing a qualitative approach, the study analyzed key tourism components, including attractions, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services, to ensure alignment with Gen Z's expectations and travel behaviors. The findings underscored the critical need to enhance core tourism elements to meet the experiential and digital preferences of this demographic. The proposed destination branding model integrated strategic segmentation, targeting, and positioning to create authentic and dynamic experiences that resonated with Gen Z's values and aspirations. This study contributed to the discourse on cultural tourism and offered insights for museum operators and policymakers to advance destination branding strategies tailored to digitally native tourists and ensure the relevance and sustainability of museum tourism in Bali.

Keywords: Bali Museum tourism, Cultural tourism, Destination branding, Gen Z, Strategic segmentation.

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1. Introduction

Bali is globally well-known for its rich artistic traditions and cultures, particularly its distinct painting styles, which have long attracted art collectors and cultural tourists [1, 2]. The island's cultural significance is further institutionalized by its 32 registered museums, as documented by the Indonesian Museum Association and the Ministry of Education and Culture. These museums function not only as repositories of tangible and intangible heritage but also as key sites for public

education and cultural tourism [3, 4]. However, despite their cultural importance, many Balinese museums struggle with declining visitor engagement, raising concerns about their long-term sustainability in an increasingly competitive tourism market.

The challenges facing Bali's museums are multifaceted, stemming from both external shocks and structural weaknesses. For example, the Subak Museum in Tabanan, a site dedicated to Bali's traditional irrigation system, a UNESCO-recognized intangible heritage, experienced a sharp decline in visitation after 2016, a trend exacerbated by the 2017 Mount Agung eruption and the COVID-19 pandemic. This case illustrates how even museums with strong cultural value remain vulnerable to external disruptions [5]. Similarly, the Buleleng Museum, which showcases North Bali's history, experienced an 84% decline in attendance between 2019 and 2023 [6]. Even the Bali Museum, Denpasar's flagship cultural institution, suffered a staggering 94% decline in visitors between 2019 and 2021, as released by the Bali Tourism Office in 2024. These figures suggest that the pandemic alone cannot account for the sector's struggles; deeper issues, such as outdated exhibition methods, limited digital engagement, and competition from more commercialized tourist attractions, may also be at play [7].

The persistent decline in museum attendance raises critical questions about the effectiveness of current preservation and promotion strategies. The imperative for museums to adopt digital technologies to remain relevant in the digital age has been widely advocated by Giannini and Bowen [8], Taormina and Baraldi [9], and Tham et al. [10], with proponents arguing that digital platforms enhance accessibility, visitor engagement, and global reach. However, critics contend that an overreliance on digital mediation risks diluting the material authenticity and embodied experience central to traditional museum encounters [10-12]. A further layer of contention arises from concerns that digital expansion, particularly when driven by corporate partnerships and monetization strategies, may lead to over-commercialization, thereby undermining museums' core educational and cultural missions [13, 14]. While this literature review maps the current landscape of digital transformation and proposes a conceptual framework to guide future research, tensions persist regarding the extent and nature of digitization. Furthermore, the reliance on international tourists, who constituted over 60% of Bali's museum visitors pre-pandemic, exposes these institutions to global volatility. A more sustainable approach requires diversifying audience engagement through local community partnerships, interactive technologies, and policy interventions that prioritize cultural sustainability alongside economic recovery.

Contemporary museums face a fundamental paradox: they must preserve their authoritative role as cultural stewards while simultaneously adapting to the participatory demands of digital-era audiences. This tension is particularly acute in Bali, where museums' continued reliance on conventional display methods directly contradicts the experiential expectations of younger, technologically fluent visitors [15, 16]. The failure to address this disconnect carries significant consequences - not merely reduced visitor numbers but a gradual loss of institutional relevance in an increasingly competitive experience economy [17]. The digital innovation gap in Bali's museum sector represents more than a simple technological lag; it reflects a deeper institutional inertia that threatens long-term sustainability. While leading global institutions have embraced augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and gamified learning as standard engagement tools [18, 19], Balinese museums remain committed to passive exhibition models. This technological conservatism is particularly problematic when considered against [1] findings indicate that digital platforms now serve as primary gateways for cultural engagement, especially among international audiences who increasingly expect hybrid access modes.

A critical imperative for Bali's museums lies in the strategic redefinition of institutional branding to align with evolving tourist motivations, which increasingly prioritize emotional engagement, educational value, and participatory experiences [20, 21]. Behavioral tourism research underscores this shift, revealing that modern visitors are no longer passive spectators but active participants seeking immersive, narrative-driven encounters [17]. Yet, Bali's museums frequently struggle to articulate their cultural narratives effectively, falling behind exemplars such as Singapore's National Gallery, where innovative curation techniques such as augmented reality (AR) integrations and community co-created exhibitions successfully bridge heritage preservation with contemporary audience expectations [22, 23]. To address this gap, Bali's rebranding initiatives must foreground its distinctive cultural capital, including UNESCO-recognized assets like the Subak irrigation system and the intricate iconography of Kamasan paintings, through dynamic thematic exhibitions and partnerships with local artisans. Such efforts would not only enhance authenticity but also foster deeper visitor connections [24]. Additionally, harnessing the persuasive power of social media influencers, particularly on visually driven platforms like Instagram, can recalibrate perceptions among younger, digitally native demographics [25]. This dual approach, combining technological innovation with culturally rooted storytelling, could position Bali's museums as competitive players in the global cultural tourism market while preserving their unique identity [26, 27].

The digital transformation of museums has fundamentally redefined visitor engagement, with emerging technologies, including interactive exhibitions, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR), proven to enhance accessibility, educational impact, and emotional resonance, particularly among younger, tech-savvy audiences [26, 28, 29]. [26, 27]. Beyond mere technological adoption, these innovations reflect a broader paradigm shift in cultural consumption, wherein museums are no longer static repositories but dynamic, experience-driven destinations that must strategically integrate digital storytelling, participatory design, and immersive branding to remain competitive [14, 30]. This evolution aligns with contemporary destination marketing theories, which emphasize emotional connectivity and personalized experiences as critical drivers of visitor satisfaction and loyalty [31, 32]. However, the successful implementation of such strategies demands rigorous audience analytics encompassing behavioral studies, preference mapping, and iterative feedback mechanisms to ensure that technological enhancements do not merely replicate traditional pedagogies but instead foster meaningful, tailored interactions that resonate with diverse demographic and psychographic segments [15, 21].

Chauhan and Karthikeyan [33] found that storytelling, augmented reality, and gamification have been identified as key tools in shaping visitor perceptions and enhancing museum attractiveness. Storytelling fosters emotional connections and a sense of belonging, encouraging deeper engagement. Similarly, Trunfio et al. [35] empirically demonstrate that strategic innovation across key museum service dimensions, including exhibition design, AR/VR integration, organizational logistics, and front-of-house staff training, significantly enhances visitor satisfaction and engagement. Their findings underscore the potential for service model innovation to transform museums from static repositories into dynamic, visitor-centric cultural spaces. However, the study also reveals implementation challenges, particularly regarding resource allocation and staff adaptability, suggesting that technological adoption alone is insufficient without parallel investments in human capital and institutional restructuring. Moreover, the incorporation of gamification introduces elements of play and competition, enhancing visitor engagement within the museum setting. Gaining insights into visitor motivations from both psychological and behavioral perspectives is essential for museums aiming to attract and retain diverse audiences. Through the integration of technology and interactive experiences, museums can encourage active participation, enrich the overall visitor journey, and establish themselves as vibrant and dynamic cultural destinations.

Despite significant advancements in museum digital transformation, a critical research gap persists regarding destination branding strategies specifically tailored to Generation Z, a demographic distinguished by their demand for interactivity, personalized experiences, and technology-mediated engagement [34, 35]. While technological innovations present transformative opportunities, scant scholarly attention has been paid to how strategic branding might reconcile traditional museum paradigms with the expectations of digitally native audiences [36]. This study addresses this dual theoretical and practical lacuna by examining the intersection of museology, destination branding theory, and Generation Z's distinctive travel behaviors, thereby advancing a novel demographic-specific framework for cultural tourism. The research makes three substantive contributions: first, it extends destination branding discourse by demonstrating how values-aligned positioning emphasizing digital storytelling, interactive technologies, and experiential programming recalibrates museum appeal for younger demographics; second, it develops an actionable model for institutional stakeholders that operationalizes these insights through immersive content, gamified experiences, and social media integration [37] and third, it provides empirical evidence for how strategic branding transforms visitor perceptions from passive observation to sustained participatory engagement, ultimately redefining museums' role in the experience economy [17]. These contributions equip museum administrators, policymakers, and destination marketers with both the theoretical underpinnings and practical tools necessary to revitalize cultural tourism for contemporary audiences.

This study examines destination branding strategies for Balinese museums, with a specific focus on engaging Generation Z tourists, a demographic increasingly recognized as essential to the future of cultural tourism. As Subhiksu, et al. [37] established, museums serve as vital cultural attractions in Bali, with many institutions adapting their offerings through expanded collections and enhanced features to meet evolving market demands. These adaptations, while potentially altering traditional museum functions, respond to visitor preferences that extend beyond exhibits to include distinctive architectural designs embodying Balinese cultural identity [38]. The significance of museums as repositories of heritage is further amplified through their role in hosting national and international tourism events. Generation Z tourists emerge as particularly crucial to these developments, displaying characteristic adventurousness and a preference for unconventional destinations [39] while simultaneously valuing authentic experiences and relying heavily on digital platforms for travel decision-making [40].

This study offers a significant contribution to the evolving body of literature at the nexus of generational tourism and cultural heritage branding by systematically analyzing how destination branding strategies can be optimized to engage Generation Z within museum settings. While previous scholarship has extensively examined destination branding [41, 42] and museum tourism [43, 44] as separate domains, this research addresses a critical theoretical lacuna by proposing an integrated framework that aligns institutional branding strategies with the unique values and preferences of Generation Z. In particular, it foregrounds the importance of digital storytelling, interactive experiences, and personalized engagement in fostering meaningful connections with younger audiences. The study advances tourism discourse in three key ways: (1) by demonstrating how cultural institutions apply contemporary branding theory to accommodate generational shifts in tourist behavior; (2) by providing empirical support for the effectiveness of technology-mediated engagement strategies in museum tourism contexts; and (3) by presenting a replicable model for enhancing the relevance and appeal of museums amid rapidly evolving visitor expectations. Collectively, these contributions deepen scholarly understanding of demographic-specific approaches to tourism branding and yield practical insights for cultural institutions seeking to navigate the challenges of digital transformation and generational change within the broader experience economy.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted in various museums across Bali, with a particular emphasis on the Bali Museum, a distinguished cultural institution serving as a repository of Balinese cultural and historical artifacts. The Bali Museum, as a significant cultural institution, encapsulates the heritage, artistry, and traditional life of Bali, rendering it an exemplary case study for examining tourist preferences. Its central location in Denpasar enhances its accessibility, thereby attracting a diverse audience comprising both local and international tourists. Given its extensive collection and its role in cultural education, the museum provides an appropriate context for investigating the preferences of Generation Z tourists, whose interests often combine cultural exploration with immersive and experiential activities.

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to yield a comprehensive understanding of the behaviors, motivations, and perceptions of tourists visiting museums in Bali. Qualitative methods were prioritized for their capacity to capture the nuanced and subjective experiences of visitors, whereas a quantitative component was incorporated to

systematically analyze tourist preferences and differentiate broader trends. This methodological approach is congruent with the principle of triangulation, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings by integrating qualitative insights with statistical analysis [45, 46].

Data collection was conducted using multiple techniques to ensure methodological rigor and depth. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with domestic Gen Z tourists (born between 1997 and 2012) to explore their preferences and experiences in detail. These interviews facilitated an in-depth exploration of the emotional and cognitive factors influencing museum visitation (15 informants). Additionally, structured questionnaires were distributed to collect quantitative data on tourist preferences (100 respondents), enabling the identification of statistically significant patterns. A comprehensive literature review was also undertaken to establish the theoretical foundation and contextualize the study within existing research. This review encompassed academic articles, online resources, and other documentary materials, providing a critical synthesis of prior studies related to museum tourism and Gen Z travel behavior. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the selection of participants who met the study's specific criteria, thereby increasing the relevance and applicability of the findings. The primary data were obtained directly from tourist respondents, while secondary data were derived from literature and digital sources.

Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative data. This systematic approach involved coding the interview transcripts to identify key themes and patterns, which were then categorized to facilitate structured interpretation and to provide valuable insights into the factors shaping Gen Z's engagement with museums [47]. Meanwhile, the quantitative data collected through questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis to detect trends and correlations in tourist preferences. The integration of these findings through methodological triangulation enhanced the study's internal validity, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The findings were systematically presented and discussed within the theoretical framework, comparing them with insights from previous studies. This integrative approach aimed to address the research questions comprehensively and contributed to advancing theoretical discussions on museum tourism and generational travel behaviors. This methodological framework reinforces the academic rigor of the study, providing a thorough and reliable exploration of Gen Z tourists' preferences in the context of Balinese museums.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Preferences of Gen Z Tourists for Museum Attractions in Bali

A key finding of this study is the overwhelming reliance of Gen Z tourists on digital sources for information, with 84% of respondents identifying the internet or social media as their primary reference. This underscores the increasing dominance of digital media in shaping tourism decisions and reinforces existing theoretical perspectives on the digital dependency of this generational cohort. Unlike previous generations, who frequently relied on traditional marketing channels such as brochures or word-of-mouth recommendations, Gen Z demonstrates a marked preference for online engagement. Consequently, museums must adopt dynamic digital marketing strategies to maintain relevance within the evolving tourism landscape. The implementation of interactive content, virtual tours, and social media-driven campaigns proved instrumental in enhancing the visibility and appeal of museums among younger visitors.

The geographical distribution of respondents reveals significant trends in visitor demographics. The majority of participants originated from Java (63%), followed by Bali (23%), with a smaller proportion from other regions of Indonesia. This distribution suggests that museum tourism in Bali is significantly influenced by visitors from Java, potentially due to economic factors, geographical proximity, and cultural affinity. Furthermore, the gender distribution among respondents indicates a notable imbalance, with female participants (64%) outnumbering their male counterparts (36%). This aligns with broader research findings suggesting that women exhibit a greater interest in cultural and heritage tourism, likely attributable to higher engagement with educational and aesthetic experiences. In light of this trend, museums could benefit from curating exhibitions and programming tailored to these interests in order to enhance visitor engagement.

Additionally, the study highlights a strong preference for well-established institutions such as the Bali Museum and the Bajra Sandhi Museum, whereas more specialized museums, including the Subak Museum and the Gilimanuk Ancient Man Museum, received comparatively lower visitor numbers. This disparity suggests that recognition and accessibility play a crucial role in determining museum visitation patterns. Furthermore, it raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of promotional efforts for lesser-known museums, thereby presenting an opportunity for these institutions to leverage digital storytelling, influencer collaborations, and experiential marketing strategies to attract a broader audience.

Finally, the study provides valuable insights into Gen Z's engagement with museum attractions. While 44% of respondents expressed an intention to revisit, 37% remained undecided, and 17% indicated no interest in returning. This ambivalence highlights the necessity for museums to enhance their experiential offerings to ensure that visits are not perceived as singular experiences. The integration of interactive elements, augmented reality features, and gamified learning experiences could significantly improve visitor retention and encourage repeat visits. Additionally, implementing membership schemes, loyalty programs, and exclusive event access could serve as effective incentives to foster deeper and more sustained engagement with museums.

Tourist preferences in this research were examined based on eight variables, and the results obtained can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.

Gen Z Tourist Preferences for Museums in Bali.

No	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	I am interested in visiting museums because of the attractions they offer	76	17	7
2	I am interested in visiting museums in Bali because museums have good transportation access and clear location of information	60	28	12
3	I am interested in visiting museums in Bali because they have or are close to tourist facilities such as restaurants, accommodation, and other facilities	64	24	12
4	I am interested in visiting museums in Bali because there are collaborations or partnerships	81	2	17
5	I am interested in visiting museums in Bali because of the interactive activities offered by the museums	92	8	0
6	I am interested in visiting museums in Bali because they have special programs or events that are regularly held	94	6	0
7	I am interested in visiting museums in Bali because there are stories or information related to the museum or collections on display	98	2	0
8	I trust reviews or reviews from other people when choosing a museum to visit	91	9	0

3.1.1. Attraction

A strong inclination towards museum visits among Gen Z tourists in Bali is evident, driven by the distinctive attractions these cultural institutions offer. This trend reflects broader shifts in youth engagement with cultural heritage, where traditional static exhibitions are increasingly being complemented or even replaced by interactive and immersive experiences. As digital natives, Gen Z visitors seek museum attractions that provide dynamic and participatory elements, allowing them to engage with history, culture, and art in more personalized and experiential ways.

The significance of interactive features in museum experiences cannot be overstated. Prior research suggests that Generation Z prefers hands-on engagement over passive observation, with digital technology playing a crucial role in enhancing visitor experiences. Museums that incorporate augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), gamification, and touch-sensitive displays align with this preference, transforming traditional visits into interactive learning experiences. Such features improve knowledge retention and encourage social sharing, as visitors are likely to document and disseminate their experiences through social media, further amplifying museums' visibility and appeal.

Immersive storytelling also emerges as a significant factor influencing Gen Z's engagement with museums. Unlike conventional exhibitions that rely on textual descriptions and static artefacts, narrative-driven exhibits, often enhanced by digital media, allow visitors to connect with historical events, artistic movements, or cultural traditions on both an emotional and intellectual level. Museums that integrate storytelling techniques, such as interactive timelines, first-person narratives, or holographic re-enactments, cater to this experiential demand and enhance visitor satisfaction.

Furthermore, the cultural richness of museum exhibits remains a fundamental attraction for Generation Z tourists. As a generation shaped by globalization, they exhibit a strong appreciation for authenticity and diversity in cultural representation. Bali, renowned for its rich artistic and historical heritage, provides an ideal setting for museums to showcase local traditions, rituals, and artifacts in ways that resonate with young visitors. Museums effectively engage Generation Z, ensuring their continued interest and participation in heritage tourism by leveraging both technological innovations and cultural authenticity.

"I like visiting Bali museums because of the collection of historical objects, which increase my knowledge about Bali. The Bali Museum is also unique and displays traditional Balinese architectural styles, so it can be an interesting photo spot" (Interview, 27 February 2024)

"Bali is a different region, namely an area that still maintains its culture. So when you visit a museum in Bali, it feels more enjoyable because apart from getting to know historical objects or museum collections, you can also experience the very strong Balinese culture, because almost all museum buildings in Bali have unique architecture that differentiates them from museum buildings in other regions. Apart from the museum collection, we can also see Balinese dance arts being performed. Very interesting" (Interview, 28 February 2024)

This underlines the multidimensional appeal of museums in Bali, which extend beyond their role as repositories of historical artifacts to include distinctive architectural aesthetics and the incorporation of cultural performances. These elements reinforce the dual function of Balinese museums as both educational and experiential tourism destinations. While the educational value of museums contributes to visitors' understanding of Bali's history and cultural heritage, the architectural design of these institutions enhances their visual appeal, serving as a significant draw for contemporary tourists. The appreciation of traditional Balinese architecture as a visual and photographic attraction further highlights the aesthetic significance of these cultural sites, aligning with previous research that emphasizes the importance of visual heritage in engaging younger generations, particularly Gen Z. This cohort increasingly values experiences that are educational and conducive to social media engagement, reinforcing the role of digital representation in shaping contemporary tourism preferences.

Moreover, Balinese museums offer an immersive cultural experience that distinguishes them from conventional heritage institutions. The architectural styles of museum buildings, which reflect traditional Balinese aesthetics, contribute to a distinctive sense of place, reinforcing the authenticity of the visitor experience. The integration of cultural performances, such as Balinese dance, further enhances this engagement by introducing an interactive and dynamic dimension to museum visits. This is consistent with experiential authenticity, which posits that tourists seek cultural experiences that extend beyond passive observation to foster deeper, more meaningful interactions with heritage. The interplay of architectural heritage, performative traditions, and historical artefacts suggests that the appeal of Balinese museums is not confined to their static collections but extends to a holistic cultural experience that engages multiple sensory and intellectual faculties.

Furthermore, it highlights that Gen Z's engagement with museum attractions is not limited to the appreciation of art collections and cultural artifacts but extends to broader cultural and aesthetic experiences. This generation, characterized by high levels of digital proficiency, curiosity, and a preference for authenticity, seeks cultural interactions that are both immersive and participatory. The findings thus reinforce the role of museum tourism as a critical medium for fostering connections with cultural heritage, deepening visitors' understanding of the historical and socio-cultural context of destinations, and facilitating memorable experiences. Gen Z prioritizes meaningful and authentic engagement within cultural spaces, highlighting the necessity for museums to adapt their offerings in response to evolving visitor expectations.

The integration of diverse attraction components significantly enhances the appeal of tourist destinations, including museums. By incorporating experiential elements such as performing arts and architectural aesthetics, Balinese museums effectively align with the shifting demands of contemporary tourists, particularly those from younger demographics. This suggests that these museums are strategically positioned as dynamic cultural hubs that offer multidimensional experiences, seamlessly integrating education, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural immersion. Rather than serving solely as custodians of historical artifacts, Balinese museums function as interactive spaces that facilitate deeper engagement with cultural heritage, reinforcing their relevance within the broader discourse on experience-driven tourism (Jones, 2019).

3.1.2. Accessibility

The data reveal that factors such as the strategic location of museums, ease of transportation, and proximity to other attractions significantly influence visitation choices. Notably, 60 respondents explicitly identified accessibility and the availability of clear location information as primary motivations for visiting museums. This preference is further substantiated by qualitative insights from interviews, in which participants emphasized the practical importance of well-situated museums in enhancing their overall convenience and appeal.

These align with previous research indicating that accessibility plays a pivotal role in cultural tourism experiences. The ease of access is a fundamental determinant of visitor engagement with heritage sites, as it directly influences both initial visitation decisions and the likelihood of repeat visits. Similarly, studies on Gen Z's tourism behavior highlight their preference for seamless, convenient travel experiences, with accessibility being a key factor in destination selection. This suggests that for museums in Bali to attract and retain younger audiences, improving transportation connectivity, ensuring clear directional signage, and leveraging digital tools for navigation are essential strategic considerations.

Moreover, the emphasis on accessibility reflects broader shifts in contemporary tourism, where ease of movement and integrated travel experiences are increasingly prioritized. Given Gen Z's reliance on digital platforms for travel planning, the availability of online information regarding museum locations, transport options, and nearby attractions further enhances the perceived accessibility of these cultural institutions. This aligns with the concept of "smart tourism," which underscores the role of digital innovation in improving visitor experiences and optimizing destination management.

"The location of the Bajra Sandhi museum feels like it is in the city center, it is very strategic, I often pass it so I was interested in coming to see what was inside, and it turned out to be quite interesting"
(Interview, 1 March 2024)

"You must visit the Geopark Museum if you go to Kintamani, it's free. We went on a study tour by bus, there was ample parking. Stop by other tourist attractions that are also close, such as Tampak Siring Palace, not too far, only 20 minutes" (Interview, 28 February 2024)

Accessibility plays a central role in shaping tourist behavior. However, for Gen Z tourists, accessibility extends beyond mere physical proximity; it encompasses the convenience, efficiency, and interconnectedness of transport networks that facilitate seamless travel experiences. Museums that are strategically located, such as those situated in city centers or in close proximity to complementary attractions, offer a dual advantage: they attract casual visitors through visibility and footfall while simultaneously encouraging planned visits by integrating them into broader itineraries. For instance, the proximity of attractions such as the Tampak Siring Palace enhances the appeal of the Geopark Museum as part of a comprehensive itinerary, demonstrating the synergistic benefits of clustering tourism sites.

Furthermore, efficient transport infrastructure, including accessible public transport options and adequate parking facilities, further enhances the appeal of museums for Gen Z tourists. This demographic, characterized by a preference for simplicity and immediacy, is particularly sensitive to logistical barriers such as limited parking or complex transit routes, which may deter engagement with cultural sites. The transport infrastructure enhances accessibility to heritage attractions and ease of movement, which are decisive factors in tourism engagement. Consequently, investment in infrastructure, such

as dedicated bus routes linking major tourist hubs to museums or the development of digital platforms that provide real-time navigation and travel information, could significantly improve accessibility and enhance the overall visitor experience.

From a destination branding perspective, integrating accessibility into promotional narratives has the potential to position museums in Bali as culturally enriching, convenient, and easily navigable. Highlighting features such as seamless connectivity, ample parking, and proximity to other attractions within marketing campaigns aligns with Gen Z's preference for hassle-free travel experiences. Moreover, the incorporation of digital tools, such as location-based applications and interactive maps, into branding strategies could enhance engagement with this demographic, given their reliance on digital platforms for trip planning. Ultimately, accessibility is not merely a logistical consideration; it signifies a broader commitment to visitor-centric experiences.

3.1.3. Amenity

A total of 64 Gen Z tourists expressed interest in visiting museums in Bali due to their proximity to complementary tourist facilities, including restaurants, shopping areas, recreational venues, and other amenities. The availability of such facilities enhances the overall visitor experience, increasing both the convenience and attractiveness of museum visits for this demographic. Prior research has emphasized that accessibility to supplementary services plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' destination choices, as it allows for seamless integration of cultural exploration with leisure activities.

The presence of dining options in close proximity to museums, for instance, enables visitors to combine cultural engagement with social and culinary experiences, aligning with Gen Z's preference for holistic and multi-purpose travel experiences. Additionally, shopping centres and recreational facilities situated near museums serve as added attractions that cater to the lifestyle preferences of this generation, which values diversified and immersive experiences. This suggests that museums that leverage their location within well-developed tourism hubs may hold a competitive advantage by providing a more comprehensive and engaging visitor experience.

"The Blanco Museum is one of the museums I have ever visited. Very interesting, apart from the painting collection, there is also a mini bird park outside the museum, a souvenir shop and a restaurant with a comfortable atmosphere to sit and chat" (Interview, 3 March 2024)

"I like museums that are spacious, have open space facilities or gathering places and can hold activities or workshops to exchange ideas with the art lover community" (Interview, 25 February 2024)

The interviews highlight the critical role of proximate amenities in shaping Gen Z tourists' inclination to visit museums. Facilities such as restaurants, shopping centres, recreational venues, and community spaces enhance the comfort and convenience of museum visits and expand the range of leisure activities available, thereby improving overall tourist satisfaction. Previous research has highlighted that modern tourists, particularly those from younger demographics, prioritize destinations that offer integrated and multifunctional experiences rather than standalone attractions.

Gen Z exhibits a strong preference for environments that facilitate interpersonal interaction and community engagement as avenues for experiential learning. This preference renders interactive spaces, participatory exhibitions, and communal areas within museums particularly appealing to this demographic. Furthermore, insights from interviews suggest that the integration of museums into a broader network of interconnected amenities contributes to a more holistic and immersive tourism experience. Gen Z favors multi-purpose destinations over isolated cultural sites, valuing both convenience and variety when making travel decisions.

By strategically situating museums in proximity to such facilities or fostering partnerships with local businesses, museums in Bali can enhance their attractiveness and position themselves as integral components of a broader tourism itinerary. Accessibility and the availability of supporting facilities significantly influence tourist behavior, reinforcing the necessity of viewing museums as cultural landmarks and key nodes within a larger ecosystem of interconnected attractions. These findings highlight the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to museum development and marketing that aligns with the expectations and preferences of Gen Z, ensuring that cultural institutions remain relevant and competitive within the evolving tourism landscape.

3.1.4. Ancillary

A total of 81 Gen Z tourists identified collaborations and partnerships as significant factors influencing their decision to visit museums in Bali. These strategic alliances, whether with local businesses, educational institutions, or cultural organizations, serve as key mechanisms for enhancing the appeal of museum tourism. Such collaborations contribute to a more dynamic and enriched visitor experience by incorporating diverse and complementary elements, including curated exhibitions, joint cultural events, and integrated tourism packages that provide added value to museum visits.

"Visited the Batur Geopark museum as part of a study tour with the school. The building is unique, very nice, interesting and you can get a lot of information, especially since this geopark has been recognized by UNESCO" (Interview, 5 March 2024)

"There is a need to develop technology that can attract interest in visiting the museum. The government and museum managers in Bali can collaborate or imitate or learn more from the government and museum managers outside Bali such as Jogja and Jakarta" (Interview, 1 March 2024)

These underscore the essential role of ancillary components in enhancing the appeal of museums as tourist attractions, particularly for Gen Z. Ancillary components encompass collaborations and partnerships with governmental bodies, cultural institutions, private enterprises, and non-profit organizations. Such partnerships provide legitimacy, improve resource allocation, and create extensive networking opportunities, transforming museums into vibrant and compelling destinations. Inter-agency partnerships are crucial in generating immersive and comprehensive tourism experiences, as they optimize resource utilization and integrate supplementary amenities equipped with cutting-edge technology, aligning with Gen Z's affinity for digital engagement.

Existing literature supports the notion that partnerships can substantially enhance the attractiveness of cultural sites. [27] argue that collaborative initiatives between museums and external stakeholders, such as universities and creative industries, foster innovation and engagement, particularly among younger audiences. Similarly, Falk and Dierking [15] highlight that museum partnerships with educational institutions create opportunities for interactive and experiential learning, aligning with Gen Z's preference for participatory and knowledge-driven experiences. Partnerships between museums and commercial entities, such as cafés, bookshops, and artisan markets, contribute to an enhanced visitor experience by extending the cultural offering beyond static exhibitions. This aligns with the findings of the present study, which suggests that Gen Z tourists are more inclined to visit museums that offer holistic experiences integrating cultural, social, and leisure elements.

Additionally, the value of such partnerships is evident in collaborations with local artisans, performers, and culinary experts, which result in distinctive programs and activities that elevate the museum experience. Initiatives such as workshops on traditional crafts or culinary demonstrations engage visitors and foster a deeper connection to Bali's rich cultural heritage. Likewise, partnerships with educational institutions and tourism agencies have proven effective in broadening museums' reach, particularly through initiatives such as school visits, study tours, and co-branded marketing campaigns. These collaborations enable museums to attract a younger audience while enhancing the educational and experiential value of their offerings.

Conversely, some studies have critiqued over-reliance on commercial collaborations, cautioning that excessive commercialization may detract from the educational and cultural integrity of museums. Prioritizing commercial partnerships shifted institutional objectives away from cultural preservation and academic research towards profit-driven imperatives. However, when managed effectively, strategic collaborations can strike a balance between cultural enrichment and commercial viability, ensuring that museums remain both educational and financially sustainable. Integrating these ancillary features into museum operations demonstrates the strategic advantage of fostering partnerships to appeal to Gen Z. This demographic prioritizes experiences that combine cultural enrichment with social and recreational elements, making collaborative initiatives an effective means of meeting their preferences. Additionally, by positioning museums as dynamic cultural hubs through these partnerships, Bali strengthens its museums' role in the broader tourism ecosystem. Institutional cooperation and collaboration as critical elements of the ancillary component enable museums to effectively cater to Gen Z's expectations. This strategy boosts Bali's destination branding and supports sustainable and inclusive cultural tourism development.

3.1.5. Activity

A total of 92 Gen Z tourists expressed a strong interest in visiting museums in Bali due to the availability of interactive activities. This underscores the critical role of participatory and proactive experiences in enhancing the appeal of museums for younger audiences. Interactive activities facilitate active engagement with exhibits, fostering a deeper connection to the content and creating memorable experiences. The qualitative insights from interviews further highlight the significance of interactive activities in shaping Gen Z tourists' preferences for museum visits in Bali.

"Puri Lukisan Museum has several workshops that you can take part in, such as batik making activities. It's exciting, not only do you get knowledge but also experience" (Interview, 1 March 2024)

"Many museums in Bali have minimal activities. Even though the existing activities can be a promotional medium for the museum. Visitors will share their activities at the museum via social media, especially TikTok/Instagram" (Interview, 10 March 2024)

Museums that strategically design diverse, interactive programming are more likely to attract Generation Z tourists, as their engagement preferences rooted in experiential learning, social connectivity, and multisensory immersion directly shape their interpretive perceptions of museum environments. Drawing on the tourist gaze framework, which underscores the necessity of crafting dynamic, meaning-laden experiences to sustain visitor interest, institutions that integrate activities such as thematic interactive tours, hands-on workshops, cultural demonstrations, and performative storytelling align with Gen Z's prioritization of edutainment (education-entertainment synthesis). This demographic's inclination toward skill-building and creative participation underscores the value of programming that fosters cultural appreciation and active co-creation, such as collaborative art projects or digital scavenger hunts. These initiatives deepen understanding of cultural heritage exemplified by Balinese cultural immersion through group gamified narratives and fulfill Gen Z's desire for socially embedded experiences that facilitate peer interaction. Museums transcend traditional passive exhibition roles, repositioning themselves as hubs of participatory cultural exchange and nonformal learning. This approach strengthens visitor satisfaction and retention and reinforces institutional relevance in an era where experiential value and communal engagement are critical to sustaining tourism appeal.

Museums must transition from static repositories to adaptive institutions responsive to heterogeneous visitor needs. Specifically, Generation Z's expectations prioritize experiential value, characterized by digitally mediated interactivity, co-creative participation, and socially embedded meaning-making. This divergence underscores the necessity for contemporary museums to reorient their strategies beyond infrastructural accessibility, instead embedding participatory frameworks that resonate with younger demographics' digital fluency and their pursuit of communal, multisensory encounters.

3.1.6. Events

The study reveals that 94% of Gen Z tourists have expressed interest in visiting museums in Bali due to the special programs or events that are regularly held. The following are the results of interviews that support the event components of museum tourist attractions in Bali.

"I visited the Pacific Museum because at that time there was an exhibition of paintings by famous artists. It really attracted my attention to visit" (Interview, 10 March 2024)

The interview data substantiate the centrality of Eventification the strategic embedding of ephemeral programming into institutional frameworks as a critical determinant of Generation Z's museum visitation preferences in Bali. These institutions leverage arts exhibitions, cross-disciplinary festivals (e.g., jazz-infused cultural showcases), gastronomy-driven events, and participatory workshops not merely as ancillary offerings but as curatorial imperatives to catalyze engagement among digitally native, experience-oriented demographics. This aligns with event studies scholarship, which posits that temporally bounded, theatrically staged activities transcend static displays, fostering affective connections and perceived novelty, key drivers for Gen Z's venue selection.

This strategic eventification intersects with the experience economy paradigm, wherein value is derived from staged participation rather than passive consumption. Gen Z's prioritization of edutainment, which is a synthesis of intellectual stimulation and Instagrammable sociality, demands that museums transcend conventional didacticism. For instance, interactive coding workshops on Balinese gamelan traditions or augmented reality (AR) enabled scavenger hunts through historical exhibits exemplify performative pedagogy, a framework that embeds learning within ludic, shareable formats. Such programming resonates with Gen Z's cognitive orientation toward rhizomatic learning, where knowledge is acquired through non-linear, collaborative exploration rather than hierarchical instruction. Consequently, museums that institutionalize these modalities position themselves as Third Spaces [16] socially generative environments that blend leisure, learning, and cultural production to meet this cohort's demand for hybridized experiences.

Critically, these findings extend the discourse on museological dynamism by foregrounding social curation as a catalyst for institutional relevance. While Cooper et al. emphasized infrastructural adaptability, Gen Z's preference for co-creative agency, evidenced by their gravitation toward artist-led workshops or user-generated content zones, reflects a paradigmatic shift toward participatory museology. This is particularly salient in Bali, where museums operate within a competitive tourism ecosystem increasingly defined by the "Instagrammability" of experiences. Events like batik co-creation sessions or TikTok-friendly cultural performances fulfill Gen Z's desire for authentic self-expression and amplify museums' roles as cultural interlocutors, bridging heritage preservation and contemporary identity formation. Thus, event-driven strategies transcend mere attraction management; they reconstitute museums as living archives, where tradition is dynamically renegotiated through the lens of youth-centric, experiential consumption.

3.1.7. Storytelling

The study reveals that 98% of Gen Z tourists have expressed interest in visiting museums in Bali due to the availability of stories or information related to the museum or its collections. The following interview results support the narrative component of museum tourist attractions in Bali. The findings from the interviews underscore the importance of narrative elements in attracting Gen Z tourists to museums. One interviewee suggested that *"museums in Bali should create videos, both conventional and 3D, about history or information about the tools and objects in the museum as a learning medium so that we are more interested in visiting the museum"* (Interview, 28 February 2024). This highlights the potential of multimedia content to enhance the educational value of museum visits and engage younger audiences.

Another interviewee noted, *"while exploring the museum, we were accompanied by a guide who explained interesting information. The history of Bali is summarized in it"* (Interview, 1 February 2024). This emphasizes the role of guided tours in providing context and enriching the visitor experience. By offering detailed narratives and historical insights, museums can create a more immersive and informative environment for Gen Z tourists.

These underscore the essential role of storytelling in enhancing the appeal of museums for Gen Z tourists. Effective storytelling techniques enable museums to foster deeper engagement by transforming exhibits into immersive and memorable experiences. Storytelling serves as a fundamental mechanism for capturing audience interest and facilitating meaningful connections with cultural heritage. To appeal to Gen Z, museums must employ dynamic narrative strategies that extend beyond static displays, integrating interactive technologies, multimedia content, and collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders to create compelling and contextually relevant narratives.

Previous research has demonstrated that narrative-driven museum experiences significantly enhance visitor engagement, particularly among younger demographics. Incorporating storytelling elements such as guided tours, audiovisual presentations, and interactive displays enhances the educational and experiential value of museum visits. This approach resonates with Generation Z's preference for digital and experiential learning, as well as their inclination towards participatory and shareable experiences. The integration of digital storytelling tools, including augmented reality (AR),

virtual reality (VR), and interactive kiosks, further enriches the museum experience by fostering a deeper emotional and intellectual connection to the exhibited content.

Moreover, the strategic use of storytelling in museum curation aligns with the experience economy framework, which emphasizes the growing demand for immersive and transformative tourism experiences. By leveraging narrative techniques that incorporate both tangible and intangible cultural elements, museums can strengthen their role as centres of cultural learning while simultaneously appealing to the experiential preferences of Gen Z tourists.

3.1.8. Reviews

The findings indicate that trust in reviews and social media content plays a crucial role in shaping Gen Z's interest in visiting museums in Bali. Of the surveyed participants, 91 Gen Z tourists identified reviews from others as a significant influence on their decision-making process. This demographic often relies on digital platforms for recommendations and inspiration, underscoring the importance of an online presence that aligns with their preferences and expectations. Additionally, the interview findings provide further insights into this dynamic. One respondent highlighted the limited awareness of museums in Bali due to the scarcity of videos, photos, and reviews on social media platforms, stating, "I only know a few museums in Bali because there are not enough videos and photos or reviews on social media about museums in Bali" (Interview, 10 January 2024). This statement underscores the need for museums to proactively engage in digital marketing and storytelling to bridge the awareness gap among potential visitors. Another respondent emphasized the importance of visually appealing and interactive experiences, stating, "Museums in Bali must provide interesting or Instagrammable photo spots, so that tourists can take photos or videos and share experiences via social media. Usually, when I see something interesting or Instagrammable, I become interested and want to come and see the museum collection and take photos" (Interview, 28 February 2024). This observation highlights Gen Z's preference for highly visual and shareable content that can be disseminated through personal networks on social media platforms.

These underscore the critical influence of digital reviews and social media content in shaping the preferences of Gen Z tourists towards museum visitation in Bali. Younger tourists place significant value on peer recommendations and rely extensively on digital platforms as primary sources of travel inspiration. This aligns with previous research indicating that Gen Z is highly influenced by user-generated content and social media interactions when making travel decisions. In this context, museums in Bali must develop a comprehensive digital strategy that leverages influencer partnerships, targeted marketing campaigns, and interactive social media content to enhance their online visibility and appeal.

The interviews reinforce these insights, highlighting the necessity of curating visually engaging, "Instagrammable" experiences that align with Gen Z's proclivity for sharing their travels on social media. Respondents emphasized that aesthetically pleasing photo opportunities and interactive exhibits serve as key motivators for visitation, a finding that aligns with contemporary trends in destination marketing. This perspective is further supported by the understanding that digital storytelling and participatory content creation are integral to modern tourism experiences.

Moreover, online reviews emerge as a decisive factor in the decision-making process of this demographic. In an era where digital platforms dominate information consumption, Gen Z tourists frequently consult travel websites, social media reviews, and online forums to assess potential destinations, drawing heavily on the experiential narratives shared by others. Positive reviews enhance the perceived desirability of museums, whereas negative or insufficient reviews can deter potential visitors. This aligns with the tourist gaze framework, which emphasizes the role of mediated perceptions in shaping tourist experiences. Consequently, museums must actively manage their online reputation by encouraging visitor reviews, responding to feedback, and continuously enhancing service quality to foster positive digital engagement.

The strategic integration of social media, user-generated content, and review management into museum marketing aligns with broader trends in tourism studies, which emphasize the increasing digitalization of travel behavior. By fostering interactive, visually appealing, and shareable experiences, museums in Bali can effectively position themselves within the evolving tourism landscape. This proactive approach enhances visitor engagement and reinforces museums' status as dynamic cultural destinations capable of resonating with the preferences and expectations of contemporary tourists.

3.2. Branding Model for Museum Tourist Attractions in Bali

A destination branding model has been developed using the STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) framework to address the preferences of Gen Z tourists for museum attractions in Bali. This model employs a segmentation strategy that targets Gen Z, a cohort characterized by distinct demographic, psychographic, and behavioral attributes, including location, gender, cultural background, education level, and occupation. Previous studies indicate that this generation prioritizes experiences that blend cultural enrichment, education, and entertainment, aligning with the principles of experience-based tourism. The model specifically targets individuals with a pronounced interest in Balinese history, art, and culture, ensuring a tailored approach to engagement and visitor attraction.

The strategic positioning of Bali's museums within this branding model underscores their role as dynamic and engaging cultural destinations designed to appeal to Gen Z. In accordance with principles of brand positioning, the model highlights museums as multifaceted spaces that offer immersive and interactive experiences. Unique collections and Balinese art and cultural performances are central to this approach, providing deep insights into the island's historical and artistic traditions. Additionally, facilities such as cafés and communal areas are integrated to foster social interaction, a factor that previous research identifies as a key determinant of Gen Z's travel behavior. Enhancing accessibility through improved public transport links, ample parking, and inclusive facilities further contributes to the overall visitor experience, ensuring convenience and comfort for diverse audiences.

Furthermore, the integration of sophisticated technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and interactive mobile applications aligns with contemporary trends in digital tourism. These innovations provide engaging and immersive experiences, which have been shown to increase visitor satisfaction and deepen cultural appreciation. Additionally, incorporating creative workshops, cultural classes, and regular special events including art exhibitions and musical performances, enhances the experiential value of museum visits, reinforcing the appeal of these institutions to a digitally connected and experience-driven generation.

A key aspect of this branding model is the emphasis on storytelling as a mechanism for enriching visitor engagement. Guided tours and interactive narratives contribute to a more meaningful museum experience that highlights the effectiveness of storytelling in fostering emotional connections with heritage sites. Moreover, the strategic promotion of visually striking “Instagrammable” locations within museum spaces capitalizes on Gen Z’s propensity for social media engagement, thereby leveraging user-generated content to amplify the museums’ reach and visibility. This approach aligns with destination branding strategies that position cultural attractions within the broader tourism ecosystem, reinforcing Bali’s status as a globally recognized cultural destination. Ultimately, this model ensures that museums in Bali contribute to the preservation of Balinese heritage and actively participate in the evolving tourism landscape. By aligning museum offerings with the expectations and preferences of Gen Z tourists, this framework fosters increased visitation, deeper engagement, and enhanced global recognition. Through a combination of technological innovation, experiential tourism, and strategic digital engagement, Bali’s museums are positioned as vital components of the island’s cultural tourism industry, ensuring their sustained relevance in an increasingly competitive global market.

4. Conclusion

This study has developed a destination branding framework tailored to the preferences of Generation Z tourists visiting museums in Bali. The research identifies key components, namely attractions, accessibility, amenities, ancillary services, activities, storytelling, and digital reviews, as critical determinants influencing museum appeal. Among these, distinctive artistic and cultural collections, traditional Balinese performances, and unique architectural designs emerge as pivotal attractions, reinforcing the significance of cultural authenticity in destination branding [27]. Additionally, practical considerations such as ease of accessibility, the availability of nearby amenities, institutional collaborations, interactive programming, curated events, engaging narratives, and positive online reviews were found to significantly enhance the overall visitor experience. These findings align with existing studies on experiential tourism, which highlight the importance of integrating cultural, technological, and participatory elements to attract younger audiences. By addressing these factors, museums in Bali can strategically position themselves as compelling cultural destinations for Gen Z tourists, thereby strengthening Bali’s broader image as a premier tourism hub.

The destination branding model proposed in this study integrates segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies to respond effectively to the specific expectations of Gen Z tourists. By leveraging interactive and technology-driven experiences, immersive storytelling, and opportunities for cultural engagement, museums can curate profound and memorable tourism experiences for this demographic. Additionally, the emphasis on digital engagement through social media and online reviews corresponds with recent findings on the growing influence of digital word-of-mouth and influencer marketing in shaping tourism decisions. This study, therefore, makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of Gen Z tourists’ expectations, offering actionable insights to strengthen cultural tourism in Bali. Furthermore, the proposed framework serves as a strategic foundation for cultural institutions seeking to enhance their relevance and competitiveness within an evolving global tourism landscape.

However, this study acknowledges certain limitations, particularly its focus on domestic Gen Z tourists and its exclusive examination of museums in Bali. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the preferences of international tourists or those visiting museums in other cultural and geographical contexts. Future research should aim to expand the scope of inquiry by exploring diverse demographic groups and conducting cross-regional analyses to identify broader trends in museum tourism. Comparative studies across different cultural and economic settings would further enrich the understanding of evolving tourism preferences, allowing for the development of more inclusive and effective strategies for cultural tourism promotion. Such research would provide deeper insights into the intersection of generational preferences, digital innovation, and cultural tourism, ultimately informing sustainable and globally relevant approaches to museum branding and visitor engagement.

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