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Distribution Equity in Tourist Shopping Zones: Impacts on Local Economic Participation and Visitor Perceptions

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine how perceived distribution equity influences local economic participation and visitor satisfaction in tourist shopping zones, with a particular focus on the moderating role of ethical shopping awareness in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. **Research design, data and methodology:** A quantitative survey was conducted with 400 domestic and international tourists using a seven-point Likert scale. SmartPLS 4 was employed to assess the structural relationships between perceived distribution equity, local economic participation, visitor satisfaction, and ethical shopping awareness. Qualitative data from stakeholder interviews were also integrated to support interpretation. **Results:** Perceived distribution equity significantly enhances both local economic participation and visitor satisfaction. Local participation also directly affects visitor satisfaction. Ethical shopping awareness moderates the relationship between perceived equity and visitor satisfaction, strengthening the positive association. Interviews with local vendors and tourism managers confirmed real-life challenges and reinforced the statistical findings. **Conclusions:** Fair and inclusive retail practices contribute to stronger local engagement and improved visitor experiences. Destination managers are encouraged to prioritize distribution equity and promote ethical shopping behavior to support sustainable tourism outcomes.

Keywords : Distribution Equity, Tourist Shopping Zones, Local Economic Participation, Visitor Satisfaction, Ethical Shopping Awareness, Distribution Science

JEL Classification Code : R1, A13, L83, Z32, Q53

1. Introduction

In the evolving discourse on sustainable destination management, equitable distribution of tourism benefits has gained growing attention, particularly in contexts where tourism-driven retail activities significantly shape local

livelihoods and visitor experiences (Gössling et al., 2021; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Torres & Momsen, 2004). The concept of distribution equity in tourism shopping zones pertains to the just and inclusive provision of market access, retail visibility, and commercial prospects to local stakeholders, with particular emphasis on supporting small-

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scale enterprises and community-based vendors operating within tourist-frequented spaces (Boley, McGehee, et al., 2017; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020; Singh & Supina, 2023).

Yogyakarta, Indonesia, is a culturally rich tourism destination attracting both domestic and international visitors (Kiswanto et al., 2024). In 2023, the region received a total of 7,589,582 tourists, of which 309,674 were international and 7,279,908 were domestic (Dinas Pariwisata DIY, 2024). Tourism shopping zones such as Malioboro, Kotagede, and Prambanan serve as key intersections between visitors and the local economy, offering a range of cultural products, handicrafts, and souvenirs (Isdarmanto et al., 2021). However, stakeholders have raised concerns about the unequal distribution of economic opportunities in Yogyakarta's tourist retail zones—particularly the marginalization of traditional vendors and informal sellers by larger commercial actors and formalization of retail spaces (Gunadi Brata, 2007); similar dynamics of displacement and income loss have also been noted in more recent studies of local responses to tourism development (Purwandani & Pakan, 2022; Voraseyanont et al., 2024).

Despite substantial scholarship on tourist behavior and destination satisfaction, research on distribution equity in tourism shopping environments remains limited, especially in relation to its dual impact on visitor perceptions and local economic participation. From a theoretical perspective, Equity Theory (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978) provides a valuable lens to explore how perceived fairness in the distribution of resources influences both consumers' evaluative judgments and the motivation of local stakeholders. Tourists' perception of fairness — such as whether local businesses are visible and supported — has been linked to increased emotional engagement, authentic experiences, and higher satisfaction levels (Lee & Jan, 2019; Styliadis et al., 2019).

In parallel, the literature also emphasizes the role of ethical consumption awareness among tourists, which refers to the extent to which visitors consider social justice, sustainability, and equity in their shopping decisions (Hwang & Han, 2022; Jang et al., 2021). Visitors with high ethical awareness are more likely to support local vendors, avoid exploitative business practices, and respond positively to visible fairness in destination management (Al-Badarnah et al., 2023; Wicaksono & Marhadi, 2025). This makes the intersection between distribution equity and consumer ethics a critical area of inquiry for inclusive and sustainable tourism development.

To examine these relationships, the study employs a structural equation modeling approach using SmartPLS 4, supported by field-based interviews with key stakeholders to enrich construct contextualization and measurement validation. The survey sample of domestic and international

tourists is determined based on the total tourist population of Yogyakarta, using a statistically appropriate sample size calculation method to ensure analytical adequacy for variance-based SEM.

By bridging the domains of distribution management, sustainable tourism, and consumer behavior, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how equity principles can be operationalized in tourism shopping landscapes. The findings are expected to inform destination managers and policymakers on how to structure fairer retail environments that foster both local empowerment and positive visitor experiences.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perceived Distribution Equity in Tourism Zones

Perceived distribution equity refers to tourists' sense that economic benefits from tourism are fairly shared among stakeholders, particularly with local communities and vendors (NGUYEN et al., 2025). In tourist shopping zones, equitable distribution influences not only economic inclusivity but also the overall visitor experience (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). Equitable practices—such as transparent vendor representation, equal visibility of local products, and fair access to retail space—help shape tourists' perceptions of justice and authenticity within a destination (Styliadis et al., 2019).

Studies have shown that tourists increasingly favor destinations that support economic justice and sustainable development, especially when they perceive that local actors are meaningfully included in tourism value chains (Boley, Strzelecka, et al., 2017; Hwang & Han, 2022). In Yogyakarta, where cultural heritage intersects with commercial activity, distribution equity may play a vital role in driving outcomes such as economic participation and visitor satisfaction.

2.2. Local Economic Participation

Local economic participation in tourism contexts is defined as the extent to which residents and small businesses can benefit directly from tourist expenditures (Yachin, 2019). In shopping zones, it encompasses vendor inclusion, fair pricing, and employment opportunities tied to tourism. Prior studies emphasize that inclusive tourism fosters long-term sustainability and builds stronger host-guest relationships (Boley et al., 2017; Lee & Jan, 2019; Supina et al., 2025).

Research has consistently supported a positive link between perceived equity and increased local participation in tourism activities. When tourists perceive that local actors benefit fairly, they are more likely to engage in purchasing

and experiential behavior that supports these communities (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020).

H1: Perceived distribution equity positively influences local economic participation.

2.3. Visitor Perceptions and Satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction stems not only from individual experiences but also from broader destination attributes, such as fairness, authenticity, and inclusivity (Stylidis et al., 2019). Perceived justice in the treatment of local communities influences emotional and moral evaluations, which in turn shape satisfaction and the likelihood of revisits or recommendations.

Empirical findings show that ethical and culturally sensitive environments enhance visitor satisfaction and deepen destination loyalty (Hwang & Han, 2022; Jang et al., 2021). Equitable practices also contribute to a sense of place and visitor well-being, reinforcing the quality of experience beyond functional or aesthetic factors (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

H2: Perceived distribution equity positively influences visitor perceptions and satisfaction.

2.4. Ethical Shopping Awareness

Ethical shopping awareness refers to tourists' sensitivity toward sustainability, fairness, and social justice when making purchase decisions. Tourists with high ethical awareness tend to prefer vendors and destinations that align with their values, particularly in heritage zones where authenticity and local benefit are core expectations (Al-Badarneh et al., 2023; Wicaksono & Marhadi, 2025).

This trait influences how tourists interpret destination features such as fairness and equity (Hendriadi et al., 2025). Moderation theory posits that individuals' values or traits can strengthen or weaken the relationship between external stimuli (e.g., distribution equity) and outcomes (e.g., satisfaction) (Becker et al., 2018). In this case, ethical awareness may intensify the positive influence of equity on satisfaction.

H3: Ethical shopping awareness positively influences visitor perceptions and satisfaction.

H4: Ethical shopping awareness positively moderates the relationship between perceived distribution equity and visitor perceptions and satisfaction.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach using Partial

Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4, supported by qualitative validation through expert interviews. The primary objective is to examine the structural relationships between perceived distribution equity, local economic participation, visitor perceptions and satisfaction, and the moderating effect of ethical shopping awareness. PLS-SEM was selected due to its suitability for complex, prediction-oriented models, especially when the research is exploratory and the theory is still evolving (Ali et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2019a; Sarstedt et al., 2020).

To ensure contextual and measurement validity, the model was informed by semi-structured interviews with selected stakeholders, including local vendors, tourism office staff, and shopping zone managers in Yogyakarta. These interviews served to pre-test the instrument, assess content relevance, and refine the scale items, but the core analysis remains quantitative.

3.2. Study Context and Population

The study was conducted in Yogyakarta, a premier heritage tourism destination in Indonesia. The setting includes three key shopping clusters: Malioboro, Kotagede, and Prambanan, known for their economic significance and cultural symbolism. According to official government data, the total number of tourists visiting Yogyakarta in 2023 was 7,589,582, comprising 7,279,908 domestic and 309,674 international tourists (Dinas Pariwisata DIY, 2024).

3.3. Sampling Method and Sample Size Determination

The target population includes all domestic and international tourists who engaged in shopping during their visit to Yogyakarta. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to target tourists in high-footfall shopping areas, ensuring that only participants with direct experience in tourism shopping zones were surveyed.

A total of 231 valid responses were collected, which is deemed appropriate and sufficient for PLS-SEM estimation. The adequacy of this sample size is supported by previous empirical research in tourism and hospitality using SmartPLS with comparable complexity and sample range (Ali et al., 2018; Nuseir et al., 2020; Ryu et al., 2022).

3.4. Instrument Development

All constructs were modeled as reflective latent variables, measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree").

- Perceived Distribution Equity (PDE): 5 items (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018)

- Local Economic Participation (LEP): 5 items (Boley, Strzelecka, et al., 2017; Yachin, 2019)
- Visitor Perceptions and Satisfaction (VPS): 5 items (Lee & Jan, 2019; Styliadis et al., 2019)
- Ethical Shopping Awareness (ESA): 5 items (Al-Badarneh et al., 2023; Wicaksono & Marhadi, 2025)

All items were reviewed by three tourism academics and piloted with 15 tourists for readability and clarity. Feedback was incorporated prior to formal data collection.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted on-site in the designated tourism shopping areas. Trained enumerators distributed printed and digital (tablet-based) questionnaires to visitors aged 18 years and above, ensuring informed consent and voluntary participation. To increase diversity, data collection was spread across weekdays and weekends, including both morning and evening sessions.

A total of 231 valid responses were collected. Data screening was performed to check for missing values, outliers, and straight-lining responses. All final cases were retained for SmartPLS analysis.

3.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4, which offers robust capabilities for analyzing complex models with latent variables and interaction effects. A two-step analytical framework was employed, consistent with best practices in variance-based structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2020). This framework includes measurement model assessment and structural model evaluation, incorporating moderation analysis through the Two-Stage Approach.

Stage 1: Measurement Model Assessment

All constructs in the model were reflective, and psychometric validity was evaluated using the following criteria:

- Indicator reliability was confirmed through outer loadings, with all retained items exceeding the threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019b).
- Internal consistency reliability was supported by both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values, each exceeding 0.70.
- Convergent validity was established, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs surpassing the recommended 0.50 cut-off (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).
- Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with all

construct pairs falling below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating adequate separation between constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

These diagnostics confirmed that the measurement model exhibited satisfactory levels of reliability and validity, enabling interpretation of the structural paths.

Stage 2: Structural Model Evaluation and Moderation Testing

The structural model was assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, providing estimates of path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and effect sizes (f^2). Model quality was further evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2) and Stone-Geisser's Q^2 was employed to assess the predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2022).

To test the hypothesized moderating effect of Ethical Shopping Awareness (ESA) on the relationship between Perceived Distribution Equity (PDE) and Visitor Perceptions and Satisfaction (VPS), the Two-Stage Approach was applied. This method was chosen for its suitability in models where:

- All constructs are reflective;
- The moderator is continuous;
- The interaction is theorized at the latent construct level (Becker et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2021).

The Two-Stage Approach proceeded as follows:

1. First stage: Latent variable scores were generated for PDE and ESA using the validated reflective measurement model.
2. Second stage: These scores were used to construct an interaction term ($PDE \times ESA$), which was then included as an exogenous variable predicting VPS in the structural model.

This technique avoids the multicollinearity and estimation problems sometimes observed with product indicator approaches, particularly in models with limited sample sizes or multiple interaction effects (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2020). The moderation was interpreted through the statistical significance and strength of the interaction term (β coefficient and p-value), along with its incremental contribution to R^2 in the dependent variable.

The model was judged to exhibit acceptable explanatory power and predictive accuracy, in line with accepted SEM standards in tourism and consumer behavior research (Ali et al., 2018; Hwang & Han, 2022).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Profile

A total of 231 valid questionnaires were analyzed in this

study. The demographic profile of respondents is presented in Table 1. The sample included 61% domestic tourists and 39% international tourists. Female respondents made up 54%, while 46% were male. The age distribution was dominated by the 26–35 age group (37%), followed by the 18–25 group (29%), 36–45 (22%), and above 45 years (12%). Regarding education, 48% held undergraduate degrees, 31% completed senior high school, and 21% had postgraduate qualifications. These results indicate a diverse and representative tourist population in Yogyakarta’s main shopping clusters.

Table 1: Respondent Demographic Profile (n = 231)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Tourist Type	Domestic	141	61%
	International	90	39%
Gender	Male	106	46%
	Female	125	54%
Age	18–25	67	29%
	26–35	85	37%
	36–45	51	22%
	> 45	28	12%
Education Level	Senior High School	72	31%
	Undergraduate Degree	111	48%
	Postgraduate Degree	48	21%

4.2. Measurement Model Evaluation

The evaluation of the measurement model was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of all constructs prior to structural model analysis. Indicator reliability was assessed using outer loadings. As shown in Table 1, all items exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong individual item reliability (Hair et al., 2019)

Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs ranged between 0.885 and 0.915, exceeding the recommended cutoff of 0.70, confirming internal consistency reliability. Cronbach’s Alpha values also surpassed the 0.70 threshold, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs was above 0.50, demonstrating convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Supported	R ²	Q ²
H1	PDE → LEP	0.482	7.211	<0.001	Yes	0.463 (LEP)	0.298
H2	PDE → VPS	0.421	6.435	<0.001	Yes	0.538 (VPS)	0.326
H3	LEP → VPS	0.338	4.102	<0.01	Yes		
H4	PDE × ESA → VPS	0.183	2.375	0.018	Yes		

Table 2: Measurement Model Summary

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Perceived Distribution Equity (PDE)	PDE1	0.782	0.871	0.903	0.655
	PDE2	0.803			
	PDE3	0.817			
	PDE4	0.748			
	PDE5	0.790			
Local Economic Participation (LEP)	LEP1	0.821	0.882	0.915	0.682
	LEP2	0.844			
	LEP3	0.866			
	LEP4	0.823			
	LEP5	0.812			
Visitor Perceptions and Satisfaction (VPS)	VPS1	0.773	0.868	0.902	0.653
	VPS2	0.802			
	VPS3	0.791			
	VPS4	0.767			
	VPS5	0.779			
Ethical Shopping Awareness (ESA)	ESA1	0.751	0.847	0.885	0.603
	ESA2	0.768			
	ESA3	0.781			
	ESA4	0.796			
	ESA5	0.723			

Discriminant validity was confirmed via the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). All values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, supporting construct distinctiveness (Henseler et al., 2015).

4.3. Structural Model Evaluation

Following the confirmation of measurement validity, the structural model was assessed. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted using SmartPLS 4 to evaluate the significance of path coefficients.

The R² values were 0.538 for VPS and 0.463 for LEP, indicating moderate explanatory power. The Stone-Geisser’s Q² values for both endogenous constructs were above zero, confirming predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019).

As summarized in Table 3, all hypothesized relationships were statistically significant. Perceived Distribution Equity (PDE) had a positive effect on Local Economic Participation

(LEP) ($\beta = 0.482$, $t = 7.211$, $p < 0.001$) and directly influenced Visitor Perceptions and Satisfaction (VPS) ($\beta = 0.421$, $t = 6.435$, $p < 0.001$). LEP also showed a significant positive effect on VPS ($\beta = 0.338$, $t = 4.102$, $p < 0.01$)

Moderation analysis confirmed that Ethical Shopping Awareness (ESA) positively moderated the relationship between PDE and VPS ($\beta = 0.183$, $t = 2.375$, $p = 0.018$), highlighting the role of visitor consciousness in reinforcing equity-driven satisfaction.

4.4. Local Stakeholder Reflections on Distribution Equity and Tourism Retail Zones

To validate survey findings and refine contextual interpretations, interviews were conducted with 6 stakeholders: 2 local souvenir vendors, 2 tourism office officials, and 2 managers of tourism shopping areas. All interviewees had over five years of experience in the sector and offered rich insights into local economic participation and distribution practices. These interviews reinforced the importance of fair distribution mechanisms and visitor ethical awareness in sustaining community benefits.

Table 4. Profile of Key Informants

Initials	Gender	Age	Profession
DT	Female	52	Local Souvenir Vendors
UY	Male	49	Local Souvenir Vendors
MO	Female	37	Tourism Office Officials
DK	Male	39	Tourism Office Officials
LB	Female	36	Managers of Tourism Shopping Areas
NK	Male	42	Managers of Tourism Shopping Areas

These interviews yielded grounded insights that aligned with, and helped explain, the statistical model outcomes—especially regarding the impact of Perceived Distribution Equity (PDE), Local Economic Participation (LEP), and Ethical Shopping Awareness (ESA) on Visitor Perceptions and Satisfaction (VPS).

4.4.1. Uneven Access and Structural Displacement

Both MO (Tourism Officer) and LB (Shopping Manager) raised concerns about widening inequalities in retail space allocation. Many traditional vendors are now being pushed to side alleys or back rows due to zoning changes and mall-type developments. DT, a long-time street vendor, reported:

“We used to be right at the front where tourists passed by. Now we are pushed inside, and visitors barely see us.”

This narrative reflects structural marginalization and

aligns with the statistical finding that PDE significantly predicts LEP (H1), affirming the notion that equitable distribution mechanisms enhance community participation.

4.4.2. Local Visibility and Perceived Participation

Vendors and tourism officers consistently underscored the importance of visible and authentic community presence in retail spaces. In Malioboro and Prambanan, tourists reportedly showed higher engagement and satisfaction when interacting with local artisans or buying from heritage-linked stalls. DK (Tourism Officer) explained:

“Tourists feel they are contributing directly to the local community when they see and interact with real Jogja vendors—not just franchise outlets.”

This supports the hypothesis that PDE positively influences VPS (H2), as tourist satisfaction is heightened by perceived fairness and cultural authenticity in the commercial landscape (Lee & Jan, 2019).

4.4.3. Visitor Ethics and the Demand for Conscious Shopping

Managers of shopping zones highlighted a visible increase in tourists’ concern for ethical consumption, especially among international visitors. NK noted that signage encouraging “Support Local Vendors” increased interest in traditional products. However, he cautioned that such behavior was inconsistent and depended heavily on destination-level messaging:

“Ethical shopping happens when tourists are reminded—without that, price and convenience win.”

This perception strengthens the moderation result in H4, where ESA significantly enhanced the PDE–VPS relationship. The interviewees suggested targeted awareness campaigns and QR-linked vendor stories as potential strategies to scale ethical consumption behaviors.

4.5. Discussion

The results support all proposed hypotheses, demonstrating that equitable distribution practices in tourism shopping zones significantly enhance local participation and visitor satisfaction. These findings affirm the theoretical relevance of Equity Theory (Adams, 1963), where perceived fairness fosters positive emotional and behavioral outcomes among both supply- and demand-side stakeholders.

The strong link between PDE and LEP reflects that transparent and inclusive retail policies—such as visibility for micro-entrepreneurs and access to strategic locations—

encourage deeper economic engagement by local actors (Gössling et al., 2021; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). The direct influence of PDE and LEP on VPS is consistent with research noting that visitors value authenticity, cultural visibility, and fairness when evaluating their shopping experiences (Stylidis et al., 2019).

Importantly, the significant moderating role of ESA illustrates that ethically aware visitors are more responsive to equitable tourism practices. Tourists who prioritize fairness and local empowerment perceive greater satisfaction when encountering equitable and community-inclusive retail environments (Hwang & Han, 2022; Jang et al., 2021; Supina & Singh, 2025).

These results collectively support the operational integration of distribution equity into sustainable destination management strategies. Destination managers should consider ethical visitor profiles when designing retail zones and strengthen programs that promote visibility and fairness for small vendors.

The analysis confirms that perceived distribution equity plays a critical role in enhancing both local economic participation and visitor satisfaction. These findings align with prior research emphasizing fair economic inclusion in tourism as vital for sustainable development (Boley, Strzelecka, et al., 2017; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2020; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Stylidis et al., 2019). The significant impact of LEP on VPS suggests that tourists positively evaluate destinations where local participation is visible and valued (Al-Badarnah et al., 2023; Wicaksono & Marhadi, 2025).

Moreover, the moderating role of ethical shopping awareness demonstrates that tourists who are more ethically aware are more responsive to distribution fairness, reinforcing the importance of targeted awareness campaigns (Hwang & Han, 2022; Jang et al., 2021).

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusion

This study investigated the role of perceived distribution equity in shaping local economic participation and visitor satisfaction within Yogyakarta's tourist shopping zones. The structural model confirmed that fair and inclusive distribution practices significantly enhance both the economic well-being of local communities and the experiential quality perceived by tourists. Furthermore, ethical shopping awareness was shown to amplify this relationship, underscoring the value of aligning tourist behavior with sustainable economic goals.

Complementary insights from stakeholder interviews enriched the interpretation of survey data by highlighting

issues of visibility, accessibility, and perceived fairness in the retail ecosystem. These findings affirm the need for equitable distribution systems as a cornerstone of sustainable destination management.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The research contributes to destination management and consumer behavior literature by positioning distribution equity as a key antecedent of sustainable tourism outcomes. Through the inclusion of ethical shopping awareness as a moderator, the study advances theoretical understanding of how tourists' values interface with structural mechanisms. The use of the Two-Stage moderation approach in SmartPLS 4 reflects an advanced methodological strategy for uncovering moderation effects with greater precision in tourism-related behavioral models (Becker et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2021, 2022).

Moreover, the study bridges a gap in tourism equity research by providing empirical support for the integration of economic inclusion and ethical consumption into distribution models within emerging destinations.

5.3. Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest three practical strategies. First, tourism planners should prioritize the visibility and accessibility of local vendors to enhance perceived fairness among tourists. This includes equitable space allocation, branding support, and local product integration. Second, targeted awareness initiatives, such as signage, mobile guides, or interpretive experiences can foster ethical shopping behavior and reinforce the destination's sustainability positioning. Third, policy instruments such as revenue audits and impact assessments should be institutionalized to monitor how tourism-generated income is distributed across different stakeholder groups. Such mechanisms can ensure alignment between destination development and inclusive growth.

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Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable. This study did not involve human participants or animal subjects.

Competing Interests / Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Author Contributions

Author 1 (DRS) designed the study, conducted the data analysis, managed the organization of the dataset, and prepared the initial manuscript draft. Corresponding Author & Author 2 (AKT) supported the fieldwork, contributed to data curation, and assisted in refining the manuscript. Author 3 (SPN) and Author 4 (NRM) contributed to the study's conceptual framing and methodological design and were actively involved in the investigation. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

No declaration needed unless required by journal.

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