

## ARTICLE

# Rebranding Samosir Island As City of Foreign Tourists

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**Abstract:** Tourism contributes greatly to a developing country as one of the driving sectors of the economy. The government and the management of tourist destinations must consistently improve the quality of tourism in terms of destinations, industries, institutions, and marketing because of the scope of tourism and the movement of millions of people on indirect tourist trips. So far, foreign tourists have become familiar with tourist destinations in Bali and Lombok. However, many tourist destinations in Indonesia have not been maximally introduced, like Samosir Island at Lake Toba Region. In 2016, the Government of Indonesia envisioned making Toba become the Monaco of Asia. This article examines the factors affecting how long visitors from other countries remain when vacationing in Samosir, a popular international travel destination in Indonesia. Using 100 hundred samples of international travelers' empirical modeling is carried out using a quantitative approach through Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and descriptive analysis. The quality of the accommodations, infrastructure, and rising travel costs contribute to longer travel time for tourists. Although it does not considerably shorten the length of stay in Samosir, rising vacation expenditures in other locations are a bonus for adventurous foreign tourists in Indonesia. Although the appeal of nature and its peace appeal to visitors from abroad, income levels do not greatly raise demand for international visitors to Samosir. As an effort, brand management is needed to improve the image of Samosir Island as the city of foreign tourists in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** foreign tourist; international tourism; city branding; Samosir

## 1. Introduction

One of Indonesia's key sources of foreign currency revenues has recently been the booming tourism industry. The contribution from tourism in 2017 was IDR 536.8 trillion, or 4.1% of all gross domestic product (GDP) in Indonesia. 12.7 million jobs, or 10.5% of all occupations, were generated by tourism in the same year. International arrivals increased by 12.6% in 2018 to 15.8 million, 15.8% more than in 2017. The top international source market for tourists in the nation was China (16% of total visitors), followed by Singapore (13.2%), Malaysia (10.6%), and Australia (9.7%), with the typical stay lasting 8.6 days (OECD, 2020).

Indonesia's archipelago is rich in customs, culture, and language, and it has an attraction that attracts domestic and foreign tourists because of its great potential and diversity of natural resources, including biodiversity and natural beauty. This potential is supported by a strategic geographical location on the equatorial emerald line with a total of 17,508 islands and a land area of 1.68 million km<sup>2</sup> so that Indonesia gets the nickname of an archipelago. The tourism sector will become an asset for Indonesia if it can be managed properly and support the country's economy because it can help other sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, plantations, folk crafts, and so on because their products are needed to support the tourism industry.

From an economic point of view, tourism activities can contribute to local revenue sourced from taxes, parking fees, and tickets or can bring in foreign exchange from visiting foreign tourists. The existence of tourism will also foster economic businesses that string together and support their activities to increase community income. The Government of Indonesia aims for tourism development to provide a range of economic, social, and environmental benefits, specifically to reduce unemployment, eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and improve the image of Indonesia.

In the Global Tourism Index, Indonesian tourism performs better. Indonesia, previously rated 44th, is now ranked 32 out of 117 nations in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) in 2021. This growth demonstrates how far the Indonesian tourism industry has advanced. The enabling environment, travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions, infrastructure, travel and tourism demand drivers, and travel and tourism sustainability were some benchmarks utilized in the TTCI assessment index. Additionally, this improvement in ranking enhances Indonesia's standing abroad, particularly concerning the growth of the tourism industry. It is envisaged that this will enable it to draw investors to the tourist industry, particularly in the five Super Priority Destinations, i.e., Lake Toba in North Sumatra, Borobudur in Central Java, Mandalika in West Nusa Tenggara, Labuan Bajo in East Nusa Tenggara, and Likupang in North Sulawesi (Uppink & Soshkin, 2022).

The island of Bali has generated the most foreign exchange earnings from the tourism sector thus far. Bali appears to be the only potential tourist destination in Indonesia. As a result, numerous individuals are unfamiliar with other Indonesian tourist destinations. But it must be admitted, the face of our tourism today seems to only focus on Bali tourist destinations which are famous for their interesting culture and various exotic places and seem slow and less concerned in promoting and preserving other cultures and tourism that have potential that is no less interesting than Bali. This can be seen from the increase in foreign tourist visits to North Sumatra Province, especially Toba Caldera UNESCO Global Geopark (TCUGGp), which is famous for Lake Toba and Samosir Island in the middle (Simandjorang et al., 2022).

Lake Toba is the largest freshwater reservoir in Southeast Asia, with vast tropical mountains with a maximum depth of approximately 450 meters. The lake is located at the top of the volcanic mountain Toba, 905 meters above sea level. Seven districts surround Lake Toba, namely Simalungun, Toba Samosir, North Tapanuli, Humbang Hasundutan, Dairi, Karo, and Samosir. One of the districts that manage Lake Toba is Samosir Regency. Samosir Regency is a new district divided from Toba Samosir Regency in 2003. The vision of Samosir Island is to become a Tourism City, this is supported by the local government, which is famous for Lake Toba, and the beautiful Samosir Island has made this district a World Heritage by UNESCO mainly because of its rich cultural heritage.

International traveler visits to Lake Toba only slightly rise. One percent more foreign visitors came to Lake Toba through its five international gateways between 2015 and 2018. The total number of foreign visitors to Lake Toba in 2015 was only 229,288. In 2017, 270,292 foreign visitors came to the country, which was a record high ([Statistics of Sumatera Utara Province, 2022](#)). The number of international visitors to Lake Toba, however, actually fell by 14% to 231,465 the following year. In addition to natural beauty, Samosir has various types of historical and cultural heritage, and this potential is spread across nine sub-districts. There are 37 tourist attractions in Samosir, and other tourist objects are being developed to support Samosir becoming a Tourism City. One of the excellent tourist areas in Samosir is Tuktuk Siadong, a peninsula on Samosir Island, which is the center of tourism in Samosir with 30 inns of various types that provide comfort and tranquility for every tourist on vacation ([Hutasoit & Sari, 2014](#)).

Tourism is a mainstay commodity and a strategic and excellent commodity in Samosir. This is due to tourism's strong linkage effect to other economic activities. Given the magnitude of the opportunities the tourism sector possesses, it is necessary to obtain consistent attention and policy commitment. One form of policy commitment the local government gives is to establish the vision of Samosir as an eco-tourism destination. Various derivative policies are provided, especially in budget allocations, to improve tourism in Samosir.

The Government of Indonesia launched a tourism development policy in early 2009 as a progressive decentralization policy towards regional tourism following the ten years of regional autonomy. This policy gives autonomy to the district level to independently develop tourism in their respective areas, allowing each province and district to prepare its tourism development plans to increase local revenue. Nonetheless, the need for coordination and synchronization of planning and action between the national, provincial, and district levels is ongoing and critical.

Traveling is no longer just a desire or hope for some people to enjoy it but has become a trend of necessity for many people, especially for those who have high working hours who do not enjoy time for vacation even in developed countries it is a right, and a tool to relieve stress and not a few companies provide funds for their workers to vacation abroad.

The determinants of tourism demand are the factors that drive and set limits to the volume of population demand for vacations and travel. The determinants of tourism demand explain why residents of some countries have a high propensity to participate in tourism while in other countries, it is low ([Vanhove, 2022](#)). These factors should be distinguished from buyer motivation and behavior. [Middleton et al. \(2009\)](#) summarized nine important factors that influence consumer decision-making on tourism demand: (1) economic factors; (2) price comparisons; (3) demographic factors; (4) geographic factors; (5) socio-cultural attitudes to tourism; (6) mobility;

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(7) government/regulation; (8) communication media; (9) information and communication technology.

The idea that asymmetrical information problems may be the cause of repeated purchases in the tourism sector is investigated research by [Ledesma et al. \(2005\)](#). Utilizing the estimate of a count data model, this hypothesis was examined using a case study of the island of Tenerife. It was discovered that the length of the stay and the knowledge gained from prior visits and/or family and friends could improve the likelihood of returning to a destination, indicating the existence of Shapiro's reputation mechanism. The major findings were confirmed by estimates of the factors determining willingness to return. The main factor that plays an important role in the occurrence of peak vacation seasons is climate. For example, residents of northern Europe tend to take their main vacations in the summer period from June to mid-September. School holidays and annual leave are also key drivers of travel demand. Economic determinants alone, however, cannot explain overall tourism demand. Many other factors influence the volume of vacations and the threshold for travel, such as demographic factors, geographical factors (e.g., climate, urbanization, etc.), socio-cultural attitudes, terrorism, political pressure, growth of crime in tourist destinations or perception of increased crime, etc. ([Tribe, 2011](#)).

The length of a vacation is typically viewed in economic theory as a demand restriction imposed by time availability. Contrarily, it is demonstrated in this research that rather than being a demand characteristic, length of stay influences destination demand. The socio-demographic makeup of the traveler accounts for the majority of the length of stay, with the perceived attributes of the location acting as a moderator. Additionally, sample selection is found to be influenced by stay length ([Barros & Machado, 2010](#)). [Rodríguez et al. \(2018\)](#) examined the factors that affect the length of stay using empirical data from Santiago de Compostela, a small tourist destination in northwest Spain, and five different Heckman selection models. The outcomes enable the identification of various visitor profiles. In this context, same-day visitors tend to be young or retired people traveling for leisure, whereas foreign tourists traveling for business or conference are more likely to stay for a more extended period of time. [Almeida et al. \(2021\)](#) used numerous econometric estimations to determine the factors that affect how long tourists stay at Madeira Island when choosing boutique accommodations and specialized lodging. The average duration of stay for visitors to conventional tourist areas is decreasing as more travelers choose short getaways to several locations. Increased disposable money, aggressive marketing tactics by rival locations, and an increase in low-cost airlines are some of the factors contributing to these changes.

[Woodside and Kozak \(2014\)](#) analyzed how motivational and behavioral factors affect how long foreign visitors stay in the Algarve overnight. The method starts with choosing the factors associated with high levels of heterogeneity throughout the years, then uses a correlation matrix to evaluate how visitors' behavior patterns relate to overnight stays. Behavioral patterns by year are determined based on motivations, sociodemographic, intents, and lagged satisfaction. Fifteen thousand five hundred forty-two observations made at the Faro International Airport between 2007 and 2010 were used in the correlation analysis. The findings, which cover any motives, show that these motives differ statistically by nation and time. The tourism industry has started to show increased interest in targeting those market groups that opt for longer prolonged stays, as they are highly profitable due to the present propensity to do more excursions, but of shorter duration, throughout the year. Seniors make up one of these segments. [Alén et al. \(2014\)](#) studied the factors affecting how long Spanish seniors stay at their destination because of the world's

aging population, especially in Spain. Spanish seniors' duration of stay was studied using the Negative Binomial model. The following determining factors were significant: age, travel goal, climate, lodging type, group size, trip type, and activities at the location. Given the absence of studies of this kind and its highly descriptive nature, this study contributes to the area both empirically and practically, with intriguing implications for the industry.

COVID-19 most severely impacts the international travel, tourism demand, and hospitality industries. They were also one of the largest global providers of full-time and temporary employment in the pre-COVID-19 era. As a result, the sector needs to position itself for the future to benefit from cutting-edge opportunities. Even if the COVID-19 era's prospects for tourism are unclear, extensive and cutting-edge research can be employed to assess how the sector might rebound and endure. Major events, personal protection gear, medical and healthcare needs, medical and healthcare requirements, short, medium, and long-haul domestic and international travel by air and sea, public versus private transportation, hotel accommodations, alternative forms of payment and pre-payment, changes in the tourism and transport industries, changes in tourist behavior, public and private policy considerations, and tourism branding are just a few of the factors that are taken into account (McAleer, 2020).

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) explain that creating a destination brand for tourism is the first step in creating a city brand. This involves designating a city or region as a destination or a place where people can go on vacation for the local and international populations. It also enables a city to tap into the potential of its unique characteristics and identify characteristics to create a competitive brand for that region. Destination branding or creating a strong brand to identify and promote a region, is a common method for creating marketing strategies (for example, the brand of Spain, whose logo is inspired by the combination of colors and shapes that call to mind the work of well-known Spanish artists like Miro). The brand also aids in defining the distinguishing qualities of the various tourism experiences available in the area (Candela & Figini, 2012).

A certain region or city is positioned to become stronger using branding. The traits or identity you wish to express through symbols, slogans, logos, trademarks, and other attributes associated with the city may be summed up in one word: city branding. To boost a city's competitiveness in the global market, city branding is a new tool in regional development that involves creating a collective imagination of a place. Kota Tua Jakarta currently seeks to project its identity globally to draw tourists, investors, and talent, as well as accomplish other objectives desired by stakeholders. Therefore, Kota Tua Jakarta uses tourism city branding as one of its methods to emphasize its competitive edge over tourists (Hidayat et al., 2019). With the factors including city brand attractiveness, tourism experience, city brand attitude, and city brand equity in tourism regions in Indonesia, Miftahuddin et al. (2021) intends to assess city branding in tourist areas. Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling is used. The results of this study lead to the development of a new model, which includes city brand attitude as a moderating variable. This moderating variable is crucial in constructing city brand attractiveness and tourism experience, which are the visitors' top preferences. When compared to other cities, the tourists of Bandung Barat serve as a validation of the identity of a key city branding.

Cities go through distinct and deteriorating growth stages. There may be phases of deterioration and a loss of competitiveness in many cities that have emerged

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distinctively in urban and economic characteristics. Contrary to conventional development tactics that have proven to be less effective over time, this research addresses the challenges associated with seeing cities as brands utilized to acquire a competitive advantage and promote sustainable growth. Al-Hinkawi and Zedan (2021) poses a question regarding the elements of city branding, the most significant sustainable branding tactics used today, and how these affect a city's competitiveness. It creates a thorough theoretical foundation for city branding as a sustainable development method and identifies the most crucial tactics to achieve it to provide a solution. Differentiation, creative cities, experience cities, and tourism cities are the four tactics that are offered. Finally, indications that can be used to improve Baghdad's competitiveness through the longevity of its cultural branding have been retrieved.

Elouali et al. (2020) draw attention to the connection between the city of Rabat (Morocco)'s brand image as a tourist destination and international visitors' decisions to return. In order to further pique the interest of researchers and stakeholders in the tourism industry, which daily faces new challenges related to the attractiveness and sustainability of tourist destinations in the new Moroccan regionalization context, they propose a reliable measurement scale capable of measuring the dimensions and associations of the brand image most remembered by consumers. The survey's findings demonstrate that the functional and abstract associations work together to create the brand image of Rabat in the minds of international visitors, with the abstract associations having a greater impact on the choice of location.

Based on the research background above, the authors draw the following problem formulations: (1) What factors influence the demand for foreign tourists traveling in Samosir? and (2) How is the influence of the factors on the rebranding of Samosir as one of the cities of foreign tourists in Indonesia? This study will make a significant contribution to the academic literature closely related to the variables that affect rebranding Samosir as a city of foreign tourists. It also has implications for the development of appropriate policies for all stakeholders, including government and non-government organizations.

## 2. Methods

This research used historical, descriptive, and quantitative research, where quantitative research includes econometric modeling of factors that influence the demand for foreign tourists to vacation and stay in Samosir Island, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Historical research includes investigating, understanding, and explaining the determinants of foreign tourist demand for vacation and overnight stays in Samosir. In contrast, descriptive research includes data collection to complete the analysis presented in tables, diagrams, graphs, and images.

This research was conducted in Samosir, a major international tourist destination in Indonesia and a center for staying foreign tourists in Lake Toba Region. This research was conducted for approximately two months, from November 2022 until December 2022. The population in this study were foreign tourists who vacationed and stayed at the Samosir. The sampling method used is purposive random sampling, where every tourist who vacations and stays in Samosir has the same opportunity to be sampled in this study. The research sample includes several respondents greater than the minimum requirement of 30 respondents, and the larger the sample will provide a more accurate value. Therefore, to meet the normality standard, the number of tourists sampled in the study was a hundred respondents (Kuncoro, 2014).



This study uses the type of primary data obtained directly from the field through direct interviews and questionnaires prepared in advance for foreign tourists who are met while traveling in Samosir. The data used in cross-section refers to data collected by observing individuals.

This study uses multivariate analysis of the multiple linear regression (multiple regression analysis) methods, which estimates a regression line by minimizing the sum of the squared errors of each observation against the line. The regression function in this study is formed in the logarithms model to obtain the elasticity value (Gujarati & Porter, 2009):

$$\ln Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln X_{1i} + \beta_2 \ln X_{2i} + \beta_3 \ln X_{3i} + \beta_4 \ln X_{4i} + \beta_5 \ln X_{5i} + \varepsilon_i$$

Where:

$Y$  = Length of stay of foreign tourists in Samosir (days)

$X_1$  = Cost of traveling in Samosir (US Dollar)

$X_2$  = Cost of traveling at other destination place (US Dollar)

$X_3$  = Tourist income (US Dollar)

$X_4$  = Quality of accommodation (ordinal scale: 1 = Poor, 2 = Average, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent)

$X_5$  = Infrastructure quality (ordinal scale: 1 = Poor, 2 = Average, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent)

$\beta_0$  = Constant (intercept)

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$  = Partial regression estimator/coefficient

$\varepsilon$  = Residual factor (error term)

### 3. Results and Discussion

The cost of traveling in Samosir has a positive and significant effect on the length of time tourists vacation in Samosir, with an elasticity value of 0.312, meaning that the increase in costs incurred by tourists makes them drastically change the length of their vacation in Samosir. Traveling to other tourist destinations in Indonesia has a negative but significant effect on the length of foreign tourists vacationing in Samosir, with an elasticity value of -0.032, meaning that an increase in tourist costs elsewhere encourages foreign tourists to reduce the length of their vacation in Samosir. This also follows the nature of vacationing foreign tourists from one destination to another in Indonesia. The income level has a positive but insignificant effect on the length of time tourists' vacation in Samosir, with an elasticity value of 0.021, meaning that high income encourages tourists to increase their vacation length in Samosir. The results of the empirical model estimation of the Demand Analysis of Foreign Tourists Traveling in Samosir through the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method are summarized in Table 1.

Another important factor that positively and significantly affects the length of time tourists' vacation in Samosir is tourist satisfaction with accommodation and tourism infrastructure. Therefore, the increasing quality of Samosir accommodation, with an elasticity value of 0.614, and the quality of Samosir's tourism infrastructure, with an elasticity value of 0.566, are more influential factors in encouraging foreign tourists to increase the length of their vacation in Samosir.

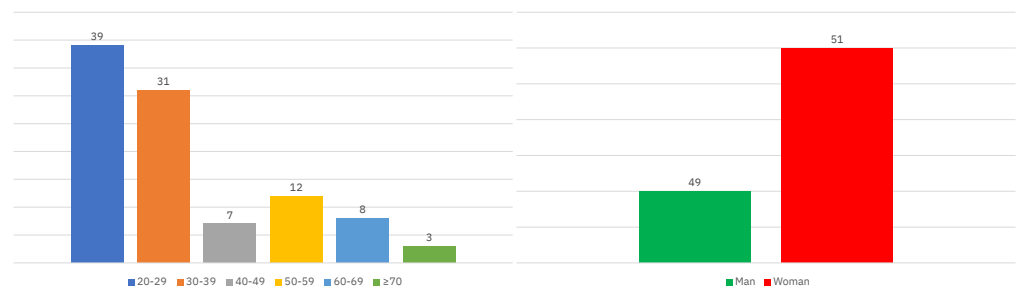
A hundred foreign tourists sampled in this study were predominantly in their twenties (20-29), as many as 39 people and in their thirties (30-39), as many as 31 people and in their fifties (50-59), as many as 12 people. The proportion of gender in this study is 49 male tourists and 51 female tourists from various countries. The education level of foreign tourists who are samples in this study is 43 bachelor's degrees, 23 people graduated from high school, 27 people hold master's degrees, and seven people are doctoral (Ph.D.).

Table 1. Regression Estimation Results

Dependent Variable: Length of Stay (Y)			
	Coefficient	t-statistic	Prob. z
Constant (C)*	-1.367	-1.812	0.06
Explanatory Variable:			
Cost ( $X_1$ )***	0.312	3.914	0.01
Other ( $X_2$ )	-0.032	-0.427	0.68
Income ( $X_3$ )	0.021	0.185	0.81
Accommodation ( $X_4$ )**	0.614	2.326	0.02
Infrastructure ( $X_5$ )**	0.566	2.528	0.03
R <sup>2</sup>	31.22%		
F-statistic***	7.347		0.01

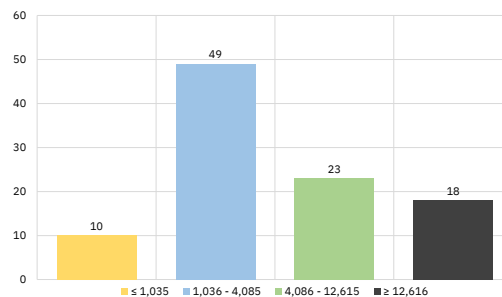
Notes: \*\*\*, \*\*, \* : significant at 1%, 5%, 10% alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level

Figure 1. Age and Gender of Respondent



The tourists sampled in this study dominated middle income. Using income classifications by the World Bank, eight tourists with income below US\$1,035 are in the low-income category, 58 tourists with income between US\$1,036-4,085 are in the lower middle-income category, 20 tourists with income between US\$4,086-12,615 are in the upper middle-income category, and 14 tourists with income above US\$12,615 are in the high-income category.

Figure 2. Monthly Income of Foreign Tourists



Vacation across continents (overseas holidays) is one of the agenda activities of foreign tourists each year. Of the hundred foreign tourists sampled in this study, 56 people routinely do one overseas holiday per year, 21 do it twice a year, and eight do it more than five times a year. Three of the tourist destinations through overseas holidays that foreign tourists do every year is Samosir on Samosir Island, Indonesia. Seventy-five visited Samosir for the first time, 15 people for the second time, and ten foreign tourists have visited Samosir more than three times in their lifetime.

Information about Samosir tourist destinations is obtained by tourists from three main sources, namely travel guides (26%), internet media (35%), and relationships with family and friends (family and friends) (25%). In contrast, the role of other



sources of information, such as travel agencies, tourist fairs, and other media, is very small. Furthermore, the motivations and objectives of the tourists who became the research sample vacationed in Samosir were diverse. However, in general, tourists' vacation in Samosir to enjoy the nature of Samosir Island and Lake Toba by walking and enjoying nature by 26%, enjoying the arts and local culture of the Toba Batak (cultural holiday) by 24% and adventuring like Samosir Island and Lake Toba (adventuring) by 18%.

The tourists who vacation in Samosir travel not only alone; where 33% of their vacation with their spouses, 20% vacation with groups, and 22% vacation by bringing their friends, 25% of other tourists vacation with family and go on vacation alone. In the study, foreign tourists on vacation in Samosir stayed in various accommodations and generally stayed in cottages with 39 people, hotels with 27 people, and homestays and bungalows, which reached 29 people. The tourists also enjoy their vacation in Samosir on various days. In this study, there were 32 foreign tourists vacationing in Samosir for three days. Not a few tourists also have a vacation for 4-5 days in Samosir. Nineteen foreign tourists also enjoyed their vacation in Samosir for over a week. The costs incurred by foreign tourists while on vacation in Samosir also vary according to the needs of transportation, accommodation, food, souvenirs, and other costs. Based on research, 17 foreign tourists spent tens of US\$, 27 foreign tourists spent hundreds of US\$, and 21 foreign tourists spent more than one thousand US\$.

Foreign tourists who do overseas holidays generally do not only vacation in one tourist destination in a country. In addition to Samosir, foreign tourists also vacation in other tourist attractions in North Sumatra and other major tourist destinations in Indonesia, such as Bali, Lombok, Sulawesi, etc. So various other tourist destinations also serve as complementary goods (complimentary) on vacation. The costs incurred by foreign tourists while on vacation in other tourist destinations in Indonesia also vary according to the needs of transportation, accommodation, food, souvenirs, and other costs. Based on research in the field, 30 foreign tourists spent tens of US\$, 22 foreign tourists spent hundreds of US\$, and 29 foreign tourists spent more than one thousand US\$.

Further explanation of the estimation results is reinforced by answers from questionnaires distributed to foreign tourists to provide assessments related to satisfaction with accommodation around Samosir in the "Very Good" zone at 40%.

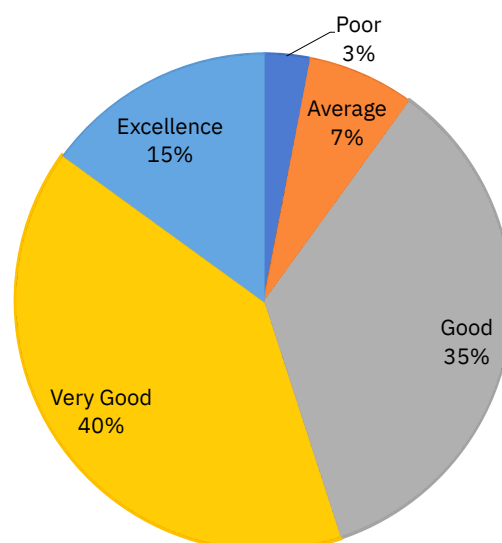


Figure 3. Level of Satisfaction of Foreign Tourists with the Facilities

This means that accommodation around Samosir has been able to meet the needs of foreign tourists in carrying out their activities and activities in Samosir. Providing different facilities for each accommodation is the main attraction for tourists in calculating the facilities with the costs that must be spent. Service, comfort, cleanliness, and beauty are important factors in this case so that tourists are willing to pay the price in accordance with the facilities provided.

The facilities of restaurants, cafes, and bars were rated "good" by 39% and "very good" by 37%. This assessment is based on the quality of the food provided, cleanliness, comfort in tasting food seen from the atmosphere of restaurants, cafes, and bars, and the services provided by the owners and employees concerned.

As for the assessment of the tourists sampled, 15% stated "Perfect" for their satisfaction with the quality of Lake Toba. A total of 40% stated "Good," and "25%" stated "Fair." Based on the research, many tourists are sad and disappointed to see the quality of Lake Toba. This is based on the large number of floating net cages that damage the water quality and scenery around Lake Toba, not to mention the water hyacinth is scattered when the rain comes and floods the area in the Lake Toba area. Many locals still carry out bathing, washing, and toilet activities around Lake Toba. The importance of awareness by the community needs to be built and supervised by the Samosir district government if it wants to make Samosir one of the tourist destinations that want to attract and impress tourists.

As many as 47% of foreign tourists rated "Very Good" on the beauty of Lake Toba. This assessment is based on the panorama of Lake Toba itself, which is naturally created, its topography, the view of the vast lake, which is supported by the air, and the beauty of the place, which provides comfort when seeing and enjoying it, like "Heaven" in the world and 45% stated "Perfect" for the natural beauty of Lake Toba.

Satisfaction of foreign tourists with the heritage of historical sites, where 30% rated "Good," 33% "Very Good," and 10% stated "Perfect." This is based on the number of historical heritage sites that are not well maintained and the lack of government intervention in preserving historical sites around Lake Toba. Furthermore, 29% of foreign tourists stated "Good" in mountain biking. This is based on the lack of good road infrastructure to support tourists to do mountain biking tours and the lack of information obtained to do mountain biking tours in the Samosir area, especially where this is one of the leading tourist attractions owned by Samosir with the shape of the region which is mostly mountains.

Fifty-one percent of tourists rated it "Good" for leisurely walking. However, the lack of pedestrian areas provided by the government for the needs of tourists is a dilemma for tourists. How not, in the morning, when they walk leisurely, there are still many roads and sidewalks that are damaged and left unfinished and neglected, which causes a lot of dust during the day and the phenomenon that occurs in the afternoon, tourists have to feel their shoes muddy due to the rain that flushed the Samosir area and the lack of quality of development carried out on some pedestrian areas where the sewers are flooded, and water stagnates along Samosir road in general.

A total of 60% of foreign tourists rated satisfaction with fishing as "Fair." This explains the lack of facilities, lack of information, and lack of services provided regarding fishing activities. The government should build a place for fishing activities to attract tourists to Samosir. Forty percent of foreign tourists rated "Good," and 30% rated "Fair" on satisfaction with transportation in Samosir. This assessment is based on the need to improve the level of service for transportation services both by the owner and the employee/driver. The lack of security is another reason for tourists to

use transportation in the Samosir and Samosir areas, plus the damaged roads that are full of holes that make tourists feel uncomfortable using transportation services.

Thirty-three percent of tourists rated "Good," and 30% rated "Fair" on general satisfaction with infrastructure in Samosir and the Samosir area. There are still many holes along the road in the Samosir area, and the lack of streetlights at night and the lack of pedestrian areas for tourists cause the lack of satisfaction of tourists stay long in Samosir. Tourists assessed their satisfaction with places for shopping in the Samosir and Samosir areas at 40% "Good" and 30% "Fair." This is based on the lack of innovation and community creation in creating superior products that characterize the Samosir area. The goods offered can be found in any city, so there is no added value obtained for an item that can be used as "souvenirs" from Samosir for tourists traveling to Samosir.

Foreign tourists' assessment of the hospitality of the people in the Samosir and Samosir areas amounted to 45% "Very Good" and 34% "Perfect." An appreciation for the people of Samosir, who can maintain our eastern culture as Indonesians who are friendly and known to smile easily. 27% of foreign tourists are satisfied with tourism information in Samosir and the Samosir area. What happens is that tourists generally do not have their guides about tourist objects in Samosir and the Samosir area and information from friends to friends that make them able to enjoy their vacation in Samosir. As many as 45% of tourists rated "Perfect" on the satisfaction of security facilities in Samosir and Samosir. This is based on the high communication between the local community and the hotels, cottages, and tourists in creating a sense of security from each party to motivate Samosir tourism to develop other potentials.

Tourists rated 51% "Fair" on Samosir and the Samosir area healthcare facilities. This is based on the lack of expert doctors and medicines that support health facility services in Samosir and Samosir. The government needs special attention to ensure the safety and health of foreign tourists in carrying out vacation activities and relaxing in Samosir and Samosir. The assessment of foreign tourists on financial service facilities in Samosir is 57% of foreign tourists rated "Poor" on the satisfaction of financial services in Samosir. This is based on the finding that there is no single ATM in Samosir, the central destination for foreign tourists on vacation. How can foreign tourists spend a long time in Samosir if no ATM facilities make it easy for them to make transactions? Finally, they have to go back to Parapat just to take the money, and it is not a certainty that ATMs in Parapat can function properly, and the lack of money changer facilities in Samosir.

Tourists assess satisfaction with the value of money in the Samosir area by 40% "Very Good" and 35% "Perfect." This is based on the level of exchange of the value of money for goods and services in the region is categorized as being in a normal distribution, meaning that tourists can still accept the increase in the price of goods that occurs as long as it does not reduce their satisfaction in getting services and value following the funds they spend. The tourists who vacationed in Samosir were satisfied with their spending during their vacation, whereas 59 tourists answered that their expenses were still in the normal category in accordance with their initial planning for a vacation in Samosir. There are 28 foreign tourists who answered that the level of their expenses while on vacation in Samosir was still cheap, and 13 foreign tourists believed that the cost of traveling in Samosir was very expensive and beyond their previous financial planning.

Of the tourists who vacationed in Samosir gave their satisfaction during their vacation in Samosir, where 30 tourists were very satisfied during their vacation, 37 were quite satisfied, 23 tourists were satisfied, and ten were unsatisfied. In general,

tourists who vacation in Samosir are satisfied during their vacation in Samosir with various activities and expenses. So from the results of questions about vacationing again in Samosir for the next coming years, 68 foreign tourists answered that they would vacation again in Samosir, while 32 foreign tourists answered that they would not return to vacation in Samosir due to several dissatisfactions while vacationing there, one of which is the infrastructure that still needs to be improved and in financial facility services in the form of ATMs, visa cards, etc. which are still very minimal and need to be improved in medium and long-term.

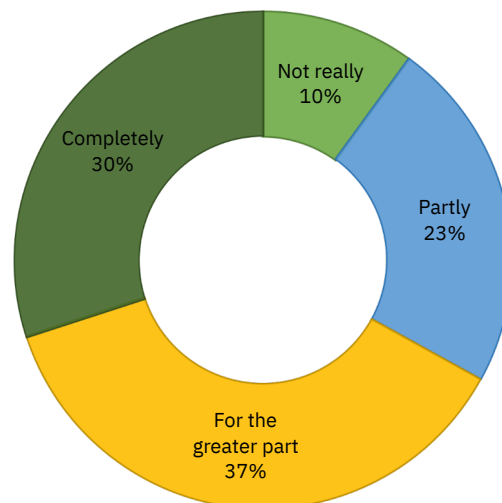


Figure 4. Overall Perception of Foreign Tourist Satisfaction of Vacation in Samosir

#### 4. Conclusion

After the data that has been obtained from various sources are processed and analyzed by researchers, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) the cost of traveling in Samosir has a positive and significant effect on the length of time tourists vacation in Samosir, meaning that the increase in costs that tourists must incur does not make them drastically change the length of their vacation in Samosir; (2) the cost of traveling in other tourist destinations in Indonesia has a negative but insignificant effect on the length of foreign tourists vacationing in Samosir, meaning that an increase in the cost of tourism in other places encourages foreign tourists to reduce the length of their vacation in Samosir. This is also in accordance with the vacationing nature of foreign tourists who vacation from one tourist destination to another in Indonesia; (3) income level has a positive but insignificant effect on the length of time tourists vacation in Samosir, meaning that high income encourages tourists to increase the length of their vacation in Samosir; and (4) another important factor that has a positive and significant effect on the length of time tourists vacation in Samosir is the level of tourist satisfaction with accommodation and tourism infrastructure. The increasing quality of accommodation and tourism infrastructure in Samosir will encourage foreign tourists to increase the length of their vacation in Samosir.

There are several suggestions and policy recommendations in the development of Samosir, namely: (a) the absence of ATM facilities in Samosir, and Samosir needs to be corrected for the local government in supporting the development of tourism in Samosir Island. In addition, the far provision of other financial services facilities such as banks and the few types of banks in Samosir where tourists have to travel from Samosir to Pangururan for more than an hour, and the lack of money changer facilities make tourists reluctant to linger in Samosir. Foreign tourists do not want to

be bothered by a vacation. The government must address things like this to answer the real needs of tourists who are important and needed immediately, not based on the wishes of the government; (b) infrastructure improvements, especially roads, and sidewalks along the Samosir area, which is the central destination for foreign tourists on their vacation. Potholed roads, the provision of places for pedestrians that are not in accordance with standard procedures, the absence of street lights, and the low disposal of water/sewers parallel to the road body, which results in flooding and muddy roads when it rains and makes tourists reluctant to do their activities outside the room; (c) the need for strict and consistent regulations from the government in prohibiting the construction of more and more floating net cages, local community activities for bathing, washing, and latrines in the Lake Toba area and water hyacinths that are scattered wildly around Lake Toba when it rains heavily. This has resulted in tourists being afraid to swim in the Lake Toba area, which is considered to cause skin diseases and damage health; (d) there is a need to construct a Post Office in Samosir. This is based on the results of research where tourists need a post office to send letters to their families, relatives and friends who are far away so that tourists feel comfortable and safe because their whereabouts and conditions are known by their relatives, relatives and friends, and are not closed to the local community itself in supporting their activities in the future such as: sending packages to their relatives who are in the city where they do not have to go to Parapat to send packages/ goods; (e) the importance of improving Health Facilities in Samosir such as the provision of quality medicines, the presence of expert doctors, and the form of 24-hour health services for tourists to provide their safety and comfort while on vacation; and (f) both the government itself is required to achieve the targets set through the vision that has been promoted, namely "Samosir Becomes an Innovative Tourism Destination", where tourism must consider the socio-economic and environmental impacts both now and in the future by taking into account the needs of tourists, not the wishes of the government and decision makers in parliament, the tourism industry, the surrounding environment and the local community.

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