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TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCES AS TOURISM ATTRACTIONS FOR CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS AT GILI MAS PORT, LOMBOK
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Abstract:

The rapid growth of the global cruise tourism industry has encouraged destinations in Indonesia to strengthen ports as gateways for international tourists. Gili Mas Port in Lombok has strategic potential due to its proximity to leading tourist destinations and the richness of the Sasak culture. However, tourism promotion—particularly traditional performances as sustainable attractions—has not yet been managed optimally and in an integrated manner. This study aims to analyze tourism promotion strategies for cruise ship passengers at Gili Mas Port and to identify the challenges encountered. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach using participatory observation, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders (KSOP Lembar, PT Pelindo, Tourism Office, NTB Regional Tourism Promotion Board, travel agent associations, and cruise tourists), and documentation studies. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings indicate that traditional performances are still presented mainly as ceremonial welcoming events and have not been optimally integrated into an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy. In addition, the use of digital media remains limited. The main challenges include stakeholder coordination, the limited duration of cruise tourists' visits, and the absence of a sustainable cultural promotion model. This study recommends strengthening culture-based IMC strategies to enhance the competitiveness of cruise tourism in Lombok.

Keywords: Traditional Performances, Tourism Promotion, Cruise Tourism, IMC, Gili Mas Port.

INTRODUCTION

The development and trends of cruise ship tourism have become a rapidly growing and highly sought-after global tourism trend. According to data from the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA), since 2010, cruise tourism has grown at an average rate of 6.5% per year, with an average of 30 million passengers worldwide. Furthermore, it is projected that by 2025, there will be approximately 37.7 million cruise passengers globally, contributing over US\$168 billion to the global economy. The growth of cruise tourism is inseparable from the conveniences it offers, including luxury and comfort. Additionally, cruise ships integrate accommodation, transportation, entertainment, and culinary services into a single travel package. It makes cruise ships an attractive tourism option for various groups seeking a complete and exclusive travel and holiday experience. It has made cruise ships an appealing vacation choice for diverse demographics, from families to couples looking for a romantic experience (CLIA, 2019).



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One factor driving the rapid growth of the cruise trend is tourists' desire for unique holiday and travel experiences. The uniqueness gained by tourists when choosing a cruise vacation is the ability to select their own itinerary according to their wishes and tourism goals. Moreover, cruise ships offer adventure and exploration, such as visiting multiple tourist destinations in one trip. Themed cruises like wellness cruises, eco-cruises, and adventure cruises are increasingly in demand as they offer compelling experiences. It is one of the factors attracting generations from Millennials to Gen X to vacation on cruise ships. Based on data (CLIA, 2024), 31% of Millennial and Gen X passengers in the last two years were new passengers, and 82% plan to sail again on a cruise ship.

According to Expert Market Research (2025), the global cruise tourism market value reached approximately USD 7.89 billion in 2024 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of around 11.5% during 2025–2034. It has led several Asian countries to begin developing infrastructure to support the global growth of cruise tourism. Countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore continue to invest heavily in building world-class cruise terminals. These terminals are designed to accommodate large ships, serve thousands of passengers quickly and safely, and provide a comfortable embarkation experience. Some modern ports that serve as benchmarks for cruise ports are the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal in Hong Kong, Marina Bay Cruise Center in Singapore, and Shekou Cruise Center in Shenzhen. These three demonstrate how ports integrated with easy access, international standards like CIQP (Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, Port Security), and support from surrounding tourist attractions can strengthen a destination's competitiveness. Over the past decade, the Asia region has become the fastest-growing market in the global cruise industry and a strategic priority for cruise operators like Royal Caribbean, MSC, and Dream Cruises.

It underscores that strengthening the port sector is not only about physical infrastructure but also connectivity with the local tourism ecosystem. This phenomenon is now reaching Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, which realizes the importance of not being left behind in the current global cruise industry growth. The Indonesian government, through the "10 New Balis" program, actively encourages the development of cruise ports such as Benoa in Bali, Labuan Bajo in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and Gili Mas in Lombok. Lombok, as one of Indonesia's premier tourist destinations, has great potential for cruise tourism development through Gili Mas Port. Gili Mas Port is projected to become a strategic point for welcoming international cruise ships, given its proximity to the 3 Gili tourism area (Gili Trawangan, Gili Air, and Gili Meno) and the unique and distinctive culture of the Sasak community. Lestari, Y. B., & Yusra, K. (2022) show that the cultural richness of the Sasak community has great potential to be developed as a leading tourism product. Furthermore, based on data from Traveland Tour World, it is revealed that globally, cruise trends prioritize authentic experiences such as visiting traditional villages or attending traditional art performances. Cultural tourism has become key in promoting cruise tourism because it serves as a tourist attraction for visiting Lombok and makes Lombok's tourism more competitive in the global market.

Despite the cultural potential and cruise trends in Lombok, Gili Mas Port still faces several challenges, particularly in the area of promotion. The rapid growth in Gili Mas has not been fully accompanied by strengthening elements such as systematic and sustainable promotional strategies. The promotion of tourist attractions to cruise tourists at Gili Mas is still inconsistent. The cultural performances presented are only a small part and are limited to welcome ceremonies when a cruise ship docks. Additionally, current academic studies analyzing how effective tourism promotion strategies are implemented at Gili Mas Port are still rare. Another challenge at Gili Mas Port is the minimal use of digital media by the Port Authority or related agencies to reach potential cruise



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tourists before they arrive. In an academic context, tourism promotion theories from experts such as Kotler and Govers (2009) emphasize the importance of segmentation approaches, storytelling, and destination image strengthening.

Therefore, this research becomes important to complement the literature and promotional practices within the context of Indonesian cruise ports. Hence, on this occasion, the researcher is interested in taking the research title "Cultural Performances as Sustainable Tourism Attractions: An Analysis of Tourism Attraction Promotion for Cruise Ship Guests at Gili Mas Port, Lombok.

METHODS

The design in this research was the framework used by the researcher to systematically guide the research process so that the research objectives could be achieved. In this study, the design used by the researcher was qualitative research with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the research focused on efforts to understand the strategies, forms, and effectiveness of tourism promotion conducted by related parties, while also capturing the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders and cruise guests. Descriptive qualitative research was used to describe social phenomena in depth, prioritizing not numbers but the meaning behind the collected data. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research provides an opportunity to explore human experience, interpret meaning, and understand interaction within a specific context. It was relevant to the context of tourism promotion, which was not only measured by visitor number outputs but also by communication strategies, promotional messages, and tourists' perceptions of the offered attractions.

Furthermore, this research design allowed the researcher to conduct a broader exploration of the involved parties, such as port authorities, tourism offices, travel agents, and cruise tourists. Yin (2014) emphasizes that qualitative research provides space to understand complex phenomena in real-world contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear. Therefore, the selection of a descriptive qualitative design was appropriate for delving into the tourism promotion strategies occurring at Gili Mas Port, Lombok.

The location of this research was Gili Mas Port, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that Gili Mas Port was the main port used as the entry point for international cruise ships to Lombok Island. With cruise ships docking regularly, this port became the center of interaction between foreign tourists and relevant parties in the local tourism industry. It made Gili Mas Port a strategic place to research the practice of promoting tourist attractions to cruise tourists. Moreover, Gili Mas Port held an important position in supporting NTB's tourism development, especially as a gateway for marine and cultural tourism. According to the NTB Tourism Office (2022), the existence of Gili Mas Port functioned not only as a sea transportation route but also as a center for tourism promotion activities aimed at cruise tourists with various tour packages to premier destinations, such as Senggigi, Gili Trawangan, and Sade Village.

The research was conducted over 7 months, starting from May 2025 to December 2025. This time span was chosen because this period coincided with a fairly busy schedule of cruise ship arrivals at Gili Mas Port. According to data from Pelindo III (2024), the level of cruise ship visits to Lombok generally increased from September to the end of the year, giving the researcher a significant opportunity to obtain comprehensive data from tourists, travel agents, and port authorities. The data used in this study were divided into two types: primary data and secondary data. These two types of data complemented each other, providing a comprehensive picture of the



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strategy for promoting tourist attractions to cruise guests at Gili Mas Port, Lombok. Primary data was data obtained directly from first-hand sources through the researcher's interaction with research subjects. In the context of this research, primary data were obtained from the results of in-depth interviews, field observations, and direct documentation at the research site. Primary data sources included parties actively involved in tourism promotion activities, such as the Harbor Master and Port Authority (KSOP) Lembar, PT. Pelindo (Persero), the West Lombok Regency Tourism Office, the NTB Regional Tourism Promotion Agency (BPPD), travel agents or the NTB Travel Agent Association, as well as cruise tourists who were the target of the promotion. According to Moleong (2017), primary data in qualitative research was the most authentic form of data because it was obtained from the experiences, views, and direct interaction with the researched subjects. Thus, the primary data in this study depicted the actual reality of tourism promotion strategies carried out at Gili Mas Port.

Secondary data used in this research included annual reports from the NTB Tourism Office, cruise ship visit statistics data from Pelindo III, regional tourism promotion strategy documents, as well as scientific articles and news related to tourism development in Lombok. Sugiyono (2019) explains that secondary data functioned to strengthen and enrich field findings, making the researcher's analysis more objective and in-depth. By combining primary and secondary data, this research was expected to produce a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of tourism attraction promotion at Gili Mas Port. The data collection technique in this research used a qualitative approach, with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the strategy for promoting tourist attractions to cruise guests at Gili Mas Port. Observation was conducted directly at Gili Mas Port when cruise ships docked, and tourism promotion activities took place. The researcher observed the interaction between tourists and promotional parties, the forms of promotional materials offered, and tourists' responses to the promotion. This participant observation allowed the researcher to see first-hand the promotional practices carried out in the field. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to obtain information directly from parties involved in promoting tourist attractions. Key informants in the interviews included the Harbor Master and Port Authority (KSOP) Lembar, PT. Pelindo (Persero), the West Lombok Regency Tourism Office, the NTB Regional Tourism Promotion Agency (BPPD), travel agents or the NTB Travel Agent Association, as well as cruise tourists. The documentation technique was used by the researcher to obtain data from written documents, reports, photos, brochures, or official promotional materials used at Gili Mas Port. Documentation data included cruise ship arrival schedules, tourist visit reports, promotion data from the Tourism Office, and regional tourism strategy documents. Documentation served as complementary data that could be verified with interview and observation results.

Data analysis in qualitative research aimed to organize, interpret, and draw meaning from the data that had been obtained. In this research, data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were sorted to select information relevant to the research focus, namely the strategy for promoting tourist attractions to cruise guests. The next stage was displaying the data in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or charts to facilitate understanding. This data display aimed to present the reduced information clearly, making it easier for the researcher to see patterns, relationships, and trends emerging from the data. In this study, data display was done by presenting the results of in-depth interviews, field observation notes, and supporting documents obtained.

The final stage was conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusions in this research were obtained through the process of interpreting data that had been reduced and displayed, then compared with theory and previous findings to discover deeper meaning. The verification process



was carried out iteratively by re-checking field notes, interview results, and supporting documents so that the conclusions drawn could be justified. Data validity could be tested with four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this research, data validity testing was conducted with several techniques, including triangulation, member checks, and prolonged engagement of the researcher in the field. Source triangulation was done by comparing and re-checking data obtained from various sources, such as port authorities, travel agents, cruise tourists, and the Tourism Office. By comparing information from various informants, the researcher could see data consistency and obtain a more objective picture.

In addition to source triangulation, this research also used method triangulation, which combined interview, observation, and documentation study methods. For example, information about promotion strategies obtained through interviews with travel agents was compared with the results of observation of promotional activities in the field and official promotion documents from the Tourism Office. Thus, the truth of the data could be tested in various ways of collecting information. Member check was conducted by reconfirming interview results or the researcher's interpretations with the informants to ensure that the recorded data matched the intent conveyed by the informant. The researcher also conducted prolonged engagement in the field by being directly involved in promotional activities at Gili Mas Port. A longer presence at the research site allowed the researcher to understand the social context more deeply and increased informants' trust in the researcher, so that the data obtained was richer and more profound. The research procedure was the systematic steps taken by the researcher to achieve the research objectives. In this qualitative research, the procedure undertaken was divided into three main stages: the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and the data analysis and report writing stage. At the preparation stage, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to understand the research context, particularly the conditions of tourism and promotion at Gili Mas Port. In addition, the researcher compiled a research proposal, obtained research permits from related institutions, and prepared research instruments such as interview guidelines, observation formats, and a list of documents to be studied. Observation was conducted on promotional activities at the port, while documentation was obtained from archives, reports, and promotional media used. At this stage, the researcher maintained research ethics by obtaining informant consent before interviews and maintaining data confidentiality.

The final stage was data analysis, conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), namely through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis results were then compiled into a systematic research report according to academic structure, from introduction, literature review, research methods, results and discussion, to conclusions and recommendations. At this stage, the researcher also conducted data validity tests through triangulation and member checks to ensure the validity of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Research Location. Gili Mas Port is an important part of the Lembar Port service system, located in West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The existence of Gili Mas Port marks a significant milestone in the development of the maritime transport and tourism sector on Lombok Island, particularly as a modern cruise terminal capable of accommodating large-sized vessels. In the context of regional development, this port functions as a supporting facility for connectivity, logistics, and access for foreign tourists arriving via sea routes. Technical data from Pt. Pelindo (Persero) shows that Gili Mas was developed as a multipurpose terminal capable of serving



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large cruise ships. With a quay length (LOA) of 362 meters, the terminal can receive international cruise ships carrying thousands of passengers. Its passenger terminal facility consists of a two-story building measuring 72 meters by 31.5 meters, with a capacity to accommodate up to 1,500 people. Externally, a parking area of 2,700 m² is available to support tourism transport operations, including shuttle buses and tour vehicles. This capacity and the completeness of its facilities demonstrate Gili Mas Port's readiness to provide international-standard services for cruise tourists.



Figure 1. Study Area Location

From an accessibility aspect, the location of Gili Mas Terminal is highly strategic and interconnected with various important activity centers in Lombok. The distance from the terminal to Lembar Port is only about 7 km, with a travel time of approximately 15 minutes via land route. Additionally, the distance to the Mandalika International Circuit is about 50 km, or roughly a 1-hour land journey. This geographical position provides a competitive advantage, particularly in supporting the mobility of cruise tourists to main destinations on Lombok Island, while also strengthening the port's function as a gateway for maritime tourism. The port is also supported by Roro (Roll-on/roll-off) ferry services connecting Lombok Island with various regions in Indonesia, as well as by port human resources (HR) who are competent in loading/unloading operations, safety, and passenger services. Furthermore, the port management regularly compiles reports regarding traffic flow, performance, and utilization as part of efforts to evaluate operational effectiveness. Although numerical data is not elaborated in the presentation, these three indicators affirm the existence of a systematic monitoring system in port management.

Overall, Gili Mas Port is a strategic infrastructure that plays an important role in the development of maritime transportation and tourism in Lombok, featuring modern facilities, large capacity, and connectivity that supports regional economic growth.

Geographical Location and Accessibility. Administratively, Gili Mas Port is located within the sub-district (Kecamatan) of Lembar, West Lombok Regency, in the province of West Nusa Tenggara. The position of Gili Mas Port can be indicated by the coordinates 8°44'27" S (-8.74095°) and 116°03'51" E (116.06403°). This port was built on the southwestern coast of Lombok Island, facing directly onto the Lombok Strait, which is a major international shipping lane. Its geographical location is highly strategic because it lies at a nautical junction connecting the Bali-Lombok-Nusa Tenggara maritime tourism route. Furthermore, Gili Mas Port is located approximately 25 kilometers from the center of Mataram city, with a land travel time of roughly 45 to 60 minutes depending on traffic conditions. This location provides easy access for tourists who wish to continue



their journey to the city center, as well as to cultural and culinary destinations and the provincial government center in the capital city.



Figure 2. Geographical Location

From Zainuddin Abdul Madjid International Airport, the distance to Gili Mas Port is approximately 45 kilometers, with an average travel time of 1.5 hours. Furthermore, Gili Mas Port offers quick access to Lombok's premier destinations such as Gili Trawangan, Gili Air, Gili Meno, Senggigi, Sade Village, and Banyumulek. It is because from the port, tourist vehicles can use a fast bypass route, allowing access to all these destinations to be reached without obstacles or traffic congestion. Gili Mas Port was constructed on a land area of approximately 50 hectares, encompassing the passenger terminal, wharf, support facilities, and an integrated development zone. Within this total area, the modern passenger terminal can accommodate around 4,000 tourists per single cruise ship arrival, making it sufficient to serve the growing influx of international tourists. Its international wharf is over 400 meters long and can simultaneously dock 2 large cruise ships with a capacity of over 4,000 passengers and 4 smaller cruise ships.

Gili Mas Port possessed modern port facilities designed to support the operations of large-scale cruise ships while providing comfort for visiting tourists. The supporting facilities and infrastructure at Gili Mas Port included:

International Passenger Terminal. The international passenger terminal at Gili Mas Port, Lombok, was a modern facility designed to serve the arrival of thousands of cruise tourists with global service standards. The terminal was equipped with immigration and customs areas, security services, a comfortable waiting lounge, organized pedestrian pathways, and CIQP (Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, Port Security) facilities, ensuring quick, safe, and efficient debarkation and embarkation processes. Furthermore, the spacious area prevented crowding even with the arrival of large numbers of tourists. The distance between the cruise ship and the port was also not too far, so tourists did not need to walk a long distance to receive service at the port terminal.

Cruise Ship Wharf. The cruise ship wharf at Gili Mas Port was in very good and modern condition, evident from its robust harbor structure, level surface, and well-maintained mooring system, allowing large cruise ships to dock safely. The wharf area appeared clean, well-organized, and had ample space to support the activities of tourists disembarking and embarking. The water depth around the wharf remained stable and sufficient, with no siltation hindering ship maneuvers. Additionally, supporting infrastructure such as lighting, safety signs, and access routes to the terminal functioned well, reflecting regular maintenance to ensure the comfort and safety of cruise ship operations visiting Gili Mas.



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Gili Mas Port Parking Area. The condition of the vehicle parking area at Gili Mas Port was spacious, well-organized, and capable of accommodating various types of vehicles used for cruise tourist operations. The parking location was divided into three categories: the western parking area was used for general visitors and guests; the eastern parking area was used for motorcycles; and the main parking area inside the passenger terminal was used for vehicles prepared by Travel Agents for tourists who would be touring Lombok. The parking surface was relatively flat, constructed with asphalt and paving blocks, and clean, with clear parking markers, facilitating the arrangement of private cars, tourist buses, shuttles, and port operational vehicles. The available space was large enough to accommodate dozens of buses simultaneously, ensuring smooth tourist pick-up flows without congestion. Vehicle entry and exit access were also well-organized with wide lanes, supporting the mobility of tourists who needed to move quickly, given their limited stopover duration (Heykal et al., 2024). These conditions indicated that the Gili Mas parking area was designed to support the smooth operation of cruise tourism optimally.

Commercial Area. The commercial area at Gili Mas Port was located directly in front of the tourist exit area and was in good, organized condition. Consequently, many tourists, before choosing a tour package, preferred to browse local products such as fabrics, typical Lombok souvenirs, leather bags, and several t-shirts themed around the Mandalika Circuit. This commercial zone was indeed permitted by the Port Authority under the supervision of the Lembar Harbor Master and Port Authority (KSOP), requiring prior business licensing for the Lembar Port area. Thus, it was evident that the locations of vendors around the port were orderly, and spaces had been provided by the port authorities, preventing unauthorized vendors from operating without a KSOP business permit. Most of the commercial area at Gili Mas Port was occupied by the local community around the port, indirectly benefiting from cruise ship activities at Gili Mas. The majority of the commercial area offered souvenir products, currency exchange, handicrafts, and light food and beverages.

Pedestrian Walkways. The pedestrian walkways at Gili Mas Port were in good condition, clean, and designed to facilitate the movement of cruise tourists from the wharf to the terminal and commercial area. The path surface was level and wide, making it safe for use by large groups of tourists. Additionally, this area was equipped with boundary fences, directional signs, and adequate lighting to ensure tourists could walk comfortably and in a directed manner, even in less favorable weather conditions. The cleanliness of the pedestrian walkways was maintained, without obstacles like puddles or trash, indicating consistent operational management. Overall, these pedestrian walkways created an orderly and efficient mobility flow, which was crucial for cruise tourists with limited visit durations.

Tourist Information Center. The Tourist Information Center at Gili Mas Port was located directly in front of the wharf exit gate, allowing tourists to immediately inquire about all information related to tourism activities around Gili Mas. Furthermore, the Port Information Center was in neat and functional condition, serving as the main point for tourists to obtain information regarding destinations, tour packages, and transportation services in Lombok. Its location was easy to find due to its strategic position near the arrival terminal, with clear signage. The room was neatly arranged, equipped with a service desk, destination brochures, tourism maps, and visual promotional materials helping tourists understand their visitation options. The staff on duty also appeared ready to serve, provide explanations, and direct tourists according to their needs. The existence of this facility helped create an organized and informative initial experience, while also demonstrating the readiness of Gili Mas Port to provide professional tourism services. The information center was



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directly managed by the Gili Mas Port tourism agent, LA PARADISE, as a partner of Gili Mas Port, ensuring that the information needed by tourists could be conveyed effectively.

Integrated Transportation Routes. The integrated transportation routes at Gili Mas Port were in well-organized condition and supported the smooth mobility of cruise tourists to various premier destinations in Lombok. Connecting roads from the port to the parking area, terminal, and exit access were designed to be wide and smooth, allowing the movement of tourist buses, shuttles, and taxis to proceed without obstruction. Directional signs and traffic signs were clearly installed, making it easier for drivers to follow the established flow. The vehicle management system at exit and entry gates also functioned effectively, reducing the potential for congestion, especially when thousands of tourists disembarked simultaneously. These good route conditions reflected strong integration between the port and Lombok's land transportation network, allowing tourists' limited stopover time to be optimized for tourism activities. Furthermore, traffic management was already integrated with port authorities and travel agents, so tourists who had purchased official tour packages from port agents or the cruise ship received transportation priority, finding their transport directly in front of the wharf exit gate. The port's routes were also close to several priority destinations in Lombok, such as the Mandalika Circuit, Senggigi, Mataram City, and several destinations in the Sekotong area.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that tourism promotion based on traditional performances at Gili Mas Port, Lombok, has not yet been managed optimally or sustainably. Traditional performances are still positioned mainly as ceremonial attractions rather than strategic promotional tools within an IMC framework. The main challenges include fragmented promotion strategies, limited digital media utilization, and insufficient stakeholder coordination. It is recommended that tourism stakeholders strengthen IMC-based promotion strategies by positioning traditional performances as core promotional messages, expanding digital promotion before cruise ship arrivals, and enhancing collaboration among port authorities, tourism institutions, and cruise operators. This study is limited to a qualitative case study at a single cruise port. Future research may adopt mixed-method approaches or comparative studies across multiple cruise destinations to enhance generalizability.

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