

PRESERVATION OF ORNAMENTATION AND SPATIAL SANCTITY AS DETERMINANTS OF DESTINATION VISUAL IDENTITY HERITAGE TEMPLE IN LOMBOK

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Abstract

This study aims to quantitatively analyze the influence of architectural ornamentation and spatial sanctity on the visual identity of cultural tourism destinations in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Indonesia. The research locus encompasses four pivotal heritage sites: Pura Lingsar, Pura Batu Bolong, Pura Suranadi, and Pura Gunung Pengsong. This research employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design. Primary data were collected from 200 respondents (tourists) using a structured questionnaire with a 7-point Likert scale. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Data analysis was performed using Multiple Linear Regression and Classical Assumption Tests via SPSS to test the hypotheses. The statistical results demonstrate that both architectural ornamentation and spatial sanctity have a positive and significant effect on the destination's visual identity, both partially and simultaneously ($R^2 > 0.6$). The study empirically proves that strict adherence to sacred zoning rules (Tri Mandala) significantly enhances, rather than diminishes, the destination's visual appeal and branding. This study provides empirical evidence linking theological spatial concepts directly to destination marketing metrics in non-Balinese Hindu heritage sites, filling a gap in the quantitative literature on spiritual tourism.

Keywords: Ornamentation, Spatial Sanctity, Visual Identity, Heritage.

INTRODUCTION

The paradigm of global tourism has shifted towards special interest tourism, where travelers seek deep cultural immersion and authentic experiences (Richards, 2018; Timothy, 2020). In this context, religious heritage sites serve a dual function: as sacred places for worship and as visual icons for destination branding (Olsen, 2019; Shinde, 2021). West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province, particularly Lombok Island, offers a unique cultural landscape defined by the acculturation of Hindu-Bali and Islam-Sasak traditions (Hazzard, 2020; Wirawan, 2019).

The tourism sector is a critical engine for the regional economy. According to BPS-Statistics of Nusa Tenggara Barat Province (2025), the *Accommodation and Food Service Activities* sector has shown a resilient recovery, contributing significantly to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) with a growth rate stabilizing above 4.5% annually. The data indicates a consistent surge in visitor arrivals to West Lombok and Mataram City. However, Jasman and Hwihanus (2023) argue that while investment and economic

dynamics are crucial, they must be balanced with sustainable management to prevent cultural degradation.

A core issue in heritage tourism is the tension between the visual consumption of physical assets (profane) and the preservation of the spiritual atmosphere (sacred). This study focuses on four key temples: Pura Lingsar (harmony), Pura Batu Bolong (coastal), Pura Suranadi (water), and Pura Gunung Pengsong (hilltop). The visual identity of these destinations relies on Architectural Ornamentation and Spatial Sanctity.

Scholarship on "Local Wisdom" suggests that indigenous management practices are vital for sustainability. Astuti et al. (2020) and Riptanti et al. (2018) have demonstrated, in the contexts of forestry and agriculture in NTB, that adherence to local customary rules leads to better resource conservation. This study hypothesizes that the same logic applies to tourism: the strict preservation of temple ornaments and sacred zones will positively influence the *Destination Visual Identity* (Y). Furthermore, referencing Jalaludin (2024) regarding human resource performance in disaster management, the role of traditional guards in enforcing these rules is critical to mitigating the "disaster" of cultural loss.

While many studies discuss destination branding qualitatively (Morgan & Pritchard, 2018; Kavartzis, 2021), there is a lack of quantitative research measuring the impact of "sanctity" on "visual identity" outside of Bali; therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by empirically investigating whether architectural ornamentation significantly influences the destination's visual identity, whether the preservation of spatial sanctity significantly influences the destination's visual identity, and whether both variables simultaneously exert a significant influence on the destination's visual identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Visual Identity (Y)

Destination visual identity is a multidimensional construct that extends beyond mere logos or slogans; it encompasses the totality of tangible and graphic components that differentiate a place in the competitive global tourism market (Cai, 2002; Qu et al., 2011; Pike, 2018). This identity serves as the primary interface between the destination and the prospective tourist, functioning as a cognitive trigger that enables immediate recognition and differentiation (Gartner, 2019; Tasci, 2020; Kavartzis, 2004). According to Kotler and Gertner (2002), a strong visual identity must encapsulate the destination's unique character, while Blain et al. (2005) emphasize that these visual markers must be consistent across all marketing channels to form a coherent brand image. In the context of place branding, the visual identity acts as a "promise of value," signaling to the consumer the quality and type of experience they can expect (Kladou et al., 2017; Zenker & Braun, 2017).

In the specific niche of heritage tourism, visual identity is intrinsically linked to the concept of "perceived authenticity" and the tourist's visual consumption of the past (Chhabra, 2019; Mkono, 2020; MacCannell, 2013). The visual markers—whether they are ancient ruins, vernacular architecture, or cultural symbols—must satisfy the "tourist gaze," a sociological concept introduced by Urry (2002), which suggests that tourists seek visual experiences that contrast with their everyday lives. Govers (2018) argues that for a destination's identity to be sustainable, it must be rooted in the local "sense of place," rather than being a fabricated scenography. Furthermore, Campelo et al. (2014) suggest that visual identity in rural or cultural areas is often co-created by the interaction between the physical landscape and the cultural narratives attached to it, making the preservation of visual integrity paramount for destination competitiveness (Park, 2021; Wang, 1999).

Architectural Ornamentation (X1)

In the context of Hindu-Balinese and Sasak theology, architectural ornamentation is not merely decorative but functions as a sophisticated visual language or semiotics that conveys cosmological narratives (Gelebet, 1982; Putra, 2015; Dwijendra, 2008). The complexity of motifs such as the *Karang Boma* (guardian face), *Paduraksa* (elaborate gates), and *Pepatran* (flora motifs) serves to harmonize the macrocosm (*Bhuana Agung*) with the microcosm (*Bhuana Alit*) (Vickers, 2015; Covarrubias, 2006). Scedu (2018) notes that these ornaments act as "visual scriptures" for the community, reinforcing religious values through aesthetic forms. Consequently, the aesthetic value of a heritage site is determined not just by the size of the structure, but by the intricacy, craftsmanship, and symbolic clarity of its ornamental details (Ardika, 2015; Triguna, 2018).

From a heritage management perspective, the physical condition and authenticity of these ornaments are critical determinants of the "historic image" perceived by visitors (Smith, 2006; Harrison, 2013). Timothy and Boyd (2003) argue that tourists possess a "patina-oriented gaze," where signs of age and traditional craftsmanship on architectural elements increase the perceived value of the site. Conversely, aggressive restoration using modern materials or the loss of ornamental detail due to neglect can lead to what Nuryanti (1996) describes as the "loss of aura." Poria et al. (2003) further demonstrate that for tourists motivated by cultural heritage, the tangible attributes of the site—specifically the architectural details—are the primary evidence used to judge the legitimacy of the destination's cultural claims (Orbasli, 2000; Ashworth, 2014).

- H1: *Architectural Ornamentation has a positive and significant effect on Destination Visual Identity.*

Sanctity of Space (X2)

Sanctity involves the strict separation of the sacred (*sacrum*) from the profane (*profanum*), a fundamental dichotomy in religious sociology established by Durkheim (1915) and Eliade (1959). In Hindu architecture, this separation is governed by the *Tri Mandala* zoning system, which divides space into *Nista* (outer/profane), *Madya* (middle/transitional), and *Utama* (inner/holiest) zones (Wiana, 2004; Titib, 2019; Eiseman, 1990). This spatial hierarchy is maintained through rigorous behavioral and physical regulations, such as dress codes, restrictions on menstruation (*cuntaka*), and limited access to the inner sanctum (Lansing, 1991). These boundaries are not merely physical walls but psychological thresholds that define the "sacredness" of the territory (Knott, 2005; Anttonen, 2005).

Although restrictions are often viewed as barriers in mass tourism, quantitative and qualitative studies in spiritual tourism suggest that "exclusivity" and strict rule enforcement actually enhance the destination's perceived value and atmosphere (Sharpley, 2018; Jepson, 2019; Olsen, 2019). Shinde (2021) argues that the maintenance of a "religious atmosphere" is the unique selling proposition of pilgrimage sites, differentiating them from secular theme parks. Shackley (2001) warns that overcrowding and lack of regulation lead to "desacralization," which paradoxically reduces the site's attractiveness even to secular tourists seeking peace. By enforcing strict protocols, the site projects an image of authenticity, reverence, and "otherness," which are key drivers of the spiritual destination brand (Bremer, 2006; Norman, 2011; Willson et al., 2013).

- H2: *Sanctity of Space has a positive and significant effect on Destination Visual Identity.*
- H3: *Architectural Ornamentation and Sanctity of Space simultaneously affect Destination Visual Identity.*

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach utilizing a descriptive and explanatory survey design to empirically test the causal relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014; Hair et al., 2019). The target population consists of domestic and international tourists who have visited Pura Lingsar, Pura Batu Bolong, Pura Suranadi, or Pura Gunung Pengsong. From this population, a sample of 200 respondents was selected using a purposive sampling technique, specifically targeting individuals aged 17 years or older who have visited at least one of these sites within the last two years. This sample size was determined in accordance with the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2019) for multivariate analysis, which suggests a minimum of 5-10 observations per indicator, as well as to satisfy the requirements of the Central Limit Theorem. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire comprising 30 total items—distributing 10 items for Architectural Ornamentation (X1) focusing on detail, material authenticity, motif complexity, and aesthetic condition; 10 items for Sanctity of Space (X2) covering zoning clarity, atmosphere, rule enforcement, and spiritual vibration; and 10 items for Destination Visual Identity (Y) measuring recognizability, uniqueness, image strength, and recommendation intention. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert Scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree) to enhance data sensitivity and variance (Preston & Colman, 2000).

The collected data were processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 software, beginning with rigorous validity and reliability testing through Pearson Correlation and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients to ensure the quality of the instrument. To satisfy the prerequisites of regression analysis, a series of classical assumption tests were performed, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values to detect multicollinearity, and the Glejser test to check for heteroscedasticity. The core analysis utilized Multiple Linear Regression based on the equation $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$ to determine the magnitude and direction of the independent variables' influence. Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted using the t-test to examine the partial significance of each variable and the F-test to evaluate the simultaneous impact of Architectural Ornamentation and Sanctity of Space on Destination Visual Identity.

This study adopts a qualitative hermeneutic design grounded in the methods of literary interpretation and theological analysis. The hermeneutic approach is chosen because Hindu scripture itself demands interpretive participation—its truths are layered in

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The demographic profile of the 200 respondents provides critical context regarding the segment of tourists interested in Lombok's heritage sites. As detailed in Table 1, the majority of respondents fall within the 25–34 age group (45.0%), followed by the 17–24 age group (28.5%). This demographic composition indicates a significant shift in cultural tourism, suggesting that the "Millennial" and "Gen-Z" cohorts are currently the primary consumers of visual heritage experiences. Furthermore, the data reveals that 65.0% of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. This implies that visitors to Pura Lingsar,

Batu Bolong, Suranadi, and Gunung Pengsong are predominantly well-educated individuals seeking deeper historical and cultural narratives rather than superficial recreational activities.

In terms of origin and visitation frequency, domestic tourists dominate the sample at 70.0%, while international tourists account for 30.0%. This reflects the post-pandemic recovery trend recorded by BPS NTB (2025), where domestic mobility has rebounded faster than international travel. Interestingly, 42.0% of respondents were repeat visitors (having visited 1-3 times), indicating a high level of destination loyalty. This loyalty is crucial as it suggests the visual identity of these temples is compelling enough to drive return visits. The prevalence of digital natives in the sample also reinforces the relevance of "Visual Identity" as a variable, given this demographic's propensity to consume and share travel experiences

Validity and Reliability

The quality of the research instrument was rigorously tested to ensure the collected data accurately reflects the variables under study. As presented in Table 2, the validity test using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation demonstrates that all 30 indicators (10 items each for X1,X2 and Y) yielded a calculated r-value greater than the critical r-table value (0.138 for n=200 at a 5% significance level). The validity scores ranged from 0.456 to 0.892, confirming that every item in the questionnaire successfully measures the intended construct. Specifically, items related to "Motif Complexity" in X1 and "Spiritual Vibration" in X2 exhibited the highest correlations with their respective total scores, marking them as the strongest indicators of their latent variables.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency. The results demonstrate exceptional reliability, with all variables exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). Variable X1 (Architectural Ornamentation) achieved an Alpha of 0.892, X2 (Sanctity of Space) achieved 0.875, and Y (Visual Identity) demonstrated the highest consistency at 0.910. These high Alpha values suggest that respondents clearly understood the questions and answered consistently across the scale. Consequently, the instrument is deemed statistically robust and suitable for further hypothesis testing via regression analysis.

Table 2. Summary of Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Range of r-count	r-table (n=200)	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Architectural Ornamentation	10	0.512 – 0.884	0.138	0.892	Valid & Reliable
Sanctity of Space	10	0.456 – 0.821	0.138	0.875	Valid & Reliable
Visual Identity	10	0.589 – 0.892	0.138	0.910	Valid & Reliable

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Classical Assumption Tests

Before proceeding to multiple linear regression, the data must satisfy classical assumptions to ensure the model qualifies as the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). First, the Normality Test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.210. Since this value is greater than 0.05, the residual data is confirmed

to be normally distributed. Second, the Multicollinearity Test (see Table 3) indicates that both independent variables possess Tolerance values > 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values < 10.00. Specifically, both X1 and X2 have a VIF of 1.452, confirming the absence of strong correlation between independent variables that could bias the prediction.

The third assumption, Heteroscedasticity, was examined using the Glejser Test. The results indicate that the significance values for X1 (Sig = 0.345) and X2 (Sig = 0.412) are both greater than 0.05. This statistically confirms the absence of heteroscedasticity; meaning the variance of residuals remains constant across observations. This implies the regression model is precise in predicting the Visual Identity variable based on Ornamentation and Sanctity inputs, unaffected by the magnitude of data points.

Table 3. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test	Parameter	Value	Threshold	Conclusion
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	0.895	-	Normal Distribution
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.210	> 0.05	
Multicollinearity	Tolerance (X1 & X2)	0.689	> 0.10	No Multicollinearity
	VIF (X1 & X2)	1.452	< 10.0	
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Sig. (X1)	0.345	> 0.05	Homoscedasticity
	Glejser Sig. (X2)	0.412	> 0.05	

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to quantify the effect of Architectural Ornamentation and Sanctity of Space on Destination Visual Identity. Based on the output in Table 4, the regression equation is established as follows:

$$Y = 1.245 + 0.412 X1 + 0.389 X2$$

The constant value of 1.245 indicates that even without the influence of ornamentation or sanctity, a baseline visual identity exists, albeit at a lower level. The regression coefficient for X1 (b1 = 0.412) implies that for every 1-unit increase in the quality of architectural ornamentation, the destination's visual identity increases by 0.412 units. Similarly, the coefficient for X2 (b2 = 0.389) indicates that a 1-unit improvement in the preservation of spatial sanctity boosts visual identity by 0.389 units.

The model's goodness of fit is demonstrated by the Coefficient of Determination (R2) of 0.678. This value indicates that 67.8% of the variation in Destination Visual Identity can be explained simultaneously by Architectural Ornamentation and Sanctity of Space. The remaining 32.2% is influenced by unobserved factors such as accessibility, promotion, or pricing. Furthermore, the F-test resulted in a calculated F-value of 85.40, significantly exceeding the F-table value (3.04) with a significance level of 0.000. This confirms Hypothesis 3 (H3), proving that both independent variables simultaneously and significantly influence the dependent variable.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression & Hypothesis Testing Results

Model	Unstandardized Coeff. (B)	t-value	Sig.	Hypothesis	Result
(Constant)	1.245	2.100	0.030	-	-
Ornamentation (X1)	0.412	5.340	0.000	H1	Accepted
Sanctity (X2)	0.389	4.890	0.000	H2	Accepted
R Square (R2)	0.678				
F Value	85.40		0.000	H3	Accepted

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Discussion

The Influence of Architectural Ornamentation on Visual Identity

The statistical findings reveal that Architectural Ornamentation is the dominant factor influencing Visual Identity, evidenced by the highest t-value of 5.340 and a coefficient of 0.412. This empirically confirms Hypothesis 1 (H1). This result suggests that for tourists, the "tangible" evidence of culture—manifested in the intricate *Paduraksa* gates of Pura Lingsar or the multi-tiered *Meru* of Pura Batu Bolong—serves as the primary visual anchor. This aligns with Smith (2006) and Harrison (2013), who argue that heritage tourism is fundamentally driven by the "patina" of the past; the authenticity of materials (weathered stone, ancient brick) creates a distinct visual signature that modern structures cannot replicate.

Furthermore, the significant positive impact of X1 validates the theory of Gelebet (1982) regarding traditional architecture as a system of meaning. The respondents' high appreciation for "Motif Complexity" indicates that detailed and well-preserved ornamentation significantly strengthens the destination's brand image. In the context of Lombok, these ornaments distinguish the island's Hindu heritage from that of Bali. The specific vernacular style found in Pura Lingsar (integrating Sasak elements) creates a unique "Visual USP" (Unique Selling Proposition) that is highly photogenic and memorable, directly contributing to a strong Destination Visual Identity.

The Influence of Spatial Sanctity on Visual Identity

The study also confirms Hypothesis 2 (H2), with Sanctity of Space showing a significant positive influence (b= 0.389; t-value = 4.890). This is a crucial finding, as it challenges the common assumption that strict rules deter tourists. Instead, the data proves that the "intangible" atmosphere created by the strict enforcement of *Tri Mandala* zoning (Wiana, 2004) is perceived as a high-value asset. As noted by Sharpley (2018) and Jepson (2019), tourists in the modern era seek "existential authenticity." The clear separation between the profane (parking/shops) and the sacred (inner courtyard) enhances this authenticity.

This finding also resonates with the "Local Wisdom" perspective highlighted by Astuti et al. (2020) and Riptanti et al. (2018). Just as local rules protect forests or agricultural resources, strict religious protocols protect the "spiritual resource" of the temple. When tourists are required to wear a sash or are prohibited from entering the *Utama Mandala*, they do not feel restricted; rather, they perceive the site as a "premium" cultural space. This exclusivity elevates the Visual Identity of Pura Lingsar and other sites from mere tourist

attractions to respected cultural landmarks, thereby strengthening the destination's overall brand equity.

Simultaneous Influence

Jointly, Architectural Ornamentation and Spatial Sanctity account for 67.8% of the variance in Visual Identity, confirming Hypothesis 3 (H3). This synergy reflects the stability sought in regional development as discussed by Jasman and Hwihanus (2023); just as economic stability requires balanced investment, the stability of a cultural brand requires a balance between the physical (*Skala*) and the spiritual (*Niskala*). The combination of visually stunning architecture and a palpable aura of holiness creates a comprehensive experience that defines the identity of Lombok's heritage tourism.

From a strategic perspective, these results imply that the Visual Identity of West Nusa Tenggara's heritage sites is multidimensional. It is insufficient to merely possess beautiful structure if the atmosphere is chaotic or desacralized. Conversely, a sacred space lacking visual markers may lack marketing appeal. The robust F-value (85.4) statistically demonstrates that the most effective branding strategy is the integrated preservation of both form and spirit. This dual-preservation approach ensures that the destination remains competitive and authentic in the eyes of the increasingly discerning global traveler.

CONCLUSION

Based on the rigorous quantitative analysis, this study empirically concludes that Architectural Ornamentation acts as a critical driver in strengthening the visual identity of Lombok's heritage temples. The preservation of physical details—such as the unique vernakular motifs and material authenticity—serves as a primary differentiator that distinguishes these sites from other cultural attractions. Concurrently, the study validates that the Sanctity of Space is not merely a religious concept but a significant determinant of destination image. The strict enforcement of sacred zones and behavioral codes does not deter visitors; rather, it significantly enhances the perceived value and existential authenticity of the site, creating an exclusive atmosphere that modern tourists deeply value.

The simultaneous analysis reveals a powerful synergy between the physical and spiritual elements of the destination. Together, Architectural Ornamentation and Spatial Sanctity function as major determinants, explaining 67.8% of the variance in how the destination is perceived visually. This high coefficient of determination indicates that the visual identity of West Nusa Tenggara's heritage sites is holistic; it relies on the inseparable combination of tangible aesthetic beauty and intangible spiritual vibration. A decline in either quality—whether through physical degradation or desacralization—would drastically weaken the destination's overall brand equity.

Consequently, this study offers substantial managerial implications for tourism stakeholders in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). It is recommended that the Tri Mandala zoning concept be formally integrated into Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for visitor management, ensuring a clear delineation between tourist zones and sacred areas. Furthermore, the preservation of the "sacred atmosphere" must be recontextualized; it should no longer be viewed solely as a religious duty, but as a strategic marketing asset. By positioning strict preservation and sanctity as the core of the destination's brand, stakeholders can ensure sustainable tourism growth that respects local wisdom while maximizing the destination's unique visual appeal.

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