

## **Analysis of Factors that Influence Prospective New Students to Choose a Tourism Study Program at Universities in Yogyakarta**

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**Abstract.** The decision of prospective students to choose a tourism college in Yogyakarta is important to study. This aims to ensure that universities can provide the best service by selecting locations and improving facilities, the quality of human resources, and the image of universities. The growth of the tourism sector continues to increase, along with the increase in the number of tourist trips, so superior and professional resource personnel are needed. As educational institutions, tourism universities are responsible for producing quality and competitive human resources. The aim of this research is to analyze the influence of place and resource resources on student decisions through the image of the institution as a mediator. The research results show that the place and resources of the speakers do not directly have a significant influence on student decisions, but when mediated by the image of the institution, they have a significant influence. Furthermore, the place and resources of the speakers have a significant influence on the image of the institution, and the image of the institution also has a significant influence on student decisions. The research results show that institutional image is an important factor influencing student decisions.

**Keywords:** institutional image, student decisions, resource persons, place

### **Introduction**

Tourism has become a very large industry and involves large numbers of people. The UNWTO Annual Report (2017) recorded that 1.323 billion tourists went on tours throughout 2017. It was calculated that there was a growth in the number of tourists of 7%, or 84 million tourists when compared to the number of tours in 2016. In addition, there was a recorded growth in the average number of tour trips. Average above 4% for 8 consecutive years since 2008.

Along with the growth of the tourism sector, which continues to increase from time to time, this is followed by an increase in the quality of human resources in the tourism sector. The demand for improving the quality of human resources in the tourism sector is absolutely necessary not only because the development of the tourism industry continues to increase but also because, since 2004 the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has agreed. Several things agreed upon in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) are the free flow of goods, services, investment, food security, freer flow of capital, skilled workers, and integration of 12 priority sectors.

The large opportunity for human resource needs in the tourism sector encourages educational institutions, especially universities, to open tourism study programs. The Association of Indonesian

Tourism Tertiary Education Institutions (AITTEI), in 2019 noted that at least 130 universities had tourism study programs and majors; Department of Hospitality, Department of Tourism Travel Business, Department of Tourism Hospitality.

Higher education, especially in the tourism sector, is not a company that pursues financial profits, but neither is it an institution for charity. This certainly encourages the emergence of competition between universities, both directly and indirectly. Ability in marketing, especially promotional strategies, is the spearhead of higher education marketing. In this case, consumers are prospective high school/vocational school graduates or equivalent. Currently, they are much more critical in making decisions about choosing a university.

The prospective student's decision in determining the choice to enter a university is based on information on the facilities, service quality and quality of the university. This intense competition also encourages educational institutions to provide the best services, especially in the field of quality and quality of education. The institution that has the authority to assess the quality of higher education in Indonesia is BAN-PT (National Accreditation Board for Higher Education). The Accreditation scores issued by BAN-PT are in the form of the predicate "A" which means "Very Good", "B" which means "Good" and "C" for the score 'Adequate'.

The results of this research are quite important as input and reference material for management to take policy and strategic steps, both from the marketing and service sides. Therefore, this research was conducted to measure the magnitude of the influence of place variables and resource resources on decisions through image as a mediator, which can provide a more comprehensive picture and complement the results of previous research on student decision-making in choosing universities, especially tourism universities.

The right location and improving the quality of resource resources in ensuring the quality of education can improve the image of higher education institutions, which is important in attracting the interest of prospective students so that it can have implications for increasing the number of students at a higher education institution. Decision-making is a stage in which a person takes action to do something, influenced by internal and external factors. The decision-making process consists of several stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternative information options, product selection, and decision-making (Kotler, 2010).

## **Basic theory**

### **Student Decision**

Decision-making is a process or stage of choosing one of several options so that someone is ready to take action and do something. Kotler & Keller (2005) explain that what is meant by a purchasing decision is a process of solving a problem, starting from the stage of analyzing needs and desires to behaviour after making a purchase. Blackwell et al. (2001) explain that 3 main factors influence consumer decisions. First, the stimulation or temptation factor from the marketing process of service/product providers. Second is the influence of external environmental factors, including culture, social class, influence of other people, family and situation. The third factor is individual differences, including consumer abilities, motivational drives, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values, and the consumer's own lifestyle.

### **Institutional Image**

Institutional image has been identified as a significant factor in students' decisions to choose a particular institution. Kim and Richardson (2003) found that institutional image significantly impacts students' enrollment decisions. Similarly, Kim, Han, and Schultz (2004) showed that a positive institutional image could increase students' willingness to enrol in college. In addition, Gibbs and Knapp (2002) found that institutional image can have a long-term impact on students' perceptions of the institution even after they graduate.

### **Place**

Kotler & Armstrong (2003) state that "Distribution channels consist of a set of institutions that carry out all activities (functions) used to distribute products and the status of their owners from producers to consumers." From the definition above, it can be interpreted that the distribution channel for an item is the

entire activity or function of moving the product along with the owner's rights from the producer to the final consumer or industrial user. Distribution is related to the ease of obtaining products on the market and being available when consumers look for them. Distribution shows the various activities carried out by a company to make products or services available and available to target consumers.

**Nara Resources**

According to Zeithaml et al. (2018), People are all parties who play a role in the service delivery process which can influence buyers/consumers' perceptions. Resource elements are employees and consumers involved in the service process. Employees' performance, attitudes, actions, and dress and appearance influence customer/consumer perceptions. Meanwhile, Hurriyati (2005) states that resource persons are all parties involved in providing services, including company employees, consumers, and other people who can influence purchasing decisions. Based on these several statements, it can be concluded that resource resources are all human resources owned by a company involved directly or indirectly in delivering products and services.

The hypotheses proposed in this research are:

- H1: Place influences the decision to choose a tourism university
- H2: Informant resources influence the decision to choose a tourism university
- H3: Place influences institutional image
- H4: Informant resources influence the image of the institution
- H5: Institutional image influences the decision to choose a tourism university
- H6: Institutional image mediates the influence of place on the decision to choose a tourism university
- H7: Institutional image mediates the influence of resource resources on the decision to choose a tourism university

**Methodology**

This research uses an explanatory and confirmatory research design with a sample size of 231 tourism study program students in Yogyakarta. The population in this study were students at Tourism Universities in Yogyakarta. Samples were taken using probability simple random sampling techniques. The research questionnaire was created using a 5 Likert scale interval scale measurement with answer choices 1) Strongly Disagree (STS); 2) Disagree (TS); 3) Neutral (N); 4) Agree (S); 5) Strongly Agree (ST) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The data analysis used is mediation analysis with the help of the Smart PLS 3.0 program.

**Data analysis**

**Direct Hypothesis Testing**

**Table 1 Path Coefficients**

	Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	T Statistics	Sig.
H1	Place -> Student Decision	0.183	0.175	1,647	0.100
H2	Nara Resources -> Student Decisions	0.092	0.102	1,024	0.306
H3	Place -> Image	0.515	0.517	7,648	0,000
H4	Nara Resources -> Image	0.322	0.317	4,255	0,000
H5	Image -> Student Decision	0.524	0.519	6,115	0,000

Source: Researcher data processing

Hypothesis testing can be done using the t-test by comparing the statistical t value with the table t value. To carry out this test, you must first know the t table value as a basis for comparison with the

statistical t value, which determines whether the proposed hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The t table value with a total data sample of 231 and a significance threshold of 5% is 1.972, indicating that the hypothesis can be considered to have a significant effect if the statistical t value > t table with a P value of 0.05 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The t-statistic value is calculated from the data processing results using the Bootstrapping method, shown in Table 1.

The original Sample value is used to see the magnitude of the positive or negative influence, while the sig value. Used to see the significance of the influence of variable (X) on variable (Y). The level of significance set in this research is 5% or 0.05, meaning that the variable (X) can be said to have a significant effect if the sig. Smaller than the significance level of 0.05.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the hypothesis has a sig. < 0.05 are the third, fourth and fifth hypotheses. The third and fourth hypotheses show that the informant's place and resources influence the institution's image. Meanwhile, the fifth hypothesis shows that the institutional image influences student decisions.

### Testing the Hypothesis of the Influence Between Variables Indirectly Through Mediator

**Table 2. Specific Indirect Effects**

	Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	T Statistics	Sig.
H6	Place -> Image -> Student Decision	0.269	0.268	4,729	<b>0,000</b>
H7	Nara Resources -> Image -> Student Decisions	0.169	0.166	3,282	<b>0.001</b>

Source: Researcher data processing

Based on the statistical test results presented in Table 2, it can be seen that the original sample value of the influence of the place variable on student decisions through the image of the institution as a mediator is 0.269 or 26.9%, with a significance value of T statistic of 4.729 > 1.972 and a sig value. Amounting to 0.000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that statistically, the Place variable (X1) has a positive and significant effect on the Student Decision variable (Y) through the Institutional Image variable (M) as a mediator of 26.9%. This means that the sixth hypothesis proposed in this research is accepted so that it can be concluded that the image of the institution mediates the influence of place (X1) on students' decisions (Y) in choosing a university.

Original sample value of the influence of the resource variable (X2) on the student decision variable (Y) through the institutional image variable (M) as a mediator is 0.169 or 16.9%, with a T statistical significance value of 3.282 > 1.972 and p-values amounting to 0.001 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that statistically the Nara Resources variable (X2) has a positive and significant effect on student decisions (Y) through the institutional image (M) as a mediator. This means that the seventh hypothesis proposed in this research that institutional image mediates the influence of resource resources (X2) on students' decisions (Y) in choosing a university can be accepted.

## Discussion

### The Influence of Place on Student Decisions

The decision-making process for students in choosing a college is a complicated matter, consisting of internal and external considerations. Although personal aspirations are important in decision-making, external considerations such as institutional location may also influence students' choices. Place variables have many aspects, including place identification, place dependence, place influence, and place social relationships. Place identification relates to an individual's perception of an area, whereas place dependence indicates the unique environmental needs and amenities a person desires in a particular location. Place

affect refers to a person's emotional ties to a location, while place social ties refer to an individual's ability to engage with their environment, community, and culture.

Research has revealed that location has no significant influence on students' decisions. This shows that geographical variables are not the most important factor in students' decisions to study at tourism institutions in Yogyakarta. Compared with the values of other indicators in the place variable, the indicator of student interest in the campus location has the highest value. Apart from that, the assessment of higher education places or locations focuses on a friendly environment, a comfortable campus atmosphere, a calm campus, and a good campus environment that supports the teaching and learning process. These findings also reveal that Yogyakarta's location, considered a student and tourism city, is not the most important consideration prospective students evaluate when choosing a university. According to the survey, students are more likely to rate their interest and liking for a university than its location. This finding is quite surprising because it contradicts the findings of previous studies, which indicate that geographic location/location/place has a major influence on decision-making.

Finally, most of the respondents in this survey came from Java, especially Central Java and Yogyakarta, which may explain why geographic factors did not have much influence on students' decisions. However, although an institution's location influences a student's decision, it is not the most important element, and students are more likely to examine other aspects, such as campus climate, facilities, and personal interests, when choosing a college. The purpose and motive for going is to appreciate the features of the destination itself. Despite this, the decision to attend college, particularly a tourism studies program, is largely centred on education rather than entertainment.

### **The Influence of Narcotics Resources on Student Decisions**

Informant resources, especially academic personnel, are very important in producing products and services that have the potential to influence customer decisions. Attractiveness and performance are two characteristics of narrative resources. However, the results of hypothesis testing show that informant resources have a good but small impact on student decisions. Consequently, the idea that informant resources influence students' decisions can neither be proven nor disproved. This means that the appearance and abilities of employees, lecturers and teaching staff do not greatly impact students' decision-making in choosing a university. This is contrary to previous research by Tijjang et al. (2017), Saurombe et al. (2017), and Riofita (2018), which found that informant resources have a large influence on decision-making. Students are more concerned with the reputation and legitimacy of the institution, which is evaluated based on achievements and accreditation rankings. As a result, campus administration must prioritize building and maintaining a good image of higher education in society by consistently improving the quality of education at each tourism university in Yogyakarta. Staff appearance and competency should still be assessed, but this should not be the main emphasis of the assessment.

### **The Influence of Location on Institutional Image**

Reputation and credibility can shape public trust in institutions, which is described as the image of the institution. Physical aspects, such as physical buildings, quality, price, location, and psychological factors, such as public trust and satisfaction, contribute to reputation and credibility.

Based on the results of statistical research, the comfortable campus climate indicator has the highest value when compared with the values of other indicators in the location variable. Apart from that, the emphasis in assessing the place or location of a college is a calm and pleasant atmosphere, as well as the interest and enthusiasm of prospective students towards the place or location of the campus, and finally a friendly environment. Surprisingly, the findings from statistical data processing in this research show that Yogyakarta's status as a student and tourism city is not the most important factor for prospective students.

In accordance with the premise outlined above, location has a direct and beneficial impact on the image of an institution. This indicates that the dimensions and indicators in the location variable can significantly impact how higher education institutions are perceived. The location has a favourable influence on impressions in terms of public image and trust. Yogyakarta, which is famous as a tourist and cultural destination, is also known by the wider community as a student city. This increases public

confidence in the quality of higher education in Yogyakarta. This is reflected in the profile of respondents, most of whom come from various provinces, although Java is still the dominant province.

The findings of this research are consistent with and support the findings of several similar previous studies conducted by Wilkins and Huisman (2015), which indicated that campus location, along with the quality of academic and social life on campus, plays an important role in shaping the image of an institution. In addition, Manhas and Tukamushaba (2015) found that location convenience and accessibility are important aspects in developing a company's image. Therefore, apart from choosing an ideal location for the establishment of a college, campus management must foster good relations with the community around the campus to create a comfortable and peaceful environment that is conducive to an effective teaching and learning process.

### **The Influence of Narcotics Resources on Institutional Image**

Credibility and reputation are important components in building an institutional image. The quality and competency of an institution's human resources in providing services and presenting a good image can be used to assess its credibility. The appearance of an institution's human resources to communicate a professional image is referred to here. Higher education Nara resources do not only include structural staff and teaching staff but also include the entire academic community. The ability of staff, employees and lecturers to provide services is an important measure of human resources.

According to the analysis, the resource indicators proposed in this study have great significance. The quality and skills of the teaching staff, in addition to an attractive and convincing appearance, are the most important resources for prospective students when evaluating higher education institutions. Testing the hypothesis above shows that individual resources have a direct, positive and substantial influence on the image of the institution, which implies that individual resources can really contribute to building the image of tourism higher education institutions in Yogyakarta. The findings from statistical testing show that resource persons have a fairly large impact on the construction of institutional image with a high level of significance, this shows that resource persons have an important impact on the public's impression of the image of higher education institutions.

These findings support previous research by Wilkins and Huisman (2015), Sasmita and Suki (2015), Harsono (2015), and Manhas and Tukamushaba (2015), who found that staff competence in providing services encourages trust and improves the company's image. Thus, it can be concluded that the better the appearance and competence of the human resources of higher education institutions (lecturers/teaching staff and employees), the better the perception of the institution's image in society and among prospective students. To develop and strengthen the institutional image, universities must continue to improve the competence and appearance of all their personnel resources.

### **The Influence of Institutional Image on Student Decisions**

Based on the findings from hypothesis testing, the image of the institution has a fairly large and positive influence on students' decisions in choosing a tourism university in Yogyakarta. In fact, the influence of image on students' decisions is the most important component, indicating that image indications play an important role in the college selection process. These image indicators include the university's reputation in society, relationships with other groups, accreditation rankings, and academic achievements. When obtaining information about an institution, prospective students emphasize its reliability and reputation, and prospective students pay a lot of attention to the quality of the campus and study programs, career opportunities for graduates, the success of the college, and the level of cooperation with the industrial sector during the process of admitting new students.

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Shehzad et al. (2014), who found a substantial relationship between image and customer behaviour in decision-making. Apart from that, previous research by Mulyono (2016), Astuti (2017), and Anam et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of institutional image in the college selection process.

### **The Influence of Place on Student Decisions through Institutional Image as Mediation**

The results of hypothesis testing show that the institutional image has a full mediating role in influencing location variables on students' decisions to study. This strengthens the theory that the impact of location on student decisions is partially mediated by institutional image. Consequently, when mediated by institutional image, location variables can considerably impact students' decisions to enrol in tourism universities in Yogyakarta. A stronger institutional image combined with a suitable and appropriate location can increase the probability of prospective students choosing a particular university.

This study found that institutional image can mediate the influence of location on students' decisions in choosing tourism universities in Yogyakarta. The difference between the direct effect test findings in Table 2 of the path coefficient and Table 3 of the indirect effect shows this. Although the direct effect of location is positive but not significant, the indirect effect mediated by institutional image is positive and substantial.

Therefore, it is very important for management to improve and maintain the image of the institution by ensuring academic quality and improving overall quality in order to compete in the market and attract new students, as emphasized by Han et al. (2019), who found that accessibility and good location can create a positive public image and influence tourist decisions.

### **The Influence of Narcotics Resources on Student Decisions through Institutional Image as Mediation**

This research looks at the role of institutional image as a mediator in the interaction between Nara's resources and location and students' decisions in choosing tourism institutions in Yogyakarta. The findings show that the quality of resource resources has a good and quite large indirect influence on student decisions through the image of the institution as a mediator. Likewise, this research finds that the image of the institution as a mediator influences students' decisions indirectly. As a result, the institutional image is fully able to mediate the influence of financial resources and location on student decisions. The analysis verified that each university prioritized developing a strong institutional image through credibility and reputation to increase student enrollment. Finally, this study found that the institutional image has a direct impact on student decisions, while the location and resources of the resource have a direct impact on building the institutional image but not on student decisions.

## **Conclusion**

1. The location of the institution does not have a substantial impact on student decision-making as this is not a major issue for most respondents due to the origin of the respondents being from nearby areas.
2. Informant resources do not directly influence student decisions but rather through the image of the university. Therefore, the institution's main priority is to build and maintain a good institutional image by improving education quality.
3. The location of a university has a significant impact on the institution's image, and Yogyakarta's status as a student city and its cultural and tourism attractions positively impact public trust.
4. Human resources play an important role in building an institution's image, which has an impact on student decisions.
5. Institutional image, including the reputation and credibility of the campus, is the most important aspect in student decision-making, followed by the value of campus accreditation, major career prospects, and partnerships with industry.
6. The location of the institution influences student decisions indirectly through the image of the institution.
7. Informant resources indirectly influence student decisions through the image of the institution, and the higher the quality and competence of the resource persons, the greater the influence on student decision-making.

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