

Harnessing competitive advantage: A resource-based perspective on sustainable business performance in tourism villages

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Abstract

Purpose – This research analyzes the competitive advantage of tourist villages influenced by VRIN and non-VRIN resources on the performance of tourist village businesses. The sporadic nature of village tourism development and the difficulty of getting out of the pioneer level are the problems raised in this study.

Design/methodology/approach –This research collected primary data on respondents who were workers from tourist villages, according to the established criteria. A total of 383 research respondents were obtained from distributing questionnaires. Using a quantitative approach, this study analyzed the relationship between VRIN resource and non-VRIN resource variables on competitive advantage, which then affects business performance

Findings – The research of the study shows that VRIN resources significantly influence competitive advantage, which then affects business performance. The results of the study also show that non-VRIN resources do not affect competitive advantage. This shows how VRIN resources play a role in forming the unique value of tourist villages as well as traditional resources that are no longer relevant in forming the competitive advantages of tourist villages.

Research limitations/implications – This research has limitations in generalizing the research results, where the research context was only conducted in Indonesia, precisely in East Java. Further research can develop the research by adding the geographical scope of the research sample.

Practical implications – This research underlines the importance of strategic development of tourist villages based on a resource-based view approach. Development based on intangible assets, integration, and collaboration with other parties can be done by tourist villages.

Originality/value – The use of the resource-based view approach in analyzing the competitive advantage of tourist villages is still not widely used, which then becomes the unique value of this research.

Keywords: Resource-based view, competitive advantage, VRIN, business results, tourism village.

Introduction

In the 2020s, tourism villages were considered a promising path for sustainable development, but towards 2022-2023 they increasingly did not meet these expectations (Subandi, 2023). A study of

tourism in China showed how the combination of tourism and ethnicity can boost economic growth (Yang et al., 2014). Based on statistical data from 2019, the trend of the development of tourism objects went down but went up significantly from 2020 to 2022, which was also caused by factors of geographical location factors and ethnic elements in an area (Ashari et al., 2024). So the existence of tourism villages in Indonesia, spread across 74.09% of villages in Indonesia, is expected to provide welfare for village communities (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022). However, the survey also showed that the development of tourism villages was motivated by short-term goals rather than long-term strategic planning that focused on using its competitive advantages. This condition is contrary to the Resource Based View (RBV), which emphasizes the focus of a strategy on resources that can provide sustainable advantages for tourist villages. Sometimes, the growth of tourist villages is sporadic, so within a period of 2-3 years (Putri & Iskandar, 2017), it has decreased or even stopped operating (Setyawan et al., 2023).

At the heart of this problem is the lack of strategic focus on the resources that could give tourism villages a sustainable edge on the market. The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, a strategic management framework, provides a useful lens through which to analyze the competitive advantage of tourism villages (El Namar et al., 2022; Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023; Simarmata et al., 2024). RBV posits that a firm's resources and capabilities are the primary drivers of its sustained competitive advantage. According to this view, resources must be Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable (VRIN) to contribute to a firm's competitive advantage and superior business performance (Cuthbertson & Furseth, 2022; Roostika, 2019; Salsabila et al., 2022). In tourism villages, these resources could include unique cultural practices, natural landscapes, traditional craftsmanship, and community involvement. However, the challenge lies in recognizing, developing, and leveraging these resources effectively.

Often, tourism villages are developed without a clear understanding of their unique resources or how these resources can be used to create a competitive advantage (Maulidiya & Hayati, 2020; Setyanto et al., 2015). This lack of strategic foresight often results in homogeneous tourist offerings that fail to differentiate one village from another (Pourtaheri et al., 2024). Tourism villages struggle to attract and retain visitors, leading to poor business performance and minimal economic benefits for local communities. Without a distinctive competitive advantage, these villages are more vulnerable to external threats, such as changes in tourist preferences or economic downturns (Rainero & Modarelli, 2020).

This research paper tries to explore the application of the Resource-Based View (RBV) in identifying and leveraging the competitive advantages of tourism villages (Li et al., 2022; Zhang & Chen, 2024). By analyzing the resources that contribute to the VRIN features of a tourist village, this study provides information on how these villages can enhance their competitive position and achieve better business results. This research will examine the relationship between competitive advantage, reputation, and business performance, to highlight strategies that can help tourism villages run more effectively in the competitive tourism market (Ramdan & Ikhwana, 2017).

The distribution of tourist attractions in Indonesia is not evenly distributed. Most tourist attractions are spread across the islands of Java and Bali (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). Furthermore, based on Kementrian Pariwisata and Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia 2024 (2024), comparison between independent, advanced, developing and pioneering tourist villages shows that there are still many tourist villages left behind, with a comparison of 78% pioneering tourist villages, 17% developing tourist villages, 5% advanced tourist villages, and only 1% independent tourist villages. Also, an interesting thing that can be seen is the income and expenditure of tourist attractions in Java with the 5 largest provinces. In 2022, East Java became the tourist attraction with the fifth largest income, namely 469 billion rupiah. However, but East Java became the tourist attraction with the highest cost, namely 675 billion rupiah (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). This difference shows a deficit in terms of income and spending comparison, which requires attention to how to optimize tourist attraction in East Java. In this study, East Java and the distribution of tourist attractions are the focus of this study.

This research highlights the need for a strategic shift in the way tourism villages are developed and managed. Moving away from ad-hoc, uncoordinated efforts toward a resource-

based approach can unlock the true potential of these villages, ensuring they not only survive but thrive in the competitive tourism landscape. This study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism development and to offer practical recommendations to stakeholders involved in the development of tourism villages.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Resource-Based View and Competitive Advantage

The Resource-Based View (RBV) has become a cornerstone in the study of strategic management and a critical framework for understanding how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage (Gellweiler, 2018; Lubis, 2022; Madhani, 2009). The RBV asserts that not all resources contribute equally to a firm's competitive position (Ogunkoya, 2018; Wei et al., 2018). For a resource to be a source of sustained competitive advantage, it must have four key attributes: it must be Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable (VRIN) (Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023; Madhani, 2009). A valuable resource lets the firm exploit opportunities or neutralize threats in the environment, effectively contributing to value creation (Zimuto & Zvarimwa, 2022). A resource is considered rare if it is not widely possessed by competitors, thus making it a source of differentiation (Baia et al., 2020). Inimitability implies that the resource is difficult to replicate, either due to physical uniqueness, path dependency, causal ambiguity, or social complexity (Ferreira et al., 2022; Zimuto & Zvarimwa, 2022). Finally, a resource is non-substitutable when no equivalent resources can replace it to achieve the same strategic outcomes. In its application to companies, VRIN can be measured using: 1) specialized know how; 2) reputation; and 3) cooperative collaboration experience (Lin & Wu, 2014).

But there are also non-VRIN resources involved in a firm's performance. Non-VRIN resources, like land and money related capital of a firm, have a lower impact and become less important than VRIN resources. It can be seen that non-VRIN resources will have a lower impact on the differentiation of firm performance (Mandal et al., 2016). However, it does not mean that non-VRIN resources are simply lost and not used in the firm. However, non-VRIN resources have low ability in creating competitive advantage for the company (Lin & Wu, 2014). The interaction between VRIN and non-VRIN resources is also found in tourist destinations, where the identification of both can provide value for tourists who come to tourist destinations (Mandal et al., 2016). To measure non-VRIN resources in a company, it can be done by using: 1) company capital; 2) property; and 3) equipment (Lin & Wu, 2014).

In tourism villages, the RBV framework can be useful in identifying and leveraging resources that contribute to a village's competitive advantage (Santra et al., 2022). Competitive advantage representing a firm's ability to outperform its rivals by delivering superior value to customers (Lieberman, 2021; Parniangtong, 2017). For example, a tourism village might have unique cultural practices, natural landscapes, or traditional craftsmanship that are valuable and rare. These resources, if well managed and promoted, can attract tourists seeking authentic and distinctive experiences. However, to maintain a competitive advantage, these resources must also be inimitable and non-substitutable (Kabue & Kilika, 2016; Zimuto & Zvarimwa, 2022). For example, while other villages might try to replicate a cultural festival, the specific historical context and community involvement in one village might make it impossible to duplicate elsewhere.

H₁: VRIN resources positively influence competitive advantage tourism village

H₂: Non-VRIN resources positively influence competitive advantage tourism village

Business Performance

Business performance in tourism villages is a multidimensional idea that encompasses various indicators of success, including financial outcomes, visitor satisfaction, and community benefits (Amrullah et al., 2023; Nguyen & Bui, 2021; Sukaris et al., 2021). Assessing the business performance of a tourism village involves evaluating its economic profitability and its social and environmental impacts (Emami et al., 2021). Effective performance management is important for making sure tourism villages meet their intended goals and contribute to the sustainable

development of local communities (Burksiene & Dvorak, 2020). Financial performance is often the most straightforward indicator of business success. Financial performance includes metrics such as revenue generated from tourism activities, profitability, and return on investment (Nguyen & Bui, 2021). Visitor satisfaction is another critical dimension of business performance (Sangpikul, 2018). Satisfied visitors are more likely to return to the village, recommend it to others, and leave positive reviews, which can contribute to the village's long-term success. Community benefits are also a key part of business performance in tourism villages (Rosari et al., 2023). These benefits can include job creation, income generation, and the preservation of cultural and natural assets. Tourism villages that integrate the local community into their operations are more likely to achieve positive outcomes for both the villagers and the visitors. Environmental sustainability is another important part of business performance in tourism villages (Nguyen & Bui, 2021). The natural environment is often one of the key attractions of a tourism village, and its preservation is essential for the long-term viability of the village as a tourist destination.

When discussing the firm performance in terms of tourism, competitive advantage is important as it determines the village's ability to attract and retain visitors, generate revenue, and contribute to the socio-economic development of the local community. The relationship between competitive advantage and business performance is well-established in the literature, with many studies showing entities with a strong competitive advantage usually achieve better business outcomes (Arsawan et al., 2022; Baia et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2019).

H₃: Competitive advantage positively influences business performance tourism village.

Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach in analyzing VRIN and non-VRIN resources, competitive advantage, and business performance in tourist villages. This study uses purposive sampling to obtain respondents who can answer the research hypothesis. The respondents of this study were employees or management members of tourist villages in East Java, which then obtained 383 respondent answers. Respondents met the criteria that they had worked in tourist villages for more than one year, so they could assess the resources in tourist villages, their competitive advantages, and the performance of the tourist villages where they worked. This study used tourist villages in East Java (Indonesia) as an area with a large number of tourist villages, included in a province that has a large income, but has expenses that are much greater than its income. This indicates that there is a suboptimal use of resources in tourist destinations. Apart from that, Tourist villages in Indonesia are an interesting object considering their achievements in 2021 and 2023 to become the best tourist villages from the World Tourism Organization.

This research uses primary data obtained through an online questionnaire created using Google Form. The online questionnaire was used to help with distribution to research respondents in several tourist villages spread across several regions. Questions representing the respondent's criteria are given at the beginning of filling in as a sign that the respondent meets the established criteria. Measurement of VRIN and non-VRIN resources variables was carried the research of Lin & Wu, (2014). Measurement of competitive advantage variables was carried out by adapting the research of Correia et al., (2021). Measurement of business performance variables was carried out by adapting the research of Nguyen & Bui, (2021). Table 1 shows the question items for each variable in this study.

Table 1. Measurement Items

Variable	Items
VRIN resource (Lin & Wu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist villages know how to providing attractions above the average of other tourist destinations • Tourist villages have a reputation above average compared to other tourist destinations • Tourist villages have experience in working together above average compared to other tourist destinations

Non-VRIN resource (Lin & Wu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capital owned by the tourist village is above average compared to other tourist destinations • The property assets (land, buildings) of the tourist village are above average compared to other tourist destinations • The quality of equipment owned by the tourist village is above average compared to other tourist destinations
Competitive Advantage (Correia et al., 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist villages have relatively new tourist attractions compared to other tourist villages • Tourist villages have innovative promotional methods compared to other tourist villages • Tourist villages have attractive price offers compared to other tourist performance
Business Performance Nguyen & Bui (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourists are satisfied with the tourist village • The tourist village builds a good relationship with visitors • Tourists have few complaints about services in the tourist village • The income of the tourist village continues to grow • The profit of the tourist village continues to grow • The market share of the tourist village continues to increase • Employees work for a long time in the tourist village • Employees contribute to the value of the tourist village • The tourist village is known by the surrounding community for its contribution to the community • The tourist village helps protect the surrounding environment

Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

The questionnaire that has been created using Google Form is distributed online to the target respondents that have been determined. Based on the response results obtained, 383 respondents have provided answers to the question items in the questionnaire. There are 286 male respondents (74.7%) and 97 female respondents (25.3%), which shows that the comparison of the workforce that contributes to the tourist village is still dominated by men. Looking when they have worked, most have worked for 1-3 years (59.3%), then the second longest is 3-6 years (32.6%), and the least has worked 6-10 years (8.1%). These results provide the view that most of the human resources working in the tourist village are still relatively new. The short time of work can show they are still new to managing the tourist village or that many of the tourist villages are still starting, considering that most tourist villages in Indonesia are still at the pioneering level. However, having at least 1 year of experience has met the prerequisites for assessing the performance of the tourist village where they work.

Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity testing is performed by examining the average variance extracted (AVE) value. The bigger the AVE value, the better the questionnaire items can describe the variable. Ideally, the AVE value should be larger than or equal to 0.5. The composite reliability (CR) score can reflect each factor's intrinsic quality, with a value greater than or equal to 0.7 indicating good quality. When the AVE and CR values meet the requirements for being regarded good, the scale has good convergent validity, and the scale used in this research is of good quality. The test findings suggest that for the composite reliability and average variance extracted values, the VRIN resource variable has a CR value of 0.74 and AVE 0.5, non-VRIN resource has a CR value of 0.75 and AVE 0.5, competitive advantage has a CR value of 0.74 and AVE 0.5, and business performance has a CR value of 0.9 and AVE 0.5. According to these findings, the scale used in this investigation is regarded good.

Reliability and Model Fit Test

Reliability testing was conducted to make sure the questionnaire used to gather primary data was reliable. The Cronbach Alpha value for each variable in the research can measure its level of

reliability. The questionnaire can be considered reliable when the Cronbach Alpha value is greater than or equal to 0.7. According to the test results, the Cronbach Alpha values for the VRIN resource variable were 0.742, non-VRIN resource 0.744, competitive advantage 0.736, and business results 0.902. The questionnaire passed the reliability test since each variable had a value greater than 0.7. The validity and model of this research were tested using SEM-AMOS. The values that can be normalized estimate provide evidence of validity testing. Figure 1 depicts the influences between each variable based on its path findings.

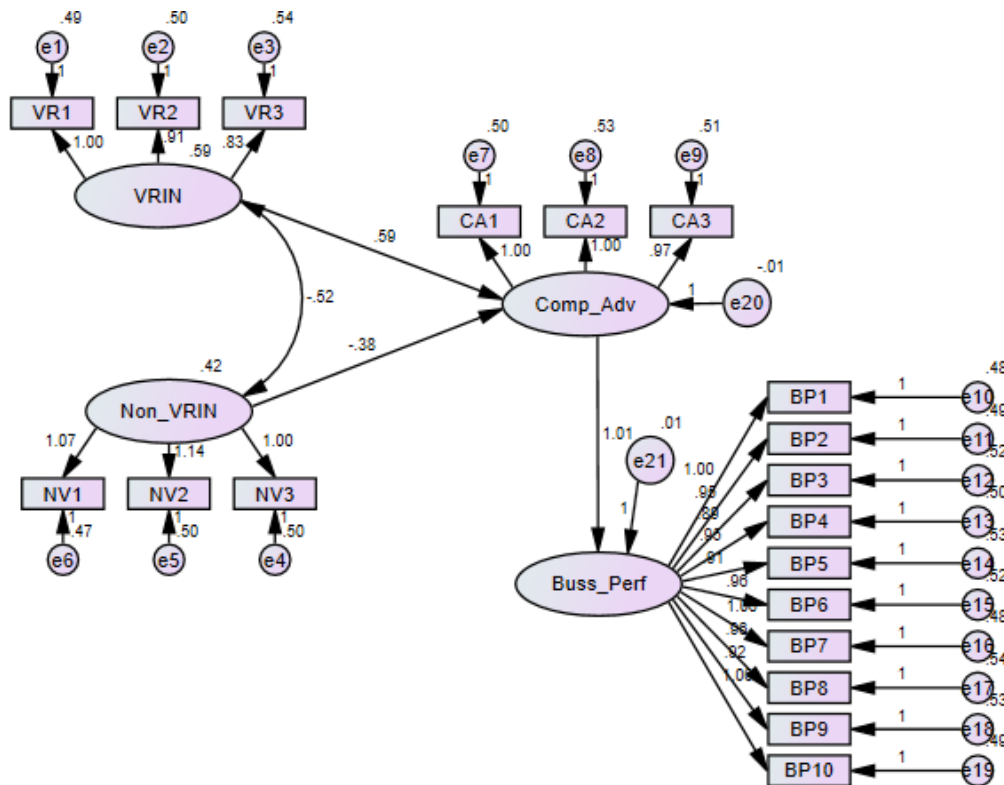


Figure 1. Structural Model Equation

Many model fit parameters can test this research model. The CMIN/df, GFI and AGFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA values provide evidence of model fit. In this investigation, the CMIN/df value was 1.221 (ideal value between 1 and 3), GFI 0.936 and AGFI 0.926 (ideal value > 0.9), TLI 0.972 (ideal value > 0.9), CFI 0.974 (ideal value > 0.9), and RMSEA 0.022 (ideal value < 0.05). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the model fit value of this study is within the best range and under the expected scale.

Table 2. Model Fit Test

Parameters	Accepted Fit	Results
CMIN/df	< 3 = acceptable fit	1.221
GFI	> 0.9 = acceptable fit	0.936
AGFI	> 0.9 = acceptable fit	0.926
CFI	> 0.9 = acceptable fit	0.974
TLI	> 0.9 = acceptable fit	0.972
RMSEA	< 0.05 = reasonable fit	0.022

Hypotheses Test

The previously proposed study hypotheses were tested using SEM-AMOS. The P value is used to determine if the hypothesis is accepted, with a value greater than or equal to 0.5. The test results can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypotheses Test

Hypotheses	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Conclusion
VRIN → Competitive Advantage	0.591	0.259	2.286	0.022	Accepted
Non-VRIN → Competitive Advantage	-0.385	0.308	-1.252	0.211	Rejected
Competitive Advantage → Business Performance	1.012	0.076	13.302	0.000	Accepted

Table 3 displays the value of each hypothesis proposed in this study because of the hypothesis testing. The first hypothesis, that VRIN resource influence the competitive advantage of tourism village, has a P-value of 0.022. The results show that H1 is acceptable. The second hypothesis, non-VRIN resource influences the competitive advantage of tourism village, has a P-value of 0.211. These data show that H2 is rejected. The third hypothesis, that competitive advantage influences the business performance of tourism village, has a P-value of 0.000. These findings show that H3 is accepted. From the three research hypotheses stated in this research, two were accepted and one was rejected.

Discussion

The findings from this research provide valuable insights into the dynamics of resource management and competitive advantage within tourism villages. The significant influence of VRIN resources—such as know-how, reputation, and collaboration experience—on competitive advantage underscores the critical role that intangible assets play in the success of these villages (Adeniran & Johnston, 2012; Diharto et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2019; Lin & Wu, 2014). These resources are not only unique and difficult to replicate but also deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of the villages, making them important for sustaining a competitive edge. Know-how, which represents the collective knowledge and skills within the village, is essential for developing and delivering unique experiences that attract tourists (Lin & Wu, 2014). The ability to leverage this knowledge effectively differentiates a tourist village from its competitors, as it lets the village offer specialized services or experiences that are difficult to replicate. Similarly, reputation plays an important role in shaping the perceptions of potential visitors (Choi et al., 2018; Su et al., 2018). A positive reputation, built over time through consistent delivery of high-quality experiences, can be a powerful driver of tourist inflow and a strong competitive advantage. Judging from the responses obtained in this study dominated by people who have only worked for 1-3 years, suggesting that this assessment comes from people who are new and still following the latest trends in the tourism sector, where intangible resources such as reputation and ability become important in building competitive advantage. Traditional resources, such as property and equipment, although necessary in operation, are no longer important elements in maintaining the competitive advantage of a tourist destination. Collaboration experience is another key VRIN resource that significantly competitive advantage (Lin & Wu, 2014). Effective collaboration with stakeholders, such as local businesses, government agencies, and non-profits, can enhance the village's ability to offer integrated and comprehensive tourist experiences. These partnerships often lead to innovative solutions and resource sharing, further strengthening the village's position.

But the finding that non-VRIN resources—such as capital, property, and equipment—do not significantly influence competitive advantage challenges the traditional emphasis on tangible assets in resource management (Lin & Wu, 2014). While these resources are necessary for the basic operations of a tourism village, they do not, by themselves, provide a sustainable competitive advantage. Capital and property can be acquired or replicated by competitors, and equipment can be upgraded or replaced, making them less effective in differentiating the village from others.

The research also confirms that competitive advantage significantly influences business performance. This finding aligns with the broader strategic management literature, which posits that entities with a strong competitive advantage are better positioned to achieve superior financial performance, customer satisfaction, and long-term sustainability (Haseeb et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Villages that have established a strong competitive advantage are better positioned to achieve higher levels of financial performance (Nguyen & Bui, 2021). For example, a village that offers unique and authentic cultural experiences—something difficult for other villages to replicate—can

attract more tourists and command premium prices. A significant competitive advantage typically enhances visitor satisfaction, which is a critical part of business performance (Rosari et al., 2023). Satisfied visitors are more likely to return and recommend the village to others, creating a cycle of positive word-of-mouth and repeat business. Villages with a clear competitive advantage are often more efficient in their operations. For tourism villages, this means people who effectively leverage their VRIN resources are more likely to attract a steady stream of tourists, generate higher revenues, and contribute positively to the local economy.

Theoretical Implication and Managerial Implication

The findings of this research have significant managerial implications, particularly for the development and management of tourism villages in East Java. Despite being the fifth-highest revenue-generating province from tourism, East Java ranks first in spending, leading to a net loss in this sector. This financial imbalance highlights the need for more strategic resource management and competitive positioning of tourism villages within the province. The study also addresses a critical gap, which is the sporadic development of tourism villages, which hampers their progression from pioneering to the next level.

Given the strong influence of VRIN resources (such as know-how, reputation, and collaboration experience) on competitive advantage, managers of tourism villages in East Java should focus on the development and protection of these intangible assets. Investment in training programs to enhance local knowledge, initiatives to build and maintain a strong reputation, and efforts to foster collaborations with external stakeholders can create a sustainable competitive edge. These strategies are important in an environment where traditional investments in capital, property, and equipment do not translate directly into competitive advantage.

The sporadic development of tourism villages in East Java has resulted in many villages remaining at the pioneering stage, struggling to advance to independent tourism village status. To address this, policymakers and village managers need to adopt a more integrated and strategic approach to development. This could involve creating regional tourism master plans that align the development of individual villages with broader provincial goals. By coordinating efforts and sharing resources, villages can avoid duplication of efforts, reduce unnecessary spending, and focus on building their unique strengths. To move beyond the pioneering stage, tourism villages in East Java should form clusters or networks that let them collaborate on marketing, resource sharing, and service delivery. This collaborative approach can enhance their collective competitive advantage, making it easier to attract tourists and achieve economies of scale. For example, villages with complementary attractions could offer joint packages, thus giving tourists a more diverse and appealing experience while reducing individual marketing and operational costs.

The findings of this research underscore the importance of a strategic, resource-based approach to tourism village development in East Java. By focusing on the development and effective use of VRIN resources, adopting integrated planning, and enhancing collaboration, tourism villages can overcome the challenges of sporadic development and financial losses, ultimately achieving sustainable growth and a stronger competitive position in the tourism sector.

Conclusion and Future Direction

This research has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of resource management and competitive advantage within tourism villages, particularly in East Java. The findings highlight the significant role that VRIN resources—such as know-how, reputation, and collaboration experience—play in driving competitive advantage, which significantly influences business performance. But non-VRIN resources like capital, property, and equipment, while necessary for basic operations, do not contribute meaningfully to competitive differentiation. This underscores the importance of strategic resource investment, particularly in intangible assets that are unique, rare, and difficult to replicate. By focusing on these key areas, tourism villages can enhance their market position, improve financial performance, and contribute positively to local communities.

However, the research is not without its limitations. The study's focus on a specific region—East Java—may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different cultural, economic, and geographical contexts. Most respondents were also men with 1-3 years of experience in tourism villages, which may have influenced the perspectives and outcomes of the study. Future research could benefit from a more diverse sample and a broader geographic scope to confirm and expand upon these findings. Despite these limitations, the research offers critical insights for both practitioners and policymakers seeking to enhance the sustainability and success of tourism villages.

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