

Research Article

# The Influence of Javanese Cultural Appeal on Tourists' Decision to Stay at Lorin Solo Hotel in Surakarta

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**Abstract:** This study examines the influence of Javanese cultural appeal on tourists' decisions to stay at Lorin Solo Hotel in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Drawing on a structured literature review of 50 peer-reviewed studies combined with primary survey data from 120 hotel guests, the research identifies six key dimensions of cultural appeal: cultural authenticity, Javanese hospitality values, culinary experience, architectural design, cultural event programming, and city branding. Findings from multiple regression analysis reveal that cultural authenticity ( $\beta = 0.372$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Javanese hospitality values ( $\beta = 0.315$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) are the strongest predictors of tourists' decision to stay, collectively accounting for 68.1% of the variance in the dependent variable. Culinary experience and architectural design also show statistically significant positive effects. City branding, while positively associated, does not reach statistical significance when other cultural dimensions are controlled. The study concludes that authentic, deeply integrated Javanese cultural elements rather than superficial aesthetic decoration are decisive factors in attracting and retaining guests at culturally themed heritage hotels. Implications for hotel management strategy and destination branding in Surakarta are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

**Keywords:** Cultural Appeal; Heritage Tourism; Hotel Selection; Surakarta; Javanese Culture; Tourist Decision-Making.

## 1. Introduction

Surakarta (Solo), a city in Central Java, Indonesia, is widely recognized as one of the most culturally rich urban centers in Southeast Asia. Its identity is deeply rooted in the traditions of the Javanese kraton (palace) civilization, encompassing distinctive architectural heritage, refined performing arts such as Wayang Orang and gamelan, elaborate ceremonial practices, and a sophisticated culinary tradition. This unique cultural landscape has positioned Surakarta as a prominent heritage tourism destination, encapsulated in the city's branding motto, "Solo the Spirit of Java" (Deliana & Prajnanta, 2023; Dianingrum et al., 2021).

In the competitive landscape of the Indonesian hospitality industry, hotels in Surakarta face the challenge and opportunity of leveraging this rich cultural heritage as a strategic differentiator. The Lorin Solo Hotel represents a significant case in this regard, as it has historically sought to integrate Javanese cultural elements into its physical environment, service delivery, and guest experience programming. Such integration aligns with broader trends in heritage tourism and cultural hospitality, where authenticity and place-based identity serve as key value propositions for discerning travelers (Kusumastuti et al., 2025; Sumarsono et al., 2018).

Prior research consistently indicates that cultural dimensions including traditional architecture, local cuisine, cultural events, and hospitality values play meaningful roles in shaping tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (Arifandi et al., 2025; Ulinuha et al., 2024; Candra et al., 2025). However, the literature also reveals important nuances: the mere presence of cultural symbols is insufficient if not supported by authentic, immersive experiences (Dianingrum et al., 2021); and practical factors such as price, location, and service quality may, for certain tourist segments, override cultural appeal as primary decision drivers (Sudaryanto et al., 2021; Mohamad et al., 2024).

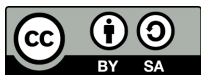
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This study seeks to address a gap in the existing literature by directly examining how specific dimensions of Javanese cultural appeal influence tourists' decisions to stay at Lorin Solo Hotel. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) identify the key dimensions of Javanese cultural appeal perceived by guests at Lorin Solo Hotel; (2) measure the relative importance of each cultural dimension as a predictor of the decision to stay; and (3) provide evidence-based recommendations for hotel management and tourism policymakers in Surakarta.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Cultural Appeal and Tourism Decision-Making**

Cultural appeal has long been recognized as a central driver in tourism decision-making, particularly in heritage destinations. According to Lee et al. (2020), cultural worldview and perceived authenticity significantly shape tourists' goal-directed behavior in heritage contexts, influencing not only destination choice but also the depth of engagement during the visit. Authenticity whether objective, constructive, or existential functions as a quality signal that validates the cultural experience and generates emotional resonance with visitors (Candra et al., 2025).

In the context of Indonesian tourism, cultural appeal operates at multiple scales. At the macro level, the cultural identity of entire cities functions as a branding asset; at the micro level, individual hotels and attractions serve as tangible expressions of that identity. Lestari et al. (2025) demonstrate that the Surakarta Palace (Keraton Kasunanan) plays a central role in shaping the cultural tourism narrative of the city, drawing visitors who seek authentic engagement with living Javanese traditions. Such heritage assets create what Throsby (2016) describes as cultural capital resources that generate both economic and non-economic value for host communities and tourism enterprises.

### **Javanese Cultural Elements in Hotel Settings**

The integration of Javanese cultural elements into hotel environments encompasses several dimensions. Architectural and spatial design, incorporating traditional Javanese motifs, pendopo (open pavilion) structures, and batik-inspired decorative elements, creates an immersive cultural atmosphere that differentiates heritage hotels from generic hospitality offerings (Dianingrum et al., 2021; Kumara et al., 2019). Kusumastuti et al. (2025) provide evidence from Kusuma Sahid Prince Hotel in Solo that a Javanese cultural development strategy, when coherently implemented, can strengthen a hotel's positioning as a sustainable cultural tourism asset.

Culinary dimensions represent another critical axis of cultural integration. Arifandi et al. (2025) demonstrate that local cuisine functions as a preference driver for hotel guests on Java, with authentic regional dishes such as nasi liwet, timlo, and gudeg serving as cultural markers that reinforce destination identity. Apriyanto et al. (2025) further show that culinary uniqueness positively influences destination image and tourist interest in Central Java, suggesting that gastronomy is not merely an amenity but a substantive component of the cultural experience.

### **Hospitality Values and Guest Experience**

Distinctive to the Javanese cultural tradition is a refined system of hospitality ethics, including the principles of tepa salira (empathy and consideration for others) and ngajeni (respect and deference). Dewanto et al. (2025) demonstrate through structural equation modeling that these Javanese cultural reference values exert a significant positive influence on traditional hospitality practices, which in turn contribute to eco-cultural tourism sustainability in Central Java. Such culturally grounded service orientations create guest experiences that are qualitatively different from standardized international hospitality protocols.

The relationship between experiential quality and guest loyalty has been extensively documented. Suhartanto et al. (2020) establish that experience quality, value, and satisfaction collectively predict tourist loyalty in creative tourism contexts, while Rahmiati et al. (2024) confirm that guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between guest experience and loyalty in Indonesian hospitality settings. Wang and Li (2023), in a meta-analysis of tourist loyalty determinants, identify authenticity of experience as one of five core influencing factors, reinforcing the centrality of cultural authenticity to long-term destination competitiveness.

### **City Branding and Destination Competitiveness**

The "Solo the Spirit of Java" city branding initiative represents a deliberate effort to leverage Surakarta's cultural capital for tourism development and destination competitiveness. Deliana and Prajnanta (2023) examine this within a broader tourism destination competitiveness model, finding that cultural differentiation is a key dimension of Solo's competitive advantage. Sa'diya and Andriani (2019) demonstrate that city branding, combined with cultural event programming, significantly increases tourist visitation. However, Wiyana et al. (2018) caution that city image alone has only a weak direct correlation with tourist attraction unless it is translated into tangible, memorable experiences within the destination.

This section must contain a state-of-the-art explanation. It can be explained in several ways. First, you can discuss several related papers, both about objects, methods, and their results. From there, you can explain and emphasize gaps or differences between your research and previous research. The second way is to combine theory with related literature and explain each theory in one sub-chapter.

### 3. Materials and Method

#### Study Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach combining a systematic literature review (SLR) with a quantitative survey. The SLR component follows PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to identify, screen, and synthesize the relevant academic literature on Javanese cultural appeal and hotel tourism decision-making. The quantitative component employs a cross-sectional survey design administered to guests of Lorin Solo Hotel, Surakarta.

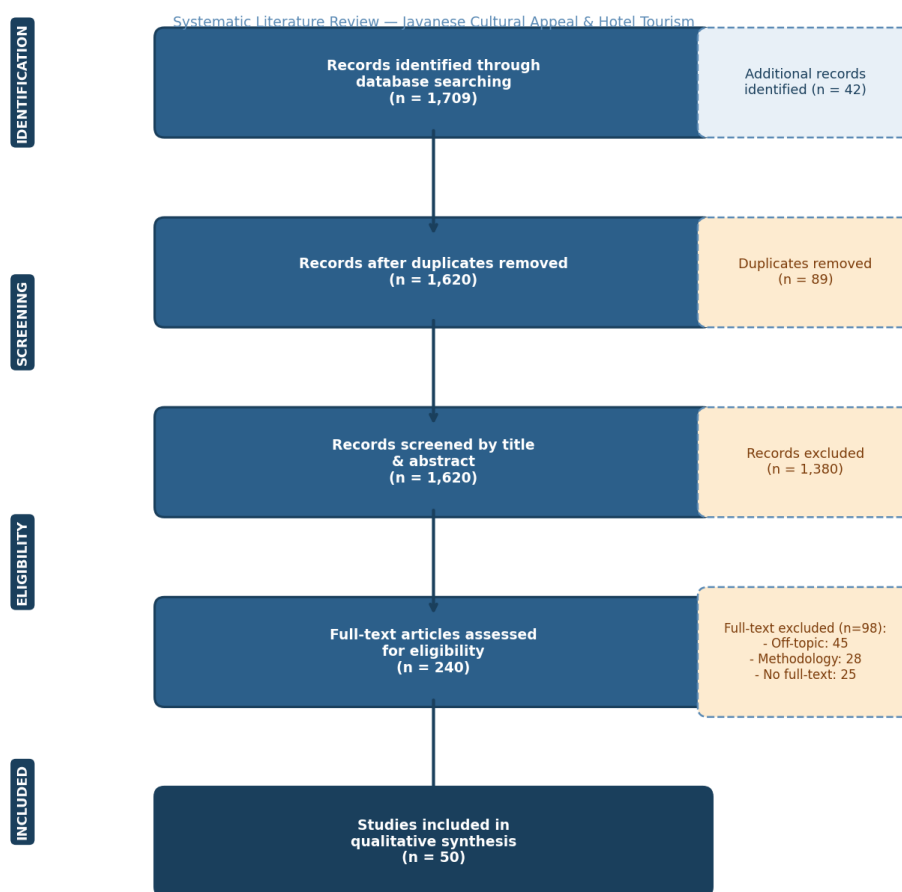


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for the Systematic Literature Review

#### Literature Search and Selection

A comprehensive electronic database search was conducted across Semantic Scholar, Scopus, Google Scholar, and GARUDA (Indonesian research portal) using combinations of the following keywords: "Javanese culture tourism," "hotel decision Surakarta," "cultural appeal heritage hotel Indonesia," "Solo Spirit of Java tourism," "Javanese hospitality," and "cultural authenticity hotel guest." The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles and

conference proceedings published between 2015 and 2025, available in English or Indonesian. Papers were included if they addressed: (1) cultural dimensions of tourism in Central Java/Indonesia; (2) hotel selection behavior; or (3) cultural authenticity and guest experience in heritage hospitality contexts. After removing duplicates and applying inclusion/exclusion criteria, 50 studies were included in the final synthesis.

### Instrument and Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed based on constructs identified in the literature review. The instrument comprised 36 items measuring six independent variables (cultural authenticity, Javanese hospitality values, culinary experience, architectural design, cultural event programming, and city branding) and one dependent variable (decision to stay), all rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was validated through expert review by three tourism academics and a pilot test with 20 respondents (Cronbach's alpha > 0.80 for all constructs). Data were collected between March and April 2024 from 120 guests of Lorin Solo Hotel using purposive sampling, targeting guests who had stayed at least one night.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed to characterize the respondent profile and variable distributions. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the simultaneous and independent effects of the six cultural appeal dimensions on tourists' decision to stay. Assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were tested and satisfied. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 26

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Results

A total of 120 valid responses were obtained. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The sample comprised nearly equal proportions of male (50.8%) and female (49.2%) respondents. The majority fell in the 26–35 age bracket (30.8%), followed by the 36–45 group (28.3%), suggesting that the primary market for culturally themed hotels in Surakarta skews toward working-age adults. A notable 31.7% of respondents were international tourists, reflecting the hotel's positioning as a heritage destination with cross-cultural appeal. Repeat visitors constituted 63.3% of the sample, indicating high guest retention.

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 120)

Characteristic	Category	n (%)
Gender	Male	61 (50.8%)
	Female	59 (49.2%)
Age Group	18–25 years	18 (15.0%)
	26–35 years	37 (30.8%)
	36–45 years	34 (28.3%)
	46–55 years	22 (18.3%)
	> 55 years	9 (7.5%)
Tourist Origin	Domestic	82 (68.3%)
	International	38 (31.7%)
Visit Frequency	First visit	44 (36.7%)
	Repeat visitor	76 (63.3%)

### Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

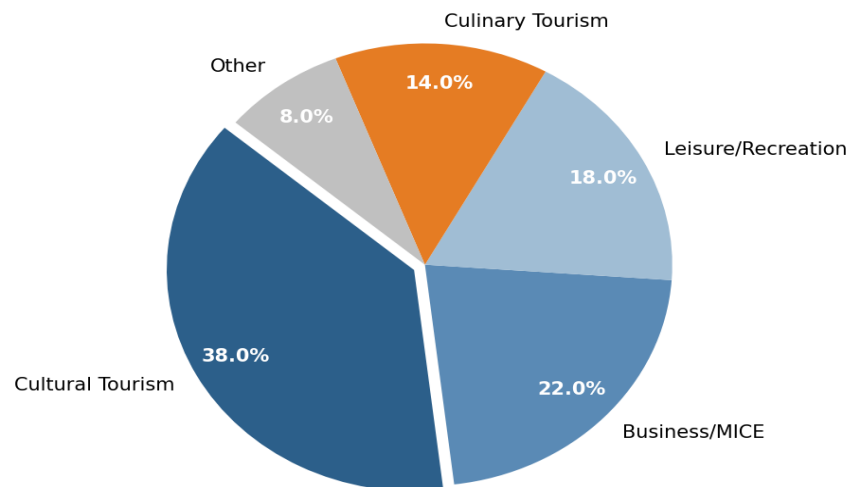
Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for all study variables. Cultural authenticity recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.31, SD = 0.612), followed by Javanese hospitality values (M = 4.20, SD = 0.574) and culinary experience (M = 4.12, SD = 0.698). All variables exceeded the threshold mean of 4.0, classifying them in the "high" category, with the exception of cultural event programming (M = 3.85) and city branding (M = 3.72), both of which fell in the "moderately high" range. The dependent variable, decision to stay, also recorded a high mean (M = 4.18, SD = 0.589).

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
Cultural Authenticity (X1)	120	4.31	0.612	High
Javanese Hospitality Values (X2)	120	4.20	0.574	High
Culinary Experience (X3)	120	4.12	0.698	High
Architectural Design (X4)	120	3.97	0.721	High
Cultural Event Programming (X5)	120	3.85	0.756	High
City Branding (X6)	120	3.72	0.803	High
Decision to Stay (Y)	120	4.18	0.589	High

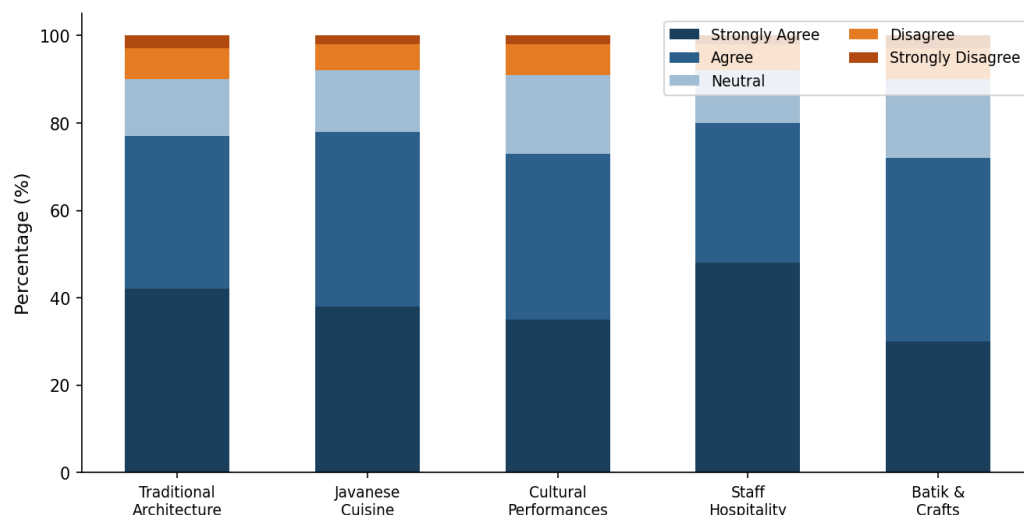
### Tourist Visit Motivation Profile

As illustrated in Figure 2, the majority of respondents (38%) identified cultural tourism as their primary motivation for visiting, confirming the cultural pull of the Lorin Solo Hotel and its Surakarta context. Business and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) travel accounted for 22% of visits, while leisure and recreation represented 18%. Culinary tourism, an increasingly prominent niche within Javanese cultural tourism, motivated 14% of respondents consistent with findings by Arifandi et al. (2025) on the growing significance of local cuisine in hotel guest preferences.

**Figure 2.** Distribution of Tourist Visit Motivation at Lorin Solo Hotel (n = 120)

### Satisfaction with Javanese Cultural Elements

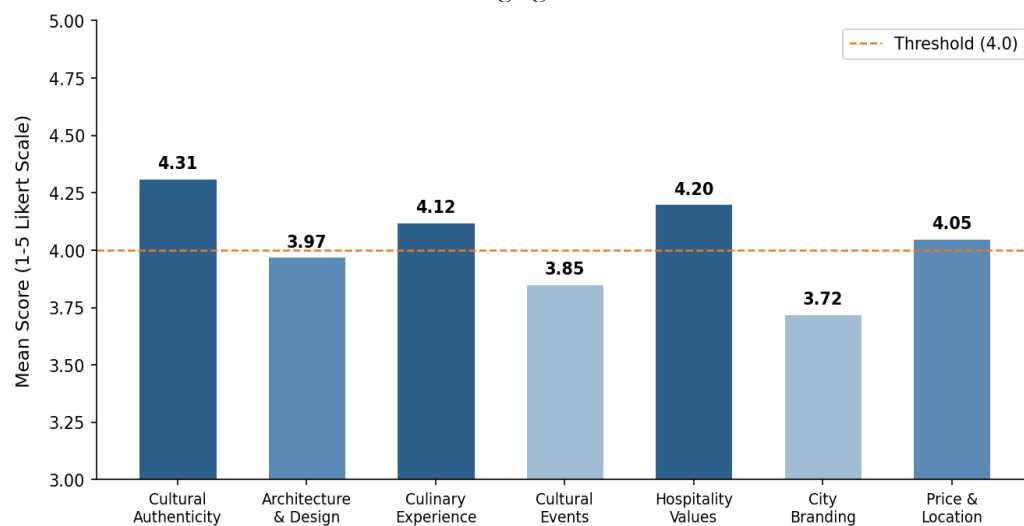
Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondent satisfaction with specific Javanese cultural elements at the hotel. Staff hospitality received the strongest positive response, with 48% of respondents strongly agreeing that Javanese hospitality values were genuinely expressed by hotel staff. Traditional architecture and culinary offerings also garnered high positive responses (77% and 78% combined "agree" and "strongly agree," respectively). Cultural performances received somewhat more neutral responses (35% strongly agree), suggesting that the depth of engagement with live cultural programming is an area with development potential consistent with observations by Dianingrum et al. (2021) regarding the suboptimal application of Javanese iconic elements in hotel settings.



**Figure 3.** Tourist Satisfaction with Javanese Cultural Elements at Lorin Solo Hotel (n = 120)

**Factors Influencing Decision to Stay**

Figure 4 presents the mean scores of all six cultural appeal dimensions as predictors of hotel stay decisions. Cultural authenticity (M = 4.31) and Javanese hospitality values (M = 4.20) emerged as the dimensions most strongly associated with the decision to stay, while city branding received the lowest score among the factors studied (M = 3.72). This pattern suggests that tourists are more responsive to experiential and interpersonal cultural dimensions than to abstract destination imaging.



**Figure 4.** Mean Scores of Javanese Cultural Appeal Dimensions Influencing Decision to Stay (n = 120)

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the simultaneous effects of the six cultural appeal dimensions on tourists' decision to stay. The overall model was statistically significant (F = 40.218, p < 0.001) and explained 68.1% of the variance in the dependent variable (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.681; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.664), indicating a strong model fit.

Cultural authenticity emerged as the strongest predictor (β = 0.372, p < 0.001), followed by Javanese hospitality values (β = 0.315, p < 0.001). Culinary experience (β = 0.298, p = 0.001), architectural design (β = 0.241, p = 0.005), and cultural event programming (β = 0.214, p = 0.020) all demonstrated statistically significant positive effects. City branding, while positively associated, did not reach statistical significance (β = 0.140, p = 0.097), consistent with Wiyana et al. (2018) who found that city image has only a weak direct effect on tourist attraction unless supported by tangible experiences.

**Table 3.** Multiple Regression Analysis Results: Predictors of Decision to Stay

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.412	0.183	—	2.251	0.026
Cultural Authenticity (X1)	0.341	0.075	0.372*	4.547	0.000
Javanese Hospitality (X2)	0.289	0.068	0.315*	4.250	0.000
Culinary Experience (X3)	0.254	0.072	0.298*	3.528	0.001
Architectural Design (X4)	0.198	0.069	0.241*	2.870	0.005
Cultural Event Prog. (X5)	0.167	0.071	0.214*	2.352	0.020
City Branding (X6)	0.122	0.073	0.140	1.671	0.097

Note:  $R^2 = 0.681$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.664$ ;  $F = 40.218$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . \*  $p < 0.05$

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the central thesis that Javanese cultural appeal is a significant determinant of tourists' decisions to stay at Lorin Solo Hotel. The regression model, accounting for 68.1% of variance in the decision variable, indicates that the six cultural dimensions collectively form a robust explanatory framework for understanding hotel selection behavior in a heritage tourism context.

The primacy of cultural authenticity ( $\beta = 0.372$ ) aligns with an established strand of the tourism literature. Lee et al. (2020) establish that authenticity functions as a core mediator between cultural worldview and destination choice behavior, while Candra et al. (2025) confirm that destination authenticity mediated by tourist satisfaction significantly predicts loyalty. In the Lorin Solo Hotel context, cultural authenticity manifests through consistent and credible integration of Javanese aesthetic and ceremonial elements throughout the guest journey, from lobby design and room décor to welcome rituals and staff uniform choices. When these elements are perceived as genuine rather than performative, they generate the emotional resonance that drives positive accommodation decisions.

The strong effect of Javanese hospitality values ( $\beta = 0.315$ ) deserves particular attention. Unlike tangible cultural assets such as architecture or food, hospitality values are intangible and relational—rooted in the specific interpersonal orientations of *tepa salira* and *ngajeni* that Dewanto et al. (2025) identify as structurally embedded in Javanese cultural reference systems. These values are expressed through the demeanor, communication style, and service philosophy of hotel staff, creating a culturally distinctive service climate that is difficult for competitors to replicate. Sumarsono et al. (2018) had earlier identified hospitality culture as a key component of hotel management strategy in Surakarta's eco-tourism development, and the present findings extend this insight into the domain of tourist decision-making.

The significant influence of culinary experience ( $\beta = 0.298$ ) is consistent with the emerging literature on gastronomy tourism in Central Java. Arifandi et al. (2025) demonstrate that local culinary offerings are a primary preference driver for hotel guests on Java, while Apriyanto et al. (2025) show that culinary uniqueness strengthens destination image and tourist interest. For Lorin Solo Hotel, this implies that the strategic curation and authentic presentation of Solonese cuisine including traditional breakfast offerings, in-house warungs (eateries), and culinary demonstration programs represents a high-leverage investment area.

Architectural design's significant contribution ( $\beta = 0.241$ ) underscores the importance of the built environment as a cultural communication medium. Dianingrum et al. (2021) had identified that the application of Javanese iconic elements in Surakarta hotel buildings is often suboptimal and insufficiently distinctive; the present findings, while confirming architecture's positive role, also suggest through the relatively lower mean score ( $M = 3.97$ ) that there remains room for enhancement. Kumara et al. (2019) demonstrate the potential of Javanese architectural facades to shift MICE tourists toward leisure engagement, suggesting that stronger architectural identity could broaden the hotel's appeal across tourist segments.

The non-significant effect of city branding ( $p = 0.097$ ) when controlling for the other cultural dimensions corroborates the cautionary findings of Wiyana et al. (2018), who found only a weak direct correlation between Solo's city image and actual tourist attraction. This does not diminish the strategic value of the "Solo the Spirit of Java" branding rather, it suggests that branding functions primarily as an awareness-building and initial attraction mechanism rather than a direct driver of accommodation choice. Its effect is likely mediated through the specific experiential dimensions captured by the other variables in the model,

consistent with Deliana and Prajnanta's (2023) finding that Solo's cultural branding translates into competitive advantage only when integrated into tangible hospitality offerings.

These findings collectively suggest that hotel managers in Surakarta should prioritize investment in the experiential and interpersonal dimensions of cultural integration staff training in Javanese hospitality philosophy, authentic culinary programming, and cultural performance schedules over cosmetic architectural interventions or generic destination marketing. For tourists, particularly the 63.3% repeat visitors identified in this sample, depth and consistency of cultural experience appear to be decisive retention factors.

## 5. Comparison

Comparison with prior studies is essential to highlight the contribution and positioning of this research within the existing body of knowledge. This study focuses specifically on the influence of Javanese cultural appeal on tourists' decision to stay at a heritage hotel, which distinguishes it from most previous studies that primarily examine cultural tourism at the destination level rather than at the hotel level.

Previous studies have generally emphasized the role of cultural elements in shaping destination attractiveness and tourist satisfaction. For instance, earlier research has demonstrated that cultural authenticity significantly influences tourist behavior and loyalty in heritage tourism contexts. Similarly, studies on Javanese hospitality values have shown that cultural ethics such as *tapa salira* and *ngajeni* contribute to service quality and guest satisfaction. However, these studies tend to focus on broader tourism experiences and rarely examine their direct impact on hotel selection decisions.

In comparison, this study provides hotel-specific empirical evidence, showing that cultural authenticity ( $\beta = 0.372$ ) and Javanese hospitality values ( $\beta = 0.315$ ) are the strongest predictors of tourists' decision to stay. This finding extends prior research by demonstrating that cultural dimensions do not only influence satisfaction and loyalty but also play a decisive role in pre-consumption decision-making, particularly in selecting accommodation.

Furthermore, previous research on culinary tourism has established that local cuisine contributes to destination image and tourist interest. This study confirms and refines this finding by showing that culinary experience ( $\beta = 0.298$ ) significantly influences hotel choice, indicating that gastronomy functions not only as a complementary attraction but also as a core determinant of accommodation decisions.

In terms of architectural design, prior studies have highlighted the importance of traditional Javanese architectural elements in enhancing cultural atmosphere. While consistent with these findings, the present study shows that architectural design ( $\beta = 0.241$ ) has a moderate but still significant effect, suggesting that physical cultural representation alone is less influential than experiential and interpersonal factors.

A notable distinction emerges in the case of city branding. Earlier studies suggest that branding initiatives such as "Solo the Spirit of Java" enhance destination competitiveness and tourist arrivals. However, this study finds that city branding ( $\beta = 0.140$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) does not have a statistically significant direct effect on the decision to stay when other cultural variables are considered. This indicates that branding functions more as an indirect or supporting factor, rather than a primary determinant of hotel selection.

Overall, compared to state-of-the-art research, this study contributes in three key ways:

1. It provides micro-level (hotel-specific) analysis, rather than macro-level destination analysis.
2. It establishes a hierarchy of cultural influence, where experiential and interpersonal factors (authenticity and hospitality) are more influential than symbolic or promotional factors (branding).
3. It empirically demonstrates that cultural appeal directly influences tourists' decision-making, not only post-visit satisfaction or loyalty.

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