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Collecting memories in urban space: cultural tourism in Medan, Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate how the continuity aspects of a city's place identity, particularly in the pillars of urban cultural sustainability, can encourage sustainable tourism. This continuity aspect encompasses value, nostalgia and familiarity.

Design/methodology/approach – This study uses a mixed methodology, which includes the collection of qualitative data through in-depth interviews with ten participants from a variety of tourism stakeholders and onsite observations at the research site, as well as quantitative data through survey responses distributed to 90 key individuals in each of the four selected locations. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze all quantitative data, whereas content analysis techniques were used to evaluate qualitative data. The findings regarding the development of cultural tourism in Medan City, Indonesia, are subsequently validated through the triangulation of the analytical results.

Findings – The continuity aspect at the four selected locations received favorable scores; however, it necessitated the consideration of several components, including the physical components of tourist attractions, the preservation of traditions, building maintenance and visitor education, to provide a comprehensive representation of urban tourism. These findings indicate that the sustainability of urban tourism is significantly influenced by the continuity aspect of place identity.

Research limitations/implications – This research is limited to the perceptions of tourists and tourism industry players regarding heritage tourism objects and to the continuity aspect of place identity to measure the level of tourism sustainability in Medan City.

Practical implications – This research provides implications for the sustainability of objects through the preservation of these objects, where the more important heritage tourism is in travel motivation, the more they are oriented toward preservation values.

Social implications – This research provides implications for tourism planning to improve the quality of existing tourist attractions as well as develop new tourist objects on tourism objects that have not yet been explored, by integrating continuity aspects in them.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is a pioneering effort to examine urban place identity within the context of sustainable tourism in Medan, Indonesia.

Keywords Continuity, Value, Nostalgia, Familiarity, Urban tourism, Cultural tourism

Paper type Research paper

(Information about the authors can be found at the end of this article.)

1. Introduction

Tourism has become one of the world's fastest-expanding industries, providing a key source of revenue for many nations (Abouelmagd, 2023) and has emerged as the fastest-growing sector in recent decades (Dluzewska & Rodzos, 2018; Comerio & Strozzi, 2019; Sayuti, 2023). Aside from its economic benefits, it may pose social, environmental and cultural issues if built without regard for people's needs or the sustainability features of urban and heritage sites (Abouelmagd, 2023). Tourism and culture complement each other, promoting cultural tourism and preserving local values in the face of globalization (Ristić, 2018). In the modern world, cultural heritage and its appraisal via tourism have grown in importance. In this case, sustainable tourism development is necessary to maintain a city's cultural heritage. Sustainable tourism involves conserving, developing and maintaining regional and domestic

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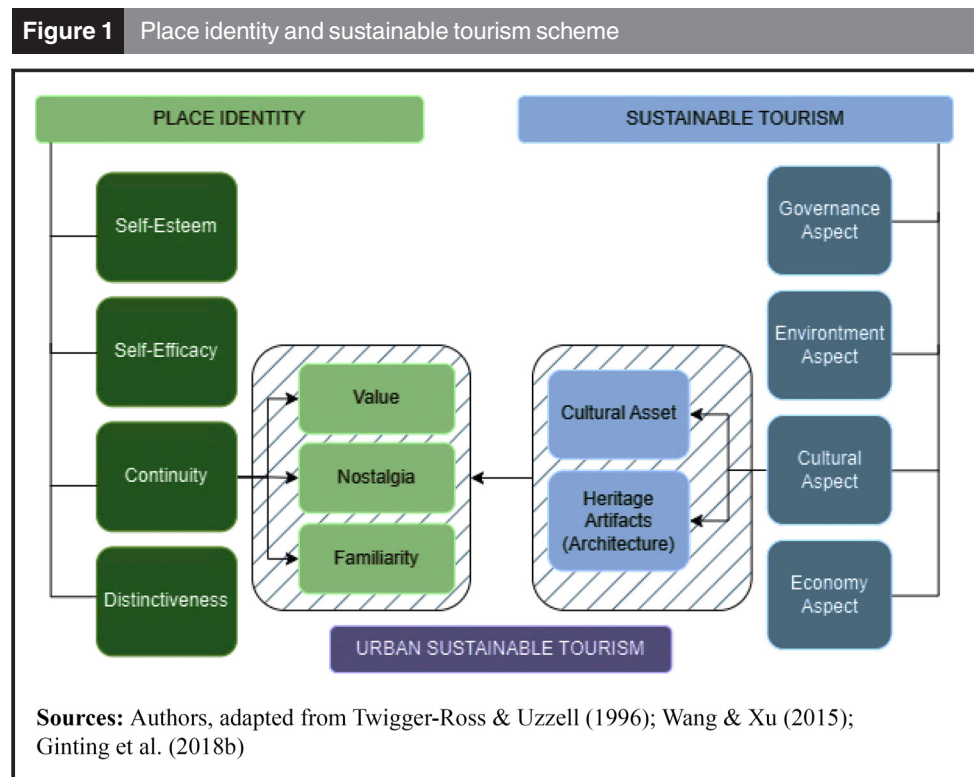
This research was funded by the World Class University Program at Universitas Sumatera Utara under contract number 26/UN5.2.3.1/PPM/KP-WCU/2022. The authors would also like to thank Sarah Nurdini Saragih, Iba Apriani Tambunan and Salwa Putri Handayani for their assistance in data collection.

tourist assets (Andari, 2019). Achieving a balance between tourist growth and heritage protection is critical to ensuring that cultural assets are not jeopardized in the quest for financial benefits (Ahmed, 2023). As a result, it is critical to investigate the implementation of sustainable tourism in urban areas using cultural and historical values (heritage) (Andari, 2019).

Tourism in urban areas is a global phenomenon that reflects the progress of world civilization, which can support regional development because of its great benefits as a source of income and improving the quality of life for people (Ramkissoon, 2023). Further research into the city's tourist attractions, including the cultural side, is required for city tourism to thrive. Based on the previously discussed difficulties of cultural tourism in urban settings, this study will focus on continuing urban cultural tourism by tourists and locals. Urban destinations face sustainability challenges as they combine life and travel (Marchi, Marasco, & Apicerni, 2023). Therefore, cultural tourism can be one way to face the challenges of urban cultural and heritage resilience by managing cultural tourism in urban areas with sustainable tourism. Sustainable cultural tourism is expected to improve the quality of conservation and management of cultural heritage because these two things cannot be separated (Liu & Shu, 2020).

However, there is a scarcity of research on the concept of place identity within the urban setting about sustainable tourism. Furthermore, it is imperative to have a strategy for enhancing place identity to construct a city's image (Bassano et al., 2019). To address this disparity, the present study aims to offer a comprehensive examination of the significance of urban place identities in the context of sustainable tourism (Figure 1). The research question is:

RQ1. How can a city's place identity encourage sustainable tourism, especially on the pillars of urban cultural sustainability by the continuity aspect of the place?



2. Literature review

2.1 Urban space

Cities can play a unique role in cultural tourism. Usually, metropolitan city centers are frequently founded on the fusion of several cultures and their physical legacies. Historical cities have become one of the most significant cultural assets because they combine tangible and intangible heritage and better reflect the complexity of human interaction with the environment (Liu & Shu, 2020). Therefore, urban areas that are abundant in historical and cultural assets could serve as portals for visitor arrivals and constitute tourist attractions (Andari, 2019).

Cultural tourism is an important component of the urban tourism economy, particularly in city centers. Therefore, urban areas need a sustainable system for urban tourism destinations to positively impact and benefit urban residents in terms of environment, governance, economy and cultural preservation for the local population. The notion of sustainable urban tourism anticipates that tourist activities will continue to be enjoyed by future generations so they can still enjoy tourism in cities with rich historical and cultural heritage (Andari, 2019).

2.2 Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism refers to tourist activities that continue to focus on issues of social, environmental and economic sustainability for the present and future (UNWTO, 2020). The purpose of sustainable tourism is to promote the short and long-term welfare of the local community and fulfill the desires of tourists while also protecting or maintaining the environment (Sayuti, 2023). To achieve the key requirements of fostering sustainable local development, ensuring self-sufficiency and meeting visitor demands (Liu & Shu, 2020). The presence of sustainable tourism is dependent on sustainable environmental, social and economic viable activities that require compatibility of the needs of the host community and visitors, which can aid in the protection and enhancement of tourism attractions to become part of the national economy in the future (Worku Tadesse, 2023). Sustainable tourism development is the process of developing tourism in each location so that the content, form and size are suitable and sustainable over time, do not harm the environment and do not jeopardize the potential to support other development activities (Van, 2020).

Sustainable tourism indicator systems have little influence on policy and sustainable change (Crabolu, Font, & Miller, 2023). The “three pillars” of the sustainability idea, namely, social, economic and environmental sustainability, have grown to incorporate culture as a fourth pillar, both at the international level (Ottaviani, Demiröz, Szemző, & De Luca, 2023). These three pillars can be influenced by the cultural conditions of a tourist area. On a national level, sustainable cultural tourism is inextricably related to the conservation and management of cultural heritage (Liu & Shu, 2020). Sustainable tourism has emerged as a promising strategy for protecting cultural assets in countries dealing with violence and instability (Stanikzai, Seerat, & Humdard, 2023) because, in practice, sustainable tourism is acknowledged for its ability to preserve and promote cultural assets while also benefiting local economies and communities (Mowforth & Munt, 2015), by creating a mutually beneficial link between cultural and natural heritage preservation (Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Stanikzai et al., 2023).

2.3 Cultural sustainability

Culture is a collection of material and spiritual values resulting from human investments in nature, society and thought (Ristić, 2018). Without these investments, human society would not exist in its basic form. Cultural resources are one of the requirements for tourist growth in a country, region or location (Van, 2020). Cultural tourism can be defined as an activity or a symbolic movement passed down from generation to generation to each civilization to giving each area its recognized qualities and serving as a repository of human experience

in the assertion and enrichment of cultural identities, in which the tourist's fundamental objective is to find, experience and consume both tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism place, gathering new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural demands (Richards, Richards, 2018, Richards, 2002; Madandola & Boussaa, 2023). Cultural tourism is one of the options that can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for heritage (Labadi, Giliberto, Rosetti, Shetabi, & Yildirim, 2021; Pezeshki, Khodadadi, & Bagheri, 2023) and it is a popular choice for tourists seeking new experiences (Ristić, 2018). One of the cultural tourism products that is often a tourist destination is cultural heritage tourism. Cultural heritages play an important role in preserving cultural values and educating the nation about the past, and they enhance the tourist experience, improve understanding of cultures around the world, preserve heritage sites and maintain peaceful coexistence in various cultural areas of the country (Worku Tadesse, 2023).

2.4 Urban cultural sustainable tourism

Urban areas are abundant in historical and cultural assets, which serve as portals for visitor arrivals and so constitute tourism attractions (Andari, 2019). Therefore, the development of sustainable urban tourism requires in-depth study, so that it can become a source of income for the city and become the basis for sustainable city design in the future. Sustainable urban tourism encompasses activities that combine the enjoyment of tourist attractions with the preservation of values and culture in urban settings (Andari, 2019), and this could be the urban potential to improve the quality of life while reaping several advantages for the communities (Ancuța & Jucu, 2023), especially as a tourism city. The uniqueness that differs from one place to another is the primary attraction for travelers to embark on a journey to a particular destination (Ginting & Wahid, 2015). Visitors' desire to visit, study and experience the ambience of a city could drive the government and community to respect, be proud of, care for, conserve, repair, clarify and promote their city's cultural heritage values (Van, 2020). This can encourage policyholders and local communities to preserve historical cultural values and can become a sustainable tourist area. Historical towns could become one of the most significant cultural assets because they combine tangible and intangible heritage and better reflect the complexity of human interaction with the environment (Liu & Shu, 2020). Local elements can be used to ensure long-term tourism development, including historic landmarks, historical sites and events, architectural and artistic masterpieces, residents' local ways of life and the cultural identity of places in close relationship with their cultural environment so that they can attract the interest of potential visitors to travel.

2.5 Continuity as the aspect of place identity in urban cultural sustainable tourism

Urban space comprises physical elements people pass through, perceive and use. From an environmental psychology perspective, these features are stimuli captured by the human senses, forming perceptions and experiences (Rapoport, 2016; Altman & Wohlwill, 2012). According to Carmona (2021), in the realm of urban design, there are six dimensions, namely, the morphological dimension, perceptual dimension, social dimension, visual dimension, functional dimension and temporal dimension. These dimensions are part of the human experience in urban space, one of which is implemented as place identity.

2.5.1 Place identity. Place identity is defined as 'those elements of self that define the individual's identity concerning the physical environment' and is a combination of memories, concepts, interpretations, ideas and related sentiments about specific physical locations (Proshansky, 1983; Popescu, Nita, & Iordache, 2020). Place Identity enables a person to recognize aspects of a new place connected to their environmental background, leading to a sense of familiarity, environment establishment, safety and control (Gur & Heidari, 2019). Place identity refers to a location's symbolic significance as a storehouse for emotions and connections that provide meaning and purpose in life (Shamai, 1991; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993; Popescu et al., 2020). Place identity can be an element of spatial planning in an area,

such as historical buildings, which seem to be the most influential objects in place identity (Ginting, Rahman, Subhilhar, & Wahid, 2018b). Some researchers who write about place identity (Breakwell, 1986, 1992, 1993; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Ujang, 2012; Wang & Xu, 2015; Ginting et al., 2018b), divide the concept of place identity into four categories, namely distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy and self-esteem. In the urban environment, these four categories must function harmoniously to promote the legibility of a place's identity by explaining the contrasts between objects (Breakwell, 2021), allowing visitors to understand and interpret these distinctions between places. In urban space, continuity is part of a location's spatial form and adds to its identity (Wang & Xu, 2015; Ginting, 2018), which may be translated into urban design to create sustainable tourism.

2.5.2 Continuity. Continuity is a critical component of the process of building place identity (Ginting, Rahman, & Delianur, 2018a). Continuity refers to the historical association of a location with its surroundings (Liu, He, Chen, Fu, & Dong, 2022). The identity of a place has a continuity aspect if it has the same elements as in the past, and a place can support the continuity of the identity of an individual considering the area has the same character as the individual's previous place of residence, or it has a history of an individual's existence in the past (Ginting et al., 2018a). Continuity in architecture means maintaining identity (Nasution, Marpaung, Ginting, & Fachrudin, 2023). Architecture may be harnessed through style repetition, material utilization, concepts, forms and functions, as well as conventional façade features (Ö. Atalan, 2016; Rizky, Loebis, & Pane, 2018; Nasution et al., 2023). The demand for continuity and the yearning for change are inextricably linked as constants of human existence (Chang, 2020). To maintain continuity with the historical structures, the land use pattern in the region must be capable of supporting the buildings' existence as tourist attractions (Ginting et al., 2018b). All "cultures" rely on and respect continuity in the form of conventions, knowledge, language, art and traditions to ensure inheritance for future generations (Chang, 2020). Several variables were used to measure the parameters of the continuity aspect, such as value, nostalgia/memory and familiarity (Ginting et al., 2018a).

The value as variable, encompasses the appeal of social culture, historical value and building value (Ginting & Wahid, 2015; Ginting et al., 2018a). Meanwhile, nostalgia is described as a single pleasing memory or a set of memories from the past that can provide a better alternative to current solutions (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005; Seifried & Meyer, 2010; Ginting et al., 2018a). It is also social, near others play an important or supporting role in nostalgic recollections and nostalgia is linked to or promotes social connectivity (Frankenbach, Wildschut, Juhl, & Sedikides, 2021; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2019; Hong et al., 2022). Human memory, taught by interactions with environmental events, has a proclivity to perceive similarities between items, especially when exploring a new location (Kaplan & Herbert, 1988; Chang, 2020). We become more familiar with objects and events among environmental invariants and there are even instances where members of different families resemble one another (Wittgenstein, 1980; Chang, 2020). Familiarity is connected with comfort and the impression formed by a place's physical and nonphysical features. Familiarity is also linked to place identity, which is the primary feature connected with place attachment. (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015; Ginting et al., 2018a). Familiarity influences comfort level, which is vital in forming an attachment to the area. (Ujang, 2012; Ginting et al., 2018a). Urban experiences that connect instinctively are based on shared memories (Chang, 2020).

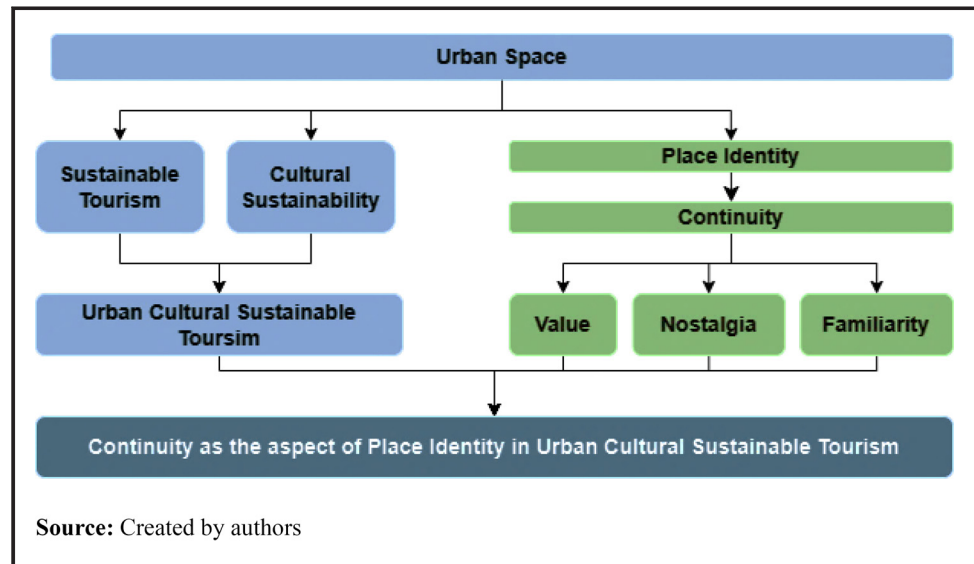
Based on the explanation of the literature, it can be concluded in a scheme (Figure 2) that the identity of a place could be applied in cultural studies of sustainable urban tourism.

3. Methods

3.1 Research areas

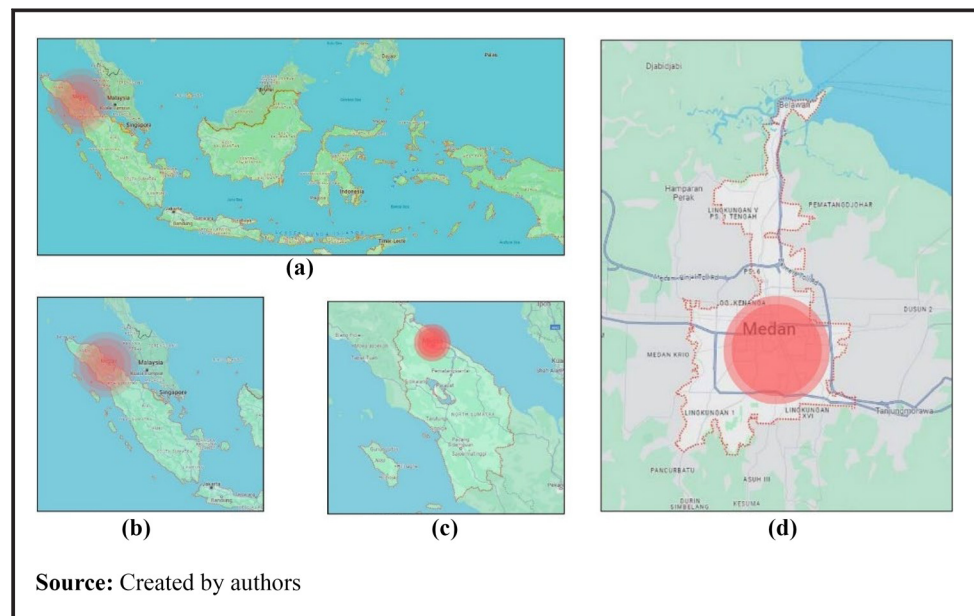
This study focuses on finding approaches that improve continuity aspects in urban space to encourage sustainable tourist development and strengthen the place's identity, which is

Figure 2 Continuity as the aspect of place identity in urban cultural sustainable tourism scheme



required for the sociocultural pillars of urban society to be preserved. To address this issue, relevant research locations must be chosen, especially in urban areas, that serve a crucial part in developing sustainable cultural tourism. Furthermore, this research is in a historical context and considers the historic district as a cultural tourist asset, focusing on sustainable tourism development (Yuliati, Susilowati, & Suliyati, 2023). The research site was chosen based on cultural attractions (Alamineh, Hussein, Mulu, & Taddesse, 2023) distinct to each urban area. In this study, four different areas in Indonesia [Figure 3(a)] have been selected,

Figure 3 (a) Map of Indonesia. (b) Map of Sumatera Island. (c) Map of North Sumatera region. (d) The research site in Medan City



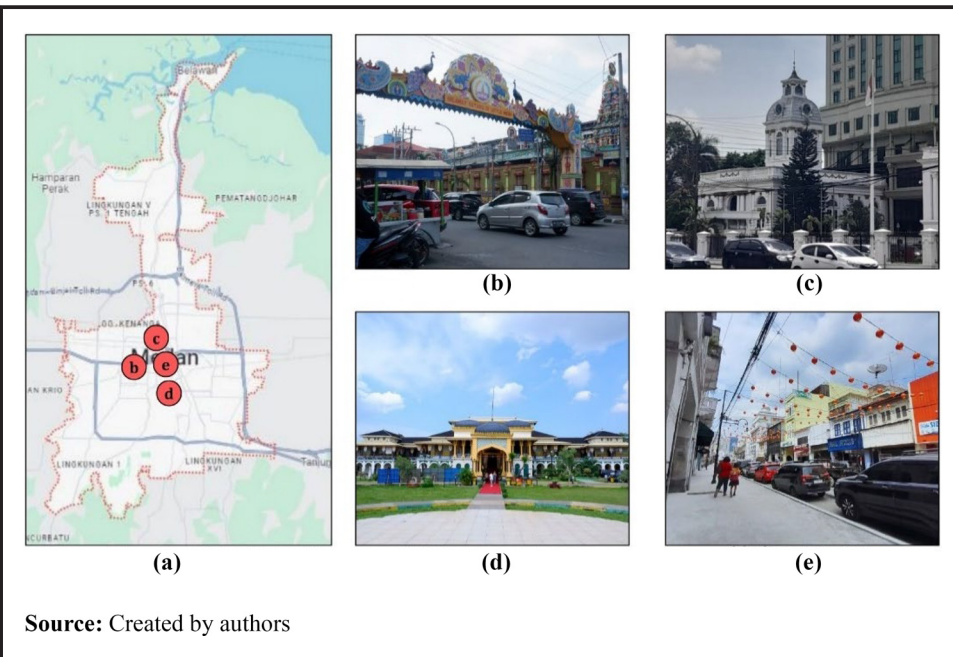
specifically Sumatra Island [Figure 3(b)], North Sumatra Province [Figure 3(c)], which is one of the cultural tourism destinations in Medan City [Figure 3(d)].

The four different areas in Medan City [Figure 4(a)] that were selected as research locations are the Little India Area (LIA) [Figure 4(b)], Colonial Heritage Area (CHA) [Figure 4(c)], Malays Sultanate Area (MSA) [Figure 4(d)] and Chinatown Area (CA) [Figure 4(e)]. Through observation, these four locations have evaluated to determine the amount of development and continuity of cultural tourism in Medan City. The buildings identified in this study are Shri Maryamman Temple and Shri Supramaniyam Temple in LIA; Maimoon Palace, Sri Deli Park and Al-Mashun Mosque in MSA; the Kesawan Street, Tjong A Fie's Mansion and Setiabudi's Temple in CA; and CHA consist of London Sumatera Building, Grand City Hall and Pos Bloc Building.

Several similar publications, such as [Jawahar, Vincent, and Philip \(2020\)](#) and [Lee, Joo, Lee, and Woosnam \(2020\)](#), used a quantitative technique by distributing a Likert scale questionnaire. [Jawahar et al. \(2020\)](#) collected questionnaire respondents from 432 tourists from various demographic types of respondents based on age, gender, occupation, qualifications and travel behaviors, which were collected to obtain data on visitor perceptions. [Lee et al. \(2020\)](#) surveyed to determine similarities in visitors' impressions of city tourism by conducting a Likert scale questionnaire to 500 local tourists. [Garcia-Buades, Garcia-Sastre, and Alemany-Hormaeche \(2022\)](#); [Qu, Cao, Ge, and Liu \(2021\)](#); [Vergori and Arima \(2020\)](#); and [Ponte, Couto, Sousa, Pimentel, and Oliveira \(2021\)](#) used a questionnaire survey approach to collect data on the perspectives and views of various stakeholders on tourist conditions in urban areas.

[Erawan \(2020\)](#) and [Zhang et al. Zhang, Ruan, and Yang \(2021\)](#) used a mixed-method, a combination of qualitative methods through semistructured interviews. [Holder, Ruhanen, Walters, and Mkono \(2023\)](#) conducted interviews with tourism stakeholders. Qualitative methods include observation and literature reviews ([Yuliati et al., 2023](#)). Hence, based on previous research indicating the significant results of using questionnaire and interview methods, the quantitative method with a Likert scale questionnaire survey, and the

Figure 4 (a) Map of all the research locations. (b) Little India area. (c) Colonial heritage area. (d) Malay sultanate area. (e) Chinatown area



Source: Created by authors

quantitative method with direct interviews with tourism sector experts. Based on several research methods related to cultural tourism in city sustainability, this study used a mixed-method approach that included qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis processes to emphasize the results (Zhang et al., 2021; Creswell, 2003).

3.2 Sampling and data collection

The study involved observations, questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Field observations were conducted to collect physical data on the research area, such as images of building types, usage, culture and activities.

3.2.1 Survey questionnaire instrument. A questionnaire assessed all the key responses from individuals (Garcia-Buades et al., 2022), regarding the continuity and sustainability of the places they have visited. Three primary questions with multiple subquestions were delivered to 360 respondents throughout four study areas, with 90 respondents in each. The main questions of the interviews to measure the level of continuity aspects are the value element, which consists of questions related to visitors' admiration, knowledge and good impressions (Kaplan & Herbert, 1988; Chang, 2020). The nostalgia element consists of satisfaction, knowledge and experience; a desire to recommend the area; feeling like returning to the past; and a desire to revisit (Ginting & Wahid, 2015; Ginting et al., 2018a). The familiarity element consists of visitors' familiarity with the area, new insight, impression of the area, satisfaction and impression of the facilities (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015; Ginting et al., 2018a).

3.2.2 In-depth interview instrument. The interview was conducted using an interview question outline that includes the questions concerning the continuity of cultural tourism in Medan City, with an in-depth discussion of the contribution of the stakeholders (Yuliati et al., 2023). Through purposive sampling, the researcher interviewed ten key person representatives from the Culture and Tourism Office of North Sumatra Province, Tourism Organizations (ASITA, INCCA and PHRI), managers from each area, cultural practitioners and academics. These interviews will provide primary data to be processed in the third stage. The list of in-depth discussion questions with informants consists of conditions of cultural preservation at the four locations, extent of cultural activities at the four locations and responses to visitors' perceptions of the four research locations (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015; Ginting et al., 2018a).

3.3 Data analysis

Analyzing the conceptualization of place identity reveals potential synergies between tourism, cultural sustainability and urban development. Researchers used SPSS V22 to analyze and manage the quantitative data gathered, which was triangulated with qualitative measures from interviews and observations.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Respondents profile

In this study, visitors from diverse places, age groups, genders and educational backgrounds who visited the four research areas (Table 1) were asked to answer questionnaires. Each study area received 90 responses, bringing the total number of respondents to 360 from diverse circles.

4.2 Continuity aspects of the study area

4.2.1 Value. A location or building is important because it provides significance to someone. The value element discussed in this study comes from the tourism areas that are

Table 1 Respondents demographic

Respondents demographic	Malay sultanate area Populations	(%)	Chinatown area Populations	(%)	Little India area Populations	(%)	Colonial area Populations	(%)
• Local (from Medan City)	51	56.67	63	70.0	62	68.89	52	57.78
• Local (outside Medan City)	38	42.22	27	30.0	28	31.11	38	42.22
• Local (from International Region)	1	1.11	0	0.0	0	0.00	0	0.00
<i>Total</i>	90		90		90		90	
<i>Age</i>								
• 18-24	41	45.56	40	44.4	37	41.11	69	76.67
• 25-49	45	50.00	36	40.0	43	47.78	14	15.56
• 50-64	4	4.44	12	13.3	7	7.78	7	7.78
• Above 64	0	0.00	2	2.2	3	3.33	0	0.00
<i>Gender</i>								
Female	48	53.33	54	60.0	47	52.22	53	58.89
Male	42	46.67	36	40.0	43	47.78	37	41.11

Source: Created by authors

intricately linked to sociocultural values and historical experiences. The value offers a one-of-a-kind experience that may set it apart from competitors (Lalli, 1992; Ginting et al., 2019).

According to the responses in Table 2, the CHA received the highest mean points with a total of 4.23 points, indicating that elements of colonial buildings in Medan City's historic area are quite popular and still have value in the eyes of visitors. Based on the results, all research areas have very good scores, where the average for all areas is more than "3.50" (LIA = 3.97, CHA = 4.23, MSA = 4.05, CA = 4.06).

Based on statement 1, *I was amazed by the objects and buildings in this place*, it is known that the average mean obtained is 4.15, which means that tourists are quite amazed by the objects and buildings in the four research areas. The highest points fell in the CHA [Figure 5(a)] with 4.44 points. The colonial building, which is one of the city icons is the London Sumatra Building [Figure 5(b)], then the Pos Bloc building is an adaptive reuse building, and currently young people are starting to gain interest as a community and culinary center that uses old buildings without changing any of the existing structure [Figure 5(c)]. Then, there is the Grand City Hall [Figure 5(d)], which is currently the same as Pos Bloc, has undergone adaptive reuse, becoming one of the culinary center buildings in the center of Medan City.

Based on statement 2, *I gained new knowledge through the objects and buildings in this place*, respondents gained new knowledge through objects and buildings in the four research sites with the highest mean point in CHA (4.21). This is because the buildings in the CHA are almost all cultural heritage buildings and visitors who have pursued higher education often have a proclivity for intellectual inquisitiveness, leading them to seek answers to their questions by engaging with cultural heritage artifacts and sites (Ginting, 2013). In the Pos Bloc building [Figure 6(a)], there is a museum that displays various correspondence tools, such as a collection of stamps from various years [Figure 6(b)], stamp printing tools, typewriters, communication tools used in ancient times and various other relic tools, which are equipped with an explanation and a QR code containing the history and use of each item on display [Figure 6(c)].

The CA gets a moderate value (4.01). But, for the other two research sites, the MSA (3.97) and the LIA (3.98) showed low values. This could be due to the lack of information and the lack of historical relics that exist in both research sites.

In statement 3, *The objects and buildings in this place made a good impression on me*, the mean obtained is quite high (4.09), which indicates that the objects and buildings in the research area provide quite a good impression for visitors. Respondents get a good impression of the objects and buildings in the four research sites, with the highest in the CHA (4.22). The CHA has several historic buildings that can give a good impression to

Table 2 Variable of value

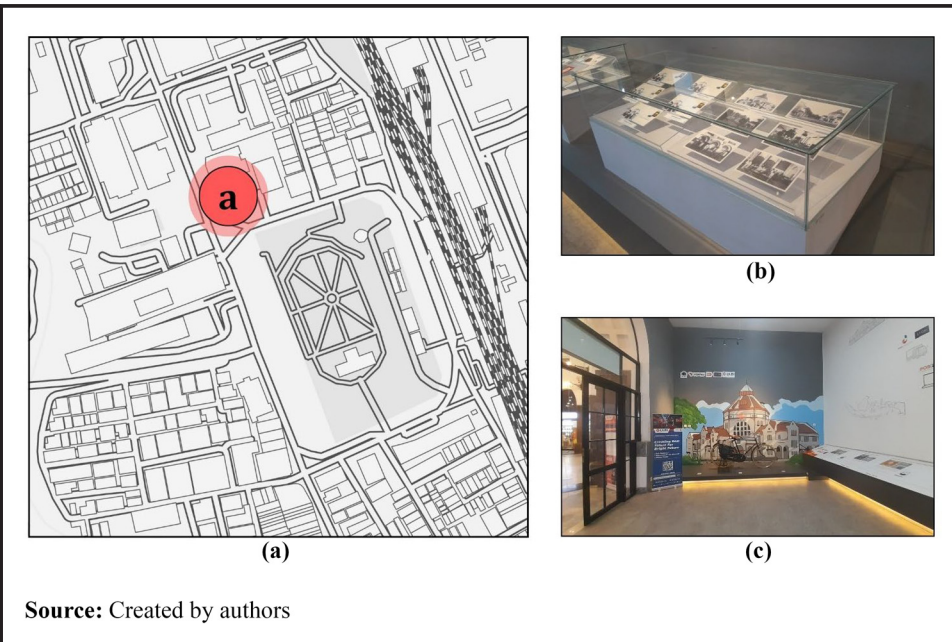
Aspect	Statements	LIA	CHA	MSA	CA	Mean
Value N = 360	1 I was amazed by the objects and buildings in this place	4.08	4.44	4.02	4.07	4.15
	2 I gained new knowledge through the objects and buildings in this place	3.98	4.21	3.97	4.01	4.04
	3 The objects and buildings in this place made a good impression on me	4.03	4.22	4.06	4.04	4.09
	4 I was amazed by the history, culture and traditions of this place	3.94	4.26	4.13	4.11	4.11
	5 I gained new knowledge through stories about the history, culture and traditions of this place	3.90	4.11	4.11	4.03	4.04
	6 The history, culture and traditions of this place made a good impression on me	3.89	4.16	4.01	4.09	4.04
Value Format: 1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Strongly agree	Mean	3.97	4.23	4.05	4.06	4.08

Source: Created by authors

Figure 5 (a) Map of colonial heritage area; (b) London Sumatera building; (c) Pos Bloc; (d) Grand city hall



Figure 6 (a) Map of Pos Bloc; (b) Historical stamps and letters at Pos Bloc's Museum room; (c) Museum with QR code information in Pos Bloc



respondents. These buildings can make an area with profound significance and rich experiential depth (Ginting & Wahid, 2015). In the MSA, the average value is (4.06). The results of interviews with Maimun Palace managers also show that tourists gain new insights through memorable experiences gained in this place:

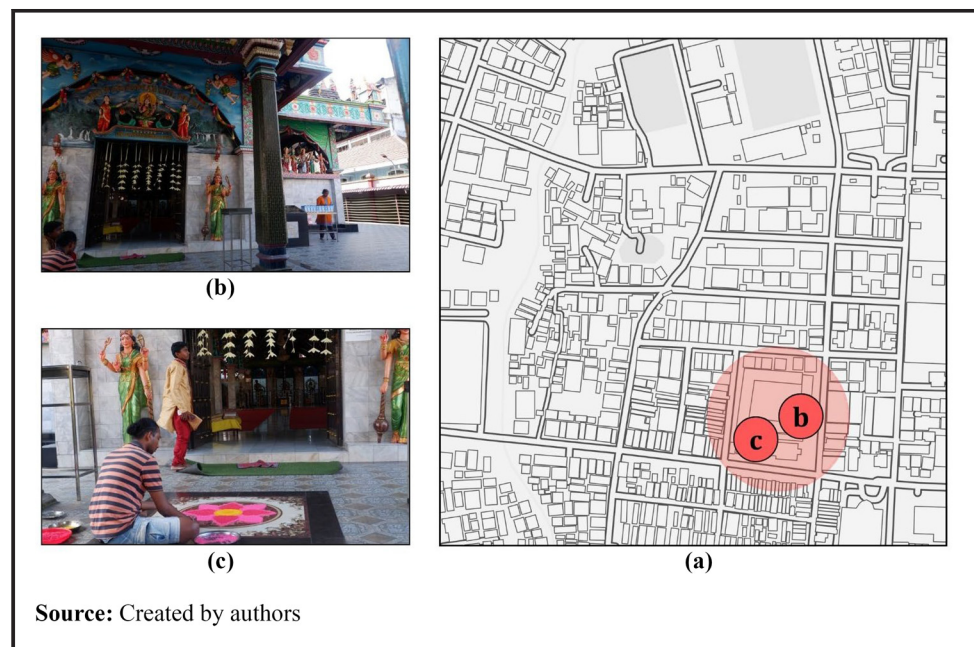
“The knowledge gained by tourists can provide a memorable experience for the tourists themselves [...]” (Main Respondent: Maimoon Palace manager)

In statement 4, *I was amazed by the history, culture and traditions of this place*, the mean obtained is quite high (4.11), which indicates that the elements of history, culture and tradition displayed in the four research location areas are quite impressive for visitors. CHA (4.26), is the highest mean, which means that in the postcolonial setting, the built environment can be linked to colonial and disputed power, as well as national struggle (Wheelan 2001, 2002, 2003; Parkinson, Scott, & Redmond, 2017). The observation results show that the nonphysical value of the LIA can be seen from its cultural activities.

In statement 5, *I gained new knowledge through stories about the history, culture and traditions of this place*, the mean obtained is quite high (4.04). The area with the highest average based on respondents' choices is the CHA (4.11). In the last position is the LIA (3.90), in the form of an area where there are many temples as places of worship which are more closed than other areas, but knowledge related to history and culture can still be obtained by those guests who have the same background from different areas. In this case, like the Shri Maryamman Temple [Figure 7(a) and (b)], it can only be opened to the public if there are no religious activities taking place, but if there are religious activities then only people who are going to worship can enter [Figure 7(c)].

In statement 6, *The history, culture and traditions of this place made a good impression on me*, the mean obtained is quite high (4.04), indicating that the elements of history, culture and tradition displayed in the four areas of the research location are quite impressive in visitors' eyes. Respondents were amazed by this place's history, culture and tradition in the

Figure 7 (a) Map of Shri Maryamman Temple; (b) Shri Maryamman temple; (c) Activities in Shri Maryamman temple



Source: Created by authors

fourth research site with the highest in CHA (4.16), because there are still many colonial-style buildings that survive and can be visited.

Although the four study locations have strong historical value, tourism industry experts said they do not yet have impressive stories. According to them, telling a place's story is very important and needs to be added to tourist attractions because how a tourist attraction impresses tourists depends on the story told about the object. "Don't just focus on the building, but the physical aspect must be there (too). That could help the tourist activity with storytelling." (Mr Solah from Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies [ASITA]).

4.2.2 Nostalgia. Nostalgia is linked to consistency, and the components under examination include self-esteem, connectivity, social competence and fulfillment, socioemotional coping, goal-directed tactics and positive reframing (Batcho & Shikh, 2016).

In statement 3, *The objects and buildings in this place made a good impression on me*, the mean According to the responses in Table 3, all research areas have good nostalgia. It shows that the average for all areas is higher than "3.00" (LIA = 3.71, CHA = 3.81, MSA = 3.89, CA = 3.85).

In statement 1, *I feel satisfied when I am in this place*, the total mean was 4.05, which is quite good and that means the respondents were satisfied in the four research sites. The area that got the highest mean was the CHA (4.13), because there are still colonial elements displayed on the building facades. When someone feels satisfied about a place, the respondent will feel nostalgic that can increase their level of satisfaction (Io & Wan, 2018). In contrast to the three previous locations, CA got the lowest mean (3.98). Based on observations made, the number of visitors at one of the historical buildings in the CA [Figure 8(a)], Tjong A Fie Mansion [Figure 8(b)], was not that many compared to the other three research locations, apart from that at the time the observation was carried out there was revitalization of the CA along Kesawan Street [Figure 8(c)].

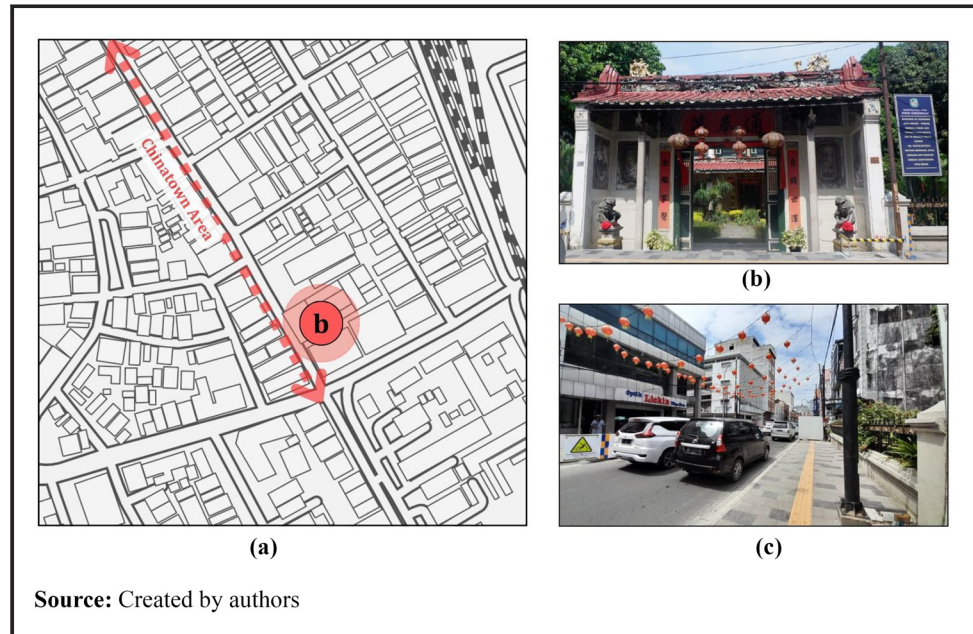
From statement 2, *I feel satisfied with the knowledge I have gained*, the total mean obtained is 3.89, which means that visitors are quite satisfied with the knowledge gained after visiting the tourist area which is the research location. Respondent's satisfaction with the knowledge gained in the LIA received a moderate response (3.86). In the CA (3.87), CHA

Table 3 Variable of nostalgia

Aspect	Statements	LIA	CHA	MSA	CA	Mean
Nostalgia N= 360	1 I feel satisfied when I am in this place.	4.02	4.13	4.08	3.98	4.05
	2 I feel satisfied with the knowledge I have gained	3.86	3.89	3.93	3.87	3.89
	3 I feel satisfied with the experience I gained	3.91	3.98	3.96	3.91	3.94
	4 My satisfaction with this place makes me want to recommend it to others	3.87	4.21	4.01	4.06	4.04
	5 The knowledge I gained at this place makes me want to recommend it to others	3.73	4.17	3.96	3.98	3.96
	6 The experience I gained makes me want to recommend it to others	3.88	4.11	3.97	4.07	4.01
	7 I feel like I've gone back in time when I'm in this place	3.27	3.49	3.70	3.73	3.55
	8 I felt like I had gone back in time through the insights I gained in this place	3.26	3.46	3.74	3.84	3.58
	9 I have past experience at this place	3.31	2.62	3.63	3.12	3.17
	10 I was so satisfied that I intend to revisit this place in the future	4.04	4.08	3.96	3.98	4.01
Value Format: 1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Strongly agree	Mean	3.71	3.81	3.89	3.85	3.82

Source: Created by authors

Figure 8 (a) Tjong A Fie Mansion location in Chinatown area; (b) Tjong A Fie Mansion; (c) Kesawan street known as Chinatown area



Source: Created by authors

(3.89) and MSA (3.93), who gain the highest mean among the others conclude the respondents were quite satisfied.

Based on the results of statement 3, *I feel satisfied with the experience I gained*. The total mean of statement 3 is 3.94, which can be interpreted as meaning that some visitors are quite satisfied with their travel experience. experience and feel it while visiting the research location area. Based on the results of the questionnaire (Table 3), the area that got the highest mean was the CHA (3.98), then the MSA (3.96) and then the CA and Little India got the same results for 3.91. Then, based on the results of statement 4, *My satisfaction with this place makes me want to recommend it to others*, the total mean is 4.04. The area that got the highest mean was the CHA which got a total mean of 4.21, then the CA with a total mean of 4.06, then followed by the MSA with a total mean of 4.01, and the area that got the last position was LIA with a total mean of 3.87.

Based on the results of statement 5, *the knowledge I gained at this place makes me want to recommend it to others*, the total mean was 3.96. In this case, it can be interpreted that the knowledge obtained by tourists is quite clear and pleasing to visitors and some visitors are willing to recommend these areas to others. The area with the highest score is the CHA (4.17), then the CA (3.98), then the MSA (3.96) and finally the LIA (3.73).

Based on the results of questionnaire statement 6, *the experience I gained makes me want to recommend it to others*. The total mean of 4.01 is obtained, which can be interpreted as the experience that visitors get in each area that is the research location. enough to arouse visitors' desire to recommend these areas to others. It was found that the area with the highest mean was the CHA (4.11). This is supported by the results of observations in the CHA shown in Pos Bloc [Figure 9(a)], which shows that Pos Bloc still uses several ornaments and features of ancient post offices to become part of a unique photo spot to increase the number of visitors, for example, the mailbox behind Pos Bloc [Figure 9(b)] which is often used as a photo spot by visitors [Figure 9(c)].

In statement 7, *I feel like I've gone back in time when I'm in this place*, they get a total mean of 3.55. The total mean can be seen to be lower than other statements, but it can be said

Figure 9 (a) Pos Bloc location in colonial heritage area; (b) Post box (PO box) in Pos Bloc; (c) Activity in Pos Bloc



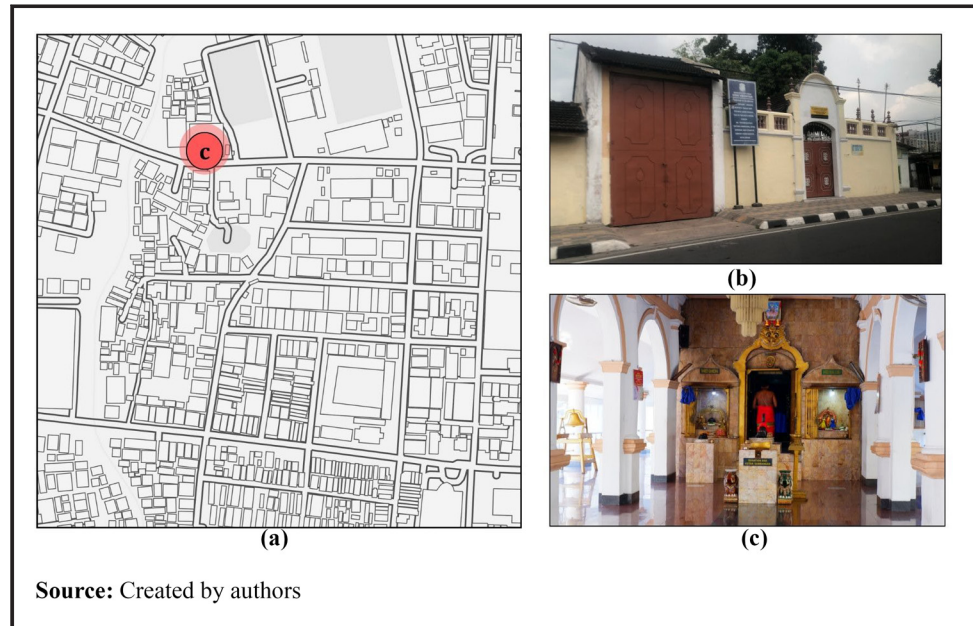
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that from these results, visitors can feel a little nostalgic or like they are going back to the past. Based on the results of the questionnaire (Table 3), the largest total mean was achieved by the CA (3.73), then the MSA (3.70), then the CHA (3.49) and finally the LIA (3.73). In statement 8, *I felt like I had gone back in time through the insights I gained in this place*, which discusses visitors' feelings of being carried away by the past as if they were in the past. Through insight gained in these areas, it produces a good total mean, which is worth 3.58. The highest mean was achieved with a total mean of 3.84 by CA. In statement 9, *I have past experiences at this place*, it discusses past experiences that have been felt by visitors, getting a total mean of 3.17, which can mean that the past experiences of visitors who come on tour are not felt enough by some visitors. The MSA achieved the highest total mean (3.63). Based on statement 10, *I was so satisfied that I intend to revisit this place in the future*, respondents were so satisfied that I intend to revisit this place in the future on all four research sites obtained high scores, especially in the LIA (4.04) and the CHA (4.08). Not much different, in the MSA (3.96) and the CA (3.98) also got a fairly high score. This is supported by observations at one of the buildings in the LIA, Shri Supramaniyam Temple [Figure 10(a) and (b)], which has a unique and distinctive temple, as well as activities that visitors can witness if there are religious activities [Figure 10(c)].

Overall, nostalgia aspects in the four regions received moderate responses (3.82). The area that obtained the lowest nostalgic value was the LIA (3.72). This is influenced by the lack of such a sense of returning to the past felt by the respondents. Meanwhile, the results of interviews with tourism industry players stated that elements to strengthen nostalgia really need to be added, for example, renting Dutch-style costumes at Pos Bloc, renting Chinese costumes at Tjong Afie, bodyguards wearing ancient Malay Army costumes, Malay cultural performances routine and Royal Dinner with Malay culinary delights at Maimun Palace:

So, back to the packaging (of the tourism), for example, what kind of attractions are there? Like at Tjong A Fie, as soon as you enter the mansion, if there's music, there's incense burning, you can feel it (the ambience). Pos Bloc's food can taste like the West, yes, like some style of the

Figure 10 (a) Shri Supramaniyam temple location in little India area; (b) Shri Supramaniyam temple; (c) Dancing Shri Supramaniyam temple



Source: Created by authors

past. Even if the landmarks don't support it, for example, you can make them based on your experience. – Dewi PHRI (Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association)

4.2.3 *Familiarity*. The concept of familiarity is closely linked to the formation of place identity, and it is the primary characteristic connected with place attachment. The capacity of a location to suit the psychological demands of individuals who trigger their emotions is expressed in emotional attraction (Ujang, 2014). According to the results, familiarity in four research areas received a good average score (Table 4).

According to the responses in Table 4, all research areas have good familiarity, where the average for all areas is higher than “3.00” (LIA = 3.75, CHA = 3.92, MSA = 3.88 and CA = 3.89).

Based on statement 1, *I became more familiar with this place*, respondents became more familiar with the four research sites with the highest CHA (4.16). When someone behaves routinely or often in a place that feels familiar can develop and increase one's familiarity with the place (Felder, 2021). On the LIA (4.10) and the CA (4.00) get moderate values. Besides that, the MSA received the lowest score (3.90). Based on statement 2, *I gained new insight by recognizing this place*, respondents gained new insights by identifying the four research sites in the MSA (4.08) and CHA (4.07), Meanwhile, in the CA (3.98), and LIA (3.93) get a

Table 4 Variable of familiarity

Aspect	Statements	LIA	CHA	MSA	CA	Mean
Familiarity N=360	1 I became more familiar with this place	4.10	4.16	3.90	4.00	4.04
	2 I gained new insight by recognizing this place	3.93	4.07	4.08	3.98	4.01
	3 I gained a good impression after recognizing this place	3.94	4.04	4.03	4.01	4.01
	4 I'm satisfied with the public facilities at this place	3.50	3.69	3.69	3.67	3.64
	5 The public facilities at this place gave me a good impression	3.29	3.67	3.70	3.78	3.61
Value Format: 1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Strongly agree	Mean	3.75	3.92	3.88	3.89	3.86

Source: Created by authors

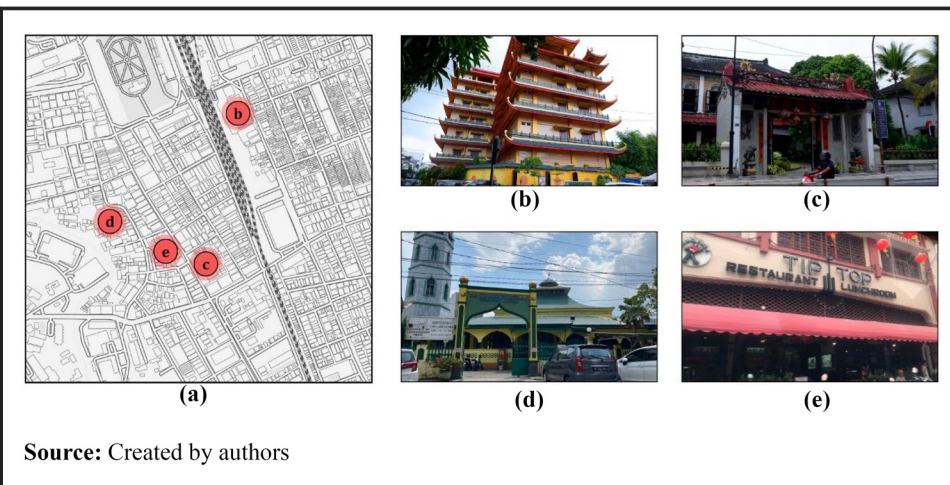
low value. A person is familiar with a place when he already knows or recognizes a place well (Felder, 2021) which indirectly adds new insights to them. Then, based on statement 3, *I gained a good impression after recognizing this place*. The results of the questionnaire showed that respondents got a good impression after recognizing the four research areas, with the highest CHA (4.04). In the CA 4.01 [Figure 11(a)], this area is quite easy to recognize and generally has many memories for several Medan City residents. For example, the majestic Setiabudi Temple [Figure 11(b)] which can even be seen from the CHA, the presence of the Tjong A Fie Mansion as a historical museum [Figure 11(c)], and the TIPTOP Restaurant [Figure 11(e)], then there are the Gang Bengkok Mosque facilities which have existed for a long time and were built by Tjong A Fie [Figure 11(d)].

Based on statement 4, *I'm satisfied with the public facilities at this place*, the results of the questionnaire also showed that respondents were satisfied with the existing facilities in the four areas to give a good impression with the CHA and the MSA being the highest. In the MSA [Figure 12(a)], the facilities provided are quite diverse, such as at Maimun Palace there is a mosque [Figure 12(c)] and street vendors [Figure 12(b)], then at Sri Deli Park, a seating area is provided [Figure 12(d)] and trash bin to keep a healthy environment [Figure 12(e)].

Based on Statement 5, *the public facilities at this place gave me a good impression*, the physical quality in the four regions is moderate. Overall, familiarity in the four regions received a moderate response (3.86). The area that obtained the lowest closeness value was the LIA (3.75). This is influenced by respondents' low satisfaction and positive perception of the physical qualities in this region. The three aspects that create continuity in all of the research areas can be considered good in the CHA and MSA, but average in the CA and LIA. The issue of facilities showing tourist satisfaction scores below 4 aligns with what tourism actors also feel. "There is nothing, engagement or let alone culture exchange in here if we talk about culture" – Solah from ASITA (Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies).

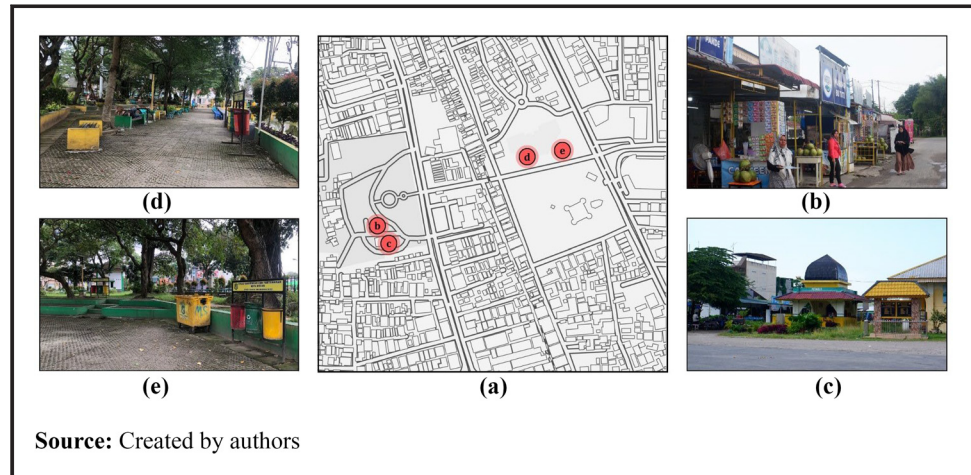
In contrast to tourists who generally show satisfaction with the value aspect in the four study areas, tourism industry players stated that various things still need to be improved, including infrastructure and facilities, such as parking, toilets, cafes/restaurants and shops. Several participants stated that the existence of these facilities at Maimun Palace, for

Figure 11 (a) Chinatown area; (b) Setiabudi temple; (c) Tjong A Fie Mansion; (d) Gang Bengkok Mosque; (e) TIPTOP restaurant



Source: Created by authors

Figure 12 (a) Malay Sultanate area; (b) Street vendor at the Maimun palace; (c) Mosque at the Maimun palace; (d) Sitting area at Sri Deli Park; (e) Trash bin at Sri Deli Park



example, gave a bad image to the tourist attraction, for example, the placement and design of the market, the use of inappropriate tents and public activities in open spaces:

The potential is already there (exist), there is already an element of direct development. It is just a matter of connecting what is there to make it even more interesting. (Mr Muklis – Medan City Tourism Department)

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Collecting memories in urban space. Tourists engage in tourism-related activities to seek a break from their daily routines and stress. They search for new elements of life, unique experiences and different or exceptional surroundings (Zhou, Xiang, Cheng, & Yang, 2021). Urban spaces provide a tourism experience, mostly through historical tourist attractions, which are the core attraction for many urban tourism destinations globally (García-Hernández, De la Calle-Vaquero, & Yubero, 2017). These historical objects physically and emotionally embody the identity of the place. This study demonstrates that preserving cultural objects integral to Medan culture through diverse physical and emotional experiences results in creating a place identity. The aspect of continuity, which allows visitors to engage with identical objects from the past, is the primary reason for this occurrence. In addition, the qualities of value, nostalgia and familiarity contribute to this too. The study results show that visitors find the most satisfaction in the value aspect of these objects, with a mean score of 4.08. This number is higher than the mean scores for nostalgia and familiarity, which are both 3.86. This is in line with Carneiro and Crompton (2010), who emphasize that people who are less familiar or unfamiliar with tourist destinations will be more likely to seek more information about that tourist attraction. In this case, tourists can receive information through the value of objects displayed as tourist attractions. These three characteristics contribute to a series focused on collecting memories within an urban space, where the location and narrative are intricately intertwined with the urban space.

The value is demonstrated through the tourists' sense of admiration toward the building, learning new insights into the tourist attractions, positive impressions formed and acquisition of new knowledge of historical, cultural and traditional features. This information highlights the substantial importance of heritage tourism attractions in Medan, which are vital in offering visitors memorable impressions and experiences. Both the physical and visual aspects of the building and its surroundings contribute to this through their architectural characteristics. The

significance of the past in tourism is demonstrated by the enduring influence of historical values, which evoke feelings of admiration and impart information in the present. Tourists also specifically express their satisfaction with intangible aspects, such as history and culture. Because most visitors come from Medan and other places within Indonesia, their impressions and opinions differ from those in the tourism industry. The industry professionals believe the current facilities need improvement compared to similar ones elsewhere. It is crucial to consider the perspective of tourism stakeholders since it can potentially shape visitors' perceptions. Tourists in Medan and its surrounding areas typically do not rely on tour guides for their travels. This suggests that people assess the importance of tourist attractions by gathering information independently or from sources other than tour guides. Nevertheless, this demonstrates that the provided impressions are representative of the broader population. This will have good implications for the sustainability of objects through the preservation of these objects, where the more important heritage tourism is in travel motivation, the more they are oriented toward preservation values (Alazaizeh, Hallo, Backman, Norman, & Vogel, 2016). Maintenance of the value aspect supports the achievement of preservation as part of sustainable tourism (Liu & Shu, 2020).

The nostalgic aspect of continuity is expressed by respondents' statements of agreement that they feel satisfied being in a heritage tourist area/attraction, as well as the knowledge and experience gained, which encourages them to recommend the place to others. However, tourists disagree that these tourist attractions make them feel like they have gone back in time, both with the objects and the new knowledge they gain when visiting the tourist attraction in question. This could happen because those who come are the younger generation and/or not from the city of Medan, let alone experiencing the same objects in the past. This means that emotionally, heritage objects do not always provide the ambience of the past. This is in line with what was stated by Earl and Hall (2023), that in nostalgia, there is an aspect of temporality for various tourist backgrounds. It stands to reason that the results of interviews with tourism industry players show that they also feel the same way, so it is necessary to create a welcoming atmosphere. They have a stronger sense of the past. They, for example, suggest that at the bloc post location, there is a rental of colonial-era hats and costumes, colonial-era music and food. Likewise, at Tjong Afie's house, with its strong Chinese culture and the Shri Mariaman Temple, which is dominated by Tamils, among their suggestions for the Maimun Palace are more palace guards in typical Malay clothing, regular Malay dance performances and a Royal Dinner with old Malay fashion, cuisine and atmosphere. Even though this sense of the past is not very strong, the tourists still agree to recommend these objects to others and declare that they will return to these places in the future. This is important because nostalgia can positively impact appreciation and gratitude and can also be negative if they experience disappointment in perceiving an object (Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2023).

The familiarity aspect is expressed in a statement of the level of agreement of tourists regarding their feelings that they feel familiar with tourist objects, they gain new insights and good impressions by recognizing tourist objects, as well as their satisfaction with existing facilities in tourist attractions areas and good impressions of public facilities. there. An average value below 4 but above 3.5 can indicate that tourists feel familiar with heritage tourist attractions in the city of Medan. In contrast to tourists who are satisfied with existing facilities, tourism industry players state that facilities are still very lacking, especially the arrangement, design and quality of service. The facts in this study can provide benefits for improving tourism as stated by Szubert, Warcholik, and Żemła (2021), that familiarity is related to perceived tourist attractions, and the more attractive a tourism object, the stronger it will be chosen as a tourist destination (Kim & Perdue, 2011)

4.3.2 Sustainable urban tourism: when continuity support urban space conservation. The continuity aspect, based on this research, shows that the continuity of culture from the past to the present, which is maintained in urban space, forms value, nostalgia and familiarity for

tourists, meaning that they come to enjoy the continuity of the past, provide new experiences and gain new insights regarding the object of heritage tourism. This can be seen through the preservation of physical objects, such as buildings and clothing, as well as intangible objects, such as cultural and culinary performances. Even though the last two aspects have not been optimally strengthened at tourist attractions in Medan, tourists still make these heritage objects part of the “must visit” places in the city of Medan. With a strong image of the past, this heritage tourist attraction is physically successful when these past objects are conserved. The more original it is, the more it is liked. Apart from physical objects, the ambience of a heritage area should be stronger when intangible heritage such as dances, traditional ceremonies, banquet traditions from past cultures, music and culinary delights are also preserved and made into tourist attractions at heritage tourist objects according to the traditions of the object concerned: Colonial, Chinese, Indian and Malay. Sustainable tourism in Medan City is supported by the conservation of these tourist objects, which, apart from saving resources by benefiting from old buildings, also maintain traditions that are expected to have a multiplying effect on the community's economy.

Increasing cultural tourism in urban areas with the continuity aspect is one of the supports for tourism development on an urban scale. Following [Liu et al. \(2022\)](#), the continuity aspect refers to the historical association of a location with its surroundings so that the preservation of historic buildings and sites can become a tourist attraction by providing value, nostalgia and a familiar impression that builds memory and brings back memories of past conditions and the ambience from somewhere in the city area. [Ginting et al. \(2018a\)](#) also agree with the importance of place identity in improving the quality of urban cultural tourism, where continuity aspects in place identity can support the continuity of the identity of an individual considering the area has the same character as the individual's previous place of residence, or a history of an individual's existence in the past.

5. Conclusion

This research has evidence and arguments that aspects of continuity as part of place identity can be used as a point of view in explaining how heritage objects as tourist attractions support sustainable tourism by preserving things that support value, nostalgia and familiarity, both cultural ones in the form of objects such as buildings, clothing and culinary delights, or intangible ones, such as dance, music and traditions/ceremonies. These continuity aspects are the basis for strengthening heritage tourism objects by developing things that add good memories and impressions, new insights and tourist experiences, as well as providing an evaluative point of view regarding the success of sustainable tourism from the heritage tourism aspect. This research provides implications for tourism planning to improve the quality of existing tourist attractions and develop new tourist objects that have not yet been explored by integrating continuity aspects into them.

This research has limitations because it only analyzes the perceptions of tourists and tourism industry players regarding heritage tourism objects in the city of Medan. Further research can analyze more broadly how marketing aspects strengthen continuity at tourist attractions. This research recommends strengthening the continuity aspect of heritage tourism objects by improving the quality of design, facilities and services, in addition to strengthening storytelling and ambience, for example, by exposing more past costumes related to heritage tourism objects, creating regular cultural performances, both in the form of banquets or other traditional ceremonies.

Based on the median value of each aspect that contributes to continuity, support and development of tourism infrastructure, or supporting facilities are required so that visitors can develop a sense of admiration for buildings, tourist attractions, cultural history and traditions and knowledge gained during travel, leading to a desire to recommend or promote the tourist destination. The current study adds factual evidence to the argument

that municipal governments should consider the public's perception of Medan's city image when planning development and redevelopment. This technique can successfully optimize the effects of large-scale investments in local identity enhancement. While there has been considerable research conducted on the topic of place identification in the context of heritage and nature tourism, there is a noticeable dearth of studies examining the incorporation of sustainable urban significance.

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