

# **ASSESSING DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS OF MATI CITY: UTILIZING IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to assess the destination competitiveness of Mati City utilizing importance-performance analysis. This paper utilized a quantitative, non-experimental design using the correlation technique to recognize the different scales in the importance analysis of Mati City as a destination when examining 516 beach goers. The study used descriptive statistics, frequency, mean, Pearson r, and ANOVA for the statistical tools. The study reveals the competitive importance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination concerning services, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine are found to be very important. Thus, developing a competitiveness model for destinations could assist tourism stakeholders in the public and private sectors in identifying the location's strengths and weaknesses from the viewpoint of travelers, as well as in highlighting chances for tourism development and formulating plans to address any risks to future tourism. The competitive performance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination was outstanding in terms of services, safety and security, attraction, festivals, transportation, and cuisine. Therefore, development results should be given more weight in tourist performance evaluations. The results show that Mati City has an outstanding destination performance overall. This does not, however, imply that Mati City does not require renovation. Several sectors need upgrading to boost Mati City's standing as a travel destination. The results show that transportation rates are the best, indicating that Mati City has a solid infrastructure that increases efficiency and supports the tourism industry. Lastly, there is no significant difference in sex, age, and marital status, while educational attainment significantly differs in assessing the destination competitiveness of Mati City utilizing performance analysis.

*Keywords: Assessing Destination, Competitiveness, Performance Analysis, Mati City*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries today. People have become interested in famous tourist spots; some will even travel far away to reach their target destination. Tourism can offer various economic and social benefits for destinations as it also helps showcase the tourist spots in their location. Every island has something unique to offer. However, other than the destination, we also need to consider the other tourism sectors to have a competitive position in the tourism industry. Socio-demographic characteristics have been directly connected to the choice of a particular travel destination. Among the earliest studies that looked at the influence of demographic factors on tourists' destination choices (Woodside; Lysonki; Crompton, 1996), the results showed a connection between demographic factors and visitors' participation in tourism activities. According to

Collin and Tisdell's findings from 2002, demographic characteristics impact tourists' participation in tourism-related activities and choice of travel destination. Mati City is the capital city of Davao Oriental which is located in the Mindanao Region. Mati was chosen to be the subject of this paper because many international and domestic tourists visit the place because of the beautiful landscapes and beaches where tourists can enjoy flora and fauna. Furthermore, aside from the natural sceneries, many people visit Mati City's resorts and beaches to experience the beautiful waves where tourists and locals can surf and skimboard. To sum up, Mati City is best for tourists who like to seek thrills and adventures.

Competitiveness in the global market is one of the most significant challenges for the tourism industry and its activities. This paper aims to assess Mati City's destination competitiveness and how it relates to the given variables. Consequently, various indicators have been created that aim to sum up the destination's competitiveness by an amount. Aside from that, this research will attempt to investigate a relationship between the determinants and residents' perceived destination competitiveness. This will provide information for a better understanding of the importance and performance of competitiveness in Mati City. This will help measure and determine what Mati City is capable of and what actions we can do to improve and develop over time.

In tourism, the subject of rivalry has a special significance. The rise in the globalization of the tourism sector in recent decades, as well as the rising importance of the tourist sector in the economies of many countries, have made it important for local governments and the scientific community to explore the issue of tourist destinations and competitiveness. Geographical research on the competitiveness of tourist destinations typically only covers subjects such as the nature of the natural environment, the perception of service quality by visitors, price comparisons, obstacles to local growth, and the value of various types of tourism. (Connelly, 2007). The lack of detailed papers in this field appears to be a consequence of the lack of a theoretical and methodological basis for the geographical study of tourist destination growth opportunities in a competitive setting. Economists' attempts to translate tourist competitiveness problems into spatial structures such as cities, towns, regions, and countries are of particular interest to geographers. Researchers, however, do not yet agree on the competitiveness of a tourist destination and the means used to measure it (Bednarczyk, 2011).

The issues of competition and competitiveness are critical components of every tourist destination development strategy. It applies to both destinations that rely on foreign tourists and destinations that rely on domestic tourists for their growth. The geographical analysis of this topic must be rooted in fundamental geographical concepts such as space, development, relationships, and structures, as well as in geographical concepts related to tourism, such as tourist space, tourist traffic, tourist value, tourist potential, tourist attractiveness, tourist functions, and sustainable tourism.

This study aimed to assess the destination competitiveness of Mati City utilizing importance-performance analysis. It seeks to answer the following research objectives: To measure the level of competitive Importance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination in terms of services, safety and security, attraction, festivals, transportation, and cuisine; To assess the level of competitive

performance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination in terms of services, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation and cuisine; and to determine the significant differences in assessing destination competitiveness of Mati City utilizing performance analysis when analyzed according to Respondents Profile.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The service, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine are all considered destination competitiveness indicators in this study. On the other hand, the assessment of the importance-performance analysis will include an evaluation of the moderating variable with the following information: Age, Gender, Marital Status, Education, and Annual Income.

Publishers Martilla and James (1977) created a Value Performance Analysis (I.P.A.) that has been a typical approach for analyzing client satisfaction in numerous disciplines of study due to its simplicity and convenience of use. The I.P.A. template has been widely used in a variety of settings and sectors, such as the restaurant and hospitality industries (Back, 2012; Mikulic & Prebezac, 2011; Tontini & Silvera, 2007); education (O'Neill & Palmer, 2004); health care (Abalo, Varela, & Manzano, 2007); public management and administration (Van Ryzin & Immerwahr, 2007); and for continually improving service management (Chang (Levenburg & Magal, 2005).

It has been acknowledged that a destination can supply goods and services that can improve performance to satisfy tourist needs (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Whereas the main principles of the sustainable tourism industry, which include natural, cultural, and created resources, alter destinations (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003), this is the private and public sector management operations that build or add value to the tourist experience. Several tasks vary in significance and can be done successfully or poorly, which could benefit destinations' competitiveness and market dominance. Goals and particular operators making supply-side decisions that do not adopt shifting customer demand will suffer "strategic drift" (Dwyer & Edwards, 2009), leading to short- or long-term competitive disadvantage. It is hard for the tourism stakeholder in the private and public sectors to compensate for these changes in a constructive manner so that their business may gain and keep a competitive organization.

It is reasonable to assume that within the extensive literature on destination competitiveness, the relative emphasis has been on destination resources rather than organizational processes. This is despite the reality that removing strategic drift necessitates organizations to determine the relevance of various strategic alternatives and their level of effectiveness in performing value-adding activities. Significance-performance analysis (IPA) is a technique that allows comparison of the importance ascribed to management tasks and the degree of performance on each (Dwyer, Knezevic' Cvelbar, Edwards, & Mihalic, 2012; Enright & Newton, 2004).

### **Service**

According to (Bradler H. 2004), services are a significant aspect of the company that must be enhanced to exist now and in the future. Service quality is the most critical aspect of strengthening customer-supplier relationships, but it can only be accomplished if the customer's needs are fully understood.

Service quality has generally been identified as necessary in identifying service offerings and gaining a competitive edge in tourism. Customers' assessment of a purchase, which defines satisfaction and probability of repurchase, is essential for all marketers, but particularly for service marketers, who, unlike their manufacturing peers, have less quantitative consistency metrics on which to judge their work (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1988; Brown and Swartz, 1989). Importance-performance analysis (IPA) was announced by Martilla and James (1977) and identifies which product or service attributes a firm should continue a focus on to improve customer satisfaction (Matzler, Bailom, Hinterhuber, Renzl, & Pichler, 2004). For years, the IPA has been used in hospitality and tourism analysis. The simplicity of application and the interesting method of presenting data and strategic suggestions appear to be among the many factors that can broadly accept the technique (Oh, 2001).

Hotel clients or consumers of any product or service may only prefer the quality that can directly fulfill their expectations or compare with other corporations' service quality. Their reviews of those qualities that contribute to overall satisfaction with the hotel product – both in terms of quality perception (performance evaluation) and the value of such items in choosing a specific transaction—can be used by hotel managers as a monitoring factor to allow the enhancement of certain qualities that they can affect. This form of tourism is prevalent due to the vast number of spa centers and the inherited idea of health and social security. Still, it has several concerns, such as degradation of lodging capacities, maladjustment to contemporary demands, incomplete privatization, and a lack of market research aimed at the needs of service consumers (Jovanic, Nikolic, Savic, Sajfert, & Dakovic, 2010).

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry developed a SERVQUAL method for evaluating service quality that comprises five 'structures ('tangibility,' 'reliability,' 'responsibility,' protection, empathy), as well as 22 queries. Following the publication of the first results (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985), applied the SERVQUAL model. The authors continued refining the methodology and publishing test results in publications (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988, 1994a, 1994b).

Most writers adopt the SEQUAL model and connect it with the characteristic of services within specific sectors since measuring service quality in tourist and hotel industries is complicated. Saleh and Ryan (1991) defined five variables of service quality in the tourist industry: transparency, tangible aspects, trust, sarcasm avoidance, and empathy. They featured the 33 items in their research that differed from the SERVQUAL questionnaire.

### **Safety and Security**

The travel industry has always encountered unpredictability regarding safety and security. However, it is undeniable that safety and security concerns have grown in prominence in tourism during the previous two decades. The world has changed dramatically during the previous two decades. Security has been substantially diminished because of terrorist activities, local wars, natural disasters, diseases, and pandemics that we witnessed. The tourism sector cannot avoid the negative implication of these occurrences.

Moreover, plenty of these incidents highlighted tourism's vulnerability on both a national and international scale. Since the mid-1980s, globalization has significantly impacted tourism, which has grown and become one of the world's major industries. The volume of visitors and tourists has gradually increased dramatically in recent years, documenting massive amounts of tourist activities in Europe on the one hand and highlighting the rapid emergence of new destinations in Asia – the Pacific Region on the other. These modern destinations have recently resulted in a significant decrease in the conventional mass market share (Brondoni, 2016; Dwyer et al., 2008).

The continuous failure of a significant investment in traditional mass tourism can be attributed to several causes. First, significant challenges and uncertainty are involved in terrorism, migration, and ideological differences in various places (for example, North America, Turkey, and the Sun Belt) (Adejuwon, 1996). These features have triggered the stagnation of the traditional mass market in the Mediterranean (e.g., travelers from Northern Europe) and are more likely to be countered by the management and practices of multinational corporations with different site preferences (outside of the Mediterranean) that improve the primary demand for local tourism (Brodoni, 2016; Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2000; Brackenbury, 1996). The direct terrorist acts have destroyed the Mediterranean area but have extended to other sites in the last few years (e.g., Thailand). On the one hand, it highlights the close link between tourist investment and terrorism and, on the other, emphasizes that global tourism has become an important tactical goal, surpassing international finance (i.e., New York City and Washington, 11 September 2001) (Lambin, 2011). Tourists and travelers have generally increased focus on safety and security. Since the mid-1970s, the relevance of safety and security issues has grown significantly. Actions of tourists, domestic wars, diseases, and environmental calamities all have adverse effects and harsh repercussions on the travel and tourist sectors, demonstrating the industry's susceptibility on a national and international scale. The safety and protection of the tourist are so crucial to the success of tourism investment they should have the ability to provide a safe and secure destination for tourists.

With safety management, the negative impacts of general accidents can be mitigated by safety prevention if all actors participating in the local tourism industry are ready to deal with such incidents. As a result, while disaster planning is now an important part of global tourism business strategy, many global (and local) tourism executives are hesitant to plan organizational responses for potential crises. Global tourism administrators, on the other hand, often pay careful attention to security management plans as part of an ongoing phase of creating operational capacities to deter, contain, and recover from crises, especially for high-risk activities related to the tourism industry, such as airlines, coastal shipping, and so on. Global visitor administrators hire safety and security procedures, which are somewhat different (and by local tourism authorities).

### **Attractions**

Tourist attractions offer an environment for tourists' social and psychological encounters with the place (Dredge, 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2012). Place satisfaction is a multidimensional summary judgment of a setting's perceived quality in satisfying an individual's needs for a location's physical features, facilities, and social aspects (Stedman, 2002). Another well-studied construct is position happiness. Given that favorable experiences forecast potential intentions (Lee et al., 2012), recognizing how visitor satisfaction can

improve location attachment in cultural and natural settings (Halpenny, 2006) could help island destinations flourish (Taplin, 2013). Site managers must sustain favorable visitor interactions and promote high levels of location connection to cultural and natural features. Although the constructs of authenticity, place happiness, place attachment and cultural and behavioral motives have all been well established, few studies look at the relationship between them.

Parks can include a range of advantages and outcomes, according to Driver (2008), including psychological and healthy living benefits, social capital, more outstanding quality of life, economic opportunities, and environmental resources, all of which lead to person and community well-being. Though tourism growth in African island economies has received much attention (Prayag & Ryan, 2012), research on the presumed validity of cultural and natural properties in these destinations is lacking. These tools, however, are valuable assets for emerging island economies, given the growing pattern of destination competition. Parks offer a comfortable recreational and entertainment area for city dwellers (Gobster, 2002). When dog owners walk their dogs in parks, they are engaged in recreational exercise. Walking a dog is an everyday recreational activity among park visitors, especially dog owners who enjoy leisure time (Gobster, 2002). Recreationists establish a cognitive attachment to a particular location by associating it with the recreational or entertainment opportunities it provides. Recreationists who love a specific destination develop compelling allegiance to that location and return there, resulting in cognitive loyalty (Yüksel, Yüksel, & Bilim, 2010).

Places in the natural world where we recreate and have family trips can be seen as rich in meanings that endorse perceptions and activities toward resource protection (Cheng & Monroe, 2012). Participation by local communities in protecting protected areas typically results in a greater understanding of the importance of wildlife, more responsible resource utilization, and improved local people's health (Pagdee, Kim, & Daugherty, 2006).

## **Festival**

About ten years ago (Getz and Frisby, 1988, p. 22), festival tourism was known as "an emerging giant," but there still appears to be limited and disparate literature on the subject. Festival tourism is a diverse field of research that has been approached from several viewpoints. It is often used as a "catch-all" term to include special event tourism and festivals of any scale or organizational persuasion. From the international to a regional level, the volume of fests is increasing in both rural and urban places. Current issues like tourist numbers and perceived economic and social advantages and drawbacks continue to be debated in public and scholarly spheres. Many festivals are now held on a yearly or bi-annual basis. Place-marketing is a resource management technique for urban revitalization and civic boosterism (Loftman and Nevil, 1996) that employs culture as a tool for economic development. The image of a city is crucial in creating an ecosystem that attracts highly skilled professionals and emerging industries such as advanced technology and culture (Sandercock and Dovey, 2002; Sassen, 1994). The concerted attempts of place-marketing strategy ironically standardize the picture of cities and, in many cases, elicit opposition from people (Neill, 1999; Sadler, 1993; Woodward, 1993). Creating a uniform, the imitative image of the city causes tensions between the government and inhabitants who want their cities' appearances to represent their unique history

and culture. A cultural festival, in particular, serves three essential functions in marketing a location. First, a festival promotes local patriotism, encouraging current citizens to remain in the area (Goodwin, 1993; Philo and Kearns, 1993). Second, a festival is a profitable enterprise in and of itself. Third, according to the city-boosterism model, a festival can reshape or alter the image of a city (Griffiths, 1995). A cultural festival with a noticeable performance or exhibition is an excellent opportunity to raise the city's value.

Foo (1999) defines a cultural traveler as "an internal tourist who attends most several of the historical heritage over his or her stay," whereas Richards (1996) believes that travelers seek out new information and knowledge to suit their cultural interests. Cultural tourism also includes visitors who could participate in cultural events while away from family and whose goal is to gain and explore various heritage sites and historical landmarks as part of their vacation. Examples of these events include attending a musical theatre event, exploring historical sites, landmarks, and museums, taking excursions, and engaging in cultural or religious festivals

. According to Hughes (2002), individuals that go to a destination aspire to see and enjoy a particular portion of their culture (Rivera et al., 2008). Advertising is one of the techniques for sustaining funds for urban rehabilitation and a sort of civic boosterism (Loftman and Nevil, 1996) that uses culture as a job growth instrument. The capital's image demonstrated its ability to provide an exciting atmosphere to those with highly qualified professionals and was becoming including those in sophisticated technology and cultures (Sandercock and Dovey, 2002; Sassen, 1994). The careful planning of a location strategy strangely helps simplify the image of towns and, in many circumstances, creates public opposition (Neill, 1999; Sadler, 193; Woodward, 1993). exposing a standard copy of a city image, which causes problems between the state and citizens who want their towns' pictures to represent their unique culture and traditions.

## **Transportation**

Litman (2008) highlighted the 12 public transit elements that influence a terminal's accessibility, namely: (i) Transportation modes - the quality of available methods of travel, such as in terms of speed, safety, and comfort; (ii) Transportation network connectivity - composition of links and trail contacts or other directness of trips between destinations; (iii) Travel cost or affordability; (iv) Mobility - transportation pace and length, capabilities, or transit times; and (v) Integration of transportation linkages and modes; (vi) Transportation demand; (vii) User Information - access to credible information on mobile and access alternatives; (ix) Transportation management; (x) Land use factor; (xi) Travel activity prioritization; and (xii) The value of lack of accessibility or isolation. Enhancing the accessibility criteria can contribute to a tourism destination's economic success (Currie and Falconer 2014, Celata 2007).

New modes of transportation have advanced the tourist business by increasing range capabilities, vehicle speed, journey time, and comfortability. The railway created the framework for contemporary tourism, accompanied by the vehicle rise, which changed regional and inter-regional tourism. Later, breakthroughs in long-haul air transportation enabled travel to distant areas, resulting in the birth of international tourism (Chew 1987). Walking or riding a bicycle can provide tourists with the desired on-site experience, such as leisure or

excitement. In contrast, other power types of automobiles are chosen for long-haul travel since they can save a massive amount of time (Millonig and Schechtner 2006, Lumsdon 2000). Another form of transportation is the cruise ship and cargo ships, which are classified as forms of water transportation. These forms of transportation not only met the number of tourists at the end of the 20th century and into the 2000s (Davenport and Davenport 2006; Zapata-aguirre and Brida 2008); they have also turned into tourist destinations in their own right and, in some cases, formed tourism destinations (Tang and Jang 2010). The tourism attraction may be enhanced by improving infrastructure. Projects that improve connection or provide well-organized cab contacts for visitors near essential bus or rail stations can help improve connectivity between the transportation system and accommodations (Rietveld and Bruinsma 1998, Litman 2008).

Transportation is an essential part of the travel industry and can be one of the most critical factors in its success. Because of their inextricable connection, the travel industry's expansion is one of the critical reasons for transportation growth and change (Van Truong and Shimizu, 2017). The structured territorial vehicle system continues to stand out among other regional transportation systems for advancing the travel industry. While there is no widely agreed-upon understanding of the value of an integrated vehicle, various representations and examples have been offered to help people correctly understand the concept of an integrated vehicle, including a sequence of steps and multiple perspectives and exercises (Potter and Skinner 2000, Nosal and Solecka 2014, Lu et al. 2018).

## **Cuisine**

Food is essential for gaining a greater understanding of the destination's culture and is a means of cultural elucidation (Fieldhouse, 1986). As a result, food is considered a compelling force for visitors to visit tourist destinations (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010). (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009). A destination's flavorful and elegant cuisines and visual spectacles improve the visitor experience (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005). As a result, tourism dining is rapidly becoming a key catalyst for visitors to enjoy the destination's local culture (Kivela & Crofts, 2005), and it is generally thought that food is a key "attraction" in tourism. Previous studies have discovered that visitors are enticed by the cultural flavors offered at a destination and quickly influenced by the truthful traditions of local people that enhance their authentic tourism encounters (Chang et al., 2010; Gupta, Khanna, & Gupta, 2019) carving the destination's cultural picture in the minds of travelers with high marketing ability. Local foods play an essential role in conceiving and understanding a destination's local food history, enriching the tourism experience (Mak Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2017). Earlier research has found that tourists have a bottomless appetite for local cuisine, making gastronomy a necessary component of tourist encounters. Savoring street food, cooked at home or on the street but eaten on the street, is a powerful tool for appreciating local cuisine furthermore the destination's authentic gastronomic culture (Rane, 2011), whether New York's hamburger carts or Tibet's Momo Huts. Street foods prepared by local food vendors are a delectable example of simplified contemporary and conventional local cultures that entice international taste buds to the Indian palate (Gupta et al., 2019; Winarno & Allain, 1991).

Authentic cuisine bestows exquisiteness to a tourist destination and is a critical component of the destination's cultural heritage. However, few research reports have been on tourism and gastronomy, and still less on individual food consumption habits (Gupta, Khanna, & Gupta, 2018; Gupta et al., 2019).



According to the findings of this report, as travelers interpret authenticity and a significant cultural difference in local street foods, the overall culinary experience is exceptional and long-lasting. Nonetheless, moderations can be found in the street food served to fulfill tourists' cravings for authenticity. Local culinary encounters may affect post-trip behavior, as visitors are found not just to use memories for their purposes but as well as to share successes and failures online (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012; Dahiya & Duggal, 2015) and recommend them to friends and peers (WOM) (Ali et al., 2016; Barnes et al., 2016).

Additionally, it has been found that street food vending sites bind visitors with local street cuisines, altering dishes and ingredients to the detriment of their perceived quality and cultural distance to cater to an international palate (Gupta et al., 2018). Due to the sale of mixed hybrid foods cooked with misuse of traditional local flavors and neo-recipes, the ethnic gastronomic values of India have been vandalized in the street food market. With these considerations in mind, the current research seeks to determine the effect of diet alteration on tourists' perceptions of food authenticity, overall food experience, and behavioral intentions (repurchase and recommendation intentions) (WOM).

This study is anchored on the propositions of Dwyer, Dragičević, Armenski, Mihalič, and Knežević Cvelbar (2014). The latter states the importance-performance analysis (IPA) to assess the importance of different activities to underpin tourism development in a particular destination and the industry's perceived performance in respect of these activities. The variables in this study were competitive importance, competitive performance, and the significant difference between the first two when analyzed according to respondents' profiles. Service, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine were the first and second variables' indicators. According to (Bradler H. 2004), service is a significant aspect of a company that must be enhanced to exist now and in the future. The *safety and security* of the tourist were so crucial to the success of tourism investment (Taplin, 2013) that they should be able to provide safety and security for the destination of tourists. On to the next indicator, *attraction*, according to (Dredge, 2010; Ramkissoon et al. 2012), offer an environment for tourists' social and psychological encounters with the place. *Festival*, on the other hand, can reshape or alter the image of a city (Griffiths, 1995) which is an excellent opportunity to raise the city's value. While *transportation* has advanced the tourist business by increasing range capabilities, vehicle speed, journey time, and comfortability, and by enhancing the accessibility criteria, it can contribute to a tourism destination's economic success (Currie and Falconer 2014, Celata 2007). For the *cuisine*, food is vital for gaining a greater understanding of the destination's culture and is a means of cultural elucidation (Fieldhouse, 1986).

## METHODOLOGY

The quantitative, non-experimental design using the correlation technique was used in this study. This research approach is appropriate for this study because it aims to recognize the different scales in the importance-performance analysis of Mati City as a destination when we examine the respondents' profiles.

The correlation method is a non-experimental design where researchers examine the relationship between two or more variables in a natural situation without manipulation or control. In this study, the researchers will investigate the strength of connections between variables by evaluating how a change in one variable is associated with the change in the other variable. In general, correlation

studies include independent and dependent variables, but the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable is found without the independent variable being manipulated (Price, 2013).

A stratified sampling method technique was used in this study. It is the appropriate method to obtain a sample population that best represents the entire population being studied. It was used to determine the study respondents, composed of a whole population divided into subpopulations based on relevant characteristics, e.g., age range, gender, marital status, income bracket, and job role (Turner, 2019). After categorizing them according to the mentioned characteristics, we use the random method to select samples from each subgroup. A total of 515 local and domestic respondents answered the questionnaire devised by the researchers. Additionally, researchers determined the locale of the Davao Region since Mati City is within the mentioned region, which makes the data significant.

**Table 1.** *Frequencies and Percentage for the Selected Demographic Variables*

The participants of the study included 515 random consumers from Davao Region. Table 1 presents the distribution of research subjects in demographic profile (sex, age, marital status, education, and annual income). Most of the respondents are male within the age range of 26-35 years old who are primarily

<b>Profile Variables</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	261	50.7
	Female	254	49.3
<b>Age</b>	26-35 years	380	73.8
	36-45 year	110	21.4
	46-55 years	13	2.5
	56-65 years	8	1.6
	65 above	3	0.6
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	455	88.3
	Married	57	11.1
	Widowed	2	0.4
	Divorce	1	0.2
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>	Grade School	3	0.6
	High School	36	7
	Vocational/ Trade school	30	5.8
	College	390	75.7
	Post-Graduate	56	10.9
<b>Annual Income</b>	60,000-80,000	297	57.7
	140,000-180,000	72	14
	220,000-260,000		
	300,000 above	73	14.2
		73	14.2

single and in their college level of education with an income of 60,000-80,000.

This study utilized a survey strategy in data gathering using a modified questionnaire adapted from Goffi's (2013) research entitled "Tourism Destination Competitiveness: The case of the Italian Destinations of Excellence.

The respondents distributed the questionnaire using online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and email. A Google survey form was the mode of data collection. Tourists who have been to Mati City were the research subjects to obtain their perceptions of the city's competitiveness. Beach Resorts has been chosen since it is a valuable tourist attraction that can be found in Mati City.

The questionnaire contains labeled scaled-response questions. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: 1- Relevant Respondents' Demographic Information, 2- Importance-Performance of Mati City, 3- Importance of Competitiveness, and 4- Competitiveness Indicator Performance. This questionnaire is intended to assess the significance and performance of a destination's competitiveness.

The Likert scale is a rating system used in questionnaires to assess individuals' behaviors, beliefs, or expectations. Subjects select from several potential answers to a particular question or declaration (Jamieson, 2007). Below are two types of five-point Likert scales that were used to interpret the response in the questionnaire. The second and third sections are composed of six indicators: services, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine.

The Scale Instrument for Importance of Competitiveness Questionnaire: Range of Means, Descriptive Level, and Interpretation. The indicators ranked as the highest with a mean of 4.21 – 5.00 (Very Important), which indicates that the characteristics surpass expectations or are exceptional to what is, for the 3.41 – 4.20 (Important) indicates the characteristics average result. 2.61 – 3.410 (Indifferent) denotes a state of confusion of the respondent. 1.81 – 2.610 (Unimportant) indicates that the characteristics failed the respondent's expectation, and lastly, 1.00 – 1.80 (Very Unimportant) indicates that the respondents' viewpoint does not align with the expected output.

Moreover, the Scale Instrument for Competitiveness Indicator Performance Questionnaire, 4.21 – 5.00 (Very Good) indicates that the response far surpasses the initial expectation, 3.41 – 4.20 (Good) suggests that the answer is acceptable, 2.61 – 3.40 (Not Good), it indicates that the response is average, 1.81 – 2.60 (Poor), suggests that the response needs improvement and lastly, 1.01 – 1.80 (Very Poor), indicates that the response significantly fails the expected output.

The researchers did the following steps in the research procedure to collect the data relevant to the conduct of the study. First, the researcher asked permission to conduct the study. After the panel members and research adviser approved the outline defense and questionnaire validation, the researcher asked permission to conduct the research. The researchers sent a letter to the Dean of the College of Hospitality Education. Second, the Questionnaires were distributed and validated; the researchers administered the questionnaires to the respondents via Facebook, Twitter, and Gmail. Lastly, the questionnaires were retrieved; the data were then tallied and subjected to statistical analysis.

In the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers used the following statistical tools to produce valid results. Frequency and Percentage, Weighted Mean, Pearson r, -test, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). Additionally, the researchers tested the formulated null hypotheses statically at a 0.5% significance level.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings were analyzed using the following variables: Competitive Importance, Competitive Performance, and the significant difference between Competitive Importance and Performance of Mati City.

### Competitive Importance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination

The data from table 2 shows the competitive importance of Mati City as a tourist destination in terms of service, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine. The indicator services ranked as the highest with a mean of 4.88 (very important), followed by safety and security accumulated a mean of 4.87 (very important), Transportations has a mean of 4.86 (very important), attraction resulted to a mean of 4.59 (very important), the cuisine has a mean of 4.54 (very important), Festival resulted in a mean of 4.31 (very important). Thus, collectively obtaining an overall mean of 4.67 (very important) indicates that the characteristics surpass expectations. The total results reveal that all the indicators are vital in determining the relevance of specific aspects and the needed developments to maintain a competitive position as a destination.

Based on the results mentioned above, the following implications were drawn. According to (Dwyer et al., 2004), developing a competitiveness model for destinations could help tourism stakeholders in both the public and private sectors identify the destination's strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of visitors, as well as highlight opportunities for tourism development and develop strategies to combat potential threats to future visitation.

The most crucial part of improving customer-supplier relationships is service quality. Service is an important aspect of business that must be enhanced for businesses to thrive today and in the future.

**Table 2.** *Level of competitive importance scale of Mati City as a tourist destination*

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Level
Services	4.88	0.31	Very Important
Safety and Security	4.87	0.338	Very Important
Attraction	4.59	0.5	Very Important
Festival	4.31	0.808	Very Important
Transportation	4.86	0.374	Very Important
Cuisine	4.54	0.577	Very Important
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.67</b>	<b>0.366</b>	<b>Very Important</b>

The tourism industry has always required safety and security. According to Kovari (2011), safety and security have evolved into a complex multidimensional concept that includes a wide range of components such as government stability, public safety, health and sanitation, personal information safeness, legal protection of travelers, consumer protection, safety in communication, tragedy protection, environmental security, obtaining authentic information, and quality assurance of services.

Transportation has always been a crucial tourism component since it connects visitors with various tourist destinations. Maintaining current roads, building new highways, rail tracks, sea, and air transportation, building local

airports, and improving local aircraft operations are only a few transportation requirements for tourist promotion and development.

According to Gunn (1988), one of the four major components of the tourism system, tourist attractions are a crucial component of tourist destinations. Attractions are found within the location and are the foundation of the tourist offer. Building a location into a tourism destination is impossible without existing or potential tourist attractions.

According to Buckzkowska (2009), festivals are one of the most important goals of tourist trips within event tourism. Provide an opportunity to commemorate and raise awareness of historical traditions to perpetuate the experience. Aside from showcasing culture and history, festivals can also help increase the business of local shops and restaurants.

### **Competitive Performance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination**

Data from table 3 shows the competitive performance of Mati City as a tourist destination in terms of service, safety, security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine. Transportation was first with a mean of 4.53 (very good), followed by Safety and Security and Attraction in second place with the same mean of 4.54 (very good), Services was in third place with a mean of 4.53 (very good), the cuisine was at fourth rank with a mean of 4.51 (very good), Festival takes the last place with a mean of 4.60 (very good). As a result, an overall mean of 4.52 (very good) was obtained. The results indicate that the respondents have surpassed the initial expectation of all the listed competitive indicators.

Based on the result from table 3, the following implications were drawn. Wenbin (2018) stated that destination development is a continually results-oriented implementation process. As a result, tourism performance evaluations should pay more emphasis to development outcomes. Mati City's destination performance is generally very high, as indicated in the findings. However, this does not imply that Mati City does not need any improvement. There are still specific areas that need strengthening to improve the situation of Mati City as a destination. Transportation ranks the highest in the results, which means Mati City has good infrastructure, which increases the efficiency that contributes to the tourism sector.

**Table 3.** *Level of competitive performance scale of Mati City as a tourist destination.*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Descriptive Level</b>
Services	4.53	0.51	Very Good
Safety and Security	4.54	0.492	Very Good
Attraction	4.54	0.503	Very Good
Festival	4.39	0.681	Very Good
Transportation	4.6	0.571	Very Good
Cuisine	4.51	0.524	Very Good
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>0.475</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

According to WTO (2011), "More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors." Police services must fulfill duties at all times to secure the safety of possible incidents that may occur. Natural disasters may

occur without warning but have their own set of precautions to be taken, which must be followed to save precious lives.

Mati also takes pride in their Mandaya delicacies; however, not all visitors have the chance to experience their food since most of their local delicacies are served as snacks. Lastly, Mati celebrates two annual festivals: the Pujada Bay Festival every June and Sambuokan Festival every October. Aside from that, Mati City also celebrates a prestigious music party called summer frolic. It is a prime opportunity to get to know the local culture and experience the essence of the place, and festivals are a great anchor for attracting cultural tourists. Attractiveness is an important perception during tourists' participation in tourism activities.

### **Significant Differences in Assessing Destination Competitiveness of Mati City Utilizing Performance Analysis**

Table 4 exhibited the significant difference between the competitive importance and performance when analyzed regarding sex. Overall, the t-value was 0.262, and the p-value was .794. There was no significance since the t and p values were greater than 0.05. However, the t value for transportation was 0.040, which is significant.

The overall result shows no major difference in sex when interacting with variables such as services, safety, security, attraction, Festival, and cuisine. However, results became significantly different in subjects of both genders compared to the mode of transportation. The results show that men travel by car or motorcycle and women by buses or non-motorized modes of transportation. This trend is aligned with studies showing that women prefer a more flexible mode, Bray and Holyoak, (2015).

**Table 4.** *Independent samples t-test results show the differences between the competitive importance and performance when analyzed by sex.*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Services	Male	261	4.51	0.47	0.31	0.75	Accepted
	Female	254	4.53	0.47			
Safety and Security	Male	261	4.68	0.36	1.62	0.10	Accepted
	Female	254	4.73	0.32			
Attraction	Male	261	4.68	0.37	1.88	0.06	Accepted
	Female	254	4.74	0.31			
Festival	Male	261	4.55	0.47	0.54	0.58	Accepted
	Female	254	4.58	0.47			
Transportation	Male	261	4.35	0.71	0.04	0.96	Accepted
	Female	254	4.35	0.71			
Cuisine	Male	261	4.71	0.41	1.30	0.19	Accepted
	Female	254	4.75	0.38			
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>0.49</b>			

Based on the data from table 5, the significance index from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in terms of age resulted in an overall index of 0.028, which indicated significance when analyzed by age. There was a significant difference in comparisons of proportions between the two groups. Therefore, the destination importance and performance analysis vary between mature and younger groups in this investigation.

Younger generations, particularly millennials, view travel as a chance to make new friends, learn about other cultures and historical periods, and have life-changing experiences. Even though some older people value these kinds of experiences, so most of them prefer to see their friends and relatives. These travel trends by age demography are quite illuminating and may greatly aid in offering tourists in various age groups a better travel experience.

**Table 5.** *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences between the competitive importance and performance when analyzed by age.*

		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Services	Between Groups	2.719	5	0.544	2.441	.034*	Accepted
	Within Groups	113.42	509	0.223			
	Total	116.14	514				
Safety and Security	Between Groups	0.937	5	0.187	1.558	0.17	Accepted
	Within Groups	61.193	509	0.12			
	Total	62.13	514				
Attraction	Between Groups	0.655	5	0.131	1.085	0.368	Accepted
	Within Groups	61.448	509	0.121			
	Total	62.103	514				
Festival	Between Groups	2.068	5	0.414	1.863	0.099	Accepted
	Within Groups	113.049	509	0.222			
	Total	115.117	514				
Transportation	Between Groups	7.541	5	1.508	2.993	.011*	Accepted
	Within Groups	256.508	509	0.504			
	Total	264.049	514				
Cuisine	Between Groups	2.381	5	0.476	2.997	.011*	Accepted
	Within Groups	80.854	509	0.159			
	Total	83.235	514				
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>3.144</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.629</b>	<b>2.539</b>	<b>.028*</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>126.068</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>0.248</b>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>129.212</b>	<b>514</b>				

\* $p < 0.05$

Based on the data in table 6, the marital status results from the ANOVA showed an overall index of .069, which was greater than 0.05, and, as such, it was not significant. According to the study by Payne (2009), marital status does not

play an important role in explaining travel differences, and the travel preferences of tourists are based on their origin.

**Table 6.** *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences between the competitive importance and performance when analyzed by marital status.*

		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Services	Between Groups	2.224	3	0.741	3.326	.020*	Accepted
	Within Groups	113.915	511	0.223			
	Total	116.14	514				
Safety and Security	Between Groups	0.563	3	0.188	1.556	0.199	Accepted
	Within Groups	61.568	511	0.12			
	Total	62.13	514				
Attraction	Between Groups	0.306	3	0.102	0.844	0.47	Accepted
	Within Groups	61.797	511	0.121			
	Total	62.103	514				
Festival	Between Groups	1.655	3	0.552	2.484	0.06	Accepted
	Within Groups	113.463	511	0.222			
	Total	115.117	514				
Transportation	Between Groups	5.282	3	1.761	3.477	.016*	Accepted
	Within Groups	258.767	511	0.506			
	Total	264.049	514				
Cuisine	Between Groups	0.349	3	0.116	0.717	0.542	Accepted
	Within Groups	82.886	511	0.162			
	Total	83.235	514				
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>1.783</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.594</b>	<b>2.383</b>	<b>0.069</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>127.429</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>0.249</b>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>129.212</b>	<b>514</b>				

\* $p < 0.05$

Based on table 7, the overall ANOVA significant index for the highest educational attainment was .000, which was lower than 0.05. As such, it was significant. Similar studies show addressing the influence of education level on the process of decision-making concerning the travel destination. (Wong et al., 2016), Moreover, the results revealed that more educated people engaged in international travel more often. Furthermore, this information seeks before how they make decisions and select destinations.

**Table 7.** *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences between the competitive importance and performance when analyzed by the highest Educational Attainment.*

		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
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Services	Between Groups	14.57	4	3.642	18.289	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	101.57	510	0.199			
	Total	116.14	514				
Safety Security and	Between Groups	4.14	4	1.035	9.102	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	57.99	510	0.114			
	Total	62.13	514				
Attraction	Between Groups	3.433	4	0.858	7.461	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	58.67	510	0.115			
	Total	62.103	514				
Festival	Between Groups	13.664	4	3.416	17.171	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	101.454	510	0.199			
	Total	115.117	514				
Transportation	Between Groups	32.599	4	8.15	17.958	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	231.45	510	0.454			
	Total	264.049	514				
Cuisine	Between Groups	2.938	4	0.735	4.666	.001*	Rejected
	Within Groups	80.296	510	0.157			
	Total	83.235	514				
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	12.265	4	3.066	13.372	.000*	Rejected
	<b>Within Groups</b>	116.947	510	0.229			
	<b>Total</b>	129.212	514				

Table 8 shows that the overall ANOVA significance index for Annual Income was .000, which was lower than 0.05. It is concluded there that it was significant. Undoubtedly, income is a major determinant of traveling and spending. According to Liu Na (2017), the research found that residents' income status can be an important basis for predicting the residents' tourism consumption capacity. Higher-income means more ability to pay for and enjoy the stay at a particular destination. Those with higher income can also choose the activities they want to partake in at the destination.

**Table 8.** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences between the competitive importance and performance when analyzed by annual income.

		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Services	Between Groups	7.598	3	2.533	11.923	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	108.542	511	0.212			
	Total	116.14	514				
Safety Security and	Between Groups	2.251	3	0.75	6.404	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	59.879	511	0.117			
	Total	62.13	514				

Attraction	Between Groups	1.763	3	0.588	4.977	.002*	Rejected
	Within Groups	60.34	511	0.118			
	Total	62.103	514				
Festival	Between Groups	8.202	3	2.734	13.067	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	106.915	511	0.209			
	Total	115.117	514				
Transportation	Between Groups	17.086	3	5.695	11.784	.000*	Rejected
	Within Groups	246.963	511	0.483			
	Total	264.049	514				
Cuisine	Between Groups	1.249	3	0.416	2.595	0.052	Rejected
	Within Groups	81.986	511	0.16			
	Total	83.235	514				
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>7.549</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.516</b>	<b>10.569</b>	<b>.000*</b>	<b>Rejected</b>
	<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>121.663</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>0.238</b>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>129.212</b>	<b>514</b>				

\* $p < 0.05$

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were formed based on the findings mentioned above:

The competitive importance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination concerning services, safety and security, attraction, Festival, transportation, and cuisine are found to be very important. Thus, developing a competitiveness model for destinations could assist tourism stakeholders in the public and private sectors in identifying the location's strengths and weaknesses from the viewpoint of travelers, as well as in highlighting chances for tourism development and formulating plans to address any risks to future tourism.

The competitive performance of Mati City as a Tourist Destination was excellent in terms of services, services, safety and security, attraction, festivals, transportation, and cuisine. Therefore, development results should be given more weight in tourist performance evaluations. The results show that Mati City has a very good destination performance overall. This does not, however, imply that Mati City does not require renovation. Several sectors still require upgrading to boost Mati City's standing as a travel destination. The results show that transportation rates are the best, indicating that Mati City has a solid infrastructure that boosts efficiency and supports the tourism industry.

There is no significant difference in sex, age, marital status, and educational attainment whilst educational attainment has a significant difference in assessing the destination competitiveness of Mati City utilizing performance analysis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were drawn.

Tourism authorities with high educational attainment may initiate workshops, training, and seminars regarding destination competitiveness, to be participated by small-scale beach resort owners.

The Tourism Office in the province may have a collaboration project with other government offices that will handle improvements like infrastructure that will benefit the beach resort owner and potential visitors.

The beach resort owner may readily prepare sustainable programs that educate tourists to preserve and promote the said destination.

The factors of Quality Services, Transportation, Safety and Security, Attraction, Festival, and Cuisine should further be promoted and improved by the local and national governments to attract more tourists.

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