IMPROVING A STRONG DESTINATION IMAGE TOWARDS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN DESTINATION HALAL TOURISM TO THE SUMENEP PALACE MUSEUM

Moh. Fauzi[1], Muh. Syarif[2]

[1.2]Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura
[1]210211100169@student.trunojoyo.ac.id, [2]syarif@trunojoyo.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
	The tourism sector has grown significantly and plays an important role in today's international competition. In recent years, many Muslim travelers from various countries have enjoyed traveling, which has led to the emergence of the concept of halal tourism destinations to attract Muslim visitors to this tourism sector. Of course, Indonesia must be able to develop competitive advantages, especially in the halal tourism sector. One of the famous halal tourist destinations is the Sumenep Palace Museum. In order for this tourism to be more widely known, it is necessary to develop tourism which can be done by strengthening the competitive advantage of tourism through Branding, Storytelling, and Engagement. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of determining whether Branding, Storytelling, and Engagement affect the competitive advantage of the Sumenep Palace Museum halal tourist destination. This study uses a quantitative method and obtains the results that Branding, Storytelling, and Engagement affect the competitive advantage of the Sumenep Palace Museum both partially and simultaneously..

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the main sector that is the main focus of the government in national development is tourism. Therefore, the tourism sector has developed significantly and plays an

important role in today's international competition. On the other hand, the number of Muslims worldwide has reached 1.9 billion people or about a quarter of the total global population. From an economic perspective, this can be considered a promising market.(Wijayanti, 2021). One sector that has begun to utilize this potential is the tourism industry. Interest in halal tourism is growing rapidly. Thus, in recent years, many Muslim travelers from various countries have enjoyed traveling, which has led to the emergence of the concept of halal tourist destinations to attract Muslim visitors in this tourism sector.(Dewi et al., 2023).
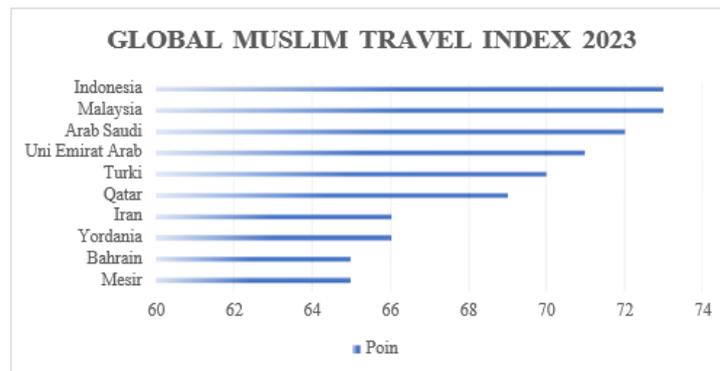

Figure 1 Global Muslim Travel Index 2023

According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2023 published by Mastercard and CrescentRating, Indonesia is ranked at the top as a Muslim-friendly destination in the world.(Annur, 2023). Of course, Indonesia must be able to continue to maintain and even develop a strong destination image, especially in the halal tourism sector to gain competitive advantage. In the context of global competition, a strong destination image is an important factor that influences tourist decisions. A positive destination image not only helps tourist destinations to attract more visitors, but also creates loyalty and trust among tourists. One thing that can be considered in improving the destination image to gain competitive advantage is branding, storytelling and engagement of halal tourist destinations.(Fernando, 2021).

Madura Island has great potential in the tourism sector, but it needs a special strategy to develop this sector so that it has its own characteristics, such as developing halal tourism. One of the regencies in Madura that has potential value for developing halal tourism is Sumenep Regency. The number of tourist visits to Sumenep continues to increase every year.

The Regent of Sumenep, Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo, who is familiarly called Cak Fauzi, said that in 2020 there were 168,775 tourists who came to Sumenep. This figure increased in 2021 and 2022 to 248,158 and 1,057,434 tourists. In 2023, the number of tourists visiting the regency at the eastern tip of Madura Island reached 1,533,385 people(Khoirunnisaa, 2024).

One of the tourist attractions that has been known to local and foreign tourists is the Sumenep Palace Museum. This museum is one of the tourist attractions that stores the historical heritage of Sumenep Regency. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sumenep Palace Museum was again visited by hundreds of international tourists. The Head of the Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Sports Office of Sumenep Regency, Mohammad Ikhsan, said that tourists from America, the Netherlands, Australia, and several other European countries would visit the Sumenep Palace Museum. He added that this visit was the second time for foreign tourists after the pandemic. The first visit was forced to not be able to dock at the port, so the tourists continued their journey to other places in Indonesia(Sumenep Regency, 2023). In order for the tourism to be more widely known, it is necessary to develop tourism which can be done by strengthening the competitive advantages of tourism through strengthening the image of the destination.

The competitive advantage of a tour is believed to be influenced by a strong destination image. This is based on the results of research conducted by Dicky Andrew Sitanggang, Sunarti, and Edriana Pangestuti. The study stated that destination image plays a crucial role before tourists visit, because it can influence their decision-making process. In addition, destination image is also very important after the visit, where it has an impact on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions.(Sitanggang et al., 2020). This ultimately contributes to creating competitive advantage value for tourist destinations. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of finding out whether a strong destination image through branding, storytelling, and engagement can influence the competitive advantage of the Sumenep palace museum tourist destination.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Branding

The concept of branding has evolved over time to encompass many broader aspects. In addition to visual identity, branding also involves the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes associated with the brand.(Wibowo, 2021). According to Kotler & Keller (2016), branding indicators include strength, uniqueness, and favorableness. Regional branding is not a tool for managing a city directly, but rather a communication strategy that aims to create a positive perception in the minds of the community, investors, and tourists. With branding, a region can highlight its uniqueness, so that it is more competitive in the regional and international arena. Research on city branding is very important because branding plays a crucial role in forming a strong and attractive city identity for both investors and tourists.(Syarif, 2023).

Storytelling

One of the new methods in marketing communications is the storytelling technique which is used as a differentiation strategy to attract consumer attention.(Putri & Christin, 2024). Storytelling is the process of conveying a story from one individual to another. As one of the oldest forms of communication, storytelling creates an emotional bond between the narrator and the listener through authentic language.(Henri, 2019). Over time, the term storytelling began to be used by companies as a marketing strategy. Storytelling is the art of creating narratives that are valuable and relevant to consumers. Through stories, a brand can position itself as an expert in its field and build close relationships with customers and even form a loyal community. This method involves conveying business values through engaging content(Anita & Lestari, 2020).

Engagement

Social media engagement is the process of building relationships with others through online platforms. The process involves activities such as commenting, liking, sharing, or responding to uploaded content.(Junaidi & Ricko, 2019). Social media engagement refers to the quality of user interaction with social media platforms, where users can create and share content and interact with others in their social networks.(Nuriyanti et al., 2022). User engagement with content on social media is becoming increasingly important for businesses.

Social media allows companies to promote their brands quickly, reach a wide audience, and measure the success of their marketing campaigns. Companies can optimize their marketing strategies and build stronger relationships by measuring consumer engagement levels.(Sulistyono & Jakaria, 2022).

Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is a higher level of attractiveness of what a company offers compared to its competitors in the eyes of customers. Competitive advantage can produce higher economic value and attractiveness compared to competitors, so companies must continue to innovate to win the competition. Innovation is the process of creating new ideas that can add value. The main focus of innovation is the development of new ideas and their application in new products or processes.(Suryati, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Types of research

This study uses a quantitative approach by conducting T-tests and F-tests to test how branding, storytelling, and engagement influence the competitive advantage of the Sumenep Palace Museum tourist destination.

Research Location

The location of this research was conducted on Madura Island, precisely at the Sumenep Palace Museum, located on Jalan Dr Soetomo No. 6, Delama Environment, Pajagalan, Sumenep District, Sumenep Regency, East Java Province.

Population and Research Sample

This research was conducted at the Sumenep Palace Museum which is famous as a halal tourism on Madura Island. The population in this study were visitors who visited the Sumenep Palace Museum destination. The sampling technique in this study used the Ferdinand formula, namely (N = 25 x Number of independent variables)(Ferdinand, 2014). In this study there are 3 independent variables so that the number of samples to be studied is 75 respondents. In addition, the sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling where part of the

sample was deliberately selected by the researcher according to the character and criteria that can be met, namely visitors to the Sumenep Palace Museum destination who are interested in visiting because they know about the tour through social media.

Research Design

This study will describe how branding, storytelling, and engagement influence the competitive advantage of the Keraton Sumenep museum tourist destination. The study began by collecting data, consisting of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected through interviews and distributing questionnaires to managers, government, tourists, and other stakeholders. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from references relevant to this study. The next step is data collection based on predetermined locations.

Data collection technique

The purpose of data collection techniques is to collect accurate and relevant data to support analysis and discussion in research. Data collection is carried out using the following techniques:

1. Field observations were conducted to obtain a real picture of the condition of the Keraton Sumenep museum pond location. This approach is important to understand the actual situation in the field.

2. Structured interviews were used to dig up in-depth information from respondents who had knowledge related to the research topic, especially in the aspects of branding, storytelling, and engagement as part of tourism development.

3. Documentation is carried out by collecting visual evidence and notes during the research process which aims to complete and strengthen the data obtained.

4. The questionnaire was designed to collect opinions and information from respondents regarding tourism development elements such as branding, storytelling, and engagement at the Sumenep Palace Museum.

Data Analysis Techniques

To determine the influence of branding, storytelling, and engagement on the competitive advantage of the Sumenep Palace Museum tourist destination, the formulation that

can be used to find the relationship between independent variables including branding (X1), storytelling (X2) and engagement (X3) on the dependent variable, namely the competitive advantage (Y) of the Sumenep Palace Museum using Multiple Regression Analysis, T Test, and F Test which are then processed using IBM SPSS 25 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis Results

Based on data obtained through field observations, structured interviews, documentation, and questionnaires on 75 predetermined samples, the resulting data is classified into several respondent category groups as follows:

No	Keterangan	Kriteria	Jumlah Responden	Persentase
1	Jenis Kelamin	Laki-laki	31	41%
		Perempuan	44	59%
2	Usia	17-25 tahun	65	87%
		26-35 tahun	09	12%
		36-45 tahun	01	1%
3	Pendidikan Terakhir	Pascasarjana	02	3%
		Sarjana	17	23%
		Diploma	08	11%
		SMA	47	62%
		SMP	01	1%
4	Pekerjaan	PNS	01	1%
		Pegawai Swasta	05	7%
		Wiraswasta	10	13%
		Pelajar/Mahasiswa	57	76%
		Ibu Rumah Tangga	02	3%
5	Frekuensi Berkunjung ke Museum Keraton Sumenep	1 kali/tahun	52	69%
		2-3 kali/tahun	17	23%
		4-6 kali/tahun	05	7%
		>6 kali/tahun	01	1%

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

The collected data will be used as a basis for testing the truth of the hypothesis proposed in this study. Statistical analysis will be carried out to obtain valid and accountable results.

Research result

Validity Test

Variabel	Item	r-hitung	r-tabel	Keterangan
Branding (X1)	X1.1	0.628	0.227	Valid
	X1.2	0.521	0.227	Valid
	X1.3	0.474	0.227	Valid
	X1.4	0.585	0.227	Valid
	X1.5	0.631	0.227	Valid
	X1.6	0.645	0.227	Valid
	X1.7	0.629	0.227	Valid
	X1.8	0.678	0.227	Valid
	X1.9	0.471	0.227	Valid
	X1.10	0.552	0.227	Valid
Storytelling (X2)	X2.1	0.381	0.227	Valid
	X2.2	0.521	0.227	Valid
	X2.3	0.678	0.227	Valid
	X2.4	0.543	0.227	Valid
	X2.5	0.629	0.227	Valid
	X2.6	0.669	0.227	Valid
	X2.7	0.614	0.227	Valid
Engagement (X3)	X3.1	0.495	0.227	Valid
	X3.2	0.321	0.227	Valid
	X3.3	0.481	0.227	Valid
	X3.4	0.514	0.227	Valid
	X3.5	0.580	0.227	Valid
	X3.6	0.440	0.227	Valid
	X3.7	0.409	0.227	Valid
	X3.8	0.495	0.227	Valid
	X3.9	0.585	0.227	Valid
Keunggulan Kompetitif (Y)	Y.1	0.435	0.227	Valid
	Y.2	0.579	0.227	Valid
	Y.3	0.662	0.227	Valid
	Y.4	0.633	0.227	Valid
	Y.5	0.613	0.227	Valid
	Y.6	0.594	0.227	Valid
	Y.7	0.656	0.227	Valid
	Y.8	0.626	0.227	Valid

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

From 75 respondents involved in this study, the calculated r value was obtained as much as 0.227 (Df = n-2 = 75-2 = 73 (0.227)). This value when compared with the table r value determined based on the number of respondents shows that the calculated r value is greater than the table r value for all variables tested (X1, X2, X3, and Y). This means that all variables used in this study are declared valid.

Reliability Test

Variabel	*Reliability Statistics*	
	Cronbach's Alpha	*N of Items*
Branding (X1)	0.867	10
Storytelling (X2)	0.801	7
Engagement (X3)	0.805	9
Keunggulan Kompetitif (Y)	0.809	8

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

The Cronbach's alpha value for all variables (branding, storytelling, engagement, and competitive advantage) is greater than 0.70. This indicates that the internal consistency of the items in each variable is quite high, so it can be concluded that these variables are reliable.

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		75
Normal Parameters^a,b	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	,31811337
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,121
	Positive	,121
	Negative	-,081
Test Statistic		,121
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,008^c
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) Sig.		,200^d
	99% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	,190
	Upper Bound	,211

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

The results of the normality test show that the asymptotic significance value (Asymp.Sig) is greater than 0.05, which is 0.200. This indicates that the research results accept the null hypothesis which states that the data is normally distributed. In other words, the data tested follows a normal distribution pattern.

Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1,825	,265		6,895	,000		
Branding	,267	,048	,432	5,619	,000	,952	1,051
Storytelling	,172	,051	,281	3,365	,001	,809	1,235
Engagement	,231	,052	,381	4,478	,000	,778	1,285

a. Dependent Variable: Keunggulan Kompetitif

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

Based on the results of data processing, the research variables, namely branding (X1), storytelling (X2), and engagement (X3), do not experience multicollinearity. This is indicated by the tolerance value of each variable which is greater than 0.10, namely 0.952 for branding, 0.809 for storytelling, and 0.778 for engagement. In addition, the VIF value for each variable is also less than 10.00, namely 1.051 for branding, 1.235 for storytelling, and 1.285 for engagement. Thus, these variables can be used in further analysis without the risk of excessive correlation between independent variables.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,289	,160		1,803	,076
	Branding	-,022	,029	-,091	-,756	,452
	Storytelling	-,008	,031	-,036	-,272	,787
	Engagement	,021	,031	,088	,659	,512

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

The branding variable (X1) produces a Sig. value of 0.452>0.05, the storytelling variable (X2) produces a Sig. value of 0.787>0.05, and the engagement variable (X3) produces a sig. value of 0.512>0.05, so it can be seen that the three variables are free from heteroscedasticity.

Regression Test

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,825	,265		6,895	,000
	Branding	,267	,048	,432	5,619	,000
	Storytelling	,172	,051	,281	3,365	,001
	Engagement	,231	,052	,381	4,478	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Keunggulan Kompetitif

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

The results of the regression analysis show that a constant of 1,825 describes the initial value of competitive advantage when the branding (X1), storytelling (X2), and engagement (X3) variables do not affect it. All independent variables have a positive influence on competitive advantage, as indicated by the respective regression coefficient values:

a. Branding (X1) has a regression coefficient value of 0.267, meaning that every 1 unit increase in branding will increase competitive advantage by 0.267.

b. Storytelling (X2) has a regression coefficient value of 0.172, meaning that every 1 unit increase in storytelling will increase competitive advantage by 0.172.

c. Engagement (X3) has a regression coefficient value of 0.231, meaning that every 1 unit increase in engagement will increase competitive advantage by 0.231.

This conclusion shows that branding, storytelling, and engagement positively contribute to increasing competitive advantage with branding having the greatest influence among the three variables.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis in this study is:

H1= X1 has an effect on Y

H2= X2 has an effect on Y

H3= X3 has an effect on Y

H4= X1, X2, and X3 simultaneously influence Y

Partial Test (t-Test)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,825	,265		6,895	,000
	Branding	,267	,048	,432	5,619	,000
	Storytelling	,172	,051	,281	3,365	,001
	Engagement	,231	,052	,381	4,478	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Keunggulan Kompetitif

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

The results of the t-test show that all independent variables, namely branding (X1), storytelling (X2), and engagement (X3) have a positive and significant influence on the dependent variable, namely competitive advantage. This is based on the significance value (sig) of each variable being less than 0.05 and the calculated t-value being greater than the t-table (1.994). A sample (N) of 75 respondents produced a t-table of Df = n-number of variables = 75-4 = 71 (1.994), so that:

a. Branding (X1): The sig value is 0.000<0.05 and the t-count is 5.619>1.994.

b. Storytelling (X2): The sig value is 0.001<0.05 and the t-count is 3.365>1.994.

c. Engagement (X3): The sig value is 0.000<0.05 and the t-count is 4.478>1.994.

Thus, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are accepted, indicating that the three variables partially contribute significantly to increasing competitive advantage.

Simultaneous Test (f-Test)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11,258	3	3,753	35,580	,000^b
	Residual	7,489	71	,105		
	Total	18,747	74			

a. Dependent Variable: Keunggulan Kompetitif

b. Predictors: (Constant), Engagement, Branding, Storytelling

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

With a sample size (N) of 75 respondents, the f-table value is 2.73. The table shows a sig result of 0.000 <0.05 and f-count 35.580> 2.73, so it can be concluded that the branding variables (X1), storytelling (X2), and engagement (X3) simultaneously influence competitive advantage.

Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,775^a	,601	,584	,325

a. Predictors: (Constant), Engagement, Branding, Storytelling

Source: Research Data Processing Results (2024)

R Square = 0.601

Based on the table X is influenced by the R Square coefficient value of 0.601 or 60%. So, it can be concluded that the magnitude of the influence of the branding, storytelling, and engagement variables is 0.601 (60%). The remaining 40% are other variables that were not examined in this study.

Discussion

The Influence of Branding (X1) on Increasing the Competitive Advantage of Sumenep Palace Museum Tourism

Branding has a significant and positive influence on competitive advantage. Based on the analysis results, each increase in one unit of branding variable can increase competitive advantage by 0.267. This shows that effective branding strategies such as building a positive image, strong identity, and consistent appeal can strengthen the competitive position of a destination or organization. Branding helps create unique added value, differentiates products

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or services from competitors and increases appeal to the target audience, thus contributing directly to increasing competitive advantage.

The findings in this study are in line with the results of previous research conducted by Kemala Dewi, I Gusti Kade Heryadi Angligan, and I Made Ngurah Oka Mahardika. Their research concluded that the implementation of effective branding in tourism marketing can be the key to achieving competitive advantage in the tourism market. Strong and positive branding can increase awareness of a tourist destination, improve its perception in the eyes of potential tourists, and in turn will increase the number of visits and tourism sector revenue. Effective branding allows a destination to highlight its uniqueness compared to competitors through differentiation of attractions, facilities, and tourism experiences offered. Conversely, weak or negative branding can damage the competitive advantage of a destination and reduce tourist interest, thus hampering the growth of the tourism sector(Dewi et al., 2023).

The Influence of Storytelling (X2) on Increasing the Competitive Advantage of Sumenep Palace Museum Tourism

Storytelling has a positive and significant influence on competitive advantage. Based on the analysis results, every one unit increase in the storytelling variable can increase competitive advantage by 0.172. This shows that the effective use of storytelling, such as delivering interesting, emotional, and relevant narratives, can strengthen relationships with audiences, build loyalty, and enhance unique images and identities. Storytelling helps create immersive experiences and differentiates destinations or products from competitors, thus making a real contribution to increasing competitive advantage.

The results of this study are supported by research conducted by Nur Lailatul Fadilah and Miftahul Huda which indicates that the application of storytelling marketing in the tourism sector has proven effective in building emotional attachment between tourists and destinations. Interesting narrative content is able to create a deeper relationship, thereby increasing the level of tourist satisfaction. This strategy significantly contributes to increasing the competitive advantage of tourist destinations. In addition, storytelling marketing also has a positive impact on tourists' interest in returning to visit, although its influence tends to be smaller than other

factors. However, the effectiveness of this strategy can decrease if there are limitations in the media or if the direct experience felt by tourists does not match the narrative conveyed(Fadilah & Huda, 2024).

The Influence of Engagement (X3) on Increasing the Competitive Advantage of Sumenep Palace Museum Tourism

Engagement has a positive and significant influence on competitive advantage. Based on the analysis results, every one unit increase in the engagement variable can increase competitive advantage by 0.231. This shows that intensive and meaningful interaction with the audience, such as through active participation, emotional involvement, and ongoing relationships, can strengthen competitiveness. Engagement helps create customer loyalty, enhance memorable experiences, and strengthen positive images, thus making a real contribution to building sustainable competitive advantage.

The findings in this study are consistent with a study conducted by Aurellia Hernaldi and Sinthon Siahaan, which concluded that social media user engagement has a significant influence on tourist visit decisions. This reinforces the importance of the role of social media as a promotional tool for tourist destinations. On social media, visitors often share posts containing information and their experiences while at a particular location. This kind of testimonial is an effective means of disseminating information because it is often considered more credible by fellow social media users. Through social media, users can exchange experiences, especially with friends and relatives in their circle of friends. Information shared through this engagement can encourage other people's interest in visiting the destination. In addition, social media allows tourists to recommend and provide reviews of places they have visited, thereby expanding the reach of information and the appeal of the destination more widely. So that the competitive advantage of tourism can be increased through social media engagement(Hernaldi & Siahaan, 2023).

CLOSING

This study shows that a strong destination image has a significant influence on the competitive advantage of halal tourism destinations, especially the Sumenep Palace Museum. A positive destination image supported by effective branding, interesting storytelling, and high engagement can increase the attractiveness of this destination in the eyes of tourists. This not only strengthens the identity of the Sumenep Palace Museum as a halal tourism destination, but also encourages an increase in the number of visits, tourist satisfaction, and the sustainability of the tourism sector.

However, the success of building a destination image is highly dependent on consistency in promotion, delivery of local values, and tourism experiences that match tourists' expectations. Factors such as relevant services, facilities, and narratives play an important role in creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

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