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The impact of emerging overtourism pressures on tourist experience and accommodation management in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area, Bulukumba Regency

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Abstract: Managing overtourism has become an increasingly important challenge for emerging marine tourism destinations, where rapid tourism growth places growing pressure on infrastructure, environmental quality, accommodation services, and visitor experiences. The Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area, one of the leading marine tourism destinations South Sulawesi,Indonesia, recorded 564,000 domestic visitors and 2,860 international visitors in 2024, representing the latest official tourism statistics available during the study period. Despite growing scholarly attention to overtourism, limited empirical research has examined how increasing tourism pressure simultaneously affects tourist experiences and accommodation management in emerging marine tourism destinations. This study investigates these relationships through a qualitative case study conducted between January and March 2025 using in-depth interviews with 25 participants, field observations, and document analysis. Data were analysed using thematic analysis integrated with Customer Journey Mapping (CJM), Root Cause Analysis (RCA), SWOT Analysis, and interpreted through the Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) framework to examine visitor experiences, identify underlying causes, evaluate strategic conditions, and assess destination capacity limitations. The findings indicate emerging overtourism pressures characterised by increasing tourism demand and growing pressure on destination management capacity. Rather than confirming overtourism quantitatively, the study identifies early managerial, environmental, and operational symptoms that reduce visitor satisfaction during peak periods. This study proposes an integrated analytical approach that links tourist experiences, accommodation management, and destination sustainability, offering practical guidance for carrying-capacity-based tourism management in emerging marine tourism destinations.

Keywords: accommodation management, overtourism, sustainable marine tourism, tourist experience, tourism carrying capacity

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Introduction

Tourism has become one of the world's fastest-growing economic sectors, generating substantial contributions to employment, regional development, and foreign exchange earnings. Coastal and marine tourism destinations have experienced particularly rapid growth due to increasing demand for nature-based recreation, marine leisure activities, and authentic cultural experiences. While this expansion creates important economic opportunities, it simultaneously intensifies pressure on tourism infrastructure, environmental resources, and public services (Farrukh et al., 2023; Zhuang et al., 2022). As destinations receive growing visitor flows, maintaining a balance between tourism development, environmental sustainability, service quality, and community well-being has become a central challenge in contemporary tourism management (Y. Li et al., 2024).

Recent tourism scholarship argues that overtourism should not be understood merely as excessive visitor numbers. Instead, it represents a multidimensional condition in which tourism demand progressively exceeds the physical, environmental, social, and managerial capacity of a

destination, leading to declining visitor experiences and increasing operational pressure on tourism stakeholders (Baleiro, 2023; Leask & Barron, 2021). This perspective highlights that governance quality, infrastructure limitations, and service capacity are equally important determinants of tourism sustainability alongside visitor volume (Butler, 2025).

Indonesia provides an important context for examining the differentiated manifestations of overtourism across tourism destinations. Bali, as Indonesia's most internationally recognised tourism destination, has experienced particularly intense tourism development in areas such as Kuta, Seminyak, and Canggu. Recent research on Canggu indicates that rapid tourism development has generated overtourism-related pressures including traffic congestion, noise, gentrification, changes in local socio-cultural conditions, inadequate public facilities, and tensions between visitors and local communities (Suyadnya et al., 2025). These conditions demonstrate that overtourism should not be assessed solely through visitor volume, but also through the extent to which tourism affects physical infrastructure, environmental quality, social relations, and residents' and visitors' perceptions of acceptable conditions. In this respect, the concept of tourism carrying capacity incorporates multiple dimensions, including physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and managerial capacities. The Bali case therefore provides an important comparative reference for understanding how tourism pressure may become more complex as destinations experience sustained growth and concentration of visitors.

Marine tourism destinations provide a particularly relevant context for examining these challenges because their competitiveness depends heavily on environmental quality, accessibility, accommodation services, and supporting infrastructure (Badoc-Gonzales et al., 2022; Eppang et al., 2024; Junaid, 2024; Papageorgiou, 2016). Unlike urban heritage destinations, coastal tourism areas typically experience highly seasonal visitation, where weekends and holiday periods create temporary congestion, increased waste generation, limited public facilities, and fluctuating accommodation demand (Darwis et al., 2026; Stan et al., 2021). Consequently, tourism sustainability in marine destinations depends not only on attracting visitors but also on ensuring that tourism growth remains compatible with destination management capacity (Junaid, 2021b; Long et al., 2022; Mayarni et al., 2023)

Within this context, the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi Indonesia, represents an appropriate case for investigating tourism pressure in an emerging marine tourism destination (Musawantoro & Ridwan, 2020). According to the Bulukumba Regency Tourism Office, the destination recorded 564,000 domestic visitors and 2,860 international visitors in 2024, representing the latest official annual tourism statistics available during the January–March 2025 fieldwork. These statistics are presented to establish the empirical context of the study rather than as analytical findings. The sustained growth in visitor arrivals has strengthened the regional tourism economy while simultaneously increasing pressure on accommodation services, infrastructure provision, environmental management, and destination governance (Laori et al., 2024; Riska et al., 2020).

Importantly, this study does not claim that Bira has reached the stage of chronic overtourism observed in internationally recognised mass tourism destinations. Instead, evidence from field observations, stakeholder interviews, and destination conditions indicates the presence of emerging overtourism pressures. Within this research, the term refers to observable pressures on destination management, infrastructure, environmental quality, accommodation services, and visitor experiences identified through qualitative evidence rather than quantitative carrying capacity measurement (Diniz et al., 2024; Jamin & Rahmafitria, 2022). This operational definition is particularly suitable for emerging marine tourism destinations, where tourism pressure develops progressively through accumulated management challenges before becoming structurally embedded.

The contrast between mature international tourism destinations such as Bali and emerging marine destinations such as Bira highlights the importance of comparative tourism research. While mature destinations may experience more visible and persistent forms of overtourism, emerging destinations may exhibit earlier symptoms through seasonal congestion, infrastructure limitations, accommodation pressure, environmental stress, and governance challenges. Comparative studies across destinations at different stages of tourism development can therefore provide a broader understanding of how overtourism develops and how destination capacity can be

strengthened before tourism pressure becomes structurally embedded. Such an approach also supports proactive rather than reactive destination management, particularly in the context of tourism growth driven by digital technologies, changing travel lifestyles, investment, and expanding visitor demand.

To explain how tourism pressure influences visitor evaluations, this study adopts Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) as its principal behavioural perspective. EDT proposes that tourist satisfaction is determined by the comparison between pre-visit expectations and actual destination performance. Positive disconfirmation occurs when experiences exceed expectations, whereas negative disconfirmation arises when destination performance falls below what visitors anticipated. In the context of emerging overtourism pressures, congestion, declining environmental quality, inconsistent accommodation services, and infrastructure limitations may reduce destination performance despite its natural attractiveness, thereby lowering visitor satisfaction (Gössling & Michael Hall, 2021; Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023).

Complementing the behavioural perspective, this study employs the Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) framework to interpret overtourism from a destination management perspective. Rather than viewing carrying capacity solely as the maximum number of visitors, contemporary tourism literature conceptualises TCC as a multidimensional framework encompassing physical, environmental, social, and managerial capacities. Integrating EDT and TCC therefore enables this study to explain both how tourists experience increasing tourism pressure and why accommodation providers and destination managers encounter growing operational constraints as visitor demand expands (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

Despite the growing body of overtourism literature, existing studies have predominantly examined the phenomenon from separate perspectives, including visitor congestion, residents' perceptions, destination governance, environmental degradation, or tourist satisfaction. Although these studies have substantially advanced theoretical understanding, they generally investigate each dimension independently and are largely concentrated in mature international tourism destinations (Leal Filho et al., 2023; Oklevik et al., 2019; Santos-Rojo et al., 2023).

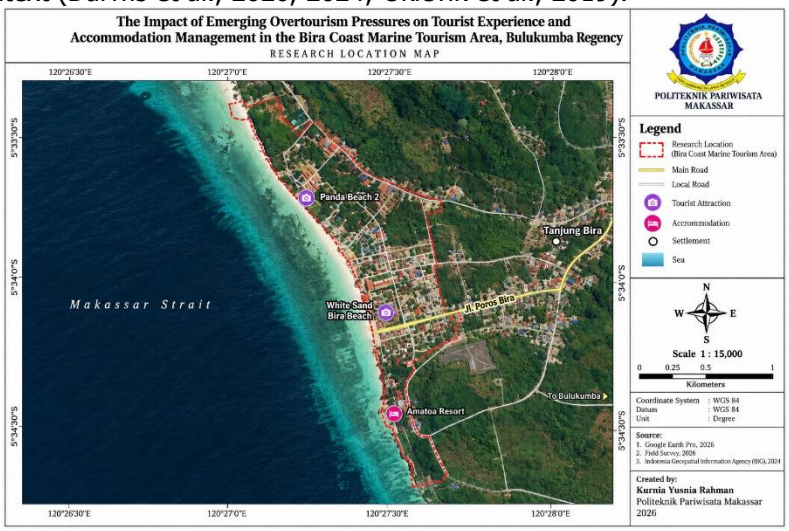
Consequently, limited empirical evidence explains how emerging overtourism pressures simultaneously influence tourist experiences and accommodation management in emerging marine tourism destinations, particularly within developing countries where tourism pressure is characterised by seasonal congestion, operational constraints, and infrastructure limitations rather than persistently excessive visitor numbers. The contrast with mature destinations such as Bali further highlights the need to examine how overtourism pressures emerge at different stages of destination development and how proactive interventions can be implemented before tourism pressure becomes structurally embedded. Addressing this gap requires an integrated analytical perspective capable of connecting visitor experiences with accommodation management and destination sustainability within a single management framework (Candia et al., 2020).

Accordingly, this study aims to examine how emerging overtourism pressures influence tourist experiences throughout the customer journey, identify the accommodation management challenges associated with increasing tourism demand, and formulate strategic implications for sustainable destination management in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area. These objectives are operationalised through three research questions: (RQ1) How do emerging overtourism pressures influence tourist experiences? (RQ2) What accommodation management challenges emerge from increasing tourism pressure? (RQ3) What strategic implications can support sustainable destination management? To answer these questions, the study integrates Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) (Cateriano-Arévalo et al., 2021; Nugraha et al., 2024), Root Cause Analysis (RCA) (Lee et al., 2025), SWOT Analysis (Benzaghta et al., 2021), and the Tourism Carrying Capacity framework (Darwis et al., 2024; Tokarchuk et al., 2021). This integrated approach contributes to overtourism literature by linking demand-side tourist experiences with supply-side accommodation management while providing practical guidance for sustainable management in emerging marine tourism destinations (Carreira et al., 2021).

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, one of Indonesia's leading marine tourism destinations renowned for its

white sandy beaches, diving and snorkeling attractions, and phinisi maritime heritage. Rapid tourism growth has stimulated local economic development while simultaneously increasing pressure on accommodation services, infrastructure, environmental quality, and destination governance. Therefore, Bira was selected as a critical case study because it represents an emerging marine tourism destination experiencing the early manifestations of overtourism rather than chronic overcrowding. The research adopted a qualitative case studies approach to explore how emerging overtourism pressures influence tourist experiences and accommodation management within their real-life context (Darwis et al., 2026, 2024; Oklevik et al., 2019).



(Source: Authors, 2025)

Figure 1. Research Location Map

The research was conducted in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia as seen in Figure 1. Bulukumba Regency is located in the southern part of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, and possesses diverse geographical and tourism characteristics, including coastal, marine, natural, cultural, and community-based tourism resources. Therefore, Bulukumba should not be regarded exclusively as a marine tourism destination. Within this broader tourism context, the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area was purposively selected because the present study specifically examines tourism pressures associated with coastal and marine tourism. Bira is characterised by prominent beach and marine attractions, accommodation establishments, tourism activities, and supporting infrastructure that experience concentrated visitor demand during weekends, public holidays, and peak visitation periods. These characteristics make Bira an appropriate case for examining emerging overtourism pressures and their implications for tourist experiences and accommodation management.

Data were collected between January and March 2025 using three complementary techniques: semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The study involved 25 purposively selected informants representing five stakeholder groups to capture both demand-side and supply-side perspectives of tourism development. Informants consisted of 12 tourists (coded T1–T12), 7 accommodation managers from hotels, resorts, homestays, and guesthouses (coded HM1–HM7), 2 tourism business operators (coded BO1–BO2), 2 local residents (coded LR1–LR2), and 2 government officials from the Bulukumba Tourism Office (coded GO1–GO2). Data were collected using semi-structured interview guides, field observation checklists, field notes, and document analysis, including official tourism statistics, destination planning documents, and accommodation records. The use of participant codes ensured anonymity and confidentiality throughout the analysis and presentation of qualitative findings

Interview transcripts were coded following the thematic analysis procedure of Braun and Clarke, beginning with familiarisation, open coding, categorisation, and theme development. The resulting themes were subsequently analysed sequentially using Customer Journey Mapping

(CJM) to identify visitor touchpoints, Root Cause Analysis (RCA) to diagnose underlying operational problems, SWOT Analysis to formulate strategic recommendations, and interpreted through the Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) framework to evaluate destination management capacity.

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through the four case study criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened by methodological triangulation across interviews, observations, and documentary evidence, together with member checking to verify participants' interpretations. Dependability and confirmability were supported through systematic coding, transparent analytical procedures, and comprehensive documentation of the research process. All participants voluntarily provided informed consent prior to data collection, and confidentiality was maintained by anonymising identities using participant codes (e.g., T1 and HM2), in accordance with internationally recognised ethical principles for social science research.

Results and Discussions

Results

Participant Characteristics

A total of 25 participants as seen in Table 1 were purposively selected to represent the principal stakeholder groups involved in tourism development within the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area. The participants comprised tourists (domestic and international visitors), accommodation managers representing hotels and homestays, local community representatives, and officials from the Bulukumba Regency Tourism Office. This diversity of participants enabled the study to capture multiple perspectives regarding the impacts of increasing tourism demand on tourist experiences and accommodation management.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Stakeholder	Number	Selection Criteria
Tourists	12	Experienced Bira during peak season
Accommodation Managers	7	Hotels, Homestays, Guesthouses
Tourism Businesses	2	Restaurants, Tour Operators
Local Residents	2	Living around destination
Government Officials	2	Tourism planning and management

Source : Interview and Observation 2025

The participating tourists represented different travel motivations, lengths of stay, and visitation periods, allowing the study to explore visitor experiences during both normal and peak tourism seasons. Accommodation managers were selected based on their managerial responsibilities and operational experience in responding to fluctuations in visitor demand. Local community representatives contributed perspectives regarding environmental and social changes associated with tourism growth, while government officials provided information on destination management, infrastructure development, and tourism policy implementation.

The diversity of stakeholder groups strengthened data triangulation by allowing the comparison of perceptions across visitors, accommodation providers, community members, and policymakers. Consequently, the findings presented in this study reflect overtourism from both the demand-side and supply-side perspectives.

Tourist Experiences Along the Customer Journey

Thematic analysis of interviews, field observations, and documentary evidence identified five sequential stages that collectively describe tourists' experiences within the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area Pre-arrival, Arrival , Accommodation , Tourist Activities, Departure. These stages illustrate how visitor experiences evolved throughout the travel journey and reveal the points at which increasing tourism pressure most strongly influenced visitor comfort and service quality (Rodrguez-Negrn *et al.*, 2025).

Pre-arrival Stage

Most tourists reported that their expectations of the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area were formed through social media platforms, online travel agencies, digital travel reviews, and recommendations from relatives or friends. Promotional images consistently portrayed the destination as offering pristine white beaches, clear seawater, diverse marine recreation activities, affordable accommodation, and a peaceful coastal atmosphere.

These promotional sources generated highly positive expectations before departure. However, several participants indicated that reliable information concerning accommodation availability, visitor density, transportation schedules, and parking conditions during peak tourism periods remained limited. Consequently, some tourists experienced uncertainty when planning their visits. One domestic tourist explained:

> *"The destination looked beautiful on social media, but I could not obtain accurate information regarding accommodation availability during the holiday season."(T1)*

Accommodation managers similarly acknowledged that reservation information was still fragmented across different booking channels, making it difficult for prospective visitors to determine room availability during periods of high demand.

Overall, findings from the pre-arrival stage indicate that tourists generally developed favourable expectations before visiting Bira. Nevertheless, the availability of accurate destination information remained inconsistent, particularly regarding accommodation capacity and visitor conditions during peak tourism periods.

Arrival Stage

The arrival stage represented the first point at which visitors encountered operational pressures associated with increasing tourism activity.

Field observations conducted during weekends and public holidays identified recurring congestion around destination entrances, limited parking availability, increased traffic density, and longer waiting times during accommodation check-in procedures. Similar conditions were also reported by accommodation managers, who indicated that visitor arrivals tended to occur simultaneously during holiday periods, creating temporary bottlenecks in front-office operations. One tourist commented:

> *"Finding parking became quite difficult because many visitors arrived at almost the same time."(T2)*

Accommodation managers also noted that although visitor numbers generated higher occupancy rates, the concentration of arrivals within short periods substantially increased operational workloads.

Observation results further indicated that congestion around access roads, parking facilities, and accommodation reception areas became considerably more apparent during weekends than during ordinary weekdays. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the arrival stage represents the first point where increasing tourism demand begins to influence visitor experiences through operational constraints related to accessibility, parking, and accommodation services.

Accommodation Stage

The accommodation stage emerged as one of the most critical phases of the tourist journey, reflecting the direct consequences of increasing visitor demand on service delivery. Interviews with accommodation managers consistently revealed that occupancy rates increased substantially during weekends, national holidays, and school vacation periods. While higher occupancy generated greater revenue opportunities, it simultaneously intensified operational pressure on accommodation providers (Boneta-Ruiz *et al*., 2025).

Most managers reported that maintaining service quality became increasingly difficult during peak seasons because visitor demand frequently exceeded available operational capacity. Housekeeping staff experienced heavier workloads due to faster room turnover, while front-office personnel managed longer check-in and check-out queues. Several managers also highlighted shortages of clean water, limited parking space, and increasing maintenance requirements as recurring operational challenges.

One hotel manager (HM2) explained that during holiday seasons, almost every room was occupied, resulting in substantially higher operational pressure. According to the manager, the main challenge during these periods was not attracting guests but maintaining consistent service

quality when visitor numbers exceeded the accommodation provider's normal operational capacity. The high occupancy levels increased workloads across operational departments, particularly front-office services, housekeeping, maintenance, and customer service, while rapid room turnover reduced the time available for room preparation and service delivery. Consequently, accommodation providers experienced greater difficulty in maintaining consistent service standards during periods of exceptionally high visitor demand.

These observations were confirmed during field visits. Accommodation facilities located near the main tourism attractions experienced significantly higher occupancy than those situated farther from the coastline. Researchers observed longer waiting times during check-in, increased demand for housekeeping services, and greater pressure on supporting facilities such as water supply, sanitation, and parking areas.

Tourists generally appreciated the friendliness and hospitality of accommodation staff. However, several respondents noted inconsistencies in service delivery during periods of intensive tourism activity. Complaints primarily concerned delays in room preparation, overcrowded common areas, and seasonal increases in room rates that were not always accompanied by corresponding improvements in facilities or services.

Overall, the accommodation stage illustrates that increasing visitor demand has generated substantial operational challenges for accommodation providers. The findings indicate that maintaining consistent service quality requires not only effective internal management but also adequate supporting infrastructure and destination-level capacity.

Tourist Activities Stage

Tourist experiences during on-site activities remained predominantly positive because of the destination's natural attractions. Participants consistently identified the white sandy beaches, clear coastal waters, marine recreation, island excursions, and the hospitality of local residents as the principal strengths of the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area.

Despite these positive attributes, interviews and field observations revealed several operational issues that reduced visitor comfort during periods of high tourism demand. The most frequently reported concerns included overcrowding at popular beach areas, queues for marine recreational activities, increasing waste accumulation, limited public seating, and congestion around restaurants and tourism facilities.

One tourist (T3) explained that the natural scenery and clear seawater were among the main attractions of the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area. However, the tourist also noted that the destination became considerably more crowded during holiday periods, which reduced the opportunity to enjoy the beach comfortably. This experience indicates that although Bira's natural attractions remained highly appealing, increasing visitor concentration during peak periods could negatively affect visitor comfort and the overall quality of the tourist experience.

Field observations supported these perceptions. Visitor density increased considerably during weekends and public holidays, particularly around beach entrances, swimming areas, restaurants, and boat departure points. Higher visitor concentrations also generated greater volumes of solid waste and increased demand for sanitation facilities throughout the day.

Several accommodation managers noted that these environmental conditions indirectly influenced guests' evaluations of accommodation quality, even though many of the identified problems originated outside hotel operations. Respondents explained that tourists often associated overall destination conditions with their accommodation experience because both formed part of a single travel experience (Suyadnya et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings indicate that tourist activities continued to provide memorable and enjoyable experiences. Nevertheless, increasing visitor density reduced comfort through congestion, environmental pressure, and limited public facilities, particularly during peak visitation periods.

Departure Stage

The departure stage provided visitors with an opportunity to evaluate their overall travel experiences and reflect upon the quality of destination management. Although most respondents expressed satisfaction with the destination's natural beauty and indicated their willingness to revisit Bira in the future, they also identified several aspects requiring improvement.

The most frequently reported concerns during departure involved traffic congestion on access roads, limited parking management, waste accumulation, and inadequate supporting infrastructure. Several participants suggested that improvements in visitor flow management and public facilities would substantially enhance the overall tourism experience.

One tourist (T4) expressed a strong intention to revisit the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area because of its natural beauty and overall attractiveness. However, the tourist also identified several aspects of the destination that require improvement, particularly traffic management, cleanliness, and the availability and quality of public facilities. These concerns indicate that although the destination continues to generate positive impressions and encourages visitors to return, deficiencies in traffic management, environmental cleanliness, and supporting facilities may influence the overall quality of the tourist experience.

Accommodation managers similarly recognised that visitor satisfaction depended not only on accommodation services but also on broader destination conditions experienced throughout the visit. They acknowledged that improvements in transportation, sanitation, environmental management, and visitor circulation would contribute significantly to maintaining positive destination impressions (Martin-Fuentes, 2016).

Overall, the departure stage demonstrates that tourists continued to value the destination's natural attractions and local hospitality. However, their final evaluations were influenced by operational conditions encountered throughout the journey, particularly those associated with accessibility, environmental quality, and supporting infrastructure. Customer Journey Mapping of Tourist Experience under Emerging Overtourism Pressures in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area.



(Source: Authors, 2025)

Figure 2. Customer Journey Mapping of Tourist Experience

Figure 2 illustrates the tourist journey across five sequential stages—Pre-Arrival, Arrival, Accommodation, Activities, and Post-Visit—within the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area. The journey begins at the ticket counter (Loket) and parking area, where visitors first access the destination before entering the main tourism corridor. During the arrival stage, tourists experience circulation through the destination's road network, followed by accommodation and dining activities concentrated around hotels and local restaurants. The core tourism experience occurs at White Sand Bira Beach, Panda Beach, and the Open Stage (Panggung Terbuka), while the post-visit stage represents visitors' movement toward the surrounding green area, reflecting the final phase of their destination experience.

The mapping identifies five principal dimensions of emerging overtourism pressures that influence tourist experiences throughout the journey. Infrastructure challenges include limited road capacity, insufficient parking space, and inadequate public facilities during peak periods. Accommodation pressures are reflected in seasonal room shortages and increased accommodation prices, while environmental issues emerge through waste accumulation and declining beach cleanliness. In addition, governance constraints are evident in limited visitor flow coordination and destination management, whereas human resource challenges include staff shortages and

the need for improved service training among tourism operators. Overall, the customer journey demonstrates that visitor satisfaction remains generally positive because of Bira's attractive coastal environment and hospitality. However, satisfaction gradually declines from the arrival through the accommodation and activity stages as visitors encounter congestion, infrastructure limitations, environmental pressure, and operational service challenges. Although most tourists expressed a strong intention to revisit the destination, the findings emphasize that improving visitor management, infrastructure, environmental quality, and accommodation capacity is essential for maintaining sustainable tourist experiences under emerging overtourism pressures (Mihalic & Kuščer, 2022).

Root Cause Analysis of Overtourism Challenges

To identify the underlying factors contributing to the problems experienced throughout the tourist journey, the findings obtained from Customer Journey Mapping were further examined using Root Cause Analysis (RCA). Rather than treating congestion, declining service quality, environmental deterioration, and visitor dissatisfaction as isolated issues, the RCA was employed to trace the managerial, infrastructural, and institutional factors that generated these recurring problems. Analysis of interview transcripts, field observations, and documentary evidence revealed four interrelated categories of root causes: infrastructure limitations, accommodation operational constraints, environmental management deficiencies, and governance challenges.

Infrastructure Limitations

Infrastructure deficiencies emerged as one of the most frequently reported causes of operational problems within the destination. Tourists consistently described congestion on access roads, limited parking capacity, insufficient sanitation facilities, and increasing pressure on public infrastructure during weekends and holiday periods. These observations were confirmed by accommodation managers and government officials, who acknowledged that tourism growth had exceeded the pace of infrastructure development.

A tourism official explained:

> *"Tourism has grown rapidly over recent years, but supporting infrastructure has not expanded at the same pace. During peak periods, many public facilities operate beyond their intended capacity."(GO1)*

Field observations supported these perceptions. Parking areas reached full capacity during peak visitation, resulting in roadside parking and traffic congestion. Increased visitor numbers also generated greater demand for public toilets, freshwater supply, and waste collection facilities, reducing visitor comfort throughout the destination.

These findings indicate that infrastructure-related problems are not temporary operational disruptions but reflect structural limitations in destination capacity.

Accommodation Operational Constraints

The second root cause relates to accommodation operations. Hotel and homestay managers reported that existing operational systems were designed for normal visitor volumes and became less effective during periods of exceptionally high demand.

Managers explained that higher occupancy increased workloads across nearly all operational departments, including front-office services, housekeeping, maintenance, and customer service. Rapid room turnover reduced preparation time, while shortages of trained personnel limited the ability of accommodation providers to maintain consistent service standards.

One hotel manager (HM2) explained that accommodation occupancy reached very high levels during holiday periods, with almost every room being occupied. The manager noted that the main challenge was maintaining consistent service quality while employees had to handle substantially higher workloads. Increased occupancy placed additional pressure on front-office services, housekeeping, maintenance, and customer service, while rapid room turnover reduced the time available for room preparation and service delivery. These conditions made it more difficult for accommodation providers to maintain the same level of service standards during periods of exceptionally high visitor demand.

Several managers also reported that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) had not been regularly updated to accommodate seasonal fluctuations in visitor demand. Consequently, operational responses often relied on staff experience rather than systematic procedures.

These findings suggest that accommodation-related challenges arise primarily from increasing operational pressure rather than from deficiencies in employee commitment or managerial competence.

Environmental Management Deficiencies

Environmental management represented another important root cause identified throughout the analysis. Tourists frequently associated their overall travel experience with the cleanliness and environmental quality of the destination. While respondents consistently appreciated the natural beauty of the beach, they also reported increasing waste accumulation and declining cleanliness during periods of high visitation. Field observations revealed that waste generation increased substantially during weekends and public holidays. Existing waste collection systems and sanitation facilities were often unable to accommodate the growing volume of visitors, particularly in areas experiencing the highest tourist concentration. Local community representatives similarly expressed concern regarding the long-term implications of increasing visitor numbers on coastal ecosystems. They emphasised that maintaining environmental quality requires stronger collaboration among government agencies, tourism businesses, local communities, and visitors. The findings indicate that environmental problems are closely associated with the imbalance between visitor growth and environmental management capacity rather than with tourism activity itself.

Governance and Stakeholder Coordination

The fourth root cause concerns destination governance. Interviews consistently revealed that tourism development has involved multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, accommodation providers, tourism businesses, and local communities. However, respondents indicated that coordination among these stakeholders remains limited.

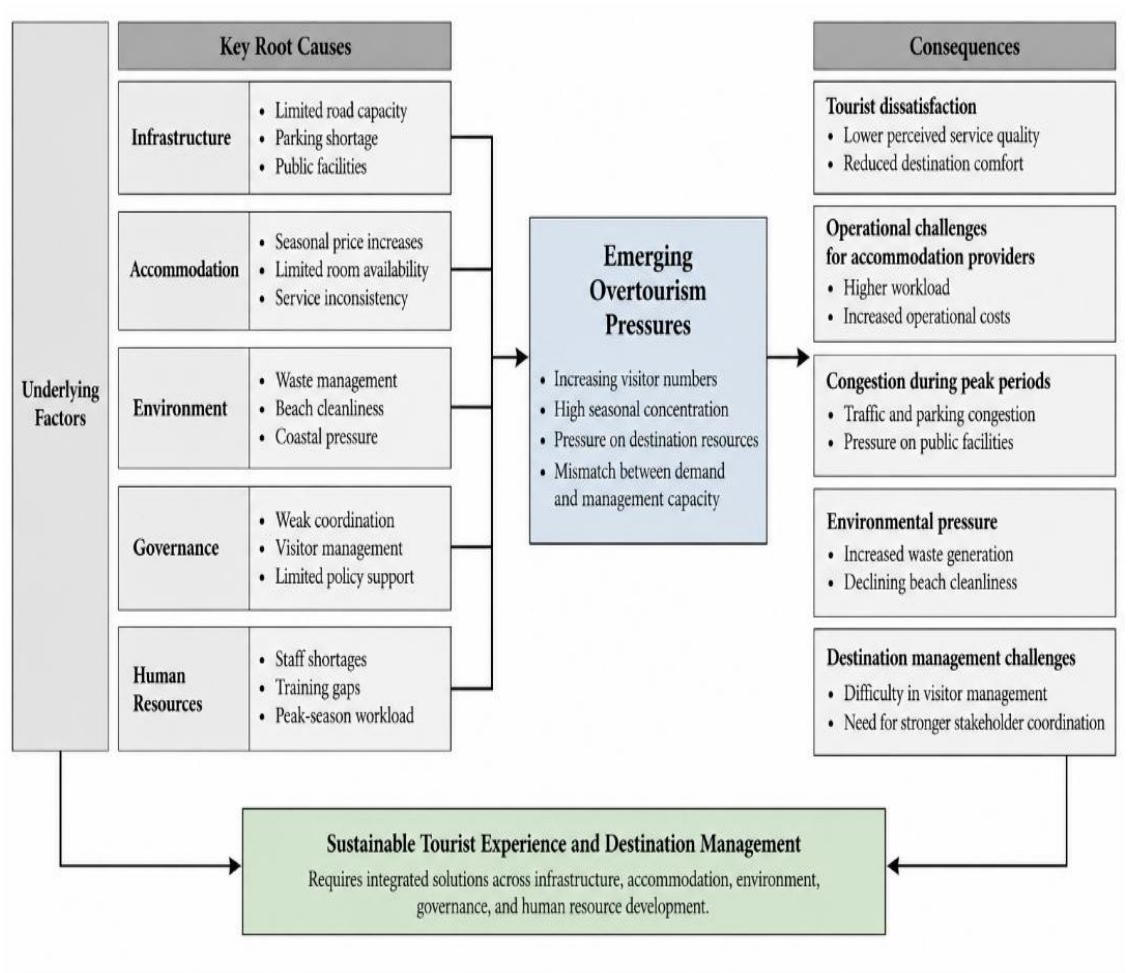
Accommodation managers acknowledged that communication regarding visitor management, infrastructure planning, and environmental conservation was generally conducted on an ad hoc basis rather than through integrated planning mechanisms (Sushanti & Kawitri, 2025).

Government officials also recognised the need for stronger collaboration in responding to increasing tourism demand. They emphasised that infrastructure development, visitor management, and environmental protection require coordinated decision-making involving both public and private stakeholders. These findings suggest that many operational problems observed throughout the tourist journey originate from fragmented governance arrangements rather than from individual organisational performance. Strengthening stakeholder coordination therefore represents an essential prerequisite for improving destination management.

Synthesis of Root Causes

The Root Cause Analysis demonstrates that the challenges associated with overtourism at the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area originate from interconnected structural factors rather than isolated operational problems. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the major issues identified during the customer journey and their underlying causes.

At the operational level, increasing visitor demand places considerable pressure on accommodation providers and supporting infrastructure. At the environmental level, higher visitor density intensifies demands on sanitation systems, waste management, and coastal resource protection. At the institutional level, fragmented governance and limited stakeholder coordination constrain the implementation of integrated destination management strategies (Herntrei & Jnov, 2024). Collectively, these findings indicate that improving tourist experiences requires comprehensive interventions extending beyond individual accommodation businesses. Sustainable destination management depends on strengthening infrastructure capacity, enhancing operational preparedness, improving environmental management, and fostering stronger collaboration among tourism stakeholders.



(Source: Authors, 2025)

Figure 3. Root Cause Analysis

Figure 3 demonstrates that emerging overtourism pressures are generated by interconnected factors involving infrastructure limitations, accommodation management, environmental pressures, governance challenges, and human resource constraints.

Strategic Findings from SWOT Analysis

The strategic implications of the findings were further examined using SWOT analysis to identify the internal and external factors influencing sustainable tourism management in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area. The SWOT matrix was developed by integrating evidence from tourist interviews, accommodation managers, local community representatives, government officials, field observations, and documentary analysis. Unlike the preceding Root Cause Analysis, which

focused on identifying the underlying causes of overtourism-related challenges, the SWOT analysis provides a strategic perspective by identifying the destination's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Pung, 2025). The analysis revealed that the destination continues to possess significant competitive advantages despite the operational pressures associated with increasing visitor demand. These strengths provide an important foundation for sustainable destination development. However, several internal weaknesses and external threats must be addressed to prevent the further escalation of overtourism and to maintain the quality of tourist experiences (Candia, 2024).

Strengths

Interviews consistently highlighted the destination's exceptional natural attractions as its principal competitive advantage. Respondents described the white sandy beaches, clear coastal waters, marine biodiversity, and island-based recreational activities as the primary reasons for visiting the destination. Local hospitality was also recognised as an important element contributing to positive visitor experiences. Accommodation managers noted that the growing popularity of the destination has strengthened market demand and increased business opportunities throughout the tourism sector. Community representatives similarly acknowledged that tourism has generated employment opportunities and stimulated local economic activities. Collectively, these findings indicate that the destination possesses strong tourism assets capable of supporting long-term competitiveness provided that future tourism growth is managed sustainably.

Weaknesses

Despite these strengths, interviews identified several internal weaknesses that constrain destination performance. The most frequently reported weaknesses included limited accommodation capacity during peak tourism periods, inadequate parking facilities, insufficient sanitation infrastructure, seasonal shortages of clean water, inconsistent service quality, and operational pressures experienced by accommodation providers. Accommodation managers also acknowledged that existing operational procedures had not fully adapted to increasing visitor demand. Several respondents emphasised that workforce availability remained insufficient during holiday periods, reducing operational flexibility and increasing workloads across multiple departments. Field observations further confirmed that congestion around tourism facilities and supporting infrastructure reduced visitor comfort, particularly during weekends and national holidays. Overall, the findings indicate that many of the destination's weaknesses are associated with capacity constraints rather than deficiencies in tourism attractiveness.

Opportunities

Participants identified several external opportunities capable of supporting more sustainable destination development. Government commitment to sustainable tourism development was viewed as an important opportunity for improving tourism infrastructure and destination management. Respondents also recognised the continuing expansion of digital tourism promotion, increasing demand for environmentally responsible tourism, and growing interest in authentic marine tourism experiences as favourable conditions supporting future tourism growth. Several accommodation managers suggested that digital reservation systems, visitor management technologies, and online destination information could improve operational efficiency while helping visitors plan their trips more effectively. Community representatives also highlighted opportunities to strengthen community participation through local tourism enterprises, environmental education programmes, and community-based tourism initiatives. These findings indicate that external conditions remain favourable for implementing more sustainable tourism management strategies.

Threats

Participants also recognised several external threats that could reduce destination competitiveness if current management challenges remain unresolved. The most frequently identified threat was the continued increase in visitor arrivals without corresponding improvements in supporting infrastructure and destination management capacity. Respondents expressed concern that sustained visitor growth could accelerate environmental degradation, reduce visitor satisfaction, and increase operational pressure on accommodation businesses. Accommodation managers also noted that seasonal price inflation may negatively influence tourists' perceptions of value, particularly when higher accommodation prices are not accompanied by corresponding improvements in service quality. Government officials highlighted increasing competition from other

coastal tourism destinations across Indonesia, emphasising that maintaining destination competitiveness requires continuous improvements in infrastructure, service quality, and environmental management. Taken together, these findings suggest that the destination's long-term competitiveness depends on its ability to balance tourism growth with environmental sustainability and service quality. Table 2 below showcases the SWOT matrix how to manage a sustainable destination.

Table 2. SWOT Matrix for Sustainable Destination Management

Strengths	Weaknesses
Outstanding coastal scenery	Limited accommodation capacity during peak seasons
White sandy beaches and marine attractions	Insufficient parking and sanitation facilities
Strong local hospitality	Inconsistent service quality during high demand
Growing destination recognation	Limited infrastructure capacity
Rich local culture and culinary tourism	Weak institutional coordination
Opportunities	**Threats**
Government support for sustainable tourism	Unmanaged growth in visitor numbers during peak tourism periods
Expansion of digital tourism promotion	Environmental degradation
Increasing demand for ecotourism	Declining visitor satisfaction
Community-based tourism development	Seasonal price inflation
Investment in tourism infrastructure	Competition from other coastal destinations

Source: Compiled from interview findings, field observations, and documentary analysis, 2025

SO (Strength–Opportunity) Strategies

1. Utilize Bira's strong natural attractions and positive destination image to promote sustainable marine tourism.
2. Strengthen collaboration between accommodation providers and the local government to improve destination branding.
3. Develop integrated tourism packages combining accommodation, marine activities, and local cultural experiences.

WO (Weakness–Opportunity) Strategies

1. Improve supporting infrastructure, including roads, parking areas, sanitation facilities, and public amenities.
2. Enhance the competencies of accommodation employees through continuous hospitality and sustainable tourism training.
3. Implement digital destination management systems to improve visitor information and accommodation booking.

ST (Strength–Threat) Strategies

1. Introduce visitor management measures during peak tourism periods to reduce congestion.
2. Establish environmental monitoring programmes to preserve coastal ecosystems while maintaining visitor satisfaction.
3. Encourage accommodation providers to adopt sustainable operational practices and service quality standards.

WT (Weakness–Threat) Strategies

1. Develop integrated stakeholder coordination involving local government, tourism businesses, and community representatives.
2. Formulate carrying-capacity-based destination management policies to minimise long-term tourism pressure.
3. Strengthen waste management systems and environmental awareness programmes involving both tourists and local communities.

Strategic Implications

The SWOT analysis demonstrates that future destination management should prioritise strategies that maximise the destination's natural and cultural assets while addressing operational and infrastructural constraints identified throughout the study. Strengthening collaboration among government agencies, accommodation providers, tourism businesses, and local communities emerged as a key priority for improving destination resilience.

The findings also indicate that infrastructure development, visitor management, environmental conservation, and accommodation service improvement should be implemented simultaneously rather than as separate initiatives. Such an integrated approach would enable the destination to maintain its competitive advantages while reducing the risks associated with increasing tourism demand. Overall, the SWOT analysis confirms that sustainable tourism development within the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area depends not only on preserving its natural attractions but also on improving governance, operational preparedness, and infrastructure capacity.

Summary of Key Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that overtourism within the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area has evolved beyond an issue of increasing visitor numbers and has become a multidimensional destination management challenge. Evidence obtained from interviews, field observations, and documentary analysis consistently indicates that the rapid growth in tourism demand has generated increasing pressure on accommodation services, supporting infrastructure, environmental quality, and institutional management. These findings were consistently reported across different stakeholder groups, including tourists, accommodation managers, local community representatives, and government officials.

The Customer Journey Mapping analysis revealed that tourist experiences varied throughout the travel process. Visitors generally developed positive expectations before arrival because of the destination's attractive natural image and positive online reputation. However, satisfaction gradually declined during the arrival, accommodation, and on-site activity stages as tourists encountered congestion, limited parking facilities, overcrowding, inconsistent accommodation services, seasonal price increases, and environmental pressures. Despite these operational challenges, most respondents continued to express strong intentions to revisit the destination because of its outstanding coastal landscape, marine attractions, and the hospitality of local communities.

The Root Cause Analysis demonstrated that these operational problems originate from interconnected structural factors rather than isolated service failures. Four principal root causes were identified: inadequate infrastructure capacity, increasing operational pressure on accommodation providers, deficiencies in environmental management, and limited coordination among tourism stakeholders. These underlying conditions collectively reduce the destination's ability to maintain consistent service quality during periods of intensive tourism activity.

The SWOT analysis further confirmed that although the destination possesses considerable strengths, including outstanding marine attractions, strong community hospitality, and increasing tourism demand, these competitive advantages are increasingly challenged by infrastructure limitations, environmental pressures, seasonal price inflation, and fragmented destination governance. At the same time, opportunities associated with sustainable tourism policies, digital tourism promotion, infrastructure investment, and community participation provide favourable conditions for improving destination resilience and long-term competitiveness.

Collectively, these findings suggest that sustainable tourism management within the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area requires an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses visitor management, accommodation operations, infrastructure development, environmental conservation, and collaborative governance. The combination of Customer Journey Mapping, Root Cause Analysis, and SWOT Analysis provides a comprehensive empirical foundation for understanding how overtourism influences both tourist experiences and accommodation management. This integrated evidence forms the basis for the discussion presented in the following section, where the findings are interpreted through the perspectives of Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory and Tourism Carrying Capacity.

Discussions

The findings demonstrate that the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area is experiencing emerging overtourism pressures, characterised by increasing visitor demand, seasonal congestion, accommodation constraints, and growing pressure on environmental and public facilities. Rather than indicating that the destination has exceeded its quantitative carrying capacity, the results suggest a progressive imbalance between tourism demand and the destination's physical and managerial capacity during peak visitation periods. This supports the argument of Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) that overtourism should be understood as a multidimensional management issue involving infrastructure, environmental quality, governance, and service capacity, rather than merely the absolute number of visitors (Choe et al., 2023; Darwis et al., 2024; van Popering-Verkerk et al., 2022).

From the perspective of Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), tourist satisfaction evolved dynamically throughout the five stages of the customer journey. Visitors entered Bira with highly positive expectations formed through social media, online travel platforms, and destination imagery, which successfully projected the destination as a pristine marine tourism attraction. However, negative disconfirmation emerged during the arrival, accommodation, and activity stages when tourists encountered traffic congestion, limited parking, overcrowded beaches, and inconsistent service quality. These findings confirm that satisfaction is determined not by a single service encounter but by the cumulative comparison between expected and actual experiences across the entire travel journey (Yousaf, 2021).

The operational challenges experienced by accommodation providers further reinforce the managerial dimension of overtourism. Hotels and homestays benefited from higher occupancy during weekends and holiday seasons, yet simultaneously faced staff shortages, rapid room turnover, seasonal price fluctuations, and increasing pressure on water supply, sanitation, and parking facilities. These results indicate that accommodation performance is strongly influenced by destination-wide infrastructure rather than internal managerial capability alone. Consequently, improving service quality requires coordinated investment in public facilities together with adaptive operational strategies such as workforce planning, updated standard operating procedures, and digital reservation management (Amissah et al., 2022; Dam & Dam, 2021).

The Root Cause Analysis (RCA) reveals that visitor dissatisfaction originates from interconnected structural factors rather than isolated operational problems. Infrastructure limitations, environmental management deficiencies, fragmented governance, and human resource constraints collectively generate recurring issues observed throughout the customer journey. This finding is consistent with the governance perspective of overtourism proposed (Koens et al., 2009), which emphasises that ineffective stakeholder coordination often produces greater impacts on visitor experiences than tourism growth itself. Therefore, sustainable destination management should prioritise integrated planning involving government agencies, accommodation providers, tourism businesses, and local communities to strengthen visitor management and environmental conservation (Junaid, 2021a; Tjilen et al., 2021).

Finally, this study contributes theoretically by integrating Customer Journey Mapping (CJM), Root Cause Analysis (RCA), SWOT Analysis, and the Tourism Carrying Capacity framework into a sequential analytical model for understanding emerging overtourism pressures in marine tourism destinations. Customer Journey Mapping identifies where service failures occur, RCA explains why they occur, SWOT translates the findings into strategic priorities, and TCC provides an interpretive sustainability framework linking visitor demand with destination capacity. This integrated approach extends previous overtourism studies by connecting tourist experience with accommodation management, offering a practical decision-support framework for emerging coastal destinations seeking to maintain environmental quality, visitor satisfaction, and long-term tourism competitiveness.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the growing body of overtourism research in several important ways. Rather than proposing a universally applicable framework, this study proposes an integrated analytical approach combining Customer Journey Mapping (Nugraha et al., 2024), Root Cause Analysis (Lee et al., 2025), SWOT analysis, and the Tourism Carrying Capacity framework

to better understand emerging overtourism pressures in marine tourism destinations (Darwis et al., 2024; Tokarchuk et al., 2021; Zelenka & Kacetl, 2014).

First, it extends the application of Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory by demonstrating that tourist satisfaction is influenced by cumulative experiences throughout the entire customer journey rather than by isolated service encounters. The findings indicate that overtourism affects visitor perceptions progressively across different stages of travel(Rodrguez-Negrn et al., 2025).

Second, this study broadens the application of the Tourism Carrying Capacity framework by showing that carrying capacity should not be interpreted solely in terms of physical visitor numbers. Instead, infrastructure readiness, accommodation management, environmental quality, and institutional governance collectively determine a destination's effective carrying capacity(Herntrei & Jnov, 2024; Rodrguez-Negrn et al., 2025).

Third, the study introduces an integrated analytical approach that combines Customer Journey Mapping, Root Cause Analysis, SWOT Analysis, and Tourism Carrying Capacity. This multidimensional framework provides a more comprehensive understanding of overtourism by linking visitor experiences, underlying operational causes, strategic planning, and sustainability considerations within a single analytical process (Coccossis & Mexa, 2017).

Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of proactive destination management involving local government, accommodation providers, tourism businesses, and local communities. Early interventions focusing on visitor management, infrastructure improvement, environmental protection, and service quality enhancement are essential to minimise future overtourism risks while maintaining destination competitiveness.

The experience of mature destinations such as Bali further indicates the importance of anticipating tourism pressure rather than responding only after infrastructure, environmental, social, and visitor-experience problems have become severe. For emerging destinations such as Bira, early monitoring of visitor concentration, infrastructure use, environmental conditions, accommodation capacity, and community perceptions may therefore provide an important basis for preventive destination management.

For local government, priority should be given to expanding transportation infrastructure, parking facilities, sanitation systems, clean water supply, and environmental management programmes in anticipation of continued tourism growth.

For destination management organisations, visitor management strategies should include carrying-capacity monitoring, real-time visitor information systems, traffic management, waste management, and coordinated tourism planning involving both public and private stakeholders.

Accommodation providers should strengthen operational resilience by improving workforce planning, updating standard operating procedures, adopting digital reservation technologies, and implementing service quality monitoring during peak tourism periods (Rahman et al., 2026). Local communities should be actively involved in environmental conservation, visitor education, and community-based tourism initiatives to ensure that tourism development generates long-term economic benefits while preserving environmental sustainability.

Limitations and Future Research

First, the study focuses exclusively on the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area, limiting the generalisability of the findings to other tourism destinations with different environmental, social, and institutional characteristics. Second, the research adopts a qualitative case-study approach, providing rich contextual insights but not allowing statistical generalisation across destinations.
Third, tourist perceptions were collected during specific periods of tourism activity. Visitor experiences may vary across different seasons and future tourism conditions. Future research could extend the proposed analytical framework by applying it to other coastal tourism destinations experiencing different stages of overtourism. Comparative studies across multiple destinations would provide broader insights into how infrastructure capacity, governance arrangements, and environmental management influence tourist experiences. Future comparative research could include mature international tourism destinations such as Bali alongside emerging coastal destinations such as Bira to examine how physical, environmental, social, psychological, and managerial pressures differ across stages of tourism development. Such comparative evidence could support the development of proactive destination management measures before overtourism pressures

become more severe and persistent. In addition, future studies may incorporate quantitative techniques, such as Structural Equation Modelling or longitudinal visitor surveys, to validate the relationships identified in the present research.

Conclusion

The objectives of this study were achieved through the integrated analysis of tourist experiences, accommodation management challenges, and strategic implications for sustainable destination management. First, the study identified that emerging overtourism pressures influenced tourist experiences throughout the customer journey, particularly during the arrival, accommodation, and tourist activity stages, where visitors encountered congestion, limited parking, overcrowding, environmental pressures, and inconsistencies in accommodation services. Second, the study identified accommodation management challenges associated with increasing tourism demand, including limited operational capacity, workforce pressures, infrastructure constraints, environmental management issues, and fragmented stakeholder coordination. Third, the study formulated strategic implications based on the findings, including improved visitor management, infrastructure development, environmental conservation, adaptive accommodation operations, and stronger collaboration among tourism stakeholders.

Overall, the findings indicate that emerging overtourism pressures in the Bira Coast Marine Tourism Area should be understood as a multidimensional destination management challenge rather than solely as an increase in visitor numbers. The integration of Customer Journey Mapping, Root Cause Analysis, SWOT Analysis, and the Tourism Carrying Capacity framework enabled the study to identify where tourism pressures were experienced, explain their underlying causes, formulate strategic responses, and interpret their implications for destination capacity. Although the findings are context-specific to Bira, the analytical approach provides a useful basis for understanding similar tourism pressures in other emerging coastal destinations.

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