

Uncertain Supply Chain Management

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Promoting tourism governance and supply chain management in the competitiveness of tourism sector

Suparman Suparman^{a*}, Muzakir Muzakir^a, Wahyuningsih Wahyuningsih^a, Patta Tope^a and Ponirin Ponirin^a

^aFaculty of Economics and Business, Tadulako University, Palu, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze the effect of accessibility, tourism governance, and information technology on competitive advantage mediated by supply chain management at tourist destinations in Central Sulawesi Province. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach. A total of 205 respondents were used as a simple sampling technique. The data analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Square with the help of SmartPLS software. The results of this study indicate that accessibility, tourism governance, and information technology had positive effects on supply chain management and competitive advantage. Furthermore, supply chain management was able to mediate the effect of accessibility, tourism governance, and information technology on competitive advantage. This would practically imply that tourist attraction with easy access is more likely to increase the capability of supply chain management and competitive advantage.

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1. Introduction

Facing increasingly fierce competition conditions, proper business planning is required. Along with the intense competition in business, a competitive advantage is needed for companies to survive in the business world. The company implements a competitive strategy to gain a competitive advantage. A tactic that can be used is to concentrate on decreasing the manufacturing expenses of a product without compromising its ability to meet the demands of consumers, which can be achieved by introducing supply chain management within the organization. According to Heizer and Render (2005), the concept of supply chain management encompasses the integration of procurement initiatives for materials and services, the conversion of these materials into intermediate and finished goods, as well as their ultimate distribution to end-users. This comprehensive approach encompasses various critical functions including purchasing, outsourcing, and maintaining a strong supplier-distributor relationship. The objective of managing the supply chain is to establish a network of suppliers that are dedicated to the attainment of customer maximization of value.

According to Li et al. (2006), an organization's level of sustainable advantage over its rivals is known as its competitive advantage. It is made up of the skills that help an organization stand out from its rivals and are the result of important decisions made by management. To reach outstanding business performance, it is essential to focus on multiple elements, including but not limited to cost efficiency, quality, reliability of delivery, innovation in product, and timely market entry. Companies that prioritize and excel in these areas will gain a competitive advantage and attract a larger customer base, resulting in increased sales and market share. Cohen and Roussel (2013) posit that the implementation of supply chain management is an efficacious approach to attain a competitive edge by reducing production costs and fulfilling customer needs. Hence, the central role of supply chain management is evident in organizational operations.

* Corresponding author
E-mail address suparman.feuntad@gmail.com (S. Suparman)

Effective supply chain management is imperative for tourism firms to maintain competitiveness and attain a strategic edge vis-à-vis rivals (Font et al., 2006). Companies must have a competitive strategy that constantly monitors the market competition. Implementing supply chain management practices in the company can provide support for the company's longevity, competitive ability, and overall performance. Efficient management plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitive edge of the tourism sector. This involves managing the intricate relationships between suppliers, customers, and the company to ensure supplier accountability for crucial aspects such as pricing, quality, delivery reliability, innovative product development, and timely market availability. In order to optimize the distribution of goods, the tourism industry necessitates strategic supplier partnerships, customer relationships, and information sharing, as stated by Schmallegger and Carson (2008). The employment of supply chain management techniques in the procurement of goods is imperative for the tourism sector to fortify its competitiveness. Subsequently, this research endeavors to scrutinize the influence of access, tourism governance and information technology on a competitive edge by investigating the intermediary function of supply chain management.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1. Accessibility, supply chain management, and competitive advantage

Accessibility refers to the affordability and availability of tourism services and facilities. As stated in Government Regulation No. 50 of 2011, tourism accessibility encompasses various transportation facilities and infrastructure that facilitate the movement of tourists from their place of origin to tourist destinations, as well as within the tourist destination itself, about the motivation of their visit. There are several views on accessibility. Darcy (2010) states the importance of accessibility to a tourism destination. Qiao et al. (2022) stated that accessibility is one of the important aspects of tourism because it involves cross-sectoral development. Handy (2005) described accessibility as an ease for people to get to a tourism place. Pencarelli (2020) relates accessibility with supporting conditions which make it easy for tourists to get to the destination location, such as information technology and available infrastructure. Meanwhile, Ambrose (2012) explained that accessibility was related to facilities and infrastructure that support tourists to be able to visit a tourist attraction. Previous research has examined the relationship between accessibility and the performance of SCM (Smith & Xiao, 2008; Molefe et al., 2018) and with overall competitive advantage (Kastenholz et al., 2012; Vila et al., 2015). Accordingly, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H₁: *Accessibility has a significant positive effect on supply chain management.*

H₂: *Accessibility has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage.*

2.2. Tourism Governance, SCM, and competitive advantage

Tourism governance is a concept derived from the principles of good governance aimed at effectively managing the tourism sector (Jamal & Camargo, 2018). In this approach, the management of the tourism sector prioritizes the participation of three key actors: the government, the community, and the private sector (Siakwah et al., 2020). All three actors play a crucial role in managing a tourist destination, and their synergistic relationships are a critical factor that determines the success of destination management. Volgger and Pechlaner (2014) identified destination policy, planning, and development as some of the main determinants that influence destination competitiveness. The effective management of tourism involves the imperative role of governance in enabling stakeholders to work collaboratively and identifying prospects for cooperation among multiple actors within the tourism supply chain. According to Wyss et al. (2014), the proper structure of tourism governance plays a crucial role in this regard. Furthermore, Simchi-Levi et al. (2004) emphasize the significance of supply chain management in facilitating streamlined coordination among suppliers, manufacturers, and warehouses, ultimately resulting in cost reduction and improved customer satisfaction through efficient production and distribution of goods. Chen (2009) found that governance in innovation management enhances the ability of supply chain management to connect tourism companies with partners, increasing their collaborative potential. Additionally, George (2020) has demonstrated that governance frameworks can activate social capital, thereby enabling tourism businesses to achieve sustainable competitive advantages. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H₃: *Tourism governance has a significant positive effect on supply chain management.*

H₄: *Tourism governance has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage.*

2.3. Information technology, supply chain management, and competitive advantage

According to Heizer and Render (2005), supply chain management encompasses the assimilation of multiple endeavors, ranging from acquiring material and services, converting partially completed products into end products, and the subsequent delivery of said products to consumers. The term supply chain management encompasses several crucial functions, such as procurement, outsourcing, and various elements of the supplier-distributor relationship. Similarly, Simchi-Levi et al. (2004) define information technology (IT) as a suite of tools, including hardware and software applications, used to collect and assess data for making sound decisions in the supply chain. Chopra and Meindl (2007) liken IT to the sensory and cognitive system of management in the supply chain, responsible for gathering and analyzing the necessary data for decision-making processes.

Turban and Volonino (2010) contend that the introduction of supply chain management is inextricably entwined with the evolution of information technology. Additionally, previous research has established a pronounced association between the use of information technology and successful supply chain management (Tseng et al., 2011). Sanders et al. (2002) found a significant effect of IT used by organizations with operational benefits, reduced costs and cycle times. Guimaraes et al. (2002) showed the effectiveness of IT with supplier network performance. Previous studies also showed that IT systems are more likely to boost SCM performance in improving production and process control, customer management, customer service, inventory, warehouse management and price management (Narasimhan and Kim, 2001). In addition, two major perspectives - the technical and managerial perspectives - have been identified in exploring the role of information technology (IT) in augmenting supply chain management within the tourism industry. Accordingly, the integration of IT and its effective implementation can enhance collaboration among supply chain members, which can then result in prompt and coordinated partnerships in tourism management (Bahramimianrood & Bathaei, 2021). Various other investigations have also revealed the impact of IT on the performance of supply chain management (SCM) in tourism (Alsetoohy et al., 2019; Kerdpitak, 2022). From prior research, it has been established that IT significantly contributes to enhancing competitive advantage (Bhatt & Grover, 2005; Breznik, 2012). Accordingly, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H₅: *Information technology has a significant positive effect on supply chain management.*

H₆: *Information technology has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage.*

2.4. Supply chain management and competitive advantage

According to Stock and Boyer (2009), supply chain management involves a complex network of interrelated organizations, which collaborate to manage the seamless flow of materials and information, from suppliers to end users, with the aim of enhancing efficiency and ensuring customer satisfaction. This collaborative endeavor entails the acquisition of raw materials, their conversion into semi-finished products, and the ultimate delivery of the final products to consumers, at the appropriate time, in the correct quantity, and at the right location. Multiple definitions of supply chain management underscore its integration and optimization of operations, as it seeks to enhance the competitive advantage of organizations.

In the research conducted by Li et al. (2006), it was found that a company's competitive advantage can be defined by its capacity to sustain its market position in relation to its rivals by utilizing distinctive capabilities. This capability can include a range of factors such as innovation, strategic management, product quality, effective marketing, and distribution network. Competitive advantage is considered a critical aspect of a company's success, particularly in today's increasingly competitive business environment. Companies must constantly strive to enhance their competitive advantage by continuously refining their capabilities and adapting to changes in the market. By doing so, they can achieve long-term growth, profitability, and sustainability. Thus, competitive advantage is a crucial concept in academic business studies and should be studied carefully by entrepreneurs and managers.

These capabilities result from pivotal managerial decisions. For companies, supply chain management is an essential component, with managers expected to have the capacity to plan, execute, and oversee the process. Effective supply chain management is crucial in achieving competitive advantage in the tourism industry as pointed out by Molefe et al. (2018). Jermisittiparsert et al. (2019) likewise underscore the importance of supply chain management in helping firms achieve their objectives and obtaining a competitive advantage.

H₇: *Supply chain management has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage.*

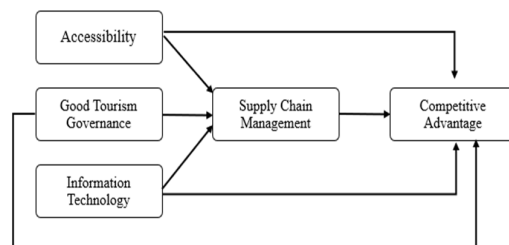


Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework

3. Research Method

This study centered on the tourism of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in different areas of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The sampling method utilized was simple random sampling, whereby 300 managers and owners were selected to partake in the study. The respondents were given a questionnaire, and out of the 300 distributed, 205 responses were entirely filled out by SMEs that had Supply Chain Management (SCM) departments. The variables used in this study were divided into some variables, namely exogenous variables (accessibility, tourism governance and information technology), endogenous (competitive advantage) and mediating variables of supply chain management (SCM). The items of accessibility were 8 items

adopted from Darcy (2010), such as impairment, independence, level of support needs and mobility aid. Robina-Ramrez et al. (2021) employed six indicators as part of the tourism governance variable, namely safety measures, commitment of tourist authorities, empowering communities, protecting common resources, promoting cooperative awareness, and fostering mutual trust among the tourism industry, tourist authorities, and communities. The indicators related to information technology in the tourist sector were adapted from Vila et al. (2021) and comprised seven key features, including interaction, memorability, personalization, privacy, and security. Additionally, seven indicators were used to analyze supply chain management elements by modifying the constructions originally proposed by Palang and Tippayawong (2019). Various management areas were identified as crucial in the successful operation of a service-oriented organization. Among them was relationship management, which focuses on developing and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, including clients and partners. Another critical area is service performance management, which involves systematically measuring, analyzing, and optimizing service delivery. Capacity and resource management are also crucial in ensuring that services are delivered efficiently and effectively, including the management of staff and physical resources. Finally, customer relationship management, which involves a comprehensive approach to identifying and responding to customer needs, is essential for building long-term loyalty and maintaining a competitive edge. Together, these management areas form a framework to guide the effective delivery of services in a business context. The measurement of Competitive Advantage was conducted by utilizing a set consisting of seven factors sourced from the research conducted by Wang et al. (2022). These factors include but are not limited to service quality, customer loyalty, acquisition of new profitable customers, a growth rate of profits, and a growth rate of sales revenue.

In this study, the Likert scale was employed to assess the responses provided by the participants, utilizing a range of values from 1 (indicating strong disagreement) to 5 (indicating strong agreement). The data obtained was subject to analysis through Path Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS), implemented using the SmartPLS software.

4. Results

The PLS-SEM method was employed to scrutinize both the structural and measurement models. Hair et al. (2016) employed to authenticate and guarantee the reliability of the measurement model. To perform the reliability test, the individual loads or uncomplicated correlations between the measurements and their corresponding latent variables were computed, utilizing a load 0.7 threshold (Henseler & Ringle, 2009). As exemplified in Table 1 and Fig. 2, all 35 items and 5 variables were retained because their loads surpassed 0.7.

Table 1
Outer Loading of Variables

Items	Accessibility	Tourism governance	Information Technology	Supply Chain Management	Competitive Advantage
AC1	0.896				
AC2	0.890				
AC3	0.892				
AC4	0.916				
AC5	0.910				
AC6	0.902				
AC7	0.900				
AC8	0.883				
TG1		0.874			
TG2		0.874			
TG3		0.899			
TG4		0.895			
TG5		0.887			
TG6		0.895			
IT1			0.888		
IT2			0.909		
IT3			0.909		
IT4			0.917		
IT5			0.918		
IT6			0.909		
IT7			0.968		
SCM1				0.911	
SCM2				0.926	
SCM3				0.919	
SCM4				0.885	
SCM5				0.897	
SCM6				0.838	
SCM7				0.962	
CA1					0.774
CA2					0.764
CA3					0.793
CA4					0.750
CA5					0.743
CA6					0.862
CA7					0.863

AC= Accessibility; TG= Tourism Governance; IT= Information Technology; SCM= Supply Chain Management; CA= Competitive Advantage

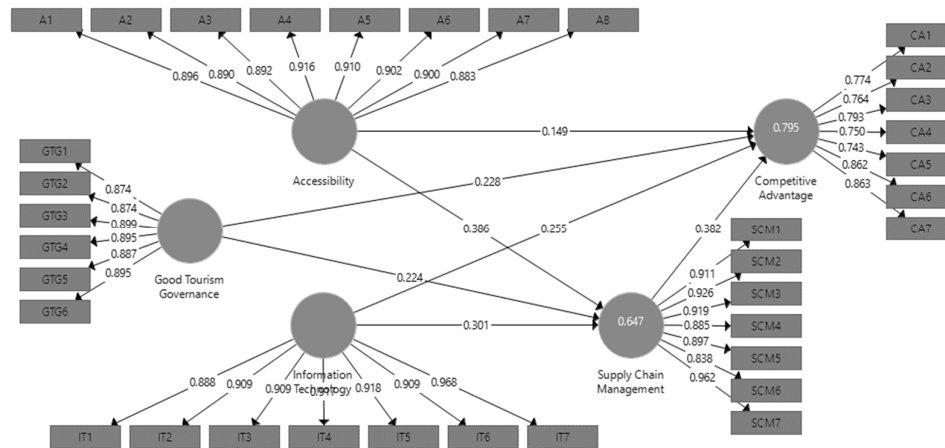


Fig. 2. Result analysis of the research model

The testing results for convergent validity showed that the external loadings are vary and acceptable (load ≥ 0.7). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all variables was also acceptable (load ≥ 0.6) (Table 2). More specifically, the value of AVE for Accessibility was 0.808; Tourism governance of 0.788; Information Technology of 0.841; Supply Chain Management of 0.821; and Competitive Advantage of 0.631.

Table 2
Convergent validity

Variables	External loading factors	AVE
Accessibility	0.883-0.916	0.808
Tourism governance	0.874-0.899	0.788
Information Technology	0.888-0.968	0.841
Supply Chain Management	0.838-0.962	0.821
Competitive Advantage	0.743-0.863	0.631

Moreover, it was observed that the discriminant validity holds great significance in gauging the association between variables, with a score exceeding 0.6. As outlined by Rönkkö and Cho (2022), discriminant validity refers to “a characteristic of a measurement tool and is considered present when it solely measures the intended construct and no other constructs of concern” Consequently, our findings suggest that all variables under scrutiny are indeed valid.

Table 3
Discriminant Validity

Variables	Accessibility	Competitive Advantage	Tourism governance	Information Technology	Supply Chain Management
Accessibility	0.899	-	-	-	-
Competitive Advantage	0.756	0.794	-	-	-
Tourism governance	0.668	0.747	0.887	-	-
Information Technology	0.675	0.770	0.635	0.917	-
Supply Chain Management	0.739	0.825	0.673	0.704	0.906

In the current research, a reliability assessment was conducted utilizing both Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability. The findings, which incorporate the designated values of Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability for evaluating the latent variables, are exhibited in Table 4. As stipulated by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a measurement instrument is deemed reliable when it surpasses Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.6. Previous research examining travel intention determinants by Nguyen et al. (2023) also demonstrated the reliability of the variables used. Thus, the variables used in this study (Accessibility, Tourism governance, Information Technology, Supply Chain Management, Competitive Advantage,) were considered reliable, thereby eligible for further testing of hypothesis analysis.

Table 4
Composite Reliability dan Cronbach’s Alpha

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability
Accessibility	0.966	0.971
Tourism governance	0.946	0.957
Information Technology	0.968	0.974
Supply Chain Management	0.963	0.970
Competitive Advantage	0.903	0.923

Based on the reliability test results presented in the table above, it can be argued that the research variables are reliable (with a Cronbach’s alpha value > 0.6) and are therefore suitable for use as a measuring instrument for the variables of interest in this study. The accuracy of the proposed PLS model was also evaluated through the R-Square (R2) and Path Coefficient measures. The structural model was tested by analyzing the bootstrapping results, specifically focusing on the R2 value of the endogenous latent variables and the coefficient (T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)) of each exogenous latent variable on the endogenous latent variables (as shown in Fig. 3).

Table 5
R Square

Endogenous latent variables	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Supply Chain Management	0.647	0.642
Competitive Advantage	0.795	0.791

The R-square value of Supply Chain Management is 0.647, as shown in Table 5. This means that 64.7% of the variable can be moderately explained by Accessibility, Tourism governance, and Information Technology. Moreover, the Competitive Advantage variable has an r-square value of 0.795, or 79.5 percent. This means that Accessibility, Tourism governance, Information Technology, and Supply Chain Management can explain 79.5 percent of the Competitive Advantage variable. This value is considered a high category. The next analysis was to perform hypothesis testing. To determine the acceptance of each hypothesis, the effect and direction of the coefficient value and path coefficients were examined to indicate the relationship’s strength and direction.

Table 6
Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P-value
H1	AC → SCM	0.518	0.518	0.077	6.743	0.000
H2	AC → CA	0.205	0.208	0.069	2.457	0.014
H3	TG → SCM	0.251	0.249	0.076	4.450	0.000
H4	TG → CA	0.376	0.375	0.068	4.903	0.000
H5	IT → SCM	0.412	0.411	0.074	5.205	0.000
H6	IT → CA	0.523	0.523	0.067	5.377	0.000
H7	SCM → CA	0.357	0.355	0.072	6.407	0.000

AC= Accessibility; TG= Tourism Governance; IT= Information Technology; SCM= Supply Chain Management; CA= Competitive Advantage

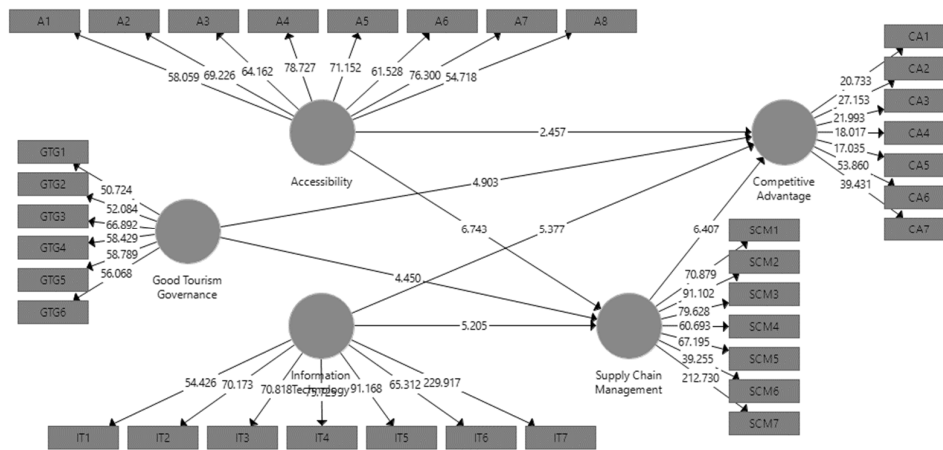


Fig. 3. Bootstrapping’s results

The research revealed a significant correlation between accessibility and supply chain management as well as a competitive advantage. The T Statistics (|O/STDEV|) value for accessibility’s impact on supply chain management was 6.743 with a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05 while the T Statistics (|O/STDEV|) for its effect on competitive advantage was 2.457 with a P-value of 0.014 < 0.05. Both hypotheses were therefore upheld. The outcomes indicate that tourist destinations that are easily accessible and secure can improve the capacity for supply chain management and competitive advantage. These results are in line with prior studies by Sul et al. (2020) and Calvo-Mora (2015), which underscored the importance of accessibility in creating competitive advantages in the tourism industry. Sul et al. (2020) distinguished several aspects of convenient accessibility, such as seamless communication, value-added services and products, shopping, and attractive attractions. The results of the study indicate a significant influence of tourism governance on both supply chain management (T Statistics (|O/STDEV|) =4.450 and P-value =0.000<0.05) and competitive advantage (T Statistics (|O/STDEV|) =4.903 and P-value =0.000<0.05),

lending support to the third and fourth hypotheses. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies, such as Volgger and Pechlaner (2014) and Wyss et al. (2014), which demonstrate the importance of destination governance in improving integration, coordination, and overall competitive advantage of management organizations.

By conducting an experiment to assess the impact of information technology on supply chain management and competitive advantage, the findings indicate that information technology has a noteworthy influence on supply chain management (T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$) =5.205 and P-value = 0.000<0.05) and competitive advantage (T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$) =5.377 and P-value =0.000<0.05). This validates that the effect of information technology on supply chain management is of statistical significance. Moreover, the statistical significance of the impact of information technology on competitive advantage was observed, thus leading to the acceptance of both the fifth and sixth hypotheses. This implies that leveraging information technology to attain a competitive edge and handle supply chain operations may yield advantages. These discoveries align with the research conducted by Thakkar et al. (2008) and Tripathy et al. (2014), who highlighted the utilization of IT resources to refine supply chain management and achieve competitive advantages in the tourism industry. In addition, this aligns with Kushwaha's (2011) argument that Information Technology serves as a crucial factor in facilitating SMEs' transformation to attain a competitive edge. The practical implications of the study suggest that, through Information Technology, supply chain proficiency can be enhanced without the need to alter established business practices and manufacturing operations.

Table 7

Indirect Effects

Path Relationship	T Statistics ($ O/STDEV $)	Pvalue
Accessibility → Supply Chain Management → Competitive Advantage	5.022	0.000
Tourism governance → Supply Chain Management → Competitive Advantage	3.591	0.000
Information Technology → Supply Chain Management → Competitive Advantage	4.003	0.000

By conducting a study on the direct and mediating impacts of supply chain management on competitive advantage, the results indicated a statistically significant influence of supply chain management on competitive advantage, with T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$) =6.407 and P-value =0.000<0.05. As a result, the seventh hypothesis that postulated the impact of supply chain management on competitive advantage is accepted. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as Molefe et al. (2018) and Jermsittiparsert et al. (2019), which have suggested that implementing supply chain management in the tourism industry could enhance competitiveness.

Furthermore, the results of the indirect effect test as shown in Table 7 showed that supply chain management mediates the indirect effect of the variables of accessibility (T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$) =5.022 and P-value =0.000<0.05), tourism governance (T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$) =3.591 and P-value =0.000<0.05), and information technology (T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$) =4.003 and P-value =0.000<0.05) on competitive advantage. The findings are also in line with Zhou and Benton (2007), Wu et al. (2014), and Tripathy et al (2014) demonstrating that accessibility, tourism governance, and information technology can improve supply chain performance which consequently has implications for competitive advantage.

5. Conclusion

Based on the discoveries made, accessibility significantly affects supply chain management and competitive advantage. The study indicates that tourist governance has statistically significant effects on these two aspects, as well as the impact of information technology. The latest evaluation confirms that supply chain management exerts a statistically significant influence on competitive advantage. Furthermore, the investigation suggests that supply chain management may act as an intervening variable to enhance the effects of accessibility, tourism governance, and information technology on competitive advantage. The results theoretically asserted the importance of accessibility, tourism governance, and information in managing tourism. Practically, this would imply that tourist attraction with easy access to the internet is more likely to increase the capability of supply chain management and competitive advantage. Stakeholders also need to consider multifaceted aspects of convenient accessibility, including smooth communication, value-added service and products, shopping, and appealing attractions in building destination image and tourism management. Two limitations can be highlighted in this study. The first is the limited locations to conduct research and the lack of similar empirical studies which use tourism governance to be carried out in local tourism in Indonesia. The second is the limited SMEs involved in this study. Future studies can utilize similar studies on tourism governance in a regional or national context as well as examine the roles of information technology that is rapidly developing to support tourism. Furthermore, forthcoming research is anticipated to allocate consideration towards the medium and large-scale industries in addressing the pandemic crisis and employ alternative methods in scrutinizing the tourism sector as a whole.

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