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Strategic Prioritization for Sustainable Urban Tourism in Greater Bandung: An Analytical Hierarchy Process Approach

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Abstract

City adventures and tourism help change the economic landscape and urban layout of many cities in the Global South, and Greater Bandung is one of them. Even though tourism brings a lot of economic and cultural benefits, it also puts stress on cities, buildings, travel networks, and nearby locals. The purpose of this study is to identify and prioritize sustainable urban tourism strategies for Greater Bandung by applying the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). Using feedback from 15 experts in government, academia, industry, and civil society, the research assesses five different strategies—heritage revitalization, smart mobility systems, digital tourism platforms, community-based tourism (CBT), and green urban infrastructure—by looking at how they match up with five types of sustainability: accessibility, infrastructure, tourist attractions, how communities are involved and their impact on nature. Heritage revitalization is considered the most important, followed by systems for smarter mobility and digital tourism platforms that highlight the community's main concerns about culture. Ranking lower overall was CBT and green infrastructure because the social and environmental criteria weighed less compared to other areas. They reveal that urban tourism plans should prioritize sustainability and support the use of AHP when making tourism decisions. The research shares useful findings for creating urban tourism policies in developing areas and adds to the wider discussion on sustainable urban tourism here.

Keywords: sustainable urban tourism, Greater Bandung, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), strategy prioritization, cultural heritage, smart mobility

INTRODUCTION

Urban tourism is growing very fast worldwide due to more cities, new cultures, and travelers eager for meaningful urban experiences. Now, over half of the world's international tourists visit urban areas, which demonstrates a significant global shift toward more metropolitan tourism, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023; Kusumah, 2023). Bandung, which is often called the "Paris of Java," is a famous city in Indonesia known for its colonial buildings, creative businesses, and delicious food (Gimnastian et al., 2022; Resmi et al., 2023). But, because cities are growing so quickly, they now deal with problems like crowded roads, polluted areas, and differences in access to social and economic benefits (Q. Gao et al., 2024; Han, 2022; Safriana et al., 2024). Because of these challenges, there is a strong need for planning that balances developing tourism with caring for nature, local traditions, and equal support for the community (Andjanie & Putro, 2023; Resmi et al., 2023).

The authorities address these problems by finding and prioritizing eco-friendly tourism strategies for the Greater Bandung region (Greater Bandung) with the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). According to the AHP model, different development plans are evaluated using accessibility, infrastructure, attractions, how involved the community is, and how environmentally friendly they are. All of these characteristics influence urban tourism by linking factors like transportation networks (Pesimo-Abundabar & Pongpong, 2023; Song & Xu, 2024), responsible

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green designs (Maleachi et al., 2023; Zaghmout, 2024), traditional cultural heritage (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024), shared community decision-making (Raihan et al., 2024; Yang, 2023). Given that Greater Bandung—including the cities of Bandung and Cimahi, and parts of West Bandung, Sumedang, and Bandung Regency—is currently facing significant urban-tourism pressures, the need for a structured prioritization framework has become increasingly pressing (Hsu et al., 2024; Kusumah, 2023; Resmi et al., 2023).

While various initiatives such as digital tourism platforms and cultural heritage revitalization have been introduced, existing research tends to approach tourism development from siloed perspectives—typically focusing on infrastructure, promotion, or visitor satisfaction—without a cohesive multi-criteria framework for strategic decision-making (Ahirward et al., 2023; Santiesteban et al., 2023). Moreover, the Indonesian urban tourism discourse remains under-theorized and fragmented, often lacking integration of local stakeholder perspectives or prioritization based on context-specific challenges. The AHP method addresses this gap by allowing for the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data, offering a rigorous means of evaluating competing strategies under complex and uncertain conditions (Kosova et al., 2022; Xhafaj et al., 2022). By mapping interrelationships among key factors and leveraging expert input, AHP supports evidence-based decision-making that reflects the values and needs of local communities while promoting long-term sustainability (Park et al., 2022; Santiesteban et al., 2023).

To this end, the present study is guided by two central research questions:

(1) What are the most critical criteria for sustainable urban tourism development in Greater Bandung?

(2) How should alternative development strategies be prioritized based on these criteria using the AHP method?

This research makes several important contributions. Theoretically, it extends the application of AHP in the context of urban tourism governance in the Global South, where such approaches remain relatively underutilized. Practically, it delivers a replicable decision-support framework for tourism planners, local governments, and stakeholders to assess development priorities based on empirical expert judgment. Methodologically, the study advances a participatory, multi-criteria evaluation approach that integrates sustainability, inclusivity, and cultural integrity. Ultimately, it aims to inform integrated urban tourism policies responsive to destination competitiveness and community-centered development in Greater Bandung and similar urban settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban Tourism and Its Sustainability Challenges

Urban tourism encompasses diverse cultural, historical, commercial, and recreational activities within urban environments (Ashworth & Page, 2011). As a growing segment of the global tourism economy, it contributes significantly to employment, cultural exchange, and infrastructure investment. However, its rapid expansion, particularly in emerging economies, has led to escalating spatial, environmental, and socio-economic challenges such as overcrowding, gentrification, congestion, and unequal access to public services (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023; Tang et al., 2022; N. Wang, 2024). In Indonesia, cities like Bandung illustrate how tourism growth can quickly outpace local infrastructure and urban governance capacities. This has intensified pressure on public services, mobility networks, and green spaces, highlighting the urgent need for integrated planning strategies that reconcile economic gains with long-term sustainability (Guo & Liu, 2024; Han, 2022; Kusumah, 2023). Empirical studies underscore the importance of adaptive transport infrastructure and spatial design to alleviate congestion and enhance the livability of urban tourism destinations (Štofková et al., 2022; J. Wang et al., 2022).

Environmental sustainability is particularly risky as unregulated tourism pressures urban ecosystems. (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023) emphasize the necessity of comprehensive urban traffic analyses, noting the strong link between tourism-driven mobility and broader urban environmental degradation. Scholars have argued that cities should become more resilient by developing smart infrastructure and choosing adaptive approaches, especially where tourism is rising (Zaghmout, 2024; Zhang & Li, 2024). Although urban tourism affects many sides of a city, research to date usually focuses on issues like infrastructure, marketing, and the environment separately. This stops policymakers from creating well-structured strategies that include different sectors. AHP is a strong alternative method because it successfully unites different types of criteria into one structured system for prioritization (Štofková et al., 2022). AHP allows evidence to lead decisions while also including the opinions of those involved, which is very valuable for city tourism planning. To make urban tourism work with sustainable development, we need to work collaboratively and deal with the many layers of urban problems. Besides improving technology, reducing traffic jams, controlling pollutants, and addressing inequality call for

strategic tools such as AHP, which help design plans using local situations that communities need to ensure lasting resilience.

Key Criteria for Sustainable Urban Tourism

The first important step when using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) for planning urban tourism is to choose appropriate criteria for evaluation. Through a thorough examination of relevant studies, accessibility, infrastructure, tourist attractions, community participation, and environmental protection were found to be the most important criteria for planning sustainable urban tourism (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023; Santiesteban et al., 2023; Song & Xu, 2024; Tovmasyan & Gevorgyan, 2022). How accessible urban services are often affects the happiness of tourists and the helpfulness of the city's transport network. An efficient transportation system makes it easy for people to visit main attractions and increases the clarity and inclusiveness of the city for people visiting (Pesimo-Abundabar & Pongpong, 2023; Satrya et al., 2024). Evidence shows that making places more accessible by adding multiple transport options, clear signs, and digital means improves the tourism experience for people and makes trips less stressful (Lu et al., 2022).

Along with making a destination accessible, the quality of infrastructure should cover things like nearby places to stay, convenient toilets, paths for pedestrians and ways to travel, and better digital links. When infrastructure improves, tourism in the city becomes safe, meaningful, and convenient for tourists, which also leads to positive urban effects (Hsu et al., 2024; Maleachi et al., 2023; Satrya et al., 2024). Creating sustainable infrastructure means it will remain strong for years and use resources effectively. Tourist attractions that highlight cultural customs are very important for forming a destination's image and influencing what visitors do. Sights that introduce local culture and the creative arts make a place memorable and help create enjoyable travel experiences (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). Honest and genuine experiences make travelers feel satisfied, boost community pride, and support tradition (according to Nedeljković et al., 2022; Nuriyev, 2022).

Becoming involved in the community is considered more and more important for sustainable tourism. If local communities are included in planning and running tourism strategies, the chance of sharing tourism benefits and including all types of people greatly improves (Raihan et al., 2024; Yang, 2023). They make local people more invested in tourism development, cause less tension, and guarantee that tourism fits the community's values and needs (Santiesteban et al., 2023). Urban tourism planning relies heavily on making sure it is environmentally sustainable. Since cities are dealing with the growing negative effects of tourism, such as air pollution, waste, and harm to nature, including sustainability measures is necessary (Kosova et al., 2023; Mitra et al., 2023). Managing the negative effects of tourism on the environment is important for an urban tourism system to last and not harm people or the environment (B. W. Gao et al., 2022; Tovmasyan & Gevorgyan, 2022).

Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) in Tourism Studies

Since urban tourism systems become more complicated, decisions need to consider environmental, economic, social, and cultural aspects. Usual evaluation processes do not capture the complexity of what schools do well. To address these challenges, analyzing and prioritizing choices in uncertain and multiple-stakeholder contexts, Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) frameworks have grown in popularity (Santiesteban et al., 2023; Štofková et al., 2022). MCDM techniques can handle both numbers and other types of information, giving them a key role in tourism planning because sacrificing for development, saving the environment, and community welfare is often needed.

In tourism research, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), described by Saaty in 1987, is used very often. Using AHP, problems are divided into a structure of levels, and experts decide the importance of certain aspects and choices. Engaging many stakeholders and using clear data help in making choices that are backed by facts and supported by those involved (Kosova et al., 2022; Xhafaj et al., 2022). In the same manner, (Štofková et al., 2022) demonstrate that AHP helps project managers include both measurable and hard-to-quantify factors in their planning, and (Kosova et al., 2022) present how AHP is used in practice to group tourism sustainability indicators. Also, (Srdjević et al., 2022) make use of AHP to rank urban parks in Vilnius, illuminating how this helps improve the city's tourism sector by investing in the right areas.

Besides AHP, studies have applied the Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) to help solve issues related to tourism. In Thailand, (Phuangpornpitak et al., 2024) applied TOPSIS to plan tourist routes, demonstrating how combining spatial with user preference data helped make visitor management more effective. Similarly, (Nedeljković et al., 2022) examined rural tourism development by applying MCDM tools, stressing that they are suitable for rural and rarely visited areas.

Because more MCDM tools are being used, it is now understood that using several approaches that match the location is important for tourism development decisions. The authors (Santiesteban et al., 2023) point out that having stakeholders take part in decisions improves the legitimacy of outcomes and ensures that policy actions reflect local traditions and strive for sustainability. Because MCDM is interactive and considers many aspects, it is a great choice for urban tourism planning, where conflicts between speedy development and social/environmental boundaries exist.

METHODS

Both interviews with technical experts and the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) are combined in this study to understand and analyze the topic. The purpose is to find and choose sustainable measures for tourism growth in Greater Bandung, which includes Bandung City, Cimahi, West Bandung, and Sumedang. Recently, this area has seen a big increase in tourism, which has led to rising urban and environmental pressures. As a result, a framework that organizes decisions needs to guide planners and those involved, making sure any choices follow sustainability guidelines(Gimnastian et al., 2022; Resmi et al., 2023).

The study recruited 15 key informants through purposive sampling to gather evaluative input, targeting experts in urban planning, tourism policy, community-based tourism, and sustainable development. The experts included government officials, academics, tourism consultants, and local NGO representatives—all of whom had at least five years of experience in their respective domains. A structured AHP questionnaire was distributed both physically and digitally. Respondents were instructed to compare elements pairwise at each level of the hierarchy using the Saaty 1–9 scale, where "1" represents equal importance and "9" denotes an extreme preference for one element over another.

The AHP procedure was executed in six key steps. First, the problem was clearly defined: to identify the most effective and sustainable strategy for developing urban tourism in Greater Bandung. The hierarchy was then constructed, consisting of three levels: the goal (strategy selection), five criteria (accessibility, infrastructure, attractions, community engagement, environmental sustainability), and a set of alternatives (e.g., digital tourism platforms, green infrastructure, heritage revitalization, and community-based tourism models). The hierarchical breakdown is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. AHP Hierarchy Structure

Level	Elements
Goal	Selection of the optimal sustainable urban tourism strategy
Criteria	Accessibility, Infrastructure, Tourist Attractions, Community Engagement, Environmental Sustainability
Alternatives	Digital Tourism, Heritage Revitalization, Green Infrastructure, Community-Based Tourism, Smart Mobility

Source: Research data, 2025

Next, pairwise comparisons were conducted for each set of criteria and alternatives, resulting in judgment matrices for each expert. These matrices were normalized and analyzed to derive priority weights using the eigenvector method. The consistency of each matrix was then evaluated by calculating the Consistency Index (CI) and Consistency Ratio (CR) using the following formula:

$$CI = \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1}, \quad CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$$

Where λmax is the principal eigenvalue, n is the number of criteria, and RI is the Random Index based on matrix size (Saaty, 1987). Consistency was defined by a CR less than or equal to 0.1. All matrices that went beyond this limit were clarified by being corrected or excluded, followed by interviews if more explanation was needed. Only after everyone's scores were confirmed were the results gathered, and the geometric mean was applied to assign final weights to every criterion and alternative. Microsoft Excel was mostly used for data processing, and the software Expert Choice™ helped with consistency checks and weight calculations. Thematic insights from experts' opinions were examined to check for similarities. In this way, a methodical evaluation of tourism strategies is achieved by using expertise, contextual factors, and standards focused on sustainability. Connected stakeholder insight in a carefully organized decision model allows the research to connect qualitative actions with numbers and thus benefit cities with similar stresses generated by tourism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Informant Profile and Contextual Positioning

By using purposive sampling, the study here brought together 15 expert informants to add strength, appropriate context, and validity to AHP analysis. They are key players in shaping and implementing tourism

policies and plans in Bandung City, its Regency, and nearby regions, namely Cimahi, West Bandung, and several regencies. Every informant needed to have at least five years' experience in careers linked to tourism, urban planning, sustainability, or community development. The informants were chosen to reflect institutional diversity—government officials, academic researchers, private sector tourism operators, community leaders, and NGO practitioners—to ensure a multi-dimensional understanding of urban tourism dynamics. They were identified based on their involvement in tourism initiatives, urban governance forums, academic publications, or community-led regional projects.

The professional backgrounds, years of experience, and regional focus of each informant are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Informant Profile Summary (N = 15)

ID	Sector	Professional Background	Years of Exp.	Regional Focus
E1	Government	Urban and tourism planning	10	Bandung City
E2	Academic	Sustainable development	15	West Java
E3	Private Sector	Travel and tour operations	12	Bandung Metropolitan
E4	Community Representative	Cultural heritage and civic advocacy	9	Central Bandung
E5	Urban Planning Consultant	Infrastructure and mobility strategy	13	Greater Bandung
E6	Government	Environmental policy and tourism	11	Cimahi
E7	Academic	Urban sociology and policy	16	Greater Bandung
E8	Community Representative	Community tourism and MSME support	8	Bandung Regency
E9	Private Sector	Hospitality and events management	10	North Bandung
E10	Government	Public service and spatial planning	14	West Bandung
E11	Academic	Urban sustainability and planning	18	Bandung and Cimahi
E12	NGO	Environmental and green tourism	7	Bandung Urban Fringe
E13	Community Representative	Urban farming and eco-tourism	6	South Bandung
E14	Private Sector	Destination branding and promotion	9	Bandung Creative Zone
E15	Academic	Tourism economics and development	17	Bandung City

Source: Research data, 2025

This broad composition enabled the study to capture institutional, spatial, and experiential diversity, which is particularly important given Bandung's complex urban-tourism interface. Informants contributed to the quantitative AHP assessments (through pairwise comparisons of criteria and strategies) and qualitative elaborations that offered deeper justifications for their judgments. These additional insights were coded thematically and further analyzed, providing a rich interpretive foundation for the prioritization framework. Moreover, the varied regional foci of the respondents ensured that perspectives from both central urban cores and peripheral tourism zones were represented. This spatial spread is crucial in the context of Greater Bandung, where tourism development is concentrated in the city center and expanding toward peri-urban and rural fringes—each facing distinct infrastructural, environmental, and governance challenges.

Thematic Insights from Expert Narratives

In addition to completing pairwise comparisons for the AHP model, informants were invited to share their qualitative reflections on urban tourism development in Greater Bandung. These open-ended responses were collected through written commentary within the AHP instrument and supplemented by clarifying follow-up discussions when necessary. Using an inductive thematic analysis approach, five dominant themes emerged. These themes help explain the rationale behind expert preferences and provide contextual depth to the quantitative results presented in subsequent sections. The most frequently cited theme was the centrality of Bandung's cultural and historical identity. Informants emphasized that tourism in Bandung is inseparable from its colonial-era architecture, historical corridors like Braga and Asia-Afrika, and longstanding creative culture. Heritage revitalization was considered a preservation effort and a core competitive advantage for Bandung's urban tourism. As noted by a community representative: "*We cannot talk about sustainable tourism in Bandung if we let heritage sites decay. That is the city's soul.*" (E4). Another expert added: "*Unlike many other cities, Bandung's identity is rooted in its heritage. That is what draws people here, not malls or new buildings*." (E15)

The second key theme was urban accessibility and mobility infrastructure. Many respondents, particularly from government and planning sectors, pointed to traffic congestion, fragmented transportation, and poor pedestrian infrastructure as major obstacles to tourism development. The issue was described as structural, with Bandung's urban form and limited transit systems failing to keep pace with growing tourist demand. One private-sector tourism operator observed: "*Tourists spend more time stuck in traffic than enjoying the city. That*

hurts both experience and reputation." (E3). Similarly, a government official emphasized: *"Improving our heritage sites is pointless if tourists cannot reach them comfortably."* (E1).

The third theme was the lack of meaningful community participation in tourism planning. While community-based tourism has become a policy buzzword, many informants argued that implementation often lacks depth and consistency. The dominant perception is that most planning processes are top-down, with limited opportunities for local communities to shape strategy or contribute ideas. An academic expert shared: *"The rhetoric of community-based tourism is everywhere, but in practice, communities are consulted after decisions have been made."* (E2). Another planner added: *"Community engagement is often performative—people are invited to events, not planning tables."* (E5)

Two additional themes were mentioned less frequently but provided important forward-looking insights. The first was the growing importance of digital infrastructure in urban tourism. This includes mobile apps, QR-based tourism trails, digital storytelling, and real-time service updates. Informants saw digitalization as a strategic enabler and necessary for managing visitor flows in dense urban spaces. As one technology-savvy informant put it: *"Smart tourism tools are no longer optional—they are essential for destinations that want to stay relevant."* (E14)

The fifth theme was the need for environmental safeguards in urban tourism planning. While environmental issues were not the most frequently cited concern, they were viewed as a long-term imperative—particularly concerning waste management, air quality, and reducing green space in urban areas. One respondent working in environmental tourism remarked: *"Bandung cannot afford to sacrifice its ecological buffer zones in the name of urban expansion."* (E12)

Table 3 below summarizes the five themes and the number of informants explicitly mentioning them.

Table 3. Summary of Emergent Themes from Expert Narratives

Theme	Key Insights	Mentioned by (N)
Heritage as identity core	Bandung's cultural and historical legacy is its most distinctive tourism asset	12
Accessibility and mobility limitations	Congestion and inadequate transport reduce tourism quality and efficiency	10
Community engagement is underdeveloped	Tourism planning lacks early-stage, meaningful citizen involvement	8
Digital Infrastructure as an enabler	Smart tools enhance service delivery, flow management, and brand visibility	6
Environmental sustainability as a concern	Waste, pollution, and green space loss threaten long-term viability	5

Source: Research data, 2025

These thematic insights support and explain the AHP ranking results presented in the next sections and reveal the deeper social, infrastructural, and cultural narratives shaping stakeholder perceptions. The emphasis on heritage, mobility, and community engagement reflects a growing awareness that urban tourism development in Bandung cannot rely solely on branding and infrastructure. Instead, it must be strategically inclusive, culturally grounded, and environmentally conscious if it is to be sustainable in the long term.

Consistency Validation of AHP Matrices

The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) assumes that human judgment—although subjective—can be logically consistent when structured properly. To ensure the reliability of expert inputs, it is essential to assess the consistency of each respondent's pairwise comparison matrix. This step helps verify that the relative preferences expressed by each informant conform to the transitive property (e.g., if A > B and B > C, then A should be > C), which underpins the AHP logic (Saaty, 1980). In this study, each expert completed a pairwise comparison matrix for the five main criteria: Accessibility, Infrastructure, Tourist Attractions, Community Engagement, and Environmental Sustainability. The consistency of each matrix was evaluated by calculating the Consistency Ratio (CR) using the following steps:

Compute the principal eigenvalue λmax;

Use it to calculate the Consistency Index (CI):

$$CI = \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1}$$

Divide CI by the Random Index (RI) based on matrix size (in this case, n = 5), where the RI for five elements is 1.12:

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$$

According to Saaty's guideline, a CR value ⩽ 0.1 indicates acceptable consistency. Responses with a CR higher than this threshold are considered inconsistent and are typically excluded or revised. After analyzing the CR values from the 15 matrices, 13 were considered valid because their CR was 0.1 or less; the other 2 matrices exceeded the acceptable level (CR = 0.14 and 0.18) and were not included in the final analysis. For transparency, follow-up clarification was sought from the two informants, but no substantial revision in judgment structure could be obtained, reaffirming the decision to exclude those inputs. The following Table 4 summarizes the consistency results of all expert matrices:

Table 4. Consistency Ratio (CR) Summary for Expert Matrices

Informant ID	CR Value	Consistency Status
E1	0.06	Accepted
E2	0.03	Accepted
E3	0.08	Accepted
E4	0.07	Accepted
E5	0.05	Accepted
E6	0.09	Accepted
E7	0.04	Accepted
E8	0.12	**Rejected**
E9	0.06	Accepted
E10	0.02	Accepted
E11	0.03	Accepted
E12	0.11	**Rejected**
E13	0.09	Accepted
E14	0.07	Accepted
E15	0.05	Accepted

Source: Research data, 2025

With the final 13 consistent matrices, the next step was to perform aggregation using the geometric mean method to produce a consolidated priority vector for each criterion. This ensures that the final priority weights reflect a balanced expert consensus while upholding the mathematical rigor of AHP. The consistency validation thus serves as a critical quality control mechanism, enhancing the credibility and interpretability of the AHP-derived strategic recommendations presented in subsequent sections.

Criteria Priority Weights

Following the consistency validation process described, the remaining 13 valid AHP matrices were aggregated using the geometric mean method to obtain a consolidated set of priority weights for the five decision criteria. These criteria—Accessibility, Infrastructure, Tourist Attractions, Community Engagement, and Environmental Sustainability—had been previously defined through literature synthesis and contextual refinement with experts. The results revealed clear patterns in the perceived relative importance of each criterion in supporting sustainable urban tourism development in Greater Bandung. The criterion "Tourist Attractions" received the highest weight (0.312), indicating that experts agree that Bandung's competitiveness as a tourism destination depends on its cultural and historical attractions' quality, uniqueness, and appeal. This aligns with the thematic findings, where many informants emphasized that heritage assets are Bandung's primary differentiator in a crowded urban tourism market. The second most important criterion was "Accessibility," with a weight of 0.254. This reflects widespread concern over urban mobility issues such as traffic congestion, public transport fragmentation, and limited pedestrian connectivity—which, according to informants, significantly diminish visitor satisfaction and hinder sustainable tourism expansion. As tourism density increases in Bandung's core areas, the ability to move efficiently between sites becomes a make-or-break factor for urban tourism success.

Infrastructure followed in third place, with a weight of 0.192. Roads, appropriate signs, visitor centers, and digital services like Wi-Fi and smart service platforms are all part of this set of requirements. Its noticeable weight points out that infrastructure is considered part of the scenery, just as it connects and facilitates attractions and helps accessibility rather than a main area of attention. The fourth-ranked criterion, Community Engagement, weighted 0.146, indicating that while stakeholder inclusion is considered valuable, it may still be underprioritized in current institutional practices. This agrees with the narrative that people from the community are mainly involved during the early consideration stage but do not usually help shape

the initiatives. Lastly, Environmental Sustainability received the lowest priority weight (0.096) despite being identified by some informants as a foundational long-term concern. This result suggests that while ecological issues are acknowledged, they may be overshadowed by more immediate economic and infrastructural priorities—revealing a temporal disconnect between short-term development pressures and long-term resilience goals. The priority weights are summarized in the table below:

Table 5. Final Priority Weights of Criteria (n = 13)

Criterion	Priority Weight	Ranking
Tourist Attractions	0.312	1
Accessibility	0.254	2
Infrastructure	0.192	3
Community Engagement	0.146	4
Environmental Sustainability	0.096	5

Source: Research data, 2025

A visualization of the priority weights is presented below to illustrate the comparative salience of each criterion in a more intuitive format.

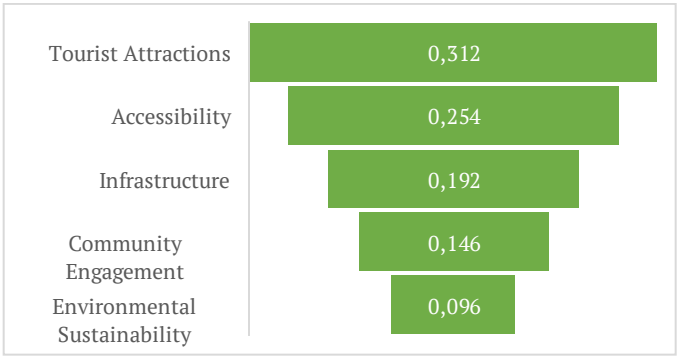

Figure 1. Criteria Priority Weights

Source: Research data, 2025

These results suggest that experts prioritize attraction-based differentiation and accessibility improvement as the core pillars of urban tourism strategy in Greater Bandung. Meanwhile, although acknowledged, softer dimensions such as community involvement and ecological integrity are not yet embedded as central planning imperatives. These weightings will be the foundation for evaluating and ranking alternative tourism strategies in the next section using AHP's multi-criteria synthesis.

Local Priority Scores of Strategies by Criterion

Having established the relative importance of each criterion in the previous section, the next stage of the AHP analysis involved evaluating the performance of each strategy within each criterion, resulting in what is known as local priority scores. These scores, derived from the pairwise comparisons made by the experts, reflect how well each of the five proposed strategies contributes to a specific criterion of sustainable urban tourism. Each set of scores within a criterion is normalized to a sum of 1.0, and they are crucial in constructing the final global ranking. Under the criterion of Tourist Attractions, the highest local priority was assigned to Heritage Revitalization, with a score of 0.412. This finding confirms expert consensus that Bandung's competitive edge in urban tourism is rooted in its rich colonial architecture, historical sites, and cultural districts. Digital Tourism Platforms followed with a score of 0.236, indicating their perceived role in enhancing the visibility and interpretability of heritage through digital storytelling and online engagement. Meanwhile, strategies such as Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and Smart Mobility Systems were perceived as less directly influential under this criterion.

Table 6. Local Priority Scores under Tourist Attractions

Strategy	Score
Heritage Revitalization	0.412
Digital Tourism Platforms	0.236
Community-Based Tourism	0.172
Smart Mobility Systems	0.108
Green Urban Infrastructure	0.072

Source: Research data, 2025

In contrast, when focusing on the Accessibility criterion, the top-ranked strategy shifted significantly. Here, Smart Mobility Systems received the highest local score (0.389), reflecting strong concern among experts about traffic congestion, inadequate public transport, and limited pedestrian access to tourist zones. Green Urban Infrastructure ranked second (0.272), primarily due to its potential to support walkable environments and reduce vehicular dependency. Heritage-focused initiatives and community tourism scored lower under this criterion, as they were seen to rely heavily on broader accessibility improvements rather than contributing directly to them.

Table 7. Local Priority Scores under Accessibility

Strategy	Score
Smart Mobility Systems	0.389
Green Urban Infrastructure	0.272
Digital Tourism Platforms	0.168
Heritage Revitalization	0.102
Community-Based Tourism	0.069

Source: Research data, 2025

A similar pattern was observed under the Infrastructure criterion. Green Urban Infrastructure again led with a score of 0.346, reinforcing that environmentally conscious urban planning (e.g., green corridors, energy-efficient buildings, and sustainable public facilities) plays a foundational role in tourism infrastructure. Smart Mobility Systems came second (0.298), given their reliance on urban infrastructure investment. Meanwhile, heritage and CBT ranked lower, reflecting their more programmatic than structural nature.

Table 8. Local Priority Scores Under Infrastructure

Strategy	Score
Green Urban Infrastructure	0.346
Smart Mobility Systems	0.298
Digital Tourism Platforms	0.174
Heritage Revitalization	0.106
Community-Based Tourism	0.076

Source: Research data, 2025

The results shifted once again under the criterion of Community Engagement. Community-based tourism achieved the highest local priority score at 0.432, which is unsurprising given that the strategy directly emphasizes empowering local actors, fostering inclusive participation, and distributing tourism benefits more equitably. Heritage Revitalization followed, particularly in cases where local communities are actively involved in heritage conservation. Digital and mobility solutions were rated lower here, reflecting their more technical and managerial focus rather than participatory.

Table 9. Local Priority Scores Under Community Engagement

Strategy	Score
Community-Based Tourism	0.432
Heritage Revitalization	0.214
Green Urban Infrastructure	0.176
Digital Tourism Platforms	0.108
Smart Mobility Systems	0.070

Source: Research data, 2025

Finally, under Environmental Sustainability, Green Urban Infrastructure emerged as the top-rated strategy (0.401), affirming expert consensus on incorporating ecological design, green spaces, and low-impact infrastructure in tourism development. Community-based tourism came second (0.224), with informants noting that local initiatives often foster environmental stewardship at the grassroots level. In contrast, Digital Tourism Platforms and Smart Mobility Systems were viewed as having more indirect or conditional benefits to the urban environment.

Table 10. Local Priority Scores Under Environmental Sustainability

Strategy	Score
Green Urban Infrastructure	0.401
Community-Based Tourism	0.224
Heritage Revitalization	0.162
Smart Mobility Systems	0.124
Digital Tourism Platforms	0.089

Source: Research data, 2025

The local priority scores demonstrate that no single strategy dominates across all criteria, reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable urban tourism. Each strategy has strengths in specific areas—Heritage Revitalization in cultural appeal, Smart Mobility in accessibility, Green Infrastructure in environmental and infrastructural resilience, and CBT in social inclusiveness. These findings underscore the importance of balancing strategic initiatives to address the full spectrum of urban tourism challenges in Greater Bandung.

Global Priority Scores and Final Strategy Ranking

In the last stage, the AHP was used to combine the priority ratings for each strategy with the global weights of the criteria to produce the global priority scores. Each strategy's result for a given criterion was found by multiplying its local score and the global weight of that criterion, and all these results were then added together. The assessment brings together many components to provide a single understanding of how each strategy functions in supporting sustainable tourism development in Greater Bandung. Heritage Revitalization was chosen first, as it has a global priority score of 0.281. This strategy performed exceptionally well under the Tourist Attractions criterion, which also held the highest global weight (0.312), amplifying its overall influence. The strong alignment between the city's cultural identity and expert judgment on strategic priorities underscores the central role of heritage-based tourism as Bandung's core tourism narrative.

In second place is Smart Mobility Systems, with a score of 0.224. While it did not perform strongly under the "Tourist Attractions" criterion, it was rated highest for accessibility, which had the second-highest global weight (0.254), and performed moderately in "Infrastructure" as well. Its ranking reflects expert consensus on the urgent need to resolve urban mobility challenges that undermine the tourism experience. The third-ranked strategy, Digital Tourism Platforms, scored 0.198. Although it did not dominate any single criterion, it maintained moderate and consistent scores across several categories, especially "Tourist Attractions," "Accessibility," and "Infrastructure." Experts viewed this strategy as a technological enabler that can enhance interpretation, visibility, and management, but one that depends on stronger physical and institutional foundations.

Community-based tourism (CBT) ranked fourth with a global score of 0.168, driven primarily by its strong performance in the "Community Engagement" criterion (0.432 local score), though that criterion had a lower global weight (0.146). Despite strong support from civil society and academic informants, its moderate scores in other dimensions limited its overall impact. In fifth place was Green Urban Infrastructure, with a global score of 0.129. Interestingly, this strategy performed best under the "Environmental Sustainability" and "Infrastructure" criteria, but the relatively low global weights of these criteria (0.096 and 0.192, respectively) diminished its final score. This outcome suggests a gap between long-term ecological priorities and short-term strategic focus, a pattern often observed in urban tourism development contexts.

Table 11. Global Priority Scores and Final Strategy Ranking

Strategy	Global Score	Rank
Heritage Revitalization	0.281	1
Smart Mobility Systems	0.224	2
Digital Tourism Platforms	0.198	3
Community-Based Tourism (CBT)	0.168	4
Green Urban Infrastructure	0.129	5

Source: Research data, 2025

To better visualize the performance of each strategy across all criteria, a bar chart can be constructed showing the global scores in descending order.

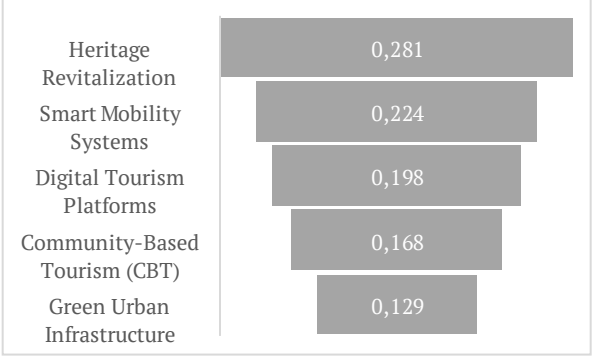

Figure 2. Global Scores

Source: Research data, 2025

These results provide a clear framework for policy prioritization and resource allocation. While all five strategies offer value within specific dimensions, the AHP model reveals that heritage revitalization and smart mobility are the most impactful when assessed against the full sustainability criteria. This insight is especially relevant for urban policymakers, tourism agencies, and community stakeholders seeking to develop a cohesive, culturally resonant, and operationally efficient tourism ecosystem. Also, these findings point out that environmental and community issues should hold greater importance in planning for the future. Green Infrastructure and CBT were acknowledged for their benefits to humans and nature, but they have little influence on the overall ranking, which could mean misalignment with what experts see as important for the future. Learning from experts, policy should be formed in a way that serves the current needs and the needs of future generations.

Figure 3. Comparative Performance of Strategies Across AHP Criteria
Source: Research data, 2025

Discussion

Interpreting Strategic Priorities in Urban Tourism

AHP-based prioritization shows how experts differ in preferring various aspects of sustainable urban tourism in Greater Bandung. This is in line with what informants and scholars say about the importance of retaining cultural legacy for tourism to remain competitive, as mentioned by Ashworth and Page (2011) and Zhao et al. (2024) (Section 4.2). The unique architecture, historic areas, and creative identity are what Bandung is most famous for in tourism. So, by revitalizing heritage zones, cities are not only saving their past but also adding to their attraction and encouraging visitors to return (Y. Gao & Liao, 2023; Resmi et al., 2023).

The high evaluation for Smart Mobility Systems is largely because people now realize that how a city moves affects the travel experience for tourists. The inefficiency and discomfort of moving around in the city during tourism result from crowded areas, a lack of public transport, and unconnected last-mile networks. This is in line with what (Satrya et al. 2024; N. Wang, 2024) have argued about the need for combining mobility strategies for tourism cities in the Global South, as their urban population often increases faster than their infrastructure can keep up. They confirm that the new policies in Bandung, which focus on smart cities and digital transport systems, are well suited to the city.

Even though digital tourism platforms are ranked in the middle for every criterion, their position shows they are used across many areas. Experts say that it could improve visitor story sharing, bookings, and navigation when linked with heritage and transport strategies. Another study by (Phuangpornpitak et al., 2024) demonstrates that digital platforms help destinations become more competitive by paying attention to individual travelers and using data effectively.

Underrepresentation of Community and Environmental Dimensions

Although Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and Green Urban Infrastructure were discussed widely by scholars and planners, they were placed lower on the list of priorities. This stands in contrast with how much the focus on equity and nature's strength is growing in sustainable tourism research (Mitra et al., 2023; Santiesteban et al., 2023). Although CBT did well in the "Community Engagement" criterion, its impact was reduced by the fact that the criterion was given less global weight. This finding means that even though

community inclusion matters a lot to the institutions, it is sometimes given less real value in their actions and systems.

Just like before, under environmental sustainability, Green Infrastructure performed well yet had a small impact on the entire ranking. Therefore, because mobility and the appeal of tourist destinations are major concerns, environmental issues are sometimes considered less important or urgent for EIB funding. Many writings over the years have cautioned people about these difficulties. For instance, (Zaghmout, 2024; Zhang & Li, 2024) explain that when city planners do not include ecological considerations in tourism development, the resulting system may damage the long-term stability of local areas.

Implications for Policy and Practice

These findings carry several practical implications. First, there is strong justification for prioritizing investments in heritage conservation and urban mobility as mutually reinforcing pillars of Bandung's tourism strategy. Policymakers should focus on integrated interventions—such as revitalizing heritage zones alongside pedestrian and transit upgrades—that deliver synergistic value across multiple criteria. Second, while digital tourism platforms are gaining traction, their impact depends on being embedded in broader planning ecosystems. Bandung's recent initiatives in digital branding and smart tourism can be strengthened by ensuring alignment with physical infrastructure and local cultural narratives.

Third, the relatively lower prioritization of CBT and green infrastructure indicates the need to rebalance tourism governance frameworks better to reflect sustainability goals. This includes elevating the institutional weight of community voices and ecological criteria in decision-making processes rather than relegating them to supporting roles. Finally, the AHP model used in this study can serve as a decision-support tool for city governments, tourism boards, and multi-stakeholder coalitions. Its ability to incorporate diverse inputs, rank competing alternatives, and surface trade-offs makes it highly suitable for urban contexts where tourism intersects with complex spatial and governance dynamics.

Theoretical Contributions and Alignment with Existing Research

From a theoretical standpoint, this study reinforces the value of multi-criteria decision-making frameworks in tourism planning, particularly in urban settings characterized by layered challenges and plural stakeholder interests. Like previous research (Kosova et al., 2022; Štofková et al., 2022) applying AHP, the conclusions are consistent and add fresh information from the fast-growing city of Ho Chi Minh. In addition, this study helps shape discussions about the structure of sustainable tourism goals: which ones are considered basic, which are vital for success, and which are considered goals for a more environmentally friendly tourism industry. Evidence shows that even though sustainability terms are widely used in tourism planning around Greater Bandung, heritage and mobility are the guiding activities for organizing the region. This trend is visible in many Global South cities that are dealing with high development pressure.

CONCLUSION

In the study, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used to outline the main goals for sustainable urban tourism development in Greater Bandung. Matching expert feedback with the main themes of a narrative supports a combined, based-on-evidence way to pick strategies and set policy priorities. It was found that heritage revitalization is the strongest priority, expressing how Bandung is both a historical and creative city. This is then complemented by Smart Mobility Systems, which focuses on solving access issues within cities. Under most main criteria, DTPs did not excel, which shows that they contribute steadily across different areas. In another way, although Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and Green Urban Infrastructure were given high ratings by experts, they ranked lower globally because community and environmental concerns were not given as much importance in the overall ratings. From this study, we learn that infrastructure actions and attraction strategies should get priority in operations, even as sustainability continues to be recognized. The AHP model used here is able to make trade-offs clearer, show stakeholder opinions, and change heavy qualitative ratings into recommended courses of action.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, urban planners, and tourism stakeholders:

1. Center Heritage in Urban Tourism Strategy: Bandung should continue to invest in heritage conservation, not only through physical restoration but also through community-based storytelling, cultural programming, and urban design integration. These efforts must balance preservation with visitor accessibility and experiential value.

2. Advance Smart and Inclusive Mobility Solutions: To enhance accessibility, the city must integrate smart transport systems, improve walkability, and create dedicated mobility corridors that connect key tourism zones. As a result, the roads should be less crowded, safety should increase, and multiple transportation systems can be more easily connected.
3. Adopt Digital Platforms to Enhance, Not Take Over Existing Planning Processes. More than just promoting, their role should also include watching visitor patterns, analyzing collected user data, and helping create sensible policy decisions.
4. Lift the role of Community-Based Tourism by introducing collaborative actions from the start of planning and engaging local people. Financial incentives, capacity development, and benefit sharing play important roles.
5. Global peers ranked Green Infrastructure last in priority, yet its key role in strengthening cities in the future cannot be denied. It is necessary to address the environment in every tourism decision, such as the siting of attractions, waste handling, and plans to lower carbon emissions.
6. Finally, AHP and other Multi-Criteria Decision Tools should be formally adopted by tourism authorities to oversee improved and joint decision-making. With their help, policy-makers can make sure interests do not conflict, and policies are consistent.

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