

Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Tourism Travel Decision Making of Indonesians during The New-Normal Era

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a decline in income for several economic sectors, one of which is the tourism sector. In June 2020, the government announced that Indonesia would enter a new normal era as an effort to recover the national economy. In this new normal era, business activities are starting to recover. Tourist attractions have also begun to reopen to the public by implementing health protocols. This study aims to analyze the socio-economic conditions during the new normal era and their impact on decision making for Indonesian people to travel. The data was collected using an online questionnaire survey in March - April 2022. The research was conducted by identifying data on personal attributes, socio-economic factors and organizational-related factors for 367 respondents in Indonesia. The results show that people want to travel during the new normal era. Indonesian tourism has the opportunity to bounce back with high public interest in returning to travel. Most people want to travel with their family. The decision-making to travel is influenced by the destination location, price, and security. Types of tourist attractions that are in great demand and have the potential to be developed are beaches, mountains, and villages

Keywords : tourism; travel; new normal era; decision making; tourist attraction

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that has occurred since the end of 2019 has not ended until the beginning of 2022, according to the statement of the president of the Republic of Indonesia in Presidential Decree No. 24 of 2021, which was signed on December 31, 2021, stipulates that the COVID-19 pandemic in fact is still happening in Indonesia and has not ended [7]. Since June 2020, Indonesia has entered a new normal era where in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been allowed to carry out activities outside their homes. This new-normal era was enacted as an effort to restore the national economy.

In 2021, the Indonesian economy managed to recover and grow 3.69% in the midst of the second wave due to the Delta variant. The acceleration of economic recovery in 2022 was mainly driven by a more controlled pandemic and a much higher vaccination coverage, thus boosting public confidence and the re-recovery of economic activity [4]. The government continues to encourage the recovery of various business sectors while prioritizing the balance between health and the economy. This policy provides business opportunities in various sectors to bounce back. One of them is in the tourism sector which has a very real social and economic impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic [5].

The tourism industry and creative economy in Indonesia felt a significant impact during the pandemic. Throughout 2020, the number of foreign tourists decreased drastically, which was 4.052 million people or 25% compared to 2019. This also had an impact on state revenues from the tourism sector. Another impact also occurs in occupancy in the hotel industry. In January-February, occupancy was still at 49.17% and 49.22%. However, in March it became 32.24%, and worsened

when entering the month of April, which was 12.67%. Another impact was felt in the reduction of labor hours. Around 12.91 million people in the tourism sector experienced a reduction in working hours, and 939 thousand people in the tourism sector were temporarily out of work. According to BPS 2020 data, around 409 thousand workers in the tourism sector have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic [3].

In this new normal era, various efforts to maintain the tourism industry have been made to bring about changes in tourism trends in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. People's behavior began to change and was accompanied by a shifting tourism trend. These changes are influenced by various factors, both social and economic factors in making the decision to travel. This study aims to analyze the socio-economic factors that influence the decision making of Indonesians travel in the new normal era.

Travel decision making is influenced by various factors. Attubel [1] mention the factors that influence decision making in travel are promotion, positioning, the physical form of the tourist attractions visited and public relations. The community before making a decision in traveling will generally be influenced by several factors in the tourism marketing process, namely promotion, products/services, market segmentation, limited time and funds, destinations visited, and the rational behavior of tourists towards the places visited [6].

The decision-making process of a tourist will go through several important phases, namely (1) the need or desire to travel; (2) information search and assessment; (3) the decision to travel; and (4) travel preparation and tourist experience [6]. In this stage of the process, the initial phase is the need or desire of tourists to travel. In this phase, a tourist will consider a tourist destination according to his needs or desires. For example, for the purpose of relieving stress, filling time off, or just wanting to please yourself. After that, tourists will look for information about tourist destinations through various promotional media that are commonly used and then tourists can set travel destinations as they expect.

In the new normal era, there is a shift in tourist destinations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many tourist attractions were affected or some were even forced to close, therefore tourism business actors used technology as an innovation in offering a choice of safe tourist destinations, one of which was virtual tourism or online tourism [3]. Tourists want a vacation that doesn't have much contact with other people to stay safe. The safety factor is one of the most important things when tourist attractions are reopened to the public.

Other factors that influence a person in making tourism decisions are sufficient information availability, travel behavior, overall travel safety, and other factors [8]. Other findings about the factors that influence the decision-making to travel are summarized in the following table:

Factor	Details
Information/ promotion	Travel motivators
	Decision-making
	Travel motivation
Travel behavior	Transportation
	Destination selection
	Risk
Safety and security	Impact of COVID-19
	Safety measures
Cooperation strategies	Disaster mitigation
	Human Resources

Source: [8]

A tourist's decision making goes through a very complex process in both ordinary and difficult situations. The process includes considering where to go, why to go, how to go, with whom to go, or others [8]. In addition, tourists will also seek in-depth information related to tourist destinations, following the latest trends, ease of access to tourism, completeness of facilities to carry out individual or group activities, as well as the level of security they have.

Tourists in choosing tourist destination locations are also influenced by tour packages offered by travel agents or discounts given for certain tour packages. Visitors with different age range categories having different decision-making tendencies [2]. Visitors with an age range of 17 - 23 years tend to make travel decisions of their own accord and the most considered is the price factor when choosing a destination. Visitors with an age range of 24 - 40 years prefer to use the services of a travel agent when visiting a destination and consider the activity factors offered by the tourist attraction. Visitors with an age range of more than 40 years tend to choose tour packages outside the basic tour packages because they have visited before.

The choice of transportation used to go to tourist attractions has also changed. Tourists avoid public transportation because it is feared that there will be direct contact with other people. Tourists also prefer to use private vehicles with a limited number of people, for example with family or certain friends to travel. In some countries such as China, Germany, and Spain, tourists prefer to use motorbikes for safety reasons to go to tourist attractions. Small vehicles such as motorbikes are arguably important as an option for transportation that can be used during a pandemic [8].

Management to prevent the spread of the covid-19 virus provided by tourism sites is a serious consideration for tourists [10]. The government also supports to improve the quality of security, especially in tourist places that are visited by many people to suppress the spread of the Covid-19 virus. To return to driving tourism businesses in the current recovery phase, where tourist attractions are gradually opening, the government requires tourist attractions to implement the CHSE (Cleaning, Healthy, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) protocol

METHOD

People have started to return to their daily activities in this new normal era. The tourism business is increasingly showing its existence by increasing the number of visits to tourist attractions. The research method used is by conducting a direct survey of the Indonesian people through the distribution of online questionnaires. This research was conducted during March – April 2022. The questions asked were divided into several categories of questions, namely personal identification, socio-economic, and organizational factors. Some questions were measured using a five-point likert scale and some were measured using multiple choice.

Respondents were 367 Indonesians. Sampling of respondents using Snowball Sampling. This survey uses Google Forms which can be accessed by respondents using the internet. Respondents who answered questions incompletely were excluded from the analysis of this survey. Respondents who voluntarily and completely answered the questions asked will be analyzed further.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the characteristics of respondents in this study will be explained in table 2 below:

	Specification	Total (%)
Sex	Male	42,1%
	Female	57,9%
Age (years)	< 19 years old	2,6%
	20 – 29 years old	22,4%
	30 – 39 years old	39,5%
	40 – 49 years old	30,3%
	> 50 years old	5,3%
Education Level	High school	21,3%
	Diploma	9,3%
	Bachelor's	50,7%
	Master's	18,7%
Employment Status	Government Employees	2,8%
	Private Employees	11,1%
	Manual worker	1,4%
	Professional worker	48,9%
	Student	6,8%
	Business Owner	24,5%
	Unemployed	2,7%
	Others	2,8%
	Income of One Family Member	< Rp1.500.000
Rp1.500.000 – Rp3.000.000		38,9%
Rp3.000.000 – Rp6.000.000		27,8%
> Rp6.000.000		16,7%

Source: processed data

Figure 1 shows that during the new normal era, 42.1% of respondents answered that it was neither easy nor difficult to travel. Meanwhile, 28.9% of respondents answered difficult and 22.1% answered very difficult.

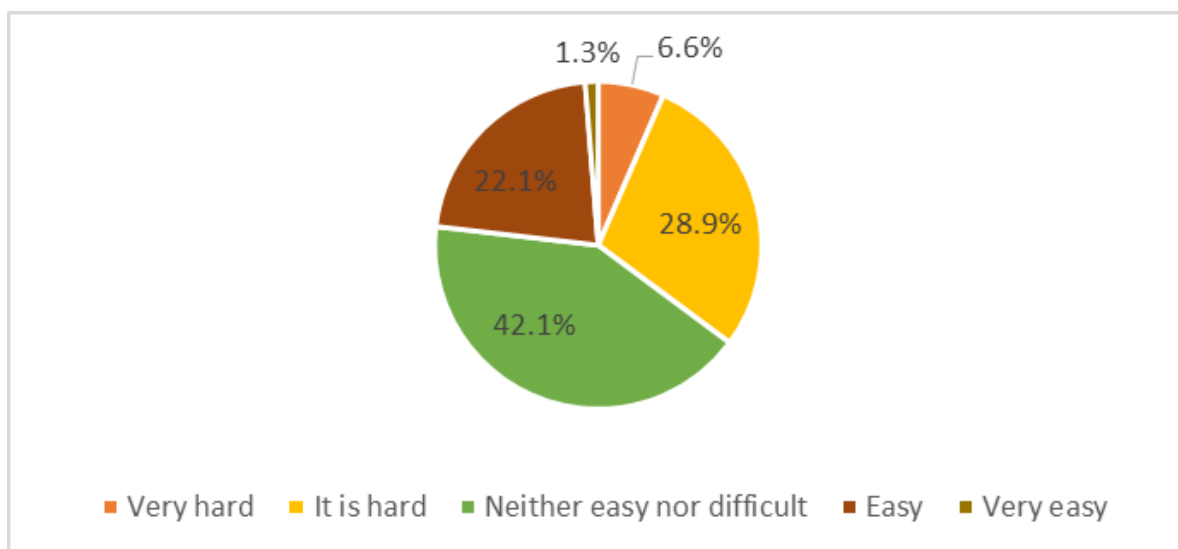


Figure 1. Respondents' opinion on travel during the new normal era.

The desire of respondents in planning a travel trip in the new normal era is shown in Figure 2. A total of 55.3% of respondents want to travel in the new normal era. Only 6.6% of respondents do not want to travel.

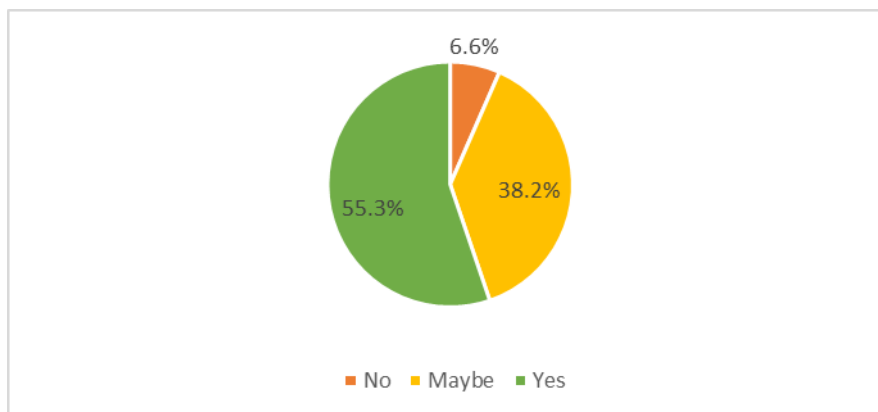


Figure 2. Respondents' wishes in planning travel in the new normal era

Figure 3 presents the reasons respondents are less interested in traveling in the new normal era. 39.7% of respondents thought that the limited budget caused by the covid-19 pandemic had affected their income. Some respondents do not travel because they have to work as indicated by the survey results of 30.1%. While 27.4% of respondents answered that they were worried about contracting the Covid-19 virus if they went on a tourist trip.

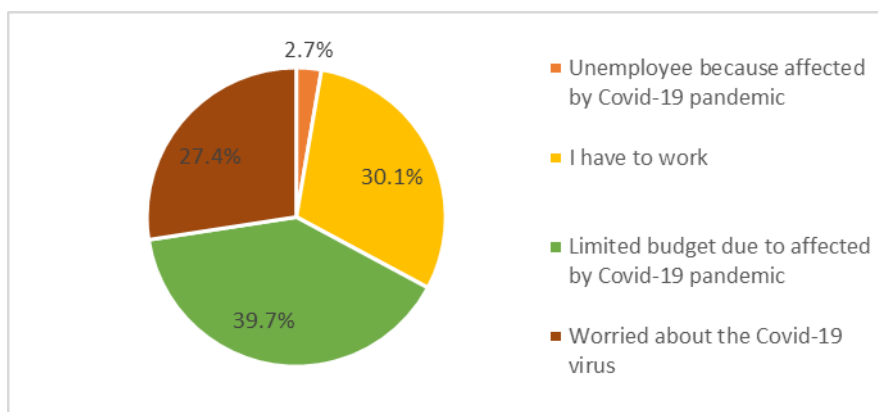


Figure 3. Reasons for respondents not to travel

Figure 4 shows the respondent's desire to travel domestically or abroad. Most respondents want to travel domestically as indicated by the survey results of 69.7%. This is also influenced by the flight restrictions that have been set in several countries to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

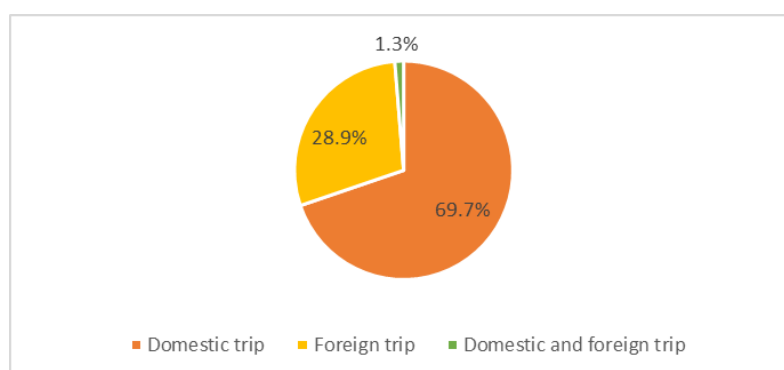


Figure 4. Respondents' choices regarding domestic and foreign trips in the new normal era

Figure 5 presents the use of travel agent services in traveling before the COVID-19 pandemic and during the new normal era. The use of travel agent services has decreased following the COVID-19 pandemic. This is indicated because respondents prefer to use private vehicles to avoid direct contact with other people.

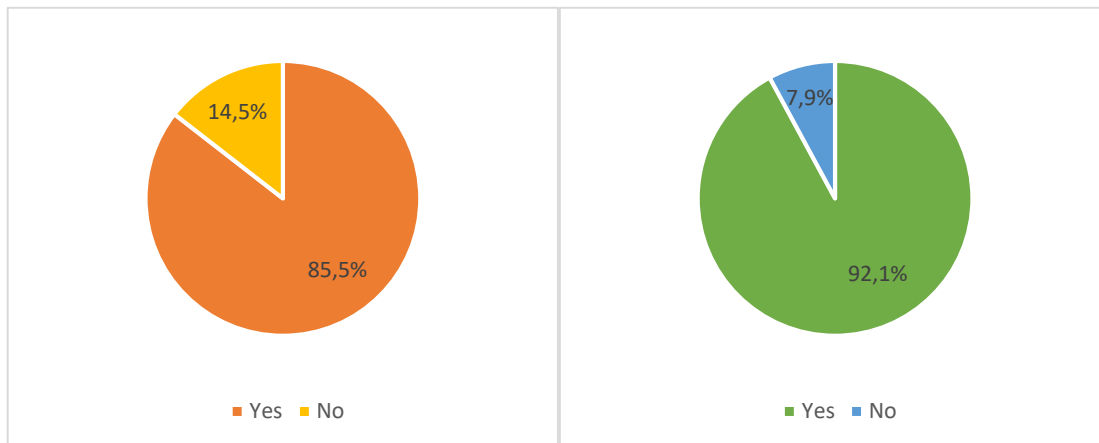


Figure 5. Use of travel agent services before the covid-19 pandemic and during the new normal era

Figure 6 shows the factors that influence respondents in making decisions to travel in the new normal era. The results showed that three main factors that influence decision making are location, price and security. The price factor is one of the main considerations because travel costs (vehicle costs, entrance tickets, etc.) increase during this new normal era, which is shown in Figure 7.

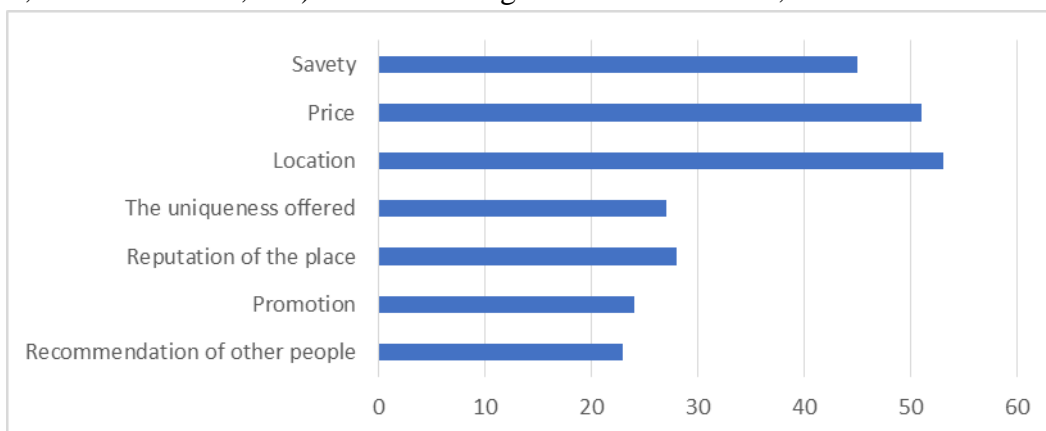


Figure 6. Factors influencing decision making in traveling in the new normal era.

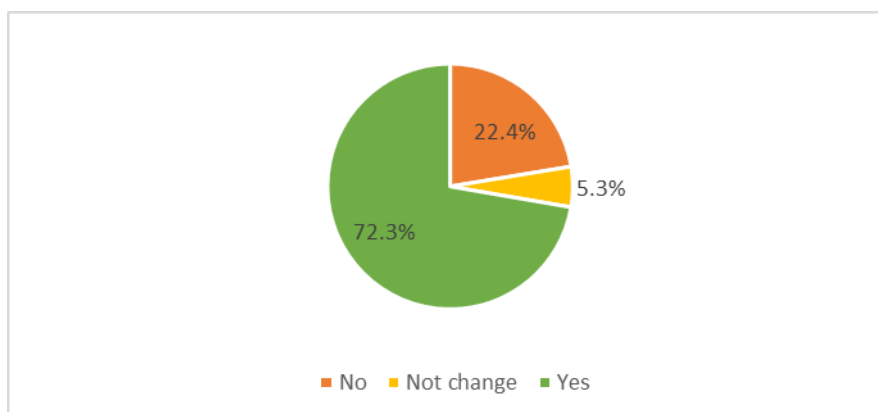


Figure 7. Respondents' opinions on the increase in travel costs during the new normal era

In this new normal era, most respondents choose to use private vehicles as a means of transportation to travel. The selected private vehicle is a car with a total of 48.7% of respondents.

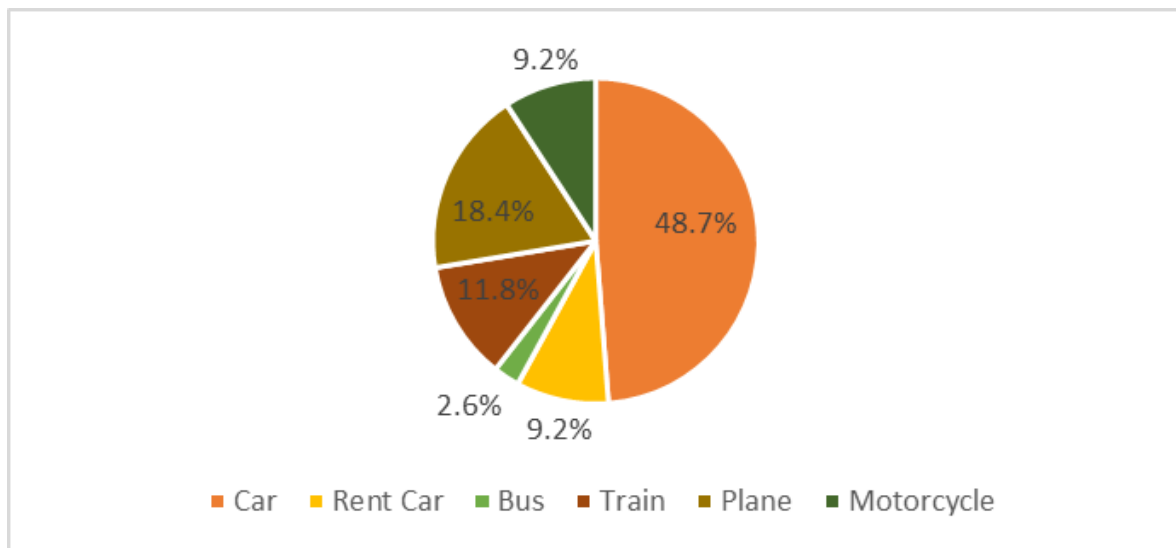


Figure 8. The mode of transportation chosen by the respondents.

Respondents' choices about who will accompany them to travel are shown in Figure 9. 85.3% of respondents chose to travel with their families in this new normal era.

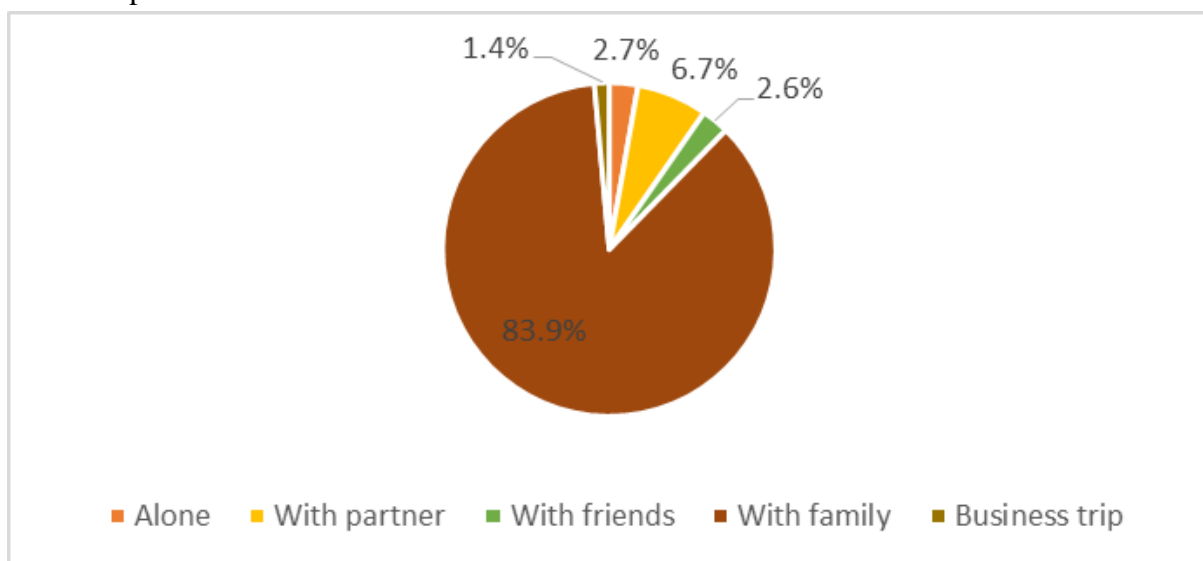


Figure 9. The choice of people who will accompany the respondents in traveling in the new normal era

In the previous question, many respondents chose to travel domestically. Most Indonesian people choose to enjoy the beach view with a response of 44.7%.

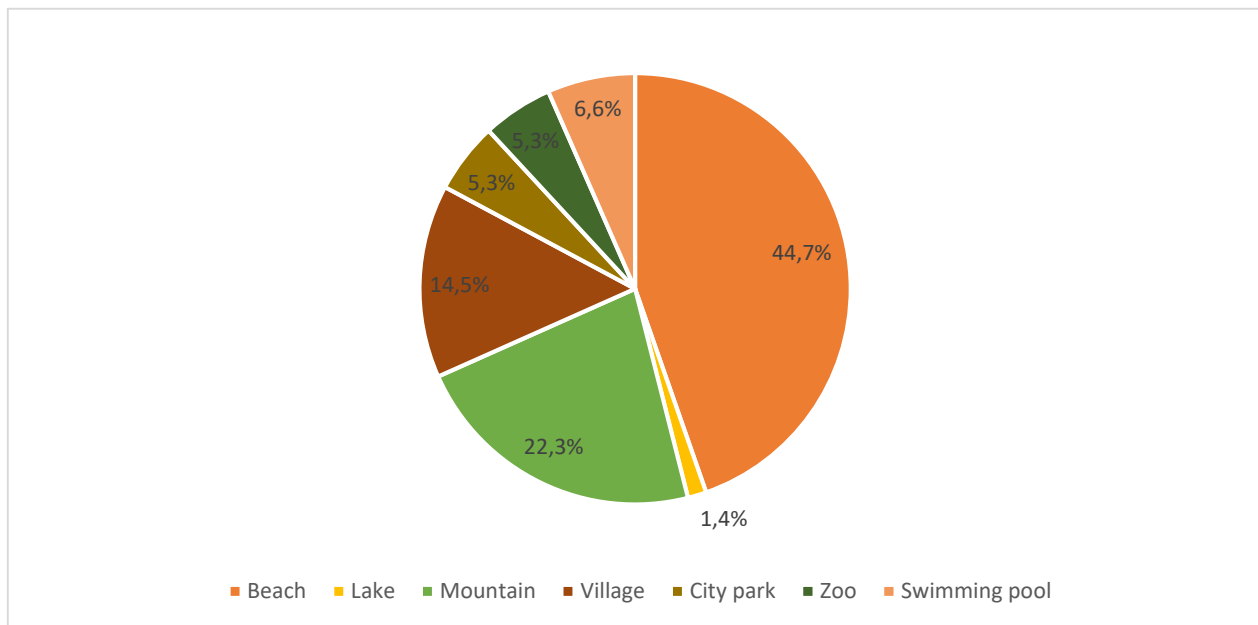


Figure 10. Respondent's choice of tourist destinations

Discussion

This study analyzes the factors that influence decision making in traveling Indonesian people in the new normal era in terms of several categories, namely personal identification, socio-economic condition, and organizational-related situation.

More than 50% of Indonesians want to travel even though in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still happening. In Indonesia, health and safety facilities to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus are currently quite easy to obtain so that people remain enthusiastic about traveling. However, on the other hand, most of the respondents expressed that traveling in the new normal era is still difficult to do. The main factor that is the reason for the lack of interest in traveling is due to a limited budget due to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic. This is also related to people's incomes which have decreased due to the pandemic. Decreased income, consumption patterns will also change, including reducing the budget for travel.

Currently the community's economy is slowly recovering, health facilities are also getting easier. Government support in providing health facilities such as hand washing stations, hand sanitizers, masks and other health facilities at tourist attractions will increase the interest of tourists to visit. Based on the findings of this study, it shows that the main factors that are considered in traveling in this new normal era are tourist destinations, ticket prices to enter the location, and safety factors. Based on the survey results, it is also known that the cost of travel, which consists of transportation costs, ticket prices for tourist destinations, etc., is increasing in this new normal era. Cooperation between the government and the management of tourist attractions can be increased as has been done by the Jember Regency Government during the Eid holiday in 2022 in collaboration with several tourist attractions managers in Jember such as Watu Ulo Beach tourism, Rembangan tourism, Patemon swimming pool and Papuma beach to free up fees entrance tickets to tourist sites for local people (Supriadi, 2022).

Most Indonesians are very concerned about safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, so when traveling, they prefer to use private vehicles such as cars compared to public transportation. To travel, they also prefer to do it with their family. During this new normal era, almost three quarters of respondents chose domestic travel with the most choice of tourist attractions, namely beaches. Indonesian people prefer natural attractions such as beaches, mountains and villages.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the interest of the Indonesian people to travel is still very high in the new normal era. This is an opportunity for the tourism business to recover, supported by the improvement of health facilities so that people feel safer and more comfortable when visiting tourist attractions. Improving the facilities and infrastructure of tourist sites to make them more attractive and provide affordable entrance ticket prices. The types of tourist attractions that are in great demand by the Indonesian people are natural attractions such as beaches and mountains and many people also choose to enjoy rural tourism with natural and cultural panoramas such as tourist villages which are currently being developed. Government support is very important to be able to expedite efforts to recover the economy, especially in the tourism business.

This study has a limitation, namely using GoogleForms, so only respondents who have internet can participate. The coverage area of the respondent is also less extensive, not yet representative in every province in Indonesia. For further research, research methods can be developed using quantitative data, for example to analyze the impact of increasing tourist visits during the new normal era on accelerating national economic recovery.

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