



Memorable tourist experience, service quality, and revisit intention: strategies for strengthening sustainable tourism at Kebumen Geopark

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism is a strategic issue that is not only oriented towards economic growth, but also environmental sustainability and cultural preservation. This study aims to analyze the influence of memorable tourist experience (MTE) and service quality on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. The method used is a mixed methods with a sequential explanatory design, combining quantitative analysis using SEM-PLS and a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews. The results show that MTE has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. Service quality is proven to have a significant effect on satisfaction, but not a significant effect on revisit intention. In addition, tourist satisfaction has a significant positive effect on revisit intention and acts as a mediating variable in both the relationship between MTE and service quality on revisit intention. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for destination managers in strengthening the strategy for managing the Kebumen Geopark sustainably.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector that makes a significant contribution to economic growth, job creation, cultural preservation, and regional development, especially in developing countries like Indonesia (Dwi Rahmawati & Intan Prastiwi, 2024). Data from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) shows that this sector will contribute approximately 5.2% of Indonesia's GDP by 2023 and become a significant source of regional revenue. However, the growth of the tourism industry must be aligned with sustainability principles to ensure that economic benefits do not harm the environment and local cultural values (Widiati & Permatasari, 2022).

The success of sustainable tourism is not determined solely by natural attractions, but also by the quality of memorable tourist experiences and the services provided to visitors. Pleasant, unique, and meaningful experiences can encourage tourists to return, while good service quality enhances their satisfaction and loyalty.

Conversely, less memorable experiences or suboptimal services can become obstacles to achieving sustainability goals. In this context, local communities play a crucial role as key actors in creating authentic tourist experiences while maintaining service quality, given their involvement in conservation, and the provision of tourism services based on local wisdom. Therefore, it is essential to examine how tourist experiences and service quality can support or hinder sustainable tourism in Geopark Kebumen, as well as how the role of local communities can strengthen these two aspects.

Sustainable tourism is an approach that considers both short-term and long-term economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts. In Ministerial Regulation No. 14 of 2016, sustainable tourism is defined as activities that meet the needs of visitors, industry, the environment, and local communities across all types of tourist destinations and activities (Satrio Wibowo & Arviana Belia, 2023).

One destination with the potential to be developed with a sustainable approach is the Kebumen Geopark, which encompasses more than 40 geological, cultural, and biological sites spread across 12 districts. This geopark has received a recommendation for approval as part of the UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) and will be discussed at the UNESCO Executive Board meeting in early 2025. The successful designation is not the end, but the beginning of a major responsibility: maintaining environmental sustainability, empowering local communities, and enhancing educational and experiential value for tourists.

The number of visitors from 2018 to 2024 shows significant fluctuations. In 2018, the number of visitors was recorded at 1,705,930 people, then increased in 2019 to 2,162,719 people. However, in 2020 there was a sharp decline to 709,290 people and continued to decrease in 2021, reaching the lowest point of 582,337 people, which was most likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. After that, the number of visitors began to rise again in 2022 to 1,623,865 people, continued to increase in 2023 to 2,151,109 people, and finally jumped significantly in 2024 to 2,983,422 people. Although data shows an increase in tourist numbers, this growth does not fully reflect the success in building tourist loyalty. This increase is largely driven by new tourist visits due to specific events such as long holidays or Eid al-Fitr.

In the context of sustainable tourism, repeat visits are a crucial element because they indicate visitor satisfaction, service quality, and perceived value of the experience. Revisit intention refers to the desire and intention to visit more frequently. Therefore, it is crucial for tourism managers to satisfy visitors and encourage them to return (Wantara & Irawati, 2021). Satisfaction can be achieved if the tourist destination is easily reached, enjoys the service, low costs, and receives a warm and friendly welcome from the tourist destination officers (Sugiana et al., 2024). Tourist satisfaction has the level of satisfaction expected from each tourist attraction for the post-visit experience (Nurfa et al., 2022). Satisfaction and intention to revisit are influenced by the level of experience felt by visitors (Sugiana et al., 2024).

There is a research gap from previous research that tourism experiences influence the intention to revisit (Dewi et al., 2024). Other research states that tourism experience does not influence the intention to revisit (Sitepu & Rismawati, 2021). Other research also states that service quality does not affect tourist satisfaction (Sitepu & Rismawati, 2021) different from (Wantara & Irawati, 2021) which states that service quality influences tourist satisfaction. A good tourist destination can provide a good experience and feeling for tourists (Violla Atmari & Wiratno Putri, 2021). Another gap research states that (Piramanayagam et al., 2020) tourism experience does not affect satisfaction, in contrast to (Nurfa et al., 2022), (Ismadi & Suwitho, 2023) dan (Pujiastuti, 2020) which states that tourism experience influences satisfaction.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. This approach was chosen to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the factors that drive repeat visits to Kebumen Geopark, in an effort to strengthen its status as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

The population in this study were tourists who had visited the Kebumen Geopark tourist destination. The sampling technique was purposive sampling with the following criteria: 1. Having visited one of the destinations in the Kebumen Geopark, at least once in the last 12 months. 2. Willing to fill out a questionnaire and/or participate in an interview. The quantitative sample size in this study was 100 respondents, referring to the minimum requirement in SEM-PLS analysis, which is 10 times the maximum number of arrows leading to a latent variable. Qualitative analysis through interviews can be used to deepen the understanding of quantitative findings from SEM-PLS by exploring the direct perspectives of tourists as well as destination managers. The selected informants consisted of five tourists, two tourism managers, and one representative from the Geopark Board. Interviews help explain factors that cannot be statistically measured, such as tourists' subjective experiences. Thus, the qualitative approach serves to complement the quantitative results, making the interpretation of the research more comprehensive and contextual.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SEM-PLS with SmartPLS software. The qualitative approach in this study was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore tourists' perceptions regarding service quality, experiences received, and factors that encourage or hinder satisfaction and intention to revisit Kebumen Geopark. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data in the Sequential Explanatory design, method triangulation was carried out by combining the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses in stages.

3.1. Outer Model Analysis

The outer model test is used to test data quality, which consists of validity tests and reliability tests.

Table 1. The performance of Outer Model Analysis

Variable	Indikator	Validity Test		Reliability Test	
		Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability
Memorable Tourist Experience			0,765	0,949	0,958
	MTE1	0,860			
	MTE2	0,877			
	MTE3	0,893			
	MTE4	0,861			
	MTE5	0,883			
	MTE6	0,875			
Service Quality	MTE7	0,874			
			0,825	0,947	0,947
	SQ1	0,914			
	SQ2	0,909			
	SQ3	0,900			
Tourist Satisfaction	SQ4	0,923			
	SQ5	0,895			
			0,788	0,865	0,918
	TS1	0,915			
	TS2	0,906			
	TS3	0,840			

Revisit Intention			0,821	0,891	0,891
	RI1	0,912			
	RI2	0,899			
	RI3	0,907			

Sumber: (data primer, 2025)

Based on Table 1, the loading factor and AVE values for all variables are greater than 0.5, indicating that all indicators are valid and convergent in forming their respective variables. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are greater than 0.6 for all variables. It can be concluded that all variables and items used in this study meet the validity and reliability requirements for variable measurement.

3.2. Inner Model Analysis

The inner model test is used to predict causality (cause-effect relationships) between latent variables. The inner model test consists of (1) R Square on endogenous constructs (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). (2) Estimate for Path Coefficients with the Bootstrapping procedure; (3) Effect Size (F Square). Conducted to determine the goodness of the model; (4) Prediction relevance (Q square).

Table 2. The performance of R square

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Revisit Intention	0,829	0,824
Tourist Satisfaction	0,726	0,720

Sumber: (data primer, 2025)

Table 2 shows that the R value of revisit intention is 0.824, meaning that Memorable Tourist Experience, Service Quality, and Tourist Satisfaction influence Revisit Intention by 82.4%, while the remaining 17.6% is influenced by other variables outside the model. The R value of Tourist Satisfaction of 0.720 means that Memorable Tourist Experience and Service Quality influence Tourist Satisfaction by 72%, the remaining 28% is influenced by other variables outside the model.

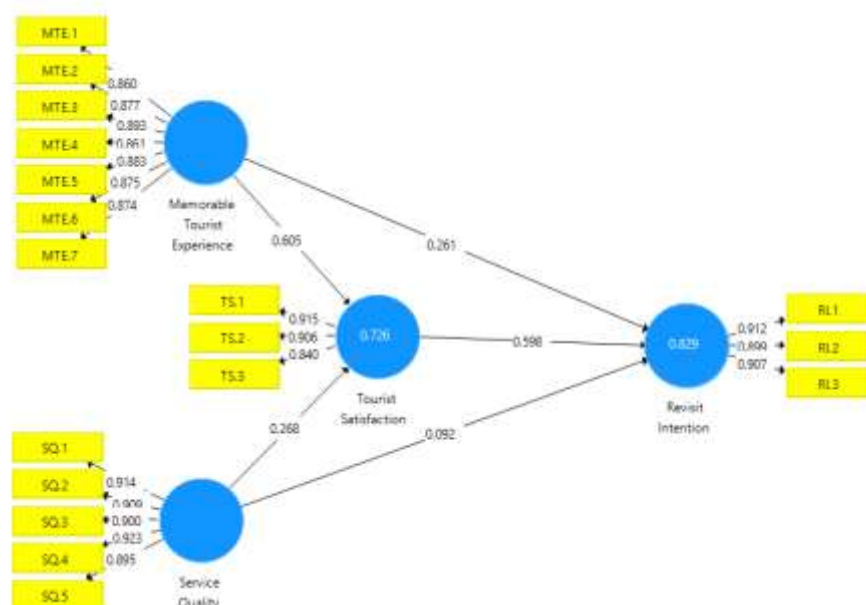


Figure 1. Coefficient Path Diagram

Table 3. The Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,039	0,039
d_ULS	0,258	0,258
d_G	0,378	0,378
Chi-Square	211,693	211,693
NFI	0,893	0,893

Overall from table 3, the model demonstrates a good fit based on the SRMR value (< 0.08), as well as the low d_ULS and d_G values. The NFI value, which is close to 0.90, also supports the model's adequacy, although it could still be improved. Therefore, the model is considered suitable for further analysis.

Step next is explain mark path coefficients based on mark T statistic and P value with use method bootstrapping criteria significance one-tailed . Then condition hypothesis can accepted is mark T statistics must is > 1.65 with level trust by 95% or mark P value < 0.05 (Hair et al, 2021).

Table 3. Path Coefficients and Specific Indirect Effects Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Interference
H1: Memorable Tourist Experience -> Revisit Intention	0,261	0,278	0,107	2,448	0,015	Supported
H2: Memorable Tourist Experience -> Tourist Satisfaction	0,605	0,610	0,121	5,015	0,000	Supported
H3: Service Quality -> Revisit Intention	0,092	0,088	0,089	1,035	0,301	Not Supported
H4: Service Quality -> Tourist Satisfaction	0,268	0,259	0,120	2,225	0,027	Supported
H5: Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0,598	0,584	0,110	5,458	0,000	Supported
H6: Memorable Tourist Experience -> Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0,362	0,354	0,092	3,922	0,000	Supported
H7: Service Quality -> Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0,160	0,152	0,080	1,999	0,046	Supported

Sumber: (data primer, 2025)

Table 3 shows the results of hypothesis testing, where H1 Memorable Tourist Experience has a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention with a T-Statistics value of $2.448 > 1.65$, P-Value $0.015 < 0.05$ and the original sample value of 0.261, so H1 is accepted. H2 testing with a T-Statistics value of $5.015 > 1.65$, P-Value $0.000 < 0.05$ and the original sample value of 0.605 means that Memorable Tourist Experience has a positive and significant effect on Tourist Satisfaction, so H2 is accepted. H3 testing with a T-Statistics value of $1.035 > 1.65$, P-Value $0.301 > 0.05$ and the original sample value of 0.092 means that Service Quality has a positive but not significant effect on Revisit Intention, so H3 is rejected. H4 testing with T-Statistics value $2.225 > 1.65$, P-Value $0.027 < 0.05$ and the original sample value 0.268 means that Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Tourist Satisfaction, so H4 is accepted. H5 testing with T-Statistics value $5.458 > 1.65$, P-Value $0.000 < 0.05$ and the original sample value 0.598 means that Tourist Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention, so H5 is accepted. H6 testing with T-Statistics value $3.922 > 1.65$, P-Value $0.000 < 0.05$ and the original sample value 0.362 means that Tourist Satisfaction mediates the effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention, so H6 is accepted. Testing H7, the T-Statistics value is $1.999 > 1.65$, P-Value is $0.046 < 0.05$ and the original sample value is

0.160, meaning that Tourist Satisfaction mediates the effect of Service Quality on Revisit Intention, so H7 is accepted.

3.3. Discussion

The first finding is that memorable tourist experiences have a positive and significant impact on revisit intention. Memorable experiences create positive memories that encourage tourists to return to a destination. Enjoyable and joyful experiences can increase tourists' desire to return. Unique and different experiences provide a unique appeal, thus encouraging tourists to revisit. Furthermore, experiences that provide a new atmosphere and refresh the mind contribute to revisit intention. Tourism in the Kebumen Geopark, provides a fun, unique experience and provides a new atmosphere for tourists. Visitors can witness how turtle and mangrove conservation are carried out, creating an engaging experience. Therefore, memorable tourist experiences play a significant role in tourists' revisit intention. This strengthens the research findings (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022) and (Xu et al., 2024a) who state memorable tourist experience has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

The second finding is that memorable tourist experiences have a positive and significant impact on tourist satisfaction. Memorable experiences not only increase satisfaction but also create loyalty to the destination. Interaction with local culture enhances satisfaction and provides a profound experience for tourists. Experiences that provide meaning and emotional value tend to increase tourist satisfaction. Tourist involvement in activities during the trip influences their satisfaction. Tourists at the Kebumen Geopark are invited to directly observe the turtle conservation process and conservation, thereby increasing tourist satisfaction. This memorable experience also plays a significant role in increasing tourist satisfaction. This reinforces the findings of research conducted by (Xu et al., 2024a) and (Z. R. Rahmawati et al., 2024).

The third finding is that service quality has a positive but insignificant effect on revisit intention. Service quality plays a significant role in tourists' decisions to revisit. However, in this study, service quality was not very significant on tourists' revisit intention. Based on qualitative interviews conducted with tourism managers, the quality of service provided to tourists was good and met established standards. However, other factors seemed to be insufficient to influence visitors' intention to return. Other factors, such as limited parking capacity, especially during long holidays, which requires tourists to walk long distances, create inconveniences that reduce visitors' desire to return. This finding supports research conducted by (Hafiva et al., 2024) but refutes research (Sumarni et al., 2024) which states that service quality influences revisit intention.

The fourth finding is that service quality has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction. This can be understood through various aspects of service perceived by tourists. Service quality, which encompasses elements such as reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness, plays a crucial role in shaping the tourist experience. When the service provided exceeds tourist expectations, this creates satisfaction and increases positive perceptions of the destination and the service provider. Tourist satisfaction is crucial because it can influence their future behavior, including the desire to revisit. This finding supports previous research showing that service quality has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction (Sumarni et al., 2024) and (Hafiva et al., 2024)

The fifth finding is that tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention. Tourist satisfaction impacts revisit intention, emphasizing the importance of satisfaction in motivating that intention. When tourists are satisfied with their experience at a destination, including the quality of service, facilities, and overall atmosphere, they are more likely to consider returning. This satisfaction creates a lasting positive impression and arouses tourists' desire to return for a similar experience in the

future. This finding supports previous research that stated tourist satisfaction influences revisit intention (Xu et al., 2024b) and (Z. R. Rahmawati et al., 2024).

The sixth finding is that memorable tourist experiences have a positive effect on revisit intention through tourist satisfaction. This hypothesis confirms that the quality of memorable experiences tourists experience is a crucial factor in determining their decision to revisit. Experiences encompassing aspects of hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaning, involvement, and knowledge can significantly increase tourist satisfaction. When tourists are satisfied with their experiences, it becomes a strong incentive for them to reconsider the same destination in the future. Thus, tourist satisfaction serves as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between memorable tourist experiences and revisit intention. This approach suggests that increasing the quality of memorable experiences not only increases satisfaction but also strengthens tourists' desire to repeat the experience. This finding aligns with previous research that suggests that memorable tourist experiences influence revisit intention through tourist satisfaction (Ismadi & Suwitho, 2023)

The seventh finding is that service quality has a positive effect on revisit intention through tourist satisfaction. Service quality has a positive impact on revisit intention, which is mediated by tourist satisfaction. The findings of this hypothesis indicate that high or low service quality in the tourism sector is crucial. Good service quality, which includes elements such as reliability, physical facilities, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness, can significantly increase tourist satisfaction. When tourists are satisfied with the service they receive, this experience becomes a driving force for them to consider revisiting. In this case, tourist satisfaction serves as a factor that strengthens the relationship between service quality and revisit intention. With this approach, improvements in service quality not only contribute to tourist satisfaction but also strengthen their desire to return to the same location in the future. This finding aligns with previous research showing that service quality influences revisit intention through tourist satisfaction (Sumarni et al., 2024).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted on the Kebumen Geopark tourism, it can be concluded that memorable tourist experience (MTE) has a positive and significant influence on revisit intention and tourist satisfaction. This shows that memorable experiences, whether in terms of novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaning, involvement, or knowledge, can create deep satisfaction and encourage tourists to revisit the destination. Tourists who have unique, enjoyable experiences that differ from their daily routines will tend to form positive memories that serve as a strong reason for repeat visits. Furthermore, this study found that service quality had a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction, but not on revisit intention. This finding suggests that while service quality remains a crucial factor in enhancing satisfaction, it is not always the primary driver of return. External factors such as limited facilities, particularly inadequate parking during the holiday season, contribute to reduced tourist comfort and ultimately reduced intention to revisit. Furthermore, the study also demonstrated that tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention. This underscores the importance of maintaining tourist satisfaction levels, as satisfaction plays a key role in fostering destination loyalty. Furthermore, the analysis results demonstrate that tourist satisfaction mediates the relationship between MTE and service quality with revisit intention. This means that memorable experiences and quality service will only optimally influence revisit intention if tourists are satisfied with their experience. Therefore, tourist satisfaction serves as a connecting factor that strengthens the relationship between the research variables, necessitating serious attention from destination managers. Limitations and Suggestions, However, this study has several limitations. First, the research object focused only on Kebumen Geopark tourism, so the

results cannot be generalized to other tourist destinations. Second, the research variables used were still limited to memorable tourist experience, service quality, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention, even though other factors such as destination image, perceived value, and environmental sustainability aspects also have the potential to influence tourist behavior. Third, this study was cross-sectional in nature, with data collected over a specific time period, so it cannot describe the dynamics of tourist behavior in the long term. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the study object to other tourist destinations, add more diverse variables, and use a longitudinal approach to achieve more comprehensive results. Implications Managerial, In terms of managerial implications, the results of this study provide valuable input for the management of the Kebumen Geopark. First, the memorable tourist experience needs to be strengthened by providing more interactive, educational, and conservation-based tourist attractions, such as involving tourists in turtle breeding activities and mangrove planting. Second, service quality continues to need to be improved, particularly in terms of guide friendliness, the availability of physical facilities, and responsiveness in addressing tourist needs. Issues related to limited facilities, such as parking areas, also need to be resolved immediately, for example by increasing capacity or providing supporting transportation. Third, management needs to prioritize tourist satisfaction, as it has proven to be key to fostering tourist loyalty.

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