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Memorable Tourist Experience and Tourist Satisfaction: Implications for Revisit Intention in Kota Lama Surabaya Heritage Tourism

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) on Revisit Intention with Tourist Satisfaction as a mediating variable in the heritage tourism destination of Kota Lama Surabaya. This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative causal research type. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed to tourists who had visited Kota Lama Surabaya. The sampling technique used non-probability sampling with the snowball sampling method, resulting in 200 respondents. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that Memorable Tourist Experience has a positive and significant effect on Tourist Satisfaction, Tourist Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention, and Memorable Tourist Experience has a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention through Tourist Satisfaction. These findings confirm that memorable tourist experiences can increase satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens tourist loyalty to making repeat visits. This study has implications for urban heritage destination development strategies, particularly in creating authentic and meaningful experiences for tourists to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of Kota Lama Surabaya.

Keywords: Memorable Tourist Experience; Tourist Satisfaction; Revisit Intention; Heritage Tourism.



Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries that considers tourism as a major economic sector. Many tourist destinations in Indonesia attract both local and foreign tourists, including religious, cultural, nature, and ecotourism. Tourism is an activity that involves travel for various purposes, ranging from recreation, knowledge seeking, to improving health and well-being. This definition of tourism includes short trips from one location to another with the aim of achieving balance in environmental, social, cultural, and scientific aspects (1).

Heritage tourism, according to the (2), is a branch of tourism that focuses on the exploration and appreciation of the cultural, historical, and environmental heritage of a region. This form of tourism includes tangible elements such as sites, monuments, and artifacts that have historical value, as well as intangible aspects such as traditions, customs, and practices. The specific subject of cultural heritage tourism emphasizes the human dimension of these sites, focusing on the traditions, practices, and values closely related to them.

Kota Lama Surabaya heritage tourism is one of the historical areas in Surabaya that is currently an attractive tourist spot with a colonial building concept. Kota Lama Surabaya is in the Rajawali Street area, Krembangan District, Surabaya. In addition to European-style buildings, tourists who visit can also tour Old Town. Heritage tourism in the Kota Lama area is divided into four zones, namely the European, Chinatown, Arab, and Malay zones, which were once the center of the economy. Many shops were established by ethnic Chinese along Jalan Kya-Kya Kembang Jepun, and there were also many merchants from Arabia and eastern countries who traded there (3).

One of the factors that can influence tourists' revisit intention to the Kota Lama of Surabaya is the presence of Instagrammable, unique, and aesthetic photo spots. In the digital era, tourist attractions with Instagrammable, unique, aesthetic, and photogenic spots are more popular with tourists, because most tourists choose to document photos with aesthetic backgrounds by taking photos or videos at these tourist destinations. In this context, the concept of Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) is important to study, as memorable tourist experiences are believed to influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intention.

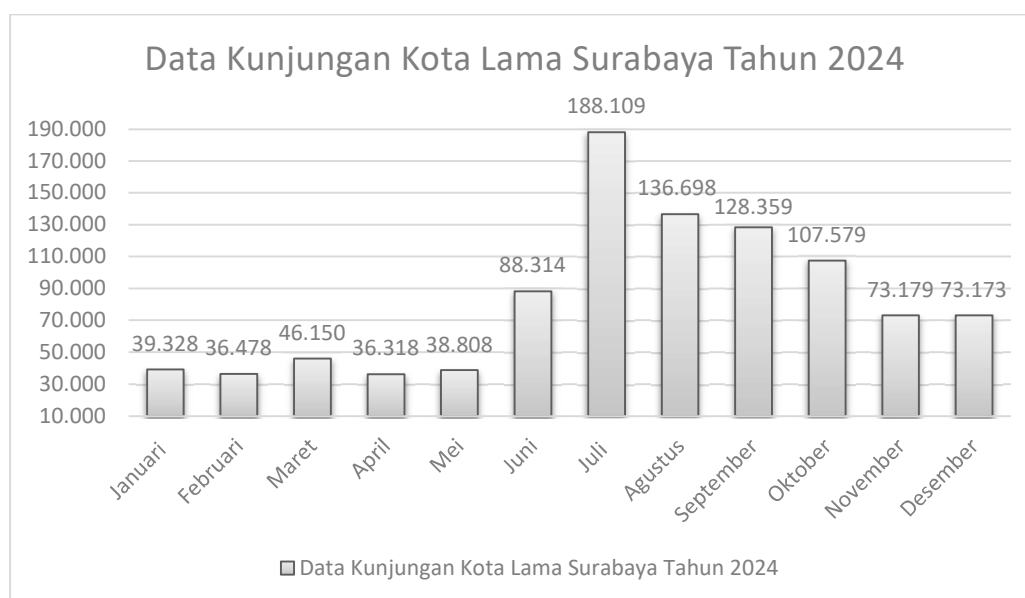


Figure 1 Visit Data for Kota Lama Surabaya
Source : Disbudporapar Surabaya (2024)

Based on Figure 1 above, which shows data from the Surabaya City Tourism and Culture Office, tourist visits to the Kota Lama of Surabaya increased after its launch in July to 188,109 tourists and decreased in December to 73,173 tourists in 2024. The cause of the decline in tourist

visits is unknown, but the Kota Lama of Surabaya has experienced a significant decrease in the number of tourist visits. This phenomenon is certainly worth further investigation.

Revisit intention is a form of behavioral intention, or the desire of consumers to return, stay longer than expected, shop more, and give positive reviews so that profits can be achieved due to the large number of consumers or tourists who come to buy products or services. One factor influencing revisit intention is a memorable tourist experience. Tourists will revisit a tourist attraction if their past experiences align with their expectations during their visit. According to (4), a memorable tourist experience is an experience that is well remembered and stored in the memory for a long time, such as a vacation to places that are interesting to revisit, for example, a vacation to heritage tourism sites in old cities, also known as memorable travel experiences. This is because tourism experiences usually occur within a certain period of time, making them memories that are stored for a long time and provide unforgettable feelings. Tourism experiences arise because tourists feel satisfied with the tourist attraction. Therefore, tourist satisfaction can be defined as the feelings of joy or disappointment that arise when comparing the perceived performance of a product (or result) with their expectations (5).

This study was motivated by a research gap in previous studies. Based on research conducted by (6) there is a significant indirect effect on tourist satisfaction in mediating memorable tourism experience on the intention to revisit Pantai Sebalang Lampung Selatan. Research conducted by (7) shows that memorable tourist experiences have a positive and significant effect on revisit intention through tourist satisfaction in Tourism Visits to Bali. However, in contrast to the research conducted by (8) the researcher shows that memorable tourist experiences on revisit intention are not significant at in the study of Karimunjawa Destination. Based on the explanation of the previous studies above, this study attempts to prove and determine whether there is an influence from each variable, namely the influence of Memorable Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention through Tourist Satisfaction.

This research is related to the influence of memorable tourist experience (MTE) and revisit intention through tourist satisfaction. Although several studies have examined these variables, most of them focus on general tourist destinations or modern tourism, such as nature tourism, entertainment, or urban tourism. However, in the context of heritage tourism, this research has unique characteristics, such as cultural attachment, historical value, and educational experiences that can influence tourists' perceptions and memories differently. In addition, previous studies often ignore the role of tourist satisfaction as a mediating variable, even though satisfaction plays an important role in connecting memorable experiences with revisiting intentions. The lack of empirical studies that specifically examine the relationship between MTE, satisfaction, and revisit intention in the context of heritage tourism in Indonesia (or other specific locations) indicates an important research gap that needs to be filled.

Literature Review

Memorable Tourist Experience

According to research result (5), a memorable tourism experience is an experience that is well remembered and stored in the memory for a long time, such as a vacation to places that are interesting to visit again, for example, a vacation to heritage tourism in this old city, also known as a memorable tourism experience. Tourism experiences can be shaped by various factors, such as social interactions, interesting activities, beautiful surroundings, and satisfactory services. Tourism experiences have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and the intention to revisit the destination (9). Memorable tourist experiences consist of important events about the actions taken by tourists, how they feel, and what they think about a destination. Memory plays an important role in understanding individuals' memories of tourism experiences that are personally relevant. Memorable tourist experiences do not always mean positive experiences (10).

Revisit Intention

Revisit Intention can be defined as the behavior of tourists to revisit a destination. Revisit intention is the satisfaction of tourists who have visited a tourist destination and had a positive experience, so that tourists plan to revisit or intend to revisit. The intention to revisit is a person's urge to revisit or visit a place that has its own appeal (11). Basically, the intention to revisit is the feeling of wanting to visit a place that has an appeal to visit. The intention to revisit is an action in choosing and deciding to visit a tourist attraction based on the tourist's experience. The intention to revisit occurs when tourists obtain satisfaction after assessing the results of their visit (12)

Tourist Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a feeling of disappointment or pleasure felt by a person that arises from comparing the performance of a product (or result) with consumer expectations. Tourist satisfaction is an overall measure of tourists' perceptions of the quality of each destination. This measure can be considered as a value regarding the quality of the results of a tourist destination, such as the treatment and service that tourists feel towards a tourist destination, but not only the results at the end of their experience. To measure tourist satisfaction, there are three factors that must be considered. The first is whether tourists are happy or not with their decision to visit a tourist destination. The second is their belief that choosing the destination was the right choice. The third is their overall level of satisfaction during their trip to the destination (13).

Research Methods

This study employed an explanatory survey research design to investigate the causal relationships among key latent variables within the domain of urban heritage tourism, specifically Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE), Tourist Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention. An explanatory survey approach was selected because it enables the systematic examination of both direct and indirect effects among constructs, thereby allowing the study to test theoretical assumptions while observing patterns of behavior among actual visitors. This design is widely used in social science research, particularly in tourism studies, where understanding the mechanisms that shape tourist behavior requires a combination of empirical evidence and theoretical interpretation.

To analyze these complex relationships, the study utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), executed through SmartPLS 4.0. PLS-SEM was chosen due to several methodological advantages highly relevant to this research context. First, PLS-SEM is appropriate for predictive modeling and theory development, especially when the structural model includes multiple pathways and mediating effects. Second, it is robust to violations of normality assumptions, making it suitable for survey data that often exhibit non-normal distributions. Third, it performs well with moderate sample sizes, which aligns with the conditions of this study. These characteristics make PLS-SEM a preferred analytical tool in contemporary tourism research, where behavioral constructs are abstract, multidimensional, and challenging to measure with traditional methods.

The study was conducted in the heritage tourism area of Kota Lama Surabaya, an urban historical district known for its multicultural architectural landscape and revitalized heritage attractions. The site was selected not only for its historical significance but also for its growing role as a popular destination among young travelers seeking culturally rich and visually appealing experiences. This contextual relevance strengthens the validity of examining MTE, satisfaction, and revisit intention within this specific setting. The target population consisted of tourists who had visited Kota Lama within the last twelve months. This inclusion criterion ensured that respondents possessed recent and authentic visitation experiences, enabling more accurate evaluations of the constructs under study.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit respondents who met the predetermined criteria. Purposive sampling, a non-probability method, was deemed appropriate because the research required participants with direct experience visiting the destination. The final sample consisted of 200 respondents. According to Hair et al. (2020), a minimum sample size

of 100–200 is recommended for PLS-SEM analysis to ensure sufficient statistical power, stable parameter estimation, and reliable model assessment. Thus, the achieved sample size meets established methodological standards and provides confidence in the robustness of the findings.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by adapting measurement scales from validated prior studies. The questionnaire consisted of items measuring memorable tourist experience, authenticity, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention. All items utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Before full deployment, a pilot test was conducted on a small group of respondents to assess item clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility. Based on pilot feedback, necessary adjustments were made to improve wording and structure. The revised instrument was then subjected to validity and reliability assessments, including the evaluation of indicator loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach’s alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), ensuring that the measurement model met acceptable psychometric thresholds.

Data collection was administered online to maximize accessibility and reach a diverse pool of respondents. The use of an online survey also reduced logistical constraints, allowing respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. After data collection, a rigorous data screening process was undertaken to identify incomplete responses, detect inconsistencies, and ensure overall data integrity.

The data analysis consisted of two major phases: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and assessment of the structural model (inner model). The measurement model evaluation focused on determining convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. Convergent validity was assessed through indicator loadings and AVE values, while discriminant validity was examined to ensure that each construct was empirically distinct from the others. Internal consistency was determined through Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability metrics. Following the confirmation of measurement model adequacy, the structural model evaluation was conducted. This stage involved analyzing path coefficients, T-statistics, p-values, and effect sizes (f^2) to determine the significance and strength of relationships among variables. Additionally, R-square and Adjusted R-square values were used to evaluate the predictive accuracy and explanatory power of the endogenous constructs. The methodological approach adopted in this study was designed to ensure rigor, reliability, and relevance in understanding the behavioral mechanisms influencing tourist revisit intention in the context of heritage tourism.

Results

The results of this study show that there were 200 respondents who completed the questionnaire, as described in the Table 1.

Table 1 Respondent Description

Category	Response	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	67	33,3 %
	Female	133	66,7 %
Age	< 15 years old	0	0.0%
	16 – 20 years old	58	29.0%
	21 – 30 years old	132	66.0%
	> 30 years old	10	5.0%

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on the data in this study shown in Table 1 above, the total number of respondents was 200, with the majority being women (133 respondents) and only 67 male respondents. Most respondents were aged 21-30 years (132 respondents). This is because mostly Generation Z always spends most of their time traveling in places that they find aesthetically pleasing, including

the heritage tourism of the old city of Surabaya today. An out-of-model analysis was conducted to ensure that the measurement model applied in this study was appropriate. This suitability was evaluated through reliability and validity testing. Outer loading, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and construct reliability are some of the analytical tests conducted to ensure that the research data is valid and reliable. Each testing method in this study serves to assess the extent to which the indicators used can show the measured construct, as well as to ensure the internal consistency of each variable in a research model

Table 2 Measurement Model

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
MTE	MTE.1	0,645	0,432	0,780	0,841
	MTE.2	0,691			
	MTE.3	0,713			
	MTE.4	0,651			
	MTE.5	0,581			
	MTE.6	0,604			
	MTE.7	0,703			
Revisit Intention	RI.1	0,864	0,699	0,785	0,874
	RI.2	0,882			
	RI.3	0,758			
Tourist Satisfaction	TS.1	0,813	0,667	0,751	0,857
	TS.2	0,823			
	TS.3	0,814			

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on Table 2, it shows that the outer loading values for each item have met the criteria with values above 0.7, but unlike the memorable tourist experience (MTE) variable, there are several indicators with values below 0.7, indicating that not all indicators in that variable meet the criteria. The average variance extracted (AVE) value of the Revisit Intention and tourist satisfaction variables is more than 0.5. This shows that all indicators of these variables applied in this study are valid. In contrast, the memorable tourist experience (MTE) variable value is still below 0.5, indicating that not all indicators of this variable are valid. In addition, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are also appropriate or meet the criteria. Thus, it can be concluded that the research subjects are valid and reliable for further analysis. Model analysis aims to assess the structural model used in predicting causal relationships between latent variables, which are variables that cannot be measured directly. The assessment in this study was conducted using indicators such as R-squared (R^2), F-squared (f^2), and Adjusted R-squared (R^2 adjusted) as shown in Table 3.

Tabel 3 R Square and Adjusted R Square Output

Variable	R Square	Adjusted R-Squared
Tourist Satisfaction	0,428	0,425
Revisit Intention	0,668	0,667

Source: Processed Data (2025)

According to (15) when conducting structural model analysis using the partial least squares (PLS) method, the R square value of each endogenous variable can be examined. Changes in R Square are used as a tool to show the influence of each variable on the model prediction results. There are several classifications of R-square values: if the R-square is 0.75, the value has a strong influence; if the R-square is 0.50, the value has a moderate influence; and if the R-square is 0.25, the value has a weak influence. Based on the table above, the R-square value for Tourist Satisfaction of 0.428

indicates a weak influence, while the R-square value for revisit intention of 0.668 indicates a moderate influence.

Table 4 F-Square Output

Variable	F Square
Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	2,014
Memorable Tourist Experience -> Tourist Satisfaction	0,749

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on Table 4 above, it shows that the f-square value for the research variables indicates that the variable tourist satisfaction toward revisit intention has a strong influence, and the variable memorable tourist experience also has a strong influence on tourist satisfaction. The hypothesis test results are available in Table 5.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistic	P values
MTE -> Tourist Satisfaction	0,654	0,663	0,040	16,184	0,000
Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0,817	0,822	0,030	27,328	0,000
MTE -> Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0,535	0,545	0,041	13,066	0,000

Source: Processed Data (2025)

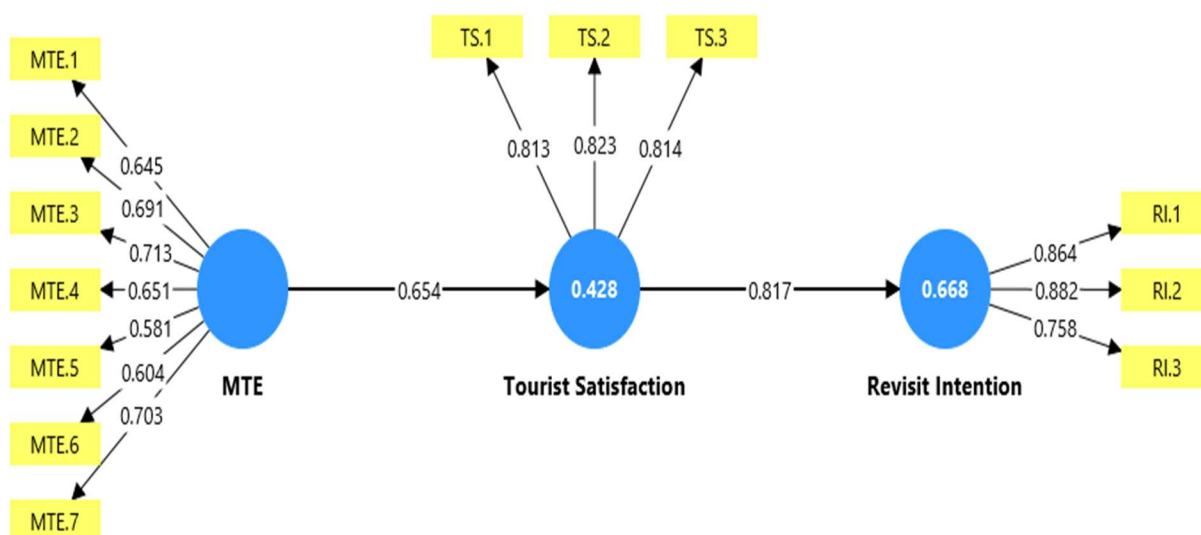


Figure 2 Path Analysis Output

Discussion

H1: The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience (X) on Tourist Satisfaction (Z)

The findings of this study reveal that Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) exerts a positive and significant influence on Tourist Satisfaction, thereby supporting the first hypothesis. This outcome aligns with the theoretical understanding that memorable experiences act as a central determinant of how visitors evaluate a tourism destination, both emotionally and cognitively. In the context of heritage tourism where cultural identity, historical ambiance, and experiential authenticity are highly valued MTE becomes an essential construct that shapes how tourists perceive and internalize their visit. Kota Lama Surabaya, with its rich colonial legacy and multicultural heritage, provides a distinctive environment in which these experiences can flourish.

Heritage destinations, unlike modern recreational sites, depend heavily on authenticity and cultural storytelling to evoke emotional engagement. Elements such as colonial architecture, the

blending of European, Arab, Malay, and Chinese cultural zones, and the presence of traditional activities all function as experiential cues that stimulate emotional resonance and cognitive appreciation. These elements not only enrich the sensory experience but also allow tourists to construct personal meanings around their visit. When tourists are immersed in such an environment, the encounter becomes more memorable, ultimately fostering stronger emotional attachment and higher levels of satisfaction.

Empirical evidence from this study further reinforces this link. The path coefficient of 0.654 and the high T-statistic value of 16.184 indicate that MTE contributes substantially to variations in Tourist Satisfaction. This suggests that when visitors perceive their experience as unique, authentic, or emotionally engaging, their overall satisfaction increases significantly. The role of novelty is particularly important, as tourists are more likely to appreciate destinations that provide distinct and informative experiences compared to conventional commercial attractions. Visual aesthetics, such as Instagrammable photo spots and preserved heritage façades, also enhance memorability especially for younger travelers like Generation Z, who comprised a large proportion of respondents. This demographic places strong emphasis on visual appeal, digital shareability, and immersive sensory engagement, making them highly responsive to experiential quality.

The distinctive character of Kota Lama Surabaya amplifies this relationship. Recent revitalization efforts, the proliferation of heritage-inspired cafés, vibrant street activities, and improved visitor facilities have transformed the destination into a culturally rich and interactive space. Tourists are not merely passive observers but active participants in a living historical environment. These experiences allow visitors to develop long-lasting memories that translate into satisfaction when their expectations are met or exceeded. Consequently, MTE serves as a foundational determinant of tourist satisfaction, confirming its strategic importance in enhancing destination competitiveness and sustaining long-term appeal.

The results of this study are supported by research conducted by (16) which states that memorable tourist experiences have a significant effect on tourist satisfaction.

H2: The Effect of Tourist Satisfaction (Z) on Revisit Intention (Y)

The study further demonstrates that Tourist Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention, thereby confirming the second hypothesis. The strong path coefficient of 0.817 along with a notably high T-statistic of 27.328 provides robust empirical evidence that satisfaction is one of the most influential determinants of tourists' willingness to return to a destination. This finding aligns with established theories in consumer behavior and tourism research, which consistently highlight satisfaction as a central predictor of post-visit behavioral intentions, including loyalty, word of mouth advocacy, and repeat visitation.

The relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention can be framed within the expectancy disconfirmation model, which posits that satisfaction arises when tourists' actual experiences meet or surpass their pre-visit expectations. When this occurs, visitors develop positive emotional and cognitive evaluations that encourage them to repeat the experience. In the context of heritage tourism, this effect becomes even more pronounced. Unlike recreational or entertainment based tourism, where satisfaction may rely heavily on facilities or service speed, heritage tourism satisfaction is multidimensional. It includes not only physical features but also interpretation quality, authenticity of historical elements, cultural symbolism, and emotional connection to the place. These factors create a deeper sense of meaning and personal enrichment that strengthens the motivation to return.

In Kota Lama Surabaya, several attributes contribute to this process. Visitors who perceive high levels of cleanliness, well-preserved historical architecture, and aesthetically pleasing photo spots tend to evaluate their experiences more favorably. The availability of adequate public facilities, safety, and ease of transportation access also enhances satisfaction by reducing inconvenience and enhancing comfort. Importantly, the atmosphere of the area marked by colonial era buildings, cultural diversity, and a nostalgic sense of the past plays a crucial role in shaping tourists'

emotional bonding with the destination. Such attachment fosters a psychological connection that motivates visitors to relive the experience.

Heritage destinations such as Kota Lama possess a relatively stable appeal because their core attractions historical structures, cultural narratives, and urban heritage landscapes do not change rapidly. This stability allows tourists to revisit while still experiencing meaningful or even new interpretations of the destination. Many visitors return not only to enjoy the aesthetic environment but also to explore different angles of its history, cultural identity, or newly revitalized spaces. Therefore, satisfaction functions as a cumulative emotional response that significantly reinforces revisit intention, confirming its central role in sustaining long term destination loyalty in heritage tourism settings.

The results of this study are supported by research conducted by (17) which states that tourist satisfaction has a significant effect on revisit intention.

H3: The Effect of Tourist Satisfaction (Z) in Mediating Memorable (X) on Revisit Intention (Y)

The results of the study demonstrate that Tourist Satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) and Revisit Intention, as evidenced by an original sample value of 0.535 and a T-statistic of 13.066. This mediation effect confirms that the influence of MTE on revisit intention does not operate solely through a direct pathway; rather, it is substantially strengthened when channeled through the psychological mechanism of satisfaction. In essence, while memorable experiences can initially stimulate interest in revisiting, satisfaction determines whether this initial interest develops into a concrete behavioral intention.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding is consistent with widely accepted behavioral models in tourism research, particularly the sequence of experience, satisfaction and loyalty. According to this framework, memorable experiences shape tourists' cognitive assessments and emotional responses during their visit. These evaluations, when positive, form the basis of satisfaction is a key emotional state that significantly enhances the likelihood of repeat visitation. MTE alone may generate pleasant memories or positive impressions, but without satisfaction, these memories may not be strong enough to motivate tourists to return. Satisfaction acts as the interpretative filter through which memorable experiences gain meaning, coherence, and value, ultimately transforming them into behavioral loyalty.

Empirically, the study's findings support this theoretical flow. The effect of MTE on revisit intention becomes considerably more pronounced when levels of satisfaction increase. Visitors may recall visually appealing scenery, unique architecture, or enjoyable social interactions, yet these memories must be accompanied by a fulfilling overall experience characterized by comfort, ease, and emotional resonance to motivate a return visit. Satisfaction thus functions as a bridge that converts experience-based impressions into sustained behavioral intentions.

In the context of Kota Lama Surabaya, the mediating role of satisfaction is especially pertinent. The destination's appeal largely stems from its historic ambiance, Instagrammable photo spots, and multicultural heritage zones. While these elements may initially attract tourists and contribute to memorable experiences, they are insufficient on their own to guarantee revisit intention. If visitors encounter issues related to cleanliness, safety, inadequate facilities, or poor service, the positive effects of MTE may be diminished. Therefore, satisfaction serves as the validating mechanism that ensures memorable experiences culminate in a desire to return.

This mediation effect underscores the importance of a holistic approach to heritage tourism development. Managers must not only curate meaningful and memorable experiences through revitalization efforts, narrative based interpretation, and cultural authenticity but also ensure consistent service quality, cleanliness, accessibility, and visitor comfort. When these factors operate synergistically, they produce the strongest impact on revisit intention. Ultimately, the

combined effect of MTE and satisfaction enhances the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of Kota Lama Surabaya as a heritage tourism destination.

The results of this study are supported by research conducted by (18) and (19), which states that tourist satisfaction mediates the effect of memorable tourist experiences on revisit intention.

Conclusion

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) plays a fundamental and significant role in shaping tourist satisfaction, which subsequently influences revisit intention within the heritage tourism context of Kota Lama Surabaya. Memorable experiences whether derived from hedonic pleasure, cultural immersion, appreciation of historical elements, or emotional engagement serve as powerful psychological triggers that shape visitors' overall evaluations of the destination. These experiential components contribute to the formation of vivid, long-lasting impressions, ultimately enhancing tourists' feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction with their visit. When visitors perceive their experience as meaningful and emotionally resonant, the likelihood of developing positive attitudes toward the destination increases substantially.

In addition, the study confirms that tourist satisfaction acts as a crucial mediating variable between MTE and revisit intention. This finding underscores the notion that memorable experiences alone are insufficient to guarantee repeat visitation. Instead, these experiences must be supported by a high level of satisfaction, encompassing aspects such as service quality, destination accessibility, authenticity of cultural elements, visitor comfort, and the overall atmosphere of the heritage site. Satisfaction, therefore, serves as a psychological bridge that transforms positive experiences into concrete behavioral intentions, such as returning to the destination, prolonging future stays, or recommending the destination to others. The mediation effect reinforces the centrality of satisfaction as an essential predictor of tourist loyalty.

The implications of these findings are significant for destination managers, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in the development of heritage tourism in Kota Lama Surabaya. To enhance destination competitiveness and ensure long-term sustainability, efforts should prioritize the creation of authentic, meaningful, and memorable tourist experiences while simultaneously maintaining high standards of service quality. Strategies may include preserving and restoring historical buildings, improving interpretation services, integrating engaging cultural storytelling, upgrading visitor facilities, and safeguarding the aesthetic and historical integrity of the area. By harmonizing experience-oriented initiatives with consistent service excellence, Kota Lama Surabaya can strengthen emotional bonds with visitors and position itself as a distinguished heritage destination that fosters enduring loyalty and repeated visitation. The synergy between MTE and satisfaction thus provides a strong foundation for sustainable tourism development in the region.

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