



Increasing Tourist Satisfaction Through Service Quality: The Mediating Role of Memorable Tourism Experience

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ABSTRACT: In the tourism sector, tourist satisfaction is the primary determinant for assessing the effectiveness of managing tourism destinations and the long-term viability of tourism enterprises. Tourist satisfaction becomes crucial to discern the influential factors that impact the tourist's satisfaction. This research seeks to elucidate the direct effect of service quality on tourist satisfaction and its indirect effect mediated through memorable travel experiences. This study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing cross-sectional surveys with questionnaire instruments. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire instrument were assessed through a sample of 30 respondents. A total of 204 tourists, selected using an accidental sampling technique, participated in research conducted in Jakarta Old Town. The collected data was subjected to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM PLS). The findings from the tests reveal that service quality exerts a direct and significantly positive impact on tourist satisfaction, and it also exerts an indirect influence mediated through the creation of memorable travel experiences. Hence, it is imperative for the management of Jakarta Old Town to consistently enhance the quality of services to cultivate memorable tourism experiences. These remarkable travel experiences foster an emotional bond that can instigate the development of contentment and other favorable behaviors.

Keywords: Service Quality, Memorable Tourism Experience, Tourist Satisfaction, Positive Behavior, Business Sustainability



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INTRODUCTION

Consumer satisfaction is prominent in marketing literature as it is a pivotal metric for assessing a company's performance and profitability ([Hussain et al., 2015](#); [Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2019](#)). Within the tourism industry, tourists' satisfaction takes center stage when evaluating the effectiveness of tourism destination management and the long-term viability of tourism enterprises. This is due to its profound influence on tourists' decision-making processes, engagement with the offered products and services, and their inclination to revisit ([Milman & Tasci, 2018](#)). Numerous studies have elucidated that tourist satisfaction acts as a catalyst, shaping word-of-mouth recommendations, repeat visits, and loyalty, thereby exerting a substantial impact on the prospective revenue and profitability of tourist destinations ([Gholipour Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2018](#); [Zboja et al., 2016](#)).

Satisfaction in the tourism context can be defined as a tourist's evaluation of the difference between their expectations before experiencing a tourism product and the actual performance or service received ([Milman & Tasci, 2018](#)). When tourists perceive that the performance or service of the tourism product meets or surpasses their initial expectations, they experience satisfaction. On the contrary, if the performance or service falls short of their expectations, it leads to dissatisfaction. Tourists who derive satisfaction from their visit are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors, such as revisiting and displaying loyalty to the destination. This perspective aligns with the findings of [Lin & Kuo's \(2016\)](#) study, which underscores satisfaction as the primary driver of loyalty. Given the paramount importance of tourist satisfaction, it becomes essential for destination managers in the tourism industry to identify critical factors that significantly impact satisfaction. A comprehensive understanding of these crucial elements will empower destination managers to enhance and ensure the quality of tourism products and services and align with and fulfill tourist expectations.

Services are defined as intangible activities carried out by individuals with the primary objective of meeting the needs of others ([Sipe & Testa, 2018](#)). In today's fiercely competitive era, the focus has shifted towards delivering high-quality services to tourists. It is worth noting that tourist satisfaction hinges not only on the quality of the product but also on the unwavering commitment of service providers within the tourism industry to provide top-notch tourist experiences. Various literature underscores that service quality plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer satisfaction ([Chan et al., 2021](#); [Jiang & Zhang, 2016](#); [E. B. Setiawan et al., 2020](#)). Crafting service quality that aligns with the expectations of tourists emerges as a recommended business strategy to ensure sustained business performance, given its capacity to influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty ([Afthanorhan et al., 2019](#); [Chan et al., 2021](#); [Rusdin & Rashid, 2018](#)). Furthermore, service quality is a distinguishing factor that sets competitors apart ([Jiang & Zhang, 2016](#)). The competitiveness of tourist destinations is significantly influenced by destination management, which involves enhancing the primary tourism offerings and the quality of complementary services ([Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008](#); [Sun et al., 2018](#)). While numerous research findings consistently highlight the positive role of service quality in shaping tourist satisfaction, there are conflicting perspectives, as demonstrated by the study results of [Rismawati & Sitepu \(2021\)](#), indicating that service quality may not contribute to tourist satisfaction. Another study by [Setiawan \(2021\)](#), focusing on bus users in Surabaya suggests that service value exerts a more substantial influence on satisfaction than service quality. This inconsistency in the impact of service quality on tourist satisfaction is believed

to be attributable to other variables mediating the relationship between these two factors.

Tourist satisfaction refers to a favorable psychological response that follows an enjoyable travel experience (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022). As per Kim et al., (2012), these memorable and positively cherished tourism experiences are constructed based on individual evaluations of the travel encounter. Travelers who form positive impressions of the tourist destination, which may encompass aspects such as the warmth of the local people, the natural beauty, the uniqueness of the local culture, and the provision of satisfactory services, are more likely to undergo a gratifying travel experience and trigger revisit intention (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2018).

Experience is inherently personal and multi-faceted, making its management a crucial concern in the business realm. Memorable travel experiences are shaped by hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, and knowledge (Kim et al., 2012). Hedonism pertains to the pleasure one derives from self-indulgence, novelty involves the exhilaration of new experiences, local culture signifies the social interactions between tourists and local communities, refreshment signifies the rejuvenating state of feeling revitalized, meaningfulness underscores the profound value and significance, involvement gauges the degree of personal engagement in the tourism experience, and knowledge refers to the information, facts, or insights acquired by individuals (Bigne et al., 2020). Additionally, Bigne et al. (2020) have introduced supplementary indicators to elucidate the components of memorable travel experiences, namely serendipity and surprise. Serendipity represents positive and unforgettable occurrences that happen unexpectedly during the journey, while surprises denote unforeseen experiences that exceed the expectations of tourists.

Empirical research reveals that the travel experience is a preceding factor influencing satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Moon & Han, 2018). Creating memorable travel experiences is an anticipated outcome for tourists when embarking on a journey. These travel experiences hold a significant position as they serve as the most reliable source of information that influences travelers' choices regarding whether to revisit tourist destinations (Marschall, 2012; Ye et al., 2021). Consequently, the capacity to foster the development of positive and memorable tourist experiences emerges as a new competitive advantage for destination managers.

In the service-centric tourism industry, where the travel experience is the primary offering, service quality has been a constant priority (Thoo et al., 2019). Numerous research studies affirm that the provision of outstanding service to tourists within tourist destinations serves as a precursor to the creation of unforgettable travel experiences, ultimately shaping positive future behaviors in tourists, such as their inclination to return and their loyalty (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015; Thoo et al., 2019).

The study's objective was to investigate the influence of service quality on tourist satisfaction, examining both direct effects and the role of memorable travel experiences as a mediator. This research took place in the tourist destinations in Jakarta Old Town, a significant attraction within DKI Jakarta. Jakarta Old Town holds a crucial position in Jakarta's tourism strategy as it stands as one of the capital cities' most iconic and historically rich tourist spots, contributing significantly to an understanding of Jakarta's history and culture. The novelty of this study lies in its focused exploration of service quality, tourist satisfaction, and memorable travel experiences within the

unique setting of Jakarta Old Town, The exploration of memorable experiences as a mediator is less common ([Lindeman et al., 2017](#)). The study's findings are anticipated to offer valuable insights to the managers of tourist destinations in Jakarta's Old Town, facilitating the enhancement of tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction, in turn, is expected to boost tourist retention and loyalty while positively impacting the tourism industry's sustainability.

Development of Research Hypotheses

The findings of [Jahmani's \(2017\)](#) research on Royal Jordanian Airlines passengers elucidates the substantial impact of service quality on customer satisfaction. This notion is corroborated by [Hau & Omar's \(2014\)](#) research that focuses on tourists visiting turtle breeding sites, demonstrating that service quality plays a noteworthy and affirmative role in enhancing tourist satisfaction. Furthermore, research conducted on destinations with Islamic characteristics, as highlighted in the study by [Yuliviona et al., 2019](#) also underscores the favorable and substantial association between service quality and tourist satisfaction.

H1 : Service quality has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

Research by [Thoo et al. \(2019\)](#) on zoo tourist destinations in Malaysia unveiled a compelling and substantial influence of service quality toward memorable tourism experiences. The degree to which travelers perceive they receive sufficient, welcoming, and high-quality service aligns with their overall satisfaction with their travel experience. This finding finds resonance in other scholarly works by [\(Sthapit et al., 2022\)](#). Additionally, it reinforces the idea that service quality and memorable travel experiences contribute to tourists' overall satisfaction ([Nugraha et al., 2021](#)).

H2 : Service quality positively affects memorable travel experience.

H3 : Service quality affects tourist satisfaction with mediated Memorable Travel experience

In their study, [Tung & Ritchie \(2011\)](#) introduced an additional layer to assessing memorable travel experiences, detailing the affirmative correlation between memorable travel experiences and tourist satisfaction. This viewpoint gains further support from the research findings of [Kim \(2017\)](#), which underscores the pivotal role of memorable travel experiences in molding tourist satisfaction and the overall image of a destination. Memorable travel experiences can significantly foster a holistic impression of tourists towards a tourist destination.

H4 : Memorable travel experiences positively affect tourist satisfaction.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach through cross-sectional surveys. Survey instruments consisted of questionnaires, with questionnaire items developed based on specific indicators of each construct; service quality indicators encompassed tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy ([Lai et al., 2020](#)), memorable tourism experiences adopted indicators of hedonism, novelty, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, knowledge, serendipity and surprise, as well as local culture ([Bigne et al., 2020](#)) and tourist satisfaction indicators

included word-of-mouth referrals, brand loyalty, continuance, recommend, and repurchase/revisit ([Wang, 2016](#)). A Likert Scale was used with five scoring options ranging from "strongly agree" (score 5) to "strongly disagree" (score 1).

The questionnaire instrument underwent validation and reliability testing with the assistance of SPSS version 26 software, involving 30 participants ([Yuniarti et al., 2022](#)). The validity test using the Pearson product-moment formula indicated that all items were deemed valid, as the calculated r-count exceeded the critical r-table value (0.361). Additionally, the reliability test, based on Cronbach's Alpha, yielded values exceeding 0.70 for all variables ([Kilic, 2016](#)). The study employed an accidental sampling technique. About 204 tourists of Jakarta Old Town participated as respondents for hypothesis testing. The sample size of 204 respondents conforms to the guidelines proposed by ([Hair Jr et al., 2017](#)), which stipulates that the minimum sample size should be at least 10 times the number of indicators for a construct.

The data was subsequently analyzed using the Smart PLS software, employing PLS SEM. This analysis encompassed two distinct models: the outer model test (measuring model) and the inner model test (structural model). The measurement model test evaluated the relationships between constructs and their corresponding indicators through validity and reliability assessment. Meanwhile, the structural model test aimed to establish causal relationships between exogenous and endogenous latent variables and validate the research hypotheses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

Four criteria were employed to elucidate the respondents' profiles, encompassing gender, tourists' age ranges, occupation, and visitation frequency. Upon tabulating the questionnaire data, the results revealed a higher proportion of female respondents (65.69%) than their male counterparts (34.31%). Concerning tourists' age categories, the most prominent group fell within the 17-25 years (64.71%). This prominence can be attributed to Jakarta's old town's amalgamation of history, culture, gastronomy, art, and distinctive ambience. It is a compelling destination for youthful explorers seeking to immerse themselves in the city's rich cultural tapestry and unique offerings. The second and third largest contributors were tourists aged 36-50 and those over 50. The allure of this demographic is rooted in a mix of nostalgia, historical fascination, serenity, the preservation of tradition, ease of access, and educational value offered by Jakarta's old city. These elements combine to captivate older tourists, offering them meaningful experiences and an opportunity to connect with the city's historical legacy and cultural heritage.

In the context of occupation, the most significant portion of tourists comprises students (63.73%). This finding can be attributed to the accessibility of the Old City of Jakarta, which allows students to delve into the historical and cultural aspects of the city. Jakarta's old city boasts a wealth of historical treasures and distinctive cultural elements, such as the Fatahillah Museum, Ceramics Museum, Kota Intan Bridge, and Wayang Museum, all providing profound insights into the city's

heritage. Young travellers are frequently drawn to the opportunity to learn about Jakarta's history and culture while savoring the authentic ambiance of the old town.

Regarding the frequency of visits, most tourists who have explored the Old City of Jakarta have done so between 2 to 4 times (50%). The convenience of access and the vast array of attractions and activities available in Jakarta's Old City can motivate tourists to make return visits. Jakarta Old Town can be accessed easily by private or public transportation. Respondent profile data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Criteria	N (%)
Gender	
a. Male	70 (34.31%)
b. Female	134 (65.69%)
Range of age	
a. < 17 yrs	9 (4.41%)
b. 17 – 25 yrs	132 (64.71%)
c. 26 – 35 yrs	12 (5.88%)
d. 36 – 50 yrs	39 (19.12%)
e. > 50 yrs	12 (5.88%)
Occupation	
a. Students	130 (63.73%)
b. Employees	40 (19.61%)
c. Housewives	16 (7.84%)
d. Others	18 (8.82%)
Frequency of visits	
a. 1	63 (30.88%)
b. 2 – 4	102 (50%)
c. ≥ 5	39 (19.12%)

Source: author

Measurement Model

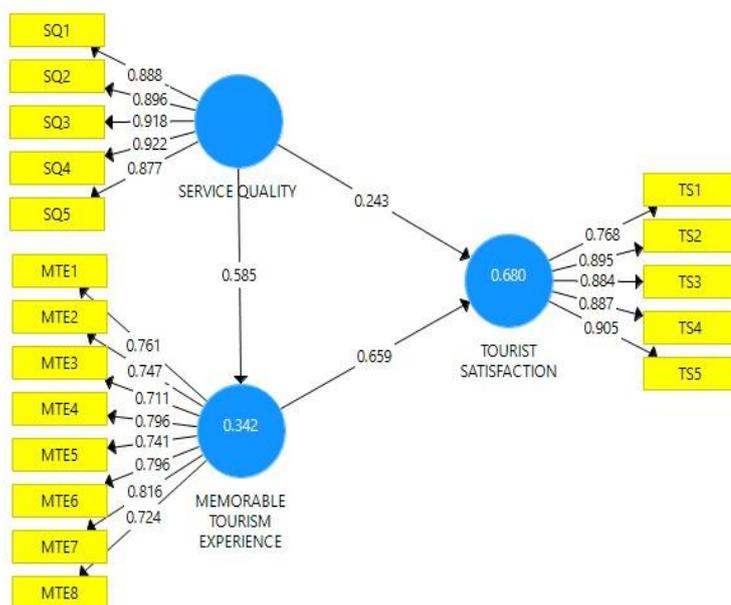


Figure 1. Measurement Model

Source: author

The analysis of measurement models is conducted to examine the relationship between construct variables and their respective indicators, involving validity and reliability assessments. In assessing convergent validity, factor loading values are employed to demonstrate the extent of a correlation between the indicator and its associated construct variable, in combination with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. According to (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2014), an indicator is deemed to possess sufficient validity when its factor loading exceeds 0.70 and its AVE surpasses 0.5. This finding indicates that the indicator can adequately elucidate more than half of the variance within its indicators, thus effectively explaining the latent variable constructs. The test results revealed that all indicators exhibited factor loading values exceeding 0.7 and AVE values surpassing 0.5, affirming their strong validity (see Table 2).

Table 2. The result of Validity & Reliability Testing

Constructs	Indicators	Factor loading	Cronbach α	CR	AVE
Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE)	MTE 1	.761	0.89	0.91	0.58
	MTE 2	.747			
	MTE 3	.711			
	MTE 4	.796			
	MTE 5	.741			
	MTE 6	.796			
	MTE 7	.816			
	MTE 8	.724			
	SQ 1	.888	0.94	0.95	0.81

Service Quality (SQ)	SQ 2	.896			
	SQ 3	.918			
	SQ 4	.922			
	SQ 5	.877			
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	TS 1	.768	0.91	0.93	0.75
	TS 2	.896			
	TS 3	.884			
	TS 4	.887			
	TS 5	.905			

Source: Author

Validity testing results involve assessing discriminant validity, which requires confirming that the correlation between an indicator and its underlying construct exceeds the correlation with other constructs. Discriminant validity is evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) criteria, chosen for its heightened sensitivity, with a stringent threshold of less than 0.9 as a critical value (Henseler et al., 2015)(see Table 3)

Table 3. Discriminant Validity with HTMT criteria

	MTE	SQ	TS
MTE			
SQ	.634		
TS	.880	.676	

Source: author

Multicollinearity assessment relies on examining Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values to determine whether there are intercorrelations between constructs. The outcome of this test reveals that all VIF values for the constructs are less than 5, which confirms the absence of any multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2014) (see Table 4)

Table 4. VIF Value

	MTE	SQ	TS
MTE			1,521
SQ	1,000		1,521
TS			

Source: Author

The model's predictive accuracy is evaluated through the R² value, which assesses the capacity of exogenous factors to account for the variability in endogenous constructs. A higher R² value, ranging from 0 to 1, indicates more precise predictions by the model. Table 5 shows that the service quality construct explains 33.9% of memorable travel experiences, indicating a weak relationship. On the other hand, the ability of service quality and memorable tourist experiences to explain tourist satisfaction is 67.7%, denoting a moderate relationship (Hair et al., 2014).

Q² value, on the other hand, gauges the construct model's relevance by measuring how accurately it predicts exogenous variables for endogenous constructs. When reflective endogenous latent

variables have Q^2 values greater than zero, it signifies the predictive relevance of the pathway models for these constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Notably, all Q^2 values are above zero (see Table 5).

Table 5. R2 dan Q2 Values

	R^2	R^2 adjusted	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
MTE	0.342	0.339	1632,000	1324.316	0.189
SQ	0.680	0.677	1020,000	504.536	0.505

Source: Author

Excluding specific exogenous factors from the model allows for the observation of changes in R^2 values, providing a means to gauge the magnitude of influence these removed factors exert on the endogenous constructs, which is quantified through the effect size, represented by the f^2 value. The results of our testing indicate that values of 0.121 fall into the medium category, while values of 0.521 and 0.893, both exceeding 0.35, are classified as substantial effects (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 6. Effect Size

Construct	f^2	Conclusion
MTE → TS	0.893	substantial
SQ → MTE	0.521	substantial
SQ → TS	0.121	medium

Source: Author

We employ model fit testing to evaluate the compatibility between the observed data and the model's relationships, which relies on the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value. For a satisfactory fit, the SRMR value should be below 0.1 (Cangur & Ercan, 2015). (see Tabel 7).

Table 7. Model Fit Testing

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.052	0.052

Source: Author

Hypothesis Testing

The study results reveal that service quality exerts a significant and positive influence on tourist satisfaction, evidenced by a t-count value of 3.533, exceeding the threshold of 1.96 (t-table), and a p-value of 0.000, lower than 0.05. This outcome supports H1. The path coefficient of 0.243 signifies that a one-unit increase in service quality corresponds to a 24.3% boost in tourist satisfaction. A positive and significant impact of service quality on memorable tourist experiences is demonstrated by a t-count value of 11.789, surpassing 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, supporting H2. The path coefficient of 0.585 illustrates that a change in service quality translates to a

substantial 58.5% enhancement in memorable tourist experiences. Furthermore, the construct of service quality indirectly influences tourist satisfaction through its mediation of memorable travel experiences. This mediation effect is substantiated by a t-count value of 10.934 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), confirming H3. The path coefficient of 0.659 indicates that service quality contributes 65.9% to tourist satisfaction when mediated by memorable travel experiences. Moreover, memorable travel experiences exhibit a noteworthy and positive impact on tourist satisfaction, as suggested by a t-count value of 8.620 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), thereby validating H4. The path coefficient of 0.386 signifies that every unit increase in memorable travel experiences results in a substantial 38.6% rise in traveler satisfaction (see Table 8)

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing

Relationships between constructs	Path Coefficient	T-count	P Value	Conclusion
H1: SQ→TS	0.243	3.533	0.000	Supporting
H2: SQ→MTE	0.585	11.789	0.000	Supporting
H3: SQ→MTE→TS	0.659	10.934	0.000	Supporting
H4: MTE→TS	0.386	8.620	0.000	Supporting

Source: Author

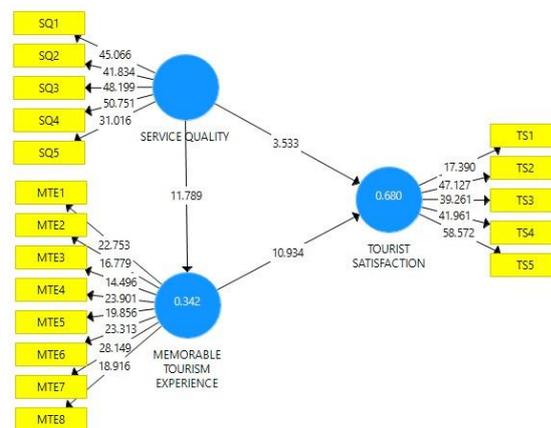


Figure 2. Structural Model

Source: Author

The research finding indicates that tourists hold a notably positive perception regarding managing tourist destinations in Old Jakarta, with a satisfaction level of 83.73%. Jakarta Old Town stands as a prominent historical and cultural tourist destination, prompting the Jakarta government to enhance its management continuously. Ongoing efforts encompass improvements in facilities and infrastructure to ensure easy access and maximize the comfort of visitors within the destination. The intense focus on service quality has led to a substantial boost in tourist satisfaction, with nearly half of the tourists visiting the Old City of Jakarta 2-4 times. This pattern of revisiting tourist destinations serves as a critical indicator of the formation of tourist satisfaction, aligning with prior research (Wang, 2016). The research outcomes corroborate and reinforce earlier studies that

underscore service quality's positive and significant impact on tourist satisfaction ([Hau & Omar, 2014](#); [Jahmani, 2017](#); [Yuliviona et al., 2019](#)).

The results indicate that tourists have positive responses when assessing the various facets of service quality in managing services at Jakarta Old Town, mainly because of the abundant attractions and diverse activities available. Jakarta's Old Town boasts a wealth of historical buildings, museums, and a rich array of historical artefacts that showcase Jakarta's evolution from the Dutch colonial era to the present day. This destination also offers many tourist activities, such as historical tours, cultural experiences, and culinary adventures. The attraction and activity services deliver a distinct and enjoyable exploration of Jakarta's history and culture, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the authentic atmosphere of the old town. Consequently, this contributes significantly to crafting a memorable experience for tourists. These findings align with prior research highlighting the capacity of service quality to create unique and enjoyable travel experiences, thereby reinforcing the hypothesis that good service quality is a predictor of enhanced travel experiences ([Sthapit et al., 2022](#); [Thoo et al., 2019](#)). A positive travel experience often commences with the quality of services received at a tourist destination, including friendly assistance, accurate information, necessary facilities, and a rich tapestry of tourist attractions and activities. This solid foundation fosters the creation of memorable tourist experiences. Distinct and memorable travel experiences play a pivotal role in cultivating tourist satisfaction and shaping perceptions of the excellence of tourist destinations, ultimately encouraging positive traveler behavior in the future.

The research outcomes also reveal that tourists find their visit to the Old City of Jakarta memorable. This is attributed to various factors, including the historic architecture reminiscent of Jakarta's Old Batavia era, the presence of museums exhibiting a wealth of ancient artefacts, cultural attractions, an authentic ambience, and complementary facilities that collectively create a memorable experience for visitors. These distinctive and unforgettable experiences significantly impact meeting travelers' expectations and fostering their satisfaction. This influence of memorable travel experiences on tourist satisfaction aligns with previous research findings, asserting that memorable travel experiences have a positive effect and serve as a determining factor in tourist satisfaction ([J. H. Kim, 2017](#); [Tung & Ritchie, 2011](#)).

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that service quality can positively influence tourist satisfaction directly and when facilitated through memorable travel experiences. Memorable travel experiences serve as a direct driver in shaping tourist satisfaction. Consequently, it becomes imperative for the management of Jakarta Old Town to persistently enhance service quality, encompassing infrastructure improvements such as better signage, provision of accurate information services, and the establishment of suitable rest areas to enhance the convenience of tourists. This enhancement should also encompass ensuring accessible facilities for individuals with disabilities.

Moreover, memorable tourism experiences play a pivotal role in predicting the development of tourist satisfaction. As a result, managers should prioritize creating unforgettable experiences for tourists to foster a deeper emotional connection with the Old City of Jakarta. This emotional bond

can catalyze positive online reviews and other favorable behaviors. Implementing interactive and engaging experiences that allow travelers to actively participate, like hosting cultural activities and historical reenactments, is one approach to ensure that tourists have memorable experiences, boosting overall satisfaction levels.

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