

The Role of Heritage Image as an Intervening Factor in Increasing Visits to Lawang Sewu

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to assess the impact of service quality and destination branding on the decision to visit the Lawang Sewu Semarang tourist attraction, which are mediated by heritage images. KAI Wisata, as the manager of Lawang Sewu, is targeting 700 thousand tourists in 2024. However, until December 31, 2024, the number of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the area for one year reached 650 thousand visitors. This is actually good, but not yet in accordance with the target set. This research used quantitative methods on 96 respondents. Therefore, the data analysis is performed using SmartPLS. The research results show that service quality and destination branding are proven to increase visiting decisions. Decisions to visit are positively and significantly influenced by service quality, destination branding, and heritage image. This can provide insight into increasing public interest in the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berupaya untuk mengkaji pengaruh kualitas layanan dan destination branding terhadap keputusan berkunjung ke objek wisata Lawang Sewu Semarang yang dimediasi oleh heritage image. KAI Wisata selaku pengelola Lawang Sewu menargetkan 700 ribu wisatawan pada tahun 2024. Namun hingga 31 Desember 2024, jumlah pengunjung wisatawan mancanegara dan nusantara selama satu tahun mencapai 650 ribu pengunjung hal tersebut sebenarnya sudah baik, namun belum sesuai dengan target yang ditetapkan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif terhadap 96 responden. Oleh karena itu, analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas layanan dan destination branding terbukti dapat meningkatkan keputusan berkunjung. Keputusan berkunjung dipengaruhi secara positif dan signifikan oleh kualitas layanan, destination branding, dan heritage image. Hal tersebut dapat memberikan wawasan terhadap peningkatan minat masyarakat terhadap objek wisata Lawang Sewu.



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INTRODUCTION

Destinations in Indonesia are increasingly developing, as shown by the emergence of tourism (religious, mystical, and historical). (UU RI No. 10 TAHUN 2009 TENTANG KEPARIWISATAAN, 2009) about tourism, explained that Indonesian tourism increases the source of income for the Indonesian state. In this regulation, chapter 1, verse 3 states that tourism is a tourism activity that is supported by facilities and services provided by the community, government, and other stakeholders. A Central Java tourist attraction that has a Dutch heritage building feel that is familiar to residents of Semarang and its surroundings is Lawang Sewu. The building has many large doors and large windows. This building used to be the central administrative office for railways in Indonesia.

According to (Prabowo, 2017) stated that lawang sewu in Javanese means “seribupintu”. This parable was created because Lawang Sewu has many doors, but only 342 doors actually reach a thousand doors. Visitors can visit Lawang Sewu to explore the spaces within the building, see the architecture, and learn about its history. Lawang Sewu is the most interesting place in Semarang City because it presents unique stories about Indonesia's past. There are many myths about the existence of ghosts from the colonial era that still exist around it. The newest area that attracts the most attention from tourists is the underground space, also known as kalderberkenning. The spot that was closed for 10 years is reopened to the public on december 3, 2024 (Nurikhsan, n.d.).

When someone goes to a historical tourist spot, they always have hopes and expectations for the place. After they leave, those hopes will become lasting memories, whether they are pleasant or disappointing. The form of service provided by officers to tourists is very important, and the image of the tourist destination will depend greatly on whether they meet or fulfill tourists' expectations.

As time goes by, Lawang Sewu has experienced significant changes in terms of facilities and services. However, on the other hand, Lawang Sewu still has a problem, namely the visit target, which has not yet been achieved, recorded in (Takhrodjie, 2024) Takhrodjie report on December 31, 2024, at inilahjateng.com, According to KAI Wisata Operational Director Wawan Ariyanto, Lawang Sewu targets 700 thousand tourists in 2024. However, until December 31, 2024, the number of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the area for one year reached 650 thousand visitors. This is actually good, but not in accordance with the set target.

In this research, the discussion focuses on people's decisions to visit Lawang Sewu. According to (Harbani, 2023) The decision is to choose one of the many options available. Usually, decisions are made with the aim of resolving a problem or issue. The decision to visit itself is interpreted according to Intan Juwita in (Ghifari Hannan & Siregar iskandarsyah, 2023), is an action conducted by an individual or group of individuals to a specific location for the aim of entertainment, personal growth, or studying unique sceneries.

The strategy to increase community visit decisions is not easy, but it can be attempted. One way to do this is to increase the value of tourist attractions, namely through perceived service quality and destination branding. This was once stated by (Pramita et al., 2024); (Kumail et al., 2021) but in this case also obey (Manurung & Wahyono, 2018); (Maulin & Sabana, 2024) The service quality of the community may not necessarily make tourists visit a tourist destination. Research regarding service quality on heritage image is still limited.

Paying attention to the existing problems, this research tries to provide a way to overcome these problems, namely by adding heritage image as an intervening variable, which in the end is hoped to become a connecting bridge between the service quality and destination branding variables in the visit decision.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

According to Nugraha & Indriani, (2022), quality is the level of good or poor, quality, level or degree of something; in this context, the term "something" can indicate numerous things, such as goods, services, conditions, or other things. In terms of people, processes, the environment, and products (goods or services), quality also refers to attempts to meet or exceed human expectations. Additionally, quality is a condition that can be attained. And according to Aziizirrahiim, (2022) and Nugraha & Indriani, (2022), service quality is something that is not binding and strict but flexible and can change. What is meant by being able to change is that the quality of service must be improved to be better in the future, which will be the key to the success of the tourism industry.

According to Illah et al., (2019) it is indicated that the better tourists' perception of a destination, the more likely they are to make the decision to go. This effect demonstrates that good feelings occur in tourists' thoughts when they form a favorable image of the destination. Perceived service quality is the priority that consumers can feel about products or services from the comparison between the desires and performance that consumers feel after purchasing a product or service (Riyadi & Nurmahdi, 2022) (Gofur, 2019); (Illah et al., 2019); (Afriza et al., 2021); (Sidik & Lutfia, 2024); (Madani et al., 2024); (Lisnama & Pasaribu, 2024). Therefore, it can be formulated that **H4: Service Quality has a significant positive effect on visit decisions.**

According to (Wisnawa et al., 2019) several aspects of service quality including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. From indicators by (Wisnawa et al., 2019) This research takes 3 indicators including reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. Various services provided by the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction include guides, environmental cleanliness, and Japanese, Dutch and Javanese clothing from the colonial period can enhance the heritage view for visitors. (Pandey & Sahu, 2020) supports the findings of this research. So it can be formulated that **H1: Service Quality has a significant positive effect on Heritage Image.**

Destination Branding

Destination branding is the identity, symbol, brand, and so on used by certain tourist attractions to differentiate them from other tourist attractions. It can also be considered an advantage offered by a tourist attraction to maintain or even increase the number of tourists visiting (Kumala et al., 2022); (Maxim, 2017); (Baggio, 2017); (Johnson et al., 2016); (Amelung et al., 2016).

The Lawang Sewu tourist destination attracts the attention of visitors and becomes one of their favorite places because it has branding that differentiates it from other tourist destinations around Lawang Sewu. This is in line with Yoeti's theory in (Maruto & Huda, 2020) that destination branding has the ability to control tourists' minds because in their minds, other destinations can compete.

Lawang Sewu provides a mystical tourist experience which can be an advantage that differentiates it from other tourist attractions around Lawang Sewu, in line with (Fistola &

La Rocca, 2017) This is due to the fact that destination branding is a factor that gives certain destinations special advantages when compared to other destinations. Having these advantages will certainly attract tourist interest because most tourists choose tourist attractions based on existing advantages (Baggio, 2017). According to Michelson & Paadam, (2015); Son et al., (2023), heritage image is significantly impacted by destination branding. Therefore, an **H2 can be formulated: Destination Branding has a positive and significant effect on Heritage Image.**

According to Riyanto et al., (2019) stated that destination branding was measured using seven indicators: (1) image, which is tourists' perception of tourist attractions; (2) recognition, which is the action of tourism actors in introducing tourist attractions; (3) differentiation, which is a characteristic of a tourist attraction; (4) brand messages, which are considered messages conveyed by marine tourism actors about tourist attractions; (5) consistency, which is the truth of the message conveyed by marine tourism actors about tourist attractions; (6) emotional response, marine tourism actors to encourage tourists' feelings; And (7) expectation, which is how much the maritime tourism actor's message matches what tourists experience. From the indicators (Riyanto et al., 2019), this research took 3 indicators, including image, recognition, and emotional response. Kumala et al., (2022); Wijaya et al., (2021) which states that destination branding significantly influence visit decisions. Therefore, this research can formulate an **H5: destination branding has a significant positive effect on visit decisions.**

Heritage Image

According to Junarta et al., (2021) Heritage image is an example of historical events that occurred in the past and became the foundation for modern civilization. from historical events that occurred in the past and function as the foundation for modern civilization. Cultural heritage images has a beneficial impact on the quality of the experience; when tourists' views of tourist locations grow, this can affect the quality of the experience they receive (Wu & Li, 2017). The concept the image of heritage tourism refers to tourist visits to cultural heritage sites that have been preserved from time to time (Hafiz et al., 2023). However, according to Chen & Chen in ; (Junarta et al., 2021), the image of cultural heritage has an essential function in shaping experience satisfaction. Even Ritchie and Hudson in Junarta et al., (2021), claimed that the destination's heritage image is an important factor that determines the quality of the tourist experience and research on tourist experiences that have evolved from original forms into unforgettable experiences. According Hafiz et al., (2023) indicators of heritage tourism image in this research are 1) historical background, 2) entertainment, and 3) convenience. Research by Hafiz et al., (2023) shows that heritage image has a positive and significant effect on visit decisions. Therefore, this research can formulate an **H3: Heritage Image has a positive and significant effect on Visit Decision.**

Visit Decision

R. S. Manurung et al., (2023) defined tourist visit decision as a individual or group visiting a certain place in a short time to refreshing, self improvement, or learn about the place's interest. When a person decides to visit a place they like from a variety of options, it is called a visiting decision. Meanwhile, according to Illah et al., (2019) in the world of

tourism, the purchasing decision taken by the buyer is considered a visiting decision. Traveler decision to travel are driven by the powerful push and pull factors. Basically, the factor that pushes are social psychology, which makes tourists feel motivated to travel. Meanwhile, pull factors show tourists' interest in the destination, which creates perceptions.

Visits are represented by five indicator factors, according to Damanik, Weber in Hurriyati, (2015). They are target areas (destinations); travel capital (type of trip); time and costs (time and costs); travel agent (travel agent); and service sources. From the Damanik indicator, Weber in Hurriyati, (2015). This research takes 3 indicators including target areas, time and costs, and service sources.

So that based on the theory that has been presented, the framework of this research is presented as follows

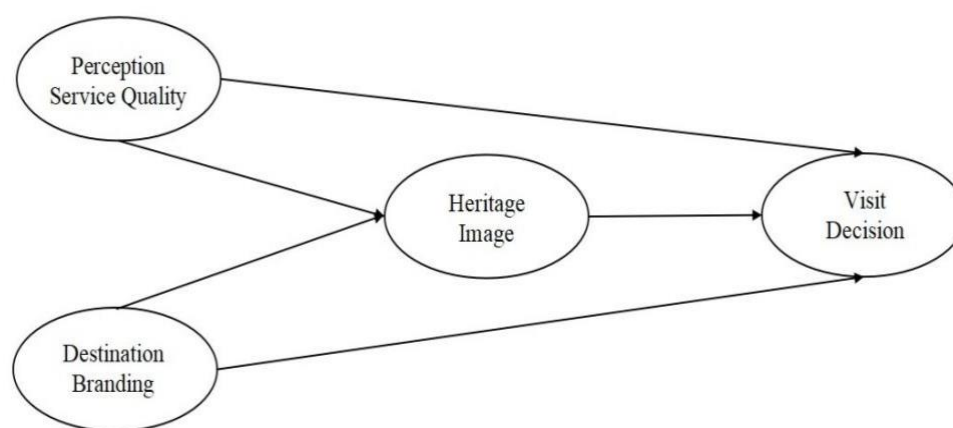


Figure 1 *Research Framework*

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a quantitative study. The population of this study are travelers who have or have not visited Lawang Sewu. The way to determine the sample for this research is by calculating the number of all indicators of the variables, then multiplying by a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 10. In this study there are 12 indicators, the minimum respondents are $12 \times 5 = 60$, and the maximum respondents are $12 \times 10 = 120$, the respondents used are $12 \times 8 = 96$. Sampling in this study used non-probability sampling and purposive sampling as an approach because the population size is unknown. Data was collected by questionnaire. Variables are measured using a Likert scale with a scale of 1 to 5 from the least “very disagree” to the highest “very agree”, (Al Saed et al., 2020)

The 5,000-bootstrap procedure, Partial Least Squares Squation Modeling (PLS-SEM), was used with SmartPLS to conduct significance analysis of path coefficients between constructs (Ringle et al., 2015; Sarstedt and Cheah, 2019) in (Cheung et al., 2020). PLS-SEM is considered more appropriate for this research because PLS-SEM is more suitable for complex structural models consisting of direct and indirect relationships (Hair et al., 2017).

Research has demonstrated the power of PLS-SEM for measuring and assessing structures to measure the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). The outer model was assessed with individual measurement item loading factor, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE).

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Analysis of the results of data collection using Smart PLS. To measure convergent validity by using item loading outer, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE (Hair et al., 2017). The measurement results are in the following figure.

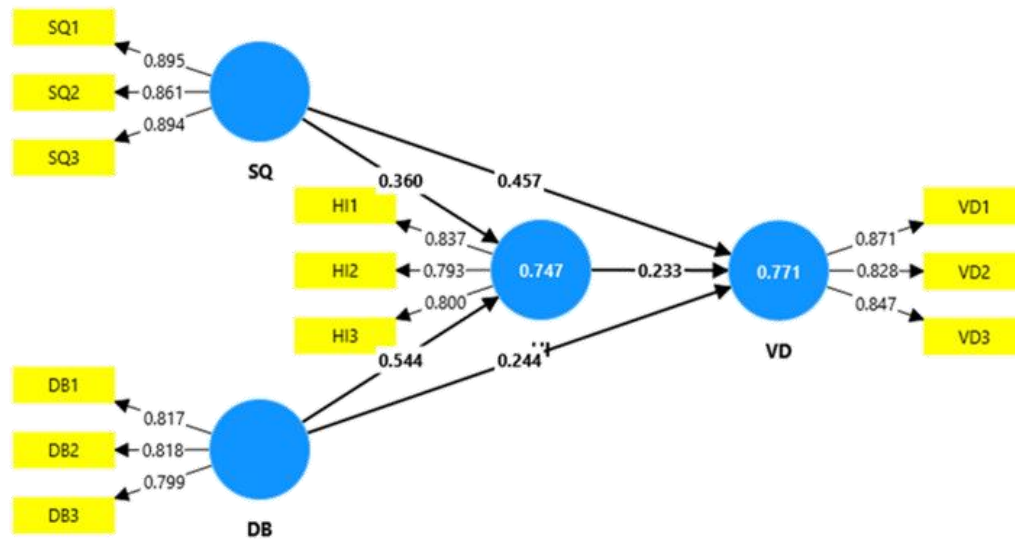


Figure 2 SEM PLS Result Test (Researchers, 2024)

Table 1 Outer Loadings

	DB	HI	SQ	VD
DB1	0,817			
DB2	0,818			
DB3	0,799			
HI1		0,837		
HI2		0,793		
HI3		0,800		
SQ1			0,895	
SQ2			0,861	
SQ3			0,894	
VD1				0,871
VD2				0,828

VD3	0,847
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Source: Research data, 2024

The validity level of an indicator is high if the loading factor value is higher than 0.70. According to the table above, each indicator meets convergent validity because it exceeds 0.70.

Table 2 Construct Validity and Realibility

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reability	Composite Reability	AVE
DB	0.742	0.747	0.852	0.658
HI	0.738	0.739	0.851	0.656
SQ	0.859	0.861	0.914	0.780
VD	0.806	0.808	0.886	0.721

Source: Research data, 2024

In this study, all variables by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability showed higher values than 0.7 (Luo et al., 2018). With the lowest value at 0.738. This shows that all variables in this research are valid and reliable. AVE criteria (Hafiz et al., 2023) are fulfilled because it shows a value above 0.50, so it can be said convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3 R-Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
HI	0.747	0.741
VD	0.771	0.764

Source: Research data, 2024

R-square value of the HI (Heritage Image) variable is 0.741, which explains that the service quality, destination branding, and visit decision variables influence Heritage Image by 74.1%. Meanwhile, VD (Visit Decision) obtained a value of 0.764, which explains that 76.4% of the Visit Decision variable can be influenced by service quality and destination branding.

Table 4 Direct Test

	T statistics	P values
SQ → HI	4.241	0.000
DB → HI	6.907	0.000
HI → VD	2.601	0.009
SQ → VD	4.121	0.000
DB → VD	2.429	0.015

Source: Research data, 2024

Table 5 *Indirect Test*

	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	p-value
Service Quality → Heritage Image → Visit Decision	0,084	2,073	0,038
Destination Branding → Heritage Image → Visit Decision	0,127	2,509	0,012

Source: Research data, 2024

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Service Quality on Heritage Image

Service quality significant positive affect heritage image. From the hypothesis tested, it shows service quality has a positive and significant influence on heritage image. This proves that better service quality provided by a tourist attraction will have a positive impact on the heritage image. Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted. The services provided by tourist attractions in the form of guides, various background settings, as well as Japanese, Dutch, Javanese, and Pirate clothing during the colonial period can increase the heritage image in the eyes of visitors. This result in line with (Pandey & Sahu, 2020). The service quality indicators taken in this research include reliability, responsiveness, and empathy.

The Effect of Destination Branding on Heritage Image

Destination branding significant positive affect heritage image. From the hypothesis test carried out, it shows that destination branding has a positive and significant influence on heritage image. So, that the better destination branding carried out by a tourist attraction will have a positive impact on the heritage image. Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted. It can be emphasized that architectural characteristics, collections, and landscapes must survive in the era of modernization in order to be relevant to society. Destination branding, which positive influence heritage image is also shown in research by (Michelson & Paadam, 2015); (Son et al., 2023). Destination branding indicators taken in this research include image, recognition and emotional response.

The Effect of Heritage Image on Visit Decision

Heritage image significant positive affect visit decision. From the hypothesis tested, shows the heritage image significant affect visit decision. So, the better the heritage image created by a tourist attraction will have a positive impact on visit decisions. Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted. The concept of heritage image is described as the experience of visitors who visit cultural heritage which still cared for from time by time, and can be inherited for the next generation. Tourist objects which are maintained have a potential to be developed and applied as tourist attractions. Before visit decision, the heritage image itself can be formed by getting information about the heritage image of tourist attractions and after having this experience. The better the heritage image, the faster the visit decision.

This result study are supported by (Hafiz et al., 2023). The Heritage Image indicators taken in this research include historical background, entertainment, and convenience.

The Effect of Service Quality on Visit Decision

Service quality significant positive affect visit decision. The hypothesis tested shows service quality has a significant positive influence visit decision. This proves that the better the service quality provided by a tourist attraction, will have a positive impact on visit decisions. Thus, hypothesis 4 is accepted. The quality service provided by employees, security guards, and guides provided by Lawang Sewu provides convenience in all aspects, is polite and friendly, and not only that, all the officers also look neat and seem professional. The existence of cleaning workers who ensure cleanliness in the tourist attraction environment also provides comfort when traveling. This means that better quality service will increase visit decision at tourist attraction. This study's results also shown in (Riyadi & Nurmahdi, 2022); (Gofur, 2019); (Illah et al., 2019); (Afriza et al., 2021); (Sidik & Lutfia, 2024); (Madani et al., 2024).

The Effect of Destination Branding on Visit Decision

Destination branding significant positive affect visit decisions. The hypothesis tested shows that destination branding has a positive significant influence visit desicion. This means that the better destination branding carried out by a tourist attraction will have a positive impact on visit decisions. Thus, hypothesis 5 is accepted. The Lawang Sewu tourist attraction has been one of the tourist attractions that must be visited when stopping in the city of Semarang. This tourist attraction has become one of the tourist icons in the city of Semarang because it has the meaning of a heritage site during colonialism. This shows that the more destination branding a tourist attraction provides, the more visit decisions it will have. This research are supported by (Kumail et al., 2021); (Kumala et al., 2022); (Wijaya et al., 2021). The visit decision indicators taken in this research include target areas, time and costs, service sources.

The Effect of Service Quality on Visit Decision through Heritage Image as Mediator

The result shows a significant positive effect on service quality and visit decision through heritage image as a mediator. Lawang Sewu management managers can easily increase the number of visit decisions by being consistent, responsive, and empathetic in maintaining service quality. The managers of Lawang Sewu are primarily responsible for maintaining the architecture of colonial buildings, maintaining the cleanliness of the tourist attraction's environment, and employing friendly employees to meet visitors' needs quickly and efficiently. Having a guide who can explore Lawang Sewu by providing insight into the colonial period will give tourists an understanding of the heritage image. With a strong relationship, there will be a greater influence of service quality on visit decisions. This will attract tourists to better understand the heritage image of the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction. This shows that heritage image is able to mediate by providing a positive effect on service quality and visit decisions.

The Effect of Destination Branding on Visit Decision through Heritage Image as Mediator

The result shows destination branding positive significant effect on visit decision through heritage image functioning as a mediating factor. The destination branding that exists at the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction can be shown in the management of Lawang Sewu management which still maintains the architecture of the building, colonial period photo frames, as well as the rental of colonial period clothes such as Japanese clothes, Dutch clothes, and Javanese clothes. If tourists feel that the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction has a unique attraction which is rarely found in other destination, this will make Lawang Sewu more interesting for them to visit. This shows that heritage image has the ability to mediate by providing a positive influence on visit decisions and destination branding.

CONCLUSIONS

From this study result and discussion, service quality significant influence visit decision for Lawang Sewu. So that, better service quality will increase more visitors to the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction. Destination branding has a big influence on visit decisions at the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction. In other words, more and more potential tourists consider destinations to be well promoted. Thus, visit decisions will increase. Heritage image influences tourist decisions to the Lawang Sewu tourist attraction. In other words, the better the tourist's perception of the destination, the greater the visit decision will be gratered.

The implication from this research is importantly focusing on service quality and destination branding to strengthen relationships with tourists. Thus, this study gives an overview of heritage image management strategies overview to keep heritage service quality and destination branding with advances in technology and globalization that continue to develop over time. Therefore, several steps need to be taken, such as maintaining historic buildings; some old buildings require better maintenance and restoration; supporting facilities such as parking areas can be further improved and expanded; visitors often find it difficult to find a large enough parking space, especially on weekends and during holiday seasons.

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