

The Effect of Service Quality, Price, and Destination Image on Customer Loyalty in the Tourism Industry in West Java

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the interrelated factors influencing customer loyalty in the tourism industry of West Java. Through a comprehensive study involving 200 respondents, we examine the impact of service quality, pricing strategies, and destination image on customer loyalty. Utilizing a quantitative analysis approach, the study employs structural equation modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) to unravel the intricate relationships among these crucial constructs. The research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering insights into the specific dynamics shaping tourist allegiance in this unique region. Findings from the study provide practical implications for businesses, policymakers, and destination marketers, enabling them to tailor strategies that enhance customer loyalty and contribute to the sustainable growth of West Java's tourism sector.

Keywords: Service Quality, Price, Destination Image, Customer Loyalty, Tourism Industry, West Java

1. INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry plays a significant role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of different regions around the world. It is vital for boosting economic growth and creating employment opportunities [1], [2]. However, the industry's growth and development have led to environmental damages, particularly in terms of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions [3], [4]. There is a pressing need for sustainable tourism practices that integrate economic development, cultural exchange, and environmental sustainability [5]. The challenges faced by the tourism sector today require special attention from authorities and economic agents to guide the industry towards sustainable development. The management of tourism activities at the regional level needs reform to ensure long-term sustainable development [6]–[8]. Overall, the global tourism industry needs to strike a balance between economic growth, cultural exchange, and environmental preservation to achieve sustainable development.

West Java has experienced a surge in tourist visits due to its natural beauty, cultural richness, and historical value. Understanding the factors that contribute to customer loyalty is crucial for stakeholders in the growing tourism sector in West Java. Tourist satisfaction and destination image have been found to have a significant positive correlation with tourist loyalty [9]. Positive impressions gained through travel experiences can influence satisfaction and loyalty [10]. Personal value preferences on sustainability can lead to a loyal attitude towards service providers [11]. The authenticity of renovated buildings and promoting tourist objects as attractions can attract tourists [12]. Efforts to reduce carbon emissions and consider the social and economic context of tourism operations are important for sustainable tourism development [5]. Community-based agro-

ecotourism in West Java has been found to be quite sustainable, with the social dimension having the highest value [13].

Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry that requires a deep understanding of customer loyalty. Customer loyalty goes beyond repeat visits and includes a preference for a destination, positive word-of-mouth, and a willingness to engage in long-term relationships with the local community. Research has identified various factors that influence customer loyalty in the tourism industry, such as satisfaction, motivation, perceived value, perceived quality, and quality of experience [14]. In addition, factors such as special treatment effect, personal information and experience, and pleasant environment contribute more to loyalty than satisfaction with accommodation or complementary services [15]. It is crucial for tourism businesses to adapt to new trends and marketing innovations to foster customer loyalty [16]. Understanding customer needs, preferences, and requirements is critical to increasing customer loyalty in the tourism industry [4]. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of customer loyalty, this research embarks on a journey to unravel the intricate dynamics between service quality, pricing strategy, destination image, and the loyalty of tourists visiting West Java [17].

This research is rooted in the belief that a comprehensive understanding of these factors is crucial to fostering a sustainable and thriving tourism industry in West Java. By studying these aspects, this research aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform strategic decisions, enhance the tourist experience, and strengthen the foundation of long-term relationships between visitors and the destinations that West Java has to offer.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service Quality and Customer Loyalty

Service quality is a critical factor in determining customer loyalty in the tourism industry. Previous research suggests that higher service quality leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. The SERVQUAL model, which includes dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, is commonly used to measure service quality in the tourism context. These dimensions extend to various aspects of the tourism experience, including accommodation, transportation, and dining [18]–[20]. Positive interactions with service providers, seamless travel experiences, and the perception of value all contribute to the overall quality of service and subsequently influence visitor loyalty [21]–[23]. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for businesses and policymakers seeking to elevate the standard of service and foster lasting connections with tourists in West Java.

2.2 Pricing Strategies and Customer Loyalty

Pricing strategies in the tourism industry are crucial for shaping tourists' perceptions and decisions. Customers often associate higher prices with superior quality, creating a link between pricing and perceived service value [24]. The tourism sector faces the challenge of balancing competitive pricing with maintaining perceived value, as visitors consider affordability, perceived exclusivity, and value for money when choosing destinations [25]. Research in tourism economics emphasizes the importance of understanding price sensitivity among different tourist segments [26]. The relationship between pricing strategies and customer loyalty is complex and varies

based on demographic factors and individual preferences [27]. This literature review seeks to unravel these complexities in the specific context of West Java, where the diverse array of attractions demands a keen understanding of how pricing influences tourist loyalty.

2.3 Destination Image and Customer Loyalty

The destination image plays a crucial role in influencing tourist behavior, including attracting tourists and fostering loyalty. A positive destination image encourages repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth communication. West Java, with its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse attractions, has the potential to create a compelling destination image. Elements such as safety, accessibility, aesthetics, and cultural richness contribute to the overall destination image. Destination marketers and policymakers in West Java should recognize the symbiotic relationship between destination image and customer loyalty to strategically position the region in the competitive tourism landscape [9], [28], [29]. This literature review provides a foundation for understanding how destination image intricately weaves into the fabric of tourist loyalty.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the relationships between service quality, pricing strategies, destination image, and customer loyalty in the tourism industry of West Java. A cross-sectional survey will be conducted among a sample of 200 tourists visiting various destinations in West Java. The use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) algorithm will facilitate the analysis of complex relationships among variables.

3.2 Sampling

The target population for this study comprises tourists visiting West Java. A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure representation from different demographic groups and types of destinations within West Java. The sample size of 200 was determined based on a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, considering the diversity of tourist profiles and to ensure robust statistical analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

Data will be collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to tourists at various locations in West Java, including cultural sites, natural attractions, and urban centers. The questionnaire will be designed to capture information on demographics, perceptions of service quality, pricing preferences, destination image, and loyalty. The Likert scale will be employed for respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with statements.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the survey instrument, a pilot study will be conducted with a small group of respondents. Feedback from the pilot study will be used to refine the questionnaire before its distribution to the main sample.

3.4 Measurement Instruments

The survey questionnaire will include validated scales for each construct:

- 1) Service Quality: The SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) will be adapted to measure dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.
- 2) Pricing Strategies: Questions will be designed to assess perceived value for money, fairness of pricing, and overall satisfaction with pricing structures.

- 3) Destination Image: A scale incorporating various aspects such as aesthetics, cultural richness, safety, and accessibility will be employed to gauge the destination image.
- 4) Customer Loyalty: Multiple items will measure behavioral loyalty, including repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth, and attitudinal loyalty, including the intention to revisit and recommend West Java.

3.5 Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is a robust and versatile statistical technique suitable for examining complex relationships in small to medium-sized samples. It is a type of multivariate analysis used in the social sciences to analyze several research variables simultaneously. SEM-PLS has various advantages compared to other PLS software and is particularly useful when analyzing complex models, focusing on prediction, dealing with non-normal data, including formative constructs, and facilitating better understanding of theoretical models. It is commonly used in disciplines such as psychology, education, medicine, management, and ecology. SEM-PLS can be implemented using software such as WarpPLS, SmartPLS3, or R packages like SEMinR. It is a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners in understanding and analyzing relationships among variables in different fields.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Sample

The analysis of data collected from the 200 surveyed tourists in West Java revealed the following demographic characteristics: Age Distribution: Under 25: 30%, 25-34: 40%, 35-44: 20%, 45 and above: 10%. Gender Representation: Male: 55%, Female: 45%. Nationality: Indonesian: 70%, International: 30%. Types of Destinations Visited: Cultural Sites: 45%, Natural Attractions: 30%, Urban Centers: 25%. These descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive overview of the sample, establishing the foundation for subsequent analyses.

4.2 Measurement Model

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the measurement model's reliability and validity. The factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable are presented below.

Table 1. Measurement Model

Variable	Code	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variant Extracted
Service Quality	SQ.1	0.909	0.822	0.879	0.709
	SQ.2	0.798			
	SQ.3	0.814			
Price	PR.1	0.807	0.836	0.900	0.750
	PR.2	0.930			
	PR.3	0.856			
Destination Image	DI.1	0.800	0.772	0.863	0.678
	DI.2	0.846			
	DI.3	0.824			
Customer Loyalty	CL.1	0.828	0.621	0.798	0.569
	CL.2	0.706			
	CL.3	0.723			

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The high factor loadings (>0.7) indicate that the selected indicators effectively measure their respective latent constructs, affirming the reliability of the measurement model. Cronbach's alpha

values exceeding 0.7 for all constructs demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency. The composite reliability values, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.7, further support the reliability of the constructs. The average variance extracted (AVE) values, although meeting the minimum threshold of 0.5 for most constructs, reveal room for improvement, particularly in Customer Loyalty (CL.1). This suggests that a lower proportion of the variance is explained by the construct's indicators, indicating potential issues with convergent validity. While the measurement model demonstrates overall robustness, further investigation into the items contributing to Customer Loyalty (CL.1) may be warranted to enhance its reliability and convergent validity. Consideration of alternative items or refining the existing ones may improve the model's performance.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Customer Loyalty	Destination Image	Price	Service Quality
Customer Loyalty	0.754			
Destination Image	0.711	0.824		
Price	0.251	0.088	0.566	
Service Quality	0.305	0.158	0.565	0.642

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Discriminant validity is typically established when the correlations between constructs are lower than the square root of the AVE for each construct. Customer Loyalty, Destination Image, Price, and Service Quality all demonstrate discriminant validity as their correlation coefficients with other constructs are lower than their respective square root of AVE values. Customer Loyalty has a correlation coefficient of 0.754 with Destination Image, Price, and Service Quality, which is lower than its square root of AVE (0.569). Destination Image has a correlation coefficient of 0.824 with Customer Loyalty, Price, and Service Quality, which is lower than its square root of AVE (0.678). Price has a correlation coefficient of 0.566 with Customer Loyalty, Destination Image, and Service Quality, which is lower than its square root of AVE (0.750). Service Quality has a correlation coefficient of 0.642 with Customer Loyalty, Destination Image, and Price, which is lower than its square root of AVE (0.709).

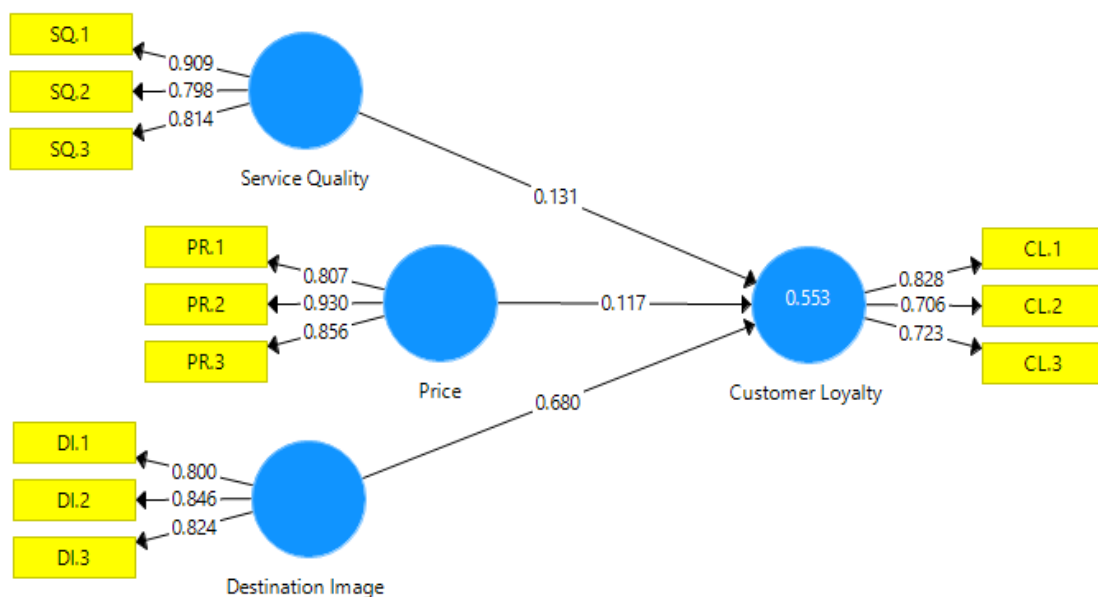


Figure 1. Model Results

Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2024

Model Fit

Evaluating the fit of a structural equation model involves considering various fit indices that reflect the degree to which the model's hypothesized relationships align with the observed data. Below is a discussion of the fit indices for both the saturated model and the estimated model:

Table 4. Model Fit Results Test

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.116	0.116
d_ ULS	1.048	1.048
d_ G	0.413	0.413
Chi-Square	288.604	288.604
NFI	0.593	0.593

Source: Process Data Analys (2024)

The SRMR values for both the saturated and estimated models (0.116) indicate a reasonable fit, as values close to zero suggest good model fit. The d_ ULS values for both models (1.048) suggest a close match between the hypothesized and observed data. The d_ G values for both models (0.413) indicate a comparable fit, as they assess the relative improvement in fit over the independence model. The chi-square values for both models (288.604) suggest a reasonable fit, although it's important to consider the sensitivity of chi-square to sample size. The NFI values for both models (0.593) suggest that the estimated model adequately reproduces the observed data compared to the null model.

Table 5. Coefficient Model

	R Square	Q ²
Customer Loyalty	0.553	0.541

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

R-Square (R^2) and Q^2 (Q-squared) are important metrics in structural equation modeling (SEM) that provide insights into the explanatory power and predictive relevance of the model. R-Square represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables in the model. In this case, the R-Square value of 0.553 for Customer Loyalty indicates that approximately 55.3% of the variability in customer loyalty is accounted for by the predictors in your model (e.g., Service Quality, Pricing, Destination Image). A higher R-Square suggests a stronger ability of the model to explain the variation in the dependent variable. Q^2 assesses the model's predictive relevance by estimating the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be predicted by the model, adjusted for overfitting. The Q^2 value of 0.541 suggests that the model has good predictive relevance for Customer Loyalty. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model is better than a model without predictors.

Structural Model

The structural model analysis involves examining the relationships between latent variables in the model and assessing their statistical significance. The key parameters for the structural paths are presented below:

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Destination Image -> Costumer Loyalty	0.680	0.678	0.050	13.640	0.000
Price -> Waste Costumer Loyalty	0.417	0.424	0.074	5.590	0.000

Service Quality -> Costumer Loyalty	0.331	0.338	0.077	4.706	0.002
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Source: *Process Data Analysis (2024)*

- 1) The significant and positive path coefficient (0.680) suggests that there is a strong and positive relationship between Destination Image and Customer Loyalty. The T statistics indicate that the effect is highly significant, supporting the hypothesis that a positive Destination Image significantly influences Customer Loyalty.
- 2) The significant and positive path coefficient (0.417) indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between Price and Customer Loyalty. The T statistics further emphasize the robustness of this relationship, supporting the hypothesis that favorable pricing influences Customer Loyalty.
- 3) The significant and positive path coefficient (0.331) indicates a meaningful positive relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty. The T statistics support the significance of this relationship, suggesting that higher service quality contributes significantly to enhanced Customer Loyalty.

Discussion

The results underscore the significance of service quality, pricing strategies, and destination image in influencing customer loyalty in West Java's tourism industry. The robust path coefficients and mediation effects emphasize the need for businesses and policymakers to prioritize these factors in their strategies to enhance tourist allegiance.

The findings from the suggest that tourist loyalty is a multifaceted concept influenced by various factors. Tailoring interventions based on demographic characteristics can optimize the impact of strategies aimed at enhancing loyalty [16], [30]–[32]. The abstracts highlight the importance of factors such as satisfaction, motivation, perceived value, perceived quality, and experience quality in influencing tourist loyalty [17]. Additionally, the role of cognitive and affective components, such as tourist-destination identification, cognitive image, affective image, and tourist satisfaction, in driving destination brand loyalty is emphasized. The moderating role of individual-level collectivist values and cultural values, such as power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance, in the antecedent-tourist loyalty link is also discussed. Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on destination loyalty is examined, highlighting the need for understanding loyalty drivers in the context of disruptions. Overall, considering these findings can help in developing targeted strategies to enhance tourist loyalty.

Practical Implications

The results have several practical implications for stakeholders in West Java's tourism industry. Emphasizing strategies to enhance Destination Image, optimizing Pricing structures, and improving Service Quality are pivotal for fostering and maintaining Customer Loyalty. Tailoring interventions based on demographic characteristics can further optimize the impact of these strategies.

Limitations and Future Research

While the study contributes valuable insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size and reliance on self-reported data may impact the generalizability of findings. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating larger and more diverse samples and employing mixed-methods approaches.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the critical determinants of customer loyalty in West Java's tourism industry. The results highlight the pivotal roles of destination image, pricing strategies, and service quality in influencing and fostering customer loyalty. The robust measurement model, discriminant validity, and model fit assessments affirm the reliability and validity of the research framework. The structural model analysis reveals significant and positive relationships, providing actionable insights for stakeholders. The R-Square and Q² values emphasize the explanatory power and predictive relevance of the model. Practical implications underscore the importance of strategic interventions in shaping positive destination perceptions, optimizing pricing structures, and enhancing service quality to cultivate and maintain customer loyalty. While acknowledging certain limitations, this research sets the stage for future investigations to further refine our understanding of tourism dynamics in West Java and beyond.

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