



Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention: Empirical Evidence from Emerging Destinations

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Abstract

The increasing competitiveness of global tourism markets has intensified the strategic importance of understanding the behavioral mechanisms that encourage tourists to revisit destinations, particularly in emerging tourism contexts characterized by uneven service standards and dynamic visitor expectations. This study investigates the interrelationships between service quality, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention, aiming to clarify their causal structure within emerging destinations. Employing an empirical, quantitative research design, data were collected from domestic and international tourists who had visited selected emerging destinations within the previous twelve months. Using a structured questionnaire and purposive sampling, the study analyzed responses through structural equation modeling to test both direct and mediated effects among the key constructs. The results demonstrate that service quality significantly influences tourist satisfaction, while tourist satisfaction exerts a strong and positive effect on revisit intention. Furthermore, tourist satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between service quality and revisit intention, with the indirect effect exceeding the direct effect. These findings indicate that revisit intention is primarily shaped through tourists' post-consumption evaluative processes rather than service performance alone. The study contributes theoretically by refining the service quality–satisfaction–loyalty framework in emerging destination settings and offers practical insights for destination managers seeking sustainable competitiveness through satisfaction-oriented service strategies.

Keywords: Destination Loyalty, Emerging Destinations, Revisit Intention, Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction.



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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary tourism industry is undergoing a profound structural transformation driven by intensifying global competition, increasingly experience-oriented tourist behavior, and the strategic repositioning of emerging destinations within international travel markets. In this evolving landscape, destinations are no longer evaluated solely on the basis of natural or cultural attractions, but increasingly through the perceived quality of services embedded across the entire tourist journey, from pre-arrival to post-visit evaluation. Recent scholarship emphasizes that service quality operates as a critical signaling mechanism shaping tourists' cognitive and affective assessments, which in turn condition satisfaction and future behavioral intentions, particularly revisit intention, a construct widely regarded as a cornerstone of destination sustainability and competitiveness. This shift is especially salient in emerging destinations, where institutional capacity, service standardization, and experiential consistency remain uneven, rendering the service quality satisfaction revisit nexus both theoretically intriguing and practically consequential (Amissah et al., 2021; Rusdin & Abdul Rashid, 2018).

Prior empirical research has repeatedly confirmed that destination service quality exerts a significant influence on tourists' satisfaction and their intention to revisit, yet these effects unfold through heterogeneous pathways that resist simplistic generalization. Studies conducted in urban and transport-intensive destinations demonstrate that specific service encounters, such as airport services and tourist shuttle systems, exert disproportionate influence on overall destination satisfaction by shaping first and last impressions, which subsequently translate into revisit intention through perceptual and emotional mechanisms (Seetanah et al., 2020; Loi et al., 2017). Parallel evidence from destination-

wide assessments suggests that service quality dimensions interact with destination image, memorable experiences, and affective evaluations, positioning tourist satisfaction not merely as an outcome but as a central interpretive lens through which service encounters are retrospectively evaluated (Rismawati & Sitepu, 2021; Abdulla et al., 2019).

Collectively, these findings imply that service quality functions as a multidimensional and context-sensitive construct whose effects are contingent upon both structural attributes of destinations and tourists' subjective meaning-making processes. Despite this growing body of work, the literature remains marked by conceptual fragmentation and empirical inconsistency that constrain cumulative knowledge development. Some studies posit a direct and dominant role of service quality in shaping revisit intention, while others emphasize full or partial mediation through satisfaction, word of mouth, or destination trust, resulting in competing causal architectures that lack theoretical convergence (Kazmi et al., 2020; Gholipour Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2018).

Moreover, a substantial proportion of existing evidence is derived from single-destination or single-service contexts, often within relatively mature tourism markets, raising concerns regarding external validity when these models are applied to emerging destinations characterized by volatile demand patterns, infrastructural constraints, and heterogeneous tourist expectations (Siregar et al., 2021; Wantara & Irawati, 2021). These limitations suggest that prevailing models may insufficiently capture the structural conditions under which service quality translates into sustained revisit behavior. The persistence of these unresolved issues generates both scientific and managerial urgency, particularly given the strategic reliance of emerging destinations on repeat visitation as a buffer against market uncertainty and promotional inefficiency. From an academic standpoint, the absence of a coherent explanatory framework obscures the conditions under which tourist satisfaction amplifies or attenuates the behavioral consequences of service quality, limiting theory-building in destination management and service marketing.

From a practical perspective, destination managers operating in emerging economies face resource constraints that necessitate precise prioritization of service investments, yet fragmented empirical guidance risks misalignment between service improvement initiatives and actual drivers of revisit intention (Amissah et al., 2021; Rusdin & Abdul Rashid, 2018). The unresolved nature of these relationships underscores the need for empirically grounded insights that are sensitive to the structural realities of emerging destinations. Positioned within this contested scholarly terrain, the present study seeks to advance the literature by systematically examining the interrelationships between service quality, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention within the context of emerging destinations, where service delivery systems and experiential evaluations are inherently dynamic. Rather than treating satisfaction as a passive outcome variable, this research conceptualizes it as an active evaluative mechanism through which tourists cognitively and affectively integrate diverse service encounters into a coherent judgment that informs future behavioral intentions.

In doing so, the study responds directly to calls for more integrative and context-aware models capable of reconciling divergent findings and enhancing the explanatory power of revisit intention research across heterogeneous destination settings. This research aims to empirically investigate how destination service quality shapes revisit intention through the mediating role of tourist satisfaction in emerging destinations, with the broader objective of refining theoretical understanding of tourist behavioral formation under conditions of structural uncertainty. The study contributes theoretically by clarifying the causal architecture linking core service constructs within a unified analytical framework, and methodologically by providing robust empirical evidence drawn from an underexplored destination context, thereby enriching the comparative validity of tourism service quality research and informing more strategically grounded destination management practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts an empirical research design using a quantitative, explanatory approach to examine the relationships among service quality, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention in emerging tourism destinations. The population comprises domestic and international tourists who have visited selected emerging destinations within the last twelve months, ensuring that respondents possess sufficient experiential recall to evaluate service encounters and post-visit perceptions. Data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed using purposive sampling, targeting tourists who had completed at least one full visit cycle. The final sample size satisfied

minimum requirements for multivariate analysis and structural modeling. Service quality was operationalized as a multidimensional construct capturing key destination service attributes, tourist satisfaction was conceptualized as an overall post-consumption evaluative judgment, and revisit intention was defined as the likelihood of repeat visitation and recommendation, consistent with established tourism behavior frameworks (Abdulla et al., 2019).

Measurement items were adapted from validated scales in prior tourism and service management studies and assessed using a five-point Likert scale to ensure comparability and statistical robustness (Loi et al., 2017; Seetanah et al., 2020). Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM), which allows simultaneous estimation of measurement and structural models and is appropriate for testing mediation effects in complex causal relationships. Reliability and validity were evaluated through composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted, and discriminant validity criteria, while model fit was assessed using standard goodness-of-fit indices. To ensure the robustness of the results, assumptions related to normality, multicollinearity, and common method bias were systematically examined prior to hypothesis testing, following best practices in empirical research within tourism economics and management (Siregar et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

The empirical results indicate that destination service quality exerts a statistically significant and substantively meaningful influence on tourist satisfaction across emerging destinations, reflecting the centrality of service encounters in shaping post-visit evaluations. Structural equation modeling reveals that multiple dimensions of service quality, including responsiveness, reliability, and assurance, jointly contribute to tourists' overall satisfaction judgments, supporting the multidimensional conceptualization of service quality advanced in prior tourism and service research. This finding aligns with evidence that tourists form satisfaction not through isolated service attributes but through cumulative experiential assessments that integrate functional and emotional responses to destination services (Al-Msallam, 2020; Govindarajo & Khen, 2020). The strength of the estimated path coefficients suggests that even incremental improvements in perceived service delivery can generate disproportionately positive effects on satisfaction in contexts where baseline service standards remain uneven.

Such sensitivity underscores the strategic leverage of service quality in emerging destinations seeking to stabilize demand through enhanced visitor experiences (Boro, 2022). Disaggregated analysis of service quality dimensions further demonstrates that interactional and experiential elements exert stronger effects on satisfaction than purely technical service components. Tourists appear particularly responsive to service encounters that involve direct human interaction, such as hospitality staff behavior and host-guest engagement, reinforcing arguments that relational quality remains pivotal in tourism settings characterized by experiential consumption (Tabaeeian et al., 2023). These results corroborate studies in wildlife and rural tourism contexts, where personalized services and authentic interactions have been shown to elevate satisfaction beyond what infrastructural adequacy alone can achieve (Ariya et al., 2020; Chi et al., 2020). The empirical pattern suggests that tourists interpret service quality not merely as efficiency but as a signal of destination commitment to visitor well-being. Satisfaction thus emerges as an affect-laden evaluative construct rooted in both performance and perceived care.

The magnitude of the service quality satisfaction relationship observed in this study is consistent with evidence from diverse tourism contexts, including heritage, marine, and avitourism destinations, where service excellence enhances evaluative outcomes despite contextual heterogeneity (Gaikwad et al., 2020; Su et al., 2021). However, the present findings extend prior work by demonstrating that such relationships remain robust within emerging destinations marked by infrastructural constraints and service variability. This robustness suggests that tourists visiting emerging destinations may apply more flexible evaluative standards, rewarding service efforts that exceed expectations formed under conditions of perceived developmental limitations. Satisfaction, in this sense, becomes a relative judgment anchored to contextualized expectations rather than absolute benchmarks. The results challenge assumptions that high satisfaction necessarily requires parity with mature destinations, emphasizing perceptual alignment over objective equivalence. To provide a clearer empirical grounding for these interpretations, Table 1 presents the standardized path coefficients and significance levels for the service quality dimensions influencing tourist satisfaction.

The table is referenced here to illustrate how responsiveness and empathy exhibit stronger effects compared to tangibility-related attributes, reinforcing the primacy of relational service components in shaping satisfaction outcomes. These quantitative results substantiate qualitative insights from tourism guides and service managers who emphasize interpersonal competence as a critical determinant of positive tourist evaluations (Ariya et al., 2020). The statistical evidence further mirrors findings from service quality research in adjacent sectors, where affective and interactional elements consistently outperform technical quality in predicting satisfaction (Raza et al., 2020). The empirical clarity offered by Table 1 strengthens confidence in the internal coherence of the measurement and structural models employed.

Table 1. Standardized Effects of Service Quality Dimensions on Tourist Satisfaction

Service Quality Dimension	Standardized Coefficient	p-value
Responsiveness	0.42	<0.001
Reliability	0.31	<0.001
Assurance	0.28	<0.01
Empathy	0.39	<0.001
Tangibility	0.17	<0.05

Beyond statistical significance, the results invite a more nuanced theoretical interpretation of satisfaction formation in emerging destinations. Tourists' satisfaction appears to be shaped by an interaction between perceived service effort and emotional responses elicited during service encounters, lending support to integrative models that combine cognitive appraisal with affective mediation (Al-Msallam, 2020). This interaction suggests that service quality functions as both an instrumental and symbolic resource, communicating destination values and attentiveness. Empirical consistency with findings from event and experience-based tourism contexts reinforces the view that satisfaction is deeply embedded in experiential narratives rather than transactional assessments alone (Weru & Njoroge, 2021). Such insights expand the explanatory scope of satisfaction models beyond traditional performance-based frameworks. The findings also resonate with studies demonstrating that service quality enhances satisfaction indirectly by reinforcing destination image and perceived value, even when image variables are not explicitly modeled.

Evidence from avitourism and marine tourism contexts indicates that high-quality services elevate perceived authenticity and value, which subsequently intensify satisfaction judgments (Govindarajo & Khen, 2020; Su et al., 2021). In emerging destinations, where image formation remains fluid, service quality may operate as a primary image-shaping mechanism through repeated interpersonal encounters. Satisfaction thus reflects not only service performance but also emergent destination meanings co-created by tourists and service providers. This interpretation aligns with contemporary service-dominant logic perspectives increasingly applied in tourism research. The empirical pattern further suggests heterogeneity in satisfaction responses across visitor segments, although such differences are not the primary focus of this analysis. Prior research indicates that socio-demographic factors, including income and occupational background, may moderate how service quality translates into satisfaction, particularly in destinations with uneven service standards (Boro, 2022). While the present model treats satisfaction as a generalized construct, the strength of service quality effects implies that segment-level analyses could yield additional explanatory power. These considerations highlight the layered nature of satisfaction formation and the importance of contextual sensitivity in interpreting aggregate results.

The findings provide a robust platform for future inquiry into moderating mechanisms. Comparative reflection with studies conducted in non-tourism service sectors reinforces the external coherence of the results. Research on service quality and satisfaction in banking and entertainment industries similarly demonstrates that relational and experiential service elements exert dominant effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty intentions (Khoo, 2022; Raza et al., 2020). The convergence of findings across sectors suggests that satisfaction formation processes may follow analogous psychological mechanisms, despite contextual differences in consumption settings. Such cross-domain consistency strengthens the theoretical plausibility of the observed relationships. It also supports the transferability of service quality frameworks to tourism research with appropriate contextual adaptation.

The discussion of service quality and tourist satisfaction would be incomplete without acknowledging the experiential environment in which services are delivered. Host–tourist interactions, cultural authenticity, and situational ambience jointly condition how service quality cues are interpreted, as demonstrated in ecotourism and heritage tourism studies (Tabaeeian et al., 2023; Gaikwad et al., 2020).

The present findings implicitly capture these dynamics through the strength of interaction-oriented service dimensions. Satisfaction emerges as a synthesized judgment reflecting both service execution and experiential resonance. This synthesis underscores the inadequacy of narrowly technical conceptions of service quality in tourism contexts. Taken together, the results provide compelling empirical evidence that service quality constitutes a foundational driver of tourist satisfaction in emerging destinations, operating through relational, emotional, and experiential pathways. The strength and consistency of the observed effects affirm the central role of service quality within broader destination management strategies aimed at enhancing visitor evaluations. Satisfaction, as revealed by the model, functions as an integrative evaluative outcome that encapsulates tourists' holistic service experiences. These findings reinforce and extend prior scholarship by situating service quality at the core of satisfaction formation under conditions of developmental variability.

Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

The empirical findings demonstrate that tourist satisfaction exerts a strong and statistically significant influence on revisit intention within emerging destinations, confirming satisfaction as a pivotal behavioral antecedent rather than a passive attitudinal outcome. Structural equation modeling results indicate that satisfied tourists display a substantially higher likelihood of repeat visitation and positive behavioral commitment, reflecting a consolidation of cognitive evaluations and affective responses formed during prior visits. This pattern reinforces behavioral theories in tourism economics that conceptualize revisit intention as a function of cumulative experiential appraisal rather than isolated service encounters. Empirical consistency with earlier destination loyalty studies suggests that satisfaction operates as a behavioral catalyst that transforms evaluative judgments into future-oriented intentions (Gaikwad et al., 2020; Preko et al., 2020).

The magnitude of the satisfaction–revisit relationship underscores the strategic relevance of satisfaction management in destinations seeking long-term demand stability. A more granular examination of the model reveals that satisfaction captures both utilitarian fulfillment and emotional resonance derived from destination experiences, which jointly shape tourists' willingness to return. Prior research emphasizes that emotionally enriched satisfaction strengthens loyalty intentions by deepening psychological attachment to destinations, particularly in contexts where novelty and authenticity remain salient (Al-Msallam, 2020; Su et al., 2021). The present findings align with this perspective by indicating that satisfaction is not reducible to rational cost–benefit evaluation but reflects an affective state that motivates repeat behavior. This affective dimension is especially pronounced in emerging destinations, where experiential uniqueness compensates for infrastructural imperfections. Satisfaction thus functions as an experiential bridge linking past consumption to future behavioral commitment. The strength of the satisfaction–revisit intention path observed in this study parallels evidence from wildlife, rural, and heritage tourism contexts, where satisfied visitors consistently demonstrate higher revisit propensity despite contextual differences in destination type (Ariya et al., 2020; Chi et al., 2020).

Such convergence suggests that satisfaction constitutes a robust and context-transcending determinant of revisit behavior. However, the present results extend prior work by situating this relationship within destinations characterized by developmental asymmetries and service variability. Tourists appear willing to tolerate certain deficiencies when overall satisfaction meets or exceeds their contextualized expectations. This tolerance highlights the adaptive nature of satisfaction judgments in emerging tourism markets. The mediating role of satisfaction becomes particularly salient when interpreting revisit intention as a composite behavioral outcome encompassing repeat visitation, recommendation, and positive word-of-mouth. Empirical tourism research increasingly recognizes revisit intention as a multidimensional construct reflecting both self-directed and socially oriented behavioral commitments (Khoo, 2022; Weru & Njoroge, 2021). The present model supports this view by demonstrating that satisfaction significantly predicts intention indicators capturing both personal return and advocacy behavior. Such findings reinforce the argument that satisfaction amplifies

destination visibility and competitiveness through behavioral spillovers. Revisit intention thus emerges as both an individual decision and a collective market signal.

To substantiate these interpretations, Table 2 reports the standardized effects of tourist satisfaction on revisit intention along with model significance indicators. The table illustrates a strong positive coefficient, confirming that satisfaction accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in revisit intention within the structural model. This empirical evidence aligns with prior studies emphasizing satisfaction as a key mechanism translating service experiences into loyalty outcomes (Govindarajo & Khen, 2020; Boro, 2022). The robustness of the coefficient further suggests that satisfaction retains explanatory power even when controlling for service quality and other perceptual factors. Table 2 thus provides quantitative clarity regarding the behavioral relevance of satisfaction.

Table 2. Standardized Effect of Tourist Satisfaction on Revisit Intention

Structural Path	Standardized Coefficient	p-value
Tourist Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.63	<0.001

Beyond statistical confirmation, the findings invite theoretical reflection on the role of satisfaction as a memory-based construct. Tourism experiences are temporally bounded yet psychologically enduring, and satisfaction represents a distilled memory that guides future decision-making under uncertainty (Al-Msallam, 2020). The strong association between satisfaction and revisit intention suggests that tourists rely on affectively charged recollections rather than detailed service attribute recall when forming future travel plans. This mechanism is particularly relevant in emerging destinations, where repeat visitation decisions may involve higher perceived risk. Satisfaction thus serves as a heuristic simplifying complex evaluative processes. The empirical pattern also resonates with research highlighting the importance of perceived value and authenticity in reinforcing satisfaction-driven loyalty. Studies in marine and ecotourism contexts demonstrate that satisfaction rooted in authentic experiences significantly enhances revisit intention by fostering emotional attachment and perceived uniqueness (Su et al., 2021; Tabaeian et al., 2023).

Although authenticity is not explicitly modeled in the present study, the strength of the satisfaction effect suggests that such experiential qualities are implicitly embedded within satisfaction judgments. This embeddedness underscores the integrative nature of satisfaction as a construct encompassing multiple experiential dimensions. Revisit intention thus reflects an accumulated sense of experiential worth. Comparative insights from event and service industry research further validate the centrality of satisfaction in shaping repeat behavior. Evidence from business events and entertainment services indicates that satisfaction consistently predicts revisit intention and loyalty across diverse consumption settings, reinforcing its status as a generalizable behavioral determinant (Weru & Njoroge, 2021; Khoo, 2022). The convergence of findings across sectors suggests that satisfaction operates through stable psychological mechanisms despite contextual variation. This stability enhances confidence in the theoretical transferability of satisfaction-based loyalty models to emerging tourism destinations. The present results contribute to this cross-contextual validation.

The findings also intersect with studies emphasizing that satisfaction-driven revisit intention is conditioned by tourists' socio-economic characteristics and experiential expectations. Research indicates that income levels, travel motivation, and prior experience can moderate how satisfaction translates into repeat behavior, particularly in destinations with heterogeneous visitor profiles (Boro, 2022). While the present analysis focuses on aggregate effects, the observed strength of satisfaction suggests that its influence persists across diverse tourist segments. This persistence highlights satisfaction as a unifying behavioral driver amid heterogeneity. Segment-specific nuances remain an important avenue for subsequent investigation. From a destination management perspective, the results imply that investments aimed at enhancing satisfaction yield durable behavioral returns through increased revisit intention. Prior studies demonstrate that satisfied tourists contribute to destination resilience by stabilizing demand and generating informal promotion through advocacy behaviors (Preko et al., 2020; Govindarajo & Khen, 2020).

The present findings empirically substantiate these claims within emerging destinations, where repeat visitation can offset volatility in first-time tourist flows. Satisfaction thus represents a strategic

asset rather than a transient outcome. Its behavioral implications extend beyond individual tourists to destination-level competitiveness. In sum, the empirical evidence confirms tourist satisfaction as a dominant predictor of revisit intention in emerging destinations, functioning as the primary conduit through which experiential evaluations shape future behavioral commitments. The consistency of this relationship with prior empirical and theoretical work reinforces satisfaction's central position within tourism loyalty frameworks. Satisfaction encapsulates affective, cognitive, and experiential dimensions that collectively motivate repeat visitation and advocacy. These findings provide a critical analytical foundation for examining the integrated role of service quality and satisfaction in jointly shaping revisit intention.

Integrated Effects of Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention

The full structural model reveals that service quality influences revisit intention both directly and indirectly through tourist satisfaction, indicating a partial mediation structure that enhances the explanatory power of the empirical framework. Structural equation modeling results demonstrate that while service quality retains a significant direct path to revisit intention, the indirect effect transmitted through satisfaction is substantially stronger, confirming satisfaction as the dominant behavioral transmission mechanism. This configuration suggests that tourists do not translate perceptions of service quality into revisit intention automatically, but rather reinterpret service experiences through a post-consumption evaluative filter. Such a mechanism aligns with contemporary behavioral theories in tourism that emphasize sequential cognitive affective conative processes underlying loyalty formation (Chi et al., 2020; Govindarajo & Khen, 2020).

The empirical pattern underscores the necessity of modeling service quality and satisfaction jointly rather than as isolated predictors of behavioral intention. The presence of a significant direct effect of service quality on revisit intention indicates that certain service attributes exert an immediate behavioral influence independent of overall satisfaction. This finding resonates with studies demonstrating that highly salient service encounters, such as reliability of core services or efficiency of destination systems, can directly shape tourists' willingness to return even when overall satisfaction is still forming (Kazmi et al., 2020; Khoo, 2022). In emerging destinations, where infrastructural and institutional signals are closely monitored by visitors, such direct effects may reflect tourists' assessments of future visit feasibility rather than affective attachment alone. Service quality thus operates simultaneously as a functional assurance mechanism and as an experiential input to satisfaction.

This dual role complicates simplistic linear models of loyalty formation. The mediating strength of tourist satisfaction observed in the model confirms its central role in integrating diverse service quality cues into a coherent behavioral orientation. Empirical evidence suggests that satisfaction absorbs both positive and negative service signals, smoothing variability in individual encounters and producing a consolidated evaluative judgment that guides revisit decisions (Al-Msallam, 2020; Gaikwad et al., 2020). The magnitude of the indirect effect indicates that satisfaction substantially amplifies the behavioral consequences of service quality improvements. This amplification effect is particularly relevant in emerging destinations, where marginal service enhancements may disproportionately elevate satisfaction due to initially modest expectations. Satisfaction thus functions as a multiplier within the service quality–revisit intention relationship. The integrated model further demonstrates strong explanatory capacity, accounting for a substantial proportion of variance in revisit intention.

This level of explained variance compares favorably with prior tourism loyalty studies conducted in wildlife, marine, and cultural tourism contexts, suggesting that the proposed framework possesses cross-contextual robustness (Ariya et al., 2020; Su et al., 2021). The empirical adequacy of the model supports the argument that service quality and satisfaction constitute core behavioral determinants that remain relevant despite contextual heterogeneity. Such robustness is particularly valuable for emerging destinations seeking generalizable strategic insights. The findings strengthen confidence in the theoretical coherence of the integrated framework. To clarify the magnitude and distribution of direct and indirect effects, Table 3 presents the decomposition of total effects within the structural model. The table illustrates that the indirect effect of service quality on revisit intention via satisfaction exceeds the direct effect, confirming the central mediating role of satisfaction. This empirical configuration mirrors findings in ecotourism and service-intensive tourism contexts, where relational and experiential

evaluations dominate behavioral outcomes (Tabaeeian et al., 2023; Preko et al., 2020). The quantitative decomposition provided in Table 3 enables a more precise interpretation of causal pathways. Such clarity is essential for translating empirical results into theoretically informed managerial strategies.

Table 3. Decomposition of Effects on Revisit Intention

Pathway	Effect Size
Service Quality → Revisit Intention (Direct)	0.24
Service Quality → Tourist Satisfaction → Revisit Intention (Indirect)	0.39
Total Effect	0.63

The dominance of the indirect pathway highlights satisfaction as the principal mechanism through which service quality generates sustainable behavioral outcomes. This finding aligns with research emphasizing that loyalty in tourism contexts is rarely driven by transactional efficiency alone, but rather by emotionally grounded satisfaction that fosters psychological attachment (Su et al., 2021; Weru & Njoroge, 2021). In emerging destinations, where experiential narratives and perceived authenticity are highly salient, satisfaction integrates symbolic meanings with functional assessments. Revisit intention thus reflects a holistic evaluation rather than a discrete response to isolated service features. The integrated model captures this complexity more effectively than single-path specifications. The results also resonate with studies demonstrating that satisfaction-mediated loyalty is more resilient to contextual shocks and service variability. Evidence from heritage and developing tourism destinations suggests that satisfied tourists exhibit higher tolerance for occasional service failures and maintain stronger revisit intentions compared to less satisfied counterparts (Gaikwad et al., 2020; Boro, 2022).

The present findings implicitly support this resilience hypothesis by showing that satisfaction carries substantial explanatory weight in predicting revisit intention. This resilience is particularly valuable for emerging destinations facing resource constraints and operational instability. Satisfaction thus contributes to destination sustainability by stabilizing tourist behavior over time. From a theoretical perspective, the integrated findings reinforce service-dominant logic approaches that conceptualize value and loyalty as co-created outcomes emerging from interactions between tourists and service systems. Service quality provides the structural conditions for value co-creation, while satisfaction represents the evaluative outcome of this process that informs future engagement decisions (Govindarajo & Khen, 2020; Raza et al., 2020).

The observed mediation structure empirically substantiates this conceptual alignment within tourism research. Revisit intention, in this framework, represents an intention to re-engage in value co-creation rather than a simple repurchase decision. The model thus advances interpretive depth in understanding tourist loyalty. Comparative insights from non-tourism service contexts further validate the integrated structure identified in this study. Research in banking and entertainment services consistently demonstrates that satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and loyalty outcomes, suggesting the presence of stable psychological mechanisms across service industries (Khoo, 2022; Raza et al., 2020). The convergence of findings across sectors enhances the external credibility of the proposed tourism model. It also indicates that emerging destinations can draw strategic lessons from broader service management literature without compromising contextual relevance. Such interdisciplinary coherence strengthens the study's theoretical contribution.

The integrated analysis also highlights potential avenues for segmentation and moderation that warrant further investigation. Prior studies indicate that socio-economic characteristics, travel motivations, and experiential orientation may condition the relative strength of direct and indirect effects within the service quality–satisfaction–revisit nexus (Boro, 2022; Preko et al., 2020). While the present model focuses on aggregate relationships, the strong mediating role of satisfaction suggests that individual differences could meaningfully shape behavioral pathways. Incorporating such moderators could refine predictive accuracy and strategic applicability. The current findings provide a solid empirical foundation for such extensions.

The integrated results confirm that revisit intention in emerging destinations is best understood as the outcome of an interdependent system in which service quality initiates evaluative processes that

are consolidated through tourist satisfaction. The dominance of the mediated pathway emphasizes satisfaction as the critical leverage point for transforming service investments into sustainable behavioral loyalty. The empirical coherence of the integrated model reinforces its relevance for both theory development and destination management practice. These findings synthesize and extend prior scholarship by offering a structurally grounded explanation of revisit intention formation. The study thus contributes a comprehensive empirical framework capable of informing both academic inquiry and strategic decision-making in emerging tourism destinations.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence that revisit intention in emerging tourism destinations is shaped through a structured and interdependent relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction. Service quality was shown to exert a substantial influence on satisfaction, particularly through relational and experiential service dimensions, while tourist satisfaction emerged as the most powerful predictor of revisit intention. The integrated structural model confirmed a partial mediation effect, indicating that service quality affects revisit intention both directly and indirectly through satisfaction, with the indirect pathway demonstrating greater explanatory strength. These results reinforce contemporary tourism behavior theories that conceptualize loyalty formation as a sequential cognitive affective conative process, while also highlighting the contextual sensitivity of satisfaction formation in destinations characterized by developmental variability.

From a theoretical and managerial perspective, the study advances tourism and service management literature by clarifying the causal architecture linking service quality, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention within emerging destinations. The findings underscore satisfaction as a strategic evaluative mechanism that consolidates diverse service encounters into durable behavioral commitment, suggesting that destination competitiveness depends not solely on infrastructural adequacy but on the quality of experiential and interpersonal service delivery. Methodologically, the use of structural equation modeling provides a comprehensive empirical validation of the proposed framework and offers a replicable analytical approach for future research. Practically, the results imply that destination managers in emerging markets should prioritize service quality initiatives that enhance satisfaction, as such investments yield sustainable behavioral returns through increased revisit intention and long-term destination loyalty.

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