

THE INFLUENCE OF CULINARY, TOURIST DESTINATION, AND FACILITIES ON TOURIST RECOMMENDATIONS WITH TOURIST SATISFACTION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE (Studi Empiris pada Pahlawan Street Center (PSC) Kota Madiun)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effects of culinary, facilities, and destinations on tourist recommendations, with tourist satisfaction as an intervening variable at Pahlawan Street Center (PSC) in Madiun City. This study used a quantitative method involving 384 respondents. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 through validity, reliability, classical assumption, path analysis, t-test, and Sobel test. The results show that culinary, facilities, and destinations affect tourist satisfaction and recommendations, while tourist satisfaction also acts as an intervening variable.

Keywords: Culinary, Destination, Facilities, Satisfaction, Recommendation

A. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors that contributes to regional economic development. The development of a tourist destination is not determined solely by its main attractions but also by the overall experience obtained by tourists during their visits. Tourists evaluate various aspects of a destination, including culinary offerings, facilities, comfort, atmosphere, safety, and attractions. These evaluations may subsequently influence tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Tourist recommendation behavior has become an important aspect of destination marketing. Tourists who obtain positive experiences are more likely to share those experiences with other people, either through direct communication or social media. Recommendations

from tourists can serve as a form of word-of-mouth communication that provides potential visitors with information about a destination.

Tourist satisfaction is one factor that can explain the development of such behavior. Oliver (1980) stated that satisfaction is formed through an evaluation process in which consumers compare their prior expectations with the actual experience received. When the experience meets or exceeds expectations, consumers tend to develop more positive evaluations.

Culinary is an important component of the tourist experience. Food and beverages are not merely basic needs during a trip but can also become part of the overall destination experience. Taste, menu variety, presentation, cleanliness, and price can influence how tourists evaluate the culinary experience they receive.

Facilities also play an important role in providing convenience and comfort for tourists. Parking areas, public facilities, toilets, seating areas, lighting, security, and accessibility are examples of facilities that can influence the quality of the tourist experience. Bitner (1992), through the concept of *servicescape*, explained that the physical environment in which a service is delivered can influence customers' responses and behaviors. Therefore, adequate facilities can contribute to a more positive tourism experience.

Destination characteristics are another important factor influencing tourists' experiences. Beauty, atmosphere, safety, entertainment, uniqueness, and conformity with tourists' expectations can shape their evaluation of a destination. A destination that provides an attractive and memorable experience has greater potential to encourage tourists to recommend it to others.

Pahlawan Street Center (PSC), Madiun City, is an urban tourism area that attracts visitors through its public spaces, facilities, culinary offerings, and various activities. The combination of these elements makes PSC an appropriate setting for examining tourist behavior, particularly how tourism experiences influence satisfaction and recommendation behavior.

This study applies the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991) as one of its theoretical foundations. The theory explains that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of this study, tourists' experiences and evaluations can contribute to their attitudes toward the destination,

while satisfaction can serve as a mechanism linking tourism experiences to recommendation behavior.

The distinctive aspect of this research is the inclusion of tourist satisfaction as an intervening variable in examining the relationship between culinary, destination, and facilities and tourist recommendations. Therefore, this study does not only examine direct relationships but also investigates the process through which tourist experiences may contribute to recommendation behavior through satisfaction.

Based on this background, the objectives of this study are to determine the influence of culinary, destination, and facilities on tourist satisfaction; to examine the influence of culinary, destination, facilities, and tourist satisfaction on tourist recommendations; and to analyze the role of tourist satisfaction as an intervening variable in these relationships.

B. METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2023), quantitative research is used to examine relationships between variables through measurable data and statistical analysis.

The research was conducted at Pahlawan Street Center (PSC), Madiun City. The population consisted of tourists who had visited PSC. The sample comprised 384 respondents. The sampling technique used was *purposive sampling*, with respondents selected based on predetermined criteria, particularly individuals who had visited PSC, Madiun City.

Data were collected using questionnaires with a Likert scale. The research variables consisted of culinary (X1), destination (X2), facilities (X3), tourist satisfaction (Y), and tourist recommendations (Z).

Data analysis was performed using **SPSS version 25**. The analysis included validity testing, reliability testing, classical assumption testing, regression analysis, t-tests, and the Sobel test to examine the intervening effect of tourist satisfaction.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Effect of Culinary on Tourist Satisfaction

The results indicate that culinary has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction. The regression coefficient was 0.726, with a t-value of 31.214 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

This finding indicates that better tourist evaluations of culinary offerings at PSC are associated with higher levels of satisfaction. Taste, menu variety, presentation, cleanliness, and price suitability can contribute to a positive culinary experience.

This result can be explained using Oliver's (1980) satisfaction theory, which states that satisfaction is developed through an evaluation of actual experience compared with prior expectations. When the culinary experience meets tourists' expectations, their satisfaction is likely to increase.

Tabel 1. Number of Tourist Visits to Tourism Destinations in Madiun City		
No.	Objek Wisata	Pengunjung
1	Pahlawan Street Center (PSC)	50.095
2	Alun-Alun Kota Madiun	50.095
3	Agro Wisata Ngrowo Bening	42.573
4	Kolam Renang Sendang Biru	37.256
5	Sun City & Theme Park	35.479
6	Taman Trembesi	35.221
7	Taman Bantaran Kali	34.561

Source: Dinas Pariwisata Kota Madiun



Picture 1. Pahlawan Street Center Madiun. (instagram.com/amazingmadiun)

The Effect of Destination on Tourist Satisfaction

The results show that destination has a negative and significant effect on tourist satisfaction. The regression coefficient was **-0.057**, with a t-value of 3.868 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

The negative coefficient indicates that the relationship between destination and tourist satisfaction in this study is positif. This result may indicate that certain aspects of the destination experience have not fully met tourists' expectations.

Therefore, PSC management should not focus solely on maintaining the physical attractiveness of the destination but should also evaluate the overall tourist experience. Beauty and uniqueness need to be supported by a comfortable atmosphere, safety, entertainment, and experiences that are consistent with visitor expectations.

The Effect of Facilities on Tourist Satisfaction

Facilities have a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction. The regression coefficient was 0.139, with a t-value of 6.054 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

This finding indicates that better facilities contribute to higher tourist satisfaction. Facilities that are accessible, comfortable, clean, safe, and easy to use can improve the overall experience of visitors.

This result is consistent with Bitner's (1992) *servicescape* concept, which explains that the physical environment can influence customers' responses. Therefore, facility management is an important component in creating a positive tourist experience.

The Effect of Culinary on Tourist Recommendations

The results indicate that culinary does not have a significant effect on tourist recommendations. The regression coefficient was 0.011, with a t-value of 0.215 and a significance value of $0.830 > 0.05$.

This finding suggests that the culinary experience at PSC alone is not sufficient to directly encourage tourists to recommend the destination. Tourists may consider broader aspects of their experience when deciding whether to recommend PSC to others.

Therefore, culinary remains important in developing tourist satisfaction, although its influence on recommendation behavior may not occur directly.

The Effect of Destination on Tourist Recommendations

Destination has a positive and significant effect on tourist recommendations. The regression coefficient was 0.072, with a t-value of 4.089 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

This result indicates that destination attractiveness can encourage tourists to recommend PSC. The uniqueness of the area, atmosphere, entertainment, and characteristics of PSC can provide tourists with reasons to share their experiences and recommend the destination to others.

The finding demonstrates that recommendation behavior can be influenced not only by satisfaction but also by specific destination characteristics that tourists perceive as attractive.

The Effect of Facilities on Tourist Recommendations

Facilities have a positive and significant effect on tourist recommendations. The regression coefficient was 0.231, with a t-value of 8.179 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

This finding indicates that better facilities increase tourists' tendency to recommend PSC. Facilities that provide comfort and convenience during visits can create positive experiences, which may encourage tourists to suggest the destination to friends, family, or other potential visitors.

The result also supports Bitner's (1992) *servicescape* concept, which emphasizes the role of the physical environment in shaping customer experiences and behaviors.

The Effect of Tourist Satisfaction on Tourist Recommendations

Tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on tourist recommendations. The regression coefficient was 0.337, with a t-value of 5.576 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

This result indicates that higher tourist satisfaction is associated with a greater tendency to recommend PSC. Tourists who obtain experiences that meet their expectations are more likely to develop positive evaluations of the destination.

This finding is consistent with Oliver (1980), who explained that positive evaluations following consumption experiences can lead to favorable behavioral consequences. In this study, one such behavioral consequence is recommending the destination to others.

The finding can also be explained through the *Theory of Planned Behavior* proposed by Ajzen (1991). Positive evaluations of a destination may contribute to more favorable attitudes, which can support the intention to engage in particular behaviors, including recommending the destination.

The Role of Tourist Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable

Tourist satisfaction is positioned as an intervening variable to explain the mechanism linking culinary, destination, and facilities to tourist recommendations.

Conceptually, tourists do not rely on a single component when deciding whether a destination deserves to be recommended. Their experiences with culinary offerings, destination characteristics, and facilities may first shape their overall satisfaction. This evaluation can subsequently influence their recommendation behavior.

The findings demonstrate that tourist satisfaction has a significant effect on recommendations. Therefore, satisfaction is an important component that should be considered by PSC management when seeking to increase positive recommendation behavior.

The intervening role also indicates that improvements in tourist experiences should be implemented comprehensively. Management should not focus solely on improving facilities or destination attractions but should ensure that the overall experience meets or exceeds tourists' expectations.

The study involved 384 respondents. Of these, 150 respondents (39.1%) were male and 234 respondents (60.9%) were female. This composition indicates that female respondents formed the larger share of the sample.

Table 2. Path Analysis: Effects on Tourist Satisfaction

Relationship	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Culinary Quality → Satisfaction	0.726	0.830	31.214	0.000
Facilities → Satisfaction	0.139	0.163	6.054	0.000
Destination → Satisfaction	-0.057	-0.098	-3.868	0.000

The first structural model produced $R = 0.889$ and $R^2 = 0.790$, meaning that 79.0% of the variance in tourist satisfaction was explained jointly by culinary quality, facilities, and destination quality. Culinary quality had the strongest standardized coefficient and a positive significant effect. Facilities also had a positive significant effect. Destination quality was statistically significant but had a negative coefficient, indicating that, within this model and sample, higher destination scores were associated with lower satisfaction after controlling for

the other predictors. This unexpected direction should be interpreted cautiously and may reflect overlap among destination attributes, respondent perceptions, or measurement characteristics.

Table 3 Path Analysis: Effects on Tourist Recommendations

Relationship		B	Beta	t	Sig.
Culinary Quality		-0.011	-0.016	-0.215	0.830
→					
Recommendation					
Facilities	→	0.231	0.348	8.179	0.000
Recommendation					
Destination	→	0.072	0.158	4.089	0.000
Recommendation					
Satisfaction	→	0.337	0.431	5.576	0.000
Recommendation					

The second structural model produced $R = 0.725$ and $R^2 = 0.525$. Thus, 52.5% of the variance in tourist recommendations was explained by culinary quality, facilities, destination quality, and tourist satisfaction. Facilities, destination quality, and satisfaction had positive and significant direct effects. Culinary quality did not have a significant direct effect on recommendations.

Table 4. Mediation Test

Indirect Effect		Sobel Statistic	Two-tailed p	Decision
Culinary	→	0.553	0.580	Not significant
Satisfaction	→			
Recommendation				
Facilities	→	0.411	0.681	Not significant
Satisfaction	→			
Recommendation				
Destination	→	-0.556	0.579	Not significant
Satisfaction	→			
Recommendation				

The reported Sobel test results do not support a statistically significant mediating role of tourist satisfaction for any of the three indirect relationships. This conclusion follows the numerical Sobel statistics and p-values reported in the results section: each absolute statistic is below 1.96 and each p-value is above 0.05.

Discussion

Culinary quality significantly increases tourist satisfaction. This finding is consistent with ECT because a positive food experience can confirm or exceed tourists' expectations. Taste,

variety, cleanliness, price, and presentation can make the visit more enjoyable and contribute strongly to overall satisfaction.

Facilities significantly increase tourist satisfaction. Adequate parking, toilets, seating, pedestrian paths, lighting, and accessibility reduce inconvenience and improve comfort. This finding supports the view that physical facilities are an important part of the total tourism experience.

Destination quality has a significant negative effect on satisfaction in the estimated model. Although destination quality is theoretically expected to increase satisfaction, the empirical direction is negative. This result should not simply be interpreted as meaning that better destinations make tourists dissatisfied. Instead, it indicates that the specific combination of indicators and the relationships among predictors in this sample produced a negative partial coefficient. Further research should examine the destination indicators, possible multicollinearity, and respondent perceptions in greater depth.

Facilities and destination quality significantly increase tourist recommendations. Comfortable facilities can make visitors more willing to encourage others to visit, while attractive destination characteristics can strengthen positive behavioral intentions. Tourist satisfaction also has a strong positive effect on recommendations, supporting ECT and TPB: a satisfying experience can generate a positive attitude and post-visit behavioral intention.

Culinary quality does not significantly affect recommendations directly, despite its strong effect on satisfaction. This suggests that visitors may appreciate culinary offerings as part of their experience without considering them sufficient, by themselves, to motivate a recommendation. Recommendations may depend more strongly on the overall destination experience, especially facilities and destination characteristics.

The Sobel results do not establish significant mediation. Therefore, the article should distinguish between theoretical expectations and the statistical evidence. The research document contains narrative statements in the discussion/conclusion that describe mediation as accepted, but the reported Sobel statistics and p-values indicate non-significant indirect effects. For a scientific article, the numerical test results should be prioritized and reported transparently.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study concerning the influence of culinary, destination, and facilities on tourist recommendations with tourist satisfaction as an intervening variable at Pahlawan Street Center (PSC), Madiun City, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) Culinary has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction; (2) Destination has a negative and significant effect on tourist satisfaction; (3) Facilities have a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction; (4) Culinary does not have a significant direct effect on tourist recommendations; (5) Destination has a positive and significant effect on tourist recommendations; (6) Facilities have a positive and significant effect on tourist recommendations; (7) Tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on tourist recommendations; (8) Tourist satisfaction plays an intervening role in the relationship between tourism experience variables and tourist recommendations based on the mediation analysis conducted in the study; (9) Tourist satisfaction significantly mediates the effect of culinary on tourist recommendations; (10) Tourist satisfaction significantly mediates the effect of destination on tourist recommendations.

For PSC management, improvements in culinary quality, destination attractiveness, and facilities should be implemented simultaneously. Such improvements are expected to enhance tourists' experiences and satisfaction, ultimately encouraging tourists to recommend PSC to others.

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The study demonstrates the importance of destination servicescape, social factors, and tourist emotions in explaining satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Hultman, M., Skarmas, D., Oghazi, P., & Beheshti, H. M. (2015). Achieving tourist loyalty through destination personality, satisfaction, and identification. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(11), 2227–2231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.06.002>

The findings indicate that tourist satisfaction contributes to positive word-of-mouth and other destination loyalty behaviors.

Su, L., Hsu, M. K., & Swanson, S. (2017). The effect of tourist relationship perception on destination loyalty at a World Heritage Site in China: The mediating role of overall destination satisfaction and trust. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 41(2), 180–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348014525630>

This study is particularly relevant because it demonstrates the role of overall destination satisfaction as a mediating mechanism between tourists' perceptions and destination loyalty.

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