

The Influence of Service Quality on the Decline In Tourist Visits at the Maimun Palace in Medan City

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Abstract

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This research investigates the decline in visitation at Medan City's Maimun Palace by emphasizing the influence of declining service quality, particularly regarding noise and the lack of separation between the merchant area and historical relics. Involving qualitative and descriptive research methods, analysis of the findings highlighted the need for improved layout, implementation of strict regulations on merchants, and enhancement of tourist services as integral solutions. The results show that these improvements are expected to create a clearer flow of visits, maintain the quality of the destination, and provide a more satisfying visitor experience. The conclusions emphasize the urgency of integrated measures to support sustainability and restore visitor interest, while recognizing that the focus on service aspects is a limitation. These measures provide a basis for further efforts to develop and improve the management of this historic tourist destination.

Keywords: Tourism Destinations, Service Quality, Visit Decline

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INTRODUCTION

Maimun Palace, as a historical heritage that illustrates the richness of Malay culture and the history of the Sultanate of Deli in Medan City, North Sumatra, feels a serious challenge with the declining number of tourist visits (Lubis, 2023). This decline is not only a concern for destination managers, but also has a significant impact on the sustainability of cultural and historical heritage. In this context, in-depth research on the factors that influence service quality at Maimun Palace is very important.

These conditions provide a high urgency to investigate the root causes of the decline in visitation. This is not only to restore visitor numbers, but also to maintain the sustainability and integrity of this cultural heritage. Maimun Palace is not just a local tourist destination; it embodies the identity and pride of the local community (Sumanti, 2019).

The main objective of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing service quality at Maimun Palace and its impact on visitation decline. Involving qualitative and descriptive qualitative

research methods, this study aims to provide a holistic view of the social dynamics in this destination (Waruwu, 2023). The main contribution of this research is expected to go beyond understanding the problem, and include developing practical solutions that can be implemented.

In this context, this research is expected to provide concrete guidance for destination managers and relevant stakeholders to improve service quality. Moreover, this research seeks to design solutions that can restore the image of Maimun Palace and increase its attractiveness to visitors. Concrete measures that can be implemented are expected to have a positive impact on the visitor experience and restore public interest in this destination.

Through this approach, the research also sought to accommodate the visitor perspective, by understanding their expectations and preferences for services at this historic destination. By incorporating visitors' voices in the formulation of solutions, it is hoped that the results of this research will not only be relevant to destination managers, but also meet the expectations of visitors seeking a memorable experience at Maimun Palace.

As such, this research not only details the problems facing Maimun Palace, but also seeks to provide holistic and sustainable solutions. Through this approach, it is hoped that Maimun Palace can re-establish its appeal as a superior tourist destination, create a positive impact on the local economy, and preserve cultural and historical heritage for future generations.

RESEARCH METHOD

When someone wants to do research and get accurate results in accordance with existing data, a research method is needed. The type of research conducted in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research is often called a type of naturalistic research, because the research is conducted in natural conditions (Sugiyono, 2019). The purpose of this type of qualitative research is to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subject, including the behavior, experiences, and beliefs he experiences and the meaning given to these phenomena.

Informants in qualitative research are individuals or groups who provide information or data related to the research topic. The source of information can be the main or additional source of information to convey illustrations, explanations, or views on the phenomenon under study. In this study, the selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations. This research uses interview and documentation techniques. The data analysis technique in this study is to use data analysis according to Miles & Huberman, namely reduction, data display, and conclusions and data verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research produced significant findings related to the factors that contributed to the decline in visitation at Maimun Palace, as well as the implications of the decline in service quality. Analysis of observational, interview and documentation data presents a comprehensive picture of the situation facing this tourist destination.

One of the key findings is that the decline in visitation is not only caused by the noise problem due to the presence of vendors inside Maimun Palace, but also by the lack of clear separation between the vendor area and the heritage area. This creates an uncomfortable visitor experience, undermining the tranquility and authenticity of Maimun Palace's ambience which should be the main attraction.

At the stage of identifying the main problems, conclusions from the data analysis showed that there was a need to improve the layout of Maimun Palace. This solution includes developing a plan to separate the merchant area from the heritage area, creating a clearer flow of visits. These improvements are expected to create a more organized and calm experience for visitors, ensuring that they can enjoy the beauty and history of Maimun Palace without distraction.

Regulation and supervision are also proposed as solutions to address these issues. The introduction of stricter regulations for vendors inside Maimun Palace, such as setting working hours, selling locations, and other criteria, is expected to maintain the quality of the destination. In addition, strict supervision will help prevent excessive noise that can disrupt the visitor experience.

Improving tourist services is also a focus of solution formulation. Involving the training of tour workers to provide more informative and in-depth guided tours, as well as the use of interactive technology to provide historical information to visitors, is expected to improve the quality of their visit. Thus, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the history of Maimun Palace, increase their satisfaction, and invite new interest.

In conclusion and verification, the results of data analysis and solution formulation are evaluated independently by the researcher. The in-depth data analysis included the identification of problem patterns, which showed that the decline in visitation was caused not only by noise, but also by its relationship with visitor satisfaction. Therefore, the proposed solutions are expected to create positive changes, restoring the appeal of Maimun Palace as an attractive and memorable tourist destination for visitors.

CONCLUSION

This research uncovered several key findings that provide insights into the decline in visitation at Maimun Palace in Medan City. The analysis showed that the main factors causing the decline involved noise caused by the presence of vendors inside the palace and the lack of separation between the vendor area and the heritage area. In response to the findings, concrete solutions have been formulated to improve the layout, implement stricter regulations, and improve tourist services.

Improvements to the layout of Maimun Palace are geared towards creating a clearer flow of visits, separating the merchant area from the heritage area. This is expected to provide a more organized and calm experience for visitors, improving the quality of their visit. Stricter regulation of vendors inside Maimun Palace is a crucial step in maintaining the quality of the destination, with regulated working hours, sales locations, and other criteria that can have a positive impact.

In addition, improved tourist services are an integral part of the solution. Training of tour staff to provide informative and in-depth guided tours, along with the use of interactive technology, is expected to improve visitors' understanding of the history of Maimun Palace. As such, the overall proposed solution can create positive change, re-establish the destination's appeal and invite new interest.

While this research provides significant insights, there are limitations that need to be acknowledged. This research only focuses on the service aspect and does not touch on the promotion and marketing aspects. Therefore, further research involving these aspects may provide a more comprehensive picture of efforts to increase visitation at Maimun Palace. These conclusions provide a framework for further action in improving the attractiveness and sustainability of this historical tourist destination.

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