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# THE EFFECT OF TOURISM MARKETING MIX AND SERVICE QUALITY ON INTEREST IN RETURNING VISITORS THROUGH TOURIST SATISFACTION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE

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## Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the influence of tourism marketing mix and service quality on interest in returning visitors through tourist satisfaction as an intervening variable. The research was conducted in tourist destinations in Luwu Regency using a survey method of 100 respondents. The results of the study show that the marketing mix and service quality have a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction, which in turn increases the interest of tourists to return. In addition, tourist satisfaction proved to be a strong mediator in the relationship between marketing mix and service quality with interest in returning. These findings indicate the importance of effective marketing strategies and high-quality services in increasing tourist loyalty and the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Based on these findings, it is recommended that tourist destination managers focus on strengthening elements of the marketing mix and improving service quality to achieve higher tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

## Keywords:

Tourism Marketing Mix, Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction, Interest In Returning, Tourist Destinations.

## Introduction

The tourism sector plays a very important role in the economy, both local and foreign. The growth of the tourism sector not only contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but also creates jobs and supports other sectors of the economy. The tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors, serving as a significant source of income and employment in various countries, and producing a multiplier effect that can stimulate people's economic growth (Nursalam et al., 2022). This is in line with research (Mahfudz, 2023) which shows that the tourism industry is able to compete with other major sectors, such as financial services and the manufacturing industry, in contributing to global economic growth.

Sustainable tourism development is becoming increasingly important in today's global context. It is stated that the application of sustainable tourism principles can be a solution to encourage sustainable economic development (Husain, 2023). In the context of post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery, the tourism sector is a priority in the economic recovery program, which shows that this sector has great potential to support future economic growth (Marwan & Isnaeni, 2022). In addition, research (Widari, 2020) shows that sustainable tourism development policies need to be implemented to ensure that economic growth does not sacrifice social and environmental aspects. The tourism sector not only serves as a source of income and employment, but also as a driver of sustainable economic growth. With great potential to improve people's well-being and support other sectors, planned and sustainable tourism development is key to achieving broader economic goals.

One of the destinations that tourists are interested in is to visit an area that has beautiful scenery and has a distinctive culture that is a special attraction for tourists, both local and foreign tourists. Tourist destinations in Luwu Regency play a considerable role in terms of bringing in domestic and foreign tourists, plus several natural tourism objects in Luwu Regency show an increasing tendency because they are increasingly known by local and foreign tourists.

The influence of the tourism marketing mix and the quality of service in attracting tourists is a very relevant topic in the context of tourism industry development. The tourism marketing mix consists of elements such as products, prices, venues, and promotions, all of which contribute to the traveler's experience. Research (Usman, 2022) shows that the tourism marketing mix has a positive and significant influence on tourist satisfaction, which in turn increases interest in returning. This shows that an effective marketing strategy can create a satisfying experience for travelers, encouraging travelers to return to the same destination.

The quality of service also plays an important role in attracting tourists. A study conducted (Hudhori, 2024) confirms that good service quality contributes more to visitor satisfaction than customer value. The high quality of service not only creates a positive experience for tourists, but also improves the image of the destination. Good management in tourism services is very important to attract tourists (Simarmata et al., 2021). Thus, good service quality can be a key factor in building tourist loyalty and increasing the competitiveness of destinations.

Tourists are an important factor that contributes to the interest in returning. Research shows that the positive experiences that travelers have during their visit can increase the likelihood of returning to the same destination. (Usman et al. 2022) emphasized that tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the interest in returning, and can mediate the influence of the tourism marketing mix on the interest in returning. This shows that an effective marketing strategy that results in high satisfaction can increase tourist loyalty.

Overall, tourist satisfaction is a key component in increasing interest in returning. Research shows that the combination of quality of service, effective marketing mix, and positive experiences during a visit is essential to creating tourist loyalty. Therefore, a management strategy that focuses on increasing tourist satisfaction will be very beneficial for the sustainability of the tourism industry. Based on the theories and problems that have been raised regarding the importance of increasing interest in tourist visits to tourist attractions, the researcher is interested in conducting research related to the influence of tourism marketing mix and service quality through tourist satisfaction on interest in returning.

### Literature Review

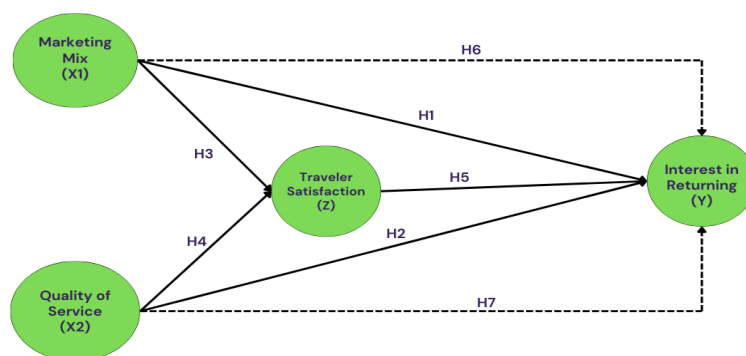
The tourism marketing mix is a very important concept in developing tourism destinations, especially in the context of digitalization and innovation. In this modern era, digital marketing has become one of the main strategies used to promote tourism destinations. For example, research by shows that tourism managers in Purbayan Village need to develop marketing tactics that utilize digital technology to increase tourist attraction (Indainanto, 2024). In addition, Sari and Batubara emphasized the importance of internet-based promotional media, such as websites that meet SEO standards, to increase the visibility and ranking of tourism destinations on search engines (Sari & Batubara, 2021).

Marketing mix, or marketing mix, is an important concept in marketing that consists of various interrelated elements to achieve marketing goals. The main elements of the traditional marketing mix are known as the 4P's, namely Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. However, in modern practice, especially in the context of more complex services and industries, the marketing mix is often expanded to the 7P's, which also include People, Process, and Physical Evidence (Oroh, 2023; Wibisono, 2023; Zulkifli, 2024).

Service quality in the tourism industry is a key element that affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. Various theories and indicators have been developed to measure the quality of service, with one of the most widely used models being SERVQUAL. This model identifies five main dimensions of service quality: tangible (physical evidence), reliability (reliability), responsiveness (responsiveness), assurance (assurance), and empathy (empathy) Muharam (2023) Lusiah, 2019; Prananda et al., 2019). These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating how customers perceive the quality of service they receive. The quality of service not only includes physical aspects such as cleanliness and facilities, but also includes the interaction between staff and customers. Further research shows that service quality has a significant effect on tourists' interest in revisiting, with service quality being the dominant predictor in the regression model used (Simarmata et al., 2021). This shows that the positive experience obtained from good service can encourage tourists to return to the destination.

Service quality indicators in the tourism industry can also include the timeliness of service, accuracy of information, and the friendliness and courtesy of staff (Pangestuti & Husniaty, 2021). For example, research by shows that professionalism and speed of service can be applied in the context of tourism, where customer satisfaction is greatly influenced by how they are treated by staff (Khusaeni, 2016). In addition, research by Hidayat and Sunarharum emphasizes the importance of destination image and safety as part of the overall tourist experience (Hidayat & Sunarharum, 2023).

Tourist satisfaction is one of the important aspects in the tourism industry that has a direct effect on the interest of returning visitors and tourist loyalty. Various studies show that tourist satisfaction is influenced by the quality of service, emotional experience, and destination attributes. Usman et al, 2022 emphasized that service quality has a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction, which in turn affects interest in revisiting. This is in line with findings that show that sustainable tourist satisfaction can foster loyalty, which is a commitment to continue using the products or services offered (Ramadhani et al., 2021). Tourist satisfaction is also influenced by the specific attributes of the destination. Research shows that good service quality attributes can increase satisfaction and, ultimately, traveler loyalty (Pinkus et al., 2016). In addition, the causal relationship between antecedent factors, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty, suggests that satisfaction serves as a strong mediator in this relationship (Zhu & Zhang, 2015). Another study by confirming that tourist satisfaction has a stronger mediating effect compared to place attachment in the relationship between destination attraction and loyalty (Nasir et al., 2020).



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

## Methodology

The research method used to determine the sample size and research data through an online questionnaire distributed to users of tourist destinations. A total of 100 respondents voluntarily participated in filling out this research questionnaire. The respondents' profiles are shown in table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Information Of The Respondents**

Demographic Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	73	73%
Female	27	27%
Age		
17-35 years old	62	62%
36~45 years old	30	30%
Over 46 years old	8	8%
Job		

Demographic Items	Frequensy	Persentase (%)
Students	43	43%
Employee	20	20%
Entrepreneur	13	13%
Others	14	14%

Measurement variables and indicators were adopted from previous studies and were formulated with research objectives. The scale used is a five-point scale of likers, ranging from strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing, the research variables and research indicators are shown in table 2.

**Tabel 2. Variabel Dan Indikator Pengukuran**

Variable	Indicators	References
<b>Marketing Mix (X1)</b>	1) Product	(Oroh, 2023),
	2) Price	(Wibisono, 2023),
	3) Place	(Zulkifli, 2024)
	4) Promotion	
	5) People	
	6) Process	
	7) Physical Evidence	
<b>Service Quality (X2)</b>	1) Tangible	(Muharam, 2023),
	2) Realibility	(Lusiah, 2019)
	3) Responsiveness	(Prananda, 2019)
	4) Assurance	
	5) Empathy	
<b>Traveler Satisfaction (Z)</b>	1) Facilities	
	2) Attractions	(Nurfajrina, 2021)
	3) Accessibility	
<b>Interest in Returning (Y)</b>	1) Intention to revisit	
	2) Recommendations to others	(Cahyani, 2024)
	3) Visit preferences	(Saputra, 2024)

## Result

The results of the research conducted by looking at the measurement model/outer model test were determined by the outer loading value of each variable indicator. The determination criteria are said to be valid if the outer loading value  $> 0.07$ . The results of the study found that the outer loading values of all variable indicators MM, QS, TS, and IR were more than 0.7 (see Table 3). In addition, to assess the model, it is said to be reliable if the value of Cronbach's Alpha is greater  $> 0.6$  and the composite reliability (CR) is higher than  $> 0.07$ . The results of the study found that the CR value of each construct was in the range above  $> 0.07$  so that it could be said that the reality was achieved (see table 3). In addition, the convergent validity

indicator is achieved when the average extracted variance (AVE) the value obtained is said to be valid if it > 0.50. The results of the analysis found that the AVE value was above the threshold so that it could be said that convergent validity was achieved (see table 3).

**Tabel. 3. Measurement Model/Outer Model Test**

Variable	Item	$\Lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
MM	MM1	0,940	0,970	0,962	0,783
	MM2	0,906			
	MM3	0,887			
	MM4	0,741			
	MM5	0,902			
	MM6	0,891			
	MM7	0,911			
QS	QS1	0,936	0,921	0,941	0,761
	QS2	0,850			
	QS3	0,832			
	QS4	0,870			
	QS5	0,869			
TS	TS1	0,845	0,790	0,877	0,705
	TS2	0,827			
	TS3	0,846			
	BD4	0,929			
IR	IR1	0,871	0,808	0,885	0,720
	IR2	0,884			
	IR3	0,788			

Keterangan: MM= Marketing Mix, QS= Service Quality, TS= Tourist Satisfaction, IR= Interest in revisiting

Source: Primer SmartPLS, 2024

### Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing using SEM applications as seen in table 4. for any relationship between variables. The P-Value shows the significant level between variables where if the P-value < 0.05, the relationship between the variables is said to be significant,

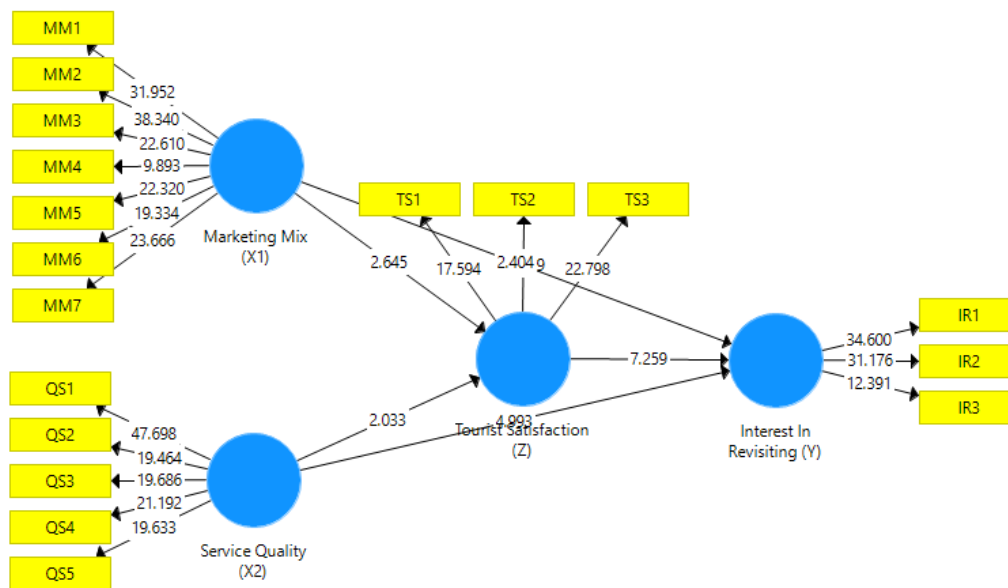
**Tabel 4. Hypothesis Test**

Hypothesis	Relation	$\beta$	T-Value	P-Value	Keterangan
H <sub>1</sub>	MM→IR	0,203	2,404	0,017	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub>	QS→IR	0,387	4,993	0,000	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	MM→TS	0,244	2,645	0,008	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	QS→TS	0,212	2,033	0,043	Accepted
H <sub>5</sub>	TS→IR	0,521	7,259	0,000	Accepted
H <sub>6</sub>	MM →TS→IR	0,127	2,383	0,018	Accepted
H <sub>7</sub>	QS →TS→IR	0,110	2,045	0,000	Accepted

Keterangan: MM= Marketing Mix, QS= Service Quality, TS= Tourist Satisfaction, IR= Interest in revisiting

Source: Primer SmartPLS, 2024





**Figure 2. SEM Analysis Results**

The results of the hypothesis test in this study show that there is a significant relationship between Marketing Mix (MM), Service Quality (QS), Tourist Satisfaction (TS), and Interest to Return (IR). First, it was found that Marketing Mix had a positive influence on Interest to Return with a  $\beta$  value of 0.203 and a P-value of 0.017, indicating that an increase in Marketing Mix elements such as products, prices, promotions, and venues could increase travelers' interest in returning. This is in line with previous research by (Oroh, 2023) which stated that effective marketing strategies play an important role in shaping customer decisions.

In addition, Service Quality was also proven to have a significant effect on Interest to Return with a  $\beta$  value of 0.387 and a P-value of 0.000. These findings are supported by research (Muharram, 2023) which shows that superior service quality can increase customer satisfaction and encourage their intention to return. Service Quality also has a positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction with a  $\beta$  value of 0.212 and a P-value of 0.043, which is consistent with research (Prananda, 2019) which shows that service quality is the main predictor of satisfaction in the tourism sector.

Furthermore, Tourist Satisfaction was found to have the strongest influence on Interest to Return with a  $\beta$  value of 0.521 and a P-value of 0.000. This supports the theory of customer satisfaction and loyalty put forward (Ramadhani et al., 2021), which states that high satisfaction tends to increase loyalty and interest in making repeat visits. Marketing Mix and Service Quality also had an indirect influence on Interest to Return through Tourist Satisfaction as a mediator, with  $\beta$  values of 0.127 and 0.110, respectively. This shows that customer satisfaction plays an important role as a link between marketing strategy and interest to return.

Overall, this study confirms the importance of Marketing Mix and Quality of Service in building Traveler Satisfaction, which in turn increases Interest to Return. These results not only support previous research but also provide important insights for the tourism industry on how to increase tourist loyalty through effective marketing strategies and high-quality services.

### Summary and Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that Marketing Mix and Service Quality play an important role in shaping Tourist Satisfaction, which then has a significant impact on Interest to Return. The direct influence of Marketing Mix and Quality of Service on Interest to Return has also proven significant, suggesting that a good marketing strategy and high-quality service can increase the likelihood of travellers making a repeat visit. In addition, Traveler Satisfaction serves as a powerful mediator in the relationship between Marketing Mix and Service Quality with Interest to Return, which emphasizes the importance of customer satisfaction in building loyalty.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that companies or tourist destinations focus on improving their Marketing Mix strategy and service quality to increase tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Elements such as product, price, promotion, and distribution must be reinforced, while the quality of service must be consistent and exceed travelers' expectations. In addition, the development of loyalty programs that offer incentives for repeat visits as well as the regular use of traveler feedback can help companies tailor their strategies according to customer needs, thereby increasing the interest of returning tourists and strengthening the competitiveness of destinations in the market.

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