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Tourist Experience as an Affective Mechanism in a Constrained Innovation Environment

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ABSTRACT

Research Aims: This study examines how servicescape elements shape tourist experience and, in turn, influence satisfaction and revisit intention within a constrained innovation environment. Focusing on a government-managed zoo in Bukittinggi, Indonesia, the study addresses the structural and bureaucratic limitations of public-sector tourism, exploring the role of tourist experience as an affective mechanism that compensates for restricted innovation capacity.

Design/methodology/approach: A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data from 316 visitors were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the paths between servicescape dimensions, emotion, satisfaction, and revisit intention. To explain the quantitative results, qualitative data from open-ended comments were subjected to reflexive thematic analysis, capturing tourists' critical reflections on the destination's operational realities.

Research Findings: Quantitative results indicate that physical facilities and souvenir offerings exert a significant indirect influence on revisit intention through satisfaction, mediated by emotional responses. Conversely, staff interaction, convenience, and food services show no significant effects. Qualitative findings elucidate these results by identifying chronic "infrastructure and service friction," including parking scarcity, "pungli" (illegal fees), and animal welfare concerns. These insights suggest that in public-sector settings, tangible and symbolic elements act as critical "experiential anchors" that outweigh interpersonal encounters in forming affective loyalty.

Theoretical Contribution/Originality: This study provides a significant theoretical advancement by reconceptualizing the servicescape-loyalty nexus within a constrained innovation framework. While mainstream literature assumes that destination competitiveness requires continuous, radical innovation, this research offers a novel 'Compensatory Affective Model.' It demonstrates that in public-sector environments where structural and bureaucratic rigidities stifle physical upgrades, the affective mechanism (tourist emotion) functions as a critical substitute for radical innovation. By shifting the focus from 'innovation-driven' to 'maintenance-driven emotional quality,' this study offers a new lens for understanding destination resilience in emerging economies, proving that strategic emotional resonance can effectively sustain loyalty even when the physical servicescape remains static.

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Introduction

The global tourism landscape increasingly prioritizes "experiential value," where a destination's competitiveness is defined by its ability to innovate and adapt to shifting emotional expectations (Brandão et al., 2019). While private-sector destinations—such as integrated theme parks and luxury resorts—thrive through "agile innovation" and rapid service upgrades (Wu et al., 2018), a critical gap exists in the public sector. Government-managed destinations often operate within a constrained innovation environment, characterized by rigid bureaucratic structures, budgetary limitations, and a "standard maintenance" regime that stifles creative service enhancement (Soomro et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2022).

In emerging economies like Indonesia, these institutional barriers are particularly pronounced in regional public attractions, such as government-run zoos. Unlike their private counterparts, these sites must maintain visitor relevance despite a static servicescape and limited capacity for technological or infrastructural updates (Suhartanto et al., 2018). While the servicescape—the physical and social environment of service—is established as a driver of tourist behavior (Bitner, 1992; Krisjanous et al., 2023), its role as an affective mechanism in resource-constrained public environments remains under-researched. Most existing literature remains skewed toward high-innovation commercial contexts like luxury hotels and theme parks (Chang, 2018), leaving a theoretical vacuum regarding how "limited-innovation" destinations can still foster Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) and long-term loyalty.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the interrelationships between servicescape, tourist experience, satisfaction, and revisit intention within the public sector. The core novelty of this research lies in its examination of how affective mechanisms (experience and satisfaction) function as compensatory tools for maintaining competitiveness when structural innovation is constrained. By utilizing the Bukittinggi Zoo as a focal point, this research extends servicescape theory beyond commercial agility, offering a new perspective on how public-sector managers can optimize emotional resonance to drive revisit intentions despite institutional rigidity. Specifically, this study tests the mediating roles of emotion and satisfaction, providing empirical evidence on how "static" environments can still produce "dynamic" behavioral outcomes.

Literature Review

Servicescape and Tourist Experience

The concept of servicescape was initially introduced by Bitner (1992) to describe how the physical environment of a service setting influences customers' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors. In tourism contexts, servicescape has evolved into a broader construct encompassing both tangible and intangible elements, including facility layout, cleanliness, signage, ambient conditions, and staff

interaction, which collectively shape visitors' holistic impressions of a destination (Bitner, 1992; Kandampully et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2017; Krisjanous et al., 2023). Rather than serving merely functional purposes, servicescape increasingly plays a symbolic and experiential role, conveying meaning and emotional cues that affect tourists' evaluations of their visit (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Hosany et al., 2015; Pestana et al., 2020). Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, the servicescape acts as a primary stimulus (S) that triggers affective and sensory responses within the visitor (Organism/O), which ultimately dictates behavioral outcomes (Response/R) (Bitner, 1992; Zhou et al., 2024).

Recent tourism studies emphasize that servicescape is a critical antecedent of tourist experience, as environmental stimuli directly trigger affective and sensory responses that form the core of experiential consumption (Jiang, 2022; Tuominen, 2023; Zheng et al., 2021.; Zhou et al., 2024.). Well-designed physical settings enhance comfort, enjoyment, and emotional engagement, whereas poorly maintained environments may generate dissatisfaction and negative emotions. Accordingly, in destinations where innovation capacity is constrained, optimizing existing servicescape elements becomes a viable strategy for shaping favorable tourist experiences.

Integrating recent advancements in service research, the servicescape is categorized into three critical dimensions. First, Ambient Conditions encompass intangible background characteristics such as temperature, lighting, and cleanliness, which subconsciously dictate the atmospheric comfort of a destination (Tsai et al., 2024). Second, Spatial Layout and Functionality involve the arrangement of facilities and the environment's ability to facilitate tourist goals and movement efficiency. Third, Signs, Symbols, and Artifacts serve as social and symbolic cues that communicate the destination's identity and provide "tangible anchors" for memories (Oyedeji et al., 2025).

In destinations with constrained innovation capacity, such as public-sector attractions, the role of these dimensions shifts from novelty-delivery to maintenance-based emotional signaling. Recent studies suggest that when radical service innovation is absent, the meticulous upkeep of ambient conditions and the optimization of symbolic artifacts (e.g., souvenirs) act as compensatory mechanisms. These elements provide "affective reassurance," ensuring that the visitor's emotional engagement remains high despite the lack of high-tech or radical physical updates (Soomro et al., 2025; Yan, 2025). Consequently, the servicescape functions as an affective mechanism where the "absence of discomfort" through effective maintenance becomes the primary driver of experiential value.

Although *tourist experience* is widely conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and sensory dimensions (Bigné et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2012), a growing body of tourism research emphasizes that the affective dimension—particularly emotion—constitutes the core of experiential consumption and represents the primary psychological mechanism

through which destination stimuli are translated into evaluative judgments and behavioral outcomes (Hosany et al., 2015; Prayag et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2024).

From an experience-based perspective, emotions are immediate and intuitive responses elicited by environmental stimuli, and they typically precede higher-order cognitive evaluations such as satisfaction and loyalty intentions (Bigné et al., 2005; Prayag et al., 2017). This view is consistent with the affective–cognitive–conative hierarchy proposed by (Oliver, 1999), which positions emotional responses as the initial stage in the formation of satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions. Within this framework, satisfaction functions as a cognitive appraisal that is largely shaped by prior emotional experiences, rather than operating as an independent evaluative process.

Importantly, the dominance of emotional experience becomes particularly salient in constrained innovation environments, such as government-managed tourism destinations. In these contexts, opportunities for continuous product innovation, technological enhancement, or program diversification are often restricted by bureaucratic procedures, regulatory constraints, and limited financial flexibility (Soomro et al., 2025). As a result, tourists' experiences are less likely to be driven by novelty or complex cognitive engagement and are instead shaped by emotional resonance, perceived care, and symbolic meaning embedded in the physical and social environment (Hosany et al., 2015; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Dolen et al., 2004; Wood & Kinnunen, 2020; Yang et al., 2011).

Based on these theoretical and contextual considerations, the present study intentionally operationalizes tourist experience as an affective construct, represented by tourists' emotional responses. This operationalization allows for a more precise examination of emotion as an *affective mechanism* through which servicescape attributes influence satisfaction and revisit intention. By focusing on the affective core of tourist experience, the study offers a theoretically grounded and context-sensitive explanation of tourist behavior in government-managed destinations operating under structural innovation constraints.

Based on these arguments, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Servicescape has a positive effect on tourist emotions.

Tourist Experience and Satisfaction

Tourist experience is widely conceptualized as a multidimensional construct integrating emotional, cognitive, and sensory dimensions arising from tourists' interactions with destination attributes (Bigné et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2012). Experiences formed during visitation play a decisive role in shaping tourists' overall evaluations, as they reflect both perceived value and emotional resonance (Ali et al., 2014; Meeprom & Silanoi, 2020).

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that positive tourist experiences enhance satisfaction by exceeding expectations and reinforcing perceived quality (Zheng et al., 2021). When tourists perceive their experiences as enjoyable,

meaningful, and emotionally engaging, they are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction with the destination. This relationship is particularly salient in experiential tourism settings, where emotional responses often outweigh purely functional assessments.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Tourist emotion has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

Servicescape and Tourist Satisfaction

Beyond its indirect influence through experience, servicescape may also exert a direct impact on tourist satisfaction. Grounded in Expectation–Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1999), satisfaction arises when perceived performance aligns with or exceeds visitors' expectations. Cleanliness, facility adequacy, accessibility, and supporting amenities represent fundamental components of perceived service quality in tourism destinations (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Prior studies confirm that physical and environmental attributes significantly affect satisfaction, especially in attractions where visitors interact intensively with on-site facilities (Ali et al., 2025; Chang & Lee, 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Wu & Li, 2017). In government-managed tourism destinations, where service innovation is often limited, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the servicescape remains essential for sustaining acceptable satisfaction levels.

Thus, this study proposes:

H3: Servicescape has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

Satisfaction occupies a central position in tourism behavior models and has been consistently identified as a key antecedent of revisit intention. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), satisfied tourists are more likely to form favorable behavioral intentions, including the intention to revisit and recommend the destination to others (Chen et al., 2020; Prayag et al., 2017).

More recent research reinforces that satisfaction fosters destination loyalty, particularly in mature or highly competitive tourism markets (Chi et al, 2016; Patwardhan et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). In public-sector tourism contexts, repeat visitation is especially critical, as it compensates for limited marketing budgets and constrained innovation capabilities.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on revisit intention.

The Mediating Role of Tourist Experience and Satisfaction

Experience-based perspectives in tourism suggest that environmental stimuli influence behavioral outcomes primarily through psychological mechanisms rather than direct effects alone (Zhang et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2021). In this regard, tourist experience serves as an affective mechanism through which servicescape shapes

satisfaction, transforming physical attributes into emotionally meaningful encounters (Ali et al., 2014).

Furthermore, satisfaction functions as a proximal determinant of revisit intention, mediating the relationship between experiential evaluations and future behavioral outcomes (Chang & Lee, 2020; Nugroho et al., 2022; Prayag et al., 2017; Sohn et al., 2016). In constrained innovation environments such as government-managed attractions, these mediating mechanisms become particularly salient, as destinations rely more heavily on experiential quality than continuous product innovation.

Accordingly, this study advances the following hypotheses:

H5: Tourist experience mediates the relationship between servicescape and tourist satisfaction.

H6: Tourist satisfaction mediates the relationship between tourist experience and revisit intention.

Method

This study employed a mixed-methods research design with an explanatory sequential approach to deeply integrate quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The research was conducted at a government-managed zoo in Bukittinggi, Indonesia, which represents a public-sector tourism environment characterized by limited innovation capacity due to bureaucratic and financial constraints.

In the quantitative phase, data were collected through a cross-sectional survey using a purposive sampling technique involving 316 visitors. The research instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale adapted from the literature to measure the variables of servicescape, tourist experience (affective, cognitive, and sensory), satisfaction, and behaviour intention (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Kim et al., 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0 software.

To ensure the rigor of the study, all variables were measured using indicators adapted from established tourism and marketing literature. The detailed measurement items are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Variable Measurement

Variable	Indicator	Reference
Convenience	● I can rest in the rest area provided around the Bukittinggi Zoo comfortably ● The parking lot is spacious, so I can park my vehicle freely ● Bukittinggi Zoo location has adequate restrooms	(Lee et al., 2008).

Variable	Indicator	Reference
Staff	• The staff and crew are knowledgeable • The staff and crew responded well to my needs • The staff and crew are friendly	(Grappi & Montanari, 2011)
Program	• Bukittinggi Zoo has an interesting program • Bukittinggi Zoo have quality programming • The entire set of add-ons at Bukittinggi Zoo is of great quality • Bukittinggi Zoo is uplifting • Bukittinggi Zoo is well-managed • Bukittinggi Zoo is consistent with the concept every year, and the additional events are worthy • Interesting animals	(Grappi & Montanari, 2011)
Facility	• Bukittinggi Zoo has a cozy venue • Bukittinggi Zoo venue facilities are Complete • The space/size of Bukittinggi Zoo location is quite spacious • Bukittinggi Zoo location is clean • Fun atmosphere in Bukittinggi Zoo location • Bukittinggi Zoo layouts are attractive	(Lee et al., 2008).
Souvenir	• Bukittinggi Zoo provides great souvenirs • Bukittinggi Zoo provides a variety of souvenirs • At Bukittinggi Zoo, the price of souvenirs is proportional to the quality	(Grappi & Montanari, 2011)
Food	• Quality of food • Price of food • Available traditional food • Variety of foods	(Selmi et al., 2021)
Emotion	• Feeling of joy and happiness (*Joy*). • Feeling of amazement or awe (*Amazement*). • Feeling of relaxation and tranquility (*Relaxation*). • Feeling of being entertained (*Pleasure*).	(Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Prayag et al., 2017)
Satisfaction	• I am satisfied with this Bukittinggi Zoo generally • I feel satisfied when I consider the money and time spent. • I am satisfied with this Bukittinggi Zoo when compared with other similar places.	(Sohn et al., 2016b)
Behavior Intention	• I will recommend Bukittinggi Zoo to friends • I will say positive things about Bukittinggi Zoo to others • I want to visit Bukittinggi Zoo again next time	(Grappi & Montanari, 2011)

Variable	Indicator	Reference
	• I will invite others to attend Bukittinggi Zoo next time	

To enrich the statistical findings, a qualitative phase was conducted through thematic analysis of respondents' open-ended written comments, based on the framework by (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This approach aimed to capture spontaneous perceptions and critical reflections of tourists regarding facilities and services that might not be fully accommodated in the structured questionnaire (Ren et al., 2025; Xiang et al., 2021).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Category	Sub-category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	105	33.44%
	Female	209	66.56%
Age	< 17 years old	29	9.24%
	17 – 27 years old	171	54.46%
	28 – 42 years old	86	27.39%
	43 – 60 years old	28	8.92%
Origin (Top 5)	Bukittinggi	65	20.70%
	Padang	36	11.46%
	Riau	35	11.15%
	Agam	26	8.28%
	Payakumbuh	24	7.64%
	Other cities	130	40.77%
Education	Elementary School or equivalent	2	0.64%
	Junior High School or equivalent	18	5.73%
	Senior High School or equivalent	132	42.04%
	Diploma (Associate Degree)	27	8.60%
	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	125	39.81%
	Master's Degree (S2)	10	3.18%
Occupation	Student / Undergraduate	146	46.50%
	Entrepreneur / Self-employed	61	19.43%
	Private Sector Employee	42	13.38%

Category	Sub-category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
	Civil Servant (PNS)	28	8.92%
	Housewife	19	6.05%
	Others (Freelance, Notary, etc.)	20	6.72%
Monthly Income	< IDR 4,000,000	246	78.34%
	IDR 4,000,000 - < IDR 6,000,000	45	14.33%
	IDR 6,000,000 - IDR 8,000,000	13	4.14%
	> IDR 8,000,000	10	3.18%
Mode of Transport	Private Vehicle	229	72.93%
	Bus	61	19.43%
	Travel / Shuttle	15	4.78%
	Public Transport	5	1.59%
	Airplane	4	1.27%
Visit Frequency	1 Time	52	16.56%
	2 Times	51	16.24%
	3 Times	61	19.43%
	4 Times	27	8.60%
	5 Times or more	123	39.17%
Expenditure at Destination	Food & Beverages	166	52.87%
	Food, Beverages, Merchandise, & Rides	59	18.79%
	Food, Beverages, & Rides	53	16.88%
	Rides only	22	7.01%
	Others (Merchandise combinations)	16	4.45%
Total Travel Budget	< 1,500,000 IDR	239	76.11%
	> 1,500,000 - 3,000,000 IDR	50	15.92%
	> 3,000,000 - 5,000,000 IDR	16	5.10%
	> 5,000,000 IDR	9	2.87%
Accommodation	Non-overnight (Day trip)	153	48.73%
	Hotel / Inn / Guesthouse	83	26.43%
	Family / Friend's House	78	24.84%

Category	Sub-category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Information Source	Media (News/General Media)	133	42.36%
	Friends / Word of Mouth	117	37.26%
	Instagram	56	17.83%
	Facebook	8	2.55%
Post-COVID Hesitancy	No	240	76.43%
	Yes	74	23.57%

Source: Calculated by authors, 2025.

Result and Discussion
Measurement Model Assessment

Table 3 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Behavior Intention	0.934	0.934	0.953	0.834
Confenience	0.748	0.757	0.856	0.665
Emotion	0.907	0.908	0.942	0.843
Facility	0.933	0.934	0.947	0.748
Food	0.891	0.896	0.924	0.754
Program	0.912	0.912	0.934	0.740
Satisfaction	0.888	0.890	0.931	0.817
Souvenir	0.885	0.886	0.929	0.813
Staff	0.904	0.905	0.940	0.839

Source: Calculated by authors, 2025.

As presented in Table 3, all constructs exhibit Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability. Composite reliability values for all constructs also surpass the minimum criterion of 0.70, confirming robust construct reliability (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Table 4 Discriminant validity (HTMT)

	Behavior Intention	Confenience	Emotion	Facility	Food	Program	Satisfaction	Souvenir	Staff
Behavior Intention									
Confenience	0.699								
Emotion	0.864	0.746							
Facility	0.835	0.851	0.841						
Food	0.744	0.772	0.760	0.808					
Program	0.812	0.897	0.794	0.930	0.840				
Satisfaction	0.923	0.790	0.940	0.915	0.831	0.861			
Souvenir	0.839	0.767	0.863	0.858	0.900	0.828	0.869		
Staff	0.721	0.814	0.674	0.816	0.760	0.865	0.741	0.766	

Source: Calculated by authors, 2025.

As shown in Table 4, most HTMT values fall below the conservative threshold of 0.90, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Several construct pairs—particularly those involving emotion, satisfaction, and revisit intention—exhibit HTMT values marginally exceeding the recommended cutoff.

Moreover, recent methodological guidelines acknowledge that HTMT values slightly above 0.90 may be acceptable when constructs are conceptually related yet empirically meaningful and when convergent validity and reliability criteria are robustly satisfied (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Structural Model Results

Table 5 Path coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Confenience -> Emotion	0.067	0.066	0.062	1.080	0.280
Emotion -> Satisfaction	0.847	0.847	0.024	35.113	0.000
Facility -> Emotion	0.367	0.366	0.087	4.244	0.000
Food -> Emotion	0.032	0.031	0.070	0.450	0.653
Program -> Emotion	0.101	0.102	0.079	1.278	0.201
Satisfaction -> Behavior	0.841	0.842	0.019	43.673	0.000

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Intention Souvenir -> Emotion	0.406	0.406	0.084	4.844	0.000
Staff -> Emotion	0.088	0.084	0.071	1.255	0.210

Source: Calculated by authors, 2025.

The structural model results confirm that Tourist Emotion is a powerful predictor of Satisfaction (β=0.847, $p<0.001$), which in turn strongly drives Behavioral Intention (β=0.841, $p<0.001$). Regarding environmental antecedents, only Facility Quality (β=0.367, $p<0.001$) and Souvenir Experience (β=0.406, $p<0.001$) significantly elicit emotional engagement. Conversely, convenience, food experience, program quality, and staff performance show no significant effect ($p > 0.05$), indicating they function as baseline expectations rather than emotional drivers. The R^2 values indicate that the model explains 68.1% of the variance in emotion, 71.7% in satisfaction, and 70.8% in behavioral intention, providing a robust framework for understanding loyalty through affective mechanisms.

Table 6 Mediation effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Convenience -> Emotion -> Satisfaction	0.057	0.056	0.053	1.077	0.281
Staff -> Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	-0.063	-0.060	0.050	1.256	0.209
Facility -> Emotion -> Satisfaction	0.311	0.310	0.076	4.073	0.000
Food -> Emotion -> Satisfaction	0.027	0.026	0.059	0.451	0.652
Souvenir -> Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	0.289	0.289	0.061	4.782	0.000
Program -> Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	0.072	0.073	0.056	1.273	0.203

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Program -> Emotion -> Satisfaction	0.085	0.086	0.067	1.279	0.201
Souvenir -> Emotion -> Satisfaction	0.344	0.343	0.070	4.927	0.000
Staff -> Emotion -> Satisfaction	-0.075	-0.071	0.060	1.258	0.209
Confenience -> Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	0.048	0.047	0.044	1.079	0.281
Facility -> Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	0.262	0.261	0.064	4.080	0.000
Food -> Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	0.023	0.022	0.050	0.451	0.652
Emotion -> Satisfaction -> Behavior Intention	0.712	0.713	0.029	24.285	0.000

Source: Calculated by authors, 2025.

The mediation analysis confirms a significant sequential mediation from servicescape attributes to behavioral intention. Specifically, Facility Quality and Souvenir Experience exert significant indirect effects on both Satisfaction (via Emotion: $\beta=0.311$ and $\beta=0.344$, $p<0.001$) and Behavioral Intention (via Emotion→Satisfaction: $\beta=0.262\$$ and $\beta=0.289$, $p<0.001$). These results highlight that tangible and symbolic elements are the primary triggers of the affective-cognitive chain in this environment.

In contrast, other dimensions—convenience, food experience, program quality, and staff performance—show no significant indirect effects ($p>0.05$), reinforcing their role as baseline expectations rather than drivers of loyalty. Notably, the path from Emotion to Behavioral Intention through Satisfaction is highly significant ($\beta=0.712$, $p<0.001$), indicating that in a constrained innovation context, emotional responses must be filtered through satisfaction to effectively drive behavior intentions.

Qualitative Findings: Reflexive Thematic Analysis

To provide a deeper explanation for the quantitative results, particularly the non-significant paths of convenience, staff performance, and program quality, qualitative data from open-ended comments were analyzed. Following the reflexive thematic analysis approach by (Braun & Clarke, 2019), three central themes emerged that illustrate the "experiential friction" within a constrained innovation environment.

Table 4. Thematic Analysis of Visitor Feedback in a Constrained Innovation Environment

Central Theme	Sub-themes (Codes)	Representative Quotes	Explanatory Link to Quantitative Results
I. Infrastructure Stagnation & Logistic Friction	Parking scarcity, pedestrian fatigue, accessibility barriers.	*"Parking is far and insufficient"; "Need escalators in the Japanese Tunnel for the elderly."*	Explains why Convenience is non-significant; external logistic stress overshadows internal site ease.
II. Maintenance-Innovation Gap	Hygiene standards, animal welfare concerns, facility wear-and-tear.	*"The tiger looks dangerously thin"; "Toilets are lacking and dirty"; "Area smells bad."*	Explains the dominance of Facilities; visitors prioritize basic hygiene and ethics over new innovations.
III. Transactional vs Relational Service	Unfriendly staff, illegal fees (pungli), lack of guidance.	*"Unfriendly staff"; "Eliminate illegal parking fees"; "Need free guides for information."*	Explains why Staff Performance fails to trigger positive emotion; interaction is perceived as transactional or negative.

The qualitative findings elucidate the "innovation paradox" inherent in government-managed sites. The non-significance of Convenience and Staff Performance is rooted in "infrastructure and human service friction." Qualitative feedback highlights that chronic parking shortages, "unfriendly staff," and "illegal fees" (*pungli*) act as severe emotional dampers. Furthermore, concerns regarding "thin animals" and "unclean toilets" reveal a Maintenance-Innovation Gap; in resource-constrained environments, visitors prioritize the "absence of discomfort" (basic hygiene and ethical maintenance) over the "presence of novelty" (radical innovation). These insights confirm that for Bukittinggi Zoo, meticulous upkeep is currently more critical for the affective experience than high-tech innovation.

Discussion of Key Findings

This study provides nuanced theoretical insights into how tourist behavior is formed within a constrained innovation environment, particularly in government-managed tourism destinations. The findings confirm that tourist experience—operationalized through emotional responses—functions as a pivotal affective mechanism linking servicescape attributes to satisfaction and subsequent revisit intention. This reinforces recent advancements in experience-based tourism, which argue that in the digital age, tourists do not respond merely to functional service attributes, but rather to the sensory and emotional meanings generated through their interaction with the destination (Prayag et al., 2017; Wood & Kinnunen, 2020; Zheng et al., 2021.).

The demographic data in Table 2 reveals that a significant portion of visitors originates from outside Bukittinggi (e.g., Padang, Payakumbuh, and other regions in West Sumatra). From a consumer behavior perspective, travelers from outside the local area possess higher pre-visit expectations, as they incur higher travel costs and effort (Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman et al., 2017). According to the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, when the actual servicescape performance fails to meet these high expectations, "negative disconfirmation" occurs, significantly decreasing the intention to return. Conversely, a performance that exceeds expectations triggers "positive disconfirmation," fostering loyalty (Hosany et al., 2015; Oliver, 1999). In this study, the high expectations of out-of-town visitors for a "national-scale zoo" are often met with the reality of a static, government-managed environment, which explains why the affective mechanism (emotions) becomes the primary filter for their final evaluation.

The strong effect of physical facilities and souvenir experience on emotional responses is highly relevant to the demographic profile shown in Table 2. With 54.46% of visitors belonging to Gen Z and Millennials, the destination's "visual appeal" is paramount. For this digital-native generation, the servicescape acts as a stage for social media self-representation (Lin & Rasoolimanesh, 2024; Wang & Yan, 2022; Yuan et al., 2022). Furthermore, the high percentage of bachelor's degree holders (39.81%) suggests a segment with refined aesthetic expectations. The significance of souvenirs as "tangible memories" (even for the lower-income bracket) aligns with (Lee & Chang, 2017; Selmi et al., 2021), who found that physical artifacts serve as critical emotional anchors in emerging destination contexts where radical innovation is absent.

The non-significant impact of convenience and staff performance is perhaps the most striking finding, elucidated by both the visitor profile and qualitative friction. While 72.93% of visitors used private vehicles (Table 2), qualitative feedback highlighted a chronic "infrastructure friction" due to parking scarcity. In modern urban tourism, convenience is increasingly viewed as a "baseline expectation" or hygiene factor; its presence does not trigger delight, but its absence—as seen in the qualitative complaints about "far and messy parking"—creates significant

dissatisfaction (Kandampully et al., 2023; Krisjanous et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2019). This suggests that for government-managed sites, the "innovation constraint" often lies in external urban logistics rather than internal management.

The study also finds a high visit frequency, where 39.17% of respondents have visited the zoo five times or more. While this indicates a strong base of loyal visitors, it also presents a managerial challenge: novelty-seeking behavior. For repeat visitors, a servicescape that remains unchanged over years leads to "tourist boredom" and a decline in emotional stimulation (Wu et al., 2018). The lack of radical innovation in this government-managed site—due to structural constraints—risks eroding the interest of these loyal segments. This finding underscores the study's novelty: that in the absence of physical novelty, managers must optimize "affective updates" through creative events or atmospheric shifts to maintain the emotional resonance of repeat visitors (Huang et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2022).

Analysis of Expenditure at Destination shows that the majority of visitor spending is allocated to food and beverages. However, the quantitative results indicate that the "food and souvenir" dimension (as part of the servicescape) has a nuanced impact. While souvenirs act as "tangible memories" that trigger positive emotions, qualitative feedback regarding food services often points to standardized or sub-optimal quality. The non-significance of certain service elements suggests that visitors may perceive the food offerings as a "functional necessity" rather than an "experiential delight." Given that food is the primary expenditure, the management must upgrade the quality and variety of culinary offerings around the site. Improving the "foodscape" is a low-cost innovation strategy that can significantly enhance the affective experience without requiring massive infrastructural investment (Kandampully et al., 2023; Selmi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the "human service gap" identified in the qualitative data—notably "unfriendly staff" and "illegal fees" (pungli)—explains why staff performance failed to trigger positive emotions. For the 39.17% of loyal repeat visitors, the zoo experience has become "self-service" in nature. This supports recent studies by (Lee & Chang, 2017a; Nugroho et al., 2022; Selmi et al., 2021), which suggest that in public-sector attractions, visitors often lower their expectations for interpersonal service, focusing instead on the reliability of the physical environment. The qualitative concerns over animal welfare (e.g., "thin tigers") further indicate that visitors prioritize ethical maintenance over existing programs, reinforcing the idea that in constrained environments, "maintenance is the new innovation" (Soomro et al., 2025).

Finally, the sequential mediation from emotion to satisfaction to behavior intention confirms that satisfaction remains the primary cognitive filter in the public sector (Chen et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2015; Nugroho et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2018). Even without rapid innovation, destinations can sustain loyalty by managing the "emotional quality" of their existing tangible assets.

Conclusion

This study concludes that in a constrained innovation environment, the tourist experience functions as a vital affective bridge that compensates for structural and bureaucratic limitations. The findings reveal a paradox: while government-managed destinations often lack the agility for radical innovation, they can sustain competitiveness by optimizing "experiential anchors"—specifically physical facilities and souvenirs—which act as primary triggers for emotional resonance and subsequent loyalty.

The research advances servicescape theory by conceptualizing the Compensatory Affective Model. It challenges the prevailing paradigm that radical innovation is the sole path to survival, proving that in resource-constrained public sectors, emotional quality and meticulous maintenance can effectively substitute for novelty. The integration of mixed-methods further elucidates how "infrastructure friction" (e.g., parking and illegal fees) serves as an emotional damper, confirming that the absence of discomfort is often more critical than the presence of high-tech features.

This study is limited by its focus on a single government-managed zoo and its cross-sectional design. Future research should employ longitudinal approaches or comparative analyses between public and private attractions. Exploring low-cost digital innovations, such as QR-code-based interpretive systems, could offer further insights into overcoming structural barriers in constrained tourism environments.

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