



# The Role of Heritage Immersive Authenticity to Increase Tourist Satisfaction

Agapito Barros<sup>1</sup>, Suliyanto<sup>2\*</sup>, Refius Pradipta Setyanto<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Management, General Soedirman University, Purwokerto, Indonesia; letensiobarros@gmail.com (A.B.) suliyanto@unsoed.ac.id (S.) refius.setyanto@unsoed.ac.id (R.P.S.)

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Cultural Immersive Authenticity (CIA) as a mediator of the relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction, and to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the management of experience-based tourist destinations. This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method. The subjects of the study were tourists visiting Prambanan Temple, Indonesia, as a representation of cultural tourism destinations. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to 219 respondents. Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method using AMOS software to test the causal relationship between variables. The results showed that Cultural Immersive Authenticity played a significant role as a mediator between service quality and destination image on tourist satisfaction. This finding also supports the hypothesis that cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity have a positive influence on tourist experience. This study concludes that improving service quality and destination image combined with a deep heritage of authenticity can increase tourist satisfaction. This study provides important implications, both theoretically in enriching the literature on cultural authenticity and tourism marketing, and managerially in designing strategies to improve the quality of cultural-based tourist destinations.

**Keywords:** Cultural Immersive Authenticity, Destination Image, Heritage Tourism, Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a global phenomenon that includes activities across geographical boundaries for recreational, business, or professional purposes.(Edirisinghe et al., 2021; Kartika et al., 2024). As one of the main economic sectors, tourism makes a significant contribution to national income and local community development.(Liu et al., 2023; Wondirad et al., 2021). According to(Buhalis et al., 2023), this sector not only increases foreign exchange, but also provides a positive impact through the provision of employment. The tourism sector plays an important role in supporting economic growth and socio-cultural development at the global and local levels. Tourism is not only one of the main contributors to state revenue, but also plays a role in job creation, poverty alleviation, and cultural preservation(Geoffrey Deladem et al., 2021).

From an economic perspective, tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Data from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) shows that the tourism sector will contribute around 10% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2023.(Jones, 2024). In many developing countries, tourism is a major foreign exchange earner, driving economic growth through investment and tourist spending.(Rodríguez-Díaz & Pulido-Fernández, 2021). The tourism sector in Indonesia contributes significantly to the economy. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy reported that tourism contributed 5% to Indonesia's GDP, with the highest contribution coming from leading destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta, and Labuan Bajo. The increase in foreign tourist arrivals after the COVID-19 pandemic has created a multiplier effect on other sectors such as transportation, accommodation, and culinary.(Riswanto et al., 2023).

The tourism sector creates both direct and indirect jobs. Global Employment Trends notes that more than 330 million people are employed in the sector globally, which includes jobs in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and tourist attractions.(Dempster & Zimmer, 2020). In Indonesia, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the tourism sector will absorb around 13 million workers in 2022, making it one of the sectors with the highest labor participation rate.(Statistics, 2022).

Tourism also plays a role in regional development, especially in remote areas that have natural or cultural tourism potential. Tourism development causes areas to gain access to infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and clean water, which in turn improves the quality of life of local communities.(Citaristi, 2022b). For example, the development of the "10 New Bali" destination in Indonesia has had a positive impact on regional economic growth through increased domestic and international tourist visits. Based on a social and cultural perspective, tourism plays a role as a means of preserving local cultural heritage and traditions. Through tourism, communities can introduce their culture to the world, while also receiving economic benefits from this activity. An important review is to maintain a balance so that there is no exploitation of culture that can damage the authenticity and local values.(Richards, 2007).

Tourism promotes cross-cultural dialogue that supports understanding and tolerance between nations. According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), interactions between tourists and local communities have the potential to create deeper mutual understanding and foster social harmony.(Citaristi, 2022a). Despite its great potential, the tourism sector also faces challenges such as overtourism, climate change, and lack of adequate regulation. A sustainable tourism approach is essential to ensure that negative impacts are minimized and long-term benefits are guaranteed. Cultural tourism is a sub-sector of tourism that is unique in that it utilizes cultural heritage as its main attraction. Cultural tourism involves tourists in activities related to the traditions, customs, arts, architecture, and history of local communities.(Sapkota et al., 2024). According to Richards (2021), cultural tourism accounts for almost 40% of all international travel, indicating a great interest in cultural experiences.

Cultural tourism in Indonesia has enormous potential, considering the diversity of tribes, languages, and traditions. Cultural festivals, such as the Lake Toba Festival, the Jember Fashion Carnival, and the Ngaben traditional ceremony in Bali, are the main magnets for local and foreign tourists. Destinations such as Yogyakarta, with its Keraton cultural heritage and batik art, and Toraja, with its unique funeral traditions, are concrete examples of how local culture can attract global attention. Local culture is an attraction for tourists because it offers authentic experiences that cannot be found anywhere else. Tourists tend to look for experiences that can enrich their insight into the traditions and lives of local people. This is in line with the trend of experiential tourism, where tourists want to actively participate in cultural activities, such as learning to weave traditional cloth, participating in traditional processions, or tasting regional specialties.(Wasela, 2023). For example, efforts to preserve local culture through Tourism Villages in Indonesia have succeeded in increasing tourist interest in the lives of indigenous people. Penglipuran Village in Bali, known for its traditional architecture and beautiful atmosphere, has become a leading destination for cultural tourism at the international level (Kemenparekraf, 2023). Cultural tourism

provides significant economic benefits to local communities and the government. Directly, this sector creates job opportunities for local residents, such as tour guides, craftsmen, and artists. Indirectly, cultural tourism also supports other sectors, such as transportation, culinary, and hospitality.

Despite its great potential, cultural tourism also faces challenges, such as excessive commercialization that can reduce cultural authenticity. It is important to manage cultural tourism sustainably by involving local communities in every stage of planning and implementation. Community-based tourism approaches have proven effective in ensuring that local communities directly benefit from tourism activities, while maintaining their cultural authenticity (Richards, 2021). Tourist satisfaction plays a key role in determining loyalty and intention to return to a destination. Oliver (1997) stated that satisfaction is the result of a comparison between expectations and perceived experiences. In the context of cultural tourism, authentic experiences are the main factor influencing tourists' perceptions of destination quality. Tourist satisfaction is one of the main indicators of the success of a tourist destination. Tourist satisfaction is closely related to their likelihood of returning to the same destination and recommending it to others, thus influencing the long-term sustainability of the destination. (C.-F. Chen & Tsai, 2007). Tourist destinations that are able to provide a satisfying experience not only improve their positive image in the eyes of tourists but also create a domino effect for increasing new tourist visits through word of mouth promotion or online reviews.

The Development of Prambanan Temple Tourism Destinations in Indonesia as a World Cultural Heritage (Parlindungan, HH, Sukwika, T., & Manurung, H. (2021). The most popular tourist destination in Indonesia is Prambanan Temple, which is the largest Hindu cultural heritage in Indonesia and has its own charm and beauty. Because in addition to its amazing buildings and spatial layout, Prambanan Temple also holds historical stories and legends that attract tourists. In Indonesia, tourism marketing is a priority in the development of the creative economy, especially through national campaigns such as "Wonderful Indonesia" which aims to increase the attractiveness of local destinations to the international market. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, culture-based marketing strategies, digitalization, and direct promotion are the mainstays in attracting domestic and foreign tourists (Kemenparekraf, 2022). Factors such as digitalization of marketing through social media, creation of attractive visual content, and direct interaction with tourists are the main trends in modern tourism marketing. Research by Buhalis and Law (2008) shows that digital technology allows destinations to reach a wider audience at a lower cost, and provides travelers with access to plan and personalize their experiences, challenges remain, such as managing traveler expectations that are often influenced by unrealistic promotional content. Tourism marketing is also closely related to strengthening the cultural identity of a destination. Cultural-based marketing strategies not only highlight physical attractions, but also showcase cultural elements such as local traditions, arts, and cuisine. Kotler and Keller (2016) note that integrating cultural authenticity into marketing can create stronger brand equity, provide competitive uniqueness for destinations, and increase tourists' desire to visit.

Study (Rahmayanti & Ekawati, 2021) found that service quality has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction. Their study emphasized that service quality attributes such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles can improve the overall tourist experience. Tourists who are satisfied with the service are more likely to provide positive reviews that support the destination's reputation. (Septiandari et al., 2021) found that positive destination image plays an important role in creating a satisfying tourist experience. Tourists with a good perception of destination image tend to feel satisfied because their expectations are met. This study highlights the importance of marketing strategies to build a good destination image. (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2024) shows that service quality and destination image simultaneously influence tourist satisfaction. This study identifies a strong relationship between these elements, where increasing service quality strengthens destination image and ultimately increases tourist satisfaction. The study (Ibrahim & Thawil, 2019) found that service quality does not always have a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Although product quality shows a positive effect, service quality has not had a strong impact, especially when tourist expectations do not match the reality on the ground. Research (Mustikowati & Sarwoko, 2011) found that destination image does not always have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction. Their research suggests that tourists may have unrealistic expectations, which reduces the impact of destination image on satisfaction, even if the services provided are adequate. The study (Apriyani, 2017) found that although service quality is perceived as good by providers, this does not always translate into customer satisfaction. Travelers often compare their experiences with higher expectations, so factors such as responsiveness and empathy may not be enough to achieve optimal satisfaction. Based on the results of the study, there is a gap that some studies show that service quality and destination image significantly affect tourist satisfaction. Others show that the influence is not significant, especially in destinations with less than optimal cultural management.

This research is worth doing because it raises the concept of cultural heritage as an important element in creating a memorable and sustainable tourism experience. In the context of cultural tourism, authenticity has direct implications for destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, and the preservation of local cultural heritage. (Richards, 2018). Promoting the preservation of local culture through an authenticity-based approach. By emphasizing authenticity, local communities can be more involved in tourism management, which in turn will raise awareness of the importance of cultural preservation. (Smith & Robinson, 2006). Globalization often results in cultural homogenization, which can reduce the uniqueness of local cultures. (Kim & Jamal, 2007). This research is important to understand how authentic heritage can be maintained and integrated into cultural destination management strategies. In the technological era, cultural authenticity can be threatened by digital presentations that often prioritize aesthetics over authentic content. (Sundbo & Dixit, 2020). This research can fill the gap regarding how technology can be used to support authenticity without reducing local cultural values.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The quality of tourism services has been recognized as a key factor that has a significant influence on tourist satisfaction in various studies. According to (Parasuraman et al., 1988) The SERVQUAL model with five main dimensions—Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy—is the basis for measuring service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction, including in tourism. (Baker & Crompton, 2000) found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction in the context of festivals, while (C.-F. Chen & Chen, 2010) shows the importance of the quality of the tourism experience in increasing satisfaction at historical and cultural sites. In addition, the study (Žabkar et al., 2010) shows that destination attributes and perceived service quality have a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of holistic destination management. In the context of cultural heritage tourism, (Al-Ababneh, 2013) proves that service quality has a positive influence on tourist satisfaction in Petra, Jordan, which is also supported by the findings of (Akroush et al. (2016) which highlights the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and tourist loyalty in Jordan. Recent research by (Rondonuwu & Mandagi, 2023) in Likupang, Indonesia, also found that better service quality increases tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Based on this literature, hypothesis H1 states that:

*H. Service quality has a positive influence on tourist satisfaction.*

Destination image is an important factor that can affect tourist satisfaction. Various studies have shown a positive relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction in the context of tourism. (Crompton, 1979) defines destination image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a person has about a destination". This definition emphasizes that destination image is a construct that includes both cognitive and affective aspects. (Bigne et al., 2001) conducted a study on the relationship between tourist destination image,

perceived service quality, satisfaction, and post-visit behavioral intention. They found that tourist destination image has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction. This study emphasizes the importance of building and managing a positive destination image to increase tourist satisfaction. (C.-F. Chen & Tsai, 2007) examined the relationship between destination image, trip quality, perceived value, and satisfaction. Their results showed that destination image has both direct and indirect effects on tourist satisfaction. This confirms the important role of destination image in shaping tourist experience and satisfaction. (Prayag, 2009) in his research in Mauritius found that destination image has a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding and managing destination image to increase tourist satisfaction and loyalty. (Le et al., 2020) conducted a study in China and found that both cognitive and affective components of destination image have a positive influence on tourist satisfaction. This confirms that destination image is a construct that influences tourist satisfaction through various aspects. (Coban, 2012) conducted a study in Cappadocia and found that destination image has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction. This study confirms the importance of destination image in the context of cultural and historical tourism. Based on the literature research above, the following are the research propositions:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Destination Image has a positive influence on Tourist Satisfaction*

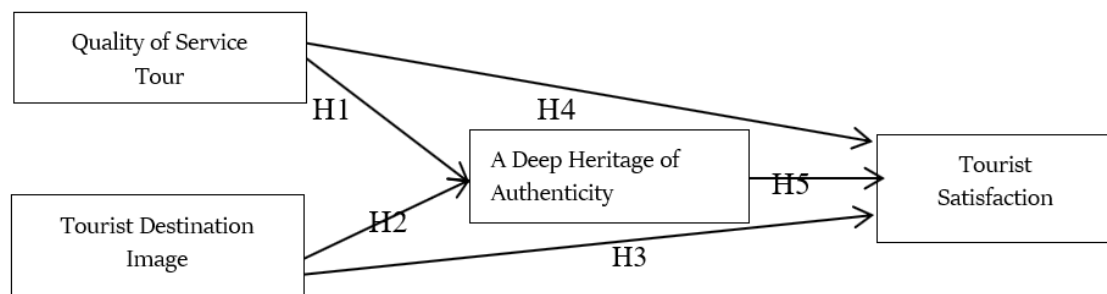
Heritage Immersive Authenticity (HIA) is an increasingly important concept in cultural tourism. The mediating role of HIA in the relationship between tourism service quality and tourist satisfaction is an interesting and relatively new area of research. (MacCannell, 1973) first introduced the concept of authenticity in tourism, highlighting the importance of authentic experiences for tourists. Although it does not directly address the role of moderation, this research provides a foundation for understanding the importance of authenticity in tourism experiences. (Ning, 2017) further develops the concept of authenticity by introducing "existential authenticity," which relates to the authentic experiences of tourists. This concept is relevant to the CIA because it emphasizes the importance of tourists' deep engagement with local culture. (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010) examined the relationship between authenticity, cultural motivation, and tourist loyalty. Although they did not directly address the moderating role of CIA, their study showed that perceived authenticity influences tourist satisfaction and loyalty. (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011) explored the relationship between authenticity and cultural tourist motivation. They found that perceived authenticity influences tourist satisfaction. This suggests a potential moderating role of authenticity in the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. (Yi et al., 2017) examined the role of authenticity in cultural tourism experiences in Korea. They found that perceived authenticity influenced tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This study suggests that cultural authenticity can strengthen the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. CIA context, (Lau, 2010) emphasizes the importance of tourists' deep engagement with local culture to create more authentic and satisfying experiences. Although it does not explicitly discuss the role of moderation, this study suggests that CIA can strengthen the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Based on the literature research above, the following are the research propositions:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Deep Authentic Heritage mediates between Tourism Service Quality and tourist satisfaction.*

Heritage Immersive Authenticity (HIA) can play an important role in mediating the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction. Although research directly addressing this moderating role is limited, several related studies can provide valuable insights. (Cohen, 1988) discusses the concept of authenticity in tourism and how it can influence the tourist experience. Although it does not directly address the role of moderation, this study highlights the importance of authenticity in shaping tourist perceptions and experiences. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) developed a framework for measuring destination image, which includes both functional and psychological components. They suggested that cultural authenticity may be an important part of destination image, potentially influencing tourist satisfaction. (Chhabra et al., 2003) examined the role of perceived authenticity in tourist satisfaction at a cultural heritage festival. They found that perceived authenticity was positively correlated with tourist satisfaction. This suggests a potential moderating role of authenticity in the relationship between destination image and satisfaction. (Prayag & Ryan, 2012) explored the relationship between destination image, Place Attachment, personal involvement, and tourist satisfaction. Although not directly addressing CIA, their research suggests that deep involvement with a destination can strengthen the relationship between image and satisfaction. (Ram et al., 2016) examined the role of authenticity in heritage tourism experiences. They found that perceived authenticity influenced tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This study suggests that cultural authenticity can strengthen the relationship between destination image and satisfaction. (Lu et al., 2015) explored the role of authenticity in cultural tourism experiences in China. They found that perceived authenticity influences tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. This suggests the potential moderating role of HIA in the relationship between destination image and satisfaction. Based on the literature research above, the following are the research propositions:

*H<sub>3</sub>: Deep Authentic Heritage Mediates Destination Image to Tourist Satisfaction.*

In summary, the hypothesis is formulated as follows with reference to the variables described previously and the empirical model shown above:



**Figure 1:** Empirical Research Model.

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1. Research Setting

This study was conducted at Prambanan Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. As one of Indonesia's most important cultural heritage destinations, Prambanan Temple attracts both domestic and international tourists, offering a unique blend of historical, cultural, and architectural experiences. The study focused on tourists visiting the site during 2023–2024. Data collection involved administering structured questionnaires to tourists at various entry points within the temple complex, to ensure a diverse representation of different demographic backgrounds.

### 3.2. Measurement Instrument

This study used a structured questionnaire consisting of several constructs to measure the main variables. Service quality and destination image were assessed using Likert scale items adapted from previously validated studies. Cultural Immersive Authenticity (CIA) was operationalized as a multidimensional construct that combines aspects of authenticity, cultural immersion, and tourist engagement. Tourist satisfaction was evaluated through items that capture the overall experience and intention to revisit. (G.-M. Chen & Starosta, 2000; H. Chen & Rahman, 2018; Ning, 2017; Ward & Kennedy, 1994) and Authenticity and Genuine Experience (Chhabra, 2010; Cohen, 1988; Ning, 2017; Poria et al., 2006).

### 3.3. Sampling and Data Collection

This study adopted a purposive sampling technique, targeting domestic and international tourists visiting Prambanan Temple between 2023 and 2024. Data were collected through face-to-face interactions using printed questionnaires distributed at strategic points within the temple complex, such as ticket counters, cultural exhibitions, and rest areas. A total of 219 responses were obtained, of which [insert number] were deemed valid for analysis after data cleaning. The sampling process ensured representation across demographic groups, including age, gender, and nationality.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the relationship between variables. Initial analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability (Cronbach's alpha), and validity tests (convergent and discriminant validity). SEM analysis evaluated the direct and indirect effects of service quality and destination image on tourist satisfaction through CIA. Model fit was assessed using indices such as Chi-square/df, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA, all of which met the recommended threshold. The results were interpreted to draw theoretical and practical implications for cultural heritage tourism.

**Table 1:** Demographic profile (N=216).

| Demographics           | Frequency | %    |
|------------------------|-----------|------|
| Age                    |           |      |
| Man                    | 97        | 47.7 |
| Woman                  | 106       | 52.3 |
| Gender                 |           |      |
| 15 – 24                | 21        | 10.3 |
| 25 – 34                | 56        | 27.6 |
| 35 – 44                | 64        | 31.5 |
| >45                    | 62        | 30.5 |
| Education level        |           |      |
| High school/equivalent | 74        | 36.5 |
| Diploma                | 45        | 22.2 |
| Bachelor degree)       | 59        | 29.1 |
| Postgraduate (S2/S3)   | 25        | 12.3 |

## 4. RESULT

The demographic profile of the respondents showed an almost balanced gender distribution, with 47.7% male participants and 52.3% female participants. The ages of the respondents ranged from 15 to over 45 years, with the largest age group being 35–44 years (31.5%), followed by those aged 45 and over (30.5%). In terms of education level, the majority of respondents had completed high school or its equivalent (36.5%), followed by bachelor's degree holders (29.1%), diploma holders (22.2%), and postgraduate degree holders (12.3%). This diverse demographic representation provides a strong basis for analyzing the relationships among the variables studied.

### 4.1. Measurement Model

Following the two-step approach recommended by Anderson & Gerbing (1988), CFA was first conducted on the measurement model with (AMOS, 23) before hypothesis testing. The measurement model was observed to be satisfactory and valid (Table, 4) based on the relevant fit indices (Chi-square =288,805, DF =203, CMIN/DF =1,413, GFI = 0.886, TLI = 0.950, CFI = 0.956, and RMSEA = 0.045), which were assessed in accordance with the suggestions of previous researchers (Byrne et al., 1989; Hair et al., 2010). When the measurement model was achieved, the validity and reliability including the resulting variables were verified. The composite reliability and the average variance extracted (Table, 2) both exceeded the specified cutoff figures of 0.70 and 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981), while the overall factor loading (Table, 2) was indeed greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the square root of AVE values for all components exceeded the correlation across constructs (Table, 3), indicating that each construct in the model appeared to have discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Given these results, it is clear that the measurement model has an adequate level of reliability and validity. In addition, a "Harman's single factor test" was conducted using SPSS to exclude potential "common method bias" (variation in the data that is largely attributed to a single variable). The overall variance accounted for by the single factor remained at 21%, much lower than the acceptable threshold of <50% (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

**Table 2:** Measurement model result.

| Variables                   | Construct Reliability | Average Variance Extracted |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Quality of Tourism Services | 0.857                 | 0.717                      |
| Tourist Destination Image   | 0.904                 | 0.675                      |
| Deep Cultural Authenticity  | 0.910                 | 0.881                      |
| Tourist Satisfaction        | 0.892                 | 0.689                      |

### 4.2. Structural Model

Structural equation modeling was applied to verify and evaluate the hypotheses after the measurement model showed an overall satisfactory fit. SEM observations (table, 3) confirmed a satisfactory model fit: ( $\chi^2$ ) =206,805, CMIN/DF = 1,413, CFI =0.9, GFI =0.885, RMSEA =0.885, TLI =0.950(Hair et al., 2018).



**Table 3:** Model fit metrics (measurement and structural model).

| Fit indices       | $\chi^2$ | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>CMIN/DF</i> | GFI   | AGFI  | TLI   | NFI   | CFI   | RMSEA |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Measurement Model | 206,805  | 203       | 0,000    | 1,413          | 0.885 | 0.858 | 0.950 | 0.866 | 0.956 | 0.885 |

Note: "CFI: Comparative fit index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation; GFI: Goodness of Fit-Index".

Furthermore, the suggested hypotheses were tested, and the results are presented in (Table, 4), which shows that all the proposed hypotheses appear significant in the predicted direction. The SEM results revealed that service quality has a significant impact on CIA (Estimate = 1.310, CR = 2.081,  $p = 0.037$ ), while destination image also positively influences CIA (Estimate = 0.374, CR = 1.954,  $p = 0.052$ ). CIA, in turn, significantly enhances tourist satisfaction (Estimate = 0.202, CR = 2.503,  $p = 0.019$ ). Furthermore, the direct effects of service quality (Estimate = 0.198, CR = 2.250,  $p = 0.008$ ) and destination image (Estimate = 0.514, CR = 2.411,  $p = 0.016$ ) on tourist satisfaction were supported. These results confirm CIA as an important mediating variable, with the model showing strong explanatory power.

**Table 4:** Significant in the predicted direction.

| No | Variables  | Estimate | SE    | CR    | P     | Results   |
|----|--|----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 1  | Quality of Tourism Services → Profound Cultural Heritage | 1.310    | 0.629 | 2.081 | 0.037 | Supported |
| 2  | Tourist Destination Image → Profound Cultural Heritage   | 0.374    | 0.582 | 1.954 | 0.052 | Supported |
| 3  | Profound Cultural Heritage → Tourist Satisfaction        | 0.202    | 0.748 | 2.503 | 0.019 | Supported |
| 4  | Quality of Tourism Services → Tourist Satisfaction       | 0.198    | 0.791 | 2.250 | 0.008 | Supported |
| 5  | Tourist Destination Image → Tourist Satisfaction         | 0.514    | 0.213 | 2.411 | 0.016 | Supported |

## 5. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

### 5.1. The Relationship between Tourism Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

The results of the analysis show that there is a positive influence between the quality of tourism services and tourist satisfaction. This is reinforced by the results of the hypothesis test which states that service quality affects tourist satisfaction. The friendliness of destination visitors makes a major contribution to tourist satisfaction. This indicates that the friendly attitude of visitors is an important element in creating a pleasant tourism experience. When tourists feel served with a friendly attitude, they tend to be more satisfied with their visit, as also explained by Parasuraman et al. (1988) that friendliness is part of the empathy dimension in service quality. The quality of the facilities provided is of high quality and is an important aspect in supporting tourist satisfaction. This indicates that tourists feel that the existing facilities meet or even exceed their expectations. Good facilities, such as clean toilets, adequate parking areas, and comfortable resting places, contribute greatly to tourist comfort. This is in line with research by Zeithaml et al. (1996) which states that physical facilities are one of the main elements in service quality. Good information can reduce confusion and improve the tourist experience, as expressed by Bitner (1992) that clarity of information is part of the physical evidence that influences the perception of service quality. When visitors experience problems, quick and solution-oriented responses from visitors are key factors in maintaining satisfaction, as supported by Grönroos' (1984) research on the role of responsiveness in service quality. Ease of communication with visitors shows that ease of communication with destination visitors affects the tourist experience, indicating that visitors who are able to convey information clearly help tourists feel more comfortable and understood. This is consistent with the findings of Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) who stated that effective communication is one of the important elements in building positive customer relationships. Alignment with previous research The findings in this study are in line with previous research which shows a positive relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction. Research by Parasuraman et al. (1988) shows that dimensions of service quality, such as reliability, empathy, and responsiveness, have a significant influence on customer satisfaction. Similar results were also found by Kotler and Keller (2016), who stated that good service quality can increase tourist loyalty. Another study by Choi and Chu (2001) revealed that staff friendliness, quality facilities, and effective communication are key factors in enhancing customer experience in the tourism sector.

### 5.2. The Relationship Between the Image of a Tourist Destination and Tourist Satisfaction

The results of the analysis show that the image of a tourist destination has an influence on tourist satisfaction. This confirms that a positive image owned by a tourist destination can increase the level of visitor satisfaction. Based on the results of the hypothesis test received, each indicator in the variable index table shows the important role of destination image in forming a satisfying experience for tourists. This tourist destination is a safe place. Security is one of the important elements in building a positive destination image. This finding reflects that visitors feel protected while at the destination, which is a crucial factor in increasing their satisfaction. Security allows tourists to enjoy their experience without worry, thus strengthening the positive image of the tourist destination. The residents around the tourist destination are very friendly, indicating that the friendliness of the local residents gives a very good impression to tourists. The friendly interaction between residents and visitors creates a warm and pleasant atmosphere. The weather at the tourist spot is very friendly. This shows that environmental factors also affect the image of the tourist destination. Supportive weather creates a pleasant experience for tourists, allowing them to enjoy tourist activities without interruption. Although this factor is natural, the perception of comfortable weather remains an important element in building a destination image. This finding is in line with previous research which shows that destination image plays a significant role in influencing tourist satisfaction. According to research by Chiu et al. (2016), a positive destination image can improve tourists' perceptions of the quality of their experiences. Chen and Tsai (2007) found that a good destination image can influence tourist loyalty, which ultimately increases the chances of repeat visits. Other research by Styliadis et al. (2017) also confirmed that elements of destination image, such as security, friendliness of residents, and supporting facilities, are the main components that influence the level of tourist satisfaction.

### 5.3. Heritage Immersive Authenticity - HIA relationship on tourist satisfaction

The results of the study indicate that Heritage Immersive Authenticity - HIA has an influence on tourist satisfaction. This indicates a high level of authenticity at the Prambanan Temple Tourist Destination. This reflects that cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity play an important role in creating a satisfying experience for tourists. Deep Cultural Authenticity indicates tourists' appreciation of the original cultural elements presented by this destination. Cultural authenticity highlighted through traditions, art, and relevant stories is able to provide an authentic experience that is highly valued by tourists. This finding is in line with research by Wang (1999), which states that authentic cultural experiences increase tourist satisfaction. Deep Historical Authenticity highlighted by Prambanan Temple, such as historical narratives related to the relics of the kingdom and religion, makes tourists feel more connected to the past. This indicates that historical elements have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction. This is supported by research by Timothy and Boyd (2003), which states that authentic historical heritage can increase the attractiveness of tourist destinations. In the aspect of Deep Existential Authenticity, it shows that Prambanan Temple has succeeded in presenting an experience that depicts real life from the

past, such as the daily activities of ancient people or spiritual elements that are still relevant today, indicating that tourists feel deeply connected to the essence of past life presented by this destination. Deep Environmental Authenticity, tourists appreciate how Prambanan Temple maintains the authenticity of its environment, including spatial planning, architecture, and the surrounding natural landscape, indicating that environmental aspects play an important role in creating a satisfying tourist experience. Research by Chhabra (2010) emphasizes that an authentic environment can increase the attractiveness and image of a tourist destination. The cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity offered by Prambanan Temple contribute significantly to tourist satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research, as stated by Kolar and Zabkar (2010), that authenticity is one of the key factors that determine a deep and satisfying tourist experience. Tourist destinations that are able to present the authenticity of heritage well not only increase tourist satisfaction but also encourage repeat visits and loyalty to the destination.

#### **5.4. Relationship between Service Quality and Heritage Immersive Authenticity - HIA**

The results of the hypothesis test show that service quality has an influence on Heritage Immersive Authenticity - HIA shows that the service experience provided at a tourist destination has a positive contribution in building tourist perceptions of the cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity of the tourist destination. Friendly Service by Visitors, visitor friendliness is an important aspect in increasing the perception of the authenticity of a tourist destination. This friendly attitude creates a positive emotional experience and strengthens tourist trust in the authenticity of the culture and local values represented by the destination. This finding is in line with the research of Parasuraman et al. (1988), which emphasizes that direct interaction with visitors has a significant impact on tourist experience. The quality of the facilities provided is of high quality such as cleanliness, good infrastructure, and comfort support the perception of the authenticity of the destination. Good facilities provide material support for the elements of the authenticity of the destination. Previous research by Bitner (1992) also showed that the physical quality of destination facilities supports tourist perceptions of the appeal of authenticity. Ease of Communicating with Destination Visitors shows that effective and easy-to-understand communication strengthens tourist perceptions of the authenticity of the destination. This is in line with the research of Zeithaml et al. (2002), which states that good communication enhances the relationship between tourists and destinations and builds a strong authentic impression. Overall, service quality at tourist destinations plays an important role in strengthening tourists' perceptions of Heritage Immersive Authenticity - HIA. This study is consistent with previous findings by Kolar and Zabkar (2010), which states that good service quality can increase the value of cultural authenticity perceived by tourists. Service elements such as friendliness, facilities, communication, and problem solving are the main supporters in creating a satisfying and authentic tourist experience. Tourist destinations need to maintain and continue to improve their service quality in order to provide an authentic and immersive tourist experience.

#### **5.5. The Relationship between Destination Image and Heritage Immersive Authenticity**

The results of the hypothesis test show that the image of the tourist destination has a significant influence on Heritage Immersive Authenticity, indicating that tourists' positive perceptions of various destination image attributes contribute significantly to building an immersive experience of cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity at the tourist destination. Tourist Destination Security shows that the sense of security felt by tourists while at the destination supports a pleasant authentic experience. Tourists who feel safe tend to be more able to appreciate the values of cultural and historical authenticity of a place. Kotler and Gertner's (2002) research shows that the perception of security is one of the important elements in creating a positive destination image and supporting the tourist experience. Friendliness of the People Around the Destination with the friendliness of the residents adding value to the tourist experience, reflecting the authenticity of the culture that lives in the surrounding community. The friendly attitude of local residents can strengthen tourists' connection with local cultural values and traditions, which are the core of authentic heritage. Research by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) supports this finding, emphasizing the importance of social interaction in building an authentic destination image. The weather that Be Friendly at Tourist Destinations. The favorable weather provides a comfortable atmosphere for tourists, allowing them to focus more on exploring the elements of cultural, historical, and environmental authenticity in the destination. Overall, a positive destination image plays an important role in building Heritage Immersive Authenticity. This finding is in line with the research of Kolar and Zabkar (2010), which shows that a strong and positive destination image can increase tourists' perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic experiences. Image elements such as security, friendliness of the residents, the existence of complete facilities, and environmental conditions support tourists' experiences in appreciating the authentic values offered by the destination.

#### **5.6. The relationship between Heritage Immersive Authenticity as a mediator of the causal relationship between service quality, tourist destination image and tourist satisfaction.**

The results of the hypothesis test indicate that Heritage Immersive Authenticity mediates the causal relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction. This means that service quality and destination image provide an indirect contribution to tourist satisfaction through an immersive experience of cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity in the destination. This finding highlights the importance of the role of authenticity as a factor that strengthens the relationship between destination elements and tourist satisfaction. High service quality has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction through an immersive authenticity experience. For example, the indicator Destination employees serve very friendly, the friendliness of the staff not only provides a satisfying direct experience but also creates an authentic atmosphere that makes tourists feel welcome. In this context, the authenticity experience is strengthened through direct interaction with staff who represent local cultural values. High-quality facilities ensure that tourists can enjoy the comfort that allows them to focus more on exploring culture and authenticity in the destination. This supports research by Kolar and Zabkar (2010), which states that authentic experiences can be strengthened through elements of facilities and services that support tourist comfort. The image of the tourist destination acts as a link between destination elements and tourists' perceptions of authenticity, which ultimately increases tourist satisfaction. Positive interactions with locals reflect living cultural values, thus reinforcing the experience of deep authenticity. This supports the research by Echtner and Ritchie (1993), which highlights the importance of social interaction in building an authentic destination image. A deep authentic heritage plays a significant role in strengthening the relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction. These elements act as mediators that bridge the elements of service and image with tourist satisfaction. Cultural authenticity, as reflected in Deep cultural authenticity provides a lasting experience for tourists, strengthening their emotional connection with the destination. This is in accordance with the research of Pine and Gilmore (1998), which states that authentic experiences can create significant added value to customer satisfaction.

Overall, service quality and destination image have direct and indirect effects on tourist satisfaction, with authenticity experience as a mediating factor. Tourists who experience quality service and perceive a positive destination image are more likely to appreciate the authentic values of the destination, thereby increasing their overall satisfaction. This finding is in line with research by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) and Pine and Gilmore (1998), which emphasize the importance of authentic experiences in increasing tourist satisfaction. Destination managers need to continue to improve service quality and destination image, emphasizing elements of authenticity to create an unforgettable experience for tourists.

### 5.7. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study contributes to theoretical and managerial implications by introducing a new construct of Cultural Immersive Authenticity (CIA) and linking it to Heritage and Gaze Theory. Theoretically, it enriches tourism marketing by positioning CIA as a mediator linking service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of cultural, historical, existential, and environmental authenticity in shaping tourist experiences. It integrates theories of Service Quality, Destination Image, and Customer Satisfaction, providing insight into the complex interrelationships. From a managerial perspective, the findings highlight actionable strategies to enhance service quality, destination image, and cultural authenticity, such as employee training for hospitality, facility enhancement, cultural preservation, and interactive experiences. These efforts aim to exceed tourist expectations, strengthen satisfaction, and enhance destination branding for long-term success.

### 5.8. Limitations and future research directions

This study faces several limitations, including limited representation of respondents to Prambanan Temple in Indonesia, seasonal data collection that may not capture diverse tourist perceptions, limited access to international respondents, and time constraints that affect in-depth analysis. These limitations affect the generalizability and depth of the findings, highlighting the need for a broader study area, additional variables, and better methods. Future research should explore a variety of local and international destinations, adopt mixed-methods approaches such as in-depth interviews, use longitudinal analysis to track changes over time, and examine the role of digital technology and social media in shaping destination image and tourist satisfaction.

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