

Linking Attractions, Amenities, and Tourist Satisfaction: A Conceptual and Empirical Study of Pasir Padi Beach, Indonesia

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Abstract

Coastal destinations often emphasize natural attractions but overlook the role of supporting amenities in shaping tourist comfort and satisfaction. Existing research on Indonesian beach tourism remains largely descriptive, rarely integrating these dimensions within a conceptual framework. This study investigates how the development of attractions and amenities contributes to tourist comfort and satisfaction at Pasir Padi Beach, Pangkalpinang. Using a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis, the data were thematically analyzed and triangulated across stakeholder perspectives. Findings reveal that while the beach offers distinctive natural and event-based attractions, limited and poorly maintained amenities—such as sanitation, lighting, and spatial organization—reduce perceived comfort and satisfaction. The study develops an analytical model linking attractions–amenities–comfort–satisfaction adapted from the 4A and SERVQUAL frameworks, highlighting the interdependence between physical infrastructure and experiential quality. Theoretically, the research contributes to destination development discourse by contextualizing service quality concepts in coastal settings; practically, it provides guidance for local governments in integrating amenity improvement within sustainable tourism planning.

Keywords: Coastal Tourism, Attractions, Amenities, Comfort, Satisfaction, Sustainable Destination Development.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development, especially in coastal environments, increasingly prioritizes natural beauty and picturesque landscapes in its marketing narratives, often overshadowing the crucial role of supporting amenities in enhancing visitor satisfaction and ensuring repeat visits. While the allure of natural attractions draws tourists, the quality of service infrastructure—such as accessibility, cleanliness, and amenity provision—profoundly affects the overall visitor experience. Empirical studies confirm that infrastructure and transport facilities create critical links between tourists and destinations, directly influencing satisfaction and destination loyalty (Abdullah et al., 2023; Dung & Ngan, 2024; Goeltom et al., 2023; Pesimo-Abundabar & Pongpong, 2023). Yet, the absence of coordinated and well-maintained amenities often results in diminished tourist experiences and a lower likelihood of return visits (X. Wang et al., 2024).

High-quality services and amenities are central to creating positive perceptions of destinations. Clean public areas, effective waste management, and accessible facilities enhance not only comfort but also the overall image of a tourism destination (Apriyanti et al., 2024; Arabov et al., 2024; Susanto & Sumarni, 2025). The neglect of these supporting facilities prevents regions from fully capitalizing on their tourism potential and undermines long-term competitiveness in a saturated tourism market. Recent discussions on smart tourism further highlight that integrating digitalization with physical infrastructure can optimize service delivery and strengthen visitor engagement (Dianawati et al., 2024; Hariyanto et al., 2025; Roman et al., 2024; Sufa et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2024). Such technological

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and managerial innovations make amenities more responsive, elevating tourists' experiential satisfaction and fostering loyalty through enhanced service encounters.

The dynamics of beach tourism, especially in developing countries, reveal a complex interplay between attractions, amenities, and tourist satisfaction. A growing body of research recognizes this relationship but often stops at descriptive explanation rather than analytical integration. For instance, (Emuy et al., 2024) emphasize that tourist satisfaction stems from quality services, ambiance, and safety, all of which reinforce loyalty in beach destinations. Similarly, (Karim et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2024) show that destination experience and satisfaction act as mediating factors shaping tourists' behavioral intentions. (Annida et al., 2024; Ji et al., 2023) further demonstrate that cleanliness, comfort, and perceived performance of attributes significantly determine the quality of the tourism experience. These findings align with (Talukder et al., 2024), who reveal that eco-tourism service quality fosters positive perceptions and satisfaction, while (Budisetyorini et al., 2021; Wulus, 2024) underscore that amenities directly influence tourists' intentions to revisit. Taken together, these studies affirm that attractions and amenities are fundamental determinants of satisfaction, yet their interconnection remains conceptually fragmented. Most research focuses on individual aspects—either attraction development or amenity provision—without situating them within a comprehensive analytical model. Consequently, the relationship between attractions–amenities–comfort–satisfaction remains implicit rather than empirically tested.

This study addresses that gap by developing a conceptual framework that integrates these four elements within the context of coastal destination management. Using Pasir Padi Beach in Pangkalpinang as an empirical case, the research explores how attractions and amenities jointly shape tourist comfort and satisfaction. The study adapts principles from the 4A (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, Ancillary) and SERVQUAL models to explain how physical and service dimensions interact in shaping visitor experience. By linking these theoretical constructs, this study contributes to advancing the discourse on destination development and offers practical insights for policymakers seeking to enhance sustainability and competitiveness in coastal tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attractions and Tourist Experience

Tourist attractions represent the core of destination appeal, serving as both the initial draw and the symbolic identity of a place. Yet, contemporary scholarship argues that attractions alone cannot sustain satisfaction without the support of high-quality services and infrastructure. The concept of attraction has evolved from a static list of sites to an experiential construct encompassing sensory, emotional, and symbolic dimensions that define how tourists engage with a destination. Recent studies affirm that satisfaction depends on the synergy between attractions and service environments. Destinations combining strong natural or cultural assets with reliable amenities, hospitality, and security achieve higher loyalty and competitiveness (Barkhordari et al., 2023; Raman, 2023; Reyes & Dael, 2023). Even peripheral infrastructures—such as healthcare and transport—affect destination choice and revisit intention (Kapera, 2024). Emotional and sensory engagement, such as feelings of relaxation or joy in coastal landscapes, strongly mediates satisfaction (Dewi et al., 2024; Susanto, 2023; Zhu et al., 2025), showing that tourism experiences are shaped by affective connection rather than physical scenery alone (Elhosiny et al., 2023).

In beach tourism, scenic beauty remains vital but must be strategically curated. The quality of coastal scenery predicts satisfaction and destination competitiveness (Lury et al., 2023; Prawira et al., 2025; X. Q. Wang & Chen, 2024). Experience-based models now emphasize creative and technological enrichment through cultural design (Zhang & Dai, 2023) and smart-tourism systems that improve interaction and service delivery (Sheng, 2024). Immersive technologies such as virtual reality also enable pre-visit engagement and risk mitigation (Qi et al., 2024; Yersüren & Özel, 2023). Ultimately, destination success relies on transitioning from resource-based to experience-based attraction management. For coastal destinations, integrating aesthetic quality, innovation, and emotional resonance transforms attractions into holistic experiences that enhance satisfaction, loyalty, and sustainability (Any et al., 2024; Martins & Ribeiro, 2023).

Amenities and Service Quality

Amenities represent the essential infrastructure—both tangible and intangible—that allows tourists to experience attractions comfortably and safely. They encompass physical facilities such as accommodation, sanitation, signage, and transportation, alongside service-based elements including hospitality, security, and information systems. Contemporary research positions amenities not as passive support structures but as active determinants of perceived service quality and visitor satisfaction (Emuy et al., 2024; Syaiful et al., 2024). High-quality amenities foster emotional attachment and a sense of care, while inadequate or poorly maintained

facilities disrupt the continuity of tourist experiences and diminish loyalty (Kobra & Wee, 2023). The growing application of service quality and experiential frameworks in tourism theory underscores that amenities directly shape perceptions of value. Well-managed facilities enhance not only comfort but also trust, signaling reliability and professionalism (Anggraeni et al., 2023). Conversely, the absence of essential amenities—such as clean sanitation, safe access, or comfortable lodging—can break the emotional rhythm of a trip, reducing the likelihood of return visits (Jannah et al., 2023; Wulus, 2024). Within this view, amenities become the interface between environmental aesthetics and usability, translating destination potential into tangible visitor satisfaction.

In coastal destinations, amenities hold additional importance because they mediate the relationship between natural beauty and sustainable enjoyment. Adequate facilities ensure that environmental aesthetics can be appreciated without compromising comfort or ecological balance (Emuy et al., 2024). Recent studies also confirm that satisfaction with amenities strongly predicts revisit intention and loyalty, strengthening the local tourism economy (Deng et al., 2024). Thus, amenities operate not merely as physical infrastructure but as strategic levers in destination competitiveness and sustainable service delivery. The evaluation of service quality in tourism must move beyond descriptive inventories of facilities toward an integrated understanding of amenities as emotional, functional, and strategic assets. Their design, management, and innovation are fundamental to transforming visitor comfort into lasting satisfaction and behavioral loyalty—key indicators of destination resilience and sustainability.

Integrating Attractions–Amenities–Comfort–Satisfaction: Toward a Conceptual Model

Although the roles of attractions and amenities have been widely acknowledged in tourism studies, their interaction remains insufficiently theorized. Most research treats these variables independently, overlooking how their interplay shapes tourists' psychological and emotional experiences. This fragmented approach limits understanding of how destinations translate physical attributes and service systems into perceived comfort and satisfaction (Cavalcante et al., 2025). Attractions act as the initial motivators, providing the aesthetic and symbolic stimuli that drive visitation (Shahzad et al., 2023). Yet, without adequate amenities—such as accommodation, accessibility, and service reliability—the experiential value of these attractions cannot be fully realized (Juliana et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024). Amenities, therefore, serve as moderators that strengthen or weaken the impact of attractions on tourists' overall experience. When both are effectively aligned, they generate a holistic encounter that satisfies functional, emotional, and symbolic needs.

Comfort operates as the mediating mechanism within this relationship. It represents a state of psychological equilibrium achieved when environmental design, service provision, and visitor expectations converge (Meneses & Amador-Marrero, 2023). Conceptually, comfort transforms objective features—such as cleanliness, accessibility, or hospitality—into affective responses that culminate in satisfaction (Li et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2023). In other words, comfort bridges the material and experiential dimensions of tourism, turning spatial and service quality into emotional well-being. The integrated framework proposed here positions attractions as the stimulus, amenities as the moderator of experience quality, comfort as the mediator of affective response, and satisfaction as the evaluative outcome. This chain of influence underscores that destination success depends not on isolated attributes but on the synergy between physical appeal and service performance. Empirical studies support this interdependence: destinations that synchronize attractions and amenities within a coherent design framework report stronger visitor loyalty, attachment, and positive word-of-mouth (Delshad, 2024; Estudillo & Wong, 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, this model challenges the conventional dichotomy between tangible and intangible tourism dimensions. It advances a holistic view where satisfaction emerges as an emergent property of the attraction–amenity nexus, mediated by comfort. Such a perspective enriches destination competitiveness models and extends the application of service quality theory to experiential and emotional domains (Peña et al., 2024). Practically, this framework offers guidance for destination managers seeking to enhance sustainability: by investing simultaneously in physical attractions and service amenities, they can engineer comfort and satisfaction as integrated, mutually reinforcing outcomes.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design aimed at exploring how the development of attractions and amenities influences tourist comfort and satisfaction within the framework of coastal destination management. The qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the relationships and meanings attached to visitor experiences rather than mere numerical generalizations. The

study adopts a constructivist paradigm, viewing tourist satisfaction as a socially constructed outcome shaped by interactions between visitors, facilities, and environments. The analytical lens was guided by the Attractions–Amenities–Comfort–Satisfaction (AACS) conceptual framework developed in the literature review. This framework provided a basis for designing interview protocols and for coding patterns of relationships between the physical (attractions, amenities) and affective (comfort, satisfaction) dimensions of tourism experience.

Research Site

The research was conducted at Pasir Padi Beach, Pangkalpinang, Bangka Belitung Islands, Indonesia — a coastal destination currently undergoing facility enhancement under a government-led waterfront development plan. The site was chosen as a critical case because it represents a developing beach tourism area where both attractions and amenities are evolving, making it suitable for examining the interplay between destination infrastructure and visitor experiences.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure information-rich cases. The study involved informants representing four stakeholder groups: 1) Tourism Office Officials— responsible for policy and infrastructure planning; 2) Local Business Operators – café, accommodation, and souvenir shop owners; 3) Visitors/Tourists – frequent and first-time visitors representing different age and purpose segments; 4) Community Representatives –residents engaged in tourism-related activities. This composition enabled triangulation across institutional, managerial, and experiential perspectives. Recruitment continued until data saturation was reached, where no new insights emerged.

Data Collection

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: 1) Semi-structured interviews, guided by open-ended questions related to attractions, amenities, comfort, and satisfaction; 2) Field observations, focusing on spatial layout, facility quality, and visitor behavior; 3) Document analysis, involving local tourism plans, development reports, and visitor reviews from digital platforms. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent. Field notes captured non-verbal cues, spatial arrangements, and environmental conditions relevant to the conceptual model.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step procedure: familiarization, coding, theme development, reviewing, defining, and reporting. Initial codes were generated from both the conceptual framework (deductive) and emerging insights (inductive). Themes were subsequently aligned with the AACS model to identify causal and relational patterns between physical and experiential variables. To ensure analytical rigor, triangulation was conducted across data sources and participant groups, and member checking was performed with key informants to validate interpretations. NVivo 14 software supported data organization and coding consistency.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Credibility was established through data triangulation, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. Transferability was addressed by providing detailed contextual descriptions of the site and participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board of [University Name], and informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development and Perception of Beach Attractions

The empirical findings indicate that Pasir Padi Beach's attractions are perceived as both aesthetically appealing and socially meaningful, yet constrained by limited experiential innovation. Across stakeholder groups, three dominant attraction dimensions emerged: natural landscape quality, recreational diversity, and event-based activities. Respondents consistently described the beach's visual and spatial character—its long coastline, gentle waves, and clean white sand—as the primary stimulus for visitation. Tourists associated these attributes with feelings of relaxation and calmness, reinforcing the affective pull of natural aesthetics. Observations confirmed that visitors frequently photographed sunrise views and coastal vegetation, highlighting visual appreciation as a central form of engagement. However, the attraction's potential is

undermined by inconsistent environmental maintenance. Both tourists and local business owners noted seasonal litter accumulation and the absence of cohesive spatial zoning. These issues reduce the scenic value that initially draws visitors, creating tension between natural beauty and management performance.

The development of attractions at Pasir Padi has evolved beyond passive sightseeing. The government and community host periodic festivals, sport-tourism events, and culinary fairs, which temporarily increase visitation. Data from the Tourism Office show a 15% rise in visitor numbers during festival months. However, these activities are episodic rather than continuous, limiting their cumulative impact on destination branding. Local entrepreneurs emphasized that such attractions "boost sales and visibility but don't last long" (Male, café owner, 42). Visitors echoed this, suggesting a lack of permanent thematic attractions that could sustain engagement year-round. Conceptually, the findings illustrate that attractions function as the initial experiential stimulus in the AACCS model, shaping first impressions and emotional engagement. Yet, the resource-based approach—relying solely on natural scenery—limits long-term differentiation. While visual appeal creates an affective entry point, the absence of structured experience design (e.g., storytelling, guided experiences, interpretive facilities) constrains the development of deeper, more memorable interactions. In short, Pasir Padi's attractions succeed in drawing visitors but fall short in converting visual appreciation into lasting attachment. This suggests that enhancing experiential layers around natural assets—through creative, cultural, or participatory elements—is critical for sustaining competitiveness in coastal tourism.

Quality and Function of Tourism Amenities

The analysis revealed that tourism amenities at Pasir Padi Beach function as both enablers and constraints in shaping the visitor experience. While the provision of basic facilities—such as toilets, prayer rooms, food stalls, and parking—supports accessibility and convenience, the inconsistent quality and maintenance of these amenities significantly influence how visitors perceive comfort and satisfaction. Three interrelated themes emerged: functional adequacy, spatial accessibility, and service ambiance. Visitors generally perceived the existing amenities as present but uneven in quality. Public restrooms and prayer facilities are limited to one central cluster, creating accessibility gaps for tourists positioned further along the 2-kilometer coastline. Many respondents noted issues such as inadequate lighting, malfunctioning fixtures, and poor hygiene. Observations confirmed that while food stalls and seating areas were abundant, few complied with cleanliness and waste management standards. These inconsistencies illustrate the fragility of amenity reliability—their presence alone does not guarantee perceived service quality.

Spatial layout and connectivity emerged as key determinants of usability. Tourists appreciated the easy road access from the city center but expressed dissatisfaction with the internal organization of facilities, where signage and pathways were either unclear or absent. Vendors and officials both acknowledged the lack of integrated design, as amenities had evolved incrementally rather than through planned zoning. This spatial fragmentation reduced the perceived coherence of the destination, with tourists describing the beach as "convenient to reach but confusing to navigate." For visitors with limited mobility or families with children, long walking distances between attractions and facilities reduce comfort, especially under hot weather conditions. Amenities also shape the affective tone of the tourist experience. Informants highlighted the duality between informal local hospitality—considered warm and personal—and infrastructural shortcomings that sometimes created discomfort. Tourists valued the friendliness of vendors but were disturbed by street musicians or irregular service charges, such as pay-per-use restrooms. This contradiction underscores that amenities operate not only as physical enablers but also as symbolic indicators of care and professionalism. When facilities are clean, functional, and aesthetically aligned with the beach environment, they signal attentiveness and enhance tourists' sense of being valued.

The findings position amenities as the moderating element in the AACCS framework—determining whether attractions translate into positive emotional experiences. Functional gaps and fragmented design diminish the capacity of natural attractions to foster comfort. Conversely, when amenities perform reliably, they amplify aesthetic appreciation and facilitate longer stays. In conceptual terms, these findings demonstrate that amenities are not neutral infrastructure but active mediators of emotional value. Their quality and coherence moderate how tourists interpret attractions—either reinforcing comfort or generating frustration. Sustainable competitiveness thus requires not merely adding facilities but embedding them in an integrated design that aligns physical usability with affective satisfaction.

Tourist Comfort as Mediated Experience

Findings reveal that tourist comfort at Pasir Padi Beach emerges not merely from physical conditions but from the alignment between environmental design, facility reliability, and tourists' emotional expectations.

Comfort operates as a psychological mediator that translates objective features—such as cleanliness, accessibility, and service interaction—into subjective evaluations of satisfaction. Three thematic dimensions define the comfort experience: environmental congruence, perceived safety, and emotional ease.

Comfort was strongest when the physical environment matched visitor expectations of a relaxing coastal setting. Tourists described comfort as a sense of "balance between openness, cleanliness, and calmness." Visual coherence—clean sand, organized vendor stalls, and shaded seating—was repeatedly mentioned as producing mental ease. However, when waste or disorganized stalls disrupted the scenery, the emotional tone shifted from relaxation to irritation. This demonstrates that comfort depends on aesthetic congruence—how environmental cues align with tourists' inner image of an ideal beach. Comfort was also closely tied to feelings of safety and convenience. Visitors highlighted well-lit paths and visible security patrols as sources of reassurance, particularly during evening hours. Families valued shaded rest areas and nearby amenities for reducing physical strain. In contrast, the absence of clear pedestrian zones and occasional motorcycle traffic along the promenade created mild anxiety and reduced mobility comfort. Observation data showed that areas with improved lighting and seating encouraged longer stays—up to 30–40 minutes more compared to poorly lit sections—indicating a behavioral link between perceived comfort and engagement duration.

Comfort extended beyond physicality to the emotional tone of interactions. Tourists emphasized the friendliness of locals, fair pricing, and relaxed crowd density as factors that produced emotional ease. When vendors were polite and unobtrusive, tourists felt "free to enjoy the space." However, noise, litter, and unsolicited street performances were perceived as comfort disruptors. These patterns highlight that comfort is co-produced through environmental quality and social behavior. It reflects the successful orchestration of spatial, managerial, and interpersonal dimensions within the destination ecosystem.

In the AACCS framework, comfort functions as the mediating construct that transforms environmental and service attributes into emotional satisfaction. The data show that comfort is not a passive state but an experiential outcome dependent on coherence between physical aesthetics, facility usability, and social atmosphere. When these elements align, visitors experience psychological equilibrium—calmness, safety, and contentment—that leads to higher satisfaction and willingness to return. Conceptually, this finding refines comfort as a dynamic bridge between the tangible (infrastructure) and intangible (emotion). It underscores that enhancing comfort requires managing perceptual coherence, not only facility improvement. The mediation process explains why even well-developed amenities may fail to generate satisfaction if comfort cues—such as cleanliness, safety, and ambiance—are inconsistent.

Tourist Satisfaction as Evaluative Outcome

Tourist satisfaction at Pasir Padi Beach emerges as an integrative judgment, reflecting how effectively attractions, amenities, and comfort align to meet and exceed visitor expectations. The findings show that satisfaction is not determined by single attributes but by the synergistic interaction between aesthetic pleasure, functional usability, and emotional well-being. Three themes illustrate this evaluative process: holistic experience coherence, emotional aftertaste, and behavioral intention.

Visitors who perceived strong alignment between attractions and amenities reported higher satisfaction levels. The combination of visual serenity, clean spaces, and reliable facilities created a sense of completeness—what many informants described as "everything feels in place." In contrast, fragmented experiences—where scenic beauty was offset by poor facility management—produced mixed evaluations. This suggests that satisfaction arises when the functional and affective dimensions of tourism are coherently delivered, confirming that comfort serves as the psychological integrator between environment and service quality.

The emotional residue of the experience—how tourists felt after leaving—proved a critical component of satisfaction. Visitors often described feelings of calmness, gratitude, and attachment when environmental cues and social interactions aligned positively. Conversely, discomforts such as heat exposure, litter, or inconsistent pricing left a lingering sense of frustration, even if attractions themselves were appreciated. This emotional evaluation process demonstrates that satisfaction functions as a cognitive–affective synthesis rather than a simple reaction to service performance. Comfort mediates this process by filtering sensory and emotional inputs into enduring impressions that shape the tourist's memory of place.

Satisfaction translated directly into behavioral intentions, particularly willingness to revisit and recommend. Approximately 72% of interviewees indicated they would "definitely return," citing comfort, friendliness, and scenery as combined motivators. In contrast, respondents who emphasized infrastructural gaps or cleanliness issues expressed conditional loyalty—willing to return "if improvements are made." This pattern confirms that satisfaction is behaviorally consequential, transforming subjective comfort into loyalty

and advocacy. Stakeholders noted that returning visitors often became informal promoters through social media, amplifying the destination's reputation.

Conceptually, these findings affirm tourist satisfaction as the final evaluative outcome in the AACCS framework. It encapsulates tourists' cognitive assessment of utility and their affective response to comfort. The evidence supports the mediating role of comfort—satisfaction intensifies when environmental harmony and emotional ease coexist, and weakens when either is compromised. From a managerial perspective, satisfaction operates as a feedback mechanism: it signals the degree of systemic coherence between attractions, amenities, and experiential delivery. Thus, improving satisfaction requires not only infrastructure upgrades but the orchestration of comfort through design, cleanliness, safety, and social atmosphere. Ultimately, satisfaction at Pasir Padi Beach is sustained not by extraordinary attractions, but by the integration of simple, reliable, and emotionally resonant experiences—a key insight for advancing sustainable coastal tourism models.

Discussion

This study examined how the interaction between attractions, amenities, and comfort shapes tourist satisfaction within the context of coastal destination development. The findings extend existing tourism theories by demonstrating that satisfaction is not merely an outcome of high-quality services or appealing attractions, but rather an emergent property of their alignment. Traditional destination development frameworks—such as the 4A model (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, Ancillary services)—treat these components as discrete pillars of competitiveness (Mazanec et al., 2007). The present study challenges this compartmentalization by revealing that tourists perceive these elements as interdependent experiences rather than separate categories. For instance, scenic beauty at Pasir Padi Beach generated affective appeal, but satisfaction only materialized when amenities provided comfort, safety, and coherence. This supports emerging perspectives in experiential tourism, which argue that destinations must be managed as relational systems where material, spatial, and emotional dimensions interact (Neuhofer, 2025). The aesthetic appeal of attractions alone is insufficient; satisfaction arises from how destinations orchestrate sensory engagement and service reliability into a seamless flow of experience.

The findings foreground comfort as a neglected yet essential construct in tourism satisfaction research. While models like SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) conceptualize service quality through tangibles, reliability, and responsiveness, they rarely capture the psychological synthesis through which tourists internalize environmental and social cues. This study positions comfort as a mediating mechanism linking physical and affective dimensions of service experience—echoing recent calls for integrating emotional well-being into destination management. Comfort, therefore, is not just a by-product of good service; it is the interpretive filter through which tourists evaluate satisfaction. The finding that visitors' comfort levels directly predicted revisit intention strengthens this argument and invites refinement of classical service-quality models toward more experiential formulations.

Within the Destination Competitiveness Model (Dwyer & Kim, 2003), attractions and infrastructure form the core resources influencing perceived value. However, the Pasir Padi case suggests that synergy and emotional coherence matter more than resource abundance. Clean beaches, shaded seating, and organized pathways did not simply enhance functionality; they produced affective stability and psychological safety—key drivers of satisfaction and loyalty. This aligns with the experience co-creation perspective (Campos et al., 2018), which posits that tourists derive value through interactions with both physical environments and human actors. However, the present study extends this logic by showing that when these interactions fail to create emotional equilibrium—due to litter, noise, or spatial disorganization—satisfaction declines despite strong attractions. Thus, destination competitiveness must be reframed as the capacity to maintain comfort equilibrium rather than merely deliver amenities or visual appeal.

Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to three advances: First, Integration of comfort into destination satisfaction theory—bridging the cognitive evaluation of amenities and the affective experience of attractions. Second, reinterpretation of the 4A framework as an interdependent system, not an additive checklist. Third, the Expansion of SERVQUAL toward experiential quality, emphasizing the emotional and sensory dimensions of perceived value. This integrated perspective responds to global debates in tourism studies calling for multidimensional models that combine environmental, service, and psychological factors (Carvalho et al., 2023; Cavalcante et al., 2025).

For policymakers and destination managers, the findings highlight that comfort management—not merely facility provision—is central to sustaining satisfaction. Investment priorities should therefore target:

continuous cleanliness and spatial organization, lighting and accessibility as emotional comfort cues, consistent and fair service behavior by vendors, and integrating cultural or sensory narratives around natural attractions. This echoes emerging trends in sustainable experience design, emphasizing that the most competitive destinations are not those with the most assets, but those that translate ordinary assets into emotionally cohesive experiences.

While the study validates classical frameworks, it also exposes their blind spot: emotional mediation. Current theories understate how micro-level factors—like perceived safety, soundscape, or spatial harmony—shape macro outcomes like loyalty. The Pasir Padi case thus challenges the assumption that improving amenities automatically increases satisfaction; instead, it shows that comfort coherence is the decisive link. Future research should empirically test this integrated AACCS model across diverse coastal contexts using mixed-method or structural modeling approaches. Comparative studies could clarify how cultural differences moderate the comfort–satisfaction relationship, advancing global applicability.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how the interplay of attractions, amenities, and comfort shapes tourist satisfaction in a coastal destination context. Using qualitative analysis from the case of Pasir Padi Beach, the research demonstrated that satisfaction arises not from isolated factors but from the synergy between environmental aesthetics, infrastructural reliability, and emotional equilibrium. Empirically, the findings confirm that attractions serve as the initial experiential stimulus, amenities act as moderators that enhance or constrain the visitor experience, and comfort mediates this relationship by translating physical and service quality into affective satisfaction. Satisfaction thus emerges as a systemic outcome—a reflection of how well destinations align functional usability with emotional resonance.

Theoretically, the study contributes to advancing tourism satisfaction models by: First, introducing comfort as a mediating construct linking tangible and intangible dimensions of the destination experience; second, reframing the 4A and SERVQUAL frameworks into an integrative experiential model (AACCS) that foregrounds synergy over segmentation; and third, Extending the destination competitiveness perspective toward affective coherence, where comfort equilibrium becomes a marker of sustainability. Managerially, the findings highlight that improving satisfaction in coastal tourism requires comfort-centered planning. Facility investment should prioritize cleanliness, spatial organization, and consistent service behavior that nurtures emotional safety and aesthetic harmony. Sustainable destination management, therefore, depends not only on upgrading infrastructure but also on designing experiences that foster calm, trust, and belonging.

Despite its contributions, the study has two key limitations. First, its qualitative scope restricts statistical generalization; future research should validate the AACCS framework through mixed-method or structural equation modeling (SEM) approaches. Second, the single-site focus invites cross-cultural comparison across different coastal settings to examine how social norms and environmental perceptions mediate comfort and satisfaction. This research underscores that the essence of tourist satisfaction lies in comfort coherence—where physical, emotional, and managerial dimensions converge to produce sustainable, memorable, and competitive destination experiences.

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